



Council Policy

Policy Title:	Media
Policy Number:	9.2
Priority Area:	Connecting People and Places
Service Area:	Community Engagement, Consultation and Communication
Meeting Adopted:	17 October 2017 - 171017/12

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this policy is to provide timely and accurate information to the media in a way which is professional, enhances Council's public image, limits the possibility of misinformation and maintains positive relations with the media.

POLICY

1. Authorisation

Richmond Valley Council encourages open, honest and prompt communication with the media.

Only the Mayor and General Manager are authorised to comment on Council's behalf. All media is coordinated through the Communications Team.

Councillors are not permitted to comment to the media on Council's behalf unless authorised to do so by the Mayor. Council acknowledges that as elected representatives, the media will, from time to time, call on Councillors for personal comment. In this instance, a Councillor wishing to make statements to the media must inform the journalist:

- that comments are made as an individual;
- that comments made do not necessarily represent the views or beliefs of Council or other Councillors; and
- that the matter has or has not been determined by Council.

On approval from the Mayor and/or General Manager, in time of crisis, the Director Infrastructure and Environment or the Manager Communications, Events and Tourism may deal with the media directly. All information, regardless of importance needs to be given to the above people so timely and accurate information can be delivered to the media and broader community.

2. Preparing and issuing media releases

Media releases relating to Council's activities, decisions and plans will be prepared by the Manager Communications, Events and Tourism with input from respective departments. All proposed releases are to be forwarded to the General Manager for approval prior to release.

Council will only write a media release for Council initiatives and projects, or for external not-for-profit organisations, where Council is a partner or where Council officially supports a particular project.

Following authorisation of media releases, distribution to media is arranged via the Communications Team, with the distribution to include a copy of the release being forwarded to all Councillors and staff.

3. Providing a Council spokesperson for comment or interview

Council staff are not permitted to discuss Council matters with the media either during work hours in a work capacity, or out of work hours in a personal capacity unless authorised to do so by the General Manager.

Where a staff member is contacted by the media, they must be polite, courteous and refer the call to the Manager Communications, Events and Tourism. If no one is available at the time, email the person’s name, media outlet they represent, nature of the call and deadline to the Communications Team. Where the issue is urgent, refer person to the General Manager.

No media statement is to be released without approval from the General Manager.

To ensure continuity, all interview requests are to be forwarded to the Manager Communications, Events and Tourism

4. Enquiries

All media enquiries are to be allocated to the General Manager or Manager Communications, Events and Tourism.

5. Media access to Council business papers

Representatives of local media outlets should have access to Council business papers as near as possible to the time they are available to Councillors.

6. Liaison with media outlets

All media outlets are to be treated equally and without bias. All media releases and other statements/announcements are to be provided to all and any relevant outlets for reporting.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by Council at the time of any relevant legislative changes, compliance requirements or at least every four years.

Version Number	Date	Reason / Comments
1	18/11/2008	New Policy
2	18/08/2015	Policy review and presentation in new template
3	17/10/2017	Policy review