

---

# **SAWYERS VALLEY VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADE (INC.)**

## **MEDIA POLICY**

VERSION: 0.1



# Document Control

<b>Document Name</b>	Media Policy
<b>Document Version</b>	0.1
<b>Prepared By Name</b>	Lorna Woodley
<b>Scheduled Review Date</b>	

# Change History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Outline of changes</b>
0.1	06/08/21	L. Woodley	Initial draft

**PRINTED COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED. ENSURE YOU HAVE THE LATEST VERSION**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. POLICY STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. OVER VIEW</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3. PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH MEDIA</b> .....	<b>1</b>
3.1 RESPONDING TO MEDIA INQUIRIES.....	1
3.2 PERSONAL COMMENTS.....	2
3.3 PHOTOS AND VIDEOS.....	2
3.4 INACCURATE INFORMATION.....	2
<b>4. USE OF DIGITAL SERVICES (SOCIAL MEDIA)</b> .....	<b>3</b>
4.1 AUTHORITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY.....	3
4.2 POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE.....	3
4.3 APPLICATION OF THE POLICY.....	3
4.4 PROHIBITED COMMUNICATION.....	3
<b>5. USE OF DIGITAL IMAGES</b> .....	<b>4</b>



# 1. Policy Statement

The Media Policy supports Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bushfire Brigade members to take a consistent, appropriate and planned approach to managing and interacting with the media, including social media.

## 2. Over View

Media is a critical conduit for SVVBFB (the Brigade) to disseminate key information to the local and wider community.

Media can assist local emergency management arrangements by:

- distributing critical public information relating to fire and natural hazard situations
- communicating key preparedness and prevention messages locally
- promoting the work and achievements of the Brigade personnel and volunteers
- initiating discussion on emergency management topics and issues of relevance to the local community.

DFES Media works with the Brigade and its members to leverage media opportunities and project a professional and authoritative image.

The aim of this policy is to ensure Brigade personnel and volunteers:

- apply a consistent, appropriate and planned approach when managing and delivering public information in both emergency and normal working situations
- present a consistent and professional image to the community via the media and through the public information the Brigade delivers.

This policy and associated procedures will guide Brigade personnel and volunteers in the processes and restrictions for communicating with the media.

## 3. Principles for Communicating with Media

### 3.1 Responding to Media Inquiries

Brigade members must not respond to media enquiries, participate in interviews and/or provide comments/statements on emergency management issues/topics or matters of community interest unless prior approval is granted.



3.1.1 The following positions have automatic approval in the following circumstances:

- Incident Controller or spokesperson delegated by the IC, where the media enquiry relates specifically to the status of the incident underway only.
- Volunteer Brigade Captain or Chairperson, where the issue relates only to the local brigade, group or unit, e.g. volunteer recruitment, community events such as a brigade, group or unit open day, or promotion about the day-to-day activities of the brigade, group or unit.

## 3.2 Personal Comments

### 3.2.1

Brigade members must not make personal comments to the media, on brigade and/or DFES related matters or incidents, including:

- discussing or making public comment to media about the performance of government agencies or the government of the day
- providing media with personal or identifying information, including address details and/or images, of injured or deceased persons
- providing any information which may prejudice an investigation or future court proceeding
- making any discriminatory comments
- commenting on any matter which, in the opinion of the IC, relevant Command Head or Commissioner may negatively impact DFES operations.

### 3.2.2

Personnel are to advise the DFES Media team and volunteers are to advise their Captain/Group Commander/Unit Local Manager (Chairperson) if they intend to comment in the media on a personal issue or if their personal circumstances may lead to media coverage.

## 3.3 Photos and Videos

Photos and videos taken as part of the volunteer's duties at an incident or event may become the property of DFES. This applies when both private and brigade camera or video equipment is used. DFES will have an applied right of use and automatic copyright over the images/videos.

## 3.4 Inaccurate information

Where media reports are inaccurate or wrong, brigade members are required to refer the matter to the DFES Media team for further investigation and action as soon as practicable.



## 4. Use of Digital Services (Social Media)

It is important social media posts are accurate, factual, appropriate and do not pose an operational or reputational risk to individuals, the Brigade or the DFES.

The priority must always be responding to incidents and the safety of those involved.

### 4.1 Authority for Social Media Activity

Personnel can only capture images or video at incidents or participate in social media activity if they have approval from the Incident Controller or delegated authority:

- for Level 1 Incidents, all personnel must request and receive approval from an officer in charge of the incident prior to posting on social media
- for Level 2 or Level 3 Incidents, all personnel must request and receive approval from DFES Operations and DFES' Digital Communications Team prior to posting to social media.

### 4.2 Potential for Damage

Brigade Members should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to Volunteer Bushfire Brigade entities through their use of online communication via social media.

### 4.3 Application of the Policy

The Policy is applicable when communication is made on a brigade or personal electronic device; or when a Social Media post is made anonymously, through the use of an 'alias' or a pseudonym.

### 4.4 Prohibited Communication

Prohibited online communication via Digital Media Platforms (Social Media) includes, but is not limited to, communication which:

- disparages, discriminates, bullies, harasses and/or defames brigade entities or their colleagues
- reveals confidential, proprietary, non-released information concerning brigade or DFES business operations
- criticises brigade or DFES entities and/or other members/staff members
- is defamatory
- is rude, offensive or threatening towards brigade members and/or associates
- publicises or comments on internal brigade disputes
- implies the authorisation to speak as a representative of The Brigade or gives the impression that the views expressed are those of The Brigade
- uses a brigade email address or logo that may give the impression of official support



or endorsement of personal comments

- has the potential to adversely impact the professional reputation and/or the productivity of The Brigade and/or DFES.

## 5. Use of Digital Images

Individuals' safety and rights to privacy, in relation to the use of captured images (photographs and videos), are recognised and protected.

5.1 Captured images of individuals and their property (including, but not limited to, vehicles and homes) cannot be published in any forum, by members, without the explicit permission of the individuals who are the subject of such material.

5.2 Unless otherwise authorised by the Incident Controller or delegated authority from the relevant Hazard Management Agency (HMA), DFES personnel must not record footage of incidents or participate in social media while undertaking operational or support activities during an incident. The priority must always be responding to the incident and the safety of those involved. If capturing content will negatively impact this in any way, it is not permitted

5.3 Members are prohibited from using personal cameras to capture images at incidents such as motor vehicle accidents and property fires.



## Appendix A - Reference Documents

DFES Media Policy (Number 73 2015)

[https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/policies-and-acts/media-policy-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=4d4591a4\\_6](https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/policies-and-acts/media-policy-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=4d4591a4_6)

DFES General Circular No: 4/2021 File: D15793 21 January 2021 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

[https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/circular/general/general\\_circular\\_04\\_2021-use-of-social-media-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=ce4226a4\\_2](https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/vhprocesscopy/circular/general/general_circular_04_2021-use-of-social-media-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=ce4226a4_2)

Shire of Mundaring Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2013

[http://sawyersvalley.bfb.asn.au/files/sv.bfb.asn.au/CombinedVersion\\_SVVBFB-ByLawsAndCoC\\_V3.1\\_200929\\_0.pdf](http://sawyersvalley.bfb.asn.au/files/sv.bfb.asn.au/CombinedVersion_SVVBFB-ByLawsAndCoC_V3.1_200929_0.pdf)

Shire of Mundaring Brigade Operating Procedures

<https://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/AboutCouncil/Policieslocallaws/Council%20Policies/Local%20Laws/Bush%20Fire%20Brigades%20Local%20Law.pdf>

Sawyers Valley Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade By Laws

<http://sawyersvalley.bfb.asn.au/files/sv.bfb.asn.au/Brigade%20Operational%20Readiness%20Plan%202017%20v1.0.pdf>