
MEDIA MANAGEMENT POLICY

INTENT

This policy guides the management of effective external communications to the community and stakeholders through media channels.

It establishes clear protocols for engaging with media inquiries and designates authorised Council spokespersons to ensure consistent and transparent communication.

SCOPE

This policy outlines a formal process to ensure all media releases, statements to the media and inquiries from media organisations relating to Cook Shire Council are managed professionally and appropriately.

This policy applies to all external communications on traditional and digital channels, including but not limited to print media, radio, television, digital platforms (websites, online news portals, social media), and both paid and earned media, and corporate publications. It also includes the management of Council's corporate social media channels in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Social Media Policy.

This policy also applies to all Council publications, pages, posts and brands representing Council or Council activities. It does not extend to internal communications.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of Cook Shire Council appointed in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>
Council	Mayor and Councillors of Cook Shire Council

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TERM	DEFINITION
Communication	All forms of communication to both media and public including, but not limited to, interview, media releases, press statements, social media content, marketing and promotional materials, corporate publications and advertising
Council business	Includes any matter that has been, or is being, considered by Council as having appeared in Council's business papers or can be reasonably expected to appear in Council's business papers
External Communications	Any communication channel or content that is intended for publication to individuals, organisations, stakeholders or other entities outside of Council, including (but not limited to) members of the public, media organisations stakeholders and other external partners and agencies.
Internal Communications	Any communication channels and content intended solely for dissemination among council staff, contractors, or affiliated personnel. It is not intended for public distribution and consumption.
Media	All forms of published content, including newspapers, radio, television, social media and online. Also includes any organisations and individuals involved in publishing media content, including news agencies, reporters, journalists and social media Influencers.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council recognises the need for its community to access factual, accurate and timely information regarding issues that affect or interest them.

Council will treat all media enquiries efficiently and courteously with due regard to the fact that all media work to stringent deadlines.

Council will encourage all media to direct initial enquires to the Media and Communications Coordinator (via phone or email to mail@cook.qld.gov.au).

Written statements to the media on behalf of Council will be issued through the Media and Communications Coordinator or delegated officer.

AUTHORISED SPOKESPEOPLE

Council has nominated the following persons to act as official spokespersons to the media:

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- The Mayor is the official Council spokesperson on all matters concerning Council decisions, actions, policies, and community-related issues. This includes at civic occasions, community events and major Council announcements.
- When the Mayor is unavailable or absent, they may delegate as appropriate to another Councillor.
- Councillors are not authorised spokespersons for Cook Shire Council. However, Councillors are permitted to make statements of personal opinion to the media (see below).
- The CEO is the official Council spokesperson on all matters relating to Council’s operations including staff, administrative and industrial matters. The CEO may also act as spokesperson on technical and legislative matters affecting policy or may delegate to another officer as appropriate;
- The Media and Communications Coordinator may provide information to the media which is freely available to the public. This information may be provided in order to improve or clarify the media’s understanding of an issue. No other staff member may make statements to the media or publicly (including on social media) where their statements may be seen as speaking on behalf of Council.

COUNCILLORS

Only the Mayor and CEO are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of Council. Individual Councillors remain free to make personal comments to the media but are not authorised to speak on Council’s behalf.

Councillors must ensure that when making personal comments to the media, they clearly distinguish between their own personal opinion and agreed Council decisions.

When communicating with the public or media to express a personal opinion about a Council resolution, Councillors must respect the democratic process by first acknowledging that the Council resolutions represent the majority view of Council.

It is the Councillor’s responsibility to ensure that any comment made to the media in their capacity as a Councillor is accurate, not prejudicial to Council’s legal standing, and is not in any way defamatory to other Councillors, officers or any other persons.

For significant issues Councillors should advise the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer, before providing comment to the media where possible. Councillors are asked to advise the Mayor or CEO of all their interactions with the media. This will assist in Council providing consistent, timely and accurate responses.

MEDIA APPROVAL AND DISTRIBUTION

All external advertisements and brochures prepared by staff must be approved by the Media and Communications Coordinator or delegate to ensure accuracy, quality and

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consistent corporate branding.

The Media and Communications Coordinator will arrange for advertisements and media statements/information to be placed in the appropriate media and will authorise, through the appropriate Divisional Director, advertisements, public notices, fact sheets, e-newsletters, social media, publications and brochures for printing and distribution.

Any media request or response contravening this Policy may result in incorrect information being communicated to the public or damage the relationship between Council and media outlets

Non-compliance with the Media Management Policy by Councillors or staff will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESPONSIBILITY
THE MAYOR	Official spokesperson for council on all matters concerning Council decisions, actions, policies, and community-related issues. This includes at civic occasions, community events and major Council announcements.
CEO	Official spokesperson for all matters relating to Council's operations including staff, administrative and industrial matters
COUNCILLORS	Advise Mayor and CEO when asked for comment, and
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR	Ensure as far as possible all media releases, statements to the media and inquiries from media organisations relating to Cook Shire Council To ensure that all communication with the media is consistent, well informed, timely and appropriate;
EMPLOYEES	Must direct all media enquiries through appropriate channels.

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REFERENCES, LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

This policy references: *Queensland Local Government Act 2009*

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy has been developed with recognition and acknowledgement of the:

- Community Engagement Policy
- Advertising Expenditure Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Policy and Procedures for Councillors

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATION

Will be published to Council's website, communicated to all staff and updated onto Council's policy register.

APPROVED BY

Council Resolution 2024/21

REVIEW

SPONSOR:	Director Organisational Business Services
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW:	Media and Communications Coordinator
ADOPTION DATE:	27 February 2024
REVIEW DATE:	February 2026

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THIS POLICY IS TO REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL OTHERWISE DETERMINED BY COUNCIL

AMENDMENT HISTORY

VERSION	AMENDMENT DETAILS	AMENDMENT DATE	APPROVAL
1.0	New Policy	November 2009	Council
2.0	Minor amendments	June 2012	Council
3.0	Minor amendments	November 2017	Council Resolution 2017/202
4.0	Minor amendment – spelling error	June 2019	Media & Communications Officer
5.0	Complete revision and rename	February 2024	Council Resolution 2024/21

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