

# Web Based Annual Reporting

**Stephen Horne**  
**Managing Director, IAB Services**



23 June 2008

# Annual Reporting

Reform needed both to substance and form

- ✓ Attention has been (rightly) focused on *substance*
- ✓ But *form* is also in need of improvement
- ✓ Even good Annual Reports often rate as an average piece of communication
  - = the achievement of shared meaning
- ✓ Every communication needs to consider
  - user requirements
  - structural elements
  - communication channels

# Traditional Structural Elements

- ✓ It's all about *navigating the report* so that the reader obtains “meaning”
- ✓ Reporting framework
  - once by function or division (activity focus)
    - based on organisation chart
    - KPIs were “busy-ness” metrics
  - Now usually by objective (outcome focus)
    - based on corporate plan
    - KPIs are results measures

# Traditional Structural Elements

- ✓ Contents , Glossary, Index
  - road map
  - “jargon buster”
- ✓ Internal links and cross references
  - useful for navigation, but too much can suggest a confusing overall report structure
- ✓ Summaries
  - Snapshots, dashboards, graphics
  - Simple explanations (eg. Financial Report)

# The start of a user revolution

- ✓ Websites were originally “supplier” focused
  - “what we do”, “what we have for you”
  - catalogue of documents and activities
- ✓ But focus group research challenges that
  - customer focus: “what we want from you”
  - turned the glove inside-out – website redesign (see ICAC)
- ✓ More savvy users demand more analysis
  - search-a-bility within the site (engine)
  - search-a-bility across the www (metadata tags)
  - comparison (benchmarking) tools (eg. Moneywatch)

# New forms of Reporting

- ✓ Summary vs full Annual Report
- ✓ Special Purpose Reports (eg. TBL)
- ✓ Pressures from Regulators and Customers
  - continuous reporting
  - simplified reporting and improved analysis
- ✓ Online reporting trend accelerated

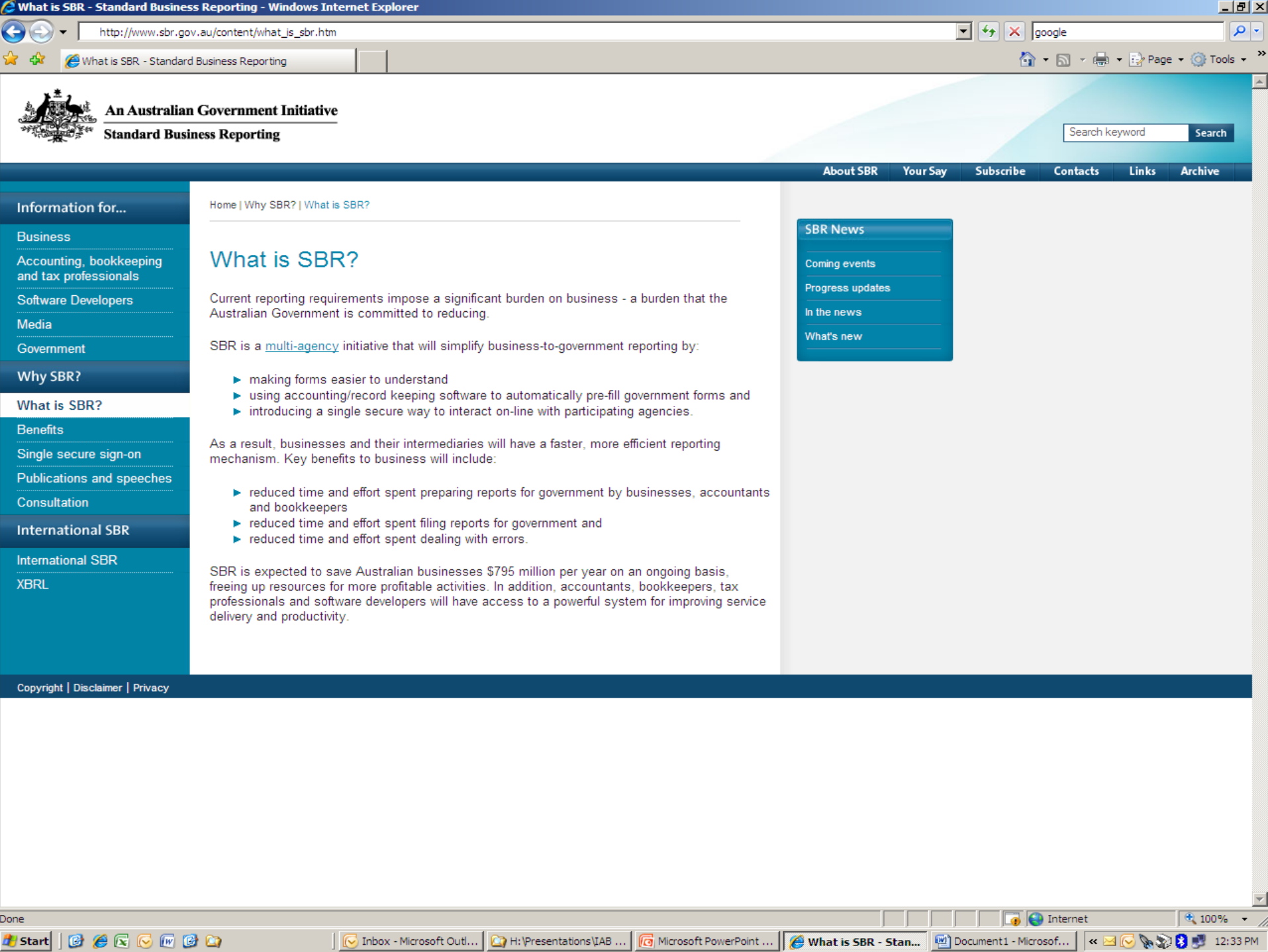
# First steps into cyberspace

- ✓ Most organisations still “think-print” to begin with
  - disc or cd-rom version
  - online pdf
  - both have major access and navigation problems
- ✓ Sectioned-pdf's
  - a little easier, but internal movement is still poor
- ✓ Web based reporting
  - actually a whole new communication channel. Requires a significant re-think

# Technology rewrites the script

- ✓ web design tools add new possibilities
  - easy internal navigation
  - text-balloon explanations
  - bells and whistles (movement, embedded video)
- ✓ XBRL will revolutionise financial reporting
  - free language for electronic communication
  - defined by an international standard
  - think of it like a bar code on every piece of financial reporting data
  - Being pushed by Federal Government (SBR Program)





# Criteria for Online Reporting

- ✓ New Award category this year for the Australasian Reports Awards
- ✓ Five main areas to address:
  - Communication design
  - Accessibility
  - Printability
  - Transparency
  - Organisational Branding and Values

Electronic (Online) Reporting Award / Criteria Applicable to Special Award Categories / Criteria - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.arawards.com.au/index.php/eng/Criteria/Criteria-Applicable-to-Special-Award-Categories/Electronic-Online-Reporting-Award

annual reports awards

Electronic (Online) Reporting Award / Criteria Applicable to Special Award Categories

Page Tools

HomeAbout the ARAEntering the AwardsCriteriaGala EventSeminarsSponsorsWinnersContact Us

WELCOME TO THE  
AUSTRALASIAN REPORTING AWARDS

Criteria

ARA Criteria 2009

General Criteria Applicable to all Divisions

Additional Criteria for Specific Industries/Divisions

Criteria Applicable to Special Award Categories

Sustainability Reporting Award

Governance Reporting Award

Communication Awards

Occupational Health & Safety Reporting Award

Knowledge Capital Reporting Award

Electronic (Online) Reporting Award

Meat & Livestock Australia  
2008 Electronic (Online) Reporting Award Winner

Electronic [Online] Reporting Award

Since the implementation of the Simpler Regulatory System Bill by the Australian Government in 2007, many listed companies have begun to distribute annual reports online via the Internet and provide hard copies upon request. While regulations covering public sector reports will still require full printed documents, there is significant and growing interest and development in online reporting by some government sector and community organisations. This award seeks to recognise the effectiveness and quality of Online Reporting for Publicly listed companies, Government bodies and not-for-profit organisations.

**ARA expects the critical disclosure elements of the specific published Criteria to be applied**, but recognises the special nature of the electronic medium and the necessary changes in presentation and access online reports need to employ to attract, inform and hold the reader. The primary purpose of the online report is that it must be able to be clearly read on screen, can be easily accessed and satisfy all the needs of online users who should be able to view, understand, extract and print all, or any part of the report.

ARA acknowledges the support of Designate Group in the development of these criteria and in facilitating the judging process. We are grateful to the Australian Investor Relations Association for their advice published in 'Electronic Communications Guidelines for Australasian Listed Entities',

The Online Annual Report should strive for excellence in:

**Communication Design:**

- Is the Online Report designed for screen viewing?
- Can the Report be easily read online?
- Can the reader control the font size? Does any colour contrast between text and background enhance or detract the reports readability?
- Is the Online Report different to the printed version?
- Does it allow multiple levels of readership such as skimming and in-depth reading?
- Does the Report effectively highlight critical messages and text?
- Are images used to enhance or do they detract from the message?
- Are images captioned effectively?
- Has any flash, animation, audio, video etc been used? Has it been effective or a distraction? Does it slow down the file, impair or enhance the communication?

**Accessibility:**

- Is the Report easily accessed from the website?
- Is the navigation intuitive and easy to use?
- Does the Report have a table of contents/index? Are the contents and index linked to the main

http://www.arawards.com.au/index.php/eng/Contact-Us

StartInbox - Microsoft OutlookMicrosoft PowerPoint - ...Electronic (Online) Re...Internet100%4:30 PM

# Criteria for Online Reporting

## ✓ Communication design:

- Is the Online Report designed for screen viewing?
- Can the Report be easily read online?
- Can the reader control the font size? Does any colour contrast between text and background enhance or detract the reports readability?
- Is the Online Report different to the printed version?
- Does it allow multiple levels of readership such as skimming and in-depth reading?
- Does the Report effectively highlight critical messages and text?
- Are images used to enhance or do they detract from the message?
- Are images captioned effectively?
- Has any flash, animation, audio, video etc been used? Has it been effective or a distraction? Does it slow down the file, impair or enhance the communication?

# Criteria for Online Reporting

## ✓ Accessibility:

- Is the Report easily accessed from the website?
- Is the navigation intuitive and easy to use?
- Does the Report have a table of contents/index? Are the contents and index linked to the main sections of the Report?
- Can the user move within sections and between sections? Between levels? Does the user have to go through too many levels?
- Does the report provide interactive links to relevant sites/documents?
- Can users quickly get the information they want? Does the user always know where they are, in the Report?
- Does the Report use clarifying descriptions when necessary?
- Can readers copy and paste information for their own use?
- Can financial information be accessed in spreadsheet form? Is it already available in that form?
- Is all referenced information linked to its relevant page?
- Is there a site map and help button?

# Criteria for Online Reporting

## ✓ Printability:

- Is the Online Report designed and produced to allow for the purpose of printing?
- Is the Online Report set up for quick, cheap and efficient printing?
- Can the Report be downloaded in full for later reading and printing?
- Can individual sections of the report be downloaded for later reading and printing?
- Can the user print directly from the page they are viewing?

# Criteria for Online Reporting

## ✓ Transparency:

- Is there access to the Full Annual Report?
- Is the organisation letting people choose the information they want or dictating to them?
- Are graphs, tables and diagrams clear and easily read and easily understandable?
- Are there links to any other parts of the organisation's website or other websites for further information?
- Was the Online Report available quickly after the results were released? Was it available by the time the printed version was mailed?
- Are Senior Management and Directors clearly taking responsibility for the Report content?

# Criteria for Online Reporting

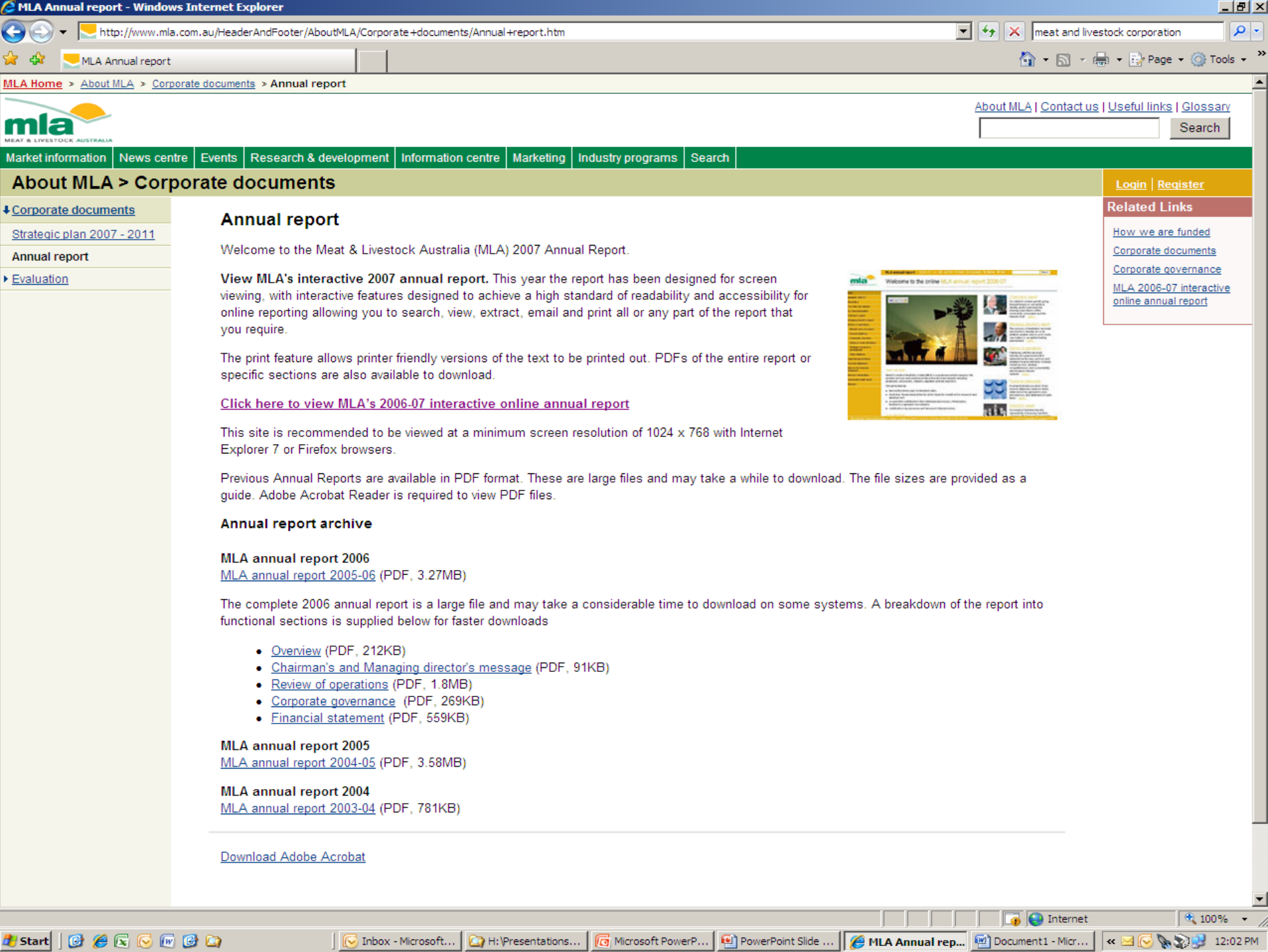
## ✓ Branding and Values:

- Does the Online Report consistently reflect the organisation's brand i.e. website, corporate profile and other online documents?
- Does the Report visualise the organisation's values?
- Does the Report relate to the website?



# An example to look at

- ✓ ARA winner of the Online Reporting Award:
  - Meat and Livestock Australia
  - [www.mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au)





# Some Issues to Ponder

- Some users may see this as cost shifting if they have to use their own resources to print out material from the Report
- Limiting the use of colour, and use of borderless printing, may help reduce costs for users
- XBRL – stay tuned – your organisation will need skills in this area
- Annual Reporting may not continue to be “annual” for much longer. Especially with XBRL, shorter reporting periods, if not continuous reporting, is surely coming



## Winners

- > [2008 Award Recipients](#)
- > [Gold Awards](#)
- > [Silver Awards](#)
- > [Bronze Awards](#)
- > [2007 Award Recipients](#)
- > [2006 Award Recipients](#)
- > [2005 Award Recipients](#)
- > [2004 Award Recipients](#)
- > [2003 Award Recipients](#)

## Gold Awards

Australia Post  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC)  
Barwon Water  
BHP Billiton  
Boral Limited  
Brimbank City Council  
Caboolture Shire Council  
Central Queensland Ports Authority  
City of Boroondara  
City of Kingston  
CSR Limited  
Department of Emergency Services  
Gold Coast City Council  
Hume City Council  
Legal Aid New South Wales  
Macarthur Coal Limited  
North East Water  
NSW Lotteries Corporation  
Nurses Board of Victoria  
OneSteel Limited  
Port of Brisbane Corporation  
Residential Tenancies Authority  
Rio Tinto  
Santos Ltd  
Stanwell Corporation Limited  
Suncorp-Metway Ltd  
Tennis Australia  
The Hospitals Contribution Fund of Australia Limited  
Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health  
Warrigal Care  
Watercare Services Limited  
West Wimmera Health Service  
Western District Health Service  
Western Region Water Corporation  
Westpac Banking Corporation  
Woodside Petroleum Ltd

# Working with Agencies to improve the Public Sector



**Stephen Horne**  
**Managing Director**

**IAB Services is a NSW government trading enterprise**  
operating since 1985 to assist State, Local and Commonwealth  
Government bodies in NSW and the ACT to improve their  
performance  
and manage their risks

**[www.iab.nsw.gov.au](http://www.iab.nsw.gov.au)**

**Ph: 9261 9104 email: [stephen.horne@iab.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stephen.horne@iab.nsw.gov.au)**