

## **IPEd review Q & A**

### **What's wrong with the present model and the present level of funding? Why should we pay more money to IPEd?**

The present level of funding is just sufficient to pay for the accreditation program and updating of the *Standards*, and that's all. It is not possible for IPEd to advocate for the profession and promote it effectively, and societies have great difficulty in doing this. Inability to effectively promote the profession as a whole, IPEd and the accreditation program is a major problem with serious consequences for society members.

The present model depends very heavily on volunteers, with a significant burnout rate. This reliance on volunteers can only be reduced by some form of payment for services that have to date been provided mostly by volunteers. So this operational model is not financially viable and the Institute's continued reliance on volunteers has become increasingly risky. In short, the long-term viability of IPEd is doubtful. (See Appendix 1 to the IPEd review discussion paper, *IPEd plenary session, 12 April 2013: accreditation segment*.) In the meantime our societies also remain dependent on volunteers, who are increasingly difficult to find.

If IPEd is to represent the interests of Australian editors adequately and deliver the services society members want, as indicated in the most recent IPEd survey, the Institute needs a much higher level of funding. This could be delivered through the IPEd as is with increased funding model (IFM) or the direct membership model (DMM).

This would enable IPEd to meet two pressing needs. The first is the ability to promote the editing profession, the organisation and its accreditation program. A major feature of effective promotion is the ability to speak for Australian editors with one unified voice, presenting one unified image of the profession. This is not possible with the present model.

### **Why should societies give up their identities?**

Australian societies of editors won't be losing their identities. Each society has its own distinctive characteristics and identity, shaped by its history, the city where it's based, the nature of the local publishing industry and the local market for editors' services. This will not change whether your society remains a society or becomes a branch of a national direct-membership organisation.

Societies will continue to be the main focus for individual members, whether the IFM or the DMM is adopted.

### **Will IPEd be setting up an expensive bureaucracy?**

Volunteer burnout and difficulty in recruiting volunteers are problems all too familiar for societies and for IPEd. The IFM and DMM options will both involve the engagement of contractors on a part-time basis to provide essential services for members, such as advocacy and promotion of the profession and of IPEd. Under the DMM that would include financial and accounting management and membership administration, which would only be included under IFM as an additional shared function. The alternative is continuing reliance on volunteers for essential services such as promotion and the financial management of IPEd, and maintenance of its website, with the societies continuing to administer their own websites, newsletters and freelance registers. The latter arrangement would guarantee that services given a high priority by members will **not** be delivered efficiently or in a timely manner. Part-time employment of an Executive Officer, Finance Officer, and Communication/Membership Officer as contractors will ensure that highly rated services such as advocacy, financial administration and communications (under DMM, or under IFM with agreed shared functions, such as maintaining a national events register and freelance register), will be delivered effectively. Otherwise, members will be depending on volunteers who will be obliged to give first priority to paying work, especially if they are freelancers.

Reliance on volunteers has certainly characterised our societies and IPEd in the past, but IPEd cannot continue to depend on volunteers to the same extent. If we wish to be treated as professionals, IPEd needs to conduct its operations on a professional and businesslike basis.

And if volunteer burnout continues at the present rate, IPEd simply cannot operate and societies will continue to struggle to deliver services themselves. Employment of paid contractors through the IFM will provide some relief for hard-pressed society committees; the DMM (and also the IFM with agreed shared functions) would reduce their burden considerably.

However, engagement of a few individuals as contractors on a realistic time basis does not make a bureaucracy. It simply means that IPEd is using the most cost-effective, businesslike means of delivering services that our members value. The real question here is whether our members want high-priority services to be delivered efficiently or not.

### **How will IPEd recruit people for paid positions?**

Initially IPEd will advertise for an Executive Officer, on a part-time contract basis, through the societies of editors and externally. Once the EO is appointed, the EO in conjunction with the IPEd Council will recruit the Finance Officer and the Communication/Membership Officer.

### **Who will decide how much money is made available to IPEd and how much money remains with societies/branches? How will this be done?**

If a majority of society members vote in favour of the IFM, an amount sufficient to cover IPEd's cost of delivering services would constitute the substantially increased levy each society would be required to pay to IPEd. A great deal of work has already been done by IPEd on those costings and more will be done, based on the outcome of extensive discussions with society committees. The figures given in IPEd's review discussion paper (\$150 annual levy for IFM or \$215 levy with shared functions) reflect the Institute's experience to date, the experience of other organisations that provide similar services, the views expressed by members of society committees and budget details supplied by their treasurers. Society committees would have to increase members' fees to cover the IPEd levy and also to cover the cost of attrition among their members.

Under DMM the average fees estimated at \$240. Costings for delivery of services and amounts to be returned to branches to cover their costs will be based on extensive discussions with society committees and budget details supplied by their treasurers, as well as IPEd's own past experience and that of comparable organisations, to ensure that IPEd and its prospective branches all have sufficient funds to meet their respective responsibilities.

These discussions will ensure that societies/branches do have sufficient funds to deliver local services, under both models.

### **Why do we need uniform membership structures and criteria across Australia?**

Uniform membership structures and criteria would make transfer of membership between societies much easier when members move to another state or territory. They would also bring achievement of a single national voice and image closer. This is crucial if IPEd is to promote the profession and the Institute effectively and gain national recognition of IPEd as a professional national organisation speaking with authority on behalf of all its members.

Uniform membership structures and criteria are also essential if IPEd is to administer membership under the DMM or the IFM with that as an agreed shared function.

### **I would like the IFM but with shared functions. At committee level, our society finds membership administration, newsletter preparation and so on onerous tasks, with volunteers less likely to come forward and less able to spare time. Is this possible?**

Yes, it is possible if a majority of society members vote for the IFM and opt for shared functions.

**I would like the IFM, but only with some of the shared functions. Would this be possible?**

The vote at the end of 2013 will determine to what degree, if any, members are keen to share functions. If the IFM is adopted, it will be up to the individual society committees to work together to decide which functions they want to share, and how they might align them and implement the necessary new processes.

**If the societies moved to the DMM, what would happen if that model failed in the future? Would societies then have to start all over again?**

This is an unlikely scenario, but if it did happen the regional branches would still be intact and able to take back the shared functions that had been devolved to the DMM. There would be a period of readjustment and societies that had wound up would have to reinstate their legal structure but there would be no need to start all over again.

**Will IPEd and the societies continue to rely on volunteers if the DMM is adopted?**

IPEd would continue to call on the services of volunteers, but to a significantly lesser extent. Employment of a part-time Executive Officer, Finance Officer and Communication/Membership Officer (on a contract basis) would enable IPEd to deliver essential services such as advocacy and promotion of the profession, a unified website and a national newsletter with local content, a register of members (IFM if with shared functions and DMM) and greater national coordination of training for members (IFM and DMM).

Volunteer effort would still be required, at a somewhat reduced level, to carry out existing society activities if the IFM is adopted. With the DMM or the IFM with shared functions, some volunteers would be still be required to maintain local communication networks, organise general meetings, do the day-to-day running of training events (arranging catering, for example), and prepare local newsletter and website items. However, these tasks would be much less demanding in terms of time and effort than present committee workloads; this should mean that volunteers would be easier to recruit. Under IFM without shared functions, volunteer effort at society level would be roughly the same as it is now but with better support from IPEd through advocacy and promotion, communication and training.

**Would these models disadvantage smaller societies?**

Under the DMM, services would be provided equitably so that it would not matter whether your branch was small or large. National coordination of training would also ensure that size and/or relative isolation would not prevent the provision of equitable training opportunities for all. Where the organisation's taking a particular approach or action depended on individual members' support for one option rather than another, the usual diversity of views within branches should ensure that the overall majority view would be reflected rather than, say, the views and concerns of larger branches swamping those of smaller branches.

If the IFM is adopted, small and/or relatively isolated societies would be no worse off than they are now; in fact, they would be better off because of increasing advocacy and promotion of the profession and possible creation of some shared services. The relative disadvantages such societies experience in terms of training opportunities for their members would also be further reduced under the IFM if societies agreed to share services and through the increased national coordination of training opportunities this model would bring.

Under both models (IFM and DMM) all societies would have an equal voice, as they do at present.

**Would either of these models make it easier for societies/branches to provide services for regional members?**

If the IFM is adopted, societies would retain their existing option to set up regional groups. With the DMM, members would be individual members of the new national organisation with a direct relationship with that organisation but would still be members of their state or territory branch. Those living in regional areas some distance away from the capital cities could request the creation of a new region or the national organisation could initiate this action if a demonstrated need existed.

In either case, members living in these regions would have to take on the responsibility of running local activities.

**Won't the bigger societies feel disadvantaged under these models by propping up the smaller, less affluent societies?**

The advantages of a truly national body far outweigh any disadvantages that might be perceived by the larger societies. Economies of scale, a truly national voice, a real sense of collegiality with fellow editors throughout Australia and reduced volunteer pressure are just some of the advantages of both models. As explained elsewhere, under the DMM, current money reserves held by the more affluent societies will be held in trust by the central organisation for the exclusive use of the branches that supersede those societies.

**Will individual members have any say in decisions on IPEd activities under the DMM?**

Yes. Individual members would be able to state their views and concerns through the online forum, their branch and their board member. Adoption of the DMM would give individual members a sense of ownership that some don't feel now.

Individuals could also express their views through their branch committee. Under both models, the IPEd board/Council would continue to consult with committees regarding new initiatives and seek the views of individual members through surveys and general meetings, as happens at present. Since 2008 the IPEd Council has systematically sought the views of society committees and society members before making significant changes and taking new initiatives. This will not change.

**Can we trust IPEd to spend our money wisely and meet the needs of individual members?**

Yes. IPEd's priorities will be determined by continuing consultation with societies, including surveys of individual members, as outlined above. The organisation will seek best value for members' money, regardless of which model is adopted.

**I've heard rumours that editors in New Zealand might be interested in joining IPEd. Is this possible under the new models?**

There is no reason why our fellow editors in New Zealand could not join, no matter which model is adopted. Under the IFM, the IPEd Council would have to propose a constitutional change to allow for another member society. Under the DMM, individuals would be able to join independently, no matter where they are located.

**How would the transition to either model be handled? How long would it take to set all the new arrangements in place?**

Under the IFM, if it is agreed to share some or all functions, and the DMM, all services to be transferred to IPEd—financial and accounts management (DMM only), membership administration, a shared newsletter and website with local content, training, and event registration—will be the subject of detailed consultations with committee members around Australia who currently have responsibility for these activities.

Under the IFM, the new arrangements would start in the next financial year, i.e. from 1 July 2014. Under the DMM, the new model would start between January and July 2015. To help cover the costs of transition under the DMM, a levy of \$70 is proposed for the 2014–2015 financial year.

Specific documents will be developed and published by IPEd providing detailed definition and plans for transition, for both IPEd and the societies.

**Under the DMM (and the IFM if shared functions are agreed on), how can we be sure that in this transition power games and self-interest won't take priority over timely and cost-effective services to all individual members?**

The transition process is explained above. The objective of all these working groups will be delivery of timely and cost-effective services to members and a unified national voice for Australian editors. Compromises will be necessary in some cases, but the aim would be, as it has always been with IPEd, to achieve consensus.

Full recognition of each society's needs will provide the basis of all administrative systems. If IPEd or the new organisation fails to achieve efficient and equitable systems, we would expect society/branch committees and individual members to point this out forcefully and many individuals to resign their membership. Failure to deliver timely and cost-effective services to societies and individual members and the resulting dissatisfaction would jeopardise the future of IPEd or the new organisation. So IPEd has a very strong incentive to make this work.

**Why should societies lose their hard-earned money reserves to IPEd under the DMM?**

They won't. If the DMM is approved by a majority of society members, societies will be asked in the first instance to pay most of their funds over to IPEd, retaining only sufficient money to cover transition or wind-up costs. However, the funds paid over to IPEd will be held in trust-style accounts for the exclusive use of those branches.

**What role would individual society members play in the future?**

Under the DMM, you will hold direct membership of the new national organisation. You will therefore own this organisation, as opposed to owning your local society and indirectly belonging to IPEd. The organisation will continue to call on volunteers for activities that are best undertaken by working groups consisting of committed volunteers from all branches; the IFM would also provide such opportunities to contribute to your profession.

However, you will continue to be a member of a society or branch, depending on whether the IFM or the DMM is adopted. All societies will need volunteers to provide local services, such as networking activities (general meetings and group emails, for example), helping to organise training activities, providing local content for a shared website and newsletter, and seeking sponsorship from relevant organisations where possible, albeit at a greatly reduced level under the DMM or the IFM if shared functions are agreed on. So you can choose to be actively involved in your society/branch or not actively involved, as happens at present.