

CONQUERING CONFLICT

Reducing family conflict and youth
homelessness across Scotland

PRIMATE

SCCR
Scottish Centre for
Conflict Resolution



Background

In Scotland, family relationship breakdown is one of the major contributing factors to youth homelessness and life chances can slip away. Established by the Edinburgh Cyrenians and funded by the Third Sector Early Intervention Fund, the Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (SCCR) charity was founded to be a National Resource Centre for best practice in conflict resolution, mediation and early intervention work. Its vision is to help families overcome the difficulties that affect their lives and reduce resulting teenage homelessness.

- Every year, nearly 5,000 young people – the equivalent of five high schools – become homeless in Scotland because the relationship with their family breaks down.*
- 61% of young people said arguments happen at home at least once a week.*
- 25% of youngsters think about leaving home at least monthly.*
- 50% of professionals didn't feel they have the skills or knowledge to support families at such times, despite 83% saying it was part of their role.*

Objectives

We set out to build a digital hub that would act as a platform for SCCR to promote their cause, garner support, provide genuinely useful information and resources, and help families in Scotland overcome relationship breakdowns. Specifically we aimed to:

- Reduce family conflict and help young people avoid homelessness because of family breakdown by empowering both professionals and those affected by conflict
- Grow awareness of SCCR, their remit and how they can support young people, parents, carers and professionals
- Pursue a high impact, wide reaching strategy to make the SCCR brand accessible to anyone, anywhere, on any device

“We cannot underestimate the impact an initiative like the new Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution can have in reducing family conflict - and in helping young people avoid homelessness because of family breakdown.”

AILEEN CAMPBELL MSP
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Insight

Our research identified three vital target audiences:

Young people

Someone aged between 16 and 24 years old who's experiencing arguments and difficulties at home. They may be at high risk of running away from home and seek reassurance that they are not alone and that support is available to improve their lives.

Parents & carers

Someone who is responsible for the care and upbringing of a young person. They are experiencing conflict at home and seek support to help them defuse, deal with and improve the situation.

Professionals

Someone who works in the mediation industry or a related sector and is looking for tools, resources, training and support to help them deliver their services in a more effective and impactful manner.



Challenges

SCCR is a new charity, lacking the reputation and prestige of other well-known organisations and thus had to fight for a foothold of recognition. Additionally, the audience for SCCR is wide and varied including, quite contrastingly, both young people and parents along with professionals who work in mediation and family support.

Communicating clearly with this diverse group of users in an engaging manner was a huge challenge as the background and situation of each could vary dramatically. Likewise, given the subject is often emotional and highly charged, finding a common way to establish a rapport and present information was a key challenge to overcome.

Opportunities

Unlike a commercial organisation, the opportunity for SCCR was one born out of necessity rather than desire. In 2013/14, 4,750 young people aged between 16 and 24 became homeless due to family and relationship breakdowns*, the equivalent of five high schools. This staggering figure highlights the issues that Scottish families face and the devastating impact that conflict between parents, carers and young people can have. As a result, the opportunity for us was huge: the potential to address the issue of family difficulties and reduce resulting homelessness across the country.

**Source: Scottish Government*

“It is important that we all have the opportunity to discuss problems with others at difficult times in our lives to help resolve the challenges we face. This can be particularly important for young people facing homelessness.

Relationship breakdown with families and friends is often the cause of homelessness and mediation services can have a key role to play in preventing this.”

MARGARET BURGESS MSP
MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND WELFARE

Strategy

We recognised we needed to take an holistic approach, building the project from the ground up. Specifically we agreed we would:

#1

Commit to a single web presence and visual style and tone of voice that would appeal to all audience types

#2

Place usability at the heart of the website; creating an easy to navigate resource of information and help for everyone from young digital natives to digital immigrants

#3

Develop genuinely useful content and advice to attract and retain visitors; putting visitor needs first to create a beneficial online tool

#4

Create an email marketing programme, build a subscriber base and regularly drive those recipients back to the website for updated information

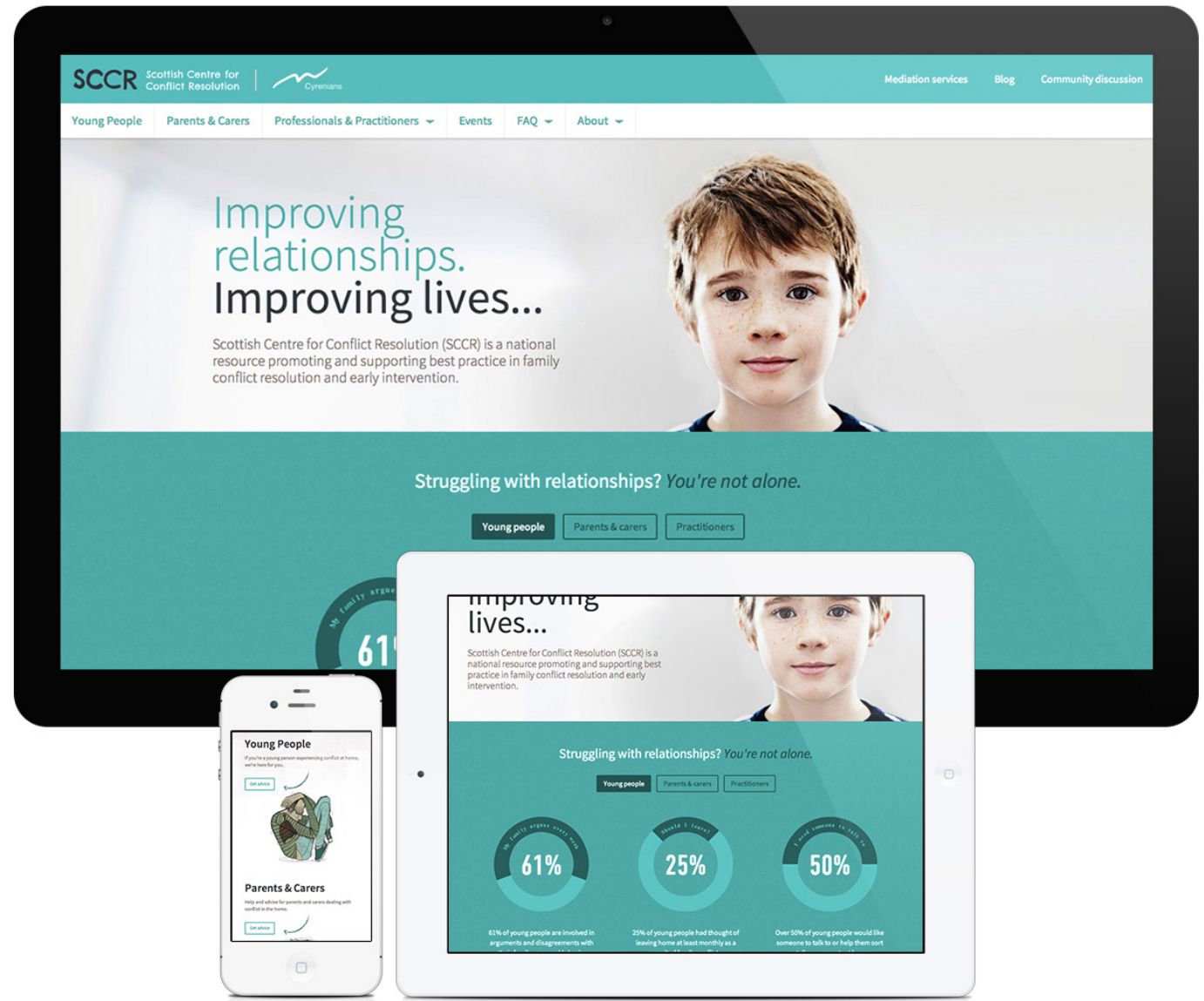
#5

Run regular campaigns to leverage social media and increase engagement from young people who may be experiencing family conflict

In short, we would aggressively promote the services of SCCR through an audience-led, integrated marketing approach before directing them to the website for further information, encouraging them to sign up to our newsletter and follow us on social media.

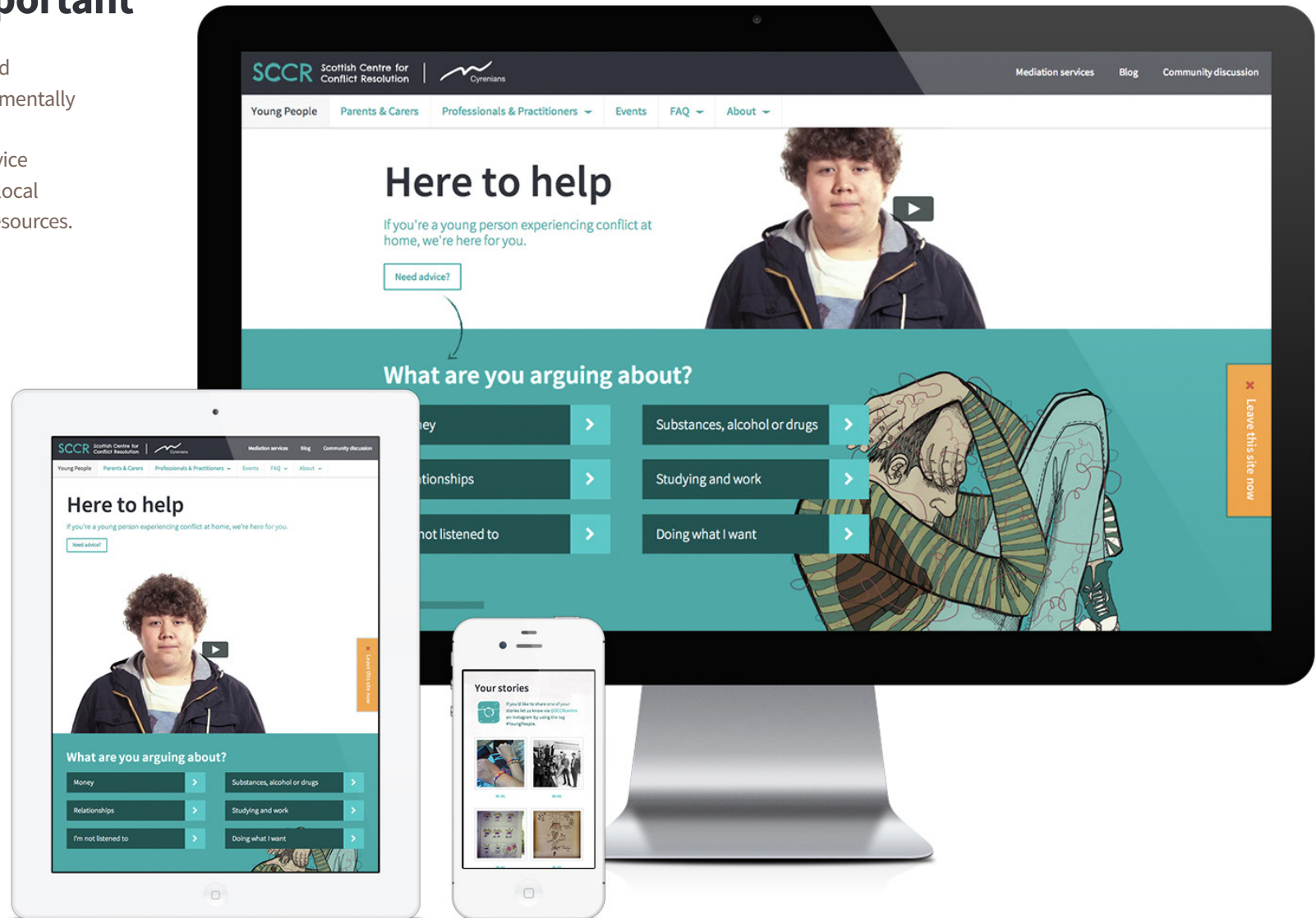
Universal appeal

We avoided the traditional charity clichés and instead adopted a grounded, honest, non-patronising visual style that would appeal to both younger people, their parents and industry professionals.



Fundamentally important

We built upon our audience research and developed content that would be fundamentally important to users: examples of other families benefitting from mediation; advice on how to handle common arguments; local mediation services; training tools and resources.



Advice & support

From the beginning, we knew that the SCCR digital offering would only be successful if it provided genuine advice, support and resources for its audience. Existing as a 'brochure' site would not be enough - the website had to serve as tool that would benefit users experiencing potentially harmful family conflict.

- Young people and parents have their own separate areas of the site that each proffer specific advice on how to deal with a large variety of argument points, from money and studying to relationships and substance abuse
- Professionals have access to a huge scope of training materials, resources, events and conferences as well as an online discussion forum
- A simple to use directory of mediation services was set up to enable quick access to important contacts

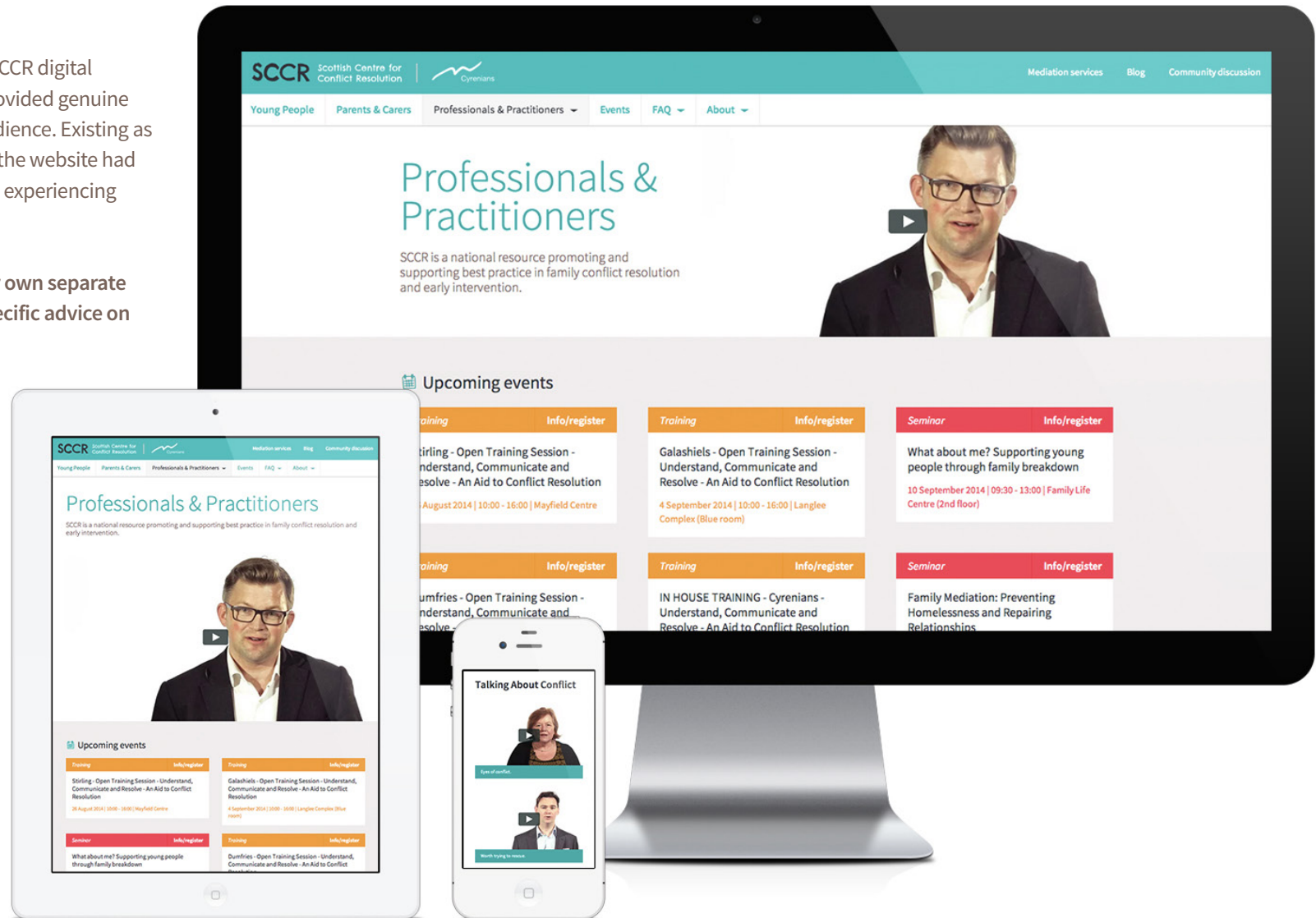


Illustration & video

To tackle the challenge of trying to convey a sensitive matter to a hugely varied audience in a non-patronising manner, we heavily utilised illustration and video.

Custom commissioned illustration was used throughout the site to establish a look and feel that transcends gender, age and background. It also lends a mature, occasionally dark and tongue-in-cheek, look and feel to a topic that is not easy to discuss. Equally, using custom illustrations for different areas of conflict helped us better connect the user to the information being provided.

The heavy use of video helped not only explain the mediation process and compel users to act but also, importantly, showcased real case studies. For instance, the videos of Kerry and Sam, mother and son who have benefitted from mediation, helps not only give a real face to the issues at hand but also shows young people and parents that they are not alone.



Driving traffic

We used the blog, social media, a regular email newsletter, media interviews and press releases (TV, radio and newspapers) to establish our awareness and develop relationships with our target markets. We've used a host of different tactics but two of the most successful and beneficial were:

- media interviews on TV
- the SCCR #StopTalkListen national campaign

Despite having a limit budget and limited resources, we have been able to execute these tactics in a way that has allowed us to really punch above our weight.

TV & press coverage

As part of our integrated marketing, PR and digital strategies, we utilised the press and media outlets to announce the launch of SCCR and drive visitors to the website and our live events.

Over 37 pieces of press coverage were recorded for SCCR.

- Good Morning Scotland - 998,000 viewers
- STV East and West - 302,755 viewers
- BBC news website - 400,000 views
- STV news website - 224,000 views



National campaign

To further promote SCCR and raise awareness of family conflict and teenage homeless, a national campaign was developed in late 2014; to accommodate this digitally, a microsite was created.

Following the theme of #StopTalkListen, the campaign encourages people to share the topics that they argue about at home via social media.

The microsite captures tweets and photos shared via Twitter and Instagram, tagged with #StopTalkListen, and presents them on a virtual wall to help elicit engagement and promote support for the cause.



Website statistics

7,885

VISITS

3,846

UNIQUE VISITS

4:30

AVERAGE SESSION DURATION (MINS)

3.55

AVERAGE PAGES VIEWED PER SESSION

Training statistics

51 SESSIONS WITH 715 BENEFICIARIES

OVERALL PARTICIPATION

86%

OF PROFESSIONALS FEEL THEY HAVE AN
INCREASED KNOWLEDGE BASE REGARDING
FAMILY CONFLICT

85%

OF PROFESSIONALS FEEL THEY HAVE AN
INCREASED SKILLS BASE REGARDING
FAMILY CONFLICT

81%

OF PROFESSIONALS FEEL CONFIDENT IN
THEIR ABILITY TO SUPPORT FAMILIES IN
CONFLICT

Conference statistics

16 SEMINARS WITH 131
BENEFICIARIES

SEMINAR TOTAL

83%

OF DELEGATES FEEL MORE CONFIDENT
ABOUT DISCUSSING FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
AND FAMILIES WHO USE THEIR SERVICE

4 NATIONAL CONFERENCES INCLUDING A
CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (295 BENEFICIARIES)

CONFERENCE TOTAL

94%

OF DELEGATES WOULD BE INTERESTED IN
ATTENDING FUTURE SCCR EVENTS

84%

OF DELEGATES RATED THE CONFERENCE
EXPERIENCE AS EXCELLENT

Learnings

Establishing a new charity is a long road, requiring a huge amount of support, patience and passion in the cause. The causes that are addressed by SCCR are severe and there is no quick fix or simple solution. Creating a long term platform for growth is incredibly important and the help that can be provided as a result can be tremendously beneficial.

Digital media is redefining marketing. Nowhere is the battle between ‘push’ and ‘pull’ more pronounced than on the Internet where users - particularly digital natives - are free to ignore or engage as they choose. Finding ways to engage and connect with these users in a meaningful manner is incredibly important.

“Mediation and other methods of alternative dispute resolution have increasing importance in our justice system - and, more broadly in seeking to address conflict in our society - and I look forward to the Faculty playing its part in these developments.”

JAMES WOLFFE QC

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES, IN SUPPORT OF SCCR