

## How to write a media release

- The best media releases read like a news article.
- They follow an inverted pyramid, with the most important points at the start and the least important at the end.
- The first paragraph contains your key message. This is the most important thing about the story; what you would want someone to remember if they forgot everything else.

It should include the key facts of the story – what/when/where/who/how.  
For example:

*St Presyb's Church yesterday raised more than \$10,000 towards a new youth programme through a silent auction conducted by celebrity auctioneers.*

*This Sunday, Community Church will welcome new minister Jo Smith, a former doctor whose previous ministries include a Waikato parish and two years' mission work in China.*

*Unless more than \$50,000 is raised by the end of this year, Parish Church faces a demolition order for its church hall.*

- Include plenty of quotes. This way, lazy (or time-pressured) journalists can rewrite your release into a story. Always use “said” or “says” rather than “commented” etc. Make sure those quoted are happy with the release.
- Keep your writing simple and concise. Avoid unnecessary adjectives – instead of saying something is “exciting” or “significant” explain why.
- Don't include any negative statements or anything you would be unhappy to see in a headline. Burying the “bad news” part of a story in the middle of a release won't stop a journalist making it the focus of their story.
- Limit your release to one page.
- Add your contact details at the bottom: make sure you include an afterhours or mobile number.
- Put a simple headline at the top that summarises the first paragraph

## Sample: Media release

### ***Historic building faces demolition***

Unless more than \$50,000 is raised by the end of this year, Parish Church faces a demolition order for its church hall.

← *5 Ws addressed in first sentence*

The building, which is over 100 years old, needs a new roof, re-piling and exterior refurbishment to bring it up to building code standards.

← *Most important facts at the top of article.*

The building is used by more than 30 different community groups, and parish minister, the Rev John Smith, is asking the community for help.

“The church has been here longer than most of us have been around. It’s a grand old lady that needs a bit of a facelift.”

← *Colourful language increases chance of quotes being used.*

He is calling for volunteers from the community to assist with the refurbishment work.

“The building is recognised by the historic places trust. It’s an expensive business keeping it up to standard, and we just don’t have the funds to maintain it anymore,” he says.

← *Lots of quotes makes it easy for the reporter*

A working bee is being organised for the first week of November, and fundraising efforts kick off in earnest next week with a church fair, says Mr Smith.

/ends

For further information, to arrange an interview please contact Rev Smith on 021 123 456.

- Photo opportunity: Friday, 30 October at 10:00am-4:00pm - working bee to tidy up the parish grounds

← *Provide a photo opportunity if possible, as this increases newsworthiness*