

Media Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of council officials with regard to interactions with the media.

Policy Statement

Communicating with the community via the media is an important part of achieving council's broader objectives and commitment to transparency.

This policy provides a clear framework for facilitating media enquiries and the process for authorising council officials to represent Riverina Water by making public comment.

Media agencies are an important partner in reaching customers and the community, and this policy is designed to facilitate that process in an efficient manner.

Scope

This policy applies to board members, staff, council committee members and contractors of Riverina Water.

Definitions

Council officials Board members, staff, council committee members and contractors of Council

Media	All print, broadcast and digital mediums accessible to the public
Authorised spokesperson	Council officials who are permitted to make comment to a journalist or media organisation as per this policy.
Media enquiry	Any request for comment or information by the media

Data and document control

Principles

Any comment to a journalist or member of a media organisation is to be consistent with Council's Code of Conduct and accurately reflect the values and decisions of Riverina Water.

Only an authorised spokesperson may be interviewed by the media or provide approved responses.

Authorisation

The Chairperson, CEO and Directors are council's authorised spokespersons.

Other staff and representatives may be authorised by the CEO and/or relevant Director as a spokesperson to comment in the media on behalf of Riverina Water.

Facilitation of interactions with the media

Council's Community Engagement Officer is the primary contact for all media agencies.

Staff who are directly approached by a media agency should refer the journalist or media organisation to contact Council's Community Engagement Officer.

Commitment to providing information

Media enquiries will be facilitated as soon as possible, dependent on the complexity of the request and availability of council officials to comment.

Council will not comment on certain matters such as confidential items, an investigation in process or matters not in the public interest. If required, the issue may be subjected to the public interest test *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)* to determine what information should/can be released, or information may be withheld to avoid potential defamation/privacy breaches.

Policy Implementation

Council officials will be made aware of the protocols set out in this policy and it will be available on the staff intranet and Riverina Water's website.

Media agencies are encouraged to follow this policy's principles so as to ensure a response to their enquiry in an efficient and effective manner.

Data and document control

Non Compliance

Non-compliance with adopted policy may be considered a breach under the Code of Conduct. As such, any suspected or known non-compliance will be reported to the CEO.

Policy number	Policy 1.29
Responsible area	Corporate Services
Approved by	Riverina Water Board Res 22/015
Approval date	24 February 2022
Legislation or related strategy	Defamation Act 2005 Copyright Act 1968 Local Government Act 1993 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
Documents associated with this policy	Community Engagement Strategy Code of Conduct Policy 1.01 Privacy Policy 1.20 Social Media Usage Internal Policy 4.11
Policy history	Approved by Riverina Water Board February 2021 Resolution number 21/01
Policy Review	Every 4 years (2026 or before depending on new Board)

Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative or other changes, therefore

Data and document control

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Next scheduled review: February 2026

this document is uncontrolled when printed. This policy will be revised following the commencement of a new Board.

END OF POLICY STATEMENT