

Guidelines for Media

Be aware of your organisation's media policies and networks.

Media Releases

- Allows the correct facts to be stated, enables consistency in the message and ensures audiences are targeted.
- Short and to the point, restrict to one page.
- Check with your organisation's Media Liaison person before releasing.

Planning

- Find the hook or angle of the story – why is the story of interest to the media?
- What are the key findings and implications?
- Ensure availability to respond to media upon release, include contact details at the end.

Audience

- Who is your audience?
- Provide regional examples and spokespeople.
- Use clear, simple language.
- Demonstrate the applicability, benefits and costs of the project.
- What is your 'take home message'?
- Gain supporting quotes from colleagues, collaborators, funding bodies and stakeholders.

Content

- Write 'Media Release' and the date.
- One idea = one sentence = one paragraph. A sentence should be no more than 25 words.
- Avoid using industry jargon, spell out acronyms.
- The main point of the story should be in the first sentence/paragraph.
- Use an 'inverted pyramid' as a template, important information first and subsequent material in descending order of importance.
- Answer: who, what, where, when and how.
- Include your contact details.
- Include clear information about date, time and location if an event is associated.
- Use the full name and title of any person or organisation mentioned.
- Credit all funding bodies supporting the project.

Images

- Provide high quality images and footage or suggest opportunities.

Timing and Distribution

- Consider news deadlines of the target media.
- Research the manner in which the target media prefer distribution, email, fax or personal contact.

Talking to the Media

- Are you the correct contact for this topic?
- Be aware of the media; read, watch and listen regional, national and horticultural focussed publications, TV and radio.
- Tailor your approach to suit the media outlet.
- Ensure your language suits the medium and the audience.

Interview Techniques

- Ensure there are no interruptions, close the door and clear your desk
- Set three clear messages that you/your organisation want to get across.
- Keep to the facts, avoid opinion or speculation. Keep answers short and to the point.
- If you do not know the answer, say you do not know, do not make up answers.
- There is no such thing as off the record.

Prepare!

- Note media type and journalist's name.
- Confirm topic and approach.
- Find out exactly what they want to know and ask questions.
- Check the deadline and ask to call back.
- Check relationship and contact with your organisation's Media Liaison person.
- Request copy of interview.
- Confirm format – news, feature, opinion, current affairs, talkback, live or recorded, studio or field.
- Brief yourself, prepare but do not learn

Tricky Questions

- Acknowledge question
- Use bridging phrase
 - The main point is.....
 - The real issue here is.....
 - Before I get to that
 - Another way of looking at it

Collated and edited by

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