

# AFA Communications Team Report Annual General Meeting 2017

## Overview

### *Communications Team Sub-Committee*

This year marks the second year of the operation of the Comms Team sub-committee, and the first full year of operation under that structure. We have improved our tracking of key response metrics, and fine-tuned our response time standards to seek to better utilise CT resources.

A decision was also made to reduce resources expended on “non-substantive” correspondence (mainly anti-atheist rants, racist polemics, objections to our stance on marriage equality. gratuitous advice to be less \*politically correct\*, requests for assistance with migration or asylum etc) by essentially ignoring those.

While the CT did bring in several new members to assist with the workload, it also experienced significant turnover in personnel, and thus additional team members are still being sought.

### *Performance of Communications Team*

The year was another 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 2016 to 31 January 2017 are provided in the table below.

CT Item	Amt/No:
Number of CT Members	10
Media Releases Produced	16
Emails/Letters Addressed	286
Average within Response Std	73.90%
FAQ Entries	6

To improve response times and ownership/accountability, processes were amended to institute a standard for replying to correspondence received within 72 hours, and for allocating CT tasks to team member(s) within 6 hours if not voluntarily taken up. Success of these measures was somewhat mixed.

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.

A number of our Media Releases were "picked up" and quoted by national/online media, most notably in respect of the 2016 Census campaign. This was a key component of the CT's work during this year.

As part of this, an external communications consultant was sourced and engaged to assist the AFA for a period of 6 months, timed to coincide with the 2016 Census campaign. In my opinion this was both beneficial and successful, and the AFA will consider a similar strategy for our future high-impact, high-visibility campaigns.

The vast majority of member and general feedback in respect of our MRs and presence was positive. Our most popular MRs garnered approximately 350-450 "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.

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 and the Census campaign.

The team dealt directly with over 250 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 3-4 additional CT members;
- Refine and improve meeting of Response Protocols;
- 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.