



# Council Policy Manual

## WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

<b>COUNCIL POLICY</b>							
<b>COMMUNICATIONS POLICY</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Policy No:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adopted by Council:</td> <td>20 Feb 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Next review date:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Policy No:		Adopted by Council:	20 Feb 2014	Next review date:	
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Senior Manager:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)						
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)						
Functional Area:	Chief Executive Officer & Governance						
Introduction & Background	<p>The Council will reinforce its commitment to enhancing communications and work with residents to foster increased community involvement in council decision making.</p> <p>It is clear residents want to be more involved in the community and decisions which affect them; they want to have more influence in their future and they are looking to the Shire to work with them to achieve this. This policy reinforces and continues to develop our partnership with our residents.</p>						
Purpose & Objectives	<p>Council will continue to demonstrate a willingness to work closely with residents to identify a common vision for the shire and to put that vision into action. This policy builds on that willingness. The policy will provide a logical framework and foundation which is essential if Council is to create better partnerships with residents.</p>						
<b>Policy Details</b>							
1.	<p><b>Definitions</b></p> <p>'Communication' in the context of this policy includes all written, verbal, electronic and personal interactions by all staff and elected members with any member of our community, visitors, all levels of government and other agencies.</p> <p>'Considered' means thoughtful, respectful and with regard to the receiver of the information.</p> <p>'Timely' means occurring within a suitable amount of time or occurring at a suitable time, particularly from the perspective of the receiver of the communication.</p>						
2.	<p>Timely, considered, open and honest communications</p> <p>West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to timely, considered, open and honest communications.</p>						



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## WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

	<p>This commitment means we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share knowledge and information (wherever legally possible).</li> <li>• Work to develop trust and positive relationships in our community.</li> <li>• Are proactive, innovative and creative communicators.</li> <li>• Have the will to implement this policy.</li> </ul> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a transparent willingness to work in partnership with people and organisations.</li> <li>• Encourage local knowledge and input.</li> <li>• Build community ownership in Council projects.</li> <li>• Involve the community in our plans for improvement and share successes.</li> <li>• Continue professional development in community engagement and communication processes.</li> </ul>
3.	<p>Principles</p> <p>This policy is underpinned by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good communication driving cultural change and improving performance.</li> <li>• All communication will consider and value community perspectives.</li> <li>• All communication will be in plain English.</li> <li>• Good communication is both a duty and an opportunity and is everyone's responsibility.</li> <li>• All communication matters – equally.</li> </ul>
4.	<p>Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of this policy and guidelines is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote an easy flow of communication between Council and Residents.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of community issues and Council's role in them.</li> <li>• Boost public confidence in the Council.</li> <li>• Provide a mechanism for seeking and acting on feedback.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of Council's procedures and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Tailor communication processes for targeted groups and projects.</li> </ul>



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## WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

5.	<p><b>Roles and Responsibility</b></p> <p>In accordance with section 73AA of the Local Government Act 1989, the Mayor is classified as the principal spokesperson. In addition to this, under section 94a of the Local Government Act 1989, the CEO is required to support the Mayor in the performance of their role and this will occasionally enable the Chief Executive Officer to speak Council issues. Senior Managers, may speak on operational matters relating to their specific department, with prior approval.</p> <p>The Mayor may delegate to Councillors to comment on specific areas of interest or committees that they are representing Council on. They are reminded that when making statements on behalf of Council, that they are required to state the position of Council on a particular item or issue. If the statements that they make are their own and not necessarily the collective view of the Council, they must make that clear via a disclaimer.</p> <p>Media inquiries may require a degree of research and this will dictate the response time. Where possible, they will be responded to as soon as possible.</p> <p>The CEO will ensure that appropriate processes are in place and adhered to by staff communicating with the media.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of Senior Management to ensure that appropriate and targeted consultation on community issues begins as early as possible to allow for community involvement and comment before decisions are made.</p>
6.	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Council will commit to timely, considered, open and honest communication.</li><li>○ Council will continue to generate media releases</li><li>○ Council will continue to conduct community forums at Council meetings held 3 times per year at small town locations</li><li>○ Council will encourage community groups to include senior members of staff and Councillors in their meetings and planning.</li></ul>
7.	<p><b>Methods</b></p> <p>Consultation and communication are the key means of understanding what our community wants and the actions that we may undertake.</p> <p>Communication with the community can be via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Paper:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Media releases</li><li>○ Advertisements</li><li>○ Brochures</li><li>○ Fact sheets</li><li>○ Annual report</li></ul></li></ul>



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- Photographs
- Council plan
- Public notice boards
- Signs
- Letter box drops
- Community/ service club newsletters
- Council forms/ applications
- Written material in plain English
- Letters via direct mail
- Invitations to attend council meetings.
- Electronic:
  - Media interviews, press, radio and TV
  - Website
  - Email mailing lists
  - Information and help lines
  - Telephone communication
  - Records management
  - Customer Requests system
- Face to face:
  - Council meetings
  - Community forums
  - Councillors Forums
  - Advisory committees to Council
  - Greater accessibility to senior staff and Councillors
  - Events
  - Word of mouth
  - Workshops
  - Partnerships with other organisations
  - Opportunities to make submissions
  - Presentations
  - Public displays
  - Onsite inspections



# Council Policy Manual

## WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

8.	<p>Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <p>This policy will be monitored against the Council Plan throughout the year and will be reviewed at a time period to be determined by Council. Evaluation will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at community forums.</li> <li>• Number of people involved in working groups.</li> <li>• Annual <i>Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey</i> results.</li> </ul>
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<b>Policy Adopted:</b>	Ordinary Meeting 20/02/14	Minute Book Page 25449	RecFind 14/000743
<b>Policy Reviewed:</b>	Ordinary Meeting 17/05/17	Minute Book Page 35505	RecFind 17/001917