

# Hitting the Headlines

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[climatemediacentre.org.au](http://climatemediacentre.org.au)

## By the end of the workshop you will...

Have a solid understanding of how the media works, and what they want.

Get some practice under your belt at pitching a story idea

Find out what key messages are, why they are important and how to create them

Start work on a basic media strategy – that you can take away and keep working on

Have a copy of our “how-to-guide” on launching a successful event to keep

## A little bit about us

### The Climate Media Centre

The Climate Media Centre most closely resembles a PR agency.

We provide media training, support, preparation and coaching to a group of spokespeople with an important story to tell about climate change impacts or solutions.

We are both **proactive** (in finding story ideas and pitching those to suitable media) and **reactive** (in responding rapidly to breaking news).

We are staffed by former journalists with experience in newspapers, online, radio and television.

**Details:** [www.climatemediacentre.org.au](http://www.climatemediacentre.org.au)

@CMCAUS

## What makes news

**New and developing** - Southern Hemisphere's first Tesla powerwall installed

**Different, unusual or unique** – Carbon neutral brewery to be built in Ballarat

**Controversy or conflict** – Solar stitch-up: Energex demands change

**Emotive/feel-good** – Beloved sports ground switches to sun power after winning solar panel lottery

**Relevant to a large numbers** – Rooftop solar producing more energy than WA's biggest turbine

## A Transaction

### The media wants...

An interesting story that's relevant to their audience with good quotes, and pictures/footage that grab the reader/listener/viewer's attention.

### You want...

To raise awareness of an issue/situation among the public, encourage them to take action and promote yourself and/or your organisation in a positive light.

## Journalists: the jack of all trades

**Newsrooms reporters are expected to do more with less**

**Even more so, today, journalists are:**

- Generalists
- Under pressure
- Under-resourced
- On deadline

## Great expectations...

Even if you have an interesting story and a great photo/vision opportunity you have **NO control** over:

- Whether or not the story will run;
- When and where the story is placed; or
- Exact content.

Journalists want their stories to run, and to run well. They will be pushing for this, **BUT** it isn't up to them either.

News is still news – **big news must take precedence.**

## So... how do you make your story appealing?

Start with **THEIR** audience

Who watches their program, or listens in to their radio station or reads their newspaper or magazine or website?

Is it a certain age bracket? Is it weighted toward a certain gender? Is the majority of their audience in the workforce, or retired? Parents?

Now here's the real test: why should that audience *care* about your story?





## Next: what are your “selling points”

Depending on which outlet journalists work for, they are looking for some essential ingredients that make up a story:

**Talent:** who do you have for the journalist to speak to? Are they engaging and confident? What interesting things do they have to say? Are they an expert? Are they already well known? (I.e. A local identity)

**Pictures:** This is a MUST for television. This is important to newspapers and websites. The more eye-catching the better.

**Case studies:** Bulk buying scheme? Then you need one household eg.

**Extras:** graphics, short and engaging videos, simple and compelling data

## Prep!

### Tailor individual pitches

- different hooks
- different talent

### Know your target

- Researching outlet/journo's past work saves time in the long run

### Anticipate the 'picture problem'

eat: pictures matter



## Build Relationships

### Patience

#### Be flexible

engaging during the planning process helps

#### Be available

prepare for reactive opportunities; and last minute requests

## Perseverance pays off

Knock backs are common

Don't assume a journo isn't interested in your issue

Always review, and ask questions

Seek advice from others



## Key messages

Not what you say; but what you get across throughout an interview.

1-3 main points you are trying to make

Each point should be as simple and straightforward as possible (usually summarised in one sentence)

Another way of thinking about it: What do you want people to be thinking/feeling after they watch/read/listen to you?



## Some examples

### An interview on blackout in SA

- The blackout was caused by extreme weather
- Climate change is making extreme weather worse (putting people and places in danger)
- We need more renewable energy to fix climate change and make our electricity grid more secure

### An interview about the Congress

- Community energy makes renewable energy affordable and accessible to everyone
- Australians love renewable energy and want more of it
- They are sick of waiting for political leadership and are investing their own time and money NOW to make it happen themselves



## Get into groups, pick a scenario

### Scenario 1

SA Power has applied to the Australian Energy Regulator, asking for permission to introduce a penalty fee to be paid by all roof top solar owners in the state.

This means solar households will pay close to \$100 more in supply charges than other households that use the same amount of electricity.

You are going to be interviewed by a newspaper on how this affects rooftop solar owners

### Scenario 2

New data has just been released showing there are now 1.5 million households in Australia with rooftop solar.

A TV journalist is writing a story about this milestone being achieved with a solar industry expert but also wants to talk to a homeowner about why they invested in solar.

You are being interviewed at midday at your house.

|   |             |             |               |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Purpose of interview</b>   |             |             |               |
| <b>Audience</b>   |             |             |               |
|   | Message one | Message two | Message three |
| <b>Three key ideas/<br/>messages</b>  |             |             |               |
| <b>Key quote worthy “grab”<br/>for each message</b>                           |             |             |               |
| <b>Facts, case studies, and<br/>illustrations to support<br/>each message</b> |             |             |               |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Purpose of interview</b>   | <b>I want to let SA Power &amp; the government know that this is not on. I also want to alert others, and get them to join the campaign.</b>                                 |  |   |
| <b>Audience</b>   | Solar owners in South Australia (primary) and SA voters (secondary)  |  |   |
|   | Message one  | Message two  | Message three   |
| <b>Three key ideas/ messages</b>                                      | Rooftop solar owners are outraged  | SA Power (Goliath) is making a cash grab from the little guy like you and me (David)   | Solar ownership is good for the whole community (eases demand on grid & brings down wholesale prices & doing our bit for the environment)   |
| <b>Key quote worthy “grab” for each message</b>                       | ”I’m one solar owner in a state with XX solar owners and if they are all feeling as angry as I do right now then SA Power better watch out.”                                 | “I installed solar to save money on my power bills, and now this big power company is picking on us saying we have to pay them for the privilege. How is that fair?”   | ”My solar is not only saving me money but adding clean power to the system for my neighbours & community.”  |
| <b>Facts, case studies, and illustrations to support each message</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1.5 million Australian households now have rooftop solar</li> <li>- One third of households in SA now have rooftop solar</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain your household costs. Ie. I was paying X per year on power and after I installed solar I cut my bills by X %</li> <li>- 40% of household bills are made of charges relating to poles and wires</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 21,000 people were employed by renewable energy industry at the end of 2013 in Australia</li> <li>- Solar households cut demand by 10% &amp; pushed back the peak</li> </ul> |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Purpose of interview</b>   | <b>I want to show my support for solar &amp; demonstrate its benefits for all Australians</b>   |  |   |
| <b>Audience</b>   | Non-solar owners (primary) and secondary solar owners (secondary)   |  |   |
|   | Message one   | Message two  | Message three   |
| <b>Three key ideas/<br/>messages</b>                                  | A solar power revolution is underway  | Australians love solar   | Solar power benefits all Australians in many ways   |
| <b>Key quote worthy “grab”<br/>for each message</b>                   | “When I got solar five years ago I was the only one on my street. Now you look around and it seems like every second house has panels. It’s great because the more people do it the cheaper it gets.” | ”I got solar because I wanted to take control of my power bills, and over the past 5 years I’ve saved XX \$. If I could afford to install more I would!” | ”I got solar to save money but it feels good to know you are helping everyone out by producing power to meet demand in a way that doesn’t hurt the environment.”  |
| <b>Facts, case studies, and illustrations to support each message</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1.5 million Australian households now have rooftop solar</li> <li>- The price of solar panels has dropped 75% over the past 6 years</li> </ul>               | Your story or the story of other people you know!  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 21,000 people were employed by renewable energy industry at the end of 2013 in Australia</li> <li>- Solar saves people money! (Ie. Cut my bill by 30%)</li> <li>- Peak demand figures; as per other slide</li> </ul> |

## Creating a basic media strategy

Creating a basic media strategy as part of your launch preparations will help you clearly define what you want to communicate, and to who. This can be one page long and outline your:

**Objectives:** what do you want to achieve? These should be as specific as possible. A good example of an objective would be: “to increase sign ups for our new project/program”. A bad example would be: “to raise awareness about our new project/program.”

**Key messages:** what do you want to communicate? Choose a maximum of three messages and keep them as high level as possible. For example: Explaining what community energy is. Or, showcasing the progress being made by your community.

**Audience:** who do you want to engage? This could range from community members who might benefit from your scheme, potential investors, or decision makers (such as local politicians).

## Creating a basic media strategy (cont)...

**Story angles (also known as “news hooks”):** why should the media be interested in your story? Another way to tease this out is answering the “So what?” question multiple times. (See the newsworthy section below for more guidance.) Provide dot points or questions you expect the media will want answered.

**Media targets:** this is largely driven by who your audience is. Find out what your audience reads, watches or listens to. For example, if you’re targeting Bendigo homeowners, then it makes sense to contact local news outlets such as the Bendigo Advertiser or ABC Bendigo studio. There’s no value in having your story being published in the NT News.



Old players



CLIMATE  
MEDIA  
CENTRE

2GB  
873AM

The Daily Telegraph

Herald Sun



The Courier Mail

Bendigo Advertiser  
MINERS MUST PAY 40 PER CENT BLOODS END SQUARE'S UNBEATEN STREAK

ARSON ATTACK

Church's op shop gutted in weekend blaze



GUTTED: Firefighters battle the blaze at the op shop. PHOTOS: MICHAEL HILL

## New players



THE  
HUFFINGTON  
POST



CLIMATE  
MEDIA  
CENTRE



the guardian

## Now it's time for you to outline your strategy!

Make sure you include:

- Objective/s
- Key messages
- Audience
- Story angles/opportunities
- Targets

**Thank you**

