
Corporate Communications Policy

CONTROL:

Policy Type:	Administrative
Authorised by:	Council
Head of Power:	Not applicable
Responsible Officer:	Community Sustainability Manager
Adopted / Approved:	Minute No. 2020.11.16-OM-10
Last Reviewed:	November 2020
Review:	November 2022
Version:	2

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

This policy outlines how to appropriately handle corporate communications for Diamantina Shire Council.

1.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES

To ensure workplace participants represent the Diamantina Shire Council through its Corporate Communications channels to reflect its Vision, Mission, Values and objectives. To also ensure workplace participants' use of social media is in keeping with the Values of the Diamantina Shire Council.

1.3 COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY

This Policy will commence on adoption. It replaces all other specific Media and Corporate Communications policies of Council (whether written or not).

2. POLICY

2.1 CONTEXT

Corporate communications are any forms of communication that emanate from the Diamantina Shire Council that would be assessed by any reasonable person as being representative of Council's position on a matter. This can be any communication, such as verbal, email, written, websites, social media posts and any other form of distributing information from Council to stakeholders, residents and the general public.

This policy specifically relates to corporate communications with media (such as radio programs, television journalists, newspapers, online news services including blogs and vlogs as well as the creation and distribution of media releases), online Council communications (for example websites, social media, electronic direct marketing and contributions to discussion forums) and similar situations where information is distributed by or requested from the Diamantina Shire Council that has the ability to inform stakeholders, residents and the general public of Council's activities, plans and policies

This policy does not cover marketing, advertising and promotions undertaken for encouraging transactions at the Council's tourism assets such as Tourist Parks, Visitor Information Centres and other

Corporate Communications Policy

accommodation and attraction facilities, or any other consumer communications. These are covered in the Consumer Communications Policy (to be developed at the time of this policy being adopted).

In the case of a disaster/emergency, for communications guidance, see the Diamantina Shire Council Disaster Management Plan.

2.2 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all Diamantina Shire Council (and its entities) employees, agents, contractors and elected representatives, referred to in this Policy as 'workplace participants'. This policy is not restricted to the workplace or usual work hours.

Anyone handling corporate communications on behalf of the Diamantina Shire Council should be aware they are representing its Values, Mission, Vision and objectives. The integrity of the Diamantina Shire Council is to be maintained online.

3. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 SPECIFIC AND STANDARD

3.1.1.MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTACTS

3.1.1.1 Receiving a Media Request

The CEO is the primary contact for all media enquiries (television, radio, online, print and any other media enquiries). If a media enquiry is received by any workplace participant, this enquiry must be immediately communicated to the CEO, preferably in writing by email. This email should contain the name of the enquirer, media outlet they are from, topic of their enquiry and relevant contact details.

3.1.1.2 Public Spokesperson

The CEO and the Mayor are the public spokespeople for the Council, and are therefore the only people who are able to speak on behalf of the Council to media, unless they delegate this responsibility to another workplace participant. No workplace participant other than the Mayor or CEO may speak to the media about a topic, whether on or off the record, backgrounding, being the public spokesperson or for any other reason other than to obtain relevant information to pass on to the CEO.

When representing the Council to media, the public spokesperson will conduct themselves in a manner reflecting the values of the organisation, as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

3.1.1.3 Producing a Media Release

A method of proactively informing the public of Council's activities and plans is to produce media releases. These documents are generally one page in length, and include quotes from public spokespersons (see 3.1.1.2). These documents are often published verbatim in news articles in print and online, and so should be written in a manner that lends itself to this happening, including being distributed to media in both an uneditable and editable format (to ensure ease of copying).

Media releases should not only be used as a reactive tool to better inform the public of a Council action or activity, but rather should be used as a proactive engagement piece to inform the public of actions Council will take or plans for the future.

Corporate Communications Policy

A template is available in Council's record management program and this is to be used as the basis for each media release.

3.1.2.COUNCIL'S ONLINE PRESENCE

3.1.2.1 Official Council Website

Diamantina.qld.gov.au is the official web presence for the Diamantina Shire Council. This site is Council's opportunity to communicate all items of interest to residents and stakeholders. This includes media releases, corporate documents such as Council meeting minutes, policies, plans and other useful communications.

The Council web presence is able to be updated by various Administration Officers authorised by the CEO. Updates must be in keeping with the Diamantina Shire Council Corporate Style Guide (yet to be produced at the time of this policy being developed). The Web Maintenance Procedure must be followed by those authorised to update the website.

3.1.2.2 Official Council Social Media Presence

Access to Diamantina Shire Council social media accounts will be given to approved staff. Approved staff will only use Diamantina Shire Council owned assets to update Council's social media presences. The content generated through these accounts is for the advancement of Council's objectives as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The Diamantina Shire Council's main corporate social media presence is /DiamantinaShireCouncil on Facebook. In keeping with the style of social media. This is a good place for sharing snippets of interesting information about the Council's activities and news, whilst guiding people elsewhere if they want to find out more (such as to the Council's website or to contact the Shire office). Posts should be in keeping with the Diamantina Shire Council Corporate Style Guide (yet to be produced at the time of this policy being developed), whilst keeping the information light, easy to digest and snappy. Some humour, in keeping with the style guide, is encouraged, being mindful of the values of the Council.

Responses to all comments must be positive, helpful and reflective of the Diamantina Shire Council's Values.

3.1.2.3 Official Council Newsletters

Desert Yarns is Council's official e-newsletter. This is a monthly newsletter sharing community information, including updates from the Mayor, CEO and Department Managers. Council has authorised the following items to feature in Desert Yarns:

- Mayors Message
- Chief Executive Officer Report
- Works Report
- Community Sustainability Report
- Governance and Environment Report
- Employee profiles
- Link to the council meeting minutes;
- Interesting history of the shire and/or its people
- Community Event promotion and coverage
- A page offered to the Health centre, school and police in each town
- NO advertising by businesses or individuals.

Corporate Communications Policy

As with all corporate communications, this document should keep within the guidelines of the Diamantina Shire Council Corporate Style Guide (yet to be produced at the time of this policy being developed). Distribution is as follows:

- Diamantina.qld.gov.au
- Facebook.com/DiamantinaShireCouncil
- Emailed link to the document through the community email distribution lists
- Post to interested parties outside the Shire or outside of the major towns within the Shire
- Copies at the Visitor Information Centres and businesses if they accept

Advertising within the guide is free for not for profit groups and associations (quarter or half page). Private enterprises may advertise within the guide at the following rates:

- Quarter page, \$5
- Half page, \$10
- Full page, \$20

3.1.2.4 Community Email Distribution Lists

Council maintains lists of email addresses of locals who have chosen to receive periodic information (in accordance with anti-spam and privacy laws). These email lists can be used for Council communications only. If non Council entities wish to communicate through Council channels to residents, they are able to purchase advertising in Desert Yarns (see 3.1.1.6), and/or they may request a copy of Council's email lists for use in accordance with the relevant legislation.

3.1.2.5 Other Public Notices and Corporate Communications

From time to time Council may have the need to communicate through other channels, or be asked to respond via methods not covered in this policy. For any and all of these situations, the CEO is the Primary Contact Person (see 3.1.1.1), and the CEO and Mayor are the Public Spokespeople (see 3.1.1.2). Other communications channels may include (but are not limited to) podcasts, blogs, vlogs and similar channels.

3.1.3. PERSONAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

3.1.3.1 Use of Personal Social Media

Diamantina Shire Council acknowledges that employees may wish to use personal social media accounts. Employees must be cognisant that these platforms allow information posted to their sites to be public, even when privacy settings are in place. When using social media, especially whilst at work, employees must be aware that:

- You are bound by Code of Conduct, Code of Confidentiality, Mission Statement and Values
- You must not be on your personal social accounts if it interrupts your work
- If using a device during work and operating plant, the plant must be fully stopped, with the park brake applied and away from hazards
- Your opinions must be stated as being an expression of personal view where referring to the Diamantina Shire Council or its various stakeholders and suppliers, remembering that harmful conduct online may open employees to disciplinary action. Your comments should not explicitly or implicitly suggest they are made on behalf of the Diamantina Shire Council
- You are not to publically criticise a colleague or any Council partners or stakeholder groups

Corporate Communications Policy

For further information on the use of personal communication devices in the workplace, please see the Information Technology policy.

4. REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions shall apply:

Word / Term	Definition
Council	means Diamantina Shire Council.
Workplace participants	all Diamantina Shire Council (and its entities) employees, agents, contractors and elected representatives.

4.2 RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Links to supporting documentation
Public Interest Disclosure Policy
Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy
Code of Conduct
Corporate Plan
Corporate Style Guide
Disaster Management Plan
Information Technology Policy

4.3 VERSION CONTROL

Previous Version Number	Adopted/Approved Date
1	July 20 2020;Minute No. 2020.07.20-OM-7