Communicating with Confidence

What does Paula Wriedt – Tasmanian Minister for Tourism, Arts and Environment, Mary Binks – former Mayor of Devonport, and Pru Bonham – former Deputy Lord Mayor have in common? All three influential women were once daunted by the prospect of public speaking and found an effective solution as members of the Penguin Club.

Formed in 1937, the Penguin Club has approximately 700 members Australia-wide. This not-for-profit organisation has a surprisingly low profile considering the high profile of some of its members.

In a friendly and supportive environment, Penguin Club members enjoy the opportunity to develop their communication, chairmanship and self-confidence skills. The club offers a variety of meeting types, seminars and workshops to equip women to meet the challenges they can expect in their lives. It also provides guidance and the experience necessary for women to hold office in business and community organisations.


Through the efforts of its’ Tasmanian members, the Penguin Club has developed a member competency-training program that is creating a lot of interest and is now being used in other states. The Penguin Club is the first speaking organisation to link its’ activities to a training organisation, so its’ members can obtain a certificate that’s recognised both nationally and in New Zealand. Members can become competent in a variety of units from the Business Services package including:

- Make a presentation
- Organise and manage meetings
- Create electronic presentations
- Plan and review administrative systems
- Develop teams and individuals
- Lead work teams
- Plan and manage conferences
- Plan and organise assessment.
- Prepare and process financial business documents

Regular group meetings are held monthly or twice monthly and last one hour. There are active groups in Northern and Southern Tasmania with plans for expansion.

For further information, contact Paula Murphy on 6229 4290 or view the website at www.thepenguinclub.asn.au.

Paula Wriedt, Tasmanian Minister for Tourism, Arts and Environment.

“I’ve always enjoyed public speaking but after a few years away from it I felt I needed to regain my confidence so I joined the Penguin Club. The club provided me with a really solid base for re-establishing myself as a confident public speaker. I was also grateful for the better understanding of meeting procedures which I gained. Needless to say, my very public role now as a Government Minister would be a lot more difficult without the skills I developed through the Penguin Club and along the way, I was fortunate to meet so many supportive women who really inspired me.”

Pru Bonham, former City of Hobart Deputy Lord Mayor and Alderman

“When I joined the Penguin Club at Uni in 1986, I was too nervous to stand up and speak without holding onto my chair! My Penguin Club training gave me the knowledge to chair council and board meetings effectively, and the confidence to get up and speak in public, often representing the City for various Lord Mayors. My most challenging speaking task was a joint State and Civic welcome for about 2000 US Navy personnel! At such affairs, the attention span is about 90 seconds. Penguins teach you when to shut up, too.”

Mary Binks, former Mayor of Devonport

“I was fortunate to have a number of years as a member of the Penguin Club. It was fun, instilled confidence and taught me all the skills that I would need as an elected member of Local Government. I learned how to make the most of my arguments, hone the points so that they would have the utmost effect. Motions, amendments, cut and thrust and even emphasising a fact by the use of a pause, were no cause for anxiety as we had learned it all at Penguins.”
The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) has welcomed the release of a comprehensive set of benchmarks to guide and evaluate policy responses to work and family responsibilities following a Work + Family Policy Roundtable launch in Sydney.

The Australian Work + Family Policy Roundtable, established in 2004, is made up of Australian researchers with expertise on work and family policy. Its goal is to propose, comment upon, collect and disseminate relevant policy research to inform good, evidence-based public policy around work and family issues in Australia.

HREOC President and Acting Sex Discrimination Commissioner, John von Doussa QC said secure, stable and fair work and family arrangements were needed to ensure that Australian women and men are able to meet the competing demands of paid work and family life. “In the lead-up to the 2007 Federal Election, HREOC supports policies that will achieve positive work and family outcomes for individuals, families and the nation.”

HREOC’s It’s About Time: Women, men, work and family paper, released earlier this year, recommends the adoption of a wholistic life cycle framework, underpinned by the human rights principles of equality between men and women, and equality for employees with family responsibilities. “To be effective, work and family policies have to address caring responsibilities at all stages of life – from child care, to care of older people and people with disability. They have to consider the role of both men and women as workers and their responsibilities for unpaid and paid work,” Mr von Doussa said.

“In the face of such complex policy challenges, clear, evidence-based principles by which to measure work and family policies are not only welcome, but essential. The benchmarks developed by the Work + Family Policy Roundtable met this need and also complement HREOC’s own findings in the It’s About Time paper,” he said.

The result of two years extensive consultation and research, It’s About Time outlines 45 priority measures to support its framework. These include: a right to request flexible working arrangements; a national paid maternity leave scheme; federal legislation to protect employees from discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities; and quality, affordable early childhood education and care services.

Our democratic system of government means that all voices are heard during an election campaign and this is particularly true at a Local Government level. Inevitably, campaigning and the opportunity to make a real difference will bring out not only the best and brightest but also those with a specific cause or, in some cases, obsession, which will be magnified in importance if they are successfully elected.

Local councils provide an excellent opportunity for individuals wanting change or reform, to seek office and actually have an impact on how things are done. More often than not, this means highly skilled and charismatic individuals are brought forward to the benefit of both the council and its ratepayers.

Sometimes, however, the opposite is true and someone with an axe to grind or a specific issue to gnaw away at is elected, skewing people’s perception of the council and what it stands for. In order to get elected, these candidates may end up misrepresenting council views and actions because of previous frustration experienced in dealings with them.

How can a local council cope when an axe grinder is elected? For example, if a vocal campaigner against a recent rate rise is elected to council, that person is going to continue to voice their objections at council meetings and within the community. Rates are a particularly emotive issue as ratepayers tend to hear the word ‘rise’ and nothing else, not taking the time to understand the whys and wherefores that have led to this difficult decision.

At one level, it is good for the community to elect someone representing their specific interest, as it reflects an issue of concern to a wide number of ratepayers. However, the one-eyed nature of arguments on issues of great passion can often cause misperceptions of council’s motivations and actions, as well as augment the relative importance of the issue in relation to other issues before the council. Some council decisions are not easy but are necessary, and rate rises are an excellent example of this.

While good leadership will take a community through these issues, allowing for reasoned debate and acceptance of good, clear arguments, it is the long-standing reputation of the council that is the main determinant of what perceptions of the organisation will be when the dust has settled.

In other words, while an individual or group may seek to achieve office over a particular issue, which may or may not have been properly represented in the community, it is the reputation of council that will determine whether or not short-term political expediency wins over a more considered policy outcome. And, it is in such times, that council will need to heavily rely on the goodwill built up in the community, in order to ensure it achieves its outcomes.

As an example, if as a result of the next round of Local Government elections, a council finds an anti-rate increase campaigner elected to office, the success of council in continuing with its policy of a rate rise will depend on the goodwill generated in the community.

Without any goodwill and a ground swell of support for the anti-rate rise campaigner, council will be faced with either modifying its policy in the future, or attempting to explain the need for an increase in rates to the newly elected member (who now has a mandate based on low rates).

“....it is the reputation of council that will determine whether or not short-term political expediency wins over a more considered policy outcome.”

Either outcome is difficult to deliver on. However, if prior to the elections, council has done everything within its powers to articulate why rates are increasing, the likelihood of somebody being elected on such a platform are significantly diminished. While many in the community will sympathise with the position, they will also be informed enough to understand that charges do have to increase, if only to cope with inflation.

The bottom line is protect your reputation, communicate your message, don’t take the community for granted and when the tough times arrive, they will be a lot easier to deal with than if you sit back and do nothing at all.

Becher Townshend is the Managing Director of public relations consultancy Beyond PR and specialises in effective and crisis communications. He also conducts media training seminars for TCCI’s College of Management.
Students’ Studies Reward Councils and Organisations

UTAS Cradle Coast campus students have been putting their studies into action, and local councils are reaping the rewards.

Second-year Bachelor of Regional Resource Management (BRRM) degree students have embarked on workplace internships, undertaking applied research projects, hosted by a number of organisations including local councils and regional development organisations.

Workplace Unit Co-ordinator, Dr Robyn Eversole said the practical and hands-on nature of the internships have provided innumerable benefits.

“While students have gained valuable networking and skill-building experience, employers have been able to receive extra support with projects,” she said.

The Bachelor of Regional Resource Management degree was introduced last year to the University of Tasmania’s Cradle Coast campus in Burnie.

Students learn the integrated principles of economic and community development and natural resource management, leading to careers as project leaders, strategic planners, entrepreneurs, researchers, analysts and business managers. The workplace internships are one of the degree’s unique components, where students are able to put theories to the test.

George Walker has played a role in helping to shape Central Coast’s future. His internship allowed him to work closely with Central Coast Council to prepare a project business case for the concept of a Local Agri-Business Cluster for Gourmet Food.

Central Coast Council Major Projects Manager, Peter Murden, said the concept involved looking closely at the relationship between tourism and the abundance of value-adding opportunities in agriculture in the region.

George’s role was primarily to research the concept of clusters, looking into the key aspects and features of clusters, and how and why they could be applied. Working closely with a project reference group, George was able to fine-tune his research, which also involved looking at examples from across Australia and internationally.

“We don’t have that kind of expertise here (at Council), however the University does, so the placement worked well for us,” Mr Murden said.

Antoinette Schrammeyer was able to pursue one of her passions for her internship when she assisted the Burnie City Council in progressing crucial aspects of the Burnie Waste Management Strategy, in particular, raising awareness of how to reduce waste to landfill.

As part of her project, she visited Burnie schools promoting recycling, separation and resource recovery initiatives and updated the recycling and waste section of the Council’s website. She also delivered presentations to coastal meetings of the Master Builders Association and Housing Industry Association, explaining the waste strategy and discussing ways of minimising waste to landfill.

Burnie City Council Works and Services Design Engineer Rowan Sharman said Antoinette’s efforts had gone a long way towards getting the word out about waste management. “It was a great opportunity to advance our action strategies and assist Netty with her studies and work experience,” he said.

Local councils, development organisations or companies interested in the Bachelor of Regional Resource Management degree and potential internship projects, should contact Dr Robyn Eversole on 6430 4519 or email Robyn.Eversole@utas.edu.au.
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The Best Leadership Style... all of them

ANDREW REIMER
LG Performance Tasmania

While working with a range of different groups and reviewing the latest organisational studies, one thing is clear about top performing organisations, they see many leaders at a range of different levels. Leaders are informal (projects or assignments), people leaders (team supervisors or managers), operational leaders (those with a broader scope, often managing managers), and strategic leaders (those focused on designing the vision and the execution plans to get there). Often, more than a third of an organisation has leaders in at least one of these levels.

Clearly, all leaders need to speak with a common language and share the vision of the organisation, while living the overall values in daily activities to achieve team success. However, each leader’s style is also crucial to getting the best out of staff, especially their ‘star performers’.

Leaders have the ability to sway everyone’s emotions and therefore affect performance. Emotions tend to be very infectious. When leaders drive emotions positively, they bring out everyone’s best. This effect is called resonance. Creating resonance through positive emotions eg, enthusiasm, passion, excitement, fun, provides the foundation for people to become ‘star performers’.

When leaders drive emotions negatively, they undermine the emotional foundations that let people shine. This effect is called dissonance. Negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, frustration, disappointment, sadness, hurt, actually hijack people’s attention from the task at hand and have a negative impact on performance.

Emotionally Intelligent Leadership creates the environment for ‘star performers’ to flourish. These leaders use particular leadership styles that are underpinned behaviourally by the Emotional Intelligence Leadership Competencies.

The following table provides a summary of the leadership styles that build resonance and create the best environment for ‘star performers’. Recent organisational research showed the Visionary Leadership style as singularly most effective. However, the use of the other styles was also needed to create resonance within the organisation.

Leaders of organisations with the best results practised all of the six styles, often seamlessly and in different measures, depending on the business situation.

To develop effective leaders at all levels within a council environment, the first step is to identify the many different leader ‘groups’. Then, by considering each council’s specific culture, values and strategic objectives, a list of core competencies (and specific behaviours) need to be agreed for all leaders. And finally, a list of specific competencies for each leadership level will help define selection, development, assessment and succession planning issues. These competencies are often called the ‘hows’ of an organisation’s strategy while specific objectives/KPIs are known as the ‘whats’.

Leadership competencies (and associated behaviours) must be customised to each council and specifically communicated to all staff. The flexibility to use different leadership styles is often seen as one of these core competencies. And performance management systems must link Council’s and the individual’s strategic objectives to their leadership competencies (behaviours), to ensure that outcomes are achieved at all levels in a manner that is consistent with Council’s values and culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>How it Builds Resonance</th>
<th>Impact On Climate</th>
<th>When Appropriate</th>
<th>EI Competency requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visionary</strong></td>
<td>Moves people towards shared dreams</td>
<td>Most strongly positive</td>
<td>When changes require a new vision, or, when clear direction is needed</td>
<td>Self-Awareness, Self-Confidence, Empathy, Transparency, Visionary Leadership, Change Catalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching</strong></td>
<td>Connects what a person wants with organisational goals</td>
<td>Highly positive</td>
<td>To help an employee improve performance by building long term capabilities</td>
<td>Self-Awareness, Empathy, Developing Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliative</strong></td>
<td>Creates harmony by connecting people to each other</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>To heal rifts in a team, motivate during stressful times, or strengthen connections</td>
<td>Empathy, Teamwork &amp; Collaboration, Conflict Management, Building Bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic</strong></td>
<td>Values peoples input and get commitment through participation</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>To build buy in or consensus, or to get valuable input from employees</td>
<td>Empathy, Teamwork &amp; Collaboration, Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pacesetting</strong></td>
<td>Meets challenging and exciting goals</td>
<td>Is often Highly Negative – because it is generally poorly executed</td>
<td>To get high quality results from a motivated and competent team</td>
<td>Self-Awareness, Empathy, Self Control, Achievement Drive, Transparency, Initiative, Adaptability, Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commanding</strong></td>
<td>Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency</td>
<td>Can be Highly Negative – because so often misused</td>
<td>In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with a problem employee</td>
<td>Self-Awareness, Self-Control, Empathy, Achievement drive, Initiative</td>
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LG Performance offers leadership programs and custom workshops to help define leadership competencies and develop key behaviours within council leaders at all levels. Contact Deidre Parker for more information on 6236 9055 or 0438 622 924.

LGAT News September 2007
Within the living memory of many councillors and council staff, it was once fine to blithely light up a cigarette at work, in a friend’s home, or at the cinema – in fact, just about anywhere, anytime.

This began to change in the 1970s when tobacco advertising bans came into force, following incontrovertible scientific proof that tobacco smoke caused cancers and other life-threatening diseases. Since then, science has proven that second-hand smoke from other people’s tobacco products can kill or ruin the health of non-smokers too. This has led to the roll out of indoor smoking bans in many public spaces, here and overseas.

**Outdoor smoking bans**

Now, and more controversially, efforts to protect people from second-hand smoke have extended to include outdoor settings. Interestingly, in Australia, this push is being driven by councils, as well as hospitals and educational institutions.

In New South Wales, Manly, Mosman and Warringah Councils have banned smoking on beaches, within 10 metres of children’s play areas, and within 10 metres of all council properties. Waverley Council prohibits smoking on the iconic Bondi Beach, as well as its Bronte and Tamarama beaches. More than 30 NSW councils have introduced smoke-free outdoor areas within their localities to-date.

Launceston City Council, the first Australian Council to prohibit smoking around playgrounds and some sports fields, has now banned smoking near the Brisbane Street Mall children’s play area. Support is gathering for a total smoking ban in the Mall. This year, Devonport City Council outlawed smoking at its outdoor aquatic centre and smoking is no longer allowed within the grounds of Launceston General Hospital. The momentum is building.

**The evidence**

Outdoor smoking bans were initially more controversial because, although medical science had long suspected that outdoor second-hand smoke amassed in unhealthily high concentrations, little hard evidence existed to back this up. That was until the results of the first studies began to filter through.

One recent study measured ambient second-hand smoke on a cruise ship at sea and found outdoor smoking areas were as contaminated as the indoor smoking-permitted casino. A Stanford University study found that someone sitting near an outdoor smoker can inhale as much second-hand smoke as someone in an indoor tavern that allows smoking. So why is tobacco smoke a problem outdoors, surely it just goes up, well, in smoke?

The problem is that while tobacco smoke does rise, it quickly cools, loses upward momentum and hangs in the air. If there is no wind, the smoke saturates the area. This is made much worse where smokers gather in groups and, in this case, even if there is wind, those downwind are smothered in a toxic fog containing 43 chemical compounds known to cause cancers.

**Help is at hand**

Outdoor smoking bans in and around public amenities are inevitable and are supported by the vast majority of Australians. With this in mind, the Cancer Council has produced a kit for councils and councillors wishing to introduce smoke-free areas in their locality.

The kit comprises four fact sheets: *Why are outdoor smoke-free areas important for your Council?, Sample council and policy, Case studies: Neighbourhood friendly smoke-free Councils, and Frequently asked questions.*

These fact sheets include contacts at councils that have introduced outdoor smoking bans, sample resolutions and useful facts.

The jury is in: tobacco smoke is a health hazard, outdoors as well as in. Increasing the number of outdoor, smoke-free areas is good for your community and may ultimately protect your council from litigation.

To obtain copies of the fact sheets, please visit the Cancer Council website at www.cancertas.org.au/pages/smokingtobacco.php.