



PHILANTHROPY AUSTRALIA - KEY GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT

MEDIA & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Background

As philanthropic issues become more common in the media and policy arena, there may be an increasing role of the President and Members of the Board to engage and be sought to make comments in the media or other external communications. As such, we need to adopt a consistent process for approving certain external communications, but be mindful that the process doesn't unnecessarily restrict the need for the Board of Philanthropy Australia to take the lead where it relates to our purpose and principles for participation in policy issues (See PA Board Charter).

Process Framework - Board

Council Members have multiple roles and positions and in conducting any media or external communication, each Board member needs to be very explicit as to whom they represent when signing off an open letter, a letter to the editor or interview – when they identify as an individual, a Board Member or representing another agency.

This framework applies for all media and external communications where you are identified as a PA Board Member or where because of the specific philanthropic nature of the content, you may by default be perceived to be representing the PA Board and/or Philanthropy Australia.

1. Where a Member has an identified role via association, board representation or employment with another organisation and/or a clear personal interest in a particular area, it is legitimate that they should engage in external/communications in their own right. In such circumstances, where possible the member should not be identified as a PA Board Member – however it is noted that such an association may be made – and to inform the President and CEO of such engagement for information and media monitoring purposes.
2. Where an issue is consistent with an agreed 'official' PA position, as outlined in PA Submissions and Policy Papers, members are encouraged to support and engage in external media/communications – and to inform the President and CEO of such engagement for information and media monitoring purposes.
3. Where an issue may have conflicting views or interests amongst members, Board Members should not engage in any external media/communications and should refer the matter to the President.
4. Where an issue may be considered controversial, Board Members should not engage in any external media/communications and should refer the matter to the President.



This framework applies to the PA Board Chair or his/her nominee, as it is assumed that by default, any view expressed verbally or in writing as the PA Board President will be interpreted as the view of the PA Board and the philanthropic sector as a whole.

1. Where an issue is consistent with an agreed PA position, as outlined in PA Submissions and Policy Papers, the PA Chair is encouraged to support and engage in external media/communications – and to inform Board Members and CEO of such engagement for information and media monitoring purposes.
2. Where an issue may have conflicting views or interests amongst members, the PA Chair should seek support from Board – for prior approval.
3. Where an issue may be considered controversial, the PA Board Chair should not engage in any external media/communications and should refer the matter to a Board Meeting for discussion and to determine if there is an ‘official’ Board position.

Process Framework – Management

The role of Management, as exercised via the CEO, may require a more flexible interpretation when it comes to media and external communications. Management needs to be able to be more immediate, responsive and flexible in relation to media and external communications and at times may express views that could be perceived or interpreted as more controversial or outside of an agreed ‘official’ PA positions from time to time.

This framework applies to Management with regard to media and external communications:

1. All official written releases to the media, submissions and policy papers must be signed off by the CEO.
2. Where an issue is consistent with an agreed ‘official’ PA position, as outlined in PA Submissions and Policy Papers, the CEO is encouraged to support and engage in media and external communications – and inform the President of such engagement for information.
3. Where an issue is emerging and outside of an agreed ‘official’ PA position, as outlined in PA Submissions and Policy Papers, the CEO may respond and engage in media and external communications – but must inform the President of such engagement for information.
4. Where an issue may be considered controversial or have potentially strong conflicting views or interests amongst members, the CEO should discuss with the President for approval prior to engaging in any media and external communications.
5. Where due to the immediacy of an issue and where it may be considered that views expressed may be controversial or have potentially strong conflicting views or interests amongst members, the CEO must inform the President as soon as practicable.