How to write a media release

The purpose of a media release

The first step to writing a media release is understanding why you're writing it.

A media release is a simple and effective way of getting across a message to your community via one or more media outlets. It's a great way to raise awareness and increase involvement and support for your Local Drug Action Team's (LDAT's) work.

Questions it needs to answer

To give your media release the best chance of getting published, it will need to be structured to address the 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'why' and 'how' of the story.

For example, if you're announcing funding for your LDAT, you might include how much you're receiving, who from, and what the money will go towards.

If you're hosting a workshop or event that's open to the public, you might include the event details, how people can attend and what is the purpose of the event.

And remember, your media release needs to be 'news' – you should be telling journalists, and your community, something fresh and topical. This doesn't mean you can't raise an old issue, but you need to provide a fresh angle on it if you do and ensure it is still relevant.

The structure of your media release

Publish date

Make sure your media release clearly states when the information provided can be made public.

If the information is ready-to-go straight away, you can state at the start of the media release: IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

If you don't want the media to publish the information in your media release until after a specific date,, be sure to make that clear by stating at the start of your release: EMBARGOED UNTIL <date>, <time>. E.G. EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2021, 6AM AEST.

Headline

Your headline should be written in q way that catches a journalist's attention, and also summarises the information in the media release. Think about headlines in the media that catch your attention. Aim for around six words – the fewer the better. Try to be creative and catchy about it. Put it in bold.

Lead

The lead is the first paragraph and should contain the most important information. If someone reads just this part of the media release, they should have a good idea of your story or issue you're trying to raise.

Body

The remainder of the media release — or the body copy — should have the most important information at the top, and the least important at the bottom. Use short sentences and active language. For example, 'The man drove the car' instead of 'the car was driven by the man'.

Make sure all the information you include in a media release is factual. If you're using a statistic, you'll need to reference its source.

It's a good idea to include quotes in the body of a media release to add a human element to the story and support the messages you're trying to get across.

If you have quotes from various organisations involved in your project, have just one spokesperson for each organisation. The quotes should add to the story, not simply repeat it.

You should check with all organisations and spokespeople mentioned in the media release that they're happy to be included in the media release before it's sent out.

How to finish your release

Be sure to add "For interviews and media enquiries, contact" and include a contact name, phone number and email at the end of your release.

A media release must be timely. For instance, if you want to promote and invite the public to an event, don't send out the media release the day before – some local papers can be finalised several weeks in advance. Get to know your local media's deadlines so you can make sure they have all the information they need well in advance.

And finally, always have someone else check your media release for clarity, spelling and grammar before sending it out.

Media release templates

The [Community Hub](#) has a variety of templates to help you reach out to the media about stories common to most LDATs. Stories the templates cover include:

- formation of your new LDAT
- additional funding for your LDAT
- launch of a project/activity
- promotion of a community meeting.

If the media release templates don't cover a story you have in mind, please get in contact with your Relationship Manager at the [Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#) to discuss.