

### Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish protocols for the release of public statements issued by the Shire of Boddington (Shire), including to the media and on social media, to ensure the Shire is professionally and accurately represented, and to maximise a positive public perception of the Shire.

This Policy also provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Council President, Deputy President, Council Members, and the Chief Executive Officer when issuing public statements.

### Scope

This Policy applies to all Shire of Boddington Council Members, employees, consultants, volunteers, contractors, and outsourced service providers of the Shire.

### Definitions

Term	Meaning
Policy	This Shire of Boddington policy titled "Communications and Media".
Act	The Local Government Act 1995.
Media	Includes all mediums used for communication including, but not limited to, television, radio, newspaper, newsletter, magazine, internet, and social media.
Social Media	Web-based technology which facilitates the communication and sharing of text, photos, audio, video, and information in general.
Council Members	Includes all Councillors.

### Policy Statement

Media and public statements are issued by the Shire for the purposes of:

- Sharing information required by law to be publicly available;
- Sharing information that is of interest and benefit to the Community;
- Promoting Shire events and services;
- Promoting public notices and community consultation and engagement opportunities;
- Answering questions and responding to requests for information relevant to the role of the Shire; and
- Receiving and responding to community feedback, ideas, comments, compliments, and complaints.

Official statements are to be consistent with policies, standards, and the position adopted by Council.

The Shire uses a combination of different communication modes to relay public statements including:

- Shire websites;
- Advertising and promotional materials;
- Media releases and media statements promoting specific Shire positions prepared for or provided by the President, the Chief Executive Officer, or a delegated officer;

- Social media platforms; and
- Community newsletters and communiques.

### Speaking on Behalf of the Shire of Boddington

- Section 2.8 (1) of the Act provides that the President is the official spokesperson for the Shire of Boddington and may represent the Shire in official communications. All media enquiries are to be directed to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance whereby information is to be coordinated to support the release of an official response on behalf of the Shire. The media may approach the President directly for comment in their capacity as official spokesperson for the Shire.
- Section 5.34 of the Act provides that the Deputy President may perform the functions of the President if the office of President is vacant or the President is not available or is unable or unwilling to perform the functions of the President.
- Section 2.10 of the Act sets out the role of Council Members. There is no provision for a Council Member to speak on behalf of the local government.
- The President may include commentary from other Council members in media and public statements where a Council Member has specific expertise or knowledge of a specific area of Council business, a comment from a Council Member other than or as well as the President would generally be expected by the community, and/or a comment from a Council Member other than or as well as the President maximises the positive perception of the Shire Council.
- The Chief Executive Officer, or a Chief Executive Officer approved officer, may speak to the media or otherwise in public as to the Shire's affairs in performance of the Chief Executive Officer's functions under S.5.41 of the Act, including that of managing the day-to-day operations of the Shire.
- Statements made by a Council Member or employee, whether undertaken in an authorised official capacity or as a personal communication, are not to:
  - Bring the Shire of Boddington into disrepute;
  - Compromise the person's effectiveness in their role within the Shire;
  - Imply the Shire's endorsement of personal views;
  - Imply the person is speaking on behalf of the Shire, unless authorised to do so; and/or
  - Disclose, without authorisation, confidential information.

### Council Member Statements on Shire Matters

- Council Members may speak in public to the extent that doing so does not conflict with roles or obligations outlined in the Shire's Code of Conduct and the Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007.
- Any public statement made by a Council Member, whether made in a personal capacity or in their capacity as a Council Member, is to:
  - Clearly state that the comment or content is a personal view only which does not necessarily represent the views of the Shire of Boddington;
  - Be made with reasonable care and diligence;
  - Be lawful, including avoiding contravention of copyright, defamation, discrimination or harassment laws;
  - Be factually correct;
  - Cause damage to the reputation of the Shire;
  - Not reflect adversely on a decision of Council;
  - Not reflect adversely on the character or actions of another Council Member or

- employee; and
- Maintain a respectful tone and not use offensive or objectionable expressions in reference to any Council Member, employee, or community member.

### Social Media

- The Shire uses and maintains social media accounts to facilitate information sharing and to provide feedback to our community. Social media is not to be used by the Shire to communicate or respond to matters that are complex or relate to a person's or entities private affairs.
- The Shire may post and contribute to social media hosted by others to ensure that the Shire's strategic objectives are appropriately represented and promoted.
- The Shire is to, at its discretion, moderate its social media accounts to address, and where necessary delete, content deemed to be:
  - Offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false, or misleading;
  - Soliciting or commercial in nature;
  - Unlawful or which may incite others to break the law;
  - Information which may compromise individual or community safety or security;
  - Repetitive material copied and pasted or duplicated;
  - Electioneering for Council, appointment to official Office, or any ballot;
  - In violation of intellectual property rights or the legal ownership or interests or another party; and
  - Inappropriate in any other way.
- Where a third party contributor to a Shire's social media account is identified as posting content which is deleted in accordance with this Policy, the Shire may, at its discretion, hide that contributor's comment and/or block that contributor for a specific period of time or permanently.
- The Shire is to, in conjunction with other communication modes, use social media to communicate and advise the community regarding Emergency Management.

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>History</b>	Adopted 16 September 2021 (Resolution 100/21) Amended 23 March 2023 (Resolution 25/23)
<b>Delegation</b>	
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	Section 2.8, 2.10 and 5.41(f), Local Government Act 1995
<b>Related Documentation</b>	Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates Code of Conduct for employees