



WAVERLEY  
COUNCIL

# Media Policy

Policy owner	Communications and Engagement
Approved by	Adam Hassan, Executive Manager, Customer Experience and Communications
Date approved	7 November 2023
Commencement date	7 November 2023
TRIM Reference	D23/124663
Next revision date	February 2027
Relevant legislation/codes	Local Government Act
Related policies/procedures/guidelines	Council's Code of Conduct D13 31469 Media Policy 2019 Council's Records Management Policy
Related forms	

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## **1. Background**

Waverley is a high-profile local government area, with many newsworthy projects, activities and tourism destinations. A mutually beneficial and trusting relationship between Council and the media is essential in maintaining and protecting Council's reputation, and promoting the good work that we do. Our media relations should support our vision for Waverley for a vibrant and resilient community that takes care of each other, other natural environment and local places. We treat the media in the same manner as any other customer of Council, with timeliness, transparency and respect.

## **2. Purpose**

The Media Policy provides a framework for Councilors and all Waverley Council staff (including volunteers, contractors and advisory committee members) to uphold our reputation and promote the good work that we do. It clearly indicates Council's authorised spokespersons to ensure that media coverage of Council matters is accurate, fair and reliable.

The Media Policy aims to:

- promote open exchange of information between the Council and the media
- limit the publication of inaccurate information, miscommunication and reputational risk
- strengthen positive media relations
- clearly indicate Council's authorised spokespersons
- ensure appropriate authorisation and responsibility for the information provided
- ensure consistency by staff and Councilors in dealing with the media.

Council staff must not speak to the media about Council matters, or provide information, footage or photos, or Council materials such as emails and reports, without approval from the Manager, Communications & Engagement or the Senior Media Advisor. Staff should immediately inform the Manager, Communications & Engagement and/or Senior Media Advisor, of any incident or situation that may attract media attention or inquiries, including information shared on social media.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to Councilors and all Waverley Council staff (including volunteers, contractors and advisory committee members). Any breaches of the policy can result in action under Council's relevant Code of Conduct.

## **4. Policy Content**

### **4.1. Statements to the media**

The Mayor is the primary official spokesperson for Council. Comments made by the Mayor are informed by the General Manager, Senior Media Advisor and Communications & Engagement Manager. The General Manager, Manager, Communications and Engagement and the Senior Media Advisor, may also act as official spokespersons where agreed by the Mayor and GM. Media statements that relate to operational matters of Council are generally attributed to a spokesperson

for Council. The Senior Media Advisor and Communications & Engagement Manager may also put forward a Director or other staff member to provide expert commentary on a specific topic, with the Mayor and GM's approval. Council also has approved spokespersons for Lifeguard matters.

#### **4.2. Councilors and the media**

The Media Policy does not prevent the right of individual Councillors to express their own opinions to the media at any time. Councillors must clearly indicate that they are expressing their personal views, and not that of Council, except if they are supporting a Council position. Except for the Mayor, Councilors are not the official spokespersons of Council, unless delegated by the Mayor. To ensure information provided to the media is accurate and timely, Councilors should seek information from the appropriate Council officer, such as the Senior Media Advisor, before making comment. Councillors are permitted to share information related to Council materials in their communication with the media, provided such materials are directly relevant to discussions at hand and do not contravene confidentiality requirements or privacy laws.

#### **4.3. Council and the media**

The Manager, Communications and Engagement and the Senior Media Advisor manage all media inquiries for Waverley Council and its staff and the media approvals process.

All media inquiries for Waverley Council and its staff should be directed to [media@waverley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@waverley.nsw.gov.au) or 0416 075 532. Inquiries to this email and phone number are monitored seven days a week, including on public holidays.

Council staff must not speak to the media about Council matters, or provide information, footage or photos, or Council materials such as emails and reports, without approval from the Manager, Communications & Engagement or the Senior Media Advisor. Staff must not intentionally contest or undermine Council policy or decision, or cast Council, Councilors or Council staff in a negative light.

Council staff may speak to the media or write Letters to the Editor as private individuals with the following restrictions:

- a) they do not comment on Council business or policy
- b) they are not identified as Council employees
- c) their comments are not perceived as representing official Council position or policy

Any breaches of the Media Policy can result in action under Council's relevant Code of Conduct.

## **5. Review of Policy**

- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed every four years or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements. The policy may also be changed as a result of other amendments. Any amendments to a community facing policy must be way of a Council resolution, and any amendments to an organisational facing policy must be approved by the General Manager.
- 5.2. Council staff and members of the public may provide feedback about this document by emailing [communications@waverley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@waverley.nsw.gov.au).