

Councillor Media Policy November 2025

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Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Amended) and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgment of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)	5
2.	BACKGROUND	5
3.	SCOPE	6
4.	DEFINITIONS	6
5.	POLICY	6
5.1	QUERIES: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS.....	6
5.2	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO).....	7
5.3	MEDIA RELEASES.....	7
5.4	QUOTES.....	7
5.5	PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES	7
5.6	DISTRIBUTION.....	8
5.7	MEDIA TRAINING	8
6.	RESPONSIBILITIES	8
7.	REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW	9
8.	BREACH OF THIS POLICY	9
9.	REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS	9
10.	ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES	10

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

This policy ensures the Mayor and Councillors have clear guidelines and direction around the use of the mass or mainstream media. The media is actively used to inform the wider community of Council's activities, decisions, strategic directions and stance on particular issues by planning, managing and delivering effective and consistent communication.

The Councillor Media Policy aims to:

- ensure that clear and consistent messages are communicated;
- minimise threats to the city's image and create positive perceptions of Greater Dandenong;
- promote trust in local government;
- create a positive image for Council as open, accountable and responsible; and
- ensure Councillors understand Council's media relations protocols and systems and have the skills to appropriately respond to the media if required.

This should be achieved by:

- working cooperatively with media outlets;
- respecting the role and purpose of the media;
- promoting key messages and responding to media enquiries; and
- Councillors undertaking media training.

2. BACKGROUND

Greater Dandenong City Council utilises media outlets to ensure the community is well informed of its services, activities, events, decisions and strategic directions by planning, managing and delivering effective, consistent communications.

In turn, the media provides a vital information source for Council's audiences.

Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to informing and influencing public opinion through building positive relationships with the media. This will ensure Council is represented in a unified and professional manner at every opportunity.

This policy previously covered Councillors' use of social media. This is now covered by the Councillor Social Media Policy, based on a model policy released by the Victorian Local Governance Association in line with local government reforms in 2024.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors of Greater Dandenong City Council who may have interaction with media channels in their official capacity as Councillors.

4. DEFINITIONS

Mass media or mainstream media is a means of mass communication, including radio, television, newspapers, magazines and online versions of such publications or broadcasts, which reach and influence people widely.

Model Councillor Code of Conduct has the same meaning as at section 3 of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

5. POLICY

5.1 Queries: Mayor and Councillors

The mayor is the organisation's official spokesperson for:

- all policy matters and council decisions;
- statewide political issues affecting local government; and
- issues affecting public perception of the city.

The Mayor may ask the Chief Executive Officer, a director, Deputy Mayor or another Councillor to make an official comment on their behalf.

As the chair or delegate of a Council Delegated Committee, Councillors may provide comment on matters relating to that Delegated Committee to the media.

Councillors will not provide information that is either formally declared 'confidential' or deemed 'confidential' or which may be considered privileged to their role as a Councillor to the media under any circumstances.

5.2 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is the official spokesperson for all operational matters pertaining to Greater Dandenong City Council as an organisation and for corporate issues relating to strategic direction such as Council Plan priorities and the annual budget. The CEO may, by agreement, refer a matter to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor for their comments, or otherwise may delegate responsibility to a director or council officer to make an official comment.

The Manager Communications and Customer Experience is available anytime to assist with media queries or responses that Councillors receive directly.

All media queries by journalists to Council must be forwarded to Council's Media and Communications team at media@cgd.vic.gov.au for appropriate follow up and response by the relevant spokesperson under the policy.

5.3 Media Releases

The Media and Communications team is responsible for coordinating the approval and distribution of all media releases on behalf of Greater Dandenong City Council.

5.4 Quotes

The Mayor will be quoted as the official spokesperson in the majority of Council media releases and media responses. The Deputy Mayor other Councillors may be quoted where relevant and with the agreement of the Mayor. The CEO or another senior officer may be quoted on operational matters, or with the agreement of the Mayor.

5.5 Photo Opportunities

Photo opportunities regarding corporate issues will be coordinated through the Media and Communications team. The Mayor and Councillors will be advised of relevant photo opportunities and invited to attend. If the media are not available or unable to make it to a photo opportunity, Media and Communications staff may arrange to take the photograph

and provide it to them. Photos taken by Council staff or Council's contract photographers remain the property of Council and are subject to normal intellectual property and contract conditions.

5.6 DISTRIBUTION

Media releases will be circulated by email to local and major metropolitan media outlets (according to recipient lists managed by the Media and Communications team.). A copy of each release will also be sent out to the Mayor, Councillors and executive team via weekly councillor communications and placed on Council's website.

The Media and Communications team may determine to restrict circulation or target specific media outlets if the matter is specific to a particular audience or is only a matter of local interest.

The Media and Communications team will distribute all media releases, unless otherwise agreed.

5.7 Media Training

Regular training is important to increase the likelihood of Council's messages being accurately carried by the media; preparing for approaches from and interviews with metropolitan media, particularly radio and television; and helping to minimise damage in a crisis situation.

Councillors will be given the opportunity to undertake media training within three months of a general election or as deemed required. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will attend formal media training within two months of being elected. All media training will be arranged by the Media & Communications team.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

All Councillors of the Greater Dandenong City Council are responsible for forwarding media enquiries on Council matters to the Media and Communications team for preparation and verification of a response, in support of the relevant spokesperson under this policy.

The Media and Communications team is responsible for organising media training, providing media advice to the relevant Council spokesperson, preparing media releases and responses to media enquiries, coordinating approvals and dissemination of materials to mass media outlets, media monitoring and record keeping.

The media has a responsibility to submit queries in writing through the Media and Communications team at media@cgd.vic.gov.au

7. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Council commits to monitoring processes, regular information sharing and decision making to understand the overall level of success in this policy's implementation.

A formal media monitoring system is in place to capture any mentions of the organisation and individuals so that appropriate responses can be prepared and/or advice provided.

A periodic review of this policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

8. BREACH OF THIS POLICY

A breach of this policy will constitute a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. It may also breach defamation laws. Penalties may apply.

9. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)

[Local Government Act 2020.](#)

[Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014](#)

[Health Records Act 2001](#)

[Public Records Act 1973](#)

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Greater Dandenong City Council Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Greater Dandenong City Council Information Security Policy

10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update