

## Media Relations Policy

**NOTE:** Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be obtained from the Policy Register on Council's intranet or by contacting Council's Corporate, Governance & Strategy Branch. **A hard copy of this electronic document is considered uncontrolled when printed.**

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### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to define the use of media relations to conduct business on behalf of South Burnett Regional Council ('Council') to ensure it is managed professionally and appropriately.

### 2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all Council representatives and all media outlets.

### 3. GENERAL INFORMATION

Council media relations aim to be proactive in nature, with the intent of providing factual information, and supporting public confidence in the organisation.

Council acknowledges its duty of care in ensuring its media relations adhere to appropriate standards of behaviour and contain information that is in the public interest. This policy outlines the principles, protocols, and methods for managing communication to ensure consistent, factual information is provided to the community through the media. This policy provides guidelines for Council representatives, in their interactions with external media and acknowledges the measures to ensure the appropriate management of Council's media efforts.

#### 3.1. Organisational Media Relations

Organisational media relations are coordinated by Council's Executive Services who are responsible for overseeing information provided to the media on Council decisions, activities, services and facilities. Council media relations are proactive and aim to inform and foster public confidence in the organisation. Activities include the production of media releases, publications, and the management of media enquiries.

#### 3.2. Official Council Spokesperson for Council-wide or Regional Significance

The Mayor is the official spokesperson for all Council responses or media interviews of Council-wide or regional significance. On a case-by-case basis, the Mayor may delegate to a Councillor to speak on behalf of Council.

Executive Services will field all enquiries.

#### 3.3. Media Release Preparation

All media releases, public notices and bulk mailouts will be managed and distributed through Executive Services with content provided by the relevant branch if requested.

Councillors may request a media release be prepared by Executive Services. Councillors are to notify the Mayor of their request so that the Mayor is kept up to date on media related matters.

Councillors and General Managers are encouraged to provide updates, photos, and stories on what is happening in the individual Councillor Divisions to Executive Services.

Where possible and practical alongside media releases, photographs are encouraged to enhance the verbal documentation.

### **3.4. Media Release Approval Process**

The Chief Executive Officer ('CEO') or delegated officer must approve all Council media releases. Responses made by Councillors to direct requests from the media are not considered media releases and as such do not require approval by the CEO. To assist Councillors in their response, it is advised that Councillors make contact with Executive Services to ensure the information they intend to provide is true and accurate and seeking appropriate support as needed.

### **3.5. Responding to Media Enquiries made directly with Council**

Media representatives are requested to make direct contact with Executive Services in the first instance. Executive Services in consultation with the relevant General Manager or delegated officer, will co-ordinate a response in accordance with Council's Media Relations Flowchart, consulting with the relevant Councillor.

If the matter has a specialised or technical component, the CEO may respond or delegate the responsibility to a senior officer.

Council's preferred option is to provide a written response to specific questions. All written responses shall be co-ordinated by Executive Services and must be approved by the relevant General Manager or the CEO as appropriate.

The Mayor should be notified immediately of any potential risks to Council's reputation should a response be delayed.

In all cases, where comment is made or proposed to be made to the media, the spokesperson (including Councillors) is required to notify Executive Services of the nature of their comments.

All correspondence to or from the media is to be forwarded to [media@sbrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:media@sbrc.qld.gov.au) for records management.

### **3.6. Participation in Council related events / activities (where media maybe present)**

Council may host an event to launch a service or open a facility, or where Council has sponsored a project or major event, Executive Services is responsible for ensuring all Councillors are issued an invitation to attend the event/activity where practicable.

Where the attendance of Council representatives is limited, the Mayor and relevant Divisional Councillor are to receive the invitation in that order (as attendance numbers allow). Executive Services may extend an invitation to another Councillor or Executive Leadership Team member/s should the Mayor, relevant Divisional Councillor be unable to attend.

### **3.7. Council Advertorial Activities**

Council undertakes advertorial activities to ensure dedicated communication platforms for Council news such as a page or part-page in local print media. Where practical, Councillors are to be provided an opportunity to contribute content on a rotational basis.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

**Councillor** means a Councillor of a local government, includes the Mayor.

**Council representative** means all Councillors and Council employees including permanent, casual and temporary employees, apprentices, trainees, contractors, volunteers, and work experience students.

**Media** means television, radio, print and social media journalists, photographers, and camera operators, including representatives from trade and specialist publications and internet news services.

**Media relations** means the use of the media to communicate corporate messages about Council.

This includes preparation and distribution of media releases, media statements, media interviews and conferences or briefings, media launches and features.

**Media releases** means communications designed to be sent to the media to encourage them to develop articles on a topic. A media release is written in order to highlight an important event, program, or piece of information by Council that succinctly describes who, what, where, when, why and how of the story. Media releases are intended to promote the interests of Council and assist Council to meet the principles of Local Government.

## 5. LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

*Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*

## 6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

South Burnett Regional Council Community Engagement Policy – Statutory050

South Burnett Regional Council Media Relations Flowchart – Procedure027

South Burnett Regional Council Social Media Procedure – Procedure024

## 7. NEXT REVIEW

As prescribed by legislation or April 2026

## 8. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Revision Description	Adopted Date	ECM Reference
1.	Adoption of Policy	24 September 2008	418029
1	Adoption of Policy	9 December 2009	817662
2	Policy Revision	21 November 2012	1407706
3	Policy Revision	16 November 2016	2022469
4	Policy Revision	13 June 2018	2512946
5	Policy Revision	15 July 2020	2700319
6	Administrative change replacing Social & Corporate Performance Branch with Corporate Services Branch as per Council Resolution 2021/62	24 March 2021	2700319
7	Review of policy	20 October 2021	2700319
8	Administrative amendment – organisational structure review – resolution 2022/432	27 April 2022	2700319
9	Review of policy	24 April 2024	2700319
10	Review of policy – minor amendment	20 November 2024	2700319

  
Mark Pitt PSM  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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