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## ANNUAL REPORTS – Design, layout and graphics

The annual report should be easy to read and engage with the reader who might not be financially literate. The graphics and text should complement each other. Copy should be crisp and clear and avoid clichés. It should be written with enthusiasm and passion.

The report should be easy to navigate and the content capable of being skimmed. The report should focus on the reader and what the organisation wants the reader to absorb from the report.

Remember that a printed annual report does not automatically translate into the online medium and this issue should be discussed with your designer.

### The written component

- > Is the writing clear and concise?
- > Is the report written with vigour and pace?
- > Is it technically correct (eg. grammar, spelling, punctuation etc)?
- > Is it written in plain English with short words and short sentences?
- > Does it use active rather than passive voice?
- > Is it free of jargon and are technical terms explained?
- > Can it be understood by shareholders who may not be financially literate?
- > Are figures presented in easy-to-understand format?
- > Is information cross-indexed well?
- > Are headings and sub-headings more than just labels? Are they active and interesting?
- > Is there balance between the amount of words and visual layout?
- > Does the report present a strong reflection of the organisation's identity, values and culture?
- > Does the report convey an impression of strength – that this organisation has a clear idea of what it is doing and where it is going?

### The graphics and production components

- > Does the design encourage the reader to open the report?
- > Is there a strong cover statement?
- > Does it hold the reader's interest once inside?
- > Does it support a theme or message?
- > Is the design functional and an aid to understanding?
- > Are all four covers used to maximum advantage?
- > Is the typeface readable and of an appropriate size?
- > Are there effective readership-enhancing devices such as breakout quotes?

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- > Is colour used to enhance communication?
- > Is the design functional and does it work in harmony with the text to make the report readable and assist understanding?
- > Are photographs well composed, interesting and used to reinforce key messages?
- > Are graphs and charts used to explain information?
- > Is the report well printed? Are page alignments accurate? Is it securely bound?
- > Does the design encourage selective reading?
- > Does the report lend itself to online viewing? (See online reporting)