

Appointing a Town Crier



Creative
Colourful
Community
Ambassadors

A.H.G.A.T.C.



POINTS TO CONSIDER

- WHAT ARE COUNCILS EXPECTATIONS.
- SELECTING YOUR REPRESENTATIVE.
- MAKING THE APPOINTMENT.
- REGALIA AND ACCESSORIES.
- FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.
- REGALIA STYLING NOTES.

Making the most of your Town Crier

COMMUNITY MARKETING AND YOUR TOWN CRIER

Having made the decision to appoint a Town Crier the next step is selecting your Town Crier. In most situations the Council will advertise the position seeking applications from interested parties to audition for the role of Town Crier. This process could either be a public or closed audition depending on your wishes.

Ideally a panel of judges will consider the performance of each applicant to select the most suitable candidate. The best candidate should be able to score highly in not only volume but also in clarity and diction—they have to be clearly understood. Your best candidate may be a lady crier as the higher vocal register can carry well.

If Councils expectations include the Town Criers participation in more formal ceremonies and events, welcoming dignitaries, opening Council facilities etc. the manner in which the candidate presents themselves may also be considered. The Guild has developed scoring guides which can be provided to make your task easier. In some limited cases the Guild may even be able to provide one of our members as a guest judge.

Decide first what your council needs are

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS WILL ENSURE THE BEST OUTCOME FOR ALL

THE SELECTION

Town Criers were in essence the first mass social media sources so it would seem appropriate to use some of the modern equivalents to find your candidates. Local radio may be able to play a part in promoting the concept and you could use a judge from the radio station to attract additional coverage of any competition and perhaps the outcome of the audition or competition. Candidates could be supplied with a prepared cry –so all contestants are judged on the same words or they could be asked to demonstrate their ability to write their own cry.

- Candidates should be made fully aware of Councils expectations for the role at the time of applying for the position.
- Consideration could be given to preliminary auditions before a public 'cry off'.
- A panel of 3 judges should be used to determine a suitable candidate.
- Allow sufficient time for the successful contestant to prepare for any major activity. i.e. best not to appoint a Town Crier a week before a major festival etc.
- Contact the AHGATC Membership Secretary for Judging packs.



THE APPOINTMENT

- NORMALLY A LONG TERM POSITION.
- PERHAPS A PROBATIONARY PERIOD.
- YOUR TOURISM AMBASSADOR.
- KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL HISTORY.

THE APPOINTMENT

Persons who take on the role of Town Crier generally do so out of a genuine connection with the community and wanting to promote the area and its attractions. The Ancient & Honourable Guild of Australian Town Criers recommend that wherever possible a long-term or lifetime appointment be made to ensure maximum engagement. That said it is not uncommon for a probationary period of some duration to be completed before the appointment for life takes effect. The appointment should be recorded in Council minutes and accompanied by a formal document or certificate of appointment. The Guild can provide suggested wording for the certificate upon request.

When asking your Town Crier to appear at functions it is important to understand that the office of Town Crier is a non partisan, apolitical and sectarian role. Your Crier should not be making declarations that may be seen by a normal person as containing biased or controversial content.

Once a Crier is established in the community we recommend that Council encourage community groups to use the Crier's services to help build the profile and experience of the Town Crier. Ultimately this develops confidence and capability for an excellent contribution to your communities overall social wellbeing.

Let your community know loudly and proudly that you are appointing an official Town Crier and what you want the role to entail. Wherever possible make the presentation of the certificate of appointment at a public event.

A Town Crier is still not a common sight so they will be photographed often and can make a lasting impression on visitors to your region or when travelling for competitions in Australia or abroad.

Given the nature of many activities your Crier will be involved in having a Working with Children check prior to the appointment is recommended.

Officially appointed Town Criers are eligible to apply for membership of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Australian Town Criers and compete in sanctioned competitions for awards including the title of Australian champion.

- By tradition the appointment is an honorary incumbency.
- You may consider a probationary period before confirming appointment.
- Once established your Town Crier may be asked to perform for non-council events or functions such as fetes or charity fundraisers .
- Large regions may consider the appointment of an assistant Town Crier.
- It is quite common for the Town Criers partner to act in an unofficial capacity as a companion escort.

THE REGALIA

The common uniform, or more properly, the regalia worn in Australia follow the English traditional style that are based on the dress from around the mid eighteenth century onward. Military styling for regalia is quite common.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

By modern tradition the role of Town Crier is commonly that of an honorary incumbency. Councils generally support attendance of their Crier at the Australian and international Championships.

TOURISM AMBASSADOR

The principal role for the Town Crier could be seen as a Tourism Ambassador. At civic events your Crier should be able act as a master of ceremonies if required. A good working knowledge of your local history or the ability to acquire it is considered an essential tool of the Town Crier.



THE REGALIA AND ACCESSORIES

Unfortunately there is no way of avoiding this. A good quality well made uniform is going to be expensive to purchase and maintain. Materials, design, colours etc will all have a bearing on the final cost which can run to more than \$1,000. A quality handbell, essential for the role, will cost at least \$100 to \$175 before engraving.

Costs for the regalia could be managed if it were to include a more contemporary styling. Nonetheless your Town Crier should stand out in a crowd and be outfitted in a style that reflects the community they represent. Consider the style and councils official colours and any other elements of the district that may be able to be included. The council crest should appear on the Criers scroll

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the role of the official Town Crier is one that is an voluntary honorary incumbency it would reasonable for council to assume some of the regalia maintenance costs as they can be expensive. Depending on the nature of the materials used in the construction it may require regular cleaning only possible by dry cleaning. Items like gloves, shirts and footwear also need to be replaced regularly .

Your Town Crier will undoubtedly incur personal expenses in travelling to and from official events on councils behalf and recovery of those expenses should be considered in determining a budget or perhaps an honorarium or stipend for services. Championship competitions are hosted by councils right around Australia and support for your Crier to attend these should be budgeted. International competitions markets your community to world wide audiences.

- Uniforms are likely to need to be dry cleaned.
- Reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses should be budgeted for.
- From time to time uniform items may need to be replaced.
- As a tourism ambassador your Town Crier will need support from council marketing teams to promote your region at approved events.
- Support to attend Australian and international Championships.
- Your Town Crier represents your Mayor, council and its citizens.





TOURISM AMBASSADOR

Promoting your community in one of the most cost effective ways possible, your Town Crier could bring years of service to council and bring joy to thousands of visitors over that time.

Depending on your needs your Crier may also serve as a by-laws officer.

Making the most of your Town Crier

WHAT YOU COULD EXPECT

The role of the Town Crier has changed over time and is now much more ceremonial in nature. Your crier can add a sense of dignity and formality to many events that would not be possible other wise. There are many councils whose criers have served for over 25 years.

Experience has shown that the Town Crier can command the attention of almost any audience and make events 'special'. Because Town Criers are not common place tourists always ask to be photographed with your Crier.

Over the past 30 years Guild members have participated in many hundreds of events. Here are just a few of the activities your Town Crier could be part of :-

- Citizenship ceremonies.
- Public holiday events and festivals, Australia Day, New Years.
- Leading parades.
- Opening council meetings or council facilities.
- Compering fete's and bazaars.
- Agricultural shows.
- Greeting representatives from sister cities.
- Arrival of the Olympic torch, Variety Bash competitors
- Greeting tour groups, ships etc.
- University graduations
- and many many more

Suggested Expectations.

- Availability - with appropriate notice Council should reasonably be able to call on the Crier to be available to perform a duty or function.
- Proclamations - Council can expect a Crier to be able to draft a suitably worded proclamation for an event. Council may choose to approve any cry beforehand.
- Presentation - Council should expect high standards of personal presentation and appropriate behaviour.
- Knowledge - Your Crier should have a good working knowledge of the community history and an awareness of key features.

STYLING NOTES FOR YOUR CRIERS REGALIA

While many of the livery styles are seen as a military in design it is more about having an impactful and eye catching appearance. The use of your council official colours in the creation of the Criers attire is used frequently across Australia. The scroll often employs the council's official crest. One example is Grafton's Town Crier appears in purple to reflect the regions famous jacaranda's while the Town Crier for Toowoomba wears a Ruthven tartan kilt. The regalia is to capture elements of your community and is worn with pride by your representative.

Top to toe.

- Tricorn hat—may be trimmed with feathers.
- Topcoat—usually with an attached cape.
- Lace jabot and shirt with lace trimmed cuffs and gloves. You will probably need two of each to cope with all day or weekend events.
- Long vest. Day or evening vests may be different colours.
- Period trousers. As above you may need two and of different colours.
- Riding boots or bucked shoes and long hose.
- Lady Criers most commonly choose period styled dresses.
- A scroll and of course the bell, or device to call to order.



your Town Crier

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