

# Working with the Media and Communications Unit

The Media and Communications Unit (MCU) is a small team of communications specialists who work with academic, TAFE and corporate staff to gain positive media coverage for the university and enhance communication with a number of key Swinburne stakeholders.

## Media:

The MCU's responsibilities include:

- managing Swinburne's **Media Centre**: see [www.swinburne.edu.au/chancellery/mediacentre/media-centre](http://www.swinburne.edu.au/chancellery/mediacentre/media-centre): includes media releases, online experts guide, links to Swinburne publications
- dealing with **media questions** and enquiries
- linking media with **staff experts**
- gaining journalists' interest in Swinburne stories, through **media releases** and phone contact
- providing **media training** and advice to staff
- offering **editorial assistance**
- **issues** and **crisis** management
- **monitoring Swinburne's coverage** in the media and appropriate internal distribution – contact Kate Ducardus to sign up – [kducardus@swin.edu.au](mailto:kducardus@swin.edu.au)
- running a **daily Sector News Service** to staff subscribers – includes significant Swinburne coverage, sector news and relevant news stories – contact Kate Ducardus to sign up – [kducardus@swin.edu.au](mailto:kducardus@swin.edu.au)

## Media opportunities for staff (Australian and international media)

### 1. Expert commentary

Every year the MCU produces a guide for journalists that outlines Swinburne's researchers, their areas of expertise and direct contact details. Swinburne staff who are included in the guide need to be willing to comment to journalists about their area of expertise, and need to be able to respond to journalists' enquiries in a prompt manner. To be included in the experts guide, please contact Lea Kivivali – [lkivivali@swin.edu.au](mailto:lkivivali@swin.edu.au). See:

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/chancellery/mediacentre/media-centre/find-an-expert>

The MCU can also pitch a staff member as an expert commentator if there are any topical stories or issues happening in the media that relate to their area of expertise.

### 2. Research

Before releasing Swinburne research to the media, completed research must have been independently examined by a supervisor (for PhD students) or accepted for publication in an academic journal. Please notify the MCU as soon as research has been accepted for publication.

Incomplete research may be publicised, particularly for the purposes of attracting participants for the research, but it must be made clear that research is incomplete and that any conclusions are preliminary.

### 3. Conference papers

If an expert is presenting a conference paper that could interest a broad audience, they should notify the MCU. Conference papers can provide a good opportunity to put research/commentary out to the media.

#### **4. Visiting professors/speakers for seminars hosted at Swinburne**

When Swinburne runs a seminar or public event, then the MCU can generally gain coverage in newspaper event listings. In order to do this, please notify the MCU at least one month in advance. If the event is of interest to a broad audience then it may also gain more comprehensive coverage.

#### **5. Exhibitions/events/launches**

Similarly, for exhibitions, events or launches, please notify the MCU at least one month in advance, as it will give us the opportunity to secure event listings.

#### **6. Academic or student awards/success stories**

If a student or academic has done something out of the ordinary, it may provide a potential media opportunity. This could include student/staff awards or designing an innovative new product. If an award is to be announced please give the MCU as much notice as possible ahead of time.

If you planning on putting out a new student/staff design to the media, IP and patent implications should be considered.

#### **7. Grants and funding**

Grants or funding to undertake new research can attract media attention, although generally the media are more interested in outcomes.

#### **8. New appointments**

Significant staff appointments can gain coverage in sector publications such as Campus Review. These announcements can be made prior to, or on commencement of, the new staff member. New staff members should also notify the MCU of their areas of research and expertise, so that we can keep them in mind for any media enquiries.

#### **9. Opinion pieces**

The MCU can provide editorial assistance and advice to staff wanting to submit an opinion piece to a metropolitan or national print media outlet. Generally we ask that the staff member put together a one-paragraph proposal outlining what they will be arguing. The MCU will then pitch this to an opinion editor. If the editor is interested, the staff member will be asked to write the full piece (generally between 600 and 1000 words, depending on the media outlet).

#### **10. Picture stories**

A story is always more likely to get a run if it is accompanied by a strong visual.

#### **11. Other interesting stories**

There are no hard and fast rules about what will make a good media stories, so please notify the MCU about other activities in the faculty including interesting partnerships with external organisations, interesting projects underway, outreach work or visits to regional schools.

#### **12. Issues Management**

Occasionally sensitive issues arise that need to be carefully managed. The MCU needs to be informed of any potentially negative issues so that an appropriate response to the media can be prepared.

#### **13. Media training:**

The MCU regularly runs media training sessions designed specifically for Swinburne staff members. Run in conjunction with Andrew Dodd a former ABC journalist and reporter at The Australian, the three hour session takes participants through a series of mock interviews.

The session gives participants a snapshot of what is involved in working with the media, how to work with the MCU and what can be done to increase the chances of obtaining positive and accurate media coverage.

The sessions are informal and have been designed to encourage questions and maximise participant interaction. If you are interested in taking part in one of these sessions please contact the MCU.

#### **14. Media Monitoring**

The MCU also provides the university with a media monitoring service. Any print, broadcast or online media coverage that Swinburne receives is collected and distributed to relevant staff throughout the university. You can request copies of specific Swinburne coverage by contacting Kate Ducardus ([kducardus@swin.edu.au](mailto:kducardus@swin.edu.au)).

#### **15. Swinburne magazine**

While the MCU is not responsible for the production of the Swinburne magazine, we work closely with Marketing Services to identify potential story leads. The magazine is distributed three times a year via *The Australian* and *The Age* newspapers.

### **Internal communication:**

The MCU is also responsible for the university's internal communications strategy. This includes both staff and student communications

#### **1. Staff communication**

The MCU is responsible for a number of internal communication tools. If you'd like to communicate with the Swinburne community, the MCU can facilitate this via:

- targeted email to relevant departments or campuses (see <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/chance/communicatingswinburne/communicatingstaff/staff-communication.html>)
- the staff home page
- twice-weekly staff bulletin
- official email - the University's official email policy provides information on what constitutes an official email – basically the email has to be relevant to all staff AND be about key university business (see <http://policies.swinburne.edu.au/ppdonline/showdoc.aspx?recnum=POL/2008/40>)

#### **2. Student communication**

The MCU also puts out a fortnightly e-zine to current students, and regularly updates the current student landing page with news and events.

## Other stakeholder communication

### 1. Alumni Communication

From 2010 the MCU is working with the Alumni's and Development Office on enhancing communication with Swinburne's alumni. If there is anything happening that you think Swinburne alumni would be interested in please contact the MCU. This could include general news, research news, or alumni profiles.

### 2. Communication with communities around Melbourne campuses

The MCU produces a quarterly 'Local update' that goes out to residents surrounding our three Higher Education campuses (Hawthorn, Prahran and Lilydale). This includes updates on building developments, on-campus events and anything else that might be of interest to the local community.

### 3. Communicating Swinburne

The 'Communicating Swinburne' website

<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/chance/communicatingswinburne/> hosts a number of resources designed to help staff communicate consistent messages and up-to-date facts about Swinburne.

Whether preparing for a radio interview, a conference presentation or a publication, you'll be able to convey a message with impact.

Resources include the University's five key messages with a series of corresponding facts and figures; guides to communicating internally and externally; how to work with the media; templates, style guides and publications; an overview of the Swinburne brand and tips for writing a document or speech.