BARCOO SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY
MEDIA

Policy Number: BSC-052	Version: 2
Classification: Governance	Section: Chief Executive Officer - Governance
Date Adopted by Council: 15 October 2025	Resolution Number: 2025.10.009
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Review: Note: This Policy is reviewed when any of the following occur: 1. The related information is amended or replaced. 2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer. Notwithstanding the above, this Policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.

OBJECTIVE

Barcoo Shire Council is committed to keeping its local and wider community well informed about its activities. To achieve this outcome Council recognises that a good working relationship with the media is essential. This policy provides guidelines for effective communication of Council affairs to the community via the media.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Mayor, Councillors and staff of Barcoo Shire Council. Reference to staff in this policy includes Council delegates, volunteers and contractors and service providers engaged by Council.

This policy does not address Social Media. Council has a separate policy for Social Media.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council's Media Policy seeks to:

- Ensure consistency by Councillors and staff in dealing with the media.
- Promote open exchange of information between Council and the media.
- Limit the publication of inaccurate information which promotes conflict or embarrassment for staff and Councillors.
- Limit the possibility of miscommunication and reputation risk.
- Promote positive media relationships.
- Clearly indicate Council's authorized spokespersons.
- Ensure appropriate authorization and responsibility for information provided.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Mayor and the CEO are Council's official spokespersons on all matters.
2. The CEO may nominate other staff to act as spokespeople for the Council.
3. The Mayor may nominate another Councillor to speak on a particular matter.
4. The CEO is responsible for coordinating media liaison and issuing press releases and

is authorised to respond to media enquiries on behalf of Council.

5. No staff member, other than those authorized by the CEO are to handle an enquiry from the media without prior approval from the CEO.
6. Information given to the media of a controversial, legal or ethical nature requires the approval of the CEO and / or the Mayor.

Authorised Officer	**Roles and Responsibilities**
Mayor	Council's official Spokesperson on all matters.
Deputy Mayor	Act as the Mayor's delegated spokesperson if the Mayor is not available.
Councillors	Speaks for the Council when delegated by the Mayor. Otherwise may provide the media with comment, identifying that it is provided as their own personal opinion and not representing the official position of Council.
CEO	To make statements on behalf of Council to the media. Council's official spokesperson on all policy, operations and administration issues.
Staff	No media role, unless requested by the CEO to provide information or comment.

Note: Reference to staff in this policy also includes Council delegates, volunteers, contractors and service providers engaged by Council.

CONTACT BETWEEN THE MEDIA, COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

1. All media enquiries should be directed to the CEO.
2. Council staff must not speak to the media about matters related to Council unless authorized to do so.
3. Council staff may not provide any comment or information to the media with the intention of contesting or undermining Council policy or portraying Council, Councillors or Council staff in a negative light.
4. Council staff may speak to the media or write letters to the Editor as private individuals with the following restrictions;
    a. They do not comment on Council business or policy;
    b. They are not identified as Council staff;
    c. Their comments are not perceived as representing official Council position or policy.
5. In the vent of an industrial dispute (or an incident likely to lead to an industrial dispute), statements on behalf of Council staff should be issued via the relevant union.
6. When appropriate a member of staff may become the sole spokesperson on a specific issue, event of initiative within their operational portfolio, to ensure consistency of message.
7. Council staff should treat all media outlets equally and should avoid giving one outlet preferential treatment. Media releases should be distributed to all media outlets at the same time.
8. When a media organization or representative requests information on a specific topic, the response must be provided exclusively to that organization or representative.
9. Council staff should avoid providing information "off the record" during media interviews. It is best to assume that everything said to any media representative may appear in a news story.
10. Contractors or service providers employed by Council must refer all media enquiries relating to Council to the CEO.

COUNCILLOR CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

1. Every Councillor has a right to express a private opinion on any issue, whether or not that opinion reflects Council's official position, but Councillors must carefully identify the role in which they speak or write.
2. Whenever Councillors publicly express their own opinions they must make it clear they are speaking for themselves, and not for Council, unless they are supporting a Council position.
3. When Councillors speak "for the Council" when delegated by the Mayor, they must express and support Council's entire policy on the issue at hand.

MEDIA RELEASES

1. Staff may prepare draft media releases but they must be forwarded to the CEO for editing, formatting and distribution to ensure they maintain Council style and look.
2. Barcoo Shire Council media releases should never be issued without the CEO's knowledge and the prior approval of the CEO, the Mayor or delegated authority.
3. A media release should never be issued quoting a Councillor or member of staff without that person's prior knowledge.
4. Staff with specialist knowledge may be quoted in media releases with the permission of the relevant delegated authority.
5. Media releases must be approved by the CEO or the delegated authority before posting on the Council website.
6. All new staff are to be given Council's Media Policy as part of the induction process.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Barcoo Shire Council Code of Conduct