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1 PURPOSE

This policy outlines the protocols and procedures governing and guiding City of Palmerston staff and elected members' interaction with media agencies and use of social media. The policy is designed to establish a framework across Council governing interaction with media to best ensure consistent messaging and brand recognition and reputation.

2 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, upcoming and unfolding events. At all times media interaction should be utilised to positively enhance the Council's reputation and public standing.

The Mayor is the principal spokesperson for the City of Palmerston. Other Elected Members or staff may be spokespersons as appropriate. Views expressed by Elected Members 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.

3 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.
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.

4 POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Council Media Protocol

The Communications Officer will be, in so far as possible, the first contact point to liaise with media, provide information and arrange for the preparation of media releases and briefings prior to interviews.

- 4.1.1 A decision on whether the issue should be addressed by an Elected Member or Staff would be made in the first instance by the CEO in conjunction with the Mayor.

4.2 Staff Dealing with Media

- 4.2.1 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 the City of Palmerston.
- 4.2.2 Any personal use of social 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.
- 4.2.3 On occasions it is appropriate for staff to talk to the media instead of an Elected Member, the Chief Executive Officer will have the authority to designate City of Palmerston staff to become spokesperson.
- 4.2.4 City of Palmerston Council staff, including those in the Communications 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.

4.3 Elected Members Dealing with Media

- 4.3.1 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.
- 4.3.2 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.
- 4.3.3 When Elected Members are approached directly by media to comment on any issue to do with City of Palmerston operations they are encouraged in the first instance to contact the Chief Executive Officer solely to ensure that they are briefed with all relevant and accurate information before releasing any details to the media.
- 4.3.4 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.
- 4.3.5 It is not suggested that Elected Members who post on 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.
- 4.3.6 When Elected Members are posting on social media regarding Council matters they are encouraged to contact the Chief Executive Officer prior. This will help ensure that all information going out regarding both operational matters and Council decisions is correct at the time of posting.

4.4 Media Releases

- 4.4.1 All Council media releases must only be released to the media from the Communications Team or Chief Executive Officer's office.
- 4.4.2 All media releases will be provided to Elected Members when being released to the media.
- 4.4.3 Elected Members are entitled to distribute their own media releases; however they must

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clearly indicate these releases are the opinions or beliefs of the individual Elected Member and are not being made on behalf of Council.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 EM04 Caretaker Policy

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION
