

Editorial/Opinion Piece Template Guide



Purpose

A guide for creating compelling editorial or opinion articles that carry strong, positive images and messages about older people.

To make it easy for marketing and media colleagues/journalists to use your editorial with minimal editing.



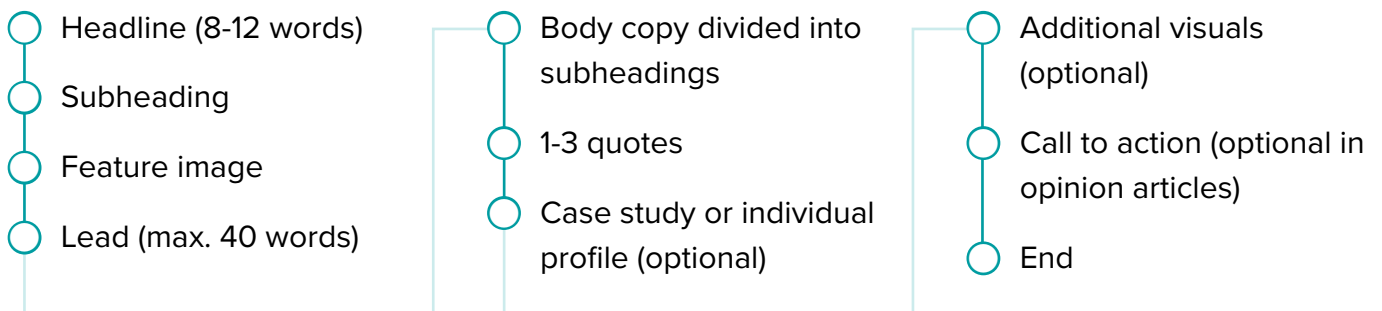
Audience

Internal communication teams, external media agencies.

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[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/
AgePositiveCommunicationToolkit](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/AgePositiveCommunicationToolkit)

Summary of editorial/opinion piece structure



What is an editorial?

An editorial is a short essay that shares an individual's opinion on a current event or social issue. A good editorial aims to persuade the reader to consider your perspective, reflect on their own, and change their opinion. You might use this style to communicate:

- Project outcomes/impact, participant experiences and why they matter
- Program descriptions and achievements, and how this relates to broader issues
- Local impact of global issues, e.g. local efforts to combat ageism and discussion of the wider impacts of ageism and why it is worthy of attention

Before you begin...

- Decide what issue you will write about, clearly define it and think through the various points you want to make. Identify the key point as this may be used in your introduction to draw the reader into the full story.
- Think about your target audience and note down what matters to them. Try to tap into this in your editorial to catch their attention.
- Develop logical arguments and avoid overly emotional rhetoric or offering personal opinions without evidence. Once you've chosen your argument and 'side' of the story, stay consistent throughout the piece.
- Be well-informed; talk to older people who are involved in or impacted by the issue you are addressing, when you are preparing your piece. Include their stories and first-person voices (with permission) where possible.
- Decide what 'voice' to write in; some editorials can be very powerful in the first person, but depending on your topic and your role, this may not be appropriate. For example, a CEO writing in the first person on an issue of concern that is impacting older people can be powerful; likewise, the collective first-person voice of a group of older people can be very effective.



Refer to the editorial/opinion piece template in this toolkit.

Guide continued on the next page

Tips

- 1 Keep paragraphs short: 1-3 sentences maximum, with clear breaks between them. Aim for a maximum editorial length of 2 pages.
- 2 Use subheadings to break up long pieces of copy and catch the reader's attention as they scan the page.
- 3 Pay attention to grammar. This will make life much easier for journalists and media professionals and more likely that they pick up your editorial.
- 4 Journalists on all platforms are seeking shorter stories with a few pictures. If the publication wants more words they will ask.
- 5 Don't forget to include your name or the name of your organisation's spokesperson as well as a direct contact number at the end of the editorial/opinion piece. If the media are interested, they will want to get in touch with someone quickly.

Checklist

Use this checklist once you have written your editorial or opinion piece.

- Does the reader know your opinion on this topic within the first paragraph?
- Does the topic interest the audience it aims to attract?
- Do the headline, subheading and feature image catch the eye and the attention of the reader and leave them with a sense of curiosity and wanting to know more? (You may wish to ask someone else to give you an opinion on this!)
- Does the content flow well? Is it easy to read? (You may wish to ask someone else to give you an opinion on this!)
- Is your argument consistent throughout?

List continued on next page



- Have you checked numbers and data shared in the editorial for maximum accuracy? Have you shared links to original documents that show that data?
- Do your language and images accurately and realistically represent/reflect your message?
- Do the language and images represent positive, non-ageist views of older people?
- Could someone have a diminished view of older age by reading this piece? (If the answer is yes, revise before submitting it!)
- Do your quotes, case studies and additional images add to the story? Do they challenge stereotypes of ageing?
- Has everyone mentioned in the article approved the use of their name or story (where applicable)?
- Have you ensured there is sufficient local content to appeal to your audience? (This could be local, regional, state or national, depending on context)
- Have you included the relevant contact details in case the media want to get in touch?

For more information contact

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