

FQ CLUB MEDIA GUIDE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Positive media coverage and consistent communication are important elements of the long-term success and commercial viability of all sporting clubs.

Even without the resources of dedicated staff, clubs can improve their media and communication capabilities simply by addressing the essentials and following a few simple principles.

Ensuring timely and consistent delivery of information that reflects your club in the best light is crucial to engaging club members, supporters and the wider community.

A clear and considered Club Media Strategy is necessary to identify media opportunities and devising tactics that take advantage of these opportunities.

With this brief guide, Football Queensland aims to increase your club's capacity to deliver key messages to members, the media and your local community.

2.0 WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Local media including newspapers, radio and television will always be receptive to reinforcing the strength and success of their respective communities.

Your club has a unique opportunity to expand its public profile through the broadcasting of events, community-based initiatives, member achievements and more.

The more coverage you receive, the greater chance you have of attracting new members and potentially increasing commercial interest or value for existing sponsors.

Rest assured, interest in your club stretches far beyond just the weekly results.

Developing professional and mutually beneficial relationships with local journalists is of strategic value to your club.

Journalists are generally time-poor and must prioritise news items. They will respond favourably to any organisation that promptly assists them in meeting their deadlines by facilitating interview requests, providing facts and clarification, and offering additional assistance.

Strengthening your club's ability to infiltrate the news and sports pages or bulletins reduces the reliance on taking out paid advertisements.

Your most cost effective way of infiltrating the media cycle is to regularly distribute targeted **media releases**. See section 2.1 below for guidance on media releases.



TIPS FOR BUILDING MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS:

- Email or phone your local newspaper, radio or television station and ask for their sports journalist. Identify what type of stories they may be interested in and the best time to provide them to suit their news cycle.
- Where possible, provide the journalist with a single point of contact within the club.
- Respond to media requests as quickly as possible – even if it's just to acknowledge their contact. A journalist approaching deadline will make arrangements for other stories if a request is unheard.

2.1 MEDIA RELEASES

The most cost effective way of becoming a regular part of the media cycle is to begin issuing media releases to your desired news outlets.

After identifying and building relationships with key contacts – a sports reporter at the local newspaper, for example – you can begin providing stories for consideration.

Ideally, a media release will achieve certain news value criteria in a concise manner. Often-used conventions within a typical structure makes it easy to tell your story.

The ultimate aim of a media release is to direct the most important, interesting and, ideally, publishable information to the right people.

Football Queensland has developed an industry-standard media release template which can be found below in **Section 2.2**.

Alternatively, it is understood that not all clubs will possess the time and human resources required to source each of the media release elements and draft a complete, ready-to-print news item.

A strong ‘lead’ – perhaps your club is holding special celebrations for its 50th anniversary next week – can still be enough to alert a journalist to your story, particularly in smaller communities.

As a minimum, the essential details you should be distributing should include ‘the 5 Ws’. Not all questions will necessarily need to be addressed in every instance, but it is advisable to answer as many as possible:

- **WHO** is involved? (**WHO:** Example United)
- **WHAT** is happening? (**WHAT:** Charity Fundraiser)
- **WHEN** is it happening? (**WHEN:** 2.00pm Saturday, 4 June)
- **WHERE** is it happening? (**WHERE:** Example United – ABC Field, 23 Road St)
- **WHY** is it happening? (**WHY:** To raise donation funds for charity)



TIPS FOR DISTRIBUTING MEDIA RELEASES:

- Be sure to include key details by addressing as many of the ‘5 Ws’ (**Who, What, When, Where, Why**) as possible.
- In your media release, provide a suitable point of contact that can aid a journalist should more information be required.
- In addition to helping workshop your media releases, Football Queensland is always a willing recipient of club news. Include the **Key Contacts** below in your media releases and we will strive to publish the item on footballqueensland.com.au.

2.2 NEWS ITEM / MEDIA RELEASE BREAKDOWN

PARAGRAPH 1 – THE LEAD

Grab the reader’s attention with the most interesting information. Attempt to answer as many of the ‘5 Ws’ as possible in the opening paragraph, but be wary of length. Your opening sentence should rarely be more than 25 words.

PARAGRAPHS 2/3 – THE CONTEXT

The background to your story. Expand on the opening paragraph and include key facts. Here you can provide basic context to the initial matter raised in the lead and set-up the quotes being used in following paragraphs.

PARAGRAPHS 2/3-5/6 – THE QUOTES

The most interesting quotes from your interviewee will often be the cornerstone of your entire story. Ensure that any opinion expressed is that of an authority on the matter, not the writer. If your club is celebrating its 50th anniversary, quotes might be sourced from your president explaining what the club means to its community.

PARAGRAPHS 5/6-7/8– ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

Additional content that sheds more light on the overall story or achieves further news value criteria.

PARAGRAPHS 7/8-9/10– ADDITIONAL QUOTES

Insert additional quotes from either your primary source or a secondary source which build upon the Additional Insight.

PARAGRAPHS 10/11/12 – CONCLUSION

If required, round out the article with any additional facts or details.

EVENT DETAILS

Conclude with details of the event or match to which the article is referring.



TIPS FOR WRITING NEWS ITEMS/MEDIA RELEASES:

- Follow the ‘Inverted Pyramid’ structure. Position the most interesting and relevant news at the beginning.
- Brief is best. Only on rare occasions should a paragraph contain more than a single sentence. Aim for 200-350 words when writing news items.
- If you are quoting a source, use “says” or “said” as the description of their comments. More emotive language can incorrectly influence readers as to the opinion offered.

2.3 NEWS ITEM / MEDIA RELEASE EXAMPLE

LEAD: Queenslander Jarred Gillett will referee his third Hyundai A-League Grand Final when Adelaide United and Western Sydney Wanderers clash in Sunday's decider at Adelaide Oval.

CONTEXT: Gillett, one of Football Federation Australia's three inaugural full-time professional referees, was also named the Hyundai A-League 2015/16 Referee of the Year at the Dolan Warren Awards held at the Carriageworks in Sydney last night.

CONTEXT: The former Mudgeeraba Soccer Club junior will be joined by fellow Queenslander Chris Beath as an Additional Assistant Referee, alongside Strebre Delovski and Assistant Referees Matthew Cream and Luke Brennan.

QUOTES ('INDIRECT' QUOTE): Speaking shortly after receiving his award, Gillett said he was proud to have once again been selected to officiate a Hyundai A-League Grand Final.

QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "It's an honour to receive this appointment to end what has been an exciting Hyundai A-League season for everyone involved," Gillett said.

QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "Being a full-time referee has definitely led to improved performance levels and allowed us to take our game to another level this season.

QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "We have a strong refereeing team for the Grand Final and we look forward to being a part of this Sunday's Grand Final at Adelaide Oval."

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT: Gillett's recognition caps a memorable season in which he was selected to become one of Australia's first ever full-time professional referees.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES ('INDIRECT' QUOTE): FFA Director of Referees Ben Wilson congratulated Gillett and paid tribute to another outstanding season as a match official.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "As one of the first full-time referees to be appointed by FFA, Jarred has been totally committed to every aspect of his refereeing this season," Wilson said.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "His performances in the Hyundai A-League have reflected his efforts and professional attitude in this new role.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES ('DIRECT' QUOTE): "I am looking forward to watching Jarred and his experienced team of match officials handle what is always a very entertaining match."

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA RELEASE EXAMPLE:

Former Mudgeeraba junior Jarred Gillett to referee third Hyundai A-League Grand Final on Sunday.

- **WHO?** Jarred Gillett
- **WHAT?** Appointed to referee his third Hyundai A-League Grand Final
- **WHEN?** Sunday, 1 May
- **WHERE?** Adelaide Oval
- **CONTACT:** Mudgeeraba president John White on 0400 xxx xxx.

3.0 CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Facilitating media coverage should not be at the expense of the club promoting itself.

News articles, events and announcements published on your own club website and social media allows you to communicate key brand messages and reinforce positive opinion in the minds of existing members, potential members and the wider community.

By telling your own stories, and not relying on independent media to do so, you can create the club image you desire.

Regularly publishing content to your media channels is also essential to boosting sponsorship interest. Improving the number of visitors to your website – and therefore eyeballs on strategically-placed advertisements – is a primary tactic for raising revenue. Football Queensland has the ability to interpret and provide clubs with the necessary data to take to existing and new sponsors but, first, websites must be regularly maintained.

PICTURED: Below is an example published in 2015 by Mareeba Bulls. The news item celebrates club success, features on the website and can be distributed to local news outlets as a media release.



The screenshot shows a website for Mareeba United Football Club Inc. The main headline is "Bulls win the CUP". The article text describes a 6-2 victory over the Edge Hill Tigers. Key details include Wayne Srhoj leading the team, Robert Penderza and Paul Ruiz contributing to the win, and a 50-metre pass from keeper Julian Madrid. The article also mentions a penalty conversion and a hat-trick by Srhoj. Social media sharing options for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are visible.



TIPS FOR CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE:

- Identify your club’s key messages and use your own media channels to reinforce them. Does your club treasure success? Are you about providing a fun and friendly meeting place for the community? A flagbearer of female or inclusive football?
- Identify and adopt a public voice, whether it’s jovial, personal or more professional. Do you banter with other clubs before matches, or remain authoritative?
- Contact FQ if you require assistance with operating your free FoxSportsPulse website.

4.0 MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Given around half of all internet users access social media daily, it is strongly encouraged that clubs actively maintain a presence on at least one prominent platform.

Operating on social media is a free way to build your community and club identity. It also provides an opportunity for Football Queensland to see and interact with club updates.

Social media is predominantly useful for engaging with your community and building your brand. Posts should be relevant to your audience: if somebody has liked your club's Facebook page, it's because they want to hear related news from and about you. Not because you are the go-to destination for English Premier League highlights.

Combining a functioning website with an active social media presence is a clear, industry-standard strategy for communication.

However, merely posting to your Facebook page or Twitter profile is just the beginning. Social media, as with media releases, is most effective when used in accordance with particular best practice principles. You can reach and engage a larger audience and present a professional image to individuals and sponsors alike by adopting simple tactics.

Though the landscape is often changing, **Facebook** is undoubtedly where most of your community and potential members are active. We have accordingly provided Facebook-specific information in **Section 4.1**.

Football Queensland understands that not all clubs will immediately possess the human resources required to keep their social media accounts ticking over.

Fortunately, clubs are full of young people prepared to gain practical working experiences. Ideally, one will be interested in pursuing a career in media, marketing, public relations or communications. Put the word out, find a suitable candidate and introduce them to the Key Contacts listed in this document.



TIPS FOR MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Social media provides a megaphone for critics. Remain calm and professional in your response to negative opinions. Welcome feedback and invite detractors to discuss issues away from the public eye.
- Clubs must ensure all persons posting to Club Social Media Accounts understand and adhere to Football Federation Australia's [National Code of Conduct](#).
- Club committee members and volunteers already stretched? Canvass your community for a suitable person interested in gaining some media or marketing experience and put them in touch with Football Queensland for support.

4.1 FACEBOOK

Facebook is one of the world's most powerful marketing and media communications tools, offering a potential audience size statistically equivalent to mainstream media outlets.

In Australia and Queensland, Facebook is the market-leader in social media by a significant margin, with more active users and more content options than its social media competitors.

Football Queensland recommends capitalising on Facebook's breadth of audience by making it your primary social media account.

The first step to maximising Facebook's power is to ensure your club is active as a ['Page'](#) and not a personal account or group. Pages are especially designed for connecting with communities. When operated effectively, you have the ability to deliver interesting information to a captivated audience.

Consistently posting good quality content is the key to growing your base of Facebook followers. From there you can cultivate a positive club image, broadcast important news and direct traffic to your website. Always be mindful that a single post may be a person's first impression of your club.

[Facebook For Business](#) provides an easy-to-understand guide to effectively managing a Facebook page for volunteers and professionals alike, while Football Queensland's media department is always willing to discuss how you can make the most of your Facebook and social media presence.



TIPS FOR FACEBOOK:

- Ensure your club is operating as a Page. To convert a personal profile into a Page, [follow Facebook's step-by-step advice](#).
- Start with the basics: update your profile picture with the club logo and a suitable cover photo.
- Match the name of your Page as closely as possible to the name of your club. Avoid nicknames. Ask yourself what people will most likely search for when they are seeking to find your Page. **EXAMPLE:** Brisbane Roar FC instead of BRFC.
- Your posts should be representative of the club's voice, not that of a single person. Avoid posting in the first person ('I') and instead make references to 'Example United FC', 'we' or 'the club'.
- Enhance your posts with an image, link or video. Simple text posts will not perform as well within Facebook's algorithm and will subsequently be seen by fewer people.
- Mentioning another Facebook page in your post? Tag them! Your ability to reach more people will be boosted.

4.2 FACEBOOK POST EXAMPLES

Below are two examples of simple, effective Facebook posts by community clubs.

For more information of how to structure a Facebook post, contact Football Queensland.

WHY IT WORKS:

- Post is relevant to the club's audience.
- Post text is brief, informative and positive.
- Post includes an embedded link. These posts statistically reach more people and have greater 'engagement'.
- The link refers readers to a full article published on the club website. This post is simply a gateway to the website story, where views are more valuable.
- Another Page relevant to the post (Daniel Morcombe Foundation) is tagged in the text.



WHY IT WORKS:

- Post text is positive and reinforces achievement.
- Post recognises a sponsor while also remaining relevant to the club's audience.
- Post avoids being plain text by adding images.
- Junior images are engaging and of interest to the club's audience.



5.0 NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IDEAS

The following is a list of news and social media content ideas to help your club remain active through your channels and potentially in mainstream media.

NEWS:

- Events – season launches, award presentation nights, historical milestones/celebrations
- Achievements – players/coaches selected for representative teams, facility upgrades, team success
- Seniors – previews, reports, player signings
- Juniors – awards, player spotlight, team profiles
- Club Personalities – staff profiles, recognition of long-serving volunteers
- Community – fundraisers, club involvement at local events
- Sponsors – new sponsor announcements, deals for members

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Link to website posts
- Upcoming match promotion
- Match/weekend photo album
- Sponsor recognition
- Video or audio interviews
- Zone/Football Queensland post shares

6.0 KEY CONTACTS

Football Queensland is more than willing to assist your club with implementing processes, sharpening skills or building on the groundwork laid in this guide.

For media and marketing support, please don't hesitate to contact us at our office in Logan.

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