

## COUNCIL POLICY

### PURPOSE

This policy outlines the protocols and procedures governing and guiding City of Palmerston staff and Elected Member interaction with media agencies. The policy is designed to establish A framework across Council governing interaction with media to best ensure consistent, accurate messaging, brand recognition and improving the reputation of City of Palmerston.

### PRINCIPLES

The purpose of any media interaction is to inform and/or educate City of Palmerston stakeholders and the community about Council policies, positions on issues, decisions and upcoming events and projects. At all times, media interactions should be utilised to positively enhance the Council's reputation and public standing.

The Mayor is the principal spokesperson for City of Palmerston however, may delegate specific media interactions to the Deputy Mayor or other Elected Members.

The Chief Executive Officer is the appointed spokesperson for any operational matters and may delegate this responsibility to appropriate staff as necessary.

Views expressed by Elected Members on any form of media should be clearly identified as either personal or professional and must always endeavour to promote the interests of the municipality and raise awareness and understanding of community issues.

### DEFINITIONS

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

TERM	DEFINITION
Elected Members	All Elected officials including the Mayor.
Media	Various means of communication through which news, entertainment, education, data or promotional messages are disseminated. These platforms can include television, radio, newspapers and magazines but are distinct from social media.

TERM	DEFINITION
Personal Social Media Communications	Exchange of user generated content on social media platforms held by individuals including employees for private purposes. Social media may include but is not limited to social networking sites, chatrooms, media sharing sites, blogs, forum and online collaboration. This can also include accounts not titled with the name of the individual.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. Council media protocol


- 1.1. The Communications and Media Team will be, in so far as possible, the first contact point to liaise with media, provide guidance on, and coordinate, written and verbal media statements including media releases and assist in preparing the nominated spokesperson for interviews with the media where required.

### 2. Staff dealing with media

- 2.1. No City of Palmerston staff member is authorised to speak to the media on any Council issue without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer. This includes personal social media communications which directly relate to issues arising from operations at City of Palmerston.
- 2.2. Any personal use of any form of media should not imply the user is an authorised representative of City of Palmerston, contain use of a City of Palmerston email address, any City of Palmerston logos or insignia or use or disclose Council information that is confidential or private.
- 2.3. On occasions it is appropriate for staff to talk to the media instead of an Elected Member whereby the Chief Executive Officer will have the authority to designate City of Palmerston staff to become a spokesperson.
- 2.4. City of Palmerston Council staff, including those in the Communications and Media Team, must not engage in any media activity which is deemed by the Chief Executive Officer to be specifically for the personal advantage of any Elected Member.

### 3. Elected Members Dealing with Media

- 3.1. Elected Members are entitled, at any time, to attract media attention for themselves. They are encouraged to inform the Chief Executive Officer out of professional courtesy solely to confirm any factual matters concerning the City of Palmerston as they may relate to the media opportunity.
- 3.2. Elected Members should also ensure that when they are seeking to gain media attention for themselves that they make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the City of Palmerston Council.
- 3.3. When Elected Members are approached directly by media to comment on any issue regarding City of Palmerston operations, they should contact the Chief Executive Officer to determine the appropriate spokesperson in the first instance. This does not apply when speaking to the media about matters not reflecting Council decisions and when expressing individual opinion.

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- 3.4. Elected Members are entitled to indicate that they are Elected Members of the City of Palmerston Council and are encouraged to use social media to communicate with the community. To ensure distinction between personal and Council use, Elected Members are encouraged to establish pages that identify them as Elected Members separate from private accounts, however it should be clear that the opinions expressed are those of the Elected Member and not those of Council.
  - 3.5. It is not suggested that Elected Members who post or comment via personal pages should contact the Chief Executive Officer however, if posts relate to operational matters or decisions of Council, it should be clear that the opinions expressed are those of the Elected Member and the comments are not being made on behalf of Council.
  - 3.6. When Elected Members are posting on social media regarding Council matters, they are encouraged to contact the Chief Executive Officer prior for information or share posts from City of Palmerston's social media pages. This will help to ensure that all information is correct at the time of posting.

## 4. Media releases

- 4.1. All Council media releases must only be released to the media from the Communications and Media Team or Chief Executive Officer's office.
- 4.2. All media releases will be provided to Elected Members when being released to the media.
- 4.3. Elected Members are entitled to distribute their own media releases; however they must clearly indicate these releases are the opinions or beliefs of the individual Elected Member and are not being made on behalf of Council.
- 4.4. This Policy applies to employees, contractors, volunteers, consultants and any other person(s) undertaking public engagement on behalf of City of Palmerston.
- 4.5. Community Engagement methodology will be guided by internal procedural strategies in line with the IAP2 spectrum of Public Participation and include Consult; Involve; Collaborate; Empower.
- 4.6. All community engagement periods will reflect minimum statutory requirements where applicable.
- 4.7. Where there is no statutory requirement, selection of the appropriate timeframe and actions will be at the discretion of Council.
- 4.8. The Marketing and Communications Team provides advice and assistance for engaging with internal and external stakeholders and keeping this Policy up to date, visible and readily accessible.

## ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Caretaker Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Code of Conduct for Elected Members and Committee Members
- Code of Conduct for Council Employees

## REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- Northern Territory Local Government Act



## POLICY DETAILS

OWNER	CEO	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Deputy CEO
APPROVAL DATE	4 April 2023	NEXT REVIEW DUE	4 April 2027
RECORDS NUMBER	533653	COUNCIL DECISION	10/776