

# Media and Communications Policy

<b>Responsible Division</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Responsible Business Unit</b>	Communications, Engagement & Customer Relations
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Communications, Engagement & Customer Relations
<b>Affected Business Units</b>	All business units
<b>ECM Document Set ID</b>	4703870

## Purpose

This policy details legislative obligations and establishes protocols for the City of Bayswater's official communications, and personal statements made by Elected Members and staff in the media.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- Elected Members when making comment in either their role or in a personal capacity
- Committee Members
- City of Bayswater employees.

## Definitions

**Communication** means the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using some other medium.

**Elected Member** means a person who is currently serving a term of office as an Elected Member of the Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.

**Employee** means a person employed by the City of Bayswater, including contractors engaged under a contract of service.

**Media** means the channels of communication, such as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, social media, emails and the internet, that reach or influence people widely.

**Official communications** means communications that have been prepared by the City's Communications and Marketing team to share information via communication channels which may include a media release/statement to news outlets, social media posts, stories and advertisements, e-newsletter articles, newsletter articles, emails, printed collateral and advertising.

**Personal statement** means a personal statement, made publicly, on a matter related to the business of the City and not in the capacity of an official City spokesperson.

**Photo opportunities** means the photos arranged by the City's Communications and Marketing team for the purpose of promoting official City communications. It does not relate to event photography.

## Policy Statement

### 1. Speaking on behalf of the City

The Mayor is the spokesperson for the City of Bayswater under the Local Government Act 1995 and represents the City in official communications. When the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor may act as the City's spokesperson. The CEO may speak on behalf of the City where authorised to do so by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor may appoint an Elected Member to act as spokesperson on a specific matter, while the Mayor and/or CEO may appoint an employee with specialist knowledge to act as spokesperson on a specific matter.

Any statements on behalf of the City should only be made with specific authorisation.

Communications by Elected Members undertaken in an authorised official capacity must be consistent with the general principles and standards of behaviour set out in the City of Bayswater Elected Member Code of Conduct. Elected Members must:

- ensure information provided is factually correct;
- not pre-empt or adversely reflect on a decision of Council;
- avoid damaging the reputation of the City;
- not imply the City's endorsement of personal views; and
- not disclose, without authorisation, confidential information.

Employees must not disclose information, make comments or engage in communication activities about or on behalf of the City of Bayswater, Elected Members, employees or contractors, that breach the Employee Code of Conduct.

### 2. Responding to media enquiries

All enquiries from the media for an official City comment, whether made to an individual Elected Member or employee, must be directed to the CEO or a person authorised by the CEO.

Information will be coordinated by the City's Communications and Marketing team to support the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or CEO (where authorised) to prepare an official response on behalf of the City.

### 3. Photo opportunities

Where the Mayor is unavailable for a photo opportunity, the Mayor may delegate the photo opportunity to the Deputy Mayor. If the Deputy Mayor is also unavailable, the Mayor may delegate the photo opportunity to Elected Members who represent the Ward relevant to the subject of the communication.

### 4. Elected Members making a personal statement

An Elected Member may choose to make a personal statement publicly on a matter related to the business of the City.

Elected Members must be careful when expressing opinions on matters before Council to avoid the apprehension of bias. Elected Members must remain open minded and consider Council matters based on the information presented to them. Any personal statements made by an Elected Member need to take this into consideration.

Any public statement made by an Elected Member on a matter related to the business of the City, in a personal capacity or as a local government representative, must be consistent with the general principles and standards of behaviour set out in the City of Bayswater Elected Member Code of Conduct. Elected Members must:

- when giving a media interview, clearly state that the comment or content is a personal view only, which does not necessarily represent the views of the City;
- not reflect adversely on a decision of Council;
- not reflect adversely on the character or actions of another Elected Member or employee.

An Elected Member who is approached by the media for a personal statement may request the assistance of the CEO.

Comments which become public and which breach the Media and Communications Policy, the City's Elected Member Code of Conduct or the Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021, may constitute a breach of the Local Government Act 1995.

## **5. Recordkeeping**

Official communications undertaken on behalf of the City, including on the City's social media accounts must be created and retained as local government records in accordance with the State Records Act 2000. These records are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1992.

Elected Member communications that relate to their role as an Elected Member are subject to the requirements of the City's Record Keeping Plan and the State Records Act 2000. Elected Member records are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1992.

## **Related Legislation**

*Freedom of Information Act 1992*

*Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*

*Local Government Act 1995*

*State Records Act 2000)*

## **Related Documentation**

City of Bayswater Employee Code of Conduct

City of Bayswater Elected Member Code of Conduct

## Document details

<b>Relevant delegations</b>	Nil		
<b>Risk evaluation</b>	Low		
<b>Strategic link</b>	Theme:	Leadership and Governance	
	Goal L4:	Communicate in a clear and transparent way	
<b>Council adoption</b>	27 February 2024	<b>Resolution</b>	10.5.1.1
<b>Next review due</b>	20 November 2026		
<b>Reviewed/modified</b>	-	<b>Resolution</b>	-
<b>Revision details</b>	-		