

TITLE:	Media Consultation Policy		
DIVISION:	Public Relations		
ADOPTED BY:	Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	May 2019	DATE OF REVIEW:	May 2022
MOTION NUMBER:	OC 101/19		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP62		
AUTHORISED:	Chief Executive Officer		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All Councillors, Local Authority Members and Employees of the Barkly Regional Council

PREAMBLE

The aim of all policy is for Councillors to provide strategic input into the effective operational framework of the organisation the Local Government Act

SUMMARY

This Policy establishes Council's expectations in relation to consulting with the media on official Council business and outlines the acceptable behaviour when consulting with the media.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Policy is to provide guidance to employees and elected members as to who is authorised to speak to the media, parameters on what can be released to the media and how the information may be communicated to the media.

BACKGROUND

Only designated Council persons have the authority to consult with the media and this consultation must represent Council in a positive way. This document details the Council's procedures and directives regarding the consultation with the media by Councillors.

Council recognises the importance of the media in keeping the community informed, getting feedback on important issues and ensuring Council operates in a transparent and open way and the important news gathering role of traditional media.

POLICY

Guiding Principles

The procedural statement and directive in this document adhere to:

- Effective communication with the community and other stakeholders that assists Council achieve its broader objectives in providing municipal services;
- Timely and accurate dissemination of information that the community needs to understand Council's role and services;

- Professional and accountable media relations that ensures the media is able to do its job effectively while not compromising Council's legal and ethical responsibilities;
- Coordinating risk management practices;
- Ensuring appropriate accountability by appropriate Council media consultants; and
- Cost-effective communication, thereby minimising cost to Council.

DEFINITIONS

Traditional media includes:

- Printed (newspapers, newsletters, magazines);
- Broadcast (radio, digital radio);
- Online (online news sites, blogs); and
- Televised (TV news, programs).

PROCEDURES

The Council Mayor will be the principal spokesperson for Council issues. Should the Mayor be unavailable, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the spokesperson or will designate an appropriate senior Council officer.

Issues of an operational nature should be directed to the CEO in the first instance.

Elected members must not make public comment on Council matters in an official capacity, except where directed to by the Mayor. Elected members are under no obligation to seek permission from, or to advise the CEO or the designated officer of any attempt to gain media attention for themselves. However elected members are encouraged to inform the CEO or the designated officer out of professional courtesy.

All comments made via the media are in the public domain, thus sound judgement and professionalism should be exercised when engaging with media. Comments must comply with all relevant Council policies and values.

Views expressed by elected members should be clearly identified as their own, either personal or professional. Comments should be in line with relevant Council policies and not at any time bring the reputation of Council into disrepute.

BUSINESS RELATED USE OF ALL MEDIA

As a general principle, only the Mayor, CEO or their delegate will make official comments on behalf of Council to the media.

All media statements and official comments 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.

Personal comments are not represented as the view of Council and this should be clearly identified.

LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

Council may be held liable for statements made by an Elected Member or authorised employee commenting in an official capacity on behalf of Council, no matter the media platform.

LEGISLATION, TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

Local Government Act
Privacy Act (Cth)
Council Codes of Conduct
Social Media Policy
Delegations Policy

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELEGATION

The Mayor has the authority to act as the principal spokesperson for the Council.
The CEO has delegated authority to implement this Policy.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This Policy is to be reviewed every three (3) years and may be reviewed at other times at the discretion of Chief Executive Officer.