

Policy P624 Media Communications

Responsible Business Unit/s	Governance
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance
Affected Business Unit/s	All City business units

The City of South Perth (the City) is committed to open and transparent communication and to being fully accountable. We will communicate with our community and provide the media with information about projects and initiatives in a timely manner.

Policy Objectives

The objective of this policy is to:

- Provide guidance to the Mayor, Councillors and the City's administration for a coordinated approach to communicating with the media in a consistent, accurate and professional manner to enable fair and accurate reporting of City business
- Promote a positive and professional image of the City
- Keep the community informed about City business through the various media channels
- Ensure that all communication is consistent, accurate and in the best interests of the City
- Provide guidance on speaking with and responding to the media.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Elected Members, City employees and consultants.

Policy Statement

The City aims to build positive relationships with journalists and media representatives. Responding to media enquiries fosters open and transparent relations and helps to build confidence in the City, while maintaining a solid reputation of responsiveness to enquiries.

The media communications policy sets out a clear and consistent protocol for communications in general but in particular relating to contact with the media. It has been established to:

- Provide clear guidance on the role of the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and administration employees in communicating with the media
- Proactively represent the City in media communications

- Ensure communication with media is consistent, in line with the City’s Marketing and Communications Strategy
- Ensure that communications with the media are positive and of a professional standard
- Ensure that media communication is in accordance with relevant statutory provisions, the City’s Code of Conduct and this Policy.

Speaking to the media

In accordance with section 2.8(1)(d) of the *Local Government Act 1995* the Mayor is the official spokesperson for the City. On operational or administrative matters, it may be more appropriate for the Chief Executive Officer to provide comment. If unavailable, the Mayor may authorise an alternative spokesperson (usually the Deputy Mayor) to speak or provide quotes on their behalf.

The Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer may, where more appropriate, appoint an employee with specialist knowledge to act as spokesperson on a specific matter.

Media liaison

The Communications Officer is responsible for coordinating media liaison, issuing media releases and responding to media enquiries on behalf of the City.

The Communications Officer, Marketing Coordinator and in their absence, the Marketing Officer, are the only City employees approved to respond to a media enquiry. No other employees are able to provide comment to the media, either ‘on’ or ‘off the record’ on any matter pertaining to the City and its Council.

City employees

In cases where it is appropriate for an employee to be interviewed for a news story, this is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. The employee must first seek approval from their Business Unit Manager and following approval by the Chief Executive Officer, the employee must liaise with the Communications team to prepare for the interview.

Employees must not make public comment unless specifically directed to do so and only in consultation with the Communications team. If authorised, comment should be confined to factual information, avoiding the expression of personal opinion.

Elected Members

If making statements to the media about a Council decision or policy, Elected Members should clearly indicate that they are expressing their personal views and that they are not speaking on behalf of the City. In making a statement or comment, Elected Members should clearly communicate the decision of Council, the process taken to arrive at the decision and the reasons for it, before they indicate their personal views.

Elected Members must not make disparaging or offensive comments in the public domain including the media, public meetings or in any form of electronic communication, including social media, about other Elected Members or City employees.

Media Statements/Releases

Media statements should present a positive image of the City. The City will not promote a community group or business either via the media or any other of the City's communications channels unless the City is directly involved in a partnered activity or event.

The Communications team will manage all media statements and releases. They will endeavor to respond to all media enquiries unless it is not in the City's best interest to do so.

Employees who become aware of issues or potential issues that could lead to adverse media outcomes for the City must contact the Communications team immediately so that an appropriate response or statement can be developed.

Where a media release relating to a City project or in which the City is involved is to be prepared by another organisation, a copy must be provided to the Communications team to enable input from the City and to seek approval from the Chief Executive Officer or Mayor prior to the information being released.

Media releases and responses to media enquiries will be made available by publishing on the City's website on the day of release unless specifically requested to delay the publishing of a response by a media outlet.

Media statements will not include information of an electioneering or personal promotional nature.

The City will discuss matters with the media unless there are confidentiality, privacy or duty of care implications or if the discussion of the matter could infringe other laws or regulations.

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

Section 1.3 (2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Other Relevant Policies / Key Documents

Marketing and Communications Strategy