

Working with your local media

Eight tips for promoting your school's involvement in Arts Unit programs and events to your local media

The local media is a wonderful place to promote your school and its involvement in the Arts Unit's many great programs. Journalists, especially from the local newspapers, are always keen on colourful, performance-based stories to fill their pages.

1. Identifying the opportunity

If your students are taking part in Arts Unit programs such as choral, instrumental music, dance or drama festivals, performing arts ensembles, VET work placements, or any of the many camps and workshops conducted annually, your local media – particularly newspapers – may be interested in running a story about their involvement.

2. Cooperate

Consider working collaboratively with other schools in your area which might be involved in the same program, thereby maximising the opportunities for publicity. 'Scale' is something our public schools do particularly well.

3. Contacts

Provide contact details (name and mobile number) for the staff member who will be the contact for the journalist. Ensure this staff member is aware their details are being shared.

4. Keep it short

A media outlet will almost certainly not need all the information on a potential story, but will be happy with a short **alert** outlining the news angle along with the contact details of the spokesperson. If writing a full **release**, try to keep the document to a single A4 page. It's not necessary, at this stage, to send a full list of all the students involved in the program (although the journalist will almost certainly want that, once they are researching the story with you).

5. Plain English

Avoid jargon at all costs. The aim is to inspire a story for the journalist to write.

6. Include images

Wherever possible include a great picture with your pitch. Most schools have at least one good quality camera available and most Smart Phones will take good pictures as well. Ensure you get your settings right. Any photographs included with media releases or alerts should be at least 2MB in size, and of course must be in focus. **See helpful photography tips.**

7. Check permissions

Ensure you have the appropriate permissions in place before putting any students forward as story ideas. See **here** for more information and downloadable permission forms.

It would also be a good idea to run any ideas you wish to pitch past your director beforehand to double-check there are no potential issues.

8. When to pitch your story to your local media (and when not)

Several of The Arts Unit's major programs are promoted **centrally** in collaboration with the Department's Media Unit. For the following programs, schools are asked to **not** undertake their own media promotions.

- Aboriginal Dance Company
- ARTEXPRESS
- Multicultural Playwright Program
- Operation Art
- Premier's Reading Challenge
- Premier's Spelling Bee
- Schools Spectacular
- Any State public speaking and debating competition

However, if you have students taking part in one of these programs who have a particularly interesting 'back-story', you should pass that information on to the relevant Arts Unit coordinator, who may well be able to highlight that in media releases.

Media support

Contact either the Department's Media Unit on **9561 8501** or email mediaunit@det.nsw.edu.au or your local media officer for advice and assistance with story identification and pitch.

See the department's **Media Relations Policy** for further details.