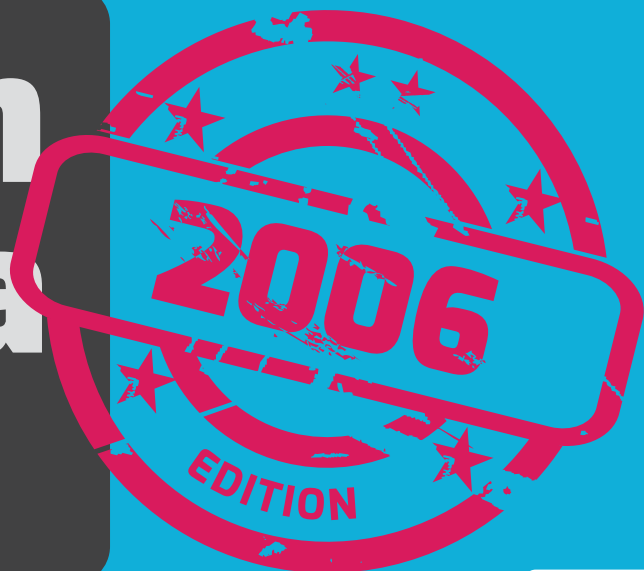


Grants in Australia Survey



aigm

Australian Institute
of Grants Management

An enterprise of:



ourcommunity.com.au

About the Survey

2006 was the first time the Australian Institute of Grants Management (AIGM) conducted its annual Grants in Australia Survey.

Several hundred grantseekers responded to the inaugural survey, which looked at a variety of grants issues and gauged grantseekers' impressions of grantmakers' work.

The issues the survey focussed on could broadly be categorised into three areas:

- 1. Grantmakers' information provision.**
- 2. Applications and acquittals.**
- 3. Feedback and "customer service".**

We also asked grantseekers about their "biggest bugbear" when it came to grantmakers' behaviour.

Top takeaways

1.

Communication between grantmakers and grantseekers remains an issue:

Respondents highlighted issues surrounding grantmakers not providing enough information, and not providing feedback.

While some elements of information provision were rated as generally good or excellent – particularly information on average grants amounts and on previous grants recipients – grantseekers also said that grantmakers didn't advertise their programs well enough (a basic part of information provision), nor did they provide convenient ways for grants applicants to contact them after hours.

2.

State Government still the chief source for grants:

Nearly 50% of grantseekers said their State Government was their primary source of grants.

This again highlights the importance that State Government funding and programs play for many groups in the community sector.



Top takeaways (continued)

3.

Grantseekers are finding it harder to secure grants:

More than 65% of respondents said grants were becoming harder to secure.

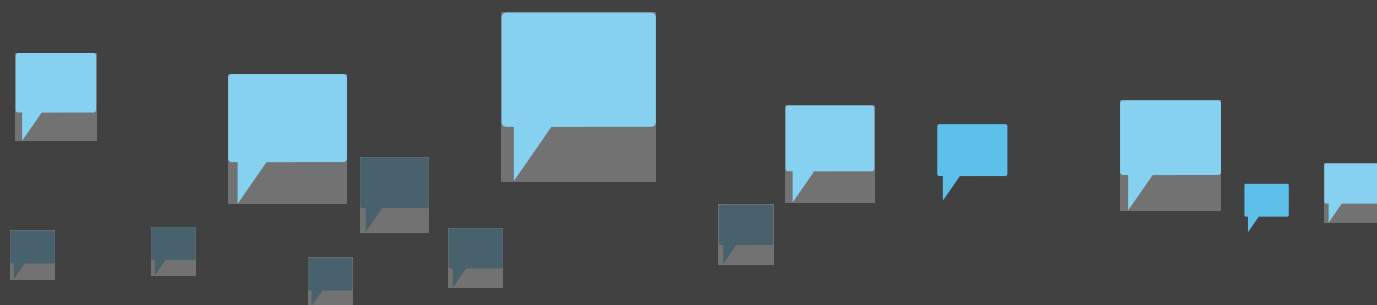
Again, this finding illustrates how important it is for grantmakers to get the word out about their funding program or programs.

And given that around 50% of respondents said grantmakers did not do a good job in this regard, this is an area in which improvement is needed.

4.

Grantmakers value clarity – in application forms, in program description and in reporting requirements:

They also believe there is room for improvement in these areas, as the survey results bear out.



Top recommendations

1.

Grantmakers must make more of an effort to be available to answer queries and/or be responsive to questions:

A lack of responsiveness and clarity was highlighted as a key grantseeker bugbear.

Examine how easy it is for grantseekers to access YOU – your contact details, your grants information.

- How does your website stack up – is it easy to find contact details? Is it easy to find information about grants programs, grants recipients, etc?
- Do you have a phone hotline or contact number where people can catch you after hours?
- Can people get in touch with you?

2.

Grantmakers should better promote their programs.

One way to do so is to get your grants programs into Our Community's Easy Grants newsletter (subscribe at The Funding Centre here: www.fundingcentre.com.au/subscribe).

EasyGrants goes directly to thousands of subscribers who are looking for grants funding. It provides a great conduit between grantmakers and grantseekers.



Top recommendations (continued)

3.

Allow ample time for people to submit and write applications.

Thirty-four percent of respondents to the survey said grantmakers did not allow enough time for applications to be written and submitted.

Your organisation needs to be conscious of the amount of time it takes for grantseekers to compile a credible funding application.

In addition, grantmakers must ensure their guidelines and other information about the program are clear so that applicants don't waste time trying to figure out what is actually required.



Top recommendations (continued)

4.

Consider funding non-DGRs, or offering different types of grants (long term, etc):

Another bugbear respondents mentioned was that big organisations and those with charitable or DGR status had an unfair advantage over small groups when it came to attracting grants.

It might be worth your while thinking about how you can support smaller organisations – through a dedicated grants round, for example, or even through seed funding and other non-monetary support. Consider perhaps working directly or through an intermediary to fund non-DGR groups.

One bugbear a number of survey respondents mentioned was the lack of funding for overheads, core costs or capital.

Does your organisation have the scope to set aside some grants to cover capital costs? Could you even pull together a grants round or create a grants program towards this aim?

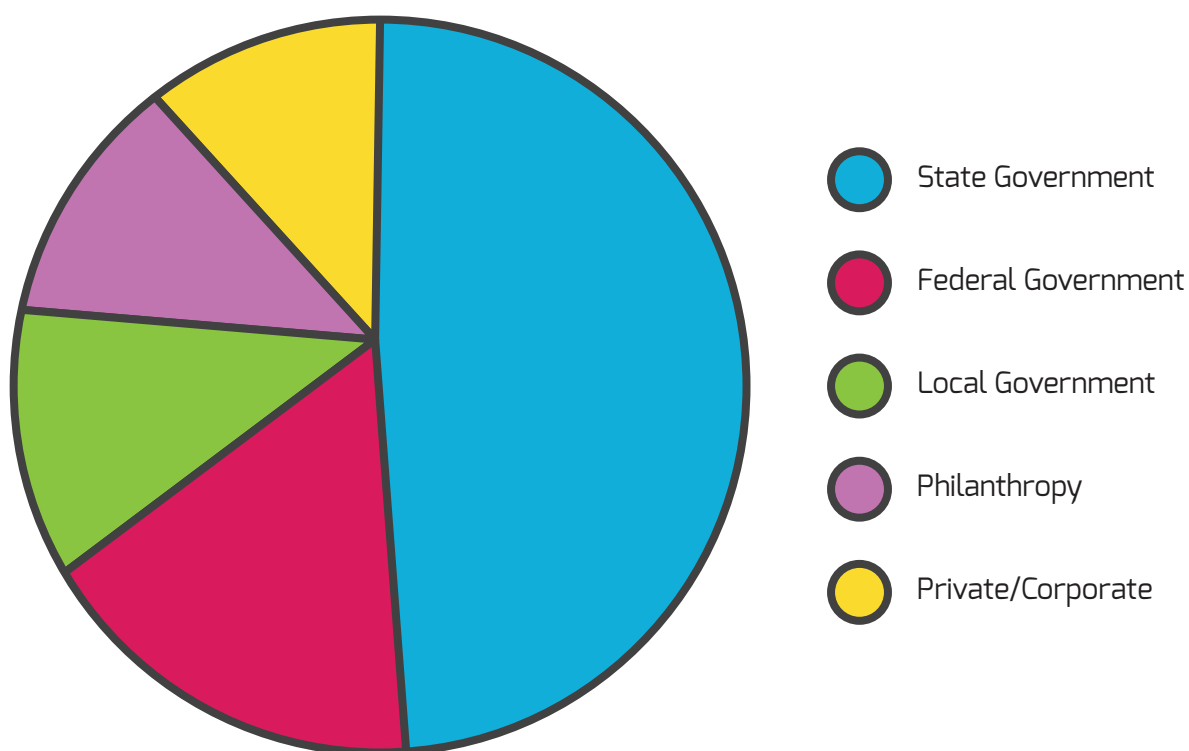
Alternatively, can you include in your grants a component which covers capital costs, overheads or core costs for the organisation you are granting to so it can ensure these costs are met. >



Findings

When asked about their **primary source of grants**, almost half the respondents to the survey (48.8%) said the State Government.

Federal Government was nominated as a primary source of grants funding by almost 16% of grantseekers, while local government, philanthropy and private/corporate grants were the main sources of funding for around 12% of grantseekers.



65%

More than 65% of respondents said grants were becoming harder to secure, compared to just 5.5% who said grants were becoming easier.

29%

Nearly 29% said there had been no change in comparison to the previous year.

Grantmakers' information provision

The Grantmaking in Australia Survey asked grantseekers to rate funders in a number of areas linked to their provision of information.

And while grantmakers got pretty good marks across a number of areas, there was room for improvement in others:

The Good

83%

of respondents rated as "OK" or "excellent" grantmakers' ability to provide information about average grant amounts.

71%

said grantmakers did an "OK" or "excellent" job of providing easy access to information about projects and groups which have been previously funded through their program.

65%

said information provided about grants and grants programs on funders' websites was "OK" or "excellent".

74%

said grantmakers' provision of details for grants staff contact details was "OK" or "excellent".

Grantmakers' information provision (continued)

The Not-so-Good



50%

of respondents said that funders generally did a "poor" job of advertising their programs.



34%

of respondents said grantmakers did not allow enough time for applications to be written and submitted.



51%

said grantmakers efforts to provide a free telephone hotline to access grants information was "poor".



60%

said grantmakers' efforts to provide after business hours phone contacts for grants inquiries were "poor". Just 16% described these efforts as "OK".

Poor communication

Average Grant Amounts

OK:

66%

Excellent:

17%

Poor:

14%

Not important to me:

3%

After hours contact for inquiries

*Grants Inquiry Line –
Personal contact
after hours*

OK:

16%

Excellent:

1%

Poor:

60%

Not important to me:

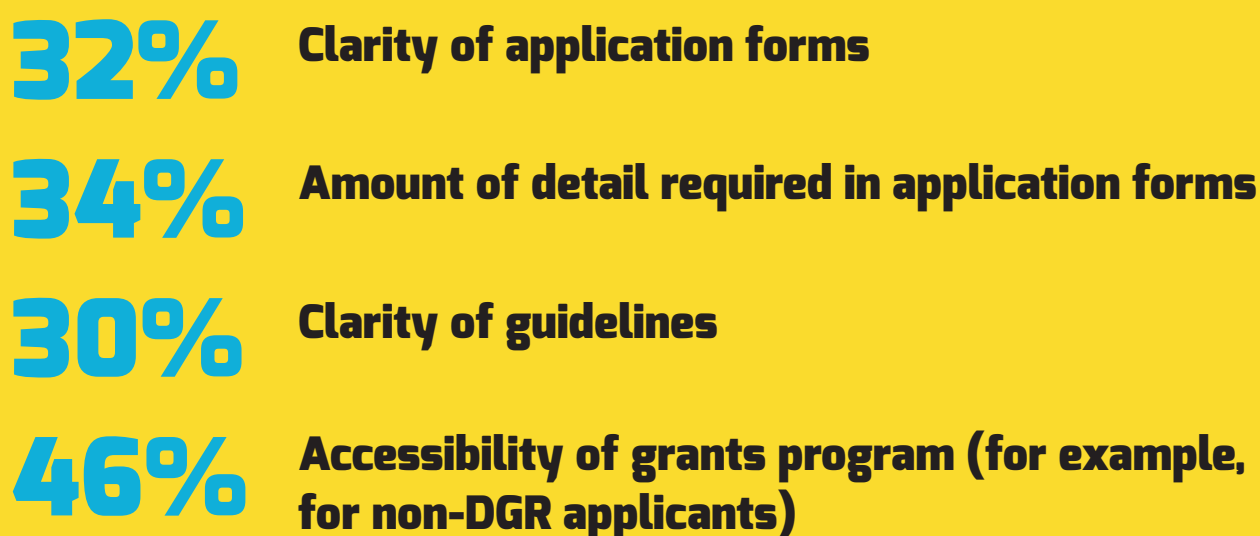
23%

Poor communication – including grantmakers not providing enough information, and not providing feedback – was among respondents' chief bugbears. See more on page 15.

Applications and acquittals

A significant proportion of grantseekers remained sharply critical of grantmakers' efforts when it came to application and acquittal details.

More than 30% of respondents rated as "poor" grantmakers' efforts when it came to:



Clarity of application forms



Amount of detail required in application forms



Clarity of guidelines



Accessibility of grants program (for example, for non-DGR applicants)

26%

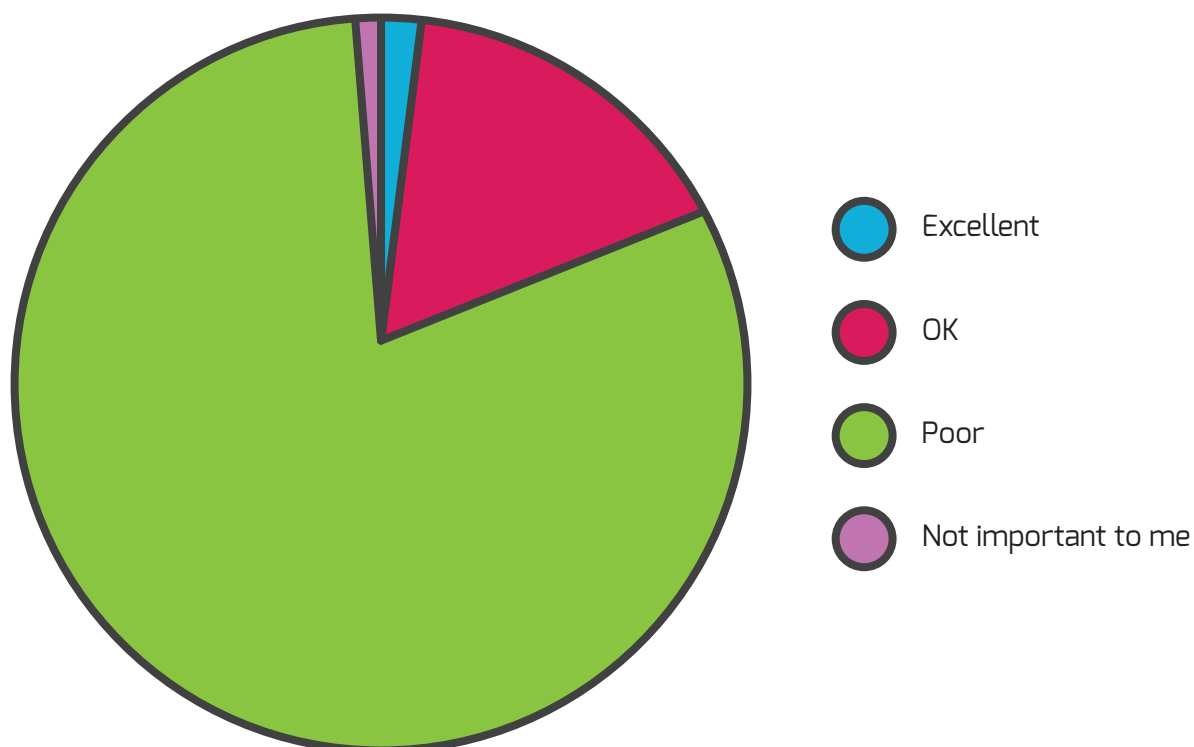
Twenty-six percent of applicants described as "poor" grantmakers' grant acquittal requirements.

Again, "problems with guidelines and application forms" was listed among the biggest bugbears grantseekers had with grantmakers.

Feedback and customer service

Feedback

Survey respondents were scathing of the level of feedback grantmakers provided on grantseekers' applications.



17%

Just two percent – two percent – of respondents said the level of feedback was “excellent”, while only 17% said it was “OK”.

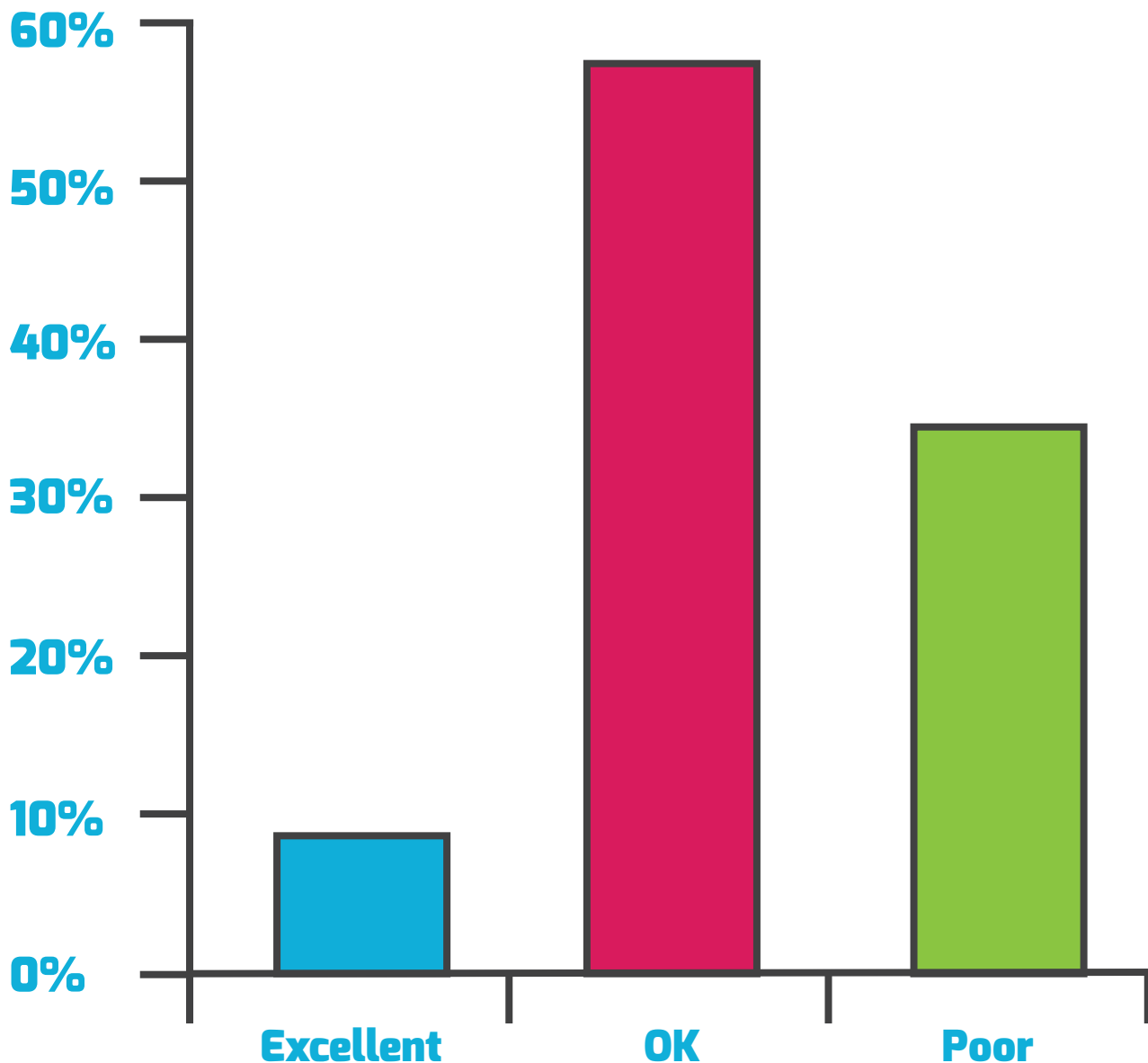
80%

A whopping 80% of respondents said it was “poor”.

Basic Customer Service

When it came to customer service – answering and returning calls or email inquiries – grantseekers felt funders could do better.

Feedback and customer service (continued)



9%

Only 9% of respondents described grantmakers' efforts as "excellent".

57%

While 57% said they were "OK".

34%

A significant number – 34% – described them as "poor".

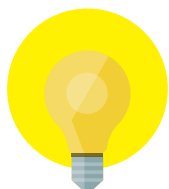
Bugbears

As part of the 2006 Grants in Australia Survey, we asked for respondents' all time biggest bugbears and put to them this question: If they had one thing they could change about grantmakers, what would it be?

The summary of responses saw a number of themes emerge:



Poor communication – not providing enough (or clear enough) information, and not providing feedback.



The focus on "innovative" or short-term projects, rather than funds for ongoing costs or capital.



Unrealistic timeframes – including guidelines being released too close to closing dates, delayed decisions and delays in providing funds.



"Pigeon-holing" – or not taking into account the special circumstances of certain groups, particularly rural groups.



Big organisations and those with **charitable or DGR status** being given an **unfair advantage** over small groups.



Problems with guidelines and application forms.



Unrealistic reporting requirements.

The Australian Institute of Grants Management

The AIGM is a best-practice network for grants managers and grantmakers. The AIGM works to help grantmakers review and improve their grants programs, and keep abreast of best practices both within Australia and internationally.

The AIGM is a division of Our Community, a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice, tools and training for Australia's 600,000 community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.



What we believe

- 1** Grantmaking is an absolutely central element in the Australian economic system. Not one dollar should be wasted on poorly designed, poorly articulated, poorly evaluated or inefficient systems. Grantmakers must maximise resources by sharing lessons, and seeking and learning from those shared by others.
- 2** Australia needs more and better professional grantmakers. The job of grantmaking should be afforded appropriate professional status, training and recompense.
- 3** Grantmakers should listen to the communities they serve. Grantmakers should be driven by outcomes, not process. They should trust and respect their grantees and offer programs, systems and processes appropriate to their needs and capacities.
- 4** Grantmakers should be efficient. Wastage is indefensible. Skimping on systems, technology and professional staff is equally wicked.
- 5** Grantmakers should be ethical. Grantmakers must ensure that the process of grantmaking is fair, unbiased and open.

You can read more about our values and beliefs in our grantmaking manifesto:

www.grantsmanagement.com.au/manifesto

What we do

As well as overseeing a number of grantmaking affinity groups, the AIGM's major offerings include:



- **SmartyGrants** Australia's best-practice online grantmaking system, used by more than 3900 grants programs of all types and sizes across Australia and New Zealand.
- **Grants Management Intelligence (GMI)** The AIGM's member publication, tracking best practices in grantmaking across Australia and all over the world.
- **Grantmaking Toolkit** An all-in-one decision-making framework, workbook (including policy building templates), and check-up tool designed to walk grantmakers through the process of building, reviewing or refreshing a grants program.
- **Grantmaking Manifesto** Framing the drive for reform and professionalisation of grantmaking in Australia.
- **Code of Practice for Professional Grantmakers and Code of Practice for Grantmaking Agencies** Setting performance and practice standards for leading grantmaking organisations and individuals.
- **Grantmaking Knowledge Bank** Searchable, topic-based listing of best-practice thinking and case studies.
- **Grantmaking in Australia Conference and other training and events** Generalised and topic-based conferences, networking events and training for government, philanthropic and corporate grantmakers.
- **Grants in Australia Survey** Annual survey of grantseekers tracking the performance of grantmakers throughout Australia.

For more information about the AIGM, or to join, visit:

www.grantsmanagement.com.au

or email: service@grantsmanagement.com.au

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Special thanks: Our thanks goes to all of those who took the time to fill in the survey. Again, we at the AIGM look forward to drawing on these ideas and more as we push forward in our grantmaking reform agenda in the months and years to come.

We welcome your feedback: We are always keen to hear from you. Send your feedback to service@grantsmanagement.com.au



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