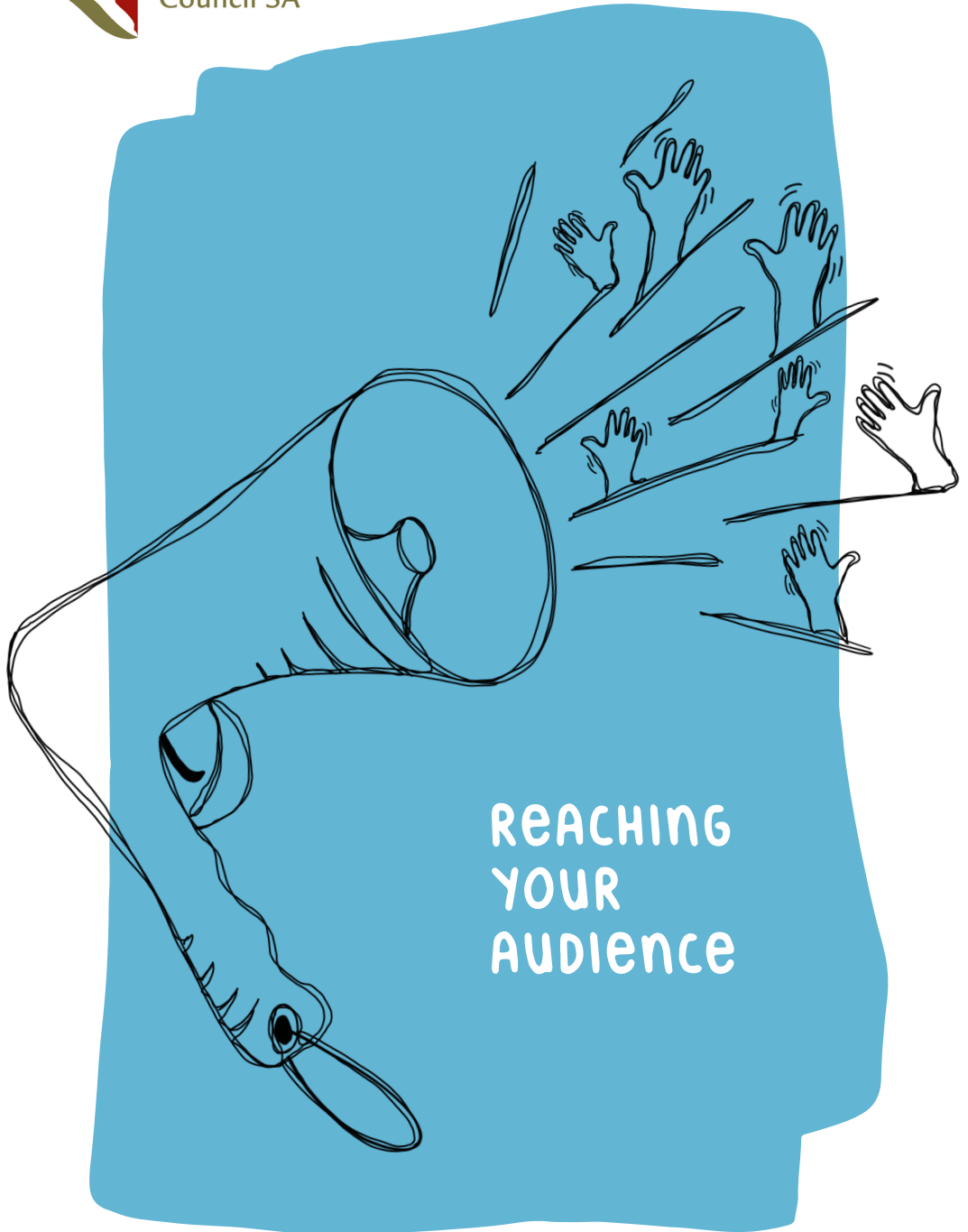




Conservation  
Council SA



REACHING  
YOUR  
AUDIENCE

## GETTING YOUR MESSAGE OUT: A CAREFULLY CONSIDERED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY IS YOUR FRIEND

Effective communication doesn't just happen: it has to be planned.

A communications strategy is your blueprint for reaching people with a message that meets your objectives and is meaningful to them. It is a plan that outlines what you are trying to achieve, who you need to communicate with, what you are going to talk about, how you're going to do it, and how often.

A thoughtfully planned communication strategy will help meet your objectives by ensuring you deliver the best message to the right audience, at a strategic time using tactics that will reach them.

**BEST MESSAGE**  
**+ TARGETED AUDIENCE**  
**+ A STRATEGIC TIME**  
**+ RIGHT CHANNELS/TACTICS**  
**= ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVE**

It doesn't need to be a complex document; however, it is worth spending the time to map out how you plan to communicate to ensure you make the most effective use of the resources and budget you have.

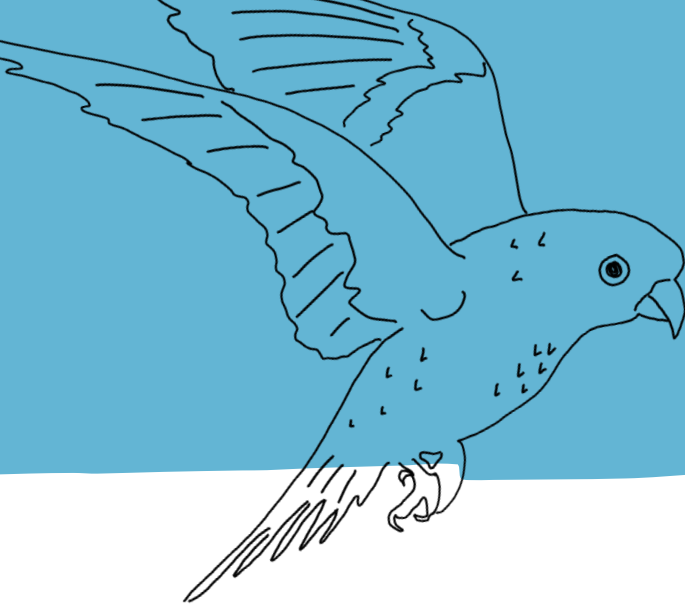
## WHY COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT? OR WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

People are increasingly going online for their news and entertainment and are inundated by thousands of messages every day.

Deloitte's 2018 Media Consumer Survey discovered that 91% of respondents multi-tasked by using social media while watching TV.

International research from shows that people are now switching between screens up to 21 times a day and the average attention span has reduced to 8 seconds. The result is a 'passive-consumption' where people are not fully focusing, engaging or interacting with the media they use.

A communications strategy ensures your messages will stand out from the noise and reach your audience.



EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION  
DOESN'T JUST  
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TO BE PLANNED.

## STEPS TO CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

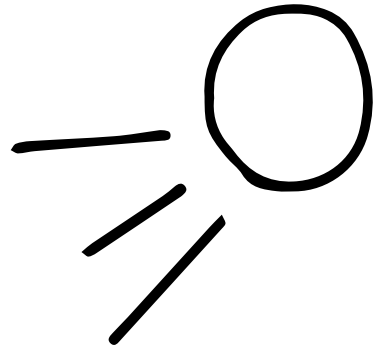
- 1. DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES:**  
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?
- 2. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE:**  
WHO DO YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH?
- 3. MAKE YOUR MESSAGES MATTER:**  
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO COMMUNICATE?  
HOW IS IT RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE?
- 4. GETTING YOUR MESSAGE OUT:**  
WHO IS GOING TO TELL THEM?  
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?
- 5. TIMING:**  
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM?
- 6. MONITOR AND REVIEW:**  
HOW DID YOU GO?

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

All communication should have a clear purpose. Think about what you want to achieve in relation to your specific topic, issue, action or policy. Your purpose may be to:

- \* BUILD SUPPORT
- \* RAISE AWARENESS
- \* CHANGE POLICY
- \* INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR
- \* IMPACT PUBLIC OPINION
- \* STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS





Think about what the change is, how it will help and who it will benefit. Write down your objectives using the SMART principles:

**S** SPECIFIC,

**m** MEASURABLE,

**A** ACHIEVABLE

**R** REALISTIC

**T** TIME-BOUND

USE THESE OBJECTIVES TO IDENTIFY WHO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IS AND HOW YOU CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE TO REACH THEM.

## WHO DO YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH?

Identifying and understanding your audience allows you to tailor a clear, specific message and makes effective use of your time.

The general public is not an audience. Communicating with the general public will not get you the results you are aiming for. It doesn't make sense to try to please everyone. There is no point in wasting time and resources on people who are not interested in what you have to say or do not have the power to make the changes you are seeking to influence.

Your time, energy and money are better invested in a target audience.

The smaller and more defined your target audience, the easier it is to develop a communication strategy that will reach them and move them to action. Identify the decision makers and influencers.

Who are the people that can help accomplish your objectives either directly or indirectly? Focus on those you can persuade and use their networks to influence others.

### YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE MAY INCLUDE:

- \* Members or non-members of your group
- \* Voters in an electorate
- \* Related associations
- \* Special interest groups, e.g. people who want to ban single-use plastics
- \* Educators
- \* Allies from your sector
- \* Local/State/Federal government officials
- \* Policy advisors
- \* Media representatives
- \* Employees
- \* Volunteers
- \* Clients
- \* Potential funding bodies
- \* Donors
- \* Influential people in the business community

**THE GENERAL PUBLIC  
IS NOT AN AUDIENCE.**

Once you have identified your target audience, gather information and insights on what makes them tick.

## CONSIDER:

WHAT WILL BE MEANINGFUL AND MOVING TO YOUR CHOSEN AUDIENCE (NOT YOU)?

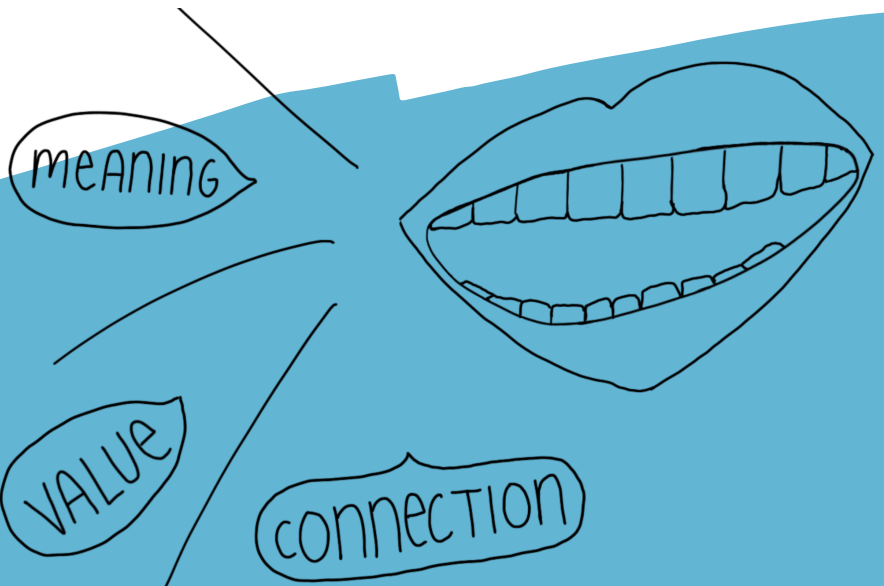
WHAT DO THEY VALUE, FEAR OR ARE CONCERNED ABOUT?

WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT YOUR ISSUE?

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS STOPPING THEM FROM TAKING ACTION?

DO YOU HAVE ANY PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO THEM?

These questions will inform the types of messages you create and the tools you use to do it.



## WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO COMMUNICATE? HOW IS OUR MESSAGE RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE?

Be clear about what you want to communicate. A simple, clear message will support your objectives and have meaning with your audience. Your message should appeal to people's emotions as well as core, common values.

The Australian Conservation Foundation's *Narrative Handbook: How to tell compelling stories that move people to action* is a fantastic resource that shows why storytelling matters, how to tell compelling stories and applies the Common Cause values and framing to the Australian environment movement. Download a copy of the guide here - [acf.org.au/narrative\\_handbook](http://acf.org.au/narrative_handbook)

Common Cause Australia's research shows that values are the guiding principles in life that rise above all situations and shape our attitudes, behaviours and social norms. Choosing messages that strengthen and engage people's compassionate values are the key to overcoming social and environmental problems.

Drawing from research in psychology, cognitive science, linguistics and behavioural economics, Common Cause suggests that the way you engage with people activates different values. You should engage and communicate using pro-social and pro-environmental values if you want to strengthen them and motivate people to act. Fear-based communication does not work.

Storytelling works. Stories can be used to motivate people to take action. Begin with why the issue matters, present the problems associated with the issue and end with what the audience can do about it.





Frame your issue in a way that leads the audience to support your solution and desired outcome.

1. **POSITIVE OUTCOME—**  
**WHAT'S THE 'END GAME'?**
2. **PROBLEM—**  
**WHAT'S THE THREAT TO THE POSITIVE OUTCOME?**
3. **SOLUTION—**  
**WHAT'S THE ANSWER TO FIXING THE PROBLEM/REMOVING THE THREAT?**
4. **AUDIENCE'S ROLE—**  
**WHAT'S THEIR ROLE IN THE SOLUTION? APPEAL TO YOUR AUDIENCE'S VALUES. WHY SHOULD THEY CARE?**

**LANGUAGE AND FRAMING OF YOUR MESSAGE MATTERS. APPEAL TO PEOPLE'S COMPASSIONATE VALUES.**

# LOVE. NOT LOSS.

The best way to rekindle a lost love is not to talk about what went wrong. It's to remember what we loved in the first place. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN Love. Not Loss. is an international campaign that focuses on love instead of fear as a motivator for people to protect the environment.

Their website provides detailed case studies on how people can personalise, humanise and publicise nature.

**PERSONALISE:** Build a personal connection between people and animals, make issue locally relevant, shift public attitude.

**HUMANISE:** Talk about nature in human terms, help people relate to nature and the challenges it faces.

**PUBLICISE:** Publicise positive actions to protect nature, make actions visible, showcase impact by demonstrating the difference people have made.

Build in a call to action. What do you want people after they have heard your message?

**WHAT CAN YOU ADD TO YOUR MESSAGE THAT WILL CREATE A SPARK THAT WILL MOVE PEOPLE TO ACT? IF ATTITUDES CAN CHANGE, THEN THE BEHAVIOUR WILL CHANGE.**

Remember that conflicting messages create confusion. Always use active speech and plain English, and avoid acronyms and complex jargon that people may not understand.

# WHO

IS GOING TO  
TELL THEM?

WHO SHOULD DELIVER  
YOUR MESSAGE?

ARE YOU, OR YOUR  
ORGANISATION, THE BEST  
POSITIONED TO GET THE  
MESSAGE ACROSS?

SOMETIMES, OTHER PEOPLE  
ARE BETTER PLACED TO REACH  
YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY A CREDIBLE  
TRUSTWORTHY PERSON THAT  
PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO?

REMEMBER THAT THE  
MESSENGER MUST  
COMPLEMENT THE MESSAGE.

# HOW

## ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?

Face to face contact is important to help people feel commitment and connection to a cause.

The best way to communicate with people is in person, with the next best option being a connection through media. Once you have identified who your target audience is and what you are going to say to them, you can select the right tools and tactics to reach them.

### SOME WAYS TO REACH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE INCLUDE:

- \* Face to face contact
- \* Write a letter to the editor
- \* Engage through social media. It is a good idea to research which social media channels your target audience uses the most.
- \* Create your own website. You can add a greater amount of detail here along with current and future events. People can be directed here to find out more about your cause, or find you through online searches.
- \* Blog posts (on your own website or guest blog)
- \* Printed or emailed newsletters— build up a database of supporters
- \* Seek out speaking opportunities. Think about active groups in your local community that may be interested in hearing from you. These may include service clubs, community centres, interest groups, primary or secondary schools, universities, upcoming conferences or local business precincts.
- \* Pitch to publications your audience reads. Consider newspapers, websites, blogs or magazines. Find out who writes for these publications and pitch a story idea with yourself as an expert, or write an expert article and pitch it to the publication. Keep in mind that story idea must be newsworthy and relevant to the publication.
- \* Briefings
- \* Develop a mass media advertising campaign
- \* Personalised telephone calls
- \* Print materials, e.g. factsheets and brochures

- \* Flyers can be useful if your target audience is in a particular area or neighbourhood. Also useful for schools, local councils, placing on community noticeboards or directly into letterboxes.
- \* Radio Interviews
- \* Call talkback radio
- \* Radio or TV advertisements
- \* Journal articles
- \* Banners and posters
- \* Media releases

Get creative with how you use the communication content that you create. One original piece can be reworked and used across multiple sites. For example, one short written article can be used to create content for a Facebook post, Instagram post, media release, website header, stakeholder communication and an advertising campaign.

If you have identified more than one target audience, change your strategies to tailor your communication to each audience. This is where your communication strategies help you to prioritise time and money.

## When ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM?

Build a schedule for communications into your plan.

How frequently do you intend to send a newsletter, or schedule a Facebook post? Are there are few issues active within your organisation? Do you need to schedule different times and dates for separate issues so you don't exhaust your audience? Are there any key dates, events or anniversaries that you can build communications around? Has your issue been in the media lately? How can you use that to your advantage?

If using social media, schedule your communications to reach your audience when they are known to be online.

## HOW DID YOU GO?

Build in evaluation time along the way. Measure your results to see if have achieved your objectives and refine your plan as you go. Evaluating your plan will assist you with future communication strategies.

# RESOURCES

## TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING STRATEGIES AND MESSAGES

### **Resource Media—Toolbox.**

Tip sheets and templates for building effective communications plans and messaging, from a non-profit communications firm working to support social change.

[resource-media.org/toolbox](http://resource-media.org/toolbox)

### **Smart Chart.**

An online tool for developing custom communications plan from scratch, designed for change making non-profits. Created by Spitfire Strategies

[smartchart.org](http://smartchart.org)

### **Planning to Win.**

A Just Enough Guide for Campaigners.

[planningtowin.org](http://planningtowin.org)

### **Common Cause Handbook**

[commoncause.org.au/uploads/1/2/9/4/12943361/common\\_cause\\_handbook.pdf](http://commoncause.org.au/uploads/1/2/9/4/12943361/common_cause_handbook.pdf)  
[valuesandframes.org](http://valuesandframes.org)

### **Narrative Handbook: How to tell compelling stories that move people to action Australian Conservation Foundation.**

[acf.org.au/narrative\\_handbook](http://acf.org.au/narrative_handbook)

### **Love. Not Loss.**

[iucn.org/commissions/commission-education-and-communication/cec-resources/love-not-loss](http://iucn.org/commissions/commission-education-and-communication/cec-resources/love-not-loss)

### **Australia Remade**

[australiaremade.org](http://australiaremade.org)

## TOOLS FOR IDENTIFYING AND REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

### **Worksheet—Identify your Audience.**

Prepared by Reef Resilience

[reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/Worksheet-3-Audience\\_2017.docx](http://reefresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/Worksheet-3-Audience_2017.docx)

### **2018 Yellow Social Media Report**

Research on how Australians are using social media to help inform strategies to reach your target audience.

[yellow.com.au/social-media-report](http://yellow.com.au/social-media-report)

### **2018 Media Consumer Survey**

Research by Deloitte showing how Australians are consuming different media and entertainment. Provides useful insights to inform how you can reach your target audience.

[deloitte.com/au/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/media-consumer-survey](http://deloitte.com/au/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/media-consumer-survey)

## TOOLS FOR SCHEDULING SOCIAL MEDIA

**Hootsuite**—[hootsuite.com](https://hootsuite.com)

**Buffer**—[buffer.com](https://buffer.com)

## TOOLS FOR CONTENT CREATION (WITH FREE OPTIONS)

Creating visual content (graphic design)

**Easel.ly**—[easel.ly](https://easel.ly)

**Canva**—[canva.com](https://canva.com)

## STOCK PHOTOS

**Pixabay**—[pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

**Unsplash**—[unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

**Pexels**—[pexels.com](https://pexels.com)

**Splitshire**—[splitshire.com](https://splitshire.com)

**The Stocks**—[thestocks.im](https://thestocks.im)

## VIDEO TEMPLATES

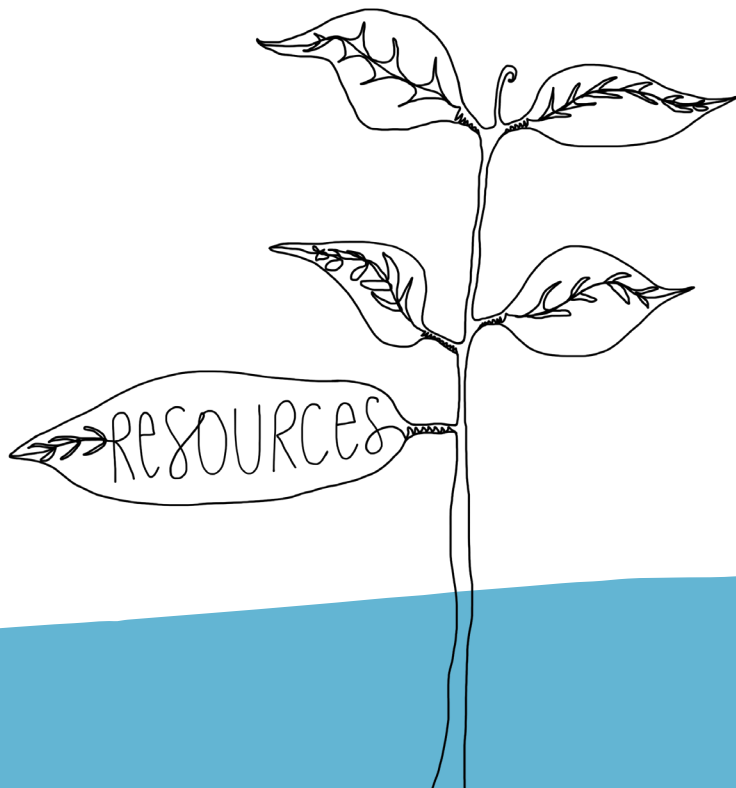
**Renderforest**—[renderforest.com](https://renderforest.com)

**Biteable**—[biteable.com](https://biteable.com)

**Vidwiz**—[vidwiz.com](https://vidwiz.com)

## TRANSCRIPTIONS, CAPTIONS OR TRANSLATIONS

**Rev**—[rev.com](https://rev.com)





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**THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO FUNDING FROM**



THE MYER  
FOUNDATION