

1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

Policy title:	Media Policy
Policy number:	ADM010
Category:	Policy
Classification:	ADM
Status:	Approved

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure that all communication with the media is consistent, well-informed, timely and appropriate,
- to clearly indicate Roper Gulf Regional Council's authorised spokespersons,
- to improve communication with customers and enhance Roper Gulf Regional Council's public image, and
- Limit the possibility of miscommunication to maximise the effectiveness of Roper Gulf Regional Council by ensuring comments to the media relating to the Council are made only by authorised people.

3. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

The Media Policy applies to all Roper Gulf Regional Council Councillors and employees, including Council Committee Members, Local Authority Members, Executive Officers, contractors, volunteers, trainees and clients.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Roper Gulf Regional Council acknowledges that effective communication is the key to building informed audiences, knowledgeable consumers and encouraging them to become active citizens.

Roper Gulf Regional Council is committed to providing information to the media in a timely, accurate and newsworthy manner to maximise positive editorial coverage of Roper Gulf Regional Council events, programs, services, decisions and other aspects of operation and policy matters.

5. DEFINITIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Communication	The means by which information is conveyed to the community through written and electronic means. This policy relates to all corporate communication.
Community	Roper Gulf region residents, visitors, ratepayers, businesses, community and government organisations, neighbouring Councils and other stakeholders with an interest in the Roper Gulf Regional Council.
Council affairs	Includes matters before the Council or other Council affairs and business, RGRC policy, interpretation of policy, management of Council business, management of RGRC staff or actions or matters that may commit RGRC's resources to any purpose.

Delegated Officer	A person or body, and the individual member of that body, to whom a function of Roper Gulf Regional Council is Delegated Officer.
Media	Media defines tools used to store and deliver information or data, including but not limited to print media, broadcast media, electronic media and multi media.
Media enquiries	When the media requests more information in relation to a media release – for example an interview with a Council spokesperson – or a response or quote in relation to another matter they are preparing a story on.
Public comment	Includes interviews with the media (including comments to or interviews with the press, radio or television), public speaking engagements and expressing views in letters to the press, in books, notices, articles or in any medium where it is reasonably foreseeable that the publication or circulation will enter the public domain.
RGRC	Roper Gulf Regional Council
Social Media	Software tools that allow groups to generate content and engage in peer-to-peer conversations and exchange of content. Examples include, but are not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, blogs, wikis; online video sharing sites such as YouTube; and online photo sharing sites such as Instagram.

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1 Dealing with Media Enquiries

The Mayor and CEO are RGRC's official spokespersons on all matters. The CEO may nominate other staff to act as spokesperson for particular operational aspects of the Council.

The CEO is responsible for co-coordinating media liaison and will be the Delegated Officer to respond to media enquiries of behalf of RGRC. No staff member, other than CEO is to handle an enquiry from the media.

The CEO will be responsible for issuing media releases about RGRC's activities, decision and plans subjects to the Mayor's approval.

6.2 Elected Members and the media

Every Elected Member 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. Whenever Elected Members publicly express their own opinions, they must make it clear they are speaking for themselves and not Council, unless they are supporting a Council position. When Elected Members speak on behalf of the Council, they must express and support Council's entire policy on the issue at hand.

Any Elected Member who feels unable to speak positively in support of a Council policy while formally representing Council must treat it in a similar fashion to a conflict of interest issue.

6.3 Staff and the media

No RGRC staff member is authorised to speak to the media on any Council issue without prior approval of the CEO, or the Delegated Officer.

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The CEO, or the Delegated Officer, will have the authority to designate RGRC staff to talk to the media when a matter is:

- Operational
- Relevant to their particular Council responsibilities
- Requested by individual media

A general priority guide for staff selection will be:

- First: CEO
- Second: Directors
- Third: Managers
- Fourth: Specific key staff

In all cases, the decision on who will speak to the media rests with the CEO, or an officer designated by them.

It may be appropriate, for reasons of expediency, or gravity of subject matter, for the CEO to officially speak direct to the media to ensure the overall reputation of Council is protected and/or enhanced. It is not acceptable for any member of staff to talk to the media on any Council matter without the prior approval of the CEO or the Delegated Officer.

6.4 Media Issues Protocol

The CEO will liaise with Elected Members on Media issues when a request is made from a member of the media, or the CEO recognises an opportunity for positive media exposure for Council as a whole.

Elected Members and RGRC staff are not to use or disclose information gained in the ordinary course of the business of Council in a way that may cause significant damage or distress to a person, damage to the interests of the Council or a person, or confer an unfair commercial or financial advantage on a person or business when dealing with the media.

When speaking to the media, Elected Members are required to "make it clear whether or not they are representing Council in accordance with an adopted Council position, policy or procedure, or if they are presenting a personal viewpoint as an individual."

All aspects of communication by staff (including verbal, written or personal) involving RGRC activities should reflect the status and objectives of RGRC. Communications should be accurate and professional.

As a representative of the community, Elected Members need to be not only responsive to community views, but to adequately communicate the attitudes and decisions of the Council. In doing so, Elected Members should acknowledge that:

- as a member of the Council, there is respect for the decision-making processes of the Council, which are based on a decision of the majority of the Council;
- information of a confidential nature must not be communicated until it is no longer treated as confidential;
- information relating to decisions of the Council on approvals or permits should only be communicated in an official capacity by a Delegated Officer of the Council;
- information concerning adopted policies, procedures and decisions of the Council is conveyed accurately;

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- when speaking to the community or the media, they make it clear whether or not they are representing Council in accordance with an adopted Council position, policy or procedure, or if they are presenting a personal viewpoint as an individual;
- when expressing personal views, care is taken not to show disrespect for the Council, its decisions, decision-making process or other Elected Members and staff.

6.5 Media Releases

The Governance Communications Coordinator will work to prepare media releases on behalf of RGRC. Other RGRC staff are encouraged to prepare their media releases, but they must be forwarded to the Governance Unit for review, editing and formatting to ensure that they maintain RGRC’s style and look, as well as a consistent Council message.

Under no circumstances should a media release be issued quoting a Councillor or member of staff without that person’s prior knowledge.

All media releases must be approved by the CEO. RGRC media releases, as approved by CEO, will be posted on the RGRC website and disseminated to relevant media outlets in order to maximise potential positive exposure for the Council.

6.6 Use of photographs and video in media publication

This policy shall cover the use of photographs and video in any media that is published by RGRC.

Photographs and video of individuals will not be released without receiving written approval through the Photographic/Video Consent and Release Form.

All Photographic/Video Consent and Release Forms must be recorded with Governance Unit.

6.7 Liaising with the media

All media enquiries are to be dealt with promptly and should be directed to the CEO.

Media organisations and their representatives will be treated equally and without bias.

7. REFERENCES

Acknowledgements (original author/source documents)	
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ADM005 – Communication Policy ▪ ADM011 – Conflict of Interest Policy ▪ CL001 – Members Code of Conduct ▪ HR001 – Employee and Contractor Code of Conduct ▪ HR005 – Confidentiality and Privacy Policy
Related Publications	
Related Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photographic/Video Consent and Release Form

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8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy number	ADM010
Policy Owner	Governance
InfoXpert ID	658191
Endorsed by	OCM
Date approved	18 December 2013
Revisions	August 2016
Amendments	
Next revision due	July 2018

9. CONTACT PERSON

Position **Manager Governance and Corporate Planning**
Contact number **08 8972 9000**