

COMMUNICATION POLICY

First Approved	Council Meeting July 2011
Status	Council Policy
Review Frequency	4 yearly or as required (16 March 2020 – Resolution Ref ACM20528)
Last Review Due	November 2017
Next Review Due	November 2021
File Number	18.63.001 / PL2021100
Responsible Division	Leadership
Related Documents	Public Consultation Policy Communication & Media Standard Operating Procedure Information Management Policy Information Privacy Principles Elected Members - Code of Conduct Employee - Code of Conduct
Applicable Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1999 s. 62 and 109</i> <i>Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)</i> <i>Defamation Act 2005 (SA)</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act (SA)</i> <i>State Records Act 1997 (SA)</i> <i>Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)</i>

Preamble

The contents of and the commitments that Council make in this policy are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of the Council's general position in relation to those matters, and to facilitate its aspirations wherever it is reasonable to do so.

Overview

Council recognises its responsibility to effectively communicate to inform the community and wider audience on a variety of aspects of Council business and other community issues. Council is committed to working with the media and using its own communications channels to ensure all relevant issues are communicated in a timely and accurate manner.

This policy applies to Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of the Alexandrina Council.

Policy Principles

- **Media Comment and Press Releases**

The Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are the only authorised key spokespersons of the Council for media comment and press releases regarding Council business, operation or policy. No other Elected Member, employee, contractor, agent or volunteer of the Alexandrina Council is authorised to make public comment regarding Council business or policy, unless specifically directed to do so by the Mayor or the CEO. Press releases prepared by General Managers, Managers and staff will be authorised by the Communications Team, appropriate Divisional General Manager and the CEO before publication.

Local media will be provided with copies of press releases and the following documentation free of charge upon request:

- recommendations of Council Committees which are to be presented to Council for adoption
- reports of Council officers which have been presented to Council for adoption or acceptance
- budgetary or other financial statements adopted by Council

- copies of correspondence forming part of the Minutes of Council or the recommendations of a Council Committee
- minutes of every Council or Council Committee meeting or meeting of electors after same have been adopted or accepted by Council.

- **Social Media**

Communications Team staff will be responsible for posting all content on the Council's corporate social media pages. Comment in relation to Council business, decisions or processes via social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs or other forums etc), must not be made by staff, particularly if comments may bring the Council into disrepute or risk reputational damage.

- **Copyright**

Care must be taken when scanning or reposting articles and images on the Council's website or in social media content, as copyright may apply. Please ensure permission is always requested and granted from the appropriate source prior to use.

- **General Community Communication**

The use of a variety of media, including (but not limited to) the Council website, quarterly Council newsletter, signs, notice boards, email, social media, newspapers, radio, television and advertising are available and may be used to inform stakeholders of a variety of Council information and strategic directions. Staff may not use titles in the media unless authorised to do so by the CEO.

All communication must adhere to the principles of:

- balance and honesty
- openness and transparency
- achieving the aims and supporting the objectives of the Council and the community
- supporting the views and/or needs of our community.

When using social media in issues relating to the Council, Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers are expected to:

- Seek prior authorisation from the CEO (via the Communications Officer)
- Adhere to Council's codes of conduct, policies and procedures
- Behave with caution, courtesy, honesty and respect
- Comply with relevant laws and regulations
- Reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of Alexandrina Council, and refrain from bringing the Council into disrepute
- Personal social media accounts do not necessarily reflect the views of Alexandrina Council.

- **Internal Council Communication**

Internal communications will be undertaken using the Council's intranet site 'Connect', internal Council email, official meetings and other methods deemed appropriate by the CEO. These inform Executive, staff, contractors, volunteers of Council administrative and operational changes, and provide guidance to enable sound decision-making, and general information. 'All Staff' emails should generally not be used. The Connect Social Site can be used for general non-work related staff news and announcements.

Note: The Mayor or CEO cannot authorise public communication, publication or release of any document or part of a document if:

- the document or part relates to a matter of a kind referred to in s.90 of the *Local Government Act, 1999*, or
- the Council or Council Committee orders that the document or part be kept confidential.

Delegations

Council acknowledges that the CEO may sub-delegate matters related to this Policy to staff or other persons employed or engaged by Council. Appropriate authorisation must be obtained before releasing information, including, but not limited to uploading content and acting as a spokesperson on behalf of Council.

Availability of Policy

This Policy will be available on the Council's website www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au. Copies can also be provided to interested members of the community upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.