



# CAMS CLUB RESOURCE GUIDE

## CHAPTER 7: COMMUNICATIONS



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

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# 1. Promoting a Car Club

## 1.1 Why Promote the Club?

**Need to Promote a Club** Car clubs have to promote themselves. There are many other social and voluntary organisations in their area seeking exposure to achieve recognition and attention from the community. Each one of them wants to attract members and sponsorship.

The competition for people's leisure time has increased greatly over the past decade. There is a far greater range of activities to entertain people than ever before. This means many of them do not even consider a car club as an interest.

Good relationships with the local media contribute to good relationships with the local community. The better these relationships are, the more possibilities there are of reducing adverse publicity, such as a serious incident at a motor sport event, or that motor sport contributes to undesirable behaviour on the road. It will also enable the Club to create an awareness of its existence and the aims it wishes to promote and lobby for a wide range of matters that impact the Club.

**Ideas are Important**

Promoting a club does not have to be expensive. The Committee<sup>1</sup> and club members will be able to generate many ideas to promote the Club at no or little cost.

Effort and ideas are far more important than a big budget. Not all ideas work for all clubs. The importance of club promotion cannot be over emphasised and the Club should do as much as is feasible.

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<sup>1</sup> Committee refers to the Main or Management Committee

## 1.1 Why Promote the Club? – Continued

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Club Promotion is a Dedicated Role</b> | <p>Club promotion should not be a task that is tagged onto a committee member's role. It needs to be a dedicated role.</p> <p>The person responsible for publicity<sup>2</sup> should be on the Committee, or at least attend meetings. This will ensure he / she is up-to-date with the Club's profile and development plans, as well as being able to contribute directly to any discussion on club promotion.</p> |
| <b>Role Requirements</b>                  | <p>It certainly would be an advantage if a person who has some knowledge of marketing or public relations took on the role. This is not essential, as it is not too often someone with qualifications can be found.</p> <p>Common sense and enthusiasm are qualities that are essential and important.</p>   |
| <b>Duration of Publicity Officer Role</b> | <p>Clubs intending to carry out a publicity program should have a Publicity Officer who will be available for a few years to provide continuity and who can 'study' the local media.</p>   |

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<sup>2</sup> The Committee needs to decide on the title of the position, to ensure it carries the status required to deal with the media and the outside community. Some titles may be: Publicity Officer, Promotion Officer or Media Liaison.

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## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Publicity Versus Promotion

'Publicity' is regarded as getting a story published or aired and it is slanted towards a news angle.

'Promotion' covers a wide field, which can include publicity and advertising. It looks at special events to get attention. It requires planning and the well-ordered execution of small details.

Effective publicity is achieved when the event is publicised in the newspapers (or journals), on radio and/or television.

### Difference Between News, Publicity and Promotion

News is 'publicity' but it's about new information, especially about recent events and happenings and / or about something significant that has happened. It usually has some degree of immediacy about its release. News can be of the success of club members in sporting or personal arenas; the results of raising funds for a charity, etc.

The intention of publicity is often to create goodwill about the Club, to keep the Club's name and its activities in front of its audiences. A publicity campaign can be prepared a year in advance. Monthly news releases can be issued on more regular happenings within and around the Club. Examples include the selection of the Committee, and release of the year's activity calendar.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### **Difference Between news, Publicity and Promotion** (continued)

Promotion strategies should emerge from the Club's overall strategic plan. This is because promotion work is just one strategy to help the Club achieve its aims. Promotion work requires careful thought, detailed planning, and often a budget. Monitoring and evaluating the promotion must be built into the plan to help guide future promotion work. Promotion of the Club can deepen its relationship with the local community, including local authorities.

Promotions may be carried out, to:

- simply promote the Club; e.g. a demonstration of the Club Members' cars as a show
- raise funds for the Club or in conjunction with a local charity
- recruit new members by placement of posters around town

Much of what is printed in newspapers or journals, heard on the radio, seen on television or posted on the internet is publicity of one kind or another about people.

The main task of the Publicity Officer is to find interesting information and ideas that can be turned into publicity. Items, which would be of no interest to the mainstream media in capital cities, could be of great interest to regional or local media. Publicity Officers should be concentrating on this area, as the local media is always looking for local stories. If an item (including photographs and / or footage to enhance its chances of getting a run) can be written and delivered to the editor's desk it is much more likely it will be used.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Making News

Making news is not something that happens by chance other than, usually, in tragic situations. There are a number of effective ways of making news legitimately:

- Tie-in with another news item of the day if this news is known in advance or react very quickly if a news story 'breaks'.
- Issue a report on some activity or matter involving the Club and / or club members. An example is the appointment of a new committee.
- Announce an appointment; e.g. the appointment of Publicity Officer to the Committee.
- Celebrate an anniversary, such as the formation of the Club, the winning of a championship, and the length of service of committee members.
- Simply make a statement on a subject of interest if it can be related to the Club in some way. Examples include youth development, driver training, and family involvement.
- Ask a celebrity person or a subject matter expert to address the club members and arrange interviews with the media. The celebrity does not have to be a 'national hero'. The person can be someone who has achieved a bit more than the average club member or competitor. The subject of the address may include competition, event organisation, being an effective committee member, or contribution to the efficient running of the Club.
- Award a club member for an achievement and announce it to the local media.
- Stage a special event; for example, hold a club 'media day'.
- Issue the text of the speech given by the Club's President to a service club meeting; for example, Lions or Rotary.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### **Making News** (continued)

To determine whether a story is newsworthy, see if it contains some human interest. The ingredients of a newsworthy story are:

- when it is new, for example the opening of clubrooms and new committee appointments
- when it relates to a personality and / or celebrity
- when it involves conflict – but be careful with this point
- when it pertains to some future event which is of interest to the local community

### **Preparing Media Releases**

Use a specially printed paper for the media release so that it stands out amongst the (normally) white documents scattered over a desk. Ensure that at least the words “Media Release” are at the top of the page(s). Some other ideas include:

- Releases should include the Club logo
- Ensure the following information is included in the media release:
  - name of the Club
  - address
  - contact details of the person who can provide further details
  - date of the media release
- Type the text at least one and a half or double spacing. Use a font size no smaller than 10 point and a font type that is simple such as Arial or Times New Roman. Leave wide margins on both sides of the text to provide a clear area for editing by the journalist.
- Keep releases brief and concise. Use ‘good old plain English’ and avoid jargons and acronyms. Keep the release to no more than 150 words.



## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Preparing Media Releases

(continued)

- Put the important news first. This attracts attention, otherwise the release is likely to be put aside if it starts boringly.
- It is also important to stress the 'local angle'.
- Try to answer the questions who, what, why, where and when, when writing the contents of the media release. Read and re-read the release to see if these questions are answered.
- Always try to include a quote. An example is: "The introduction of the new dirt circuit will give local teens an opportunity to try their driving skills out in a safe manner rather than on the open road", said Peter Public, the President of the XYZ Car Club at the announcement of the new circuit.
- Mention, but do not over-emphasise, sponsors' names. The release will end up in the bin very quickly otherwise.
- Give a name and contact details at the end of the release, as well as a date. Make sure the telephone numbers listed will be answered.
- Do not send a flood of releases otherwise they will be ignored – be selective.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Photographs

Photographs are always important with a release for 'a picture can tell a thousand words'.

- Identify club members who are reasonably adept at photography to be the official photographer. Encourage them to learn the 'tricks of the trade' of taking photographs for media use:
  - Photos should be as professional as possible.
  - The background should be uncluttered.
  - Where appropriate, have the Club badge / name in the background.
  - Find out from the contacts at the media outlet how they would like photographs. Provide high resolution digital photos that are at least 4 megapixels. The higher the resolution, the better the print quality. Good 35 mm printed copies should be around 200 mm x 150 mm (8" x 6") glossy prints.
  - Send copies of photos taken from different angles to different media outlets.
  - Check if black and white or colour is best.
  - If supplying printed copies, make sure the photographs are captioned properly and that the caption is secured to the photos and will not be detached by accident. If supplying digital (electronic) photos ensure the photos are captions electronically. One way is to use the caption as the file name.
- If a well-known sporting personality is available, let your media contact know. Offer the personality an interview / photo session with the journalist and in-house photographer.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Print Media

- Establish a database in the Club of the names of journalists and editors of relevant publications such as motoring and motor sport. The database should contain the names of journalists of the daily and weekly regional newspapers, as well as magazines, freesheets and even in-house magazines of any large company within the region. It is easy to obtain the names, addresses and contact details such as telephone numbers and email addresses from websites or by a quick call to the organisation. Ideally, the database should also contain the 'deadlines' of the relevant paper and any other information in relation to submitting articles.
- Although email is now prominent, there is no reason why a release cannot be posted. This has an advantage that it can be opened, which is a bit of novelty these days. If the letterhead is prominent it can stand out amongst the papers on a desk. Allow time for delivery and keep editorial deadlines in mind.
- There are a number of downsides to emailing releases:
  - So many emails are received that it is tempting, and easy, to use the delete key if the release contains trivial data.
  - With any email, the pages all look the same. Important news does not stand out on emails, whereas it can be highlighted in a posted release.
  - The email, unless it is printed, is locked away in the recipient's system and not seen unless specifically wanted. A release by post sits on the desk.
  - Email allows quick and easy access to journalists; therefore, people often send messages without really studying what they have written. Journalists receive a lot of trite emails, so when the club wants to advise of an important event it is dismissed as yet another 'one of those emails'. Refrain from bombarding journalists with every little detail of what is happening; be selective.
- On the other hand an email copy allows journalists to easily edit the release and to 'cut and paste'.
- Get to know the journalists and editors and establish what they want and then give it to them in a form that suits them.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Print Media (continued)

- Know the copy deadlines and photograph arrangements, and get the release in early enough so that it can be considered for publication. Copy is prepared in advance of the print day. A release probably will not get a printed if it arrives 'late'. Once the layout has been prepared, there is no reason to delete one article for another, unless it is exciting news.
- Invite journalists, and if it is an extra special occasion, editors, to selected events and functions. Putting them in a competition car is known to be very effective in enthusing them.
- If media representatives have enquiries, answer them promptly. They may be waiting for a clarification of a release sent to them and this could make the difference in it being printed. Keep any promises made so that the Club becomes recognised as a reliable source.

An idea is to draw up a plan in advance for issuing regular publicity articles at least monthly. Some, if not most, club activities are planned well in advance at the beginning of the year so there is no reason a suitable story cannot be prepared well in time to meet any publication deadline.

### Relationship Benefits

If the local media learn that the Club is a reliable source of information, you will develop a relationship of 'mutual benefit'.

### Appoint an Archivist

The appointment of an Archivist is a position overlooked by the majority of clubs. The role of the archivist is to file much of the Club's publicity activities for historical purposes. Such an appointment, which is one that can be made for a long period of time, should be given serious consideration by the Committee.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Radio and Television

Although there will be more opportunities to gain coverage through local radio, regional television should not be ignored. There are 'stringers' (reporters with a camera) in a regional town or city.

Develop contacts at the media outlets. In this case there most probably will not be motoring journalists. There may well be someone in a decision-making position who is a motoring or motor sport fan or who indeed may even have a motoring or motor sport segment. In this case persevere until a contact or two is found.

The principles outlined in the suggestions for preparing media releases for the print media are the same for radio and television.

### Radio and Television – Club Spokesman

- It is important to select a club member who can act as a club spokesman for radio and television. It may not be the President, nor the person in charge of publicity. The spokesman needs to be trained in presentation and should keep the following points in mind:
  - Liaise with relevant and authorised CAMS personnel and CAMS Media Team prior to any interview in relation to an incident.
  - Dress appropriately – remember, you are representing your club, motoring and the sport in general.
  - Be familiar with the subject, and be in possession of all the fact(s). Write them down, particularly records of times, dates, and events and do not be afraid to refer to them; it is better to do this than be inaccurate. Make a note of the points to be stressed – if possible, discuss these with the interviewer prior to starting the interview. Interviewers are always looking for 'angles' and you may provide one or two.
  - Concentrate and listen to the question(s).
  - Speak up, be definite in what is said, and do not ramble; appreciate that most times only a few seconds will actually be used, particularly on television. Avoid motor sport jargon.
  - Remember that it can be dangerous to quote someone and do not rely on second-hand information. If you did not see it happen, then say so. State that 'as I understand it from a report I have been given .....'.

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Radio and Television – Club Spokesman (continued)

- If the speaker does not know the answer to a question say so to the reporter. This is preferable than filling in or wasting time.
- Prepare your key messages / lines and stick to them. Repeat if necessary but stay 'on message'.
- Stick to the facts! This is particularly important in interviews relating to an incident.
- Be consistent – do not change your story (especially the facts) between interviews with different media outlets.
- Be prepared for an awkward question, perhaps on some totally unrelated issue. If it is known that some controversial issue will come up, it is best to think of the potential answers and have a practice run with someone primed to ask challenging questions.
- Build up others; play down your role.
- Keep the laws of libel and slander in mind at all times.
- Stay calm and relax – it shows if the speaker is not. Be aware of being too relaxed.
- Do not allow yourself to lose your temper. If this happens, it may well get coverage, but for the wrong reasons!
- Do not promote sponsors too much, as the interview will be edited anyway.
- Resist the temptation to try too hard to be funny – it will not work.
- Avoid being interviewed after some alcoholic hospitality, the hospitality shows!

## 1.2 Planning a Publicity Program

### Tips for an Interview

The unblinking eye of the television camera and the cold hard metal of the microphone can be very unsettling for some people. If this is the case, it is best to decline an interview.

If being interviewed, the interviewee needs to concentrate intently on the interviewer. Look the interviewer in the eyes; never look at the lens of the television camera, unless you are doing a 'live cross'.

Most interviews can be friendly, but there are occasions when the interview may be controversial; for example, a bad crash in an event. If such a situation arises, the interviewee must:

- Determine if the Club, Police, CAMS or another authority is better suited to address media and speak publicly or on camera about the incident.
- Keep cool at all times.
- Not be ruffled.
- Not allow words to be put into his mouth by the interviewer.
- Not use the 'no comment' term. If the interviewee has no comment to make on the issue, then the interview should be refused in the first place; or at least the interviewer told that discussion of a particular subject is not to be part of the interview.
- Not declare without authority from CAMS and or Police that an investigation into the incident will occur.

In these circumstances, prior liaison with CAMS may avoid the above circumstances, alleviate the requirement for clubs to be put in this position and / or provide a spokesperson who is trained / experienced and can speak from a position of authority as the 'governing body'.

### 1.3 No / Bad Publicity

**Ignored by Media** If the media still ignores the Club's efforts to get exposure, work out why this is happening. It could be that:

- perhaps the publicity officer is not quite the right person
- perhaps the releases that are being prepared are not quite what they should be

Contact the media outlet and have a meeting with the editor to find out:

- what the problem is
- what the Club has to do to get coverage

Above all, do not give in, keep plugging – after all, there is no alternative.

#### **Bad Publicity**

If the Club gets bad publicity, do not overreact and especially do not publically criticise the media outlet or journalist.

It is not the Club's position to be the censor. So don't try and tell the media what they should or should not photograph / film or publish. This can actually work against the Club.

If there have been errors of fact, press to have them corrected – but do not charge in with all guns blazing. This can turn bad publicity appearing on page 7 into worse publicity appearing on the front page, or worse, still marginalise the Club from the media and result in no / little coverage in the future.

Remember, there is nothing staler than yesterday's news so many issues will quickly pass over. Make sure that the relevant people in relevant positions are aware of the facts.

At worst, a constructive debrief with the editor could make him / her a bit more supportive at the next opportunity.



## 2. Newsletters

### 2.1 Printed Newsletters

**What are Newsletters?**

Newsletters are informal publications, often simple in format and crisp in style, for a defined audience. They provide special information, upcoming events and news, and are not necessarily issued regularly.

**Why Use Newsletters?**

Building strong relationships between members and the Club is the prime reason for a newsletter program.

**Aim of a Newsletter**

The aim of a newsletter, often only two to four pages long, is to distribute information and communicate with current and potential members.

If written in an interesting and readable manner it can attract new Members to the club.

**Relevance of Newsletter**

Many of the best looking and best intentioned newsletters fail because they do not communicate with the readers for whom they were designed. One of the main reasons for this failure is that the information in the newsletter is stale, irrelevant, too long, or over-technical. The very purpose of the newsletter is to convey 'immediacy', thus it should contain only a few subjects and be written by one, or a few, authors.

**Magazine**

A magazine, on the other hand, is a periodical publication of many pages, with numerous articles, stories, and pictures on multiple subjects written by multiple authors, together with even results. A magazine also provides opportunities for advertising. If the Club wants to produce a glossy publication, then it needs to look at producing a 'magazine' in print or on the website where layout, appearance and usability are not restricted.

## 2.1 Printed Newsletters – Continued

### Tips for Editing Paper-Based Newsletters

Here are some tips on writing and editing newsletters:

- Always keep the audience in mind, and what is relevant and important to them.
- Develop a publication structure, editorial calendar and written guidelines for those preparing articles.
- The most basic newsletter should have:
  - a number of 'lead' items
  - shorter 'news' items
  - a message from a leader within the Club
- More developed newsletters may include:
  - features
  - 'departments', e.g. 'Rally Corner'
  - columns, e.g. 'From the President'
  - an editorial
  - in-house news
  - news titbits; e.g. results of events of interest to members
  - cartoons
- The frequency of the issue of the newsletter should be realistic about the amount of contents that can be consistently produced. A very active club could sustain a monthly newsletter, a club that is active now and then perhaps only need, a newsletter each quarter, or half year.
- Be concerned about how the newsletter reads before worrying about how it looks. Relevant and well-written contents will often stand on its own, even as plain text.

## 2.1 Printed Newsletters – Continued

### **Tips for Editing Paper-Based Newsletters** (continued)

- Keep to 'plain' text and do not get too involved with advanced layout and styling techniques. Good writing and good editing are essential for clarity, conciseness, limiting or eliminating jargon, length and correctness. This will contribute to giving the readers top priority.
- Put an 'in-this-issue' outline at the top of the front page.
- Lead with strong articles; people decide in seconds whether to read an article or not.
- An editorial or message from the President should have a regular spot after the lead items.
- In-house or more parochial news should have a regular spot much further into the newsletter.
- Information 'comes to life' as a story when someone talks about it, therefore sources of the story should be cited.
- List all those who contributed to the newsletter; this will reward those who did and encourage others to participate.
- Track reader feedback; do a sampling of readers after each issue and a more formal readership survey after a given number of editions.

## 2.2 E-Newsletters

**E-Newsletters** It is now common practice to send newsletters electronically, hence the 'e-newsletter'.

Once the e-newsletter is in place it is far less expensive than printed newsletters. However, as with any communications technique, the presentation greatly affects the success of the communiqué. Online information is no different.

**Reasons for an E-Newsletter** There are many reasons why a club should consider developing an e-newsletter:

- To build better relationships. This is one of the main reasons for a newsletter.
- To build loyalty. The newsletter helps build loyalty to the Club. Receivers react positively to member messages arriving in the inbox as they feel a 'bond' with the sending organisation.
- To save money. As the Club has access to the website, it's a great deal easier and cheaper to produce and distribute than to print and mail newsletters.
- It is very quick. If a matter arises that needs to be communicated to members quickly, this can be achieved almost instantly by e-newsletters.

**Options** There are different format and platform options for e-newsletters, with varying strengths, weaknesses and usability. This impacts on their ease and successful use.

Somewhat surprisingly, many people will not open attachments to normal emails.

## 2.2 E-Newsletters – Continued

### Caution

Clubs need to be aware of some negatives when using e-newsletters. Online newsletter research has revealed the following findings:

- People get a lot of email, much of which they do not want. Therefore, they do not have, or make, the time to read a lot of text.
- E-newsletters must be designed to facilitate scanning, as not all recipients read them thoroughly; many just skim through the newsletter and read parts of it that are of interest; in many cases attachments are not even opened.
- Receivers are frustrated by e-newsletters that demand too much of their time.

### 3. Club Magazine

#### Club Magazines are Important

A club magazine is an important way of communicating with members, be it a printed copy or an electronic copy posted on the Club's website.

In many clubs a magazine is the only tangible item that members receive for their subscription. Therefore, the Club's committee should take its production seriously.

#### Printed Versus Web-Based Copies

A printed club magazine has the advantage of being around for anyone interested to browse or read, whilst the web-based copy is locked away in a computer.

When determining whether to just place the club magazine on the Club's website and not produce a printed copy of the magazine, consideration needs to be given to the following points:

- Although it can be assumed most, if not all club members and others to whom the magazine may be distributed have access to the website, the recipient's software needs to be capable of reading the electronic magazine efficiently.
- An alternative is to place the magazine on the Club's website from where members can read it, or download it if they so wish. To solve the problem of downloading big file sizes, a simple text email can be sent to members alerting them that the magazine has been posted on the website.
- The physicality of reading on the website is something that people do not necessarily want to do for a long period.
- Many people like to have a 'hard copy' that sits around and can be read or glanced through at leisure. Not everyone has a colour printer to run off an electronic magazine that usually carries colour photographs and advertisements.
- Does the Club have someone who can spend the time to produce a regular electronic magazine? This takes more expertise than producing a printed copy.

## 2.2 E-Newsletters – Continued

### **Advantage of Electronic Magazine**

The main advantage of having an electronic magazine is cost. Costs related to the production and printing of a magazine, production of labels, and envelopes and postage, as well as time spent in preparing the magazine for postage, make an electronic magazine look attractive.

Before any move is made to introducing an electronic magazine, club members should be canvassed for their preference.

### **Standard of Publication**

Given modern technology that is easily accessible, the standard of a club magazine can be reasonable.

A club should monitor what other comparable clubs produce and determine the standard the club feels is right for their Members and others readers of the club magazine.

For example, a Porsche or Mercedes Benz club may have a high gloss magazine, as its members will be used to this standard of publications from the vehicle manufacturers, whereas a club with mostly rally enthusiasts may consider the high gloss not necessary.

In the end, a consistently produced magazine with topical contents may be more important than an elegant or expensive production.

### **Frequency of Publication**

Ideally, a magazine should be published monthly, or at least bi-monthly, to enable the latest news to be publicised to members and others readers.

### **Editor**

Production of club magazines works best when one person is appointed as Editor.

The Editor should be a member of the Club's committee to allow him / her to keep abreast of all that is happening within the Club.

## 2.2 E-Newsletters – Continued

### Editorial Policy

The Committee should establish policy guidelines on layout and broad contents for the Club's magazine.

It is important that the Club's magazine maintain its standard of presentation and readability. The Committee should determine what 'flavour' it desires the magazine to have – elegant or somewhat earthy, expensive looking or cheap and cheerful. Attempts should be made to give the magazine its own character. If this means being controversial, then legal advice should be sought.

The standard and use of language should not offend readers.

### Production Schedule

The production of a successful magazine is largely dependent on the contents. To achieve success, an Editor needs to plan ahead.

There is often a mad rush to put the contents together, yet with some planning this can be avoided.

An editor should have a twelve month schedule so that the articles can balance the magazine to suit the varying seasons and to cater for all the members' interests.



## 2.2 E-Newsletters – Continued

### Contents

The magazine contents should be selected to suit the Club. The contents may include some of the following suggestions:

- contents page
- what the magazine is, for example;
  - ‘The Official Publication of the xxxxx Car Club’
  - a summary of what the Club stands for and does
  - promote that it is a ‘CAMS Member Club’
- a profile of the Club; for example:
  - committee(s)
  - contact details
  - where the Club meets and when
  - membership subscription details
  - membership application form – possibly as a centrefold
- calendar of events.
- magazine details; for example:
  - call by the editor for contributions
  - format of the copy
  - deadline dates
  - photo requirements
  - advertising rates
- editorial.
- news about the Club; for example, committee decisions
- items wanted and for sale
- brief history of the Club

## 2.2 E-Newsletters – Continued

### Contents (continued)

- reports on past and upcoming:
  - meetings
  - social activities
  - competitive events
  - championship tables
  - CAMS' matters
- welcome to new members
- snippets from the Club's history
- selected letters from members
- articles about members' cars
- other items, including:
  - cartoons
  - quizzes
  - crosswords
  - club merchandise
  - news from the Club's sponsors

### Magazine Distribution

Having produced the magazine, get it to members quickly.

Produce enough copies to send to local journalists, club sponsors, neighbouring car clubs, CAMS State Offices, the local council, the police stations, hairdressers, surgeries, local libraries and other places where there is a chance people may browse (if not read) it.

The magazine should not be only aimed at attracting new members, it should also communicate as widely as possible within the Club's boundaries.

## 4. External and Community Communications

### 4.1 Community Relations

**Part of the Community**

A car club should be an integral part of the community, particularly in rural regions. It should be active in this role to maintain a worthwhile profile to attract new members on a steady basis.

**Suggestions**

Some suggestions to consider for enhancing community communications are listed below:

- Is the Club included in telephone directories?
- Is the Club listed in any guides to local associations?
- Are club dates distributed to sources where they can be published; for example, local government (e.g. council) lists?
- Do club dates appear in “What’s On” features in local newspapers, local radio stations and tourism promotional materials?
- Are run-on copies of the club magazine placed in places frequented by the public such as libraries, surgery waiting rooms, coffee shops and community and recreational venues?
- Can the Club be represented in local activities such as town shows and fetes? These type of activities are always looking for additional participants. Can the Club come up with a professional-looking display featuring a car that the public will find exciting?
- Can the Club be involved in a series of evening classes on motor sport related matters?
- Can links be forged with schools, with emphasis towards road safety – not driver training but driver awareness?

## 4.1 Community Relations – Continued

### Suggestions (continued)

- Are there community opportunities for club action which will generate media coverage? Examples may include Santa Claus coming to town in a unique rally car and involvement with children needing special care. There are many opportunities and if the Club does not pick up on these, other dynamic local clubs will.
- If the Club meets regularly at, for example, a local hotel is there a display board about the Club which is kept up to date? Recruitment literature could be available from the hotel.
- Can club members with the ability be persuaded to give talks to other groups in the region, or the next region; or invite speakers from outside to do so? Many speakers are available – they often only need to be asked.
- Consider reciprocal projects with non-motoring groups in the area.
- Significant anniversaries are always worth celebrating and promoting:
  - The celebration of a club milestone is significant (20 years, 30 years, 50 years, some now getting to 80 years).
  - The length of service of members.
  - ‘Then and now’ stories are always popular with local media, particularly if there are photograph and / or film footage of what the region looked like 20, 30, 50, 70 years before.
- When future generations are celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup>, 120<sup>th</sup>, 130<sup>th</sup>, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries they will appreciate having archived material to look back to. Make sure that copies of newsletters, magazines, committee minutes, photographs, video, and film footage are stored in a prominent and safe location which can be handed down through the decades. It is worth talking to a specialist to ensure the items are stored in ways that will ensure their integrity in years to come.

## 4.2 Club Website

### Benefits of a Club Website

Development of a club website provides the opportunity to reach a constantly growing audience of potential new members, provided they can first be attracted to the website.

A website allows every visitor to the site to be informed about all aspects of the Club's activities, including:

- about the Club and its membership
- where and when the Club Members meet
- contact details
- future event calendars and previews of coming activities
- reports and results of previous activities, including photographs
- technical issues and advice
- items for sale
- forums
- announcements
- links to other websites that are of interest to club members

## 5. Website

### **Writing for a Website is Different to that for a Print Medium**

Writing for a website is not the same as writing for print because people read differently on the internet.

It is difficult to read a lot of text on a screen, and readers tend to read 25% slower from screens than from paper.

### **Reader Behaviour**

A significant barrier to be overcome when presenting contents on a website is behavioural. People behave differently when online to when they are viewing a page – they do not read, they scan.

Readers look at headings and subheadings first, then scan for hyperlinks, numerals and keywords. They jump around, scrolling and clicking.

The word that best describes the behaviour is 'impatient'.

### **Website Contents**

The challenge for the contents being prepared for the website is to overcome the readers' impatience by keeping things as short as possible.

However, for materials that do not lend themselves to the clipped style of online documents, the contents must not be compromised to suit this style.

The single most important element on the website is the contents, since it is for the contents that users visit the site in the first place.

Other elements are important, such as images, but clips carry the vast proportion of the communicative value of the website.

## 5. Website – Continued

### Importance of Contents on a Website

A common mistake made by web designers and copywriters is in the area of underestimating the importance of contents. It is very common to recycle print contents and not write for the special conditions of the web. The very worst online contents comes in the form of fat portable document format (PDF) files which cannot be edited.

Users often cannot find information in many-paged manuals that have been put on the website in a single, PDF file. In these instances efforts should be made to convert the information into a navigable group of smaller web pages that are laid out for online reading and not for print.

Writing for a website does not always need perfect traditional grammar and full sentences; although a good command of the language is important for credibility.

If the content is available elsewhere on the website within the specific site, a link to the page where it can be found can be supplied.

### Website Pages

Duplicate pages increase the potential for outdated contents, as one of the pages will most likely be updated regularly, whilst the other pages are left untouched.

Each page should be independent of other pages. Unlike printed publications, websites do not move in sequential order from beginning to end. A site visitor can enter a page on the website without having seen any of the other pages, so it must never be assumed that the visitor has read contents on other pages for a particular subject or matter.

## 5. Website – Continued

### Style

Web pages need to employ 'scannable techniques', using:

- one idea per paragraph
- bulleted lists
- the inverted pyramid style, starting with the conclusion
- half the word count than conventional writing
- highlighting key words

If the content does not provide the information needed by users, the website will provide little value no matter how easy it is to use.

Contents prepared for the web should use familiar words and avoid jargon. If acronyms and abbreviations must be used, they must be clearly understood by typical users, and should be defined on each page.

The number of words in a sentence and sentences in a paragraph should be minimised. The first sentence (the topic sentence) of each paragraph should be descriptive of the remainder of the paragraph. A rule of thumb with the website is to give a given topic about half the word count used when writing for print.

Users also tend not to like to scroll through masses of text so the important information should be placed at the top of the page.

The first paragraph of a page should answer the question "What is the page about?" The primary theme of a paragraph should be included in the first sentence of the paragraph, as users tend to skim the first one or two sentences of each paragraph.



## 5. Website – Continued

**Style (continued)** Writing should be in an affirmative, active voice. Sentences written in the active voice style are more concise and easier to understand, as the verb explains itself. In passive writing, the verb requires other words to assist it and so the sentence is longer:

- active – a lively, energetic, dynamic, on-the-go tone
- passive – an inert, inactive, submissive tone

Being an informal and immediate medium, compared to print, users appreciate a somewhat informal writing style, with small amounts of humour, but care must be taken with the humour.

**Headings** Headings on a web page make it easy to scan the page's contents. A user can scan down a page, get a quick idea of what is on the page, and decide whether to read in more detail.

'Clever' or 'cute' headings should not be used as users often rely on scanning to pick up the meaning of text.

**Numbers and Numerals** The guidelines for presenting numbers on the website are different from the print medium:

- Numbers should be written with digits, not letters, for example; 23, not twenty-three.
- Use numerals even when the number is the first word in a sentence or bullet point.
- Use numerals for big numbers up to 1 billion; after that it is best to express amounts in words. It is difficult to comprehend so many zeros.
- Spell out numbers that do not represent facts. For example; it is better to write 'there are hundreds of officials required at the Grand Prix', rather than 'there are 100s of officials ....'.
- Use numerals when stating a fact, for example; '1200 officials are required for the Grand Prix'.

## 5. Website4.2 Club Website – Continued

**Introduction Text** A brief introduction can help users better understand the rest of the web page. The introduction should answer two questions:

- What will users find on this page – i.e. what is its function?
- Why should the user care to read the page – i.e. what is in it for them?

**Mixed Case with Writing Style** Reading text is easier when capitalisation is used to start sentences and to indicate proper nouns.

If an item is intended to attract the user's attention, it should be displayed in all UPPERCASE, **bold**, or *italics*. These methods for showing emphasis should not be used for more than one or two words or a short phrase.

**Font** Recommended fonts are sans-serif type, such as Helvetica and Arial.

Verdana is considered the best because of its wide pitch and sans-serif style.

**Language** Plain language in a simple sentence structure should be used so that the audience can understand the contents as it is read for the first time.

To optimise reading comprehension, the number of words in sentences, and the number of sentences in paragraphs should be minimised. A maximum of 20 word per sentence should be used. A paragraph should not exceed six sentences.

Long blocks of text can be intimidating. Bulleted items can make reading easier as they highlight certain points.

## 5. Website – Continued

### Avoid Using Jargon

Do not use words that typical users may not understand.

Terminology plays a large role in the user's ability to find and understand information. Many terms which are familiar to writers are not familiar to users.

To improve understanding it may be helpful to put a term in quotes viz "xxx", and a glossary may be helpful to those who are new to a topic.

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

The use of acronyms and abbreviations can be used when the full identity or name of organisation or title has been used.

For example: 'The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) has been promoting member clubs to...' After the first instance Confederation of Australian Motor Sport can be used as CAMS thereafter.

### Familiar Words

Words that are frequently seen and heard should be used, as they are more quickly recognised.

Weak pronouns like 'this', 'these' or 'they' should be avoided as the reader might not be able to determine what is being referred to. 'Here' and 'now' are also words to avoid as not all readers will know when and where the contents are being written.

## 5.1 Website Policy

### Website Policy

A website policy should describe how the Club's website is developed and maintained according to a set of principles.

It is a document the webmaster and Committee should refer to whenever new contents are being planned, or if existing contents is being revised. It should be essential reading for the contents authors and web designers.

### Contents of a Web Publishing Policy

A web publishing policy should guide all the work carried out on the Club's website. Exactly what appears in the policy will depend on the Club's needs. Some topics that may appear in the policy include:

- responsibility
- budget
- style guide
- accessibility and usability
- cross-platform compatibility
- links
- advertising and sponsorship
- data protection;
- evaluation and review
- archiving / preservation

## 5.1 Website Policy – Continued

### Responsibility

The website is now the most visible aspect of the Club and, in theory, can be seen by many millions of people across the world. Therefore, it is essential that there is someone who is responsible for all aspects of the website. The policy should state who is responsible:

- on the Committee for the overall supervision of the website
- for its actual development and maintenance
- for the written content
- for the design

It is important to ensure that the responsibility for the final approval of contents and design is clarified.

This could be particularly important for clubs with blogs or who use contents management systems where many people contribute contents. There needs to be some process to ensure editorial control, whatever the means of maintaining the website.

Responsibility for who can make changes to the website should be determined and only this person effect changes. Usually this person is called the 'Webmaster'.

### Budget

Developing and maintaining the website can cost money and this needs to be taken into account by the Committee. Even if volunteers are involved with the website this does not mean there will not be costs. Some of these will be:

- cost of hosting
- cost of the Club's domain name
- external technical assistance for development and maintenance
- the possible purchase of specific software

## 5.1 Website Policy – Continued

### Style guide

A style guide ensures consistency that makes the website look professional and presents an acceptable image of the Club. Developing one is a useful exercise for a club as it makes the Committee think about the Club's brand and identity.

A style guide should:

- cover both contents and the design of the website
- include guidance on the use of the Club and other stakeholders' logos
- mention the use of images and colour
- cover the use of templates and other design elements the website may include
- outline terms on contents, such as the use of abbreviations, punctuation, and how standard words should be formatted, for example email or e-mail
- detail the use of the Club's and the sport's jargon
- generally outline how to write contents for the website

### Accessibility and Usability

Accessibility and usability are closely linked. Accessibility is concerned with specific issues related to ease of access, whilst usability has more to do with the general user experience. The web publishing policy should outline:

- the Club's position on accessibility and usability, giving some examples of how the Club will ensure the site is accessible and the standards to be reached;
- how the Club plans to test periodically whether the site is accessible and usable.

## 5.1 Website Policy – Continued

### Cross Platform Compatibility

Not everyone uses the latest Microsoft Windows software, or uses Internet Explorer to look at websites. There are many browsers, so it is essential that anyone who wants to have a look at the website can do so, no matter what they are using. To ensure as wide a coverage as possible constructing the website should take into account:

- users with Apple computers
- people accessing the webpage through devices other than desktop & laptop computers (e.g. smartphones, tablets, etc.)

### Links Internal and External

**The web is all about links, so this section of the policy is crucial.**

The policy should explain how internal pages should be linked – will the links to other pages be within the text, at the bottom of each page, or somewhere else entirely?

Whatever is used needs to be consistent so that visitors to the site know what to expect.

The policy on external links needs to establish where the links will be located; for example, using a special page for external links; and what organisations or sites to link to. If there is a policy on external links established those responsible for the website will be able to deal with requests to link to other sites consistently and clearly.

### Advertising and Sponsorship

Some websites generate income from advertising or promoting sponsors.

As with any publication, there needs to be a policy stating what organisations' advertisements will be accepted. It may be decided to take them from anyone, or it may be specific on what types of companies and organisations the Club is willing to promote.

## 5.1 Website Policy – Continued

**Data Protection** Websites can be used to collect data from people. This means data protection must be established in the policy.

Visitors to the site need to be told what the Club will be doing with their data. For example; there may be a form for people to fill in to ask a question, or sign up for some activity. If the Club wants to use the details for some other purpose; for example, sending membership information, or sponsors' information, people have to be given the option of saying whether they want this to happen or not.

**Evaluation and Review**

Maintaining a website is a job that is never finished.

Websites need review and evaluation on a regular basis. The policy should set out how often a review is to take place and what techniques will be used.

Reviewing the website statistics can throw a lot of light on important information such as:

- who uses the site
- how they found it
- which pages they find more interesting
- which pages are not visited

**Setting Up a Web-Based Membership Database**

Web-based membership databases have the system of one input, many outputs. This means that a club needs only to have one database which everyone within the Club uses to record and update membership information.

In setting up website membership databases there are various legal considerations, for example the *Privacy Act*, and practical matters that need to be met in establishing the database procedures.



## 6. Membership Database

### Contact with Members

Keeping in touch with club members can be a time-consuming and labour-intensive business. It can now be greatly assisted by using a club-owned website.

Membership databases and websites can make collecting information and communications with club members and other stakeholders very accessible and effective.

Establishing a membership database online enables the Club to communicate quickly with its members using email, for example; distributing an e-newsletter to bring to their attention any matters that may be of interest to them.

### Management of Members-Only Section

A membership database also enables clubs to manage a members-only section. This section:

- can be used to personalise communications with members
- enables the posting of alerts; for example, new events and activities coming up that may be restricted to Members only
- assists with managing subscription renewals
- distributes general news aimed at members only that should not be on general display on the website

### Objectives of Membership Database

One of the objectives of a membership database is to get to know the club members and to identify any changes or trends in the membership base. This will help the Club, through the Committee, to respond accordingly.

### Further Information on Membership

For further information on membership refer to [Club Management Handbook Chapter 5 – 'Club Membership'](#).

## 7. Media Accreditation for Events

### Media Accreditation

Media attention can be of valuable assistance to a club or event. Not only is media coverage of motor sport events around Australia welcome, it's encouraged.

Clubs, track operators and promoters are therefore urged to promote CAMS Media Accreditation to interested media before arriving at motor sport events in order to obtain still or moving images.

This offers clubs, operators and promoters a level of organisation and certain insurances when it comes to staging an event.

The CAMS Media Accreditation process is for photographers, videographers and journalists seeking accreditation for CAMS sanctioned motor sport events held around Australia.

Critically, photographers, videographers and journalists are required to comply with the new CAMS Media Accreditation Policy. The Policy contains important information about the application process as well as outlining key minimum rules which are required to be followed at each event to enhance safety.

CAMS Accredited Media are also be required to wear their CAMS Media Vest and CAMS Media Accreditation identification at events at all times.

Those who fail to wear the correct media vest and credentials may have their accreditation revoked, in particular those who continue to participate knowingly with expired credentials.

CAMS Media Accreditation is only be active for the calendar year for which a member of the media has applied for (i.e. between 1 January and 31 December) regardless of then they pay for CAMS Media Accreditation.

New applicants are only be granted bronze accreditation for grass roots motor sport events or the like, silver and gold accreditation enables the accredited photographer or videographer access to a higher level of event.

## 7. Media Accreditation for Events – Continued

### Media Accreditation (continued)

There are several benefits in having CAMS Media Accreditation:

- Having CAMS Media Accreditation makes a clear statement to event organisers about the quality of your portfolio, that you are bound by the CAMS Media Policy and that you are endorsed by CAMS. CAMS Media Accreditation is recognised by event organisers.
- Many event organisers may restrict access to certain areas of an event to those who hold CAMS Media Accreditation. Those without CAMS Media Accreditation may not be able to access areas beyond those available to general spectators.
- Those who hold CAMS Media Accreditation when attending a CAMS event as a photographer or videographer receive personal accident insurance through CAMS which provides for a certain amount of compensation in the event that you are injured

*Note: CAMS Accreditation does not entitle holder automatically to V8 Supercars Media Accreditation.*

### Background

CAMS is responsible for ensuring the safety and integrity of motor sport and the wellbeing of its employees, participants, licensed persons and officials while performing their roles at motor sport venues.

Participants are often performing their roles in restricted areas of motor sport venues which must not be accessed by members of the public unless authorised. CAMS Media Accreditation, if issued, can give the CAMS Media Accreditation holder privileged access to restricted areas, as well as broad access to other areas of motor sport venues for the proper performance of the permitted activities.

CAMS regards all venues as the workplace of the participants, and wants to ensure that a CAMS Media Accreditation holder will fully respect the rights of persons who have been authorised to enter the restricted areas and will not by their presence or actions cause disharmony or give rise to potential conflicts or risk the integrity of motor sport or the wellbeing of others. Unlawful or anti-social conduct which constitutes harassment, hateful, abusive, bullying or threatening behaviour or in the media (including digital and social media) may result in the revocation or suspension of CAMS Media Accreditation.

## 7. Media Accreditation for Events – Continued

### Background (continued)

If CAMS Media Accreditation is issued, CAMS reserves the right to revoke the Accreditation or suspend a holder's use in the event that CAMS considers that the holder breaches or fails to meet to the criteria set out in the CAMS Media Accreditation Policy.

### Safety and Risk Management

Safety in motor sport is paramount.

All organisations and indeed all persons involved in motor sport in any capacity, be they drivers, co-drivers, team members, officials, media, organisers, promoters and motor sport contractors owe obligations and have responsibilities under the relevant Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) legislation in each state and territory of Australia.

It is an obligation under law for all individuals and organisations to satisfy the requirement of the various OH&S legislation.

Organisations must demonstrate that they have safe systems of work in place which provide evidence that the workplace is as far as practicable, without risks to the health and safety of all persons attending the event.

This obligation applies not only to persons involved with the organisation of all events held under the sanction of a permit issued by CAMS, but also to CAMS itself.

The full CAMS Media Accreditation Policy is available on the CAMS website ([www.cams.com.au](http://www.cams.com.au)).

## 8. Social Media

### **CAMS Policy Objective**

Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content. As a member-based organisation, CAMS recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool for the promotion of motorsport and for the engagement of its members.

The CAMS policy objective on social media aims to provide some principles to follow when using social media. This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media platforms by CAMS staff, members or volunteers where the CAMS member, volunteer or staff member makes no reference to CAMS or related issues.

The following standards apply to work use and personal use of social media at any time when it has a clear and close connection with CAMS:

- always follow relevant CAMS policies
- do not act unlawfully (such as breaching copyright) when using social media
- make sure personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of tasks
- be clear that personal views are one's own, and not necessarily the views of CAMS
- do not disclose confidential information obtained through work or when volunteering at a CAMS / motor sport event

The full CAMS Policy on Social Media is available on the CAMS website ([www.cams.com.au](http://www.cams.com.au)).

## 8. Social Media – Continued

### Guidelines for the Use of Social Media

- Mobile devices and social media should not be used while officials are on duty.

Your attention should always be to your officiating duties. Save the internet for on your break or the end of the day.

- Put yourself in the other person's shoes.

Take a moment to think before you post. If it was you someone was posting a picture or comment about, how would you feel?

- Once it's out there, it's out there.

Never assume that something you post online is private. Comments, photos, statuses can all be copied, shown to friends, screen captured and saved or sent on by others. Always assume the person you are posting about will see your post.

- If in doubt, leave it out.

If you have to stop and think about it, it probably means you should not be posting it! Remember, your online presence is part of your personal brand. What you say and do online affects how people perceive you.

- Social media should not be used to make disparaging or negative remarks about competitors, officials, volunteers, event organisers, promoters or CAMS.

There can be serious consequences for misuse of social media. If you have an issue that needs resolving, there are appropriate channels to do this through. The CAMS Member Protection Policy and OH&S Policy are available on the CAMS website. If you need advice on how to resolve an issue, call CAMS.

- Never post photos or comments about a motor sport incident.

It is vitally important that we all respect the privacy of individuals involved in accidents or incidents, whether on or off track. Never, ever post photos, comments or information on social media or other online forum about an accident or incident. Remember Point 2: Put yourself in their shoes.

- Use social media as a tool to promote and encourage the development of our sport.

Social media is an amazing platform if used responsibly and for a positive purpose. Use it to promote events, clubs, activities and membership. Use it to spread the word about our great sport, and keep it positive!