



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council requires a consistent and professional corporate approach when engaging in two-way connections with the media and the community, whether through traditional or social media.
- 1.2 This Policy establishes Council's position in respect to the expectations on Council's representatives when engaging in media, communications and social media in both an official and personal capacity.
- 1.3 Council recognises that the way people communicate and share information has changed and the combination of traditional and digital platforms aims to:
 - 1.3.1 inform the community about the policies, service levels, programs, services and initiatives of Council.
 - 1.3.2 ensure Council is visible, accessible and accountable to the community and key stakeholders.
 - 1.3.3 drive community participation and engagement with the programs, activities and events delivered or supported by Council.
 - 1.3.4 increase and encourage two-way communication between the community and Council to enhance Council's value perception.
- 1.4 Council's communications and engagement platforms may be used to connect and share information and may provide details and specific information, however all information will lead back to Council's corporate website.
- 1.5 The Policy does not cover public consultation or general Council correspondence or the use of social media in a personal capacity where no reference is made to Council-related matter.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The following principles will be applied in all media, communication and social media matters pertaining to Council;
 - 2.1.1 Be credible, accurate, fair, thorough and transparent;
 - 2.1.2 Be respectful, cordial, honest and professional at all times;
 - 2.1.3 Be responsive and share information where appropriate;
 - 2.1.4 Behave with honesty and integrity;
 - 2.1.5 Be consistent with other Council information.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Traditional media** – includes newspapers, radio, television, publications, letters, press releases etc.
- 3.2 **Social Media** – includes platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content to participate in social networking, allowing the community



to comment, provide feedback and engage online. Social media includes Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs and more.

- 3.3 **Digital Platforms** – Includes social media, email, eNewsletter, text messaging, websites, videos etc.
- 3.4 **Council Representatives** – means any person carrying out duties or performing tasks for and on behalf of Council whether paid or unpaid, including council staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers or students.
- 3.5 **Moderation** – means the editing or removal of offensive content posted to a social media site.

4. Response to Traditional Media

- 4.1 The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) are nominated as the official spokespersons of Council for traditional media when speaking with journalists from print and broadcast media outlets, and have the authority to make comments to the media on behalf of Council.
- 4.2 Where appropriate or expedient for a specific issue, the Mayor may delegate responsibility as principal spokesperson for Council to the Deputy Mayor or another Elected Member.
- 4.3 All approaches from the media should be directed to the CEO.
- 4.4 When Elected Members speak to the media, they speak as individual Councillors and not on behalf of Council and this must be made clear in their response.
- 4.5 When the Mayor is not speaking on behalf of Council it must be clarified that the conversation is as an individual not as Mayor.
- 4.6 Where appropriate or expedient for a specific issue, the CEO may delegate responsibility to a member of Council Staff within the area of expertise and knowledge to comment.

5. Use of Social Media

- 5.1 Council representatives using social media must:
 - 5.1.1 Only disclose publicly available information. No comment will be made on Social Media sites regarding confidential, private or legal matters.
 - 5.1.2 Only use corporate imagery such as logos and official Council photographs with the permission of the CEO (or nominee).
 - 5.1.3 Ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission.
 - 5.1.4 Ensure that information posted online is not illegal, libellous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusing or obscene.



- 5.1.5 Ensure that information posted online does not infringe the behavioural requirements for Elected Members, behavioural standards for Employees or any other Council code or policy.
- 5.2 When using Council social media sites, Council Staff authorised by the CEO (or nominee) will:
 - 5.2.1 Only post content that is genuinely expected to be of interest to followers.
 - 5.2.2 Link to more information on Council's website where possible. If external websites are required to be linked to, this must be authorised by the CEO (or nominee).
 - 5.2.3 Provide accurate, fair and thorough information.
- 5.3 Council representatives' personal media platforms such as Facebook should not be used as an avenue by the public for customer enquiries, requests, complaints or responses. Any customer enquiry, request or complaint should be addressed and responded to through the appropriate channels during business hours or through Council's website.
- 5.4 Monitoring social media:
 - 5.4.1 The CEO and/or approved delegate will monitor content posted on all official social media outlets to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message and consistency in branding.
 - 5.4.2 Content relating to Council that is posted on the internet by Elected Members, Council Staff, residents and other community members or organisations will be monitored by the CEO.
 - 5.4.3 Where necessary, content will be addressed in an appropriate manner.
 - 5.4.4 Comments from social media users will be monitored and moderated where possible.
- 5.5 Council Staff must not use personal accounts to make adverse comments about Council or its programs, services, projects, Elected Members, Council Staff, volunteers, community members or decisions. Elected Members and Council Staff are not to participate in Council's public consultation processes using social media sites.
- 5.6 Elected Members should use social media in accordance with the Behavioural Standards for Elected Members and all Elected Member' social media accounts should have a prominent statement that clearly identifies they are not speaking on behalf of Council. In expressing individual views, Elected Members must do so in a way that does not undermine the community's trust or confidence in Council and maintains respectful relationships with fellow Elected Members and Council Staff. For Elected Members, breaching this Policy may result in a Behavioural Standards complaint.

Media, Communications and Social Media POLICY



5.7 Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by Council representatives will be managed through the relevant disciplinary systems. Serious breaches may result in suspension or termination of employment or association in accordance with Council policies. Any content that breaches the Policy guidelines will be recorded and kept on personnel records.

6. Complaints

6.1 All complaints and grievances about Council and its services should be formally reported to Council on 8687 9177 or dce@elliston.sa.gov.au. Please refer to Council's Complaints Handling Policy for further information.

7. Reviews

11.1 This Policy/Procedure will be reviewed every three (3) years], or as required as a consequence of amendments to the Act, Regulations, Guidelines or the statutory public integrity framework generally.

8. Document administration and control

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| Policy Title | Media, Communications and Social Media Policy | | |
| Procedure Type | Governance | | |
| Responsible Department | Office of the Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Responsible Officer | Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Related policies and / or procedures | Behavioural Management Policy Code of Conduct for Employees Records Management Policy Public Consultation Policy Caretaker Policy | | |
| Date adopted | 16 May 2023 | Minute Number | 2023.84 |
| Version | New Policy | | |
| Last reviewed | | | |
| Next Review date | Within twelve (12) months after the conclusion of a periodic election, in line with legislative changes or by resolution of Council. | | |
| Availability | This Policy is available for inspection at the Council office and any person may obtain a copy of this Policy upon payment of the fee fixed by council in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges adopted each financial year. It is also available on Council's website elliston.sa.gov.au Any grievance in relation to this Policy or its application should be forwarded in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of Council. | | |



13. Version Control

| Version no. | Date adopted | Synergy Record | Amendments Made | Prepared by: |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------|
| 1 | 2019 | | | |
| 2 | 16 May 2023 | NGR234536 9.63.1/2 | Updated title and complete review of content of Policy New formatting | Executive Assistant |