

Fact Sheet: Tips for Talk Back Radio

Talk-back radio is a great way to discuss environmental issues. Like letters to the editor politicians monitor talk back programs to gauge public opinion without the filter of 'experts' or 'commentators'. So next time you have an opportunity to make a comment on talk back radio give it a go!

Here are some tips that will assist you with your talkback interview.

Remember to prepared yourself before you make that call.

Before the call

- Why are you calling? To inspire, inform, educate.
- Try to understand your audience. Who is listening to this station, this presenter, during this time? Are they in the office, at home, or driving? Are they elderly, families, or teenagers? You need to find a way to relate to your audience.
- Write down 3-4 main points, keep it simple and have them in front of you when you call. Be sure to practise saying your points out loud.
- While on hold make sure your radio is turned off - listen to the program through the phone.
- Remember to relax - try and imagine that you are going to be talking to ONE friendly listener.

On air

- You don't have much time (60 seconds maximum) so give a quick greeting to the presenter and then get straight to your point. The listener will only get to hear what you say once so be concise and don't waffle.
- Don't read from your notes, talk in a clear voice and focus on your 3-4 main points. Speak clearly and use lots of expression. Being on air can be nerve-racking so be calm and slow down. Remember its like a conversation with ONE friendly listener.
- Use everyday language.
- Make it constructive, and informative. Encourage the listeners to take action, tell a compelling first hand story, give an alarming statistic, give out information (website, phone number, meeting place).
- Try and come across calm and reasonable, remember talk back radio feeds off strong emotions and confrontation.
- Be prepared for criticism from the host. Its ok, you're not trying to convince them it's the audience you're trying to reach.
- Don't get into an argument with the presenter, they are professional arguers your chances of winning are slim. Passion is great but anger comes across poorly on air.
- If the host tries to change topics, agree or disagree quickly - then draw the focus back onto your main points. Use phrases like "You may be right but what I'm concerned about is....."
- For radio it's good to talk in pictures creating imagery for the listener. Describe events, places, people and situations.
- Try to avoid repetitive words like 'you know' 'like' and 'ums'. Try not to shuffle papers, click pens or sniff but remember to breathe and enjoy yourself.
- Remember you're speaking to lots of Australians so don't expect to convince everyone.
- Stand your ground. Your point of view is valid and important, even if the host is hostile. Remember that maintaining your composure builds your credibility.