

# AFA Communications Team Report

## Annual General Meeting 2016

### Overview

#### *Establishment of Communications Team Sub-Committee*

Prior to the 2015 AFA CoM Conference, the AFA's PR function was vested in a large group whose members (except for committee members, who were all co-opted to it by default) had been acquired over a period of years, by various means.

It was identified that over time, this had led to a diffusion of responsibility and "ownership" to the extent that too much was left to too few, and the majority of members to the team were not actively contributing to it at all.

The 2015 CoM Conference adopted a proposal to

- Streamline the PR Team and reduce the number of members to 8-12;
- Change the name to Communications Team (CT);
- Appoint a dedicated CT Officer;
- Call for expressions of interest for suitable candidates to join the team, including to ex-members of the PR Team.

These have largely been implemented during the year under review (2015/16).

#### *Performance of Communications Team*

The year was a busy one for the new CT, especially in the areas of Media Releases (MRs) produced, and incoming correspondence dealt with. Some basic statistics for the period 1 February 2015 to 31 January 2016 are provided in the table below.

Comm Team Item	Amt/No:
Number of CT Members	8
Media Releases Produced	21
Emails/Letters Addressed	127
FAQ Entries	16

To improve response times and ownership/accountability, processes were instituted for replying to correspondence received within 48 hours, and for allocating CT tasks to team member(s) within 6 hours if not voluntarily taken up. The procedures for Executive approval of MRs were also streamlined.

While these were noted to have had some positive effects, I think it's an uncontroversial observation that there is still scope for improvement in this regard, as workloads still fell too heavily onto too few members at times. I would like to record a vote of appreciation for Julian Jordan and Kylie Sturgess in particular. While all members of the CT contributed to its overall output, Julian and Kylie frequently went "above and beyond" in their work for the CT.

One solution to that will be to expand the size of the team beyond the current 8.

A number of our Media Releases were "picked up" and quoted by national/online media, including:

- 40 Days For Harassment;
- Dear Mr Turnbull: Godlessness Is **Not** The Problem;
- Syrian Refugee Crisis and Religion.

This year also saw improvement in the synchronisation of our messaging across our media/social media platforms, with Admins for the AFA Forum and Facebook/twitter pages working to ensure that MRs etc go out simultaneously across all platforms.

The vast majority of member and general feedback in respect of our MRs and presence was positive. Our most popular MRs garnered approximately 400-500 Facebook likes on the AFA Facebook page. At the same time, a few members sufficiently objected to our public stances (usually involving issues regarding marriage equality and associated issues, or Reclaim Australia/UPF) to resign from the organisation.

Michael Boyd, Kylie Sturgess and Danny Jarman were directly interviewed and quoted in the media on a significant number of occasions, with a good proportion of those being generated by AFA MRs.

The team dealt directly with over 100 emails, and Kylie and Julian (in particular) worked tirelessly in response to many of them to expand our FAQ entries so that future similar inquiries could be dealt with more efficiently.

### ***Priorities for the 2016/17 year***

- Recruit 2-4 additional CT members;
- Refine and improve application of Response Protocols;
- Census 2016 Campaign;
- Develop and improve Communications strategies, including proactive ones;
- Liaise with external PR/media providers as needed in respect of relevant campaigns;
- Liaise with other Sub-Committees (eg: Events) to promote the AFA's work and events.