

Media Policy

Policy Statement

The media plays an important role in informing the public about Pharmac's work. Our approach to engagement with media is to be as open and responsive as possible.

Wherever possible, Pharmac will be proactive. This means actively making information available when it is in the public interest rather than waiting for a media request.

The understanding, trust, and confidence of the public in Pharmac's work is vital to the organisation. In addition to engaging with media, we work with key stakeholders, and consumer groups to share information with the public.

Scope

- This media policy applies to all Pharmac kaimahi and contractors.
- It is owned by the Manager, Public Affairs and Government Services.
- It was approved by the Director, Equity and Engagement.

Roles

All kaimahi

- Refer all media requests to the communications team. In practice, this means forwarding emails to media@pharmac.govt.nz
- Help the communications team respond to media requests by quickly providing the information requested. Usually, turnaround times for these are hours not days.
- Advise the communications team if you are working on something that may be of public interest or attract media attention. A communications plan may be required.
- Refrain from talking to media about Pharmac's work without going through the communications team.
- Pharmac's social media policy includes not speaking on behalf of Pharmac through personal social media channels. All kaimahi are bound by the Standards of Integrity and Conduct for public servants and these include standards of conduct relating to social media use.

People managers

- Responsible for making their teams aware of this policy and discussing what it means in practice for the day-to-day work of the team.

Pharmac media spokespeople

- Review and approve media statements that include them as the spokesperson where it relates to their role, where possible.
- Be available for interviews and interview preparation as required.
- Participate in ongoing media training so they can confidently front media interviews.
- Awareness of media coverage and key messages on current issues.
- Be available to respond to media requests after hours.

Board, committee, and panel members

- Refer all Pharmac related media requests to the communications team.

Communications team

- Prepare and share proactive communications that inform the public about Pharmac's work or important information such as product recalls or supply issues.
- Build and maintain relationships with media so they have an awareness of Pharmac's role and processes.
- Respond to all reactive media requests in a timely manner.
- Prepare key messages with subject matter experts for media spokespeople and also for staff to use at external engagement activities.

Media requests are either emailed to media@pharmac.govt.nz or the media may call the designated media phone (021 863 342).

Responsibilities

Media spokespeople

The role of a Pharmac spokesperson is held by kaimahi best suited to represent the organisation in the relevant discussion.

Most media requests received by Pharmac relate to our operational work. Our primary media spokespeople are responsible for leading our decision making processes. Pharmac's primary media spokespeople are the:

- Chief Executive
- Director Advice and Assessment/Chief Medical Officer
- Director Pharmaceuticals
- Director Medical Devices
- Kaituruki Māori.

Other people may be designated as a spokesperson for a specific issue if agreed by the Chief Executive. Before kaimahi are interviewed by the media, they must have media training which is organised by the communications team.

Ongoing media training will be provided to make sure our spokespeople are comfortable and confident in their interviews.

Media interviews

Media may request an interview with a Pharmac spokesperson which could be live, pre-recorded, in-person, a phone call or over Teams. Agreeing to do an interview with the media is at Pharmac’s discretion.

We aim to be as open and transparent as possible, so will accept interviews as appropriate. If we are unable to accept an interview request, we will attempt to provide further information or refer to alternative spokespeople.

Handling after-hours requests

Our core business hours are 9am–5pm. Outside of these hours, a member of the communications team is on call and has the media phone. This includes public holidays.

The information that can be provided after-hours may be limited, for example, if the request asks for data the request may need to be deferred until the next business day.

Preparing media responses and media releases

All responses to media requests and media releases are signed off by the relevant media spokesperson after it has been reviewed by the subject matter experts.

If we receive multiple media requests on the same subject, we may choose to proactively release the information.

All media releases and responses must comply with:

- the Privacy Act 2020. This means we must not make any unwarranted disclosure of personal information.
- The Official Information Act 1982. This means we think about the duty to make information available but also consider whether there are grounds for withholding the information under the Official Information Act.
- Pharmac’s Security Policy.

The communications team will consult the legal team and the government services team if advice is needed on Pharmac’s legal or statutory obligations.

Keeping the Minister’s office informed

As a Crown Entity, Pharmac operates on a no-surprises basis to ensure our Board and the Minister or Associate Ministers of Health are informed about issues.

The communications team provides No Surprises updates to the relevant Minister’s offices and the Pharmac Board on issues that could result in significant public or media interest.

Owner(s)	Manager, Public Affairs and Government Services		
Policy Reviewed	October 2023	Next Review	October 2025