

Authority:

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) (CI)

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THE ISLANDER EDITORIAL POLICY

Objective

- To provide a fortnightly community newspaper to the public as a community service and for the amenity of the community
- To provide a vehicle for publishing information relevant to the Shire's operations, including wherever possible to meet the statutory obligation to publish certain Shire information in a "newspaper circulating in the district"
- To obtain financial contributions to the publication through newspaper sales and advertising, recognising that such financial contributions are not full cost recovery

Policy

A. General Policy

1. *The Islander* newspaper is a community newspaper. This means that it is not a local government publication to ratepayers but is a community publication to the whole community.
2. The Shire will publish *The Islander* newspaper on a fortnightly basis or more often if the need arises.
3. As a community publication the Shire invites editorial contributions and advertising from the community, and charges fees for purchasing copies of *The Islander* and advertising goods and services. Fees and charges are set each year within the Shire's Annual Budget.
4. The CEO is designated as the Editor of *The Islander*. The Council is the Publisher.
5. The Editorial Group, comprising the President, a Councillor nominated by the Council, the Policy Officer, CEO and the Manager Community Services, will oversee the editorial content of *The Islander*. The committee may invite any other person to assist or advise the committee as required from time to time.
6. Editorial content means unsolicited articles and letters submitted by the public, solicited articles, articles prepared by the Shire, bulletins, public notices, community information such as broadcasting programs and calendar of events, and advertisements. In each case, as guided by this policy, the Editorial

Group will determine/identify the category of editorial content submitted.

7. The Editorial Group will comprise of the CEO and either the President or a Councillor each time it is convened. In the event of any disagreement, the President as representative of the Publisher has the final decision on editorial content.
8. The Editorial Group shall meet two days prior to the publication date to edit the draft.
9. Following the finalisation of the draft by the Editorial Group, no further changes are to be made to the draft except for minor corrections to spelling and grammar.

B. Editorial Policy

1. The Shire will publish articles, including views and opinions, in *The Islander* where such material submitted is accurate and/or factual, is not defamatory or inflammatory, and the author or source of the material is identified.
2. “Defamatory” means any statement, opinion, article or other material that, if published, may find a complaint of defamation proved against the Islander.
3. “Inflammatory” means any statement, opinion, article or other material that, if published, may be considered to be offensive to sections of the community for reasons of gender, race or religious conviction; or material containing derogatory references.
4. “Accurate and/or factual” means material that appears on the face of it to be
 - Based on proper research, investigation, or known information
 - When using quotations or source information, that it accurately references such quotations or sources
 - Truthful, or not false or misleading or deceptive
 - In the case of advertising material, meet the standards set out in the advertising policy
5. “Identification of source or author” means sufficient detail to know who has written an article, where the person resides, and where the article was previously published and any copyright requirements (in the case of re-printed articles).
6. In some circumstances the name and address of an author will not be published, but the details must be supplied in the first instance.

7. The Editorial Group has the right to edit or refuse to publish articles submitted.
8. In the case of edited articles, the author or source of the article will be advised of the required edits and asked whether or not they still want their article published. The author or source will be given the opportunity to withdraw and re-submit an article if they don't accept the proposed editing of the article.
9. In the case of letters to the editor, the letter will either be accepted or rejected.
10. The following general disclaimer will appear in each edition of *The Islander* that "The material published in *The Islander*, does not necessarily reflect the views of the Shire of Christmas Island, nor does the Shire of Christmas Island take responsibility for any errors or omissions in articles submitted for publication by external sources.
11. It will also publish its editorial policy statement in each edition of *The Islander* in the following terms:

"The Shire reserves the right to edit or refuse any articles submitted for publication. Letters to the editor will either be accepted or rejected. Items need to be:

- Accurate and/or factual
- Not defamatory or inflammatory
- Identified by author (including letters to the Editor)

A full copy of *The Islander* policy is available from the Shire on request."

C. Advertising policy

1. In recognising that *The Islander* is a reliable means of advertising goods and services as well as publishing bulletins, notices and community information, the Shire will work to maximise its use through:
 - Maintaining a regular schedule of publication
 - Advertising publication deadlines
 - Facilitating electronic means of submission of articles and information
 - Maintaining a reasonable pricing structure for paid advertisements
2. Where a commercial or community advertisement is submitted, the Shire requires that the advertisements (where applicable):

- Do not contravene the Trade Practices Act (false or misleading advertising) or other relevant laws
- Does not encourage the breaching of any laws
- Are truthful
- Are clearly distinguishable as advertisements. If produced in an editorial style, the word “Advertisement” must be prominently displayed at the top of the copy
- Do not disparage identifiable services, products or competitors in an unfair or misleading way
- Do not contain anything which, taking into full account both the nature of the specific readership and generally prevailing community standards, is likely to cause serious offence to the community or a significant section of the community.

3. As a general rule all of the following types of material will be treated as paid advertising for the purposes of this policy:

- Commercial advertisements, include private “for sale” notices
- Public bulletins and notices from all Government sources including Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, other Government Departments and service delivery providers to Government or Community.
- Program or course details from community or not for profit organisations where any fees are payable for such courses or programs.
- Tourism information including flight schedules
- Job advertisements and expressions of interest
- One-off community events that incur entry charges or other fees

4. As a general rule all of the following types of material will be treated as “free of charge” advertising/community information for the purposes of this policy:

- Community organisation notices of AGMs and meetings
- Community organisation information of community interest for free activities only; paid entrance to programs or events are to be charged unless the monies are going towards charitable cause.
- Public interest information such as weather details, emergency services details, requests for blood donations etc
- Religious and cultural notices
- Funeral, “In Memoriam” or “thank you” notices
- Any notices where the community organisation can demonstrate an inability to pay

5. Where there is any doubt about what category an advertisement of notice falls into, the Editorial Group will decide.

6. The Shire will explore ways in which it can effectively and efficiently process advertising sales revenue collection.
7. Incorporated and Unincorporated Community Groups will have the opportunity to register their organisation for free advertising. Advertising space will be given only for notice of events and programs that support community development. Community Groups can register with the Manager of Community Services.

Free advertising is subject to fair use in terms of size and frequency of space utilised as decided by the Editorial Group.

D. Distribution Policy

1. In recognition of the fact that the Shire requires financial contributions towards *The Islander*, the Shire will charge a nominal fee to purchase *The Islander*. This charge is levied on an “honour system” basis. From time to time the Shire will publish details about the extent to which the community is respecting the honour system.
2. The Shire will distribute *The Islander* to the community through as many outlets on-Island outlets as possible. The Shire will continuously seek ways in which to improve its distribution and return system, for example, through direct purchase or by commission sales through local outlets.
3. The Shire will monitor changes in population on the island and vary the amount of copies of *The Islander* produced accordingly.
4. In recognition of the fact that *The Islander* contains information about the Island of interest to ex-residents and off-island organisations, the Shire will distribute copies of *The Islander* to those on a mailing list. The mailing list includes individuals who subscribe to *The Islander* as well as to off-Island organisations and individuals targeted by the Shire to receive complementary copies of *The Islander*.

E. Shire Content Contribution

1. The Shire will maximise its use of *The Islander* as a means of publishing information and views about its activities, actions and undertakings. This includes, but is not limited to, publishing a President column, publishing public notices, providing news from work sections, reporting on decisions of Council of general interest, and otherwise providing Shire information considered to be of general, public or community interest.
2. The CEO will produce a column about council services and issues.

3. In order to ensure information is published about on-Island activities and events, the CEO may engage suitable persons to produce articles for the front and back page of *The Islander* on a paid basis.
4. The Shire will also encourage community members to contribute information, articles and letters of general interest.
5. Without limiting discussion within the Editorial Group about all material published in *The Islander*, the elected members on the Editorial Group will be responsible for dealing with all material submitted for publication in *The Islander* by elected members. The CEO will advise his opinion as to the need for legal advice about any material to be published.
6. The Shire will arrange translation for Shire articles in *The Islander* as determined by the Editorial Group and the current Shire Translation Policy (see section AD4)