



News Media Policy

Version number 2.1 November 2023

1 MBIE guiding principles relevant to this policy

- 1.1 The News Media Policy aligns with the following MBIE guiding principles:
- ensuring Te Ara Amiorangi, our core values, and diverse and inclusive culture are at the heart of what we do
 - protecting organisational reputation
 - complying with legislation, regulations and standards.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This policy outlines the principles underpinning the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE's) approach to news media engagement. It should be read in conjunction with the [News Media Guidelines](#) which will help MBIE people develop and maintain effective engagement with the news media.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, secondees and contractors employed or engaged on any basis by MBIE (our people), whether they are casual, fixed term or permanent, whether full time or part time and whether they are in New Zealand or in any other country.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all direct interactions with news media, including through Social Media channels.
- 3.3 For information about the administration and operation of MBIE social media channels, please refer to the [Social Media Channel Policy](#) and the [Social Media Procedures and Guidelines](#).

4 Help

- 4.1 For any queries relating to the policy, please contact the MBIE Communications and Government Services branch or [email the Communications team](#).

5 Definition of terms

Term	Definition
News Media	Any individual or organisation that meet the following criteria: - a significant element of their publishing activities involves the generation and/or aggregation of news, information and opinion - they disseminate this information to a public audience by print, electronic or digital means.
Social Media	Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

6 Policy statements

Relationship with the news media

- 6.1 The news media is a key stakeholder for MBIE and has a legitimate interest in its activities. The news media provides scrutiny and supports transparency and accountability of our activities.
- 6.2 The news media also play a critical role in MBIE's communication with the public and other stakeholders. Being able to communicate our story through the news media helps the public to better understand what MBIE does, which assists us to operate more effectively.
- 6.3 The news media can enhance or detract from MBIE's reputation (and that of our Ministers).

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- 6.4 MBIE is committed to being accessible, transparent, knowledgeable and credible in its interactions with the news media. We want to manage our engagement with the media constructively, promptly, and professionally.

Media engagement

- 6.5 The Communications teams within the Communications and Government Services branch are the first point of contact for the news media in reactive and proactive situations. This ensures the appropriate spokespeople are utilised, communications are coordinated and approved signoffs are achieved.
- 6.6 Responses to news media enquiries should be given priority and be as prompt as reasonably practicable, taking into consideration complexity, reputational risk, confidentiality concerns and the operating environment of 'no surprises' with Ministers.
- 6.7 The Communications teams will inform relevant people leaders and MBIE people and keep them up-to-date with follow-up news media questions or ongoing requests.
- 6.8 If a media request seeks official information, it falls under the definition of an Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request and should be considered under the OIA, following the Media Requests for Official Information Procedures. However, sometimes it may be more appropriate to treat a media request for official information through the formal OIA process. In these instances, please refer to the Official Information Act Request Policy and follow the Official Information Act procedures.

MBIE people talking to media in their private capacity

- 6.9 MBIE people have the right to interact with the news media as private individuals, as long as doing so does not interfere with their official duties, or negatively reflect on the operations, standing or integrity of MBIE. (Refer to the [Standards of Integrity and Conduct](#) from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.)

Designated Spokespeople

- 6.10 MBIE will name spokespeople in the interests of transparency, unless there is a good reason not to.
- 6.11 The Communications teams will work with the business to determine designated MBIE spokespeople who can engage with news media.
- 6.12 When acting as an MBIE spokesperson, MBIE people must not express personal views to news media. These may discredit MBIE or impair its effectiveness. MBIE people must maintain public service neutrality at all times. (See the [MBIE Code of Conduct](#)). This does not preclude relevant MBIE people whose role it is to provide professional opinion (e.g. the Chief Economist) providing views to news media in that capacity.

Sign-off

- 6.13 Sign-off of communications with news media must be sought from the relevant Senior Manager or someone they have delegated this responsibility to. The Communications Manager or Principal related to the work will decide if/when they need to refer a proposed response to a Deputy Secretary, The Secretary/Chief Executive, or advise the Minister's office.

7 Key accountabilities and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governance and oversight	
Secretary for Business, Innovation and Employment and Chief Executive (The Secretary)	Overall responsibility for MBIE meeting its obligations under this policy.
Assurance, Risk and Accountability (ARA) Committee	Approves major amendments to this policy.
Business group management: Identify and manage risks in day-to-day operations (1st Line)	
Deputy Secretaries (Dep Secs)	- Provide leadership to embed the policy within their business groups - Designate spokespeople (in consultation with the Communications teams) for either an ongoing or one-off basis, depending on the issue
General Managers	- Designate spokespeople (in consultation with the Communications teams) for either an ongoing or one-off basis, depending on the issue. - Provide assurance that their business group is compliant and that matters of non-compliance are dealt with appropriately.
Managers and People Leaders	- Ensure our people in their branch are made aware of and comply with this policy - Ensure this policy is embedded into operational activities within their teams/business area - Ensure their staff are aware of their need to refer all news media requests to the Communications team by emailing the Communications team.
Our People	- Comply with this policy and associated mandatory procedures - Participate in relevant training as required - Refer all news media requests to the Communications team by emailing the Communications team - Advise their people leader if and when they have received a news media request or have been approached by news media.
Specialist functions: Set MBIE-wide expectations, policies and procedures (2nd Line)	
GM Communications and Government Services (Policy Owner)	- Provide advice and support to business groups relating to the policy - Assist business groups with any breach management / mitigation activities as required - Monitor compliance with the policy on a regular basis

Role	Responsibility
	Ensure the policy is reviewed and updated by the agreed review date
Communications teams (in the Communications and Government Services branch)	- Manage all news media enquiries and liaise with the business unit on an appropriate response/engagement - Work with the relevant business unit in the development of communications material - Ensure that designated spokespeople are adequately prepared and briefed to engage with news media - Engagement with news media (both reactive and proactive) via the Communications teams - Monitor, record and analyse news media interactions - Assist and advise the business on news media engagement, strategies and/or tactics - Provide advice to Dep Secs, GMs (or delegates) on appropriateness of MBIE people to be MBIE spokespeople - Provide advice or assistance with Official Information Act or Privacy Act requests as appropriate - Promote awareness of this policy, in particular during election periods and at times of reputational sensitivity - Liaise with ministers' offices as appropriate.
Designated spokespeople	- Are adequately prepared and briefed to engage with news media - Adhere to agreed messages - Maintain public service neutrality at all times - Are constructive, prompt and professional in engagements with news media.

8 Procedures

- a. [Media Guidelines](#)
- b. [Social Media Procedures and Guidelines](#)
- c. [OIA Procedures](#)
- d. Complying with the Official Information Act 1982 – media responses
- e. Media Requests for Official Information Procedures

9 Related MBIE policies and documents

- a. [Information and Records Management Policy](#)
- b. [Official Information Act Requests Policy](#)
- c. [Privacy Policy](#)

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- d. [Publishing Official Information Policy](#)
- e. [Social Media Channel Policy](#)

10 Relevant legislation, regulations and standards

- a. [Copyright Act 1994](#)
- b. [Defamation Act 1992](#)
- c. [Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015](#)
- d. [Official Information Act 1982](#)
- e. [Plain Language Act 2022](#)
- f. [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- g. [Public Records Act 2005](#)

11 Measures of success and compliance management

Measures of Success

- 11.1 The Communications teams regularly monitor and evaluate how well the news media policy is working. The measures of success are that:
- a. News media queries are given priority and are promptly acknowledged. News media queries are responded to as quickly as reasonably practicable and information provided is accurate and credible.
 - b. Only designated spokespeople engage with the news media for interviews and similar activities.
 - c. There is appropriate consultation in MBIE before a news media response is provided.
 - d. All information released to the news media is signed-off by the person with the relevant authorisation.
 - e. MBIE spokespeople do not express personal views.
 - f. Ministers are kept informed under the 'no surprises' convention.
 - g. An accurate and comprehensive news media log is maintained.

Training and communication

- 11.2 To ensure the policy is effectively communicated across the Ministry and that designated spokespeople have the required competencies to engage with the news media, the Communications teams will:
- a. Organise news media training where it is needed, including for new spokespeople or in areas where there is heightened public interest.
 - b. Remind MBIE people of the policy by communicating it through internal channels.
 - c. Promote the policy in interactions with MBIE people across the organisation.
 - d. Publish the News Media Policy on the policy page of the Intranet.
 - e. Guidelines, checklists and online modules are used to inform MBIE people and people leaders of their obligations.

Compliance management

- 11.3 The General Manager, Communications and Government Services branch will monitor compliance with internal policy requirements by:
- a. Monitoring of compliance with required processes, procedures or guidelines set out in the mandatory procedures manuals.
 - b. Daily monitoring of MBIE news media engagement performance (including an environmental scan and news media log) to ensure compliance.

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- c. Follow up and analysis of non-compliance with support provided to ensure future compliance.
 - d. Keeping a formal log of news media enquiries and final responses sent.
 - e. Ensuring all breaches are recorded and those which are of a serious nature (e.g.: something that is related to a breach of privacy or that is damaging to MBEs reputation) are reported immediately using Camms.
- 11.4 Compliance information regarding the performance of this policy will be provided to the relevant business group and the Enterprise Risk, Compliance and Insurance team on a quarterly basis.

12 Non-compliance

- 12.1 Failure to comply with this policy may be considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct](#).
- 12.2 Any action taken as a result of a breach of any of the obligations set out in this policy will be conducted in good faith, a fair process will be followed, and the person involved will have a full opportunity to respond to the concerns or allegations and have access to appropriate support, advice or representation.