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<b>Title: Media and Communications Policy</b>	

# Media and Communications Policy

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## Background

Burnet Institute works to maximise the potential of all media channels to reach current and new audiences. Digital media has changed the way we communicate and engage with Burnet's stakeholders. However, 'traditional' channels remain key in Burnet communications, with some of our audiences continuing to rely on them.

## Purpose

Burnet Institute recognises the impact that media, in different formats, plays in building our brand, and promoting our research and programs, and international development activities. We encourage all staff to actively promote the Institute's research and projects through a range of communication channels, including traditional and emerging media, print, digital, and social media.

Burnet Institute is committed to providing accurate, timely and accessible information about the organisation, and its goals and activities. This information is promoted and shared with the general public across multiple media platforms in Australia and internationally. Burnet is also committed to communicating our work while always respecting the dignity of communities who receive our communications.

## Scope

### **Accuracy, timeliness and accessibility of information**

All information released by Burnet Institute must be accurate, placed in context, timely, and available across multiple media channels as appropriate to the communication. All publicly released material must have approval by either the Director and CEO, Deputy Directors, or Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing. In developing the communications, the process must involve checking by at least three people to ensure its accuracy and context, and minimise errors.

All communications using storytelling, imagery or videography must be checked by designated managers to ensure it meets Burnet Institute's current Brand Guidelines and Photography and Videography Guidelines.

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Any media or news item that involves a DFAT-funded project or activity must have formal approval from DFAT Communications.

## Definitions

### Senior Management

A collective term for Burnet's Executive, Program Directors, Heads of Disciplines or Executives who represent the Institute and who have a high level of responsibility for the conduct of Burnet's functions.

### People Responsibility

A collective term for those who have the day-to-day responsibility for employees' workplace activities and/or is the person in control and management of the workplace. This definition includes those who are responsible for the allocation of tasks to staff, honoraries, honours and postgraduate students, and the management of laboratory or workshop tasks, field trips, contractors and volunteers.

### Employee

Is any person employed under a contract of employment or contract of training, whether the contract is express or implied, oral or written. The definition includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) persons employed by Burnet (full-time, part-time or casual)
- (b) persons employed on research grants
- (c) postgraduate students and post-doctoral fellows (when they are employed part-time to perform work such as teaching or research assistant)
- (d) honoraries.

### Contractors

Includes principal consultants, contractors and their sub-contractors, who may be engaged by Burnet for a variety of purposes including construction, building and facilities maintenance and repair, installations, deliveries, marketing and communication, and project work.

### Media

All forms of media, whether physical or digital, and includes earned, owned and paid media.

### Media outlet

A publication or broadcast medium that transmits news, feature stories, entertainment, or other information to the public through various distribution channels (physical or digital), including newspapers, magazines, radio, and broadcast, cable, or satellite television.

## Policy statement/overview

### 1. Media first point of contact

The appointed primary media contact (currently, Manager, Media and Multimedia) is the first point of contact for media representatives. Any media enquiries through switchboard or directly to staff members should be referred to a media team member in order to solicit a timely and accurate response. The media team is your direct support for all media enquiries and for pitching your research directly to media outlets.

### 2. Spokespersons

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2.1 The Director and CEO, Professor Brendan Crabb AC, is Burnet Institute's principal spokesperson for the Institute on matters of policy, official announcements or key issues of an official nature, including for COVID-19 and similar global health crises.

At times, the Director and CEO may delegate this role to an appropriate person, depending on the issue.

- o All staff and students are reminded that **ALL media requests** concerning COVID-19 are to be forwarded to the Manager, Media and Multimedia, in the first instance. This role is responsible for assessing the request by the media and/or staff/student.

2.2 Burnet staff are encouraged to share their expertise with media on matters within their area of qualification and expertise. **All initial contact** should come through the Manager, Media and Multimedia.

2.3 Awareness of partner and other contractual considerations

As Burnet works with many partner organisations, it is important to ensure that the role, reputation and position of these organisations are recognised and respected. If issues are likely to impact on these organisations, contact with the relevant person within that organisation must be made prior to communicating with a media outlet.

Burnet may also be involved in specific contractual arrangements that limit our ability to discuss certain activities with media outlets. Examples include Australian Aid, members of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), or partner organisations, including non-government organisations. See more details in item 9 'Partner Agency Policy'.

### 3. Media access to Burnet Institute

Media representatives are generally permitted access to the Institute. However, representatives are to be always accompanied by a member of the media team. They must also comply with the existing health and safety regulations in place by the Institute and the Alfred Health precinct.

Strict adherence to laboratory OH&S standards is mandatory. Should media require access to laboratory facilities, the Manager, Occupational Health and Safety, and Head, Laboratory Operations and Facilities Support, must be notified. Burnet's media team should always be made aware of a media representative being onsite and assist with access and managing any issues. Any media outlet filming in laboratories or offices should be accompanied onsite by a member of the media team.

### 4. Media Releases

Official Burnet Institute media releases are issued to specific, targeted media outlets to maximise awareness and promotion of major Institute announcements, conference presentations, scientific breakthroughs and research papers published in prestigious international journals. They are only to be issued by the media team. Burnet's Director and CEO, senior managers or the relevant researcher for such announcements are usually the key spokespersons referenced in the media release.

### 5. Issuing Letters to the Editor or opinion pieces

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Staff are encouraged to write letters to the editor or opinion pieces on areas of their expertise. These should only be issued to the media through the media team after approval from the Director and CEO or their nominee.

## 6. Crisis communication

If a situation arises that is considered a critical incident i.e. a laboratory accident or a controversial issue adversely affecting Burnet's reputation, major stakeholders including media will require urgent and timely information and an official Burnet response. In these situations:

- A crisis team consisting of executive/senior management should be assembled quickly by the Director and CEO, or nominee, to establish the facts and to decide what action is necessary, including what needs to be communicated quickly to stakeholder groups.
- All media enquiries are directed through the media team.
- A written media statement is prepared by the media team for issuing, as appropriate. The designated spokesperson/s must be available to answer questions, by phone or in person, at any point during the crisis period.

## 7. Access to information

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (Act), particularly Section 13 of the Act, provides that the right to obtain access to a document only applies to documents of an agency, or an official document of a government minister.

Burnet Institute does not currently fall within the definition of 'agency' under the Act. Therefore, the Act does not currently apply to Burnet, and Burnet is not subject to freedom of information requests.

Requests for information should be directed through the Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing. Requests for information are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## 8. Dealing with the media in overseas settings

The responsible person for dealing with promotional media issues should be the In-Country representative. Proactive promotion of activities to the media should be encouraged; however any media releases should receive approval from the Marketing and Communication Team in Melbourne prior to being issued.

Crisis management issues that are deemed likely to attract media attention in-country or in Australia, or adversely affect Burnet's reputation, should be dealt with by the In-Country representative in conjunction with the Head of International Development, Institute Director and CEO, and Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing.

## 9. Partner Agency Policy

Burnet Institute partners with many organisations, both domestically and internationally. We recognise that comment in the media reflects not only the position of Burnet Institute but also that of organisations with which Burnet is partnering. In some cases, contractual obligations may restrict Burnet from dealing directly with the media. Guidelines must be followed in accordance with requirements under that contract e.g. DFAT or international partners. Any issue that arises that may attract media attention and is likely to impact on DFAT or the relevant Minister or Secretary, must be raised with DFAT by Burnet's Head of International Development or Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing.

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Media issues that arise in a setting that involves partner organisations should only be responded to following approval from the partner organisation, either as a joint response or by Burnet Institute with permission of the partner organisation. Any media releases that mention the partner organisation should be approved by that organisation prior to release. The media team should be made aware of any media release from a partner organisation that mentions Burnet Institute, or uses Burnet's corporate logo. Burnet Institute is an active member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is committed to full adherence to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The Code requires members to be respectful and considerate of the reputation of other ACFID Members, including not issuing statements about other ACFID Members with the intention of creating a reputation or other advantage.

## 10. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Aid

Burnet Institute is an organisation accredited by Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), with funds received by the Institute through Australian Aid. While the activities funded may vary from country to country, the Institute and its collaborating project partners have a responsibility to acknowledge the support provided by the Australian Government, and reflect this in communications and marketing materials or announcements. Recognition by placement of the Australian Aid logo on printed and online materials is a requirement for all projects (see Burnet Institute Brand Guidelines 2023 Australian Government branding and acknowledgement, pages 47 to 49).

In media activities and media releases, if a project is funded through Australian Aid, this must be acknowledged according to the latest guidelines. Media activities or announcements in which Australian Aid is to be recognised must have prior approval by the appropriate DFAT Officer before release.

Images or footage used in communicating DFAT-supported projects or initiatives should have the consent of people appearing in them.

### **Related links:**

*Using Australian Government or Australia Aid logos and acknowledging support*

(<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/logos-and-style-guides#branding-aid>)

*ANCP Manual Acknowledgement and Engagement Summary* (<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/ancp-manual-acknowledgment-and-engagement-summary>)

*DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note – Use of images and social media*

(<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/Images%20and%20Social%20Media.docx>)

## Responsibility for implementation

Board of Directors and all levels of management

Employees, students, contractors, volunteers and collaborators

Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing

## Related Policies/ Procedures/Guidance

### Related policies and guidance

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[Social Media Policy \(/policies/workplace-conduct-and-responsibility/social-media-policy/\)](/policies/workplace-conduct-and-responsibility/social-media-policy/)

[Photography and Videography Guidelines \(/policies/workplace-conduct-and-responsibility/photography-and-videography-guidelines/\)](/policies/workplace-conduct-and-responsibility/photography-and-videography-guidelines/)

### **Policy updates**

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

### **Need more help?**

The Media Team assists in preparing spokespersons for an interview and hosts media training workshops.

For more information regarding the Media Policy or for additional support, please contact Executive General Manager, Communication and Marketing: [communications@burnet.edu.au](mailto:communications@burnet.edu.au)

(<mailto:%20communications@burnet.edu.au>).