

From: Shane Rodgers
Sent: Thu 2/9/2012 11:06
To: Shane Rodgers
Subject: Editorial Update - Important changes in 2012

Major Editorial changes for 2012

Welcome to the first Editorial Update of 2012. This is a particularly long update but it includes some major editorial changes that you should be aware of.

New Group Bureau to launch in April

In April we will be making some significant changes to the way we cover non-local content for our daily mastheads. When our current contract with AAP expires next month we will be reducing our reliance on wire services and creating eight new positions in Canberra, Sydney and South-East Queensland to provide the core of this content.

With the advent of so many digital sites using wire copy in real time, generic wire services are no longer adequate for our print or digital needs. We need to use our resources to create unique content that is specifically tailored for regional audiences. Currently we miss opportunities to cover national and state events of vital and specific interest to regional readers. We also have no effective mechanism to cover state and federal parliament from a regional viewpoint, and the large number of regional court cases that end up in the capital cities.

The harsh reality of modern information flows is that non-local content that is available on multiple websites and electronic media has very little value in print the next day. Our real point of difference is our superior coverage of local issues and our ability to interpret broader content for the specific needs of our audience.

Perhaps more importantly, the new group bureau (to be called APN Newsdesk) will provide another dimension of career opportunities for our journalists. A news organisation of our size should be represented in the press galleries of Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney, and we need the capacity to cover the major stories in our footprint far better than anyone else. Making this change, including largely weaning us off a 40-year reliance on wire services, will have upsides and downsides. We should, however, view this as an opportunity to rethink our approach to content. Declines in print circulation will not turn around by continuing to do what we have always done. We need to boldly try new things and recognise that the world has changed and we need to change with it.

The changes will be accompanied by greater cooperation between the sites on content and a far deeper daily group newlist with a rich tapestry of content options. There are still issues to work through, particularly in sport, but this will be done as a matter of urgency over the next few weeks.

The new roles are listed below. If you are interested in being considered for one of these roles please email me by Friday, February 17. You can send a full CV if you want but an email

outlining your experience and why you want the role will suffice. Please put "APN Newsdesk" in the subject field so I can easily identify the email as an expression of interest. The attached Q&A has more detail and feel free to contact me or

Group News Editor Steve Zeppa directly if you have specific questions. Given that planning for this is still fluid we may make further changes to the structure but you will get a full communication on the outcome when the time is right.

National Affairs Editor (Canberra)

National Affairs Reporter (Canberra)

Group Chief Reporter (Brisbane/SEQ)

Group Reporter (Brisbane/SEQ)

Group Reporter (Brisbane/SEQ)

Group Sport Reporter (Senior/Brisbane SEQ)

Group Sport Reporter (Junior/Brisbane SEQ)

NSW Group Reporter (Sydney)

New structure for Centro

Our centralised editorial production operation - Centro - will move to the next phase of its development at the end of February. The changes are aimed at improving the service to mastheads, creating a stronger team mentality among Centro staff and ensuring we are making optimum use of our talent.

The key elements are:

- Restructuring the Communities desk to ensure quality and consistency, and capitalise on the potential layout efficiencies created by the new suite of designs
- Creating a core "flying squad" team to support the daily pods and the community desks based on the production priorities on individual days
- Creating a Centro Art Studio of our best graphic artists and designers to provide high level creative support to the mastheads
- Revamping the Centro physical environment at Maroochydore to optimise communication and performance
- The addition of an Editorial Services desk aimed at strengthening the quality of shared sport, national, regional, world and finance pages.

New Centro General Manager Geoff Crockett is also revising position descriptions for all Centro staff and working on a new program of regular staff feedback, setting of expectations and performance reviews. Under the new structure, the masthead pod arrangement will remain in place for the dailies and these small teams will be encouraged to develop even stronger relationships with their mastheads.

Former Sunshine Coast Daily communities editor Belinda Warren has moved into Centro as Communities News Editor. She will work with Group Communities Editor Denise Pickering to continually improve the quality of our non-daily titles and oversee the remaining roll-out of the Community Suite designs. Several roles will be re-engineered in Centro to accommodate the requirements of the new APN Newsdesk. Geoff Crockett will send a more detailed communication on the changes to Centro staff over the next few days.

New strap style for dailies

At the end of this month we will be adopting new strap styles for our daily print titles. The new designs are clean and consistent and will allow us to run group pages across the titles without them looking inconsistent with individual newspaper styles. The designs, created by Centro Art Director Yohanna Dent, allow us to tag specific environments in our newspapers and showcase brands and external logos based on a common set of rules. The new style guide will be published on the intranet as soon as final tweaks are completed.

Shane

Shane Rodgers
Editorial Director