



# Council Policy Manual

## MEDIA

**Policy, procedure protocol**

Policy

**Document version**

1.0

**Policy number**

CORP7/3

**Obsolete Number**

**Keyword classification**

Record Management

**Adoption date**

26th March 2021

**Resolution**

21/21      157/14  
72/18  
269/16  
261/15

**Consultation period**

**Review due date**

**Review adoption date**

**Date revoked**

27/04/2018      11/12/15  
16/12/2016      22/08/2014

**Documents superseded**

Initial Document

**Related Documents**

Code of Conduct Policy  
Access to Information Policy

**Responsible Directorate**

General Manager

**Responsible Officer**

General Manager



# Council Policy Manual

---

## 1. Purpose of Policy

To establish protocols for distributing Council information to print, online and broadcast media, to ensure coordinated, accurate and reliable presentation.

To establish protocols for responding to inquiries from the media and to the community on social media.

To establish protocols for posting content on Council's online properties.

To support staff members in their use of different mediums.

To keep the community informed about Council activities, services and programs.

To encourage open government, increased collaboration with the community, reduce barriers to engagement and increase access to information.

## 2. General Principles

Brewarrina Shire Council encourages open communication with the media and the community, with an emphasis on promoting a positive, progressive and professional image of Council and staff. We aim to provide accurate and timely information, to ensure the community is aware of what's going on and how they can be involved.

The Mayor and/or General Manager are the official spokespersons for the Council on all matters of Council policy, interpretation of policy or actions which may commit the Council's resources to any purpose.

In the absence of the General Manager and Mayor, the official spokesperson can be the Deputy Mayor/General Manager or as delegated by the General Manager. The General Manager is to approve media releases before being released to public.

Council's media policy operates according to the following principles:

Council strives to provide accurate, fair and thorough information.

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

Media enquiries are to be dealt with promptly and within the media's deadline where possible.

Social media comments and queries should be dealt with in a consistent, open and transparent matter.



# Council Policy Manual

---

Council will openly discuss matters of interest unless disclosure of certain information is contrary to law or unable to be disclosed on the advice of Council's lawyers.

Councillors may express their personal view online or to the media on any matter relating to their shire or routine Council business however this should be clearly identified as a personal view.

Council staff members are not to make any comments to media or online relating to Council decisions, operations and/or events, or about Council staff and/or elected representative's which may bring Council into disrepute. This includes the use of social media in a private capacity.

In the case of official investigations, accidents or enquiries into business dealings or any matters with possible legal consequences, any statements made to the media must be approved by Council's lawyers.

Staff must ensure that no confidential information on individuals can be gained from Council's online digital properties or social media properties. Any personal information collected by staff will be in accordance with the information protection principles contained within the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. Council's Statistical data on website visitors may be collected as per the Website Disclaimer and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

### **3. Council's Online Properties**

Council's online properties are increasingly being used as a source of information for the public. They should be maintained to ensure information is up to date and accurate.

Responsibility for this rests with the General Manager, in conjunction with the official spokesperson/s Mayor/Deputy Mayor or as delegated by the General Manager.

All Council's online properties should follow Council's style guide and be identifiable as belonging to Council.

### **4. Social Media**

Social media allows Council to improve engagement with the community and to be transparent and accountable. Council should endeavour to build an established audience on social media and support ongoing relationships. Therefore adequate resourcing should be provided to ensure Council's continued commitment to online engagement as well as adequate out of hours monitoring.

Brewarrina Shire Council's social media accounts are run by designated staff members appointed by the General Manager representing Council. All Council's social media properties should follow Council's style guide and be identifiable as belonging to Council.



# Council Policy Manual

---

Matters of a serious or complex nature should be taken off line and referred to Customer Service to ensure tracking and reporting.

All employees using Council's social media accounts should maintain high standards of professional behaviour as per Council's Code of Conduct; ensure that all published material is consistent with Council's policies, standards and other published materials.

## 5. Photos

Consent should be obtained from individuals before their image is used by Council in any public capacity.

Photos can only be taken of children with consent of a parent or care-giver. These photos must be taken in a respectful and appropriate manner and not distributed or reproduced in any manner without consent.

Council photographers may take photographs of groups in public places. These may be used in the public arena without consent of the individuals but only if people are not identifiable.

## 6. Who is responsible for implementing this Policy?

General Manager

## 7. Document owner

General Manager, Community

## 8. Related Council Policies

- Code of Conduct Policy

## 9. Legislation and references

- a) Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- b) Copyright Act Cth 1968
- c) Defamation Act NSW 2005
- d) Privacy Act Cth 1988
- e) Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act
- f) NSW 1998
- g) Media Council of Australia
- h) Journalists Code of Ethics
- i) ACT Government Social Media Policy Guidelines, March 2012
- j) Social media guidance for civil servants, Government Digital Office, UK, General May 2012

## 10. Definitions

### Media:

Any commercial, community or citizen publishing entity or property. This includes all online and offline, print or digital publication sites or applications.



# Council Policy Manual

---

## **Council's online properties:**

Any page published on the internet and located on a Council server or any page published on the internet and located on a third-party server on behalf of Council. The content is moderated and controlled by Council staff and or Council contractors.

## **Social media:**

User-driven online tools and forms of publishing based on interaction or conversation, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

## **Online content:**

Any comments posted on Council's online properties, website or other online properties including, but not restricted to; blogs, online forums, YouTube, and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook.

## **Media release:**

A written statement issued by the Council that states its position on a matter of Council business, Council policy or the public interest.

## **Media comment:**

A verbal or written statement issued by the Council that states its position on a matter of Council business, Council policy or the public interest.

## **Council spokesperson**

The designated official spokesperson for the Council.

## **Community**

Includes all the people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of the Brewarrina Local Government Area. The community can be referred to as stakeholders or comprise of stakeholders.