

## **City of Albany**

### **Media Liaison Protocol**

#### **Introduction**

This protocol provides clear guidelines about:

1. Responses to media requests for interviews or information;
2. Approval of media releases, media statements, letters to the editor and speeches;
3. Handling crises and emergency situations in the media.

#### **Purpose statement**

The Media Liaison Protocol aims to ensure communication between the City of Albany (the City) and the media is consistent, well informed, timely, appropriate and newsworthy.

The Procedure outlines the situations in which the media are communicated with and the process undertaken in each varying scenario to ensure the correct steps are taken by City staff when liaising with the media.

#### **Scope**

The objectives of this media protocol are:

- To identify opportunities to promote the City of Albany and its activities;
- To ensure these activities are accurately and professionally portrayed in all public channels, including media releases, speeches, feature articles, advertisements, newsletters, websites and other publications;
- To maintain a consistent corporate image and a positive reputation for the City of Albany, through a clearly understood procedure for liaising with the media.
- To coordinate responses by the City of Albany to media organisations.
- To provide a streamlined approval process for all media contact.
- To enable information about City of Albany activities that are likely to attract media interest to be brought to the attention of relevant parties;
- To facilitate a proactive and coordinated approach to issues and risk management.

## **Media Liaison Protocol**

This media protocol should be followed in conjunction with the following City of Albany policies and guidelines:

- Media Policy; and
- Social Media Policy & Guidelines.

### 1. Responses to media requests for interviews/information

#### 1.1 Point of contact & responsibilities

- a. The City of Albany communications team is the primary point of contact within the City for all media enquiries directed to the City of Albany.
- b. The communications team can be contacted any time on telephone 6820 3009 or 0436 804 664.
- c. Upon receiving an inquiry from the media, the Communications Team will immediately inform the Mayor or CEO, Executive Director and / or Manager
- d. The Communications Team will also notify of any relevant deadline and provide support to prepare a timely response.
- e. The Communications Team will seek information and input from the CEO, Executive Director, Manager or an Officer who is a subject matter expert to assist with drafting an appropriate and accurate response.
- f. The Communications Team will also identify and assist with releasing proactive statements and media releases to the media on behalf of the City of Albany in consultation with the CEO, Executive Director and / or Manager as appropriate.
- g. The CEO or authorised delegate is responsible for responding to media enquiries on behalf of the City of Albany.

#### 1.2 Dealing with the media & authorised spokespersons

- a. All requests received by the City of Albany for media interviews or information **MUST** be referred to the Communications Team;
- b. The Communications Team will consult with the CEO, Executive Director and / or Manager as appropriate to determine how the enquiry will be handled;
- c. The CEO or Executive Director will act as spokesperson for the City, or authorise an appropriate delegate to respond to the media where appropriate;
- d. The Mayor will act as spokesperson for the Council, or authorise a delegate to respond to the media where appropriate.

### 2. Approval process for media

#### 2.1 Media statements and responses format

- a. The Communications Team will consult with the CEO, Executive Director and / or Manager to determine whether the response to a media enquiry will take the form of an interview or a written media statement;
- b. Where time permits and as required by the CEO or Executive Director, the Communications Team will work with either the CEO or their delegate before the interview to ensure they are prepared in terms of key messaging and angles likely to be pursued by the media representative;
- c. All written media statements will be drafted in consultation with the CEO, Executive Director, and relevant Manager and will be clearly marked DRAFT until the content has been approved.
- d. In the case of a media opportunity or a general response to a media issue, the Communications Team, in conjunction with the CEO or Executive Director, may issue a media release, rather than a media statement.
- e. All City of Albany media content must be approved by the CEO or an authorised delegate prior to release. All Council-related media content must be approved by the Mayor and the CEO prior to release.
- f. Advance notice of interviews and approved copies of media statements, media releases and letters to the editor will be provided to relevant parties for their reference prior to release.
- g. The Communications Officer handling the statement will ensure the response or media release is recorded to comply with records-keeping requirements.

## 2.2 Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor may be drafted in response to issues raised or to correct misinformation published in the media. These will be drafted and approved using the same process as media statements and media releases.

## 3. Handling crises and emergency situations

### 3.1 Communication plans

Communication plans should be prepared for all sensitive or controversial issues. The communications team will prepare these plans as required by and in consultation with the appropriate business unit.

### 3.2 Emergency situations

- a. The CEO, Executive Directors and all City of Albany managers are to be notified of any sensitive media issues or emergency situations involving the City of Albany;
- b. The Communications Team will coordinate all media contact in consultation with the CEO, relevant Executive Director and team managers as appropriate;
- c. As directed by the CEO or their delegate, the Communications Team will ensure relevant parties are kept informed of issues or incidents involving the City of Albany.