



Lifeline Australia
Media Relations Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Media Relations Policy	3
1.1 Definitions used in this Policy and Procedure.....	3
1.2 Policy Rationale	3
1.3 Purpose	3
1.4 Responsibilities.....	4
1.5 Target audiences	5
1.6 Key messages	6
1.7 Compliance.....	6
1.8 Conflict/Dispute Resolution.....	6
1.9 Review and Amendment of Policy	7

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1. Media Relations Policy

Last Updated:	29 January 2017
Status:	Final
Custodian:	Public Affairs Manager
Contact:	E: media@lifeline.org.au T: 0408 407 376
Authority:	CEO
Authorisation:	Lifeline Australia Board
Review date:	30 January 2018
Publication date:	29 January 2017
Related Policies	Lifeline Australia Membership Policy Lifeline Australia Government Relations Policy Lifeline Key Messages Briefing Pack Lifeline Brand and Communications Guidelines Trade Mark Licensing Agreement
This policy applies to:	Members (including any entities or business units controlled by the Member that deliver Lifeline services), Lifeline Australia and Lifeline Centres

1.1 Definitions used in this Policy and Procedure

Lifeline Australia – National Office.

Members – means an Affiliate Member and a Non-Affiliate Member as prescribed by Lifeline Australia's Constitution.

Lifeline Centres – means a separately accredited location or locations, including the personnel, equipment and facilities at those locations, from which Lifeline Services are supplied

Lifeline Network in Australia – The Lifeline Australia Member Organisations, Lifeline Centres and Lifeline Australia.

1.2 Policy Rationale

This policy has been created to promote a clear and consistent approach to national, State/Territory and local media activities. It aims to build on Lifeline's strong brand and reputation by promoting open communication and collaboration between Lifeline Australia and Lifeline Centres.

Please contact Lifeline Australia's Public Affairs Manager (0408 407 376, media@lifeline.org.au) with any questions relating to this policy, or to request a copy of the Media Relations Action Plan.

1.3 Purpose

To ensure Lifeline Australia and Lifeline Centres are early, engaged and constructive contributors in public discourse; with clear and consistent messages that the media trusts and relies on for expert comments on suicide.

Our media relations activities must ensure:

- Lifeline Australia and the Lifeline Network speak with a singular, coordinated and powerful external ‘voice’;
- The organisation’s brand and reputation are protected and grown;
- Lifeline continues to receive extensive media interest and coverage; and
- There is widespread media promotion of positive help seeking messages.

These outcomes will be best achieved through both Lifeline Australia’s national media activities and by leveraging the Lifeline Network’s collective reach and impact at the local level.

1.4 Responsibilities

In adhering to this policy:

Lifeline Australia must:	Lifeline Centres must:
Consult with Lifeline Centres on media comments where relevant and practical to do so	Only undertaking media relations activities on matters with Federal or State/Territory-wide* significance if approved by and in concert with Lifeline Australia
Provide information around media activities in a timely manner	Seek advice or clarification from Lifeline Australia on matters early
Align media content to Lifeline Australia's Media Relations Policy, ABC Strategy and key organisational priorities	Align media content to Lifeline Australia's Media Relations Policy, ABC Strategy and key organisational priorities
Remain apolitical and not make comment on political matters	Remain apolitical and not make comment on political matters Note: see the media messages briefing pack for principles around commenting on social policy matters.
Share evidence-base with Lifeline Centres and, where requested, clarify or explain our position in a timely manner	Work with Lifeline Australia and the Lifeline Research Foundation to ensure evidence-led and appropriate** public commentary, including perspectives from local communities
Respond to any concerns or queries as early as practically possible	Never intentionally speaking out in a way that negatively impacts Lifeline's brand and reputation, and therefore it's accessibility to help-seekers, including maintaining the confidentiality of internal discussions and decision-making processes.
Adhere to the Brand and Communications Guidelines.	Adhere to the Brand and Communications Guidelines (a copy can be provided upon request).
Not comment on individual cases of suicide or attempted suicide except where there is overwhelming helpseeker interest to do so.	Not comment on individual cases of suicide or attempted suicide except where there is overwhelming helpseeker interest to do so.
Show extreme caution when commenting on contemporary events and their potential implications regarding the causes of suicide. This means generally avoid linking specific events to	Show extreme caution when commenting on contemporary events and their potential implications regarding the causes of suicide. This means generally avoid linking specific events to suicide trends (except

suicide trends (except where there is substantial evidence to the contrary)	where there is substantial evidence to the contrary)
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*With the exception of where there is only one Member in a State/Territory.

**In ensuring 'appropriate' public commentary around suicide and mental health, Lifeline adheres to the guidelines set by the Australian Government's Mindframe National Media Initiative (Mindframe) that encourages responsible, accurate and sensitive representation of mental illness and suicide in the Australian mass media. Recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- Avoiding language that presents suicide as desired outcome, i.e. 'successful suicide'. Instead, we should use phrases like 'took their own life' or 'died by suicide'
- Avoiding outdated phrases that associate suicide with 'crime' or 'sin', i.e. 'commit suicide'
- Avoiding reporting explicit detail about method
- Minimising details about death including method and location
- Promoting help-seeking information
- Respecting people's grief and privacy in the period immediately following a death

Open and destigmatised discussion of suicide encourages help-seeking and offers hope to those most vulnerable. It is an important aspect of Lifeline's role in changing community perceptions around suicide and building resilience.

It is required that Centre Managers and other staff who engage with media familiarise themselves with the Mindframe guidelines, found at www.mindframe-media.info.

1.5 Target audiences

Media relations activities should target:

- National media (TV, radio, print);
- Local media;
- Online news media and high profile blogs; and
- Specialised media (LGBTI, Indigenous, etc.)

In growing and protecting our brand and reputation, **Lifeline Australia limits national media spokespeople to the following people:**

- Chair, Lifeline Australia
- CEO, Lifeline Australia
- Executive Director, Lifeline Research Foundation
- Public Affairs Manager, Lifeline Australia

Others may only speak to national media outlets where prior verbal or written consent has been granted by Lifeline Australia's Public Affairs Manager (0408 407 376, media@lifeline.org.au). Lifeline Australia commits to providing prompt responses.

This policy advises that Lifeline Centres each have a single spokesperson and point of contact when dealing with local media and provide these details to Lifeline Australia's Public Affairs Manager. Similarly, it is the responsibility of Lifeline Centre Managers to ensure staff and volunteers do not contact media, the public and external organisations on behalf of Lifeline

without the express prior approval of the Lifeline Centre Manager. In granting any such approval, the Lifeline Centre Manager is required to act in accordance with this policy. If a staff member or volunteer becomes aware of media interest, they must notify their direct manager and/or the Lifeline Centre Manager as soon as possible.

While Lifeline Centre Managers have authority to delegate spokesperson responsibilities at the local level, the Lifeline Centre Manager remains accountable for any public comments made on behalf of their organisation. The principles and decision making process identified in this document must still be adhered to when adapted to the local context.

1.6 Key messages

To ensure clear and consistent messages across the Lifeline Network, Lifeline Australia has prepared the Key Messages Briefing Pack. This document - available upon request - includes a set of responses on reoccurring topics. Lifeline Centre spokespeople and representatives must adhere to these messages and principles at all times, while providing additional local information or de-identified anecdotes where appropriate.

Lifeline Centres must work closely with Lifeline Australia to ensure consistent national messaging, tailored to local regions.

The Key Messages Briefing Pack can also act as a resource for staff members, volunteers and members of governance structures, acknowledging that we all have an opportunity to be community brand ambassadors and help create a suicide-safe Australia. This policy outlines how such roles should be performed within our broader organisational objectives.

The Public Affairs Manager is available to provide input/feedback on media issues and can be contacted 8:30am-6pm (Mon-Fri) via the Lifeline Australia via 0408 407 376 or media@lifeline.org.au. Please leave a message if you cannot get through, and you will be responded to as soon as possible.

1.7 Compliance

The Lifeline Australia Constitution requires Member compliance with all policies as a condition of maintaining Lifeline accreditation. Failure to abide by this policy will therefore constitute a breach of accreditation requirements. With a view to ensuring that the Lifeline network and brand is protected, the Constitution provides for Lifeline Australia to:

- review a Lifeline Centre's Accreditation where there are reasonable grounds to do so; and
- suspend or terminate a Lifeline Centre's Accreditation but only where there are significant concerns, notice and an opportunity to answer the concerns has first been provided to the Lifeline Centre and Lifeline Australia has tried to assist the Centre to remedy the concerns.

1.8 Conflict/Dispute Resolution

If a situation arises between Lifeline Australia and a Lifeline Centre/Lifeline Member relating to the application of this policy that cannot be resolved through routine consultation, the dispute will be subject to the resolution process detailed in Lifeline Australia's Membership Policy.

Lifeline Australia's Membership Policy is available at: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/about-lifeline/corporate-governance/our-corporate-governance>

1.9 Review and Amendment of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Lifeline Australia will maintain a register of issues arising under the Policy to be addressed at the time of review of the policy. The existing policy will remain current until such reviews have been undertaken and communicated to the Lifeline Network.