



Council Policy
Communications,
Media and Brand

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Purpose

The purpose of the Communications, Media and Brand Policy is to establish a framework that ensures Dubbo Regional Council is represented in a unified, consistent, and professional manner. This policy aims to enhance public recognition and trust in Dubbo Regional Council by developing and maintaining a clear and consistent corporate identity.

The policy provides guidelines for the consistent use of the Council's brand across all communication channels and materials, safeguarding Council's reputation by ensuring all communications are accurate, timely, and reflective of the Council's values and commitments. Additionally, the policy outlines principles and procedures for engaging with the media, community, and stakeholders to foster transparency, openness, and positive relationships. It also identifies and mitigates potential reputational risks through proactive communication strategies and adherence to legal and ethical standards.

Related Information

A clear and consistent corporate identity enables recognition for Dubbo Regional Council and supports effective service delivery.

Maintaining quality control and consistency reflects Council's commitment to its corporate brand and reputation. Consistent application of this ensures a unified visual identity and minimises reputational risks.

Council is committed to the principals of engagement outlined in the Community Engagement Strategy, with openness, consistency, accuracy and timeliness in particular, guiding the communication and media related activities.

The objectives of this policy include reflecting the core vision and values of Council, developing a strong and respected identity, ensuring consistent use of the corporate brand and sub-brands and the protection of Council's reputation.

Related Legislation

The policy is to be read in conjunction with NSW Legislation:

- Defamation Act 2005
- State Records Act 1998
- Copyright Act 1968
- Local Government Act 1993
- Privacy and Personal Protection Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Industry Codes of Practice, as identified by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). This includes the Broadcasting Services Act, Commercial Radio Code of Practice, and Community Radio Code of Practice.
- Trade Marks Act
- Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Act 2006

Dubbo Regional Council policy and procedures:

- Dubbo Regional Council's Social Media Policy
- Dubbo Regional Council's Community Engagement Strategy
- Dubbo Regional Council's Code of Conduct Policy

Scope

This policy applies to the Dubbo Regional Council brand in its entirety, covering all forms of representation across physical, digital, and virtual environments. It ensures all efforts are consistent, professional, and positively reflect Dubbo Regional Council's identity. This includes, but is not limited to:

- All Council brands and sub-brands
- Branding guidelines and style specifications
- Logo usage and visual identity
- Advertising and publications
- Event sponsorships, programs, projects, and operations
- Corporate wardrobe and stationery
- Vehicle branding and identification
- Websites and social media platforms
- Signage and general communication tools
- Use of the Council brand on any Council-related materials
- Applications in non-physical and virtual contexts, including avatars, AI interfaces, and other emerging technologies

The policy applies to the Mayor, Councillors, Council staff, contractors, and volunteers.

Policy

All elected representatives and staff employed by Dubbo Regional Council have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.

Councillors and staff are to ensure that any materials produced on behalf of Council project a consistent identity that is applied across Council.

Brand Usage

The Brand Guidelines are designed to help Council maintain a consistent and recognisable brand in all Council communications. Council's brand is detailed in the guidelines and include all details of its registration as a trademark which gives Council the authority to stop uses which detract from the positive characteristics that the brand represents.

Staff and elected representatives are not permitted to use corporate logos and trademarks unless approval is granted by the Marketing and Creative Services team. Council's corporate logos cannot be

reproduced by external parties on any published material or resource without the approval of the Marketing and Creative Services team to ensure all terms and conditions of the Brand Guidelines are adhered to.

Use of Council's branding

All communications by Council staff and Councillors must use the official Council brand.

The Strategic Partnership and Investment branch is responsible for the use of Council's brand. All requests must be approved by the branch to ensure compliance with relevant laws and industry standards, including copyrights and intellectual property. Development of new corporate brands, trade marks or logos must be approved by the Marketing and Creative Services Team.

Council's logos must not be used to endorse or promote third-party products, services or commercial interests unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Before seeking approval, staff must consult the Marketing and Creative Services Team.

All additional brands must follow Council's Brand Guidelines and any applicable separate brand guideline.

Photography, videography and image use

The use of photos, footage and complementary graphic elements is supported by Council to support effective design of communication material.

Where appropriate, Council staff must ensure all permissions for subjects are gained when taking photographs or videos on behalf of Dubbo Regional Council using standard templates.

Images representing, but not limited to, legal matters, contracts or construction projects must be filed in line with relevant legislation, guidelines or Council procedures.

Copyright laws apply to all articles, graphics, or data on the internet. Unauthorised use of a third party's graphic, photo, HTML, or text without permission, may be in breach of copyright.

Accessibility and inclusive communication

Council is committed to making communications and services inclusive and accessible.

Council's digital content meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards, and Council websites include accessibility tools that allow users to customise their experience. Print materials are required to follow Australian accessibility standards, using clear design and formatting to support readability.

In physical spaces, such as signage and wayfinding, Council uses QR codes with text-to-speech and sign language symbols; all signage updated in the future will have these considerations undertaken in the design phase.

Guidelines for design that highlight accessible communication are outlined in Council's Brand Guidelines.

To reach the community effectively, Council is committed to using a wide range of communication channels including social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X, as well as newsletters, local radio, and newspapers. Council staff and councillors also connect with people face-to-face at pop-ups in public spaces. For more targeted outreach, Council provides courtesy notices and doorknocking for residents affected by works, and Council's customer service team is available via phone and digital chat. Council ensures all messages are placed across a range of channels when they go out to community, who may have a preference for one over another.

Management of reputational risk

Council has a responsibility to ensure accurate and relevant information is disseminated or made available to the public in a timely manner. Clear and consistent branding enables the public to recognise Council activities, improving awareness of and access to information about policies, programs, services and events. Maintaining high standards of communications result in the public having more confidence in the credibility and authority of information that clearly identifies Council as its source.

Crisis communication and response

Should a crisis be faced that threatens the reputation of Council, including, but not limited to, data breaches, scandals or legal issues, strategic action should be undertaken both internally and externally to control damage and restore trust within the community.

The Communication Services Team is part of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) to reduce and control the risks from the crisis. A unified response should be created with clear messaging that aligns with company values and legal considerations. During this period the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director will be the spokesperson for the organisation.

Social media and public communications

The Social Media Policy determines all responsibilities around employee social media usage in both a personal and professional capacity.

Public inquiries, complaints process and misinformation responses are to be developed in conjunction with management and the Communication Services team.

Reputational Risk Matrix

Risk category	Risk description	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategy	Responsible division
Service delivery failures	Failure to deliver key services (eg waste management / water)	High	Service monitoring and reporting Engage with service users for feedback	Relevant division
Communication failures	Miscommunication of council decisions or initiatives	Medium	Develop proactive communication strategies Have a dedicated spokesperson	SPE
Project delays	Delays in delivering community projects, leading to negative community sentiment	Medium	Follow the new project management office templates Regular updates to stakeholders	Relevant division

Risk category	Risk description	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategy	Responsible division
Social media backlash	Negative sentiment and backlash on social media platforms	Medium	Follow social media monitoring system Repond to social media commentary. Respond promptly to misinformation and provide correct facts.	SPE
Governance / Legal issues	Disputes leading to negative perseption, lack of transparency, perceived corruption	Low	Ensure legal compliance in all activieis Engage advisors for risk review Ensure regular publication of reports	OP
Ethical violations	Allegations of unethical behaviour by staff	Low	Implement and review strict code of conduct	OP
Failure to engage with community	No opportunities for inclusive and accessible participation and a misunderstanding of their role in the process.	Low	Engagement Plans developed to identify stakeholders, risks and levels of community participation.	SPE

Media

Engagement with the media

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will appoint one or more Council staff members as Media Coordinators. This may be for individual projects or a broader range of activities. The number of coordinators appointed will depend on the nature and scope of the project/s.

The Media Coordinator is responsible for:

- Acting as the main contact for all media enquiries, interview requests and requests to film or photograph Council staff, facilities or events.
- Ensure all media representatives are treated professionally, equally and without bias.
- Guiding the Mayor and Councillors on media interactions to prevent miscommunication or misinformation.
- Ensure media enquiries are promptly addressed by the relevant staff member and that all enquiries and responses are recorded.

- Preparing media releases, statements and quotes prior to their release and ensuring they are appropriately approved.

The following protocols ensure engagement with the media is in line with this policy:

- The Communications Services Team is the first point of contact for all Council staff, Councillors and other representatives on media-related matters.
- If staff or Councillors become aware of issues that could attract negative media attention, they must notify the Manager Strategic Partnerships and Investment or a Communications Services Team member immediately.
- Councillors are entitled to enter public debate and make comment on Council affairs provided they clearly state that such public comment reflects their personal opinion and not that of Council. Once a Council decision is reached, the Mayor is the spokesperson.
- The CEO or a representative is the official spokesperson on matters related to Council operations, staff, and any issue involving Council resources
- The Communication Services Team will determine the most appropriate spokesperson for issues that cross over political and operational lines, in consideration of organisation and reputational risk.
- All media releases and written statements prepared by the Communication Services Team and distributed to the media will be shared with all Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team.
- Distributed media releases will be published publicly on Council's website.
- Council staff must not make political or controversial statements to the media that could reflect poorly on Council or its officials.

Media engagement by Council officials and Councillors must be conducted in a professional, timely and respectful manner.

The roles and responsibilities of Councillors, staff and other officials when working with the Media are outlined in the Responsibilities section of this policy.

Councillors can direct any questions on their obligations around media requests under the policy to the CEO.

Standards of Conduct when engaging with the media

Council officials must comply with the Councils Code of Conduct Policy when engaging with the media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a Council official.

Council officials must not provide information or make comments to the media that:

- are defamatory, offensive, humiliating, threatening or intimidating to other Council officials or members of the public.
- Contains profane language or is sexual in nature
- Constitutes harassment and/or bullying within the meaning of the Code of Conduct Policy or is unlawfully discriminatory
- Is contrary to their duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and their responsibilities under any policies or procedures adopted by the Council to ensure workplace health and safety.
- Contains content about the Council, council officials or members of the public that is misleading or deceptive
- Divulges information that is confidential to Council
- Breaches the privacy of other Council officials or members of the public

- Contains allegations of suspected breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct or Information about the consideration of a matter under the Procedures for the Administration of the adopted Code of Conduct Policy
- Could be perceived to be an official comment on behalf of Council where they have not been authorised to make comment
- Commits the Council to any action
- Violates an order made by a court
- Breaches copyright
- Advertises, endorses or solicits commercial products or business.

Use of media during emergencies

During emergencies, such as natural disasters or public health incidents, a Media Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating media releases, statements and commentary on behalf of the Council and assisting the Emergency and Risk Team as needed.

Councillors, Council Staff and other Council officials must not provide comment or information that is inconsistent with official advice issued by Council and any other agency coordinating the emergency response.

Training on media engagement during emergencies will be provided to Councillors and relevant staff and other Council officials.

The Communications Services Team will be part of Council's Crisis Management Team (CMT) formed in cases of emergency.

Media engagement in the lead up to elections

In accordance with advice issued by the Office of Local Government this policy does not prevent the Mayor or Councillors who are candidates at a Council election from providing comment to the media in their capacity as candidates at the election.

Any media comment provided by the Mayor or Councillors who are candidates at a Council election must not be provided in an advertisement, newspaper column or a radio or television broadcast paid for by the Council or produced by the Council or with Council resources.

Responsibilities

Spokesperson	Roles and Responsibility
<p>Mayor</p>	<p>The Mayor is the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body of the Council, including representing the views of the Council as to its local priorities (section 226(c) of the Local Government Act 1993).</p> <p>If the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor may act as the Council's spokesperson.</p> <p>The Mayor may delegate their role as spokesperson to other Councillors where appropriate, (for example, where another Councillor is best placed to comment, because the issue is of particular interest to them, or it is within their particular area of expertise).</p>
<p>Councillors</p>	<p>As a member of the governing body and as a representative of the community, Councillors are free to express their personal views to the media.</p> <p>When engaging with the media Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must not purport to speak for the Council unless authorised to do so; • must clarify they are expressing their personal views as an individual Councillor; • must uphold and accurately represent the policies and decisions of the Council; • must not disclose Council information unless authorised to do so; and • must seek information and guidance from the CEO or Communications Services Team where appropriate to ensure they have the most up-to-date and relevant information and have considered reputational or other risks. <p>In the interests of promoting a positive, safe and harmonious organisational culture, Councillors should endeavour to resolve personal differences privately and must not prosecute them publicly through the media or social media.</p> <p>Where Councillors become aware of potential issues that could result in media interest, they should provide this information to the CEO / Communications Services Team.</p> <p>Media representatives seeking interviews or comment from individual Councillors, including the Mayor on individual views of Council matters or any other matters should utilise Councillors publicly available contact details on Council's website.</p>

Spokesperson	Roles and Responsibility
Committee Chairpersons	<p>The Committee Chairperson may be the spokesperson for the Committee they Chair regarding a recommendation before a resolution has been made by Council. Once Council makes a resolution the Mayor is the spokesperson.</p>
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	<p>The CEO is the official spokesperson for the Council on operational and administrative matters.</p> <p>The CEO may delegate to other council staff to speak on their behalf where appropriate, (for example, where the delegated staff member has professional expertise regarding the subject matter, or the CEO is unavailable).</p> <p>Approve LGA-wide, sensitive or annual collateral created by the Communication Services and Marketing and Creative Services Teams.</p>
Council Staff	<p>Council staff must not speak to the media about matters relating to the Council unless authorised by the Communications Services Team to do so.</p> <p>If Council staff receive a media enquiry or they are invited to comment to the media on a matter relating to the Council, they must refer the enquiry to the Communications Services Team.</p> <p>Council staff are free to express their personal views to the media on matters that do not relate to the Council, but doing so, must not make comments that reflect badly on the Council or that bring it into disrepute.</p> <p>If authorised to speak to the media, Council staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must uphold and accurately represent the policies and decisions of the Council; and • must seek information and guidance from the Communications Services Team where appropriate before providing comment to the media to ensure they have the most up-to-date and relevant information and have considered reputational or other risks. <p>Where Council staff become aware of potential issues that could result in media interest, they should provide this information to the Communications Services Team.</p> <p>Staff in manager and director roles are required to approve collateral created by the Communication Services and Marketing and Creative Services Team.</p>

Spokesperson	Roles and Responsibility
Communication Services Team	<p>It is the role of the Communication Services Team to handle the overall reputation of Council, public relations, media and media requests and overall perception of Council by stakeholders and the community.</p> <p>The team provides services to managers and project leaders to ensure the community and stakeholder groups are informed of projects, services and decisions that may affect them.</p> <p>Ensures the community receives the most accurate information about the organisation, which is produced in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>The Communications Services Team should be the first point of contact for the Mayor, Councillors and Council staff on all media-related issues that relate to Council as an organisation</p> <p>The team may respond directly to the media on matters that have already been approved and published.</p> <p>Media representatives seeking interviews or comment from Council should contact the Communications Services Team in the first instance.</p> <p>The Communications Services Team facilitate media requests and interviews about operational and corporate matters within DRC, they do not manage personal, political or opinion requests on behalf of the Mayor or Councillors, or requests not directly related to the matters of Council.</p> <p>Whilst elected representatives can make suggestions via the CEO for positive or responsive communication opportunities, Councillors, including the Mayor, cannot direct staff at an operational level to undertake activities or communicate certain messages.</p>
Marketing and Creative Services Team	<p>The Marketing and Creative Services team are directly responsible for the corporate identity, branding, websites and only presence of Council.</p> <p>The team assist staff to promote their activities, services, programs or events to the community through the production of materials that requires graphic design or digital presence, in conjunction with the Communications Services Team.</p> <p>The team provide advice, clarification and confirmation about any proposed use of the logo or brand.</p>

Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Brand Guidelines	The collection of visual and verbal elements representing a brand's values, mission and personality. It encompasses elements such as the brand name, logo, tagline, colours, typography and tone of voice. These attributes associate with a brand and how Council seeks to establish for itself in the mind of the community and other important stakeholders, created and reinforced by Council's Communication Services and Marketing and Creative Services teams.
Brand Image	A consumers' perception of a brand. The image is shaped by their interactions with the brand, including their experiences, opinions, and associations. The brand owner will seek to bridge the gap between the brand image and brand identity.
Brand recognition	A brand that is widely known in the marketplace.
Crisis	An event that threatens the reputation of Council, including, but not limited to, data breaches, scandals or legal issues
Council Spokesperson	A person appointed by the CEO for the purpose of speaking to the Media or community through digital channels on a topic.
Communication Services team	The Communication Services Team function under the Strategic Partnerships and Investment Branch, part of the Strategy, partnerships and Engagement Division. The team includes the Communications Team Leader and Communications Service Partners. The team works closely with the Marketing and Creative Services Team.
Elected representative	Mayor, Councillors, members of staff and delegates of the council (including members of committees that are delegates of the Council).
Emergency	An incident that may impact the Council and Council's roles and responsibilities within the community, including but not limited to, natural disasters and public health incidents.
Logo	A graphic mark or emblem, which may include a tagline. All Dubbo Regional Council logos and trade marks including those representing projects, business and facilities (e.g. Dubbo Regional Airport, Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre, Old Dubbo Gaol, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo Regional Livestock Marketing and Wellington Caves).
Marketing and Creative Services Team	The Marketing and Creative Services Team function under the Strategic Partnerships and Investment Branch, part of the Strategy, partnerships and Engagement Division. The team includes the Marketing and Creative Services Team Leader, Digital Services Partner, Creative Services Partner, Marketing Services Partner and the Marketing and Creative Services Officer. The team works closely with the Communication Services Team.

Term	Definition
Media	Print, broadcast and online media used for communicating information to the public, including, but not limited to, newspapers, magazines, internet publishers, radio, and television broadcasters.
Personal Information	Information or an opinion (including those which forms part of a database in any form) about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion.
Social Media	Online platforms and applications, such as but not limited to social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards, that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Yammer, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr and Wikipedia.

Document Control

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