

TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

MEDIA POLICY

(1) OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for communication with the media.

(2) PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Others have a right to know about decisions and actions that affect them and respond with information which enables elected members and staff to make informed decisions themselves.
- 2.2 Only those persons who hold the positions nominated in this policy are authorised to speak on behalf of Council.
- 2.3 Elected members have the right to discuss Council resolutions with the media on the basis that it is made clear to the media that they are not speaking on behalf of Council.
- 2.4 Elected members and staff must not divulge to the media details of discussions which occur as part of the decision making process on items which are resolved by the Committee or Council as being confidential.
- 2.5 Media releases should be used to;
 - Promote specific Council projects and initiatives,
 - Relay accurate and up-to-date information to electors,
 - Congratulate/commend individuals and organisations,
 - Defend Council from unwarranted criticism.

(3) ISSUES

- 3.1 The Town of Cottesloe encourages open communication with the media, with an emphasis on promoting a positive, progressive and professional image of Council and staff. Communications should be accurate, polite and professional. A coordinated approach is therefore essential in dealing with the media.
- 3.2 Some meetings, or some parts of a meeting, may be closed to the public under Sec. 5.23 of the *Local Government Act* when dealing with certain matters. While the final decision is public knowledge, participants in the meeting have an obligation to ensure that the meeting discussion itself remains confidential.
- 3.3 Although the *Freedom of Information Act* facilitates public access to Council documents, there are documents and issues of a sensitive nature which are required to be kept confidential. This includes

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papers distributed to assist in decision making which are either tabled as 'confidential' or marked 'confidential'.

(4) POLICY

Mayor

- 4.1 The Mayor is the primary Council contact for the media.
- 4.2 The Mayor is authorised to make media comment and issue media releases on behalf of the Council on local, state and national topics that directly affect or relate to the Town of Cottesloe.
- 4.3 The Mayor has the discretion to nominate an elected member with specific knowledge or skills on a topic to provide media comment on that topic subject to the nominee complying with the following condition that applies to media comments made by the Mayor.
- 4.4 Media comment by the Mayor or his/her nominee must accurately reflect the Council's position on the topic as determined by the Council in adopted documents including Council's,
 - Strategic Plan
 - Town Planning Scheme
 - Policies
 - Minutes and
 - Meeting notes

Elected Members

- 4.5 Each elected member has the right to make "personal" statements to the media on matters of Council business provided:
 - (a) it is made clear to the media that such statements are not made on behalf of Council and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council;
 - (b) where the matter has yet to be determined by the Council, disclose that fact.
 - (c) the statements do not include comments on discussions which were resolved by the committee or Council to be of a confidential nature;
 - (d) the statements in all circumstances:
 - (i) fairly and accurately reflect the conduct of Council business, proceedings in Council or committee meetings;

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- (ii) are intended to either provide the community with a clear expression of the opinion of the elected member making the statements to the media; and
- (iii) are not intended to bring the Council into disrepute or lower its standing in the community.

CEO

- 4.6 The CEO is the principal media spokesperson for the Town of Cottesloe as an organisation.
- 4.7 The CEO may also respond to media enquiries on behalf of the Council if requested by the Council or Mayor to do so for a particular topic.
- 4.8 The CEO may authorise a staff member to provide media comment on a particular request or topic where appropriate.
- 4.9 Departmental Managers may provide media comment on operational, procedural and statutory matters within their areas of responsibility subject to the prior approval of the CEO.

Council Staff

- 4.10 All media requests received directly by staff shall be referred immediately to the CEO or in his/her absence, the Department Manager.
- 4.11 No media comment can be made unless prior authorisation has been received from the CEO or in his/her absence, the Department Manager.

Media Releases

- 4.12 Council media releases should benefit and inform the community rather than aggrandise any individual.
- 4.13 Any media release issued on behalf of Council as an elected group must be approved by the Mayor or (in his/her absence) the Deputy Mayor.
- 4.14 Where a media release refers to, or quotes an elected member, or other persons and organisations, the elected member, person or organisation must also approve the media release.
- 4.15 Elected members are free to issue their own press releases as individuals but should do so with the best interests of the Town of Cottesloe in mind. Personal attacks on other elected members and Council staff are to be avoided.
- 4.16 Council staff are encouraged to prepare their own media releases subject to the CEO's approval and editorial control.

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4.17 Media releases must quote someone (whether it be an elected member or a staff member) and must contain the details of a contact person for media follow up.

4.18 All media releases issued shall be emailed to elected members at the time of release to the media.

ADOPTION DATE: June , 2013

REVIEW DATE: June 2017