

The IPEd Review

Late in 2012, IPEd commissioned a working party (WP1) to survey the societies about IPEd's role and functions, and any changes that they would like to be made. The survey was completed in December 2012, and in January 2013 WP2 presented a report and an outline of the survey results to the IPEd Council. IPEd Council formed a second working party to elaborate on the options recommended by the first working party, and to add some information about legal issues.

The elaborated report was presented at the national editors conference held in Fremantle in April, and feedback was obtained from society members who attended the conference session. The feedback at the conference indicated that, in the sample of 91 editors who completed the form, there was strong support for IPEd as is, with an increased levy to allow it to provide the core functions listed below. However, many people indicated that this would be as a first step towards a single national body of all editors. Also, Council does not believe that sufficient information has yet been provided to society members to enable them to form a definite preference.

Consequently, IPEd Council has commissioned a working party of councillors and society members (WP3), to work with each society to obtain broad society membership preferences for the two options summarised later in this document. Based on that input, the working party will develop business cases and arrange a referendum later this year; that referendum will determine which option should be implemented.

The core functions of IPEd

One thing that the survey and all member input has indicated is that there is overwhelming support for IPEd to continue to exist, and to provide some core functions.

The Phase Two Working Party report lists six key functions of IPEd:

1. to maintain a viable national accreditation scheme
2. to maintain the *Australian Standards of Editing Practice* (the *Standards*)
3. to promote the national accreditation scheme and the *Standards* to editors and industry
4. to promote the editing profession nationally
5. to advance the quality, skills and expertise of members of the editing profession
6. to ensure that national issues of relevance to the editing profession are responded to.

However:

IPEd as it now stands lacks the current and future capacity to provide all six functions. With the current \$25 per member levy, IPEd can only afford to provide the accreditation scheme and maintenance of the Standards.

This rest of paper summarises the two options for IPEd's future that are feasible. It draw most of its content from the report of the WP2, as presented at the conference, but adds some additional statements about the potential for shared services, and about the advantages and disadvantages of each model.

IPEd as is, with an increased levy ('Increased Funding' model)

The main features of this option are:

- IPEd would continue to have the objective to perform all six core functions.
- The extent to which IPEd could achieve this objective would depend on the amount of the increased levy.
- Any increase in the IPEd levy would necessitate some increase in society membership fees, for most or all societies.
- If this model receives sufficient support from society members, WP3 will develop a business case to determine the level of the levy needed to fund adequate performance of the core functions.
- The business case for the increased levy will be presented to the society memberships in the national referendum later this year.

Advantages and disadvantages

The advantages of the Increased Funding model include:

- It is a relatively painless and easy change; the work to be done is mainly the development of the business case and organising the referendum.
- Particularly if coupled with the development of some shared services, and making the membership grades and criteria consistent across societies, this option could ease the eventual transition to a direct membership model.

The disadvantages include:

- There has been, in the past, considerable inertia in the societies concerning moving to consistent membership grades and membership criteria, or any other form of inter-society cooperation.
- Even with stronger promotion by IPEd, there will continue to be no common image and brand for editors, and little or no communication or direct engagement between IPEd and society members.
- Unless the societies cooperate with each other and IPEd to develop shared services, there will be continued inefficiency and waste in the duplication of services and administrative systems, and very high reliance on volunteers.

Potential for shared services in conjunction with the Increased Funding model

Society membership feedback indicates that many members would like the societies to share the provision of some functions, to avoid waste through duplication and reduce the burden on volunteers. The societies could agree that IPEd work with them to develop a business case for providing some shared functions and services, such as:

- a shared website, with sections for each society's news, events, committee information, etc., and common sections for IPEd information, resources for editors, industry news and so on
- member self-service through the website for updating contact details, renewing and paying for society membership, registering and paying for events
- a national newsletter, carrying a mix of society and IPEd items
- some shared administrative functions, such as accounting.

Shared functions and services would generally cost each society less, through both sharing and economies of scale (higher volume, lower per transaction cost). Some of the shared functions and services could be operated by paid contractors, reducing the need to rely on volunteers.

Direct membership model ('DM')

The main features of this option are:

- Society members would become direct members of IPEd (possibly with a changed name, such as Editors Australia, or the Australian Society of Editors), which would be the single national professional body representing editors.
- The national body's service objectives would include the same core functions as IPEd has, as well as the increased administrative functions.
- The existing societies would need to close down, and transfer their accumulated funds to the national body (a legal requirement); the societies would become branches of the national body, and founding agreements and policies would give the branches full control over the use of the funds contributed by their former society.
- Branches would continue to provide professional development and networking, supported by shared national services such as event registration and payment through the website.
- Branches would use the common website and newsletter facility for branch-related news and member communication.
- The national body would collect all membership fees and event fees, operate banking and accounting, and provide funding for both national and branch expenses; branches would prepare budgets for their local activities, and additionally control the funds accumulated by their society predecessors.
- In the IPEd review process, the societies will gather broad membership input, by surveys and votes, to determine the level of support for moving straight to the direct membership model; if this level is significant, WP3 will include the DM model as an option in the national referendum of society members.
- If the DM model is to be included in the national referendum, WP3 will work with the societies to develop a costed business case, which will determine the necessary level of membership fees to fund the DM model.

Advantages and disadvantages

The advantages of the DM model include:

- This model would provide sufficient funding to properly represent the members as professional editors, validated by a set of national membership grades, criteria for membership, standards, ethics and policies.
- The single, national brand would give editors more influence and help to justify adequate remuneration for their professional services.
- As direct members of the national body, editors would gain direct communication and engagement with it, while continuing to run their local activities.
- With national membership and the resulting efficiencies, the national body could provide professional-standard support services while reducing the burden on volunteers; these services could be provided more equally across all regions, regardless of population.
- The transition from a federation of state and territory societies to a single national body is a common one, and there is much knowledge about how to do it.

The disadvantages are chiefly:

- Each society would need to cancel its registration or wind up; there are ways to minimise the complexity and cost, but it would have to be done.
- A considerable amount of work would need to be done by society members and IPEd councillors to draft, negotiate and agree the rules, procedures and policies that would govern national and branch functions, and some costs for regulatory changes and filings; this process could take many months.