MEDIA POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

MEDIA POLICY AND PROTOCOLS		Adopted by EMT:	18/01/2012
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1.   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this document is to provide clear and concise guidelines relating to the expected processes and procedures that both Councillors and Council staff shall follow in dealing with requests from or making comment to the media.

1.2   The document also provides guidelines that will be useful for the media in understanding Council's expectations in relation to the procedures for seeking information from Council or making requests for media comment from Councillors or Council staff. It also provides guidelines for the filming and/or recording of Council meetings.

2.   Scope

2.1   The policies and protocols in this document apply to both Councillors and Council staff, and reinforce and supplement the guidelines in the Councillor Code of Conduct (18 October 2011) and the Staff Code of Conduct (October 2011).

2.2   For the purposes of this document, the term 'media' refers to all forms of media including traditional media such as print, radio and television and also social media forums such as 'twitter', 'youtube' and 'facebook' or any other on-line forum which is accessible to the public such as third party or personal blogs.

3.   Principles

3.1   In addition to the principles adopted in the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct, all Councillors and staff are committed to providing accurate, transparent and timely information to the media.

4.   Media Comment

4.1   Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors

4.1.1   The Mayor is the primary spokesperson to the media on behalf of Council where the issue relates to Council policy and/or is of a political, controversial or sensitive nature.

4.1.2 Where the Mayor is not available or at his/her discretion, the Mayor may, in the first instance, delegate authority for media comment to the Deputy Mayor or the relevant Ward Councillor/s where the issue is of a specific geographic nature or is of specific interest to a particular Councillor, or as per delegation endorsed at Statutory Meeting.

4.1.3 In the event the Mayor may wish to delegate authority to the Deputy Mayor or another Councillor on a particular issue, this shall be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager to ensure they are adequately briefed.

4.1.4 It is desirable, in the first instance, that all requests from the media for comment are directed to the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager who will liaise, in conjunction with the Mayor, to provide the necessary response from the relevant spokesperson.

4.1.5 When the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or a Councillor is contacted by the media directly, they should, in the first instance and prior to making comment, contact either the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager to confirm the relevant media spokesperson for the issue and to obtain the necessary information to provide an accurate and timely response.

4.1.6 Where the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor chooses to make comment to the media on issues that may be contrary to Council policy, or on matters not yet formally considered by Council, they should specify the comment is a personal view.

4.2 Chief Executive Officer and Council Staff

4.2.1 The Chief Executive Officer is the official media spokesperson for all administrative, operational and management matters pertaining to Strathbogie Shire Council as an organisation including:

- Staffing and structure of the organisation

- Corporate issues relating to service provision or the day-to-day business or operations of the Council.

4.2.2 The Chief Executive Office may delegate authority for media comment to the Communications Manager or another Council Officer at his/her discretion on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.3 Under no circumstances should any Council Officer make any comment or express a view to the media about any matters pertaining to the Strathbogie Shire Council without the formal approval of the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager.

4.2.4 Where a Council Officer (other than the Communications Manager) is delegated authority by either the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager to make media comment, it shall generally be limited to commentary on matters of a technical nature.

4.2.5 All requests from the media for comment on administrative, operational and management matters should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager who will liaise to provide the necessary response from the relevant spokesperson.

4.2.6 All media inquiries or requests for comment on all local emergencies and natural disasters (such as fire and flood) should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Manager.

5. Filming and/or Recording of Council Meetings

5.1 In the first instance, any media outlet and/or community representative must submit a request in writing to the Communications Manager if they wish to film or record any proceedings of a Council or Council-run meeting.

5.2 The Communications Manager shall forward the request to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, all Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer for noting.

5.3 Unless otherwise advised by the Chief Executive Officer (in consultation with the Mayor), permission **may** be granted.

5.4 Permission **may** only granted for filming on the basis the camera/camera crew adopts a fixed position and is not moving around the meeting room. Any exception to this provision must be approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer or Communications Manager.

5.5 Journalists may use laptop computers to make notes for Council meetings.

Reference Documents:

Reference 1 – Strathbogie Shire Council Staff Code of Conduct
Reference 2 – Strathbogie Shire Council Councillor Code of Conduct
Reference 3 – Strathbogie Shire Council Social Media Policy