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# Tweed Link Policy

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Version 1.0

Adopted by Council  
at its meeting

Minute No:

Division:	General Manager
Section:	Communications and Marketing
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Historical Reference:	

The Tweed Link is an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) registered newspaper, ISSN 1327-8630 which is produced weekly by Tweed Shire Council. It has been published since 1998 and has a strong following in the Tweed community.

The Tweed Link is free and is distributed to 38 500 households across the Tweed every week. It is available on Council's website and sent via hard copy and through email subscription lists. It is also available on audio tape. The Tweed Link is produced 49 of the 52 weeks of the year with a three-week break over the Christmas/New Year period.

The Editor of the Tweed Link is the Communications and Marketing Coordinator position within Council.

As a newspaper the Tweed Link's aim is to adhere to the codes and standards set by the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), Australian Press Council and others. The Tweed Link operates in a newsprint environment, similar to other commercial newspapers.

It is important that the Tweed Link maintains its integrity and continues to be seen by the community as a reliable news source of Council business. The Tweed Link: publishes Council's statutory and other advertising, reports factual and accurate content to allow the community to make informed decisions on matters relating to Council; informs the community about Council decisions, projects, services and programs and increases awareness and stimulates the development of community understanding about the business of Council as their local government provider.

The Tweed Link operates as a commercial newspaper and is reliant on advertising as a revenue stream. This policy outlines who is eligible to advertise in the Tweed Link. It is not intended for the Tweed Link to compete with other commercial newspapers that service the Tweed area which is why there are some restrictions in place.

Information about the Tweed Link, rate card, advertising calculator, deadlines and past editions can be found at <http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/LinkWeb/TweedLinkDetail.aspx> These items are discussed in the advertising section of this policy.

### **EDITORIAL**

As with any commercial newspaper, the Tweed Link aims for a balance between editorial and advertising whilst ensuring the editorial is about Council related business or of significant importance to the whole of the Tweed community.

The aim of the Tweed Link is to fill the information gap that exists in this geographically diverse community and to ensure they have accurate and reliable information about the business of Council.

Editorial priorities must be linked to Council business and are based on newsworthy principles these being: timing, significance, proximity, prominence and human interest. This includes, however is not limited to, key issues of Council such as Council decisions, planning and development information, community services, programs and events, projects and partnerships.

The Tweed Link must be factual, unbiased, timely, relevant to residents of the Tweed Shire, wide ranging, free of political influence, unhindered by group or individual

pressure, observant of confidentiality as determined by Council, fair, honest and frank and available to all members of the Tweed community free of charge.

### **ADVERTISING**

The Tweed Link operates as a commercial newspaper and is reliant on advertising as a revenue stream. As a result the Tweed Link has a 'rate card' which details its advertising rates, column sizes, requirements and deadlines. In addition to the rate card, Council has established an 'online advertising calculator' which provides users an instant quote to advertise in the Tweed Link.

Advertisers have the ability to provide black and white camera-ready artwork for the printed Tweed Link as well as full colour for the online and email version.

### **Paid Advertising**

#### ***Who is eligible to advertise in the Tweed Link?***

Government bodies (Commonwealth, State and Local Government organisations).

Affiliated Government authorities and statutory corporations.

Government affiliated/facilitated programs or events.

Public educational facilities.

Registered not-for-profit organisations and community groups (eg: business chambers, arts, cultural and sporting organisations and charities).

Festivals and events funded through Council's Festivals and Donations Funding Policies.

Consultants (private companies) who are contracted to a Government body are able to advertise providing the content is of community interest, relevant to the project they were engaged for and not promotional in nature.

Commercial organisations, utility companies and consultants contracted to government bodies may on occasion advertise in the Tweed Link providing the content is relevant to a lodged development application, is of community interest and is not promotional in nature. These ads must be factual and to the point and not include any corporate branding or marketing of the said organisation. Advertising of this nature is at the discretion of the Editor.

#### ***Who is not eligible to advertise in the Tweed Link?***

Commercial businesses (see exception above).

Unregistered community groups.

Political parties/election campaigns.

Individuals.

### **In-Kind Advertising**

Recognised community residents, ratepayers or progress associations are entitled to advertise their monthly meetings and AGMs in the Tweed Link free of charge. This in-kind advertising space is restricted to no more than 3 column x 1cm deep. This advertising is considered in-kind support from Council to encourage the Tweed community to participate in their local associations who represent the community on many Council issues. In-kind advertising is recorded and reported on at Council meetings. Any additional advertising above this space allotment will be charged at the rates set out in the Tweed Link rate card.

Note: It is the responsibility of these groups to provide Council with the required wording of these advertisements in electronic form to [tweedlink@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tweedlink@tweed.nsw.gov.au) by the Tweed Link deadlines.

At the discretion of the Editor in-kind advertising can be cancelled without notice at any time if space restrictions apply. Paid advertising will take priority if space is an issue.

### **Types of Advertising not accepted**

Recruitment advertising is not accepted. Only Tweed Shire Council or Council funded corporations/statutory authorities can advertise positions vacant.

Electoral campaigns for individual candidates, parties or political advertising is not accepted.

Public Notice advertising is not open to other 'classified' advertising such as for sale, birthday or engagement announcements.

Advertising that is considered not relevant or of significant community importance, offensive, discriminatory, questionable or in bad taste will not be accepted and is at the sole discretion of the Editor. Final acceptance of any advertising is at the discretion of the Editor.

### **ELECTED MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

Historically the Tweed Link promotes the business of Council, not individual Councillors. The aim is not to engage in the political process and to only report on the outcome and implementation of Council business.

It is important to maintain community integrity and remain apolitical and impartial at all times to ensure the Tweed Link is seen by the community as a reliable and unbiased news source of Council business.

The Tweed Link makes no reference to Councillors as individuals, they are referred to as 'Council' – the elected members as a whole representing the community.

A long established and historically unwritten rule has been the Tweed Link does not run individual photos of elected Councillors with the exception being the result of new, mayoral or by-elections to inform residents who their elected members are.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Many ratepayers and people who work in the Tweed live outside of the Tweed shire. To ensure everyone has access to the Council newspaper the Tweed Link is also available by subscription in hard copy or electronic format.

Hard copy subscriptions (black and white) are mailed to the subscriber. The cost recovery fee to cover postage and handling is 6 months - \$15 and 12 month - \$30. This is subject to change at any time in line with increases in postage costs.

An electronic email subscription service is also available to receive the Tweed Link (full colour) direct to participating email accounts free each week. Subscriptions are available online at [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au).