

# MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

Policy number	004	Version	1
Drafted by	Evan Knoble	Approved by Committee on	July 2009
Responsible person	President, Secretary	Scheduled review date	July 2012

## Introduction

Local, state, national and international media are vital partners in achieving the goals of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc. 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 contacts on Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's business 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 debate issues in the public arena.

## Principles

Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc operates on the values of

- **Honesty;** Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story.
- **Transparency;** Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- **Clarity;** all communications with the media will be written in plain English
- **Balance;** information provided to the media by Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc will as far as humanly possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.

## Purpose

Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc works with the media in order to

- advocate for the goals of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc
- promote the work of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc
- inform the public of the details of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc
- assist in fundraising for Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc

In order to ensure that these purposes can be fulfilled this policy regulates the choice of people entitled to speak for Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the community in holding Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc 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, Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc 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 Committee members and volunteers to ensure that effective media relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

The policy deals with the day-to-day relationship between Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc and the media and does not address how Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc will work with the media in a crisis, for which separate guidelines are available as a Procedure Sheet on [What to do in a Media Crisis](#).

### ***Authorisation***

<Signature of Policy Officer>

<Name of Policy Officer>

<Date>

### Policy

It is important that Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc works with the media to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.

It is not possible to provide hard and fast rules about who will speak to the media on behalf of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc in particular situations. Where possible, Committee members and other volunteers should speak to the media on any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc only if

- They have consulted the communications officer nominated by the Committee
- They have the required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion
- They have some experience in media relations

and where any of these criteria do not apply are recommended to exercise extreme caution.

Where, however, media inquiries concern straightforward provision of information on uncontentious issues responses may be made by any officer or member who knows the facts.

Staff, Committee members and other volunteers, and third parties are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's work and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

Staff, Committee members and other volunteers must observe Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's confidentiality policy in relation to member records.

Committee members and other volunteers are advised to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by relevant people before talking to the media on any issue related to Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

In dealing with the media staff, Committee members and other volunteers should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

Any filming or taping on Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc property or of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the Committee or its nominee.

### Procedures

Significant statements on behalf of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc shall be made as authorised by the Committee or its nominee in reference to the principles listed above.

It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc are those of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

The Committee shall nominate a Communication Officer for Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.

- The Communications Officer will produce and update a list of key contacts for distribution to local press and radio and TV stations. The Communications Officer can also be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.
- The Communications Officer shall be responsible for the production of Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's annual public relations plan, which shall be consistent with the organisation's business plan and marketing plan.
- The Communications Officer shall coordinate all media conferences for Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc. All such conferences shall be videotaped by Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc.
- The Communications Officer shall authorise all media releases from Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc and be responsible for mounting them on Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's website. All news releases must also be approved by staff in charge of the relevant area before distribution.
- The Communications Officer should, where feasible, be involved in any approaches to the media to feature Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's work.
- Approaches from all national press, radio or TV stations or specialist press should be directed to the Communications Officer who will discuss the nature of the story and then contact the appropriate officer or member asking them to respond.
- It is important to obtain advice from the Communications Officer (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) 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 Communications Officer will work with the relevant staff and Committee members to produce a communications plan which will ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed.
- No photos of members, audience or volunteers should be released to the public via advertising, news media, or web without the approval of the Communications Officer, who shall satisfy themselves that Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's confidentiality policy has been observed and that a completed photographic release form is in place.
- Where a Committee member or volunteer has had any significant interaction with media representatives on issues related to Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc, it is the responsibility of the person concerned to notify the Communications Officer and to provide the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.

Any significant media contacts with Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc's staff or members on any issue likely to prove contentious shall, where possible, be videotaped.

Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial committee work to produce, such work must

be authorised by the committee. 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 Communications Officer.

Rosebud Astral Theatre Society Inc 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 committee members.

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.

### Related Documents

- [What to do in a media crisis](#)
- Committee Confidentiality Policy