

ADM005- Communication Policy

1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

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| Policy title: | Communication Policy |
| Policy number: | ADM005 |
| Category: | Policy |
| Classification: | Administration |
| Status: | Approved (OCM 28 May 2014) |

2. PURPOSE

The Communication Policy has been developed to provide direction and guidance for the delivery of high quality, relevant, accessible and transparent communication to Roper Gulf Regional Council's stakeholders, residents, Elected Members and Staff. RGRC places a high importance on maintaining open and consistent communication with residents, Elected Members, and staff as well as with outside agencies. This communications policy should be read along side and whilst observing RGRC's *Computer Usage Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Media Policy and Social Media Policy*

3. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all internal and external communications of the Council including correspondences inward and outwards, telephone communication, email, internet, media contact including media releases, newsletters, RGRC's website, direct discussion between employees or Elected Members with external persons; representation and speaking at official functions; and public speaking engagements.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Roper Gulf Regional Council recognises that creating effective means of communication fosters trust among RGRC communities, Councillors, and staff.

The Communication Policy intends to ensure that:

- Important information external to RGRC shall be promptly received, considered and communicated to the RGRC's internal stakeholders,
- Important internal information is promptly identified, considered and communicated to the RGRC's internal stakeholders and external stakeholders as appropriate.
- Whether through traditional communication mechanisms or online, a consistent, factual and positive image of RGRC is created.

5. DEFINITIONS

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| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| Communication | Includes all written, verbal, electronic and personal interactions by all employees with any member of our community, visitors, all levels of government and other agencies. |
| Considered | Means thoughtful, respectful and with regard to the receiver of the information |
| Elected Members | Members of the RGRC Council |

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| External Stakeholders | RGRC external stakeholders shall be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residents of the Roper Gulf region • visitors to the area • other local governments • State and Federal governments • regulatory authorities • funding authorities • businesses with whom RGRC deals with |
| G&CP | Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance Business Unit |
| Internal Stakeholders | RGRC internal stakeholders shall be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the elected members • the Chief Executive Officer • the Directors and Managers • all other employees • consultants and contractors acting on behalf of the RGRC |
| RGRC | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Shall | Will |
| Social Networking Sites | Includes Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube and any other similar websites. |
| Timely | Means occurring within a suitable amount of time or occurring at a suitable time, particularly from the perspective of the receiver of the communication. |

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1. Professional Image

RGRC places the highest of importance on its image of professionalism during its communications. RGRC’s professional image shall be upheld and maintained during all of its communications through ensuring:

- Informative outgoing correspondence in line with RGRC’s style guide is distributed in a timely manner to residents, stakeholders, Elected Members and RGRC staff.
- Incoming correspondence is received and actioned in a suitable amount of time.
- RGRC’s programs are promoted and advocated effectively throughout community.

6.2. Roles and Responsibilities

The official media spokespersons of RGRC are the Mayor and the CEO.

The CEO may delegate a member of RGRC staff to speak on a specific event. Directors or their nominated staff may speak on operational matters relating to their specific department with the CEO’s approval only.

Elected Members may speak on specific issues of interest to them with prior approval from the Mayor.

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6.3. External Communication

RGRC recognises the importance of having a variety of external communication methods in order to reach the residents of the Roper Gulf Region effectively, transparently and in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of Manager Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance, as a delegate of the CEO, to prepare and disseminate the following types of external communications whilst observing the *Local Government Act*:

- RGRC Regional (Business) Plan
- RGRC Annual Report
- Media Releases
- Invitations to attend Ordinary Meetings of Council
- Website content

It is the responsibility of each business unit's manager to send the following types of communication to the Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance Business Unit, as the CEO's delegate, prior to its distribution to the community for approval, unless prior delegation from the CEO has been provided:

- Advertisements
- Newsletters
- Brochures
- Fact Sheets

All other forms of communication distributed, whilst not required to seek approval from G&CP shall be prepared and distributed in a manner that upholds RGRC's professional, transparent and consistent communication values.

6.4. Customer Service

RGRC shall provide a high level of customer service to its internal and external stakeholders and customers. RGRC shall correctly and efficiently answer and respond to phone calls, letters, faxes, emails and face to face contact with stakeholders and customers to ensure a positive reputation of RGRC is generated and upheld.

6.5. Community Consultations

Consultation with the community is a vital and essential method of receiving the ideas and views of RGRC residents. Community consultations shall occur whenever reasonable and/or possible.

It is the responsibility of Senior Management, as set out by the *RGRC Organisational Structure* to ensure that community consultation on community issues begins as early as possible to allow for community involvement and comment before decisions are made. The Local Authority Meetings are an effective medium for these consultations to occur. At Local Authority Meetings, it is the responsibility of the Senior Manager to delegate the responsibility of spokesperson to an RGRC staff member in their own business unit to conduct the consultation.

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6.6. Media Relations

RGRC shall establish and maintain a strong working relationship with the local and regional media outlets through the provision of up-to-date and interesting stories from the RGRC region. In RGRC’s attempt to provide timely, open and transparent communication, RGRC shall endeavour to respond to media inquires from any outlet on the same day as receiving them.

The official media spokespersons of RGRC are the Mayor and the CEO unless delegation has been provided by the CEO to another member of staff.

6.7. Internal Communication and Employee Relations

In order to provide information to the community in a timely and transparent manner, RGRC will provide information to its Employees and Elected Members in a timely manner also. Internal communication shall occur by, but is not limited to:

- New employee induction training
- Regular business unit staff meetings
- Regular senior management meetings
- Access to RGRC policies, procedures and plans
- Notice boards
- ‘Employee of the Month’ and like award schemes

6.8. Events and Festivals

Roper Gulf Regional Council may use community events and festivals to disseminate and distribute information regarding RGRC as an organisation, the programs that RGRC operate and employment opportunities that may exist.

It is the responsibility of the business unit’s manager organising the information or stall at the event of festival to ensure that the information being distributed is correct, up-to-date and upholding RGRC’s values and professional image.

6.9. Violations

Violations of the Communication Policy will be dealt with in accordance to the nature and severity of the specific violation. An RGRC employee or Elected Member who violates the Communications Policy will be subject to disciplinary action under Council’s Code of Conduct and Member’s Code of Conduct.

7. REFERENCES

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| Acknowledgements (original author/source documents) | Roper Gulf Regional Council Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance Business Unit. |
| Related Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGRC Style Guide • ADM013 Social Media Policy • ADM005 Communications Policy |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CL001 Members Code of Conduct • CL002 Members Disciplinary Policy • HR003 Employee Discipline Policy • HR005 Confidentiality and Privacy Policy • ADM006 Computer Usage Policy • ADM007 Mobile Phone Policy • ADM010 Media Policy • RGRC Organisational Structure |
| Related Publications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Act • Privacy Act • Local Government Act |
| Relevant Forms | <i>Nil</i> |

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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| Policy number | ADM005 |
| Policy Owner | Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance Business Unit |
| Endorsed by | |
| Date approved | 4th November 2008 |
| Revisions | March 2014 |
| Amendments | |
| Next revision due | February 2015 |

9. CONTACT PERSON

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| Contact person | Manager Governance, Corporate Planning & Compliance |
| Contact number | 08 8972 9000 |