



STRATH GORDON
HEAD OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Heading into the 10th year of professional Rugby, media coverage of the game in all forms of media has grown exponentially.

Coordinator, Nishara Ramburuth transferred from the Marketing Department to take up a position of PR & Publications Manager, while Tim Archer took responsibility for Media Operations and all teams below Wallaby level.

In broad terms, the role of the Media & Communications Department can be summarised as:

- Grow Rugby profile in the (free) media.
- Enhance and protect the reputation of the ARU and the game of Rugby.
- Enhance the recognition of Rugby as a Community sport.
- Expand Rugby into new markets.

An external review of the department was completed in 2004 and identified a number of areas where Rugby's profile could be enhanced.

These centered around:

- Greater access, particularly to Team Wallaby based in Coffs Harbour.

- Greater debate of rugby-related issues in the media.
- A "campaign" approach to generating new interest in Rugby.

The issue of Team Wallaby access for electronic media has been addressed over the past four years by the creation of a Wallaby Media Unit, which generates daily television pictures and storylines on the team no matter where they are located.

This material is fed at no cost to all Australian television networks, bringing pictures and interviews of the Wallabies into national newsrooms on a daily basis.

The Media & Communications Department has extended the contract of cameraman Anthony George for a further four years to ensure this coverage continues to build Rugby's profile.

Rugby has led the way in this regard and the Media Unit concept is now being actively pursued by other sports and other major Rugby-playing nations.

The Wallaby Media Unit generates daily television pictures and storylines on the team. ARU Media Unit



STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

Following the success of the "True Colours" electronic newsletter during Rugby World Cup 2003, the format was reproduced on a weekly basis in 2004 for ticket purchasers, subscribers from our website and various stakeholders.

"True Colours" was sent to more than 100,000 email subscribers on a weekly basis throughout the Test season, with content provided by an ARU editorial team led by Nishara Ramburuth.

Content was gleaned from all ARU departments, providing subscribers with an inside view of the organisation, from High Performance and Community Rugby activities to special offers from our sponsors and licensees.

"True Colours" also provides the ARU Marketing Department with an invaluable database of high value customers. The E-Newsletter has proved to be an excellent example of taking a successful element of the ARU's Rugby World Cup operations and applying it to our "business as usual" activities.

Also introduced in 2004 was the ARU's first Staff Newsletter, also in email form, titled "Inside Running." All departments contribute details of their major projects on foot and other news on individual achievement within the organisation.

The West Australian media has embraced the fourth Australian Super 12 team in Perth. The West Australian



2004 PROJECTS

Other major projects for 2004 included support at the local level for all TryRugby roll-outs, similar support for EdRugby initiatives, regional and community media focus for individuals in national teams below Wallaby level, a familiarisation program for the new CEO with key media organisations, media training for Level Three coaches and first year contracted players and major media campaigns around the Super 12 Awards, John Eales Medal, 1984 Grand Slam Reunion & Tom Slack Dinner, the Super 14 additional team selection process, the strategic spend of RWC surplus funds and the new Broadcast Agreement.

The Super 14 bid process generated extraordinary national media coverage, climaxing with the announcement of Western Australia as the winning bidder.

Both Melbourne and Perth were encouraged to promote their credentials for the job, which culminated in significant profile for the game during November and December, including Perth's spectacular "people power" rally at Subiaco Oval.

More than 500 media across Australia and from overseas were accredited for Test matches across Australia in 2004, a record number of working media for a regular season since the game went professional in 1996.

The growth in interest in Rugby is also reflected in the expansion of the ARU Media database, which now extends to approximately 2,000 media email addresses, primarily in Australia but also worldwide.

With Test matches played in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth in 2004, there was significant media interest from these more AFL-oriented markets. Notably, *The Age* has extended its Rugby coverage with a designated reporter covering Test matches beyond the Victorian border for the first time.

It's timely to note that heading into the 10th year of professional Rugby, media coverage of the game in all forms of media has grown exponentially, while bringing with it greater media scrutiny.

The reputation of the ARU across the business remains robust in spite of significant organisational change in 2004 and a turbulent but exciting period of constant change over nine years of professional Rugby.