

## Media

Classification:	Council Policy
First Issued / Approved:	December 2006
Last Reviewed:	27 November 2012, C8941 10 September 2013, C9391 25 August 2015, C10326 13 March 2018, C11619 27 June 2023, C270623/13480
Next Review:	June 2027
ECM tracking number:	987629
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate
Relevant Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999 – Behavioural Standards for Council Members</i> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
Related Policies:	Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy Social Media Policy Records Management Policy Code of Conduct for Council Employees Code of Conduct for Volunteers Caretaker Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy provides a framework for Council Members and staff to interact with the media that allows Council to:
- 1.1.1 promote its work and to educate and inform its community about Council activities; and
  - 1.1.2 distribute positive and informative stories and may also involve responding to media enquiries and working together with media outlets on issues of public interest.
- 1.1 This Policy also outlines procedures for Council Members and Council staff who, acting as an appointed representative of the Burnside Council, make public comment or provide information to the media about Council activities.
- 1.2 Public comment includes public speaking engagements, speaking on radio or television, views expressed to newspapers, magazines, websites, books, journals, notices or other such forums where it might be expected that the

publication of the comment will be accessible to part or all of the Burnside or Local Government community.

## 2. Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

*Principles:* 2. Communication and Engagement

*Theme:* Spans across all Strategic Plan Themes

*Goals:* 1. A resilient, healthy and connected community

*Priorities:* 1.3 A sense of community

## 3. Our Approach

- 3.1 Enable effective and efficient Council business.
- 3.2 Provide convenient and flexible service delivery.
- 3.3 Remain compliant with all relevant legislation, standards and codes.
- 3.4 Ensure all media representations are undertaken to timely, positively and openly position Council's business and image.

## 4. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Context

- 4.1 Legislative requirements for the City of Burnside corporate social media accounts are as follows:

### 4.1.1 *Local Government Act 1999*

Under Section 58 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, the Principal Member (Mayor) has the responsibility to act as the official spokesperson of Council. The Mayor may delegate this authority to other suitable persons such as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Director or a member of the Community Engagement and Communications team.

- 4.1.2 Under section 75E of the *Local Government Act 1999*, Behavioural Standards for Council Members are established which strengthens the legislative capacity to regulate interactions between Council Members and the media. These Behavioural Standards form part of the conduct management framework for Council Members under the Act.

### 4.1.3 *Council Code of Conduct for Council Employees*

#### *Council Code of Conduct for Volunteers*

The Codes of Conduct require that Employees and Volunteers comply with all relevant Council policies, codes and resolutions. Council Staff also comply with an Employee Conduct Protocol.

## 5. Policy

### Speaking on Behalf of Council

- 5.1 The Mayor is Council's official spokesperson, unless Council has appointed another Member to act in this capacity.

- 5.2 Council Members may not speak on behalf of Council unless authorised to do so by the Mayor, or unless Council has clearly spoken (as a body) and granted permission to do so.
- 5.3 The CEO has delegated authority from the City of Burnside Council to make official statements on behalf of the Council and to respond to media enquiries.
- 5.4 The CEO may delegate this authority to a Director or other appropriate Council staff to make public comment to the media on specific matters relating to administration or Council activities on a case by case basis.
- 5.5 Comments made by the official spokesperson, be it the Mayor, CEO or a delegated spokesperson from the Council Members or the Administration, must truly reflect the will of the Council as expressed in its meetings.
- 5.6 Comments made by the official spokesperson must not show disrespect for Council, its decisions, its decision-making process, Council Members, Council management or staff.
- 5.7 Comments made by the official spokesperson must not give the media or any unauthorised person information brought to Council in confidence.
- 5.8 All media statements released to the media will be approved by the CEO or a Director (under the delegated authority of the CEO).

#### **Council Members as Individuals**

- 5.9 As a member of the community, Council Members retain the right to make public comment or speak to the media. However, any public comments made by Council Members are to be clearly identified as their opinions only and do not necessarily represent the position of Council nor unduly reflect on any Council decision.
- 5.10 If questioned by the media on their opinions regarding business yet to come before Council, Council Members should refrain from commenting to remove the risk of prejudicing the business in the Chamber.
- 5.11 Council Members speaking as individuals also must not give the media or any unauthorised person information brought to Council in confidence.
- 5.12 For Policy regarding communications relating to Elections, refer to the City of Burnside's Caretaker Policy.

#### **Staff**

- 5.13 Staff must not speak to the media on any issue relating to the Council or Council business, Council Members or staff unless specifically authorised to do so by the Mayor or the CEO.
- 5.14 This authorisation will be obtained through the relevant Director / Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator and staff who are contacted directly by a journalist or media outlet should refer them to the Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator.
- 5.15 Staff who are contacted directly by a journalist or media outlet should refer them to the Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator.

- 5.16 Staff, as members of the public, retain the right to their own opinion but must ensure that any comments made in the public domain cannot be construed as being representative of the Council or the Administration. Staff must not show disrespect for Council, its decisions, its decision-making process, Council Members, Council management or staff.
- 5.17 Staff speaking as individuals must not give the media information presented to Council in confidence.

## **6. Review and Authority**

- 6.1 This Policy will be reviewed every four years in accordance with Council's Policy and Procedure Framework.

## **7. Availability**

- 7.1 The Policy is available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website [www.burnside.sa.gov.au](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au)
- 7.2 The Policy will be available for inspection, free of charge, at the Civic Centre during ordinary business hours and a copy may be purchased at a fee as set annually by Council.
  - 7.2.1 City of Burnside Civic Centre; 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore SA 5065  
Telephone; 8366 4200; Email; [burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au) Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 pm (except public holidays).

## **8. Further information**

- 8.1 For further information about this policy please contact:

City of Burnside Civic Centre; 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore SA 5065  
Telephone; 8366 4200; Email; [burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au)