
InTransition Episode 93 – Allan Yates

David Pembroke: Hello, ladies and gentlemen and welcome once again to In Transition, the podcast that examines the practise of content communication in government and the public sector. My name's David Pembroke and thanks for joining me. Today we speak to an old friend of mine and someone who really knows communications inside and out. Before we come to him, we start with the definition, as we do each week, of exactly what content communication is. Content communication is a strategic, measurable, and accountable business process that relies on the creation, curation, and distribution of useful, relevant, and consistent content.

The purpose is to engage and inform a specific audience in order to achieve a desired citizen and/or stakeholder action. That's content communication and jump online to www.ContentGroup.com.au to learn more about it. Click on the research tab and jump in there and have a look at the research programme that we have underway with the Australian National University. A really exciting project that we will continue to report to you over the next 10, 12 months or so as we continue to build out that method and that standard that we're seeking to create for content communication, a global standard for the way that government engages with citizens and stakeholders.

To my guest today, Mr. Allan Yates. Yatesy has worked as a journalist in both the national and international media for almost 20 years, including 12 years in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery. He's also held senior roles in media relations with the Australian Institute of Sport and certainly played a key role at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. More recently he's worked in strategic advice, issues management, and communications for organisations such as the Australian Automobile Association, the TAFE Directors of Australia, the Australasian New Car Assessment Programme, the Department of Climate Change, New South Wales Health, but most importantly recently, a significant role at the Australian War Memorial which is Australia's number one tourist attraction and an icon in the Australian community. He joins me now in the studio. Allan Yates, welcome to In Transition.

Allan Yates: Thank you, David. Hi.

David Pembroke: That's a lot. You've done a lot but you also did ... You worked for the former prime minister, didn't you? Bob Hawke for a while?

Allan Yates: I did work for the Hawke and Keating governments on a couple of their projects. It was probably a transition out of journalism into the dark side.

David Pembroke: You talk about that transition, but let's go back to your time as a journalist. What brought you to journalism? What made you interested in becoming a journalist, and a senior journalist at that?

Allan Yates: Well, you don't start as a senior journalist. My entry into journalism, I would say, was completely ad hoc. I was sitting at home waiting for my end of year school results. I probably would have been a teacher in those days, that was the profession most students got exposed to.

David Pembroke: Where did you grow up, just by the way?

Allan Yates: I was brought up mainly in Sydney, in the Sutherland Shire. Born in New Zealand, my sister was born in Scotland 13 months later, so we basically chased my father around for the first 10 years of our lives. Waiting for my school results and I'm watching television one day and Ron Casey was on the air and I looked at him and thought, "He is an icon to television, I could certainly see myself maybe one day doing something like that." From there, I contacted media outlets and most of them said, "No way in the world." I did get an opportunity at News Limited, which I took up as a, in those days, a senior copy boy, which moved through to a cadetship and moved on to a cadetship then.

David Pembroke: How hard was it to get into the media, to get that role?

Allan Yates: It wasn't easy. For example, Fairfax Media, they awarded 12 cadetships a year at the start of the year and I think that particular year, 1973, tragically that I was looking for that position there were about 800 people who'd applied. They now award about eight cadetships a year and they have something like 32 to 38,000 a year applying.

David Pembroke: Wow. Back then what was it that you loved about journalism? What was it, apart from, probably, Ron Casey being the sports broadcaster at the time, what was it that you liked about it, that attracted you to it? What were the specific parts of it?

Allan Yates: Well I think I had a facility with words. I certainly wouldn't call myself a numbers person, so I think that was always something that assisted me and I liked the thought of going out, viewing things, and being able to report it back to the public. The paper I worked on in those days was The Daily Mirror, which was an afternoon daily, up against the Sydney Sun, which made it one of the most competitive news markets in the world.

David Pembroke: Yes, I remember it well. I was a paperboy at the time.

Allan Yates: There weren't too many markets in the world, city markets in the world that had two afternoon dailies. Our first edition hit the streets at 9:15, so we're up and at them very early and it was a very competitive environment. In those days, long before mobile phones and computers, you would go out, you would assess the

scene and because you were working for an afternoon daily with five editions a day you ran back into the office and you basically dictated your story, which gave I think most people in my position a good facility to sort their words out, get into a flow pretty much on the run, and then be able to dictate it down the line.

David Pembroke: In terms of that, what was the best advice that you got about telling stories at that time? What makes a good story?

Allan Yates: Well there were a number of ones. Broadsheet dailies, which I worked on later in life, versus tabloids, which was the Sydney Sun and the Daily Telegraph, they were very conversational in the way they presented their material, so that was something that was always presented to me, keep it pretty simple, keep it conversational, keep the sex in the lead, make sure that people got interested right from the start.

David Pembroke: Yeah, and that really stands to this day, doesn't it? Simple communication, go hard early with your best information to grab the attention, because if you don't grab the attention early they're not going to stay with you.

Allan Yates: I think it does, but I think the nature of journalism these days is a little bit more as a commentary, as much as reporting issues, so in many cases you're getting a mix of the actual story for the public and also the journalist's view on how that story should be viewed.

David Pembroke: Sure, but it's still that point about attention though, isn't it, that you, even if it's commentary, straight news reporting, you've got to give your best or your hardest opinion earliest if you're going to grab attention, or your best facts and information to try to grab that attention.

Allan Yates: I agree and I think with newspapers you still, and with electronic medium, you do have that heading is often something that pulls people in or sends them away.

David Pembroke: Yeah. In terms of your time as a journalist and so, obviously going out and reporting at all sorts of different, probably, news events, sports events, what did you like about that part of it, that notion of, obviously, being out there, having that front row on the first cut of history, exciting times for you?

Allan Yates: It was. It was an exciting time for a young person in any year I think, but technology was slowly coming into it in the '70s and so the game, journalism, was evolving. You're right, to be able to go out there, and journalists do have an access, and in many cases they don't understand they've got until they no longer have it. That would certainly be the case in politics. Most politicians will call a journalist back.

David Pembroke: I was fortunate enough to spend 10 years as a reporter for the ABC, and I don't think I did understand back then just that privilege that you have, that notion of front seat access to be at such wonderful events, important, significant sporting events, cultural events, political events and you get the most privileged position because of your responsibility to then tell that story out to your readership. I loved it as a journalist.

I found it just so invigorating, but ultimately, it's funny, but from my point of view I ultimately wanted to be ... I got sick of probably reporting on other people and thought to myself, well, hang on, I actually want to go and do something myself. I don't want to be always be telling the story of other people. I actually want to go and do something. I found that my time in journalism, I don't know, it sort of ran out, it sort of ran its course a bit. Did you find that in journalism that it ran its course for you?

Allan Yates: I think journalism is often a young person's game. You do have your ... across the board, but by and large in a lot of workforces young people form the basis for that workforce. I don't know that journalism is any different to that. The people who are out in the road are the people who are taking the risks in some cases and then moving back quickly to report it back to their audiences. They are at the frontline, as you say, and they do have a privileged position. I find that it is probably a young person's game.

People see it as a career more now than it may well have been 20 or 30 years ago, and it may well have been, as you were saying, moving through your life it was a job for X number of years and then you started to see it as a career. I think that's a telling differences. A job is a job. A career is something you decide you want to do for the rest of your life. I found that journalists who came through who took that decision to make journalism a career, as opposed to treating it as a job, were the ones who often went on to senior positions.

David Pembroke: Yeah, I don't know. I wonder, and this is probably a little sort of tangential for ... With the audience here is really government communications, but bear with me, I sort of go off on these tangents occasionally, but I'll wonder about long term journalism and journalists who spend a lot of time reporting and not having the experience of actually going and doing other things to enrich their experience, to be able to come back with a different perspective and I think we're the poorer for it. I don't think there's enough diversity at senior levels.

I don't think we get enough ... A richer experience in some of those correspondents and they spend all their time doing the one thing and to me, particularly in politics, you just, I find that there's not the perspective that I need when I read a lot of it. It's like, oh, they've done this or they've done that or it's like, okay, like making decisions. Making decisions is difficult and often in political journalism it's like, oh, they've done this or they ... It's not grounded in any sort of understanding that those things are intensely difficult and choices have to be made and grownups have to make choices and you can't please

everybody all the time. Politics is a horse race almost, who's in front, who's behind, who did what to who?

Allan Yates:

David Pembroke: Who cares? To me ... Anyway, that is a bit of rave to the side. Okay, so let's get back on point here, really, around what I want to talk to you about is obviously you had a distinguished career in journalism for a long time and in political journalism, I think when you were here in Canberra you were bureau chief for the major, News Limited, the Australian newspaper-

Allan Yates: I was chief of staff, not bureau chief.

David Pembroke: Sorry, chief of staff.

Allan Yates: I like to make a difference, so-

David Pembroke: Yeah, but still, chief of staff is an incredibly important position in terms of gathering and distributing and ordering priority for what stories are going to actually make the cut. Then you moved into sort of telling stories, working for government out at the Australian Institute of Sport and the Australian Sports Commission. What skills did you bring with you from journalism into that storytelling role when you were representing the government agencies that you work for?

Allan Yates: All right, a couple of things. If I could just go back on your rave, I think that journalism is like most professions, people who have been in the game for a long time have experience and expertise. In many cases you arrive at that level because you have had a broad base of experience in terms of, in journalism, going out and doing that. As we move into our more senior positions, as you call them, we're meeting with younger people who have decided that communications or journalism is their career. In my case, and I would say a lot of cases of people my age, we fell into the game, we came into the game because we were able to get into it, it's intensely competitive now.

Young people these days go to university for three or four years to achieve that expertise, to achieve that degree or that in college experience. I think that all the journalists these days have to understand that they are working with a new workforce that is specifically skilled for the game they're coming into. While I think it's really important to have that broad base, young people these days are making those decisions and they're coming into things like journalism and communications viewing it as a career for them rather than just a job. Many people my age group, and I'd say you're at least a generation below me, which is the good news, Dave, I would say we came into the game seeing it as a job and we moved from there.

David Pembroke: Okay.

Allan Yates:

Now your second question was about telling the story. At a place like the Australian Institute of Sport, I was there from '96, I worked for the Hawke and Keating governments and we got thrashed in '96 by Howard, but I was lucky enough to take up a position at the AIS in Sports Commission as the manager media and public relations, running from '96, just before the Atlanta Olympics, through to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. There were no shortages of stories to be told, whether it be preparation for the Olympics, whether it be funding for the Olympics, whether it be athlete preparation, whether it be the significant scientific advantage that the Australian Institute of Sport was giving Australian sport in those days, and it was the preeminent sports laboratory in the world.

It was an exciting time to be there. I was very lucky to be there. We basically moved the AIS and the sports commission from its role as a smaller media and comms area, servicing media with sports interests to international sporting icon effectively, as Australia did well, improved in Barcelona and Atlanta and then moving into the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The AIS' reputation was preeminent and it was incredible that the stories that could've been told. For example, in '96 when the Australian team was at Atlanta the Australian junior swimming team was in camp at the AIS and they were living the same routine, getting up early in the morning, walking for kilometres with bricks in their gear bags, doing their training sessions, having briefings, but really just trying to encapsulate that Olympic experience for the next generation of swimmers.

There were fantastic stories to be told. Alongside that, there were other areas, such as the African Sports Centre, which was there, and also the Indigenous Sports Centre and at that time the sports commission was taking big steps into grassroots sport, with what was then called their Active Australia Programme. There were no shortages of stories to be told.

David Pembroke:

How did you decide which stories to tell, to build, certainly around the AIS, the mystique of this place, the Australian Institute of Sport. Just as an aside, I was the communications director of the Wallabies at the '99 World Cup and pretty much every press conference that we had during that particular tournament people would raise this issue of the Australian Institute of Sport as if it was this magical place that bestowed powers onto the athletes and what role did the Australian Institute of Sport play in the development of the Wallabies. Now a lot of the athletes had been part of the AIS, but it really was that mystique.

I'll come to that in a minute, about how did you build that mystique, but just go back to that, if I might, that first question of with so many stories to tell, I think it's the same really in government everywhere, is that there are thousands of stories to tell and I think in your experience at New South Wales Health, your experience at Climate Change, like there's never really a lack of stories to tell in government, but just going back to that point, how did you decide which stories to tell and how strategic were you about building up this mystique?

Allan Yates: Right, I don't know that you can tell too many stories if the media's not interested in hearing them. We were absolutely swamped by the media. For example, you may recall Ekkart Arbeit was appointed as the head athletics coach for Australia running into the Sydney Olympics. It subsequently came out that he'd been a member of the East German regime in the late '70s and so over the course eight weeks I think we had something like 5,500 medias queries about this. Alongside that the international media was getting interested in Australia in the build up to the Sydney Olympics.

We had incredible interest and visitation from overseas and international media agencies. The fact of we having stories to tell is probably more importantly defined by the number of people who want to hear it and run it. We're in a position we're able to talk about Australia's preparation for the Olympics, the individual sports preparation for the Olympics, the issues around the AIS and their sports science and what they were looking at and you may recall that drug testing was becoming, through the '90s, was becoming much more of an acknowledged and scientific project, for want of a better term, but the AIS lead that particularly in the area of EPO, which was-

David Pembroke: Yeah. Yeah. I was involved in that.

Allan Yates: Blood doping and there was this sports scientist called Robin Parisotto who really championed that, but that sports science area was vibrant and led the world.

David Pembroke: In that specific instance it was more about management of flow. There was so much demand that really it was about really managing that.

Allan Yates: It was and it was also we're in a situation where we did have a lot of stories, as you say. We did have a lot of media that wanted their own story, so we were able to feed stories out completely separate. Alongside that we did some other things where we brought media in and gave them 24 hours at the AIS. We put them in the athletes' village. We had them going out and doing sessions with the athlete sports, ranging from archery through to gymnastics, which was always very popular, and we have a very funny thing with Hutchinson, who was then with the Wide World of Sports, a big unit himself dressing up in a tutu and going out to do some stuff the gymies.

It wasn't seen as taking the mickey out of the gymnastics programme, but it was an incredibly popular segment and so we were able to draw in media on a whole range of different levels, from soft stories through to hard news stories and in many cases there was a lot of interest around the funding and political elements of the Olympics as well.

David Pembroke: In terms of your journalism, how useful was your journalism in being able to identify the stories that were going to work, we're going to run, understanding the needs of the media so that you were able to get the stories run?

Allan Yates: Right, I think in a couple of areas I was lucky in that I probably had strong networks with the media and, again, we're probably talking 25 years or so after I'd started as a journalist. I'd moved through the journalism phase and by the time I got to the AIS in the late '90s I did see myself more as a communications practitioner and I think the next step from there was to see myself as a manager. I think there is a big difference between being a practitioner and a manager.

David Pembroke: Now the audience to this podcast are people who work in government communication, both here in Australia and around the world, and sort of the underpinning of content communication is really this understanding that you can be your own media now. The technology has gifted us the ability to be our own media company. The factors of media production and distribution have now been democratised and they now reside in every organisation. You can create your own video content, audio content, stills, graphics, and you can distribute that through these massively powerful online platforms matched with your offline platforms as well.

This sits at the heart of this process of content communication. As somebody who has worked in the field for quite some time, and someone who has great experience in the traditional media, what's some of the advice that you would give people to be successful in this new world, to take on this capability and to be successful now that you can be your own media company for your programme or your policy or your regulation?

Allan Yates: All right. We're talking about comms not journalism now?

David Pembroke: Yeah, comms.

Allan Yates: Okay. Well look I think first off you need to be relevant. As you've already said, there are a lot of stories out there, but you've got to be relevant to the audience you're trying to attract and to-

David Pembroke: About being relevant, what does that mean?

Allan Yates: Well for example I think a good example is the difference between government ... Sorry, I'll start again, between federal public sector and state public sector. In the federal public sector you have greater emphasis on policy and funding. For example there would be in the department of transport an area which would say there will be a transport system in Sydney or Melbourne, there will be cars and trucks and buses and freeways and ferries and rail and a range of different things, here's an amount of money to go and build, in the 2000 Olympics it was the M7 motorway, which was there.

At the state level it's more about service delivery, so the issue there is more about, mate, where's my bus? If it's not here in 10 minutes I'm ringing Ray

Hadley or Alan Jones. There's a clear distinction between those two, the delivery of the public service at the federal level and at the state level-

David Pembroke: And what the audience needs to hear from you as a result of those different emphases.

Allan Yates: Yes, and so with communications and government communications and relations at the state level you are much more about informing a public, you're about service delivery. If that bus isn't there, why not? I worked a lot for state transit, which was Sydney buses and ferries. If that ferry was broken down in the harbour I would always hear about it on Ray Hadley or Alan Jones because someone, a punter on that ferry would be ringing up, going, "Oh, guess what, the ferry's broken down," long before our operational people would be letting us know, because they were dealing with the issue. I think that that is an issue. You need to be able to move quickly and react, but you also need to be able to build significant communications programmes around that.

David Pembroke: What about building those programmes? What advice do you have to people given that they now have these wonderful gifts of technology that they can now create these content programmes at a much more cost effective way than they've ever been able to do it in the past? As you would remember from the old days creating video not that long ago was prohibitively expensive. Now we can do it on our iPhones. Creating podcasts you'd have to have studios. Well now, like we're doing here, we've got a little studio in the middle of our office so we can make a programme. Graphics, you can go to Canva and just grab the templates and put information. It's so much easier now.

What advice do you have for people to take advantage of that? Given that you've got that skill and experience in journalism how do people make the best of it, because it's sort of a different way of thinking for government communicators who traditionally, I suppose, had been in the space of engaging through the media and traditional mainstream advertising.

Allan Yates: Well I think I mentioned earlier on many of the people in my generation, maybe a generation or two under that, came through journalists and moved into communication. Today we're dealing with whole generations of young people that see communications as their skill there. They're taught, they're book taught and then they move out to be real world taught about the profession they've chosen. Many journalists wander into communications because their time as a journalist is finished. That's an issue that needs to be thought about and looked at by the journalists coming into the game and also the younger people who've chosen it as a profession.

Relevant, again, is very important. You need to make sure that what you're saying and what you're presenting is specific to the needs, specific to the requirements of those audiences. There's no point talking to them about apples when what they're looking for is oranges. There's no point coming out trying to

convince people that that bus that they've been waiting for all week has been 10 minutes late has actually been on time, they've just been 10 minutes early. Those kind of things don't work. People out there are experiencing their own, have got their own experiences with whatever the service might be at that level or whatever the policy might be at the federal level.

David Pembroke: How do you discover that need? How do you understand the audience and what they're looking for?

Allan Yates: Well very quickly, again, in the service delivery area, the state area it comes the elevator very quick. If that bus isn't on time, mate, you're in trouble, okay? With the federal level and often at the international level you have more time, it's a more controlled environment. That policy is put together, there is feedback sought from a whole range of target audiences and stakeholders. We build the project or build a project around that and then from that level, from that project being built we then develop the specific communications or marketing or content programmes that are required to present those projects.

I think that's very important. In our area as communicators, I often have a graph which is a pyramid and the bottom two-thirds of the pyramid are the people who've prepared that product, whether it be armaments, biscuits or the AIS or the Olympics or the NDIS, whatever it could be, that project by the time communicators get involved is two-thirds, three-quarters developed. Our job is to go from there, to pick up that final quarter or that final third. Now what you've got to do is take the people below you, who've developed the project, who are wondering who the hell is this person and explain to them that they are the experts in their area, but what you are is an expert in your area and your job is to take the work they've done and compliment it. Not take it and run it, just to compliment it.

With that upper third, that upper echelon, which is in many cases your senior management, you are in the process of advising them of the best method they can promote or communicate the project that's being developed or the product that's being developed and from there you've got to be able to take that top third with you, as well as taking the bottom two-thirds.

David Pembroke: In terms of that getting involved in that bottom two-thirds, how can communications people get involved early so by the time that they do get involved it's not too far gone, or they haven't been able to influence in way where it's perhaps not fit for purpose?

Allan Yates: Well, from my point of view I always found it very, very important to acknowledge the role of the people who've developed the policy. If you come in thinking, look, I'm on top of this, you need to be going in there and saying, "How is this happening? Why is this policy being developed? How have you developed it?" Gain the story to be told from those people who've got much more expertise than we have and to try to work around them is just madness and it's

suicide. If you've got people who develop a policy who think, who are wondering or think that you're not much good, no matter how much you impress the people at the upper echelon, you're going to be working against the tide.

That's very important, to acknowledge the expertise of everyone involved in the project and to pick their brains about how it's developed and then once you've picked their brains then to take that away and then formulate a communication programme. It's not about saying, "Okay, look that's a great ... We're going to do this, this, this. What does it all mean?" You can't do it backwards.

David Pembroke: Really what your advice is get up out of your chair, go and see the people, spend a bit of shoe leather, go down and ask questions, be curious, find that essence.

Allan Yates: Yeah, it's a novel concept, but we are still a people game, it is still communications and if you don't get out there and go and speak to the people how are you going to know what it is? I'm a great believer in that. Research helps, but again research is about people. Research is about touching base and finding out. You can have a great research paper to work off, but you need to know the background behind it. You need to know what the people that are developing the product think, on both sides, what they think is good about the product and the issues that need to be managed.

Alongside that I think there's too, there's issues to be communicated, there's issues to be managed and I think that needs to be clearly identified so that once you do know what's up there you're in a position to be able to treat them differently and an issues management programme or policy is very different to an issues promotion policy.

David Pembroke: Yeah, that's really good advice and I think sometimes we don't take the time, there's not that level of humility really that you just need to think, well, look, I don't know about this and I'm going to go and ask a few questions and it doesn't hurt. For me this is the intensely interesting part of working in government, is that we're trying to solve important problems for the community, so the work is really interesting. Spending time with smart people, who are very engaged in this particular problem they're trying to solve from a policy level, can be very rewarding and getting on top of things. I think that's great advice.

Allan Yates: I would also say the communication of it. I think communicating it out to the larger audiences and 25 years ago it was all about mass media, whereas these days with the internet and technology, the digital platforms we have we can go directly to them. You'd only have to look at what happened in the last election campaign with things like Mid East scare and stuff like that that were direct approaches to the punters and even the recent ACT election. It's not only about pulling stuff together, it's about how you reach out, how you attract people and get them to listen to your message.

David Pembroke: Yeah. Well how do you do that? What's the best way to do that?

Allan Yates: Well I think every program's different. I think you need to shape it. I think you need to look at the dynamics of the target audience you're trying to hit. You need to look at the product you've got. You need to look at the medium or the platform media or the platforms you're going to use to communicate it. I think most of these programmes are very different in the way they're delivered and so consequently one size doesn't fit all.

David Pembroke: You do need to customise pretty much every communication programme?

Allan Yates: I think so. Most audiences are different. Most products are different. You need to differentiate between the product and your audience, so I'd say nearly all comms programmes are discrete, individual in their own way.

David Pembroke: What about that point that you just made really around the broadcast era, moving from the broadcast era to the narrow-cast era and that really it really is about getting that specific understanding of that narrow audience that you're seeking to influence and engage? What are some of your advice that you have to people about trying to drill down to really get that understanding? What are some of the best ways that you can get that understanding?

Allan Yates: Well again I think it's a people game. I do think you need to charge the expertise, get to the expertise of whatever your product is. In terms of getting your medium out, your message out, there are many different ways, whether you want to do it as an event base, whether you want to do it as a national programme, whether you want to do it as a specific corridor marketing programme. For example if you are looking to promote a new time table, you do it as a corridor promotion, you go straight down the corridor where the potential passengers are going to be, as opposed to a broader campaign or a broader programme which you might go.

David Pembroke: Just quickly before we do wrap it up, I'm interested in your views about managing up within organisations and probably managing up into the political realm. As a communications person working in a government organisation what is your best advice around managing ministerial offices and how do you get the best outcomes working with ministerial offices given that they have particular interests and concerns and pressures and worries and other things? How have you found the best way to work with ministerial offices over time has been in order to get that support you need for the communication programme?

Allan Yates: All right, look, I think there's a couple of things. One, I think it's very important to understand the way parliaments and ministers' offices and all offices work, and that includes the press gallery. You need to understand the significant demands and pressures that are on ministers' offices and MPs and their offices on the way through. They are the ones that deal with the public much more than we do. If there's an issue in an electorate the member of the public will

come to the MP about it, so that's very important. The other thing I think is incredibly important is to be honest. You need to be seen as an honest trader. You need to be seen as an honest trader to gain-

David Pembroke: As an impartial.

Allan Yates: As impartial, to gain the confidence of parochial political people. Alongside that I think in terms of working within parliament it's very important to make sure that if you've got a product that product is accessed by all MPs. For example, MPs briefings hosted by the minister have always been something which is either been, if it's a bit sensitive, resisted strongly by the office or alternately it's something that the ministers see as an opportunity to provide access to all MPs. MPs look for stories as much as the media do.

They want to have good news stories to go out to their electorate with, so they are always looking for policies, programmes, funding programmes which might be of interest to their electorate, to their voters, specific voters, so they have a great interest in what goes on around parliament beyond their own electorate. I think from the minister's point of view it's often a very good thing to be able to present to the breadth of parliament through the MPs. Not just a press conference, but an MPs briefing.

David Pembroke: Okay. There we go. All right, Allan Yates, we'll leave it there. Thank you very much for coming into the studio to spend a bit of time with me today and audience, lots of great advice there. I think going back, that notion of simplicity and clarity around your communication and thinking more broadly.

I love Yates' advice there about getting up, getting out of your chair, go and speak to the people who understand the policy, the programme, the regulation, and sit with them and try to help them and work with your own skill to craft that story, to craft that narrative, which is going to be compelling for that audience. Indeed to seek their insights about what the audience may be looking for, because they have spent so much time in developing that policy, that programme, that regulation, that they indeed have great insight that you can draw upon.

Allan Yates: In their networks. They have networks we don't understand, so we need to understand and to be able to communicate to them.

David Pembroke: Yeah, exactly. Okay, so that's another great point as well. Plenty of great value there from Allan Yates. Did I say, Yatesy, thanks very much. Thanks for coming in.

Allan Yates: No problems, mate.

David Pembroke: I really enjoyed our conversation and thanks, I really appreciate it and I know the audience did as well. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you once again for joining

me In Transition. It's been a wonderful conversation today and I look forward to joining you again next week at the same time. Bye for now.