

	Media Policy
	Strategic

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Warrumbungle Shire Council's ('Council') use of media to engage with the community, recognising that how a council is portrayed in the media impacts greatly on how the organisation is perceived.

2. Objectives

To provide a robust framework for the administration and management of Council's interactions with the media.

To set standards of conduct for all Council officials who are required to interact with media in their official capacity.

3. Scope

This policy applies to engagement between Council officials and the media. It does not apply to social media use, which is subject to Council's *Social Media Policy*.

4. Legislation and Associated Documents

ASSOCIATED POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Councillor Induction and Professional Development • Records Management • Records Management for Councillors • Social Media Policy
ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (NSW) • <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW) • <i>State Records Act 1998</i> (NSW) • <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (NSW)
ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Procedure • Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct • Records Management Procedures • Records Management for Councillors Procedures • Social Media Procedure

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Council official	Councillors, members of staff and delegates of Council (including members of committees that are delegates of the Council).
Media	Print, broadcast and online media used for communicating information to the public, including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, internet publishers, radio, and television broadcasters.

Policy

- 6.1 Council recognises that media can be an effective tool to promote Council programs, events, and initiatives. In addition, media can be invaluable in times of crisis or emergency when information needs to be communicated to the public. Effective media engagement can assist in keeping the community informed, explaining decisions and promoting confidence in Council and its decisions.
- 6.2 The councillors, staff, and other officials of Council are committed to upholding and promoting the following principles of media engagement:
- Openness – we will ensure that we promote an open exchange of information between our council and the media.
 - Consistency – we will ensure consistency by all councillors and staff when communicating with the media.
 - Accuracy – the information we share with the media will be a source of truth for our council and community and we will prioritise the need to correct inaccuracies when they occur.
 - Timeliness – we will ensure that we respond to media enquiries in a timely manner.
- 6.3 The General Manager is the official spokesperson for Council on operational and administrative matters.
- 6.4 The General Manager may delegate to other Council staff to speak on their behalf where appropriate, (for example, where the delegated staff member has professional expertise regarding the subject matter, or the general manager is unavailable).
- 6.5 The Mayor is the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body of Council, including representing the views of Council as to its local priorities (section 226(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*).
- 6.6 If the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor may act as Council's spokesperson.
- 6.7 The Mayor may delegate their role as spokesperson to other councillors where appropriate, (for example, where another councillor is best placed to comment, because the issue is of particular interest to them, or it is within their particular area of expertise).
- 6.8 As members of the governing body and as representatives of the community, councillors are free to express their personal views to the media.
- 6.9 When engaging with the media, councillors:
- must not purport to speak for Council unless authorised to do so;
 - must clarify when speaking to the media that they are expressing their personal views as an individual councillor and that they are not speaking for Council (unless authorised to do so);
 - must uphold and accurately represent the policies and decisions of Council;
 - must not disclose Council information unless authorised to do so, and
 - must seek information and guidance from the General Manager where appropriate before providing comment to the media to ensure they have the most up-to-date and relevant information and have considered reputational or other risks.

- 6.10 In the interests of promoting a positive, safe and harmonious organisational culture, councillors should endeavour to resolve personal differences privately and must not prosecute them publicly through the media.
- 6.11 Where councillors (including the Mayor) become aware of potential issues that could result in media interest, they should provide this information to the General Manager.
- 6.12 Staff must not speak to the media about matters relating to Council unless authorised by the General Manager to do so.
- 6.13 Council officials must comply with Council's *Code of Conduct* when engaging with the media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a Council official.
- 6.14 The associated Media Procedure is to be applied for administration and usage of Council media.
- 6.15 A breach of this policy or the procedures will be a breach of Council's *Code of Conduct*.

7. Getting Help

The staff member who can assist with this Policy:
 Position: Manager Corporate Services
 Department: Corporate and Community Services

8. Version Control

Next Review Date: September 2025
 Staff Member Responsible for Review: Manager Corporate Services

Policy Name	Version	Resolution	Date
Media Policy	1	355/2223	15 June 2023