



Council Policy Manual

WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL POLICY	
MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY	Policy No:
	Adopted by Council: 21 December 2022
	Next review date: 21 December 2026
Senior Manager:	Director Infrastructure Development and Works
Responsible Officer:	Manager Projects and Innovation
Functional Area:	Projects & Innovation
Introduction & Background	This policy provides a framework for Councillors and staff to use to promote coverage of Council affairs that is consistent, fair, accurate and reliable. Through adherence to this policy, West Wimmera Shire Council will maximise its ability to effectively communicate decisions, policies, programs, services and activities to the community by encouraging high standards, consistency and professionalism within the organisation.
Purpose & Objectives	<p>(a) To guide Council's media liaison activities and specify procedures and protocols for dealing with media requests with the intention of informing our Stakeholders.</p> <p>(b) To develop and maintain a positive working relationship with the media.</p>
Response to the Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020	<p>Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.</p> <p>This policy is in response to the following overarching governance principle/s of the Local Government Act 2020:</p> <p>(a) the community engagement principles (section 56);</p> <p>(b) the public transparency principles (section 58);</p>
Policy Details	
1.	Scope
	This policy applies to all print, electronic and digital media
2.	Objectives



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To ensure that clear and consistent messages are communicated from Council to the media, and that these messages are linked to Council's policies, procedures and Council Plan.b) To create a positive image for Council as a transparent, accountable and effective local government authority.c) To ensure Councillors and Council Officers understand Council's media relations protocols and procedures.d) To determine who will represent Council in dealing with the media.
3.	<p>Key Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) That Council will communicate openly and honestly with the media in order to maximise public knowledge and understanding of Council's policies, activities, services and achievements.b) That comments to the media be presented in a positive, concise and consistent manner.c) That all reasonable media requests will be dealt with as soon as practicable taking into consideration resource availability. If the information requested can be sourced from Council's website, media outlets may be directed to the appropriate area.d) Should Council receive an unreasonable number of requests or improper questions/queries through the media portal, officers may, at the CEO's discretion, advise that they are unable to provide a response in the circumstances.e) The CEO may disallow an enquiry if they determine that it;<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of Councilii) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substanceiii) deals with subject matter already answerediv) is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staffv) relates to personnel mattersvi) relates to personal hardship of any resident or ratepayervii) relates to industrial mattersviii) relates to contractual mattersix) relates to proposed developmentsx) relates to legal advicexii) relates to matters affecting the security of Council property orxiii) relates to any other matter which Council considers would prejudice Council or any person



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4.	<p>Protocols</p> <p>a) The Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer are the official spokespersons for Council.</p> <p>b) The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may delegate authority to an appropriate Councillor or senior staff member to make an official comment on behalf of Council.</p> <p>c) Council Officers may make statements relating to their area of work only after the Chief Executive Officer approves such statements.</p> <p>d) All enquiries and requests from the media must be submitted through the media enquiry form on the West Wimmera Shire Council website.</p> <p>e) Should staff or councillors receive media enquiries, the media must be advised that their query is to be lodged through the council website/media portal. Only matters lodged into the media portal will be actioned.</p>
5.	<p>Councillors and media</p> <p>a) Councillors have the right to express personal opinions on any issue, but must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of Council, unless they are supporting a Council position;</p> <p>b) With the approval of the CEO, the Mayor may liaise with Council's Communications Officer for advice in relation to speeches, media releases and official statements to the media.</p>

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 26/09/02	Minute Book Page 10410	
Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 06/04/06	Minute Book Page 13682	
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