

MLA communications resource: photography guide

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Why?

Here's a quick guide to providing print-worthy images for MLA publications/communication channels.

We rely on producers, researchers and other contributors to provide images to support case studies and articles in MLA's communications channels. These images are an essential element, to engage readers and help depict important aspects of the story.

Technical requirements

Size/resolution	Images must be at least 2MB in size. Don't reduce the size when emailing. If using a modern smartphone, you can text the images to us without reducing the size
Format	Images need to be jpg files, not embedded in a word document
Composition	Please provide both landscape and portrait images to suit a range of communications channels and layouts
Permission	If the image was taken by a third-party (not the producer/researcher) ensure the photographer provides written permission to publish and check if acknowledgements are required. For MLA-commissioned images, ensure an MLA Consultancy Agreement and Statement of Work have been completed
Storing	Images should be stored and captioned in MLA's image library, WebDam, and include relevant talent release forms. If you're a service provider and the images are related to an MLA-funded project, contact your MLA project manager who can arrange for these images to be uploaded

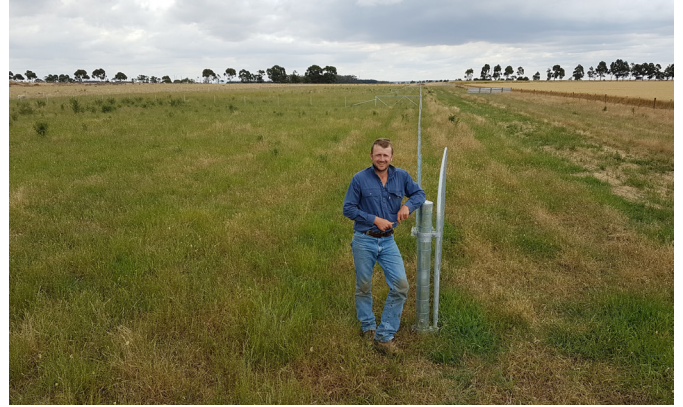
10 tips to take better photos

1	Do: remove hats and sunglasses	People's faces need to be clearly visible. Ensure they always take off their sunglasses and remove hats if casting a shadow – but be mindful of squinting! ✓ Tip: Try changing the angle so the sun casts light without causing people to squint.
2	Do: stay close	Keep the main subject (person) clearly in the foreground, close to the photographer.
3	Do: think about what else is in the photo	Add something of interest in the background e.g. pastures, cattle, sheep, ✓ Tip: A group of cattle/sheep always looks better than a single animal, so aim for a herd/flock shot.
4	Do: depict professional farming business	Avoid including weeds, broken fences, cattle/sheep bones etc in the image.
5	Do: mix it up	If the subject feels awkward/embarrassed, try a few different positions e.g. kneeling next to a dog, leaning on the ute – this looks better than standing stiffly.
6	Don't: overcrowd	If taking a photo of several people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid too many – 3-4 maximum • consider how people are positioned – try to stagger them or have them at different levels e.g. one standing next to the cattle yards, one sitting on a rail, so it looks less 'static' • take several photos of the group in both portrait and landscape. ✓ Tip: You want everyone to look good – so check the photos. Are everyone's eyes open? Are there any flies on peoples' faces? Is everyone smiling?
7	Don't: promote unsafe practices	MLA will not publish photos of people riding (or even just sitting on) horses, motorbikes or quadbikes without helmets.
8	Do: think about how a photo can tell your story	What kind of work do you do, and where do you do it? Capture that! For example, a producer case study needs at least one photo showing the producer/s, and an article about research should depict an aspect of the research.
9	Do: provide plenty of options	The more images the better – provide photos of livestock, pastures, new infrastructure, the landscape of the property etc – variety creates a more interesting story in the magazine.
10	Don't: underestimate the photography resources in your business	You don't need a fancy camera, as modern smartphones can take great images. Ask a family member or staff member to snap some photos.

Examples

The following examples demonstrate a range of images which are:

Strong	At publishing standard
Okay but could be better	May be considered for publishing
Needs improvement	Won't be considered for publishing in their current form



Strong

Comments:

- this is an excellent selection of images
- the photos depict a range of aspects of the story (producer, livestock, pasture, infrastructure)
- no hat/sunglasses and no squinting.

Tips:

- try different positions – kneeling, standing
- try different heights – position the camera front-on but also try standing on the back of a ute and shooting down
- take photos (with and without the producer in each option) of different aspects of the story/business e.g. pastures, livestock, technologies etc.



Strong

Comments:

- close-up, clear and engaging image
- hats – but not casting shadow and obscuring faces.

Tips:

- keep the main subject (person/s) clearly in the foreground, close to the photographer.



Strong

Comments:

- these images show how creative use of backgrounds work well – there's no cattle/sheep/paddocks in the background but they are clear, engaging and still 'rural'.

Tips:

- a 'producer' photo doesn't have to be on their property
- if taking a photo at a workshop or field day, use a shed/fence/tree for a rural background
- try positioning the subject in a range of ways: looking straight to the camera, looking a little to one side (but ensure it's 'deliberate' like the photo of the woman above, so it looks intended).



Strong

Comments:

- although there are quite a few (6) people in this image, by positioning them on different levels (standing in foreground, leaning on the fence, sitting on fence) it creates an interesting, engaging image.

Tips:

- ensure hats don't cast shadow on faces
- try different positions – avoid the 'criminal line-up' effect of many people standing shoulder to shoulder in a line.



Strong

Comments:

- a simple composition still works well
- positioning the subject in the foreground and livestock in the background creates some interest.

Tips:

- ensure hats don't cast shadow on faces
- think about the background – avoid weeds, rubbish, falling-down fences etc.



Okay but could be better

Comments:

- no hat removes shadows from face
- subject is in the foreground – however, the positioning makes the cattle look quite small.

Tips:

- play around with levels and reposition the person e.g. kneeling in the foreground.



Okay but could be better

Comments:

- faces have shadows cast over them
- using ute as a 'prop' can sometimes be effective
- ordinary background (with powerlines) and foreground (shadowed ute tray).

Tips:

- be mindful of what's in the background – re-angling this image would have removed the powerlines from view
- the ute tray is dominating the image – although it can be cropped, consider what's in the foreground.



Okay but could be better

Comments:

- good use of action to depict the story – a vet involved in sheep research
- subject's face is obscured, would be better if he was looking up a bit more or at the camera.

Tips:

- think about how the photo can depict the story.



Okay but could be better

Comments:

- face is clear of shadow – but hair is blowing across her face
- great depiction of the landscape of the property.

Tips:

- check for flies or hair on face, squinting or closed eyes etc.



Okay but could be better

Comments:

- providing a selection of images for a story – in this case, producers in the containment yard as well as an image of sheep – creates interest
- subjects appear quite static.

Tips:

- take a selection of photos to depict different aspects of the story
- consider repositioning subjects so the photo is more engaging (e.g. take a close up shot).



Needs improvement

Comments:

- producer's face obscured by shadow.

Tips:

- remove hat
- stand closer/zoom in so subject isn't as far away
- reposition angle so sun isn't casting a shadow – but be aware of squinting!



Needs improvement

Comments:

- a single animal can look a bit lonely
- front-on can make an animal's head look oversized.

Tips:

- take a photo of a herd/mob not a single animal
- reposition to get side-on images.

Images courtesy of Alice Bennett, Angus Whyte, Hilary Wardhaugh, Jess Brogden, Josh Kelly from Jack Harlem Photography, Meurs family, Michael Shannon, Peter Star, Rob and Ainsley McArthur, Steve Cotton, Stockyard and Tom Clune.

For more information

Contact MLA Editorial Manager Rebecca Jennings: rjennings@mla.com.au