

## **National Webmaster's Report , July 2008**

In brief, this report talks about zones on the website, website advertising, an apology, plans for the rest of this year, and plans for next year.

This year has seen some significant changes, though not as many as I would have liked.

Almost all zones are now using the new national website [www.rostrum.com.au](http://www.rostrum.com.au), with NT, SA, Vic and Qld all joining National, Tas and WA. Qld has a different colour scheme to the rest of the website, but they still the same layout, accounts and search/menu structure. The only zone left to go is ACT, which I hope to have transferred in the near future. Some state Voice of Youth and individual club websites are still not all using the national website. Several individual clubs are now personalising their website pages on the national website. Paul Wilkins from SA came to Tas to receive a day's training on the new website.

We are advertising Rostrum on Google, via Adwords. At \$170.91 (Jan 1 2008 to July 8 2008), I have not 'spent' enough of my advertising budget so far this year. At the moment, I am limiting our 'daily budget' to \$2.00, and being stingy with the 'per click' costs. For a brief introduction as to how the ad campaign works, please see <http://adwords.google.com>. The top search phrases that find our that list our ads are: "communication/communication skills/effective communication" (18000 impressions/about 300 clicks/), "wedding speeches/wedding speech" (11871 impressions/about 150 clicks), "speech writing" (2817 impressions/about 50 clicks), "Public speaking" (1374 impressions/about 30 clicks). In total so far this calendar year on the google search page advertising, we have a 41,514 impressesions, 613 clicks, costing \$72.80, with an average cost of \$0.12 and an average "rank" of 6<sup>th</sup> in the paid searches. The balance of the advertising costs come from website content clicks (I.e. ads imbedded on various websites), which has a similar breakdown, but has speech preparation doing a little better. I have as an attachment the reports for the 'search' and 'website content' showing a breakdown of what and where our budget is going. As at the moment I can only pay google by credit card, I would like Rostrum to purchase a 'pre-paid' credit card, say with a value of \$500 at a time, to be used for the purpose of website advertising. This would help me with cash flow.

Due to personal ill health this year, I have not been as active as I feel the role of national webmaster need and deserves. My apologies to those that I have not responded to within an acceptable time frame. However, with many thanks to Jenny Blain from Victoria, and Leo Morgan from Tasmania, we have kept the wheels turning, and many more of the tasks have been done than otherwise would have been. I expect that my personal issues will get better over the next few months, but I still will not be at the top of my game for a little while yet.

My personal aims for the rest of the year is to get the remaining zone (ACT) onto the national website, set up for next years voice of youth, and look at the national website structure, and encourage all clubs with individual web pages onto the national site.

My tentative aims for next year are to upgrade the website software, and to move Rostrum onto a website package that allows for better control over our email, and has mailing lists.

With ACT's permission, moving their website should be a relatively simple affair. An ACT representative will need some training for a couple of hours (over the phone or over the web is OK).

For the Voice of Youth, I would like all regions to either have a web based form that gets emailed to representatives, or a downloadable form. I would also encourage all regions to have easily found contact details on the web. This year, as national webmaster, I received several last minute phone calls asking who/when/where questions, and in a few of these, I had to forward the messages onto state presidents.

I am aware that the current website design, colour scheme and structure of documents has problems. There is not yet a consensus as to what these problems are. Some tell me that it is

a 'clean & uncluttered website'. Others tell me that it is 'boring & unattractive'. There however is a fairly consistent chorus that some documents could be easier to find. I am calling for volunteers to: list the website deficiencies, propose solutions, & come to a consensus as to solutions (including any funding if required). I do not expect this to be a quick process. Could volunteers please mail their contact details & items to [webmaster@rostrum.com.au](mailto:webmaster@rostrum.com.au).

I also am intending to make a change to the 'join' button on the website, to better separate new member queries from existing Rostrum member registrations.

We are currently on an 'old' version of the website software, so we are missing out on some fixes that will make the website easier to customise and on a few other bug fixes. There is also a demand for additional rostrum based email addresses (which are currently charged for on a per email account basis), as well as for better 'web mail' access. For next year, I am looking at upgrading our website software and hosting package. This will have a higher annual cost, but hopefully with the old website ([www.rostrum.asn.au](http://www.rostrum.asn.au)) no longer being required (from a date to be determined), and with the additional email accounts being provided as part of the package, there should not be a significant cost increase. As part of this, we should be able to get mailing lists. These are a formalised process of our existing emails that go around, providing a (semi) permanent history of correspondence, and can include protection against spam. Mailing lists could include a list for National, and State councils, as well as other groups like training councils.

My budget request is that next years budget is the same as this years.

I have enjoyed my role as National Webmaster. While I would be content to continue next year (as health permits), I also encourage other nominations for this role. If you can organise a chook raffle, could write a newsletter, and can answer emails within a week, you have the necessary skills. If another person takes over the role, I am willing to provide as much technical support as necessary.

Kind Regards

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