

Advertising Spending - Council Policy

Effective Date	21 May 2008
Policy Owner	Customer Support and Governance
Link to Corporate Plan	Financial Sustainability
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Related Legislation	Local Government Act 2009 Local Government Regulation 2012 Local Government Electoral Act 2011
Related Documents	Community Engagement - Council Policy Procurement - Council Policy

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
1	21/05/2008	Ordinary Meeting of Council
2	16/03/2011	Ordinary Meeting of Council
3	18/12/2013	Ordinary Meeting of Council
4	17/08/2016	Ordinary Meeting of Council
5	20/01/2021	Ordinary Meeting of Council

This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.**

Advertising Spending - Council Policy

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines outlining the control on expenditure on advertisements placed by Council in various media to ensure that this advertising is in accordance with the public interest, and complies with the requirements of section 197 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to any paid advertisement or notice in any media that promotes an idea, goods or services (including facilities) provided by Western Downs Regional Council.

This policy **does not** apply to advertising for:-

- a) the acquisition or disposal of property, plant and equipment used, or to be used by Council in its business;
- b) for tenders, quotations or expressions of interest;
- c) staff recruitment purposes; or
- d) reports published in the media where no payment is made for the report.

3. POLICY

3.1 Principles

Council is committed to the efficient, economic and responsible use of public resources and recognises that in order to achieve its strategic and operational objectives, reasonable expenditure on advertising is in the public interest to provide information or educate the public.

Council may spend money on advertising only:-

'(2) (a) if—

- (i) the advertising is to provide information or education to the public; and
- (ii) the information or education is provided in the public interest; and
- (b) in a way that is consistent with the local government's advertising spending policy.

(3) Advertising is promoting, for the payment of a fee, an idea, goods or services to the public.¹

Advertising should be used where the purposes of Council, or the benefit of the community, is advanced. It should not be used to promote the particular achievements or plans of particular Councillors or groups of Councillors, or used in an election, or for any purpose intended to provide material personal gain for a Councillor or Council employee.

3.2 Provisions

All advertising expenditure must be:-

- a) reasonable;
- b) cost effective;
- c) within relevant budget allocation;
- d) for official purposes; and
- e) able to withstand public scrutiny.

3.3 Acceptable uses of Council advertising expenditure are:

¹ *Local Government Regulation 2012* - section 197(2) and (3)



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- a) To advise the public of new or continuing services, programs, facilities and venues provided by Council;
- b) To advertise, promote and increase public awareness of new, changed or continuing policy, services, programs, facilities and venues provided by Council;
- c) To increase the use of a service, program, activity, facility or venue provided by Council;
- d) To change the behaviour of people in Council's area for the benefit of all or some of the community or to achieve the objectives of Council;
- e) To advise the public of the time, place and content of scheduled meetings of Council;
- f) To advise the public of the decisions or outcomes made by Council at its meetings;
- g) To request feedback or comment on proposed policies or activities of Council or other matters of interest to Council or the community;
- h) To advertise matters required by legislation to be advertised;
- i) To promote social education information (e.g. road safety campaigns, health campaigns, emergency service information etc);
- j) To advise the public on proposed community events, progress on Council works, services and projects and other matters of public interest;
- k) To advise the public of due dates for payment of rates and charges;
- l) To achieve Council's plans, goals and activities; and/or
- m) To promote the Western Downs Region for the purposes of tourism, events or economic development.

Section 90D of the *Local Government Act 2009* prohibits Council publishing or distributing election material during a caretaker period prior to the local government election. Election material is anything able to, or intended to -

- a) influence an elector about voting at an election; or
- b) affect the result of an election.²

3.4 Authorisation of Advertising

All advertising must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate and in accordance with Council's financial delegations.

The approving officer must ensure that:

- a) the expenditure is in accordance with this policy;
- b) the cost of the advertisement is appropriate for the number of people it is intended to inform and provides a commensurate benefit to the Council and/or to the public; and
- c) the cost is available in the relevant budget item and meets the usual requirements for expenditure approvals.

² *Local Government Act 2019* - section 90B(2)

