



ACT
Government

Media and Communication Policy

Office of Industrial Relations and
Workforce Strategy

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)

Policy Number: 02/2024

Issued: February 2024

Contents

Media and Communication Policy.....	1
Contents	2
Media and Communication Policy.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Application.....	3
Background.....	3
Principles	3
Responsibilities	4
Key Legislative Provisions	4
Further Information.....	5
Review	5
Approval Authority	5

Media and Communication Policy

Purpose

1. To set out high level principles and supporting guidance to assist ACT Public Service (ACTPS) employees and ACT Public Sector members (**'Public Employees'**)¹ understand their responsibilities when dealing with media and communication as part of their employment as a public employee.

Application

2. This policy sets out Whole of Government instructions issued by the Head of Service under the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#) (PSM Act) and applies to all public employees.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Media and Communication Guidance](#) issued by Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), and with directorate and agency specific policies.

Background

4. The provision of cohesive and timely media and communication is fundamental to an open, transparent and responsive relationship between the ACTPS and the ACT community.
5. It is through the use of media releases, media alerts, social media and attendance at public forums that the ACTPS is able to announce or advise the community of directorate or Ministerial initiatives or events, or provide information.

Principles

6. **Media Requests** – all media requests, including media enquiries, media releases, media alerts and requests for comment or interviews are to be managed by a Directorate Media Adviser or Directorate Communication team.
7. To ensure consistent messaging across the ACTPS, the CMTEDD Communications and Engagement team must review any media request that is Whole of Government in nature.
8. **Speaking at Public Forums** – a public employee attending a public forum to present or speak in an official capacity on behalf of the Directorate may only do so when;
 - a. their appearance is endorsed by the Director-General, their delegate, or the appropriate Director/Executive Director; and
 - b. their presentation and/or speaking points have been approved in line with directorate protocols.
9. Presentations that are general, topical or contentious should be prepared in consultation with the Directorate Communication team and be approved by:
 - a. Director/Executive Director of the relevant line area(s); and
 - b. Director-General (or Deputy Director-General if delegated).
10. Presentations that are highly technical should be prepared by the relevant line area and

¹ Public employee(s) means an officer, temporary employee, casual employee, public sector member, senior executive member, board and committee members and contractors or consultants exercising a function of a public sector entity.

approved by the Director/Executive Director of that line area.

11. If approved to present or speak in an official capacity at a public forum, the public employee must only speak on those topics approved. Should a question be asked that could be reasonably determined to fall outside of the approved topics, the public employee should advise they are not authorised to speak on that matter.
12. If media are known to be attending the event, the Directorate Communications Team should be advised about the public employee's attendance at the event prior to it occurring.

Responsibilities

13. **Public Employees**— it is the responsibility of public employees to provide any media requests directly to their Directorate Media Advisor or Directorate Communication team for action. It is expected that enquiries will be responded to within the timeline advised by the Directorate Media Advisor or Directorate Communication team.
14. When attending public forums, public employees should consider their obligations under Section 9 of the PSM Act not to disclose information obtained through their employment with the ACT Government that they are not authorised to disclose. It is only appropriate for a public employee to make comment in an official capacity at a public forum when they have approval to participate in discussions relating to their directorate.
 - a. For example, it is important for public employees not to comment on whether any projects are being considered in a budget context.
15. Public employees who are attending public forums (whether in an official or unofficial capacity) should be aware of the requirement to adequately manage any conflicts of interest. Should a public employee attend a public forum in an unofficial capacity, they have a duty to consider whether personal comments and statements could:
 - a. be mistaken for an official comment;
 - b. involve the use of official information not publicly available;
 - c. constitute or give the appearance of a conflict of interest; and/or
 - d. undermine public confidence in the employee's ability, or that of their directorate, to carry out official functions fairly and impartially.
16. **Directorate Media Adviser/Directorate Communication team** – it is the responsibility of the Directorate Media Advisor or Directorate Communication team to manage Directorate media responses in consultation with the relevant line area(s). This includes confirming any required deadlines and gaining the necessary approvals as outlined in the Media and Communication Guidance material.

Key Legislative Provisions

17. The key principles of this policy are consistent with the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (PSM Act). Section 9 of the PSM Act details the requirements of a public employee in performing his or her duties, in particular that a public employee shall:

(m) not disclose, without lawful authority—

(i) any information acquired by him or her as a consequence of his or her employment; or

(ii) any information acquired by him or her from any document to which he or she has

access as a consequence of his or her employment;

(n) not make a comment that he or she is not authorised to make where the comment may be expected to be taken to be an official comment.

Further Information

18. Further enquiries may be directed to the CMTEDD, Communications and Engagement team at: CMTEDD.Comms@act.gov.au.
19. For further information on these guidelines, please contact OIRWS at eba@act.gov.au.

Review

20. This policy is due for review 3 years from the last issued or reviewed date, or earlier where there are changes that affect the operation of these guidelines.

Item	Details
Document name:	Media and Communication Policy
Policy Number:	02/2024
Prepared by:	Director, Communications and Engagement
Feedback to:	eba@act.gov.au
Issue Date:	February 2024
Next Review Date:	February 2027

Approval Authority

Geoffrey Rutledge
Deputy Director General
Office of Industrial Relations & Workforce Strategy
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
On behalf of the Head of Service
8 February 2024