



Shire of **Ngaanyatjaraku**
ON A JOURNEY

Council Policy

Policy 1.6 – Communication –
Elected Members and Staff

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Council Policy 1.6 - Communication - Elected Members and Staff

Policy Objective

To provide guidance and appropriate controls to facilitate elected members in discharging their duties and define communication protocols between elected members and staff.

Policy Statement

The Shire is committed to maintaining appropriate and effective communication between elected members, staff and the community. To help ensure the Shire is professionally and accurately represented when officers or elected members are making comment in either official Shire or personal capacity, official communications will be consistent with relevant legislation, policies, standards and the positions adopted by Council.

Speaking on Behalf of the Shire

In accordance with legislation, the President is the official spokesperson for the Shire, and the President may also authorise the CEO to speak on behalf of the Shire.

Communications must comply with legislation and the Code of Conduct, and must not bring the Shire into disrepute, imply local government endorsement of personal views, disclose confidential information or compromise the effectiveness of the individual in their local government role (regardless of whether comments are made through a personal or official communication).

Responding to the Media

All media enquiries relating to Shire business must be directed to the CEO (or a person authorised by the CEO) for information to be collated to assist the President or CEO in forming an official response on behalf of the Shire.

Where media directly approach an elected member for a personal statement, they must comply with the 'Personal Communications and Statements on Shire Matters' section of this policy.

Social Media

All comments via social media platforms must be in accordance with the Shire's social media procedure.

Personal Communications and Statements on Shire Matters

Any public statement made by an elected member other than the President, or the CEO where authorised, (in a personal or official capacity) must ensure:

- a) They have clearly stated the view is personal and not representative of the Shire;
- b) Comments comply with legislation, the code of conduct and policies;
- c) Statements are factual;
- d) Reasonable measures are taken to protect the reputation of the Shire;
- e) Statements do not denigrate any decision of Council, or the character or actions of elected members or employees; and
- f) Communications do not contain offensive or distasteful representations toward elected members, staff, community members or the Shire's reputation.

Elected members and staff should maintain awareness that personal comments made privately have the potential to be made public and must ensure all communications do not breach this policy, legislation or the Code of Conduct.

Comments which are made public (whether intended to only be private or otherwise) which breach this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Record Keeping and Freedom of Information

Official communications and transactions must be evidenced and retained as local government records in accordance with the State Records Act 2000 and the Shire's Record Keeping Plan.

Staff and Elected Member Communications

Where an elected member is carrying out an 'Ordinary Citizen Transaction' (OCT), they may direct their enquiry through the administration or other departmental office for processing, as per any member of the public. Elected members must not assume entitlement to preferential treatment, and OCTs must be equitable to that which any member of the public is entitled.

Where an elected member requires information in an official capacity, their request must be directed to the CEO, or to an officer authorised by the CEO.

Staff, other than those authorised by the CEO in writing, are not permitted to contact elected members relating to official Shire business unless:

- a) It is in the course of performing an OCT;
- b) They have been requested to by the CEO or an officer authorised by the CEO; and
- c) The contact is relating to an approved official capacity (such as a committee or working group) and the communication is limited to that business only.

Policy History

Amendments to this Policy

Amendments to this policy require a simple majority decision of Council.

History

Policy reviewed: 24 June 2020

Policy amended: 24 June 2020

Policy reviewed: 28 June 2023

Previous Policy

Policy adopted: unknown

Policy No. 1.6

