

Media Policy

1 Purpose

Communicating with the media is an important part of achieving Council's broader objectives and commitment to transparency and open, honest communication with the public. Media coverage is a key driver of organisational reputation - hence the need for a positive framework for interaction and engagement.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of Council workers with regard to engaging with the media.

2 Policy

2.1 Council Workers (not including Councillors)

1. Council will openly discuss matters of interest with the media unless disclosure of certain information contravenes Council's obligations of confidentiality or privacy, duty of care, or could infringe other laws or regulations that govern its operations.
2. The Mayor and the General Manager are the official spokespeople on Council affairs, as per the NSW Local Government Act (1993).
3. All media enquiries received by workers without media delegation should be directed in the first instance to Council's Senior Communication Officer.
4. Media enquiries received by workers with media delegation are to be dealt with promptly by that worker or directed to Council's Senior Communication Officer.
5. Only the General Manager, Mayor, Directors, Communication Officers and workers with the relevant media delegation have permission to speak to the media.
6. Council workers with a professional expertise, but without delegated authority, are allowed to speak to the media on a specific subject within their field - on specified occasions - with the permission of the General Manager and in consultation with Council's Senior Communication Officer.
7. No contractor employed by Council is allowed to speak to the media regarding Council business without the express permission of the General Manager.
8. Council workers have an obligation to support Council decisions and shall not use the media to damage Council's reputation, undermine public confidence in the Council or local government generally.
9. As members of the community, council workers are entitled to offer their personal views on matters which are the subject of community engagement, bearing in mind the point above. Workers who are uncertain in this matter should seek the guidance from Council's Senior Communication Officer.
10. Council workers must not make political or controversial statements in or to the media relating to Council affairs, decisions and/or events, or about council officials that are likely to generate negative publicity and damage the reputation of Council.
11. Council's Senior Communication Officer is responsible for coordinating and distributing media releases, articles, columns, statements, newsletters and other media material on behalf of the Mayor and Council.
12. The Media Policy and Social Media Policy also apply in emergency and public alert situations.

2.2 Councillors

1. Councillors may openly discuss matters of interest with the media unless disclosure of certain information contravenes Council’s obligations of confidentiality or privacy, duty of care, or could infringe other laws or regulations that govern its operations.
2. The Mayor and the General Manager are the official spokespeople on Council affairs, as per the NSW Local Government Act (1993).
3. Councillors have an obligation to support Council decisions and shall not use the media to damage Council’s reputation, undermine public confidence in the Council or local government generally.
4. As members of the community, Councillors are entitled to offer their personal views on matters which are the subject of community engagement, always bearing in mind how that may be perceived given their substantive role with Council. Councillors who are uncertain in this matter should seek guidance from the General Manager or Directors.

3 Definitions

Worker: As defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and varied to include councillors.

A worker is:

- a councillor, or
- an employee, or
- a contractor or subcontractor, or
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or
- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person’s business or undertaking, or
- an outworker, or
- an apprentice or trainee, or
- a student gaining work experience, or
- a volunteer.

Media: Includes print media (such as national or local newspapers, magazines, newsletters, brochures etc.) broadcast media (including radio and television broadcasters and internet publishers) and social media.

4 Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead councillors in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and guidelines.
General Manager	Executive	To lead workers (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and related guidelines.
Directors, Group and Section Leaders	All Directorates	To communicate, implement and comply with this policy and related guidelines.
Group Leader Customer Services, Communication Officers	Business Services	To support workers in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy.
All Council workers	Council	To implement this policy.
Council Committees		To be aware and adhere to this policy.

5 References

- Council’s Code of Conduct Policy
- Council’s Community Engagement Policy
- Council’s Social Media Policy
- Council’s Social Media Guidelines

6 Details of Approval and revision

- Approval date: 24/08/2017
- Responsible Section: N/A
- Superseded policies/procedures:
- Next review date: 24/08/2021

Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date