

Handy Hints for Volunteer Writers and Proof-Readers for Eumundi Voice

There are two main categories: news articles and feature articles. Other categories are: opinion pieces, editorials, and book and movie reviews.

News articles cover the basics of current community happenings. They answer the questions: who, what, where, how, and when? Small articles limit 100 words, longer limit 250 words

Feature articles are usually longer and more in depth than regular news articles. They cover one subject from multiple angles and are written in a more creative, entertaining format. Although a news story can be creative and entertaining, too. Limit 400 words.

It is important to remember that both news and features demand the same level of research and reporting and due regard, for the ethos of *Eumundi Voice*. Articles may be edited for length, style, grammar and punctuation. Keep your articles short, so there is plenty of room for photographs. A page one story is 150 words limit.

The Basic Story Outline

The best way to structure a newspaper article is to first write an outline. Then jot down ideas for the following six sections remembering always that you are reporting.

1. Lead sentence

Grab and hook your reader right away.

2. Introduction

Which facts and figures will ground your story? You have to tell your readers where and when this story is happening.

3. Opening quotation

What will give the reader a sense of the people involved and what they are thinking?

4. Main body

What is at the heart of your story?

5. Closing quotation

Find something that sums the article up in a few words.

6. Conclusion (optional—the closing quote may do the job)

What is a memorable way to end your story? The end quote may be a good way to sum things up. That doesn't always work. If you are quoting more than one

person with different points of view in your story, you cannot end with a quote from just one of them. Giving one of your interviewees the last word can tilt the story in their favour. You might choose to give an Internet address for readers to obtain further information.

Before you get started with writing, it is important for you to be familiar with *Eumundi Voice's* **Kit for Advertisers and Contributors**.

Style Hints for Volunteer Writers and Proof-Readers

The Words:

- All stories are to be factually accurate and fair, and reasonable and balanced accounts of events.
- Value judgement, endorsement, condemnation should be avoided in stories.
- The five Ws must be answered within the first two paragraphs: What, where, when, who and why.
- Articles should be written as press releases in the third person, for example, rather than saying "I would like to thank all who helped on the day", write your name "Chamber secretary, Mr Ian Jones, thanked all who helped on the day."
- Keep sentences short, simple and direct, with one sentence to a paragraph.
- All stories should be dated and sourced, (e.g. Media release, June 9). Make sure the organisation name is in the story, not just on the letterhead.
- Avoid superlatives (e.g., extremely, very, huge) as they don't actually tell us a lot and take up valuable space.
- Reports should generally be in the past tense.

Punctuation and Style

- No full stops in abbreviations (e.g., use NSW, SCC, Mr JW Smith)
- If you use curly quotes and apostrophes, they will automatically changed to straight quotes and marks by design software.
- Both en and em dashes are changed to en dashes by design software.
- Use single quote marks for unusual usage of a word (e.g., some native species have the 'smarts' to avoid predation).
- Use double quote marks for quoted (direct) speech.
- Don't use tabs or indents or try to imitate newspaper column layout.
- Use capitalised italics for artworks, books, plays, songs, and movies.
- Use & without spaces (e.g., P&C not P & C).
- Use hyphens to connect words (e.g., well-worn).
- Use a dash (-) with a space before and after, for an aside within a sentence (e.g. Mistakes are - after all - how you improve) and at the end (e.g. know your limits - it could save your life) instead of a comma.
- Web addresses (URLs) should be www.blogs.com (e.g., delete the http://).
- Use single word spacing, even after full stops.
- Use the hidden character function to check for unwanted spaces.

- For locations, use Rd, Ave and St, not Road, Avenue and Street.
- Dates should be Friday, 18 June, without a year if it is within the current, previous or coming year. Say next year or last year as necessary.
- Long names should be spelt out with the abbreviation in brackets on the first mention. Use the abbreviation thereafter, for example, Eumundi and District Historical Association (EHA) held its annual ...).
- Use position or role first, then name (e.g., Eumundi State School captain, Suzie Greentree). Most positions are lower case, (e.g., mayor Mark Jamieson)
- Sunshine Coast Council rather than Sunshine Coast Regional Council.
- Use lower case council, association and members throughout stories.
- Use Cr David Law not Councillor David Law (and not Clr either).
- Say "EDCA decided ..." or "The meeting decided ..." rather than "Members decided ...".
- Use "said" rather than "states", unless you are quoting from a written statement.
- Use "more than" rather than "over".
- Spell out barbecue (not BBQ).

Numbers

- Phone numbers in the format 5442 7197 and mobiles 0413 199 766
- A date range in the same month is July 19-23.
- Numbers 10 and above are numerals, from one to nine are spelt out, except when it is a measurement (e.g., 5cm but five people).
- Use a comma as thousands separator for 10,000 and more but no separator for 9999 and less.
- It's 10am, not 10.00 a.m.
- It's one million or 2.57 million, not 1,000,000 or 2,570,000.
- Sentences should not start with numbers. If you have to start a sentence with numbers, spell them out (e.g., Fifty-five volunteers ...) or use an introductory phrase (e.g., Last year, 158 people ...).
- Spell out contractions (e.g., use "do not" not "don't") except for an informal quote (e.e., Bill said, "I'm glad we moved here.")
- Avoid semi-colons(;) and exclamation marks(!).
- Placings: first, second, third ... ninth, 10th, 11th ... etc. Turn off ordinals in Word to avoid, for example, 12th, 13th. Turn off ordinals in Word to avoid superscript.

Look out for common mistakes

- No apostrophes in plurals, (e.g., under-16s and CDs).
- Use them for possessives, (e.g., team's success).
- Possessive Its does not have an apostrophe (e.g., The dog wagged its tail).
- Abbreviation "it's" has an apostrophe (e.g., It's been a long day).
- Don't confuse tenses when reporting what a person says. If the words are quoted verbatim, they are surrounded by quote marks and the original tense is retained, (e.g., "This is the best thing since sliced bread," she said) and note the comma goes inside the quotes.
- Don't mix tenses (e.g., said ... was ... said ... is).

- Recognise collective nouns, (e.g., The club will hold its ... NOT the club will hold their).
- It is EITHER ... Member for Noosa, Ms Sandy Bolton, said ...OR ... Member for Noosa Ms Sandy Bolton said... (Note the commas – two matching or none).
- Commas often go in pairs, around a clause. The exception is, of course, when the clause starts or ends sentence.
- Use "who" for people and "that" or "which" for things,(e.g., "the man who" not "the man that").
-