



The Solution Network Australia F o u n d a t i o n

The Virtual Community Warehouse

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The Virtual Community Warehouse is an initiative of The Solution Network Australia Foundation in collaboration with Community Organisations on the Sunshine Coast



Frequently asked questions

What is the Virtual Community Warehouse

The Virtual Community Warehouse or VCW, as we like to term it, identifies resources within the Community service sector that can be shared.

Why should I support the VCW?

The VCW is a powerful tool with many benefits:

- ✓ Builds trust
- ✓ Creates effective symbiosis
- ✓ Creates opportunities for collaboration
- ✓ Easier to extend an existing project or programme
- ✓ Easier to trial a project or programme
- ✓ Enables short term projects to be undertaken easily
- ✓ Gives faster access to resources
- ✓ Less lag time between programme concept and implementation
- ✓ Less time spent making submission after submission for funding
- ✓ More effective use of available resources
- ✓ Reduces competition
- ✓ Reduces duplication
- ✓ Reduces pressure on available funding allowing it to be used on other projects
- ✓ Strengthens the community welfare sector by promoting unity

..and we aren't thinking too hard. Ultimately we would like to see community organisations setup delivering services to clients without having to ask for a cent in funding. It's very achievable so please help us get the VCW there.

Is it an actual warehouse?

No. We only record resources held by other organisations so that they may be further and better utilised.

Does it cost anything to join the VCW?

Not at this time and we would certainly like to keep it as a free service to the community. Our goal is to make it sustainable through the sale and auction of equipment and by offering other services such as assistance with event co-ordination and management. We will keep members updated.

How does the VCW work?

Very well, thank you.

Let us know what it is you need via the resource request and we will check the VCW listing. If what you want is not available we will try to source it for you. Once we have found your resource we will contact the lender and give them the details of your request. If the lender approves the transaction we will pass on the lenders details to you. You then contact the lender and make final arrangements.

How do I join?

Essentially the VCW is reciprocal. To borrow you should have something to lend. We have no criteria for what you can offer at this time, as needs are many and varied. If you feel that you have nothing to offer but would like to use the VCW, give us a call, send us an email or drop in and we will see what we can work out.

Does it cost anything to borrow resources?

There are no charges levied by the VCW.

However, a lender may require that certain costs are covered, such as the cost of a driver for a bus, or the fuel or the cost of consumables if you were to borrow a badge maker. However

this can be discussed directly with the lender as it does not involve the VCW.

If I make resources available to the VCW do I lose control of my things?

No, definitely not.

The resources are yours and we will always respect your wishes. We only ask that if you lend resources they are lent within the spirit of the VCW. If you choose to withdraw resources we would appreciate some notice and would also hope that any negotiated transactions are honoured.

What happens if I don't want to lend my things to a particular organisation or event?

You don't have to authorise any transaction you are not comfortable with and whatever your reasons for not wishing to authorise a transaction remain strictly private and confidential and are not discussed with other borrowers or lenders.

As a lender, how do I know that the borrower will look after my things?

The VCW operates within the spirit of collaboration, co-operation, trust and mutual respect. Each transaction is rated by both the borrower and the lender as positive, negative or neutral. This rating is made available to the lender when we request provisional authorization.

There is also another opportunity to meet with the borrower and discuss any reservations or safeguards you may require. The VCW will also actively facilitate transactions where the lender has such reservations.

Ultimately it will be an organisations track record that will be the best measure of their

integrity.

What happens if someone contacts me directly to loan resources?

Refer the caller to us immediately. The VCW coordinates and facilitates all requests. The benefits here include:

- Fewer calls and hassles to lenders
- Lenders can say "no!" to a transaction without offending anyone
- Borrowers get access to similar resources within other organisations without having to phone around

If a borrower persists in contacting organisations direct, their membership will be suspended for a period or cancelled.

How do I know what is in the VCW?

There is a general list of resources available to members but it is not exhaustive. It does not indicate the lenders as this information is considered private and confidential.

The great thing is that the VCW will try and find resources that are not listed. So whatever your request or wish list, put it in and let us help you save money and time and have a successful outcome.

What plans do you have for the VCW?

There is a lot of potential to develop other facets of the VCW; we have some ideas of our own but would really appreciate your input. For now our focus is increasing membership, establishing a unique database and rating system and setting up a functional website. That should keep us going for now -we'll keep you posted.