

MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

It is vital that the Queensland AIDS Council (herein referred to as the Council) presents a credible, authoritative and coordinated image to both the media and the general community. This is critical not only for the image of the Council, but also to ensure that Council policies are clearly and accurately articulated and conveyed with maximum effect.

Procedure

Spokespersons

It is essential that Council spokespersons are recognised as an authoritative source of information pertaining to HIV/AIDS, the Council and its operation.

1. There are two nominated spokespersons for the Council, the President and the Administrative Director.
2. Comments and statements should be made in accordance with Council policies.
3. On issues where Council policy does not exist, spokespersons should consult as widely as practicable before making public comment.
4. The nominated spokespersons may delegate authority to appropriate persons to give comment to the media on matters in which the latter may have a particular expertise.
5. Spokespersons are not permitted to make any public comment, including personal views, about staff/volunteers or the Council's work which could adversely affect the Council's reputation or ability to carry out its work.
6. Other members of the organisation may not in any circumstances represent themselves as spokespersons to the media unless authorised to do so.
7. It is recommended that all spokespersons undergo a professional media training course.

Confidentiality

Work at the Council involves access to sensitive and confidential information about clients.

1. At the outset of work at the Council staff/volunteers sign a confidentiality clause which must be adhered to at all times, including dealing with the media. In the confidentiality clause staff agree to:
 - not disclose any information of a personal or confidential nature to any person without the authorisation of the Administrative Director or specific consent from the person or persons concerned.

- not to disclose the identity of anyone seen on the premises belonging to the Council, to any person not employed by the said Council, without the specific consent of the person concerned.

QuAC Initiated Media Releases

1. Media releases may only be issued with the prior approval of the President or the Administrative Director.
2. Releases should be consistent with the Council's format, printed on Council letterhead (see attached example).

Media Initiated Contacts

1. All media contacts must be directed to the nominated spokespersons.
2. The nominated spokespersons must make strategic decisions on whether it is in the Council's best interests to refrain from making public comment.
3. In no circumstances should the spokesperson's home/work telephone number be divulged. Messages can be taken and passed on to the spokesperson.
4. In certain cases the media seek instant responses from the Council. If all nominated spokespersons are unavailable it is important to remember, that in order to prevent potentially inappropriate responses, staff must operate with the Council's priorities and timetable in mind, and not to succumb to outside pressures.