



An Australian Government Initiative



NORTHERN RIVERS

RDA-NR Media Relations Policy

1. Introduction

RDA-Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) is committed to fostering positive and transparent relations with the media across all platforms to promote its role, objectives, and activities. This policy aims to maximise media engagement while minimising the risk of misrepresentation, ensuring that our communications uphold accuracy and clarity. While recognising freedom of speech, these guidelines aim to maintain a professional and open dialogue with the media in line with current legal and organisational obligations.

2. Principles

RDA-NR commits to the following:

- **Integrity:** Never knowingly mislead the public, media, or staff on any issue or news story.
- **Openness:** Promote transparency in media relations, while complying with legal obligations, confidentiality agreements, and government contract guidelines.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect sensitive information, including personal data and commercially sensitive material, in accordance with RDA-NR's privacy policies and relevant legislation.
- **Clarity:** Ensure that all communications are delivered in plain English and are easy to understand.
- **Accuracy:** Provide information that is objective, balanced, accurate, and timely, aiming to educate and inform stakeholders.
- **Discretion:** Exercise appropriate caution when releasing sensitive information, particularly regarding government or commercial matters.

3. Media Access and Accountability

The media is entitled to scrutinise the work of RDA-NR, and staff and Board members must be accessible to ensure accurate reporting. However, RDA-NR reserves the right to defend itself against ill-informed criticism by utilising appropriate platforms to ensure factual and fair representation.

4. Government Relations

Comments on government policies at any level will be managed with care and professionalism. Concerns regarding government actions or decisions should be raised directly with the appropriate government department or body before being discussed publicly.

5. Media Spokespersons

The primary media spokesperson for RDA-NR is the Chair or, when appropriate, the Director of Regional Development (DRD). On occasion, another RDA-NR representative with subject matter expertise may speak to the media, as determined by the Chair or DRD. In all cases, staff and Board members must seek approval from the Chair and/or DRD before engaging with the media, ensuring they are adequately briefed and equipped for the interaction.

6. Media Briefings and Interviews

All staff and Board members should be properly briefed before speaking to the media. If media inquiries are straightforward and non-contentious, and the individual is fully knowledgeable on the subject, they may engage with the media. However, caution should be exercised, and any communication that could impact the reputation of RDA-NR must be carefully considered. Staff and Board members should also ensure that any comments they make are clearly identified as personal opinions or official statements of the organisation.

7. Media Filming and Recording

Filming, taping, or photographing by media representatives on RDA-NR property or at RDA-NR events requires prior approval from the Board or its appointed delegate. This ensures that such activities are conducted professionally and in line with RDA-NR's privacy and security policies.

8. Public Presentations

Staff and Board members are encouraged to deliver public presentations on behalf of RDA-NR, provided it is made clear whether the presentation is an official communication of the organisation or a personal perspective. Presentations must align with RDA-NR's goals and values, and speakers should exercise discretion to protect the organisation's reputation.

9. Official Statements and Media Releases

All major or significant public statements and media releases must be authorised by the Chair, in consultation with the DRD. These communications should be drafted in alignment with the strategic objectives of RDA-NR and reflect accurate, objective, and balanced information. Written media releases are preferred to minimise the risk of misrepresentation.

10. Clarity of Representation

It is crucial that all media representatives are aware whether a staff member or Board member is speaking on behalf of RDA-NR or expressing personal opinions. Care should be taken to ensure that any communication does not damage RDA-NR's reputation or misrepresent the organisation's views.

11. Role of the Chair

The Chair's responsibilities include:

- Serving as the primary point of contact for all media inquiries and determining the most suitable spokesperson.
- Authorising all media releases in collaboration with the DRD.
- Overseeing media approaches by staff or Board members relating to RDA-NR activities.
- Coordinating communication plans for contentious or high-profile issues in consultation with relevant staff and Board members to ensure consistent and accurate information is disseminated.

12. Role of the DRD

The DRD is responsible for authorising the use of photos or other visual media in news stories, advertisements, or online platforms to ensure compliance with RDA-NR's privacy policies.

13. Media Contact Reporting

Staff and Board members must report significant media interactions to the Chair and DRD, providing details of the communication. In cases where unauthorised confidential information has been disclosed, an investigation will be conducted, and the Board will determine appropriate corrective action.

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Responsibility: RDA Northern Rivers Board

Previous Versions: None - Version 1.0
