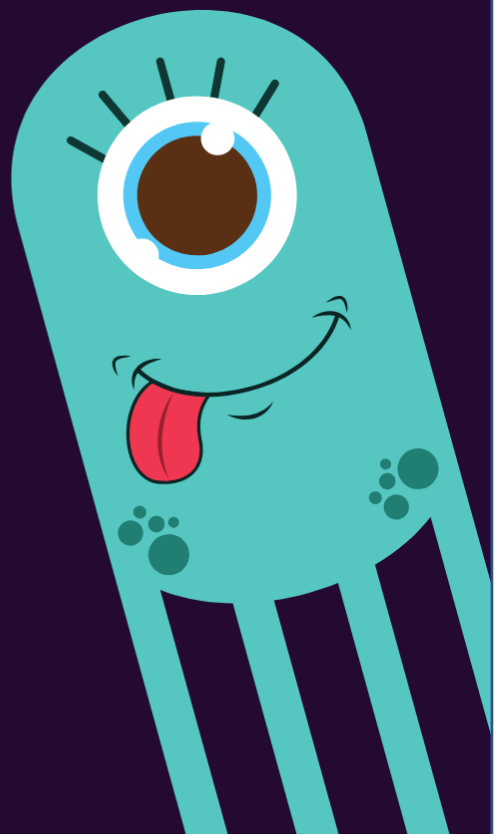




R u Mad?

Are you making a difference?





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Introduction

What is the *R u MAD?* Program?

The *R u MAD?* Program was initially developed by the Stegley Foundation in 2001, before being adopted by the former Education Foundation (Melbourne), as an innovative learning framework that allowed school students to develop and implement a project in response to their passions, aspirations and concerns about their community or the wider world. The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. has maintained the legacy established by the Education Foundation over 20 years and promoted and supported the application of *R u MAD?* not just by schools, but also within communities that are keen to find a creative way to engage their young people in youth-led community action.

The philosophy that informs the *R u MAD?* Program is based in philanthropy. The resources and materials are designed to assist young people to create systemic change in their communities by giving of their '*time, talent and treasures*'. The *R u MAD?* Program aims to facilitate youth-led action to promote social justice through social change. The Program is firmly based on the belief that we all have personal and collective gifts to give to improve the communities in which we live; and, that every one of us can take a role towards changing the circumstances of, and providing opportunities for all members of the community.

Through the *R u MAD?* Program, the following outcomes can be achieved for young people and communities –

- Create a culture of citizenship, social responsibility and giving.
- Encourage positive and critical thinking to achieve change.
- Facilitate youth leadership and youth-led action.
- Discover the asset rich tapestry of the community and harness those assets to create positive change.
- Create opportunities for young people to '*be heard*', take control over issues and concerns that are important to them and, ultimately become change agents within their community.
- Enhance the personal development of young people in terms of skills, knowledge, attitudes and connections.



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How Does the *R u MAD?* Program Work?

The *R u MAD?* Program uses a simple framework to facilitate youth-led change within any community. Young people are encouraged and supported to engage in the following simple processes – conversation, brainstorming, research, project design, action, celebration and evaluation – students come up with ideas based on their passions and interests (what they care about) and implement their project.

There are two levels of madness:

- Participation in a *R u MAD? Day*.
- Creation of a *R u MAD? Project*.

A ***R u MAD? Day*** is a one-day activity that allows schools and/or communities to explore the concepts of youth-led action and awareness to create positive change in the community. A *R u MAD? Day* helps to introduce the concepts of youth participation in the community in a way that is fun and engaging. Most importantly, it develops a day of action that empowers young people to discover that small acts can *Make A Difference*.

R u MAD? Projects operate over an extended period of time and allows greater levels of engagement with longer lasting results. *R u MAD? Projects* encourage a focus on the three components, namely preparation/research, action and evaluation. Young people identify the opportunity, issue or problem. In terms of a problem, they explore the cause of that problem and develop and implement a project to address the cause and not just the problem itself. *R u MAD? Projects* assists students to identify and share their '*time, talent and treasure*' to create a stronger and healthier community.

The *R u MAD?* Program was originally designed to be integrated into the Australian school curriculum. The elements of the Program's framework can certainly be adapted to deliver key components of the current [Australian Curriculum](#) including – Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding. The original comprehensive set of *r u MAD?* Program resources designed specifically for teachers and students for implementation through schools may be accessed from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. website.

The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. has revamped the *R u MAD?* Program into a more flexible framework that is easier to navigate for implementation within communities, particularly by youth groups, youth focussed organisations or local governments. The two components of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. *R u MAD?* Resources focus on 'Holding a *R u MAD? Day*' and how to implement a *R u MAD? Project*.



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The *R u MAD?* Framework

The *R u MAD?* Program is facilitated through a simple and flexible framework that can be adapted and implemented in any community through schools, youth groups, youth focussed organisations or local governments. The resources provided in this *Project Kit* are intended as a guide – they can be modified and adapted to suit the needs of any community.

The Framework is built around three phases of implementation. The facilitator resource sheets within this *Project Kit* include workshopping activities to guide young people in following the *R u MAD?* Project phases – understanding, action and celebration.

Phase 1. Understanding

In Phase 1. of the *R u MAD?* Program the focus is on conversation and brainstorming. Young people are invited to identify their values, explore issues that concern them, brainstorm the possibilities without limitations and discover their passions. Workshop Exercises 1-4 provide a basic framework for implementing Phase 1. of the *R u MAD?* Program.

Phase 2. Action

In Phase 2. of the *R u MAD?* Program the focus is on planning and project design, research, promotion and action. Young people are invited to develop an idea for a *R u MAD?* Project that builds upon the issues and passions identified in Phase 1. to work towards achieving their big possibility. Young people will also be required to promote their project and uncover what they and the broader community can contribute in terms of the '*time, talent and treasure*' required to implement their *R u MAD?* Project. Workshop Exercises 5-8. provide a basic framework for implementing Phase 2. of the *R u MAD?* Program.

Phase 3. Celebration

In Phase 3. of the *R u MAD?* Program the focus is on evaluation and celebration. Young people are invited to assess the impact of their *R u MAD?* Project and celebrate successes and lessons learned. Workshop Exercise 9. provides a basic framework for implementing Phase 3. of the *R u MAD?* Program.



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Workshop Exercise 1. Identifying Values

In this exercise, young people will identify their values. It is a good idea for the facilitator to undertake some research on values.

This definition is provided by Steven Mintz of [Ethics Sage](#) *“Values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. They help us to determine what is important to us. Values describe the personal qualities we choose to embody to guide our actions; the sort of person we want to be; the manner in which we treat ourselves and others, and our interaction with the world around us. They provide the general guidelines for conduct. Values in a narrow sense is that which is good, desirable, or worthwhile. Values are the motive behind purposeful action. They are the ends to which we act and come in many forms. Personal values are personal beliefs about right and wrong and may or may not be considered moral. Cultural values are values accepted by religions or societies and reflect what is important in each context.”*

The [Barrett Values Centre](#) is a useful resource for exploring values. A sound knowledge of basic values by the facilitator is necessary to translate what young people identify as important into values.

Activity:

As a group, young people initially discuss their understanding of what values are and why they are important. Secondly, young people identify and prioritise what set of values they share as a group.

Two suggested questions to ask are:

1. What is important to you?
2. Why are these things important to you?

Record ALL answers.

Translate answers into values.

The facilitator could also present young people with a list of values and ask them to choose their top ten and explain why they chose those values.



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Workshop Exercise 2. Discovering Youth Issues of Concern and/or Interest

Below are a set of group discussion themes that enable young people to clarify their concerns and passions.

Discussion: What is unfair about life?

Looking at different aspects of life and society, young people brainstorm and discuss areas of inequality that seem unfair from their perspective.

- Home

- School

- Local Community

- Australia

- World



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Discussion: What issues are important to young people now?

Group the key themes from this exercise to begin to focus on priority issues and interests. Some possible areas and their related issues have been noted below, expand upon these or highlight ones that are identified as relevant.

Issues could include –

Environment:

- Climate change
- Plastic pollution
- Endangered species

Health:

- Positive mental health
- Healthy eating and body image
- Use of illegal substances / alcohol abuse

Social Inequality:

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Inequitable distribution of resources
- Social isolation

Multiculturalism/Diversity:

- Inequality
- Intolerance/ lack of knowledge about different cultures.

Boredom:

- Lack of things for young people to do
- Antisocial behaviour

Others:

Activity:

Following the discussion, make a list of the group's priorities – what are the key themes the group considers important?



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Workshop Exercise 3. Developing a Big Possibility that Would Overcome the Identified Themes

Using a theme that has clearly stood out as being an issue for the group, work with young people to create a BIG POSSIBILITY. This is a situation that would alleviate the world of the identified problem or develop an opportunity. A big possibility, although unachievable, is used so students can learn that small steps are significant in achieving a HUGE final outcome.

For example, big possibilities may be –

- A world where people live harmoniously with no war.
- A world where humans improve the environment and live in harmony with all species and environments.
- A world where no person is hungry.

Potential Big Possibilities

What is our big possibility as a class?



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Workshop Exercise 4. Identifying the Passions of Young People

Passions for young people take on a variety of forms. Examples may include:

- music – both playing and listening
- art – photography, drama, painting, etc
- food
- animals
- sport
- people.

Activity:

Have each young person in the group identify at least one personal passion and / or interest. List the responses.

Our Passions and Interests

What are the passions and interests of our group?



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Workshop Exercise 5: Developing an idea for a *R u MAD?* Project

Utilising resources like the *"23 MAD Ideas for Young People to Use to Make A Difference!"* Resource Sheet 1. (next section), or sharing inspiring stories of people who have created positive change (this could include having outside presenters speak to the group), have young people develop an idea for a *R u MAD?* Project that builds upon the issues and passions previously identified by the group to work towards achieving their big possibility.

Activity:

Have young people form smaller groups to discuss ideas for their projects.

Some questions to consider when developing the project idea:

- Will the idea make a difference? How?
- Would the local community support the idea?
- Is the project doable in the time frame?
- What skills resources would be needed – volunteers, professionals, money?
- Who could be asked to help make the project work?
- Who else apart from the class needs to be involved?

Bring all of the groups together to discuss their ideas, and decide on a class project – it may be one that a group has come up with or it may be a variation or a combination of a number of ideas. If more than one project idea is developed, allow each young person to vote for their preferred project.



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Workshop Exercise 6: Uncovering Assets

This is a quick group asset mapping exercise. Young people will consider more deeply already available resources that can be utilised to make their chosen project a reality. It is useful to record responses, so they are visible to the group when undertaking Workshop Exercise 7.

Activity:

Have young people brainstorm and list suggestions under the following three categories –

- **TIME:** What time can the group contribute to the project? Do they know anyone else in the community who may be willing to contribute their time?
- **TALENT:** What skills, knowledge and talents exist within the group that would be useful to the project? Do they know anyone else in the community who has the required skills, knowledge or talents and would be willing to share them? (e.g. writing skills, gardening skills, knowledge of science).
- **TREASURES:** What physical resources does the group have access to? Do they know anyone else in the community who has the required resources? (e.g. tools, space, materials).



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Workshop Exercise 7: Planning a *R u MAD?* Project

This is when the group will '*nut out*' how they will turn their ideas into reality. Workshop 6. will help to inform and 'flesh out' the planning process.

Activity:

Using the 'Our Project' planning template in the next section (Resource Sheet 2.), have the group discuss and plan out how the chosen *R u MAD?* Project will be implemented.

It may be easier to form smaller groups and select the best responses from each group to form an overall plan.

Workshop Exercise 8. Promoting

Do not forget to promote the *R u MAD?* Project! The community will be very interested to hear about the project, and promoting may lead to assistance and support, or suggestions that had not been considered.

Ways to Promote the Project:

- Word of mouth – tell as many people as possible! You never know who may give you valuable information or support.
- Alert the media (see Resource Sheet 3. '*Working with the Media*').
- Create a project flyer and distribute in shops and/or letterbox drop.
- Put notices up around the community.
- Create a social media presence.
- Create a page on a community website – find an appropriate community group / local schools / local government who would be willing to help or create a project website.
- Put notices up on community pin up boards.



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Workshop Exercise 9. Reviewing and Evaluating

Following the actual implementation of the *Ru MAD?* Project, it can be useful to review and evaluate the project. What were the successes? What lessons were learned? This is also a great opportunity to celebrate the project!

Activity:

Using the '*Community Project Review and Evaluation*' template in the next section (Resource Sheet 4.), have the group discuss and share their thoughts. Record answers. This activity could also be undertaken anonymously by each individual involved or in smaller groups. The group could then come together to discuss responses given.

Activity:

Plan a celebration! Organise an event to bring together those involved – to thank everyone for their commitment and contribution and to share thoughts about the successes of the project, lessons learned, the harder moments and the fun times.



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Holding a R u MAD? Day

What is a *R u MAD?* Day?

The *R u MAD?* Program uses a simple framework to facilitate youth-led change within any community. Young people are encouraged and supported to engage in the following simple processes – conversation, brainstorming, research, project design, action, celebration and evaluation – students come up with ideas based on their passions and interests (what they care about) and implement their project.

There are two levels of madness:

- Participation in a *R u MAD? Day*.
- Creation of a *R u MAD? Project*.

A *R u MAD?* Day is a one-day activity that allows schools and/or communities to explore the concepts of youth-led action and awareness to create positive change in the community. A *R u MAD? Day* helps to introduce the concepts of youth participation in the community in a way that is fun and engaging. Most importantly, it develops a day of action that empowers young people to discover that small acts can *Make A Difference*. Holding a *R u MAD? Day* is a great way for a school or community to discover what their young people care about, and lay the groundwork for developing a *R u MAD?* Project.

***R u MAD?* Projects** operate over an extended period of time and allows greater levels of engagement with longer lasting results. *R u MAD?* Projects encourage equal emphasis on the three components of: preparation/research, action and evaluation.

A *R u MAD? Day* is especially useful to:

- engage young people across the community.
- create a community-wide focus on creating positive change.
- foster collaboration between different groups, organisations, institutions and demographics.
- provide opportunities for community-led action.
- discover what young people in the community care about.



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Tips for Organising a *Ru MAD?* Day

The purpose of a *Ru MAD?* Day is to set aside time for young people to explore what they care about and, understand what it is involved in becoming active citizens who have the ability to make a difference. Organising a one-day event or activity allows young people to immerse themselves in the concept of creating positive change through a series of workshops – Identifying Values and Priorities, Exploring Big Possibilities, Identifying the Passions of Young People and Developing an Idea for a *Ru MAD?* Project.

A *Ru MAD?* Day can be used in a variety of ways to motivate and guide young people to make a difference in their community. When organising a *Ru MAD?* Day, you will need to consider the following –

Who will be involved? Will you involve school children across the community? Or perhaps youth groups or invite young people from across the community to participate. Which organisation or institution will take the lead in planning the *Ru MAD?* Day? Once you have decided, this will help determine which organisations and institutions you can involve in designing and organising the day's activities. Planning and implementing a *Ru MAD?* Day is an excellent opportunity for collaboration, and can reveal some exciting resources and possibilities. It is recommended that workshop groups be no more than 30 young people. The number of young people involved will determine how many adults you will need to facilitate the workshop sessions and guide project development and implementation.

What will the day involve? What do you want to achieve by holding a *Ru MAD?* Day? Will you use the day to focus on discovering what young people care about, brainstorming ideas or developing a project ideas? Will you use the day to implement a *Ru MAD?* Project? Will you use the day to celebrate and evaluate a *Ru MAD?* Project? The information provided in the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. Resource *Ru MAD?* Project Kit will help to design the content for the day. Ideally, a *Ru MAD?* Day is best used as an opportunity to discover what young people care about and begin the design and planning stage of a *Ru MAD?* Project, or, to celebrate and evaluate a *Ru MAD?* Project that has already been implemented. Depending on the nature of the *Ru MAD?* Project, they generally take more than one day to implement.

When and where will you hold the day? This will be largely determined by who is involved. For example, you may decide to involve Year 6 students from schools across the community. You could decide on a date and bring students together in one venue



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or run the day in the classroom across the respective schools. You may choose to involve youth groups and hold the *R u MAD?*

Day on a weekend at a community facility. You may choose to hold a community wide *R u MAD?* Day and invite young people to participate via registration by advertising through schools, youth focussed organisations and community groups.

There is a great deal of flexibility in how a *R u MAD?* Day can be organised. To get the most out of the day it is best to determine which cohort of young people you want to involve and what you want to achieve from the day. You may choose to involve just one class / group / organisation, or a broader range of young people from across the community. Planning a *R u MAD?* Day should begin with lots of conversations with relevant individuals from institutions and organisations to get a good idea of community interest in the concept. Whatever you choose to do, keep in mind, it is about creating the space for young people to realise they can MAKE A DIFFERENCE in their communities.

If you would like to discuss ideas for how to implement a *R u MAD?* Day in your community, contact the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. www.bankofideas.com.au



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Resource Sheet 1.

23 MAD Ideas for Young People to Use to Make A Difference!

1. Create a series of small skits educating other young people about an issue. Perform them in front of the school at an assembly.
2. Create a workshop researched and presented by young people around an issue and invite parents and community members to participate.
3. Arrange a community photography competition on a theme of interest. Ask local business owners to donate a prize, charge a small entry fee and use the profits on a project that will benefit the community.
4. Hold a mini jazz concert in a local park, invite the community to come and listen to music and share stories of their lives with others.
5. Write a song about an issue, record it and ask the local radio station to play it for the community to hear.
6. Research another country and establish links with one of the schools including a pen-pal letter exchange program.
7. Organise a 'share a skill day' where parents nominate their special skill and share it with the class (or small groups).
8. Find out why eating fresh fruit is so important to human health. Organise a 'fruit' day where people eat (primarily) fruit all day. Dress up in the colour of your favourite fruit and paint fruit pictures on everyone's faces.
9. Invite an Aboriginal elder to visit the school to discuss Indigenous customs and history. Ask them to share with the class a cultural activity that is important to them. Design a 'Welcome' sign acknowledging the local traditional owners.
10. Organise an art exhibition on a theme of interest. Display the art in a public area for the community to view.
11. Research philanthropic businesses and businesspeople. Discuss why it is good for individuals and businesses that profit to make contributions to community activities.



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Write a letter to some that really stand out thanking them for their contribution and explaining to them why you think their actions are important.

12. Identify a wall that has been the target of graffiti. Organise to paint a mural that sends a positive message about the type of community you live in.
13. Participate in a TravelSmart to School program to reduce dependence on cars - share the information and environmental benefits with the broader community.
14. Identify an environmental area that needs attention. Invite a local member of an environmental action group (e.g. Friends of Crumpet Creek) to come to the class to discuss what steps would be the most appropriate to restore the area. Plan a day to restore the area and invite community members to participate.
15. Cook a meal for members of a senior citizens group. Ask them to share stories about their childhood and what the local area was like when they grew up.
16. Organise an 'alternative sport day' of wacky individual and team sports, award ribbons for participation and enthusiasm rather than athletic ability.
17. Organise a 'buddy day' where young people pair up with people from a different age group, year level, school or background and share stories about what you like and what makes you passionate.
18. Research different Australian native flora and fauna and create a water wise native garden in the school. Invite professionals or university students to visit the school to discuss how this small action can make a difference.
19. Invite a family (or families) that have migrated (or are refugees) from another country to Australia to talk to the class about their experience and why they have chosen Australia. Design posters that highlight the similarities between people with different backgrounds/cultures.
20. Create 'smile zones' in the local shopping area where people have to smile as they enter. Design funny masks and t-shirts so people will not be able to help themselves!
21. Research the cost the environment of shoppers using public bags. Promote this, and organise a campaign urging local retailers to achieve a 'plastic free' community.
22. Research the impact of using local chemical fertilisers on the local environment. Promote 'earth friendly' options in terms of gardening and lawn care.
23. Create and sell 'bully proof vests' – T-Shirts with a slogan that empowers the wearer against bullies.



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Resource Sheet 2.

Our Project

Title: (one sentence description)

Outcomes: (describe 3 outcomes - what impact will the Project have?)

Elements: (describe 3 Project elements - what is going to happen?)

Our first three steps:



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What we have:

What we require:

Who will be involved?

Who do we need to talk too?

Timeline?



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Resource Sheet 3.

Working with the Media

The media (newspapers, TV, radio) is a very important means of informing the community about community initiatives. Media coverage is a vital information, marketing and promotional opportunity which no community project can afford to ignore. Effective use of the media is a skill which needs to be developed.

General Principles

- Decide who will deal with the media. Whether you use one person or a group to deal with publicity, it is essential that reporters know who to contact for a clear, mandated comment or statement. Channel all communications with the media through one spokesperson and ensure all your members know who this is.
- Be careful not to raise local expectations beyond what you can deliver. This will quickly lose your credibility with the community and it will take a long time to get it back.
- Be proactive - seek the media out. Do not wait for the media to chase you. Make a list of local newspapers, radio and TV contacts, including local newsletters. Identify specialist publications who may be interested in your initiatives.
- Establish relationships. Get to know local reporters, correspondents and editors. Find out about their deadlines and the issues they are interested in. But do not waste their time.
- Do not play favourites with the local media. Alternate the times you give out stories and press releases so you do not favour one paper or radio station.
- Be open and reliable - give accurate information. Stick to the facts. If you are giving an opinion make sure you state it is your opinion. Provide honest answers to questions and do not be afraid to say that you do not know something. If you are phoned by a reporter to comment on something, feel free to ask for 10 minutes to collect your thoughts, but make sure you phone back.
- Invite media representatives to your meetings. Send them minutes (always with a prepared media statement summarising the key points you wish to convey), give them early notice of important events. Always provide an after hours phone number at the end of any press statement or after an interview and return calls promptly. Go out of your way to report progress.
- Be helpful - most media organisations are short of time and resources. The more you can help them without being asked the better. Put particular effort into writing media press releases (see below). Journalists are usually too busy to spend a lot of time rewriting press releases. Attach photos.



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Make sure it's news

The media look for news that is new, unusual and which in their opinion will interest their readers, listeners or viewers. Do not bombard them with endless press releases. You will soon develop a bad reputation.

As a general rule, the more local the media outlet (local newspapers, community radio) the greater their feeling of obligation and willingness be to report events and issues of interest or benefit to the local community.

Make sure your news is fresh and allow time for reporters to meet their deadlines.

Arrange photographic or video opportunities or provide good quality photographs (most media prefer to take their own).

Ways of conveying news to the media

- Media press releases
- Phone calls/alerts
- Invitations
- Media conferences
- Radio phone-in shows
- Circulation of documents
- Letters to the Editor

Press Releases

A press release (media release or press statement) is one of the most efficient ways of informing the media or making an announcement. It saves your group and media outlets time, helps get the facts correct and enables your group to inform a range of media outlets at the same time. It is simply a statement that tells "the WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, and WHY" concisely.

A press release must create a positive image in the critical eyes of the media. Poorly drafted press releases usually end up in the rubbish bin and reduce the credibility of your group.

To enhance the effectiveness of your press releases, note the following:

- Use a media release letterhead which reflects your group's identity - keep the design uncluttered and avoid using small typeface.
- Make sure you grab the reader's attention in the headline and the first sentence.
- Place the most important facts at the top and then arrange your material in descending order of importance. Do not attempt to get everything into the first (lead) paragraph, which should consist of no more than 30 words.
- Ensure material is accurate. Check all facts, especially spelling of people's names and titles.
- Keep it short, preferably a single page, two pages at the most. (Keep to 400 words or fewer).
- Ensure it is dated and contains a contact name and phone numbers/email address. Make sure the contact person and telephone number are obtainable when journalists are likely to call as many journalists work at night or early in the morning.



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- Know the copy deadlines of your target media outlets.
- Make sure you issue your release on the best day for maximum coverage. Generally a release issued on a Monday or Tuesday will get better coverage than one released on a Friday.
- State the timing for release if not for immediate use i.e. embargoed until date and/or time.
- Attach any visual material, photographs, logos, maps, diagrams

In terms of media release writing style, note the following:

- Use simple language and sentence construction. Avoid the use of jargon and clichés.
- Use positive words and phrases.
- Use short paragraphs - often one sentence is enough. Limit sentences to 25-30 words.
- Write names of people and organisations in full the first time they appear in the text. Add abbreviations in brackets afterwards.
- Use quotes to make it more interesting.
- Write in the third person, eg, 'he said' or 'she said', not 'I said' or 'I was'.
- Do not use underlining - underlining is an editor's instruction to print those words in italics.
- Spell out numbers from one to nine, except for dates, times, prices, weights and measures, then use figures until they become unwieldy thousands of millions.
- Do not use the % sign, spell out "per cent" as two words.



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Resource Sheet 4.

Community Project Review and Evaluation

A summary of the main steps of our Project:

What our Project achieved:



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What we would do differently?

What were the biggest challenges?

What were the really enjoyable moments?

What key lessons did we learn?