



Critical Incident Communications Plan

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Objective

This document has been designed specifically for National Sporting Organisations to assist in the implementation of an effective communications strategy during a critical incident.

It can be scaled up or down to suit a critical incident, major event or other contentious issues.

It has been written to complement the AIS Critical Incident Management Framework.

This plan has been written in practical language and designed in chronological order, allowing team members to work through it methodically.

It is broken into three key phases:



“Five Questions in 5 minutes.”
This helps determine the right communications strategy

The steps to take in the first 10–30 minutes to start communicating.

A thorough, chronological task list for the next 24 hours.

Terminology

CIMP	Critical Incident Management Plan
CIMT	Critical Incident Management Team
CICP	Critical Incident Communications Plan
CICT	Critical Incident Communications Team

Critical Incident Communications Functions

This document refers regularly to the roles and responsibilities of the “Critical Incident Communications Team”.

It is recognised that while some NSOs may have well-resourced teams, many either have a single communications person or don’t have a dedicated communications function at all.

Best practice for an effective communications response should include the following functions:

- Communications lead (who should also sit on the NSOs Critical Incident Management Team)
- Media
- Digital (website, social media, multimedia)
- Internal communications
- Stakeholder communications (e.g. sponsors, partners & government)
- Marketing
- Graphic design
- Team assistant

If you have a small or one-person team to cover all these functions, consider getting additional help in the first hours or days.

In the first instance, contact the AIS who can provide support or guidance:

Evie Madden

Strategic Communications Manager

Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

Australian Institute of Sport

Evie.Madden@ausport.gov.au

Consider training other staff in your organisation to help with these functions. For example:

- IT can help with digital work
- HR can help with internal communications
- Commercial, Sponsorship or Legal can help with stakeholder communications.
- The receptionist can play the role of Team Assistant (a critical role)

These staff should be trained to use the tools and templates in this plan.

Alternatively, consider contracting an expert crisis communications consultant to help with your strategy and workload, for example RiskLogic.

Critical Incident Communications Team

Name	Title	Mobile	Email	Function
Jack Lucas	Communication and Marketing Manager	0419 298 172	Jack.lucas@softball.org.au	Comms Lead
Kylie Bloodworth	Comms support	0403 871 394	Kylie.bloodworth@unisport.com.au	Comms Assistant

How this team will communicate

Internal/operational updates:

- Before a critical incident occurs, set up a WhatsApp group for members of Critical Incident Management Team and Critical Incident Communications Team.
- **Note:** Do not rely on group text messages because some parties may drop off group texts, depending on their device (iOS v Android v Google)

Video conferencing

- Zoom

Common documents that can be viewed live anywhere in the world by CICT and CIMT members

- Note: These are the crucial “living documents” such as FAQs, Key Messages or the Facts, Assumptions and Task list which are used by the CIMT to create a “common operating picture”.
- List the path or file name where these are stored. Ensure they can be accessed when all IT systems are down.
 - Google Docs

Pre-Incident Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	This Critical Incident Communications Plan is pre-populated and approved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All stakeholder databases, documents and templates are up-to-date and can be accessed offline/remotely by all members of the Critical Incident Communications Teams.
All members of the Critical Incident Communications Team and reserve communications staff:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have been trained and exercised in the Critical Incident Communications Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have access (including passwords and PIN codes) to relevant platforms and systems including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – media monitoring – media distribution platform – social media accounts – online newspapers – teleconferencing – media database – stakeholder database – CRM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have each other’s mobile numbers stored in their phone and are on a Critical Incident Communications Team internal group (e.g. WhatsApp group).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media spokespeople have been trained.

PHASE 1 – Assess

Take 5-15 minutes to ask 5 questions, then determine the communications strategy

Note: this process can be done in 15 minutes in urgent situations but may take longer if time permits.

1. Are we responsible? Do we own the issue?

Situation	Do we own it?	Options
The incident is a result of our actions.	Yes	Own the issue.
An athlete/partner/supplier contributed to the incident. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate behaviour • equipment failure causes injury • technology supplier fault brings down your IT system 	Yes	Own the issue Potential to carefully share the responsibility (without blame shifting).
Death or serious injury of grassroots player/athlete while participating	Yes	Address the issue
We are a victim but should have had strategies in place to avoid it (e.g. cyber-attack).	Partially	Victim + culprit strategy (a balance between owning the issue and criticising those responsible). Consider a joint strategy with police or other partners.
We didn't cause the incident, we had no way of avoiding it but we have been caught up in it. e.g. pandemic, weather event, explosion, terror attack	No	Communications plan should seek to minimise further damage or injury, demonstrate empathy and action and return to BAU as soon as possible.

2. What are the story ingredients?

This checklist allows the communications team to focus on the critical elements prior to deciding on the appropriate communications strategy.

This tool does **not** change the Critical Incident Management Team’s assessment of the incident. Nor is it designed to produce a score or rating. It simply allows the communications lead to frame the issue, consider the impact and help determine the appropriate strategy.

Run through this list of questions and tick the relevant statements, then make sure our communications strategy addresses these factors.

	Ingredient	Consideration	Yes?
1	Injury / Illness / Death / Damage	<p>No current or likely illness, injury, death or damage.</p> <p>One person injured or ill.</p> <p>Level of illness, injury, death or damage is currently minimal but could grow.</p> <p>Multiple people injured or ill.</p> <p>Significant level of illness, injury, death or damage.</p>	
2	Training, preparation & performance	<p>BAU training and preparation can be maintained through workarounds.</p> <p>Potential to disrupt training or preparation</p> <p>Potential to significantly impact performance</p>	
3	Current media / social media coverage	<p>Minimal.</p> <p>Manageable.</p> <p>Growing.</p> <p>Intense.</p>	
4	Number of stakeholders impacted	<p>Relatively few people impacted.</p> <p>Likely to be contained to a small stakeholder group only.</p> <p>Potential for 100s of people to be impacted.</p> <p>Multiple stakeholder groups definitely impacted.</p>	
5	Voices in the story (who might speak	<p>There are minimal voices in the story, with minimal influence or reach.</p>	

	Ingredient	Consideration	Yes?
	publicly about the issue)	<p>Potential for multiple voices / opinions with mainstream reach.</p> <p>Many influential voices / opinions with national or international reach.</p>	
6	Governance	<p>World governing body, AIS, AOC, IOC, SIA or WADA not likely to be interested?</p> <p>Likely to generate interest, public commentary or criticism from world governing body, AIS, AOC, IOC, SIA or WADA</p>	
7	Likely duration	<p>Likely to be a 24-hour event/story. Issue may run out of oxygen tomorrow.</p> <p>Potential to keep growing into a multi-day/week event or story.</p>	
8	Containment	<p>Can be contained by quick/decisive action.</p> <p>Likely to continue growing, regardless of our response.</p>	
9	Location	<p>Contained to one location.</p> <p>Multiple locations / time zones.</p>	
10	Political landscape	<p>Likely to be minimal interest or response from Sports Minister.</p> <p>Sports Minister may seek answers, raise concerns or comment publicly about it.</p> <p>This is a hot political issue that will definitely create debate and discussion.</p>	
11	Victim versus culprit	<p>We are a victim.</p> <p>We are a victim and a culprit (e.g. we are a victim of data theft, but we failed to prevent the theft).</p> <p>We are culprit but there are other culprits.</p> <p>We are the sole culprit.</p>	
12		Unlikely to result in litigation, charges or compensation.	

	Ingredient	Consideration	Yes?
	Legal / compensation	Could result in litigation, charges or compensation.	
13	Constraints	<p>We can communicate the issue fully and transparently.</p> <p>There are legal, privacy, safety, security or other reputational issues that constrain our ability to be fully transparent.</p>	
14	Track record	<p>We have a strong record. This is a first time or one-off problem.</p> <p>We have a poor or growing track record.</p>	
15	Opportunity	<p>There is an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive</p> <p>Minimal opportunity to create an upside</p>	

3. Who are our most critically impacted stakeholders?

NOTE: A comprehensive Stakeholder List can be found in the Critical Incident Management Plan and should include all names, titles, emails and mobile phone numbers. It should also include the name of the person in the organisation who manages the relationship and will be the conduit for communication during a critical incident.

Use the table below to quickly list the most important impacted stakeholders. That is, the critical people/organisations we need to communicate with immediately.

Put ourselves in their shoes. What do they need or want to know?

#	Stakeholder group	What do they need / want to know?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

4. Who is our spokesperson / spokespeople?

OPTION	PROS	CONS
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates gravity and leadership. • Reinforces standards and values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative exposure for CEO. • Potentially overaccentuates the gravity of the issue. • Exposure to other unrelated issues.
Secondary spokesperson (e.g. High Performance, Integrity, Commercial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an option to escalate to CEO, if required. • Can downplay the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that we are not taking it seriously. • Criticism that CEO has not fronted.
Head Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually located on site with the team/media • Strong relationships with media • Contains the issue to the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't allow a 'corporate' response. • Can have limited media experience
Athlete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to take ownership or responsibility • Can increase trust and transparency • Can release the pressure valve, allowing athlete to then focus on performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can increase pressure on athlete • Exposes athlete to questions beyond their remit • Potential to stray from key messages • Can be distracting and stressful
Joint media conference with other spokesperson (e.g. AOC, sponsor, police, DFAT. Etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single location & time (usually easier for media) • Ability to prep together and agree on messaging • United front, singing from the same song sheet • Can deflect questions to the other spokesperson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for mixed messages. • Relies on solid relationship and full agreement on messaging

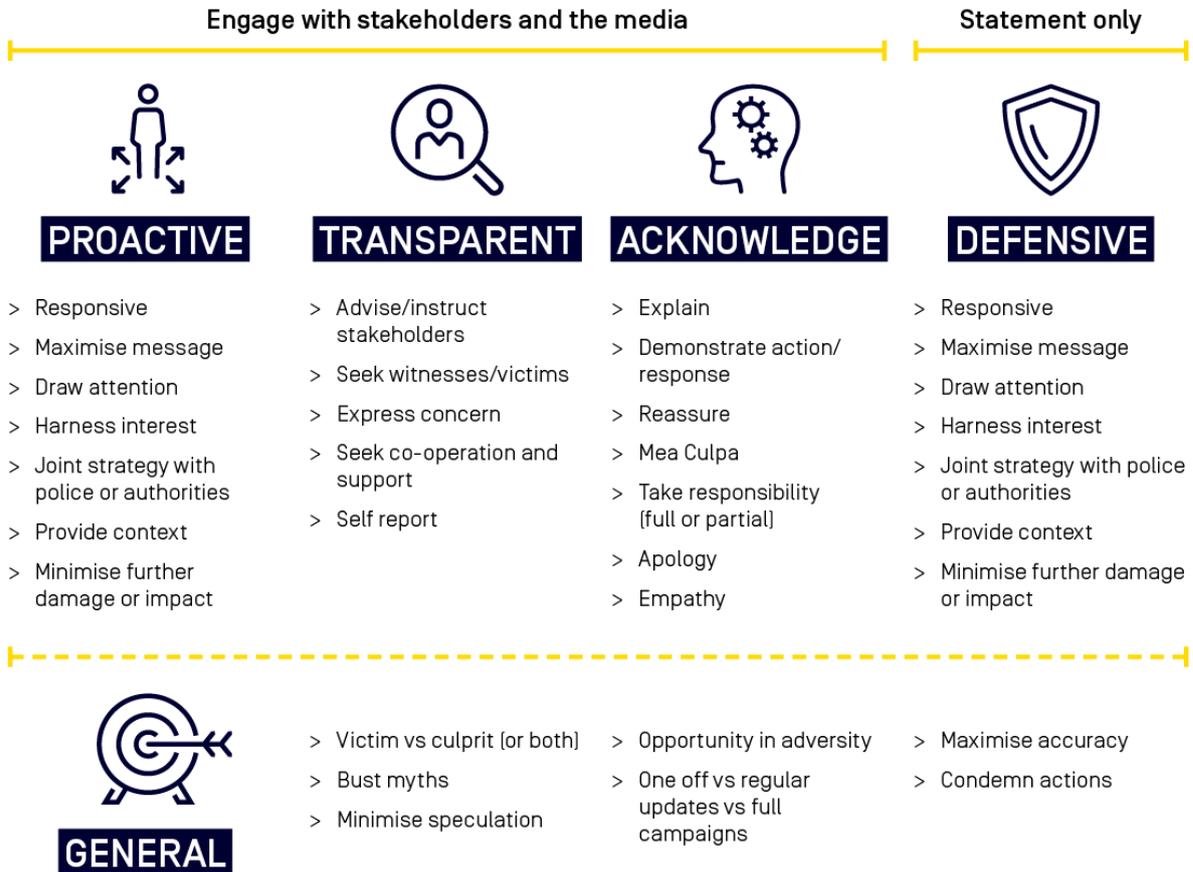
Who are our spokespeople? Have they been media trained?

Name	Title	Areas of expertise	Last time media trained?
Name	Title	Insert	Date?

Name	Title	Insert	Date?
Name	Title	Insert	Date?
Name	Title	Insert	Date?

5. What are our strategic communications goals?

Based on the reputational impact and the affected stakeholders, tick the most appropriate strategic goals of our **communications strategy**, then design the communications strategy to address these goals.



Proactive Media Tactics (when the news has not yet broken)

Tactics	What we should do
Restricted release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding statement only to media and stakeholders who ask for it. • Plan for rollout of full communications strategy once news has broken.
Exclusive drop to key journalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weigh up the risk/reward. • Target preferred journalist/platform. • Roll out full communications strategy once the story runs.
Proactive newspaper drop + Day 2 rollout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on embargo with targeted newspapers and brief journalists. • Roll out full communications strategy on Day 2.
Media release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release statement to all media and/or market. • Assess need for follow up interviews or media conference.
All-in media conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-in media conference. • Consider follow up interviews (e.g. TV, radio, video message for digital channels and EDM). • Consider full communications strategy utilising marketing channels (e.g. newsletters, fact sheets, advertising, videos, etc.).

Reactive Media Tactics (when the news has already broken)

Tactics	What we should do
Media release only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send media release to all media. • Add media release to digital channels. • Send media release to key stakeholders with any additional messaging.
Media conference only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-in media conference. • Prepare communications strategy to address the subsequent coverage.
Joint media conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media conference with partner or emergency services. • Prepare communications strategy to address the subsequent coverage.
Media conference plus full communications strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media conference + follow up interviews + full communications & marketing strategy.

For each of the strategies, we should:

- Closely monitor the coverage and commentary closely including:
 - Traditional media
 - Social media
 - Stakeholder feedback loops

- Continually reassess the appropriateness of the chosen strategy.
- Plan to escalate to a different strategy at short notice.

Communications Strategy for CIMT Endorsement

Adapt this template to suit our needs and objectives, then submit it to the Chair of the Critical Incident Management Team for formal endorsement.

Jack Lucas Communications & Marketing Manager recommends the following communications strategy based on the facts and assumptions we have at hand as at **XX:XX am/pm**. The communications team will continue to monitor the situation and will make an updated recommendation if required.

Example A

(Note: this is the recommended option in response to a critical incident, unless extenuating circumstances apply)

We will implement a **thorough and proactive communications strategy** that engages with as many of our stakeholders as possible, using all relevant communication channels including harnessing the media to maximise our reach and counteract the negative commentary. The **objective** is to explain the situation, provide empathy, maximise transparency, demonstrate our commitment to addressing the issue, provide advice and reassurance to our stakeholders, build trust and minimise any additional impacts. This includes providing media interviews either (a) via a single 'all-in' media conference or (b) on a case by case basis, pending requests.

Example B

We will implement a **targeted communications strategy** that communicates directly with the most impacted stakeholders using our direct and 'owned' channels. Our initial media response will be restricted to a holding statement, with the potential to escalate to a media release, interviews or media conference if required. The **objective** is to only target those people affected, while reassuring our stakeholders, maximising accuracy and busting myths. We may carefully deflect responsibility to the parties that are to blame and/or defer the matter to the authorities. We will assess media interview requests on a case by case basis but are likely to decline them unless the situation changes. An alternative is to provide an exclusive interview to (insert targeted journalist).

Example C

(Note: this is rarely the recommended option in a critical incident)

We will implement a **limited communications strategy**, where a holding statement is provided only to those media who make enquiries. This statement will be used to communicate with a narrow range of stakeholders on an as-need basis. This strategy recognises that (a) there are legal or financial constraints and/or (b) there is reputational risks associated with communicating which outweigh the reputational damage we are likely to sustain for not engaging and/or (c) proactively engaging would add fuel to a story that has a high potential of dying naturally. The **objective** is to remain a small target, contain the information flow and minimise coverage. We will decline all interview requests.

Our communications strategy will include the following:

Stakeholder / channel	What	To do	Consider
Media	<p>Holding statement</p> <p>Media release</p> <p>Media release + media conference</p> <p>Media release + media conference + additional interviews</p> <p>Other proactive opportunities (e.g. Op-ed piece, speaking opportunities)</p>	Insert Yes/No	Insert Yes/No
Internal	<p>Staff / team email with media release, key messages and FAQs</p> <p>Reminder not to comment on social and refer all media to Comms</p> <p>Staff / team meeting</p> <p>Intranet</p> <p>Video message</p> <p>Digital screens</p>		
General	<p>Updated scripts and FAQ for switchboard</p> <p>Key information, FAQ and video on website</p> <p>Full use of social media including responding to complaints and questions</p>		
Govt agencies & Ministers	Direct phone call / email		
World governing body	Direct phone call / email		
Partners in sport - AOC,	Direct phone call / email		

Stakeholder / channel	What	To do	Consider
state bodies, clubs			
Sponsors and other partners	Direct phone call + follow up email with media release, fact sheet and FAQ Ongoing stakeholder follow up as required		
Fan & “(Sport) Family” databases	Email or video message from spokesperson / CEO / athlete / coach Fact sheets & FAQs Text message with link to web content		
Fans at matches / events	Big screen message Electronic signage On ground announcement Match program		
Feedback loops	Monitor, assess and respond to stakeholder feedback via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generic inbox • switchboard • social media • talkback radio & traditional media • stakeholder meetings 		
Marketing	One off print ad Targeted social media campaign Full marketing campaign Review and cancel any inappropriate collateral		
Victims / family	Initial calls or message from CEO / Legal (to be nominated)		

Stakeholder / channel	What	To do	Consider
	Nominated Family Liaison Officer (insert name) to manage personal liaison with victims and/or family, in collaboration with DFAT, emergency services or relevant authorities.		
Joint or collaborative strategy	Collaboration with emergency services or partner to maximise communication and share responsibility/workload		

<p>Recommended by:</p> <p>Name: Insert name</p> <p>Title: Insert title</p> <p>Time & date: Insert time & date</p>	<p>Endorsed by the Critical Incident Management Team:</p> <p>Name: Insert name</p> <p>Title: Insert title</p> <p>Time & date: Insert time & date</p>
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PHASE 2 – Stabilise

Four critical actions once the strategy is endorsed

1. Write a holding statement and get it approved (FIRST 10 MIN)

A swift holding statement demonstrates we are on top of the issue and that we are acting quickly to address the issue. It provides confidence, certainty and transparency.

It does not need to be detailed. A second or third version can be issued as more information becomes known.

Communicate early and often, rather than waiting to verify or collate all the facts into one single statement.

Basic requirements in a holding statement:

1. Acknowledge the incident.
2. What we know i.e. the who, what when and where (the “why and how” may be unknown)
3. What we don’t know
4. Myth busting – correct any inaccurate information or reporting
5. What we are doing about it
6. Empathy and concern
7. Silver linings (if appropriate)
8. Commit to updates
9. Follow us on social or website

HOLDING STATEMENT TEMPLATE

This template has been written for an incident that kills or injures people.

It can be adapted to other scenarios using the Prewritten Key Messages in **Tool 7**.

Details can be edited out or added in. Our first statement may be restricted to the first 2-3 pars. A second or third statement can be issued once more details are known.

HEADLINE: (NSO) responding to (insert incident)

(NSO) is (aware of / responding to / investigating) a report of (incident) at (location) at approximately (insert international and local time).

What we know

Information received to date suggests (insert known facts).

What we don't know

The full details are still emerging. We don't yet know (insert unknowns). However, we are working closely with (insert partner or govt agency) to obtain the facts.

Myth bust

We can confirm (insert myth) has not occurred and wanted to reinforce that comments on social media that suggest (insert myth) are incorrect. Insert correct information.

What we are doing about it

A senior response team has been stood up and is working around the clock with our team members in (insert location) to assist our athletes, staff and the local authorities. XXXXX will be travelling to / is already on their way to (insert city) to provide assistance and support.

The welfare/safety/security/privacy of our athletes and staff is our greatest priority right now, and we are doing everything in our power to help them.

We are updating our athletes' families with whatever verified information we can provide them.

If there are any family members who we haven't yet been able to reach, please call us on (insert number) and you will be put through to the appropriate person.

Express empathy and concern

Everyone at (NSO) and the wider (sport) family are deeply shocked / appalled / saddened by this event.

It is a traumatic event, and an unspeakable tragedy for XXXXX's family and friends, and we extend our deepest and most heartfelt sympathies to them at this very difficult time.

Our thoughts are with the other Australian and international athletes who have been caught up in this, and also for the people of (insert city) who extended such a warm welcome to our team when they arrived there on (insert day).

Silver linings (if appropriate)

If there has been any positives out of today, it is the way our team has responded.

I have been told that (e.g. insert anecdote of athletes or support staff who acted quickly or put themselves in danger to help others, team doctor or physio treated local victim).

They constantly make us proud when they represent Australia (on the field/track/in the pool, etc) and now they have made us even prouder with their selfless actions in these extremely difficult circumstances.

Thank the public

We are being inundated with messages of support and we thank our fans and the wider public for their care and concern.

Where to get updates

We will provide updates as soon as we have them. In the first instance please check in at (insert URL) and/or follow us on Twitter/Facebook where we will post any new information that becomes available.

Media contact name: Jack Lucas

Mobile phone number: +61419298172

Email: jack.lucas@softball.org.au

2. Ring around of high priority stakeholders (FIRST 30 MIN)

Based on the authorised statement, do an immediate ring around of our highest priority stakeholders who need / deserve an update before we speak to the media.

Why?

- ensure they hear from us first, before they hear it in the media.
- minimise the chance of them speaking out against us.
- maximise the chance of retaining them as a champion.

What to tell them?

- provide them with the holding statement.
- reassure them we are on top of it.
- commit to ongoing updates.
- provide name and number of their appointed liaison person.
- take on board their questions or concerns and feed them back into the CICT and CIMT

3. Write key messages (FIRST 30 MIN)

There should be one set of key messages.

Once approved, they provide the foundation for all stakeholder communication. They can be adapted to suit each audience, but the central messaging should be consistent across all audiences.

Ensure the key messages address questions coming in via feedback loops, including questions from journalists, stakeholders, the switchboard and people on social media.

It is recommended that these key messages are tested with the spokesperson against likely questioning to ensure they will be suitable and robust.

Functional messages	Human messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who, What, When, Where, Why, How• Degree of impact• What we don't yet know• What does it mean for stakeholders?• What should stakeholders do - instructions, warnings, recommendations.• Contact details for more information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy• Apology• Condolences• Condemn actions of perpetrators• What we are doing about it• Will work hard to rectify or prevent repeat event• Working closely with authorities• Commitment to transparency and updates• Data to reinforce positive or provide context
Proof points	
<p>Supporting data, evidence or information that reinforces our position.</p> <p>Can include research, statistics, track record etc.</p> <p>Must be irrefutable and relevant to the situation.</p>	

4. Write a media release

Update the initial holding statement into a formal media release.

The media release should be based heavily on the approved key messages.

Including spokesperson quotes will increase the expectation that the spokesperson is available for follow up interviews.

If we don't intend to make someone available for interview, attribute any quotes to the generic "a (NSO) spokesperson".

Provide the necessary media contact person, should any points need clarification, or you are seeking to do interviews.

PHASE 3 – Remedy

Task list for Critical Incident Communications (roles & responsibilities)

This run sheet provides a thorough checklist of all the tactics that should be considered once the communications strategy and messaging has been authorised and released.

It is recognised that many NSOs may have only one communications person covering all functions. However, it has been colour coded by function to assist with delegation where possible.

The run sheet is loosely chronological. Tasks can be executed out of order or not at all, depending on the situation.

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
1	Write draft holding statement (see template at Phase 2).	Media	
2	Coordinate onsite media marshalling area	Media	
3	<p>Assess the issue and determine the strategy (see Phase 1)</p> <p>Submit communications strategy and holding statement to CIMT Leader for approval.</p> <p>Update the CIMT re:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of media interest and flavour of the reporting. • Commentary from other stakeholders. • Where the story is likely to go. • Next steps. 	Communications lead	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
4	Ring around high priority stakeholders. Relay the holding statement, provide a dedicated point of contact and commit to regular updates.	Stakeholder communications	
5	Look after the receptionist! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give them the holding statement, key messages and/or FAQs. Consider a 2nd call taker to provide backup. 	Team Assistant	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email all staff with holding statement and any additional instructions, with a reminder about not commenting on social media and referring any media calls to Communications. Put message on intranet and other internal channels. 	Internal Communications	
7	Clear the CEO's diary.	Communications lead	
8	Facilitate meeting of Critical Incident Communications functions (see meeting agenda at Tool 3).	All	
9	Get help from AIS Comms or engage an external crisis communications consultant (e.g. RiskLogic).	Communications lead	
10	Start a Communications Log, with timecodes (see Tool 10).	Team Assistant	
11	Set up Critical Incident Communications Centre (see Tool 9).	Team Assistant	
12	Liaise with CEO about contacting victims or family members.	Communications lead	
13	Forward landline numbers to mobiles (if relocating to Comms Centre)	All	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
	Record voicemail on mobile phone asking people to send text messages instead of leaving a voicemail.		
14	Ensure entire communications team can see live version of CIMT's Fact & Assumption log.	Team Assistant	
15	Manage incoming media calls, log the questions and angles.	Media	
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor talkback radio and TV. • Task media monitoring contractor to increase monitoring and frequency of alerts. 	Media	
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase social media monitoring and sentiment analysis • Provide regular analysis to Communications lead for feedback to CIMT • Immediately escalate contentious or high profile posts. 	Digital Media	
18	Capture relevant clips, links and screengrabs and save centrally.	Team Assistant	
19	Get copies of statements or media releases from other parties.	Team Assistant	
20	<p>Ensure strong feedback loops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor questions and comments coming in via receptionist, social media, fans & staff. • Provide summary to Communications lead so they can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – update CIMT and, – feed it into an FAQ document. 	Internal Communications	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write key messages (make use of pre-written messages at Tool 7). Write media release Get them approved by delegated approver / CIMT Leader. 	Media	
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write FAQs based on approved key messages. Continually update and timestamp it so readers know how up to date it is. This should be a “single source of truth”. 	Internal Communications	
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide FAQs to receptionist. Post FAQs on website. Add prominent tile to front page of website to direct people to FAQs and media release. Include a link to the FAQs in the media release. 	Digital Media	
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send media release to all staff <u>prior to sending it to media</u> (a simple way to empower staff) Issue media release Post media release on website and via social media. 	Media	
25	Send media release and FAQs to key stakeholders, with any additional messaging as agreed with Communications lead.	Stakeholder communications	
26	Send EDM (with link to media release & FAQs) to participants, fans and other databases.	Marketing	
27	Collaborate and agree on strategy / messaging around responding to social media commentary.	Digital Media	
28	Write internal Q&As for prepping spokesperson for media interview.	Media	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
29	Book location and audio requirements for media conference.	Team Assistant	
30	Write and send advisory re media conference.	Media	
31	Manage access / security / accreditation for media for media conference.	Team Assistant	
32	Brief spokesperson and rehearse media conference (see Tool 12).	Media	
33	Print copies of media release for media conference.	Team Assistant	
34	Manage media conference.	Media	
35	Shoot media conference. Consider either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • livestreaming media conference in full, • editing it for turnaround, or • recording a second one-on-one interview/message in a controlled environment. For use in digital channels. 	Digital	
36	Coordinate post media conference interviews (radio, live crosses, follow ups with print media).	Media	
37	Critical Incident Communications Team meeting #2:	All	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check team welfare. • Update team with situation report. • Status/completion of tasks. • Review all media/social coverage, stakeholder feedback, hot issues and unanswered questions. • Reassess chosen communications strategy. • Logistics and staffing for overnight and Day 2. • Timing for next meeting. 		
38	Write Op Ed piece for targeted media and/or own digital channels.	Media	
39	Create infographics or other creative for website and social media.	Digital	
40	Script, shoot, edit, caption and publish video message. Remember, an authentic video with low production values will be better received than something that looks like marketing material. Always include captions because the majority of people will watch it on a phone without volume.	Media	
41	Publish video on website and social channels.	Digital	
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess media coverage to date, anticipate and prepare for media's next steps. • Schedule spokesperson for follow up interviews on breakfast radio and beyond. 	Media	
43	<p>Consider shooting footage or photographs that help reduce concern, provide context or demonstrate action.</p> <p>For example, footage of athletes helping local residents in a natural disaster.</p>	Media	

Item #	Task	Function	Time completed
	Release the footage to media and social media.		
44	Leverage case studies or harness third party endorsers who can champion your track record or magnify your message.	Communications lead	
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess if there are any existing marketing campaigns in market that could be compromised due to the incident. • Assess potential for Above The Line and/or digital campaigns to support the communications strategy (e.g. mea culpa newspaper ads). 	Marketing	
46	Breathe. Check staff welfare.	All	
47	Consider angles, messaging and logistics for Day 2. Arrange staffing as appropriate.	Communications lead	

TOOLBOX

Tool 1 – Approval process for Critical Incident Communications

This table formalises the delegation of authority for approving communications during critical incidents.

NOTE: NSOs may have different approval processes. The process below is a best-practice suggestion.

Update this table to suit your needs then ensure you get formal Executive / CEO endorsement of the process.

This will reduce uncertainty, speed up the approval process and ensure no information is released without approval.

In some situations, the Chair or Board members may want to play a role in strategy development or approval. This needs to be managed by communications and the CEO to ensure appropriate consultation and input, without delaying the process.

	Communications Strategy	Holding statement Key messages Media release	FAQs <small>(based on approved key messages)</small>	Social media responses <small>(based on approved key messages)</small>
Written by	Communications	Communications	Communications	Communications
In consultation with		Subject Matter Expert (SME)	Subject Matter Expert (SME)	
Reviewed by *		Critical Incident Management Team *		
Authorised approver	CIMT Leader and/or CEO	CIMT Leader and/or CEO	Communications **	Communications
Once approved, send as an FYI to	CIMT members	Chair & Board Staff	CIMT, Chair & Board Staff	

* this review is designed as a quick sanity check before the CIMT Leader and/or CEO officially approves statements and media releases. It should **not** be seen as an approval gateway. Avoid situations where the

entire Critical Incident Management Team workshops or wordsmiths the communications strategy or media statements.

** FAQs often change or are updated regularly. If the FAQs are written using the key messages that have already been approved by the CIMT Leader and/or CEO, they don't need to be reapproved. Empowering the Communications Lead to approve the FAQs (with input from SMEs) will speed up response times.

Tool 2 – Communicating with the Next of Kin in the event of a death

If an athlete or staff member dies or is seriously injured while in camp or travelling for competition, NSOs need to provide as much support to the family as possible, including respecting their wishes in how to manage media.

This guideline is designed to ensure that, before making any public comment, we verify that the family has been informed of the death and understand how they wish media to be managed.

In theory, it is the role of State Police to attend the home or workplace of the Next of Kin and formally break the news of the death. In practice though, families often find out through the news, social media or the grapevine well before the “death knock” is delivered in person by police. This can heighten the anger or distress of the family and needs to be carefully managed should this occur.

Care is needed to ensure the family is supported without inadvertently or insensitively breaking the news.

Close collaboration with police and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is required.

- 1
 - Appoint a senior NSO staff member to be the Family Liaison Officer who will be the dedicated point of contact for the family. This could be the Team Manager, Team Doctor, General Counsel, etc.

If the death is not yet public knowledge or known by the Next of Kin

- 2a
 - For a death in Australia, find out the name, mobile number and email address of the Officer in Charge of the investigation (OIC) from the State Police force. This is likely to be a Sergeant or Senior Constable.
 - Provide the OIC with the Next of Kin details.
 - Be aware that the OIC and investigating officers don't usually do the formal door knock. This is usually tasked to local “General Duties” police in the area where the Next of Kin lives or works.
 - Collaborate with the OIC or local police to ascertain if the death knock has been done or when it will be done.
 - Offer to accompany the local police on the death knock, so that our Family Liaison Officer can provide immediate condolences and support in person. This offer may be declined by police. If so, find out as soon as it has been done.
- 2b
 - For a death overseas, the Australian Embassy and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) staff play an important role.
 - The first thing the NSO should do is contact our appointed consular official attached to the local embassy.
 - If you don't have the name and number of the local consular official, call the Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra which is available 24/7:
 - 1300 555 135 (within Australia)
 - +61 2 6261 3305 (from overseas)
 - SMS to +61 421 269 080
 - The consular official will liaise with DFAT staff in Canberra who will liaise with State Police who are responsible for informing the Next of Kin.
 - Depending on the circumstances and location of where the incident has taken place this process can take time.
 - As above, consider liaising with State Police and offer to accompany them on this visit.
 - Alternatively, ensure DFAT or State Police let you know as soon as it is done.

- 2c
- Once the Next of Kin has been informed, the Family Liaison Officer should follow up immediately with a visit.

If the death is already public knowledge and is probably known by the Next of Kin

- | | |
|----|--|
| 3a | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check with local police to confirm if the family has been formally informed• Make contact directly to provide condolences, offer apologies, answer questions, listen and be shoulder to cry on.• Consider taking teammates, coaches or friends when visiting. |
| 3b | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be conscious that fans and supporters may start a makeshift memorial where flowers, teddy bears or symbolic trinkets are laid.• Put in place the operational arrangements to support this.• As some point, dead flowers will need to be disposed of. It will be important to update the family before doing so and suggesting a donation as an alternative option for people who want to pay their respects. |

NOTE:

In the event of a serious injury, there is no requirement to wait for police to inform the Next of Kin. The Family Liaison Officer should proactively make contact to update the Next of Kin as soon as possible.

TIPS FOR THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

Once the family has been formally notified by police, the Family Liaison Officer should contact them as soon as possible, preferably via personal visit, or by phone if distance is a barrier.

Liaising with the family must be done with sensitivity and honesty, where their views and wishes are always respected.

They will want to know what happened and how it happened.

They may go through rapid stages of shock, denial, anger and blame, including potentially blaming the (NSO).

They may want to talk to teammates, the coach or the team doctor who were there at the time. They may also want to travel to the site immediately to be with their loved one's body.

Be as compassionate, transparent, accurate and accessible as possible.

Prior to the call/visit:

- Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally.
- Be ready to provide basic known facts - who, what, when & where.
- Be ready for the "why & how" questions. Be as factual but also be careful particularly when a police investigation is ongoing.
- Consider and agree on the level of financial, personal or symbolic support (NSO) may be able to extend to the family.

For example:

- Ability to talk to teammates who were there.
- Access for the family to visit the location.
- Collect and return personal belongings.

- Help arrange viewing the body by liaising with DFAT, local police or the local morgue.
- Help them prepare for a media conference or offer to do a joint media conference to help share the load.
- If they are feeling overwhelmed by the media attention, offer to read or issue a statement on their behalf.
- Short term financial support to get them through coming weeks while life insurance or workers compensation payments are sorted out.
- Offer counselling, childcare, meals, etc.
- Payment of outstanding salary, leave or superannuation payments.
- Supporting or promoting a fund-raising campaign (e.g. Go Fund Me).
- Flowers
- Minute's silence / black armbands at next game/meet.
- Coach or team mates to speak at the funeral, act as pall bearers, etc.
- Longer term offers, such as a tribute match, memorial plaque, naming a building, stand, field, pool, etc in honour of the person.

The first (NSO) staff member to visit the family will leave a long-lasting memory. Ensure our Family Liaison Officer is suitably prepared, that they are emotionally resilient enough to do the job and are well supported by the organisation.

Ensure liaison with the family is long term and extends well beyond the incident, including the anniversaries of the death in following years.

Ensure that HR, Finance and all other administrative records are updated, to ensure no future inappropriate emails, calls or letters.

Tool 3 – Critical Incident Communications Team Meeting Agenda

#	Agenda Item	By whom	✓
1	Confirm attendance, welfare and future availability	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
Situation Report			
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update team on facts, assumptions, tasks and unknowns. Team members to add any additional facts and unknowns. 	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications strategy			
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the communications strategy. Distribute the holding statement and key messages. 	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure and Taskings			
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm structure / membership of Critical Incident Communications Team. Allocate tasks as per the Task List (see Phase 3). 	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logistics			
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm everyone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a member of the internal communication channel/group(s). has soft and hard copy of Critical Incident Communications Plan. has access to all critical documents, databases and templates. Confirm location and set up of Critical Incident Communications Centre. 	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
Next meeting			
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and location. 	Communications lead	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tool 4 – Stakeholder Checklist (wallchart)

Print this and post it on the wall of the Critical Incident Communications Centre.

List how we have communicated with each stakeholder group as listed in the Critical Incident Management Plan.

For each stakeholder group, ask from their perspective “what does it mean for me?”. All messaging should be based on the approved key messages, media release or FAQs.

Stakeholder	How? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal briefing• Team meeting• phone call• email• SMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EDM / newsletter• formal letter• other	Who <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approver?• Messenger?	What time did it go out?

Stakeholder	How?		Who	What time did it go out?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal briefing • Team meeting • phone call • email • SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDM / newsletter • formal letter • other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approver? • Messenger? 	

Tool 5 – Channel Checklist (wallchart)

Print this and post it on the wall of the Critical Incident Communications Centre to ensure all communication channels are considered.

Channel	What	Done
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding statement • Media release • Link to FAQ • Script for recorded message / Interactive Voice Response (IVR) 	
Staff database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email media release and FAQs to all staff • Ensure HR can provide home phone numbers and next of kin quickly 	
Intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to media release and FAQs 	
Internal social network / group or enterprise channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yammer • Slack • Closed Facebook group • Other 	
Staff or team meeting(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face • Teleconference 	
Key stakeholder briefing (e.g. Minister, AIS, States, Clubs, sponsors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face • Video or phone conference 	
Databases for participants / clubs *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our CRM and other databases to reach these stakeholders • Ensure they have the option to respond, monitor their feedback and feed it into the ongoing strategy. 	
Marketing database for fans and “sporting family” *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If separate from our CRM 	
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email media release to distribution list * • Publish on website • Link to via social media • Media conference (consider livestreaming or recording and broadcasting) 	
Media interviews (post media conference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio – news grabs and/or talkback interview • TV – live cross panel show • Print – more in-depth interview than media conference, Q&A style article 	
Op-ed piece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target relevant publication 	
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put prominent tile on front page to link through to key collateral. • Get graphic designer to pre-produce a tile, crawler or ticker tape for the site. 	
Social media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • LinkedIn • Instagram • Others 	
Social media groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed or private groups that are utilised by teams or athlete groups • Large fan, participant or community groups that support our sport 	
Text messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging directly to the mobile phones of stakeholders • Consider a platform to allow for two-way SMS messaging to large groups in an emergency 	
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head office • Venue signage at events 	
Grassroots engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar • Fact sheet or brochure to clubs & participants • Script for club leaders to provide a verbal or email update 	
Pre-recorded video with spokesperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed on website • Post on social channels 	

Channel	What	Done
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide link to clubs 	
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on own website then shared on social media • Guest content on relevant host web page 	
Partners' channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage sponsors and other partners to link to our web content and share our social content. 	
Third party endorsers by former champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media or guest speaker opportunities • Influencer posts on social media 	
Regulator channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask World Governing Body to put a link on their website or social channels 	
Paid marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off print ad • Digital campaign • Full Above the Line marketing campaign 	
Presentations, events or speaking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing commitments and upcoming CEO, Coach or athlete speaking events • Seek new/alternative opportunities 	

** It is critical that all databases are kept up to date and either backed up or regularly exported so they can be accessed offline. Print hard copies quarterly to insure against IT failure.*

Tool 6 – Content Checklist

Print this and post it on the wall of the Critical Incident Communications Centre to ensure all content options are considered.

Content	Description	Done?
Holding statement		
Key messages		
Media release		
FAQ (public)	<p>A <u>public document</u> that grows as the incident unfolds. It should be published centrally (website), updated regularly (including a timestamp) and provided as a link in all our communications.</p> <p>Consider using a common document (e.g. Google docs) for building, approving and accessing the master FAQ document. This also allows the Critical Incident Management Team to view the most up to date version at any time.</p>	
Q&A (internal)	<p>This is <u>not a public document</u>. It is used to prep our spokesperson to pre-empt the most likely and toughest questions that may be asked at a media conference. Use it to prep our spokesperson.</p>	
Fact sheets		
Video messages		
3rd party endorsement	<p>Messaging from sponsors or former champions that reinforce our reputation and ability to respond.</p>	
Proof points	<p>Supporting research or data that proves or demonstrate our position.</p>	

Infographics	Use graphics to simplify information, provide greater context and distil information that can be consumed easily
Marketing	Additional one-off advertising or targeted campaign

Tool 7 – Prewritten Key Messages

These pre-written messages are a guide. They should be adapted suit the circumstances.

Event	Key messages
<p>Event that kills or seriously injures athletes, staff, supporters, etc.</p> <p>Includes terrorist attack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are deeply shocked and saddened by this tragic/traumatic/horrific event/incident. • Insert what is known and not known • Our thoughts are with the victims and their families & friends at this time. • We extend our deepest condolences to them and we are offering them every support that we can. • Our thoughts are with the other Australian and international athletes who have been caught up in this. • Our thoughts and concerns are also with the people of (insert city) who extended such a warm welcome to our team when they arrived there on (insert day). • Insert tangible steps that have been put in place to help, including liaising with family members. • Any close family members who we have not yet been able to reach can call our head office on (insert number) and we will put you in contact directly with to the team as soon as possible. • (Insert any silver linings) We applaud our athletes / staff for their bravery and/or selfless actions in the face of such difficult situation. • We have selected a team of senior staff and I have appointed (insert position title) to coordinate our response, including supporting the victims and families. • We are working closely with emergency services and to determine how and why this happened. • The safety of our athletes/ staff / family members / supporters are our primary concern right now. • We are providing them with a high level of support and care, including medical care and psychological counselling, as well as shoulders to lean and a lot of warm hugs. • Insert proof points that demonstrate the psychological and welfare training and support provided pre and post incident. • We are being inundated with messages of support and we thank our fans and the wider public for their care and concern. • We will provide updates as soon as we have them. In the first instance please check in at (insert URL) and/or follow us on Twitter/Facebook where we will post any new information that becomes available. • While it is critical that we allow the authorities to determine how this has happened, we will also run our own internal review into the incident and our response. • We are liaising closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Federal Police and will be taking their advice about upcoming travel to events/matches/meets in (insert country).
<p>Mass illness, food poisoning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert what is known <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – number of people sick – range of symptoms / seriousness

Event	Key messages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how we are caring for them – what it means for competition / performance – any verified information about cause/source (without speculating) • Insert what is unknown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cause or source – withdrawal from performances – cancellation of event • What we are doing about it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – we are working very closely with the organising committee and local health officials to minimise the impact and spread of the infection – it is critical that we listen to the expert advice and follow their instructions – our team doctor is also attending to our athletes and provide his/her independent advice about how we can best look after our team – we have isolated XXXX athletes who are showing symptoms – as a precaution, we have also (insert details) – insert any change to travel plans – we have a large number of family members and supporters who travelled with us, so we are relaying as much information to them as possible to ensure they take the necessary precautions and get any treatment they may need. • This is so disappointing for everyone because they have worked and trained so hard and were looking forward to competing/playing. • However we need to balance that disappointment against the need to look after the health and welfare of the entire team.
<p>Natural disasters and weather</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (NSO) is collaborating with the SES and emergency services in response to (insert event) • We have appointed a senior team to respond and recover. • While the extent of the damage is are still being measured, what we know to date is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Insert what is known about the impact – Insert what is not impacted – Insert what it means for our stakeholders – Insert an alternative solution/workaround or outline what customers can do to minimise the impact. • We are working hard to support and help our stakeholders with the clean up. • We will be adding regular updates and FAQs to our website (add link) or you can follow us on social media for updates
<p>Suicide of an athlete or former athlete</p>	<p>NOTE: do not comment publicly until we have consulted with the family and verified their wishes around media. See Tool 2 re communicating with family in the event of a death</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are deeply shocked and saddened by this tragic news.

Event	Key messages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our thoughts are with the individual and those people impacted at this time • We extend our deepest sympathies to them and we are offering them every support we can. • We are also wrapping a high level of care and support around teammates and the wider (Sport) Family • Insert tangible steps that have been put in place to help impacted family, teammates and staff (e.g. psychological support, grief counselling, shoulders to lean on, hugs.) <p>If (NSO) is being criticised about psychological support services, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is impossible to know all of the factors that have led to this tragic event, and it would be highly inappropriate for us to speculate. • What we can say is that competing in high performance sport on a world stage can bring with it both a unique degree of pressure and stress as well as unique wellbeing benefits. • With the help of the Australian Institute of Sport and other partners, (NSO) works very hard to support our athletes by providing access to best practice psychological support and training in addition to support services that are available to them in the wider community. • We also provide training, mentoring and wellbeing support services for athletes to best equip them for the transition from being a high performance athlete to life post their sporting career.
<p>Illegal behaviour or Code of Conduct breach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offensive conduct • damaging property • drink driving • domestic violence • affray or assault • alcohol-related incident • recreational drugs • breach of curfew • breach of social media policy 	<p>If incident is not clear cut (e.g. allegations only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (NSO) are aware of reports of (insert known details). • We are conscious that at this stage they are allegations and that the full facts of this matter are still emerging. • However these are very serious allegations, they are deeply concerning and the issue has our full attention. • I have tasked (Team Manager / Head of Integrity etc) with investigating this incident. • That will include meeting with (athlete/staff member) as well as (victims, witnesses, teammates) to get to the bottom of the incident. • Where appropriate, we will also liaise with police and assist their investigation. • It is important we have the full story around what happened without pre-judging or speculating on the outcome or potential consequences. • Everyone has the right to procedural fairness, as opposed to a trial by media or social media. • I know people are passionate about this and have strong views, but I would ask them to reserve their judgement until all the facts are known. • Rather than speculating or provide a running commentary on this matter, we will concentrate our efforts on helping the police/authorities with their investigations. • We are taking this matter very seriously and as soon as we know more, we will provide another update. • In the meantime, we are getting on with (training, preparation, competing, etc).

If the incident is clear cut or confirmed

- (NSO) is aware of (insert overview of incident).
- (NSO) is extremely disappointed by this revelation.
- We pride ourselves on our high standards, values and culture, not only within the national team but right across our sport including at the grassroots level.
- Playing/performing in the Australian team / representing Australia at international level comes with enormous privilege and enormous responsibility.
- Those responsibilities include (insert values – inclusiveness / honesty / respect / teamwork).
- The first thing we have done is apologise to (insert victims).
- We have done this in person and have also written a formal apology on behalf of the team / NSO.
- (Insert any other action taken to mitigate the damage).
- This incident is a potential breach of our Code of Conduct and I have tasked (Team Manager / Head of Integrity, High Performance Manager etc) to instigate our Code of Conduct proceedings.
- We will provide another update as soon as that process has concluded.

If a sanction has been applied

- (Name) has been found to have breached Section XX of our Code of Conduct.
- As a result, he/she has been (insert relevant sanction):
 - Formally warned / counselled
 - Fined
 - Stood down from the team
 - Will remain with the team but will not be eligible to train or be selected
 - Sent home
 - Suspended

Athlete or staff member making a political statement or protest

If the behaviour has the NSO's tacit or strong support, or is not a breach of the Code of Conduct:

- Everyone has the right to have an opinion.
- We understand opinions may be divided on this and respect the fact that some people may see this as controversial, inflammatory or inappropriate.
- However, we don't agree / don't believe this is a breach of our Code of Conduct.
- We fully support (athlete's) right to express their views....
 -and fully support their position on this issue, **OR**
 - That is not to say (NSO) supports his/her position, but we have no problem with him/her having an opinion and expressing it as long as they do it respectfully and have tolerance for other people's opinions.

Event	Key messages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History is marked with many gestures, statements or protests on the world sporting stage which, in the heat of the moment and the media frenzy, were seen as extremely political, controversial or inappropriate. However, with the passing of time and changing attitudes, we have come to see them as examples of extraordinary leadership and a catalyst for positive change. • We have a Code of Conduct which specifies the high standards of behaviour and leadership we expect from our athletes/players. • We have discussed this internally and don't believe this is a breach of those standards. <p>If the behaviour is marginal, frowned upon or could interpreted as a breach of the Code of Conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has the right to express their opinion or political views, as long as it does not breach the high standards contained in our Code of Conduct which every athlete/team member supports and has signed up to. • We will take a close look at this, have a discussion with (athlete) and consider the circumstances internally. • We know there are a wide range of views among the Australian public about this subject, ranging from people who are lauding their stance to people who believe they should never represent Australia again. • We are not the arbiters of political opinion, we are more interested in winning matches/medals/races and making our families, fans and the Australian public proud of us. • We certainly don't want (sport) to become a political platform but we also respect the right of people to have opinions, as long as they express them respectfully and have tolerance for other people's opinions. • So rather than taking a kneejerk reaction to this, we will take some time to discuss this internally, including meeting with (athlete). • We are going to consider this issue rationally and calmly before passing judgement.
Anti-Doping Rule Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [The NSO] and ASADA (SIA)/ or the International Federation are working together to ensure that proper process and procedure under the [NSO's anti-doping policy] or [IF's anti-doping policy] are followed. • Importantly, the well-being of the athlete is being taken into consideration before further information is publicly released.
Classification/eligibility of Para-sport athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classification system for Para-sport groups athletes with similar impairments into categories for competition. Classification systems vary across Para-sports. • Athletes who may be eligible to compete in Para-sport must have an eligible physical, vision or intellectual impairment that leads to a permanent activity limitation. • Eligible physical impairments include ataxia, athetosis, hypertonia, joint restrictions, leg length difference, limb loss or deficiency, muscle weakness and short stature.

Event	Key messages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes are required to provide medical documentation that details their impairment type and level of impairment. There are specific minimum impairment criteria that athletes must meet in order to be eligible for each sport. This is determined through a classification assessment. • The classification system for each Para-sport can be found here. • Insert specific details relevant to the case, including the strict systems in place to classify athletes as accurately as possible. • Insert details of what avenues are available for people to dispute their classification, or the classification of others.
<p>Cyber-attack / IT breach / loss of personal data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (NSO) is concerned by an apparent data / email / IT system breach. • At this stage, we understand this breach may involve (insert summary of known extent of the breach, including what group of stakeholders may be affected and what data may be exposed). • Add any information that might rule out or narrow the impact (e.g. we believe the stole data may include private addresses and email addresses for approximately 10% of our stakeholders, but at this stage we have no information to suggest any passwords or bank account details have been compromised) • We have directly contacted any stakeholders who we believe may be affected. • We have alerted all (staff, team members, participants, members, past ticket purchasers) and other relevant stakeholders to this alleged data breach. • We have also notified the Australian Office of the Information Commissioner who have notified the Australian Federal Police (check that they have done this). • As a precaution, we are recommending people change their passwords immediately and ensure they have a two-step authentication process in place to access their accounts. • People should also monitor their accounts for any irregular transactions • Insert any other precautionary steps they can take to protect themselves • We take the protection of confidential information very seriously and we are taking all necessary steps to investigate and remedy the situation as quickly as possible. • (NSO) will also appointed forensic specialists to investigate it and fully protect our data systems across our properties. • (Insert name & title) will be conducting [a review/ an independent investigation] into the matter to identify any gaps that may exist and improve our systems to minimise the risks of similar occurrences in future.
<p>Lockdown of venue or office (in the event of an occurring or imminent threat)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working closely with Police and the emergency services following reports of (incident / attack at insert location and time). • Police and Emergency Services are on site and it is critical that people listen to and follow their instruction. • On advice of police <u>or</u> as a precaution and in the interests of protecting our athletes, staff and supporters, (insert name of building/venue) has been locked down. • As at (insert time) no one will be allowed in or out of the building until further notice from police. • The official advice in an active armed offender situation it to Escape, Hide, Tell.

Event	Key messages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESCAPE – move quickly and quietly away from danger, but only if it is safe to do so. – HIDE – stay out of sight and silence your mobile phone. – TELL – call the police by dialing Triple Zero (000) when it is safe. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All occupants have been accounted for and are safe and well. <p><u>or</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently accounting for all staff but at this stage there are no reports of anyone missing or injured. • Please follow Police on Twitter for their latest updates.
Bomb threat	<p><i>Internal information only: if media call about a bomb threat, consider having the following off the record conversation:</i></p> <p><i>While we are treating this event with the utmost seriousness, we would ask that media take the advice of Police Media about whether or not this incident should be reported as a bomb threat. Experience suggests that media coverage of bomb threats can lead to copycat hoaxes, which leads to unnecessary disruption and ties up resources.</i></p> <p>If the media insists on reporting it as a bomb threat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (NSO) is aware of an incident at (insert venue). • We are treating this seriously and are taking the advice of police. • Our first priority is the safety and security of our staff and customers. • Based on advice from police we have evacuated all staff and customers from (insert relevant area). • Please follow police directions and stay away from the area.

Tool 8 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This is a critical document in a 'hub and spoke' communications model. Host the FAQ centrally, and link to it via every communication channel available. When writing the FAQs, consider the following:

- Add a timestamp with every update so stakeholders can understand how up to date the information is, particularly in a rapidly changing environment.
- Considering re-ordering the FAQs so that the hottest questions appear at the top.
- Address every question being asked via social media and via our non-media feedback loop. As a stakeholder, there is nothing worse than an FAQ document that doesn't answer your question.
- Continually revisit and update, even in the days after the event.

Q. Insert question here?

A. Provide answer based on key messages

Q. Insert question here?

A. Provide answer based on key messages

Q. Insert question here?

A. Provide answer based on key messages

Q. Insert question here?

A. Provide answer based on key messages

Tool 9 – Critical Incident Communications Centre and Media Conference Room Checklist

Primary Site	Secondary Site	Offsite Location	Media Conference Room
<p>Insert location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address Meeting Room number Direct phone number 	<p>Insert location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address Meeting Room number Direct phone number 	<p>Insert location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address Meeting Room number Direct phone number 	<p>Insert location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address Meeting Room number

Equipment checklist

Critical Incident Communications Centre					
Media conference room	IT	Media	Stationery	Communications	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media backdrop (if appropriate). Alternatively, assess an appropriate backdrop Audio splitter Sufficient power outlets and cords Lighting Shade Lectern Microphone stand Copies of media release Suitable entry/egress for spokesperson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desktop / Laptop Laptop chargers Password and log in accesses Power boards Zoom / Teams app or similar installed on all computers Access to servers / cloud systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television that can monitor the news Radio Video conferencing details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whiteboards and markers Pens, pencils, textas Butchers paper Wall charts Blue Tac Whiteboard markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile phone chargers Offline copies of all contact lists and databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Critical Incident Management Plan Organisational chart Wall clock (to display international times) List of critical infrastructure Bottles water Snack bar

Tool 12 – Preparing for a Media Conference

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider pros and cons of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Outdoor or indoor location – Sitting or standing – Branded backdrop or neutral backdrop – Ease of exit (without looking like they are running away) – Make sure the location is quiet and not near building works or other noises which may impact the quality of the audio. • Avoid signage that photographers might frame into their shots to create a negative image (e.g. exit or warning sign behind our spokesperson). This included the entry and exit points into the media conference room.
Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate all questions, including left field questions and questions on other topics unrelated to the issue at hand. • Write answers to every question, based on the approved key messages. • Spend time rehearsing with the spokesperson, practice tone and body language • If possible, do not use any notes. It maximises authenticity and confidence.
Presentation	<p>Ensure the spokesperson is perfectly presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal enough for the occasion • tie straight • coat collar down • hair in place • makeup done <p>Make eye contact to increase authenticity and engagement. Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make eye contact with the individual journalists as you answer their questions (but avoid getting into a one-on-one debate), or • Lock eye contact with one person behind the cameras regardless of who asks the question (but avoid looking like robot).

Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectern and or microphone stand. • Microphones, speakers, media splitter and lighting (as required). • Copies of media release. • ‘Show & tell’ to reinforce our message –maps, photos, infographics, graphs, forecasts or other proof points. • AUSLAN translator (particularly for natural disasters). • Assess merits of having relevant people behind/beside the speaker as a show of support (e.g. supporters, families, staff, emergency services, etc.). • The media contact should be with the spokesperson during the conference, in order to be available to journalists and monitor/or end the press conference when appropriate.
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Rehearsing an opening statement (key messages) and responses to all anticipated questions as per the Q&A is critical to ensure the media conference runs as smoothly as possible.

It is important to note that a logical explanation will not generally be enough in difficult circumstances. It is important to address people’s feelings and concerns and not come across as simply operational.

What you say must be:	How you act must be:	Do not
Factual	Calm / in control	Speculate or predict causes, outcomes or timeframes
Accurate	Human	Be loose, defensive or aggressive
Honest	Swift	Apportion blame
Consistent	Decisive	Blame the media for making it worse

What you say must be:	How you act must be:	Do not
Empathetic / sensitive Transparent	Confident (but not arrogant) Bust myths	Defy gravity Underestimate the impact or emotion

Remember: the microphones are always on and can pick up conversations at long range.

Document control

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