



Our stories matter:

Understanding the media and

public communication landscape

Why is it important to understand the way different forms of media operate, before telling your story?

Media and public communication platforms have evolved considerably over the past decade and there have never been more avenues for people to share their lived and living experience stories with the public.

This resource aims to give people with a lived and living experience an understanding of the different media platforms they may engage with to share their story. Each type of media platform has different characteristics and possible

impacts that you may need to consider before deciding to engage.

This document is part of a suite of resources developed out of the *Mindframe Lived and Living experience of suicide project* that also includes overarching guidelines for telling your story, guides to self care and avoiding burnout, and a workbook with various steps that can help you safely and effectively prepare to share your story.

For more information about this project, visit: mindframe.org.au/our-stories-matter

Key principles to consider before engaging with media

Sharing your lived and living experience of suicide is powerful. It can create change, provide hope, empower others, and contribute to your own healing. It can also be challenging, uncomfortable and could result in your story being used and published in places or contexts that you may not have expected or been ready for. It could also bring unwanted attention or even scrutiny to other areas of your personal life.

Taking the time to consider the way media outlets are owned and operated, as well as understanding the steps that media professionals may take in the process of researching and publishing your story is important, regardless of what type of media format you may be interested in engaging.

Syndication

Media ownership in Australia is concentrated among a small number of people and organisations. When you share your story, you may only share it with one newspaper or radio broadcasting station. However, this may be then shared across various other outlets and platforms. This is called syndication. This occurs because many different media and public communication platforms are owned by the same people or organisations which allows for content to be shared across commonly owned or controlled outlets.

When consent is given for your story to be shared on one platform, it is applied to all related platforms. Content can also be bought and leased between owners and organisations.

For a summary of the main media interests in Australia, visit:

acma.gov.au/media-interests-snapshot

Publicly available information and background checks

It is important to note that anything you share publicly can be quoted by all media and public communication outlets, even when the information is not initially shared directly with or by that publisher. This includes your own personal social media.

It is also important to note that any background information about your personal life can be investigated by the media and public communicators and shared with the public. It is important to keep this in mind before sharing your story and to consider whether there is anything in your background that you aren't comfortable with the media finding and sharing to the public.



Print media

Print is a large and varied sector of the media with information presented in many different forms. It is important to remember that print media stories and quotes can be syndicated. So while you may initially work with one outlet, your story may end up being shared and published across multiple outlets.

Stories appear in the following different types of print media:

Newspapers

There are hundreds of newspapers in Australia, including multiple major national or state and territory daily newspapers, regional daily newspapers, Sunday or weekend newspapers and numerous weekly or twice weekly regional, rural and suburban publications.

Magazines

Magazines published in Australia include titles focused on women, men, general interest, health, television, home and garden, leisure and current affairs. Publication cycles vary, but most magazines are published either on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis.

Online news

The online media environment continues to grow rapidly. Almost all major media outlets, from print through to broadcast programs, also have websites that provide and update daily news items regularly. There are some independent news organisations that operate entirely online or through social media platforms.

Working with print media: what you need to know

Article type	Types of stories	Points to remember for print media
News	Basic facts about current issues (who, what, where, when, how, and sometimes why). Shorter quotes from a small number (sometimes only one person) of sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on your key messages. Photos and names may be required. Nothing is 'off record', so anything you say may appear in print.
Features	In-depth exploration of an issue, usually a longer article allowing more space for more information, interview subjects, viewpoints and context. This article format includes opinion as well as facts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews can be done over the telephone and interviews may appear online on websites.• In some instances, you may be able to provide quotes or responses to questions online via email or text. These may then be shared or embedded into a story.• News stories are often shared online and on social media.

Podcasts

Podcasts are medium to long-form audio programs that can be streamed or downloaded from the internet, most often via listening apps. They are normally 'hosted' by one or more individuals, the tone is often conversational, and the format involves sharing general thoughts, ideas and information about a specific theme or topic area.

Working with podcasts: what you need to know

Setting	Program format	Points to remember for podcasts
Being interviewed on a podcast	Normally a longer-style interview or conversation where people can deeply explore one or more topic areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak clearly into the microphone.• If it is a longer style interview, think about what you want to discuss in advance. This may include being firm about any areas of your experience that you don't want to share.• Ask whether the interview will be edited or played in its entirety.• Focus on your key messages.• Podcast recordings are often filmed and snippets may be shared on social media for promotional purposes.• Your story or quotes may be picked up and used by other media outlets.



Radio

Radio has historically been one of the most utilised forms of media in Australia. Radio content is provided through large networks which include public broadcasters, commercial and community stations. Programs may also be streamed via the internet or via podcasts.

Public broadcasters

Australia's largest public radio broadcaster is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio which is made up of numerous metropolitan and regional stations, national networks and an internet service. Another is the Specialist Broadcasting Service (SBS), a multicultural service that broadcasts in more than 50 languages across a network available in all capital cities and key regional centres.

Commercial broadcasters

Australia has hundreds of commercial radio stations, the majority of which are broadcast 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 managing their day-to-day running.



Working with radio: what you need to know

Program type or format	Types of stories	Points to remember for radio
News	News delivered in short 'grabs' at frequent intervals. A radio news report on a single issue may only last several seconds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak clearly in short sentences. • Use plain, straightforward language. • Be brief and to the point.
Current affairs	Longer reports including discussion and opinion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on your key messages. • Interviews can be done in studio or over the telephone.
Talkback	Longer discussion about a topic involving audience members who contribute their opinion via telephone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be possible to pre-record interviews if you are unavailable for a live interview. • Talkback is 'live to air'.
Specialist programs and documentaries	May focus on health or other public interest issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio may also be filmed, with snippets of the interview shared on social media accounts.



Television

Television in Australia is provided through public broadcasters, commercial free-to-air, subscription services and small numbers of community stations.

Public broadcasters

Australia's largest public television broadcaster is the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), which provides a national television service with local, national and international programming, and digital channels. Another key public broadcaster is the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), which 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 much of the population having access to at least three channels.

Subscription and streaming television

Subscription and streaming television (also commonly referred to as '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 in capital cities.



Working with television: what you need to know

Program type or format	Types of stories	Points to remember for television
News	A report on an event or issue usually lasts between 30 seconds to two minutes and is read by a presenter or reporter with accompanying footage and/or interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about your appearance and what people can see. Don't forget to make clear eye contact with the camera or the interviewer when you are speaking.
Current affairs	Explores issues in more depth and may feature longer interviews with multiple people to provide broader context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak clearly.• 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">• The story or segment may become available online and shared on social media platforms.



Social media

Social media refers to online platforms that enable users (individuals or organisations) to create, share and engage with content in an interactive environment. People and organisations, including media outlets, use social media for a variety of reasons such as staying connected with friends, marketing a product, sharing information and ideas, self-expression, community building and making an income from content creation or by influencing people. Social media platforms use various types of content such as text, photos or videos (or a combination).

Working with social media: what you need to know

Social media platform	Types of stories	Points to remember for social media
Facebook	The largest social network available. Utilises a range of features for individuals and organisations to provide updates and information to friends and followers such as written text, photos and videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about your language, image and audio selection. • Think about your privacy setting and who can access your content. • Know that people can comment and share your content more broadly. It can also be used and shared for stories in mainstream media. • Consider your long-term digital footprint. Once something has been posted or published via social media, it may be impossible to remove. • If you are sharing on your personal account, people may contact you about your content. Some people contacting you may even be in distress and seeking support.
LinkedIn	A professional networking platform designed to connect colleagues and share relevant industry information, ideas and recruitment opportunities.	
X (formerly Twitter)	Known for short form written content that can be accompanied by photos and videos. Content is often around trending topics and current community issues.	
Instagram	Focused on visual content, Instagram uses photos, videos and written text to connect and engage people.	
Tik-Tok (Reels on Instagram also uses this format)	A platform known for shorter videos, often set to music or sound bites, that are creative and designed to go 'viral'.	
YouTube	The original platform for user-created video content where audiences can engage with different types of content on virtually any topic.	