

## Council Policy – Media

<b>Responsible Directorate</b>	Community Engagement
<b>Responsible Business Unit/s</b>	Communications & Customer Engagement
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Communications and Customer Engagement
<b>Affected Business Units</b>	All

### Objective

The objective of this Policy is to promote positive coverage of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (Shire) that is fair, accurate and reliable.

### Scope

This Policy applies to Elected Members, Shire Employees, and volunteers.

### Policy

#### Media Liaison

Council will openly discuss matters of interest with the media unless disclosure of certain information contravenes Council's obligations of confidentiality or privacy, duty of care, or could infringe other laws or regulations that govern its operations.

Media statements are to maximise the opportunity to present a positive image of the Shire.

Media organisations and their representatives will be treated equally.

#### Speaking on behalf of the Shire

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), the Shire President is the official spokesperson of the Shire. If the Shire President is unavailable, they may authorise either the Deputy President or the Chief Executive Officer to act on their behalf. This authorisation must be in writing and may include details such as the time frame or specific topic/s or event/s for which the Deputy or Chief Executive Officer are able to speak on behalf of the Shire President.

As members of the community, Elected Members are entitled to enter into public debate in their private capacity and make comment on Council affairs provided they clearly state that such public comment reflects their personal opinion and not that of the Council or a committee of Council. Any such communication must comply with the Shire's Code of Conduct for Councillors, Committee Members and Candidates, and must:

- be made with reasonable care and diligence,
- not disclose confidential information,
- not reflect adversely on the Shire or a council member, committee member, candidate or Shire employee,
- be factually correct and not misleading.

## Administration

1. The Chief Executive Officer may nominate specialist members of staff to respond to technical questions on operational matters only. The Shire President and/or Chief Executive Officer must approve of other information before it is issued or distributed to the media.
2. Shire employees should support Council decisions and should refrain from using the media to make negative personal reflections on each other or comment that could be interpreted as such and which are reasonably likely to undermine public confidence in the Council or local government generally.
3. Shire employees must not make political or controversial statements in or to the media relating to Council affairs, decisions and/or events, or about Elected Members which are likely to generate negatively on Council.
4. Shire employees are entitled to enter into public debate and make comment on civic affairs, provided they do not give the impression they are speaking in their official position for or on behalf of Council.
5. The Corporate Communications team is responsible for co-ordinating and distributing articles, columns, and newsletters on behalf of the Shire President or the Council. In each case, the responsible officer must ensure the information contained in the document is accurate and approved by the relevant Directorate, Chief Executive Officer, and Shire President, prior to release.

## Incorrect Information

In the event of incorrect information or information that has a personal or corporate reputation risk being published, the Corporate Communications team will investigate and report to the Chief Executive Officer on how the information came to be published. If necessary, the Chief Executive Officer will issue or will authorise a media release clarifying the incorrect information. If the information is published in an external publication, the Corporate Communications team will coordinate a correction in that publication.

## Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Act and the relevant Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Code of Conduct.

## Definitions

Not applicable.

## Related Documents

- Council Plan 2023-2033
- Code of Conduct for Councillors, Committee Members and candidates
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Bush Fire Brigade Operating Procedures
- Volunteer Code of Conduct

## Legislation / Local Law Requirements

- *Local Government Act 1995*

### Amendment Record

Relevant Delegations		Nil	
		Date	Resolution Number
Council Adoption		29 September 2015	OCM187/09/15
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Amendment Details
2	18 December 2017	OCM179/12/17	
3	17 March 2025	OCM068/03/25	New template and minor updates to reflect legislative changes