

COVID Threatens 1 in 3 Australian Community Groups - Survey

Rev Tim Costello: Lack of funds, donors, volunteers and the demands of social distancing threaten sporting, cultural and creative groups everywhere.

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA, May 18, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The deadly impact of COVID-19 on Australia's 600,000 community organisations has been revealed by a survey showing the \$146 billion dollar sector fighting for cash, volunteers and in many cases, survival. 70% of sporting clubs, arts and cultural organisations, community groups, welfare services and youth services surveyed described themselves as "threatened".

The national COVID-19 Community Sector Impact Survey questioned 366 community and nonprofit organisations from the volunteer-run to those with turnover in the millions. The survey is part of #GivingTuesdayNow, a global campaign encouraging generosity, volunteering and gratitude.

"There's no sugar coating this – the COVID-19 pandemic is seismic," says [Giving Tuesday](#) Ambassador Rev. Tim Costello. "Community groups are the social infrastructure of our economy – they need fast-tracked investment from government, philanthropy and individuals before it's too late. JobKeeper is a great start but we need to go further."

Some key findings from the survey:

- Two thirds (67%) have seen a drop in fundraising.
- One third (35%) have reduced staff with 40% unsure if there will be further reductions.
- More than half (57%) have seen a drop in volunteer activity.
- Nearly all (85%) respondents have been impacted by social distancing laws with many having to cease all activity.
- 89% believe they have not received the support they need from government, philanthropy and peak bodies.
- There is huge uncertainty about the future. 33% believe COVID-19 poses a "significant threat" to their ongoing viability and 53% describing their post-pandemic future as uncertain and 14% describing their future state as "weaker".

In response to the crisis, a COVID-19 Giving Register launching Friday May 15 will enable passionate individuals to find local groups to help by volunteering, donating or other forms of

support. Already the register has 100+ groups keen to meet new supporters.

The survey responses reveal some high speed innovation with groups that delivered services face-to-face now operating online, groups combining, working from home, sharing resources and re-inventing themselves.

“Community groups have always had to innovate just to thrive,” added Rev Costello. “Now it’s goes to their ability to survive.”

Interviews with Tim Costello available and community groups nationally including:

- a medical research foundation that had to throw its \$1.2 million fundraising ball online;
- a 130 year old Sydney charity working with vulnerable children now acting as a food bank;
- a theatre troupe working with Aboriginal communities in Queensland forced to halt business;
- the Neighbourhood Houses that have downed tools and found a master tailor with a science degree to make PPE for medicos;
- a rural retreat and mentoring program for vulnerable boys that’s expecting a post-COVID surge;
- a charity helping low-income families meet technology costs.

[Full survey results including graphics and respondent comments](#)

[The Giving Registry](#)

Giving Tuesday

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