Media Relations Policy

QA REF	M't P&P No 11
Introduced	28th May 2024
Last Reviewed	28th May 2024
Next Reviewed	28th May 2027
Policy Owner:	Manager Corporate Services
Endorsement:	Endorsed by the Executive Team on 09 April 2024.
Board Approval:	Adopted by the Board of Directors at a meeting of the Board on 28 May 2024. This policy is valid from the date of Board approval and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until such time as formally revoked by resolution at a meeting of the Board of Directors.
Next Review Due:	28th May 2027

1. Purpose

This policy aims to establish guidelines for engaging with local and regional media outlets to maximise media coverage's benefits while minimising misrepresentation risks.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, board directors, and volunteers of the Mallee Accommodation and Support Program (MASP) involved in media interactions.

3. Policy Statement

It is MASP's policy to respond to appropriate and reasonable media questions/inquiries effectively, accurately, and on a timely basis to help promote public understanding of our services, activities, and issues. Responsibility for media engagement and strategy rests with the Communications Coordinator, part of the Corporate Services team, reporting to Manager – Corporate Services.
MASP collaborates with the media to:

A) Advocate on social and community issues central to our purpose and values.
B) Represent and advocate on behalf of MASP's clients.
C) Promote the work of MASP and raise awareness of its services.
D) Inform the public about the range of services offered by MASP.
E) Facilitate fundraising efforts and acknowledge donors and fundraisers.

3.1 Media Representation

- The Communications Coordinator manages and assesses the media opportunity, identifying the most relevant spokesperson and ensuring that all necessary approvals and consent requirements are considered in developing a response.
- Designated spokespersons, including the CEO, Board directors, and staff, may engage with the media on behalf of MASP. Before any media engagement, individuals must consult the Communications Coordinator, who has experience in media relations. Staff members require prior CEO approval before representing MASP in media interactions.

- Nominated spokespersons will work with the Communications Coordinator to determine key messages and ensure any timelines or deadlines to meet media requests are delivered upon.

3.2 Media Releases & Conferences

- The Communications Coordinator is responsible for the ongoing management and implementation of a proactive program to keep the local media informed, including but not limited to issuing MASP's media releases and contacting journalists about potential stories.
- The Communications Coordinator will produce and update a list of key contacts for distribution to local press, radio, and TV stations. The Communications Coordinator can also be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.
- Board directors, CEO and managers can be quoted in media releases. Where MASP is a partner in a joint release, an appropriate external person may be quoted alongside the authorised MASP spokesperson.
- The Communications Coordinator shall coordinate all media conferences for MASP.
- Staff members must refrain from approaching the media directly. They must provide the Communications Coordinator with information or opportunities for the media instead.

3.3 Authorisation

- Approaches from all press, radio or TV stations or specialist press should be directed to the Communications Coordinator, who will discuss the nature of the story and then contact the appropriate staff member, asking them to respond.
- The CEO shall authorise all media releases from MASP, and the Communications Coordinator is responsible for publishing them on MASP's website.
- All news releases and significant written statements must also be approved by the CEO.

3.4 Complex and/or contentious issues

It is important to obtain advice from the Communications Coordinator (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) on any issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time. In such a situation, the Communications Coordinator will work with the relevant staff, CEO and Board members to produce a communications plan to ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed.

3.5 Speaking Off the Record

CEO, Board directors and all staff should be aware that all conversations with a member of the media, whether an interview is agreed upon or not, are treated as on the record and can be attributed to them.
Speaking off the record can be useful to provide information for the purposes of briefing on an issue in which MASP is not involved. The staff member and journalist must agree to this prior to the discussion.

3.6 Confidentiality and Preparedness

Staff, the CEO, and Board directors must adhere to MASP's confidentiality policy regarding client information. They are encouraged to deliver public presentations promoting MASP's work while ensuring clarity regarding their representation of the organisation. Proper briefing and guidance by the line manager and Communications Coordinator are essential before engaging with the media on any MASP-related issues.

3.7 Photos

No photos of clients or employees should be released to the public via advertising, news media, or the web without the approval of the Communications Coordinator, who shall satisfy themselves that MASP's confidentiality policy has been observed and publicity releases have been signed. Personal information about individuals cannot be provided to third parties without their consent.

3.8 Representation Awareness

Staff and Board directors should be mindful that they represent MASP when interacting with the media. They should refrain from commenting or participating in activities that may compromise MASP's reputation.

3.9 Advising of Press Contact

Where a staff member, the CEO, Board directors or volunteer has had any interaction with media representatives on issues related to MASP, it is the responsibility of the person concerned to notify the Communications Coordinator and to provide the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.

3.10 Issue and Crisis Management

- The Communications Coordinator monitors media and social media activity and identifies potential issues. If a MASP staff member becomes aware of an issue that has the potential to develop further, this should be brought to the attention of the Communications Coordinator as soon as possible.
- In the event of a crisis or unexpected issue, the Communications Coordinator, in collaboration with the Corporate Services Manager and designated area Manager, will put into place appropriate crisis management procedures to ensure MASP's communication with the media is appropriately managed.
- Statements made during a crisis situation may have far-reaching effects, including potential use in legal proceedings. It should, therefore, be noted that comments contrary to the provisions of this policy could prejudice MASP's ability to communicate in the most appropriate way and compromise the professionalism of MASP's image.

3.11 Reporting

The Communications Coordinator will compile quarterly reports on MASP Media activity. These reports will be part of the Communications Report presented to the Board.

3.12 Breach

Where a member of staff breaches this policy, this may lead to disciplinary action, which may range from a warning up to termination of employment, depending on the severity of the breach.

In the event of a Board Director breaching this policy, this may lead to them being removed from their position on the Board in accordance with MASPs Constitution and Company Charter.

4 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Board Chair and Board Directors	• Allowed to engage with media. • Board Directors to engage with and notify the Board Chair prior to engaging with the media. When there is no ability to notify prior to engagement, this should be done as soon as practicable after the engagement. • Responsibility to notify the Communications Coordinator prior to engaging with the media. When there is no ability to notify prior to engagement, this should be done as soon as practicable after the engagement. • Seeking approval from the CEO to represent to conduct media representation. • Provide any relevant information supporting the development of crisis management procedures.
All Staff	• Allowed to engage with media. • Responsibility to notify the Communications Coordinator prior to engaging with media. • Seeking Approval from the CEO to conduct media representation. • Provide any relevant information supporting the development of crisis management procedures.
CEO	• Authorisation of media releases and statements. • Approval of filming the premises. • Engagement with media and media representation.
Communications Coordinator	• Development of all media releases • Management of media contact lists and distribution of media releases. • Development and collaboration with cross-functional teams on media releases and statements. • Coordination of media enquiries and media conferences, including assessment of the enquiry and nomination of the spokesperson. • Reporting on media relations activities.

	• Providing advice and direction to all staff and managers on media representation. • Development of communications plan for complex/contentious issues. • Monitoring media activity and potential issues/opportunities. • Coordination of crisis management procedures.

5 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

Media	Includes all forms of media, including print, broadcast, and online.

6 Related Documents

This policy is implemented in conjunction with the following related documents:

Policies	• Advocacy Policy • Board Confidentiality Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Confidentiality & Privacy Policy • Human Rights Policy • Organisational use of Social Media Policy
Procedures	
Instructions and Guidelines	• MASP Brand Guideline
Forms and Templates	• List all related MASP Forms and Templates

7 Legislation and other References

Related Legislative Acts and other sources of Authority	• Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Defamation Act 2005
Related Standards, Guidelines and other References	• What to do in a media crisis • Risk Management Framework