

Media and Corporate Presentation Policy

As at 20 October 2009



	POLICY		
TITLE	Media and Corporate Presentation Policy		
DATE ADOPTED	2 August 2007	MINUTE	Minute 231/05
REVISED	20 October 2009	REVIEW	2012
RECORD	D/W no: 217250		
ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION	Local Government Act 1993		
ASSOCIATED POLICIES	Strathfield Council Code of Conduct Strathfield Council Code of Meeting Practice Strathfield Council Sponsorship Policy Strathfield Council Business Ethics Policy Strathfield Council Volunteers and Community Representatives Policy		

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Title and Commencement

This policy is titled *Strathfield Council Media Policy*. This policy was adopted on 2 August 2007 by Council resolution (minute 231/05). The following amendments have been made.

Date	Type	Minute
2 August 2007	Adoption	231/05
20 October 2009	Revision	366/09

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

An important part of Strathfield Council's role is effective, consistent, clear and accurate communications, though the media and authorised uses of Council's corporate images.

Council has an important relationship with the media, as it provides an opportunity for Council to further its reputation and inform the public about its services and activities. In dealing with the media, Councillors and authorised Council staff must ensure Council is presented favourably and accurately.

Council's corporate images represent the Council to the public and therefore, use must be authorised in order to maintain the integrity and reputation of the Council.

This document sets out the policies with respect to conduct of Council's media relations and corporate images.

1.3 Objectives and Coverage of the Policy

- To ensure consistency across Council when dealing with the media
- To promote an open exchange of information between Council and the media
- To ensure all communication from Council to the media is consistent, accurate, timely and appropriate
- To identify Council's authorised spokespersons.
- To maintain integrity of Council's corporate images.

This policy applies to all Council officials including councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers.

1.4 Definitions

'Media' includes all forms of print, published, broadcast and electronic media

'Corporate images' includes Council's logos, crests, corporate colours etc that would reasonably appear to represent Strathfield Council to the public

2. POLICY

2.1 Dealing with Media Enquiries and issuing Media Releases

All media enquiries should be directed to Council's Communications Unit. The Communications Office are responsible for coordinating Council's media liaison.

Journalists may on occasions contact an officer directly. No staff member, other than those authorised, has approval to handle any enquiry from the media and must refer the matter to the Communication's Unit.

Under no circumstances can Councillors or Council employees, contractors, volunteers and community representatives discuss staff, confidential legal advice or commercial in-confidence matters with the media. Improper release of personal and/or confidential information is a breach of the Code of Conduct.

On occasion, volunteers and committee representatives may be contacted by the media for information or comment on an issue or decision taken by Council. Individuals are free to make personal comments to the media, however they should not be identified as representing Council or expressing views on behalf of a Council committee or group.

2.2 Authorised Spokespersons

The Mayor and the General Manager are the official spokespersons on Council affairs, including comment on official opinion and information that may be of a controversial, legal or ethical nature.

The Mayor is empowered by s.226 of the Local Government Act 1993 to carry out civic and ceremonial functions of Council. Accordingly, the Mayor, and on occasion, the Deputy Mayor, appears in the media as representative of the Council.

Council Directors and Council's Communications Office are authorised to provide information to the media on operational matters only.

All authorised spokespersons should handle media enquires efficiently and adhere to deadlines stipulated by the media representative.

A record of media releases should be stored in Council's record management system.

When information is supplied verbally to the media, a written record of the enquiry and the response provided should be forwarded immediately to the Communications Office. This will afford some protection against misreporting.

2.3 Role of Councillors

Individual councillors are free to make personal comments to the media, provided it is clearly stated that the comment reflects their personal opinion and not that of Council.

Councillors should not include personal criticism of other Councillors or Council Staff in comments to the media nor distribute unauthorised information.

Councillors wishing to publish information in Council publications should submit material for inclusion in columns to the Communications Unit, who will forward it to the newspaper after review and any necessary editing.

When information is supplied verbally to the media, a written record of the enquiry/conversation and the response provided should be forwarded immediately to the Communications Office. This will afford some protection against misreporting.

2.4 Written Material for Media

The Communications Unit is responsible for coordinating and distributing comments and statements on behalf of the Mayor and General Manager.

The Communications Unit is responsible for preparing and distributing all communications collateral, including media releases. Media releases generally include comment from the Mayor and/or the General Manager. Collateral relating to specific division or projects will be forwarded to the relevant Director/Manager/Council officer out of courtesy/for their information.

The Communications Unit will obtain approval of the General Manager prior to release.

Where a media release is prepared by another organisation, which relates to a Council project or in which Council is involved, it must be forwarded to the Communications Unit before it is released.

2.5 Media Alerts

Council staff should advise the Communications Unit of forthcoming public events to enable a forward media program to be developed.

Any Council officer who is aware of an occurrence that may be of interest to the media should immediately contact the Communications Unit.

2.6 Crisis Communication

Council recognises that ill considered and uninformed comments can cause dire consequences and legal implications in the event of an emergency, disaster, crisis, or sensitive issue. Accordingly, only the Mayor and General Manager are authorised to speak to the media on these occasions.

2.7 Corporate logo and image

Council's corporate images, including the Council logo and crest, are property of Strathfield Council. Council's corporate images, including logo and crest, represent Council to the community, therefore their use requires prior approval in order to protect and enhance Council's role and reputation.

The use of the Council logo by outside organisations is permitted only in cases where the user has sought and obtained express written permission from the General Manager. This includes, but is not limited to printed form (eg letters, advertisements, flyers, pamphlets etc) or electronic (eg emails, websites, social networking sites etc). Authorisations may also be included in agreements such as sponsorship or use of community facilities. Council will not approve use of corporate images by external organisations if the use may reflect negatively on Council or bring it into disrepute.

Council requires that corporate images are:

- reproduced without alteration or modification. There is to be no manipulation of individual elements, including colour, in any way. Tilting, compressing or expanding the logo components is not acceptable. The elements of design and text are integral components of the logo device and must not be deleted or modified.
- the logo is used strictly in accordance with authorised and not to be used so as to infer endorsement of commercial products or services, unless agreed.

Any request for permission should be made in writing and include details about where and how the logo will appear. A copy of final artwork must be submitted with any request.

Permission may be withdrawn for non-compliance with the above conditions. Council may seek a legal remedy for any unauthorised use of its corporate images.

2.8 Councillors and corporate images

Councillors do not have the authority under the Local Government Act to officially represent the Council in their own capacity, except where expressly authorised by resolution of the Council. Therefore, Councillors are not permitted to use Council's logo in printed form (eg letters) or electronic (eg emails, websites, social networking sites etc) without authority of the General Manager.

Council's Code of Conduct does not permit Councillors to use Council's logo for election purposes.

Councillors are supplied with Councillor Letterheads, under Council's *Councillors Facilities and Expenses Policy*, for issuing correspondence to residents or ratepayers. The letterhead contains the statement "This letter is from a Councillor of Strathfield Municipal Council. Official decisions of the Council are conveyed by letter signed by the General Manager".

If Councillors wish to develop their own style of stationary, it must not include Council logos, crest or statements which may appear to official or authorised documents of Strathfield Council.