Cardinia






Cardinia Shire Council

# Community Advocacy Toolkit



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Arts, Advocacy, Economy and Social Strategy Unit in association with Croftglen Collective

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# Acknowledgement of Country



Cardinia Shire Council recognises and values the Boonwurrung, Bunurong and Wurundjeri tribes as the original inhabitants of the land that makes up Cardinia Shire.

Cardinia Shire's name is derived from the Boonwurrung[1] or Wadawurrung word 'Kar-din-yarr', meaning 'look to the rising sun' or 'close to the sunrise'. Council's logo, which includes a motif of the rising sun, refects this meaning.

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the right of Aboriginal, and indeed all Australians, to live according to their values and customs, subject to the law.

Council is committed to developing and strengthening relationships through reconciliation. Council supports the reconciliation process, which promotes mutual respect and understanding of the Aboriginal peoples and of all ethnic groups and their history and culture in our community.

1 There are a number of acknowledged spellings for Boonwurrung and these include Bunurong, Bunwurrung, Boonwerung, Bunurowrung, Boonoorong and Bururong. Cardinia Shire Council uses the spelling proposed by N'arweet Carolyn Briggs.



# Introduction

## What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of actively supporting a cause and seeking to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Successful advocacy results in the ability to obtain public or government support for a project, policy or program.

Advocacy usually involves campaigning for a specific and measurable outcome that will benefit the community. This could be the funding and/or delivery capability required to achieve the community goal.

Direct campaigns: this involves directly communicating with elected officials or their staff to influence policy decisions. This can be done through meetings, phone calls, emails, or written submissions.

Indirect campaigns: this involves mobilising public opinion through media campaigns, grassroots organising, or letter-writing campaigns. The goal is to build awareness and influence elected officials to support specific policies that are important to the people they represent.

Advocacy does not always achieve instant results. Some advocacy campaigns are long-term undertakings that respond to complex issues. In other cases, advocacy may focus on a single issue and may only require a handful of actions to achieve a result.

Participating in advocacy can connect you with other people who share your passion about where you live, delivering personal and communal benefits. It is also a great way to learn new skills, meet new people and have a say.



# Why advocate?

Advocacy is a powerful tool for ensuring that the needs and priorities of our community are heard and addressed.

By speaking up, gathering support and engaging with elected officials, you can help shape policies and decisions that directly impact your daily lives. Whether it's advocating for improved infrastructure, increased funding for local services, or stronger environmental protections, you can become an agent of change by using your voice.

Cardinia Shire Council brings expertise in policy development and government relations, while the community provides valuable insights and firsthand experience.



By combining our efforts, we can create a more powerful and effective voice for our community when petitioning State and Federal government.

## Examples of community advocacy

- Public speaking.
- Participating in community projects and organisations, for example through steering committees.
- Meeting with politicians and community leaders.
- Contributing to public inquiries, for example Senate inquiries or Royal Commissions.
- Contributing to academic research.
- Addressing schools, businesses, organisations and other community groups.
- Participating in public events, community forums, conferences and other public discussions.
- Contributing to advocacy campaigns.

# About this toolkit

Cardinia Shire Council has put together this toolkit to support individuals and community groups to advocate on issues that are important to them.

It can help you with developing and implementing advocacy campaigns of any size.

We've created tools, like checklists and templates, to help you advocate effectively and get your message heard.

View Advocacy Tools and Templates

## Ingredients of an effective advocacy campaign

### Evidence based

The 'ask' at the heart of the campaign needs to be based on evidence. This can take the form of data, research, statistics, public policy or case studies. Any type of evidence supporting the 'ask' must be reliable, relevant and robust.

### Realistic and relevant

The 'ask' should be achievable from a political, environmental, economic or financial perspective. Advocacy should be targeting the people or groups that have the power and responsibility to make decisions that could help secure the 'ask'.

### Community centric

Advocacy efforts should centre and address the needs of the community, rather than individual people or businesses. Community support and engagement are vital in progressing the advocacy campaign.

### Clear, consistent and coordinated

Clear messages that explain and support the 'ask', are needed. Messages should use facts and statistics to help generate support for the 'ask' and be used consistently in all campaign materials from social media posts to brochures and websites. An advocacy plan that details what needs to be done, when, by whom and what resources or materials may be required will help coordinate all campaign elements.

## Examples of effective advocacy

### Stop the Tip

stopthetip.com.au

### West Footscray Velodrome

starweekly.com.au

### Advocacy Campaign, Access Denied, 2014

accessdenied.net.au

# Glossary

Advocacy has a language of its own. Below are definitions of key terms that are helpful to understand.



### Advocacy

An activity or series of activities designed to get public and/or government support for a project, policy or program.

### Ask

The objective that the advocacy campaign is trying to achieve. E.g. obtaining funding, securing regulatory change or a new service.

### Tactics

Activities used to communicate campaign messages, seek support for the campaign and place pressure on the target to support the ask.

### Influencers

Those who have the potential to encourage the target/decision-maker to make a decision that supports an ask.

### Stakeholder

An individual or organisation with an interest in the ask, E.g. they may benefit from it.

### Target/decision-maker

The individual or organisation responsible for funding, supporting or implementing an ask.



# Part 1:
# **Advocacy guide**

# When to advocate

**Before you start planning an advocacy campaign, ask yourself the following questions to make sure you are on the right track.**

## Can you confirm the ask?

What do you want the advocacy campaign to achieve? Can you explain it in one sentence?

**Tip:** Define exactly what you want to achieve through your advocacy efforts. Identify ways to maintain integrity and transparency in your advocacy efforts.

## Do others want the same thing?

Can you identify partners/allies/supporters who will also benefit from the ask?

**Tip:** There are many campaigns running on social media and other channels. An amplified voice sends a stronger message. Form coalitions who will benefit from the ask to join you and strengthen your voice.

## Is there research or data that supports your ask?

Is there an evidence base to support your ask? Do you understand the issue thoroughly, including its history, status, and key stakeholders? If so, make sure you include details of it in your campaign materials.

**Tip:** Try searching council or relevant government websites. You could even collect data by conducting an online survey or asking people to complete a questionnaire at the local shops.

## What are the reasons against supporting your ask?

Put yourself in the shoes of your advocacy target, what arguments might they use to oppose your ask? Can you counter them? Ultimately, who has the power to provide what you are advocating for?

**Tip:** Try brainstorming reasons the solution you're asking for will provide may fail to draw out potential counter arguments. Or, think of some questions stakeholders or decision makers may have.

## Can you identify who your advocacy campaign should target?

It may be an individual (such as a Minister) or an organisation (such as government department, agency or council).

**Tip:** To land on a consistent, concise message that resonates with your target audience, you need to know what's important to them. How could your 'ask' ultimately help them achieve their goals or fulfil their responsibilities?

# Advocacy essentials

## 1. Research the issue

If you're not already, become an expert on the issue. Start by finding out:

- Are there any existing plans to deliver the policy, project or program you want? Has it been delayed, if so, why?
- How much will it cost?
- Has anybody else asked for it in the past and why hasn't it been funded?
- How many people would it benefit? An online search using words that describe your ask, your location and other relevant search terms is a good first step.
- Go through back editions of the local paper to see if they have reported on the issue, these are usually available online at your local library.

## 2. Confirm your ask

Your 'ask' needs to be simple. You should be able to explain it in one sentence.

For example:

"This campaign is seeking to secure (insert dollar value) to fund/develop (insert brief description of the policy, project or program) that will benefit (number of people or specific demographic for example older residents) in (insert location)."

## 3. Develop an evidence base

Good campaigns are based on solid research. Gather all available research and statistics that support your ask. You may find these on council or government websites or through relevant community organisations, peak bodies or industry associations.

Local population, demographic, economic and housing data collected through the Australian Census is available via Cardinia Shire's Community Profile.

You could also do you own research by:

- Posting an online questionnaire to a relevant Facebook page or sharing an online survey using a tool like Google Forms. Be sure to explain why you are doing the research and how you will use the results. Start with the Survey Checklist.
- Providing volunteers with clipboards and questionnaires on the ask outside the local shopping centre, school or local train station.

Using these tactics will also help link you with others who support your ask and find anecdotal evidence that could also be used to support the advocacy campaign.

The data you obtain should be used in campaign messages and materials to help generate support for your ask, for example:

"More than (insert percentage) of (insert location) residents surveyed said they strongly supported the need for the (insert brief description of the policy, project or program)."

## 4. Identify the target/ decision-makers and influencers

As part of considering whether to advocate or not, you may have already identified the target of your advocacy effort. If you haven't already, learn more about their views and policies and determine how best to approach them.

## 5. Raise the profile of the issue

An important precursor to any advocacy campaign is raising awareness of the issue the advocacy campaign intends to resolve.

You need to state the problem and propose a solution (for example what the campaign seeks to achieve) as highlighting the issue and raising the profile of it among the community creates a ready environment for a campaign.

# Who is responsible for what?

**Understanding the responsibilities and current priorities of local (council), state and federal governments will help you isolate the targets for your advocacy.**

This factsheet from the Parliamentary Education Office details the breakdown of local, state and federal government responsibilities to their constituents and communities.

The Cardinia Shire community has an impressive advocacy history, successfully advocating for much needed infrastructure projects. View Cardinia Shire Council's current Advocacy Plan to gain understanding of what Council is currently advocating for on behalf of shire residents and businesses.

Some 'asks' are better directed at private enterprise or regulatory bodies. To help identify where to direct your advocacy effort, and specifically who to target, start with the Stakeholder Register.

## Asks that affect policy

Advocacy can include asking for changes to, or introduction of, new laws. Before you start creating a campaign that seeks legislative change, it's important to understand the way parliament works.

NGO Oxfam Australia has detailed information about the Australian political system, including the structures and processes for making and changing laws.

You can view recent Bills in Parliament here.

## Your voice in parliament

Australian Members of Parliament (MPs) play a vital role in representing the interests of their electorate and addressing local issues.

As constituents, you can ask your MP to support specific initiatives, raise concerns in Parliament, or advocate for funding and resources that benefit your community.

To amplify your advocacy cause, consider various ways to connect with your local MP, such as writing a thoughtful letter, requesting a face-to-face meeting, or organising a community petition.

When reaching out, it's important to clearly communicate your concerns and suggest actionable steps that your MP can take to support your issue.

Check out Appendix B of the advocacy toolkit for practical tips and tools to use when building relationships with members of parliament.

# Advocating to Cardinia Shire Council

**Cardinia Shire Council is responsible for the delivery and maintenance of a range of services and infrastructure.**

To give your feedback on projects the Council is delivering, or to follow progress on the projects you care about, visit creating.cardinia.vic.gov.au. To receive ongoing updates, select the project of interest to you and click the 'follow' button at the top of the project page.

Another way to engage directly with Council is by attending and asking questions at Council meetings.

## Cutting through the noise

Visit Cardinia Calls For to find out more about what Council is currently advocating for. You can also find opportunities to volunteer or community groups to engage with on Council's online directory.

You can search petition sites like GetUp! Or Change.org to search for campaigns and add your voice to an existing petition relating to your issue.

Researching the issues championed by your local MPs may uncover campaigns that cross over with yours.

For state level initiatives, check out Strategies and Policies on the Victorian Government's website.

Stakeholders and potential allies are approached frequently with requests from the community. It's important to check if advocacy is already underway for the issue you're passionate about or the ask you're trying to secure. Rather than dilute existing advocacy efforts by adding to the noise, you or your community group may act as supportive allies to strengthen an existing advocacy campaign.



# Working with stakeholders

**Stakeholders are a valuable resource in advocacy. Their level of power and interest in the issue you are raising and the ask you're trying to secure determines how highly engaged they should be with your campaign.**

A stakeholder can be a community group, private company (e.g., utility providers), a regulatory body or officials such as an Ombudsman.

To help define who your stakeholders are, try out the Stakeholder Register and Stakeholder Map.

Thinking about who is invested in your cause, and who needs convincing, is a great place to start before determining how you'll advocate and what your messages will be.

## Engaging your local Member of Parliament

Engaging with your Member of Parliament (MP) is a valuable step in advancing your advocacy campaign.

As a representative of your community, an MP can take various actions to support your cause, making your voice heard in important discussions.

Here are some ways you can ask your MP to get involved:

- **Vote on legislation:** ask your MP to support or oppose specific bills that impact your issue.
- **Initiate committee inquiries:** request that they call for a committee inquiry to examine the potential consequences of a bill or issue.
- **Make a speech:** encourage your MP to speak about your issue in Parliament, raising awareness among their colleagues.
- **Move a motion:** suggest they propose a motion to formally address your concern and gauge parliamentary support.
- **Ask questions:** ask your MP to pose questions in Parliament to seek further information on your issue from the government.
- **Raise your issue with ministers:** encourage your MP to discuss your cause with the relevant Minister or portfolio holder.
- **Attend local events:** invite your MP to participate in community events related to your advocacy, strengthening your connection.

- **Engage with the media:** request that your MP speak to the media about your issue to help gain broader visibility.
- **Include your story in newsletters:** ask your MP to feature your advocacy topic in their regular communications to constituents.

Partnering with an MP starts with clear, concise communication that is effective in grabbing their interest.

We've created a guide and provided an example to help you create your email or letter to your MP and request a meeting with them, and a handy checklist to help you prepare for the meeting.

Find your State Electorate and Member of Parliament

Find you Federal Electorate and Member



# Championing the cause

**Ultimately, successful advocacy requires sharing the load among multiple people, groups or organisations.**

Campaigns are most impactful when the message is approached from multiple angles — such as personal stories, data-driven evidence, and emotional appeals. Sharing personal narratives can create an emotional connection, while statistics can provide compelling evidence to support your claims.

Additionally, utilising various platforms — like social media, community events, and traditional media — helps to broaden the message's reach and impact. This multi-faceted approach not only strengthens your advocacy efforts but also fosters a deeper understanding of the issue, encouraging more individuals to join your cause and advocate for change.

We've created an Advocacy readiness checklist and Advocacy Campaign Checklist to guide you through what's required to succeed in advocacy.

A concerted advocacy effort might involve multiple organisations joining forces to address a social issue, ensuring that their messaging and activities are unified and strategically planned.

This collaboration enhances the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes by pooling expertise, resources, and support.

Essential skill sets for advocacy campaigning include:

1. **Communication skills:**
   This includes writing, public speaking, and social media proficiency. Look for individuals with experience in journalism, marketing, or community organising.

2. **Organisational skills:**
   Effective campaign planning and project management are key. Those with experience in event planning, project coordination, or volunteer management will be valuable.

3. **Research and analytical skills:**
   Being able to gather and interpret data is important. Seek out people with backgrounds in research, education, or policy analysis.

4. **Networking skills:**
   Building relationships with stakeholders is an essential part of advocacy. Individuals with experience in fundraising, community outreach, or lobbying can help in this area. Individuals with corporate, consulting or government employment experience are usually skilled in networking and stakeholder management.

5. **Creativity and innovation:**
   Finding new ways to engage the community and convey your message is important. Look for allies with backgrounds in design, media production, or creative writing.

# Building your case: Surveys

## When to run a survey

Surveys can be a powerful tool in advocacy when you want to gather insights from a broad audience, assess community needs, or measure the impact of initiatives.

Surveys can be a useful way to find out what, when, how often, and by whom something happens. By collecting data from a large group of people, patterns can be identified. In this way, you can assess if the problem or need is widespread or isolated to a specific group of people.

Online surveys can be created using tools like Google Forms, Typeform or Survey Monkey. You could also conduct surveys in person or using printed forms created using a Microsoft Word template.

## The pitfalls of surveys

It's important to recognise that surveys, when they are poorly designed, and not targeting the right profile or number of people, result in misleading or 'skewed' results. Low response rates are very common, which means you'll need to approach more people than your sample size to collect enough data.

There are lots of resources to help you with the design of your sample and survey online. Here are a few to look over before you start creating your survey.

Survey Monkey

Typeform

## Making sense of the data

Once you collect the data, understanding it involves identifying themes or patterns and trends.

The total number of responses collected using a survey needs to be large enough to have confidence in the results and to confidently rely on the story the data is telling.

It can also be useful to cross-check the results of your survey with other forms of data collection to confirm the reliability of your data. This might look like complementing a survey with interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insight, observing people's behaviour in a location, or if relevant, online feedback such as ratings or reviews.

By combining different perspectives, you can create a more robust understanding of the problems your ask should address, giving your campaign credibility. This ensures your ask is able to meet the need and create beneficial change.

To guide you through developing your survey, we've provided a detailed checklist here.

# Building your case: Petitions

Petitions are another good way of raising awareness, gathering evidence of support and for advocating directly to government. There is a significant difference in the approach to government compared with raising awareness and evidence of support.

## Raising awareness and gathering evidence of support through petitions

Most of these types of petitions are developed and shared online using tools such as Change.org and Getup.org.au.

The high-level steps of developing petitions are:

1. Craft a clear and concise title.
2. Write a brief, powerful statement of your demand.
3. Explain the importance of the issue.
4. Set a realistic signature goal.
5. Include fields for name, email, and optional comments.
6. Select an online platform for distributing and managing the petition. Ensure it works on mobile phones.

For physical versions, include space for handwritten signatures and addresses.

## Petitioning directly to government

Petitions are also used to petition government to take action or make decisions. It's important to note, that petitions to Council, State and Federal Government have specific compliance requirements to be acknowledged and considered.

## References, tools and guidelines

Government Petitions

- Submitting petitions to Cardinia Shire Council here: How to submit a petition - Cardinia Shire Council
- Learn more about petitions to State Government here: Online & Paper petitions
- Start the process with State Government here: Petitions - Parliament of Victoria
- Learn more about petitioning Federal Government and start the process here: Petitions – Parliament of Australia

Other tools and guidelines

- Start your petition (Change.org)
- ACF petition education content

# Engaging with the media

## Understanding the media

Understanding how the media works and knowing who's who is incredibly helpful when advocating for something. Equally, having strong relationships with people from local media organisations is important for local advocacy campaigns.

Below are a few guidelines and things to consider.

## How to work with journalists

- Respect their deadlines: real and non-negotiable .
- Always be polite, enthusiastic and cooperative.
- It's the audience that matters: talk to them.

## How to handle interview requests

- Take time to prepare: don't respond immediately, take details and return the call if you need to
- You can say no, but advise early rather than cancel late
- Prepare three key messages and practice saying them aloud several times
- Know your material and think about what you may be asked.

## Conducting interviews

- Use your key messages
- Remember who your audience is
- Say what you want to say
- You don't have to answer every question

## Key messages

- They work, because they provide a framework for consistent communication
- Write them down, know them and use them
- Test them with a friendly small sample of your audience and refine as needed
- Speak to your audience, use appropriate language, examples and images
- Say the same thing, just in a different way
- Plan and practice, practice and plan

## Media support tools

- Allocate someone as the designated media contact to manage enquiries
- Ensure only designated people from your campaign speak to media
- Create an issues register with holding statements help to ensure consistency
- Keep a media log, tracking interactions with media and outcomes (i.e. copies of articles).

# Media releases

Local journalists often get story ideas from media releases that have been sent to them or contact that has been made with them by phone or email. You may want to issue a media release to:

- Help raise the profile of the issue prior to the campaign.
- Launch the campaign.
- Promote or report on a campaign event or activity.
- Release research findings.

### Below are tips on the type of information to include in your media release:

- The name of your group, campaign and the ask
- Comments from relevant spokespeople
- Different ways people can support the campaign
- Offer interviews with organisers
- Promote an event: include time, place, date, spokespeople and special gusts
- Release of a new report that supports your campaign

# Other media tactics

Case studies using real people telling real stories, letters to the editor and opinion pieces are also useful ways to get media coverage of your campaign.

### Personal stories

Real people telling real stories of how they are directly affected by the issue and how they will benefit from the campaign ask can be very powerful.

- Search for local people who have a story to tell and who can support the campaign
- Summarise the story in no more than one page, providing the journalist with an overview of who the person is and how they are impacted
- Propose ideas for photo opportunities to accompany the story
- Present the story to the journalist. Follow up to gauge interest.

### Social media

Social media is revolutionising campaigning – at the national and community level.

Facebook is the perfect grassroots communication tool. It is inexpensive, easy to set up, manage and update and has a wide reach. It allows you to connect directly with the community.

It also helps generated local media coverage with reporters liking, following and reporting on campaign activity they see occurring online. Guidelines for use and moderator guidelines must be publicly available to appropriately manage online interactions.

A digital campaign can comprise a website, online forms, email address, Facebook page, X (formerly twitter) feed, online petitions and surveys. Importantly, most of these activities can be undertaken at no – or low – cost.

### Letter to the editor/Op ed

Writing letters to the editor of a newspaper or arranging an Opinion Editorial (Op-ed) are also good ways to express your views.

Tips on writing opinion content:

- Use current news and events to get readers interested
- Be brief – get straight to the point
- Stick to one issue

# Being an ethical advocate

**Prioritising ethics in advocacy not only strengthens the movement but also promotes a culture of integrity and accountability that benefits society.**

When advocates operate transparently and fairly, they foster an environment where diverse voices are respected, which enhances collaboration and collective impact. In other words, advocacy done right secures what's right for the community.

Ethical advocacy means standing up for a cause or issue in a way that is honest and fair, respecting both the people you're trying to help and those you're working with. To avoid reputational damage and potential legal consequences, it's vital to identify and mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

## Don't...

- Allow your personal interests or relationships to cloud your judgement.
- Offer bribes or any other unethical incentives to people in power, as these actions can undermine your credibility and harm the cause you're advocating for.
- Forget to keep detailed records of communications, decisions, and actions taken throughout the advocacy process. This can provide protection if questions arise about your methods or intentions.
- Allow the use of inflammatory rhetoric in the way you communicate your position or refute your critics.

## Do...

- Focus on building genuine relationships and engaging in open, respectful dialogue to promote positive change. Use clear and respectful language in all communications.
- Create processes that distribute decision making power and create transparency around funding allocation and vendor selection.
- Develop a strategy for responding to criticism or negative feedback. This includes training spokespersons and preparing key messages to address concerns.
- Consult legal experts, when necessary, especially when navigating regulations or potential liabilities related to your advocacy activities.

# Going the distance in advocacy

**Advocacy can be time-consuming and resource-intensive — some campaigns may be short, while others may take years. Consider how you will support yourself and the volunteers helping with the campaign to maintain energy and engagement**

## Embrace flexibility

Be prepared to adapt your strategies as circumstances change.

## Remember your why

Remind yourself why this cause is important to you — whether it's a personal experience, a vision for a better community, or a passion for social justice. Keeping this focus not only energises you but also inspires those around you, creating a lasting commitment to the advocacy journey.

## Take time to replenish yourself

Advocacy can be demanding, so plan for ways to avoid burnout. Plan ways to manage the highs and lows from the beginning, such as:

- Setting realistic goals and taking breaks when needed to manage the demands of advocacy alongside your normal job and other personal commitments.
- Engaging in regular check-ins with your allies or team to share feelings and experiences to foster support and connection.
- Creating a balance between advocacy work and personal interests, such as hobbies or social activities, to top up your tank and energise you.

  Practising mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or yoga, can really help recharge emotional batteries.
- Celebrating both small and large victories together can reinforce a sense of purpose and community, keeping everyone energised and focused on the bigger picture.

## Celebrate the wins

Acknowledging efforts and results boosts morale, reinforces commitment, and encourages ongoing participation. Celebrating the small victories helps remind everyone of the progress made and the impact of their efforts. This means volunteers and supporters of your cause are more likely to stay engaged.

Groups and individuals can celebrate accomplishments by:

- Hosting recognition events to celebrate achieving key milestones
- Sharing success stories on social media
- Creating newsletters or pitching a story to local media that highlight achievements, or
- Simply gathering for a coffee to reflect on what's been done with your allies.

# What happens once advocacy is successful?

Once an advocacy project has successfully secured its ask — whether it's funding, construction, or policy change — it's reason to celebrate! Following this, there are several key considerations, such as ensuring delivery accountability, maintaining engagement with stakeholders, planning for implementation, and evaluating outcomes.

You may decide to hold a post advocacy debrief, or reflection meeting to collectively answer these and define next steps.

To get started, review the list below, and note additional questions that arise.

### Accountability

How will we ensure that the commitments made are met and that resources are used effectively?

### Stakeholder engagement

Who needs to be kept informed and involved as we move forward, and how can we maintain their support?

### Implementation

What specific steps do we need to take to put our plans into action, and who will be responsible for each step?

### Sustainability

What strategies do we have in place to ensure that our achievements are sustained over the long term?

### Community feedback

How will we solicit and incorporate feedback from the community to ensure their needs are being met?

### Adaptability

What potential challenges could arise during implementation, and how can we prepare to adapt our plans as necessary?

### Celebration

How will we celebrate this success with our community to reinforce support and encourage future engagement?

### Future advocacy

What lessons have we learnt from this advocacy effort that we can apply to future campaigns or initiatives?

### Legacy

What long-term changes do we hope to see from our advocacy, and how can we ensure our work contributes to these changes?



# Part 2:
# **Advocacy tools and templates**

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# Advocacy readiness checklist

Before you start planning an advocacy campaign, you should be able to answer these questions:

**What's the ask or desired outcome?**

**Who will support the campaign?**

**What supporting evidence do we have?**

**What counter arguments should be addressed?**

**Who is the target or has the power to provide the ask?**

# Advocacy campaign checklist and progress tracking

Complete the steps below to prioritise tasks needed to develop your advocacy campaign. As you advance, shade the boxes indicating progress of the activity to indicate completion.

| | | Progress | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step | Activity | Not started | In progress | Half-way | Almost done | Complete |
| 1 | Answer all five questions in the "Advocacy Readiness Checklist". | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2 | Develop a stakeholder map. Identify the political, bureaucratic, business and community players. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3 | Confirm what your budget is. If you require funding and don't have any, explore ways to get financial support from allies. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4 | Write down the key messages of the campaign. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5 | Develop campaign infrastructure if required. E.g., Incorporation, official roles, bank account, social media channels, web address, PO box | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6 | Recruit volunteers that will help you with different tasks. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7 | Develop tools and tactics. List all communications and engagement activities that you are planning to use. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8 | Create a campaign plan. Include the communications and engagement activities that you plan to use, budget and resource implications. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9 | Launch and manage campaign. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10 | Track and measure campaign success. Continuously elicit feedback and track success, tweaking the messaging and approach as required. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11 | Reflect on the highs and lows of your campaign and celebrate! | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

# Advocacy S.M.A.R.T goals

Use this tool to help clarify objectives, whether it's planning a campaign to secure funding, organising events to raise awareness, or pushing for policy changes.

Example S.M.A.R.T. Goals:

- **Specific:** Host three community workshops on local environmental issues.
- **Measurable:** Reach at least 200 community members through these workshops.
- **Achievable:** We have the venue and volunteers secured.
- **Relevant:** This will help us gather support for local environmental policy changes.
- **Time-Bound:** Complete this by the end of the next quarter.

## Specific

**What is the exact goal you want to achieve?**

**Tip:** Clearly define what you want to accomplish. Avoid vague language.

## Measurable

**How will you measure progress and success?**

**Tip:** Identify quantifiable indicators. What do you want to aim for and how will you track this?

## Achievable

**Is this goal realistic and attainable?**

**Tip:** Consider your resources, time, and capabilities. Do you have the skills and support needed to achieve this goal?

## Relevant

**Does this goal align with your broader advocacy mission?**

**Tip:** What direct impact will achieving the goal have? How is this aligned to the values or needs of the community or group?

## Timebound

**What is your deadline for achieving this goal?**

**Hint:** Set a clear timeframe. For example, "By the end of the next quarter" or "Within six months."

# Community survey checklist

Follow the below steps to ensure that your survey is purposeful, well-structured, and capable of gathering valuable insights to support your advocacy efforts. For further reading on ways to gather evidence, visit NNG.com.

It is important to consider the following ethical and privacy points

1. Consider whether the approach or any of the questions might cause harm
2. Personal details must be recorded securely on a server in Australia and destroyed when no longer needed
3. Contact details cannot be used for any other purpose unless permission is given by the respondent

Please review The Research Society's code of professional behaviour. It is easy to read and provides important information on ethics and privacy when designing surveys.

## ☑ 1. Define the survey's purpose

**Steps:**

- Clearly state the goal (e.g. understanding community needs about parking)
- Ensure a survey is the best method for your objectives; consider existing data sources like the ABS. Cardinia Shire Council also has local data available.

**Resources:** ABS Survey Design

## ☑ 2. Design the survey sample

**Steps:**

- Identify characteristics of your target audience.
- Ensure representation to avoid bias; consider multiple respondent profiles.
- Choose the appropriate sampling method and calculate sample size.

**Resources:** Sample Size Calculator

## ☑ 3. Draft clear, unbiased questions

**Steps:**

- Write neutral questions; avoid leading language or topics.
- Ensure consistent interpretation by the respondent.
- Focus on single ideas in each question / answer option.

**Resources:** Non-Leading Questions Guide

### 4. Include demographic questions (if relevant)

**Steps:**

- Add optional demographic questions to help give your results context.
- Include a brief description of how the data will be used, and alleviate privacy concerns to encourage participation.
- Only ask for personal information if it is needed for the research purpose.

**Resources:** Demographic Questions

### 5. Choose question types

**Steps:**

- Select formats based on the data needed (e.g., multiple choice, open-ended). Try not to use more than 2 open ended questions in a survey.
- Include varied question types for comprehensive insights and improved respondent experience.

**Resources:** Explore Google Forms for options.

### 6. Organise questions logically

**Steps:**

- Structure from general to specific; group similar questions.
- Start with easier questions directly related to the topic to engage respondents.

**Resources:** Sensitive Questions Best Practices

### 7. Test the survey with a small group

**Steps:**

- Pilot test with a small segment of your audience.
- Gather feedback on clarity and engagement.

**Resources:** Try Google Forms for testing.

### 8. Plan for data analysis and reporting

**Steps:**

- Decide on analysis methods and tools so you can make sense of your data.
- Visualise results clearly – referring to percentages, or using charts and graphs is effective.
- Review insights to ensure you've got data you can use to advocate.

# Stakeholder register

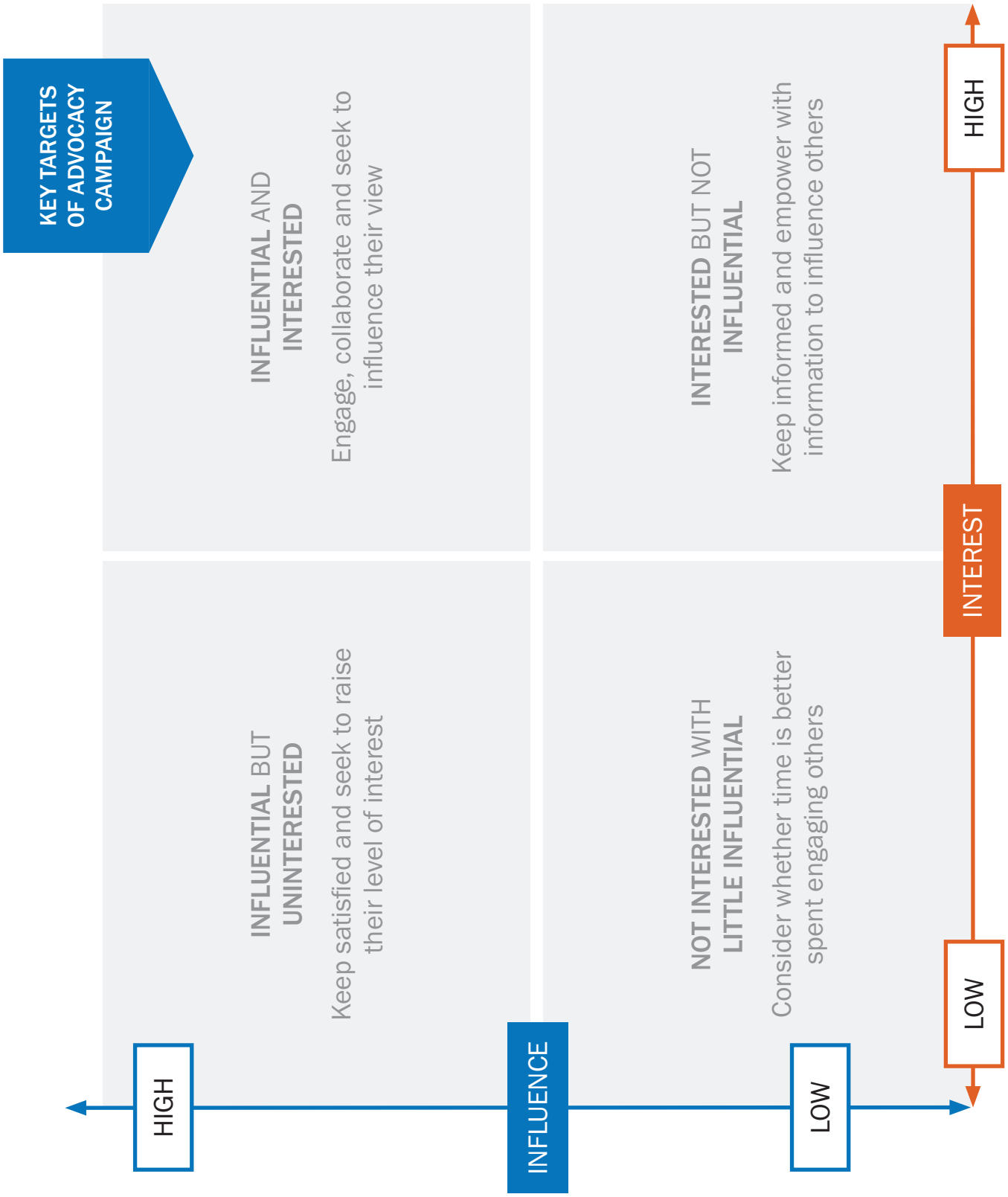
It's important to understand who the stakeholders involved are and their respective role and level of influence. This is helpful to understand who needs to be engaged throughout the advocacy and who the potential 'Friends' or 'Allies' are and who the specific target or decision maker(s) are.

To help identify the priority, work through the Stakeholder Map to determine which people are critical to successfully securing your ask.

| Category | Stakeholder Title/Role | Name | Priority (High/Med/ Low) | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **State/Federal Government**<br>Ministers | | | | |
| **State/Federal Government**<br>Shadow Ministers | | | | |
| **State/Federal Government**<br>Local MPs | | | | |
| **Government**<br>Department of<br>_____ | | | | |
| **Council**<br>Councillors | | | | |
| **Council Staff** | | | | |
| **Community groups** | | | | |

# Stakeholder map

Plot where each of the stakeholders you've listed in the Stakeholder Register sit on the spectrum of interest in your cause, and power to provide the ask. This will help you determine the 'Target Priority' and direct your time and resources effectively.



# Sample letter

<Date>

The Hon. <First name> <Last name>, MP
Minister for <Portfolio name>
<Address line >
<Address line 2 if applicable>
<Suburb>
<State> <postcode>
Via email: <email>

Dear Minister,

**Re: Urgent attention – <Advocacy Project Name>**

I am writing to you to request that you reconsider the decision to significantly reduce the funding for the "Sealing the Hills" and "Roads for our Community" programs.

As a local community member, I know first-hand the significant environmental, social, and economic benefits these unsealed road programs would have provided our area. Unfortunately, I also know the damaging repercussions that cutting unsealed roads funding will have on my community.

These works are vital to the development of the existing townships in and around the Hills and will greatly improve our community's safety and access, while reducing dust, pollution, and wear and tear on our vehicles.

Our community has been severely impacted by major storms, our roads are littered with potholes, and we are one of the highest-risk bushfire areas in the state. A dangerous network of unsealed roads adds another layer of complexity that our community just doesn't need or deserve.

Sealing our local roads would have improved the liveability and connectivity of my community; providing emergency services improved road access and supporting regional tourism to thrive.

This funding was originally announced by the Australian Government in 2019 with support from both sides of government. My community and I are understandably devastated that funding has been cut.

We're outraged that the safety, wellbeing, accessibility, growth and future development of the Dandenong Ranges and surrounding townships has not been prioritised, supported, or even considered by the federal government.

The decision to strip funding from these vital infrastructure programs has been a massive blow locally, as it was made without any consultation or explanation and despite significant work already being underway.

I support and believe in the work being undertaken as part of the Sealing the Hills program.

I want to see my local roads sealed and upgraded; I know many members within my community also do.  We deserve to have the federal government's promises of funding for unsealed road upgrades upheld.

I urge you to immediately reinstate the previously committed funding for the 'Sealing the Hills' and 'Roads for our Community' programs in their entirety.

To further understand the severe impact that this cut will have on my community, I would like to invite you to come and visit the Hills area to witness the state of our unsealed roads first-hand.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

First name Last name

<Add return address if posting>

# Checklist for meeting with an MP

## Before the meeting

### Request a meeting

- [ ] Write a clear, brief email to request a meeting.
- [ ] State who you are, the issue you represent, and why you want to meet.
- [ ] Follow up with a phone call to confirm your request.

### Know your MP

- [ ] Research your MP's background, party, and party position on the issue.
- [ ] Understand their personal views on your issue by checking past statements or speeches.

### Understand your issue

- [ ] Gather key facts and current developments about your issue.
- [ ] Practice discussing your issue with a friend to prepare for potential questions.

### Clarify your goals

- [ ] Decide on specific actions you want your MP to take.
- [ ] Prepare two or three clear requests for action.
- [ ] Make a list of all the reasons why the MP may decline your request, so you have a follow up answer or question prepared and don't hit a dead end in the conversation.

## During the meeting

### Team up

- [ ] Bring 2-3 supporters who share your concern to the meeting.
- [ ] Choose one person to lead the conversation and assign someone to take notes.

### Be organised

- [ ] Provide a brief document outlining key points for the MP.
- [ ] Prepare notes with your main arguments but avoid reading a script.

### Make a good impression

- [ ] Dress appropriately and arrive slightly early.
- [ ] Introduce yourself and thank your MP for their time.
- [ ] Deliver a brief outline of the issue and how it's affecting the electorate

### State your request clearly

- [ ] Tell your MP exactly what action you want them to take.
- [ ] Provide reasons why this action is important and beneficial.

### Listen and respond

- [ ] Pay attention to your MP's reactions and adjust your message as needed.
- [ ] Be respectful, even if they disagree with you.

### Secure a commitment

- [ ] Ask your MP what actions they will take and when they will do it.
- [ ] If referred to another MP, remind them you want their involvement.

## After the meeting

### Debrief with your team

- [ ] Discuss what worked well and what could improve for next time.
- [ ] Review notes and commitments made during the meeting.

### Follow up

- [ ] Send a thank-you email or letter to your MP.
- [ ] Summarise any commitments they made and provide additional information if promised.
- [ ] If you don't hear back within a month, follow up with their office to check on the status of their commitments.

# Advocacy strategy canvas

Work through this canvas to help define an approach to communicating and convincing others to act in support of your advocacy goals.
Advocacy campaigns are usually multi-faceted, implemented across multiple channels (social media, print, radio, live events) for different groups of people.

Complete one canvas for each target demographic you wish to reach.

1

**What is the long-term vision for what you want to achieve?**

2

**What are the specific goals for this campaign?**

3

**What will indicate you're on the right track?**

4

**What are the key messages or elements of campaign?**

5

**What channels will this specific campaign use?**

6

**What relationships, trends or events currently have influence over the issue?**

7

**What are the activities and tasks we need to do?**

# Resourcing tracker

| Resource type | Description | Quantity | Cost/Value | Source | Status | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.g. Materials | Flyers | 1,000 | $200 | Local print shop | Ordered | Delivery due next week |
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# Campaign message worksheet

**Description:** A guide to craft compelling and consistent messages for your advocacy campaign.



**Who is your target audience and who do you want the message to reach?**

E.g. Adults who own or drive a vehicle in Cardinia Shire



**What problem or issue is relevant to this audience?**

E.g. Road safety, access, travel time



**What solution are you offering?**

E.g. Safer and more accessible roads for the community



**How will your solution have an impact?**

E.g. Sealing the roads will reduce the number of road accidents in our community



**What action should your audience take to help secure the solution?**

E.g. Sign our petition today

Write your campaign message using the guidelines to the left. You'll need to create:

1. An attention-grabbing headline
2. Explanation of the problem, solution and impact the solution will have
3. A call-to-action - next steps for the audience to take

## Headline

## Explanation

## Call-to-action

# Campaign planning calendar

This tool will help keep track all of the different activities across various channels and platforms. It can also help with resource planning using the Campaign Resourcing Tracker.

| Marketing Activity | Date | Target audience | Channel | Resource(s) Needed | Owner | Completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E.g. Instagram post | E.g. 11/12/24 | (E.g. Parents, 24-45yrs) | (E.g. Social Media) | (E.g. Social Media expert) | Name of person leading | DD/MM/YY |
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# Social media checklist

## 1. Define your goals

- [ ] Identify objectives: what do you want to achieve? (e.g. raise awareness, gather support, drive action) this should align to the Campaign Strategy Canvas.
- [ ] Set measurable targets: using the Campaign Strategy Canvas, define specific metrics (e.g., number of shares, followers, engagement rate) that will help you understand how successful your content is.

## 2. Know your audience

- [ ] Research your target audience: understand their demographics, interests, and behaviour.
- [ ] Create audience personas: outline key characteristics of your ideal supporters.

## 3. Choose the right platforms

- [ ] Identify suitable platforms: select social media channels that align with your audience (e.g., Facebook, X, Instagram).
- [ ] Create accounts: set up profiles on chosen platforms with consistent branding.

## 4. Develop a content strategy

- [ ] Plan content types: decide on format (e.g., posts, videos, stories, infographics).
- [ ] Create a content calendar: schedule posts to maintain consistency and keep your audience engaged. Leave space for spontaneous posts, e.g. responding to news articles.

## 5. Craft compelling messages

- [ ] Write engaging copy: use clear, concise, and persuasive language to communicate your message using the Campaign Message worksheet.
- [ ] Include calls to action: encourage followers to take specific actions (e.g., sign a petition).

## 6. Establish brand voice

- [ ] Use consistent visuals: work with the same logos, colours, and fonts each time you post.
- [ ] Create eye-catching graphics: use tools like Canva or Adobe Spark to design posts.

## 7. Engage with your audience

- [ ] Respond to comments and messages: foster a sense of community by interacting with followers. Be courteous and humble, and always respectfully disagree.
- [ ] Share user-generated content: highlight posts from supporters to encourage more engagement. Create tags your supporters can use to link all the content together.

## 8. Monitor and analyse performance

- [ ] Track key metrics: track engagement, reach, and conversions for your content.
- [ ] Adjust strategy as needed: review metrics frequently. Analyse what works and refine your message or content based on what the data is telling you.

## 9. Promote your campaign

- [ ] Utilise paid advertising: consider boosting posts or running targeted ads to reach a larger audience and amplify your message.
- [ ] Collaborate with influencers: partner with people who align with your cause to extend your reach.

## 10. Stay informed and adapt

- [ ] Follow trends: keep up with social media trends and platform updates. Understand what the platform will 'favour' e.g. reels over static imagery.

# Media contacts

Below is a list of local and metropolitan media contacts. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list and these details are correct as of September 2024 but things can change. If these have expired, a Google search will help you find new contact details.

## Metropolitan print media, radio and television

| | |
|---|---|
| **Metropolitan print media** | **The Age**<br>Switchboard: 8667 2000<br>Media release: newsdesk@theage.com.au<br>Letters to the editor: letters@theage.com.au<br><br>**Herald Sun**<br>Switchboard: 9292 1226<br>Website: www.heraldsun.com.au/help/storytips<br>Email: news@heraldsun.com.au |
| **Metropolitan radio** | **ABC radio Melbourne**<br>Talkback: 1300 222 774<br>SMS: 0437 774 774<br>Switchboard: 8646 1771<br><br>**3AW**<br>Open Line: 9690 0693 |
| **Television** | **ABC News**<br>Switchboard: 139 994<br>Email: investigations@abc.net.au<br><br>**9 News**<br>Email: contact@9news.com.au<br>A Current Affair email: aca@nine.com.au<br><br>**7 News**<br>SMS/Phone: 0438 777 123<br>Email: tips@7news.com.au |

## Local print media, radio, television and community newsletters

| | |
|---|---|
| **Local print media** | **Pakenham Berwick Gazette**<br>**Pakenham Officer Star News**<br>Main phone: 5945 0666<br>Website: pakenhamgazette.com.au<br>Editorial: editor@starnewsgroup.com.au<br><br>**Ranges Trader Star Mail**<br>Main phone: 5957 3700<br>Website: mailcommunity.com.au<br>Editorial: editor@mailcommunity.com.au |
| **Local radio** | **Sherbrooke Community Radio Club**<br>Email: jmcnabb@jeack.com.au<br><br>**Mountain District Radio Inc 3MDR**<br>Email: office@3mdr.com<br>Website: www.3mdr.com<br><br>**ABC Gippsland**<br>Phone: 5143 5511<br>Website: www.abc.net.au/gippsland |
| **Local television** | **Win News Gippsland**<br>Phone: 5173 7899<br>Email: gipnews@winnetwork.com.au<br>Website: www.wintv.com.au<br><br>**ABC Gippsland**<br>Phone: 5143 5511<br>Website: www.abc.net.au/gippsland |
| **Community newsletters** | Local community newsletters are listed on Cardinia Shire Council's website:<br>www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/communitynewsletters |

# Media contact list

Use this contact list to record relevant media outlets and channels you'll use to raise awareness about your advocacy cause, and the person you're directly dealing with.

As interest or circumstances evolve, these stakeholders will too. It's important to:

1. Research relevant media outlets
2. Identify key journalists and editors
3. Collect contact information (name, email, phone, social media)
4. Note areas of interest or expertise
5. Track past interactions and coverage
6. Schedule regular updates to keep the list current

| Last updated | (DD/MM/YY) | | Next update due | | DD/MM/YY) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Media channel** | **Outlet name** | **Key contact name** | **Job title** | **Contact details** | **Interest and expertise** | **Coverage** |
| E.g. Radio | ABC Radio (Triple J) | Joe Ann | Producer, Hack Program | Phone, email | Access and Inclusion, Politics, Environment | Url/podcast link |
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**Cardinia Shire Council**
Civic Centre
20 Siding Avenue, Officer

PO Box 7
Pakenham 3810 (DX 81006 Pakenham)

Phone: 1300 787 624
Email: mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au
Web: www.cardinia.vic.gov.au

**National Relay Service (NRS)**
TTY: 133 677 (ask for 1300 787 624)
Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay): 1300 555 727 (ask for 1300 787 624)

**Translator Interpretation Service**
131 450 (ask for 1300 787 624)