

A guide for lived experience speakers: understanding the media

The term 'media' covers a variety of communication tools including newspapers, magazines, speciality journals, television, radio, news services, online and specialist industry publications. 'Media' also includes those who work in the industry, including journalists, editors, producers and others.

Media report on events or information, with the goal of educating, informing and entertaining different audiences. Audiences are generally most interested in things that could affect them or those around them. The different types of media are: radio, print, and television.

Radio

Radio is one of the most commonly used forms of media in Australia and the easiest way to get a story across to a target audience. Radio is provided through a large network which includes public broadcasters, commercial and community stations. Programs may also be streamed on the internet.

- Public broadcasters: Australia has two public radio broadcasters: (1) Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio is made up of 60 metropolitan and regional stations and four national networks and an Internet service; and (2) Specialist Broadcasting Service (SBS) is multicultural and multilingual broadcaster. It broadcasts in more than 50 languages across a network which is available in all capital cities and key regional centres.
- Commercial broadcasters: There are approximately 260 commercial radio stations in Australia and 60% are in non-metropolitan areas.
- Community broadcasters: A 'community', as represented by a community radio station, may be defined in terms of interest, geographical or cultural boundaries. Most community radio stations have volunteers for their day to day running.

Table 1: Working with radio – what you need to know

	Types of stories	Points to remember for radio
News	News delivered in short ‘grabs’ at frequent intervals. Short grabs may only last for 7-10 seconds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak clearly in short sentences. • Use plain, straightforward language. • Be brief and to the point. • Focus on your key messages. • Interviews can be done over the telephone. May be possible to pre-record interviews if you are unavailable for a live interview. Talkback is ‘live to air’.
Current affairs	Longer reports including discussion and opinion.	
Talkback	Longer discussion involving audience members.	
Specialist programs and documentaries	May focus on health issues.	

Print media

Print is a large and varied sector of the media and information is presented in many different forms. Stories appear in the following different types of print media.

- Newspapers: There are more than 600 newspapers in Australia, including 12 major national or state and territory daily newspapers, about 35 regional daily newspapers, nine Sunday newspapers and almost 500 weekly or twice weekly regional, rural and suburban publications.
- Magazines: There are over 1,500 magazines published in Australia, including women's interest, men's interest, general interest, health, television, home and garden, leisure and current affairs titles.
- Online news: The online media environment continues to grow rapidly and almost all major media outlets, from print through to broadcast programs, also have websites that provide and update daily news items regularly.

Table 2: Working with print media – what you need to know

	Types of stories	Points to remember for print media
News	Basic facts about current issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on your key messages. Photos and names may be required. Nothing is ‘off record’: anything you say may appear in print. • Interviews can be done over the telephone and interviews may appear online on websites
Features	In-depth exploration of an issue – includes opinion as well as facts.	

Television

Television in Australia is provided through public broadcasters, commercial free-to-air and a number of community stations.

- **Public broadcasters:** Australia has two public television broadcasters: (1) Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) provides a national TV service with local and national programming and digital channels; and (2) Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) provides a national television service as well as digital channels. SBS broadcasts a mix of Australian produced and international programs.
- **Commercial television:** Commercial free-to-air television reaches most Australians with the majority of the population having access to three channels.
- **Subscription television:** Subscription television (also called 'pay TV'), is different to other forms of television as it is a direct contract between the television provider and the subscriber. Subscription television has a smaller target audience than free-to-air television and offers more specialised programming.
- **Community television:** Australia has a small number of free-to-air community television stations, most of which are located in capital cities.

Table 3: Working with television – what you need to know

	Types of stories	Points to remember for television
News	Usually 30 seconds to two minutes read by presenter or reporter with accompanying footage and/or interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about your appearance – television is about what people can see. • Speak clearly.
Current affairs	Explores issues in more depth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on your key messages. • Actual screen time used may be very brief (e.g. seven seconds).
Other programs	Mix of information and entertainment e.g. Breakfast programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the story may become available online.