

Feedback from survey of IPEd members Editors WA branch 29 March – 8 April 2018

Introduction

The aim of this survey was to better understand members' overall level of satisfaction with branch activities, and what members, the committee, or IPEd as an organisation might do to improve services to members in Western Australia. The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey online surveying and was distributed to the Western Australia membership list by the IPEd Communications Officer.

There were 37 respondents out of a state membership of 102, so just over one-third of Western Australian members of IPEd responded. This is at least as high as any previous survey or poll of Western Australian editors and is considered sufficient to reasonably infer that the responses may reflect the views of the membership as a whole.

Most questions were phrased to understand members' current level of engagement and preferences. A few opening questions were included to learn about the distribution of members in the state, and how well they know the branch committee and IPEd management. Some later questions were posed to assist planning for a subsequent meeting held on 14 April 2018 at which the IPEd CEO was present.

Most questions in the survey asked for particular information, either by selecting from a list of options provided, or inviting respondents to write directly into comments boxes. The main aim of the survey—to understand members satisfaction with branch activities—therefore had to be gauged indirectly from those responses. In retrospect, it would have been good to include a few questions to elicit those views more directly, such as, 'How satisfied are you with the performance of the Editors WA branch of IPEd?' (Results from other surveys conducted recently suggest this kind of question, coupled with voluntary comments, can provide meaningful information about an organisation's performance.)

This report presents a summary of results with basic interpretation and commentary. Where responses are reported as percentages, these are rounded (in this analysis) to the nearest whole number or, in some cases, to half a percentage point. A graphical summary of the survey results extracted from SurveyMonkey is provided as a separate PDF document (Attachment 1). It is not well paginated and not all free-text comments are displayed, therefore a record of all free-text comments copied directly from the online survey is also provided as a separate document (Attachment 2).

Survey results

General information

Q1: I am a member of IPEd (Y/N)

(Answered by all respondents)

Yes: 36
No 1

Respondents were invited to forward the survey to other editors, in the hope this might reach editors who are not members of IPEd (there is currently no database of non-IPEd member editors). Evidently this objective was not very successfully met.

Q2: What kind of editor are you?

(Answered by 36 of 37 respondents)

Full time	14%
Part time	5.5%
Freelance	58%
Employee	5.5%
Editing is part of work	36%
Retired/semi-retired	5.5%

More than one option could be selected by respondents, so the total exceeds 100%. Editors answering this question are overwhelmingly freelance, and a high proportion, more than one-third, has editing as only part of their work.

Q3: Where in Western Australia do you live?

(Answered by all respondents)

Perth central (5 km of CBD)	7 (19%)
Northern suburbs	5 (13.5%)
Western suburbs	3 (8%)
Southern suburbs	10 (27%)
East including hills	5 (13.5%)
Outside Perth	7 (19%)

The single highest population of members (27%) identify as living south of the river more than 5 km from the CBD. However, considered as numbers for whom a meeting venue north or south of the river might be more convenient, the combined number of central, northern and western residents (15) is the same as the combined number of south-of-river (10) and eastern or hills residents (5).

These data reflect the urban sprawl of Perth's residential areas, and the reality that it is always going to be difficult to find a meeting location that suits a majority of members.

Q4: I know everyone who is on the Editors WA branch committee

(Answered by all respondents)

Yes:	27%
No	73%

Less than one-third of respondents claim to know all members of the WA branch committee. However, the question is quite demanding in asking about 'everyone' on the committee and not defining 'know', so it could be read to mean that respondents should know committee members personally, which is a big ask. This may not have been a very useful question.

Q6: I know the names of all IPEd national office staff

(Answered by all respondents)

Yes:	5.5%
No:	94.5%

Arguably, this might not be very important, but it suggests the great majority of members in Western Australia have either not had contact with IPEd staff or have not sought information about IPEd staff from the national website.

Branch activities

Q6: What kinds of branch events have you attended in the past 12 months?

(Answered by all 34 of 37 respondents)

Branch meeting with presenter/speaker	44%
Branch meeting with panel	47%
Branch networking meeting	32%
Workshop	32%
None of these	18%
I live too far away	15%

Respondents were able to select from several options. Meetings with either single presenters or a panel of presenters were almost equally attended and networking meetings (Café Society was specified, but this could have been expanded to include the annual Christmas function) seem to be reasonably popular.

The number of respondents answering 'None of these' or 'I live too far away' corresponds closely to the number of respondents who answered Q3 by saying they live outside Perth and it's likely this is a primary reason for the last two responses in Q6.

Q7: What kinds of events would you like to attend in future?

(Answered by all 32 of 37 respondents)

Branch meeting with presenter/speaker	69%
Branch meeting with panel	66%
Branch networking meeting	50%
Half-day or full-day workshop	59%
Technical training for editorial skills	66%
Webinars or other online events	53%
Other	Comments – see Attachment 2

Respondents were able to select from several options. There is strong support across the spectrum of suggested events. In particular, there is an unanticipated level of support for half- or full-day workshops, which the branch (and former society) have previously only run infrequently. There is also a high level of support for training in editorial skills (although training might have been the wrong word to use in this circumstance because the branch does not intend to become a training institution), and for online events, which could be organised either nationally or locally.

Q8: What meeting topics do you think Editors WA should offer?

(Answered by all 33 of 37 respondents)

Technical editing skills	64%
Publishing practices	36%
Editor–author–publisher relationships	24%
Writing	15%
Genre editing	33%
Editing for the web	48.5%
Social media skills	24%
Networking and social events	30%
IPEd information events	12%
All of the above	51.5%
Other	Comments – see Attachment 2

The distribution of topics selected by respondents is quite broad. Concomitant with Q7, there is strong support for technical editing sessions, which the branch (and former society) have run rather infrequently. Notably, respondents are not enthusiastic about events designed to talk about or relay information from IPEd (although receiving news from IPEd via other channels might be more acceptable — this is untested).

Q9: Can you present, lead or help organise topics for branch meetings?

(Answered by all 6 of 37 respondents)

See Attachment 2 for comments

Although six respondents answered 'Yes', no direct offers have been received by email since the survey closed.

Q10: IPEd CEO, Karen Lee, will visit Perth on 14 April 2018 to meet with members. What topics of branch or national scope would you like to discuss with Karen?

(Answered by all 10 of 37 respondents)

See Attachment 2 for comments

This question was designed to create a link between Q4–9 and the (at that time) forthcoming event. In retrospect, Q10 might have been better used in the notice for the meeting with Karen Lee, rather than in this survey.

Q11: Do you feel there is sufficient integration or coordination between the Editors WA branch and IPEd nationally?

(Answered by 22 of 37 respondents)

Yes: 14 (64%)

No: 8 (36%)

See Attachment 2 for comments

This question was prompted by anecdotal evidence that some members have felt 'left out' of IPEd decision making at the national office, or have felt that some of the aims of transition to direct membership — such as reducing the workload on branch committees — have not been well met. I

That more respondents feel there is sufficient integration between the branch and IPEd nationally suggests the anecdotal evidence may not be representative of impressions overall. However, only a subset of people taking part in the survey answered this question and there is not enough information to make any further interpretation. In retrospect, Q11 looks like a bit of an outlier that possibly didn't fit very well into the rest of the survey.

Conclusions

- This survey of Western Australian members of IPEd (and one non-member who was able to access the survey), is the first to seek the views of editors in this state since transition to the Direct Membership Model in July 2016. It is possibly also the only statewide survey to seek members' preferences for meeting formats, topics and training in at least the past approximately 10 years. As such, it provides a valuable snapshot of members expectations, and how the branch is faring since transition, and should be taken into consideration for planning future branch activities.

The results of this survey may also be usefully considered in light of the nationwide survey of members conducted by IPEd in 2017, but this comparison has not yet been attempted.

- In general, the kinds of activities organised by Editors WA have met some needs, but it's apparent that the range of events could be expanded to include more workshops, more technical training, and more online events including webinars.
- Similarly, it's clear that the range of topics members would like to attend could be expanded to include upskilling for editing web-based material and social media platforms. Together with training in editorial skills, addressing these preferences would likely make branch activities more relevant to the digital environment in which many editors now work, than has perhaps been the case.

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25 April 2018