



SHIRE OF LEONORA

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Purpose: To provide clear, consistent, and timely communication between the Shire, Council, community, and stakeholders, supporting transparency, engagement, and service delivery.

Scope: Applies to all Shire officers, contractors, and Councilors for official communications through approved channels.

Alignment: Integrated Planning & Reporting (IPR) framework; Shire policy manual; social media management procedure; recordkeeping and disaster recovery arrangements.

2. OBJECTIVES

- Keep Council informed of key activities, risks, and decisions.
- Engage the community through regular updates and open forums.
- Provide clear standards for responding to enquiries across channels.
- Maintain professionalism by using authorised and monitored channels only.
- Enable effective crisis communication that is fast, accurate, and coordinated.

3. AUDIENCES

3.1 Internal

- Councillors
- Executive Team
- All Staff
- Contractors

3.2 External

- Residents
- Local Businesses
- Community Groups
- Traditional Owners
- Media
- State/Commonwealth Agencies
- Regional Local Governments

4. KEY MESSAGES

4.1 Themes

- Service delivery and infrastructure updates
- Community safety and resilience
- Events and participation
- Economic development and tourism
- Sustainability and environment

4.2 Tone

- Clear, Respectful, Inclusive
- Evidence-based and Practical

5. CHANNELS & FREQUENCY

5.1 Council Updates

- Email: Monthly summary to Councillors from the CEO (Target Send Date: First Business Day of Each Month).
- In-Person: Monthly verbal CEO update at the Ordinary Council Meeting.

5.2 Community Updates

- Tower Street Times: Monthly article highlighting projects, events, and community news (Broadcast ONLY; no social media comment/responses).
- Website: Key notices, project pages, and crisis updates.

5.3 Town Halls

- Minimum of two open public town halls per year (March and August recommended).
- Invite stakeholder presenters (e.g., service providers, agency reps, community groups).
- Publish agenda, logistics, accessibility information two weeks prior.

6. RESPONSE STANDARDS

- Phone messages: Respond within 2 business days.
- Emails: Respond within 3 business days.
- Written correspondence (letters): Respond within 10 business days.
- Social media: The Shire will not respond to comments or direct messages. Social media is used for broadcasting information only; enquiries must be directed to phone, email, or written correspondence.

7. GOVERNANCE & ROLES

7.1 Shire President

- Legislated responsibility for all public messaging.

7.2 Chief Executive Officer

- Owns the strategy; supports the Shire President in their role as official spokesperson; approves major announcements from administration.

7.3 Communications Officer

- Drafts content; maintains website and notices; coordinates Tower Street Times articles; monitors channels for misinformation.

7.4 Managers

- Provide operational updates and data; ensure service areas meet response standards.

8. CRISIS COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

8.1 Principles

- Accuracy (verified information only)
- Speed (prompt holding statements)
- Consistency (single source of truth)
- Transparency (what is known, what is being done, next steps)

8.2 Roles & Responsibilities

- Shire President: Spokesperson for all media.
- CEO: Approves messages; media liaison; leads briefings.
- Communications Officer: Drafts and distributes updates; maintains crisis webpage; monitors for misinformation.
- Incident Lead (Manager): Provides operational status, impacts, safety instructions.
- LEMC/Emergency Services Liaison: Coordinates with WA Police, DFES, Health, Main Roads, etc.

8.3 Channels in Crisis

- **Primary:** Shire website crisis page; email alerts to Councillors and key stakeholders; local radio.
- **Secondary:** Social media (broadcast only; comments not engaged); SMS to Councillors if material changes.

8.4 Timeline

- Within 30 minutes: Initial holding statement (acknowledge, advise source of truth, next update timing).
- Within 2 hours: Verified details and safety instructions (what, where, who, how to stay safe).
- Ongoing: Updates every 4 hours or as new information becomes available.
- Within 7 days post-crisis: Summary Report, lessons learned, next steps.

8.5 Templates

8.5.1 Holding Statement

“The Shire of Leonora is aware of [incident]. Our priority is community safety. Verified updates will be published on [link to crisis page] and broadcast via local radio. Next update by [time].”

8.5.2 Update Statement

“As of [time], the situation is [status]. Please follow instructions: [safety steps]. For assistance, contact [hotline/email]. Further updates at [time] on [link].”

8.6 Escalation Protocol

- Activate Emergency Management Team if essential services are impacted (water, roads, power).
- Notify Councillors immediately via email/SMS upon material changes.
- Coordinate with State agencies and follow Incident Controller direction.

9. MEASUREMENT & REPORTING

- Monthly Council feedback on clarity and usefulness of updates.
- Engagement: Town hall attendance; website traffic; Tower Street Times readership (where available).
- Compliance: Response-time SLA adherence across channels.

10. TEMPLATES

10.1 Council – Monthly Email Update (Template)

Subject: CEO Monthly Update – [Month] [Year] – Key Activities & Priorities

- 1) Highlights: [3–5 dot points].
- 2) Risks & Issues: [items requiring attention].
- 3) Upcoming Milestones (next 4 weeks): [list].
- 4) Decisions/Guidance Requested: [if applicable].

10.2 Tower Street Times – Monthly Article (Template)

Headline: [clear, community-friendly title]

Intro (75–100 words): What’s new and why it matters.

Project Update: [progress, benefits, timelines].

Events: [dates, how to participate].

Community Spotlight: [person/group story].

Where to find more information: [website/contact].

11. RESPONSE PROTOCOL CHART

INBOUND TYPE	CHANNEL	TRIAGE OWNER	TARGET RESPONSE TIME	ESCALATION TRIGGER
General enquiry	Phone	Customer Service	2 business days	Safety risk or complaint → Manager
General enquiry	Email	Customer Service / Area	3 business days	Complex or media interest → CEO
Formal letter	Written	Records / Area	10 business days	Legal/regulatory matters → CEO
Media enquiry	Email/Phone	CEO	Same day (holding statement)	Sensitive/urgent → Crisis protocol
Social media comment	Facebook	—	Not responded	Redirect to official channels

Note: This strategy complements Shire policies and procedures (e.g., social media management, external complaints, recordkeeping). It should be reviewed annually and after any major incident.