



## Media Relations Policy

|                    |                        |                             |            |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Title</b>       | Media Relations Policy | <b>Policy No</b>            | PN-0015    |
| <b>Version</b>     | 1                      | <b>Date of Approval</b>     | 17/02/2020 |
| <b>Pillar area</b> | Governance             | <b>Schedule review date</b> | 2022       |

### Purpose

The intention of this Policy is to establish a framework for achieving an effecting working relationship with the media and to ensure that any comments made to the media are consistent with AusDBF values and objectives. AusDBF will establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media in order to communicate important public information and messages about its work and its goals.

This Policy provides guidelines that maximise the advantages of media interaction and minimise the risks of media misrepresentation. AusDBF works with the media in order to:

- advocate for the goals of the organisation
- promote the work of the organisation
- inform the public of the details of the organisation
- assist in fundraising for the organisation.

### Scope

This Policy applies to all AusDBF staff, Board members and volunteers.

### Definition

The *media* includes newspapers, magazines, journals, bulletins, newsletters, radio programs, television programs and electronic media such as online journals, online news websites, weblogs, podcasts, electronic newsletters, electronic noticeboards and social media sites.

### Core Policy

AusDBF operates on the values of:

- 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, while complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate
- clarity - all communications with the media will be in plain English
- balance - information provided to the media by AusDBF will be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely

### Responsibilities

- The Board shall nominate a Communications Director to coordinate AusDBF relationships with the media.
- The Board Chair and the Communications Director are authorised to speak on behalf of AusDBF.

- The Business Services Coordinator is authorised to speak on behalf of AusDBF on any non-contentious issues and where authority is delegated by the Board Chair or the Communications Director.
- Other staff, Board members and volunteers are advised to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by the Board Chair, Communications Director or Business Services Coordinator before talking to the media on any issue related to AusDBF.
- Where information or public comment is requested or required, the Communications Director will determine the most appropriate person to respond.
- Staff, Board members and other volunteers are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss AusDBF's work and its goals, provided they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by the organisation.
- All staff, Board members and other volunteers must observe AusDBF's Privacy Policy in relation to members' records.
- Significant statements on behalf of AusDBF shall be made by the Board Chair or Communications Director or delegated to the Business Services Coordinator.
- It must always be made clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to AusDBF are those of the organisation or of an individual. At all times, the positive reputation of AusDBF is paramount.

The Communications Director is responsible for:

- producing the organisation's annual public relations plan which will be consistent with the organisation's business plan and marketing plan
- authorising all media releases from AusDBF and, in discussion with the Business Services Coordinator, mounting them on the organisation's website. All media releases must be checked by the relevant Board or staff member before distribution
- receiving and coordinating a response to all approaches from media.

All staff, Board members and volunteers are responsible for:

- providing advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the Communications Director on any issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time. In such a situation, the Communications Director will work with the relevant staff and Board members to produce a communications plan which will ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed
- ensuring that no photos of members shall be released to the public via advertising, news media or internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the Communications Director, who must be satisfied that the organisation's Privacy Policy has been observed
- notifying the Communications Director or any contact made in the name of AusDBF to the media and providing the name of the journalist and the media outlet they represent
- ensuring any filming or taping of AusDBF's property or of the organisation's proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the Board Chair, Communications Director or where delegated, the Business Services Coordinator
- ensuring every effort 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 Board Chair or Communications Director.

AusDBF reserves the right to withhold sensitive information. Any such information will be clearly labelled and notified to relevant staff.

If any unauthorised releases of confidential information do occur, an investigation will be initiated by the Communications Director.

## **Initiating media contact**

The Board Chair can authorise the Communications Director, the Business Services Coordinator or other Board members with the relevant expertise, to initiate media contact for reasons such as:

- generating media interest about an AusDBF event or initiative
- increasing community awareness and understanding of AusDBF
- promoting awareness of an issue affecting AusDBF

All media releases should be reviewed by the Communications Director.

## **Handling a media inquiry**

The Board Chair, Communications Director, Board members and staff can provide basic, publicly available information on matters of a general nature. When handling a media inquiry:

- be courteous and diplomatic
- request the name and professional details (e.g. name of outlet they represent) of the inquirer
- provide factual information and avoid making comment or giving an opinion about the information being provided.

Any sensitive, contentious or political inquiries need to be referred to the Communications Director.

## **Protocol for media interviews**

When doing media interviews:

- be prepared
- be on time
- treat journalists courteously and diplomatically
- discuss with journalists only those facts you personally know about and do not provide your opinion or comment
- be open and cooperative
- if you don't have the information, help the journalist to contact a Board member or staff member who can assist
- avoid technical jargon. Be clear and concise and speak in a way that is understandable to the audience who will read, hear or see the media report.

## **What to do in a media crisis**

All AusDBF staff, board members and volunteers must follow the outline provided in the annual public relations plan. Follow these summary points:

- understand that, in a crisis, the Board Chair and the Communications Director will handle contact with the media. They will prepare a response and address the issue publicly as soon as possible. This response will be shared with Board members prior to publication.
- provide information to the media that is accurate and fair. The media may run a story anyway, but inconsistencies or inaccuracies can be minimised if appropriate information is made available.
- ensure AusDBF makes it known that the situation is not normal and/or not acceptable and that AusDBF is doing what it can to ensure it is not repeated.
- deal with the issue quickly, effectively and honestly. AusDBF must do this and be perceived to be doing this.