

NEWSLETTER

2024 Edition



On the horizon

- > Continuing to provide media and communication support for the Airport Development Group
- > Moving into Stage 2 consultation for the Vanderlin Drive Duplication project
- > Completing West Daly Regional Council's 2024-25 Regional Plan
- > Helping Road Safety NT write road safety guidelines for Territory schools
- > Continuing to provide pro bono social media and fundraising support to RSPCA NT
- > Supporting Northern Iron as it moves into operations in the Barkly

OVERVIEW

2024 has well and truly kicked off for True North with lots of familiar and fresh projects underway.

This year we will have a strong focus on best practice engagement as we see lots of long term and complex projects start to find their footings across the Territory. We provide our thoughts on this in our story on page 2 of this newsletter.

We also have some changes at True North that we are excited to share with you.

- > Senior Consultant **Claire Punch** joined the team in January. Claire has a strong background in the arts and publishing sectors and has since worked in aviation and most recently government across a range of policy areas, including business, environment and water security. Claire is enjoying flexible work while she balances time at home with her 2 kids and studying for her MBA.

- > **Sevasti Makrylos** has stepped into the role of General Manager at True North. Sevasti has been with True North for over 8 years, and during that time has worked in almost every role across the business. It is safe to say Sevasti knows True North inside out and is doing a marvellous job in this new role, managing our internal processes and team workflow.
- > **Bethany Thornton** started in the Managing Consultant role in early April. Bethany previously worked for True North for 4 years before working with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics where she managed all facets of communication and engagement for a portfolio of significant infrastructure projects. In her new role, Bethany is focused on business development and leading complex projects alongside the team.

Please join us in congratulating Claire, Sevasti and Bethany on their new roles!

- > We have also said farewell to **Claire Butler**, who was with True North for an amazing 15 years. During her time with True North, Claire headed up our Cairns office and provided her expertise on many of the Territory's leading resources projects. Claire will be greatly missed and we wish her the very best for her future endeavours in Cairns.
- > We are also very excited to announce a new division of True North called, **True North Strategic Advisory**. This division will be headed up by Hollie Young with Elena Madden and will specialise in government, social performance, renewable energy, mining and resources and large-scale infrastructure programs.
- > Please see more detail about True North Strategic Advisory on page 5.

We hope the year has kicked off well for you and we look forward to partnering with you throughout 2024.

STAFF PROFILE

Your favourite thing about working at True North?

That's easy – working with a group of strong, capable, and interesting women.

Types of projects you enjoy working on?

One of the things I enjoy about working at True North is the opportunity to work across a range of interesting projects. I really enjoy thinking strategically about things and so marketing and brand development projects really excite me. As a project driven person, this style of work is also appealing because I have the opportunity to see a project come to fruition which is very satisfying.

Favourite food from the markets?

That's easy, Laksa! Controversially not from Mary's rather the Purple Lady at Parap Markets.



CLAIRE PUNCH

Best restaurant/café recommendation?

I've really enjoyed Charlie's of Darwin for dinner on many occasions, but my all-time favourite is Ella by Minoli.

Last show or podcast you binge-watched/listened to?

This is a bit random as I'm not a mad sports fan, but I'm really enjoying watching The Dynasty about the New England Patriots. It's a documentary about a period of success and controversy for the team. I'm loving the drama!

Podcast wise, I'm enjoying Diary of a CEO with Steven Bartlett.

THE PROJECT BENEFITS OF EARLY ENGAGEMENT

Early and meaningful engagement is an authentic process of involving people in solutions and decisions, listening to and understanding their perspectives, providing an honest account of people's input and taking seriously the lived experience of communities.

Jane Munday, Guide to Social Impact Assessment 2020

Early engagement can be a useful approach, particularly for large-scale infrastructure projects that have multiple stages of engagement.

Meaningful early engagement provides an opportunity explain a project in general terms, offer the opportunity to provide feedback and input before project design and specifications are finalised, and understand people's values and issues to inform design. It presents an opportunity to supplement desktop review work with qualitative feedback, and to build solid relationships to form a basis for the next formal stages of engagement.

Using the *IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation* as a base, this is also an opportunity to ask people how they want to be consulted with going forward.



Benefits of early engagement can include:

- > inform rigorous project scoping
- > enhance community confidence through quality, participative process
- > understand community attitudes, beliefs, values and concerns
- > inform balanced decision-making by giving equal weight to community knowledge and technical studies
- > provide the community with objective information and keep them informed
- > avoid mistakes and missteps by eliciting community knowledge
- > build relationships and trust
- > avoid the cost of conflict and delays.

For more information on early engagement in a Social Impact Assessment context, see *Guide to Social Impact Assessment* by Jane Munday, 2020.

THE VOICE REFERENDUM MEDIA SUPPORT

True North Strategic Communication was engaged in partnership with media agency Six O'Clock to deliver public relations and media support to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) NT during the campaign for the 2023 Voice Referendum.

True North provided support over a period of 4 months leading up to the referendum. This included developing an overarching media plan for the referendum in the NT and liaising with the AEC national media team to ensure a coordinated approach to local media coverage. We also wrote and pitched media alerts, coordinated media interviews, followed up on national media releases for local coverage, organised and managed local and remote media events and coordinated and managed media on polling day.

Challenges:

The AEC is responsible for providing the Australian people with an independent electoral service and is required to be politically and issue-neutral throughout all aspects of its operation. True North applied strategic considerations and took great care to maintain this stance across our work, especially given the higher level of process scrutiny that came with the referendum event.



Outcomes:

59

individual pieces of earned media achieved across print, TV, radio and digital platforms

71

syndications nationally

4

local media events held and well attended

1

remote media event organised, held and well attended

RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI IN COMMUNICATION

Have you used or heard of Chat GPT, a generative AI system that can create content and ideas, personalise experiences and improve efficiency? We'd say most of us have. But, how can we make the most of emerging technologies such as AI while making sure our content sounds human and is used for good?

It is certainly a technology to be harnessed for good and in our industry it is widely used to generate content ideas for social media and digital platforms, for speech to text application, to create chatbots and more.

However, AI is an emerging and rapidly developing application and regulation hasn't quite caught up. Some responsible considerations for using AI for communication and marketing include:

1

Copyright

AI uses algorithms that gather massive amounts of online data – from other people. The issue is that there are currently no copyright laws or expectations in Australia about how artificially manipulated information is protected by copyright. This is something to keep a close eye on as regulation catches up.

In Australia, there generally needs to be 'independent intellectual effort' for work to be protected by copyright. This means it is possible that works will need a certain level of human input to be protected by copyright. AI tools do not currently have a legal status and cannot own copyright. It is the human contributor who would own copyright if a work was protected.

For more detail on this, see [Arts Law](#) or [CSIRO](#).

2

Transparency

AI does not have any rights under copyright law and therefore there is no legal obligation to indicate that AI was used to generate the work. However, it is probably best to be transparent with your audience and indicate when AI has been used to generate content.

"*Australia's AI Ethics Principles*" developed by the Australian Government as part of 'Australia's Artificial Intelligence Ethics Framework' talks about the need for 'transparency' and 'explainability' when it comes to using AI. While these principles are not legally binding, they are helpful in providing guidance on best practice when working with AI.

3

Context

AI might be a great way to draft catchy social media posts, but we have found that context is important and human touch is essential. Context is a deep part of human communication, and AI hasn't quite caught up on the nuances that come with culture, place and relationships. A human in the middle is absolutely critical, and this is especially the case in a unique operating environment like the Territory. So by all means, use ChatGPT to draft that email or social media post, but please check it before sending or posting!

TRUE NORTH STRATEGIC ADVISORY

We are very excited to introduce a new division of True North – True North Strategic Advisory.

True North Strategic Advisory specialises in government, renewable energy, mining and resources and large-scale infrastructure programs to provide effective and innovative strategic solutions to key environmental and social issues in the Northern Territory.

True North Strategic Advisory will be headed by Hollie Young, who joined True North Strategic Communication in 2017 as Managing Consultant and during this time focused on leading large-scale infrastructure, community and reputational projects.

Hollie will work with Managing Director Elena Madden in her new role.

True North Strategic Advisory operates as an arm of True North Strategic Communication, to provide a niche service offering on complex and specialised projects.

We work on projects of all sizes and stages to advise and deliver major project facilitation, strategic communication, Social Impact Assessment, crisis communication, reputation management and change management.

Hollie and Elena have provided large organisations with crisis communication, reputation management and change communication support for many years with a demonstrated track record of success.

Our methodology is based on a localised and personal approach and we work in partnership with our clients to add value and deliver positive and collaborative results for the community.

Bethany Thornton will take on Hollie's former role at True North Strategic Communication to allow Hollie to focus on her new advisory role.

Please feel free to contact Hollie or Elena at any time to chat about the services offered under True North Strategic Advisory.

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STAFF PHOTOS



Elena got a little too excited welcoming Bonza to the Red Centre

Sarah with Helen Yang from Tivan



Sarah and Emily at Women in Resources' International Women's Day event at Crocosaurus Cove

The team 'loving' a Charlie Bliss photoshoot!



Huntar on her way back from Wadeye



The True North team going the extra mile for a themed Christmas party



The True North team at RSPCA Northern Territory's Save the Paws Ball



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