

Shaping our future: IPed and the profession

Member comments from the IPed conference plenary 2025



Summary

What happened in Adelaide

At the 12th IPed Conference, we used a plenary session as an open forum for members to tell us what they want and need from IPed.

We posed 3 questions:


1. Challenges/opportunities: What major challenges or opportunities will editors face in the next 5 to 10 years?
2. IPed's response: What could IPed do to meet these challenges or grasp these opportunities?
3. The bold recommendation: What is the boldest, bravest action IPed could take?

We asked for imaginative and even risky ideas – but ones that were also constructive and realistic. (Sadly, IPed cannot stretch to funding an idyllic island paradise for editors.)

What IPed members said

This report pulls together the ideas we received and shared onscreen during the plenary. Comments ranged from concerns over AI (a popular topic!) to suggestions on IPed's structure.

In the first few pages, we have summarised and grouped the comments into 5 themes, to draw out patterns and commonalities. [Later](#), we present all comments verbatim by question.





1. Generative AI and technology

AI is a pressing concern for many editors, and IPed needs to support editors as they adapt.

AI poses massive challenges for editors, but it offers opportunities

Editors are worried about the impact of AI but it is a reality we must accept and adapt to as a profession. We have to:

- navigate the ethics of using AI and choose how we engage with it
- learn how to recognise and work with AI-generated text
- fight the tide of mis- and disinformation, stand for truth and fact-check (!)
- expand our skills to keep pace with tech and grasp opportunities to streamline our work
- brief clients on our value and the fact that AI may cost more in the long run
- consider the environmental impacts of tech.

Specific challenges in academic editing include:

- editors helping to preserve academic integrity
- authors using AI and claiming the text as their own work
- peer reviewers uploading manuscripts to open AI programs.

On the plus side, the proliferation of content and emerging authors provides editing, coaching and mentoring opportunities.

IPed can take on an advocacy role, working with related professions

IPed could:

- advocate for the value that human editors can offer in a world of automation, and make a statement to that effect
- get on government working groups, as so much hinges on regulation
- look at how other professional societies are dealing with AI and link with other groups (e.g. indexers, translators and authors) to promote the benefits of human input
- take a stronger position on AI and appoint AI advocates
- keep members updated on what the WPAI learns
- provide support and resources on using AI effectively and ethically (e.g. PD), defending the editor's role, and clearing explaining the pros and cons of human vs AI editors (e.g. cheat sheets of words to use).

For example, clients need to know that:

- AI-generated text is not as good as it first seems
- AI can do lots of basic copyediting and proofreading tasks, but it makes mistakes
- editors bring great value (e.g. skill, quality and human intuition) and are worth paying for
- technology has environmental impacts.

Is IPed using AI in its own activities?



2. Image, branding and marketing

It could be time to rebrand the editor and make IPed a household name.

Editors are often misunderstood or deemed irrelevant

Widespread misconceptions around the profession mean that many people don't recognise the wide range of skills and knowledge editors have. For example, they might:

- not be aware of who we are and what we do beyond traditional publishing
- not understand or care about clear, accurate communication
- think we are obsolete and can be replaced by AI.

The term “editor” is not fashionable to hiring agents and we need to banish the “grumpy granny” image. So how do we reframe our profession for visibility and career longevity?

For starters, we need to:

- identify transferrable skills
- create a broader sense of what an editor can be.

We know that editors might also be comms and media specialists, copywriters, content designers, beta readers, sensitivity and authenticity readers, accessibility experts and so on.

Visibility is a key issue, for the profession and for IPed

IPed could focus on making editors more visible, online and offline, by:

- advertising for the profession and communicating what editors do
- considering practical ways and developing specific examples to show clients and readers of the difference we make
- promoting the benefits of human editors, especially AEs
- emphasising the “high value” work we do (e.g. structural work or analysis).

Should editors be credited in documents they edit (e.g. as a contractual obligation)?

Most people are unaware that IPed exists, so it too needs to be way more visible and raise its profile through outreach. IPed should be the first call in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to comment on industry issues, not an afterthought. For example, IPed could:

- get out there in the media
- appoint a strong, competent IPed spokesperson to insert ourselves into the narrative at every opportunity or an editing industry advocate to promote human editing skills
- run a fully funded publicity or advocacy campaign, possibly by hiring a creative agency to develop and execute it
- reinvigorate the Ambassador Program
- establish a brand committee to ensure it is fit for purpose
- start a “Humans of IPed” initiative.

More controversial ideas include an IPed podcast (useful or boring?) and a new name.

3. Advocacy and outreach

IPEd needs to attract new editors and advocate for the profession as it grows.

The profession faces generational challenges

There is a strong sense that the profession needs to entice the next generation of editors, but we know starting out isn't easy:

- Fewer young people are becoming or identifying as editors.
- New editors often find it hard to gain experience and secure work.
- Automation is taking over some entry-level tasks.

As more experienced editors retire, the profession loses valuable industrial knowledge, memory and cultural context. Succession planning is important, and it presents an opportunity to both share generational knowledge and acknowledge individual careers.

Targeted outreach and advocacy would address some of these challenges.

Outreach to schools and universities would introduce young people to editing

The education sector is already on IPed's radar for outreach. Ideas for the future include:

- being visible at high schools during careers events
- attending orientation weeks or holding information sessions at universities
- collaborating with universities to research topics of concern
- connecting with student editors.

If we look at bolder ideas:

- Could IPed work with government to improve the syllabus for language education?
 - Could IPed take over the National Dictionary Centre at ANU?
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Connecting more with government and industry would also bring benefits

Raising awareness and forging connections needs to extend beyond traditional publishers.

For example, IPed could:

- engage with government to recruit AEs
- cooperate with a wider range of organisations to grow awareness about the importance of language and the skills of editors (including fact-checking)
- encourage industry to develop internships or apprenticeships to support new editors
- join platforms and committees where it can shape the narrative and policies.

There is support for reinstating the Ambassador Program (with changes to give ambassadors more discretion) or creating a new outreach program. This might include making greater use of the patron and other key IPed figures.



The literary sector offers opportunities for engagement, especially at festivals

IPEd should continue and improve its engagement with writers' organisations. In particular, it could consider supporting and having a greater presence at writers' festivals. Editors and writers go hand in glove.

Sponsorship would have the dual benefit of:

- getting the IPed logo and branding out there
- engaging with the public about the role and value of editors in a more accessible way.

Similar ideas include an editors' festival, an editor-in-residence program, an editing stand at Comic-Con or a touring exhibition (e.g. for comic strip writers).

Encouraging specific editor cohorts requires a multifaceted approach

If IPed wants to grow the profession and increase its diversity, it needs to consider a range of cohorts. For example:

- Younger editors: Set up specific online networking events as these are likely to be popular.
- Disabled editors: Develop a robust accessibility policy that actively facilitates inclusion.
- Regional editors: Engage with regional centres and support co-working spaces.

4. Industry conditions

As budgets for editing shrink, IPed can work towards boosting industry recognition.

Editors are falling by the wayside as the industry shifts

The editing profession faces several challenges:

- The publishing industry and translation industry are both shrinking.
- Publishers and others are cutting costs, which affects pay and the availability of work.
- Vanity publishers are on the rise.
- The cost-of-living crisis means clients can't afford editors and editors leave the profession because they can't make a living.

Should we go on strike and see how it all falls apart?!

IPed could be bolder and more openly political

To protect the interests of its members, IPed could:

- unionise or affiliate with a union (e.g. MEAA)
- infiltrate government
- be better activists and advocates
- get editing recognised as a skill on the APSC Digital Professions
- continue working towards an increase to the award rate.

It could also consider mandating a minimum rate/charge for work for all members or something like the MEAA fees database (although this has pros and cons).

IPed might need to broaden accreditation to support industry recognition

Accreditation could be a key part of boosting pay and conditions. Questions include:

- Should IPed develop different accreditation exams to recognise different kinds of editing?
- Could accreditation be earned through assessed modules or recognition of other qualifications?
- Do editors need tertiary qualifications? If you have one, what is the incentive to be IPed accredited?
- Should IPed mandate accreditation or introduce registration for professional editors?
- Is there a way to codify and celebrate individual milestones for recognition within the industry?



5. IPEd structure and services

IPEd could rethink its processes and offerings to help members and volunteers alike.

Top challenges relate to member and volunteer retention

IPEd is only too aware that it faces its own challenges as an organisation, beyond issues with its visibility to other industries.

The 3 main challenges are:

- bolstering membership numbers as they gradually decline
- supporting all members and meeting a diverse range of needs
- recruiting volunteers to support branch activities.

Key themes include the branch structure, fees, PD, resources and networking.

Centralising functions may alleviate pressure on branches

Members have differing opinions about IPEd's branch structure. Some members would support IPEd abolishing the branches and having local chapters for socials/networks to increase efficiencies and transparency.

Others like the branch structure but have suggestions for change, which may require revision of the by-laws:

- Centralise more admin and PD functions to free branches up for local advocacy and networking.
- Hire more staff.
- Make networking and events the focus for branches.
- Set up more special interest groups, or networks and communities of practice subgroups (e.g. government editors or academic editors).
- Allow regions to form subgroups without formal approval from the branch.

Bolder ideas include creating a branch in the Northern Territory and expanding IPEd's presence outside Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. IPEd should also join forces with its international partners as other editing associations will be grappling with similar issues.

Unsurprisingly, the topic of fees inspires debate

IPEd could revisit its fee structure to ensure fees are competitive. Ideas include:

- raising annual membership fees
- creating more tiers to membership or scaling fees based on income – so early or disadvantaged editors pay less and more experienced or advantaged editors pay more
- not charging so much for online branch meetings
- lowering fees for student members.

Other money-raising options would be enjoyable fundraising events or grant applications.



PD continues to be a key member benefit and could strengthen further

To keep pace with a changing world, IPed could consider broadening the format of its PD offerings. Examples include:

- stackable micro-credentials
- certified training with IPed as a training organisation
- on-demand e-learning that people can take anytime
- editorial training for the public, not just members
- more skill sharing opportunities.

Possible topics for PD include:

- business skills, not just editing, to build our capacity to adapt our businesses
- effective and ethical use of AI in editing (that stays current as AI develops)
- structural editing
- fact-checking
- accessibility in Word and InDesign
- visual design.

New or updated resources would support the profession

The website, IPed's primary resource, would benefit from a refresh. It should:

- have a more logical structure that serves both members and the public
- be more accessible (e.g. colour contrast)
- promote all the work IPed is doing on key issues
- use SEO that references "proofreaders" and "proofreading" to return hits for people who misunderstand the editing role.

IPed could consider other resources, such as:

- specialised advice channels
- resourcing for retirement
- a centralised place for sharing work opportunities in case of overload (e.g. a jobs board).

IPed should also audit the kinds of resources that help and provide sharing options to save members money.

Networking is a must to connect editors in meaningful ways

Members would like more ways to connect, such as:

- community-led groups (e.g. a cultural responsiveness editing group led by First Nations)
- more support for freelancers
- more face-to-face events and in-person training (to help attract volunteers)
- more events and resources catered to students
- smaller and safer spaces for editorial discussions and advice.

Also, contacting new branch members would help to welcome them and encourage them to attend events.



Verbatim comments by question

1. Challenges/opportunities:

What major challenges or opportunities will editors face in the next 5 to 10 years?

AI

The thought that AI can replace editors, and so we may lose work

Advocacy for the value that human editors can offer in a world of automation and AI.

Expanding our skills beyond just editing text, keeping pace with technology and choosing how to engage with it, especially the ethics of AI.

Navigating the ethics of AI, not just the technical aspects

Shrinking publishing industry and translation industry

Publisher cost cutting affecting work conditions and pay

Fewer younger people becoming or identifying as editors

Perceived irrelevance

Convincing people of the value of an editor

Opportunities- proliferation of content and emerging authors, providing editing, coaching and mentoring opportunities for editors to support and improve their writing.

Opportunity: sharing of generational knowledge (and also opportunity to acknowledge careers and individuals)

Inequality of amount of work available between experienced and beginning editors. Building a reputation and establishing a business.

Knowing how to adapt our services to not only survive, but succeed in an increasingly AI dominated sector

Awareness of what we bring

Banishing the grumpy nanny image.

Marketing as well stakeholder engagement.

AI

Challenges of getting started in editing when automation is taking over entry-level tasks.

Succession planning and loss of industrial knowledge/memory and cultural context



Aging out of editors. Bringing on a professional new generation. Strategies to entice a new generation. If you have a tertiary qualification, what is the incentive to be IPEd accredited?

Pay conditions

Full appreciation of the skills and knowledge required to be an editor

Recognition that Editors should have tertiary education

AI is the challenge. Policing AI output is the opportunity.

How do we educate people about what editors can do that AI can't

Membership and recruitment of volunteers

Changing expectations for human editors as the result of technological change (I.e. expecting fast turnaround)

Relevance is a huge issue. Many people don't understand or don't care about clear, accurate communication.

A risk is that clients may think that AI is good enough and they will not want to pay for a professional editor.

Challenges: Authors using AI and claiming it as their own work. Peer reviewers uploading manuscripts to open AI programs. People thinking editors are obsolete. Editors needing to restructure roles

Challenge: relevance and with AI. As a profession our lack of visibility is a larger issue. There are more ways people work alone - that's why we need to be open to content design as an early skillset

AI - hinges so much on regulation. Massive opportunities but also massive risks.

Preserving academic integrity

The cost of living crisis means clients can't afford editors and editors leave the profession because they can't make a living.


The term "Editor" is not fashionable to hiring agents

Fighting the tide of mis- and disinformation, upholding and advocating for underrepresented voices, fact-checking, trying to stand for truth.

The difficulty of finding volunteers for the branches

Younger people are increasingly using online networking opportunities.

Creating a broader sense of what an editor can be (communications specialist, copywriter, content designer) for career longevity and flexibility



Finding work without going in house for editors who want to remain independent. Where to find clients.

Advocacy!

Climate change The challenges - -environmental impact of the technologies we use - psychological and emotional impact on editors as people - complexity around truth and reliability Opportunities too!

Opportunity: collaboration with universities to conduct research into topics of concern

New IPEd website would help members to stay across all the work IPEd is doing on these issues

GenAI - can already do so much: copyediting, proofreading. The shape of the profession has changed, but AI makes mistakes. Role definition. So few people know what editors really do.

Challenge: vanity publishers

Shift our focus to fact checking

Challenges- still widespread misunderstanding of what editors do, who and what they are for (ie, only for popular published books) in addition to cost cutting editor roles by organisations.

Trying something new. "We've been having this discussion for twenty years".

What is happening to communities? So much pressure on editors already where do we find the time to volunteer even if.

Difference between an editor and a non editor in recognising AI use and quality of work. How to brief clients about this. Costing clients more. Environmental concerns with AI.

Identify transferrable skills and better marketing about the wide range of skills editors have

Fracturing of the profession - different needs for different types of editors - meeting all needs


Certified training on editing from IPEd as a training organisation

Opportunity: willingness to adapt

Finding a way into the industry for new editors - getting experience Can IPEd encourage industry to offer internships?

AI generated text: Challenges in recognising and working with AI text. Convincing clients that AI-generated text is not as good as it first seems. Opportunities for editors to master use of AI.

Challenge: Editors seen as irrelevant because AI can do the same. Same challenges remain around pay, time limits. AI will bring opportunities to streamline tasks.



Editors need to do more advocacy, add the human element to editing. The shift of literacy is significantly changing, and editors can take on a bigger role.

AI presents the challenge and dichotomy of more work for human editors, who will inadvertently "feed the beast" with their work.

Be ambassadors for the profession

2. IPed's response:

What could IPed do to meet these challenges or grasp these opportunities?

Better marketing and advocacy

Misconception around the profession

Codification to celebrate individual milestones, recognition within the industry

More ways to connect that are not limited to Facebook. There are many types of online and offline communities.

Resourcing for retirement

A centralised place for sharing work opportunities in case of overload. A jobs board

Specialised advice channels

Join forces with our international partners - we're not the only editors grappling with these issues and we should be working with together.

Make a statement about what value editors can add that AI cannot.

Continue working towards an increase to the award rate

Training and development for effective and ETHICAL use of AI in editing.

Greater use of ambassadors (patron)

Look at how other professional societies are dealing with AI. Liaison. Is IPed using AI for its own business?

Stackable micro credential training with IPed

Come up with 'cheat sheets' of words for us to use when defending our positions, our roles. How to clearly explain the pros and cons of human editors vs AI editors

Advocacy, training and skills development around AI - not just its use but the underlying issues like ethics. Working out how to reposition the editing profession in an AI world.

As people think AI can do anything, we need more outreach and promotion as AI cannot do - and linkages with other groups, indexes, translators, authors



Working party on AI will be very helpful. Keep the members updated on what is learned.
Advocate for editors' value and what we do, to inform general public.

Careers Weeks at schools

Advertising for the profession, communicating and advocating for what we do, partnerships

Reinstate ambassador or outreach program to educate people about editorial processes and value

More outreach and awareness of IPed targeting organisations beyond traditional publishers and publishing industry, marketing IPed, the role of editors, the Editors Directory.

Make our selves more visible online and offline

More engagement with the wider literary sector

IPed mandating a minimum rate/charge for work for all members

Can IPed advocate for the fact checking skills of editors in the post truth world? Emphasising the rep and other cost to companies of factual errors

So more advocacy eg the Australian Dictionary

Create more skill sharing opportunities

Updated all-inclusive website (current website very dated)

Better marketing of editors in ways that inform potential clients of the difference we make.
Collect specific examples.

Educating people and companies about what editors do (not necessarily in the context of giving editing training).

IPed needs to be way more visible. Most people have no idea who we are and what we do.

Reframing editors as more than just editors of words. Content designers, media specialists, beta readers, sensitivity readers, accessibility experts. So other industries find us!

Centralise branch PD functions to free up personnel to work on other things. Branches should focus on networking/events and PD should be a central function.

IPed using their industry and government contacts to help

Training for structural editing, fact checking, accessibility in Word and InDesign, visual design to improve technical skills and reader experience

Rebrand the editor? Ughhh

Engage with government to recruit accredited editors.



Restart an active ambassador program to reach out to universities and other organisations, but don't hamstring the ambassadors this time.

- IPEd stronger position on GenAI. - Less propaganda

Big challenge. No budget for editors.

Certified training with IPEd as a training organisation

On-demand e-learning (course that people can take anytime)

Cooperate with other organisations, including government, to grow awareness about the importance of language

Can IPEd encourage industry to develop internships

Strong advocacy role around AI issues and also in promoting the role and value of editors

IPEd doing outreach to raise its profile, promoting benefits of human editors (especially accredited editors).

Work with schools to improve the syllabus for language education

More face-to-face connections and in-person training would help get more volunteers

More events and resources catered to students, promoting IPEd to editing students

Provide smaller and safer spaces for editorial discussions and advice.

Create more visibility and accessibility for all editors

Marketing: people are unaware of iPEd. Advocacy. More guidance on AI (IPEd must have a clear stance).

We need to establish IPEd on equal footing as the first call in Australia and ANZ to comment on industry issues, not as an afterthought.

Advertise and raise awareness beyond media and editing organisations

Engage with regional centres.

Info sessions at universities about careers in editing

Support and guidelines for best-practice use of AI.

Advocacy -get onto platforms and committees where you can shape the narrative and policies. Need more apostles.

Attract younger editors. Maybe a cohort or group that could enable bonding and representation.



Better ways of advocating for ourselves inside and outside the industry - especially new generation

Create groups that IPED create but let individuals or communities lead - so that, for example, a cultural responsiveness editing group can be led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Working with High Schools to introduce kids to the profession

Consider different mediums such as comics. Editing stand at Comcon.

Providing more PD on business skills, not just editing - build editors' capacity to adapt their businesses to a changing world.

Free up volunteer time from the branch committees to work on these issues.

Visibility of editors. Being credited in edited documents. Advocating for this or even having this in contracts. Helping readers see when documents have had an editor's touch rather than AI.

Emphasise the "high value" work that editors do (structure, analysis) - and support with training

Standards, clarity of language. Big opportunity for spoken language. Be persuasive communicators.

Improve the website - logical structure to serve both IPED members and the public

Audit the kinds of resources that help and provide sharing options to save money

Contacting new branch members to welcome them and encourage them to attend events

IPED needs to remain on the ball and be proactive in providing training to keep editors on the cutting edge of AI developments to enable informed use.

Comparison with tertiary qualifications. Automatic IPED membership for qualified professionals as mentors. Are IPED fees competitive? Apply for grants/funding? Increased promotion and advocacy of IPED

Support for freelancers. Niche interest groups

IPED supporting regional co-working spaces

Provide fact sheets or freely available about how to support people with AI

For membership increase - different branch structure or interest groups for other interest

Branches being more active. Branch for the NT. Subgroups for small and regional locations to aid inclusion.



3. The bold recommendation: What is the boldest, bravest action IPed could take?

Strike. No more editing. Let's see how it all falls apart?

A new website would be great!

Get editing recognised as a skill on the APSC Digital Professions. It is not currently recognised.

Form a union group dedicated to editors

Reinvent Editing (social media marketing, community outreach, Schools outreach)

A new name including 'Australasian'. 'Institute' is outdated.

Infiltrate government

Introduce registration for professional editors. Mandate accreditation. Appoint a strong, competent IPed spokesperson to insert ourselves into the narrative at every opportunity.

Editorial training for public not just members

Name could change to be clearer

Editors festival or greater presence at writers festival - as a way to better engage with the community about the role and value of editors and make it more accessible

Change name and the definition of what IPed considers to be an editor (for example, content designers and online writers who edit

Accept that AI is a reality and we need to adapt the profession to deal with it. Make technology work for us rather than being afraid of it.

Making Editing Fashionable Again

"Association of Australian Editors" AAE

Lower fees for student members

Something like MEAA fees database? Has pros and cons.

Infiltrating education.

Advocacy and have good conversations with the public to demonstrate the value of human editing

Connect with student editors

Stop being meek. Be bold. Bolshie IPed podcast. Create our own voice(s) and content

Become better activists and advocates. Become openly more political.



Greater presence at writers festivals. Editors and writers are hand in glove.

Podcasts

Look to expanding presence outside of Aust and NZ

Build industry connections beyond publishing

Does the government know we exist?

Consider enjoyable fundraising events

More networks and communities of practice sub groups, such as specific government editors, academic editors, etc

Develop different accreditation exams that recognises different kinds of editing

Other ways to achieve accreditation eg recognition of other quals

Unify more admin functions centrally to free branches up for local advocacy and networking.
Hire more staff.

Act like a union

Take over the national dictionary centre?

Branch structure should remain it could snider other special interest groups

Advertising

Find us a union that's interested in us

An updated website! Maybe Sharepoint?

Interaction and collaboration with unions eg MEAA

Getting out there and doing more advocacy, persuasion. Curation.

Offer accreditation via assessed modules as well as an exam.

Raise IPEd annual fees

Stop charging so much for online branch meetings

Develop robust accessibility policy that encourages and actively facilitates editors with disabilities to join the profession

Allow regions to form groups without formal approval from the state branch. Revise the by-laws.

Scaled IPEd fees based on income

Unionise or affiliate with a union.



New website. Make IPEd a household name. Be out there in the media.

Don't change the name.

Appoint an editing industry advocate whose focus is to raise awareness of the value of editing beyond what AI can do.

Advocate for the importance of editors in terms of AI

Start sponsoring and supporting festivals, etc to get logo and branding out there

Editors Australia

Continue and improve engagement with writers' orgs

Oops Editors Australasia

Getting editors recognised as a Digital Profession.

Create more tiers to membership. So more intro-level fees for early/less advantaged editors + higher fees for more experienced/advantaged editors

Podcasts? Zzzzz

Fully funded publicity campaign including better ambassador program - and make our website more accessible eg better colour contrast

Overcome AI fears. Abolish the branches. Have local chapters for socials/networks but integrate state branches to increase efficiencies and transparency. Could alleviate paid positions.

Appoint AI advocates

Hire a creative agency to develop and execute an advocacy campaign promoting the value, need and contributions of editors

Get on govt working groups on AI

Humans of IPEd initiative