

Organisational Capability - Communication

Key functions

In 2003-04, the Commission's Communication Unit played a key role in promoting laws, policies and practices which safeguard the wellbeing of Queensland's children and young people. The Unit partners with other areas of the Commission to ensure major projects meet their communication goals.

The Communications Unit is responsible for:

- risk management and expert advice on media matters
- setting strategic direction for the Commission's internal and external communications
- overseeing the ongoing development of the Commission's corporate identity
- enhancing the Commission's profile to instil confidence in its role and functions
- using research to evaluate the needs of key clients - children and young people
- editing, layout and production of publications and corporate materials
- providing advice to managers on projects through communication planning
- coordinating Commission functions, events and launches, and
- redeveloping and managing the Commission's website.

Highlights

In the 2003-04 financial year, the Communications Unit's workload increased sharply, as demonstrated by the following performance indicators:

- 317 media contacts, up 84% from 172 in the 2002-03 financial year
- conducted or took part in several key events and activities to promote the work of the Commission, and draw attention to laws, policies and practices which improve the wellbeing of Queensland children and young people:
 - the launch of the *Working with Children Kit* in July 2003
 - participation in the RNA Show in August 2003 for the first time
 - conducting a display and face painting activities at NAIDOC Week in July 2003
 - involvement in Child Protection Week in September 2003
 - sponsorship of a category in the MEAA Media Awards for best coverage of an issue which impacts on children and young people
 - the launch of Children's Week in October 2003
 - the launch of the Commission's book, *Focus on Fathering* by Premier Peter Beattie
 - a seminar by UK Professor Carol Smart - *Living with Parental Separation: Young people's experiences over time*, in March 2004



- 83% more publications and materials edited, laid out and printed compared with 2002-03
- reviewed and developed new corporate branding through all Commission materials including publications, the website, stationery, merchandise and other materials in response to the Commission's name change and change in responsibilities
- redeveloped the Commission's website.

Outcomes and achievements

Exceeded media/presentation targets

The Communications Unit exceeded the key performance target of 200 media contacts and presentations with 392 in total (317 media contacts and 75 presentations), up from 247 in the 2002-03 financial year.

There were 317 media stories featuring the Commission recorded in 2003-04, representing an 84% increase on media coverage in the 2002-03 financial year. The majority of media coverage arose as a result of responses to requests for interviews from journalists in response to media releases, or as a result of Commission-related issues and activities. This growth in coverage followed an 81% increase in media activity for the Commission between 2001-02 and was achieved without additional staff or resources being allocated to the Communications Unit in 2003-04.

In 2003-04, 44 media releases were issued, compared to 14 the previous financial year. The majority were sent to regional centres to announce upcoming courses conducted by the Commission such as Working with Children Training and Advocacy Training.

Other key media releases written and issued on behalf of the Commission included:

- the launch of the *Working with Children Kit* on 7 July 2003 by Premier Peter Beattie
- a joint release with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the review of the Working with Children Check in September 2003
- the Commission's response to CMC recommendations to further strengthen the Commission's ability to protect children in care in January 2004
- the launch of the Commission publication, *Focus on Fathering* in March 2004
- the Commission's responsibility for criminal history checks on bus drivers in April 2004
- the release of the Commission's *Children and Young People in Queensland: a Snapshot 2003* in May 2004.

In addition, there were 75 public presentations, such as speeches and keynote addresses presented by Commission staff in 2003-04. The majority were written by Research Officers and edited by

the Communications Unit, with a number written by Communications Officers. These speeches were presented at a range of seminars, conferences and forums at state, national and international level.

Events

In the 2003-04 financial year, the Commission was involved in a range of events relating to its core business. These activities helped raise the profile of the Commission and awareness of its roles and functions among members of the public and government and non-government organisations.

Key events included:

The launch of the Working with Children Kit

On 7 July 2003 Queensland Premier Peter Beattie formally launched the *Working with Children Kit* to promote the creation of safe, friendly environments for children and young people. The launch followed the development of the kit in 2002-03.

Display at RNA Show

From 7 – 16 August 2003 the Commission took part in activities conducted in the Frank Nicklin Pavilion at the Royal National Show (RNA), or the 'Ekka'. This was the first time the Commission had been involved in the RNA Show. It was an opportunity to promote the Commission to the Queensland community – particularly children and young people, as a large number of school groups visit the pavilion during the Show.

The Commission's display was highly interactive and tied in with the whole-of-government theme, 'get involved'. This was achieved by using artwork, computer games, images and information to communicate key messages. The Commission set up a "games arcade" so children and young people could play interactive, educational computer games.

Staff also supervised a game in which children had to shoot stress stars through a hoop to win a prize of Commission merchandise. Merchandise available included a magnetised Commission photo frame (including contact details), non-permanent tattoos, a bubble pen or stress star and brochures about the Commission's functions. Children also had the opportunity to be photographed as part of a giant mural of Commission cartoon characters.

NAIDOC Week

In July 2003, the Commission took part in NAIDOC Week's Musgrave Park Family Fun Day at South Brisbane. The day was a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and involved displays from government and community organisations. The event was well attended and the Commission's display, with a face painter and colourful giveaways, was popular.

Child Protection Week

The Commission was involved in activities during Child Protection Week in September 2003. These included representation at the Child Protection Week Awards and involvement in a community day on the Gold Coast. During the week the Commissioner visited Mossman, Townsville and Cherbourg.

Children's Week

The Commission's involvement in Children's Week continued in October 2003, with the Commissioner continuing as State Patron of the week. The Communications Unit represented the Commission on the Children's Week Organising Committee and was involved in organising the launch at Underwater World on the Sunshine Coast. During Children's Week the Commissioner took part in an online chat through the Office of Youth Affairs' 'Generate' website. She also hosted several school groups at a screening of the Disney film 'Holes'.

Sponsorship of MEAA Media Awards for best coverage of an issue impacting on children and young people

The Commission provided \$2,000 of sponsorship to recognise excellence in reporting of children and young people's issues and to reward the promotion of positive images of children and young people.

The award was given to the story which best addressed an issue relating to the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland. The Ten Network won the award for a story which looked at a group of young people at schoolies week 2002.

The Commission sponsored the award to raise journalists' awareness of the need to:

- take into account the rights, interests and wellbeing of the child and/or young person involved, and treat their contribution and opinion with respect
- avoid stereotyping the subject/s or depicting the issue simplistically e.g. children 'gone wrong'
- positively portray children and/or young people
- avoid using negative subjective language to describe children or young people.

Launch of Focus on Fathering

On 19 March 2004, the Premier, Peter Beattie, launched the book, *Focus on Fathering*, on behalf of the Commission at the Playground and Recreation Association at Spring Hill.

The book was compiled by the Commission's Research Unit to raise the profile of the important role that fathers play and to explore the debate about men's place in the family and society today.

Website redevelopment/activity

In the 2003-04 financial year, the Communications Unit finalised the redevelopment of the Commission's website. The new site will be more responsive to the needs of key stakeholders and clients, particularly children and young people.

The new site is expected to go on-line on 1 August 2004, to reflect the Commission's new functions and name change following the introduction of the *Child Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2004*. The new site includes a corporate component and a Kids' Zone, incorporating interactive educational games and hot links.

The Communications Unit was also responsible for ongoing updates to the existing website. Hits on the site rose 67% from 1,168,282 hits last financial year to 1,950,452 in 2003-04. The average number of hits a month in 2003-04 was 162,538, up from 97,357 a month in 2002-03.



Publications

The Communications Unit oversaw the editing, printing and layout of 44 separate items, including publications, reports, brochures, merchandise and signage in 2003-04. This is an 83% increase on the 24 produced in 2002-03. In addition to the increase in volume, work centred around generating integrated design concepts for all work, to ensure all past publications requiring reprinting and new publications tie in with the Commission's new corporate identity.

A large volume of work was a result of the need to update all existing Commission materials to reflect the Commission's new name and functions.

Publications edited, laid out and produced included:

- *Advocacy Training Workbook* and *Useful contacts for children and young people* – an Advocacy reference guide
- a range of new corporate materials including a new suite of stationery and updated Employment Screening information
- four issues of *Kidspeak* – the Commission's quarterly newsletter
- six editions of a new internal monthly staff newsletter *Commish-Dish*
- *Children and Young People in Queensland: A Snapshot 2003*.
- *2002-03 Annual Report*

Other

- The Principal Communications Advisor co-chaired the youth participation sub-committee in preparation for the 15th Annual Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in September 2004
- the Unit continued the implementation of the Commission's corporate identity
- the Unit also developed a new skyline display with two sets of skins – one designed to appeal to corporate stakeholders, the other to appeal to children and young people.



Outlook

The Communication Unit's workload is expected to increase in accordance with the range of new functions and powers coming on line, all requiring marketing and communication input into new programs and projects.

The Communications Unit will continue its involvement in a range of projects and events in 2004-05, including:

- the RNA Show in August 2004
- Child Protection Week in September 2004
- Children's Week in October 2004, including representing the Commission on the Children's Week Organising Committee
- organising the launch of the expanded Community Visitor Program and the Community Visitor Information System (CVIS) in early September 2004
- the 15th Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre from 19-22 September 2004, is expected to attract more than 1,000 international delegates from 71 countries, and will include a Youth Participation Program involving around 30 children and young people from overseas and throughout Australia - it will be co-ordinated by the Commission's Principal Communications Advisor in conjunction with the New South Wales Child Guardian
- the Commission's redeveloped website, which will go on-line on 1 August 2004.

Upcoming publications

In 2004-05 the Communications Unit will edit, layout and produce a wide range of publications that support the Commission's core business, including:

- Child Labour Review Discussion Paper and Final Report
- a suite of materials to support the expansion of the Community Visitor Program including:
 - two 16 page A5 booklets informing foster carers and staff at visitable sites of their rights and responsibilities and the role of Community Visitors
 - two DL brochures (one targeting children up to the age of eight, the other, young people over eight) designed to let young people know that Community Visitors will soon be visiting them
 - factsheets on Community Visitors for foster care recruitment training
 - support materials for Community Visitor training
- *The Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Queensland: a snapshot 2004*
- *SOSE Module on Children's Rights*
- *2003-04 Annual Report*
- *Issues Paper #3*

