



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

June 2018

Version	1.0
Date	June 2018
Prepared by	Hein Basson
Adopted by Board	25 June 2018
Reviewed	
Amended	

INTRODUCTION

Clear and effective communication with residents of the New England Joint Organisation (NEJO) Region is intrinsic to effective policy and service development. In order to progress NEJO's Media and Communications objectives and requirements, the Media and Communication Policy reflects standards of best practice and procedure.

AIMS OF POLICY

The aims of the Media and Communication Policy are to:

- Adhere to the best practice principles of effective communication;
- Ensure the public are informed of NEJO's decisions, policies, programs, events and issues in a timely and accurate manner;
- Portray NEJO in a competent light, so the public perception of the organisation is enhanced;
- Increase community support for the services, activities and initiatives of NEJO;
- Increase community knowledge and confidence, so that the public are aware of the services which NEJO provides;
- Continue to build a consistent and positive relationship with the media and to increase positive media engagement and outcomes within a changing political and communication environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The NEJO Chairperson is the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of NEJO as to its local priorities (Section 226(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*). Therefore, the Chairperson is the official spokesperson for NEJO as far as media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) pertaining to the governing body and politically sensitive issues are concerned.
2. The (Interim) Executive Officer is the official spokesperson for NEJO as far as media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) pertaining to the operational and day-to-day administration functions of the organisation are concerned.
3. The (Interim) Executive Officer has authority, in the normal course of carrying out the responsibilities and requirements of the position, to directly liaise with the media provided that the Chairperson is informed either generally or specifically, of the purpose, format and content of the contact with the media.
4. Under no circumstances, shall the (Interim) Executive Officer be permitted to give personal opinions relating to NEJO issues when dealing with the media.
5. Board Members may make personal comments to the media, but must make it clear that those comments are not representative of NEJO. Board Members shall strive to portray NEJO in a competent light and be mindful not to bring NEJO into disrepute.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

- The (Interim) Executive Officer, on instruction and/or in consultation with the Chairperson, shall prepare media initiatives (statements and releases) and media responses (enquiries) in whatever format is deemed to be most appropriate in respect of the subject or issue, and the circumstantial timeframe. The (Interim) Executive Officer shall submit any statements, releases or responses for the approval of the Chairperson (if pertaining to the governing body and politically sensitive issues), before they are released;
- The (Interim) Executive Officer shall be responsible for the distribution of media releases and media alerts to relevant media outlets, and of media releases to the Chairperson, all Board Members and General Managers of Member Councils;
- Board Members are encouraged to make suggestions about topics for media attention, but the Chairperson or (Interim) Executive Officer shall be ultimately responsible for deciding the topics for engagement with the media;
- All media releases shall be registered within NEJO's electronic records management system and placed on NEJO's website, in either the originating format or in an edited or abridged version, as determined by the (Interim) Executive Officer;
- Timely, accurate and appropriate media initiatives and responses shall be made to emerging NEJO or general Local Government stories and issues. This policy reflects NEJO's understanding that:
 - All contact with the media needs to be carried out on a day-to-day basis without undue delays in order to fulfil the media's news cycle and this is an essential element of practice and procedure;
 - It is best practice for the (Interim) Executive Officer to determine the most suitable format of any media engagement and specifically any written content, and to be informed of all media contact made by the organisation;
 - Obtaining quotes from the Chairperson may not be required other than for written media releases.
- As a general guide, media engagement in any format should support or reinforce NEJO's vision, aspirations and past successes, and reflect the intent of NEJO as indicative in its Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities;
- The (Interim) Executive Officer shall, in consultation with the Chairperson, determine the use of paid advertising when and where deemed an appropriate and cost effective way of communication.

APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all NEJO Board Members.

VARIATION AND REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every two (2) years when a new Chairperson gets elected, to ensure it remains up-to-date and workable. NEJO reserves the right to vary this Policy at its discretion.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION

The Media Policy shall be discussed at a Board Meeting to ensure that all Board Members are aware of the Policy and its requirements. The (Interim) Executive Officer shall distribute a copy of this Policy to media outlets.