

Basic format for a media release

1. **Font and layout.** Make sure your release is easy to read. Choose a font and size that is plain and simple and double space if necessary.
2. **Media release.** The words Media Release should be at the top of your release, along with the name of your organisation and the date of your release.
3. **Headline.** Your headline is what makes your release stand out and is the most important point you want to get across. Keep it active and descriptive.
4. **First paragraph.** This is where you clearly introduce the event that you are sending the release about and how it relates to your organisation. It is the hook that entices the media to read the rest of your release. This is also the best place to cover the 5 Ws: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY IMPORTANT.
5. **Second paragraph.** Includes a further description of your story, perhaps in the form of a quote from someone of significance. This will increase the interest of the reader since someone else besides you has input about your story.
6. **Subsequent paragraphs.** Includes less important and supporting information.
7. **What, Where, When.** This is a brief summary of all the essential information for quick reference.
8. **Contact information.** This lists the contact person and how the media can get in touch with them for more information. Include a name, title, telephone numbers and email address as a minimum. This person should be easily contactable and well informed about the event. If the media cannot get hold of somebody quickly they will often move on to another story.

Points to keep in mind

- Try to focus on the exciting elements of your event. Is it the first time? Are there new objects on display? Are there notable objects or stories? What makes your event special? Remember journalists need to justify to their editors why a story is worth reporting, so help them by emphasizing these elements in your release.
- If a journalist decides to follow up on your story they may require images. Consider what images you have available, or what they might be able to photograph.
- If you are emailing your media release put a quick one-paragraph summary in the email. Then underneath add 'for more information please read the attached media release'. **Make sure you actually attach the release to your email!**
- Try to keep your release to one page. There is no point in overloading it with information. If a journalist is interested they will follow you up for more information.
- Use any contacts you have and follow up with an email or phone call after sending your release out.
- Big is not always best. It's not just about the big newspapers and tv stations. Sometimes the best results can come from local media outlets or interest groups and newsletters.
- Be realistic about who your event will appeal to. This will help you in deciding what types of media to approach.

- Remember most media outlets are understaffed and are short on time and space for stories. Don't take it personally if your story fails to get picked up or if journalists don't call you back. The only guaranteed exposure you will get with the media is if you pay for advertising!
- Try to remember that journalists receive dozens, sometimes hundreds, of media releases a day. By following these general guidelines you are making it easier for them to see the value in your story.