

WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE FOR YOUR CLUB

The first and most important thing to understand when writing a press release is who you are writing it for. The journalists, who will receive your release, want information that the general public (not just croquet players) will find interesting. They need more than just tournament results, how many players and where they were from. This information should be included, but you need to look beyond these to find an 'angle' that elevates the newsworthiness of the event. (See [Step One](#) below, in this well-crafted 8-step plan of how to write perfect press releases for your club).

*An example of this can be taken from the 'Olympics' of Association croquet, the MacRobertson Shield, currently being played between the USA, England, New Zealand and Australia in California. During this past week, Australia beat England in their opening test match. Although individual results and scores are of great interest to the croquet community, from a general public point of view, the fact Australia beat the 'old enemy' England in a test for the first time since 1935 is of far greater interest. It makes a perfect news angle and headline, which will grab the attention of members of the public:
'AUSSIES DOWN ENGLAND TO END 70 YEAR TEST MATCH DROUGHT'*

A media release is a document you send out to the media detailing anything that could be classified as 'news'. Journalists take this media release and if they find it interesting, they write an article about it. Best of all, any promotion your Club gets as a result is FREE! But, it's very competitive. So, how do you make sure that your media release is the one that grabs the attention of journalists?

BENEFITS OF GETTING A PUBLISHED MEDIA RELEASE

- 1 FREE marketing through the media avenue that publishes your release.
- 2 Increased traffic to your club, event and website.
- 3 Great way to profile your club.
- 4 Great way to gain credibility within the sport in the local area and set yourself up as an "expert".
- 5 Great for search engine optimisation.

DO	DON'T
Use a 12-point font in the main text	Use multiple font sizes in the main text
Use a simple font (e.g. Verdana)	Mix your fonts
Write succinctly	Have long paragraphs and sentences
Use interesting quotes or facts.	Make up quotes and facts
Write 10 July 2016	Write 10th of July 2016
Check your grammar and spelling	Misspell the name of journalists
Limit the length to only ½ of a A4 sheet	Have narrow margins
Keep your target market in mind	Write generally
Talk directly to your target market	Talk to the journalist
Be creative and controversial, but remain truthful	Include misleading or deceptive information
Send your release in 'word' format	Sent your release in PDF format
Have high resolution photos available	Provide poor quality photos
Write in the present tense	Write in past tense unless the topic is about an event that occurred
Bear in mind the actual media source you are addressing	Send the same media release to all journalists

THE PYRAMID APPROACH



When writing a media release you need to adopt the inverted 'pyramid approach'. This basically means that the first one or two paragraphs must contain the most valuable information.

A WINNING MEDIA RELEASE IN 8 EASY STEPS!

STEP 1 - DETERMINE WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO WRITE ABOUT

When deciding what to write about, keep in mind the following:

1. Why is the story going to interest the media?
2. Is there a 'feel good' element to your story?
3. Does your story:
 - Evoked an emotional response?
 - Relate to a key economic or social issue?
 - Benefit or help others? A charity or club fundraising?

STEP 2: WRITE A CATCHY TITLE FOR YOUR MEDIA RELEASE

The headline is the most important part of your media release; it must instantly grab the attention of the journalist.

Here are some tips:

- 1 Keep your headline short, just one line.
- 2 Make it an active and exciting headline, not static.
- 3 Think of the questions outlined in step one when writing your headline.
- 4 Make it bolder than the rest of the text so that it stands out.

STEP 3: WRITE AN ATTENTION GRABBING FIRST PARAGRAPH

You should start with a strong compelling first paragraph. Journalists get so many media releases every day - you only have a few seconds to grab their attention. Here are some tips:

- 1 **Keep succinct**
- 2 **Summarise the who, what, where, why, when**
- 3 No more than four or five lines
- 4 **Tell the juiciest bits here**
- 5 Grab the attention of the journalist

STEP 4: WRITE THE BODY OF THE MEDIA RELEASE

This is where you expand on your story and give it a bit of depth, backing up claims with quotes and facts. Here are some tips:

- 1 **Don't be afraid to use dot points**
- 2 They can be very powerful and handy for journalists
- 3 **Remember not to save the best for last**
- 4 It might never get read
- 5 **Quotes are great**
- 6 They add a human element and credibility
- 7 **Be honest and stick to the facts**
- 8 No one likes outlandish claims
- 9 **Highlight the benefit to the reader**
- 10 Perhaps use some 'how to tips'
- 11 **Supply a creative photo**

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR CLOSING

This is where you 'seal the deal'. Here are some tips:

- 1 **Keep it simple**
- 2 Short and to the point
- 3 **First sentence** - introduce an idea
- 4 **Second/third sentence** - support or expand on the idea
- 5 **Final sentence** - Draws a conclusion or states why it is interesting or important
- 6 Give the journalist some background information about croquet in your area, state, nationally and internationally.

STEP 6: INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

1. Include your contact details in a separate box at the very bottom of the page, home phone, mobile and email address.
2. Always say you would like the journalist or photographer to visit the club for interviews or even a game
Here are some tips:
3. **Make it easy for people to contact you**
4. Ensure there is an after-hours number
5. **Fulfill any media requests for information within 12 hours**
6. Time is everything to media

STEP 7: SEND YOUR MEDIA RELEASE

As well as knowing how to write a media release, you also need to know who to send it to.

What media organisations are you targeting?

Don't forget social media

Is your story suited to regional, state, national or international audience?

Who is going to be interested in your story?

Remember to email to local community groups, schools and church groups as well.

Be sure to do some research and find out the name and direct email address of the most appropriate person. Keep lists of publications/media sources that are suited to various target markets and update them regularly. When sending your media release, attach it in a word document and include the text in the body of the email. Use the heading as your email subject line.

STEP 8: FOLLOW UP THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP!

Always follow up with a phone call or email.

It is wise to have supporting material on hand in case the journalist needs more information.

To find out if your media release has been published anywhere you could sign up for [Google Alerts](#) - If your media release has been published send the journalist a thank you note to let them know how much you appreciate the support.