



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

MAN aims to be widely recognised as the peak body within Western Australia for men's health, wellbeing and other issues that impact on men and boys. That is, MAN is to be recognised by government, all political parties, the media, service providers, non-government agencies and community groups as the peak body, with service providers and organisations being committed members.

This policy covers the procedures and protocols for communicating with the general public, other organisations, the media and politicians.

In all communications, M.A.N. is to ensure that:

- The integrity of the organisation is maintained
- The rights to privacy of its members are protected
- Accurate information, based on verifiable evidence, is disseminated.

M.A.N. will develop a bank of policies that have been adopted by the Committee of Management. The Executive Officer is authorised to comment on any issue covered by these existing policies.

All instances where a public comment is made on behalf of M.A.N. will be reported to the Committee of Management at the next meeting.

Member organisations and individuals are free to express their own independent views on any issue. Freedom of speech and individual rights are respected. M.A.N. will not attempt to control what members say publicly. However, such public statements will not be linked to M.A.N.

General Public and Other Organisations

The major forms of communicating with the general public and other organisations include telephone conversations, letters, emails, printed material, the web site and public presentations. Statements to the media are made with the general public as the intended audience.

All communication with the general public and other organisations is to be made in a respectful and helpful manner.

The Executive Officer is responsible for communicating with the general public and other organisations and for ensuring that any staff and volunteers also communicate in an effective and appropriate way.

Media

M.A.N. recognises that it has a responsibility to respond to media requests in a timely way, but within the policies and procedures of the organisation.

The Executive Officer is to act as the primary contact for the media. As soon as practicable he will inform the Chairperson of all media contact.

Where appropriate, a member who has particular knowledge and expertise may be appointed, with the Chairperson's consent, as the spokesperson to address a particular issue.

The Executive Officer is responsible for the preparation and coordination of media releases and letters to the editor, which are to be approved by the Chairperson prior to their distribution.

A summary of all media contact will be provided to the next Committee of Management meeting.

Whenever time permits, input will be sought from the relevant portfolio holders and members who have registered an interest in an issue before a statement is made. At the discretion of the Executive Officer and Chairperson, the draft media release and letter to the editor on some issues may be forwarded to all members of the committee of management seeking their opinions and feedback to be assimilated into the document before release.

It is recognised that in order to be effective, media releases and letters to the editor that are in response to an issue that is currently being canvassed in the media, must be submitted immediately and a draft will not be able to be sent to members of the committee of management seeking their views. Whenever possible, however, input will be sought from members who have registered an interest in a particular issue.

Any member may bring a current issue to the attention of the Executive Officer and suggest that a letter to the editor or media release should be prepared as a response from MAN.

Alternatively, a member or non-member may prepare the information for it to be released officially by M.A.N, in accordance with this policy and procedures. This may be the case where the person may be unable to make a public comment due to a conflict of interest arising with their employment, or where they believe that it may have more impact coming from M.A.N. In such case the Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the content and handling of the communication conforms with MAN policies and procedures.

Politicians and Government Agencies

In the context of this policy, the term politician includes members of the state and commonwealth parliaments, endorsed political candidates and political parties.

The Executive Officer is responsible for providing general information on available services as a result of a request from a politician or government agency.

In general, all media releases will be sent to all members of the state parliament and to the Western Australian Members of the House of Representatives and Senators.

The Executive Officer is responsible for the preparation of submissions to parliamentary and government inquiries, plus letters to politicians, which are to be approved by the Chairperson prior to their distribution. A list of these will be provided to the next Committee of Management meeting.

Whenever possible, all members of the committee of management and members who have registered an interest in the issue will be informed of the parliamentary or government inquiry or the proposed communication, seeking their comments. Whenever time permits, a draft of the submission or letter will be forwarded to all members of the committee of management seeking their opinions and feedback to be assimilated into the document before release.

There will be occasions when M.A.N. will be critical of the government. However, the Minister and departmental officers should already be aware of M.A.N's position on the issue, because whenever possible, they should have received a prior briefing.

Adopted by the Committee of Management at its meeting held on 24 February 2005.