



Media Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that SPCA employees, volunteers, contractors and Board members are aware of what is appropriate behaviour with respect to engagement with the media.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors and Board members of SPCA.

1. Objectives

- 1.1 SPCA relationship with the media is a critical component in our public communications, for informing, establishing and debating issues, for sharing news and knowledge with the community and in addressing various animal issues as they arise.
- 1.2 Media coverage is one of the many drivers of our overall reputation and therefore must be managed thoughtfully and deliberately at all times. Media reporting can influence our funding, the gifting of legacies, volunteers, addressing animal welfare issues, influencing industry perceptions and political responses, and the spreading of good news stories, including Inspectorate work and the adoption of animals. Media relations must be given a high priority, managed with sensitivity and utilise the expertise available – such as our resident experts.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the primary spokesperson for SPCA. The CEO has the ability to assign specific media commentary via delegated authorities. Those with delegated authority must be media trained and have sufficient expertise and specialised knowledge to represent SPCA appropriately.
- 2.2 All media enquiries on national issues (refer 2.3) must be directed to SPCA’s National Communications Manager (or a member of Media Relations Team (refer 2.6) if the Communication Manager is unavailable) in the first instance or if he/she is unavailable, directed to the Senior External Communications Advisor who will manage the process but are not authorised to comment on behalf of SPCA.
- 2.3 National issues include any issue that impact multiple areas of the country e.g.:
 - 2.3.1 Animal Welfare issues
 - 2.3.2 Proposed changes to legislation
 - 2.3.3 High profile/risk inspectorate cases
 - 2.3.4 National fundraising events
 - 2.3.5 Responses to government announcements/changes
 - 2.3.6 Veterinary practices
 - 2.3.7 Health & Safety issues
 - 2.3.8 SPCA Certified (Blue Tick)
 - 2.3.9 National social enterprise activity
- 2.4 All SPCA Inspectorate case media releases will include the name of the person(s) who has been found guilty of charges against them in relation to the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and will be produced in line with Ministry of Justice ‘Media Guide for Reporting the Courts and Tribunals’. Names will not be included in SPCA releases, where a suppression order is in place, the person is under 18 years of age, or the person(s) is defined as vulnerable: “a person unable, by reason

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of detention, age, sickness, mental impairment, or any other cause, to withdraw himself or herself from the care or charge of another person”¹ and in line with SPCA’s Vulnerable Person’s Policy. No defendants will be named in any other communications materials, including social media.

2.5 All material will be approved by the CEO or delegated authority, where risk is suspected. Where there is reputational risk, the CEO will convene the Media Relations team immediately to agree strategy and tactical requirements. The Chairperson will also be informed at this stage.

2.6 The Media Relations team shall consist of:

- SPCA CEO
- General Manager, Engagement
- National Communications Manager or
- Senior External Communications Advisor or other third party provider by invitation.
- General Manager, Animal Services (as appropriate)

3. Responsibilities & Accountabilities

3.1 Communication with SPCA New Zealand’s board:

The CEO will report all major media risks to the Chairperson as soon as possible. “Major” is defined by the Risk and Severity scale under the SPCA Risk Management policy. The Chairperson will be responsible to keep the board informed, including key messages pertaining to the issues.

3.2 Preparation is the key

SPCA must ensure all official responses to media issues are consistent with a set of agreed official positions, based on the ‘Animal Welfare Policies and/or Position Statements. The organisation will take a consensus-based approach to every issue, utilising the extensive ‘institutional knowledge’ and experience of our people where appropriate and drawing on the vast body of research available via SPCAs worldwide and through academic channels. Any preparatory work that can be carried out in advance to identify potential issues, build appropriate strategies, and prepare draft media materials should be undertaken.

3.3 Integration of media channels

Whenever SPCA responds to an issue in the public arena a strategy and official response must be created, agreed, and tailored to the requirements of all the SPCA media channels, including media releases, SPCA website, social media platforms, email newsletters, advertising activities, call centre scripts, and internal SPCA communications.

3.4 Social media

Social media posts that reference animal welfare or feature a prosecution case or rescue story will be reviewed by a member of the Media Relations team to assess potential reputational risk before they are published. Any issue that is gaining momentum in social media channels should immediately be brought to the attention of the CEO or another member of the Media Relations team with an agreed strategy implemented in a timely manner.

¹ Crimes Act 1961

3.5 Approval

Sign off of strategy, approach and all written material is required by the CEO, and/or delegated authority, and where appropriate the Media Relations team before distribution.

3.6 Media Relations Team

- 3.6.1 The Media Relations team – see 2.6 – is responsible for determining the organisation’s official response to media issues, especially those that have the potential to damage SPCA’s reputation. All responses will be reviewed against the organisation’s overall mission, objectives and brand values.
- 3.6.2 The team shall meet at least quarterly to track trending issues and discuss works in progress. They will also develop an annual plan for media related issues.
- 3.6.3 The team shall not only track local media issues but also regularly scan international media coverage of SPCA and similar organisations worldwide to identify issues with the potential to flare up in the New Zealand media as well.

3.7 Issues Management Procedure

- 3.7.1 Identification

If any SPCA employee, volunteer, contractor or Board member identifies a national issue with potential to attract media interest or is approached directly by media in relation to a national issue, they must immediately alert a member of the Media Relations Team and provide them with as much detail as possible. Journalists, photographers, film crew, etc., that arrive unannounced at the SPCA office must be immediately referred to a member of the Media Relations team.
- 3.7.2 Circulation

All information available concerning the issue must be immediately circulated by email to all members of the Media Relations team accompanied by any advice regarding its importance. Emails should outline actions required and follow up phone calls made if timely responses are not received.
- 3.7.3 Evaluation

All members of the Media Relations team must immediately discuss the issue via email, teleconference, or face-to-face meeting to establish a consensus regarding the level of threat/opportunity it poses. As part of this evaluation the Team will agree strategy, tactics and actions and responsibilities. This includes identification of a spokesperson, if it is not the CEO.
- 3.7.4 Transmission

Following approval, all official releases and statements must be immediately emailed or posted online to the appropriate media and cc’d to the Media Relations Team.
- 3.7.5 Monitoring

The Media Relations Team will monitor responses from the media, including requests for interviews and significant social media comments, and circulate these with the Team to determine appropriate responses and ensure these remain on-message.

3.7.6 Assessment and de-brief

A formal meeting following the passage of a major issue through the media will take place to assess the effectiveness of the media strategy and processes, determine immediate follow up actions and apply lessons learned ready for next time.

3.8 Delegated Authority – Local Media

3.8.1 The CEO authorises General Manager Operations and/or Area Managers to approve both the release and appearance of certain employees and volunteers specifically related to local area issues. Such situations may encompass Inspectorate activities, veterinary matters, local events, fundraisers and promotions, animal caregivers where special animals are involved and local animal stories/adoptions.

3.8.2 In such cases, our people must not express personal views or opinions on matters of policy.

3.8.3 Our people must project a professional and positive image of the organisation including appropriate clothing/uniforms, conduct aligned to SPCA values.

3.8.4 Our people are not authorised to speak to the media on national issues on behalf of SPCA unless by specific, written authorisation by the CEO

3.9 Board Responsibilities

3.9.1 The Chairperson is authorised to discuss governance matters and will ensure that the CEO and Media Relations Team are made aware of any planned releases.

3.9.2 The Chairperson will inform the Board members of any risk factors potentially affecting the reputation and continued effectiveness of the organisation as appropriate.

3.9.3 Board members are not authorised to speak to the media on behalf of SPCA unless by specific, written authorisation by the Chairperson in consultation with the CEO.

4. Review

The Audit & Risk Committee shall review the Media Policy on a 2 yearly basis and recommend any changes to the Board.