

New Zealand Inline Hockey

Media, Communication & Events Guideline

Background

Events involving inline hockey players are taking place on a regular basis, at various facilities around New Zealand during the season.

To optimise coverage of all inline hockey events is a mammoth task.

We acknowledge that players, parents and event organisers often expect assistance in attracting media attention. New Zealand Inline Hockey does not have the resource available to do this, however this guide aims at assisting clubs and regions to take ownership of their own media and communication releases.

We do however, believe that media exposure plays an important role in increasing public interest in the sport, attracting and servicing sponsors and profiling the organisation, and to this end one of the roles of the executive is to seek ways that media coverage can be increased.

This document is meant to provide a guideline and to assist with media liaison and/or contact with your local media representatives

Priority events for media coverage;

NZIHA Major Events

- New Zealand National Club Championships
- Oceania Asia Pacific Championships
- Inter Regional Championships
- All international events played in New Zealand
- New Zealand Inline representation at events outside New Zealand

Clubs and individual players are largely responsible for their own promotion outside of the events outlined above. Clubs and players should maximise promotional opportunities wherever possible.

The media (from newspaper, radio or TV) is probably the most effective channel for voluntary and community organisations to communicate a message to the outside world.

The media can be used, for example, to:

- publicise forthcoming events
- make announcements e.g. a new key appointment
- support local or national awareness weeks/days e.g. international volunteers day
- publicise a new service.

Some advantages of using the media include:

- the ability to reach a very wide range of people (i.e. good coverage)
- it's normally free
- it can be organised at relatively short notice.

How To - Media Releases

Clubs can send media releases to NZIHA for inclusion in monthly bulletins. One off special bulletins can also be sent at the discretion of the executive. While every effort will be made to ensure that the information is published, NZIHA cannot guarantee that members will read the bulletin.

A successful media process could include publication or mention in the following:

- Article in one National newspaper
- Coverage on one National news programme
- Article on one electronic news site
- Coverage on one national radio station
- Article in one local newspaper

How do you get daily Results in the Major Daily Newspaper? The Major Daily Newspaper in your area is likely to print results in the Sports section results listings if you...

•Call the paper before the event and ask how they would like to see results and what email address to use

•Don't send results in HTML files; put them into a simple word format either as an attached document or in the body of the email. Get them in before 6pm (check time).

•Listing just the top ten (or similar) rather than providing the total results can be a good idea

•Title it clearly – Event Name, Division, "Top Ten Results after Day One" or "Final Top Ten Results" etc...

The best way to send out information to a large number of people is to send out a Media Release. Your distribution list should include relevant media contacts (include your local papers, as they are one of your most receptive audiences), and can include sponsors and supporters as well. However if your aim is coverage then the style of your release should be targeted at the media.

It is important that you remember that the media has a job to do and that is to sell stories – through newspapers, magazines, radio or television. The media marketplace is highly competitive and to get a mention your event must be newsworthy. There is no guarantee that by simply sending a release that your activity will secure media coverage but you can maximise your chances by asking yourself what is newsworthy about your event / achievement before contacting the media.

The media are bombarded with thousands of emails each day from sports people like yourselves from a variety of sporting disciplines. You need to stand out from the rest, and you need to convey the significance of your result.

Good relationships with the media

An ongoing relationship with the media, based on respect and professional integrity, will stand your organisation in

good stead and help raise your public profile. Once such a relationship is established, it should make any future contact with the media easier.

Keys to good working relationships with the media include:

- Have one designated and mandated media spokesperson who can concentrate on building rapport with the media. Choose a person who has an in-depth knowledge of the organisation and an ability to articulate ideas clearly in an enthusiastic manner.
- Be honest and tactful. Never exaggerate or distort facts – people working in the media are savvy and check facts. Exaggeration and distortion lead to loss of credibility next time you offer a story.
- Approach the media only when you have something really newsworthy to offer.
- Don't keep people waiting, be prepared, be patient, don't hassle and don't quibble about small matters like appointment times. Journalists are busy people who work in a world of pressures and deadlines.
- Be welcoming and have a copy of your media release and a media kit on hand.
- Deal firmly but politely with media demands that you are not able to meet. Do not allow yourself to be coerced in any way. If you have checked and cleared your facts, you have nothing to worry about.

Pitfalls to avoid when working with the media include:

- Don't use the media as your publicity agents. They have strict codes of ethics and will not be manipulated. Their job is to report and interpret news honestly.
- Don't get offside with the media – you won't win, and you will lose future news opportunities for your organisation.

- Don't be fussy or pedantic. Everyone makes mistakes. Often mistakes are not glaringly obvious – except to you. Unless there is an obvious legal or financial reason for drawing a mistake to their attention, let it go.

Keep the following guidelines in mind when writing a media release:

- **Do not** send conversational emails to the media, this will only mean that when you have something important to convey it will most probably be automatically deleted.
- Rather than simply adding them to your email distribution list check with them first and establish what sort of information they are happy to receive.
- Keep it simple and to the point. Just short snappy phrases rather than long sentences.
- The opening paragraph is called a lead and it should include the angle as well as the **who, what, where, why** and **how**. Rate these in order of importance and structure accordingly.
- The rest of the release should support the angle by including background, quotes and other details.
- You should try and keep the release to under a page in length, ensuring **contact details**; the **date** and the **catchy headline** are prominently displayed.
- Use punchy direct quotation – the media love quotes, they add a personal touch to the story. They could be from a player, coach or officials, and should support your points.
- Use positive words and phrases – if you are coming 4th out of a pool of 10 you are in the top half of the pool! Use 'the cup is half full' approach and accentuate the positives.
- Include a name and contact number at the bottom of a release – the journalist may need additional information.
- Send the release immediately – old news is dead news and is unlikely to be published. Check media deadlines and work to them.

Don't be discouraged if the story does not appear in print. It may simply have been that there was not enough space on a particular day – keep trying.

If you have photos available, state this at the bottom of a release, don't attach them to the email. Clogging up people's inboxes isn't a good way to get them inside! Remember to have photographer permission.

Decide what's newsworthy and what isn't. If you are having a bad event/ result, don't feel you have to publicise the fact, it's not newsworthy and any publicity isn't in your favour unless there is a particular angle that you can manipulate to your benefit.

For a more professional look you should add any email addresses to the 'Bcc' field, not the 'To' field. So that the distribution list you are sending the email to remains confidential.

Writing a media release is very different to creative writing or article writing!

- *The most important information is in the first paragraph:*

Who, When, What, Why and How

- *Each paragraph should have only 2 to 3 sentences*

- *Word economy is crucial – long winded "flowery" writing is difficult to read*

- *Offer reliable contact details for more information and state if you have images available*

- *Quotes are great!*

Make sure you send a copy to NZIHA – it keeps us up to date and we can use your words as quotes to give you added promotion in our own releases and bulletins

Make sure your club members subscribe to NZIHA bulletins where media releases can be repeated to all our members and clubs to keep them informed with what is going on.

Hot Tip:

Local community newspapers are often the easiest form of media to get coverage from. Many are willing to print what you send them as long as it has a local angle.

Find out who the sports editor is for your community paper and arrange a time to meet with them to tell them about your plans. Get their contact details and make sure any information you send reminds them of the 'local flavour' eg. "Local player Takes On the World" or "Hometown Team Wins National Championship".

Many community newspapers have high readership and are small-staffed operations, hence they are keen to receive local news in a well written format.

Community newspapers

- *Community Papers love to run stories about local sports and sporting talent*
- *Find out who is the sports editor of your local paper and establish a relationship with them*
- *Make it easy for them; If you can provide regular content and images it's possible to get lots of coverage.*

Make sure information given to the media is accurate, true and not exaggerated!

What's newsworthy?

"News" usually interests a general audience rather than only a few individuals. Generally speaking, newsworthy events are new events, but something can also be "served up" to seem new. Timing plays a large part in newsworthiness, as does a link to some other major event or news.

Ask yourself these questions to determine whether something is newsworthy:

- does your news item have human interest and touch the lives of many people?
- does your news have drama?
- does your news include people in high places?
- is your news fresh?
- who will read your media release?

Checklist for approaching the media

Your approach to the media should be well-planned and executed. Some guidelines include:

- appoint the best media spokesperson you possibly can
- get in touch with media well before an event
- approach the journalist most concerned with your area of work or type or story. If you don't already have a contact, approach the Chief Reporter
- always make your approach in person but make an appointment first
- deal with only one journalist in each news organisation
- be obliging and helpful
- be completely honest about story content
- cover Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- be unambiguous and accurate
- do not demand coverage
- do not expect repeat coverage unless you can offer something different from last time

- supply a media kit (see following section)
- supply two tickets to functions or events you would like covered by the media
- if a photographer is wanted, organise for someone to accompany them to supply information during the event – especially the correct spelling of names
- approach radio and TV as well as newspapers, but do not refer to them as “the press”.

When the media comes to you

Media calls “out-of-the-blue” should not be responded to with “off-the-cuff” comments. This is especially important if the call relates to a tricky issue. If possible, appoint a mandated media spokesperson for your organisation and follow this procedure:

- ask exactly what the call is about
- offer to call back soon and ask about the deadline for:
 - your response
 - the story as a whole
- give a reason for your delay e.g. say you need to get the file or you'd like to discuss it with someone first or you're in a meeting and will be free in 30 minutes etc
- if you want to refer the request on to someone else, do not give a reporter their contact name or phone number until you have checked with that person first, then get that other person to call back
- if you promise to call back, always do so, even to say you don't wish to discuss the matter any further because [give a reason]. This gives you credibility.

How To –

Media Interviews:

Interviews are an important opportunity for you to generate publicity and promotion.

You never know who might be listening to, viewing or reading your interview – it could be a potential sponsor, supporter or a future employer. In many cases the media will be friendly and relatively easy to deal with and you will be able to convey your message effectively if you remember a few simple points.

General media interview checklist

Some general tips on interviews for radio, TV or print include:

- find out the reporter's name (ask for a business card)
- find out the context of the interview
- be on time for the interview
- do your homework – get the facts and have back-up data on hand
- know the main message you want to convey and how to weave it into every answer you give. That way, even if your answers are cut and spliced during the editing process, your message will still come through
- write down answers to any questions you think may be asked – you can use these as a prompt, which is really useful if you're feeling a bit nervous
- speak clearly using short natural sentences and take your time
- keep to your topic – don't ramble
- ask for clarification if you don't understand a question
- if you don't know an answer to a question, be honest and say you don't know. You can also suggest that you will get back to them with an answer later on
- don't let the interviewer “rattle” you. Keep calm and respond politely and firmly. Move or lean forward into the interviewer's space if you feel they're getting hostile
- if you think you've made a mistake or said something that's wrong, don't be frightened to tell the reporter or ask them to fix it
- relax and enjoy it.

Before the Interview

- Consider why the interview is being done and what information the interviewer wants so that you can consider some possible answers and be mentally prepared. However, do not rehearse your answers or read them off a 'script', an interviewer wants spontaneity, and will find yourself in trouble if they suddenly change tack throughout the course of the interview.
- Is the interview 'live' or 'pre-recorded'? If it is 'live' then what is said will be seen/heard without any editing – you will need to think on your feet, the benefit is that it will not be left to gather dust – your message will get out straight away.
- If you are doing a 'live' interview, pick a quiet spot where you will be uninterrupted and turn off all telephones.
- Decide on some key points and write them down in order of importance. If you are not prepared the interview could end before you have made your main point!
- Make sure you are dressed appropriately for a television interview (uniform, sponsors clothing) and always take off your sunglasses.

During the Interview

Do...

- Look at the interviewer – not the camera.
- Keep your hands clasped together and try not to make any distracting movements.
- Avoid jargon – it is unlikely that the audience/interviewer have an extensive knowledge of inline hockey so keep things simple without being patronising.
- Be natural (confident without being arrogant and enthusiastic not over the top)
- Use punchy sentences, not long lengthy explanations. The average radio interview is 40-60 seconds; and the average television news item is 45 seconds – 90 seconds. So in pre-recorded interviews the lengthy explanations will often be edited out.

Do not...

- Never say 'no comment', if you don't know the answer or do not wish to share the information, rephrase it so that it doesn't sound like you are trying to cover anything up, ie) "I'm sorry I can't answer that, it is not my area of expertise" etc..
- Do not say anything that you don't want reported. Remember there is no guarantee anything is 'off-the-record'.
- Do not waffle – it will detract from your message and your main points will become buried in minor detail.
- Do not go on the attack if an interview does not get used – it is important to build relationships with the media not destroy them.
- Beware of the silence trap. Don't feel you have to fill any uncomfortable silences. Many people answer a question, and if the microphone is still being pointed their way by a reporter with an expectant look, they'll go on to say something they didn't want to say to avoid an awkward silence. If you feel you have answered the question sufficiently, then just leave it there.

How To –

Public Speaking / Speech Writing:

There are many occasions when you might be required to make an address in front of a group of people. Whether you are speaking at a prize-giving, addressing your peers, or speaking about your achievements at a formal dinner there are some essential points to keep in mind.

- Be prepared and have your thoughts organised, just before you get up run through the speech in your head.
- Rehearse your introduction so there is no need to look at notes. First impressions can capture your audience.
- It is important to capture the attention of your audience before you begin. Brace yourself, clasping your hands together in front of you (to avoid nervous gestures) and wait for silence.
- If you are introduced by an MC – begin by thanking them for the introduction.
- Concentrate on the message not the medium – direct your energy toward conveying a message that is important to you to a group of people once you get started your nervousness should dissipate.

- Don't apologise – if you are nervous or unprepared never draw the audience's attention to the fact by apologising, you may be calling their attention to something that hadn't been noticed.
- Speak clearly and concisely – don't rush, take your time and speak loudly enough that the person at the back of the room can hear you.

- Don't waffle – we've all heard speeches where the speaker won't get off the stage, don't get side-tracked or go off on tangents just stick to the prepared material.
- Dress appropriately – wear sponsors clothing/uniform at every opportunity.
- Try not to fixate on one spot while you are speaking. Instead, move your eyes around the room, making eye contact members of the audience to catch their attention.

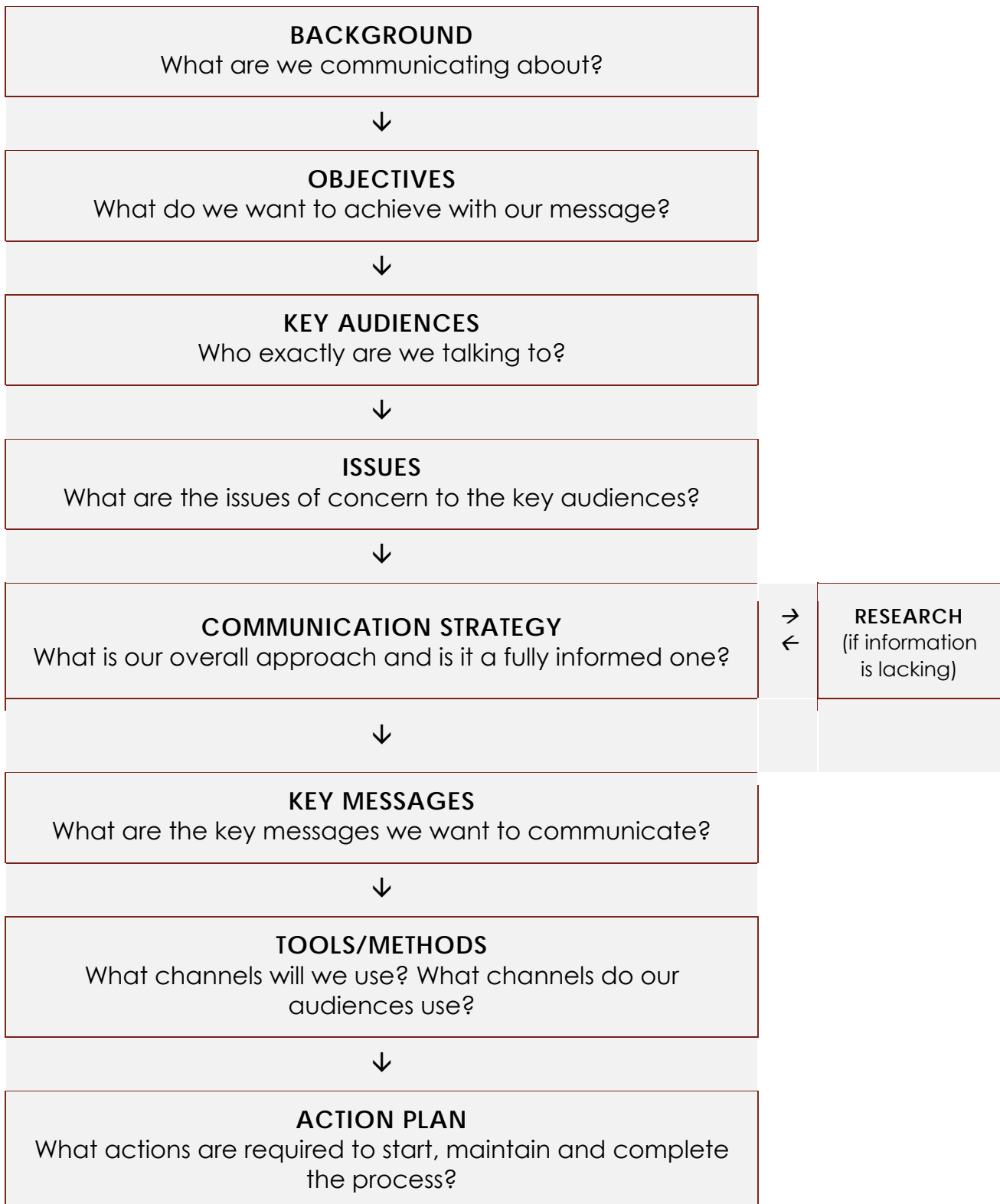
If you are speaking at a event:

- Use the full name of the event
- Thank the organisers and the lead sponsor by name.
- Thank the organisers and the other volunteer personnel for contributing to the event.
- Credit your fellow players/teams and congratulate the other place winners.
- If there are young players present, congratulate their achievements and encourage their ongoing participation.
- If you have one thank your coach/mentor
- State your long term goals and longer term aspirations.
- If there is a photographic opportunity, invite the sponsor, organisers and fellow winners to join you.

Communication planning guide

Process Chart

Rather than having an “I want to do something now” attitude, it's important to plan your communications for them to be successful (see diagram below).



Media kit checklist

A media kit folder should be sent to all key people connected to an event you might be publicising. It could contain:

- purpose, history and details of the organisers
- any relevant biographies (e.g. key team members, coaches etc)
- details of history and/or reason for the event
- photographs (uncluttered, interesting – usually of people doing something – good focus, contrast and exposure, taken close to the action, and captioned on the back with names of people, the event, what is happening and the date)
- copies of any reviews
- contact names and phone numbers
- any relevant posters or newsletters
- “free pass” and/or invitation to event.

You can also prepare a more generic media kit which could be used to introduce your organisation to the media during the process of establishing good relations with them in advance of any proposed publicity. This generic media kit would include:

- your organisation's mission statement and/or philosophies
- the structure of your organisation with current contact details
- examples of the work your organisation does
- a copy of your latest magazine or newsletter
- any up-to-date leaflets or pamphlets.

Media Releases

It is strongly recommended that you write a media release for any intended news item. The release is often sent out as a follow-up to a preliminary phone call. It is the key to building a successful relationship with any media and should accompany all approaches for news coverage.

HOW TO WRITE A MEDIA RELEASE

The main thing to remember is that a media release is a “news” item. This means it needs to “inform” people, not sell them something. If you haven't written a media release before a good way to get into the style is to grab the latest daily newspaper and read some of their informational articles. Look at how each article is written and follow the same format.

Below we provide a checklist of things to remember and a template to help you when writing a media release.

Media release checklist

A checklist of things to remember when writing a media release are:

- head the release MEDIA RELEASE
- give it a succinct title
- date it
- state the source of the release i.e. who it is from
- use the first sentence and the first paragraph (the “intro”) to convey the main message i.e. the essence of what you want to communicate
- focus on what is unique and interesting about your story
- give as many facts as possible (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
- write in a simple straightforward style
- use active language e.g. write “Large crowds attended the opening” rather than “The opening was attended by large crowds”
- make the release as short as you can (seven paragraphs is a usual maximum)
- remember that anything you say may be put at the beginning and used as the main point of your story
- source any opinions you use
- format double-spaced with wide margins using one side of A4 paper
- write “ends” at the end of the media release
- give names and contact details for people who can offer more information
- give media outlets (radio, TV, newspapers etc) equal opportunity.

Media release SAMPLE TEMPLATE ONE

[Date]

[Headline] Local inline hockey players heading across the Tasman

[Introduction or angle]

OCEANIA is an exciting five-day event, aimed at giving New Zealand's top inline hockey players international exposure.

This paragraph answers the "what?" question, as well as giving an "interesting" angle or fact to get the reader's interest. It is also no more than 35 words.

[Body]

The event, called Oceania Asia & Pacific Inline Hockey Championships, has been contested by representative teams from Australia and New Zealand for more than 10 years. Its goal is to encourage trans Tasman competition and to extend the international experience of our local inline hockey skaters as an important stepping stone in their development and to prepare them for world championship events in the future.

This paragraph has the "when?" and "who?" questions.

Additional

- *A paragraph giving more information about who will be at the event.*
- *Quote from someone involved in the event, which also answers the "why?" question.*

ENDS

[Contact]

For more information contact: Jo Bloggs, Ph 123 4567.

Media release SAMPLE TEMPLATE TWO

[Date]

[Headline] LOCAL GIRL'S TEAM WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

[Introduction or angle]

Skating successfully through a six month league season unbeaten, the local "XYZ" club team cemented their supremacy by taking on the countries best at NZ Nationals and winning the coveted Senior Women's Trophy.

This paragraph answers the "what?" question, as well as giving an "interesting" angle or fact to get the reader's interest. It is also no more than 35 words.

[Body]

The event, called New Zealand Inline Hockey Championships, is in its 15th year attracting over 50 teams from throughout the country. The event hosts 700 skaters from all Under 10 grade through to Senior Men & Women and lasts for nine days. The event was held at the "Olympic Dome" in Ohakune during the September school holidays.

This paragraph has the "when?" and "who?" questions.

Additional

- *A paragraph giving more information about who will be at the event.*
- *Quote from someone involved in the event, which also answers the "why?" question.*

ENDS

[Contact]

For more information contact: Jo Bloggs, Ph 123 4567.

FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

Organising an event ?

Here are some handy tips to help you get started. All or some ideas may be relevant to you, depending on the size of your event.

Publicising your event

- *Newspaper community notices*

Most newspapers include a free events calendar where you can promote your community event. Contact your local paper to list your event. Make sure you contact the paper two weeks prior as they work in advance.

- *Radio community notices*

Many radio stations include a free on-air community notice board. Contact your local station to list your event. Make sure you contact them in advance. Often stations prefer at least 10 days notice.

- *Getting your event into the newspaper*

Ideally you want to get a preview article into the paper prior to your event, then another article covering the day. Here's how:

- Send a press release (see advice on 'how to write a press release') to your local newspaper two weeks prior, with an interesting or quirky angle to spark their interest. Phone them to ask whether they prefer to receive press releases by email or fax.
- Follow up your press release with a phone call to make sure it has been received. Ask to speak to the chief reporter. Suggest an angle for a preview article as well as coverage of the day.
- Offer to write the story for them and take photos if a reporter is unavailable. Often there is a shortage of reporters available on Sundays.
- If a reporter says they will cover your event, don't trust them to remember. Call them on the Friday before to remind them to attend your event. But don't call more than once!

- *Call your local radio station*

- Call the local radio station and ask for the station manager to discuss how you can work together to promote your event, as well as to cover it on the day. If you get them on board with the message they may do it for free. You could even give them action packs or prizes to give away on air.

- *Staging a publicity stunt*

- Newspapers are always interested in something different or whacky, particularly if it involves a good photo opportunity. Do something one or two weeks before your event and make sure the press know about it and are invited! You will need to be creative to attract their interest.

- *Sponsored ad pages in the newspaper*

- Often newspapers will run whole page advertisement features based around a theme. Together, with your local paper find supporters in the local community to place ads on a "page" spread? With any luck (and a bit of persuasion!) they may run a free article about your event on the same page.

- *Library displays*
 - Public library displays are a great way of promoting your event. You could put up some posters and photos from previous events if you have any. Talk to your local library and see what space and time might be available.
- *Circulate posters and flyers*
 - Put posters up around town, eg at community centres, schools, at local shops, and posted outdoors. You may also wish to create a flyer that is specific to your event that you can put in cafes and shops and hand out to targeted people.
- *Contact your networks*

Using your own networks in order to prompt word of mouth publicity can be very effective.

Email or phone all the people you know and asking them to spread the word. Contacts from community groups or educational institutions would be particularly useful.

School newsletters

Call all your local schools and ask whether you can put a notice in their school newsletters. If teachers and students know about your event they can get the word out to parents.

Letter to the editor

Two weeks before your event you could write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper talking about the value and objectives of your event and encouraging interest.

Colouring-in competition

How about holding a colouring-in competition through your local paper?

Prepare a schedule with timeframes for promotional activity building up to your event so your volunteers/ committee are aware of the tasks required prior to the event.

Seeking funding in your community

Clubs can seek funding for their events from Pub Charity or other philanthropic trusts, or sponsorship from local businesses.

Organising fundraisers

You could organise a number of fundraisers throughout the year such as dinners, sausage sizzles, or raffles. Set a target amount of money to raise and a timeline.

Funding and information resources

- Fundview: The Funding Information Service is a not-for-profit organisation that has information about funding for community groups in New Zealand.
<http://www.fis.org.nz/>
- Department of Internal Affairs has funding information that may assist.
<http://www.dia.govt.nz/>
- SPARC
www.sparc.org.nz
Search the SPARC site for funding information(free access to FUNDVIEW)

Planning an event can be a daunting task. Here are some simple guidelines to help you get started.

1. Keep the purpose of your event at the centre of your plans
2. Set goals for your event. How many people do you expect? If this is a repeat event are you trying to get a larger turnout than last year? Determine what you wish your attendees to gain from the event. Try to make your event as inclusive as possible so that all children are able to attend.
3. Set your budget. This should be a top priority. How much can you or how much are you willing to spend?
4. Prepare your Venue. Make sure it is the right size for your anticipated number of people.
 - o Does the venue have adequate parking and toilets; is it easy to get there? (publish a map on your website)
 - o Do you have an emergency plan (eg first aid, fire safety plan)?
 - o
5. Work out what people and equipment you need.
 - o How much help will you need?
 - o Do you need to hire equipment?
 - o Who will recruit and organise volunteers?
 - o Where will you get help from?
 - o Do you need celebrities or local dignitaries?
6. Working backward from the event date, set up a project timeline with specific tasks that must be accomplished by specific dates. Some of the things you may want to include on your timeline are:
 - when to apply for sanctioning if event is to be included on annual events calendar
 - prepare and print promotional materials
 - when to make your first announcement of the event
 - prepare materials for event
 - prepare any necessary signage
 - set up venue
7. Determine if you need any special licenses or permits to host your event.
8. Public relations. Make a plan for publicising your event and make sure you assign somebody to take good quality photos on the day. Some publicity ideas are included in this toolkit under the heading 'Publicising your event'.
9. Evaluate the event. Take time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh.