



BetEasy Darwin Triple Crown

# Working with Media

Understanding the media to gain effective media coverage.



Northern Territory  
**MAJOR  
EVENTS**  
Company

# Working with Media

Increase your chance of media coverage by crafting a professional media release, and knowing who to contact and what to say.

## 1. The Media Release

- Jot down all the major points of your story, with the most interesting at the top. Do the first few points clearly explain the basics? Are they interesting?
- Find a point of difference, especially if your group is staging the same type of event it has previously. What is different about this year's event? Has it been revamped? Is it bigger and better?
- Explain the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW of your story, and do it early on. If you can't do that, go back to the start and refine your message.
- Use your list of major points to structure your release. If the most interesting and important information is at the top, it will grab the reader's attention and survive, even if the story gets edited down for space reasons.
- Use clear, simple language. Avoid jargon, acronyms and phrases that may not mean anything to the reader.
- Use active language instead of passive. Eg use "this project will help 10,000 people" rather than "10,000 people will be helped by this project".
- Use quotes to provide a human voice and to add clarity or sum something up.
- Stick to the facts and don't make outlandish claims that can't be backed up.
- Explain how people will benefit from going to your event, donating to your cause etc.
- Keep it short – the ideal media release is no longer than one page.
- Provide clear contact details, and the location, date and time of your event.
- Check your spelling, re-check the facts, and get a colleague to do a sense check of your media release before you send it anywhere.

## 2. The Homework

Understand the media outlet you are contacting. Do some research before calling or sending your media release. You need to know what news and geographical area an outlet covers, and who their target audience is. If you tailor your media release to fit, you will have a greater chance of success.

## 3. The Human Interest Element

Media outlets prefer to cover stories with a human interest, so produce relevant case studies to get more coverage. For the best results choose someone who is comfortable talking to media.

## 4. The Visuals

If you can provide a photo/visuals opportunity, or even an actual photo or footage, your story is likely to receive more coverage. Newsroom staff numbers are decreasing, so anything you can do to help ease the workload will be welcomed.

## 5. The News Desk v Journalist

Don't send your media release to the general news desk, where it risks being overlooked. Target specific reporters instead. If you provide a reporter with a readymade story and photo op, they are likely to cover it. Reporter details can be found on an outlet's website or social media channels. If not, call their office and ask who to send your media release to.

## 6. The Unavailable Contact

Make it easy for a journalist to follow up on your story. Provide your phone number and email, and be available if a journalist is trying to contact you outside of your office hours (but just before their deadline). If you are not the spokesperson, make sure the person who is the official spokesperson is reachable and ready to comment.





## 7. The Local Audience

Don't make the mistake of targeting big metropolitan media outlets instead of local media. Local media outlets are more likely to be interested in what you have to say, and to get your message to your target audience.

## 8. The Relationships

If a journalist knows you (and knows you return calls, provide good quotes and know your stuff) they are likely to choose your story over another, or contact you for comment more often. If possible, meet a journalist face-to-face to build a relationship.

## 9. The Phrase “No Comment”

If you are contacted about a negative story, saying “No comment” won't stop it. The story will still go ahead, it just won't include your voice. Provide a comment so your voice is heard. This will also eliminate the line at the end of a story that states you “declined to comment”, which is not a good look.

## 10. The Inside Word

Media training doesn't have to be formal or expensive – it can be as easy as approaching a journalist for advice on how you can grab their interest. If you are a not-for-profit group be sure to mention this, and be respectful of the journalist's time.

## 11. The Interview

If you arrange an interview with a media outlet, make sure you prepare. Memorise your key messages and the important facts relating to your story. Think about what questions a reporter might ask, and prepare answers. Be prepared for any negative questions/angles. Keep in mind who it is you are speaking to. Eg a newspaper will want good quotes. A talk show host will want a conversation. An industry publication will want trade speak. A TV news show will want everyday language.

For further information to help you plan, run, finance and report on your event, get in touch with us on (08)8999 6286 or email [ntmec.grants@nt.gov.au](mailto:ntmec.grants@nt.gov.au).

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