



Media Relations Procedure

A/4.6.1

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the processes for dealing with external media within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Scope

This process applies to:

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

Procedure

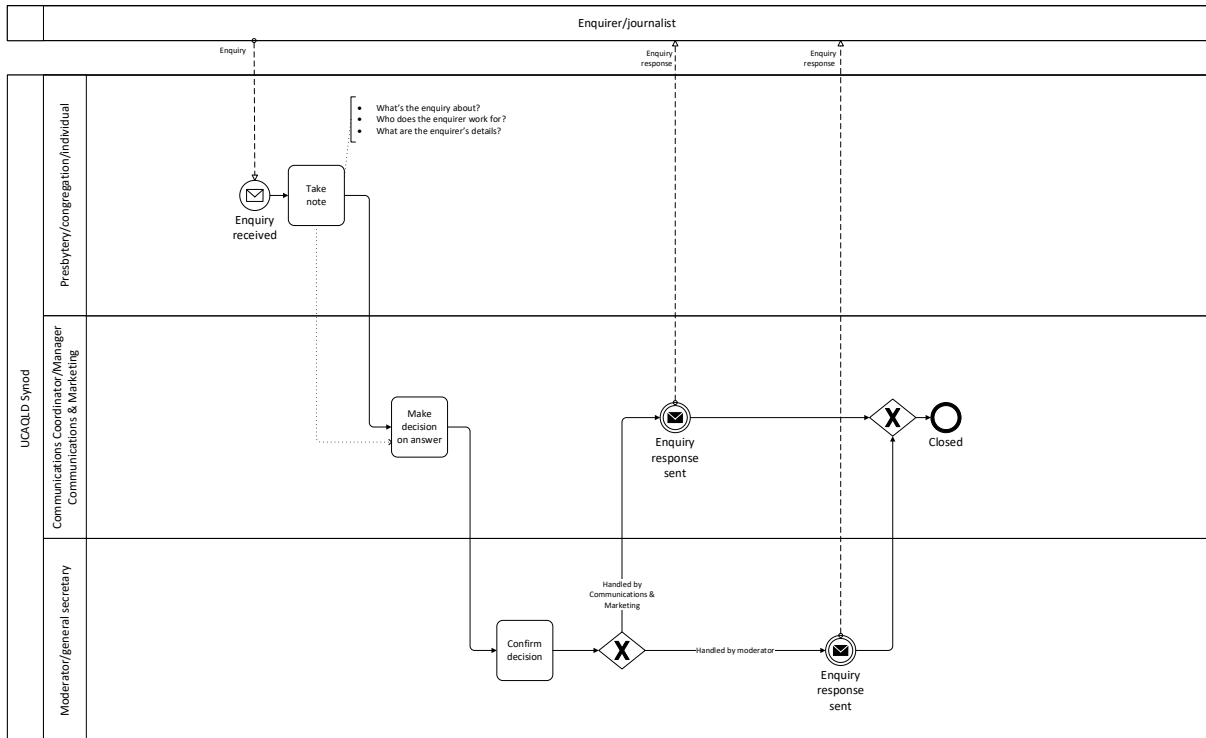
The Queensland Synod seeks positive interaction with the media, and Communications and Marketing will assist with any media enquiries you may encounter.

High priority should be given to media enquiries, attending to media needs immediately, recording details and following through to completion. All contact with media representatives should reflect our commitment to high-quality customer service. Media representatives will be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.

Media enquiries

If you are contacted for a story you have not initiated, please follow this process:

1. Ask for the journalist's name, organisation and contact details (email and mobile).
2. Ask the journalist what information they are seeking.
3. Do not answer questions. No comment is to be made citing "I am not authorised to make comment". But respond by saying that a representative from Communications and Marketing will phone them back as soon as possible.
4. The Communications Coordinator or the Manager, Communications and Marketing should be considered the first point of contact. The Communications Coordinator can be reached on 0437 368 744 or 07 3377 9777. Communications and Marketing will assess whether or not it is appropriate for a spokesperson to comment and whether the issue should be handled by the Moderator or if a ministry agent is suitable to provide comment.
5. Once a commitment has been made and either a media release issued or an interview organised, the approved spokesperson is required to cooperate with Communications and Marketing and be available for media interviews. Communications and Marketing will prepare all relevant briefing information, including talking points and an issue brief if required.
6. Any ministry agent or lay staff delegated as an approved spokesperson on behalf of the Queensland Synod should undertake appropriate media training.



For media responding to events you have initiated, Communications and Marketing can also assist.

1. Such promotions are generally positive events and stories including church events. Communications and Marketing are available to provide advice for more significant promotions, such as conferences.
2. Communications and Marketing should also be considered for provision of additional advice, guidelines, clarification, background or support.
3. If a reporter diverts a line of questioning on to another topic, please refer the call immediately to the Communications Coordinator or the Manager, Communications and Marketing for further contact and media comment.
4. Remember, any comment made to a reporter has the potential to be used as media comment. That is why making comment about anything should be kept to explaining that Communications and Marketing are the people to talk to. At that point you offer to ring the team on their behalf as well as providing Communications and Marketing contact details.

Media Arrivals

1. Members of the media do not have an automatic right to enter Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod property. Communications and Marketing are to be notified when media, news photographers or camera crews arrive unexpectedly, or when permission is sought to enter and film on Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod property.
2. While on Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod property, media must be accompanied at all times by an approved Synod representative.
3. If the media refuse to leave when asked, the appropriate authorities (eg Police) should be advised.

Media Releases

1. Communications and Marketing must be consulted where media releases and/or media representation involves a controversial or sensitive issue.
2. All media releases or statements in these situations are to be issued by Communications and Marketing.

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3. Where a release quotes a staff member, approval from that staff member must be obtained before distribution.
4. All media releases produced by other organisations that contain information about the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod should first be given to the Manager, Communications and Marketing for review.

Public Statements

1. The content of public speeches or presentations, where the speaker is representing the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod are subject to clearance by Communication and Marketing.
2. All staff and ministry agents are to refrain from offering comment or taking a stance or position on contentious or topical issues (refer to the Media Relations Policy Principles for further information).
3. Staff have a right to make public comment and publicly debate political and social issues. However, when making such comments publicly staff should:
 - a. make it clear, other than in the course of their duties (eg if they have been authorised to speak in this capacity) or when giving evidence in court, they are speaking in their capacity as an individual and are **not** making an official comment **nor** speaking on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia.
4. Ministry agents are subject to responsibilities articulated in section 3 of the Code of Ethics, Professional Conduct. They are allowed to make public statements on matters but must not misrepresent their position.

Related documents

- A/4.6 Media Relations Policy
- [POL-0001 Privacy](#)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Queensland Synod, we or us, or the Church	Queensland Synod means the functions and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and• 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).
Queensland Synod	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod including all business units, agencies, presbyteries and congregations.
Media	Refers specifically to external sources, be they radio, television, newspaper, digital or online
Members	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.
Ministry Agents	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
Lay Staff	All employees of the Queensland Synod



Revisions

Document number		A/4.6.1			
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			