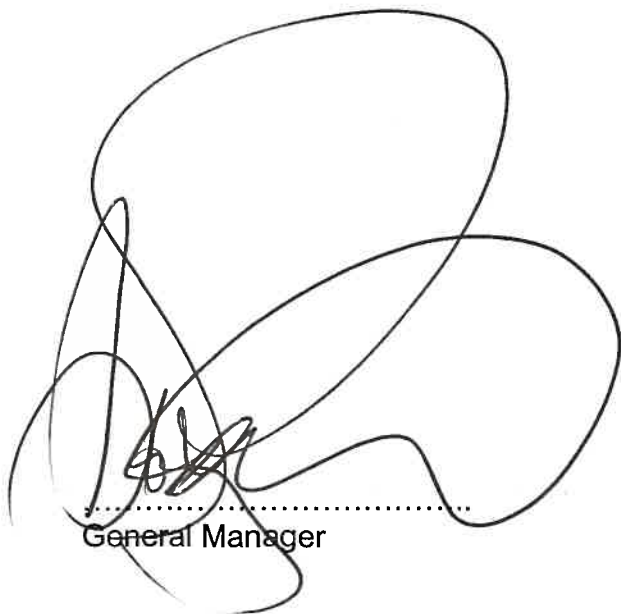




# **MEDIA POLICY**

**DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION**

<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>		MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION OFFICER (MCO)			
<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>		MANEX			
<b>REVIEW DUE DATE:</b>		MAY 2024			
<b>VERSION NUMBER:</b>		3			
<b>DOCUMENT NUMBER:</b>		NA			
<b>VERSIONS:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>RESOLUTION NO:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS:</b>	<b>AUTHOR / EDITOR:</b>	<b>APPROVED / ADOPTED BY:</b>
3	27/05/2021	7.06/21	Inclusion of Communication Strategy 2020-2025 and minor amendments.	MCO	MANEX
2	26/04/2018	10.04/18	Practice and procedure amendments – fully reworked draft.	MCO	Council
1	23/02/2017	4.02/17	Embryonic first draft for management of responsibilities and record keeping.	MCO	Council



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General Manager

28.6.21.  
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Date

**PURPOSE** The purpose of this policy is to Consolidate and guide how Glen Innes Severn Council (Council) interacts with external media. Clear and effective communication with residents of the Glen Innes Severn Local Government Area is intrinsic to effective policy and service development. One of Council's Strategic Priorities is *Continue to improve our **open communication with the community***. In order to progress Council's Media and Communications objectives and requirements the Media Policy is reviewed and up-dated to reflect revised standards of best practice and procedure.

## **APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all employees of Council, including volunteers and people on work experience, to all Councillors and to members of Community Committees of Council.

## **OUTCOMES**

The Media Policy guides Council's use of media and relationship with media including the achievement of these outcomes:

- to adhere to the best practice principles of effective communication in accordance with the Communication Strategy 2020-2025;
  - to ensure the public are informed of Council's decisions, policies, programs, events and issues in a timely and accurate manner;
  - to portray Council in a competent light, to enhance the public perception of Council as a well-managed organisation;
  - to increase community knowledge of and support for the services, activities and initiatives of Council;
  - to increase community knowledge and confidence to build community capacity; and
  - to continue to build a consistent and positive relationship with the media and to increase positive media engagement and outcomes within a changing political and communication environment.
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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Mayor is the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the Council as to its local priorities (Section 226(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*). Therefore, the Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council as far as media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) pertaining to the governing body and politically sensitive issues are concerned.
  2. The General Manager is the official spokesperson for Council as far as media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) pertaining to the operational and day-to-day administration functions of the organisation are concerned.
  3. Directors have authority to speak to the media about operational matters regarding their department, based on the understanding that the General Manager is advised of the nature and format of the media liaison. Directors can also authorise their managers or other employees to make technical and/or specialised statements to the media, as the need arises, again based on the understanding that the General Manager is advised of the nature and format of the media liaison.
  4. The Media and Communications Officer (MCO) has authority, in the normal course of carrying out the responsibilities and requirements of the position, to directly liaise with the media provided either the Mayor and/or the General Manager, (whichever is appropriate in accordance with clauses 1 and 2 above), and the relevant Director, where appropriate, are informed either generally or specifically, of the purpose, format and content of the contact with the media.
  5. No unauthorised employees are permitted to make comments to the media on behalf of Council.
  6. Under no circumstances, shall Council employees be permitted to give personal opinions relating to Council issues when dealing with the media.
  7. Councillors may make personal comments to the media, but must make it clear that those comments are not representative of Council. Councillors shall strive to portray Council in a competent light and be mindful not to bring Council into disrepute.
  8. Chairpersons of Community Committees of Council have authority to comment to the media on committee matters only. Chairs of Community Committees of Council shall always strive to portray Council in a competent light and be mindful not to bring Council into disrepute.
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## DEFINITIONS

"Media" includes all media forms and platforms including Media Releases, Media Alerts, Radio Scripts, media features and publications, responding to media requests and media interviews. It also includes all external media such as local, regional and national broadcasters and publishers including newspapers, magazines, digital media and radio networks. For the operational applicability of this policy it does not include social media platforms to which the Social Media Policy and Social Media Procedures apply more specifically.

## POLICY STATEMENT

- The MCO, on instruction and/or in consultation with the Mayor, General Manager or Director/s, shall prepare media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) in whatever format is deemed to be most appropriate in respect of the subject or issue, and the circumstantial timeframe. The MCO shall submit any statements, releases or responses for the approval of the Mayor and General Manager (if pertaining to the governing body and politically sensitive issues), or for the approval of the General Manager and appropriate Director/s, (if pertaining to the operational and day-to-day administration functions of the organisation), before they are released;
  - The MCO or the Executive Assistant shall be responsible for the distribution of media releases and media alerts to relevant media outlets, and of media releases to the Mayor and all Councillors;
  - Employees are encouraged to make suggestions about topics for media attention, but the Mayor, General Manager or Directors shall be ultimately responsible for deciding the topics for engagement with the media, and where possible will make decisions in collaboration with the MCO;
  - All media releases shall be registered within Council's electronic management system (ECM) and placed on Council's website and other social media outlets if appropriate, in either the originating format or in an edited or abridged version, as determined by the MCO;
  - Timely, accurate and appropriate media initiatives and responses shall be made to emerging Council or general Local Government stories and issues. This up-dated policy reflects Council's understanding that:
    - all contact with the media needs to be carried out on a day-to-day basis without undue delays in order to fulfil the media's news cycle and this is an essential element of practice and procedure;
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- it is best practice for the MCO to determine the most suitable format and expression of any media engagement and specifically any written content, and to be informed of all media contact made by the organisation;
  - professional input into the preparation of any media item, including proof reading, grammar and phraseology, spelling and use of vocabulary, sub-editing, fact checking and contextual referencing, and presentation is important to ensure quality;
  - this policy operates in conjunction with Council's Social Media Policy and Social Media Procedures and recognises that the use of social media may be the best method for release of information in specific circumstances, and that social media is time and issue sensitive;
  - this policy operates in conjunction with Council's Communication Strategy 2020-2025 and recognises that all of Council's media is to be consistent with the best practice principles that are specified in this Strategy;
  - obtaining quotes from the Mayor, the General Manager and/or the relevant Director may not be required other than for written media releases.
- As a general guide, media engagement in any format should support or reinforce Council's vision, aspirations and successes, and reflect the intent of Council as indicative in the Operational Plan, the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program;
  - As a general guide, regular media items should be prepared based on the Business Paper for each Ordinary Council Meeting and preferably in consultation with the author of Reports and with the relevant Director;
  - The use of paid advertising shall be commensurate with Council's *Corporate Advertising Guidelines*: and
  - The Media Policy shall be discussed at team meetings to ensure that all staff are aware of the Policy and its requirements. The MCO shall distribute a copy of this Policy to media outlets.
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## LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Industry Standards include:

- *Copyright Act 1968* (C'th);
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW);
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW); and
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1997* (NSW)

### Relevant Council Policies and Procedures include:

- Social Media Policy;
- Social Media Procedures;
- Communication Strategy 2020-2025;
- Communication Policy;
- Community Engagement Strategy;
- Communication Delegations;
- Code of Conduct for Council Staff;
- Code of Conduct for Councillors; and
- Code of Conduct for Community Committees of Council.

## VARIATION AND REVIEW

The Media Policy will be reviewed every three (3) years, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Policy does not expire on the review date, but will continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.

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