

## 1. Policy Intent

- 1.1 The Media Policy (this policy) ensures appropriate representation of Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) and its decisions, actions and services to media outlets and in corporate communication. It provides a structured approval and distribution mechanism for media enquiries.
- 1.2 Media, which encompasses traditional, social and emerging platforms, is an avenue through which TRC can advise, inform and engage with the community and stakeholders. The policy:
- guides TRC and Councillors in maintaining positive relationships with the media
  - ensures communication with the media is consistent, well-informed, timely and appropriate
  - establishes protocols and consistent methods for managing communication to the media to ensure relevant and approved information
  - defines TRC's authorised spokespeople and their functions
  - establishes guidelines for effectively communicating and publicising news.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to all TRC employees (permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time, casual and volunteer), Councillors, students, work experience placements, contractors, consultants, advisory committee members, and anyone working in any other capacity for TRC.
- 2.2 The Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), General Managers (GMs) and Strategic Communications Advisor (SCA) liaise with the media on behalf of TRC.
- 2.3 Digital communications and social media are covered under the [Digital Communications and Social Media Policy](#).
- 2.4 Advertising is covered under the [Advertising Spending Policy](#).

## 3. Background/Supporting Information

- 3.1 Media enquiries are made by print, radio, online and television journalists. Many also operate duplicate digital and social products.
- 3.2 Requests are often received for quotes and interviews from more than one TRC source.
- 3.3 Relevant legislation:
- *Local Government Act 2009* (section 12).
  - Local Government Regulation 2012.

## 4. Policy Statement

### 4.1 Dealing With Media Enquiries

- 4.1.1 Only authorised spokespeople can respond to media enquiries. This minimises the risk of misinformation, ensures key messages are delivered, and maintains an appropriate process for providing responses to the media.
- 4.1.2 Authorised spokespeople must have completed media training.
- 4.1.3 Councillors may provide statements to the media if approached directly by media outlets for their views on a matter.
- 4.1.4 Employees must direct media enquiries to the SCA. The SCA will determine the nature of the enquiry, decide on the most appropriate method of response, liaise with relevant staff, undertake research and prepare a response.
- 4.1.5 In the event the SCA is unavailable, the Coordinator Communication and Engagement will facilitate a response.
- 4.1.6 If the enquiry is about information that is already publicly available, the SCA will respond directly to the enquiry.
- 4.1.7 Other responses must be approved as required by Managers, Executive Managers (EMs), GMs, Councillors (if quoted), and by the CEO and Mayor where relevant.

### 4.2 Authorised Spokespersons

- 4.2.1 Media arrangements for disaster events are outlined in the [Public Information and Warnings Sub-Plan](#).
- 4.2.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are the authorised spokespeople for Council. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor may authorise the CEO, GMs, EMs and other Councillors to comment in relation to a specific issue.
- 4.2.3 The CEO is the authorised spokesperson on matters relating to TRC operations including staff, administrative, election and industrial matters. The CEO may also act as the spokesperson for technical and legislative matters. The CEO may authorise a GM, EM or Manager to comment in relation to a specific issue.
- 4.2.4 If the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are unavailable, the Acting Mayor becomes the authorised spokesperson for TRC.
- 4.2.5 Councillors are the authorised spokesperson for TRC committees they chair, and on particular matters if quoted in TRC media releases.
- 4.2.6 Other employees, contractors or advisory committee members are not authorised spokespeople for TRC.

## 4.3 Councillor Statements

- 4.3.1 Councillors can make personal comments to the media. Councillors must make it clear that they are expressing their opinion when communicating with the public and media. They must respect the democratic process and publicly represent Council decisions.
- 4.3.2 Councillors must contact the SCA if they would like information distributed to the media. The SCA will work with the Councillor on the most effective ways to share the information.

## 4.4 Proactive Media Liaison

- 4.4.1 The SCA will distribute information to the media to communicate information about TRC's activities and decisions. The SCA should be notified when media coverage of events or issues is required or anticipated.
- 4.4.2 The SCA will assess and determine the most appropriate method of briefing media outlets, gather information from staff and Councillors, and obtain approvals. This may involve preparing and distributing media releases, holding press conferences and arranging photo opportunities.
- 4.4.3 The SCA will prepare and distribute media releases. Responses and requests for further statements will then be made by the nominated spokesperson with the assistance of the SCA.
- 4.4.4 If a third-party is preparing a media release that relates to TRC, the opportunity for a TRC spokesperson to provide content must be sought. The SCA will coordinate the content and approvals.
- 4.4.5 Approved media releases will be distributed to media outlets and Councillors, and published on the TRC website and communication tools.
- 4.4.6 Councillors and employees may share information that is publicly available on corporate communication tools through their networks and social media.

## 5. Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of this policy, and the CEO is responsible for the development and amendment of associated procedures.

## 6. Review

The Coordinator Communication and Engagement will monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend changes. This policy will be formally reviewed by Council every three years. The policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended or repealed by Council resolution.

This policy repeals the former Media Policy adopted 25 June 2020.