

BEHIND THE SCENE OF CCN

Background

Crescents Community News (CCN), a not-for-profit community eNewsletter, has been serving the Muslim and wider communities of Queensland and beyond since 2004.

CCN has been published uninterrupted every Sunday morning over the past 9 years and is currently in its 448th weekly edition reaching out to over 3000 dedicated subscribers and readers in Queensland, as well as nationally and internationally.

Its readership, while concerned with Muslim issues in the main, also comprises a diverse demographic of all ages and sexes, different ethnic communities, government bodies and politicians as well as adherents of a number of different faiths.

Content and coverage

CCN covers topics that include local and international issues and particularly those that have a direct or indirect bearing on the community. It reports on the achievements of organizations and individuals from within the communities, creates awareness of the social and political matters that impact on, or can be influenced by, the community and keeps its readership abreast of the events that are to take place and have taken place. The net result of this has been a more informed and educated community that has become more inclusive and confident in the role it has to play in the Australian society.

All of this has been achieved on a shoe-string budget with minimal staff and expenses and virtually no sources of income. Despite this the professionalism, quality, rigor and standard of the journalism and writing and the website design and production has not been compromised in any way.

Audience

The newsletter is read and subscribed to by people from many different communities in many different countries and has been widely recognized by Muslims and non-Muslims alike as an open window into the activities and achievements and trials and tribulations of the Muslim community.

CCN has played a particularly vital role in keeping isolated Muslim communities in such places as Mereeba, Cairns, Mackay, Townsville and other parts of Australia informed about events and activities through video, audio podcasts and social media forums via the newsletter.

Mission and Scope

CCN has certainly challenged the stereotypes and misconceptions so often attributed to the Muslim community especially in the wake of negative and sensationalist media reports and events outside of the country's borders.

In addition to its motto,a sometimes self-deprecating and occasional tongue-in-cheek look at ourselves and the world around us CCN is perhaps best summed up by its own publishing policy guidelines which it has adhered so faithfully and diligently to over the years:

- Strive for originality in journalism
- Be relevant and report on the positive aspects of community life, and extol the achievements of our constituents
- Encourage and promote social, cultural and educational activities that uplift and engage all sectors of the community
- Inform and educate without preaching, or directly offering rulings or injunctions of any nature (religious or otherwise) or engaging in political or religious controversy and debate
- Avoid motherhoods and the patently and blatantly obvious
- Be inclusive of all ethnic communities and relevant activities where possible
- Develop the niche market and a sense of community identity and self-pride
- Promote and report on events and functions that are of public interest and curiosity
- Respect peoples' privacy and sensitivities
- Raise the bar for quality journalism and commentary
- Keep tongue firmly in cheek at all times but above all
- Accentuate the positive and downplay the negative

Crafting the weekly CCN

In addition to its slogan of being self-deprecating and tongue-in-cheek, CCN has gained a hard-earned reputation for consistency and predictability, journalistic and reporting quality, and pedantic and fastidious attention to detail particularly with respect to grammar, spelling and language usage.

Writing the weekly CCN requires a minimum of 20 hours a week.

It includes a number of pre and post publication tasks require an eclectic range of skills and abilities, and not everything works as normal or as expected and a number of workarounds have been developed over the years to accommodate for this.

The following are some of the more obvious tasks undertaken every week:

1. Research
 - a. Identifying appropriate articles/stories that are
 - i. Religiously and culturally sensitive
 - ii. Non-ideological
 - iii. Non-partisan
 - iv. Non-proselytizing
 - v. Apolitical
 - vi. Inclusive
 - vii. Interesting, entertaining, educational
2. Reporting
 - a. Attending events
 - b. Taking photographs
 - c. Writing the reports
3. Editorial
 - a. Articles must be proof-read for
 - i. Standards of English and writing
 - ii. Scope and objectives
 - iii. Relevance
 - iv. Sensitivity
 - b. Letters to editor
 - c. Managing guest writers
 - i. Kbcooks
 - ii. Keepfit
 - iii. Nutrition
 - iv. Gardening
 - d. Mula Nasruddin
 - e. Thought of the day
 - f. Book Club
4. Subscription database
 - a. Maintain existing subscribers
 - b. Create new subscriptions
 - c. Remove un-subscribers and undeliverables
5. Setup skills
 - a. Designing webpages
 - i. HTML, FrontPage, Web Expressions, Javascript, asp, Photoshop
 - b. Embedding multimedia, widgets, forms
 - c. Editing images/graphics
 - d. Maintaining Date Claimer, events, business ads, weddings etc.
 - e. Converting documents to OCR, pdf, images
 - f. Home Page, CCN Page

6. Publishing
 - a. ftp to website
 - b. Facebook page
7. Distribution
 - a. Set up email
 - b. Mail Merge
8. Facebook Page
9. Twitter account
- 10.Backup
 - a. Website
 - b. Email database