

MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Local, state, national and international media are vital partners in achieving the goals of Tasmanian Youth Orchestra (TYO). In order to maximise the advantages of media presentation and minimise the risks of media misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how media contact will be conducted.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The organisation welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to explore or respond to issues in the public arena.

In dealing with the media, staff, Board members, participants, contractors and other volunteers (hereafter referred to as "TYO representatives") should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the organisation and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of TYO.

PURPOSE

TYO works with the media in order to

- advocate for the goals of the organisation
- promote the work of the organisation
- inform the public of the details of the organisation
- assist in fundraising for the organisation

In order to ensure that these purposes can be fulfilled, this policy regulates the choice of people entitled to speak for TYO.

The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the community in holding TYO to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to assist them in this role.

To balance this, TYO must have the capacity to defend itself from any unfounded criticism, and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts (if necessary using other channels of communication).

It is the responsibility of all TYO representatives to ensure that effective media relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of TYO. Naturally, in doing this, certain legal constraints might apply (eg not making comment on current court cases, especially those before a jury).

POLICY

1.1 TYO operates on the values of

- a. **Honesty:** The organisation will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story.
- b. **Transparency:** The organisation will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- c. **Clarity:** All communications with the media will be written in plain English.
- d. **Balance:** Information provided to the media by TYO will as far as humanly possible

- be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.
- 1.2 TYO should seek to establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media. It is important that the organisation works with the media to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.
 - 1.3 However, contact concerning any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of TYO should only be made by TYO representatives where:
 - a. They have consulted the General Manager;
 - b. They have the required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion;
 - c. They have some experience in media relations.
 - 1.4 Where any of these criteria do not apply, TYO representatives are recommended to exercise extreme caution and to seek guidance from the most senior staff or Board member available.
 - 1.5 TYO should seek to grow its social media base and use this to engage with existing and potential members, donors and stakeholders. At the same time, a professional balance must be struck which avoids placing the organisation's reputation at risk.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The General Manager shall coordinate TYO's relationships with the media.
- 2.2 Individuals authorised to speak on behalf of TYO are acknowledged within the delegation of authority limits.
- 2.3 Other TYO representatives are advised to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by the General Manager before talking to the media on any issue related to TYO.
- 2.4 Where information or public comment is requested or required, the General Manager shall determine the most appropriate person to respond.
- 2.5 TYO representatives, and third parties, are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss TYO's work and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by the organisation.
- 2.6 All TYO representatives must observe TYO's Privacy Policy in relation to client records.

PROCESSES

- 3.1 Significant statements on behalf of TYO shall be made as authorised by the General Manager or Board Chairman as outlined by the delegation of authority.
- 3.2 It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to TYO are those of the organisation or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of TYO.
- 3.3 All TYO representatives are responsible for:
 - a. Providing advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the General Manager on any issues that are likely to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time. In such a situation, the General Manager will work with the relevant staff and Board members to produce a communications plan which will ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed.
 - b. Ensuring that no photos of clients, participants, employees, or students shall be released to the public via advertising, news media, or internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the General Manager, who shall satisfy themselves that the organisation's Privacy Policy has been observed.
 - c. Notifying the General Manager of any contact made in the name of TYO to the media and providing the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.
- 3.4 Any significant media contact with TYO's staff or representatives on any issue likely to prove contentious shall, where possible, be videotaped.
- 3.5 Any filming or taping on TYO's property or of the organisation's proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the General Manager.
- 3.6 Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial staff work to produce, such work must be authorised by the General Manager. It will usually be necessary to provide information in addition to that which is requested in order to set the facts and figures in



context. Requests for detailed information of this nature, whether from the local or national media, should be referred to the General Manager.

- 3.7 TYO reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning, say, commercial transactions or governmental negotiations. Any such information will be clearly labelled and clearly notified to relevant staff.
- 3.8 If any unauthorised releases of confidential information do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action will be taken.