

MEDIA MANAGEMENT POLICY

INTENT This policy outlines a formal process to ensure all media releases, statements and enquiries relating to Cairns Regional Council are managed professionally and appropriately.

SCOPE The Policy provides a framework to promote positive, consistent and accurate coverage of Council through traditional and digital media.

OBJECTIVES

The Media Policy has the following objectives:

- To promote good governance consistent with local government principles (*Section 4 Local Government Act 2009*).
- To ensure consistency by Councillors and staff in dealing with the media.
- To mitigate the risk of inaccurate or inconsistent information being communicated to the media.
- To clearly indicate Council's authorised spokespersons.
- To ensure appropriate authorisation and responsibility for information provided.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Mayor is Council's official spokesperson on all matters.
- The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may delegate Councillors, General Managers or staff to act as a spokesperson for the Council when appropriate.
- The Media Coordinator is responsible for co-ordinating media liaison and issuing media releases and has been delegated authority to respond to media enquiries on behalf of Council.
- General Managers and the Chief Executive Officer should make themselves available to answer enquiries from media where such enquiries affect immediate area of operations and such answers should be confined to operational issues and approved Council Policy.
- Councillors may speak to media to express their personal views only.
- No staff or Councillor can speak to the media about an item to be considered at a meeting of Council prior to the meeting, except if approved by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

It is vital that all media inquiries be treated efficiently and courteously with due regard to the fact that all media work to stringent deadlines which require prompt responses.

The Council's Marketing and Communications Branch has the expertise in media affairs and is well versed in handling inquiries from print and electronic media, and is responsible for the flow of a wide range of information between Council and the community.

All staff must direct any media enquiry to Marketing and Communications (usually through the Media Coordinator) which has the programmes in place to provide responses to the media in a timely manner.

Council's depots and administration centre shall not be used for any media activity which does not benefit Council or may be for the personal advantage of an elected member or staff member. All media activity at any Council worksite is to be coordinated through the Marketing and Communications Branch.

The Marketing and Communications Manager and the Media Coordinator shall issue statements only on matters of approved Council Policy, or at the Mayor's or the Chief Executive Officer's discretion, on issues of direct benefit to the Council as a whole.

Media releases must be approved by the Mayor, CEO, General Manager or the delegated authority before posting on Council's website.

From time to time it may be necessary for a Letter to the Editor to be written as an official Council communication to inform the community about a particular matter. Such letters must be issued through the Media Coordinator subject to the approval of the Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer.

Staff

Council employees may speak to the media or write Letters to the Editor or engage in social media platforms as private individuals with the following restrictions:

- They do not comment on Council business or policy;
- They do not identify themselves as Council employees;
- Their comments are not likely to be perceived as representing official Council position or policy.

All new employees are to be made aware of Council's Media Management Policy as a part of the induction process.

Contractors or service providers employed by Council must refer all media enquiries relating to Council to the Media Coordinator.

Councillors

Media releases, where appropriate and with the Mayor's approval, will include statements and input from divisional Councillors, or recognised delegated spokespersons.

The Marketing and Communications Branch shall not engage in any media activity which is deemed by the Chief Executive Officer to be specifically for the personal advantage of any elected member, or staff member.

SOCIAL MEDIA

All official Cairns Regional Council presences (e.g. Facebook or Twitter accounts) must be authorised by the Manager of Marketing & Communications, Media Coordinator, or Digital Media Officer.

Only publicly available information is to be disclosed and it is the responsibility of the publisher / editor to ensure that only this information is displayed. Any information provided must be factually accurate and comply with all Council policies.

Publishers / editors should only offer information on topics that fall within their area of responsibility.

Information posted must not be libellous, defamatory, abusive, obscene or discriminatory or infringe Equal Employment Opportunity, Fair Treatment policies, information privacy or conflict of interest policies or any other legislation.

An individual's personal information is not to be disclosed. Out of courtesy, any press release, media monitoring reports, or talk-back radio comments relating to specific projects, or divisions, are to be e-mailed to the relevant Councillors/Officers as a matter of policy.

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

Human Resources & Organisation Change



ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 24/10/2002
CURRENT ADOPTION: 22/08/2018
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REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:

John Andrejic
Chief Executive Officer