



Landcare Association of South Australia Inc

A member of the National Landcare Network

ABN 20 341 395 200



Landcare Association of South Australia Communications Policy

Established: 10th May 2023

Owner: Landcare Association of South Australia

Next Review: May 2024

Related Documents:

LASA Privacy Policy

INTRODUCTION	<p>This policy provides overarching guidance to all Landcare Association of South Australia (LASA) communications activities. The effective dissemination of information and communication is a vital element in linking with our community and creating greater community awareness of LASA's services, activities, achievements and ethos.</p> <p>In order to maximise the advantages of media and stakeholder presentation and minimise the risks of media and stakeholder misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how contacts will be conducted.</p> <p>It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media and stakeholders.</p> <p>In dealing with the media and stakeholders, LASA staff, Management Committee (hereafter Committee) members and other volunteers should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the organisation and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of LASA.</p>
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. LASA works with the media and stakeholders in order to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Advocate for the goals of the Association,ii. Promote the work of the Association and its members,iii. Inform the public of the details of the Association, andiv. Increase community awareness of the Landcare ethos.b. In order to ensure that these purposes can be fulfilled, this policy regulates the choice of people entitled to speak for LASA.c. The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the community in holding LASA to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to assist them in this role.

	<p>d. To balance this, LASA must have the capacity to defend itself from any unfounded criticism and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts (if necessary, using other channels of communication).</p> <p>It is the responsibility of all LASA staff, Committee members and volunteers to ensure that effective media and stakeholder relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of LASA. This policy deals with the day-to-day relationship between LASA and the media and stakeholders.</p>
POLICY	<p>a. LASA operates on the values of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Honesty: The organisation will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story, Transparency: The organisation 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, and Balance: Information provided to the media by LASA will as far as possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely. <p>b. LASA should seek to establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media and stakeholders. It is important that the organisation works with the media and stakeholders to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.</p> <p>c. However, contact concerning any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of LASA should only be made by staff, Committee members and volunteers and where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> They have consulted the Communications Officer nominated by the Committee, They have the required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion, and They have some experience in media relations. <p>d. Where any of these criteria are not met, staff and committee members are recommended to exercise extreme caution and to seek guidance from the most senior staff or Committee member available.</p>

<p>DUTIES OF KEY PERSONNEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Committee shall nominate a Communications Officer to coordinate LASA's relationships with the media. Typically, this position will be filled by the Executive Officer. If the position is filled by someone other than the Executive Officer, the Executive Officer must be consulted in communications with stakeholders. b. The Communications Officer and Chairperson are both authorised to speak on behalf of LASA. c. The Communications Officer and Chairperson are not authorised to speak on behalf of a specific LASA member or other member of the Landcare community, unless explicitly approved by the relevant party. d. Other staff, Committee members and volunteers are advised to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by the Communications Officer or Chairperson before talking to the media or stakeholders on any issue related to LASA. e. Where information or public comment is requested or required, the Communications Officer shall determine the most appropriate person to respond. f. All staff, Committee members and other volunteers, and third parties, are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss the work of LASA and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by the organisation. g. All staff, Committee members and other volunteers must observe LASA's Privacy Policy in relation to client records.
<p>PROCESSES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Significant statements on behalf of LASA shall be made as authorised by the Communications Officer or Chairperson as detailed above. b. It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to LASA are those of the Association or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of LASA. c. The Communications Officer is responsible for:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Producing and updating a list of key contacts for distribution to local press and radio and TV stations for particular Landcare events and projects. The Communications Officer can also be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment, ii. Authorising all media releases from LASA, and for uploading them on the organisation's website. All media releases must also be checked and approved by the staff, Committee member/s or volunteer/s responsible for the relevant area before distribution, and iii. Being involved in any approaches to the media to feature LASA's work or responding to approaches from press, radio or TV stations or specialist press. <p>d. All staff, Committee members and volunteers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the Communications Officer on any issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time, ii. Ensuring that no photos shall be released to the public via advertising, news media, or internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the Communications Officer, who shall satisfy themselves that the organisation's Privacy Policy has been observed, and iii. Notifying the Communications Officer of any contact made in the name of LASA to the media or stakeholders and providing contact details, and the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent (if relevant). <p>e. Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial staff work to produce, such work must be authorised by the Chairperson.</p> <p>f. LASA reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information such as commercial or financial transactions or governmental negotiations. Any such information will be clearly notified to relevant staff by the Communications Officer or the Chairperson.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. 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. h. LASA's elected representatives/nominees to the National Landcare Network (NLN) Member's Council and Board of Directors are permitted to speak on behalf of their own experiences in these roles. When speaking on behalf of LASA, the Chairperson and Communications Officer must be consulted as appropriate. i. In the event of informal or formal terms of engagement being agreed upon with stakeholders such as the NLN, Landcare Australia Limited, State and Territory Landcare Organisations and others, the conditions stipulated in those documents take precedence over those in this policy.
CRISIS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advanced preparation is critical when dealing with a crisis situation. Occasionally, an unforeseen crisis occurs, and the following steps will be followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify a single spokesperson, such as the Chairperson or Communications Officer and ensure that they are available to talk to the media and are well briefed on the issue, ii. Be prepared and forthright for a response to media enquiry. Ensure all facts and figures are available, iii. Develop a response to the media which puts the community first, takes responsibility, is honest and states the 'who, what, when, where and how' of the situation, iv. Provide a constant flow of communication to all stakeholders, most importantly employees and volunteers, and v. Be accessible and familiar with media needs and deadlines. b. Monitor media coverage and correspondence.
RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that the requirements of this policy are complied with. b. These policies and procedures shall be reviewed every year by the Committee.