

Media Policy

Purpose of this policy

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is committed to providing accurate and timely information about the work of the department to the community via the media. Effective engagement with the media helps to:

- increase community understanding of the Department's work
- build trust among stakeholders and the broader community
- promote and protect the Department's brand and reputation.

To achieve these aims, the Media Teams proactively promote work undertaken by the Department and responds to requests from the media received directly or via Ministerial Offices.

This policy sets out protocols for:

- interactions with the media
- responding to media enquiries
- ensuring information provided to media is consistent and accurate.

To whom this policy applies

This policy applies to all employees, consultants and contractors of the Department and its cluster entities.

It applies to all forms of communication and media interaction, including verbal, written and electronic, and must be read and understood in conjunction with the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

The requirements on releasing information on social media are the same as those for traditional media, as set out in this policy.

In the event of an emergency event response, such as a natural disaster, standard emergency management practices under the Business Continuity Plan are invoked.

Policy statement

The Department's Media Teams coordinate work involving the media because of its experience in dealing with it, and its ability to provide clear, concise, and consistent messaging in the promotion and protection of the Department's brand and reputation.

This includes but is not limited to:

- media releases
- media responses
- media pitches
- holding statements
- talking points
- questions and answers (Q&As)
- event briefs.

See Appendix 1 for definitions.

If contacted by a media outlet or its representative, the Media Team must be informed immediately, without providing comment or information.

Note: The Department's Media Teams can be contacted during and outside business hours, including on weekends and public holidays, on:

- media@dpie.nsw.gov.au for
 - Planning (Planning and Assessment)
 - Homes (Land and Housing Corporation, and Aboriginal Housing Office)
 - Property and Place
 - Water
 - Crown Lands
 - Office of Local Government
- media@environment.nsw.gov.au and 9995 5347 for
 - Environment and Heritage.

Making public comment (including in media)

Employees are not authorised to speak to media unless specifically requested by the Department's Media Teams, following the latter's consultation with relevant executive/s. It is not appropriate or acceptable to comment on Government policy, matters currently under police investigation, or subject to legal proceedings.

Only authorised employees comment publicly on the activities of the Department, including having conversations with journalists or posting on social media, while public speaking engagement

opportunities are required to be assessed by the Department's Media Teams before commitments are given.

All employees must respond to requests from the Department's Media Teams for information to assist in responding to a media enquiry and fact-check proposed responses by the requested deadline.

No information should be withheld from the Department's Media Teams and it must be factually accurate, so the most informed response can be provided to the media, and the Department's brand and reputation is promoted and or protected at all times.

Proactive media opportunities

All media releases are drafted and managed by the Department's Media Teams, including packages that involve multi-media resources, such as video, photography, graphics, and maps.

All media interviews and provision of information to media is coordinated by the Department's Media Teams.

You are encouraged to contact the Department's Media Teams at any time to discuss the work you are doing and any good story ideas, key milestones or updates you would like to promote to the community via the media.

Employees have a responsibility to provide information about forward work programs, policy development, and projects, to the Department's Media Teams. The latter's business partners should be involved early in policy development and projects, so they can prepare to provide the necessary support.

Industry publications

All opportunities offered to or investigated by the Department employees must be discussed with and assessed by the Department's Media Teams before they can be considered and potentially accepted. This includes any outside your professional area of expertise as a Department employee.

All subsequent materials must be reviewed by the Department's Media Teams prior to them being sent to the relevant industry publication.

Daily media monitoring

Daily media coverage relating to the Department's work is collated and distributed each day.

Failure to comply with this policy

If you fail to comply with this policy, corrective action may be taken in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct. All employees, and others covered by the code, are expected to adhere to the ethical and behaviour standards outlined in the Code.

Review timeframe

The Strategic Media Team will review this policy no later than 3 years from the date the document is approved. The document may be reviewed earlier in response to post-implementation feedback, changes to legislation, or as necessary.

Related documents

Other policy documents that should be ready in conjunction with this policy:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Policy metadata

Table 1. Policy metadata

| Category | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Status | Final |
| Date of approval | 28 March 2022 |
| Approver | Deputy Secretary – People, Culture and Communications |
| Group | People, Culture and Communications |
| Division | Communications |
| Policy owner | Executive Director Communications |
| Branch | Media |
| Document location | Department’s Intranet/Internet |
| Next review date | March 2025 |
| Associated procedure | N/A |
| Any additional applicability | N/A |
| Superseded document | OEH Media Policy, DPE -Public Affairs – Interacting with the Media |
| Further information | paul.scott@dpie.nsw.gov.au |
| Document Reference | DOC22/267192 |

Version control

Table 2. Version Control

| Version | Date issued | Change |
|---------|---------------|--|
| 1 | March 2022 | New policy |
| 1.1 | February 2024 | Updated to reflect branding and name changes |

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definitions

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Table 3 - Definitions

| Terms | Definitions |
|------------------------------|--|
| Media | Organisations that prepare or disseminate mass media information (both traditional – print, television, and radio, and online), including reporters, journalists, producers and researchers, working for or on their behalf. |
| Media Release | Used for proactive media announcements (sometimes given to a reporter ahead of time to be used as an exclusive prior to issuing). |
| Media Response | A statement responding to a media outlet's questions. |
| Holding Statement | A short statement (usually up to three lines) prepared in anticipation of a media enquiry. |
| Talking Points | Around half a dozen lines are provided to Ministerial Offices or the department's spokesperson for media interviews and public engagements. |
| Questions and Answers (Q&As) | An internal document that provides answers to tough questions which may be asked by media. These are different to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which are public facing on the department website. |
| Media Pitch | An internal document outlining the strategy behind driving media coverage, to gain the best result. |
| Event Briefs | An internal document outlining details and logistics relating to a proposed event being held by a MO or department to attract media coverage. |