

AACB Staff Scholarship Application 2013/14



Claire McLaren

“Raising Industry Profile through Innovative
Public Relations”



Role Description

The nature of my role

As Marketing and Communications Manager at Business Events Tasmania, I am responsible for managing communications with the organisations diverse target audiences:

- Clients (Association and C&I);
- Members;
- Stakeholders (including state, local and federal government);
- Tasmanian Tourism Industry; and the
- Tasmanian Community.

The central focus of my role is to:

- Increase awareness of Tasmania as a business events destination of choice through effective communication, media coverage and advertising;
- Advocate the business event industry position, being broadly recognised as the peak industry body, addressing relevant issues;
- Maintain and develop all marketing collateral;
- Maintain and develop brand integrity;
- Prepare and adhere to marketing and communication strategies that deliver against the objectives of the strategic plan, including pro-active public relations, digital and social media strategies;
- Provide input on the strategic direction of the organisation; and
- Assist with the drafting of submissions, reports and presentations.

Specific skills/qualifications

My background includes the following:

- Bachelor of Business majoring in Marketing and Tourism Management;
- Nearly 15 years' experience in marketing and communications roles including:
- 5 years in the business events sector with Business Events Tasmania;
- Public relations within the Tasmanian forest industry (both the private and public sector) working directly with the media, government, interest groups and the public;
- 3 years in the education sector.

My skills include:

- High level strategic thinking;
- Exceptional written communication skills across a broad range of mediums (copywriting for web, digital communications, advertising and marketing collateral; reports, submissions, speeches, press releases, letter-writing);
- Excellent verbal communication and networking skills;
- Excellent presentation skills and strong facilitation abilities;



- Highly developed organisational and project management skills;
- Demonstrated experience in setting and achieving against marketing objectives; market research; event management; brand management; public relations; media management; stakeholder management; and tradeshow exhibition coordination.
- The ability to consistently deliver a high volume of work efficiently and effectively;
- Creative flair and thinking;
- Motivation and innovation; and
- A positive 'can-do' attitude.

Plans for my future within Bureaux

In the short to medium term, I will work hard to see the programs and objectives of Business Events Tasmania's new Three Year Strategic Plan (2013-16) successfully delivered. In particular, I am excited by the prospect of delivering a pro-active public relations strategy that will see the broad economic and social benefits of the BE sector recognised by government resulting in better resourcing for BET; delivering the regional marketing strategy for Tasmania; raising the profile of Tasmania's ambassador program through public relations; and raising the profile of Tasmania as a BE destination in key industry sectors (aligned with Tasmania's economic development plan) through online public relations/social media.

In the longer term, I aspire to develop the skills and experience that will allow me to be an attractive candidate for a more senior management position within a bureau; and an asset to the BE sectors marketing and lobbying efforts nationally.



Project Proposal

Project description

Objective:

Gain high level public relations, and specifically public affairs (communicating with and lobbying government), skills to develop long-term strategies for 'raising industry profile' and achieving strategic objectives through innovative communications with BET's broad range of stakeholders.

Project:

I propose to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Public Relations, online through Deakin University, combined with a work placement within an international PR firm that specialises in public affairs.

The work placement would provide insight into PR strategy and execution with leading minds in the field. Edelman Washinton DC has been approached as the ideal firm (<http://www.edelman.com/office/washington-dc/>). A placement in a firm such as this is a 'money-can't-buy' experience.

Rationale:

Public relations (PR), and particularly public affairs, are crucial to the role of Marketing and Communications in the business events (BE) sector.

The process of PR - evaluating public attitudes and executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance, is central to the role of bureaux. It is *the* most powerful mechanism for achieving the objective of 'raising industry profile' – if done correctly. It is the key to effective communication in all sectors of business, government, academic and not-for-profit (Public Relations Institute of Australia). Bureaux are required to deal with each of these sectors daily.

Government funding and support is essential to the future of the sector in Tasmania and nationally. The ability to successfully lobby government and use the media to influence public opinion is not only beneficial to BET; it is fundamental to the organisation's survival.

BET is currently negotiating a three-year services agreement with the state government. BET is one of the lowest funded Bureaux in the country.

Having just completed the Three-year Strategic Plan, it is clear that innovative and proactive PR is fundamental to delivering our objectives. In particular, public affairs is very relevant, advocating the beyond tourism benefits of the BE sector to all of government.

Central to the core objectives of BET is 'raising industry profile', in particular:

- *Social Indicators Research.* Identifying and promoting the beyond tourism benefits of the BE sector.



- *Increasing awareness of Tasmania as a BE destination.* The ability to market the destination through free publicity is essential – both in the mainstream media and online.
- *The Catalyst Program* (Tasmania’s ambassador program) requires the benefits of hosting business events to be broadly understood within the community to deliver leads, local hosts and hopefully, make every Tasmanian a business events ambassador.
- *Stewardship.* Securing business events requires engagement across industry, local government and the broader community. We must advocate the industry position and seek support to address relevant issues/barriers (infrastructure in particular).
- *Grow the organisations total resource value* though the private and public sector.

With limited resources, innovation is vital. PR is a cost effective and influential tool, but it is a learned skill. The formal qualification and experience gained through this project would extend my personal skill set, benefit my career, and allow me to harness the power of PR to achieve BET’s objectives and potentially progress the sector’s objectives nationally.

Timeline of activities and key targets

- March 10 - June 20, 2014: Semester 1 Online Graduate Certificate in Public Relations through Deakin University, Australia.
- June 23 – July 11, 2014: Work placement within an international PR firm specialising in Public Affairs. Edelman Washington DC has been approached (<http://www.edelman.com/office/washington-dc/>). Edelman London would be the second choice (<http://www.edelman.com/office/london/>).
- July 14 – October 24, 2014: Semester 2 Online Graduate Certificate in Public Relations.
- September 2014: Attendance and presentation at the AACB staff conference.



Budget

Activity	AACB Scholarship	Cost Breakdown
Graduate Certificate in Public Relations <i>(part funded by the AACB scholarship)</i>	\$2500	Total cost \$8k: \$2.5k AACB Scholarship \$3k BET Professional Development Budget \$2.5K Claire McLaren
Work Placement <i>(fully funded by the AACB scholarship)</i>	\$2500	
Transport		\$115.50 + Qantas flights: \$58 airport transfers + \$57.50 for a 7-day MetroRail pass.
Accommodation		\$1750: \$250/day
Food		\$500: \$70/day
Incidentals		\$134.50: \$19.20/day
TOTAL	\$5000	\$10,500

Contact Details

Claire McLaren
Marketing and Communications Manager
Business Events Tasmania
cmclaren@businesseventstasmania.com
03 6224 6852
0410 763 940



August 20, 2013

Andrew Hiebl
AACB Inc
PO Box 91
Collins Street West, VIC 8007

Dear Andrew,

RE: AACB STAFF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION 2013/14 - CLAIRE MCLAREN

It is with pleasure that I write to support the submission by Claire McLaren, Marketing and Communications Manager at Business Events Tasmania (BET), for the AACB staff scholarship 2013/14.

Claire is an excellent and deserving candidate for the scholarship. I believe her proposed project to be an 'out of the box' approach that speaks directly to AACB's strategic goal of "Raising Industry Profile".

Having just completed BET's Three-year Strategic Plan, it is clear that innovative public relations are a fundamental requirement for achieving the organisations objectives. In particular, Public Affairs is very relevant to our industry - optimising benefits to stakeholders and advocating the beyond tourism benefits of the BE sector to all of government.

I am confident that Claire will work hard to maximise the opportunity presented by this scholarship and implement it through her work at the bureau. The skills gained through this project will be valuable to Claire, BET and potentially to the sector nationally.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Nettlefold
Chief Executive Officer
Business Events Tasmania