

ADVICE AND HINTS FOR AMHA SPEAKERS

GENERAL.

- ❖ Pick your topic carefully. You need to know and understand your subject so you can speak in a relaxed way, and be confident in answering questions.
- ❖ Correct timing is vital. It's better to finish a bit early and have more time for questions and discussion, than be rushing at the end, and spoiling the delivery of your final points. If the session chair does indicate that you are nearly out of time, finish up as easily as you can – it's not fair to later speakers or to the organisers if you cause the program to over-run.
- ❖ You must give your talk (on disc or stick) to the A/V person well in advance, so that any potential problems can be sorted out. If you use a MAC, and have prepared the talk in Keynote, note that exporting in PowerPoint is not always completely successful (as three speakers found at Beechworth). Check with the organisers in advance that the required projector/computer cables are available, and that Keynote will be supported. Hopefully this will be so at future conferences.
- ❖ Use the microphone all the time, and stay aware of the angle between it and your mouth. Remember that many in the audience may have hearing problems.

THE PRESENTATION.

- ❖ Use a simple font for the slides: Gill Sans in either upper or lower case is easy to read.
- ❖ The font needs to be big enough to be legible from the back row: 64pt for main headings, 28-36 for sub-headings, 24-30 for dot points.
- ❖ Don't overcrowd the slides: it's better to have a few extra slides than to find the audience can't decipher what you've written.
- ❖ Don't have more than one or two images with captions on one slide.
- ❖ Be very careful with the use of colour: coloured backgrounds can make the text very difficult to read – and use a great deal of ink if printed. Plain text in black, or definite colour on white or very pale backgrounds, is easiest to read. Use bold, or a different colour, for emphasis.
- ❖ Put frames round images.
- ❖ Don't overdo the animations and other effects.

- ❖ Use an effective pointer.
- ❖ **Practice** is essential: by yourself, to friends and family, and if at all possible, with a projector, so you can check all the formatting on a big screen. Some slides look very different when projected.
- ❖ Know your slides: you are telling a story to a hopefully interested audience, who can read the slides for themselves. Your job is to fill in the extras and enhance the story.

FOR THE LESS EXPERIENCED SPEAKER.

- ❖ Have you ever watched, or heard yourself, speaking in public? If you have a friend with a video camera, get them to film you in a trial session of at least 3 minutes duration. Watch and listen to your output.
- ❖ It is surprising how often speakers use gestures and mannerisms which detract from their presentation. Seeing and hearing yourself should help you to identify and avoid such traits.
- ❖ Equally important is the vocal delivery; voices frequently lose volume, or lack clear diction. Audiences are sympathetic, but they cannot share your enthusiasm if they can't hear you properly. This is particularly important for women, many of whom have soft voices. Project yourself! Study the techniques of speakers who impress you with their delivery.