

## MEDIA POLICY (COMMUNITY POLICY)

### 1. Scope

The Media Policy (this 'Policy') outlines how media activity is to be managed by Livingstone Shire Council across all forms of media and applies to all Councillors, employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors and consultants), and volunteers of Council.

This Policy does not apply to media generated by, or personally responded to by individual Councillors.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- ensure positive, proactive media coverage of relevant Council projects, programs and general operation;
- provide a consistent, streamlined approach to managing media;
- ensure appropriate authorisation of Council messages;
- ensure accuracy of information provided;
- deliver messages and information in a non-political format; and
- ensure responses are provided to media in a consistent, timely manner.

### 3. References (legislation/related documents)

#### Legislative reference

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*  
*Defamation Act 2005*  
*Information Privacy Act 2009*  
*Integrity Act 2009*  
*Local Government Act 2009*  
*Local Government Regulation 2012*  
*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)*  
*Right to Information Act 2009*

#### Related documents

Caretaker Policy  
Code of Conduct for Employees  
Councillor Interaction with the Organisation Policy  
Discipline Procedure  
Privacy Policy  
Right to Information Policy  
Social Media Policy

#### 4. Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions shall apply:

Council	Livingstone Shire Council.
Councillors	The Mayor and Councillors of Livingstone Shire Council, within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of Livingstone Shire Council. A person who holds an appointment under section 194 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> . This includes a person acting in this position.
Employee	An individual who is paid to perform work in an award position, within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Media Activity	Media is a communication tool used by Council to deliver information to the public. Media activity can be generated proactively by Council or may be produced in response to an enquiry or request from a media organisation or stakeholder. The type of media Council engages in includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• digital media;</li><li>• print media;</li><li>• broadcast media;</li><li>• news media;</li><li>• published media; and</li><li>• electronic media.</li></ul> Media, for the purpose of this Policy, also includes public forums, blogs and social media platforms.
Personal Information	Information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can be reasonably ascertained, from the information or opinion.

#### 5. Policy Statement

This Policy should be used to advance and promote Council's direction, services and purposes to the wider community.

Media is a cost-free activity and should not entail a financial transaction. Subsequently, the placement and publishing of messages and information is subject to the prerogative and decisions of the respective media organisations.

Council resources should not be used to promote the particular personal achievements or plans of particular Councillors or groups of Councillors, which does not directly relate to formal Council decisions. In particular, media of a political nature must not be used to influence the voters in an election. Refer to Council Caretaker Period Policy for further information.

At all times media activity must respect and care for the reputation and image of Council and must be in accordance with legislation and other relevant Council policies and procedures.

## **5.1 Guidelines**

- 5.1.1** Employees who are not delegated to respond to media outlet enquiries must refer all media enquiries directly to the Community Unit for response. Employees who are not delegated to respond to media enquiries are not to make any comments.
- 5.1.2** Requests from the CEO or the Community Engagement Unit for employees to provide information for the collation of a media response, must be given a high priority. Ideally, these requests should be answered on the same day, where possible.
- 5.1.3** The Community Engagement Unit will provide same day response to a media outlet where requests are received prior to 11.00am, where practicable, subject to the response being suitable to meet Council's communications needs. If a response is not possible, the media outlet will be advised, or an alternative timeframe will be negotiated for provision of the requested information.
- 5.1.4** Portfolio Councillors will be the primary spokesperson in media releases relating to their portfolio, where applicable.

## **5.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 5.2.1** The Mayor is the primary spokesperson for key Council messages and can speak on all Council matters.
- 5.2.2** Councillors are expected to comment on their Council portfolio if requested to do so by the Mayor.
- 5.2.3** The CEO will be the spokesperson for organisational and employee related matters.
- 5.2.4** Community Engagement Officers have delegated authority under the CEO to provide responses and briefing notes as spokespersons to media organisations.
- 5.2.5** In absence of the Mayor, relevant Councillor or the CEO, Council employees may be permitted to provide media comment relevant to their role and departments.
- 5.2.6** No employee (with the exception of the above spokespersons) will participate in media interviews or provide information to the media. On occasion, the CEO in conjunction with the Community Engagement Unit may approve an exception to this Policy to provide the media with an alternative spokesperson. Council employees may, from time to time, be called upon by the Council's Community Engagement Officers to provide technical information to the media, with the exception of policy issues as this remains the responsibility of Councillors.
- 5.2.7** Nothing in this Policy will impact upon an individual Councillor's right to engage with the media as they see fit. However in such circumstances the Councillor must always clarify that they are representing their own opinion and not necessarily that of the collective body of Council.

## **5.3 Confidential information**

All media activity must respect the confidentiality of others and ensure that personal information and Council business (in particular, commercial in-confidence matters) are accessed and used only for Council purposes and not disclosed except where authorised by legislation. Councillors and employees who have access to such

information have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of such information.

#### **5.4 Breaches of this Policy**

Breaches of this Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee in accordance with Council's Discipline Procedure.

### **6. Changes to this Policy**

This Policy is to remain in force until any of the following occur:

- 1) The related information is amended/replaced; or
- 2) Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the CEO.

### **7. Repeals/Amendments**

This Policy repeals the former Livingstone Shire Council Policy titled 'Media Policy (v1)'.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	23/08/2016	Adopted
2	07/03/2017	Amended Policy Adopted
2.1	03/09/2018	Administrative Amendments – reflect organisational restructure and update of Chief Executive Officer

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