



# A Model Publication

Diana Plater and Rhoda Roberts eds., *Going for Red Black and Gold: hints on how to handle the media for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities*, Jumbunna Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, UTS Sydney 1994, 72pp, \$12.00.

*Going for Red Black and Gold* is the best publication of its type that *CU* has seen in many years of perusing 'how to handle the media' manuals for women, ethnic minorities and others in need of assistance in handling our pervasive and powerful media.

If it gains the wide distribution that it deserves, it should have a major impact on the way indigenous people view and deal with the media, and should also be available to every journalist in Australia, both as a reference and as a consciousness-raising tool.

The overall tone is extremely positive. There are no whinges, no re-cremations, just practical advice about getting the message across. The tone of the book is set by Rhoda Roberts's introduction where she notes that:

*... these days public relations - or a good public image - for your organisation is more than getting space in newspapers or time on electronic media. It is getting across to the public a positive image of what you are, what you are striving for and what the issues mean.*

The body of text is interspersed with apposite cartoons and with useful information and comment in boxes, which contain succinct, accessible material in dot point form. Examples are descriptions of successful campaigns like the NSW Land Council's 'racism suck' campaign; summaries of publisher and journalist codes of ethics; and relevant recommendations from the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody. This boxed information is ideal for copying, enlarging and using for such purposes as training sessions or pinning up on noticeboards.

The inclusion of comments and advice from working journalists, including Aboriginal journalists, adds significant interest and usefulness to this book. Those who offer valuable tips on getting positive media coverage in-

clude Debra Jopson, George Negus, Paul Lyneham, Cameron Forbes, Ray Martin, Diana Simmonds, Paul Murphy, James Button and Jack Waterford. For any student of the media, the manual is worth buying for their comments alone, as they offer fascinating insights into the way journalists work.

Some of the contents of *Going for Red Black and Gold* will probably not please the uncompromising purists. For example, Marcia Langton:

*Look like a million dollars, especially if you are being interviewed for television. Wear your power suit - you are then taken much more seriously. The media then cannot get away with depicting you as a radical, drunk etc. While worrying about wearing gold earrings and such is hideous trivia, remember you are out there to win so you have to play the game.*

Langton's advice to 'trust no-one' would no doubt be echoed by Michael Mansell, who tells of being greeted off-air as 'brother' by Stan Grant who then proceeded to attack him, throwing him off-balance.

In addition to the above, this book gives an overview of who owns the media and how it works; sound advice on writing, timing and distributing media releases and on how to handle interviews and news conferences; rundowns on the different forms of media and how to approach them; and a glossary of media jargon ('grabs', 'noddies' etc). One of its best chapters is titled What To Do When the News is Bad - Making Conflict Work for You, which takes the positive approach that 'conflict raises the issue; breaks the apathy; and creates opportunities for change'.

The manual concludes with a where and how to complain section and a comprehensive list of main media and indigenous media. □

## UK Consumer Body Rejects Anti-Siphoning Rules

The Association of Consumer Research (UK) has called for an end to 'listed event' legislation preventing the siphoning of major British sporting events to pay-per-view services.

In a recent issue of *Consumer Policy Review*, the Association claims that this legislation does not work in the consumer's interest because it inhibits cable and satellite services from developing new services, and stifles competition by protecting existing broadcasters.

This position contrasts sharply with the recent recommendation of a UK parliamentary committee that the rules should be extended. (Screen Digest November 1994, 257). □



### Briefs

- Licensees of youth-oriented FM radio stations in Sydney may at last be getting the message that young people want to hear more than the narrow playlist of largely imported music that they have traditionally maintained.
- In the most recent radio ratings for that city, the ABC's youth network JJJ put on 0.8 per cent to 7.3 per cent, moving into fifth place ahead of the ABC's metro station 2BL and not too far behind MMM. All Sydney's top four stations were down on the previous survey.
- Australians should count themselves lucky to have - so far at least - free access to directory inquiries. Charges for directory inquiry services in the UK, previously 37.8 plus value added tax, have recently been reduced to 21p plus tax. This is the equivalent of over 40 cents per use of the service. (OfTel News, August 1994). □