



MAKING A SPLASH

Generating Publicity for Your Brand
A Practical Guide to Public Relations

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been created to help you understand the media landscape, how it works, and how you can promote your brand, product or experience. It also offers insight into Tourism Australia's Global PR and Publicity programs and how you can get involved with them.

Read on to find out how you can achieve positive publicity and get the media to notice your business.



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Three Sisters,
New South Wales



North Stradbroke Island,
Queensland

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

According to the Public Relations Institute of Australia, Public Relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.

Establishing a good reputation is one of the many important aspects of running a business, and generating positive publicity is a key component in maintaining your reputation. As more people become aware of your business, the potential of turning them into customers also increases.

The scope of Public Relations is very broad, and the work of Public Relations practitioners can include:

- planning and budgeting of PR campaigns and activities
- situation and audience research and analysis
- meeting with key stakeholders to make representations on behalf of the organisation.
- preparing material for and working with the media to gain editorial coverage in newspapers, magazines, radio and television.
- preparing and posting information on websites and social media
- preparing print material for distribution to particular publics ranging from brochures to annual reports
- arranging conferences, and promotional activities and events; and
- preparing speeches and press conferences.

WHAT IS MEDIA RELATIONS AND WHY SHOULD YOU ENGAGE?

One of the most cost-effective ways of promoting your business is by generating publicity through media channels (TV, radio, print and online news sites).

To do this, you can engage with media outlets and their editorial teams to get your brand, product or experience noticed. This is called 'media relations' or 'media outreach' and involves building working relationships with media outlets to gain editorial coverage.

A positive media endorsement or publicity can be a powerful tool of persuasion, as it is effectively a word-of-mouth recommendation. It also has the advantage of being able to communicate a greater depth of information than what may be in an advert.

The main difference between publicity and advertising is that adverts are paid for, while PR placements are earned and secured through PR tactics and strategies. It should be noted that results generated by PR tactics, such as media relations, are not paid for or controlled by you, but by the journalist and their editors.



WHO ARE THE MEDIA?

The media delivers information to the public through a range of mediums including print, broadcast, online platforms and social media. Journalists and reporters are the people who write or present the news and feature stories, and editors control the final content. Below is a snapshot of the media landscape.



PRINT

- Newspapers are often geographically focused. They can be national, such as The Australian, state-based such as the Sydney Morning Herald; and local, such as the Penrith Press. A newspaper generally contains sections that focus on specific topics, such as news, sport, business, lifestyle and travel. Some newspapers also feature free magazine inserts, such as the Good Weekend.
- Magazines are often more topic-specific and targeted at the interests of a particular audience, such as fashion, food or drink, travel, parenting and current affairs. Most magazines are either weekly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly, and their editors rely more heavily on great imagery than newspapers. Editors can also devote several pages to stories that are strong enough.



BROADCAST

- Television consists of commercial stations, including non-commercial organisations such as the ABC or BBC, and pay or cable television such as Foxtel. These stations present information through several programs, such as news, current affairs, lifestyle and travel, documentaries, dramas and comedy. Television depends heavily on high-grade visuals to tell a narrative. If you don't have a strong visual angle to your story, then television programs are generally not interested. Traditional TV platforms often also have online platforms to broadcast their own shows.

- Besides traditional television, over-the-top (OTT) services are also rising in popularity. OTT refers to video or streaming media that provides access to movies or TV shows directly through the internet. The platforms are usually subscription-based and some of the most popular OTT providers include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Hulu.
- Radio consists of commercial, non-commercial and community radio stations. It presents content to listeners via news, current affairs, and talkback programs. Information can be presented in either short 15 seconds snippets or segments lasting five to 10 minutes. It relies on people who are articulate and if often recorded live or may be pre-recorded.
- Listeners of online radio and podcasts are steadily increasing. A podcast is often an episodic series of spoken word digital audio files that can be downloaded to a personal device or streamed via podcasting services such as Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



ONLINE PLATFORMS

- Online refers to media content that is on the internet. The main focus areas are online editions of existing print outlets, standalone websites, blogs and social media platforms. User-generated content is a medium that is rapidly growing among the general public (bloggers, influencers) who often write about topics centred around specific themes.



SOCIAL MEDIA

- As social media channels grow, media outlets have started to share their news update and stories on these platforms. Often depending on the outlet's audience social media habits, some media outlets might have a more engaged audience on their social channels. Social media is a great tool to share timely updates and reach audiences at any point of the day.



Cape Leveque,
Western Australia

5 TIPS TO BUILD AND FOSTER GOOD MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS

1

GET FAMILIAR WITH MEDIA OUTLETS

Read and watch to understand the types of stories are of interest to media outlets and their audience. Look at what information is shared and how it's presented. Subscribe to the media via RSS feed, newsletter, or get alerts by other means. Such as Google Alerts.

2

GET TO KNOW YOUR MEDIA CONTACTS AND REACH OUT TO KEY JOURNALISTS

Do your research and get the names and contact details of relevant journalists. Interact with them via multiple means, such as at or face to face at industry events or following them on channels such as Twitter or LinkedIn.

3

BE RESPECTFUL OF THE JOURNALIST'S TIME

Find out the best time to contact them and how they best like to receive information. You can also find out the lead times and deadlines they are working to (they vary with the type of publication) which will ensure you are sharing content when they need it and not chasing them when they are on deadline.

4

PROVIDE THE JOURNALIST WHAT THEY NEED

Always produce accurate information on time, presenting them with the latest information or exclusive news. Share additional media assets as imagery, video or spokespeople to support their work.

5

BE ACCESSIBLE

Respond to media enquiries promptly and be accessible via email, phone and social media. Once you have established the relationship, you can make contact regularly offering up new-news and support.



GENERATING PUBLICITY

Publicity is all about creating awareness of your organisation, product or service through non-advertising channels.

You can generate coverage by sending product information to media contacts or inviting a journalist to experience your product first-hand. You can also engage with the social media channels of influencers and media to keep your brand top of mind.

It is important to have a robust Public Relations Strategy in place. To get you started, we have put together a list of information, tips and essentials that will help you to engage with publications and get them to write about your brand:

- Media outreach
- Answering media queries
- Holding a press conference or a media event
- Online news centre
- Hosting familiarisations
- Using social media for PR



TYPES OF MEDIA OUTREACH

Media outreach forms a significant part of any company's Public Relations strategy. It is crucial in building brand awareness and involves contacting publications and pitching story ideas to secure placement in an article. There are several ways to do this:

- **MEDIA RELEASES:** A media release is a written statement that provides information in a ready-to-publish form. It is sent to a journalist or editor to let them know of any news and inform them of something you would like reported. The media release is one of the most fundamental PR tools, but it is also easy to get wrong. A well-composed release that tells the story, answers practical questions, and provides the necessary information.
- **MEDIA NOTE OR PITCH NOTE:** As the name suggests, pitch notes are sent to the media and journalists to capture their interests. Pitch notes should include an introduction that helps set the context for your pitch, followed by objective talking points you wish to highlight. Remember to follow up on your pitch email if you don't hear back within two to three days.
- **BY-LINED ARTICLES:** Listicles, story ideas and authored articles are the most popular form of by-lined articles. While listicles and story ideas adopt a more casual approach of showcasing the product or narrating your message, authored articles are usually thought-leadership pieces by the company spokesperson. These strategies help to build credibility and awareness, for the spokesperson and brand.
- **PICTORIAL OR VIDEO FEATURE:** Not all forms of outreach are super detailed, and some can include a short note and a compelling photo or video. Here, the visual aspect must be attention grabbing and visually unique. Make sure the note explains the image and video and describes your message. Also, don't forget to include the required image and video credits in the email.
- **SERIES OR SEGMENTS LED NOTE:** Journalists and media often have series or topics for the month that they follow. It's helpful to stay abreast with these trends and pitch your stories accordingly.

- **NEWSLETTER:** Producing a regular newsletter is an excellent way to keep audiences informed. They also help to communicate with your customers and the media. Newsletters take planning and need detailed objectives, like how the media will subscribe, how often the newsletter will go out, and the themes it will cover.
- **MEDIA MEETINGS:** One way to get noticed in a flurry of emails is to establish and build connections with journalists. One way you can do this through relationship-building meetings, where you invite a journalist to attend a one-on-one discussion with a spokesperson (with no expectation of a story). This experience creates goodwill and credibility for the brand, often resulting in editorial content in the future.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ANY MEDIA OUTREACH

- **Define your audience:** While defining the audience is the first step for any marketing campaign, it is equally crucial for PR plans. Defining an audience helps to understand their media consumption pattern online and offline, which assists with shortlisting publications and websites where you need to be present.
- **Build media lists:** Becoming familiar with the publications and media outlets your audience engages with is one thing, but it is also vital to vet the platforms and find the right person to contact. Check for things like, 'Do they post about the subject you're pitching? Do they promote their posts via other channels like social media? What's their circulation and following?'
- **Grab their attention:** Journalists receive hundreds of emails every day; you only have a few seconds to make a memorable first impression. Try stand out by writing catchy subject lines. Tip: treat them like potential article headlines instead of any random subject lines.
- **Personalise:** Apart from a snappy subject line, your email needs to be personalised. Research the publication and the journalist. Demonstrate that you are familiar with the media outlet and show that you have read articles written by the journalist/editor. It will be much more effective than a mass email.
- **Develop a story:** Facts and numbers are important. But a compelling narrative goes a long way in grabbing the journalists' attention, thereby increasing your chances of getting published. Create stories around facts and figures and highlight interesting messages that you think will appeal to the publication.



GENERATING PUBLICITY



TOURISM AUSTRALIA



Blue Mountains,
New South Wales

MEDIA OUTREACH TIPS

- Always use clear, simple language and avoid jargon. Explain unknown terms or other background information in notes to editors. For example, you should spell out abbreviations. Preferred styles differ from publication to publication; however, it is better to spell everything in full to avoid confusion among the media and their audience. It is also best practice to write your copy in third person, i.e., the “he-she” form as in: “he said”.
- Make sure that you have included all relevant information that the journalist will need, such as prices, inclusions, validity for any special offers and your contact details. If there are social media or website links, always hyperlink them in the content so they can seek out more information.
- Always keep deadlines in mind when releasing press releases and media notes. Magazines often work three to six months ahead of the publication date. However, large metropolitan papers and online publications can work within a day or even a few hours of going to press.
- If you are sending to a generic publication email address, make sure the release addresses the right person at the media outlet. Otherwise, they may not receive it. If you are unsure, mark it for the attention of the person’s title, e.g., the Travel Editor.
- Include low-res photos in the email, provide links for high-res images via Google Drive or Dropbox.
- For pitches, story angles, and interviews, consider sending customised emails.
- For press releases, use the ‘blind copy’ (bcc) function to avoid a long list of journalists appearing on each recipient’s email and to protect their privacy.
 - For a fee, some media agencies will share your information with a variety of media. This method saves time and ensures multiple distribution of your release.
 - The Australian Associated Press (AAP), for example, is a wire service agency that reaches commercial television and radio stations, regional newspapers and the metropolitan dailies.
- There are several directories available to make it easier for you to reach the press. They cover major metropolitan, regional and country media, including newspapers, radio, television, magazines and newsletters. The Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) provides a free PR resources section on their website that links to media monitoring and distribution companies. Visit www.pria.com.au for further information.
- Always add a boilerplate at the end of each official media release or statement. Never assume that a journalist or media outlet has or will locate the correct information about your brand.
- When sending media releases to international markets, ensure that the release comprises hyper-local/ globally relevant aspects relevant to that market.
- Each international market is different and governed by a completely different media landscape.



GENERATING PUBLICITY



Lake Gairdner National Park,
South Australia

ANSWERING MEDIA QUERIES

One element of successful Public Relations is to be available and responsive to the media when they contact you. If a journalist phones or emails you, try to respond to them as soon as possible, even if it is to acknowledge that you have received their request. Answering a media call a week later or missing the deadline is a sure way to miss a good publicity opportunity.

While it is not always possible to be available to take media calls, being responsive and calling back on time will enhance your relationship with the media. If it is taking longer than you expected to get the required information, let them know. When answering a phone enquiry from a journalist:

- Keep a note of the enquiry.
- Establish what the journalist needs, e.g., a quote or comment, background info, copy of brochures, or photographs, and be specific so you can deliver what they want.
- Check their deadline and how they want the information delivered, e.g., verbally or emailed.
- There is no such thing as an “off-the-record” comment, so be careful and only talk about what you want to see in print or broadcast. Think about how you can use the enquiry to positively promote your messages.
- If it is an industry feature always check who the other participants are to know the peers, they may peg you against.
- Always identify the conversation’s undertones to recognise the tone of the story and avoid negative outcomes. Capture all offline conversations with the media in an “as discussed mail” so that both of you are accountable.

If you’re recording an interview for digital, radio, or television, find out all the details beforehand. Ask the media about the context, interview questions, length of time, live or pre-recorded, whether it will be one-on-one or part of a panel or group, other interviewees, the interviewer’s name and the location. It’s also important to note whether it’s a phone interview, in the studio or at the premises.

Another good tip is to connect the spokesperson to the journalist and panel members before the primary interview to ensure they are comfortable with each other and the talking points. Journalists are often under pressure when they are on a deadline. Do not feel pressured by a journalist and always remain calm and polite.



Uluru,
Northern Territory

HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE OR MEDIA EVENT

While media outreach is a great way to stay connected with the media, another method is to host a media event or a press conference. However, it is important to distinguish between announcements that warrant a press conference versus news items that will be well-received via a press note, as it can be challenging to get the media to attend these events.

Major announcements can include the introduction of new flights, a significant financial undertaking, or the opening of a new facility. But the launch of a new website or hotel refurbishment can be pitched using pitch notes and releases.

Note that press conferences take a lot of planning to ensure they are successful. It may be worth investing in a professional Public Relations specialist that has experience in these types of events. You can also opt to live stream the press conference and invite international media to attend.

Traditionally, press conferences have followed a structured approach. But lately, companies are innovating by inviting social media influencers and the media. They now also feature realistic photo-ops, theme-based décor, fun gifts and Q&A sessions with a familiar brand face. Brunches and cocktail parties are also popular with targeted media, offering a more relaxed environment to meet and greet.

No matter the approach, make sure that you send your invitations in advance and follow up before the event to check that the guests are still attending.



GENERATING PUBLICITY



TOURISM AUSTRALIA



Huskisson,
New South Wales

PREPARING A MEDIA KIT

A fundamental element of a press release or face-to-face interviews is a media kit with the necessary promotional materials for the media to use. It should give media representatives a thorough background on the topic, company, spokesperson and provide information in various formats.

A media kit in either hard copy or electronic format (on a USB or shared via email) could include:

- Current media releases and fact sheets about your business and products.
- A backgrounder on your company's history.
- Recent awards.
- Product and Executive biographies.
- High-resolution images (either on USB or downloadable via a link) of products, company logo and key executives etc.
- Media contact information.
- It is also worth thinking about the kit's presentation. Journalists receive a large amount of content, so anything that will make yours stand out will give you an advantage. Journalists sometimes receive media kits printed in a folder and but now more commonly as an electronic version.

ONLINE NEWS CENTRE

The internet is an effective method of communication, which journalists use when researching their stories. If you have a website for your business, consider broadening its use as a marketing tool by building a separate news centre. To make your website media-friendly consider the following:

- Create a dedicated online news centre or media area on your website.
- Make sure your website is accurate and contains up-to-date information. Also, clearly show when the stories were last updated.
- Some businesses have a news centre as a section on their site, visible as a link on a menu bar or other form of navigation. Some build entirely separate pages just for the media.

What to include in your online news centre?

- Press releases and e-newsletters.
- A media kit in downloadable format.
- Company fact sheets, biographies and profiles, research papers and awards.
- Event information.
- Downloadable high-resolution photographs of your product, executives, and other artwork and graphics. Photographs should be at least 300 dpi for publication and ensure that there are clear instructions for downloading the images and any copyright issues.
- Video clips, if they help to convey information easily, via YouTube (or similar) links.
- Search tool to make it easy for journalists to find what they want.
- Your full contact details including name, address, telephone number and email address and contact information for your PR representatives.



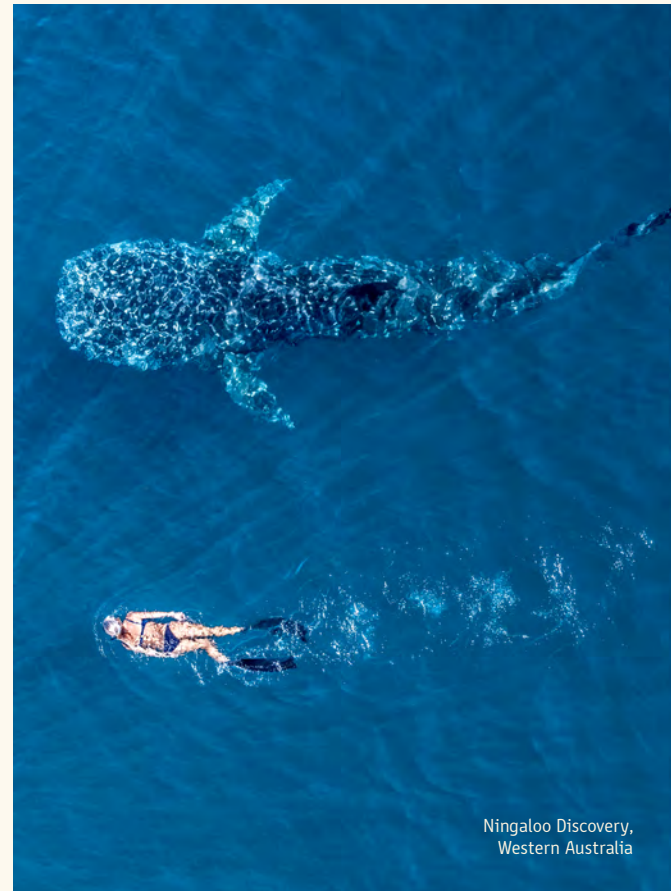
GENERATING PUBLICITY



TOURISM AUSTRALIA



d'Arenberg Cube,
South Australia



Ningaloo Discovery,
Western Australia

HOSTED FAMILIARISATIONS

Nothing comes close to experiencing a product or service in real life. Offering such an experience to journalists, publications, and influencers can be an effective means of generating publicity. You will never be guaranteed coverage, however the majority of media would normally produce some content for their outlet or channel. It could be a travel feature for a magazine or newspaper, a travelogue for online or a TV program or social media content for the influencers channel. While media can't always guarantee the amount of coverage, it is important to ensure they have a commissioned piece of coverage with a publication prior to the trip. A commissioned piece means the media have been engaged to write a particular story. Media familiarisations can be classified into three categories.

- **MEDIA:** Focuses on hosting consumer and trade media from newspapers, magazines, wire services, radio stations and online media channels on assignment to create editorial content aimed at promoting Australian destinations and experiences.
- **BROADCAST:** Focuses on hosting broadcasters from television or online channels to produce visual and audio content aimed at imparting news, information or entertainment for consumers.
- **INFLUENCERS:** Focuses on hosting influencers who can create digital and social media content for 'owned' channels. From leisure and travel to tech and even fitness, every segment has its own set of influencers to target.

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind while hosting a famil:

- Arrange for an appropriate staff member to meet and greet your visitors, accompanying the visit if required.
- Be aware of any cultural sensitivities (including appropriate conduct and greetings), dietary requirements (vegetarian, halal food or alcohol preferences), phobias or health issues. Plan activities around those needs. If you aren't sure, ask the famil coordinator. If you are hosting a group from a particular country for the first time, it might be best to talk to the visitor's coordinator to be across the cultural differences and the group's preferences.
- When you host, it can be tempting to put them in the best room and offer special extras that are not provided to other guests. This can lead to disappointment for other guests if they read about extras that are not available to them when they visit.
- Highlight your unique selling points – but avoid exaggeration, as this may only lead to disappointment.
- Be friendly and helpful, but not over-eager.
- Brief your staff and make sure they're aware of the famil schedule and any special needs.
- Share your social media hashtags/handles with the media.
- Do your research – Have a look at previous articles the person has written, look them up on LinkedIn and discover their interests/background or sign up to their social channels if they are an influencer. This will give you an insight into the types of stories and ideas that interest them and could maximise your opportunity to be featured.



GENERATING PUBLICITY



TOURISM AUSTRALIA



Lirrwi Tourism,
Northern Territory

SOCIAL MEDIA

Businesses use social media platforms to make themselves accessible, personable and build long term relationships with their target markets. But it can also be an effective tool in amplifying your message in your Public Relations strategy. Some of the most common ways PR professionals use social media are:

- **TO ENGAGE WITH INFLUENCERS:** Influencers give brands a voice they could never develop on their own. Social media influencers have large digital followings that brands can tap into to get that additional reach, promote offerings and protect reputations. Instead of inviting influencers on a familiarisation trip, you could choose to nurture relations by reposting their content, inviting them on social media lives and conducting Q&As. This strategy generates positive word-of-mouth for the brand and increases your engagement rates.
- **TO BE IN THE KNOW:** Social media gives anyone a platform to express their opinions and thoughts about good and bad experiences and the brands they love and hate. It has become crucial to monitor these conversations. Social listening provides businesses with the power to understand the public's opinion about a topic, destination or brand before it turns into a trending topic, giving companies a chance to leverage. It also helps brands to find and address online threats and possibly prevent a significant brand reputation crisis.
- **TO INFLUENCE JOURNALIST STORIES:** Social media presence for the media has become key for online and print. Stories are now viewed from the lens of, 'Does it appeal to the social media audience?' and 'Is it shareable?'. Publications are also looking to keep their audiences engaged via innovative quizzes, contests, lives, and virtual events. You can tap into this by following key publications and journalists and pitching social media lead stories to increase the visibility and coverage of your brand.
- **TO REACT TO NEGATIVE PRESS:** Nowadays, social media is one of the first places people visit to see a brand's reaction to a conflicting claim. A brand's social media account can be used to craft and publish an immediate response to a crisis and direct the public to another medium for more information, leading to accurate reporting of the incident rather than one based on speculations.
- **TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Word travels fast on social media. Brands can use this speed to give real-time updates to their consumers about product launches, company updates, and refurbishments of properties. With captivating short snippets and links on social media, brands can reach a much wider audience than traditional forums. Often, journalists also tap into these updates for stories.

Social media is a natural fit for Public Relations and one that companies have been increasingly using. You can also read about using social media effectively for your brand with Tourism Australia's social media guide.

Reading a positive article about your business, seeing pictures of your product in a publication or on television or hearing yourself on the radio for the first time can be exciting and rewarding. Once the story appears, it is easy to think phone calls for your business will come flooding in, and for some, it does generate a boost in sales. But for how long? One good burst of publicity doesn't grow a business. It just adds to it. Never expect publicity to be the sole generator of your business.

Be mindful that publicity is one element of an overall marketing plan and that it should complement your total mix of marketing/business strategies.

It is important to continue to develop media contacts, hone your skills and produce stories that communicate fresh angles about your business. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Seek paid help from a journalist or public relations consultant to tap into their specialist knowledge and network of suitable contacts.
- Do not expect all stories about your organisation to be 100 per cent favourable. Articles, radio and television presentations that are positive are a plus.
- Do keep a sense of perspective – a refurbished set of hotel bedrooms might not be news but building a spa on the roof or in an old dairy barn might be.
- Do not be offended if your story is not used. There is a great deal of competition for media coverage.
- Think carefully about what story angles and products might interest different publications. Submit the information that communicates your message in clear and simple language.





TOURISM AUSTRALIA'S GLOBAL PUBLICITY PROGRAMS

TOURISM AUSTRALIA



Developing and maintaining relationships with media is an integral part of Tourism Australia's marketing activity. The coverage created about Australia and Australian tourism by journalists, opinion leaders and advocates, aims to put Australia front of mind for future visitors.

Tourism Australia's Global Public Relations team works with all levels of the Australian tourism industry to generate publicity. The team makes sure that Australia is featured in media outlets across the globe via the Media Hosting Program, Global PR campaigns and programs such as a Press Office and industry events. We also generate influential word-of-mouth commentary through a range of Advocacy programs.

These activities complement and add depth to global marketing programs by increasing the awareness and knowledge of Australia through various media channels globally.

MEDIA HOSTING PROGRAM

Based on the principle that media can produce more motivating and detailed coverage if they actually experience a destination or product first-hand, Tourism Australia works closely with the Australian tourism industry to host between 800 and 1,000 media representatives from almost 30 countries each year.

Tourism Australia's media hosting program is designed to enable media, influencers and broadcasters from our key markets to immerse themselves in the destination to create in-depth and motivating stories that reach our target audiences. Each itinerary is individually tailored to meet the specific needs and story objectives of the participating media, while showcasing TA's brand pillars and communicating key messages.

The program provides opportunities for the media to participate in the most compelling Australian encounters. These experiences include Aboriginal culture, nature and wildlife, aquatic and coastal lifestyle, food and drinks, cities and outback, and journeys. We also try to ensure that the media engage with local Australians, immerse themselves in the Australian way of life, and revel in our culture and environment.

Tourism Australia works closely with the state and territory tourism organisations to deliver the media hosting program. To get involved, ensure you connect with your state and territory tourism organisations in the first instance. National operators should contact the Global Public Relations team directly by emailing mediahosting@tourism.australia.com.

PUBLICITY PROGRAM

Tourism Australia can also help promote your product via a range of PR and publicity initiatives such as highlighting your news in 'Australian Stories,' a section of our weekly industry newsletter 'Essentials' and TA's monthly 'Hot List' – a collection of new tourism experiences and updates from across Australia, distributed to key domestic and global media contacts.

Whether it's new tours, accommodation and attractions, restaurant openings, or event and festival announcements, send your media releases to our team via internationalmedia@tourism.australia.com.

