



## THE MEDIA ANGLE

This recent article about an exchange involving the Victorian Premier, his staff, an ABC journalist and a camera man highlights the need to be prepared for those hard and often off-topic questions.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/premier-denis-naphine-faces-bully-claim-20130719-2q8tb.html>

I am often asked in my training sessions whether it is okay to place limits on the questions a reporter can ask you. The answer is NO!

If you are a political leader, the head of an organisation or a key spokesperson you have no control over what reporters will ask you. The only thing you do have control over is what you say, how you say it and your behaviour.

You can ask for a list of questions in advance but you may well be rejected. Not many journalists will hand over their questions and then follow them verbatim during the interview. It's better to ask what the line of questioning is likely to be.

The best approach is to be prepared. Sit down with your media manager and do a quick practice interview. Talk with them about what other topics may arise. I advise clients to think of at least two really hard questions they would hate to get asked and have some answers ready. These may not relate to the interview topic you agreed on.

If you are unable to answer any hard questions for legal or other reasons, be honest and say why you cannot talk about the issue. If you walk off or get angry you run the risk of your behaviour and non-response becoming the story.

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