

# Media

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 101

### 1. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy outlines protocols for managing communication between Gannawarra Shire Council, the media and the community.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. Gannawarra Shire Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers.
2. Compliance with legislation, regulations, industry codes; Council policy, agreements and other organisational requirements; and Council values identified in the Council Plan.

### 3. POLICY

Gannawarra Shire Council is committed to using a range of methods to communicate its services and events, and update the community on current issues. This is achieved through the use of traditional media (print, radio and television) and electronic media (email and social media).

This policy ensures that communication between Council, the community and the media is managed appropriately, including:

- Providing accurate, timely and consistent information;
- Ensuring that authorised spokespeople provide information to the media or on social media on behalf of Council;
- The preservation of Council's integrity and professional image; and
- The handling of issues in an appropriate manner.

#### **Authorisation to make comments to the media**

The Mayor is the primary spokesperson to the media on major issues and decisions that are made by Council. The Mayor may delegate to Ward Councillors, where necessary, for the Council on matters relating to their ward.

The Chief Executive Officer is the primary spokesperson on operational matters, and will act as a secondary spokesperson on Council matters, should Councillors be unavailable.

The Chief Executive Officer may delegate his/her authority to senior officers as spokespeople on issues from their areas of responsibility. Senior officers are not authorised to make comment to the media unless authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer and senior officers should be aware that all comments made at public events and meetings are on the public record and can be utilised by the media.

### **Media requests and approval of written materials**

Where possible, any enquiries to staff from the media must be referred immediately to Council's Communications Team. Responses to media inquiries must be responded to in a timely manner.

### **Approval of media releases**

All media releases for distribution by Council must be endorsed by the relevant Director and approved by the Chief Executive Officer or an officer delegated by the Chief Executive Officer. This also pertains to other information provided to the media.

### **Comments as a private citizen**

Councillors choosing to express a personal opinion through the media will make clear that this is a personal view and does not represent the position of Council. Councillors will ensure that any such opinion is devoid of comments that could reasonably be construed as being derogatory, offensive or insulting to any person.

### **Use of social media on behalf of Council**

Council may use social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other emerging platforms, to promote its services to the community.

Council reserves the right to moderate comments or questions on these platforms.

## **4. POLICY REVIEW**

Council will review this policy as required but always within two years after a general election of the Council. At the time of review, this policy was compliant with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

## **5. RELATED POLICIES**

Policy No. 078 – Councillor Code of Conduct further details Gannawarra Shire Council's position on media communication by elected members.

Policy No. 143 – Community Engagement.

## **6. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Members of the public may inspect all Council policies at Gannawarra Shire Council's Kerang and Cohuna Offices, or online at [www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au](http://www.gannawarra.vic.gov.au).

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Director Community Wellbeing on (03) 5450 9333.

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