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**DRAFT**

## **ICPRA Communications Strategy**

### **Background**

Delegates at the ICPRA Conference held in Wellington, New Zealand, in October 2008 agreed that a communications strategy should be drawn up in support of ICPRA's wider activity.

The following is a draft communications strategy based on assumptions including that:

- Organisational objectives remain broadly as articulated at the 2008 conference.
- ICPRA will not have an in-house communications resource, rather relying on the contributions of office holders and member organisations.
- Budget constraints favour free or near-zero cost communications channels, such as news media, direct lobbying, and Internet-based communications.

### **ICPRA strategic objectives**

A communications strategy must aim to support achievement of ICPRA's goals. Those goals do not need to be specified in precise detail, but the strategic objectives need to be well understood. It would be timely for the Executive Committee to discuss and reaffirm the organisation's strategic goals.

Based on discussion and records of the 2008 ICPRA Conference, the following broad strategic objectives have been extracted as a 'working draft' for the purposes of this document:

#### *1. Exchange knowledge and build expertise*

- Continue to build ICPRA as a forum for member organisations to share and exchange information, insight and expertise on matters affecting the police profession and representation of members' interests.
- Through regular and ongoing interaction, develop and refine expertise and understanding of different approaches to policy issues, enabling credible engagement on issues of policy and development of operational best practice at both national and international levels.

#### *2. Build profile and awareness*

- Build amongst national and international leaders, policy and decision-makers, a high profile as a strong international advocate for rights, protections and fair treatment for police and law enforcement officers.
- Build profile both in relation to matters associated with international deployments, and also as an organisation to which national-level organisations can escalate significant national issues in order to leverage greater attention and support.

### 3. *Secure recognition from international organisations*

- Gain recognition and acceptance by international organisations such as the United Nations as a legitimate and credible pan-national body representing the interests of police and law enforcement officers, and as the appropriate organisation with which to engage when considering operational or policy matters relating to international policing deployments.

### **Communications activity**

The strategic objectives outlined above suggest various kinds of supporting communications activity.

#### 1. *Exchange knowledge and build expertise*

Key to achieving this objective is building active engagement amongst the ICPRA membership. Communications activity could include:

- Publish and circulate material documenting key proceedings at the conclusion of each biennial conference, including a communiqué.
- Produce and circulate a regular newsletter, both to current and prospective member organisations and potential affiliates.
- Ensure the newsletter demonstrates credible thinking and shows leadership on issues of widespread relevance to the policing/police representative community. The Executive Committee should encourage members to contribute such material, and consider commissioning articles on important topics.
- Ensure the newsletter reports back on other communications activity and engagement with other key audiences in furtherance of the organisation's objectives.

#### 2. *Build profile and awareness*

Key to achieving this objective is drawing the attention of national and international-level policy and decision-makers, and the news media, to the existence of ICPRA, its role and purpose, and its ability to make a credible and legitimate contribution to debate on issues affecting policing and law enforcement.

- Circulate the newsletter more widely, to academics, and national and international-level policy and decision-makers.
- Submit correspondence to national-level policy and decision-makers in support of national-level organisations engaged in national issues. Member organisations should actively seek opportunities for ICPRA to credibly engage in support of national issues. Seek follow-up meetings where appropriate and practicable.
- Seek similar engagement at international level. The Executive Committee will need to ensure policy and operational developments at the international level are monitored, as member organisations are unlikely to do so routinely.
- Support engagement with media releases, where appropriate, targeting international wire services and major national media.

- Consider preparing a media background pack outlining the role and purpose of ICPRA, with contact information for media comment.
- Consider commissioning specific research and academic work on key issues, and investigate publication options in relevant international journals, either instead of or secondary to in-house publication.
- Ensure a credible and professional image, through production of consistently high quality communications materials and related collateral (such as letterhead and business cards), and maintenance of the ICPRA website.

### 3. *Secure recognition from international organisations*

Key to achieving this objective is persuading international-level policy and decision-makers that there is a legitimate and important role for an international police representative organisation in international policing.

- Seek opportunities for formal engagement in international policy and decision-making processes, by way of (for example) submitting in response to discussion documents or treaty-making processes; engaging in UN committee/sub-committee discussions; presence or participation at international conferences on international policing.
- Regularly seek meetings with international policy and decision-makers, and ensure high quality engagement at those meetings on the major issues in international policing.
- Through engagement, demonstrate an ability to accurately and effectively represent the views, expertise and interests of the membership as a whole; and also an ability to lead thought and debate amongst the membership.

### **Communications protocols**

The membership base of ICPRA is diverse. There are complexities in the relationships between some of the member organisations, which may need to be handled with a degree of sensitivity when dealing with issues where points of difference may arise.

Any comment (whether media comment, or correspondence or published work) made by and for ICPRA to external parties needs to be well considered and remain cognisant of these complexities. For that reason, comment should only be made by authorised spokespeople, or in material specifically authorised by the Executive Committee.

ICPRA officeholders (Chairperson and General Secretary) should be authorised spokespeople by virtue of their office. Executive Committee members should also be authorised to comment on behalf of ICPRA, but in the interests of presenting a unified face of the organisation at the highest levels (such as at the UN), should generally limit themselves to comment to media within or on issues affecting their region of representation.

### *Process for adopting a public position*

While building profile and credibility both amongst members and the wider audience remains a key objective, the diversity of the organisation and member interests is such

that a conservative approach needs to be taken. This will tend to outweigh the imperative for media profile.

As a result, it is preferable that authorised spokespeople represent pre-agreed positions, or seek Executive Committee endorsement before adopting a position on behalf of the organisation.

Where this is not possible, and there is room for doubt about whether there would be general consensus behind a position, it will almost always be advisable not to take a position at all. ICPRA is unlikely, in the foreseeable future, to be so identified as a publicly accountable organisation that it becomes untenable to adopt a 'no comment' stance.

#### *Process for sign-off and release of statements*

Media statements or other written material purporting to represent ICPRA's position should be approved by the Executive Committee before being released. Where media engagement is judged necessary and urgent, and it is not practicable to secure formal signoff of a written release, the spokesperson ought at least to discuss and have the general parameters of their desired statement endorsed by the Chairman and a number of Executive Committee members.

#### *Process for distributing media releases*

Media releases should appear to be distributed to international wire services and key target individuals from a consistent, central point. This is most easily achievable by creating an email alias using the ICPRA Internet domain name, such as [media@icpra.org](mailto:media@icpra.org). This alias can be linked to the email of a current office holder, such as the General Secretary or Chairman, who should be responsible for distributing releases to wire services.

In addition, releases should be forwarded to all member organisations, who should utilise their local mechanisms to distribute releases to national media.

#### **Next steps**

On confirmation of ICPRA's strategic objectives, and acceptance of this supporting communications strategy, work needs to commence on a draft programme of communications activity with perhaps a two-year timeframe.

Tasks in developing the draft programme of activity will include:

- Identifying key target individual policy and decision-makers.
- Identifying specific key media and wire services for best impact on key individuals, and compile distribution address lists.
- Setting broad goals for media-release tempo.
- Setting broad goals for tempo of direct contact with key individual policy and decision-makers.
- Scanning for potential contact opportunities within the programme timeframe.
- Identifying academics and researchers who might be commissioned to produce work for ICPRA.
- Identifying journals and periodicals for potential publication of ICPRA-commissioned work.

## APPENDIX

The following are non-exhaustive summary lists of key audiences identified or implicit in the communications strategy, and potential means of communicating with them.

### **Key audiences**

- Potential member organisations
- Individual members
- Potential affiliate or allied organisations
- International organisations
- International leaders
- National political leaders
- National Police departments
- Academia
- Opinion leaders (columnists, commentators, editorial writers)
- News media
- General public

### **Communication channels**

- Website
- Newsletter
- Biennial Conference proceedings
- Occasional papers
- Research reports
- Speeches
- Media releases
- Submissions
- Correspondence
- Conference attendance/participation
- Meetings