

# Media Relations Policy

---

Adopted by Council 23/04/2019



# Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction.....1
- 2 Purpose.....1
- 3 Objectives.....1
- 4 Owner.....1
- 5 Scope.....1
- 6 Definitions.....2
- 7 Policy.....2
- 8 Procedure.....2
- 9 Roles and Responsibilities.....4
- 10 Communication.....4
- 11 Approved/Adopted.....4
- 12 Review .....4

# 1 Introduction

The Mornington Peninsula Shire (Shire) Media Relations Policy articulates the Shire's approach to traditional media channels (Print, Radio and Television). It offers guidelines to ensure the effective and efficient use of and interaction with external media organisations.

This policy compliments the Digital Communications Policy that covers (but is not limited to) social media, email newsletters, websites and other online communications tools.

All employees must be aware of and comply with this policy in conjunction with the Employee Code of Conduct for MPS staff and the Shire Privacy Policy.

# 2 Purpose

To recognise the importance of Council's communications with residents, ratepayers and visitors and the role of the media in the provision of Council information.

To develop and maintain a positive working relationship with the media.

To specify the arrangements for dealing with the media, including procedures for seeking and approving Mayoral and Councillor quotes in media releases and the provision of media releases to Councillors.

# 3 Objectives

To develop and maintain effective media relations in the dissemination of Council information.

To determine Council's media spokesperson(s).

# 4 Owner

The owner of the policy is Council.  
(management is responsible for the implementation of the policy)

# 5 Scope

This Policy applies to all print and electronic media.

## 6 Definitions

Terms	Definitions
Local Media	Media operating on the Mornington Peninsula including The Leader Newspaper Group, The Independent News Group, independent publications and Radio Port Phillip (3RPP).
Metro Media	Daily media, including the Herald-Sun newspaper, The Age newspaper, television and radio media.
Media Release	A statement written for the media in the style of newspaper article to explain or promote Council decisions and activities.
Social Media	Please refer to the Digital Communications Policy for guidelines relating to social media.

## 7 Policy

### Guidelines for Councillors and All Team Members

That Council communicate openly, proactively and honestly with the media in order to maximise public knowledge and understanding of Council's policies, activities and services.

That the media shall be entitled to receive all information that is public information, i.e. all information that the public is entitled to receive, and to expect that Councillors and Council officers will assist the media in presenting and explaining relevant information.

That comments to the media be presented in a timely and consistent manner.

That both the **Councillor Code of Conduct 2017** and **Staff Code of Conduct** should be referred to in relation to this Policy.

## 8 Procedure

### Guidelines for All Team Members

All media requests for information are to be referred to the Communications department in the first instance.

### Guidelines for Spokespeople

The Mayor is the lead spokesperson for the Council on issues arising from matters before and affecting Council including matters of a political nature and on issues relating to Shire Policy.

It is also appropriate for Councillors to speak on issues relating to Council/Shire Policy. The CEO is the lead spokesperson on operational matters. For all other subjects the CEO, Councillors, Directors, Managers (or officer delegated by the Manager) can respond to media enquiries.

Individual Councillors, including the Mayor, are entitled to express their own independent views through the media, however, they should make it clear that any unofficial comment is a personal view and may not necessarily represent the position of the Council as a whole.

It is suggested that Councillors inform the Mayor and Communications department of any media contact and/or commentary in a timely manner to ensure the team are across specific and/or developing issues.

### **Guidelines for Media Releases**

Media releases are to be prepared and issued by the Communications department. Any person quoted in a media release must approve it prior to releasing – with Manager/Director authorisation.

Mayor and relevant Ward Councillor/s will be provided with copies of the media release for approval prior to the release being sent to the media.

It is appropriate for the Communications Team to seek relevant Ward Councillor/s quotes if the release is area-specific. It is appropriate for the Communications Team to seek quotes from the Mayor if the release is of a Shire-wide nature, and on an issue arising from matters before and affecting Council including matters of a political nature. It is appropriate for the CEO to be quoted of matters relating to Council/Shire Policy.

Quotes from the Mayor/Ward Councillor(s) must be reviewed by the Mayor/Councillor and the relevant Director prior to publication.

All media releases to be sent to all Councillors and Customer Service at the time of release.

Media Releases of a general promotional nature may be prepared by the responsible Council officer at the discretion of their manager and must be sent to the Communication department for final editing and release.

The turn-around time for media release content/comments approval by relevant Shire staff and/or Councillors should be within a 24-hour cycle of the initial request, or sooner if possible.

## 9 Roles and Responsibilities

The following table sets out the key roles and responsibilities under the policy:

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Executive Manager - Communications</b>	For ensuring the Policy and procedures are implemented and maintained.
<b>Communications Team Leader</b>	For reviewing and supervising the operation of the policy and procedures.

## 10 Communication

The Communications team will publicise and promote the Policy among Shire employees via Around Our Shire, in team meetings and via other available communication tools. The Communications team will publish the Policy on the Shire's intranet.

## 11 Approved/Adopted

This policy was adopted by the Council on 23 April 2019.

## 12 Review

The policy will be reviewed on 23 April 2020.