



Media Relations

Australian Education Union ACT Branch Policy

Policy Number	POL035	Version	2.0
Last Reviewed	December 2018	Next Review	December 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Union welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena. Local and national media are vital partners in achieving the goals of the Union. In order to maximise the advantages of media presentation and minimise the risks of media misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how media contacts will be conducted.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media.

POLICY

- The Branch Secretary shall be the chief spokesperson for the Union and coordinate all relationships with the media.
- Where information or public comment is requested or required, the Branch Secretary shall perform that task or else determine the most appropriate person to respond.
- No Union member or employee may disclose confidential Union information, including membership matters, to any media source.
- In dealing with the media, members and employees should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the Union and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the reputation of Union.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Branch Secretary to ensure that officers and employees are aware of this policy and to ensure that effective media relations are maintained.

PROCEDURES

- The Union will provide information to the media in accordance with the following principles:
 - Honesty: The Union will never knowingly mislead the public on an issue or news story.
 - Transparency: The Union will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
 - Clarity: All communications with the media will be written in plain English
 - Balance: Information provided to the media by the Union will as far as possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.
- Contact with the media concerning any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of the Union should only be made by the Branch Secretary or their nominee. If this is not possible then another official or employee may be a spokesperson for the Union provided they have:
 - If possible, consulted the Branch Secretary or else sought guidance from the most senior staff or Branch Executive member available.
 - The required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion.
 - Some experience in media relations.



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- It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to the Union are those of the organisation or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the information being provided may affect the reputation of the Union.
- The Branch Secretary will undertake media management activities such as:
 - Producing and updating a list of key contacts for distribution to local press and radio and TV stations.
 - Being contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.
 - Coordinating all media conferences for the Union. Such conferences may be videotaped by the Union.
 - Authorising all media releases from the Union and for placing them on the Union's website.
 - Being involved in any approaches to the media to feature the Union's work.
 - Receiving and coordinating a response to all approaches from all local or national press, radio or TV stations or specialist press.
- Employees and Branch Executive members are required to:
 - Provide advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the Branch Secretary on any potential media issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time.
 - Ensure that no photos of members, employees, or students shall be released to the public via advertising, news media, internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the Branch Secretary, who shall satisfy themselves that the Union's policy has been observed.
 - Notify the Branch Secretary of any approach by the media and providing the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.
- Any filming or taping by the media on the Union's property or of the Union's proceedings (e.g. at Branch Executive, Branch Council or mass meetings) is subject to prior permission of the Branch Secretary or the relevant meeting.
- Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information enquires should be referred to the Branch Secretary.
- The Union reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning, say, commercial transactions or governmental negotiations. Any such information will be clearly labelled and clearly notified to relevant staff.
- If any unauthorised releases of confidential information do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action will be taken.

RESOURCES

Operational activities related to this policy are to be delivered within budgeted office resources.