Australian College of
Rural & Remote Medicine
WORLD LEADERS IN RURAL PRACTICE

MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY AND PROTOCOL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Protocol is to:

(i) Maximise the advantages and minimise the risks associated with dealing with media and media presentations.

(ii) Ensure that ACRRM interaction with media is timely, unified, informed, and consistent and that it accurately reflects ACRRM vision, goals and policy and position statements, and maintains and enhances the College's professional image and integrity.

(iii) Confirm College protocols and processes for interacting with the media in a range of circumstances, including:
- representing the views of the College.
- advocating on specific issues.
- responding to issues at all levels of government.
- commenting on specific areas of practice or policy.
- providing expert clinical commentary on rural generalism and areas of medical practice relevant to the College.

2. Background

ACRRM works with the media to:
- Raise awareness of the College.
- Advocate for strategic goals, policies, and priorities.
- Promote the College's Fellowship program.
- Raise public awareness about rural, remote and First Nations health issues.

For the purposes of this document, the term 'media' refers to radio, television, print, social and online media.

3. Protocol

3.1 The President is the official spokesperson for the College.
In his/her absence, the President or CEO is authorised to nominate a Board Director or Council/Committee Chair to comment on the College's behalf. The President or CEO can also nominate a College member (normally a Board member or Council/Committee Chair) to comment to the media on a specific topic, in accordance with their role and area of expertise. This includes responding to State/Territory-specific issues. These arrangements also apply where quotations are included in media releases.

3.2 ACRRM members are not authorised to represent the College in the media, except where the President and/or Board have delegated authority to the member to comment on behalf of the College. This includes both formal and 'off the record' conversations.

If they are interacting with the media in another capacity, College members should make it clear that they are speaking from a personal perspective and not on behalf of ACRRM.

3.3 Staff are not permitted to comment to the media except with the authorisation of the President or CEO. This applies to both formal and 'off the record' conversations.

3.4 Media comment must reflect College policies and position statements:
When providing spoken or written comment to the media, the authorised spokesperson must ensure that the comments are consistent with College values, policy and position statements and key messaging.

4. Process

The CEO, President, General Manager Member Services, Communications Manager, Senior Policy Advisors, and other relevant staff of the College should be kept informed of all media activity and interaction in advance where practical so that they are aware of any emerging policy issues and to ensure that media responses are consistent with College policy and positions.

4.1 General media enquiries

(i) If any member, including the President or a Board or Council member is approached directly by the media to comment on a particular issue on behalf of the College, he/she should inform the Communications Manager of the interaction and its outcome as soon as possible.

(ii) If queries come through to a staff member, including clinical staff such as Regional Directors of Training or Medical Educators they should forward the information to the Communications Manager who will triage the response through gathering key messaging, and advising the GM Member Services, CEO and President.

(iii) Queries that go straight to the Communications Manager will be triaged by alerting the GM Member Services, CEO and President, and gathering key messaging from subject matter experts.

4.2 Media releases and letters to the editor

(i) All media releases and other publications such as opinion pieces and letters to the editor are to be approved by the President and/or CEO via the Communications Manager or Senior Policy Advisor prior to distribution.

(ii) Articles for external publications, relating to policy and advocacy, should be developed in consultation with Policy Officers and other senior staff.

(iii) The President is the quoted spokesperson in media releases. Where appropriate and with the approval of the President or CEO, media releases can include quoted comments from a specialist area as required, e.g. Council or Committee Chairs or State/Territory representatives. The person quoted should approve the material before it is distributed.

(iv) The quoted spokesperson should be available for interview for a reasonable period following the distribution of the material.

4.3 Individual expert opinion

If the College receives a media enquiry which relates to a specific issue on which the College does not have an official position, the enquiry may be referred to:
- A suitably qualified Fellow for an individual expert opinion. Under these circumstances, it should be made clear that comments provided are those of an individual and do not necessarily represent the view of ACRRM.
- An appropriate stakeholder organisation e.g. RDAA.

4.4 Circulation

(i) The Communications Manager will coordinate circulation of all media documents issued on behalf of the College.

(ii) The Communications Manager will be responsible for compiling and maintaining circulation lists using the media monitoring subscription list. This will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis in consultation with staff (managers/policy officers) to ensure that relevant stakeholders are included.

Members of the College Board and all staff will be made aware of all media releases.

5. Document Control Information

5.1 Policy Information

Policy Contact and Author	P Smith P Smith	Approving Body:	CEO
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Responsible Officer:	GM Member Services	Policy System Manager:	MJ Streeton

5.2 Document History

Version	Date Approved	Author	Description of revision	Internal Distribution	
				Date	Recipient/s
V2.0	May 2024	P Smith	Review and updates	May 24	Board, OCEO, ELT
V1.0	April 2021	P Smith	New template	Apr 21	OCEO
Previous system	2020	P Smith	Revision	2020	ELT, OCEO
Previous system	2010		Revision		
Previous system	2007		New Policy		