

Media guidelines & Cultural Protocols



The following document outlines key protocols for media reporting on the passing of Rhoda Roberts AO, and coverage of her funeral and any memorial service.



BACKGROUND

On Saturday 21 March 2026, Rhoda Roberts AO, passed away following a short battle with a very rare form of ovarian cancer. A proud Widjabul Wieybal woman from the Bundjalung Nation, Rhoda is remembered as one of Australia's most influential arts and creative sector leaders. A pioneer and cultural authority, she helped reshape representation across the arts and media, carrying culture with her into every space she entered, and championing First Nations voices across the nation.

[Read the SBS statement in full here.](#)

[Read more about the life and career of Rhoda Roberts here.](#)

FUNERAL DETAILS

A funeral will be held on Tuesday 31 March at St Carthage's Cathedral in Lismore, on Rhoda's beloved Bundjalung Country.



The service will commence at 12:15pm AEDT with a Smoking Ceremony. The broadcast will conclude at 2:10pm AEDT.

At the family's request, NITV will broadcast the funeral live, available to watch on NITV, SBS On Demand (login required), on NITV Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NITVAustralia/>) and NITV YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/@NITV>).

NITV's broadcast will be presented by NITV's Head of News and Current Affairs, Natalie Ahmat, and SBS and NITV's National Indigenous Affairs Editor, John Paul Janke.

NITV is the only media outlet permitted access within the venue to capture the service, at the family's request. The live feed will be available to other broadcasters.

MEDIA ACCESS REQUESTS

The live broadcast feed will be available to other broadcasters via SBS MCR DVN Split with NITV top left bug.

The live feed will also be available to First Nations media organisations.

Any other requests to access the live feed or content can be directed to Sarah Vahtola (sarah.vahtola@sbs.com.au +61 (0)497 532 782)

CONDITIONS OF MEDIA USE

All footage and stills must be credited to NITV. All copyright and other relevant rights to be owned by the family in perpetuity, subject to a 24 hour licence for broadcast media outlets to use for reporting the service.

MEDIA USE APPROVAL

In consideration of Indigenous Cultural Protocols, SBS and NITV has gained permission to use and reproduce Rhoda's name, voice and image. We are doing so in line with her wishes. We also continue to consult with her family and community.

Media are permitted to use and reproduce Rhoda's name, voice and image. A selection of images have been approved and are available for media use. You can request approved images – email sarah.vahtola@sbs.com.au.

All video and audio content is also approved for media use.



USE OF NAME AND NAMING CONVENTION

Rhoda should be referred to as:

- *Widjabul Wиейbal woman from the Bundjalung nation, Rhoda Roberts, AO.*

Phonetic pronunciations:

- Widjabul Wиейbal - *Wi-ja-bull why-a-bull*
- Bundjalung – *Buhn-juh-lung*

We acknowledge that Widjabul Wиейbal is also spelt Widjabul Wia-bal or Widjabul Wiyabal.

CONTENT WARNINGS

When posting, publishing or broadcasting images, footage and voice of Rhoda Roberts, media should ensure they have a content warning displayed, in line with Indigenous Cultural Protocols.

Examples:

- *This article contains the name and images of a First Nations person who has died.*
- *Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders viewers are warned that the following content contains images and voices of deceased persons.*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following content contains images, voices and names of people who have died.*

Q&A

Q: Why is NITV covering the funeral?

A: Rhoda's family requested that NITV cover her funeral because they would like the service to be accessible to the many people and communities Rhoda connected with during her life and career.

The Roberts-Field family is hoping all who wish to pay respects to Rhoda at the time of the funeral can do so, even if they are unable to travel to attend the service.

NITV is a channel made by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures for all Australians. It provides a trusted space for First Nations communities, delivering coverage grounded in cultural protocols.



Q: What is the Cultural Protocol in regard to names and images of Rhoda being used following her passing?

A: There is no single standard cultural mourning protocol amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The appropriate mourning protocol is to be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with family members and community as appropriate. SBS and NITV gained prior permission to use and reproduce Rhoda's name, voice and image. We are doing so in line with her wishes. We also continue to consult with her family and community.

Q: Why are there protocols in place?

A: Cultural Protocols are in place to ensure that the public respect the wishes of the family and community of their loved ones that have passed away. Refer to *The Greater Perspective: Protocols and Guidelines for the Production of Film and Television on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* for more information.

For further information, please contact:

Sarah Vahtola | sarah.vahtola@sbs.com.au | +61 (0)497 532 782



SBS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

This document features 'The Great Ancestral Eel', an artwork reflecting the Story of Country developed by Rhoda Roberts AO for SBS and NITV. The artwork was created Ngarbal Gamilaraay artist and NITV graphic designer, Jeremy Worrall. It is proudly on display as you enter SBS and NITV's headquarters in Artarmon, Sydney, on Cammeraygal Country.