



#ALW2020 media guidelines

Welcome to Adult Learners Week 2020, which is all about making a new start or creating a new future through adult education.

This year's theme is **#ReNewYou** to encourage people to develop new skills in a comfortable learning setting so they can better navigate some of the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

This 'how to guide' has been produced by Adult Learning Australia for use by adult and community education organisations to spread the word about this year's event.

By following the guidelines in this document and using the [resources](#) – social media tiles, template press release, media backgrounder, event guide and checklist, all available at the Adult Learners Week website, you will be able to engage with your local media and make the most of social media opportunities during Adult Learners Week.

This document contains:

- Suggestions on developing story angles that will appeal to your local media
- Suggestions on how to approach your local media
- Information on the Adult Learners Week national media campaign
- Tips and advice for making the most of social media during Adult Learners Week

Adult Learners Week Story Angles

The key objective of undertaking media activity during Adult Learners Week is to boost the profile of your organisation and its activities in your local community.

Adult Learners Week presents you with a reason to get in touch with your local newspaper or radio station to talk about the importance of adult education in your community. And it gives the media a reason to listen to you.

Think about your centre, your students, the courses you offer and the impact that your centre and your students, whether past or present, have had on your local community. What stories could you tell? Some that would make you laugh? Some that make you stand back in amazement? Some that might even make you cry? This will be what your local media is looking for. You should be looking to tell a story to your local media that brings adult learning to life and relates directly to your organisation and your local community.

#ReNewYou is the theme of Adult Learners Week this year. This provides you with an overall 'hook' to hang your story off. Think about how your centre can demonstrate ways in which it has helped empower learners lives to change their lives, especially in

the face of challenges posed by Covid-19. What are their stories? Where were they when you first met them, where are they now? How have your students' lives changed since they discovered the flexible, unique and accessible environment presented by Australia's adult and community education sector. Tell their stories.

There are two basic approaches to developing your story angle:

How to write a case study story

With the case study approach, you are looking to tell a genuine adult learning story. Ask yourself some of the questions above and relate them to your organisation and your students. Who stands out as having a particularly interesting story? Would they be willing to share that story? Remember, the story should be all about how learning has changed their life, and the lives of those around them.

If you have a couple of people in mind, the first step is to approach them and confirm that they are happy for their story to be told, and for the story to possibly appear in local media or on social media.

The next step is to prepare a brief 100 to 150 word summary of their story. Make sure that your story subject is happy with the summary. This forms part of the information that you will approach the local media with.

Available on the Adult Learners Week website is a template local press release. If you take a look at it, you will see that certain sections contain text in both (brackets and italics). These are sections for you to insert your own information or change as you see fit. You can adapt the media release to suit either an Adult Learners Week event or a case study approach.

When completing the template media release, ensure that you remove all brackets and italics. When contacting and sending this to your local media you should send them both the media release and the story summary. You could include the story summary in a covering email. You can also send them the media backgrounder, also available from the website.

You might also have some further information you can provide. Have you had a significant increase in course enquiries or students year on year? Have there been changes at your centre that have improved the learning experience for your students?

If you have a good case study and follow the instructions above, you have a good story.

How to write a story about your event

The second approach to consider is the event approach. The chances are that you already have events or activities going on during Adult Learners Week.

One of the great things about Adult Learners Week is that any activity you have going on from 1 to 8 September can be considered an Adult Learners Week activity. What courses or workshops do you have going on that week? Can you turn these into a 'bring a friend' kind of event to introduce people to your centre? Can they be promoted as an Adult Learners Week event?

Possible events you can create with minimal effort include:

- Existing activities you have taking place during Adult Learners Week
- Event celebrating an anniversary or milestone for your organisation
- An open evening or open day, perhaps with an informed speaker or local celebrity / councillor
- Announcing or launching new courses or a new prospectus
- An event with learners telling their story, such as an open evening

An event will take time to plan, and there will be a cost attached for any catering, but they can be very rewarding both in terms of spreading the word about your centre and attracting new students.

Don't forget to add your event to the national Adult Learners Week event calendar to be in with the chance to win one of five \$1,000 prizes for your centre. We are looking for learning events that capture the spirit and theme of Adult Learners Week and are inclusive, engaging and fun. You can add your event to the #ALW2020 national events calendar at <https://adultlearnersweek.org/add-events-form/>.

If you decide that you will hold your event during Adult Learners Week, simply complete the media release template for use with your local media. You should also invite someone from the local media along, particularly if you involve a local councillor, your mayor, or an expert speaker.

Getting in touch with media

Don't forget, during Adult Learners Week you have a reason to call them; they have a reason to listen to you.

Do you know your local media – newspapers, radio stations, magazines, and television? Do you have any friends or contacts that work for local media? If so, give them a call, find out who you need to talk to, and outline your story idea.

If not, track down the contact details for community media online. Two great resources which will help are:

- National [community radio and television station](#) searchable guide
- Australian [newspaper](#) searchable guide

So you should now have a story to tell and your media contact details. You are ready to go!

Timing is important. With local print media you should be contacting them a week or two out from the date of your event. Regional newspaper deadlines tend to be on a Friday, with publication the following Tuesday.

Radio you should contact a week out from your event. You might not hear anything for a day or two from local radio, but then get a call asking to talk to a spokesperson later that day, so be prepared!

Contacting your local media is simply a case of picking up the phone. Call the media outlet and ask who is the correct person to talk to about a local story to do with your centre and Adult Learners Week. It might be the editor, the newsroom, or a radio producer or presenter.

When you are talking to the correct person, simply tell them that you have a story to tell, let the journalist or reporter know that Adult Learners Week is coming up, that you have prepared a media release, and give them a bit of the story background. Make sure you ask for an email address so you can send the media release and case study (if applicable) to them.

If the journalist is not interested, they will say so. Don't be disheartened. There can be many reasons why journalists don't run stories. If you have followed the simple steps above, you will have a story that will appeal to someone. Simply try the next person on your list.

Don't worry about taking or sending photographs initially. Your local newspaper will normally send a photographer along to take pictures of either a case study subject or your event. If they can't, they might ask that some be provided. Generally, photographs taken with a smart phone or small digital camera will do.

Adult Learners Week national PR campaign

Adult Learning Australia is undertaking three separate initiatives during Adult Learners Week in addition to providing this local media kit. These are:

- A national audio news release
- A national press release distributed to targeted journalists and hosted online
- Launch event – 1 September (online).

The national audio news release will be broadcast on 2nd September on commercial, local and community radio stations nationally within scheduled news bulletins, and over the course of the week.

The national press release will be hosted online and a proactive media outreach campaign will be undertaken reaching out to education commentators and journalists.

Getting online and social

Adult Learning Australia is undertaking social media activity in support of Adult Learners Week.

To find our social media platforms visit the [Adult Learners Week website](#) and click on the social media icons at the top right of the screen to see what we are saying and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

When posting on social media don't forget to use the Adult Learners Week hashtags. These are:

- #ALW2020
- #RenewYou

We will be active across all platforms prior to and during Adult Learners Week so make sure to check back regularly or search using the hashtags above to see what other organisations are doing and what stories they are telling about how learning changes lives. And don't forget you can share content you like with your own social media followers.

You should also post your own Adult Learners Week stories and photos from events using at least one of the hashtags above. This will enable Adult Learning Australia to track activity in support of Adult Learners Week and also ensure that we see your posts and have the opportunity to share them to a whole new audience.

#ALW2020 #ReNewYou Scholarships

Three [#ALW2020 scholarships](#) will be awarded to outstanding adult learners to enable them to continue learning either by taking a new learning pathway or continue an existing one. Adult learning providers are invited to nominate adult learners who demonstrate the life changing power of adult learning. Nominations close 26 August 2020.

Listing Your Adult Learners Week events

This is a simple process and will not only enable people to discover what is going on during Adult Learners Week in their own neighbourhood, but paints a picture of the range of adult learning activities taking place throughout Australia.

To post your event simply go to the [Adult Learners Week website](#), click on the 'Get Involved' icon on the home page or 'run and event' tab at the top of the page and follow the on-screen instructions to post the details of any event or course you have taking place from 1 to 8 September.

Don't forget to tag it as an Adult Learners Week event. Have a successful and fun Adult Learners Week 2020!