Anglican Diocese of Adelaide

Subject:	Media & Social Media Policy		
Body adopting policy:	Diocesan Council	**Date of adoption or last review:**	10 December 2025
Related Documents:		**Review schedule:**	5 Years

1. Overview

Communicating with the Media allows the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide to convey our key messages with clarity and impact. At other times we will need to respond to criticism and to give our account of policies, positions and events in the Diocese. A Media policy provides guidance for Diocesan officers to communicate with the Media with confidence.

The Diocese also recognises social media as a tool for direct communication and collaboration. Online platforms are fundamentally changing the way clergy and paid employees work and engage with each other, with parishioners and the community.

Our electronic presence is a window into the life of the church through which many people gaze. They get an understanding of who we are and what we believe by what is included.

All Officers of the Diocese are therefore accountable to ensure the use of social media and online communication is aligned to this policy to ensure the organisation and users are protected from inappropriate use, whilst also harnessing the benefits of social media.

2. Scope

This policy relates to the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide of the Anglican Church of Australia Incorporated, as well as all Parishes and staff that comprise the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide. This is to ensure compliance with all relevant Synod insurance policies.

Guidelines for the Diocese and Parishes regarding communication with media and social media use have been prepared and are attached to this Policy.

3. Purpose

This policy is intended to help clergy, volunteers and paid employees of the Diocese (Officers of the Diocese) make appropriate decisions about both communicating with the traditional print and broadcast Media, and the use of social media such as blogs, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn.

Officers of the Diocese should understand how communication with the Media is important and can help achieve strategic objectives, as well as the need to be well-prepared for interviews how to deliver a clear message.

Officers of the Diocese should also be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to the Diocese or a parish that can occur, either directly or indirectly from their personal use of social media and all should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk is minimised.

Officers of the Diocese are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media platform. When in doubt, employees can seek guidance from the Diocesan Media Officer on how to comply with the following obligations.

4. Definitions

4.1 Media
Media is the means of mass communication, including radio and television, newspapers, and magazines, both in print and published on the internet or other digital platforms, that reach or influence people widely. This policy document also uses "Media" as a collective for reporters, journalists, researchers, producers and other representatives of broadcast and print companies.

4.2 Social media
Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube, Instagram and blogs.

4.3 Employees
In this policy, employees include clergy, paid employees, volunteers and students on placements.

4.4 Official Use
Official use is when an employee, clergy, parishioner, volunteer or supporter is using social media as a representative of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide or a parish/church within the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide.

4.5 Personal Use
Personal use is when an employee, clergy, parishioner, volunteer or supporter is using social media as themselves, not officially representing the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide or a parish/church.

4.6 Significant issue
Any issue within the Diocese which can be expected to generate substantial Media interest.

4.7 Operational issues
Routine, non-contentions matters that do not involve comment on Church or Diocesan policy, and are unlikely to cause controversy within the Church or the wider community.

4.8 Diocesan representatives
Any person, lay or clergy, holding any position within any organisation within the Diocese who acts or speaks in their capacity as a position-holder within the Diocese.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Diocesan Council

Diocesan Council is responsible for

a. Strategic oversight of the implementation of this Policy to ensure compliance;
b. Reviewing this policy every 5 years, and
c. Approving this policy.

5.2 Diocesan Bishop

The Bishop is responsible for approving all press releases in their name.

5.3 Secretary of Synod

The Secretary of Synod is responsible for

a. Communicating this policy to all Parishes in the Diocese;
b. Implementing appropriate practices, procedures and systems that ensure compliance with this Policy;
c. Reviewing this policy every 5 years and submitting it to Diocesan Council for adoption;
d. Approve all media releases released by the Diocese; and
e. Authorise all delegates authorised to speak to the media.

5.4 Diocesan Media Officer

The Diocesan Media Officer is responsible, as an authorised delegate, for:

a. Implementing appropriate practices, procedures and systems that ensure compliance with this Policy;
b. Serve as the Diocese's first point of contact with the media;
c. Developing all media releases released under the Diocese; and

5.5 Employees (refer to Definitions)

All employees must follow and abide by the following:

5.5.a Contact with the Media and Media management
Employees must not initiate contact with the Media unless authorised by the Archbishop or the Secretary of Synod, or the Diocesan Media Officer as delegated by the Archbishop or Secretary of the Diocese.

5.5.b Approval
All Media enquiries must be directed **immediately** to the Diocesan Media Officer in the first instance to determine how the matter can be dealt with most appropriately and to ensure that the Diocese's response is accurate, coordinated, consistent and in accordance with Faithfulness in Service. Employees must not attempt to respond to the enquiry under any circumstances without approval from the Diocesan Media Officer.

5.5.c Media releases
All Diocesan media releases must be approved by the Archbishop or the Secretary of Synod or the Diocesan Media Officer as delegated by the Archbishop or the Secretary of Synod. The relevant logo should be included on the media release as per branding guidelines.

5.5.d Media interviews
Only spokespeople approved by the Archbishop or the Secretary of Synod, or the Diocesan Media Officer as delegated by the Archbishop or Secretary of Synod, are permitted to speak to or be interviewed by Media outlets.

5.5.e Operational matters
Where employees are requested to provide information directly on operational matters, they are permitted to respond to requests within their acknowledged area of professional expertise, after consultation with the Diocesan Media Officer.

5.5.f Public information and events
Where issues of significant public interest or Diocesan policy are to be discussed in a public forum, Diocesan representatives must inform the Diocesan Media Officer at least one week prior to the event. Diocesan representatives should provide advance warning of the likelihood of contentious issues. Examples include court cases, ongoing public criticism of an issue, protests, conflict between stakeholders, complaints, issues that involve parishes or other organisations within the Diocese. Alternatively, if in unforeseen circumstances, Media has attended an event where comments or a presentation from Diocesan representatives has been made, employees must advise the Diocesan Media Officer as soon as possible.

5.5 g **Social Media Age Restrictions**
In accordance with Australian law and the Diocese's commitment to child safety, staff, volunteers, and representatives must not assist or encourage persons under 16 to create or maintain social media accounts. All media activities must comply with the Social Media Minimum Age obligations under the Online Safety Act. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

6. Personal Use

Employees are reminded of their obligations contained in the Diocese Code of Conduct - Faithfulness In Service. Misuse of personal social media accounts in conflict with Faithfulness In Service may result in referral to the Professional Standards Committee.

7. Integrity

Diocesan representatives are to present the policies and decisions of the Diocese and the Anglican Church of Australia in an impartial manner. Media requests for information must be responded to with honesty, accuracy and in a prompt manner via the Diocesan Media Officer.

8. Policy review

This Policy is subject to review every five years.

9. Further Information

If any person is in doubt and seeks further clarification on any point, they must contact the Diocesan Media Officer at Synod Office.