



**Scout Association of Australia
WA Branch**

Media Contact Procedure

Version: 1

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The intent of the Media Contact Procedure is to provide guidelines for dealing with the media, on behalf of the Association. It covers the procedures to be followed when the media approach the Association for an official comment and where the Association approaches the media to make an official statement. Dealing with the media effectively is a critical task that must be handled with great care and professionalism.

2. PROCEDURE

If the media contact the Association directly through the Branch office

- 2.1 All media contacts must be initially referred to the Executive Manager, or if unavailable, the next most senior staff member. That person will record all details of the call, including the journalist's name, position, telephone numbers and email address and where possible, gather as much information as possible about the reason for the call and the '*angle*' the journalist is likely to take.
- 2.2 The immediate response to requests for comment will most likely be to inform the media that: '*We need to consider our response to your enquiry and will get back to you as soon as possible*'. This is a deliberate and successful method of managing media enquiries and ensures the Association allows itself sufficient time to collect information, consider what, if any, action needs to be taken and to formulate a considered and appropriate written response.
- 2.3 The details and reasons for the contact should then be immediately passed by the Executive Manager to the Chief Commissioner, or in their absence, the BMC Chairman.
- 2.4 The Chief Commissioner or BMC Chairman will then assess the issues and seek further advice from the Branch Solicitors, if required, and the Branch Media Advisers, if appointed, before determining the appropriate method and form of response. In some cases, it may be appropriate to refer the media request for comment to Scouts Australia National Head Office.
- 2.5 The Chief Commissioner should make all official comments or statements on behalf of the Association. The Chief Commissioner may delegate the responsibility for handling media enquiries to an Official Spokesperson of the Association.
- 2.6 In all cases, it is highly desirable to prepare and approve a written statement prior to responding to a media enquiry.

If the media contact the Chief Commissioner

- 2.7 If the media contact the Chief Commissioner directly, then the Chief Commissioner should collect information about the enquiry as outlined in Section 2.1 and then

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generally inform the reporter, 'I need some time to establish the relevant facts and consider my response. I will get back to you personally as soon as possible'. The same steps as outlined in section 2.1 to 2.6 should then be followed.

Guidelines for making comments to the media

- 2.8 All comments, whether intended to be 'on the record' or not, will be treated by the media as '*on the record*'. There is no such thing as '*off the record*'.
- 2.9 Establish all relevant facts before responding, with due respect for the media's deadlines. Time spent checking facts is never wasted.
- 2.10 All official comments on behalf of the Association should be put in writing, to ensure accuracy and avoid being misquoted.
- 2.11 Ensure comments or statements do not prejudice any on-going or pending court cases. Obtain advice from the branch solicitors if any doubt exists about this.
- 2.12 Ensure comments do not disclose any private or confidential information or identify by name any individual member of the Association without the prior consent of the individuals concerned.
- 2.13 All comments made to the media by the Association are understood to be truthful at the time they are made, and will be corrected if subsequently proven not to be truthful.

Association media statements

- 2.14 From time to time, the Association will wish to make prepared statements to the media in relation to issues and events of significance to the Branch. In all such cases, the statement must be in writing in an approved format and be approved for release by either the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Strategic Services, the Executive Manager or the Chief Commissioner. Media statements on contentious issues should be reviewed by the Branch Solicitors prior to being released.
- 2.15 Scout Districts and individual Scout Groups may issue written statements to their local community newspapers to promote local activities and achievements, as part of promoting a positive and attractive image of Scouting within the community. These must be approved by the appropriate District Commissioner, but a copy should be given to the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Strategic Services and the Executive Manager for information. All media statements should be written and in the approved format.

Guidelines for preparation of media statements

- 2.16 Media statements must never be more than one page in length.
- 2.17 Where appropriate, provide a direct quote from the Chief Commissioner.
- 2.18 Every media statement should be on the Association's official letterhead, and include a date of release, a short headline, media contact details, reference number

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and mention the availability of photos (if appropriate). A copy of the media statement template is available from the Branch office or the Branch Commissioner, Marketing.

- 2.19 Media statements can be sent via email but must be converted to PDF format before sending.
- 2.20 Include relevant background information where necessary to ensure statements are made within a proper context.
- 2.21 Do not attempt to explain complex issues in a media statement. Media statements should be brief, concise, factual and unambiguous.

Release of Media Statements

- 2.22 Written and approved media statements should be released to the media via email and fax directly from the Branch Office. Emails should be converted into PDF format. A copy of the media statement should be posted to the Association website at the time of release. A comprehensive list of electronic and print media contact details, including email addresses, telephone and fax numbers should be maintained and regularly updated by Branch Office.

Requests for interview on radio & television

- 2.23 From time to time, the Association may be requested to provide a spokesperson to appear in a television or radio interview. The Chief Commissioner should be the spokesperson for the Association. The Chief Commissioner may delegate that role to an authorised spokesperson.

Guidelines for TV & radio interviews

- 2.24 Before agreeing to be interviewed, try to find out:
 - where and when the interview will occur;
 - if the interview is “live to air” or pre-recorded;
 - what is the name of the person(s) conducting the interview;
 - what issues does the interviewer wants to discuss and why;
 - what questions will the interviewer ask;
 - is the interviewer speaking to anyone else on the same issues;
 - how long will the interview take;
 - when the interview will be broadcast?; and
 - will the interview be re-broadcast outside WA?
- 2.25 Scouts appearing on television interviews on behalf of the Association must wear the current Scout uniform.
- 2.26 Before agreeing to be interviewed, consider the most likely questions that will be asked and prepare some written responses. Wherever possible, use the interview to promote the positive aspects of Scouting.

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- 2.27 Remember, all radio microphones and TV cameras must be treated as 'live' at all times, even when the interview is over.
- 2.28 If interview turns hostile, remain calm and stick to your key messages.
- 2.29 Wherever possible, TV interviews should be conducted at the Branch Office with an official Scout logo as backdrop.
- 2.30 A written transcript of the interview and an audio and/or visual recording should be taken and kept on file to ensure an accurate record of the interview and the comments made.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Deputy Chief Commissioner, Strategic Services is responsible for reviewing this policy every three (3) years.

4. APPROVALS

Number	Document Process	Person Responsible	Date Approved	Signature
1	Draft Preparation	Clinton Smith – Deputy Chief Commissioner, Strategic Services	03/12/2010	Clinton Smith
2	Review	PJ Axford - BC Policy, Planning and Review	10/12/2010	PJ Axford
3	Review	Swan Patrol	16/12/2010	Peter Walton
4	Review	Chief Commissioner's Council	02/03/2010	Peter Walton

This Procedure has complied with all necessary approvals and is accepted as the *Media Contact Procedure* for Scouts WA.

Signature:**Peter Walton**.....Date: ..2../..03../..2010..

Chief Commissioner