

## 1. PURPOSE

This policy provides a framework for the effective delivery of all communications undertaken by Horsham Rural City Council.

This policy is supported by the Communications Plan, which guides Council's communications processes.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Horsham Rural City Council believes that clear, transparent internal and external communications is vital in maintaining a positive identity and achieving the best possible outcomes for the community.

This policy demonstrates Council's commitment to providing high quality, accessible and transparent communications to all internal and external stakeholders.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors, staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and any other person who undertakes activities on behalf of Horsham Rural City Council.

## 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Our authorised media spokespersons are the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Media and Communications Officer (or nominate). Other people may be delegated responsibility from time to time.
- 4.2 All public comments on Council matters will be in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the Code of Conduct for staff. For further guidance refer to the Councillor Media Policy (Policy No C04/246) or the Social Media Policy (Policy A04/194).
- 4.3 Our communications are planned, timely and proactive.
- 4.4 Our messages are clear, concise and easy to understand for people of all abilities.
- 4.5 Our information is presented in a variety of formats utilising a range of communications channels to best meet the needs of our community.
- 4.6 Our community has the opportunity to express their views and provide input into our strategies, policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- 4.7 Our stakeholders are provided with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about our strategies, policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- 4.8 We continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our internal and external communications by reporting on the Communications Plan to the Executive Management Team on an annual basis.
- 4.9 During the Council election period, the Council Election Period Policy will govern public communications.

## 5. COMMUNICATION

This policy is included as part of the Staff Induction Process and the Councillor Induction information. This policy will be circulated and promoted via email, staff meetings and in the staff newsletter. It will also be available on the Horsham Rural City Council intranet and website.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY

**Policy Owner:** Manager Governance and Information

## 7. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Code of Conduct	A set of rules outlining the social norms and rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organisation
Communications	The provision of information by Council to its community and internal and external stakeholders
Council Election Period	Defined in the Local Government Act 2020 to be the period from the last day of nominations until the election day
External Stakeholders	People or groups not directly undertaking activities of council including residents, organisations and businesses of Horsham and the wider Wimmera region, the media and other levels of government
Internal Stakeholders	Councillors, staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and any other person who undertakes activities on behalf of Horsham Rural City Council

## 8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Code of Conduct for Councillors	HRCC Website, Intranet
Code of Conduct for Staff	Intranet
Communications Plan	Intranet
Community Engagement Policy (Policy No C04/095)	HRCC Website, Intranet
Council Election Period Policy (Policy No C04/154)	HRCC Website, Intranet
Councillor Media Policy (Policy No C04/246)	HRCC Website, Intranet
Customer Service Charter	HRCC Website, Intranet
Social Media Policy (Policy No A04/194)	Intranet

## 9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment	Review Date
01	22 February 2021	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Policy</li> </ul>	22 February 2024