



Mildura Rural City Council

Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy

Policy – CP059

Prepared	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Council Minute No.
General Manager Corporate	Executive Leadership Team	Council	24 March 2016	2016/0056
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1. The purpose of this policy is

To provide guidance and support for Councillors and Council Staff in the performance of their duties. It complements the Councillor and staff Codes of Conduct and supports compliance with the 'Conduct and Interests' provisions in Part 4 of the *Local Government Act 1989* ('the Act').

To ensure that the Mildura Rural City Council is efficient and effective, with high standards of governance and transparency.

2. Policy Statement

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- recognise the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Council Staff, in particular the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in accordance with the Code of Conduct;
- assist Councillors and Council Staff in respecting the roles and responsibilities of others in the organisation;
- maintain transparent decision making and governance arrangements
- support compliance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic), in particular Part 4 Division 1A – Conduct and Interests; and
- recognise the responsibilities of the Council in ensuring that it meets the responsibilities of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* to protect people from risks to their health and safety including harassment, bullying, violence and discrimination.

3. Principles

The Council employs the CEO, and the CEO is responsible for the organisation. Therefore Councillors' primary point of communication is via the office of the CEO.

Contact with other council staff will be in accordance with the procedures supporting this policy.

Councillors are prohibited under Section 76E of the Act from improperly directing or seeking to influence Council staff.

Councillors may receive community requests for support regarding a range of issues. Councillors and Council officers will honour their respective obligations to maintain probity, including adherence to privacy principles, in responding to such requests.

Where any Councillor or staff member has concerns in regard to communications between Councillors and Council staff, the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the management of such interactions.

To achieve good governance, clear and effective communication procedures for Councillors and Council staff are essential. In Mildura Rural City Council, the procedures which apply to Councillors and Council staff communication are:

- 3.1 All communication between Councillors and Council staff will be courteous and respectful.
- 3.2 The Mayor is able to go directly to Marketing and Communications staff in respect to media statements, requests and responses. All decisions stemming from this will be communicated to the CEO or relevant General Manager prior to any actions.
- 3.3 Unless otherwise specified in the table below, Councillors seeking information or wishing to make comment on a specific organisational matter should do so either via the CEO or, if the matter specifically relates to a particular Department, the Councillor may contact the relevant General Manager.
- 3.4 Contact between Councillors and Council staff responsible for supporting particular Council portfolios is to be established via the relevant General Manager and Senior Manager.
- 3.5 Contact between Councillors and Council staff outside of this policy should not occur.
- 3.6 Council staff are to inform their Senior Manager, General Manager or the Chief Executive Officer of any contact made directly to them by Councillors.
- 3.7 The CEO and [relevant] General Manager are to be copied in or otherwise formally advised of all communication between staff and Councillors.

In the event that this Policy contradicts with the Councillor or Staff Code of Conduct, then the Code of Conduct will prevail.

Approved Communication Channels for Councillors							
	CEO	Executive Assistants to CEO	General Manager	Senior Manager	Manager Corporate Administration	Communication Officer	Administrative Staff
Council Plan, Strategy & Policy	✓		✓				
Civic & Ceremonial	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Operational Issues, Service Delivery	✓		✓				
Portfolio Matters		✓	✓	✓			
Administration of Portfolio				✓			✓
Media & Communications	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Information Technology Help		✓					✓
Service Reviews	✓		✓				
Councillor Requests/Questions		✓			✓		
Planning Matters	✓		✓	✓			
Regulatory [enforcement] Matters	✓		✓				
Code of Conduct	✓				✓		

4. Who is responsible for implementing this policy?

General Manager Corporate

5. Definitions

Nil.

6. Legislation and other references

6.1 Legislation

For further information related to this policy see:

- *Local Government Act 1989*

6.2 Documents

This Policy is implemented in conjunction with the following documents:

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct

6.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

Risk Category	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Risk Category	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asset Management		Financial Sustainability	
Committees		Human Resource Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Compliance – Legal & Regulatory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leadership & Organisational Culture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contract Management		Occupational Health & Safety	
Contract Tendering & Procurement		Organisational Risk Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project Management	
Environmental Sustainability		Public Image and Reputation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>