

## 1. Purpose

To advise staff on the correct policy for planning, developing and implementing external communication activities for the department. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of information/content, publications and promotional material for print, electronic or online distribution.

## 2. Policy

The department communicates with external audiences to help generate awareness and understanding of its programs, initiatives, services and events. Communication activities may be undertaken as part of a broader communication plan or strategy that support the department's strategic priorities, or they may be developed as a stand-alone activity.

The department's communication officers support the development of external communication strategies and materials to help ensure any activities provide appropriate communication solutions and comply with departmental and Queensland Government policies and guidelines.

The department operates a predominantly centralised communication model with communication support provided by the Communications and Public Engagement (CPE) branch in Corporate Services (for all Environment and Science divisions and the Office of Youth). However, in certain cases communication support may also be provided by communication and/or project officers embedded within business areas. For the purposes of this policy, these groups will be collectively referred to as 'communication officer' unless otherwise specified.

## 3. Principles

External communications will always be developed and implemented in line with the following principles:

- Alignment with the department's strategic direction and priorities
- Alignment with regulatory/legislative requirements
- Alignment with the department's strategic plan and objectives, corporate visual identity, key messages and departmental writing style
- Alignment with the Queensland Government's priorities
- Adherence to Queensland Government corporate identity guidelines
- Adherence to whole-of-government communications and advertising guidelines and policies as outlined by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Adherence to the department's responsibilities under Right to Information and privacy legislation
- Suitability for the target audience, including appropriate delivery method, language and timing
- Value for money.

## 4. Authority

This policy and procedure is guided by the following legislation and policy:

- Queensland Government Corporate Identity Manual
- *Right to Information Act 2009* and Right to Information Guidelines
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- Queensland Government Advertising Guidelines
- Queensland Government Advertising and Marketing Code of Conduct
- Queensland Government Captioning Policy
- Code of Conduct for Queensland Public Service
- *Copyright Act 1968 (Cwlth)*.

## 5. Human Rights Act compatibility

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), the department has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights. When acting or making a decision under this External Communications Policy, officers must comply with that obligation (refer to [Comply with Human Rights Act](#)).

## 6. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to the following staff within the department:

- permanent employees
- temporary employees
- consultants/contractors
- volunteers.

Elements of this policy in relation to signage also apply to the recipients of departmental grant funding.

## 7. Delegations

The cost of communication activities are approved by the business area in line with normal business and financial delegations.

## 8. Responsibilities

**Executive Director of Communication and Public Engagement (CPE)** is responsible for:

- Providing final approval for all external communication. This role may be delegated to a CPE Director.

**Communication officers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring external communications are managed in line with relevant policies and principles (outlined in section 3 Principles).
- Assisting with assessing, planning and implementing communication activities in conjunction with business units.
- Coordinating the process for publishing content to those websites managed by the department.
- Approving usage of the Queensland Government crest on departmental materials and for use on communication materials developed by external organisations.
- Managing and coordinating requests for in-house design and audio-visual services. Design and AV services are prioritised according to strategic priorities and are dependent on resourcing capability. Outsourcing of services, at cost to the business area, may be necessary for specific requests and will be assessed by the Manager, Strategic Communications.

**Business units** are responsible for:

- Assisting with assessing, planning, developing and implementing communication activities in conjunction with communication officers.
- Identifying and obtaining Director-General and/or Ministerial approval for significant communication activities (e.g. strategies, consultations and other content of a significant/high profile/contentious nature, including merchandise production). Approval should be obtained via a written briefing note, with Director Strategic Communications having been consulted as part of the process.
- Ensuring appropriate acknowledgement and promotional understandings are included in third-party contracts and materials which use the Queensland Government crest are provided to CPE approval.
- The cost of producing any communications activities.
- Ensuring external communications are managed in line with relevant policies and principles (outlined in section 3 Principles).

**Deputy Director-General/Executive Director** of the relevant business unit (or their approved delegate, to a minimum of director level, as deemed suitable by the division in accordance with the level of risk) is responsible for:

- Providing approval for the development and content accuracy of communications including funding for any activities.
- Contacting CPE to coordinate the development and implementation of external communication relating to strategic priorities, strategies, consultations, public safety issues, regulator/legislative requirements, or issues of a high profile/contentious nature.
- Approving requests for departmental staff to appear in non-commercial third-party organisations' communication material.

**Director-General** is responsible for:

- Approving significant communication activities (e.g. strategies, consultations and other content of a significant/high profile/contentious nature) that has been escalated by the relevant business unit.
- Approving production and cost of any merchandise/promotional material for either internal or external use (refer section 9 – Definitions).

## 9. Definitions and glossary of terms

**Communications**—generally includes any information developed by the department for external publication/distribution that contains corporate branding.

Examples include but are not limited to the following: publications/documents (strategies, plans, guidelines), newsletters, brochures, multimedia, electronic direct mail and web content (includes all content and publications which are published to the department's website or to other relevant Queensland Government websites). For the purposes of this policy, communications also includes promotional items that contain visual or written communication messages from the department, including promotional signage (banners, displays, plaques); and, project signage (departmental facilities and construction projects, external developments receiving departmental grant funding).

**Significant communication material**—is assessed on a case-by-case basis by CPE and the business unit, but generally includes material relating to a significant government priority, departmental strategic priority, consultations or public safety issue. Communication material may include strategy documents, consultation/discussion papers, web content and other related material.

**Merchandise and promotional material**—merchandise is physical collateral that is developed and produced for the purposes of helping to educate and inform the community about a specific initiative, program or service. It may include, but is not limited to, items such as: pens, rulers, lanyards, balls, backpacks, hats, pins, mouse pads, USBs, key rings and shirts or other clothing items that are not part of an official uniform.

The production of merchandise and promotional items must align with the [guiding principles for Queensland Government advertising, marketing and communication activity](#), meet the government's priorities and provide a defined benefit for the community.

**Usage of Queensland Government crest by external organisations**—Usage of the Queensland Government crest can only be provided to external organisations for use where there is a formal written agreement signed by both parties that includes specific terms and conditions regarding permission and usage of the crest. Formal agreements may include partnership/sponsorship agreement, funding/grant agreements or other contract/deed. The Queensland Government crest is generally used in this context to recognise Queensland Government involvement or investment in a specific project or initiative.

**Testimonials for third-party organisations**—The department (including departmental staff) does not provide testimonials for third party organisations that have been engaged/contracted to deliver a project, program or product/service. A testimonial could be perceived as the Queensland Government endorsing a particular organisation and its products, thereby providing it with a commercial advantage. This is in breach of the Code of Conduct for Queensland Public Service.

**Departmental staff appearing in a third-party organisation's communication material**—Departmental staff may be requested by a third-party organisation to appear in communication material (e.g. videos, social media content, publications etc) on that organisation's marketing/communication channels.

Staff are not permitted to appear in, provide public comment on, or be identified in any communication material relating to projects/activities/initiatives conducted by a commercial organisation (including those engaged to deliver a project, program or product/service)—except where there is a formal agreement in place that outlines the terms and conditions under which this is permitted.

Staff may be permitted to appear in, provide public comment on, or be identified in any communication material relating to projects/activities/initiatives conducted by a non-commercial organisation where there is a formal agreement in place (e.g. partnership agreement, joint management agreement).

In these cases, permission is provided by the Executive Director of the relevant business unit who must also approve pre-prepared messaging (where appropriate) and the final product prior to distribution.

Departmental staff must only comment on, or be pictured doing, work directly related to their role and/or the department's role and involvement in the project.

Note: This section does not apply to:

- Requests for media interviews, which are managed through the Media Policy.
- Participation in third party conferences, events, webinars etc, which are managed and approved as part of business as usual operations.

**Exceptions**—This policy does not apply to:

- Social media (refer to Social Media Policy)
- Advertising (refer to Advertising Policy)
- Web content publishing process (refer to Web Publishing Policy and Procedure)
- Speech writing (refer to Speech Procedure)
- Stationery items (e.g. business cards and letterhead)
- Office signage, external departmental building signage, emergency evacuation signage
- Material prepared for a business unit's internal operations e.g. internal handouts or flyers for meetings or presentations
- Forms
- Letters
- Scientific publications including journal articles, scientific/peer review papers, books and book chapters, international and national conference papers and proceedings, technical reports, consultancy reports
- Technical documents, such as regulatory guidelines or operational policies
- Event management.

## 10. Further information

Should you require any further information or clarification, please contact:

- Strategic Communications at [des.comms@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:des.comms@des.qld.gov.au).

## 11. Storage of Information

All information should be managed in accordance with the Queensland Government Information Management Framework, which includes the *Public Records Act 2002*, Information Standard 31: Retention and disposal of public records (IS31) and Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping (IS40). In addition, personal information should be managed in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, in particular the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) in that Act.

## 12. Review

This policy shall be reviewed in two years of the Last Reviewed date.

## 13. Approval

**Susan Chrisp**

Deputy Director-General

Corporate Services

Department of Environment and Science

Date: 06/09/2022

## 14. Version history

Date	Version	Action	Description / comments
18/10/2019	1.00	New policy developed and approved	Approved by Director-General
24/07/2020	1.01	Policy updated for compatibility with Human Rights Act	Approved by Deputy Director-General Corporate Services

06/09/2022	1.02	Policy updated to reflect change in branch name and to clarify some processes	Approved by Deputy Director-General Corporate Services
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## 15. Keywords

External, Communication activities, Communication material, Document, Publishing, Publication