

Elected Member Communications Policy

Objective

Recognise the role of the Mayor as the principal spokesperson of the Council in accordance with section 2.8(1)(d) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Policy Statement

No elected member, other than the Mayor, is to speak with the media on behalf of Council without the consent of the Mayor.

If elected members do speak with the media they shall represent the view of Council and shall not express a personal point of view for the purpose of gaining personal or election advantage.

The City of Albany has established formal communication protocols and procedures. Elected members are encouraged to utilise those protocols and procedures to support the City of Albany in its administration.

In all public oral and written statements (including media) elected members should:

- Respect the decision making processes and decisions of Council;
- Accurately convey information concerning decisions of Council;
- Clarify whether or not they are representing Council or presenting a personal viewpoint as a private citizen;
- Take care when expressing personal views to show respect for Council;
- Avoid criticism of individuals in a way that reflects on those individuals' competence or integrity, and which may give rise to a City of Albany liability; and
- Ensure they do not commit Council or the City of Albany to a course of action or expenditure of City resources, including staff time, without the prior endorsement of Council.

Scope

Applies to elected members of Council and employees responsible for the drafting, recording and distribution of elected member correspondence.

Legislative and Strategic Context

This policy and procedure aligns with and is complimented by:

- The *Local Government Act 1995* which is also complemented by guidelines and handbooks produced by the Department of Local Government (WA);
- *State Records Act 2000* (WA);
- *Privacy Act 1988* (C'th); and
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA).

Review Position and Date

This policy and procedure must be reviewed every two years by the document owner.

PROCEDURE

Categorisation of Correspondence. The processing of the following categories of communications is dealt with as follows:

Category One. Correspondence from Government Ministers and other members of Parliament:

- copy to Mayor for information
- copy to CEO
- Personal Assistant to Mayor and Councillors, working with the Chief Executive Officer to draft reply for Mayor for signature

Category Two. Correspondence from the general public in relation to Council business:

- copy to Mayor for information
- copy to particular named councillors for information
- copy to Chief Executive Officer if relating to City of Albany business
- Personal Assistant to Mayor and Councillors, working with the Chief Executive Officer to draft replies for Mayor for signature

Use of Mayoral Letterhead. Mayoral letterhead is to be used only by the Mayor, in their official capacity.

Relations with the Public and the Media. The Act recognises the role of the Mayor as the principal spokesperson of the Council.

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Manager Governance & Risk (MGR)		Chief Executive Officer	
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