



Name	COR01 Media Policy
Policy Type	Council
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
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## 1. Policy Purpose

This policy outlines a framework for guiding Elected Members and staff in interactions with the media to ensure consistent messaging, brand and reputation management and the appropriate use of social media.

## 2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to Elected Members and staff for any media interaction including social media use.

## 3. Policy Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

'Social Media'	All online media forums, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.
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## 4. Policy Statement

4.1 This Policy provides a framework for Elected Members and staff to interact with the media.

4.2 Media activities assist Council in delivering information to the public. Media activities may be generated proactively by Council or may be produced in response to an enquiry or request from a media organisation or stakeholder.

4.3 This Policy also outlines procedures for Elected Members and Council staff who, acting as an appointed representative of Litchfield Council, make public comment or provide information to the media about Council activities.

4.4 Public comment includes public speaking engagements; speaking on radio or television, views expressed to newspapers, magazines, websites, social media, books, journals, notices or other such forum where it might be expected that the publication of the comment will be accessible to part or all of the Litchfield or Local Government community.

## 5. Policy

### 5.1 Speaking on Behalf of Council

- 5.1.1. The Mayor is the primary spokesperson for Litchfield Council when addressing strategic and Council policy matters.
- 5.1.2. The Mayor may delegate to the Deputy Mayor to make public comment to the media if unavailable, on a case by case basis.
- 5.1.3. The Chief Executive Officer is the principle spokesperson for Litchfield Council when addressing operational matters.
- 5.1.4. The Chief Executive Officer may delegate this authority to make public comment to the media on specific matters relating to administration or Council activities on a case by case basis.

## **5.2 Media Contact Point**

- 5.2.1 The Community Engagement Advisor, in the Office of the Chief Executive, is the first point of contact to liaise with media, provide information and arrange for the preparation of media releases and briefings prior to interviews.

## **5.3 Council staff**

- 5.3.1 Litchfield Council employees are not authorised to speak to the media on any Council issue unless specifically authorised to do so by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 5.3.2 Staff members should not talk to the media on any Council matter including personal social media communications which directly relate to issues arising from operations at Litchfield Council.
- 5.3.3 Employees must refer media enquiries directly to the Community Engagement Officer.

## **5.4 Elected Members**

- 5.4.1 Elected Members are encouraged to inform the Chief Executive Officer if they are seeking media attention for themselves.
- 5.4.2 When seeking media attention, Elected Members should make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of Litchfield Council.
- 5.4.3 When Elected Members are approached directly by media to comment on any issue to do with Litchfield Council operations, they should in the first instance attempt to notify the Community Engagement Advisor which will assist them with relevant key messages and accurate information before releasing any details to the media.
- 5.4.4 As representatives of the community, Elected Members need to be responsive to community views whilst communicating the decisions of Council. Elected Members should:
  - Show respect for Council's decision making processes

- Ensure confidential information is not to be communicated until it is no longer treated as confidential
- Ensure all information concerning Council decisions, policies and operational matters is conveyed accurately
- Take care when expressing personal views that they do not show disrespect for the Council, its decisions, decision making process or other elected members and staff.

5.4.5 Media responses will be forwarded to the Elected Members along with the details of the media enquiry for their information.

## **5.5 General Media**

5.5.1 When responding to media enquiries it is important to respond in a timely manner. Where practical, a response by the close of business on the day of the enquiry is required. If not practical, the owner of the media request should be contacted and advised of the delay.

5.5.2 Media responses will be forwarded to the Elected Members along with the details of the media enquiry for their information.

## **5.6 Social Media**

5.6.1 Social media is an immediate method of communicating with stakeholders, media and the general public.

5.6.2 Ensuring information is correct and consistent is paramount when posting on social media sites.

5.6.3 Litchfield Council website is the primary internet presence for the dissemination of information to stakeholders and the community. Social media use should fall into the following categories:

- A channel for broadcasting time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (e.g. cyclone preparedness and emergency situations)
- A medium to engage with the community
- A form of marketing to increase Council's ability to distribute messages to the widest possible audience

5.6.4 When Elected Members post on social media regarding Council operational matters they are encouraged to communicate with the Chief Executive Officer or the Community Engagement Advisor.

