

POLICY NO: 4.1.25

MEDIA

OBJECTIVES

To provide guidance to the Mayor, Councillors and the City's Administration for a consistent and co-ordinated approach relating to communication with the media with the objective of ensuring that the City's affairs and activities are promoted and are objectively and fully reported in the media.

POLICY STATEMENT

The media policy sets out clear, consistent protocols for all contact with news media which are to be followed by the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees of the City of Vincent and has been established to:

- Formalise the roles of the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees in communication with the media.
- Proactively represent the City in media communications.
- Ensure communication with media is consistent, in line with the City's strategic direction and aligned with the City's Communication Strategy.
- Maintain positive and quality communications with the media at all times.
- Ensure that media communication with the City is in accordance with relevant statutory provisions, City's Code of Conduct or this Policy.

The Council is committed to open and transparent procedures and to being fully accountable. It will provide the media with information about projects and initiatives, and to respond to media enquiries (where appropriate), in a timely manner.

The City aims to maximise its media exposure by:

- demonstrating that it is an open and accessible local government;
- providing accurate information (where appropriate) to the media in a timely manner;
- and
- building positive relationships with the media.

Media Statements/Releases

The City's policy on the issue of media statements/releases is as follows:

1. The Mayor (or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor) and/or the Chief Executive Officer are the only persons authorised to speak on behalf of the Council/City to members of the media, unless prior approval has been granted to another person.
2. All media statements/releases are to accurately reflect the Council's position and shall be in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct – Section 8 – *“Communication and Public Relations”*.
3. Media releases are issued to appropriate media outlets to communicate the City's activities, actions, initiatives or decisions (determination of media outlets is at the discretion of the Mayor/Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with circumstance and the City's Communication Strategy).
4. A copy of the media statement/release is to be placed on the City's webpage as soon as is practicable after being issued. Council Members will be able to inspect and/or obtain a copy of any media statement after it has been released.
5. Media statements/releases must not include information considered to be electioneering or for personal promotional purposes.
6. Any comments by the Mayor, Council Members or the Chief Executive Officer to the media shall be in accordance with the requirements of the City's Code of Conduct Section 8 – *“Communication and Public Relations”* and any legislative requirements which prevail at the time.

Guidelines and Policy Procedures

The attached Guidelines and Policy procedures are to be followed at all times.

Date Adopted:	23 January 2007
Date Amended:	May 2010
Date Reviewed:	1 February 2010, 25 May 2010
Date of Next Review:	May 2015

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR MEDIA POLICY NO. 4.1.25

The City will use the policy and guidelines to assist the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees in understanding the correct communication processes when handling media enquiries, identifying spokespersons for media interviews, preparing media releases and making comments/statements to the media.

The following procedures and protocols are to be followed:

1. Only persons authorised by the *Local Government Act* and the City's Media Policy are to provide comment to the media on behalf of the Council and/or Administration.
2. Verbal and/or written media communications are to be made by the Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer relating to Council decisions, initiatives, activities or issues.
3. Comments by Councillors to the media are only to be made on the basis that the media are informed by the Councillor that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the Council and the comment is qualified as being of a personal nature. Councillors are not to announce Council initiatives/decisions unless previously authorised by the Mayor.
4. Details of matters that occur as part of the decision-making process which are confidential are not to be disclosed.
5. Employees are not permitted to make any comment to the media about any Council/City matter unless prior approval has been granted by the Chief Executive Officer.
6. When applying these procedures and protocols, the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees are to have regard to ethical and professional behaviour and comply with the City of Vincent Code of Conduct 2010 (Section 8).

Dealing with a Media Enquiry

Enquiries are to be directed to the City's Public Relations Officer in the first instance. The Public Relations Officer will forward the enquiry to either the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer for appropriate action, who will deal with the matter as follows:

Mayor

Where appropriate, the Mayor is to respond to media enquiries related to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer, or approved nominee, may respond to media enquiries that are administrative, operational or technical in nature, provide factual information or information on the public record.

Employees

Procedure

The following procedure is to be strictly followed by all employees in responding to media enquiries:

1. If approached by a media representative, an employee should direct the caller to the City's Public Relations Officer or, if unavailable, to the Chief Executive Officer. The employee should not continue the conversation further with the journalist/reporter.
2. However, if the enquiry is minor and/or regarding something that is a matter of public record, for example the date of the next Council Meeting, the enquiry can be answered immediately by an employee. It can also be helpful to refer some journalists/reporters to the City's website for information (www.vincent.wa.gov.au).
3. If there is any doubt or the matter is more detailed/controversial, the employee should advise the journalist/reporter that the City's policy is for all media liaison to be directed to the City's Public Relations Officer and/or Chief Executive Officer, in the first instance.
4. The Chief Executive Officer will either:
 - (a) refer the matter to the Mayor;
 - (b) respond to the media enquiry; or
 - (c) nominate an appropriate spokesperson to deal with the enquiry.

Note: Employees specifically authorised to make comments to the media are to confine themselves to providing such information as is necessary to explain Council policy or to provide factual, explanatory or background material pertinent to the question. No personal opinion is to be expressed at any time. Requests for supporting materials, related information and drawings/photographs are to be referred to the Public Relations Officer/Chief Executive Officer and are on no account to be released without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

Preparation and Distribution of Media Releases

1. Media releases are to be authorised and issued under the name of the Mayor for matters relating to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.
2. The Chief Executive Officer, or approved nominee, may authorise media releases or provide information to the media that relates to the “day-to-day” administration or operation of the City’s Administration.

The following procedure must be followed in the preparation of media releases:

1. The Mayor and/or the Chief Executive Officer will identify the requirement for the preparation of a media release for matters relating to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.
2. Employees are encouraged to provide information to the Public Relations Officer relating to any event, project or activity which is newsworthy and has the potential to generate positive publicity for the City (employees should follow the internal procedure). If appropriate, a media release will be created and distributed.
3. Matters relating to the Council decisions or of a controversial nature are to be drafted by the Chief Executive Officer via the Public Relations Officer and referred to the Mayor for approval, prior to being released.
4. If the media release is of an administrative or operational matter the Chief Executive Officer may authorise the release.
5. For matters related to mental health or suicide, staff to refer to the Mindframe National Media Initiative (<http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media>) for more information. Staff to also refer journalists/reporters reporting on these issues to the website for more information.
6. Authorised media releases will be distributed to targeted media outlets by the Public Relations Officer at an appropriate time (in accordance with circumstance and the City's Communications Strategy). Employees are not to forward copies of media releases to any party.
7. Copies of media releases are to be placed on the City’s website at an appropriate time.