



Media resources

Attracting media attention

Publicising LIW, literacy and the services we provide to our community is a vital part of the professional practice of library and information service providers and other participating organisations.

As we know, the media like something dramatic, something different, something relevant to the news of the day or something novel.

It helps you gain media attention if you directly involve the media in your Library and Information Week activities. A few years ago, for instance, as part of Library and Information Week festivities, ALIA's NSW Branch walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge — participants dressed imaginatively to show a positive, fun-loving image of librarians. They invited ABC radio personality Simon Marnie to give the prizes for the best-dressed groups and the event received excellent publicity.

Inviting local identities to your LIW event is a great way to attract media attention to your event.

Tips on targeting the media

- Identify your media outlets through Margaret Gee's *Australian Media Guide* or other such guides. The guide provides the names of the editors of specific subject matters. It is often a good idea to target the subject editors, especially on more 'meaty' issues. In most other cases the chief of staff decides whether your story will be covered. Decisions are usually taken at a very late stage, and you may need to 'hang-in there' to gain coverage, especially if you target the bigger media. It is a lot easier to get the attention of smaller, local media — they are often keen for material.
- Send the information about your activities and issues to your selected media two or three weeks before your event. Importantly, follow up by phone a week before, especially if your event presents photo opportunities — and then again the day before — and on the day.



- Use your local knowledge and networks when identifying your target journalist — you might even contact the librarians in national media organisations for tips about individual staffers you can target.
- Gaining television coverage usually requires visual novelty, colourful events, and sometimes high-profile personalities. The ALIA NSW branch harbour bridge walk mentioned above is a good example. The walk was televised and radio-broadcasted.
- If you want coverage, you may need to develop your event with television in mind. Make sure to time the event for before noon if you are to get into the news that evening.
- Give the station as much advance notice as you can and follow-up with a phone call to keep up the momentum and to clarify arrangements and appointments.
- To gain radio coverage, you may need to identify a specific story or angle, and one or more good spokespersons for the station to choose from. You and they would need to be willing to go to the studio when required, unless the station will come to the library for your event. Local radio is often receptive to interview requests.
- Print media is the easiest to deal with. If you want pre-event publicity, cultivate your targeted journalists before the event and provide them with material that easily can be adapted — the more work you have done, the more likely it is that you get the coverage you want. Remember that 'letters to the editor' are surprisingly effective, especially if they come from one of your users or supporters. Radio and print media can both rely on a good media statement and/or a telephone call for a news story and for pre-publicity. Remember to inform the free suburban press and community radio.
- You may want to consider purchasing ads in your local media or contacting the newspaper to see if they offer free or discounted ads for not-for-profit events. Don't forget community, government and school newsletters as a source of advertising

Tips on media interviews

- It's a great idea to organise a spokesperson for your organisation. Make sure they are fully briefed on Library and Information Week and your local events. You might also want to consider involving a user of your service or member of the community to give a quote or two for the interview.



- If you are interviewed on radio or television be well-prepared with the points you wish to make — you may not get much time on air to make them — and with statistics on library usage and services and the characteristics of the population you serve. Ask, before the interview, how much time you will have and what the format is (for example, question and answer). Be prepared to pass smoothly to a new point if you are asked a question which you cannot or will not answer.
- In all interviews, but especially on radio and television, be enthusiastic and positive, especially about the contribution libraries are making and will make to the community.

Tips on your media kit

The kit of information that you send to the media will include the following:

- A media release (a sample follows).
- Information about participants in your event (for example, background information about the person who will be a guest at your event).
- Descriptions of library services.
- Highlights of library programs and statistics of use and population served as way of background information about your library and information service.

Tips on drafting media statements

- There is more to gaining media coverage than sending out a media release, but a media release is nevertheless a must. To be effective it must sell the sizzle — as well as inform about the sausage.
- The first sentence and certainly the first paragraph must deliver the news 'hook'. Generalisations or explanations are not suitable for opening statements. A news story must answer the questions who, what, when, where, why and sometimes, how and to whom.
- Always use the active rather than the passive voice. For example 'Billabong Public Library will open on Sunday afternoons from 27 May', rather than 'There will be an extension of library opening hours on Sundays at Billabong Public Library'.



- o Ensure that dates, times, places and details for further information (preferably with a named contact person) are included in the media statement.
- o As well as including details of your LIW event and all the exciting activities you have planned, include some general information on what kind of library you are, who you serve, the types of services and the innovative programs you offer, library resources, how you use technology, your key statistics, and the contributions that you make to your local community.

Sample media release for Library and Information Week

Following is a sample media release which can be edited for use by your library or organisation to promote your local events.



Library and Information Week 2019 comes to < *insert your organisation here* >

On < *insert the date of your event* > at < *insert your local time in bold* >, < *insert the name of your organisation* > will join organisations from Broome to Hobart, celebrating Library and Information Week 2019.

Library and Information Week aims to raise the profile of libraries and information service professionals in Australia and showcase the many and varied resources and services that libraries provide to the community.

The event has been organised by the Australian Library and Information Association to promote the value of reading and literacy, the importance of Australia's book industry and the role of libraries.

The theme for Library and Information Week 2019 is *Truth, Integrity, Knowledge*. We will be celebrating by < *insert details of who is attending your event and why you have chosen them and any related colourful activities...* >

For information about the local event, contact < *Your details here* >.

For more information on Library and Information Week around Australia, visit www.alia.org.au/liw or contact the Australian Library and Information Association, 02 6215 8222 enquiry@alia.org.au PO Box 6335 Kingston ACT 2604