

Report on IPEd's 2025 accessibility survey

Summary

This report captures the findings of IPEd's accessibility survey, which asked members about their experiences with the accessibility of our events, activities and services. The DEI Working Party (DEIWP) circulated the survey to all members in late 2025 and received 98 responses.

We were pleased that 57% of the survey respondents reported high or very high accessibility across IPEd's services overall, based on their personal experience. Several acknowledged IPEd's efforts over recent years to become more accessible and inclusive.

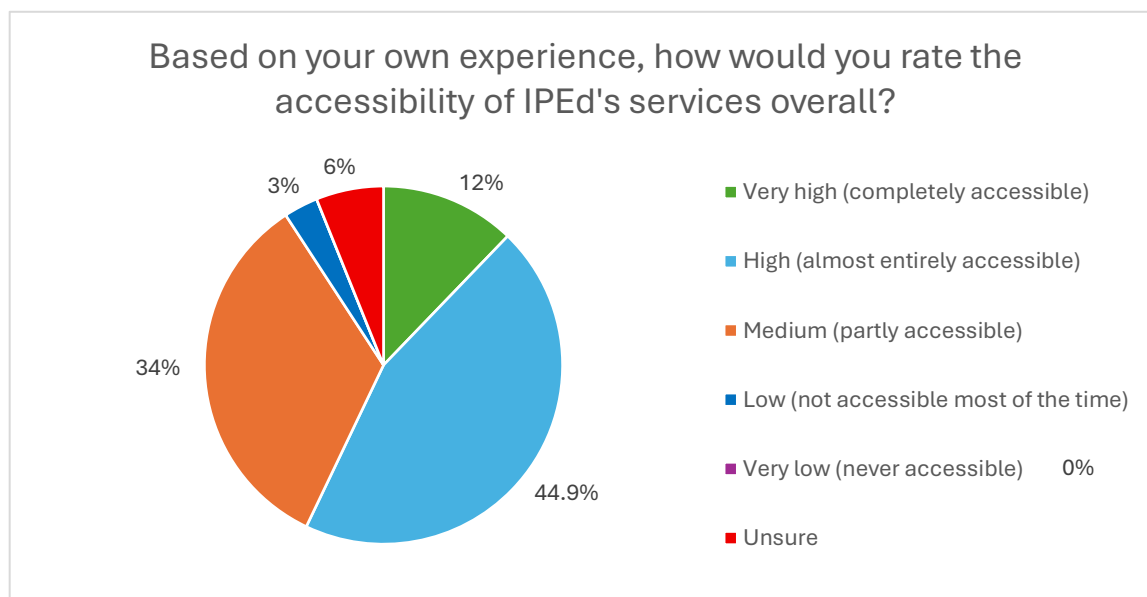
Nobody reported very low accessibility. However, this might mean that they have already been locked out of IPEd's services. Indeed, this is one major limitation of the survey: it will not capture the perspectives of members who have already cancelled their membership due to a lack of access, or any editors who were not able to access membership in the first place.

In between the 2 ends of this spectrum, 34% of respondents rated IPEd's accessibility as "medium (partly accessible)", which shows us that we have significant room to improve. IPEd's services certainly present access barriers to large portions of some demographics.

Common concerns related to:

- in-person events, particularly conferences, due to distance, timing, cost, physical barriers and the lack of livestreams or recordings
- the website, member portal (MemNet) and other online content, due to usability issues.

We also received suggestions to improve representation and member engagement.



This report has 3 main sections:

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2. Findings by demographic

3. Recommendations

1. General findings

In this section, we draw together the overarching themes that arose from the survey responses. In-person events like conferences present the biggest accessibility hurdle for IPEd, but the website and member portal also hamper access to our services.

In-person events create the most access challenges

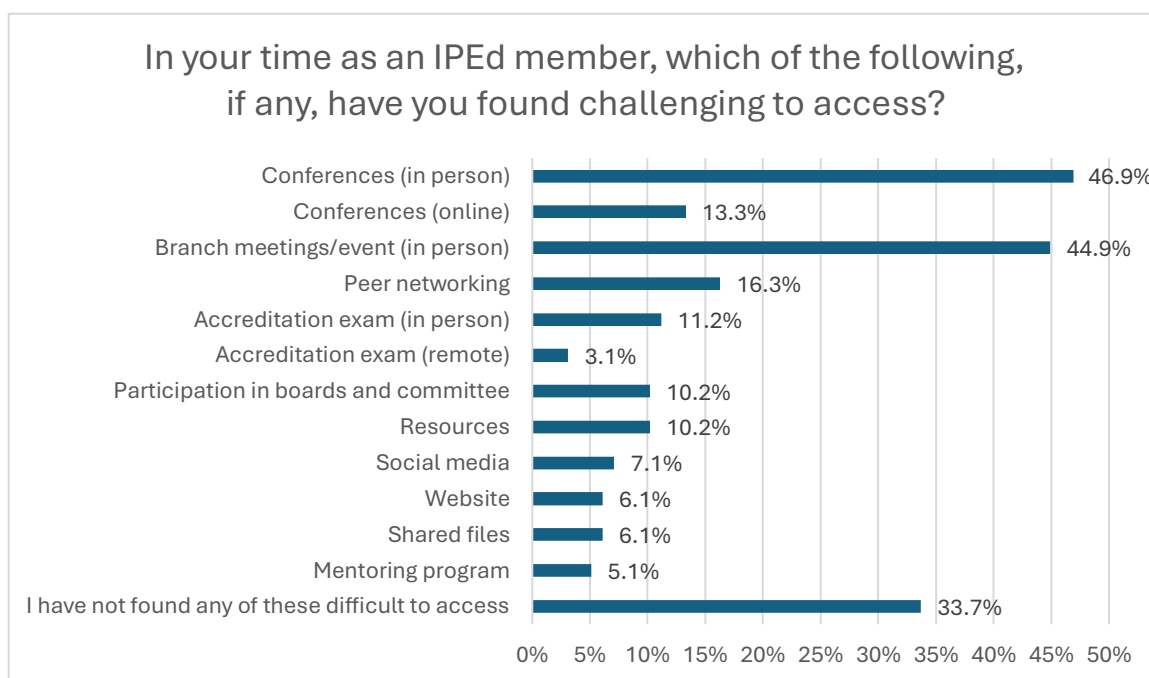
We asked which services members had found challenging to access, and in-person events topped the list:

- 47% of respondents said in-person conferences
- 45% said in-person branch meetings and events.

Around 13% found it hard to access conferences when held online.

Other areas with access challenges include peer networking (16%), the in-person accreditation exam (11%), resources (10%) and volunteer participation (10%).

Around one-third of respondents reported no issues.

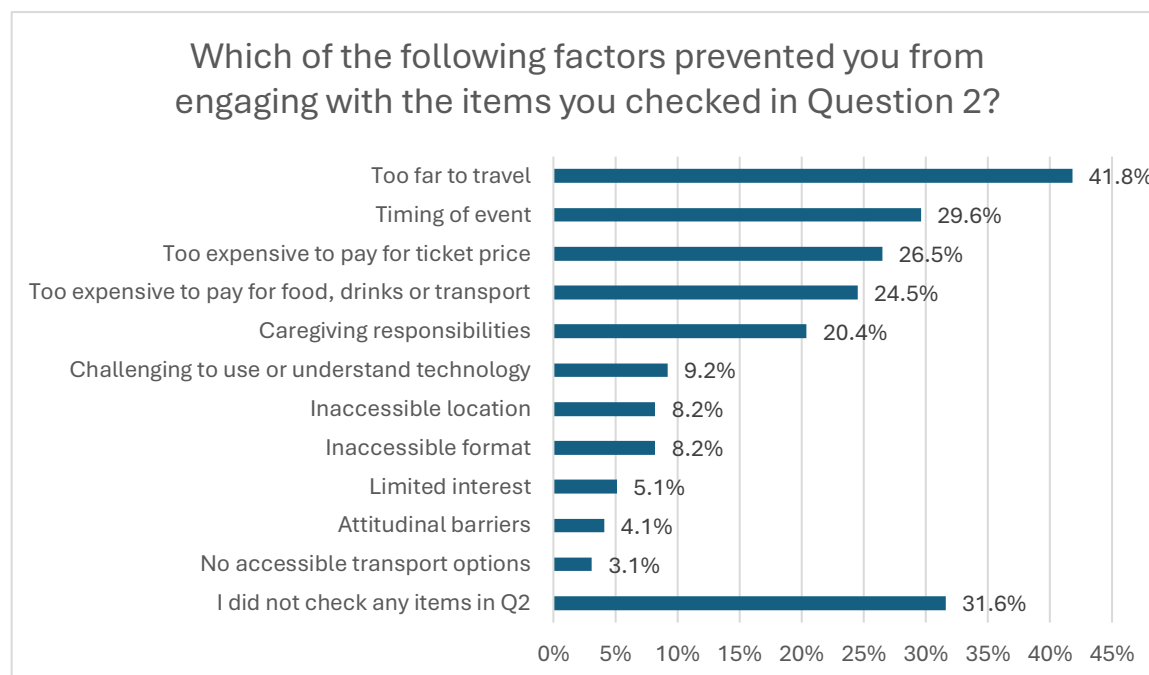


Distance, timing and costs prevent members from attending events

Common reasons for these responses were:

- distance (42%)
- timing (30%)
- cost of ticket (27%)
- cost of travel, food and other expenses (25%)
- caregiving responsibilities (20%).

We cannot break down the survey data to link specific event types with specific challenges. However, anecdotal evidence (and logic!) suggests a strong correlation between in-person conferences and concerns over distance and cost.



Interest in online, recorded and hybrid options is strong

Comments from survey respondents indicate a high level of demand for:

- more recorded workshops and professional development (PD)
- more variety in event timings (workdays, evenings, weekends)
- hybrid events
- longer access to recordings.

“The in-person conference without the option to Zoom in to one or more conference activities was an issue.”

This feedback suggests that IPEd should continue to broaden its range of event options and timings. For example, if a weekday workshop is to be repeated, it could be scheduled on a weekend for its second outing.

“When I taught a [postgraduate editing course], I taught the same course at 11 am and at 6 pm ... A similar principle could apply if students are expected to attend ‘in person’ but the better (cheaper) option would be to ensure that all courses offered virtually are able to be recorded and made available to students at a time that suits them.”

The current event feedback form asks attendees for their preferred event timing and format. We hope this data is collated and analysed to inform event planning alongside presenter availability. Further, we note the importance of offering times for speaker presentations that recognise Aotearoa New Zealand is at least 2 hours ahead of all Australian states. Equally, Western Australia is at least 2 hours behind the Australian east coast.

The e-learning work being led by the OPAL Working Party offers another important avenue to boost accessibility. For example, one member commented, “I live rurally with 2 young children and need access to online, asynchronous resources.”

IPed could also investigate the feasibility of extending the standard 3-month availability of recordings that is built into presenter agreements.

Making events virtual is not a fix-all

Several members mentioned the challenges they face accessing virtual events, with most not being comfortable with the technology (9% of all respondents). This underscores the importance of offering both in-person and virtual options.

“My problems with online events are perhaps more to do with my personality, my attitude or my age. I have never felt totally comfortable with Zoom, etc.”

We also know that many members value in-person networking opportunities, which virtual sessions cannot easily replicate.

“Zoom is great for learning but terrible for networking so I miss the social aspects of events.”

One member commented on their experience of negative mental and physical health impacts from being online for extended periods (e.g. during a conference). This is something the Events and Conference Standing Committee should consider when discussing the program for the 2027 conference.

IPed’s online presence would benefit from review

If we move on from events, the survey data has also told us that IPed’s online resources can present accessibility challenges:

- 10% of respondents said resources, including the member portal and discounts, could be challenging to access.
- 6% nominated the website.

“I have experienced no difficulty in accessing IPed’s services apart from the website. Website redesign one day perhaps, when funds allow.”

Concerns covered:

- navigation (e.g. finding key information about member discounts or events)
- usability (e.g. registering for events or setting up an Editors Directory profile)
- colour contrast (e.g. combining light blue + white), font size, and alt text for images
- content on social media not being available on the website and, conversely, content on the website not being easily shareable on social media
- representation and inclusion (e.g. building a sense of a united, supportive community).

“I really wish I could have a freelance editing entry [in the Editors Directory] but the Wall of Awful to get one feels insurmountable.”

“I’m not sure that the website, emails and the portal meet recommended accessibility standards. Do they? I don’t need them to but I don’t find any of them aesthetically pleasing or particularly easy to navigate.”

Improved communications would help lift engagement

The IPEd website and member portal are our key communication channels so it’s essential they become more user-friendly.

However, respondents also commented on communications at branch level. As a starting point, IPEd should consider reviewing how branches are using social media and address any issues for volunteers accessing local accounts.

To further improve engagement, respondents suggested ideas such as:

- having greater diversity in presenters at conferences and other events
- polling members on the conference topics of most interest to them
- championing emerging and in-house editors, alongside established freelancers, with more clarity about the options available for these members.

Attitudinal barriers can restrict access to mentoring and accreditation

A handful of respondents noted issues, particularly attitudinal barriers, when they tried to access the mentoring program or take the accreditation exam. These cases, at least one of which was historical, provide an essential reminder that the mentoring and accreditation processes should be transparent, fair and accessible to all.

We note the efforts of the Mentoring Standing Committee and Accreditation Board to work to these principles, especially through the recent diversity training initiative and the exam overhaul.

“I applied for mentoring and never heard back. [IPEd should] have a clear and transparent process for mentoring that operates with designated people and appeal mechanism. Do not assume some people are more worthy of mentoring than others.”

“I have a chronic [condition that causes pain]. I sat an accreditation exam in the days before it was held online. I was labelled ‘the special needs candidate’, which I found offensive, and was not offered any help ... I had to find my own solution.”

One respondent commented on receiving “erroneous and rude feedback” related to the exam. They called for an appeal mechanism and training for markers to improve the quality of their feedback.

Another respondent felt that professional members receive less promotion than accredited editors and expressed frustration that formal editing qualifications are not recognised for accreditation.

2. Findings by demographic

In this section, we capture feedback from members in different – but often intersecting – demographics. They have asked IPEd to prioritise flexible, low-cost PD and networking options, and to embed physical accessibility in the planning of in-person events.

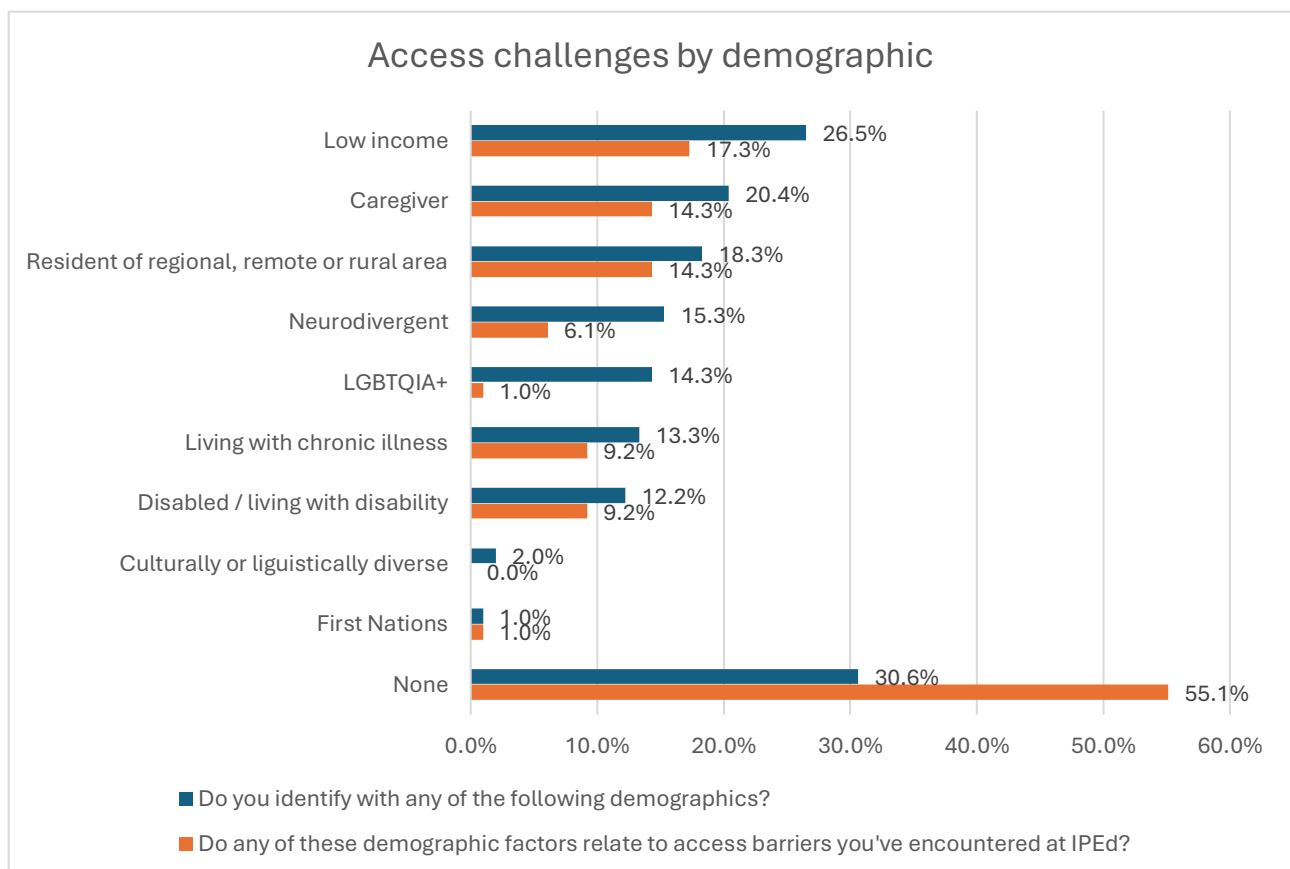
Different demographics report access barriers

When we asked about demographic factors, we heard from a diverse mix of members, including people with disability, neurodivergence and caregiving responsibilities. Their experiences make for sobering reading, as IPEd services present barriers to large portions of some demographics.

For example:

- 12 respondents live with disability, and 75% have faced related access barriers
- 13 live with chronic illness – 69% have faced related access barriers
- 18 live in regional, rural or remote areas – 78% have faced related access barriers
- 20 are caregivers to either children or adults – 70% have faced related access barriers
- 26 are on a low income – 47% have faced related access barriers.

Other demographics, such as LGBTQIA+ editors and culturally or linguistically diverse editors reported fewer or no access challenges.



First Nations representation appears to be lacking

We heard from one First Nations respondent, who queried whether IPEd has any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation. They called specifically for development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. The DEI Working Party supports this call.

(We know from the Australian Publishers Association's [2022 workforce survey](#) that the publishing industry could be more culturally diverse, and less than 1% of industry professionals are First Nations. As this survey is being repeated in 2026, it will be interesting to see what progress the industry has made towards greater inclusion.)

One non-First Nations respondent also commented on the value of PD related to Aboriginal cultural competency.

Every Australian editor needs to be able to do courses like [Terri Janke and Company's True Tracks®] at prices they can afford.

Unfortunately, our survey did not receive any responses identified as being from Māori editors.

Events and communications can create barriers for disabled editors

The survey had 12 disabled respondents, of whom 75% reported accessibility barriers. These respondents mentioned a range of practical considerations that could improve access, particularly relating to in-person events and communications.

For in-person events, respondents recommended choosing venues that have:

- lifts, ramps or other step-free access
- nearby parking with multiple spaces and transport links (or shuttle options), to minimise walking distances
- an internal layout that people with mobility disabilities can move through
- a quiet ambience where noise is not disruptive, including for people with hearing loss.

Accessibility information should be supplied for all events so members are not forced to ask.

"In-person access difficulty is not just about level access for wheelchairs; it's about walking distance, parking, transport, travel distance and cost."

For communications, awareness of vision-based disabilities is important, especially for older editors. Recommendations included ensuring that:

- type is an adequate size in emails and documents
- materials are accessible for members using assistive technologies (e.g. avoiding PDFs)
- all images in *Gatherings* (and other comms) have alt text.

Other respondents called for a disability inclusion action plan, and PD on disability access and inclusion delivered by lived experience organisations. This would expand member awareness beyond production-related principles (such as those in *Books without barriers*).

Editors living with chronic illness require flexibility

As we mentioned earlier, many respondents asked that IPEd offer a range of event times and formats, with access to virtual options and recordings. This flexibility is important for people from various demographics, including editors living with chronic illness who may not be able to attend in-person events or may miss online events if their illness flares up.

The survey heard from 13 respondents living with chronic illness, 69% of whom have experienced related access barriers.

“I was extremely disappointed that the 2025 conference and associated workshops had no online option (live or recorded, though only a live option would offer true access to the event). This excluded me from participating in the event for educational and networking purposes, but also limited my options for meeting professional development requirements in the next accreditation renewal process.”

Flexibility is also essential for the accreditation exam where formal exam conditions may not align with individual health needs for editors living with chronic illness or disability. However, we note that the exam format has changed in 2026. We will be watching the results with interest.

Regional, rural and remote members miss out on networking

IPEd needs to grapple with the question of how best to reach regional, rural and remote members – 14 of the 18 (78%) respondents in this demographic reported challenges.

Respondents acknowledged the benefits of online events and recordings, as well as the complexities of serving a dispersed membership. But several noted that they often miss out on in-person options, especially for networking, because the cost of travel is too high.

“Most activities are in capital cities. That's understandable because most editing work is in the capital cities but it does reduce the accessibility of IPEd services to people who live outside them.”

One respondent also commented that events are largely inaccessible to members who live outside Australia and New Zealand. Considering other time zones (even early mornings or late evenings) and providing recordings as a standard part of event admin would go some way towards addressing this concern.

Caregivers would benefit from flexible event options

As was the case for other demographics, having access to a range of event options was a common theme among those with caregiving responsibilities for either children or adults. Several noted that they value IPEd's attempts to run online events that are recorded for later viewing.

“I am very happy with the IPEd events online and the way many events are recorded, so that if I end up not being able to attend at the time (or I forget), I can still watch later.”

However, of the 20 respondents who had caregiving responsibilities, 70% had still experienced related access challenges.

Notably, this demographic intersected with others for many respondents.

Affordability is a common concern

As 27% of survey respondents reported having a low income – and a similar percentage reported that costs have created access challenges – affordability stands out as a key issue for members.

In the survey responses, we heard several calls to:

- reduce fees (membership, events, conferences, exams)
- offer more free or low-cost options
- provide subsidies or financial support.

One respondent noted that IPed's costs are reasonable compared with other professional associations but that editors generally have lower incomes.

This is an ongoing tension as the organisation seeks to remain financially viable, without placing a disproportionate financial burden on members.

However, it is something branches should consider when planning in-person networking events (which are generally less focused on generating revenue). A 3-course restaurant dinner may be prohibitively expensive for some members.

“IPed does a good job of making things accessible online, but part-time editing does not pay well, so most of the stuff that would really boost my career – training, conferences, etc. – is priced beyond my reach and, in the case of conferences, difficult to access in person.”

Neurodivergent members may need more structure

Some neurodivergent respondents commented on autistic anxiety affecting their access to IPed offerings (including nervousness around unfamiliar transport routes). Sensory factors such as noise and format are also important.

For members who seek to be involved in IPed committees, one respondent noted their preference for:

- meetings that are tightly run, with a clear agenda and a chair that manages participation to avoid interruptions and maintain structure
- materials that are shared well in advance to enable preparation.

“I cannot cope with too many people talking at once, coming up with new discussion topics on the fly, and talkfests that go around in circles.”

3. Recommendations

Regular non-negotiables

Who	What
IPEd Comms	• Use inclusive messaging and imagery (e.g. photos on the website/socials). • Check colour contrast. • Use alt text on all images.
IPEd Events	• Consider time zones (especially WA and ANZ) when scheduling events. • Enable captioning or subtitles or have options to download presentations so people can playback based on their own needs (e.g. adjusting volume, ability to replay content). • Record all events as standard practice and make recordings available for longer than 3 months.
In-person event organisers	• Consider mobility needs beyond wheelchair users. • Ensure venues have lifts, ramps, minimal stairs, accessible toilets, short walking distances and easy transport access. • Advertise access arrangements so people don't have to ask.
All	Avoid distributing resources as PDFs alone.

Short term

Who	What
Events and Conferences SC (tbc?)	• Consider format for 2027 conference program with regular breaks. • Turn on captioning for all recorded sessions. • Consider time zones (especially WA and ANZ) when scheduling events.
IPEd Comms	Develop social media guidance for branches to ensure consistency in content, design, images and accessibility.
DEIWP	Develop general access checklists for in-person and online events.

Medium term

Who	What
Board	• Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which would require a dedicated RAP working party to be convened. • Develop training for all chairs and deputy chairs on best practice for running meetings.
IPEd Admin	Transition to a new member database system to revitalise (and simplify!) the Editors Directory.
IPEd Comms	Revise the website's content, structure and design to improve accessibility, navigation and overall usability.