



**Southern PR is expert at writing and distributing media releases. The company works to ensure your key messages are prioritised and that your story is put across in the way which provides the best potential for media pickup. Southern PR also accesses up-to-date media lists that target your specific media markets. The following guide was compiled by Tourism New Zealand for those who prefer to have a go themselves.**

## **WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE**

1. The first paragraph should sum up the content of the release in one sentence of no more than 25 words.
2. The release should be written in inverted pyramid form with the most important facts at the top working down to the least important facts towards the end. Editors often shorten articles and release from the bottom upwards. However, if tightly constructed your release could be used in full.
3. Writing media releases is not a complicated or difficult exercise. In effect, all you are doing is listing a sequence of facts. The most difficult part is getting your own thoughts in order.
4. When writing a release, take time to think about what you want to say. Make a list of the key points you want to include. To do this, ask yourself basic questions like these;

What? When? Who? Where? Why? How?

So you might end up with something like this...

What?	A luxury lodge set in four acres of expansive gardens.
When?	Opening late September
Who?	John and Sally Ward
Where?	Queenstown, New Zealand
Why?	To realise a lifetime dream, a lifestyle change
How?	Worked together for more than a year to create six luxury units.

*Note: The order is flexible depending on the subject matter*

5. Not all your thoughts may fit into one of these questions, but they are a good guideline to get you started.
6. Don't waffle. Try to keep your sentences short. The ideal sentence is 18 – 25 words long. A few more won't hurt, but if it is too long, look at it again and see if you can break it into two.



7. Quotes make a story real, and can liven it up. Try to include one or two in your media release. Use conversational language.
8. If you are having trouble writing the release, put it away, and think about it over the next few hours, or days (if you have the time).
9. Remember though, often the first inspiration is the best.
10. Give your release a relevant and punchy heading and centre it on the page. A good heading will convey the main message of the release at a glance and should draw the reader into the story.
11. Keep it short and keep it simple – no more than two double spaced A4 pages.
12. Don't use slang or local jargon in the release. In the text, numerals from one to nine should be written in words, and 10 upwards in figures.
13. Think about submitting a release to your local daily or suburban newspaper for starters. Remember though, your release must have a catch – a hook to hang the story on.
14. Always remember to put your contact details on the bottom of the release.
15. Media releases with good accompanying photographs are often more likely to be used.

*... supplied courtesy of Tourism New Zealand*