



LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL
Preserving the Past, Enhancing the Future

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY

MEDIA

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to foster best practice by Leeton Shire Council in regard to media relations and to minimise and manage risk related to the Council's representation within the media.

2. Objective

The key focus of this Policy is to provide information to the media and public in a proper, consistent and professional manner. Information and statements to the media are to be:

- official and not personal opinions*;
- presenting a consistent and unified position;
- factually correct;
- authorised by the Mayor or General Manager, and
- well written and professionally presented (having regard to media guidelines).
- individual councillors may give personal opinions provided that it is clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Council (where relevant, staff are available to provide background information to Councillors ahead of any opinions being expressed).

3. Background

The media (digital, print and radio) are important channels of communication with the community. They are the most effective mediums for providing information on policies, projects, events, performance and achievements.

It is important that the Council continues to build on its good relationship with the media by issuing timely, informative and interesting media releases and providing intelligent response to media enquiries.

It is mandatory that each media release is approved through the correct channels, with Councillors provided with the opportunity for comment where practicable.

4. Authorised Representatives

Statements can be made on behalf of Council to the media in the form of a media release or a comment to the media by:

- (a) the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence);
- (b) the General Manager;
- (c) a staff member nominated by the General Manager; or
- (d) the Chairman of a Council Committee in relation to that Committee; or

Statements made on behalf of Council must relate to:

- Policies and resolutions adopted by Council
- Initiatives and activities with which Council is involved
- Matters of high community interest

The Council's General Manager, Corporate Communications Coordinator or authorised staff may provide information on the Council's operational matters and respond to specific inquiries on policy interpretation or guidelines. They must exercise discretion to determine the appropriateness of the response and the respondent.

5. Procedure

Preparation of media releases

- Media releases should be prepared according to correct media guidelines regarding content and presentation and presented to the Corporate Communications Coordinator for final review. (*Guidelines are available from the Corporate Communications Coordinator or Council's internal records system on how best to prepare a media release or an interview with the media*).
- All media releases are to be submitted to the General Manager prior to final distribution to local and regional media outlets.
- Comments made by the Mayor or a Councillor in an official Council media release are to be reviewed by that person prior to final distribution.

Obtaining approval for the media releases

All media releases must be approved by:

- The General Manager or the appropriate authorised staff, or
- The Mayor or Deputy Mayor (in the Mayor's absence)

Distribution of media releases

- Depending upon their relevancy media releases should be distributed by the Corporate Communications Coordinator to local and regional media contacts.
- Media releases may also be sent further afield to state and interstate contacts by the Corporate Communications Coordinator if the topic is relevant to their readers, viewers or listeners.
- All staff and Councillors are to be emailed a copy of any Council generated media releases by the Corporate Communications Coordinator.
- Media releases are to be filed into Council's Records Management System
- Media releases are to be uploaded onto Council's website and, where appropriate Council's Facebook page, by the Corporate Communications Officer.

Policy History:

Date of Adoption/Amendment	Resolution Number
22 August 2007	07/349
26 June 2013	13/136
22 February 2017	17/018