

Guide to effective communications

It's a truism that when a Jewish organisation makes news, we, the Jewish newspaper of Australia, will proactively seek it out from you and publicise it in our pages. Our newspaper takes a welcoming, open-door approach to all Jewish organisations, large and small, of any political persuasion or stream of Judaism.

But the day-to-day practicalities of a busy newsroom can disrupt the lines of communication from your organisation.

The best guarantee of having your message featured in our pages is to be proactive as a community organisation yourself and send us a **timely, accurate, concise** and **effective** piece of communication.

A good PR principle to remember is that the more your message meets these characteristics, the more likely it will be to be included, and included in the way you intended it to be.

- Your media release should have accurate details – this minimises the chances that erroneous information will be used. It should not be too long (no more than a page is usually plenty) – this minimises the chance that something important will be edited out. It should have email, phone and social-media contact info.
- It should be sent well ahead of time – **we need your copy by no later than the Monday of the week the edition will appear**, so, for example, for the edition of Friday, November 25, we would need your media release by no later than 10am, Monday, November 21. But remember, the last possible day is cutting it fine. Late the week preceding is better. And if your important news could be a feature idea, remember these are planned weeks ahead sometimes.
- You may have a special overseas guest as the keynote speaker of a major event you're organising – it's best to let us know three or four weeks ahead, because we can organise a phone interview with your major guest ahead of their arrival in Australia, and the news article based on that interview usually runs a week or two preceding the event.
- The best communication strategy is to send something to us by **email**, then follow up with a phone call, so that we already know what the topic is, and then we can fine-tune the coverage.
- We are an independent news enterprise and not the mouthpiece of any Jewish organisation or Jewish roof body – that means that the editing process is independent, and **we will only run what we think will make a strong, interesting news story or feature**, because ultimately, the quality of our editorial will determine how marketable we are to our clients.
- While you may point out certain focal points about your event or other news, we may decide another focal point is the main one, or the story lead, and that remains our call, based on what we need to do to keep it interesting. Note, I am not saying 'sensationalist', just lively and interesting.
- Photos are an essential part of editorial, and keep the pages visually attractive and lively.
- Use a professional photographer if you have the services of one and your budget can stretch to that, but remember – really great, usable

photos – that can be included in the AJN – can be taken by almost anyone! Just a few simple rules.

- Always make sure your camera is set to the highest possible resolution before you set out for the event. We absolutely can't use photos that are below 100 kilobytes, even though they may look good on a screen, they cannot be used in print. **The ideal sizes start at 1 megabyte upwards.**
- **If you are using smartphones** – resolution needs to be high (more recent models are fine). Remember, what we can use online we sometimes can't in print.
- **Take photos with a newspaper in mind** – don't just snap away and then, after the event, see what might be available for the newspaper, as a lot of so-called 'happy snaps' won't be suitable.
- **Photos we use need a few basic elements.**
 1. No more than three or four people in the shot, from the waist up – sharply focused. **Huge group shots rarely work.**
 2. **Don't take pictures of speakers while they're speaking.** Professional photographers can manage that, but generally camera enthusiasts with compact cameras won't get a satisfactory shot.
 3. Avoid pictures of people **sitting on a speakers' table.**
 4. **Avoid random pictures of a roomful of people**, as they tend to be very ineffective.
- Outdoors **always shoot in the direction of the light**, not against it.
- **Always provide captions**, including all names/titles of the people in the photo and indicating where they are in the picture, left to right. And please provide the name of the person who took the photograph, as that can be mentioned in a photo credit.

While there are no guarantees of publication, because a lot of news ideas are competing for limited space, your news idea, if it meets the standards I've set out, will sooner or later be published, and your time-dependant event will be publicised on time.

Don't forget, we also have a calendar page, called **'What's On'**. Send your event information to Michelle Perl, at **mperl@jewishnews.net.au** no later than the Thursday before the publication date, so for that Friday, November 25 edition, it would need to be with us no later than Thursday, November 17. Make sure all the pertinent facts – speaker, topic, venue and address (address optional), and booking details are included.

The main thing is to keep the doors of communication open, and to know that without your info and reminders, a busy news organisation could overlook an event.

Perhaps the most important message bears repeating – it's that we're always open to your news ideas and we welcome them. They're the lifeblood of the Australian Jewish News, Australia's national Jewish news gathering organisation – in print and online.