

Media Policy

13 June 2023

Version 2

Document information

Document name:	Media Policy	Type of document:	Policy
Status:	Active	Version number:	2
Date originally created:	12 May 2022	File reference:	ADM/8470
Superseded policy:	Media policy, social media policy	Compliance:	All staff
Related policies/ documents:	Code of Ethics and Conduct	Publication date:	13 June 2023
Review date:	13 June 2025	Policy owner:	Chief Operating Officer
Distribution:	Public	Feedback:	Legal, Governance and Risk Branch

NSW Ombudsman

Level 24, 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9286 1000

Toll free (outside Sydney Metro Area): 1800 451 524

Website: ombo.nsw.gov.au

Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

© State of New South Wales

Contents

1. Introduction and overview	1
2. Key principles	1
3. Terms and concepts	1
Communications between the Office and the media	1
Management of Ombudsman social media content	2
Moderation of Ombudsman social media platforms.....	2
4. Ombudsman approval	4

1. Introduction and overview

This Policy governs:

- (a) communications between the Ombudsman's Office (**Office**) and the media
- (b) management of Office social media content and social media platforms.

Its primary aim is to ensure that, in respect of all communications that are or may become public:

- we maintain public confidence and trust, by upholding our values of integrity, impartiality, fairness, transparency, professionalism, and respect, and
- any public views expressed are those of the Ombudsman and the Office, and not the views or opinions of individual officers.

2. Key principles

- I. Comments made in or (directly or indirectly) to the media relating to the Office, its functions and activities may only be made by the Ombudsman, or a person authorised by the Ombudsman to comment.
- II. The Office's social media platforms should be managed to ensure all content is respectful, reliable, relevant, and safe for all.

3. Terms and concepts

Media means any person or entity engaged in news reporting, journalism or preparing or publishing content intended to be disseminated through a news media organisation.

Officer means any person working in the Office, including any Deputy Ombudsman, senior executive or anyone employed under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, as well as any agency or temporary staff, intern or contractor engaged by the Office to conduct Ombudsman activities.

NSW Ombudsman public comment:

- (a) means any communication attributable (or reasonably perceived to be attributable) to the Ombudsman or the Office through a public channel, but
- (b) does not include communications contained in authorised Ombudsman reports, Ombudsman correspondence (including any correspondence with complainants), training presentations or similar material created by the Ombudsman or authorised officers.

Communications between the Office and the media

Receiving, forwarding, and acknowledging media queries

Media queries received by an officer must immediately be forwarded to the Communications and Media Unit at media@ombo.nsw.gov.au.

An officer who receives a media query may acknowledge the query and advise that it has been forwarded to the appropriate person but must not provide any other information to the person making

the query. If any further contact is made about the query, the person making the query should be advised to contact media@ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Responding to media queries

All responses to media queries are co-ordinated by the Manager, Communications and Media or, in their absence, the Director, Enabling Services.

Substantive responses to media queries can only be made with the written approval of the Ombudsman, Chief Deputy Ombudsman or a person authorised by the Ombudsman to approve the response.

Media releases or statements

Media releases or statements can only be made with the written approval of the NSW Ombudsman, Chief Deputy Ombudsman or a person authorised by the Ombudsman to approve the release or statement.

Media responses should be sent by the Manager, Communications and Media to the journalist within 24 hours, or as per the deadline that the journalist requests wherever possible.

Management of Ombudsman social media content

Access to and management of any Office social media accounts is restricted to authorised members of the Communications and Media Unit. Social media content can only be published with the written approval of the Ombudsman, Chief Operating Officer, or other person authorised by the Ombudsman to approve that content.

Moderation of Ombudsman social media platforms

The Office will maintain social media user guidelines that specify:

- (a) the principles of social media engagement
- (b) the type of behaviour or content that will result in content being removed or 'hidden', or a person being blocked or banned from a social media platform
- (c) the process by which a person can be blocked or banned from a social media platform and their rights of review
- (d) when the social media platforms will be monitored.

The Office will make the user guidelines available on its website and accessible on its social media platforms.

The Communications and Media Unit, who are responsible for the moderation of the NSW Ombudsman social media platforms, may remove content and 'block' or ban a person from those platforms if they post material that is inconsistent with the NSW Ombudsman's social media user guidelines¹.

Removal or 'hiding' of content

Where a person uploads content onto a social media platform that, in the reasonable opinion of the moderator, is of a kind specified in the NSW Ombudsman's social media user guidelines, the moderator may remove or 'hide' that content.

¹ The current social media user guidelines are available at: [Social Media User Guidelines](#)

Prior to removing or 'hiding' the content, the moderator must make a record of it (for example, a screenshot).

If the moderator removes or 'hides' the content, they must, where practicable, notify the person who uploaded the content that it has been removed and the reason(s) for its removal and their rights of review.

A person may request a review of a decision by a moderator to remove or 'hide' content. The request must be made in writing to the Manager, Communications and Media and state the grounds on which the request is being made.

Where a review request is made, the review is to be undertaken by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) or a member of staff nominated by the COO.

Blocking or banning

If a person uploads content that is removed or 'hidden' under this policy on multiple occasions, that person may be blocked or banned from the social media platform / all social media platforms.

A person may only be blocked or banned from NSW Ombudsman social media platforms with the approval of the COO.

Prior to blocking or banning a person from a social media platform, the person must, where practicable, be advised of the intention to block or ban them from the platform/all platforms and be given a chance to respond. Any submission made by the person must be considered prior to a determination being made to block or ban them.

The duration of the block or ban is to be determined by the COO.

Where a determination is made to block or ban a person from a social media platform or all social media platforms, the person must, where practicable, be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for it. The written notice must also advise the person which social media platforms they are blocked or banned from and the duration of the block or ban and inform them of their rights of review.

Where a person uploads content of a kind referred to in the NSW Ombudsman's social media user guidelines, and the moderator is reasonably satisfied that the person's further engagement on the social media platform poses a risk to health and safety or another substantive risk (such as the uploading of defamatory content), an interim block or ban from the platform/all platforms may be imposed on the person immediately for a period specified by the Office.

A person who is the subject of an interim block or ban from the platform/all platforms must, where practicable, be given a chance to respond to the interim block or ban being imposed. Any submission made by the person must be considered when determining whether the interim block or ban is to be removed or retained.

A person may request a review of a decision to block or ban them from a social media platform. The request must be made in writing to the COO and state the grounds on which the request is being made. Where a review request is made, the review is to be undertaken by the Ombudsman or a member of staff nominated by the Ombudsman.

Where a person who is the subject of a block or ban continues to engage on a social media platform(s) using an alternative social media account, profile, avatar, etc., a moderator may block or ban the person from the platform(s) immediately. In these circumstances the above provisions do not apply.

4. Ombudsman approval

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'M'.

Paul Miller
NSW Ombudsman