Media and Communications

Procedure

Our Values: Collaboration Communication Integrity Efficiency Leadership

TOGETHER WE PROUDLY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Version Control and Objective ID	Version No:	Objective ID:
Name of parent Policy / Directive	Insert link to policy / directive in objective	
Procedure Owner	The (insert relevant Branch Manager title) Manager is responsible for authoring and reviewing this procedure.	
Approved by GM on		
Date of Review		

1. Background

A fast-changing media landscape has created opportunities for council, its elected representatives and its staff to optimise modern audience behaviour in order to enhance the quality of life for our community. Our communications mission as an organisation is to use high impact storytelling techniques to engage and grow our audience, and to develop an informed and connected city.

We will turn ideas into influence, creating positive social impact. We will provide capacity for our community to build.

We will understand the media landscape, emerging tools and capabilities, and be cognisant that consumption habits and behaviours are shifting. The introduction of paywalls, new social media channels, technological advances, and new forms of communication provide challenges. Yet, therein lies opportunities for council to innovate and adapt.

Some traditional methods of sharing messages remain effective albeit expensive, including the production of magazines for household delivery. When communicating, we are conscious of all demographics, including an ageing population.

Council will utilise partnerships with news outlets, radio and television to help disseminate messaging about council and the communities with whom we work.

As we move into the future, digital content has become priority. It is immediate and at its most effective, it meets consumer expectation. Digital media offers clarity, enables multi-media messaging, and taps into the current mobile generation.

In essence, this procedure operates under the premise that information – whether that be a transparent view of council services, open discussion about important topics, or a broad view of a functional and inclusive cityscape – is regarded as an essential service.

2. Purpose

This procedure outlines a process to ensure all council-generated content, statements, media interaction, photography, video, social media, publicity and internal communications are prepared and distributed in an efficient and effective manner.

The procedure determines ways to assess organisational priorities, and to determine how to communicate these priorities in the best short-, medium- and long-term interest of council, its elected representatives and its employees.

This procedure ensures council is transparent with its community promotes discussion of topics deemed relevant to the city of Ipswich, manages key messages, promotes an active, healthy and engaged community, and delivers a liveable city.

3. Regulatory Authority

- *Local Government Act 2009, in particular the local government principles which underpin this Act.*
- *Ipswich City Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017*
- *Ipswich City Council 2011-2031 Long Term Community Plan (i2031)*
- *Defamation Act 2005*

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Before publishing any content on any of council's channels, either internal or external, the following four questions should be considered, and all four criteria met:

- Is content related to any of council's core objectives, including economic stability, managing growth, civic pride, healthy and active lifestyle, safety, governance and liveability?

If not, content may be deemed inappropriate for dissemination via council channels. All content which is proposed for dissemination via council channels, primarily but not limited to the regular newsletter, is sent to the mayor, the deputy mayor, chief executive officer, and the mayor's key advisor. This collaborative checking process is designed as a safety net to identify content which may cause reputational risk.

The chief executive officer has the final call on content disputes.

- Is there any statutory or legal reason why the content should not be published?

All information must be released on council channels in accordance with existing legislation. If content breaches any legislative requirement, council will refrain from publishing.

- Is the matter of public interest?

The Australian Law Reform Commission talks broadly about public interest. Council sees public interest as information which will help our community to become knowledgeable about issues which will help them live their lives in a functional, positive manner.

- Is content in the public domain?

Council publishes on its website all documents which will be discussed at committee meetings, and which will be subject to council adoption or otherwise. Committee papers are published as a measure of transparency and accountability.

At the point documentation is public, council is in a position to explain to its communities the reasons for those reports, the information contained therein, and the circumstances under which those reports will be discussed.

In addition, the collation of information adheres to the following ethical considerations:

- The information we deliver to our community must be accurate.
- Information should be collected and shared in a way which demonstrates equity and fairness to ratepayers, residents, councillors and Ipswich City Council staff.
- Information must avoid undue advantage and be publicly responsible in its media endeavour.
- The information we deliver to our community via council channels must be credible and be void of blatant propaganda, falsehoods or mistruths.
- We must operate with integrity and transparency.
- Any advertising must be labelled as such.
- Opinion must be labelled as such.
- We must be honest and authentic with our community, willing to share publicly-available information.
- We should not be shy of generating discussion about sensitive issues within our community.
- We should aim to promote success within our community, whether it be business, sporting or academic.
- We should aim to promote a healthy, active and engaged community.

The Media and Communications Section has a manager and a team of multi-skilled officers who are tasked to reach and build audiences by producing high-quality content of mainstream news standard.

A. Media and Communications Manager

The manager reports to the Manager Media and Stakeholder Relations, and ensures Council's media representation is handled professionally.

The Media and Communications Manager works closely with the executive team to identify issues which are a priority to the organisation, determines key messaging, and prepares content which is presented in a way that can be understood by a mainstream audience.

They also provide expert advice to Councillors and staff on handling issues which arise in the media.

They will work with stakeholders, inside the organisation and external to the organisation where required, to ensure media messaging is accurate. Statements will properly represent all parties who agree to be part of any announcement and will provide attribution as per the priorities in this procedure.

The Media and Communications Manager will:

- Work closely with the Mayor, delegates of the mayor, and the executive leadership team to identify issues which warrant media attention.
- Respond to inquiries which come directly from the media in a timely manner.
- Adopt a consistent, accurate and accountable policy when responding to the media.
- Form and maintain positive relationships with regional, state-wide and national media.
- Take a proactive approach to media planning, working with the content pool to utilise a key events calendar and half-yearly communications plans to think ahead.
- Actively promote Council decisions in a way that people understand.

- Meet audience and community expectations to provide information in a way which is deemed by them to be transparent and authentic.
- Ensure fair and accurate representation of Council across all communication.
- Challenge inaccurate reporting in the media and report suspected media leaks/breaches of the Code of Conduct (officer and councillor) to the council's internal auditors.

B. Internal Communications Officer

The Internal Communications Officer is primarily responsible to inform all staff members within council about issues which will impact their working lives. There is a separate Internal Communications Procedure.

C. Content Pool

A content pool consists of a team leader and Digital Content Officers whose core responsibility is to prepare information for all of council's audiences.

This includes all council-generated content, statements, media interaction, photography, video, social media, publicity and internal communications.

Under the direction of the Media and Communications Manager, the content pool is responsible for creating half-yearly communications plans on behalf of public-facing departments or branches. Each plan will contain opportunities to communicate council-related activities, events and issues.

The content pool will aim to complete tasks within the half-yearly communications plans, understanding that there will occasionally be matters of competing priorities, timing, funding, weather or other mitigating circumstances which prevent the opportunity to communicate a project at any given time.

After half-yearly plans are approved by general managers, members of the Media and Communications team will present opportunities for the Mayor, CEO and/or Councillors to comment on matters of public interest. Attribution may appear within the article, but more commonly adjacent to the article in order to ensure commentary is clearly labelled.

Each time a councillor is nominated as the official council spokesperson, it will be logged in order to create transparency and to promote equity of choice to councillors.

The content pool will:

- Research and produce content to meet publication deadlines.
- Identify stories to appear on council-owned channels, including social media.
- Identify appropriate platforms for each piece of content in order to maximise audience
- Manage council-owned databases
- Prepare and send Ipswich First news alerts each Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
- Prepare half-yearly plans for public-facing departments and branches
- Identify opportunities for the Mayor and appropriate spokespeople to speak about issues on council's behalf
- Establish relationships with community groups, business owners, clubs and other voices within the community who might be able and/or willing to share information which meets public interest criteria
- Oversee council-owned social media accounts
- Assist with issues management as required

Content which was traditionally issued as a media release is now disseminated via Ipswich First. Journalists are encouraged to subscribe to regular news alerts. The content pool will maintain relationships with journalists, writers, bloggers and editors.

It is the responsibility of the Media and Communications Section to keep a database of journalists up to date. When digital content officers identify that an item might be of particular interest to mainstream news organisations, an alert is sent directly to journalists pointing them to information.

On occasions, it will be appropriate to provide information to journalists before it is released on Ipswich First. This will be a decision of the Media and Communications Manager, in consultation with the Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer.

Social Media

The Media and Communications Section is responsible for social media content on Council-owned accounts. The Marketing Section is responsible for paid and promotional content on Council-owned accounts.

There are some council-owned accounts which are independently managed, including – but not limited to – Ipswich Art Gallery, Ipswich Civic Centre, Sport and Recreation, and pages set up to manage individual events.

Councillors are expected to abide by guidelines as set out by the Office of the Independent Assessor: https://oia.qld.gov.au/office-of-the-independent-assessor/resources-for-councillors/social-media-guidelines-for-councillors.html?fbclid=IwAR0g7RH2QRfHgXzX5ngGycArvhQf8Of0gNUD_GMyCANQX6P3dPaDSy7wV54

Requests for the establishment of a new social media account should be made to the Media and Communications Manager for consideration. New accounts must not be established without the Media and Communications Section's approval.

Interaction with commenters: Council takes a view that constructive comment is welcome. There is generally no need to engage with commenters. Officers are not to provide commentary or opinion. Comments may be hidden or users blocked if a comment could potentially defame, embarrass, racially vilify, abuse, harass, offend, is not in line with community standards, and is inaccurate or otherwise at the discretion of the Media and Communications Manager.

Responding to questions: If questions are in direct relation to a council event or activity, council may choose to respond with a factual response. This will only apply to questions which do not require interpretation or clarification. For example, "When does your event start?" can be answered. "Why are you having this event?" would generally not be answered, unless there was a groundswell of community opinion which required council to clarify or explain its position on an issue.

Choosing the right platform: It is the responsibility of the Media and Communications Section to monitor social media trends, and to determine which types of content is best suited to each platform.

In general, social media should be seen as an open, honest and reliable tool for Ipswich City Council, and an effective avenue for the public to provide meaningful, constructive and useful information and opinion.

External Media Engagement

It is the responsibility of the Media and Communications Section to establish a positive and productive relationship with third-party media.

When a report is inaccurate, it is the responsibility of the Media and Communications Section to seek correction.

It is the responsibility of the Media and Communications Section to ensure public information is understood by journalists, broadcasters, and the broader constituency.

Attribution and associated responsibilities

Mayor: The Mayor has a leadership role as council's primary media spokesperson on strategic matters. The Media and Communications Section has a responsibility to be apolitical. In first instance, all strategic matters which require council attribution will be presented to the Mayor, as will opportunities to front the media. The Mayor can choose to delegate attribution to the Deputy Mayor, Councillors, the CEO, General Managers or staff as deemed appropriate.

Deputy Mayor: If the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor will assume the responsibilities.

Councillors: Councillors can be quoted on issues under delegation from the Mayor. If councillors speak to the media without such delegation, they are required to declare that they are speaking as an individual councillor, and not necessarily on behalf of council. It is not appropriate for the Media and Communications Section to attribute any statements, in any forum, which reflect the personal or political opinion of councillors on any issue. The Media and Communications Section will not prepare statements which are deemed to be for the personal or political gain of councillors.

Chief Executive Officer: The CEO has a leadership role as council's primary media spokesperson on operational matters. In first instance, all operational matters which require council attribution will be presented to the CEO, as will opportunities to front the media. The CEO can choose to delegate attribution to General Managers, Branch Managers or staff as deemed appropriate.

General Managers: General Managers are responsible for making sure staff in their portfolios are aware of the media policy and ensuring any contact from the media is referred directly and immediately to the Media and Communications Section. They will be required to liaise with media officers to ensure information is accurate, and will respond to media requests in a timely manner.

Branch managers: Branch managers are responsible for making sure staff in their portfolios are aware of the media policy and ensuring any contact from the media is referred directly and immediately to the Media and Communications Section. They will be required to liaise with media officers to ensure information is accurate, and will respond to media requests in a timely manner.

Council officers: Council employees are encouraged to refrain from commenting publicly about council business, policy, activities or councillors. They might however, be called upon to provide professional opinion to aid in the preparation of a media release or statement. There might also be occasions where specific expertise is technical and warrants quotation. Before these quotes are issued publicly, they must be approved by their general manager.

Council employs a vast and diverse range of expertise. This is valuable IP. In some instances, it will be deemed beneficial to the organisation to share this IP to the community. For example, "five tips about how to maintain a perfect lawn" should be attributed to a subject matter expert. Before this information is released publicly, it must be approved by their general manager.

Similarly, information about the local community won't always warrant council comment.

5. Key Stakeholders

- The Mayor and Councillors
- Executive Leadership Team
- Branch Managers
- Staff

6. Education and Training Requirements

All those who are expected or invited to speak to the media on behalf of council will receive media training.

The Mayor, Councillors and members of the Executive Leadership Team will be provided formal training, either from an external provider or a member of the Media and Communications team.

Staff will be provided guidance by a member of the Media and Communications team.

Training will include, but not be limited to:

- Information about the media landscape
- Being part of a press conference
- Techniques to help stay on message
- What to say, and words to avoid
- Techniques to help improve appearance on camera
- How to respond in an interview scenario – print, digital, television or radio

All Media and Communications staff are required to be trained in media law, privacy law, copyright law and any other legal information which pertains to the collating and publishing of content.

When publishing information, it is important to note that officers are not protected by Shield Laws which are designed to protect journalists.

7. Procedure

<u>The preparation of half-yearly plans</u>

Step 1.0	**Planning meeting** • Media and Communications Manager or delegated officer will organise appropriate time to discuss with Department, Branch or Section manager or delegated officer items for inclusion in the plan, either January-June or July-December. • This is to be conducted in May or no later than 15 June for the July-December plan, and November or no later than 15 December for the January-June plan. • Discuss issues which might arise – positive or otherwise – which might warrant media coverage. Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Devise draft action plan** • Media and Communications Manager or delegated officer to construct a

	month-by-month action plan, listing relevant events, ideas and opportunities. • The time required to action each plan will be documented and referenced against available resources. • List the required actions for each party. • Include deadline requirements. • Include any detail which might be required in order to complete each task. • Include the correct contact points to ensure fluent and accurate sharing of information. Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Action plan approval** • Draft action plan to be approved by Media and Communications Manager and relevant General Manager. • Alterations made as required and agreed. Proceed to Step 4.0
Step 4.0	**Add items to the Mayor and CEO's individual plans** • A separate plan will be drafted for both the Mayor and CEO. These plans will include opportunities to be identified following the completion of each Department, Branch or Section Communications Plan. • The Media and Communications Manager or delegated officer will duplicate relevant items into the half-yearly plans of the Mayor and CEO. • For example, if there is an event launch which requires attendance of the Mayor, that event would be duplicated into the Mayor's half-yearly Communications Plan. • The Mayor or CEO may choose to delegate items to Councillors, General Managers or staff. If items are delegated by the Mayor or CEO – Proceed to Step 5.0 If no items are delegated – Proceed to Step 6.0
Step 5.0	**Add items to Councillor plans** • A plan will be created for each councillor as required. • The Mayor and/or CEO will nominate items which should be added to the Communication Plan for each councillor. Proceed to Step 6.0
Step 6.0	**Enact plans** • The full suite of half-yearly plans will provide the Media and Communications Branch with a "to do" list each month.

	• Media and Communications Branch officers to work collaboratively with delegates from each Department, Branch or Section to complete each task. • Media and Communications Branch officers to work with the Mayor, CEO or their delegates to ensure opportunities are met and delivered. Proceed to Step 7.0
Step 7.0	**Review plans** • Plans are to be reviewed by the relevant Department, Branch or Section each month, and alterations communicated to Media and Communications officers. • The Mayor, CEO or delegates will be notified of alterations by Media and Communications officers. • During meetings, as outlined in Step 1.0, the progress of active Communications Plans should be discussed, outlining successes or feedback. **End of process**

Request content to be completed

Step 1.0	**Log request** • If anybody sees or knows of something they feel will be of interest to the broader community, they should inform the Media and Communications Section. • Send details – including a description of the event or incident, when it happened or is likely to happen, and contact details for more information – to ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au. • There is no need to duplicate information which has already been included in half-yearly plans. Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Devise draft action plan** • An officer from the Media and Communications Section will contact the submitter of the request to discuss potential options. • There will be a determination whether the information is appropriate for an article, and whether there needs to be accompanying media such as social media, a press conference, or other platforms. If it is not considered appropriate for a full news story or requires additional types of media presence, Proceed to Step 3.0 If it is deemed appropriate for a full news story, Proceed to Step 4.0.

Step 3.0	**Consider alternative options** • Different platforms lend themselves to certain information. For example, it might be deemed appropriate to promote a business breakfast on LinkedIn. • A Media and Communications officer will provide advice to determine the avenues and platforms which best suit the information at hand. • The information will be posted to the appropriate channel, or referred to the appropriate alternative branch. If an article is still required, Proceed to Step 4.0 **If an article is no longer required, End of process**
Step 4.0	**Prepare article** • A Media and Communications Section officer will seek information which is required to complete an article. This may require contact details for third parties. • The officer will prepare an article they consider to be legal, factually accurate and in the best interest of council and/or the city of Ipswich. • A draft will be circulated to subject matter experts and/or stakeholders for fact checking and approval. Proceed to Step 5.0
Step 5.0	**Publish article** • The article will be published on Ipswich First. • If the Media and Communications officer believes the article will be of particular interest to the media, they will send an alert to the media database. Proceed to Step 6.0
Step 6.0	**Monitor posts** • If an article is published, there will likely be comments on social media and other platforms where published. • It is the combined responsibility of Media and Communications staff, and the subject matter expert to monitor comments. • It is the responsibility of Media and Communications Section staff, when alerted to a sensitive comment, to react according to policy and procedure. This may require hiding the comment, or in extreme cases banning the user. • Articles will be monitored by responsible parties up to 24 hours after they are published. **End of process**

Request a Social Media Post

Step 1.0	**Send request** • Events and other social media posts are to be sent to Ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au. • Include details of the post. If it is an event, include a time, venue, cost and other relevant information. • Include contact details of the person submitting information. Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Draft post** • A post will be drafted for approval by subject matter experts and/or General Managers. Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Post scheduled** • The post will be scheduled to appear live, in accordance with daily priorities. Proceed to Step 4.0
Step 4.0	**Monitor post** • If an article is published, there will likely be comments. • It is the combined responsibility of Media and Communications staff, and the subject matter expert to monitor comments. • It is the responsibility of Media and Communications staff, when alerted to a sensitive comment, to react according to policy and procedure. This may require hiding the comment, or in extreme cases banning the user. • Articles will be monitored by responsible parties up to 24 hours after they are published. **End of process**

Request for Urgent Communication

Step 1.0	**Notification of issue** • If there is a need for urgent communication – information which is not included in half-yearly plans – the Media and Communications Manager should be notified of the issue.

	Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Stakeholder engagement** • General Managers and/or the Chief Executive Officer, and/or the Mayor will be engaged to determine how the issue will be treated, and the best platforms for information dissemination. • Stakeholders will determine the priority. Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Action plan approval** • If the Mayor and/or CEO are satisfied that the issue is urgent, information will be released to owned audiences and the media immediately. • Notes will be prepared for the Mayor and/or CEO. • If the matter is considered a crisis, a communications plan will be drawn for approval by the Mayor and/or CEO. • All information will be approved by the relevant General Manager, the Mayor and/or the CEO. Proceed to Step 4.0
Step 4.0	**Monitor posts** • If an article is published, there will likely be comments on social media and other platforms where published. • It is the combined responsibility of Media and Communications staff, and the subject matter expert to monitor comments. • It is the responsibility of Media and Communications staff, when alerted to a sensitive comment, to react according to policy and procedure. This may require hiding the comment, or in extreme cases banning the user. • Articles will be monitored by responsible parties up to 24 hours after they are published. Proceed to Step 5.0
Step 5.0	**Ongoing publicity** • The Media and Communications Manager, in consultation with the Mayor and CEO, will assess the needs for follow up information and ongoing publicity. **End of process**

Submit Story Idea

Step 1.0	**Identify "public interest" items** • It is expected that council staff will be the eyes and ears of the organisation within the community. • Employees are encouraged to identify information from the community which meets the public interest criteria listed within this procedure. Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Share item** • Email information to ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au. Include the detail of your idea, what has happened, who is involved, and importantly, a contact number for someone who might be able to provide a digital content officer with more information. Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Feedback** • A digital content officer will respond with advice, whether the story idea meets the expectations of our audience, how we might be able to leverage the idea and if completed, where and how the story will be promoted. **End of process**

Submit an event

Step 1.0	**Determine event status** • Determine the audience of any event which will be publicised on council owned channels, or presented to external media organisations for consideration. • Only events which are open to the public will be publicised. Proceed to Step 2.0
Step 2.0	**Share item** • Email information to ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au. Include details of the event, what will happen there, who is involved (the target audience), and importantly, a contact number for someone who might be able to provide a digital content officer with more information. Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Creation of posts** • Event posts will be created in the Ipswich First What's On section, and

	promoted via social media. • Events with tourism appeal can be promoted via Discover Ipswich. • An "event" can be created in Facebook for events which have mainstream audience appeal. Proceed to Step 4.0
Step 4.0	**Monitor posts** • If an event is published, there will potentially be comments. • It is the combined responsibility of Media and Communications staff, and the subject matter expert to monitor comments. • It is the responsibility of Media and Communications staff, when alerted to a sensitive comment, to react according to policy and procedure. This may require hiding the comment, or in extreme cases banning the user. • Articles will be monitored by responsible parties up to 24 hours after they are published. **End of process**

<u>Submit an advertisement to Ipswich First</u>

Step 1.0	**Determine availability** • An Outlook Calendar, titled Ipswich First, displays all advertising bookings. Open calendar to see available dates and space. Advertising will only be accepted for council-owned business. • Advertising is available in four key position types – News Alert Banner 1 (the highest positioned banner ad within direct mailed news alerts, distributed Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday); News Alert Banner 2 (the downpage positioned banner ad within the direct mailed news alerts, distributed Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday); Homepage banner (located next to the masthead on Ipswich First website); Multiple M-rec positions (up to 5 available positions at the righthand column of the Ipswich First website). If a desired position is not available, Proceed to Step 2.0 If a desired position is available, Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 2.0	**Log priority case** • There may be instances when low priority issues occupy pre-bookings for advertising space. • Notify the Media and Communications Manager, who will determine – in consultation with the Mayor and/or CEO and/or General Managers – the priorities of the organisation.

	• Stakeholders will be notified of the outcome. • Other options may be sought. If the desired advertising is not deemed a priority, and no options are available, End of process. If the desired advertising is deemed a priority, Proceed to Step 3.0 If alternative advertising space is available, Proceed to Step 3.0
Step 3.0	**Book space** • Send a brief description of the desired advertising, inclusive of desired dates to appear, to ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au. • A Media and Communications Officer will book dates to appear in the calendar on your behalf. Proceed to Step 4.0
Step 4.0	**Create artwork** • It is the responsibility of the stakeholder booking the advertisement to organise artwork. • Banner advertisements are 728 pixels x 90 pixels; m-rec advertisements are 300 pixels x 250 pixels, and should be supplied in jpg format at 300dpi resolution. • This can be done as a Marketing Request. • This can be commissioned externally or created in-house, but should meet standards as set by the Marketing Procedure. • Artwork will be sent to ipswichfirst@ipswich.qld.gov.au and be accompanied by a link (the destination). Proceed to Step 5.0
Step 5.0	**Publish advertising** • A Media and Communications Officer will publish advertising on behalf of the stakeholder. • NB: Unless an ad tracking link is provided, the Media and Communications Section is not yet in a position to monitor advertising performance, or associated analytics. • The Media and Communications Section will however provide an advertising equivalent rate which can be included in post-campaign reporting. **End of process**

8. Monitoring and review

This procedure will be reviewed every 12 months by the Media and Communications Manager.

There will be a number of measures monitored to help gauge the success of the current Media and Communications strategy:

- Readership numbers on council-generated content.
- Sentiment evaluation via iSentia
- Monthly evaluation of Google Analytics to monitor Ipswich First and Ipswich City Council websites
- Monitoring social media audience metrics, particularly Facebook
- Evaluating service delivery response in alignment with delivery of half-yearly plans

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10. Related documents

Media Policy

Internal Communications Procedure

Councillor Social Media Guidelines: https://oia.qld.gov.au/office-of-the-independent-assessor/resources-for-councillors/social-media-guidelines-for-councillors.html?fbclid=IwAR0g7RH2QRfHgXzX5ngGycArvhQf8Of0gNUD_GMyCANQX6P3dPaDSy7wV54

11. Definitions

Half-yearly plans

Communications plans will be created for each Department from January-June and July-December each year. Departments will be required to include:

- Items of community interest which require commentary or explanation
- Items of community interest which require photography
- Items of community interest which require video
- Items of community interest which require a member of council to publicly respond to the media in the form of a press conference or stand-up
- Items of community interest which require a member of council to public respond in the form of a one-on-one interview, including the possibility of print, radio or television
- Event openings and launches
- Presentations on behalf of council, such as “keys to the city”

Items will be prioritised in terms of likely media exposure, or audience reach. Items of broad interest will be presented to the content pool for possible inclusion in newsletters.

It is understood that the half-yearly plan is a guide. The plan does however, include issues – positive or otherwise – which might not warrant proactive media attention, yet which might require reactive media strategy.

Sensitive issues

General managers will advise the Media and Communications Manager at weekly ELT meetings of any potentially sensitive media issues as soon as they become apparent. These are issues which may cause reputational damage to the organisation.

Upon determining sensitive issues, the Media and Communications Manager or nominee will consult immediately with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, General Managers or Executive Officers as determined by the Mayor and/or CEO, or in their absence their deputies.

Media Release

Media releases are becoming an outdated form of communicating with the media. Traditionally sent as a statement to all media outlets, they are becoming engulfed in an abundance of email and often receive a cursory glance from editors.

There are however, circumstances where written statements are valuable – for media calls/conferences, for official media statements such as an emergency or crisis scenario, or to provide the media with photo/vision opportunities.

Article

A more effective way in modern media is to write stories/articles in a way you feel your audience will be willing to consume. This is something we traditionally might have expected a news organisation to do.

Presenting stories in a consumable fashion provides two key advantages:

1. We can distribute them to owned audiences.
2. They are more likely to be shared to a broader audience by media outlets and social media.

Explainer

This is an article which presents the facts on a particular issue. It is designed specifically to educate an audience. It does not present bias. For example, it might explain how waste is disposed, or how development applications are processed.

Video

It is great to tell stories in visual format. However, the editing component of video is highly resource-intense. The use of video as a storytelling mechanism should be restricted to content which will reach a broad audience.

Podcast

Podcasting is seeing a resurgence. If a particular topic lends itself to this medium, council is willing to explore ideas.

Live streaming

Live content seems to be declining in popularity, unless it is a “breaking” issue – ie, something happening right now. An example when Council could consider live streaming an event might be during a news conference with the mayor.

Ipswich First

Ipswich First is a council-owned website. Content produced under the Ipswich First brand is disseminated via a variety of methods, including but not limited to:

- News alerts sent to an opt-in database three times a week. Each news alert usually contains a minimum of five articles of community interest. There will be times when a solitary story is sent to the database, for example in times of a natural disaster or extreme weather alert.
- A website, www.ipswichfirst.com.au.
- Social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube and Instagram.

All content produced by the content pool is open source, unless otherwise stated. This means any news organisation is able to duplicate – royalty-free and credit-free – content into their own product, whether that be print, digital or otherwise.

The mission of Ipswich First is to develop community pride, provide a platform for discussion, encourage inclusion, and report matters of economic, population or urban growth.

Content produced under the Ipswich First brand is to meet one or more of the following public interest criteria:

(i) To create awareness of decisions made by council;
(ii) To promote council services or activities;
(iii) To create community discussion about issues impacting the city of Ipswich;
(iv) To gather feedback from the community about issues which are important to growth of the city;
(v) To promote activity within the Ipswich area which advocates economic, sporting or academic success;
(vi) To promote activity which leads to or encourages a healthy, active and engaged community;
(vii) Include events in an extensive "What's On" calendar.

Ipswich First is the council's primary avenue to communicate detailed information to the Ipswich constituency.

Council should be careful to declare any perceived conflict of interest. For example, if a developer approaches council to work with them on an article – perhaps following a purchase, on a project launch, prior to lodging an application or prior to commencing construction, council must include a disclaimer if works or planned works are pending any sort of approval.

Discover Ipswich

This is the City of Ipswich tourism "industry cluster market development" brand to support the objectives of the city's destination plan in growing the visitor economy and employment.

Content is produced for an annual magazine, and an "always on" website. The brand also has social media channels.

Content produced under the Discover Ipswich brand is to meet one or more of the following public interest criteria:

(i) To increase visitation to the City of Ipswich;
(ii) To promote the products and/or services of ITON members;
(iii) To promote council services or activities related to the visitor economy;
(iv) To promote city events and/or activities related to the visitor economy;

(v) Create community discussion about issues promoting visitation to the city of Ipswich;
(vi) To gather feedback from the community about issues which are important to growth of the city related to the visitor economy and employment in the city;
(vii) To promote activity at a national or SEQ region level which advocates economic, sporting or academic success in relation to the visitor economy;
(viii) To promote activity which leads to or encourages a healthy, active and engaged community in relation to the visitor economy;
(ix) Include events in an extensive "What's On" calendar.

Quarterly magazine

Each quarter, a printed seasonal magazine is sent to households of Ipswich.

The magazine is designed to inform residents about council-owned and managed events and activities which are planned in the city over a three-month period.

In a streamlined approach to content, magazines also publish stories previously published via Ipswich First which are deemed of interest to the broader community.

The magazine is managed by the Marketing Branch.

Owned media

Council manages multiple audiences. These audiences are curated via databases, social media channels or memberships. Council is able to send messaging relevant to each of these audiences, which means they are valuable to the reputation of the organisation.

Advertising

There is a range of advertising inventory which has been created on Ipswich First assets, including banner and m-rec positions on news alerts, and on the website. These are available for use by council-owned interests, facilities, events, sponsorship arrangements or community engagement.

Similarly, advertising space for council messaging is available in quarterly magazines. This is the responsibility of the Marketing Section.

Advertising inventory is not available, or for sale, to external businesses. Neither is it available for personal interests or potential personal gain of staff or councillors.

Discover Ipswich does however, offer advertising to ITON members to subsidise the cost of producing the magazine.

ITON members are given space to advertise their business activities on the Discover Ipswich website.

12. Process Model

Steps in the process model should be numbered to align with the steps in the procedure.

(Delete this section if a process model is not required)