



Tasmania Police Media Guidelines

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Media and Public Communications
Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

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1. Engaging with media

Policing issues are often of public interest and therefore the focus of media attention.

Mutually beneficial working relationships with media outlets help us to effectively use media to solve crime and engage with the Tasmanian community.

News outlets can reach audiences we can't reach through our own social media channels.

Making ourselves available for interview by media also fits with our values of being honest and accountable to our community.

When possible, we provide interviews, photos and video for media to use in their publications and broadcasts because media will nearly always need more than just a media release to make an engaging story.

A proactive approach to media engagement benefits the operational aims of Tasmania Police and helps maintain positive and mutually beneficial working relationships.

(See also: [Tasmania Police Social Media Publication Guidelines](#) available on the [Media and Communications intranet page](#))

While it is not possible to provide comprehensive media advice for every situation or incident, this document offers broad guidelines for Tasmania Police staff, and Media and Public Communications is available for further advice.

2. Media and Public Communications

The Media and Public Communications team aims to assist Tasmania Police to communicate with the Tasmanian public through traditional and social media.

This often includes engaging with the community about the work of Tasmania Police, communicating public safety, incident and investigation information, reassurance messaging and crime reduction advice.

Media and Public Communications is staffed during business hours and operates an on-call system outside of business hours.

Key functions of Media and Public Communications include:

- developing content for DPFEM's social media channels
- liaising with reporters and working with the relevant police officers to develop responses to media queries
- writing and editing media releases
- issues management
- arranging media conferences and media events
- developing media plans, campaigns and strategies

- media training
- providing advice and guidance on media handling and interviews.

To contact Media and Public Communications, contact:

s30(1)(d) - Exemption Applied

See also: [Media and Communications intranet site](#) for more information.

3. Values and principles of media engagement

The Tasmania Police Media Guidelines promote the Department's values of:

Accountability:

We are accountable for what we do and how we do it. We reflect and learn.

Integrity:

We are professional, honest, and ethical in our conduct. We do the right thing.

Respect:

We value contribution and diversity – irrespective of role or status. We treat people with respect.

Support:

We are committed to supporting others. We listen and respond.

4. Related policy

[Tasmania Police Social Media Publication Guidelines](#)

5. Providing information to journalists

5.1 Aims

We engage with media because news outlets can reach parts of the Tasmanian community that we can't reach through our own social media channels.

Making ourselves available for interview by media also fits with our values of being honest and accountable to our community.

Engaging with the media allows us to call on the community for information to help us solve crime as well as provide important safety and reassurance messaging.

By providing information to the public through our social media channels and through news media we can make sure the community is informed by correct and relevant information, not rumours or ill-informed opinion.

5.2 Public interest

Policing issues are often of public interest, with crime and safety issues at the top of the list.

There is a difference between what is 'of public interest' and what is 'in the public interest', but often the line between the two is blurred.

Journalists will often cite their story or request for information as being 'in the public interest', while we may view it differently.

There are times that it's appropriate for us to explain to a journalist why we cannot talk about a certain aspect of an investigation or give a particular detail about an incident.

Our values guide that we have an approach that is open and accountable and it's important that we provide answers and information when we can, while always ensuring investigative and operational integrity.

5.3 Exclusives

We provide information to reporters and news outlets without favour.

This means that we do not provide more or different information to one reporter or one news outlet above any other.

If one news outlet initiates its own inquiry, we respect the journalist's exclusivity where possible. Such inquiries should be raised with Media and Public Communications.

In circumstances where a media release would be issued regardless, or where there are public safety reasons, requests for exclusivity will not be met.

5.4 Leaking information

Leaking information means providing information to reporters that you are not authorised to provide or that should not be provided to reporters.

Leaking information does not fit with our values and can result in disciplinary action under the Code of Conduct provisions of the State Service Act or the Police Service Act/

If unsure about what may constitute 'leaking' information, contact Media and Public Communications.

5.5 Off the record

There is no such thing as 'off the record'.

This means information provided will be published without attributing it to you.

Don't speak about any issue that you don't want reported. Use your judgement in providing background information.

5.6 Exercise judgement

Speak to journalists only on issues within your sphere of control and expertise.

Do not provide information to the media which:

- is an individual opinion
- is outside the area directly under your operational control or in which you have direct experience
- may hinder or adversely affect the investigation or other police operations
- may prejudice a person's right to a fair trial
- comments on another agency's operational matters or responsibilities
- identifies police methodology.

6. Media handling on-scene

Often media will arrive at the scene in the early stages of an incident.

They will want to film and take pictures and will ask for an interview about what has taken place.

Breaking the story is their priority and they will quickly publish stories and images online with very little detail, while they work to get information.

Your operational and investigative priorities at the scene are paramount, and it's also important to recognise that media have a job to do as well.

Their job is to get information and vision/images about matters of public interest to inform the community.

6.1 Filming and photography

- Allow media to film from an appropriate area where they can get a reasonable view of what's happening. They won't want to film distressing imagery, but they will want to be allowed to film from a vantage point that helps them tell the story of what's happening.
- If the incident is in an open area where vantage points can't be controlled, you can suggest an area for them that suits your operational needs.
- Media will usually respect any requests to move to another area or wait for an interview, as long as they have trust that they will get the vision and information they need.
- If media is excluded from the area for a specific reason, give consideration to planning escorted visits to the site where vision can be obtained under police supervision. Explain why you need to do this and what vision media should avoid.
- Camera-pooling can be considered as an option. This involves allowing one camera and a photographer into a scene with a police escort, with the understanding the images will be shared with all media. This is effective when access is limited, or a less intrusive approach is required.

6.2 Information and updates

- Public interest in a major incident is high and it's important we communicate about it sooner rather than later. Media will also be less impactful on operational activities if we indicate when they will be able to get information.
- Communicating to media at the scene about a specific time and place for an interview opportunity gives them confidence that they will get what they need and will reduce their impact on you.
- Regular scheduled updates to media will help them to feel they can trust us to provide new and changing information. It also stops them from filling their news story with less-informed opinion from other sources.
- It can be difficult to override or correct misinformation once it's spreading in the community so get in control of the information flow as early as possible.

6.3 Assistance

- If you are unsure about what you can say or how best to manage media interest in your incident, call Media and Public Communications for advice.
- During business hours you can call the Media and Public Communications office.
- After-hours, Radio Dispatch Services can put you in touch with the on-call Media Officer.
- If required, Media and Public Communications can send a media officer to a scene or forward command post to assist with managing media activities and requests.

7. Media conferences

7.1 What is a media conference?

A media conference is an arranged time and place for multiple media representatives to interview a spokesperson about an operation or incident.

Usually, media will be invited to attend by email sent by Media and Public Communications, or you can arrange it yourself with media on scene.

Some media conferences are held at or near the scene, others may be scheduled for another relevant place and time such as a police station.

For important incidents or events media may broadcast live using satellite trucks or their social media channels.

7.2 Tips for managing media conferences

Plan ahead for media conferences:

- set a time and place for the media conference – if it's at the scene, make sure the location is convenient, relevant and does not impact operational or investigative activity
- develop your **key messages (9.1)**
- read the **interview tips (8.1)**.

7.3 Exit plan

Before you start the media conference, develop an exit plan for if your time is limited or if questions from media become too numerous.

An exit plan means planning how you will end the media conference and the route you will take from the interview area.

Usually, media conferences will come to a natural conclusion when reporters run out of questions.

If questions are going too long you can call last questions by saying something like: *"I've got time for just one or two more questions"*.

Stick to what you've indicated and when you've answered the next couple of questions thank the reporters and make your exit.

It's also common for camera operators to require 'cutaways' at the end of a media conference.

This means they want to film you from different angles. They'll usually ask you to chat off-topic with the reporter while they move around filming. Ensure your demeanour matches the tone of the media conference while the cutaways are being filmed.

8. Interviews

Interviews help explain what's happened, reassure the community, and show that we are professional, honest and accountable in our approach to dealing with the incident at hand.

Approach interviews as an opportunity to tell the public about the incident, reassure them and call for witnesses and information.

As a general rule, reporters are simply interested in the story at hand and are not looking to ask you off-topic questions or catch you out. Be prepared!

- Set a time and a place for your interview – this reassures reporters that they will get what they need for their story, even if they have to wait a little while.
- Write and practice your **key messages** (9.1).
- Develop an **exit plan** (7.3).

8.1 Interview tips

- Before the interview take a few minutes to write down the three main things you want to tell the public.
- Weave your key messages into the interview as many times as you can. Don't worry if it feels like you're repeating yourself as they'll only use part of it and live audiences will only remember part of it. An appeal for information/witnesses will often be one of your key messages.
- Dress the part: Ensure you are dressed in accordance with the Dress and Appearance Guidelines (caps on if outside). Take your lanyard off as it looks messy.
- Talk to the reporters before the interview and ask them what aspects they're interested in. If there's anything you can't go into for investigative reasons tell them this before the interview starts. They are usually understanding.
- Ask if the interview is live and ask them to tell you when they start broadcasting. Remember anything you say or do in the moments before and after the interview will be broadcast if it's live. It's common for reporters to broadcast live on social media.
- Ask which reporter is 'eyeline' and look at them throughout the whole interview, no matter who is asking the question. It looks strange to viewers at home if you are staring into the camera or if your eyes are shifting around.
- Standing up during the interview gives a more professional and commanding appearance than sitting down.
- If you stumble over your words or forget what you were saying, simply pause, reset, and start your answer again. It's ok to ask reporters to repeat the question. Media want to broadcast your messages, not your mistakes.
- Check what's behind you for any distracting signage, branding or activity that could detract from your messaging.
- If you're a 'hand talker' keep your hands low and out of camera shot. Usually, it's only your head and shoulders that will be in frame.

- If possible, record your interview on the Voice Memo function on your phone and send it to Media and Public Communications. Reporters who can't attend the interview often ask for a recording.

9. Messaging

9.1 Key messages

Before an interview, take 10 minutes to write down three key messages.

Your key messages are the things you need or want the public to know and should form the basis of most of your interview answers.

- write your key messages in your 'spoken voice' so that the phrasing and sentiment comes more naturally to you during the interview
- practice saying them out loud a few times before the interview
- an appeal for witnesses or information is very often one of your key messages.

9.2 Messaging themes: the three Cs

Often key messages fall into three categories, called the three Cs: *care/concern*, *control*, *commitment*:

Care (or concern) messaging shows sympathy or concern about what has happened.

Control messaging talks about what police are doing in response to the situation in order to control what's happening.

Commitment messaging gives reassurance and talks about how police will resolve the situation going forward.

9.3 Messaging examples: the three Cs

Care (or concern)

Our sympathies are with the family of the deceased man/woman and we have an officer working closely with them to provide support at this tragic time. [i.e., we have sympathy and understand the impact on victims].

Control

A cordon has been set up around the house and forensic officers and CIB officers are collecting evidence, reviewing CCTV and interviewing witnesses. [i.e., what police are doing about it].

Commitment

Our officers are working to identify the offender and anyone who was in the street last night or who saw a green Toyota in the area is asked to call police or Crime Stoppers immediately. [i.e., we will make this better by working to arrest the offender].

9.4 Rocks and bridges

If you've ever done our media training, you may recall the concept of rocks and bridges to get you through the interview swamp.

Think of the interview as a swamp you're trying to navigate. Your key messages are the 'rocks' placed regularly throughout the swamp that you bridge between to land your feet safely.

Your 'rock' messaging is where you can be comfortable and confident in what you're saying. Bridging statements help navigate tricky or unexpected questions by 'bridging' between the rocks of safety.

There will always be questions from journalists that you're unprepared for, that reference an issue we're not ready to talk about or that simply catch you off guard. The idea of bridging statements is that you acknowledge the question and then bridge away from it to your key message.

If you imagine 'X' is the problematic question (swamp) and 'Y' is your key message (rock), common bridging statements take the form of:

- *I don't have information about X to hand right now but I can tell you Y.*
- *It's important we don't speculate about X at this stage but what I can say is Y.*
- *X is clearly something we're focusing on as part of the investigation and to assist us with that we're currently doing Y.*
- *It's too early in the investigation to talk about X but what we do want to ask of the community is Y.*

9.5 Bridging statement examples

- *I don't have the statistics about knife crime to hand right now [acknowledgement of the question] but what I can say is [bridge] **that violence is unacceptable in any form and that's why we're working to identify the offender and asking people to come forward with information** [key message]*
- *The community is understandably concerned about the offender on the run [acknowledgement of the question] and that's why [bridge] **we're asking anyone who sees the green Holden to contact us immediately** [key message]*
- *The motive of the killer is something we're looking closely at as part of the investigation [acknowledgement of the question] but it's simply too early to speculate [bridge] **and what we really need right now is for anyone who was in the area at the time to come forward and tell us what they saw** [key message].*

10. Media releases

10.1 How to write a media release

- As the officer in charge of an incident or operation it's your job to arrange the writing of a media release for distribution to media.
- A media release provides essential information about an incident. As a basic rule this includes the **who, what, where** and **when** about any incident or operation.
- A media release should be about a page in length and include all the information necessary to give journalists a good understanding of the incident or operation.
- A good place to start is to think about how you would re-tell the story to a friend and include the same level of detail and description about what took place.
- Media and Public Communications can provide advice and assistance if required.

10.2 Quotes

- Include quotes in your media release whenever possible. They should be written in the style of the spoken voice and help tell the story beyond the basic facts.
- **Section 9** gives advice about developing key messages and these can be used to form the basis of quotes.
- Media and Public Communications can give you advice and can edit your media release.
- Click here for the [Media Release template](#).

10.3 Distribution of media releases

During business hours send your media release to Media and Public Communications at

s30(1)(d) - Exemption

Outside of business hours send your media release to

s30(1)(d) - Exemption
Applied

It's important to distribute your media release earlier rather than later so that you have time within your shift to conduct media interviews.

Sending your media release out at the end of your shift when you're not available to answer clarifying questions or do interviews is very frustrating for journalists. If they're left with questions unanswered or confusion, they may publish an inaccurate story or not give the story the prominence it deserves.

It's important to be available to media for clarifying questions and interviews. This helps ensure an accurate and useful story in the media, as well as maintaining positive relationships with media representatives.

See [Tasmania Police Media Release Quick Guide](#) for more information.

11. Privacy of information

Section 9 of the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (the Act) exempts Tasmania Police from the provisions of the Act when disclosure of the information is reasonably necessary for achieving the functions of the agency.

Personal information that is disclosed about an individual should be limited to that which is reasonably necessary to achieve the operational purpose.

Note that Section 9 of the Act does not apply to information that is prohibited from release elsewhere, e.g., Court suppression orders, Sections 24 and 63 of the *Forensic Procedures Act 2000* and Section 22 of the *Youth Justice Act 1997* restrict the disclosure of certain information.

Generally, information may be released to the media in order to undertake operational functions. However, any personal information released to the media must be accurate.

If personal information is not confirmed as factual, but is deemed appropriate to disclose for operational reasons, then the nature of the information must be clearly conveyed along with the rationale for disclosing unsubstantiated information.

12. Social Media

Social media is the main way we communicate directly on a mass scale with the Tasmanian public.

Our social media channels reach audiences quickly, are free and highly effective, especially in calling for information, locating missing people and identifying offenders.

Tasmania Police uses Facebook and Instagram as its main social media channels, and to a much lesser degree Twitter and YouTube.

Our social media use is all about engaging audiences in the information we need them to know. Compared to traditional media releases, developing content for social media means writing in a more engaging way, presenting information in simple and eye-catching ways and using pictures and video to draw people in.

Traditional media will often follow the stories we post on social media, wanting interviews, vision and pictures of their own.

12.1 Social media posts

Most media releases are re-written by Media and Public Communications in a 'social style' and posted to our social media channels.

Engaging images and video produced by officers are always in demand and should be emailed to Media and Public Communications for use on social media.

12.2 Social media management

Social media channels are managed by Media and Public Communications as per the Tasmania Police Social Media Publication Guidelines.

Only employees of Media and Public Communications can post to the Department's social media channels. Any requests for content to be posted to social media should be directed to Media and Public Communications.

12.3 Moderation

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

A High Court decision in September 2021, ruled that the administrators of social media pages are responsible for the comments posted by members of the public. The decision relates to the case of NT youth detainee Dylan Voller who argued Fairfax and other media outlets were responsible for defamatory comments about him made by third parties on their social media pages.

The ruling means DPFEM is responsible for defamatory comments by third parties on our social pages. In response to the decision, Tasmania's Solicitor General advised government agencies to enhance their moderation approach to public comments.

DPFEM has developed Social Media Moderation Guidelines that apply to the moderation of authorised social media accounts and formalises and enhances DPFEM's approach to social media moderation.

Measures required from the administrators/moderators of DPFEM pages including Facebook and Instagram, include:

- posts that are published on DPFEM social media pages must be actively moderated (multiple times within the hour)
- defamatory, derogatory or inappropriate posts must be hidden as soon as they are seen
- followers must be blocked from the page if they are found to have made a defamatory comment

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

12.4 Mainstream media use of social media

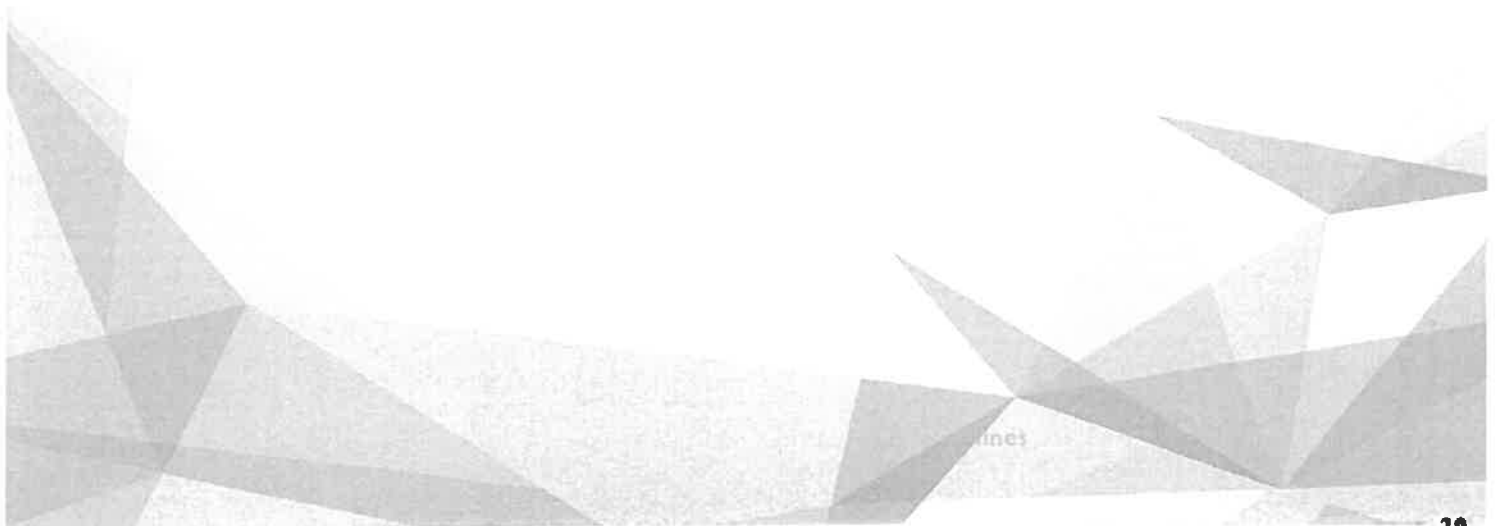
All local newspapers and TV stations also use publish online and through social channels.

Their social and online deadlines are immediate and frequent with commercial media using it as a click through to their paid content.

Mainstream media will often broadcast media conferences live through social media.

SECTION 2

MESSAGING GUIDE



13. The investigation process

13.1 Information that can be released prior to arrest

Before a person is arrested, and while being sensitive to the privacy of individuals, the following may be released:

- a description of the basic facts e.g., assault, stealing etc – this can be more detailed if appropriate to the investigation
- time and location (suburb, town or street name) – s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied
s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied
- gender and age of a victim of crime (except where it identifies them) – a victim of crime may be identified with their consent, but not if they are a sexual assault victim (unless we have permission)
- take care not to provide information that may identify a sexual assault victim,
s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied
- description of any person of interest (see **section 17 – descriptions of people**), vehicle or other items required to be recovered
- name, contact and station of the investigating officer or Crime Stoppers number 1800 333 000 and online reporting at www.crimestopperstas.com.au
- general description of any injuries or conditions
- public reassurance message about what Tasmania Police is doing to deal with the incident
- appeal for information and witnesses to come forward.

13.2 Information that can be released after arrest and prior to charging

Once a person is in custody but not yet charged, information can be released that does not risk identifying the offender:

- he/she is in custody
- he/she is helping police with their inquiries in relation to an incident or offence
- age, gender
- suburb or town of residence
- location and time of arrest
- circumstances immediately surrounding arrest.
- at this stage do not use descriptors of the arrested person in statements.

13.3 Information that can be released after charging

Limit information released about the arrest or charging phase.

Be aware of the danger of making comment about matters which could prejudice the right of an individual to a fair trial.

Once charges have been laid, the following information can be added:

- the gender, age and town/suburb or city of the charged person
- the exact charges
- the court at which the accused will appear
- date of appearance
- whether the person was remanded in custody (do not release details of bail conditions, they cannot be published in Tasmania)
- there are instances where those charged with sexual assaults cannot be named, as it may identify their victims, e.g., if the victim is a relative
- a charging statement should be provided as a brief media release without responding to further questions
- do not comment on a case that is before the courts or release information about it as this has the potential to impact a trial.

13.4 Naming charged people

Before a charged person has appeared in court, we cannot name them in a media release.

This is because the charges may be dropped before court, or the person may successfully appeal to have their name withheld.

If a media request is made for the name for the purposes of attending court, the surname can be provided with the disclaimer that it is not for publication until after their first court appearance.

After appearance in open court, the person's name can be released.

The names of minors (under the age of 18) cannot be released.

Media will have the opportunity to hear the details once the case is before the courts.

13.5 Charging statement example

“Two men have been charged in relation to a series of home and motor vehicle burglaries in suburbs including Sandy Bay, South Hobart and North Hobart, last night.

The 17-year-old and 18-year-old have been jointly charged with Aggravated Burglary x3, Burglary x9, Stealing x14 and Motor Vehicle Stealing. They have been remanded to appear in court tomorrow.

Police are grateful for the information from members of the public who assisted by promptly reporting suspicious activity in the area.

Information can be provided by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au

You can provide information anonymously.”

13.6 Custody

Do not allow the media access to any person in police custody. This includes people being conveyed to court either in vans or in secure walkways

If a prisoner is likely to be exposed to media, give them the opportunity to cover their faces

The media code of ethics requires representatives to identify themselves and their organisation. Failure of the media to do so must be reported to Media and Communications.

Do not provide video or audio recordings of people interviewed to media. Recorded interviews are the property of the person interviewed.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

13.7 Difference between Summonses and Charges

Summonses are different to charges being laid, in that if you're charged, you are bailed (or remanded in serious cases) and face court.

Being proceeded against via summons is a different process whereby a person receives a summons where they are directed to appear in court on a certain matter. It is traditionally used for lower-level type offences.

Summonses generally take some time to prepare the file and summons for service on the person (this includes a court date and complaint particulars).

13.8 Investigative methodology

Details of police or criminal methodology must not be released.

Covert and technological tactics must not be released.

If you're not sure, contact the Crime and Intelligence Command.

14. Court proceedings

14.1 Exhibits and evidence

Tasmania Police will not release vision, photographs, recordings of interviews or any other material from an investigation, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for this material must be referred to Media and Public Communications.

Approval for release must be granted by the Duty Commissioner or be sought through a Right to Information request.

14.2 Court outcomes

Comment on the outcome of court proceedings will only be made in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Duty Commissioner. Media and Public Communications is to be consulted prior to any comment.

It is preferable to wait until after the appeal period (28 days).

If approval is granted for comment release only factual statements regarding the conviction and conduct of the investigation. Do not comment on the severity or otherwise of sentencing.

Do not make any comment that may adversely affect the appeal rights of the accused.

If you are unsure whether any appeal period applies or has expired, check with the Director of Public Prosecutions/appropriate court registry before making comment.

15. Offenders

15.1 Identification sought

s30(1)(c) & 30(1)(e) - Exemption Applied

The text should read that the person's identification is sought 'in connection with an investigation into e.g., burglary offences' or that 'police believe he/she may be able to assist with an investigation into e.g., burglary offences'. Take care not to suggest the person is guilty of an offence.

Once the person has been identified the post should be taken down from social media channels and the post updated to read something like: 'Thanks for your help, everyone, the man we were seeking in connection with burglary offences in the Hobart area has been identified.'

If the image was circulated to media, the same update should be circulated to media.

15.2 Location sought

s30(1)(c) & 30(1)(e) - Exemption Applied

If an arrest warrant has been issued the accompanying text can state this fact. If no warrant has been issued state that the person is sought 'in connection with' or 'can assist with enquiries in relation to'.

For example:

'Do you know where we can find Bob Smith (aged 34)? A warrant has been issued for his arrest in relation to burglary offences. He is known to frequent the Devonport and Burnie areas. If you know where he is or if you have seen him in recently, please call police on 131 444 or Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000.'

Once the person has been located and/or arrested the post should be taken down from social media channels and the post updated to read something like: *'Thanks for your help, everyone, the man we were seeking in connection with burglary offences in the Hobart area has been identified.'*

If the image was circulated to media the same update should be circulated to media.

15.3 Wanted Wednesday

People for Wanted Wednesday posts are nominated by the Crime Management Unit after their checks have failed to locate the subjects.

When a charged person's image is sent to Media and Public Communications for publication on Facebook for Wanted Wednesday or Location sought it must be first be checked with the Forensic Procedures Compliance Unit to ensure it is not embargoed.

The easiest way to do this is to forward the email request for publication to

s30(1)(d) - confirming whether the photo is ok to release.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

In addition, all above advice for 'location sought' must also be followed.

15.4 Do not release information or speculate

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

16. Victims

16.1 Protecting the privacy of victims

Victims of crime are our priority and all public communications about an incident or crime must consider their needs and privacy first.

Sometimes victims will choose to identify themselves to media which is their prerogative.

In situations where a victim has reported a matter to police and media are seeking an update on the investigation, the investigators must first check with the victim to update them at all times prior to the release of information to the media.

16.2 Family violence

Extreme care must be taken not to identify victims of family violence.

If identifying a person as a family violence offender may lead to identification of a victim, refer to their offending with the less descriptive term 'violence'.

16.3 Family violence involving police officers

In family violence matters involving police officers, Media and Public Communications is required to check with Professional Standards to ensure appropriate engagement has occurred with the victim prior to any media release. Specific consent from the victim is required in relation to publication and timing of a media release.

Media and Public Communications must also check with Professional Standards to ensure that appropriate notifications have been actioned in relation to the alleged offender, including Wellbeing Support prior to any media release.

In the event a media release is published, Media and Public Communications will not provide any details which could potentially identify the victim.

Media releases are to be published following the court appearance.

16.4 Describing victims of crime and/or injury

Victims can be described by age, gender and town.

Care must be taken not to inadvertently identify a victim or infringe on their privacy.

Details such as profession or sometimes exact age can inadvertently lead to identification.

The level of appropriate detail to release will vary depending on what is in the public interest and the circumstances.

16.5 Information that can be released:

General information about the victim's age and location can be released:

For example:

"The robbery victim was a man in his 40s from Burnie who was uninjured."

If more detail is required about the person because it's relevant or is required to adequately explain the situation, you should remove some other detail to ensure the victim's privacy

Examples:

- *"The hate-based graffiti was sprayed on a car belonging to a Sudanese citizen living in Hobart"*.
- *A man and a woman aged in their 20s and another woman aged in her 50s, all from Victoria, were rescued from Kitchen Hut at Cradle Mountain.*
- *Three children aged under 10 were in the house at the time of the fire and are currently in hospital. All are described as being in a serious condition.*

16.6 Information that must not be released

Do not release information that:

- identifies a victim of crime, without their permission
- identifies a victim of sexual assault (the victim can provide permission for this).

If it is necessary to identify a child – e.g., a missing person, and they are also an offender or victim – take great care not to link their identification with either of those things.

For example, if a child offender absconds from custody they should be referred to as missing with police working to locate them, with no mention of being an offender.

See section **16.8 – Assisting Victims or Families of Victims** for more information.

16.7 Victim condition

Provide only a general description of any injuries or conditions. Injuries should usually be described as **'life threatening'**, **'non-life threatening'** or **'minor'**..

For privacy reasons, updates on a patient's condition once admitted to hospital should not be provided simply because there is media interest.

If a victim is in hospital, media should direct their calls for condition updates to the Department of Health.

If the victim of a crime or police incident dies in hospital, police will notify media of the fatality after the Coroner's Office has notified us of the death.

16.8 Deaths and fatalities

If a victim dies in a crash or incident, it is our responsibility to notify the public through the media. Until it is a confirmed fatality, the crash should be referred to as **'serious'**.

A fatality should not be confirmed until after the next of kin has been informed. Exceptions to this include times when the next of kin cannot be identified in a timely way. In these circumstances, only very limited, non-identifying information can be released, ie not age, gender, or where the deceased is from.

Media representatives should be encouraged to delay publishing images of crash scenes that identify vehicles involved until after next of kin has been informed.

If a victim dies in hospital sometime after an incident, police will release this information to media, following notification from the Coroner's Office. Notification to Media and Public Communications about the death comes from the investigating officer, with approval from the Coroner's Office.

16.9 Assisting victims or families of victims

There may be occasions when Tasmania Police can assist victims and their families by acting as liaison with the media, e.g., obtaining permission for an individual's photo for release to media, assisting with a family statement or arranging a family spokesperson.

Media will check social media sites such as Facebook for images of family members or victims of crime, as these are in the public domain. Most mainstream media have policies whereby they will only use these images if they can get someone to supply them, e.g., a Facebook friend of the victim.

Media and Public Communications can provide advice to media about a family's request for privacy, e.g., at a funeral or visit to a crime scene.

17. Descriptions of people

Descriptions of people should be as precise as possible and non-discriminatory and non-offensive language should be used.

It should include information about the physical features of a person rather than relying on ethnic characteristics.

s30(1)(d) - Exemption Applied

17.1 Gender and age

A person's gender and age should be described as **man, woman, boy, girl, they**.

When describing children/teenagers:

- a person aged 15 or under may be described as a child, boy, girl, they
- a person aged 16 or 17 may be described as a teenager, boy, girl, he, she, they
- anyone aged 18 or over is an adult, man, woman, they.

Circumstance may dictate which reference is appropriate. For example, it may be appropriate to refer to a 17-year-old victim as a child but a 17-year-old offender as a teenager.

For more information about children and youth, see section **20 – Children and young people**.

For more information about inclusive language, and gender and LGBTIQ, see section **18 – Gender**.

17.2 Physical descriptions

A person should be described by their most obvious physical characteristics which usually include:

- gender, height, build, hair colour and length, skin colour, distinctive physical features
- last known worn clothing (if appropriate).

Examples of physical descriptions

These may include:

- **Build** – e.g., large, athletic, slim, thin, stocky, medium, solid, muscular
- **Height** – estimate in centimetres
- **Complexion** – should be described as dark, medium, fair, tanned, olive etc
- **Hair colour** – e.g., blonde, white, black, brown, grey, etc
- **Hair length** – shaved, short, medium, long, straight, wavy, curly, spikey
- **Glasses** – half-rim, sunglasses,
- **Facial hair** – e.g., moustache, beard, sideburns, goatee, stubble
- **Distinctive physical features** – e.g., tattoos, piercings, moles, scars, physical impairments (such as a limp).

17.3 Ethnicity and nationality

Include reference to ethnicity or nationality only if it is known, and only if it is relevant:

- **Ethnicity-based descriptions** should be combined with a physical description, e.g., 'the person is perceived to be of XYZ appearance':
 - *Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander appearance* (describes people with the dark skin tone and physical characteristics common of Indigenous Australians)
 - *Caucasian appearance* (describes the skin tones and physical characteristics common of white European people)
 - *African appearance* (describes the skin tones and physical attributes common of black African people).
 - *Asian appearance* (describes the skin tones and physical characteristics common of people from Asian countries)
 - *Pacific Islander/Māori appearance* (describes the skin tones and physical characteristics common of people from the Pacific Islands)
 - *South American appearance* (describes the skin tones and physical characteristics common of people from South America).
- **Nationality** refers to a person's country or nation or origin and is of no relevance as a description except where it is an issue, e.g., where fears are held for the safety of a foreign national travelling in Australia.

18. Gender

Gender is one of the descriptors we use in identifying people (ie; persons of interest, victims, suspects, offenders etc), and relates to how a person identifies, not the sex they were assigned at birth.

In many cases it will be clear that a person should be referred to as a man or a woman. It is preferable to use man/woman rather than male/female.

The terms male/female/other refer to a person's sex and it is more appropriate for us to refer to their gender.

Gender and LGBTIQ communities

There are many gender identities and gender pronouns for people from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer/questioning (LGBTIQ) communities.

The gender binary is the concept that there are only two gender options. If someone identifies as non-binary it means they don't identify exclusively as a man or a woman. In simple terms they might identify as a mix of genders or none at all.

A person who identifies as non-binary may also be gender-fluid, with their gender identity changing over time, e.g., they might identify as a woman sometimes and as genderless the rest of the time.

We must refer to the gender of people from LGBTIQ communities in line with the way they identify.

Inclusive gender language

Common pronouns include **he**, **she** and **they**.

Making assumptions and/or using the wrong gender pronoun is disrespectful.

Use the terms that people use to describe themselves – if you are unsure then it's ok to ask what term they use.

Don't ask what term they 'prefer' as this implies choice, ask them which pronouns they 'use'.

When appropriate, use terms like 'partner' or 'parent' and 'in a relationship with' to avoid gender reference.

Describing LGBTIQ people

- If a person uses a male or female pronoun, use – **he/his** and **she/hers**.
- If a person uses non-binary pronouns, use – **they/theirs/them**.
- As always, use factual language to describe appearance.
- It might be that a person's name and/or physical description don't make clear their gender identity. It is not our place to comment, justify or explain this in our public communications.
- If gender identity remains unclear or unknown use non-binary pronouns: **they/theirs/them**.
- Do not use language that speculates or implies judgement such as referring to someone as *'believed to be a man'* or *'having the appearance of a man but...'* or *'wearing women's clothing but has facial hair...'*.

- Do not refer to a person's birth assigned sex or former gender identity – don't say:
"The woman, Ashley (formerly a man known as David) was last seen at home..."

Example statements for gender non-binary

Example	Statement
A victim of an assault remains unconscious in hospital. Their clothing and physical appearance suggest they could be gender non-binary.	<i>The victim (believed to be in their 40s) suffered serious head injuries as a result of the assault. They were taken to hospital to receive treatment and they remain in a serious condition. Anyone who saw the assault is asked to call Police.</i>
Ashley Smith's family have reported Ashley missing. Ashley's family has told us that Ashley identifies as non-binary. The family has supplied a recent picture of Ashley for use on social media.	<i>Have you seen Ashley Smith (aged 25) recently? Ashley's family is concerned for their welfare after they left home in West Hobart on Saturday night and haven't made contact with family since. Ashley is described as 165cm tall with medium-length blonde hair and a thin build. Ashley was last seen wearing black leggings/trousers and a black shirt.</i>
An assault was reported at a bar in Hobart. The alleged offender fled the scene and has not been identified. There is no CCTV or imagery of the alleged offender. Witness accounts of the offender suggest they may be gender non-binary.	<i>Police are working to identify a person involved in an altercation that left a 45-year-old man with a broken nose. The person we're trying to identify is described as around 190cm tall, thin build, brown hair below the shoulders, wearing distinctive eye make-up, sparse facial hair and a denim jacket. If you saw the altercation or have information about the person we're trying to identify please call Police.</i>
A child, Jordan Smith, is missing from Taroona. Jordan's parents have told us that Jordan identifies as a girl. They have supplied a picture that is a good likeness of Jordan but may lead people to assume she is a boy.	<i>Have you seen Jordan Smith (aged 9) this afternoon? Jordan was last seen riding a red bike outside her Taroona home at 4pm. She has dark wavy hair to her chin and was last seen wearing a blue Taroona Primary School T-shirt and navy shorts.</i>
E.g. Arlo Smith has been reported missing. Arlo is 45 and identifies as gender non-binary. Arlo is gender-fluid and their appearance sometimes changes to reflect this. In their professional life Arlo identifies as gender neutral while socially Arlo often identifies more as a woman. Arlo packed a bag and has not been to work or in contact with friends for several days. Arlo's partner has supplied several pictures of Arlo.	<i>Have you seen Arlo Smith recently? Arlo was last seen leaving work in Hobart a week ago and has not made contact with friends, family or colleagues since and they are concerned about Arlo's welfare. Arlo is described as aged 45, 165cm tall, slim build and with several tattoos of palm trees and song lyrics on their arms. Arlo sometimes changes their appearance as shown in the attached images. Anyone who has seen Arlo in the last week is asked to call Police.</i>

Justification

If media ask for the gender of the person when you have used a non-binary gender pronoun or a gender pronoun that does not conform with physical appearance, explain that the term you are using is in line with our policy of appropriately identifying gender.

It is not our place and would infringe privacy to give further justification or explanation.

19. Disability

It is important to be respectful in the language we use to describe someone with a disability. In describing a person with a disability, ensure that you emphasise the individual, not the disability.

- Avoid stereotypical, stigmatising and demeaning depiction of people with disability.
- People with disability are not 'suffering from', 'victims of' or 'afflicted by' their disability.
- Do not describe someone as a 'disabled person'. They are a person with a disability or condition.
- Sometimes it will be necessary to explain more about a person's disability to e.g., give the best chance of a positive identification or to explain how the disability may affect behaviour or thought processes.
- Consider the circumstances of the incident and whether it is necessary and/or relevant to mention their condition, and if so, how much detail is required about it.

The following are respectful ways to describe a range of disabilities:

- a person with physical condition
- a person with a mental health condition
- a person with a cognitive and/or developmental condition
- a person who uses a wheelchair or mobility aids.
- a person with a speech and/or communication condition
- a person with visual impairment
- a person who is deaf or hard of hearing
- a person who has an emotional or behaviour condition[affects their ability to recognise, interpret and control emotions]
- a person of short stature

Examples:

- *The person police are working to identify is described as a man of short stature, about 1.3m tall, with brown hair and wearing a red baseball cap.*
- *The offender is described as a man of slim build with brown hair and wearing a red baseball cap. He uses a wheelchair and has a speech condition and was seen leaving the premises at 8pm.*
- *Have you seen Jane Smith? Jane is described as about 160cm tall, blonde hair and a large build. Jane has not been seen since Monday and her family is concerned about her. Jane has a mental health condition and is sometimes aggressive or violent. If you see her, please call police.*
- *Have you seen Joe Smith? Jo is described as about 175cm tall with short brown hair. He was last seen wearing a red hat and a light blue t-shirt. Joe also has a physical condition whereby he does not have a left hand. He was last seen at the Hobart waterfront at 1am on Sunday.*
- *Have you seen Daisy Smith in the Salamanca area in the last two hours? Daisy is 14 years old with brown hair to her chin and a large build, wearing jeans and a green t-shirt. Daisy became separated from her family at the market. She has a developmental condition and may appear confused or frightened. If you see her, please call police immediately.*

20. Children and young people

The term 'youth' may be used in some circumstances, although usually the terms 'girl/boy', 'young person' or 'young people' or 'teenager' will be more appropriate.

The word 'youth' is a gender-neutral term meaning young person and the Tasmanian youth justice system applies to anyone aged 10-17 years inclusive.

The term 'youth' can be used when trying to avoid disclosing gender.

It can also be used in situations when the second reference identifies gender, e.g., *the group of youths comprised five girls and five boys.*

A person aged 18 or over is an adult and should be referred to as a **man** or a **woman**, whilst anyone aged nine or under is a child and should be referred to as a **girl** or **boy** – unless they use non-binary pronouns, in which case you should use factual language and use **they/theirs/them** or their name (if appropriate).

See section 18 – **Gender and example statements for gender non-binary** for more information.

20.1 Protecting children's identities (as offenders and witnesses)

The identity of children connected with criminal proceedings as defendants, witnesses or otherwise must never be published.

Under section 31 of the *Youth Justice Act 1997* a young person who has or is likely to appear in court cannot be identified.

All care should be taken not to release or publish details that could lead to the young person's identification becoming known.

In general, only age and gender can be released, and only after consideration has been given as to whether these details could potentially lead to identification of the young person, for example:

- *A 14-year-old girl from the Greater Hobart area has been charged with attempted murder and will appear in court at a later date.*
- *A 16-year-old boy from the North-West of Tasmania has been charged with assault and will appear in court at a later date.*

Where a young person connected with proceedings needs to be located or protected, however, it may be necessary to release identifying details – for example, it may be necessary to release their name and photo on social media in order to locate them.

In these circumstances no mention should be made of any offence or proceedings and the information released should be treated in the same way as a concern for welfare.

Comments on social media should be monitored closely and any that reference proceedings, offences or criminality should be deleted asap.

Consideration should be given to off-record briefings to journalists to ensure they understand their obligation in relation to not identifying young people in these circumstances.

21. Charging of police officers

In the interests of being open and accountable, the Commissioner of Police has authorised Media and Public Communications to issue a media release when a police officer is dismissed or charged with an offence, provided there are no legal or operational reasons preventing it.

If there is a significant concern for the welfare of the officer, the Deputy Commissioner will determine whether a media release or any public comment will be made.

The officer's age, sex, rank, and district/region can be disclosed, however, care must be taken not to identify the person.

The media release will be distributed to media outlets and posted on the Tasmania Police website to meet our obligation to be accountable, however it will not be posted on the Facebook site.

Should media enquire whether an officer has been suspended or stood down, this can be confirmed.

The Deputy Commissioner must authorise the media release, for example:

“A Southern District Sergeant will be proceeded against by summons in relation to an alleged dangerous driving incident in August last year.

The 52-year-old police officer has been charged with one count of dangerous driving following an alleged incident in Hobart on 23 August 2021.

The officer was off duty at the time of the incident. He has been assigned to non-operational duties and directed not to drive any police vehicle until the matter is finalised.

As this matter is now before the courts Tasmania Police is unable to provide any further comment.”

For more information, please refer to the Tasmania Police Manual.

For matters involving Family Violence, please see 16.3 Family Violence Involving Police Officers.

22. Death in custody

Where a death in police custody occurs (including during a police pursuit), or self-harm incident in custody is detected, the Duty Commissioner must authorise the release of information. Media and Public Communications and the Coroner are to be notified.

23. Reportable deaths in other institutions

Where a reportable death occurs in other institutions such as prison, mental health facility etc, information may be released only after consultation with the relevant agency, investigating officers, and the relevant senior executive member.

Particular care must be taken in relation to the release of any identifying details such as age, gender etc, prior to notifying next of kin.

24. Coronial matters

As in general investigations, officers are required to exercise their own discretion with regard to releasing information.

Officers need not consult the Coroner except in circumstances as indicated above.

The Coroner will not object to the release of discreet information to the media at the appropriate stages of an investigation or where the circumstances require immediate media exposure to attract public interest and assistance.

In the initial stages of an incident police may release information to make the public aware of the circumstances of a death.

The release of information may reduce fear, allay curiosity, forewarn of danger, promote public safety and maintain/initiate public interest to help the investigation.

In doing so, release only brief factual information provided that such material will not hamper an investigation or prejudice the Coroner's inquest/inquiry.

If pressed for more information simply indicate that it is a coronial investigation and further details should be sought from the Coroner's Office.

25. Identification of deceased

Only release names after next of kin have been informed and granted permission for this to occur.

If permission to release the name is not given by the next of kin/family, **do not** identify the deceased.

If formal identification is still to be carried out but investigating police are satisfied of the identity of the deceased, a name may be released only if this will further assist your investigation e.g., missing person.

You must first seek the approval of the Coroner's Office.

"The body of a woman has been located at a property in Howrah. Formal identification has not taken place however it is believed the deceased is missing person [xxx]. Initial

investigations indicate there are no suspicious circumstances. A report will be prepared for the Coroner.”

If media determine the name of the deceased through their own sources, they should be encouraged to wait at least 24 hours before publication so there is time for next of kin to be told.

Police do not confirm the name of the deceased to media without permission from the family.

26. Self-harm and suicide

In general, information about a death that is a suicide will not be released proactively:

Media generally do not report suicide, however, there will be inquiries if a body is located.

Refer to a death has having “no suspicious circumstances” and it will usually not be reported

Where the deceased has been the subject of a missing person media release, advise media that “*Sadly, the missing person has been located deceased. There are no suspicious circumstances.*”

Do not indicate, imply, or confirm the existence of a suicide note.

Suicide is a matter for the Coroner to establish after hearing evidence at an inquest, however media can be advised that “*Initial investigations suggest there are no suspicious circumstances, and a report will be prepared for the Coroner.*”

Seek the Coroner's permission if it is necessary to identify the victim in order to establish their last movements.

Respect the privacy and grief of relatives by generally not identifying the victim. There might be exceptional circumstances where such an action is essential e.g., to establish a person's last movements, but first seek the Coroner's permission.

Do not speculate on the cause, method of self-harm or exact location. This can encourage copycat behaviour.

Media should be dissuaded from reporting suicide deaths and can be referred to Mindframe for more information.

For more resources visit <http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-police/resource-downloads>

27. Sudden death

In the event of a sudden death where there will be media interest, basic details may be released, e.g., tree felling incident, quad bike crash etc.

Example:

“Police responded to a request for assistance near Orford today.

A 44-year-old man from Triabunna was struck by a falling tree branch while wood cutting.

The man died as a result of his injuries.

A report is being prepared for the Coroner.”

28. Post-mortem results

The results of a post-mortem examination should be released only after careful consideration.

The Coroner orders the examination, and the result is usually confidential until it is made public through criminal or coronial proceedings.

However, to help further investigation, quell media speculation or allay public concerns, it may be desirable to release results. This should be done in consultation with the Coroner and the Department of Justice public affairs staff.

29. Murder

Brief details of the incident – when, where and age and sex of victim – can be released.

Information about the injuries can be released, e.g., a wound to the chest, believed to be from a firearm/knife. It is important to reassure the community if the incident was not a random attack.

Provide information on whether the alleged offender is in police custody.

Example:

“A 65-year-old man is assisting with enquiries after a woman was found deceased at a New Town property this afternoon.

Police were called to the house on New Town Road just after 1pm in response to reports of gunshots.

The 45-year-old victim has chest wounds, believed to be from a firearm. A firearm was located by police at the house.

The man and woman were known to each other.

Enquiries are continuing and anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au

You can provide information anonymously.”

Or, if the offender is being sought by police:

Example:

“Police are seeking assistance in their investigation into the death of a man in his 40s in Glenorchy overnight.

Police were called to the property on Main Road just after 2am. The deceased had injuries to his upper body consistent with knife wounds.

The death is being treated as suspicious and police would like anyone with information to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au

You can provide information anonymously.

In particular police want to speak to two men believed to be in their 30s wearing dark clothing. They were seen leaving the property just before 1am.”

30. Serious and fatal crashes

Refer to a 'crash' not an 'accident'.

In the interests of a timely road safety message, it is acceptable to give an indication of what may have caused a crash.

Example:

"Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding a fatal crash near Buckland earlier today.

The two-car crash occurred about 1:30pm on the Tasman Highway just south of the town.

A 78-year-old man from New South Wales was killed. His female passengers, and the occupants of the second vehicle, two men in their twenties, were taken to the Royal Hobart Hospital with minor injuries.

While an investigation is continuing, initial inquiries indicate that weather conditions may have been a contributing factor.

Police are seeking witnesses to the crash. Please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au

You can provide information anonymously."

Example:

"While an investigation is underway into the cause of the crash, initial inquiries suggest that speed/alcohol/drug use may be a contributing factor."

It is up to the Coroner to determine the cause of a fatal collision so don't provide more detail than that.

In most circumstances, media should be provided with an opportunity for media to obtain vision/photographs of crash scenes. It may assist an investigation when seeking witnesses and also reiterate the road safety message. However, keep in mind that images from crash scenes have the potential to cause considerable emotional distress.

If next of kin have not been told, request that media delay publishing images (particularly online and via social media) until next of kin have been advised.

Media will self-censor the images as it is not in their interests to publish or broadcast distressing or disturbing images.

Permission must be obtained from an Inspector for media access to a police garage to obtain vision of vehicles involved in crashes.

Officers should not photograph scenes, whether on Department or personal cameras, for distribution to media outlets without first consulting Media and Public Communications.

31. Arson/fire media releases

Police will only issue media releases about a fire if arson is suspected or to comment on road closures/traffic disruptions.

Where a fire isn't suspicious, TFS is responsible for media.

32. Bomb threats/hoaxes

Details of bomb threats will not be offered to the media. However, if the incident is impacting on the community, e.g., evacuation of a school or road closures, basic details can be confirmed.

Use the term 'suspicious package' or 'suspect item' until it is confirmed as an explosive device.

If a school is evacuated, liaise with the Department of Education prior to confirming the name of the school and only do so if asked by media, and after the school has had sufficient time to inform the parents of the students.

Do not provide details of the level of police response, i.e., how many officers or units attended.

Most media outlets have their own policy for not reporting hoax calls due to copycats. Once the call is confirmed to have been false, that information should be released.

Example:

"Tasmania Police would like to reassure the students and staff at xxx School that a threat, posted on a website on xxx/made by telephone/email to the school, has been assessed as NOT credible.

Police advise that students and staff should go about their business as usual.

The threat was very similar to other non-credible threats made against the University of Tasmania and other Australian universities last year.

The safety of the Tasmanian community is always our first priority.

As always, anyone who sees anything suspicious or out of the ordinary is asked to call police on 131 444 or the National Security Hotline 1800 123 400."

Example:

"Police are responding to a report of a suspicious package in the Hobart Bus Mall.

At 09:15 this morning, a member of the public reported an abandoned backpack with protruding wires to police.

As a precaution the Bus Mall has been closed to pedestrians and traffic while police investigate."

The following key message may be added to a media release if appropriate:

"Editors: We ask that you please give consideration to limiting the coverage of bomb threats. Hoax threats are designed to cause maximum public fear and disruption, and media coverage is one of the key ways they achieve this aim. It can also encourage copycat threats. As ever, we appreciate your assistance on these important matters."

33. Sieges/stand-offs

Only basic details about sieges or stand-offs should be released during the incident. It's important not to inflame the situation and put the lives of members, the community and the offender at risk.

Media will become aware of an incident and an initial holding statement can be released confirming that police are responding to an incident.

Example:

"Police are responding to a disturbance at [xxx]. [XYZ] roads are closed as a precaution. Further details will be provided as they become available."

If media attention may place the welfare of people inside at risk, journalists should be briefed to be cautious in their reporting and refrain from posting updates of police operations or speculation on social media.

If necessary, Media and Public Communications can assist by liaising with editors to request they hold off or agree not to disclose certain information about the incident.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

When media arrive at the scene, establish a safe area for them and contact Media and Public Communications for assistance.

34. Money

Specific sums of money stolen in a crime should not be released.

A generic term of "A large/small sum of money" should be used.

35. Seized drugs

Prescription/pharmaceutical drugs

The amount and cost of prescription drugs should not be released. Instead use "A quantity of prescription medication".

If appropriate, include a health warning about the dangers of consuming drugs which have not been prescribed to the person.

Illicit drugs

The estimated street value of illicit drugs may be included to provide context to the seizure.

36. Firearms crime

To ensure the public are provided with consistent and accurate information, that public assistance is sought to assist in solving firearms related offending, and that the public perception/fear of firearms crime is not heightened beyond its reality, the following media guidelines are to be followed for firearms-related offending.

Spokespeople

State-wide issues and crime trends: Media comment on state-wide firearms issues and statewide trends in firearms offending is only to be made by members of the Commissioners' Office.

Regional issues: Media comment on regional issues and trends is only to be made by the district commander, detective inspector or duty officer.

Individual incidents: Responding and investigating members are encouraged to speak to the media about particular incidents for which they are responsible, but should not comment on broader firearms issues or trends.

Video Footage

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

Key messaging should:

- Be careful not to increase the fear of firearms offending beyond its reality;
- Highlight the permanent firearms amnesty and encourage the surrender of firearms;
- Highlight the availability of rewards that can be paid for the provision of information leading to the recovery of firearms or the charging of offenders;
- Provide advice on firearms storage requirements; and
- Highlight to firearms owners they need to be equally as vigilant with regard to the security of keys for their firearms storage.

37. Child abduction/attempted abduction

Media and Public Communications should be notified immediately of a report of abduction or attempted abduction.

These incidents understandably cause concern in the community and become the subject of misinformation and warnings on social media.

There is the potential for criticism of police when public warnings are not issued after a report of an approach made to a child.

A media release can refer to “*police investigating a report of an approach to a child*” where the reliability of the report is subject to investigation.

Example:

“Police are investigating after receiving information that a student from a [Hobart] school was approached by a person unknown to them.

The student reported that a man drove his vehicle slowly alongside the footpath and offered the student a lift.

The school has issued a letter to parents and posted a safety advice message on their Facebook page.

Police encourage parents to reiterate personal safety messages to their children:

Walk with friends in pairs or groups and be aware of your surroundings. Report any suspicious behaviour to the school, parents or police.

Try to remember a description of the vehicle or distinctive clothing or a registration number, and call police on 131 444, or 000 if the child’s safety is at risk.

Our main message is that there is no need to panic but to be aware of your own personal safety. Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au.”

There is also ability via Facebook to issue an Amber Alert or a Local Alert to locate a child or vulnerable person in these circumstances. This mechanism pushes the Facebook posts to the top of users’ news feeds to provide the widest possible engagement.

38. Family violence

Incidents can be referred to as 'family violence matters' where appropriate, however take care not to include details that might identify the victim.

If an incident is described as a family violence matter, then include the line:

"If you or someone you know is impacted by family violence, call the Safe at Home Family Violence Response and Referral Line on 1800 633 937 or visit www.1800respect.org.au.

The Police Assistance Line is 131444 or in an emergency call 000."

In a corporate, rather than operational media release, include the line:

"The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management does not tolerate violence, including violence against women and children."

39. Shark alerts

In keeping with our mission to keep the community safe, a reported shark sighting must be posted on the Tasmania Police Facebook page and released to media.

The reports are published for public information and should include location, time of sighting, species and size of shark, and distance from shore (if possible).

Use the hashtag **#SharkTas**.

Example:

"A surfer at Clifton Beach has reported a shark about 30metres from shore.

The shark was seen about 1 hour ago. It was believed to be a great white shark, about 2.5m long. The sighting has been reported to Coast Radio.

#SharkTas"

The information is published for community information and no further comment is required.

40. Media requests to accompany Police

Any media requests from journalists asking to accompany police on operations or raids (ride-alongs) must be referred to Media and Public Communications.

41. Requests to confirm an investigation into or charging of a specific person

This information will not be confirmed. Media should be advised "Tasmania Police would not confirm an investigation into any individual."

If charges have been laid, a charging statement can be released (without identifying the individual).

42. Crime statistics

Crime statistics are published on the *Tasmania Police website – Our Performance page* monthly and annually (financial year) via the publication of the Corporate Performance Report.

Media requests for statistics that are not collated in the published Corporate Performance Reports should be referred to Media and Public Communications.

Statistics are collated by Reporting Services and approved for release by the Assistant Commissioner, Operations.

43. Crime Stoppers

Tasmania Police works collaboratively with Crime Stoppers on various public awareness campaigns, including illicit drugs and firearms, crime prevention and shoplifting.

Crime Stoppers offer the unique ability for the anonymous reporting of crime and intelligence. Investigators should consider this avenue where information from the public is sought.

The Crime Stoppers reporting information should be included on all media releases and tagged in all Facebook posts where information is sought from the public:

Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at crimestopperstas.com.au Information may be provided anonymously.

Media and Public Communications should also share Crime Stoppers Facebook posts on the Tasmania Police Facebook page where appropriate.

44. Policy and procedures

Only members of the Corporate Management Group (CMG) – the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Deputy Secretary and Assistant Commissioners – are authorised to make comment on Tasmania Police policy and procedures.

45. Roles and responsibilities

The *Tasmania Police Media Guidelines* are to assist members with their responsibilities in liaising with the media.

46. Methodology and tactics

Do not release details of the tactics or methodology of police, particularly in covert operations.

47. Cost of Police operations

The cost of specific police operations will not be released.

48. Communication Strategy

The *Tasmania Police Media Guidelines* are available on the DPFEM/Tasmania Police intranet on both the [Plans and Guidelines page](#) and the [Media and Communications site](#).

New editions will be communicated via a Routine Notice and included in in-service training.

SECTION 3

RELEASE OF IMAGES AND VISION

49. Release of images and vision

Images and vision must not be released in the following circumstances:

- an operation in which someone has died – this will be subject to a Coronial investigation
- the operation or matters related to the operation may be subject to court proceedings

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

49.1 Westpac Rescue Helicopter vision

- Vision and pictures are no longer supplied by police officers on board the helicopter.
- Vision can be requested from RotorLift if required. The cameras are not always running so it is not always guaranteed that there is footage.

49.2 Body-worn camera vision

Body-worn camera footage can be released on a proactive basis by police if there is a strong operational need ie a serious or violence offender remains outstanding and the vision is likely to assist with identifying them.

For operational and investigative reasons media requests for body-worn camera footage of incidents will rarely be facilitated. Footage cannot be released if it relates to an ongoing investigation, unless there is an operational reason for release.

Consideration can be given to releasing footage after court proceedings and appeal periods have been finalised, if it supports operational or strategic aims.

49.3 Images of wanted people

- Images should only be issued to the media after all other avenues of inquiry have been exhausted or to warn of danger.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

- Approval must be sought from the relevant Inspector prior to the request to Media and Communications to release the image/vision.
- Ensure the release of these images will not prejudice other matters for which warrants have been issued or matters before the courts.
- Photos that are embargoed in PhotoTrack cannot be released to media.

- Give consideration to privacy and welfare issues and the seriousness of the offence before identifying a wanted person.
- The release of the name and photograph must not be capable of identifying the circumstance of a particular offence or suggest that a person is guilty of the offence or has a criminal record.

Example:

“Police are seeking information on the whereabouts of John Brown. Police believe he can assist with an inquiry into a fraud matter.

As always when we ask for help, please don’t approach the person, but phone Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 with your information. Information can also be provided online at crimestopperstas.com.au

You can provide information anonymously.

Thanks for your assistance.”

Once the person has been apprehended, Media and Public Communications must be notified immediately so the image can be removed from the Tasmania Police website and Facebook page.

Media and Public Communications will contact media organisations to immediately withdraw the photograph from publication.

Failure to remove such photos could result in contempt of court and jeopardise court proceedings.

49.4 Persons of interest

There may be circumstances where police issue photographs of individuals they wish to identify and interview in relation to offences, but for whom no warrant has been issued.

Unless there is concern for public safety or an urgent operational reason, only release the image or CCTV vision after all avenues of inquiry have been exhausted.

Only use the description “a person who may be able to assist with inquiries about a [fraud] matter” to describe the subject (see section 15 – Offenders for more information).

Things to avoid:

- Do not imply the person is guilty of an offence. A person of interest should not be referred to as an offender – they may not be an offender.
- If there are other people in the images/vision, ensure they are removed or pixelated.
- Do not release images/vision depicting violence or confronting events.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

49.5 After a person of interest has been identified

Once the person of interest has been located, the officer-in-charge of the investigation must immediately notify Media and Public Communications (or Radio Dispatch Services out-of-hours).

Media and Public Communications/Radio Dispatch Services will then advise media outlets and ask that they withdraw the image. Do not release images once an individual has been arrested.

49.6 Images of juvenile offenders

A juvenile offender cannot be identified by name under any circumstances. (only where they need to be located because of concern for their welfare)

However, images of juveniles can be released for identification purposes, provided there are no proceedings underway under the *Youth Justice Act*.

De-identified images of juveniles can also be released on media and social media platforms to accompany media statements relating to youth crime.

49.7 CCTV

In most cases CCTV vision is not the property of Tasmania Police. The owner of the footage must give authorisation before it is used or released by Tasmania Police.

49.8 Images and vision of exhibits

Media can be allowed access to film exhibits (e.g., seizures of firearms and/or drugs) under controlled conditions provided this doesn't create problems during later court proceedings.

Access to film these images can reassure the public that police are removing dangerous items from the streets. It is preferable for this to occur prior to a charged person appearing in court. Media must not be granted access to private property to obtain vision of any searches, e.g., for drug or clan labs.

49.9 Media filming police, crime scenes, public places

Media is entitled to film or take photographs in public places. This includes media in a public place outside a crime scene and filming the police, victims and others.

Police officers should remember that it's not just media who have cameras – members of the public can capture images on a phone and post on social media.

s30(1)(c) - Exemption Applied

This behaviour is likely to become the focus of a story.

If there is a reason why images/vision should not be broadcast, the investigating officer should discuss this with the journalist.

If necessary, Media and Public Communications can be requested to contact the editor of the media organisation.

Media may be invited to attend raids or police operations, but under no circumstances are they permitted to enter onto private property.

49.10 Photo opportunities with politicians

If a politician requests to be photographed or filmed with a Tasmania Police officer/DPFEM employee, ensure that the photograph shows Police employees performing official duties.

Employees may be photographed with political figures as part of their official duties such as a Ministerial visit or a forum run by a local Member of Parliament.

Photographs of politicians or candidates with Police employees designed specifically for the production of political brochures, posters and other campaign material is not permitted.

Contact Media and Public Communications for advice.

49.11 Matters involving justice or prison escapees

Limit comment on matters involving the Department of Justice. You can confirm Police attended an incident, however, do not provide details and refer media to the Department of Justice.

Do not comment on or speculate how a prisoner has escaped from a Tasmanian Prison Service facility.

Comment should be confined to the operational measures to search for and recapture escapees.

Unrelated to Application

When an escapee is considered dangerous, their photograph must be accompanied by a warning that the person should not be approached, and that the public should contact Police immediately if a sighting is made.

Media and Public Communications (or Radio Dispatch Services, if out-of-hours) must be notified as soon as an escapee is located so the photograph can be withdrawn.

49.12 Requesting images, vision or articles from media

If copies of news articles, media photographs or TV news vision are required as part of an investigation, the investigating officer should make the request in writing (email) to the news editor.

Media organisations are generally very cooperative with these requests, particularly when they come from an investigating officer. Media and Public Communications can assist with contact details if required.

49.13 Missing people

Obtain permission from a parent, guardian or next of kin prior to releasing information/photos about a missing person.

Releasing information/photos must occur via media release as well as Facebook.

Where permission is not immediately available and fears are held for the safety or welfare of the missing person, the information may be released.

Where possible, a good quality recent photograph .jpg file should accompany any media release.

The Media and Public Communications on-call Media Liaison Officer can be contacted out-of-hours to publish missing people on social media platforms.

Advise Media and Public Communications (and Radio Dispatch Services, if out-of-hours) as soon as a person is located.

When the person is located, advise media through Media and Public Communications (and Radio Dispatch Services, if out-of-hours) if the person has been found safe, injured or deceased (and whether the circumstances of the death are suspicious).

In cases involving minors and vulnerable people (including mental health), media are to be advised to remove any images of the located person from their publication platforms for privacy reasons.

Example:

“Concerns are held for the welfare of a [20-year-old Glenorchy] woman. [Julie Brown] was last seen in [Moonah] on the evening of Monday 20 February.

Ms Brown was wearing [xxx]. She was driving a vehicle [description and registration]. If you have seen Ms Brown or have information on her whereabouts please contact police [details].”

Example:

“Police have located [xxx] safe and well and would like to thank the community for their information and assistance. Media please ensure all images are removed from your publication platforms.”

Example:

“About 1pm today, 24 February 2016, Police located a body they believe to be that of missing person [xxx].

Initial investigations indicate there are no suspicious circumstances. Our condolences to family and friends of the deceased.

A report will be prepared for the Coroner.”

49.14 Calls to Triple Zero (000) or Radio Dispatch Services

Recordings or transcripts of calls to RDS or Triple Zero will not be released to the media without the approval of the Commissioner of Police.

49.15 Media use of drones

Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulations specify that drones cannot be flown over or near police or emergency operations.

The officer in charge can give permission to a person to operate a drone in the vicinity of a police or emergency operation.

CASA advises the penalty for operating a drone over a police or emergency operation is \$1050 and that drones must be at least 30metres from people and cannot be flown above people.

Police enquiries about drone use should be directed to the CASA Investigations Section at s30(1)(d) - Exemption Applied or call CASA Investigations Manager on s30(1)(d) - Exemption Applied

49.16 Footage submitted to evidence portal

Members of the public are encouraged to submit footage of offences or crimes to Tasmania Police via our Evidence Portal.

There is a general portal for dangerous driving and other traffic offences, and there is also capability for individual portals to be opened for specific incidents.

Individual investigating officers are able to open a portal. There is also capability within Media and Public Communications to open a portal on an officer's behalf.

When a person submits a recording to police, they may be requested to provide a witness statement, and give evidence in court.

When members of the public upload a video/image they can add a caption including details or where and when the event took place.

If an offence is disclosed and the offender can be identified Tasmania Police will contact the member of the public who submitted the footage for further inquiries.

The Evidence Portal should be actively promoted in media releases and social media posts where relevant and officers are to be reminded whenever they submit a media release that would benefit from the evidence portal being utilised.

Document information

General information

HP Records Manager No. A17/45315		Replaces document	Media Guidelines A guide to a working relationship with the media 2002
		Replaces document	Tasmania Police Media Guidelines 2022
Effective from	July 2024	Review date	July 2025
Business Owner		Media and Public Communications	
Applies to		Tasmania Police	
Information Security Classification		<UNCLASSIFIED>	

53.2 Approval

	Name	Position, Division/Area	Date
Prepared by	Mel Simmonds	Manager, Media and Public Communications	July 2024
Policy Management Framework Compliance	Mandy Denby	Director, Media Communications and Engagement	August 2024
Supported by	Adrian Bodnar	Assistant Commissioner, Operations	August 2024
Supported by	Robert Blackwood	Assistant Commissioner, Specialist Support	August 2024
Supported by	Jonathan Higgins	Deputy Commissioner	August 2024
Approved by	Donna Adams	Commissioner	August 2024

Unrelated to Application





**Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management
Media and Public Communications**

s30(1)(d) - Exemption Applied

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

And how DPFEM Media and Communications can help you

DPFEM MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

- First point of contact for media queries
- Respond to media enquiries and manage issues
- Provide out of hours support through an on-call arrangement
- Draft and edit media releases
- Prepare media strategies, campaigns, events, talking points
- Interview coordination and support
- Manage social media pages
- Emergency management communications
- Media training

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

WHO WE
ARE...

HOW TO CONTACT US

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

- Contact RDS if you need us urgently outside hours
- Media templates and quick guides on [Conexus](#)

WHY DO WE WORK WITH THE MEDIA?

- We need them to help us do our job
- They can get our information to the public
- Witness appeals and ID sought
- Community information and reassurance
- If we don't work with them, they'll fill the 'information vacuum' another way

Tasmania Police
s36(1) - Exemption Applied
 If you see Michael Cowie today please do not approach him and ring police immediately on 131 444
 Launceston CIB are actively seeking Michael Cowie who they believe can assist with enquiries in relation to a robbery and serious assault on Park Street in Launceston yesterday afternoon.
 Michael was last seen on Plummer Street in Monday around 4.30pm after exiting a pale blue Hyundai Getz.
 He is described as 185cm tall, solid build, a tanned of wearing on the right hand side of his neck and missing teeth

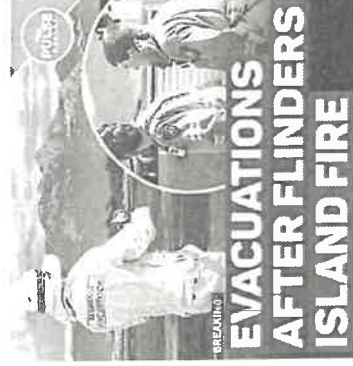


Unrelated to
Application

MEDIA IN TASMANIA

- Small news market
- Fewer reporting staff
- Less experienced staff
- Lower budgets
- High pressure: 24/7 news

s35(1) - Exemption Applied



WHAT DOES THE MEDIA NEED FROM US?

- Timely information
- Who, What, Where, When, Why, How
- Quotes
- Pictures and vision
- Interviews

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

WHAT DOES THE MEDIA WANT FROM US?

- 24/7 provision of information
- Immediate notification of all incidents
- Faster response to queries
- Open access to spokespeople
- Faster confirmation of things they've seen online
- Reduce our social media use

Tasmania Police
15 Nov 2015

... held the dog and asked us to thank the Westpac Rescue crew and others involved in the search who retrieved her and her partner from the Florentine Valley today. He and her dad were found safe and well about midday, after having the waylaid yesterday and bucking down in the wilderness overnight. Pictures left to right are: Tasmania Police Constable Nikki MacIntosh, intensive Care Flight paramedic Jess Lea, Heidi the dog, and Westpac Rescue helicopter pilot Chris Fahy. We think they'll be friends forever.



Unrelated to Application

Man and dog rescued after 24 hours lost in wild 'Lucky to be alive'

JACK EVANS and CAS GARVEY

A HOBART man and his dog have been described as "very lucky" to be alive after spending more than 24 hours lost in the bush.

Tasmania Police, SES and the Westpac Rescue helicopter were deployed on Monday morning after the 52-year-old hiker failed to return from his walk in the Florentine Valley, and family raised the alarm.

Tasmania Police Acting Sergeant Callum Herbert said the man's "several" efforts in yelling out every hour eventually drew attention from rescue crews who heard the man's voice and his leader called Heidi barking in the Wilds Crags area near Maydena.

Shortly before midday, the Westpac Rescue chopper spotted the man. "His condition is quite poor, injured, I spoke to him on the phone and he says his legs are a bit bashed up,

which isn't unusual for that area," Acting Sgt Herbert said.

Because of the dense scrub, crews would have been "hours" from reaching the man, so it was decided to perform a helicopter winch rescue.

"He went for what he thought was going to be a five-hour day walk, not so much into the national park, he was sticking to privately owned land - he was going to look for a track junction which would lead into some forestry area and it appears he's missed that junction and it got dark and he's made a sensible decision to bunker down for the night," Acting Sgt Herbert said.

The police officer said the experienced hiker was "pretty lucky" the weather was favourable and he was somewhat prepared.

"(But) he's learned some lessons. I think he's going to buy himself a PBR (personal locator beacon), probably tomorrow morning, I'd say."



Tasmania Police Constable Nikki MacIntosh, intensive Care Flight paramedic Jess Lea, Heidi the dog, and Westpac Rescue helicopter pilot Chris Fahy after the mission.
Picture: Supplied

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Missing people.
- Identifying people of interest from CCTV.
- Wanted Wednesday.
- Posting and sharing weather warnings, emergency warnings.
- Significant road closures.
- Community engagement.

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

Tasmania Fire Service
Department of Health
The Examiner
Tasmania Police
Pulse
ABC Hobart
The Mercury

s35(1) - Exemption Applied



0 50,000 100,000 150,000 200,000 250,000 300,000

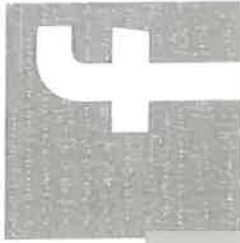


OUR AUDIENCE

FACEBOOK

s35(1) - Exemption Applied

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INSTAGRAM

s35(1) - Exemption Applied

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What works?

Tasmania Police

s36(1) - Exemption

Tasmania Police, Transport Inspectors and National Heavy Vehicle Regulators conducted a joint operation on the East Tamar Highway today, focusing on heavy vehicle compliance and vehicle defects

As a result of the operation

- 46 vehicle defects were issued
- 10 infringement notices were issued for unregistered vehicles... See more



Unrelated to Application



Tasmania Police

s36(1) - Exemption

Tasmanians have lost over \$35,000 to puppy scams this year, with people sending money for pets that don't exist.

To date, there have been 11 Tasmanian victims who have lost approximately \$35,000 to overseas scammers

Scammers set up fake websites or ads on online classifieds and social media pretending to sell sought-after dog breeds and will take advantage of the fact that you can't travel to meet the puppy in person.... See more



Unrelated to Application



s35(1) - Exemption Applied

What works?

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

Engaging with
our
community

Over 1 million
people
reached

ANY QUESTIONS?

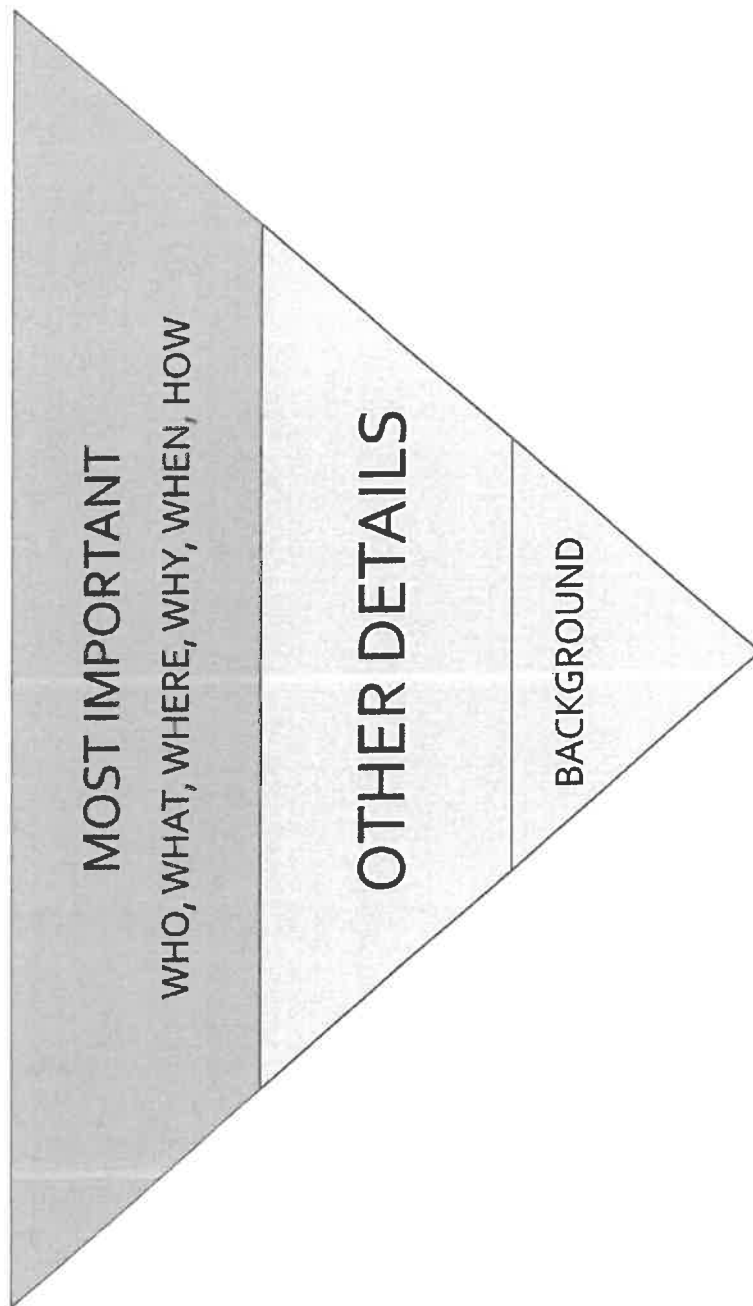
NEXT IS MEDIA RELEASES AND INTERVIEWS

MEDIA RELEASES

WHEN WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE

- Keep it short and simple
- Start with the new and most important information
- Use quotes if you can (newspapers need attributable quotes)
- Avoid jargon (man not male person)
- Check spelling and details are correct

MEDIA RELEASES



MEDIA RELEASES

YOUR STATEMENT SHOULD CONTAIN

- Information that will help the public
- Who, What, When, Where... Why. And How.
- Information that will reassure the community:
 - If there is an issue what do you want people to do (avoid the area or provide information etc).
 - What are you doing to address the issue.
 - When will it be resolved?
 - Where can people go for more information?

MEDIA RELEASES

DO NOT INCLUDE INFORMATION THAT:

- Is critical of policies, procedures or other agencies.
- Does not relate directly to your specific area of responsibility.
- Indicates blame or culpability.
- May cause a breach of confidentiality, privacy or place any person in jeopardy.

INTERVIEWS

If you're sending out a media release, be prepared for interviews

- Interviews help explain what's happened, reassure the community, and show that we are professional, honest and accountable.
- Approach interviews as an opportunity to provide information to the public, and reassure them.
- As a general rule, reporters are simply interested in the story at hand and are not looking to ask you off-topic questions or catch you out.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Before the interview take a few minutes to write down the three main things you want to tell the public.
- Weave your key messages into the interview as many times as you can.
- Don't worry if it feels like you're repeating yourself (particularly with pre-recorded television interviews as they'll only use part of it, and live audiences will only remember part of it).
- Talk to the reporters before the interview and ask them what they want to include in the interview. If there's anything you can't go into tell them this before the interview starts. They are usually understanding.
- For on camera interviews ask which reporter is 'eyeline' and look at them throughout the whole interview, no matter who is asking the question.
- If you stumble over your words or forget what you were saying, simply pause, reset, and start your answer again. It's ok to ask reporters to repeat the question. Media want to broadcast your messages, not your mistakes.
- Check what's behind you for any distracting signage, branding or activity that could detract from your messaging.
- If you're a 'hand talker' keep your hands low and out of camera shot. Usually, it's only your head and shoulders that will be in frame.

Key messages

- Before an interview, take 10 minutes to write down three key messages.
- Your key messages are the things you need or want the public to know and should form the basis of most of your interview answers.
 - write your key messages in your 'spoken voice' so that the phrasing and sentiment comes more naturally to you during the interview
 - practice saying them out loud a few times before the interview

Bridging statements

“Rocks and Bridges”

- Think of the interview as a swamp you’re trying to navigate. Your key messages are the ‘rocks’ placed regularly throughout the swamp that you bridge between to land your feet safely.
- Your ‘rock’ messaging is where you can be comfortable and confident in what you’re saying. Bridging statements help navigate tricky or unexpected questions by ‘bridging’ between the rocks of safety.
- Sometimes there will be questions from journalists that you’re unprepared for, that reference an issue you’re not ready to talk about, or that simply catch you off guard.
- The idea of bridging statements is that you acknowledge the question and then bridge away from it to your key message.

Bridging statement - examples

If you imagine 'X' is the problematic question (swamp) and 'Y' is your key message (rock), common bridging statements take the form of:

- *I don't have information about X to hand right now but I can tell you Y.*
- *X is not something for me to comment on, but what I can say is Y.*
- *That's certainly important, but what's even more important is...*
- *That's one view, but what I'm here to talk about is...*

Media release exercise

- Draft a media release about the following incident:
- A female driver crashed through two fences before coming to rest in the front yard of a residence in Hobart Road, Kings Meadows.
- The driver fled the scene but was taken into custody a short time later.
- The vehicle was seen travelling at speed prior to the crash.
- Police need dash cam footage and witnesses.
- Driver remains in custody at the LGH where she is being treated for minor injuries.

Here's one
way...

- **Woman in custody following crash in Launceston**
- A 38 year old Kings Meadows woman is in custody following a traffic incident in Hobart Road in the early hours of this morning.
- A Silver Mitsubishi Magna wagon was travelling at high speed north on Hobart Road when it failed to negotiate a sweeping right hand bend near the Six Ways intersection about 3.15am today.
- The vehicle crashed through two fences before coming to rest in the front yard of a residence in Hobart Road.
- The driver of the vehicle, a 38 year old Kings Meadows woman, allegedly fled the scene but was located by police nearby. She was treated at the Launceston General Hospital for minor injuries and remains in police custody.
- Anyone who saw the vehicle travelling on Hobart Road Kings Meadows around the time of the crash should contact Launceston Police Station on 131444 or report anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or crimestopperstas.com.au.

Leading Firefighter Development Program Media Training

Introduction

- Course outline
- Your media experience

Intro... continued

- Fears/challenges?

Types of media

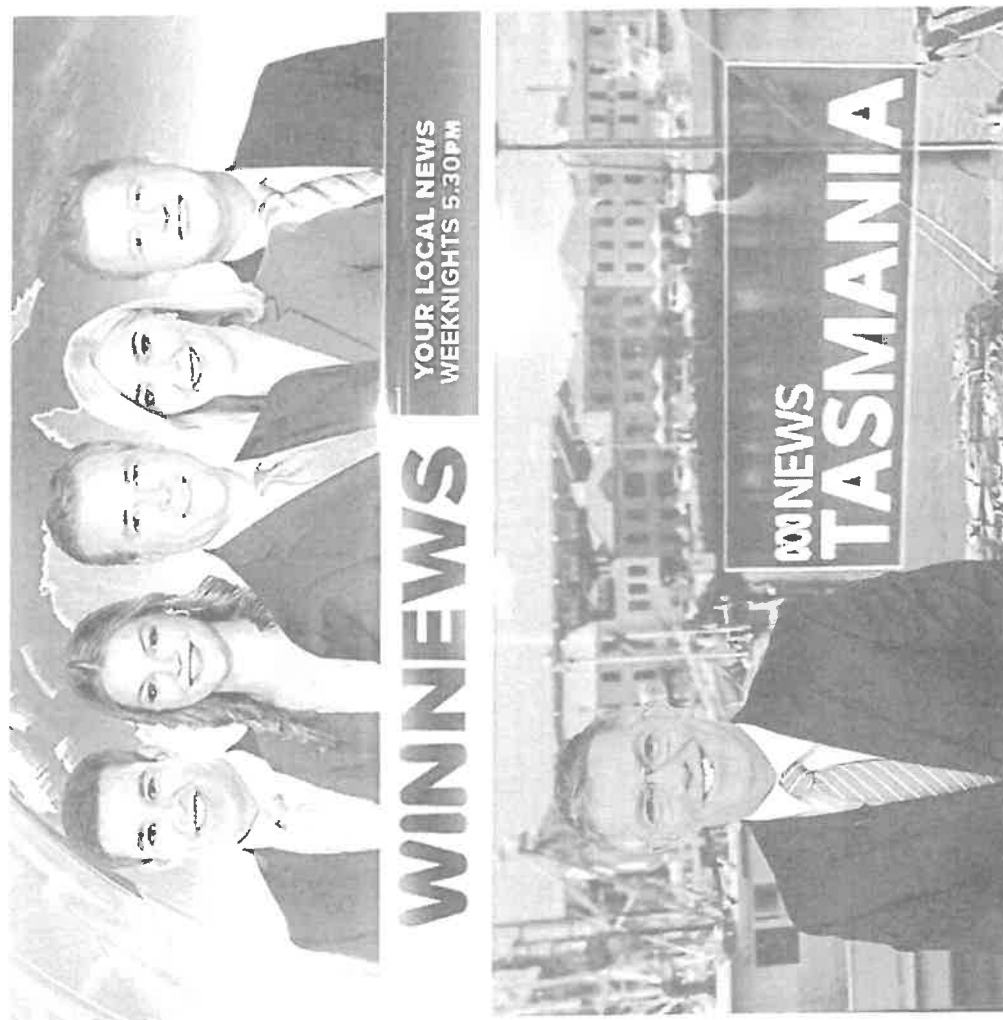
- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Online
- Social media – citizen journalism

Media in Tasmania - newspapers

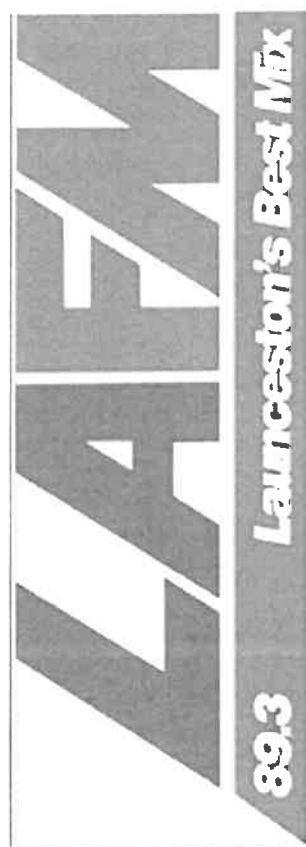
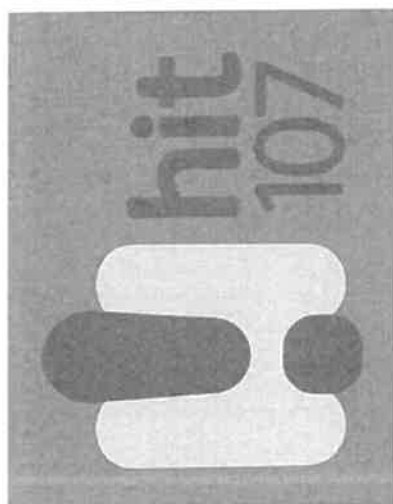
Newspapers



Media in Tasmania - television



Media in Tasmania - radio



Media in Tasmania - online

Asleep at the wheel

Fatigue to blame for fatal Midland crash: coroner

A TASMANIAN coroner has recommended driver training focus more on the dangers of fatigue after finding a man fell asleep at the wheel, causing a fatal crash.



'Thank, you know'

Career dealer came clean to cops, court told

A HUON man who supported himself solely through dealing cannabis and ecstasy to a loyal customer base has avoided being sent to prison.



Flood damage

Call for federal relief for farmers

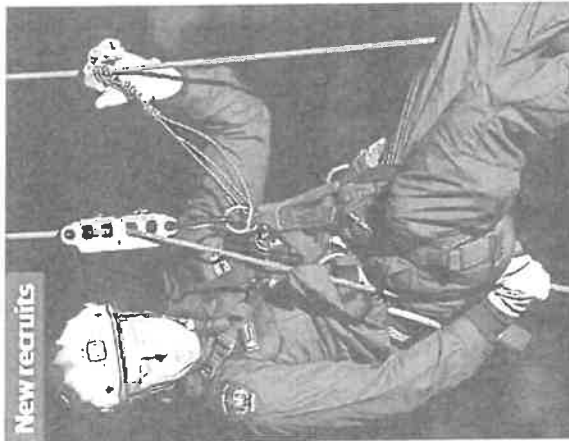
TASMANIA'S farmers are calling for natural disaster relief from Canberra, citing irreparable flood damage including the loss of generations of breeding livestock.



Poll position

Libs' popularity slumps

New recruits



Fledgling fires ready to hit the DEC

AN abseiling exercise has kicked off the grueling process of becoming a firefighter for nine new Tasmania Fire Service recruits.

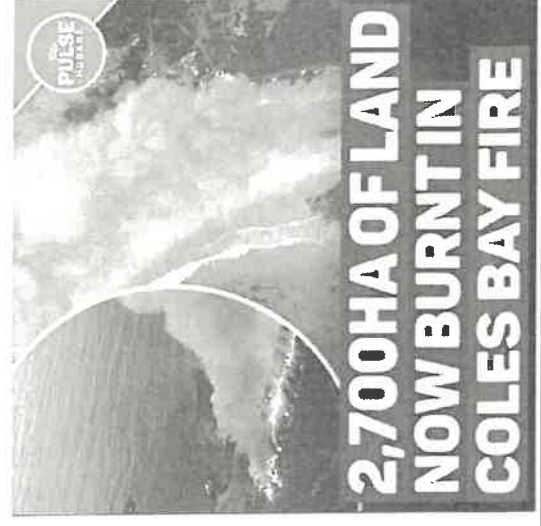
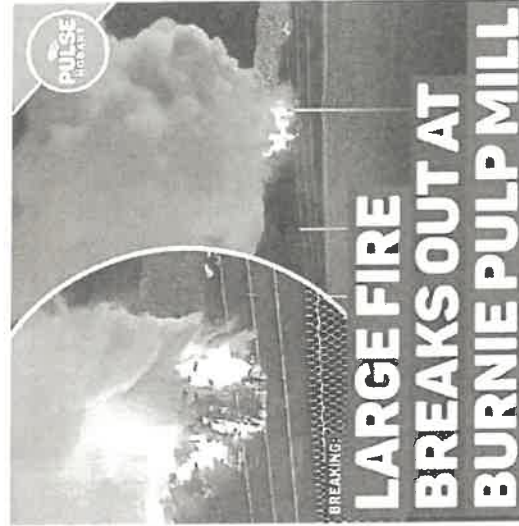
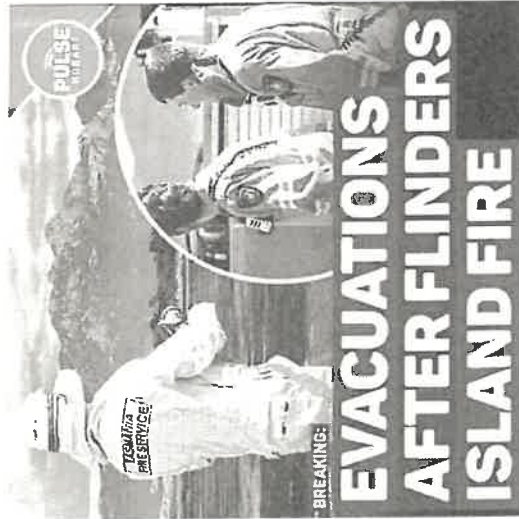
OPINION



Media in Tasmania - Social

Northern Tasmania Emergency Media

At approximately 11:45pm Emergency Services were called to Woodlucuttis, Freycinet where a rubbish bin had been set alight. Crews arrived to a 100 ton bin that was going v-v-v. Several fire hydrants throughout the car park had also been turned on and a number of trees were scattered around the area.



Public Interest

- Why is the media important to TFS?
- What is in the public interest?

It's not all about incidents

Fire Investigation feature on Southern Cross News

s36(1) - Exemption Applied



It's not all about incidents

- Fuel Reduction Risk Reanalysis feature

s36(1) - Exemption Applied



TFS media management

- DPFEM Media and Public Comms
- State Operations/Public Information
- Policies and procedures (COOLs and COOGs)
- Role of the Station Officer

Who can say what?

- The role of FireComm
- Incident Controller/Fire Investigator
- Fatal fires
- Other incidents

Planning your media strategy

- What does the media want?
- How will you deliver it?
- Think about what you might be asked

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

Dealing with media at an incident

- Acknowledge their arrival
- Let them know how soon it will be before you can talk to them
- Critical safety issues
- Basic information such as severity, resources, injuries, damage etc.
- Provide access to the fireground
- Dress requirements – no lanyards!

Example of well-managed media

Peacock Centre
fire

December 2016

s36(1) - Exemption Applied



Interviews

- **Television**
- **Radio**
- **Print**
- **Live?**

Interviews

Before the interview:

- Preparation is key!
- Talk to the journalist prior to interview, establish what they want to know, let them know what you want to talk about
- Remember you are the expert

Interviews

- During the interview – take control
- You can ask for the question to repeated / say you don't understand
- Off the record – no such thing

s36(1) - Exemption Applied

Interviews - phone

- Landline
- More time
- Pre-record?
- Talkback?
- Info at fingertips



Interviews - television

- Check what is behind you



Interviews - television

- Make yourself comfortable, free from distractions.
- Ask for eyeline
- Don't let your guard down
- Talk in short grabs
- Don't make it up
- If you don't like your answer, then stop and start again (only if pre-record, can't be relied on)
- Deflecting

Interviews

Bridging statements

- I don't have that detail available to me at the moment, but what I *can* tell you is...
- I don't have that information available at the moment, but I can get it for you
- What I'm here to talk about it...
- I'm glad you've asked me that because it brings me to a point that I've been wanting to make..
- That's one view...
- That's certainly important, but what's even more important is...

Activity

- Using the activity sheet provided, provide an answer to each question.
- Remember – stay in your lane and use bridging statements to keep you focussed.
- Split into groups of four and come up with a model answer to each question.

Interviews

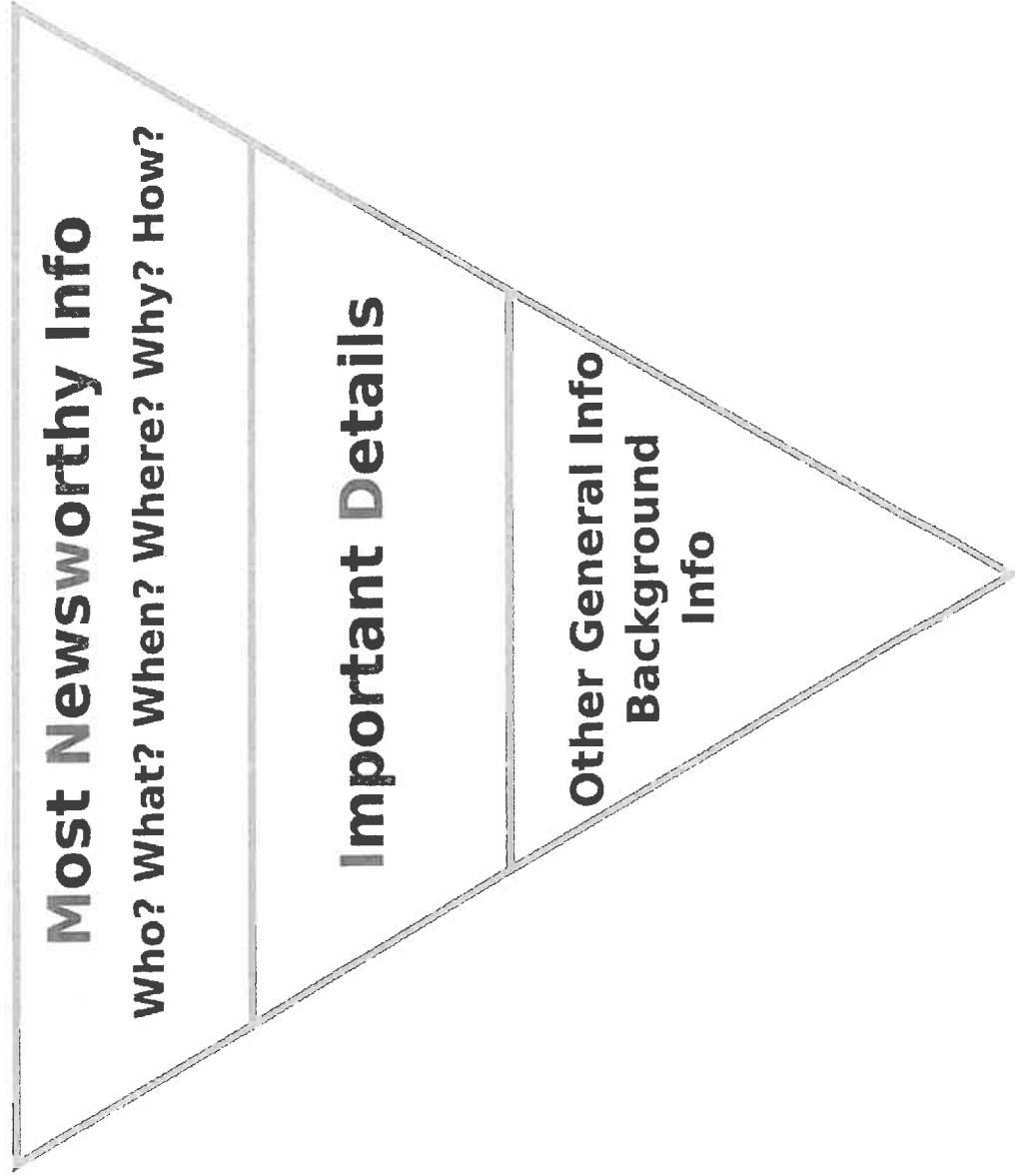
Question:

There are a lot of houses damaged by this bushfire and it looks really bad. How do you feel about that.

Answer

The Farming community in this area has been hit hard by the fire but it could have been a lot worse if land owners had not prepared. The property owners activated their bushfire plans and no lives were threatened. We have also managed to save a lot of farming equipment and stock

Crafting a media release



Crafting a media release

- Grab your audience in the first paragraph
- Keep it short
- Keep it simple
- What we know, what we don't know, what we are doing about it, what we want the public to do.

Crafting a media release

- Don't use jargon!
- For us that means:
 - Man and woman / youth – not male and female
 - People, not persons
 - Happened / started, not commenced
 - Smoke rising from, coming from / not issuing
 - Went, walked, drove – not proceeded
 - Truck – not appliance
 - Departed, left the scene - not decamped
 - Structure – use house/office building/shed
 - Removed, freed – not extricated
 - No need to use breathing apparatus

Crafting a media release

- Accuracy – punctuation, spelling, information
- Use quotes
- Be available
- Photos and vision

TOP TIPS

- A holding statement describes what you are doing
- Specifying a time and location for a media conference will allow you to ‘herd the cats’

Crafting a media release

Critique this media release:



Tasmania Fire Service

media release

Date | 01/01/01

Contact – Station Officer Blah Blah

s36(1) - Exemption

At 0300hrs on Sunday morning the Tasmania Fire Service responded to a residential structure fire at Cambridge Road Warrane.

3 fire appliances responded and arrived to find smoke and flames issuing from the structure and the structure fully involved.

Firefighters entered the structure in breathing apparatus and knocked down the fire.

The male and female occupants, who were sleeping at the time the fire started, self-evacuated the structure before crews arrived.

Crews are now mopping up and a fire investigation will be completed first thing in the morning.

Crafting a media release

Critique this media release:



Tasmania Fire Service

House fire sparks safety warning

Date: 08/05/2017 2 12pm Contact: Regional Fire Investigator **s36(1) - Exemption Applied**

A mother and three children are lucky to be alive following a house fire in Bridgewater this morning

Tasmania Fire Service firefighters were alerted to the fire at the Cove Road property at 7 45am today via a triple zero call

The fire started after a heater, which was too close to combustible materials was switched on. The occupants, who were all sleeping in the room where the fire started, were alerted to the fire when one of the occupants awoke to find the room alight

The family evacuated and the fire quickly took hold of half of the house. The fire has prompted Regional Fire Investigation Officer **s36(1)** to issue a reminder about making sure members of the public take care when heating their homes

"Had that one member of the family not woken to find the room alight, firefighters would have been confronted with a very different type of incident this morning. The reality is this family is very lucky to be alive. A few simple steps can be taken to keep your family safe

"As we enter the cooler months and we turn to heating our homes, we urge people to ensure that all flammable items are a minimum of two metres from any heating source"

Smoke alarms were installed in the house but had been disconnected while food was being cooked last night

The Tasmania Fire Service reminds people that smoke alarms can only save lives when they are working and recommends that living areas and sleeping areas are installed with either hard wired or 10 year lithium battery smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are also available for the visual and hearing impaired

"You can't smell smoke when you are asleep, so you are relying on your other senses in the event of a fire, which is why TFS strongly urge the public to install smoke alarms in all living and sleeping areas", Mr. Doran said.

The fire caused approximately \$250,000 damage.

Activity

Activity:

- Review the incident log you have been provided
- Draft a media release based on the information in the incident log

Small group discussion

- Identify any information gaps in the incident log which made it difficult to draft the media release
- Discuss the differences between your media releases
- Volunteers to participate in a mock interview

Fears/challenges

Revisit the whiteboard

Questions?

Thank you.