



ELECTED MEMBER POLICY

Title	MEDIA RELATIONS		
Responsible Director	Chief Executive Officer		
Adoption Date	30/9/2019	Review Date	2023

1 Purpose

This document details Council's policy and procedures regarding the use of and interaction with media (including social media) by Elected Members.

This policy sets out a framework for Elected Members dealing with media, whilst also recognising the role of the media in keeping the community informed, getting feedback on important issues and ensuring a transparent and open Council.

This policy addresses the role of traditional media as well as the growing role of new media such as social media. Accordingly, when the word 'media' is used in this document it refers to both traditional (including print, broadcast, radio) and new (including social media, blogs, messaging, video/pod cast, forums and discussion boards).

2 Statement of policy

General considerations

Council's Media and Communications Office (MCO) will always be the first point of contact for media enquiries. The MCO reports to the CEO and is responsible for the preparation of media releases and responses so as to inform and educate the public about Council's positions, programs or decisions. All media releases on behalf of Council are issued from the MCO only.

The *Local Government Act* recognises that the Mayor will always be the principal spokesperson for Council. For operational matters, the CEO will be the spokesperson unless the CEO designates another person to do so.

All official comment made on behalf of Council shall reflect the decisions made by Council as stated in its adopted resolutions or the positions taken by Council as articulated in its strategic and policy documents.

This policy is not intended to restrict Elected Members from expressing personal views. However, the Elected Member must clearly identify the view as their own, either from a personal or professional standpoint.

Elected Members are under no obligation to seek permission from, or to advise the CEO of media relations. Nevertheless, they are encouraged to do so. Comments should be in line with relevant Council policies, decisions and not at any time bring the reputation of Council into disrepute.



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Inappropriate use of media

The use of personal communication devices to engage with traditional or new media (including by way of messaging) during Council meetings is never appropriate.

Whenever using media, Elected Members must:

- only disclose or discuss publicly available information
- not make any comment or post any material that might cause damage to the reputation of another Elected Member or Council generally.

Any instances of non-compliance with this policy should be directed to the CEO for attention.

Elected Member presence in media

Elected Members, as community representatives, must always be mindful that their personal or professional site may be viewed as a public site, especially when reference to the Elected Member's position is included. Therefore, when expressing a personal view, this should be identified and care taken not to show disrespect for the Council, its decisions, decision making process or other Elected Members, Council staff and the community.

Potential legal liability

Elected Members are reminded that statements purportedly made on behalf of Council may in some circumstances attract legal ramifications for the Elected Member and/or Council.

Elected Members are also reminded that any meeting attended in their civic capacity may be recorded (audio and/or visual) by either the media for publication, or Council.

3 Council policies superseded

This policy supersedes all previous versions of CEO 001 Elected Members Media (including social media) Usage and 110 Media Relations.