

MEDIA POLICY	
Type	Governance
Category	Corporate & Community
Responsible Officer	Mayor CEO Staff with Delegated Authority
First Issued / Adopted	24 July 2013
Review Period	2 years
Last Reviewed	27 January 2016
Minutes Reference	OM17/16
Next Review Date	30 November 2018
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Freedom of Information Act 1991
Related Documents	Elected Members Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Privacy Policy
Public Consultation Required	No
File Reference	605.84
Purpose	To ensure that Council effectively promotes and responds to the media in a professional, timely and positive manner.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The Council is committed to upholding the principles of transparency and accountability, and recognises the duty to keep the community informed on matters before the Council.

The purpose of this Policy is to formally state Council's position in regard to communicating with the media. Compliance with this Policy will ensure that Council effectively promotes and responds to the media in a professional, timely and positive manner.

2. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

In order to communicate with the media effectively and positively, Council requires a corporate approach to liaising with the media to ensure that a consistent and positive image is created and maintained by the Council. It is important that issues which are the subject of media interest, are thoroughly assessed, the relevant facts established and an appropriate strategy developed prior to any comments being made to the media on behalf of the Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

'Media' - means all forms of the public media and press including television, radio, newspapers and other publications for public dissemination. Media also includes social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the like).

4. PRINCIPLES

The following principles will ensure a consistent and positive approach is maintained:

- Ensure all communication with the media is consistent, well-informed, timely, appropriate and complies with the Code of Conduct for Elected Members and the Employee Code of Conduct.
- Clearly indicate Council's authorised spokespersons.
- Maintain positive relations with the media by providing them with accurate and timely information.
- Improve communication with internal and external customers and enhance Council's public image.
- Establish protocols and consistent methods for managing communication to the media to ensure relevant and approved comments.
- Limit the possibility of miscommunication and maximise the effectiveness of staff by ensuring comments to the media are made only through authorised persons.
- Establish guidelines for effectively communicating and publicising news about the Council to the media.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The objective of this policy is to ensure that Council promotes a positive, effective and consistent image of the Council as well as an understanding of Council's policies.

The following points enunciate how this will occur:

- The Mayor is the official spokesperson on all matters of policy and decision-making enquiries, including civic occasions, community events and major Council announcements.
- The Chief Executive Officer is the official spokesperson on all matters concerning Council's operations including staff, administrative, election and industrial matters. Additionally, the Chief Executive Officer may act as the Council spokesperson in regard to technical or legislative matters affecting policy.

5. POLICY STATEMENT (Cont'd)

- At the Chief Executive Officer's discretion, approving media releases or responding to enquiries may be delegated to other officers of the Council.
- Authorised Staff shall provide information to the media which is freely available to any member of the public. This information shall be provided in order to improve or clarify the media's understanding of the issues.
- Any staff member authorised to speak to the media will not make any personal comments on any issues.
- The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) may also retain the right not to comment on any issue, particularly if legal advice has determined not to do so, and if the issue is related to a confidential matter.
- Where possible, requests from the media on any given issue should be submitted in writing to the Council. Responses given to the media should also be in writing and should always follow up any verbal response given.
- Individual Council members speaking to the media on their own behalf must clearly convey this to the media, particularly where those views may not necessarily be those of the Council.
- Elected Members can only speak on behalf of Council with the permission of the Mayor and if the Mayor is not available with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer.

6. MEASURES

- That this policy is followed and applied by all Members and employees.
- Timely responses to media requests for information.

7. REVIEW

- This Policy shall be reviewed by the Council annually.
- The Policy may be reviewed at any time.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's internet site: www.pirie.sa.gov.au

- Port Pirie Council Administration Centre, 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie
- Crystal Brook Rural Office, Bowman Street, Crystal Brook.

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.