

Traditional Media

For grassroots activism

Presented by CounterAct and Victorian Forest Alliance

We acknowledge that wherever we are calling in from on this continent,
we are on unceded, stolen land.



AGENDA

- Media prep before an action
- How to write a media release

BREAK OUT ROOMS

- How to amplify your story
- Video footage, photos, banners
- Tips for media spokesing - answering tricky questions

BREAK OUT ROOMS

- Tackling right-wing media

FINISH



What is newsworthy?

Impact: A big event/announcement that will affect or involves many people. **Drama:** Tension between groups/ideas. Community debate, a struggle against the elements, machines v people, the drama of sneaking in, police, arrest, passion.

Timeliness: Is something about to happen that will change things? A pending decision? A court case? A new Bill or regulation? A major meeting?

Proximity: Is it within a media outlet's circulation area?

Prominence: A widely recognisable person or issue

Human Interest: An angle or close-up personal story that people will connect to.

The unusual: Something out of the ordinary or surprising.



Media Preparation

- If you're doing media for an action - scout out the area
- Establish a media team - who's going to write the media release? Take photos and video? Be a spokesperson?
- Set up a dropbox/google drive folder and make sure everyone has access
- Media training for the spokesperson
- Have media release and media list ready
- Contact trusted allies/journalists and give them a heads up
- Prepare some prompts/talking points for the spokesperson



Who you gonna call?

- Ask another group to share their media contact list
- Ask local groups which journalists are supportive
- Be professional and friendly, build ongoing relationships with journos
- Keep a track of who covered your story favourably
- You are doing them a favour by giving them a newsworthy story, so be confident. At the same time, be willing to go the extra mile to help them run the story.



Embargo

Sending a media release with a request that the information remain confidential and should not be published until a certain date or until the action has begun.



Advantages	Disadvantages
You can make sure media have time to prepare a journalist and camera person to cover the story	Can you trust the journalists? What will be the risks if information is leaked?

Exclusive

Offering a story or interview to one media outlet with the promise that they will be the only one to receive it, or will be given the option to be the first to publish it.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Ensure your story is covered. Your story appears exciting. Build relationship with journalist.	Limits other overall coverage of the story by multiple media outlets.

Writing a Media Release

Catchy headline to get attention and state key facts

Keep release to max 1 page.

Attach backgrounder if more information is needed).

Start with key facts: what, where, when, why, how

Avoid jargon. Keep it to the point.

Include quotes from spokesperson

Other quotes could include from arrestable person.

Usually best to stick to one main issue or focus.

Use factual language rather than emotive adjectives, unless it's a quote.

Include name and contact details for spokesperson.

Include a link to drive folder with photos and footage.



Media Release: 11 – 10 -2021

Community blocks entrance to Russell Vale mine to launch protest campaign

This morning 15 Illawarra community members are blocking the gate to the Russell Vale coal mine. This covid-safe and social distanced protest launches an ongoing campaign aimed at stopping the expansion of the mine.

Locals raised concerns about the mine expansion during the Independent Planning Commission hearing, stating that the extraction of coal from under the Illawarra Plateau would place serious risk to Sydney’s water catchment. Despite these concerns, the Federal Environment Minister Susan Ley granted approval for the mine. Local Illawarra residents have formed the Stop Russell Vale Mine alliance to halt the expansion.

“Today’s protest demonstrates the outrage of Illawarra residents about the approval of this mine expansion,” said Stop Russell Vale Mine spokesperson Miranda Gibson. “The mine expansion would deepen coal extraction within Sydney’s water catchment, placing at risk the drinking water supply relied upon by 5 million people in NSW.”

For footage and photos: (drive link)

For comment:

Miranda Gibson - spokesperson for Stop Russell Vale Mine Alliance (insert phone number)

Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO)

Media release 6 October 2021



Giant 14 metre 'Cathedral' tree found in forests slated for logging

- Citizen scientists from local environment group, GECO, have found multiple giant old trees in forests scheduled for logging in the Bendoc area near the Errinundra National Park. One measures 11 metres in circumference, and another Errinundra Shining Gum, measuring 14 metres!- as wide as an average car is long
- A new walking track has been marked out to the 11m tree so the public can witness these forest giant before - logging commences in December
- Government policy is to not log large trees, but many are still being found in areas believed to be old-growth forest
- GECO has [written a report](#) which has been sent to the government calling for protection of the Giant Trees tree and surrounding forest.

Framing the issue

Often good to focus on one angle

How has your issue been reported in the past?

Are there prejudices, or misconceptions that you need to get around or shift?

Are there words or phrases that frame the issue in ways you want to avoid?

Do the words you are using give your audience a chance to agree with you?

They won't keep reporting the same story over and over – there needs to be progression, conflict, new angles and different stories.



Sending your Media Release

BCC the journalists/people on your media contact list

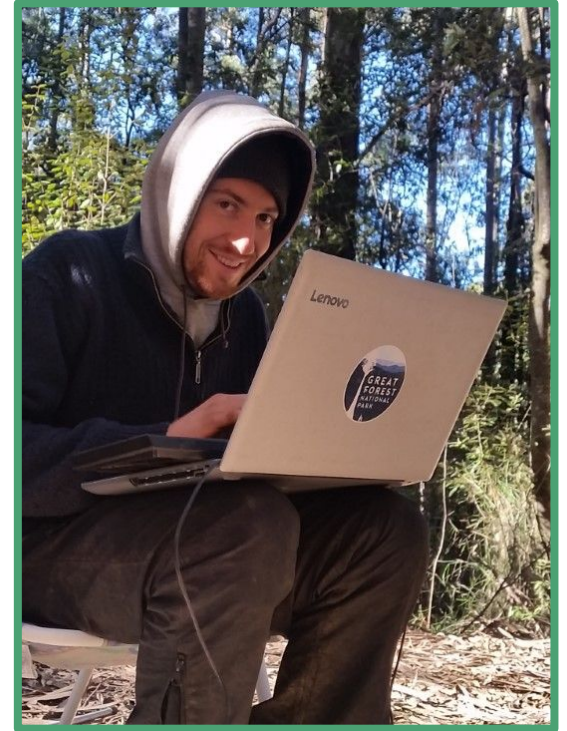
Have breaking title in the subject line

Copy and paste whole release into body of email

Attach 3-4 best photos and make sure good quality

If you have a video or drone footage, send a google drive link

Attach a PDF copy of media release



Break Out Rooms

Create a heading and first paragraph of a media release

Schedule for media team on action day



On site team	Office team
<p>Action time - yeah!</p> <p>When action is set up, message office team to let them know.</p> <p>Take photos and video as soon as possible and upload to drive</p>	<p>-Ensure media release and contact list are ready to go, everyone knows relevant passwords, shared drive for photos and video.</p> <p>Send out media release</p> <p>Choose photo/ video for media, edit and upload to media drive</p>

On site team

Take video and photos as needed.

Post to social media.

If media turn up, spokesperson or media liaison approaches them. Do interviews.

Message office team to communicate any updates (eg arrests)

Office team

Wranglers call media outlets. Can use a script. Check journalists received email and line up interviews with spokesperson.

Do interviews.

Send out media update in the afternoon with additional images and updates.

Building Relationships with Journos

Build trust, professionalism,
clear and good communication.
Never give false information.
Don't be afraid to say you don't know
something.
Help them by chasing things up
and giving them solutions and answers.
Work together.
Let them know what's going on
and keep them updated



Follow Up

- Keep a track of media stories
- Record in spreadsheet which journalists covered it and who was supportive
- Share media stories on your socials
- Thank journalists
- Track backlash or industry response
- Contact media to comment in response
- Include media team's reflections in action debrief

Logging protest at Snobs Creek

IN late news, a logging protest occurred at Snobs Creek on Monday, January 31.

The Victorian Coalition said, "Another illegal protest in stopping access to timber coops near Snobs Creek in Victoria's high country, leaving hard-working families without a day's pay on the first day of school for 2022."

"It's the latest blow to a crucial Victorian industry that's already on its knees as a result of the Andrews Labor Government's decision to ban the responsible and sustainable harvest of native timber by 2030."

Leader of The Nationals and Shadow Minister for Agriculture Peter Walsh said the illegal protest came as court action has struggled timber availability.

"The Andrews Labor Government is sitting on its hands as generations of hard-working Victorians lose their livelihoods to the illegal actions of extreme activists," Mr Walsh said.

"It's death by a thousand cuts for an industry that supports the direct and indirect jobs of tens of thousands of Victorians, both in regional Victoria and small timber communities like Keylock, Snobs Creek, Orston and Nova Now."

"The longer these illegal protests go on, the worse it gets for contractors, their workers and timber businesses down the line. Instead of the day being about getting their kids back to school, these families are again worrying about whether they are able to put food on the table."

"The illegal actions of these protesters further damages an industry already on its knees because of Daniel Andrews' short-sighted, destructive political agenda and place to deter this type of criminal activity."

"As our state continues to focus on recovering and rebuilding after the pandemic, The Nationals and Liberals will continue to stand side-by-side with the hard-working people who have built our responsible, sustainable native timber industry into a \$7.3 billion boost to our state's economy."

"By contrast, what we're seeing is law-abiding Victorians shouldering the burden of Labor's soft approach and unwillingness to enforce the law on those people who decide to break it."

The Victorian hardwood industry has access to less than six per cent of Victoria's forest area, with the other 94 per cent not available for harvesting.

Of the small amount of harvestable area, less than 0.05 per cent is harvested

in any given year with new trees planted to replace any that are removed.

Kinglake friends of the forest stated at the time of the protest, "An intersection crucial to our fall logging operations in the Baboon State Forest, on Taugurung country, is being obstructed by multiple activist groups in a bid to save large areas of forest from ongoing destruction."

"The collective of concerned individuals involved have erected a hefty 'stop' structure across the four road intersection, effectively denying log trucks access to four active native clear fall logging coupes."

"Suspended from a nearby tree, a stream of the ropes by an elaborate system of ropes, 27 year old activist Josh hopes that by blocking access to these coupes he can put a stop to the destruction of the irreplaceable carbon dense forest that houses a multitude of endangered species, including the greater glider and tawny leaved possum."

He explained, "I'm taking this action to directly stop Victorian operations which are destroying vast amounts of diverse and precious ecosystems across the state, we must end native forest logging immediately."

The statement from Kinglake FF continued, "Josh's concerns are shared by many other climate activists and list a multitude of actions represent the latest of a multitude of proactive measures being taken by groups in the area."

Recently, these efforts brought the responsible logging practices of an illuminating series aired on ABC's 20 Report. The series corroborated activist claims of Victorian failure to regenerate logged areas and protect endangered ecosystems."

"Activists are particularly concerned about the failed regeneration of these native forests in light of a series of bushfires, including the devastating 2009 Black Saturday fires, which burned or severely damaged 180,000 hectares of native ash forest."

Josh added, "I'm fearful of what the future holds for young people like me. It is obvious that we need to look after all native forests we have for a healthy climate and to mitigate the increasing danger from fires and other weather extremes that are directly linked to native clear fall logging and other extractivist industries."

His sentiments were shared by other activists involved in the roadblock.

Around 20 protesters attended the site. It is not believed that there were any incidents, and the police kept traffic away from the area."



One of the protest banners.



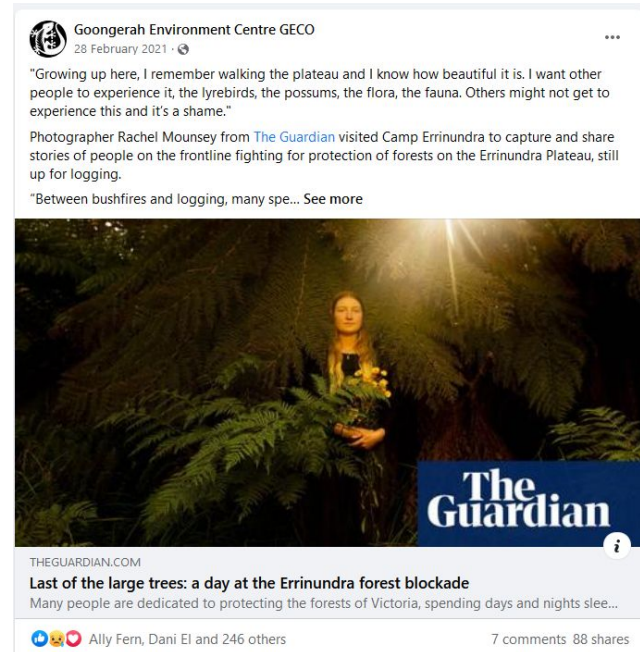
The protest.



The protest area.

AMPLIFYING YOUR MEDIA STORY

- Share ASAP! FB algorithms work really well when you share up to date stories (stale stories do worse)
- Tell everyone to share and create new posts on pages
- Tag the journo/news outlet
- Retweet on the Journo's/news outlets Twitter
- If you have an email list, send the link to the FB post of the article and
- get people to share! Send the story to allies/other groups who might share
- Follow up with a video/social media have a media package you can share with other groups



Photos

As the photographer don't be afraid to give directions!
You're the only person who can see what it's looking like.

Make sure composition is good (don't have people with weird gaps or odd placement.)

Make sure the banner is straight, even, visible and faces aren't cut off - banner photos should be horizontal

Basic colour and lighting editing - but keep it natural looking.

One good banner is better than lots of small homemade signs.

Don't play into stereotypes. Need to look trustworthy, knowledgeable and switched on.

Make sure there's no rubbish, pets, people smoking. Make camp look friendly and tidy.



Be careful of...



Banner shadows

Banner almost in the middle... but not quite!

People in front of banner

People in shadows

Great shots!

Clear, well lit banner in foreground, machinery in background



Wider shot
Showing the treesit setup with forest in background, destruction in foreground.



More great shots

Strong Compositions (foreground element and background element)

Happy engaged people

Well lit

No strange shadows or colours

Good depictions of what's happening



Video

- Short clips (5 - 10 sec)
- Landscape mode only
- No pan or zoom
- Let people move in and out of the frame
- Use a tripod if possible
- Give directions to people to get the shots you want



Ideas on what to film

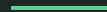
- People holding banner
- Shots that support your campaign message (eg clearfell and machinery).
- People in arrestable positions (with their consent).
- Exciting action such as Search & Rescue



What NOT to film

- People doing action set up or illegal stuff
 - Messy camp, people smoking, dogs
 - Anyone in your crew who hasn't given their consent to be filmed
 - Number plates of cars
-

[https://www.facebook.com/forest
conservationvic/posts/30431302
0175532](https://www.facebook.com/forestconservationvic/posts/304313020175532)



Media Spokesing Tips

- Speak clearly and slowly
- Short sentences, pause in between
- You can ask to start your answer again (if not live)
- Don't be afraid to take your time
- You can pause before answering or ask for clarification
- If not live, restate the question in your response to create a usable sound bite
- Avoid jargon
- Know your key message and keep coming back to it.
- Don't talk about anything you don't want to, bring it back to your point.



Tricky Question Examples

“Aren’t you creating a dangerous situation for innocent workers?”

“The dangerous situation here has been created by the Barnett government who are putting the community at risk with their reckless mentality – pushing through a toll road, before an election, without any care for the communities at risk of asbestos, dust, and loss of their local environment”

People are saying that you are wasting taxpayers money to the tune of \$40 000 a day – what do you say to that?

“The real concern is the huge amount of money being wasted by this reckless proposal - \$1.9 billion that will be wasted on a toll road to nowhere. There is no business plan, and no proper planning for the next stage/s of the proposed project. We are calling on the government to cease work until the election and prioritise the health concerns of the community.”

Break Out Rooms

Practice answering “tricky” questions and bringing the interview back to your key message.

IS THERE SUCH THING AS BAD MEDIA?

PROS: reaching people you might not usually reach, chance to comment in stories that could be biased/unbalanced

CONS: purposefully ask very tough questions, framing is often bad and hard to control

Don't worry about getting bad media - something that seems like it went very badly will likely blow over after a few months, people have short memories!

Protesting Greenies prevent Romsey man from fighting fires



Protesters have tied themselves to machinery belonging to a Romsey logging contractor, preventing him from using it to fight bushfires. Brad Meyer (pictured above) was called in to help fight some local fires on Saturday but six machines, including two vital bulldozers and a harvester, were

unusable. Mr Meyer told Neil Mitchell the protesters have ... Continue reading



Protesting Greenies bring logging to a halt in Toolangi State Forest

02/09/2019

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



NEIL MITCHELL



Does media always matter?

What is the primary aim of your action?

How does media fit or not fit into this?

Are there ways to minimise negative public attention while not watering down your tactics?

How can you talk about these tensions within your group?

How can you be bold, take risks and try new tactics while considering the ways to manage your public image?



FINAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?

RESOURCES:

PART 2 SOCIAL MEDIA:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/grassroots-media-training-part-2-social-media-tickets-259246452117>

