

# Shire of Wiluna Policy Manual

## MEDIA STATEMENTS

### Policy 1.9

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#### Policy Objectives

- To provide a framework for Council and staff when liaising with the media and provide consistency of messages.
- The objective of all media liaison should be to promote the positive image of the Shire, to provide effective media communication with the community.
- The Shire aims to provide timely, accurate information to the community through the media and to be open and transparent in its operations.
- The value of the media to local government cannot be underestimated. This organisation should maintain a good working relationship with journalists and editors and endeavour to address media enquiries promptly.

#### Definitions:

Media is defined as all electronic and print media organisations including:

- Newspapers
- Television
- Radio
- Magazines
- Professional Journals
- Freelance Journalists
- News Websites
- Social Media

A media release is a document intended for the media to inform or promote any aspect or activity of the Shire.

#### Policy:

The Shire of Wiluna encourages the use of the media as part of their strategic plans to promote the efforts of the Shire of Wiluna.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for managing all media liaison to ensure maximum impact, enhanced presentation of photo opportunities, radio and television coverage.

#### Procedure:

##### Media Spokesperson

In accordance with the Local Government Act: the Shire President is the principal spokesperson for the Shire and Council. The Shire President may choose to delegate the commentary position to the Chief Executive Officer.

It is acknowledged that the Chief Executive Officer will, when appropriate, be required to comment to the media regarding operational issues or matters of a general nature. When doing so, the Chief Executive Officer is not to offer Council view, attitude, stance or the like on any issue unless merely reporting a Council decision. The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Shire President of any comments made to the media to ensure a consistent, co-ordinated approach to media management is maintained

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at all times.

### Media Releases

The principal method for the Shire to notify the media of events and activities is through a written media release. Staff are to complete a draft media release statement.

After a media release has been drafted it will proceed through the following approval process:

- 1 The Chief Executive Officer is to check factual components, context, potential liability and strategic context;
- 2 The Shire President is to have final approval unless pursuant to subsection 5.41 (f) of the Local Government Act 1995, the Shire President has agreed that the CEO may speak on behalf of the Shire.
- 3 Copies of media releases are to be emailed to Councillors for their information.

In the case of the media release reporting information about an event/activity taking place or that has taken place and/or where the subject material is for information only and is not expected to be one of a controversial nature, the Chief Executive Officer is authorised to give the final approval.

### Media Enquiries

The response will depend on the inquiry. The response may be in the form of a formal media statement, supplying quotes via email, an organised media briefing or direct phone response.

### Shire Staff

On occasion, media representatives may contact the Shire staff directly for comment. This is to be discouraged and all such queries are to be directed in the first instance to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer is the sole contact for all media enquiries and is responsible for co-ordinating all media contact. If media contacts a Shire officer directly, the officer must inform the journalist that it is Shire policy for the journalist to approach the Chief Executive Officer, who will then liaise with and/or refer to the Shire President.

Staff, other than the Chief Executive Officer, are not authorised to give comments on behalf of the Shire to the media.

If a staff member is approached to make a personal comment to the media on a matter not related to the Shire they need to ensure that no connection with the Shire is evident within the interview.

For example: staff expressing a personal view should not be wearing a Shire uniform or be filmed or photographed near a Shire building or vehicle.

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Staff members who use social media in their own free time, are not permitted to make any comment related to the Shire or to appear to represent views of the Shire or to act as spokesperson on behalf of the Shire. Shire staff must use discretion and not post anything that could reasonably be seen to be associated with their role at the Shire of Wiluna and/or the Shire of Wiluna and/or bring about disrepute or embarrassment for the Shire. Staff may be deemed to be breaching the Council's adopted Code of Conduct if they act contrary to this requirement

### Councillors

The Shire President is the principal spokesperson for the Shire and Council as expressed in the Local Government Act 1995 Councillors are not to express a Council view, attitude or stance on any issue.

A Councillor's right to express a personal opinion on any issue of public interest not related to the Shire is recognised and it should always be made clear to the journalist that they are expressing a personal opinion.

Councillors who use social media in their own free time, are not permitted to appear to represent views of the Shire or to act as spokesperson on behalf of the Shire. Councillors must use discretion and not post anything that could reasonably be seen to be associated with their role at the Shire of Wiluna and/or Shire of Wiluna and/or bring about disrepute or embarrassment for the Shire. Councillors may be deemed to be breaching the Council's adopted Code of Conduct if they act contrary to this requirement.

Document Control	
Responsible Directorate	Office of the CEO
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