



Scouts
NSW

A Guide to Engaging Local Media

Engaging the media plays a valuable role in building the profile of Scouts and reinforcing the values and the opportunities Scouting offers to youth and adults in the local community. Although local newspapers have seen significant declines in readership, they are still a valuable way to share news and key messages, because the stories and articles they publish are generally picked up by social media channels, news wires and online publications, which increases the readership and creates further coverage.

This document provides a step-by-step guide to working with your local media.

First Things First – Guidelines

All media inquiries from national or state-wide media should be referred to and managed by the Scouts NSW Communications and Marketing Department. If you have been approached by a national or state-wide media outlet, please direct their enquiry to the Communications and Marketing Manager on 02 9735 9000.

The following type of media inquiries can be managed locally by your Group or District, without professional oversight:

- Non-controversial local topics that enhance Scouts NSW image and safeguard its reputation
- Active outreach on local matters that do not involve controversial issues, confidential information or proprietary materials.

Prepare Your Story

Journalists write to both educate and entertain. With the evolution of the 24x7 news cycle, and the time pressure on journalists trying to break a new story, there is less focus on ensuring the veracity of the published information, and few stories are double sourced. It is important, therefore, to make sure your story is unique, interesting and relevant to the local community, and your initial email to the media summarises all key information.

Below are a few things to think about when preparing your story and writing your email to the media outlets:

- What is the top message you are trying to convey?
- What are the supporting three messages you want readers to take away?
- What image or images will you supply that will attract readers' attentions?
- Who are you going to quote? (Make sure they approve the quote)
- Is there an action? If so, where will you direct readers so they can act?
- How long does your story need to be? Can you try to get the most important part of the story into the first two paragraphs?
- Have you got a catchy title?
- Check you're using the same language as Scouts NSW by having a quick look at the website



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- Are all your facts verified, if you were asked to verify them?

Contacting Media

Once you have your email drafted, identify the local papers, radio stations and television news in your area. It pays to do some background research on what's going to convince them to run your story. Ask yourself:

- What stories have got the most interest in the past? (check out the online version of the paper, where you can compare the number of comments, likes or shares)
- Are there any important dates or events coming up that link to your story?
- Is there a journalist who seems to regularly cover similar stories about local activities?

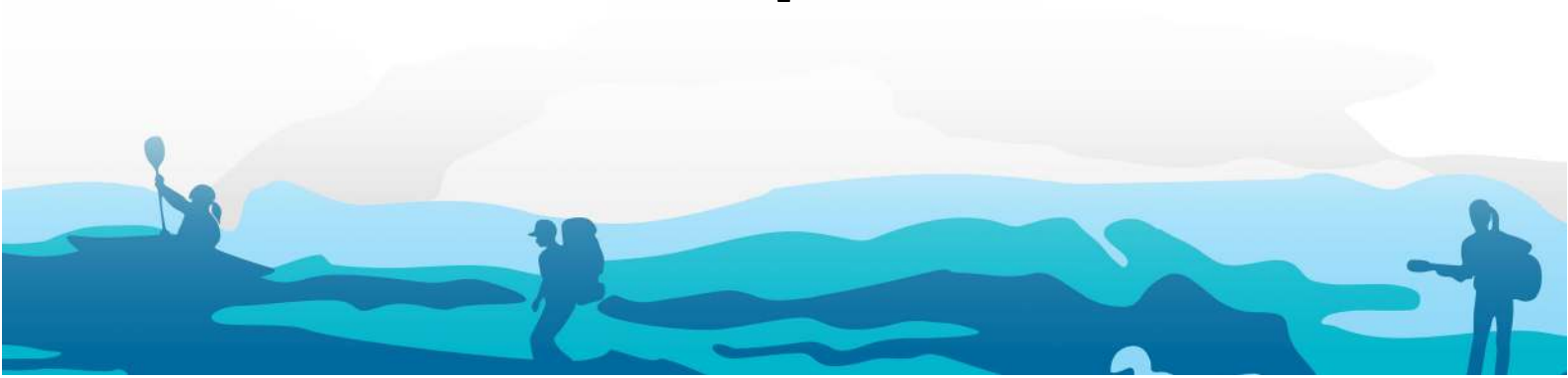
Based on this information, select the local paper, radio station and television news outlet(s) to contact.

- Find the contact telephone number for each publication/outlet, call them and ask for the email address for the news desk.
- Once you have sent your email, it helps to make a follow-up phone call.
- When calling the news desk, you should introduce yourself, and quickly outline the key points that make your story interesting. This should be no more than a few sentences, for example: "Hi, my name is James and I'm the Group Leader at 1st Sydney Scout Group. A few youth members from our Group are walking 100km together to help raise money for a local charity. I recently sent an email about sharing our Group's story and was wondering if you'd be interested?"
- Remember to have a copy of your email available and know all the relevant information!

Preparing for the Interview

So you've managed to secure an interview – bravo! Here are some tips to help you know how to respond to questions, stay in control of your agenda and use a few professional techniques if you're being interviewed for a story.

- Find out about the journalist who is interviewing you
 - What is their area of expertise?
 - What else have they written about Scouts NSW?
 - Do they have a particular style or approach?
- What is the purpose of the interview
 - What is the story about?
 - What is your role and what you have you been asked to speak about?



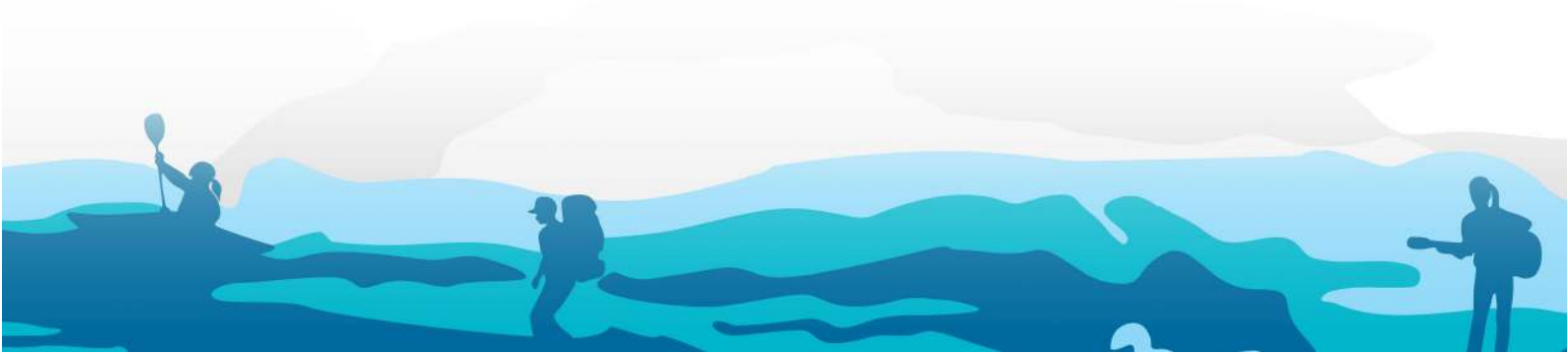


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- What questions has the journalist been given to ask?
- When is the journalist going to run the story, in what section of the paper, and how long will the story be?
- What are the key messages you want to impart?
 - Have you confirmed they are consistent with the way Scouts NSW describes itself or describes the topic you are covering?
 - Have you checked with any experts that you are up-to-date with your messages?
 - Do you have some good facts you can use to reinforce your message?
 - What images have been shared with the journalist?
 - Write down your key messages and practice reading them out loud.
- Where is the interview taking place?
 - Do you have all the relevant technical equipment? Is your phone charged? Do you have a quiet room? Can you ensure you won't be disturbed?
 - Is the journalist recording you?

Interview Tips

1. Be prepared – have all the information you need handy, and remember to have some pre-prepared responses to help keep the nerves at bay
2. Have 2 to 3 good messages – bridge back to these constantly
 - a. “That’s an important question. To answer it properly you should bear in mind that”
 - b. “That’s not my area of expertise, but I can talk about...”
3. Don’t use negative language
4. Do not talk about any other organisation – focus on Scouts NSW
5. Be polite and be diplomatic
6. Don’t lose control of the agenda by saying “no comment”
7. Avoid jargon and complex facts and figures
8. Sarcasm and irony do not translate well onto the printed page
9. Do not fill a silence
10. Use the name of Scouts NSW rather than “we” to promote our brand
11. Finally, don’t avoid a question. If you do not know the answer to a question, or you are uncomfortable about answering it, you should tell the journalist. You should never try to answer a question if you are making up an answer.





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If you want any more tips or information about interviews please feel free to contact us, as we are happy to help you out. At the end of the interview, don't forget to ask the journalist what the publication date is so you can grab yourself a copy of the publication. Please let Scouts NSW know if your story is published, as we'd love to share your story!

What does 'Off the Record' Mean?

This is a useful article to read about this terminology: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/chatham-house-rule-when-its-all-fair-game-20170616-gwsrlh.html>

It's highly unlikely you will have an 'off the record' conversation in a friendly interview. If you make a comment and then realise it's a personal observation, rather than something a person in your role would say, you can say "that was my personal position. I think it should be taken as background information rather than an attributable quote."

Television Interviews

Some things to remember about television interviews:

- Viewers may not remember your words, but they will remember your image
- Appear respectable – wear your full Scout uniform with pride
- Do not move too much
- Speak loudly
- Fix your eye on the interviewer
- Be passionate and smile a lot

Radio

Some things to remember about radio interviews:

- If you are involved in a phone-in radio program, check if anyone else is also calling in
- If you are talking about a contentious issue, stipulate the situation (e.g. consider whether to use talk-back radio or pre-recorded)
- Increase your voice level and the degree of passion
- Answers for radio grabs should fall into 7-10 seconds; some 'sound bites' can last 20 to 30 seconds
- For an average bulletin, a radio grab lasts 3 minutes; some news radio grabs last 5 minutes
- You can record your answers as practice
- Some radio stations accept pre-recorded messages.

