

100% Independent

# Andrew Wilkie

## Independent Member for Clark



How to make yourself heard and get results from government

## GETTING THE RIGHT KIND OF MEDIA ATTENTION

This information sheet has been compiled based on the experiences of the office of Andrew Wilkie MP and is not exhaustive.

### Journalism 101

Introducing the **Five Ws and one H**: Every story needs these. They are the **Who, What, Why, When, Where** and **How**. Check these off as you're writing your media release or telling your story.

### News value

The newsroom will weigh these up when deciding whether to cover your story or relegate it to the bin. If applicable try to incorporate the following into your media release:

- **Impact**: Identify the number of people the issue will affect. The more people, the more impact.
- **Timeliness**: Note the relevance of your story. Did it just happen? Is it about to happen? Did it not happen as promised? Did it happen in secret and we're just finding out?
- **Prominence**: State who is involved, particularly if they're people the media would be interested in - eg think what Kylie Minogue did for breast cancer.
- **Proximity**: Is the release about something in your backyard or half a world away? The former will get the better run - eg were Tasmanians on the plane that crashed in a foreign land?
- **The Bizarre**: Note anything particularly interesting or unusual that may grab the media's attention - eg man bites dog, or female CEOs outnumber male CEOs.
- **Conflict**: State any conflict that may exist around the content of your release. The media loves a fight - eg Kevin Rudd v Julia Gillard.
- **Currency**: Is your release relevant to a hot social issue? - eg Baby Gammy thrust overseas surrogacy into the spotlight.
- **Human Interest**: Add any aspect of the story that may tug at the heart strings - eg firemen rescue a fluffy kitten up tree.

### Telling your story

What story are you telling? Keep it simple and free from jargon. Explain why it's important and use specifics - eg "This reform will lead to states getting less funding for hospitals and mean the public will wait longer for elective surgery".

### Planning

- Most politicians and companies have a media section on their website - find a media release you like and use it as a template.
- Who is your audience? Think about who you're trying to reach. Tailor your message to them. Target the media they consume.
- How will you tell your story? Find a case study - eg a single mum who will be affected by the changes you are opposing. Make sure they will speak to the media, are available and are happy to be identified.
- Do a survey to back up your story and give it more substance - eg three out of four teachers do ten hours of unpaid overtime a week.
- Do your research and include some interesting facts - eg does it cost more to keep someone in jail than in a hospital bed?
- Do the maths - eg show why spending more on mental health will mean savings from fewer people locked up.
- Organise a rally to demonstrate support - see our "Running a Successful Event" infosheet. Think about the different needs of print and broadcast. Radio has different needs and deadlines to TV which needs pictures and talking heads.
- Pick your venue - what is the best backdrop to illustrate your story? - eg if you're talking about agricultural policy, find a rural backdrop. Make sure your venue is not too noisy or distracting and easily accessible.

## When will you tell your story?

- Think about timing – eg remind people to watch their credit card spending as Christmas approaches.
- Consider sending a press release or holding a media event on a Sunday or a Monday because they are generally slow news days.
- See the previous page regarding impact, proximity, currency and conflict.

## Sending your press release

- Email is best – ask media organisations you want to target for the best email address to send media releases and follow up with a polite and brief phone call before the event.
- Put out your release early that day and, if you have a planned an event, don't make it too late in the day. Journalists needs time to prepare their stories and get reaction.
- Make sure the contact person on the media release can answer their phone when the media calls.

## At the press conference

- If possible limit your pitch to three main points. Think of your points and practice the sentences beforehand.
- Speak simply and avoid jargon.
- Repeat your main points in the press conference.
- If you don't know the answer, don't make it up. Be honest and say you will need to seek information or don't feel qualified to answer the question.

## After your event

- If there is a development in your story let the media know – but keep it brief.
- Make contacts and work them.
- Study the result and learn from your mistakes.

## Social media

Social media reaches a wide audience, is free and the message can be managed easily. Some key points for successful social media are:

- Set up a good social media presence – Facebook and Twitter are the most popular – and update them regularly. If you don't have the time to regularly update a page, reconsider your need to have one.
- Tailor it to what sort of content you want to produce – eg if you produce lots of videos, make a Youtube channel.
- Post interesting content – photos, videos and infographics are good. When posting ensure quality over quantity as otherwise people will get annoyed and unfollow you. Don't post walls of text – people scroll quickly through their social media feeds and if your post isn't eye-catching then it will get skipped over.
- Be dynamic – if there's breaking news, post a response as soon as possible.
- Communicate with people – social media is meant to be a dialogue not a monologue so if people ask questions, respond to them. Actually ask people to do something – visit this webpage, donate to this cause or share this photo etc.

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### Want to find out more?

Visit [www.andrewwilkie.org](http://www.andrewwilkie.org) where you'll find media releases, speeches, newsletters and videos.

Or feel free to drop by the office at 188 Collins Street Hobart  
or call 6234 5255 or email [andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au)

Authorised by Andrew Wilkie 188 Collins Street Hobart 7000