

## HEALTH SERVICES UNION

### Communications Policy

---

#### PURPOSE

To ensure the HSU is delivering services in line with members needs and expectations, the HSU communicates with members and key stakeholders through a variety of channels to engage with their needs, concerns, ideas, and goals.

The purpose of this policy is to provide understanding for the appropriate use of internal and external communications that include newspapers, magazines, journals, bulletins, newsletters, radio programs, television programs and electronic media such as online journals, online news websites including alternative news websites, weblogs, podcasts, electronic newsletters, electronic noticeboards, and social media sites.

This policy applies to the Union's Leadership team, elected Councillors, employees full-time, part-time, contract, casual and Union delegates of HSU NSW/ACT/QLD (collectively referred to as HSU Officials).

#### CONTENT

In all forms of communication including verbal, printed or digital, HSU Officials are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice and professional competence, consistent with the HSU's Values, Code of Conduct and policies. Under defamation law, the Union can be held vicariously liable for the defamatory publication or spoken statements of an HSU Official.

The Union recognises that the key to building positive and lasting partnerships with HSU members and the community requires effective two-way communication. It is the policy of the Union to communicate openly and honestly as a transparent organisation, and to maximise public knowledge of its activities.

The HSU is committed to developing and implementing communication policies, practices and resources that:

- Inform the membership of key HSU decisions, services, programs and initiatives.
- Promote accessibility by the membership to the HSU.
- Promote transparency and accountability of HSU decision-making processes.
- Promote opportunities for the membership to participate in HSU activities.
- Build pride in union membership through a positive image of the HSU.

#### POLICY

The Communications Team is responsible for coordinating and dispatching all external communication and photo opportunities following appropriate authorisation.

The HSU Secretary is the official spokesperson on decisions of the HSU NSW/ACT/QLD. If the HSU Secretary is unavailable, the Assistant Secretary/Treasury will act as the Union's official spokesperson.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Media relations are a key part of the HSU's operations, an important source of information for our members and the community, and a significant part of the HSU's role as a leader and advocate for Health and Aged Care Workers. The HSU will use this policy to assist HSU Officials in understanding the correct communication processes when handling media enquiries.

Only the HSU Secretary and Assistant Secretary/Treasury are authorised to make statements or give interviews to the Media (Newspapers, Radio, Television or any other form of public media).

Responses to enquiries, including media enquiries, of a day-to-day operational level matter or enquiries of a technical nature may be referred by the Secretary to the relevant HSU Official to act as spokesperson.

The HSU's Media Consultant is responsible for coordinating and dispatching all media releases, photo opportunities and media briefings following appropriate authorisation.

Media releases are distributed only through the official HSU media channels. Approval must be obtained from the Secretary to contact and brief the HSU Media Consultant.

Joint media releases involving external third parties may only be issued with the approval of the Secretary.

## **WEBSITE**

The HSU's website is a key communication tool. Whilst hosting a range of content specific to the services offered by the HSU, it also provides an avenue to distribute information to the community and media.

All content published on the HSU's website must be approved by the Secretary and relevant Divisional Assistant Secretaries/ Managers through a work-flow process for publications prior to it being published online.

## **DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The HSU recognises digital communications is an effective way to engage with members and the community. The HSU creates specific content that meets and exceeds the expectations of a target audience on specific digital platforms, and is in line with the HSU's strategic objectives.

Staff in the Communications Team manage content and maintain dialogue with the community through each official HSU platform.

Divisional Assistant Secretaries /Divisional Managers must seek permission from the Secretary to set up an official HSU digital platform to target specific areas of the membership.

Staff who manage content and dialogue on official HSU digital platforms are expected to:

- Gain authorisation from the Secretary.
- Adhere to HSU's Codes of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures.
- Moderate during business hours.
- Respond to member/community requests within two business days.
- Delete comments that are deemed inappropriate.

Staff are permitted to post positive comments under HSU posts and the HSU will not tag individuals in posts. HSU Officials are encouraged to share the HSU's content on their personal accounts.

### **Personal Use**

The HSU encourages its Officials to participate in all forms of digital communications and to understand the views expressed by them are those of the individual and not of the HSU.

When using digital communications in a personal manner, HSU Officials should avoid speaking on behalf of the HSU and be mindful of speaking about the HSU and its Officials.

Staff should refer to the *HSU Social Media Policy*.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The Communications Team prepares and issues the *Unified* magazine and Newsletters to members.

Newsletters, including E- Newsletters, are an essential means of providing information to members for consultation and information sharing.

All communication, newsletters, member surveys and content for the *Unified* magazine must be approved by the Secretary or, in the Secretary's absence, the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

The workflow process for newsletters and Unified articles submitted by HSU Officials are as follows:

1. Preparation – HSU Official
2. Authorisation – Divisional Assistant Secretary/Manager reviews content, checks factual content, proofreads and submits to Communication Team for authorisation.
3. Communication Team are responsible for obtaining approval from Secretary or Assistant Secretary/Treasurer and ensures newsletter/magazine content meets HSU's editorial standards and style guides.
4. Newsletters/posters for targeted members or for specific campaigns must follow HSU branding requirements. Graphic designs and logo must be approved by the Secretary.
5. All official HSU written material must include an authorisation statement.

## **SMS**

SMS can be used to contact members with the purpose of being contacted by the HSU. Members who are added to future databases must be informed of their choice as to whether they do or do not want to be contacted by SMS.

It is vital that the wording in a text message is clear and concise and does not exceed 160 characters. Abbreviations can be used if necessary; however, care must be taken to ensure that this can be understood by a wide audience.

It must be identified in the text that the message is from the HSU or an HSU Official and provide some form of contact detail, whether that is an email address or a telephone number.

An opt-out system is available and members who request not to be contacted by SMS need to be removed from the database.

Requests for SMS messages should be made to the Communications Team who will seek appropriate authorisation and arrange for the SMS to be sent.

Refer to the *HSU Privacy Policy*.

## EMAIL SIGNATURE BANNERS

Email signature banners may be used to promote high-level HSU initiatives, events and/or campaign priorities.

The use of email signature banners must be designed in accordance with the HSU branding guidelines and approved by the Secretary.

## LOGO USAGE

HSU logos are to appear on all communications including correspondence, publications, forms, displays, signage, staff uniforms, fleet vehicles and any other relevant communication medium.

Co-branding with third party organisations must have approval of the Secretary.

## STAFF CORRESPONDENCE

'All Staff' emails are required to be sent to the HSU Secretary for approval.

All formal written correspondence on behalf of the HSU must be signed by the Secretary

## APPROVAL PROCESS

All external communication must be approved with HSU Secretary NSW/ACT/QLD. In the event of HSU Secretary's absence, the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer must also provide a signature.

## BREACHES

Failure to comply constitutes a breach of this policy and misconduct.

### Policy Version Control

|                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy Approval Date:       | 31 August 2021              |
| Approved by:                | Union Council under Rule 40 |
| Approval Resolution No:     | UC 39/2021                  |
| Version No:                 | V1                          |
| Replaced Version No & Date: | NA                          |