

BACKGROUND

At Wollongong City Council we value the role print, broadcast and digital media play in sharing news of Council events, activities and milestones. This Policy confirms our ongoing commitment to provide timely and accurate information to the community through positive working relationships with media organisations and via Council's digital media channels.

OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of this Policy are:

- 1 To ensure that comment made to the public through the media is consistent, well informed, timely and appropriate.
- 2 To provide a coordinated, professional and consistent approach to media liaison.
- 3 To clearly indicate Council's authorised spokespersons.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy applies to all Council officers, committee members and elected officials.

Its purpose is to provide clear direction on Councillor and staff rights and responsibilities in relation to media comment.

This Policy does not limit or attempt to restrict relationships between Councillors and the media. Individual Councillors are free to express their own views to the media at any time.

The Policy acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of Councillors as elected representatives as outlined in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

POLICY REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Any administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

Council's communication team will share Council news and information using a combination of media releases, organisational website, newsletters and official social media platforms.

- 1 The Lord Mayor and the General Manager are the official spokespersons on Council business.
- 2 The Lord Mayor may delegate Councillors to act as spokespersons on Council business.
- 3 Councillors can provide comment to the media at any time. These statements should be identified as Councillor opinion and not the position of Council.
- 4 The General Manager may nominate Council Officers to act as spokespersons in line with the Media Protocol Management Policy.
- 5 Any Council Officer contacted by the media must not provide any comment and refer the enquiry to the Media Office.
- 6 Council staff and Councillors must not discuss staff, confidential legal advice or matters of commercial in-confidence with the media.
- 7 Breaches of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with Wollongong City Council's Codes of Conduct.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Media Protocol Management Policy
- Use of Confidential Information Policy
- Council's Codes of Conduct

SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	Community Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted by Council	18 February 2019
Date of previous adoptions	24 August 2015
Date of next review	February 2023
Responsible Manager	Communications and Engagement Manager
Authorised by	Director Community Services