

# Working with the media

Your local media can help to attract audiences to Australia Day celebrations to help promote and publicise events. They may also be interested in reporting on your event for the local news.

In addition to your own local promotion, leverage the campaigns and information reported in the media throughout January. The National Australia Day Council implements national promotion to encourage meaningful participation and the meaning of Australia Day, and state and territory Australia Day Councils and Committees promote events and awards in their state-wide advertising campaigns.

## Deadlines and communication

- ✦ Be aware of media deadlines – deadlines are different for newspapers, radio and television. Check with journalists when they need information and images by.
- ✦ When calling the media, be brief and to the point – ask for the person most likely to be interested in your story. You can monitor local media to see which journalists cover similar stories and ask for them by name.
- ✦ Send media releases to the right journalist/news editor.

## Find a newsworthy hook or angle

- ✦ Offer a hook or angle about your event that will catch their attention. For example, local media like local angles and local personalities. Humour, quirky stories and human interest angles are always popular, as are anniversaries or milestones (e.g. the first or biggest).
- ✦ Know your facts and your organisation. Make sure you are up-to-date on relevant statistics and components of your event to ensure the accuracy of your statements to the media.
- ✦ Prepare by anticipating the type of questions you may be asked and work out your responses, so that you are practiced at answering them.

## Time management and efficiency with media

- ✦ Keep invitations to the media brief, with just the basic information – time, date, location, and a brief description of events.
- ✦ When media call you for information, provide it as quickly as possible. If you need to gather information and get back to them, check when their deadline is and make sure you have their name and direct contact details. If you cannot provide the information by the time they need it, tell them when you will be able to provide it.
- ✦ If you are providing a spokesperson who the media can interview, make sure that they are prepared and available from the time the media release goes out (including after hours).

## **Ethics, honesty and a professional approach**

- + Don't make promises you cannot keep, as this can have a big impact on media planning space and stories and your relationship with the media in the long-run.
- + Do not lie. If you do not know an answer or are unsure what to say to a difficult question don't be afraid to say 'I don't know, I'll have to check and get back to you on that'. It is better to be sure of what you are saying than to make an error. However, you should try not to be ignorant too often, and always get back to the media with an answer as soon as possible, and by their deadline.

## **Ensure media have the information and accept you can't control the outcome**

- + Contact the media at least two weeks before your event to let them know it is coming up. Most media are reluctant to guarantee that they will attend an event, because it depends on what else is happening on the day, but you can at least follow up a few days prior to remind them and make sure they have the details in their diary.
- + Be realistic and objective. At times the media's aims and yours will be incompatible, or other events will impact on the media coverage your event receives

## **Holding a media launch**

- + As the name suggests, a media launch is a significant media event which marks the commencement of an event or series of celebrations. It gives the media something to report on prior to your event.
- + This event is usually a feature of larger communities.
- + Sometimes the launch coincides with another event and so synergies and economies are possible.
- + Consider using a rehearsal as a media event to promote the real event to come.

## **Using radio and Community Service Announcements**

- + Some radio stations run free Community Service Announcements (CSAs) for non-profit events and organisations. All you have to do is write a short script—the length will depend on the radio station's own rules, but usually up to 30 seconds—and they'll read it out on air for you at certain times over an agreed period.
- + Remember to write out the names of people, places or things in full (no acronyms) and also add the phonetic spellings in brackets of any words the radio presenter may need help to pronounce.