



# The MFA GUIDE

Everything you need to know about  
working in Advertising Media

# **Section 1**

# **Media: Introduction**

What does a Media Agency do?  
An introduction to the Australian media landscape.

## **Foreword**

Welcome to the dynamic world of Advertising Media.

We like to think of ourselves as 'The Changers'. *Why?*

**WE ARE**  
*the changers*

Working in media gives us the opportunity to effect real change, both big and small – to influence people, business, culture and the economy.

Our industry is not just about selling more product, it's also about driving positive change and making a difference. Working with our clients to add value to consumers' lives, through our curiosity, creativity, new ideas, new solutions, new platforms, new ways of doing things.

We help our clients grow their businesses and provide leadership and innovation to help them navigate this rapidly changing world.

We work with our clients as partners to ensure that their objectives are met. Our key goal as media professionals is to find the right people at the right time in the right environment, and deliver the right message. We do this by having an in-depth knowledge of clients' brands and services, identifying consumer insights, developing innovative communication solutions, forming efficient and effective ways to implement these strategies, and applying rigorous post-evaluations to ensure our clients know what worked, what didn't and what to do next.

Last year, over \$17 billion was spent on advertising media, and a recent report from Deloitte Access Economics confirms the importance of the advertising industry to our economy, in contributing a staggering \$53 billion (or 2.1%) of GDP. It is an industry that continues to grow and provides a multitude of career opportunities.

No two days working in advertising media are ever the same. You would be hard pressed to find any other industry that can offer so much diversity in your day-to-day role. New technology, new platforms, and the changing ways that consumers engage with their devices make it an incredibly exciting and dynamic industry.

For newcomers, the career opportunities are endless, and you will find support and inspiration at your Agency and through the Media Federation of Australia, every step of the way.

The Media Federation of Australia (MFA) is the industry body for media agencies. We are proud to provide The MFA Guide to you, as it will give you greater insight into what this industry is about and what it has to offer. As things change so quickly in our industry, at times you may need to double check with your Agency about their preferred way of doing things.

We hope that you find inspiration from The MFA Guide and consider growing your career alongside thousands of dynamic and vibrant professionals, whose work is seen and heard by millions of Australians every day.

**Sophie Madden**  
CEO

## Our Member Agencies

We would like to acknowledge the contribution and support from our member agencies.



**1.1**

**Media Agencies: - What do we do?**

Media Agencies were founded primarily to offer advertisers (clients) better insights into consumer behaviour and consumers' use of media platforms, and then to provide better rates through collective media buying clout.

Over time, the depth and range of information and data necessary to assist in the process of delivering the right message to the right person at the right time in the right environment grew to require even greater expertise and focus.

Media planning and buying are the most recognised services provided by a media agency. The core functions today remain fairly consistent; however, as technology and its impact on consumer behaviour evolved, a broader range of services became necessary to provide a complete communication solution.

Clients appoint media agencies for a contracted period of time, usually around three years. The appointment process involves a number of agencies pitching for the business. Quite often clients retain their agency after the term ends and undergoes annual reviews.

**Scope of Services**

Some media agencies specialise in particular areas and others provide a complete range of services to meet clients' needs. The majority of clients appoint a media agency to provide a suite of services, which may include:

Brand Management

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Client Service/Account Management

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Research, Strategy and Insights

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Planning and Buying media, including negotiation, placement, reporting, monitoring

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Programmatic Trading

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Marketing

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Content Development and Creation

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Promotions, Experiential and Events

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Sponsorships and Partnerships

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Public Relations

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Data Analytics and more.

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## **1.2** **An Overview of the Australian context**

### **Market Profile**

There is a vast array of resources available to help us understand the market, consumers' media behaviour, and media channels. We also need to be on top of new technologies, trends and predictions, to be able to provide the best service to our clients.

Depending on the client's problem or opportunity, some of the insights or information we gather may include:

- the potential for a region or market;
- patterns of change over a period of time;
- trends in product/service categories;
- competitors' use of media, by channel and by month;
- developments in media channels/platforms.

The following pages provide a snapshot of just some of the data used to help in this process.

### Population of Australia

Here we can see the size of different market segments, according to age and gender. Of course, there are many ways to segment the population, and agencies will utilise tools to profile segments incorporating other variables and attributes, such as income, ethnicity, orientation, life stage, lifestyle, and so on.

### Population, by age and gender

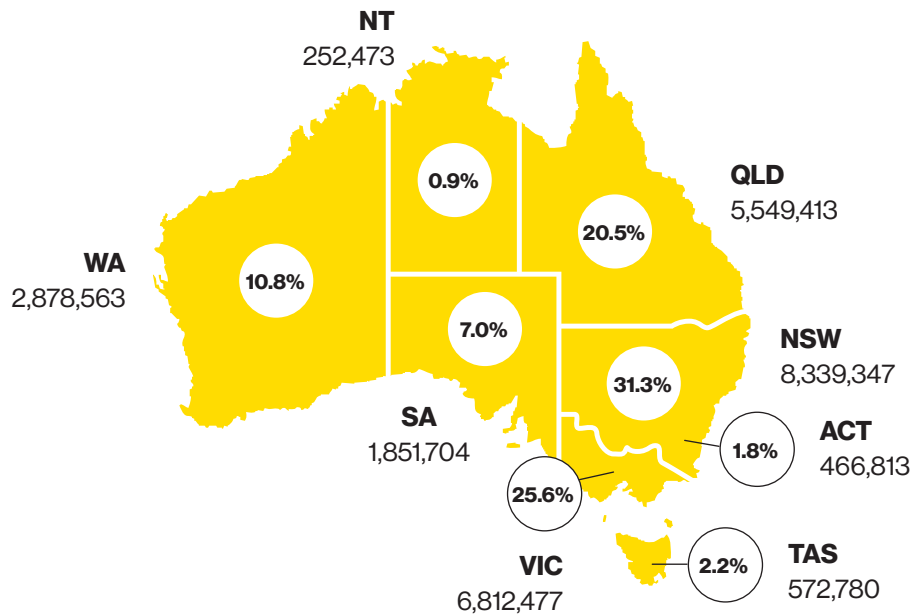
This information could help you in determining the size of a potential audience, for example for a national campaign for retirees, targeting P65-74, or a national campaign for skin care, targeting F25-29.

	TOTAL	% of TOTAL	MALES	% of AGE	FEMALES	% of AGE
<b>0-4</b>	1,516,003	5.69%	778,296	51.34%	737,707	48.66%
<b>5-9</b>	1,610,397	6.05%	828,201	51.43%	782,196	48.57%
<b>10-14</b>	1,657,381	6.22%	851,838	51.40%	805,543	48.60%
<b>15-19</b>	1,608,827	6.04%	830,510	51.62%	778,317	48.38%
<b>20-24</b>	1,731,935	6.50%	897,123	51.80%	834,812	48.20%
<b>25-29</b>	1,921,649	7.21%	973,969	50.68%	947,680	49.32%
<b>30-34</b>	1,982,592	7.44%	983,086	49.59%	999,506	50.41%
<b>35-39</b>	1,937,866	7.27%	961,138	49.60%	976,728	50.40%
<b>40-44</b>	1,780,196	6.68%	881,606	49.52%	898,590	50.48%
<b>45-49</b>	1,614,205	6.06%	797,536	49.41%	816,669	50.59%
<b>50-54</b>	1,680,286	6.31%	826,516	49.19%	853,770	50.81%
<b>55-59</b>	1,523,603	5.72%	748,378	49.12%	775,225	50.88%
<b>60-64</b>	1,516,701	5.69%	738,131	48.67%	778,570	51.33%
<b>65-69</b>	1,326,951	4.98%	637,572	48.05%	689,379	51.95%
<b>70-74</b>	1,155,082	4.34%	553,160	47.89%	601,922	52.11%
<b>75-79</b>	930,938	3.49%	445,969	47.91%	484,969	52.09%
<b>80-84</b>	583,088	2.19%	268,904	46.12%	314,184	53.88%
<b>85-89</b>	346,425	1.30%	147,472	42.57%	198,953	57.43%
<b>90-94</b>	160,916	0.60%	59,992	37.28%	100,924	62.72%
<b>95-99</b>	47,311	0.18%	14,763	31.20%	32,548	68.80%
<b>100 and over</b>	6,192	0.02%	1,477	23.85%	4,715	76.15%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>26,638,544</b>		<b>13,225,637</b>	<b>49.65%</b>	<b>13,412,907</b>	<b>50.35%</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (as at 30 June 2023)

### Population by State/Territory

Many campaigns for major brands focus on the east coast metro areas, as this is where the population is concentrated. However regional markets and other States and Territories can provide untapped opportunities for growth, and may be used to test campaigns prior to a broader rollout. The map below shows the population spread by State and Territory.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (as at 30 June 2023)

### Media Spend in Australia

We also collect broad data on media spend across categories and across media channels, as well as more specific data on how our clients' competitors are spending – by month and by channel.

This information can help planners identify advertising opportunities across platforms by understanding where, when and how much their clients' competitors are spending on media. It can indicate where there may be opportunities (e.g., channels that the competitors are not using) or indicate times of the year when the market is more or less cluttered, or where seasonality may be a factor.

There are two primary sources that collect media spend information:

- Nielsen
- Standard Media Index (SMI)

**Nielsen Ad Intel** provides cross-platform advertising intelligence across media channels, categories and brands, as well as historical data.

**Standard Media Index (SMI)** provides data on ad spend by over 95% of Australia's media agencies. They report on all major media channels, publishers and categories, and also provide bespoke ad spend reporting for specific categories.



The next charts provide a snapshot of which categories were spending the most in 2023, and the pattern of media spend across the year.

Consider the reasons behind the percentages – for example, you can see that Retail spend is the highest in November (in the lead up to Christmas), and Education & Learning is the highest in February (universities spending more to secure students for March semester). For the media planner, knowing when the category is spending can help inform their approach, as they may choose to compete head on, with the highest spend in similar periods, or choose to spend in periods where there is less competition.

### Top 15 Categories – Spend distribution by month

This chart shows the top 15 Advertisers in Australia in 2023, and their percentage of media spend by month.

Spend By Month Y2023														
Rank	Category Sector	Grand Total	JAN 23	FEB 23	MAR 23	APR 23	MAY 23	JUN 23	JUL 23	AUG 23	SEP 23	OCT 23	NOV 23	DEC 23
1	Retail	29.2%	8.4%	7.2%	7.8%	8.1%	8.3%	7.8%	7.7%	7.8%	8.6%	9.0%	10.2%	9.2%
2	Communications	9.5%	9.0%	8.2%	9.7%	7.6%	8.4%	7.3%	7.8%	8.7%	8.7%	8.7%	8.2%	7.6%
3	Motor Vehicles	7.5%	6.6%	8.7%	9.3%	6.2%	8.8%	8.6%	7.0%	8.0%	8.7%	10.3%	9.5%	8.2%
4	Travel/Accommodation	6.9%	8.5%	8.9%	9.3%	7.4%	9.4%	8.5%	8.1%	7.7%	8.2%	9.5%	8.2%	6.2%
5	Entertainment & Leisure	6.7%	8.8%	7.7%	8.5%	7.8%	7.7%	7.3%	9.0%	9.2%	9.2%	7.9%	7.8%	9.0%
6	Finance	6.7%	6.6%	9.4%	10.3%	8.0%	9.2%	8.7%	7.7%	8.4%	8.3%	8.8%	8.3%	6.4%
7	Insurance	5.1%	7.2%	7.8%	9.5%	8.0%	10.7%	10.8%	7.6%	8.4%	9.0%	9.2%	6.9%	4.9%
8	Food	4.6%	5.9%	7.1%	9.7%	8.7%	10.0%	8.9%	9.0%	7.8%	9.5%	10.2%	8.6%	4.8%
9	Services	4.4%	8.1%	7.8%	9.9%	8.2%	8.6%	8.3%	8.2%	8.2%	8.7%	8.3%	8.2%	7.4%
10	Education & Learning	3.9%	10.4%	10.6%	7.2%	6.9%	8.6%	8.1%	8.3%	7.7%	7.8%	8.7%	7.9%	7.7%
11	Computers	3.7%	6.4%	7.0%	6.7%	7.6%	10.4%	9.3%	9.6%	8.9%	8.4%	8.9%	9.4%	7.6%
12	Community/ Public Service	3.3%	6.9%	7.4%	7.5%	6.9%	9.6%	8.8%	6.2%	7.4%	9.3%	9.3%	9.4%	11.3%
13	Real Estate	3.0%	6.6%	8.7%	9.8%	8.3%	8.3%	6.9%	7.4%	8.2%	10.5%	10.8%	8.7%	5.9%
14	Gambling/Gaming	2.8%	6.3%	6.4%	11.4%	8.5%	8.2%	6.5%	6.3%	8.4%	9.4%	12.5%	10.0%	5.9%
15	Government	2.7%	8.9%	6.5%	8.7%	9.8%	11.1%	11.2%	5.7%	5.2%	6.8%	9.7%	9.1%	7.3%

**Top 15 Categories – Spend distribution by month**

Interestingly, the top Individual/Group Advertisers in 2023 were in the Retail and Government categories (the Government spend was largely due to a State Election and a national referendum):

		Y2023
Rank	Category Sector	Grand Total
1	Woolworths	\$173,843
2	Harvey Norman Holdings	\$164,416
3	Government Victoria	\$129,831
4	Government Commonwealth	\$121,679
5	Amazon.com	\$116,878
6	Nine Entertainment Co	\$116,621
7	McDonald's Restaurants	\$113,674
8	Government NSW	\$105,588
9	News Corporation	\$101,217
10	Reckitt Benckiser	\$97,700
11	Wesfarmers	\$96,397
12	Yum Restaurants Australia	\$91,293
13	Suncorp Group	\$82,623
14	Telstra Corporation	\$80,520
15	Competitive Foods	\$74,309

Source: Nielsen Ad Intel

**Media Channels**

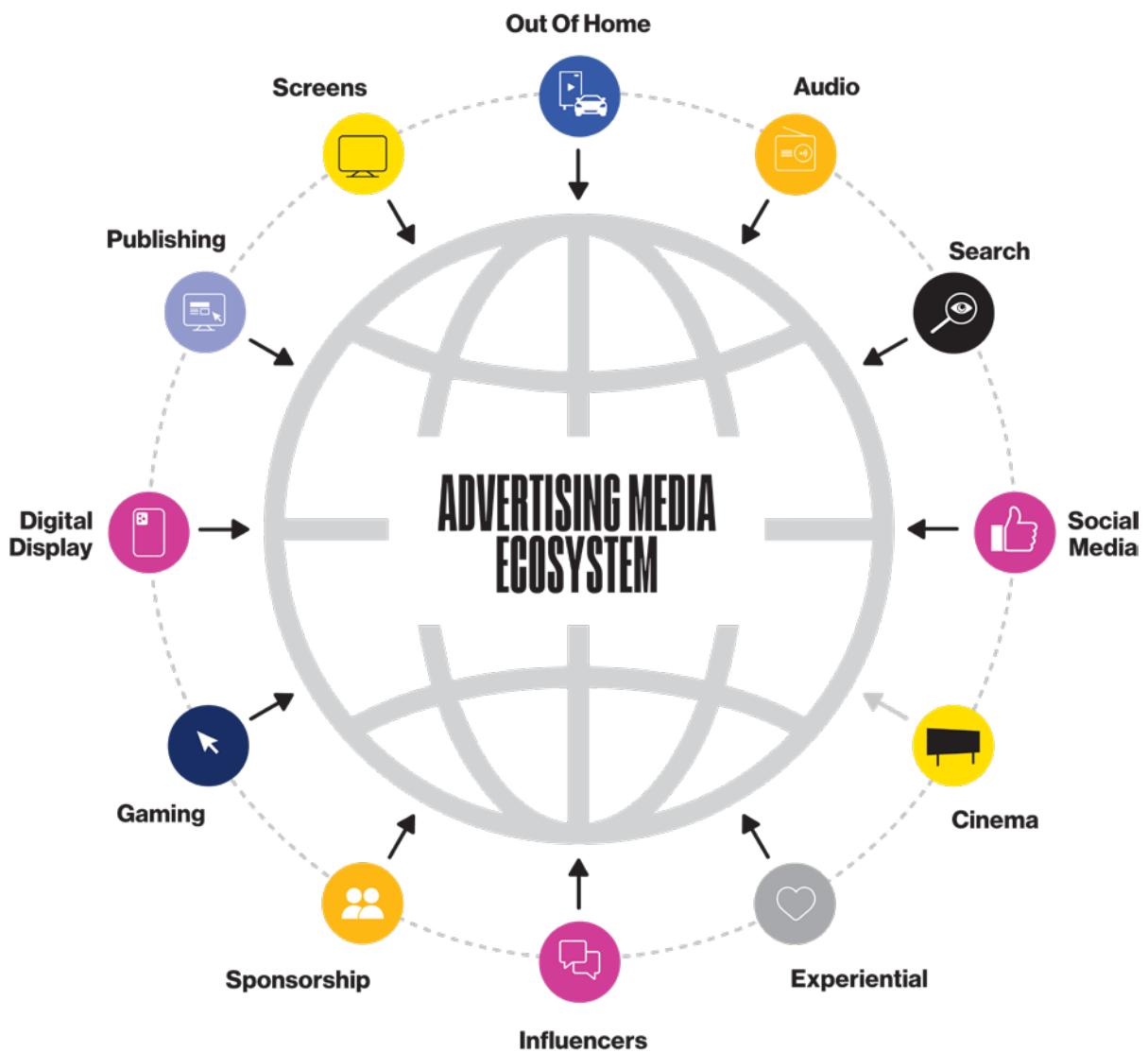
There is an ever-increasing number of media options available to us, and we tend to group them into categories. This helps the media planner navigate the diverse media ecosystem.

Most campaigns will utilise multiple channels, and it is important to continue to grow your understanding of different options and how they interact. In Section 3, we explore the most commonly utilised channels.

Having a strong understanding will help you better tailor integrated and cohesive strategies and plans to reach the target audience, and ultimately improve overall campaign effectiveness. Clients often expect media planners to be well-versed in the strengths and limitations of each channel.

*Note:*

The following is a general guide to the main channels. For more detail on what sits within each channel grouping, see Section 3.

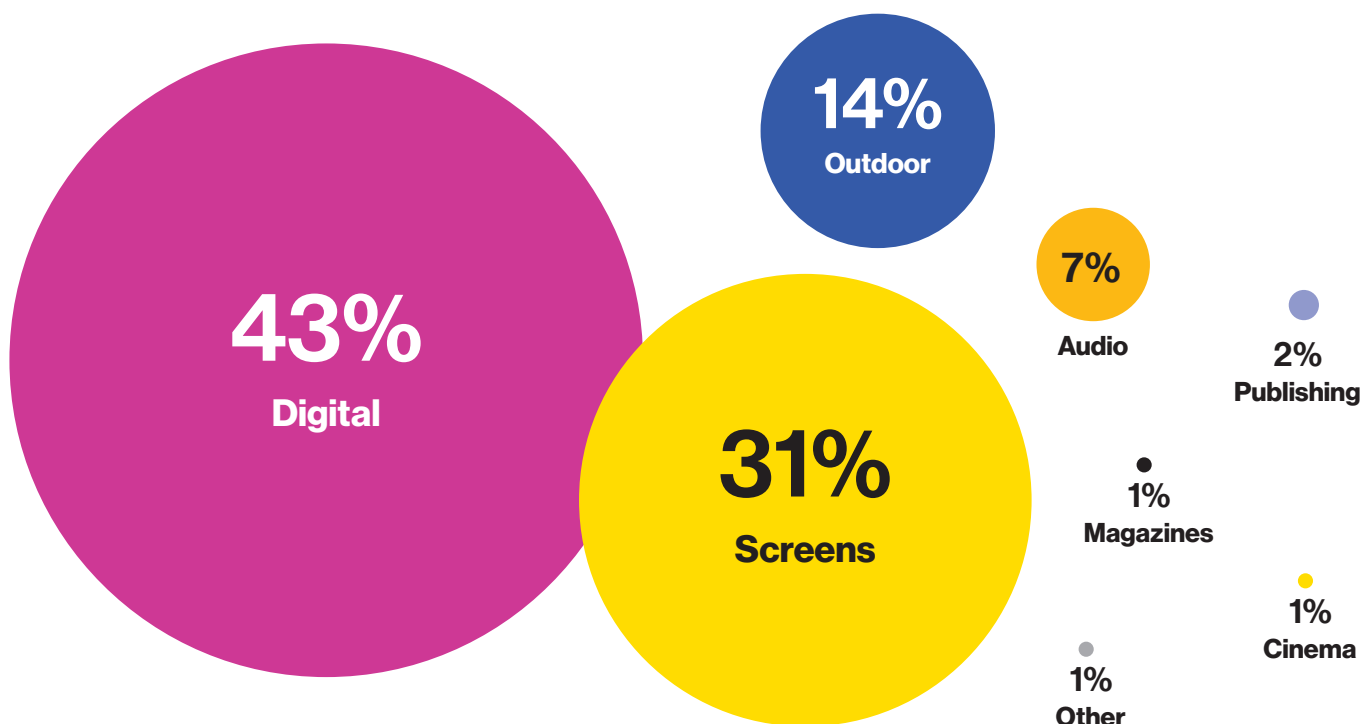


**Agency Spend by Media Channel**

This chart breaks down total annual media spend across key channels.

	CY-2010	% of TOTAL
<b>Digital</b>	\$3,781,445,142	43%
<b>Screens</b>	\$2,702,791,508	31%
<b>Outdoor</b>	\$1,258,860,101	14%
<b>Audio</b>	\$617,154,397	7%
<b>Publishing</b>	\$173,266,921	2%
<b>Cinema</b>	\$77,964,893	1%
<b>Magazines</b>	\$59,899,221	1%
<b>Other</b>	\$47,481,504	1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$8,718,863,687</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Standard Media Index



### The Value of the Advertising Industry

Advertising plays a critical role in Australia's economy. It does this by helping businesses reach target audiences, increasing their sales and revenue. A paper released recently by Deloitte Access Economics reports that whilst advertisers spent \$17.7 billion on advertising (2022), the impact on the national economy was staggering - nearly triple the spend at \$53 billion.

In fact, spend on advertising in Australia has increased more quickly than in the US, UK, Norway, Sweden and many other developed economies. One of the key drivers of this growth has been the rise of digital advertising, which has revolutionised the industry and continues to evolve.

Advertising is also a key driver of employment, with over 85,900 people employed directly in advertising roles, and 67,500 employed in the advertising supply chain (for example, working in content development and production services). In fact, in the past decade, we've seen the number of people employed in advertising roles grow at more than twice the rate of Australia's general employment – faster than many other developed countries.

This all points to a very positive future for Advertising Media, with almost limitless potential for you to build a career and thrive in this dynamic and ever-evolving industry.



### Looking to the Future

Over the past 20 years we have witnessed incredible change, caused by technological advancements. We've seen advances in computing power, faster networks, the rise of social media, the proliferation of mobile devices, access to almost infinite amounts of consumer data, and many new and fragmented channel opportunities.

These tremendous changes, whilst exciting, are also incredibly challenging for our clients to navigate. It is our job as media professionals to understand this ecosystem and help our clients navigate this complex world.

“Speed and complexity will only increase.” Henrik Wenders, Senior Vice-President AUDI

Technology at its best requires human input, and human interpretation. Insight drives brand value, and it is our role as media professionals to work with our clients to do more of the steering and shaping.

Media Group PHD predict six macro forces of change that will continue throughout the decade;

<b>1</b>	<b>Physical Separation</b> – consumers spending more time connecting via screens, for work and personal life. This may impact the development of relationships, mental health and wellbeing, purchase behaviour.
<b>2</b>	<b>Shallow Living</b> – increased multitasking leading to low levels of focus, with people being so overwhelmed with stimuli across multiple devices, that they do not engage fully and ‘skim’ their way through the day. This may affect our ability as communication professionals to achieve cut-through.
<b>3</b>	<b>Trust Dissolution</b> – increasing distrust in organisations, from governments to press to brands. This is likely to impact what we need to do to encourage consumers to ‘trust’ our client brands.
<b>4</b>	<b>Engineered Serendipity</b> – predictive analytics will become increasingly sophisticated, enabling much improved serving of relevant ads. This may change the individual brand experience, in that campaigns dynamically adapt to each person. Think custom algorithms.
<b>5</b>	<b>Decentralised Influence</b> – where everyone is an Influencer, and we move to a more unedited and uncurated world. This may prove a challenge in working out how to catalyse the marketing potential of nano-influencers and the everyday person.
<b>6</b>	<b>Purpose Pervasion</b> – with consumers expecting that every brand has an ‘authentic purpose’. This is likely to make it more difficult for brands to determine and convey their purpose, as more and more brands ‘communicating their purpose’ simply becomes white noise.

**Supporting Your Media Career**

We're with you every step of the way, supporting your learning and development, inspiring you at special events and conferences, and recognising your achievements at our annual awards ceremony.

Here's a taste of what's on offer:



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Programs for new recruits and media professionals with less than 5 years' experience. Includes skills workshops, networking events, special celebrations.



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Programs for media professionals with 5 or more years' experience, with a focus on developing business and leadership skills. The goal of the MFA 5+ program is to challenge you to think differently. Includes special events, online content and resources.



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Our annual full-day media conference, where the industry comes together to be inspired by ground-breaking thinking, best practice, innovation and hot topics, all aimed at driving our industry forward.



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Bespoke training programs on Digital Foundations, Television Foundations, How to Buy Television and more.



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The annual pre-eminent Awards program for our industry, celebrating the most effective and inspiring media campaigns.

Working in media, we are all empowered to effect change, big and small. Every day is unique, and presents us with new challenges. That's what makes our industry so exciting.