



## **MEDIA POLICY**

Public Document

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Adopted by: Council on 3 July 2018

Ownership: Strategic Direction 4 and Strategic Direction 5

## Media Policy

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### Purpose

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To provide guidelines for communication with the media by Council officials to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach is taken to media liaison.

### Objectives

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- Ensure information provided to the media by Council is consistent, well informed, timely and accurate
- Protect and enhance the reputation of Council
- Promote positive relationships and open exchange of information between Council and the media
- Identify responsibility and appropriate authorisation for information provided by Council to the media
- Provide direction to Council officials in dealing with media communications
- Mitigate risks associated with the communication of inaccurate information

### Scope

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Applies to Council officials (as defined in this policy) in situations involving:

- Direct written or verbal communication with the media about Council affairs and related matters
- Making written or verbal comments on Council affairs in public forums, where it is reasonably foreseeable that such comments will be published in the media

### Definitions

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**Contact** - journalists or student journalists may attempt to contact staff by phone, email, through social media or in person

**Council officials** – includes the Mayor, Councillors, members of staff of Council, volunteers, contractors, administrators, Council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of Council

**Media** - all forms of published content such as newspapers, radio, television and online (including social media)

**Official Spokesperson** - Council officials who, for the purpose of this policy, may provide information to the media on behalf of Council in relation to policy, administrative and operational matters.

### Code of Conduct Provisions

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Council officials should be aware of their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct when speaking to the media, or otherwise communicating through social media. These interactions must not damage the Council's reputation, commercial interests and/or bring Council or holders of civic office into disrepute. Any inappropriate comments provided to the media or posted on social media may constitute a breach of Council's Code of Conduct.

Council officials must not discuss personnel, confidential legal advice, commercial-in-confidence matters or any matters that are in contravention of the *Government Information Public Access Act* or fall under the provisions of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act* or the Privacy Management Plan with the media.

## Responsibilities in dealing with media

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### Official Spokesperson

The following Council officials may, subject to this policy and having regard to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 ('the Act') and other powers and responsibilities delegated by Council, act as the official spokesperson for Council:

#### ***The Mayor***

The Mayor is, by virtue of section 226 (c) of the Act, *'the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities'*.

Delegation 17 of Council's Delegations to the Mayor also grants authority to the Mayor *'to approve all press statements and publications issued on behalf of Council that the General Manager considers may have significant political ramifications or represent major Council announcements'*.

The Mayor may delegate these roles at his/her discretion to another Councillor or to another official spokesperson.

#### ***Councillors***

One or more Councillors may be delegated by the Mayor to act as Council's official spokesperson on specific matters.

At other times, in line with the Code of Conduct, Councillors may express only their personal views to the media on any matter relating to Council policy and other matters of public interest, however this should be clearly identified as a personal view and not an official Council position or policy and should not bring the holders of civic office into disrepute or denigrate Mosman Council or its functions.

#### ***General Manager***

The General Manager and his/her delegate may provide information or comment to the media on behalf of Council on policy, administrative and operational matters.

#### ***Directors***

Council Directors may be delegated by the General Manager to provide information to the media on behalf of Council on policy, administrative and operational matters within their area of responsibility. In the absence of the Manager Communications, Directors may distribute media releases and written statements on behalf of Council.

#### ***Manager Communications***

The Manager Communications is responsible for promptly dealing with all media enquiries received directly or referred by other Council officials.

The Manager Communications may distribute media releases and written statements and provide information on behalf of Council on policy, administrative and operational matters and take other necessary action as delegated by the General Manager.

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### **Other Council Officials**

Other Managers or specialist staff, in consultation with the Manager Communications and with the approval of the relevant Director, may provide information to the media within their area of expertise and delegations on behalf of Council on policy, administrative or operational matters as required.

Specialist units of Council may conduct media and/or publicity campaigns related to their events or programs in consultation with the Manager Communications.

Contractors and volunteers engaged by Council, and staff not otherwise delegated authority to comment to the media, must refer all media enquiries relating to Council to the Manager Communications through their supervisor.

### **Private Media Communications**

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Council officials other than Councillors may communicate with the media as private individuals, subject to:

- Not purporting to represent official Council position or policy
- Not commenting on Council business or policy and
- Not identifying as Council officials

### **Media Interaction and Contact**

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All Council officials engaging with the media in the role of Council's official spokesperson are to contact the Manager Communications for assistance and advice. The Manager Communications is to be advised of and will attend interviews or photo opportunities as appropriate.

Staff members are responsible for promptly reporting all contact with the media to the Manager Communications (via email or phone 9978 4026) and must also report such contact to their manager. In the absence of the Manager Communications, media enquiries should be referred to the General Manager or relevant Director.

Council officials may be asked by the Manager Communications to provide information relating to their area of expertise. This information should be provided in a timely manner, within the designated deadline as requested, or as subsequently agreed.

### **Related Information/Glossary**

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- Council Code of Conduct
- Delegations to the Mayor and General Manager
- Local Government Act 1993
- Social Media Policy
- Media Corporate Practice
- Employee Information Security Corporate Practice
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Privacy Management Plan

### **Review**

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Every four years unless otherwise directed by Council or the Executive Team.

**Media Policy**

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**Contact**

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Enquiries should be directed to the Manager Communications on 9978 4026.

**Amendments**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reference</b>
3 July 2018	New - Adopted	CD/16