

CE 2 – Media and Public Relations Policy

1 Objectives

The objectives of the Media and Public Relations Policy are to ensure:

- 1.1 Council demonstrates a professional, strong and authoritative image to the public.
- 1.2 Council messaging to the media is uniform, consistent and accurate.
- 1.3 Individual Councillors or employees do not express personal views or unauthorised views to the media on behalf of the organisation.
- 1.4 Messaging to the media does not place the organisation at risk, particularly in terms of liability.

2 Definitions

2.1 Councillors

means members of an elected body that make decisions on behalf of a local government through a formal meeting process. Generally, local government Councillors, who include the Mayor or President and Councillors, do not have any authority to act or make decisions as individuals.

2.2 Employee

means a person that's hired to provide a service to a company either on a full-time, part-time or casual basis in exchange for payment. Also known as staff.

2.3 Worker

means a part-time or full-time employee, casual employee, contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' and volunteers.

3 Policy

- 3.1 The *Local Government Act 1995* provides for the role of the Shire President to speak on behalf of the Local Government. Accordingly, the Shire President is the official spokesperson for Council.
- 3.2 If approached by the media for formal comment on any issue, Councillors and employees are in the first instance, to ask the media to make direct contact with the Shire President as the Council's official spokesperson.
- 3.3 When the media does not make direct contact with the Shire President and a Councillor or employee is asked to respond or comment to the media, the Councillor or employee will direct the enquiry to the CEO. The CEO will liaise with the Shire President and they will determine who will respond or comment to the media and the nature of the response or comment.
- 3.4 If the Shire President or person acting in the capacity of Shire President is unable to be contacted, the CEO will contact the Deputy President for response or comment to the media.
- 3.5 If neither the President or Deputy President is available, the CEO will determine who is to respond to the media and the nature of the response.

- 3.6 Without express authority from the Shire President, Councillors and employees are not to speak to the media offering a position on behalf of Council or the Shire as a whole.
- 3.7 Councillors retain a right to express an opinion on any issue of public interest, so far as they are clear that they are not speaking on behalf of Council.
- 3.8 The CEO and senior employees may be required to comment to the media on operational issues. When doing so, these employees will not speak about matters under the auspice of Council.

4 Accountabilities & Responsibilities

4.1.1 Council is accountable for:

- Ensuring the organisation has in place a lawful, transparent, and accountable policy framework, supported by a suite of compliant and appropriate policies and procedures.
- Endorsing (or not) each organisational policy document in a timely and effective manner.
- Delegating implementation of each policy document to the CEO.

4.1.2 The CEO is accountable for ensuring the development, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy document, in accord with governing legislation and Council directives.

4.1.3 The Executive Management Team and Managers is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all employees under their direction comply with this policy document.
- Enacting process to redress non-compliance with this policy document.

4.1.4 All employees are individually responsible for complying with this policy document.

5 Risk Management

If this Media and Public Relations Policy is not in place the risks include (but are not limited to):

- 5.1 Media interactions are unprofessional and reduce public confidence in the organisation.
- 5.2 Council messaging is mixed, inconsistent and inaccurate.
- 5.3 Individual Councillors and employees express personal views or unauthorised views to the media on behalf of the organisation.
- 5.4 Messaging to the media does not place the organisation at risk, particularly in terms of liability.

6 Legislation, Policy and Other Relevant Documents

Act	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> s.2.7(2)(b) – The council is to determine the local government’s policies s.2.8 Role of mayor or president
Regulation	N/A
Local Law	N/A
Shire Policies	Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates

Related Documents	N/A
Related Procedure	N/A

7 Administration

Original Adoption Date	17 December 1998
Last Reviewed	28 April 2022
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