

8.1.1. MEDIA POLICY

FILE NO: 11.00035

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- a) Place the draft Media Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.
- b) If no submissions are received, adopt the draft Media Policy.
- c) If submissions are received, provide a further report for Council's consideration.

REPORT:

Council's Media Policy was last adopted by Council in October 2021 and is due for readoption.

The policy has remained largely unchanged for a number of years apart from minor updates.

A review of the document highlighted the need to update the policy in a number of areas to better align to both current organisational practices and to industry best practice.

The Media Policy has been re-written utilising the Office of Local Government (OLG) Model Media Policy. The Model Media Policy, released by the OLG in 2022 incorporates examples of best practice from the media policies of a diverse range of NSW Councils, as well as from Commonwealth and State Government agencies. It was developed by the OLG in consultation with Councils.

It is a robust document that provides a framework for Councils when dealing with the media and ensures that media engagement undertaken by Councillors and staff is consistent, accurate and professional and enhances the Council's reputation. It also allows for Councils to adapt the policy to their own circumstances or supplement with their own provisions.

It should be noted the Model Media Policy was released after Council's current Media Policy was last adopted by Council.

A copy of the existing Media Policy can be located at **attachment 1**, the OLG Model Media Policy at **attachment 2** and Council's draft Media Policy at **attachment 3**.

Council's draft Media Policy has been developed using the Media Coordinator model (as that reflects our current practice and the identified staff role has media coordination responsibilities as part of their position description).

All of the sections from the Model Media Policy have been carried across to the revised Media Policy and several additions have also been included.

They are:

- relating to approval of all media content (to confirm current practice)
- relating to media commentary during a disaster to ensure clarity in these circumstances. (to confirm current practice)
- Defining staff as subject matter experts (to confirm current practice)
- Requests to film staff/facilities/council meetings for news purposes (to confirm current practice)
- Insert reference to volunteers/contractors/service providers and the need to refer media enquiries on council projects back to Council (as per the Statement of Business Ethics)
- The maintenance of an up-to-date media delegations register (to align with and replicate our social media delegations register)
- Inclusion of related documents. The model policy references the Code of Conduct in the background information and the policy relates to the Code of Conduct and several other Council documents/policies.
- Review timeline – rather than two years, review the policy within 12 months of a Council election.

The Model policy includes one of the Media Coordinator's roles as providing guidance to Councillors who are approached by the media. This has been removed from the proposed BRC draft Media Policy. This responsibility will sit with the General Manager as detailed in the draft Media Policy as this is in line with our Councillors and Staff interaction policy.

It is proposed to place the draft Policy on exhibition for a period of 28 days and if no submissions are received, adopt the Policy. However, if submissions are received, a further report will be presented to Council for its consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

BATHURST COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN – OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:

Objective 6: Community leadership and collaboration.

Strategy 6.1 Communicate and engage with the community, government and business groups on important matters affecting the Bathurst region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

01 **Inform** - to provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. media-reviewed-september-2021 [8.1.1.1 - 3 pages]
2. Model Media Policy Final [8.1.1.2 - 14 pages]
3. BRC draft Media Policy 2025 [8.1.1.3 - 7 pages]