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# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY TEMPLATE

### Definitions

* ***Day to Day Communications*** are those related to [ORGANISATION] policies, projects, programs, events and other relevant activities that have prior approval from the [ORGANISATION] Board and/or fall within the day to day management delegation of the CEO.
* ***Urgent Communications***are those developments, policy shifts and matters relevant to [ORGANISATION] for which no existing [ORGANISATION] policy or position statement is in place and which require an urgent communications response prior to the next scheduled Board meeting.
* ***Other Related Communications***are those relevant to [ORGANISATION] developments and needs arising from [ORGANISATION]’s formal partnerships or agreements with other organisations, as well as those associated with key organisations and programs contributing to [ORGANISATION]’s resourcing and service provision.

## 1. Purpose of Policy

In order to ensure that [ORGANISATION] can communicate with the media effectively, the [ORGANISATION] Communications Policy sets out:

* The principles that guide [ORGANISATION] communications with the media.
* [ORGANISATION] staff and Board responsibilities and accountabilities for communicating with the media.
* Protocols for:
  + Day to day communications.
  + Urgent communications.
  + Other related communications.

## 2. Policy Principles

### 2.1 Communication Purpose

[ORGANISATION] works with the media in order to:

* **Advocate** for the needs of [ORGANISATION] to the media, the public and government.
* **Promote and represent** the work of [ORGANISATION] to the media, the public and government, as agreed between [ORGANISATION] and relevant [ORGANISATION] members.

[ORGANISATION] staff and Board members will not make public comment on member organisations or individual members.

### 2.2 Communications Values

[ORGANISATION] operates on the values of

* **Transparency:** [ORGANISATION] will promote openness and accessibility in it’s dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
* **Balance:** Information provided to the media by [ORGANISATION] will as far as possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.
* **Community Benefit**: [ORGANISATION] will always act in the best interests its communities and community members.
* **Cultural Respect:** [ORGANISATION] will always acknowledge the First Nations traditional owners and respect the local customs and culture; [ORGANISATION] will promote the maintenance of languages, culture and customs wherever possible.
* **Ethical practice:** [ORGANISATION] will act ethically in all its communications and dealings with the media**.**

### 2.3 Communications Decision-Making

In making a decision to communicate with the media, the [ORGANISATION] CEO and [ORGANISATION] Board will be guided by:

* The relevance and importance of the matter to:
  + The [ORGANISATION] Communications Aims.
  + Board approved [ORGANISATION] media and communications policies as may be in place from time to time.
  + The [ORGANISATION] Strategic Plan and Operational Plan.
* Requests to [ORGANISATION] by [ORGANISATION] members.
* Relevant [ORGANISATION] Membership policies.
* Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with partner organisations.

## 3. Protocols

### 3.1 General responsibilities

* [ORGANISATION] staff and Board members should be aware that they may be seen as representatives of [ORGANISATION] and should therefore:
  + Avoid making comments in the public domain or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the reputation of [ORGANISATION] and/or its members.
  + Be aware of probity and/or conflict of interest matters.
* The [ORGANISATION] CEO, [ORGANISATION] Board members and [ORGANISATION] Communications Officer are to:
  + Ensure that effective media relations are maintained consistent with the role of [ORGANISATION].

### 3.2 [ORGANISATION] Spokesperson

### The [ORGANISATION] Spokesperson is the CEO and/or the Chairperson. The CEO may delegate the Spokesperson role to a staff member or Board member as appropriate to the issue.

In the case of “*Urgent Communications”*, the CEO and the Chairperson may nominate the [ORGANISATION] Chairperson or another relevant [ORGANISATION] Board member as the [ORGANISATION] Spokesperson, with support provided by the [ORGANISATION] CEO.

### 3.3 Management of urgent communications issues

[ORGANISATION] staff and [ORGANISATION] Board members should inform the [ORGANISATION] CEO as soon as practicable of an urgent issue that may require media communications.

No [ORGANISATION] staff member or [ORGANISATION] Board member should engage with the media prior to a decision on media communication being made by the [ORGANISATION] Chairperson and [ORGANISATION] CEO. Any media enquiries during the decision-making process should be referred to the [ORGANISATION] CEO.

3.4 Specific accountabilities and responsibilities

| **Role and accountability** | R**esponsibilities** |
| --- | --- |
| **[ORGANISATION] Board Chairperson**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] Board* | **In the case of “*Urgent Communications”* and “*Other Related Communications”:***   * Works with the CEO on evaluating the need for, consultation requirements, and content of a media release. |
| **[ORGANISATION] Board members**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] Board* | * Advise the [ORGANISATION] Board Chairperson and CEO on any opportunities or need to communicate messages about relevant and/or urgent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications matters. |
| **[ORGANISATION] CEO**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] Board* | **In the case of “*Day to Day Communications”*:**   * Develops media releases on behalf of [ORGANISATION] in line with policies, strategies, projects, programs, events and activities as approved by the Board. See Schedule 1 for a list of current polices, programs/projects, events and activities. * Provides media releases to the [ORGANISATION] Board and staff members at the time of release. * Tables communications activities at the next scheduled Board meeting. |
| **In the case of “*Urgent Communications”* and “*Other Related Communications”:***  Prior to the development of an [ORGANISATION] media release:   * + - Discusses the issue with the [ORGANISATION] Board Chairperson. (Note: If the Chairperson is not available, the GM will seek advice from all Directors with a clear timeframe for response).     - Takes direction from the [ORGANISATION] Chairperson on further consultation needs with other Board members and/or the sector.     - Takes direction from the [ORGANISATION] Chairperson on proceeding or not with a media release.     - Prior to public release of a media release, distributes an embargoed copy to all Directors.     - Carries out other relevant responsibilities as for *“Day to Day Communications”.* |
| **[ORGANISATION] Communications Officer**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] CEO* | * Maintains a communications contacts database. * Issues approved media releases to agreed media and other stakeholders. * Liaises with the media on interview opportunities, as directed by the [ORGANISATION] CEO. |
| **[ORGANISATION] Staff members**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] CEO* | * Refer any media enquiries to the CEO or nominated contact person in a media release. |
| **[ORGANISATION] Communications Officer**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] CEO* | * Maintains a communications contacts database. * Issues approved media releases to agreed media and other stakeholders. * Liaises with the media on interview opportunities, as directed by the [ORGANISATION] CEO. |
| **[ORGANISATION] Staff members**  *Accountable to [ORGANISATION] CEO* | * Refer any media enquiries to the CEO or nominated contact person in a media release. |

**Associated Policies**

* Social Media Policy

## Authorisation

<Signature of Board Chair>

<Signature of Manager>  
<Date of approval by the Board>  
<Name of Organisation>

## Schedule 1

## Current [ORGANISATION]Policies, Projects, Programs/Strategies, Events and Activities

### Projects

### Policies

### Programs/Strategies

### Events

### Activities

### Collaborations