



Media Relations

PRO-COM-06

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 office.

Scope

This process applies to:

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

Process

The Queensland Synod office encourages positive interaction with the media, and Communications and Marketing can 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.
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 Manager Communications and Marketing and the Communications Coordinator should be considered the first point of contact if you have been contacted by the media on any enquiry other than a media promotion you or your agency/unit/congregation/Presbytery may have initiated.
5. Phone Communications and Marketing on 07 3377 9777.
6. Only approved spokespersons within the Queensland Synod office have the authority to speak with the media (refer to the [Media Relations Policy POL-COM-06](#)). If you have not undergone media training and you have not been asked to be a media spokesperson by your manager, you can assume that you should not make any comment, either on the record or off the record, to a journalist.
7. 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.
8. Any Ministry agent or lay staff delegated as an approved spokesperson on behalf of the Queensland Synod office should undertake appropriate media training. If contacted by the media, please refer to [Media Enquiries online](#).

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



1. Such promotions are generally positive events and stories, such as 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 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 office property. Communications and Marketing should 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 property.
2. While on Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod office property, media must be accompanied at all times by a Communications and Marketing 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.
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 office should first be given to the Communications and Marketing Manager for review.

Public Statements

1. The content of public speeches or presentations, where the speaker is representing the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod office are subject to clearance by Communication and Marketing.
2. All staff are to refrain from offering comment or taking a stance or position on contentious or topical issues (refer to the [Media Relations Policy POL-COM--06](#) 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.

Dictionary

Term	Meaning
UCA Qld also called Queensland Synod office, we or us, or the Church	UCA Qld 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 office; and • outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod office (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office), under the Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld).
Queensland Synod office	Means the office of the Synod providing management and oversight within the bounds of the Queensland Synod, including business carried out at the Uniting Church Centre (60 Bayliss Street Auchenflower), as well as Raymont Residential College, Trinity College Queensland and Alexandra Park Conference Centre.
Media	Refers specifically to external sources, be they radio, television, newspaper or internet-based



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 office
Issues	Issues liable to public comment include: i. police investigations ii. protests iii. problems arising from agency or business unit activities iv. emergencies that threaten the physical wellbeing of staff, or congregation members; or other situations that generate public interest and demand a public response
Topics	Areas of general or specific interest that are not public issues relating to the Uniting Church in Australia
Activities	Any organised events, celebrations, gatherings, forums, conferences

References & Related Documents

- [POL-COM-06 Media Relations Policy](#)
- [POL-0001 Privacy Policy](#)

Revisions & Review

#	Date	Reason	Author / Reviewer	Approved
1.0	30.08.17	New media relations process	R. O'Rourke (consultant0	
2.0	12.02.18	Edit new media relations process	Phillip Hay, Manager Communications and Marketing	
DUE	01.01.20	Review cycle – every 3 years	Phillip Hay, Manager Communications and Marketing	