



## Media Issues Procedure

A/4.5.1

### Purpose

This process sets out communication and media management strategies for all issues involving or affecting the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- all ministry agents and all members of the Uniting Church in Queensland.
- all lay staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

### Procedure

1. Staff encountering a media issue should immediately contact the Communications Coordinator or the Manager, Communications and Marketing within the Synod office. With respect to the general public or media seeking comment or feedback, no comment is to be made citing "I am not authorised to make comment" and the matter referred.
2. The Communications Coordinator or the Manager, Communications and Marketing will gather accurate information from appropriate sources and complete an issues brief.
3. After fact gathering, the issues brief is forwarded to the Moderator and General Secretary for review and to decide on appropriate action (see Media Issues Policy).
4. The Moderator and/or General Secretary will work with the Manager, Communications and Marketing and the Communications Coordinator to identify an appropriate strategy.
5. Based on this advice, the Communications Coordinator and the Manager, Communications and Marketing will develop a plan of action for approval by the moderator and general secretary. This plan should include some, or all, of the following:
  - a. Establishing a key decision-making group (eg the Executive Leadership Team) if it is determined that the magnitude of the issue merits the inclusion of this group.
  - b. Include advice from the Senior Legal Counsel if deemed necessary.
  - c. A communications strategy, including key messages for all stakeholders, and messages designed for all active electronic media channels. This strategy should also include the most appropriate means of conveying information to the media including a media release or a press conference if required.
  - d. A list of the key stakeholders to be kept informed of the appropriate details and actions taken by the Queensland Synod (stakeholders may vary depending on the situation). Effective communications will help quell rumours, maintain morale, and ensure continued orderly operations of the organisation.
  - e. Among those that may be notified or considered for communication are:
    - i. the President and/or General Secretary of the Uniting Church in Australia, National Assembly
    - ii. staff, volunteers and contractors
    - iii. consumers and their families
    - iv. donors
    - v. other synod offices
    - vi. presbytery ministers and chairs
    - vii. people in specified ministry and local congregations
    - viii. the police (if appropriate)
    - ix. general public
    - x. the media.

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- f. The Communications Coordinator and Manager, Communications and Marketing, in liaison with the Moderator and/or General Secretary and/or the Executive Leadership Team, will prepare an internal communications strategy. Information should be provided by email or in face-to-face meetings and should be handled by the moderator/general secretary or their delegate.
6. All media enquiries should be directed to the Manager, Communications and Marketing or the Communications Coordinator who will determine the logistics of media communications including:
  - a. when
  - b. where
  - c. how the media will be contacted
  - d. which media will be contacted
  - e. who will supervise any press conferences and
  - f. who will provide comment or appear.

### Ongoing processes

1. The Manager, Communications and Marketing or the Communications Coordinator is responsible for the following:
  - a. Preparing subsequent media scans with an emphasis on stories that are related to the issue. Copies of these clippings or reports should be forwarded as appropriate to the Moderator/General Secretary and/or the Executive Leadership Team.
  - b. Setting up electronic information files on the issue to reside in Communications and Marketing folders. Material related to the issue including clippings, statements, letters, memos, and any other documents should be forwarded to the Manager Communications and Marketing and filed in chronological order.
  - c. Monitoring the issue (generally a minimum of daily), taking notes and frequently updating the moderator/general secretary and/or the Executive Leadership Team. These notes should be reviewed and used to improve future issues management response.

### Aftermath component

1. Following any issue, appropriate action must take place to ensure key stakeholders, as identified in the action plan, receive needed information and assistance to help bring closure to the situation as well as relief from the effects of the event.
2. Immediately following the issue, it is imperative the Queensland Synod is sensitive to the needs of staff, volunteers, contractors and congregations members who may have been personally affected. There may be a need to offer debriefing at congregation level as well as informing staff of other available counselling or support services (e.g [Employee Assistance Program](#)).
3. It is not unreasonable to expect that rumours may follow an issue, further creating an atmosphere of anxiety. Ensure the relevant staff are consulted to identify issues of continued concern and undertake communication with staff via staff meetings, email, and newsletters.
4. Depending on the nature of the situation, services and assistance may have been rendered by agencies, companies, and/or individuals from outside the organisation. Follow-up information as well as thank you letters are to be forwarded to the appropriate individuals or groups.
5. A debrief meeting of the key organising/response group shall be held within five days to review all actions taken as a result of the issue and to determine effectiveness and efficiency of operations and make any needed changes to future action plan and this process.

### Related documents

- A/4.5 Media Issues
- A/4.6 Media Relations
- A/4.6.1 Media Relations
- [POL-0001 Privacy](#)



## Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Queensland Synod, we or us, or the Church</b>	Queensland Synod means the functions and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and</li> <li>• outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod), under the Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld).</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	Refers specifically to external sources, be they radio, television, newspaper, digital or online.
<b>Lay Staff</b>	All employees of the Queensland Synod
<b>Members</b>	Means Uniting Church adherents, confirmed members, baptised members, elders, members-in-association, ministry agents and individuals who are members of any Uniting Church in Queensland church council, commission, committee or board.
<b>Ministry Agents</b>	Includes church candidates, community ministers, deacons, deaconesses, interns, lay  pastors, ministers of the word, pastors, youth workers and ministers from other denominations  serving in approved placements
<b>Volunteers &amp; contractors</b>	people who are not employed directly by the Queensland Synod, but are working for it in either a paid or unpaid capacity

## Revisions

Document number		A/4.5.1			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.0	06.03.2020	Executive Director, Shared Services	06.03.2020	Manager, Communications and Marketing	Communications Coordinator
Next scheduled review		28.02.2023			