

1.2 Media

POLICY TITLE: MEDIA
FILE REF: SC300; SC67
EXPIRY DATE: OCTOBER 2026

OBJECTIVE

This Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of elected members and staff in relation to responding to media enquiries.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Policy applies to:

- Elected members and staff
- All forms of media (print, verbal, electronic, social, etc.)
- All times of day (24 hours a day, seven days a week)

For the purposes of this Policy, media contact includes:

- Providing information via media releases or statements
- Letters to the editor
- Responding to media enquiries over the phone and via email
- Interviews or briefings
- Disclosing information to the media
- Comments on talkback radio
- Addressing a seminar, conference or community group where the media are present
- Media activities for events, reports and launches

In its dealings with the media the Council will endeavour to:

- Be a reliable source of information.
- Never provide false information.
- Be as co-operative as possible.
- Be available.
- Check second hand sources of “facts” or opinions for accuracy before repeating.
- Provide up to date information.
- Always give a direct and honest answer.
- Respond promptly.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council and is to be available to receive requests and provide appropriate background and follow up to the media.

The Mayor may handle media inquiries directly and where required seek input from Councillors and Council officers. As a member of the governing body and as a representative of the community, councillors are free to express their personal views to the media.

When engaging with the media councillors:

- must not purport to speak for the Council unless authorised to do so.
- must clarify when speaking to the media that they are expressing their personal views as an individual councillor and that they are not speaking for the Council (unless authorised to do so).

1.2 Media (cont'd)

– must uphold and accurately represent the policies and decisions of the Council”.

Councillors must carefully identify the role in which they speak.

As members of the community, Council staff have a right to enter into public debate in their private capacity. However, Council staff must clearly indicate that the views expressed are their own and must not give the impression that their comments are made on behalf of Council.

The General Manager may handle media inquiries directly and where required seek input from the Mayor, Councillors and Council officers.

Directors may handle media enquiries relating to matters within their area of responsibility.

When the Mayor, Councillors, General Manager or Directors are speaking in an official capacity “for the Council” and not expressing a personal view, they must express and support Council’s entire policy on the issue at hand.

*Adopted by Council 16 October 2023
Refer minute 188/23*

*Adopted by Council 19 October 2020
Refer minute 216/20*