

MCERA'S MAIN SERVICES

Media releases

MCERA prepares and distributes media releases on newly published education research from around the world, with a particular focus on Australian research.

In most instances, this service is only available to researchers affiliated with our Gold and Platinum Sponsors. The research must have been peer-reviewed, for instance via acceptance for publication in a respected journal, or via successful application for an ARC grant.

Sometimes, researchers will approach us with their research that has recently been published or accepted for publication. Other times, we will approach researchers, having been informed of their research by our networks, or found it through our monitoring of online databases.

In all instances, we will assess the research for newsworthiness, and make an independent determination of whether to proceed with a release. If both MCERA and the researcher are happy to proceed, we will then draft a media release drawing out some of the most salient findings of the research, with the researcher's contact details appended.

We then send the draft to the researcher, and work with them to ensure we have all necessary information, and that they feel the release is an accurate representation of their work.

Prior to distribution of the release, we aim to alert other stakeholders, such as university media teams. In some instances, we will also liaise with publishers to arrange open or temporary free access to the article to maximise impact.

With the researcher's agreement, MCERA will pitch the release to our contacts in the media, and/or arrange a time for general distribution to our media lists, at which time we ask the researcher to ensure they are available for contact.

In most instances, our releases are aimed at a media audience, and are not made available to the general public. Our primary goal is not to create content for our own channels, but to improve reporting and use existing media outlets to magnify education researchers' voices.

Expert comment – rapid responses

When an education-related issue hits the news, MCERA rapidly locates key experts on the topic, elicits responses and distributes their comments to journalists, who may choose to use the quotes directly in their stories, as background reading, or as impetus to interview the experts directly.

MCERA welcomes suggestions from researchers on issues to comment on, though will make an independent decision on whether to proceed with any particular engagement.

In general, we ask that researchers write us a comment with a strict limit of 100 to 150 words. Limits may vary, and in some cases we may gather comment via phone interview.

In all cases, a comment should be written in accessible vocabulary and syntax. It should be easy to understand for readers with no tertiary education.

The goal of such a comment is not to convey everything a researcher wishes to say on a topic, but to make one point well, and pique journalists' interest in speaking with them further.

MCERA and the researchers involved will agree with on a time to distribute the comment. The comment will include researchers' contact details, and when it goes out, researchers will be asked to keep close tabs on their phone and email in case a journalist is in touch.

Often, MCERA will need to move fast in these responses, as interest in breaking news may wane within 24 hours. Nonetheless, we aim to alert other stakeholders, such as university media teams, prior to distributing comments.

Expert comment – pre-planned responses

Certain events that prompt discussion of media issues – such as the return to school, NAPLAN testing, exam periods, global days on a theme, and the release of school results – recur at regular intervals. Others can be anticipated, for instance where a date for a significant report has been announced in advance, or where we are advised of upcoming media issues through our networks. In these cases, we seek to elicit comments in the same manner as for rapid responses, but some time ahead of their release. This gives researchers more time to read any relevant materials, formulate their thoughts, and speak with us about how best to approach the engagement.

Expert referrals

MCERA has a detailed database of education experts, extensive networks, and an [Education Research Advisory Panel](#) advising us on the most suitable researchers to comment on a given issue. As such, we are well-positioned to assist journalists to find appropriate experts for their stories. Since MCERA's commencement, this has become an increasingly important aspect of our work, due to a rise in inbound requests from journalists.

Journalists are welcome to contact us any time to make such a request. MCERA contacts relevant researchers to advise them of the request, and ask their permission to pass on contact details, as well as other details that may assist the journalist.

After passing on researchers details and advising journalists' of any constraints on availability the researchers have mentioned, MCERA leaves further correspondence between the journalist and researcher, but is available to provide additional assistance where needed.

We will also advise university media teams of the recommendation.

Media briefings and Q&As

There are education issues that appear in the mainstream media which are complex and difficult for journalists to report on. MCERA media briefings and Q&As provide journalists with up-to-date information on complex issues so they can separate fact from opinion and go back to fundamental research when needed. To avoid geographical constraints and remove logistical barriers, these briefings take place online.

In some cases, MCERA will identify an ongoing issue which is likely to recur in the media cycle, and contact leading researchers well in advance requesting that they prepare a short presentation, participate in a panel discussion, and answer any questions from journalists. In these cases, MCERA has generally looked for presentations of 5 minutes by 3 to 5 panellists, and set aside around 20 minutes for discussion and questions.

In others, MCERA will respond more quickly to an issue in the news cycle, issuing an expert comment and following this up with a Q&A briefing shortly thereafter. In these cases, MCERA has generally looked for presentations of 2 minutes by 2 to 3 panellists, and set aside around 10–15 minutes for discussion and questions.

Media support for education academics

MCERA supports education academics to work more effectively with the media. In particular, MCERA provides one-on-one coaching to support researchers to communicate effectively with the media, and training to groups of researchers. This can range from pointers on how to communicate effectively on different mediums, to drilling on the messaging for a particular interview, to group workshops on media strategy.

The level of such support is tiered based on whether researchers are affiliated with MCERA sponsors, and the level of this sponsorship.

Researchers based at Platinum Sponsors are eligible to receive extensive media coaching, tailored workshops on media engagement, and assistance in conceptualising, composing, and pitching op eds.

Informed Sources

[Informed Sources](#) is a subscription service providing school leaders, educators, parents, researchers and policymakers short, accessible articles on the latest education research. These articles give researchers affiliated with sponsors a chance to get their work directly to educators at the coalface.

We thank all of our sponsors, especially our platinum sponsors



You can find a full list of MCERA's sponsors [here](#). To find out more about supporting our organisation, contact info@mcera.org.au

