Media Enquiry and Media Release Process

As at December 2020

eSafety regularly receives queries from journalists, for comment, interview or for background information. All incoming media queries are to be handled by the Communications and Marketing team in the first instance (primarily a Senior Communications Advisor).

Incoming media enquiries

Current context & issues

- The current channel for incoming media queries is the contact form on the eSafety website. The route to this being a link in the footer of the website, or About Us > Contact Us.

- Above that contact form it also notes that 'All enquiries are dealt with during office hours.'

- When the media enquiry form is completed, an email is auto-generated and sent to the generic media email address (media@esafety.gov.au), which auto-forwards to those on the eSafety media distribution list.

- Some journalists prefer to phone and may have saved individual phone numbers of the Comms team (which will get out of date over time).

- In an attempt to find a phone number, journalists have looked to former media releases where, historically, whoever issued the release at the time is the contact number listed. By default, this becomes the 'go-to' number for journalists wanting a response from eSafety. On occasion journalists may contact the Commissioner directly, in these instances it is prudent that the Communications team remind the journalist of the protocols of contacting eSafety.

New process as of 21 December 2020

- The current contact form is useful in that it channels journalists to outline their query in written form, rather than verbally, to give an idea of the nature of the query, and acts as a good starting point to the enquiry and a way to track where those enquiries are being managed. This method should remain the primary contact point, and in a business as usual context.

- A dedicated media phone line will be listed as a standard contact on media releases. This will prevent multiple numbers appearing across media releases – and the potential for queries to be missed if journalists call a number which is outdated, or the phone number of an officer not on media call.

- This media line (a stand-alone iPhone) will be manually diverted to whichever of the Senior Communications Advisors are on call (alternating on a weekly basis) and managing inbound reactive media enquiries.

- At the time of a media release, the line would be diverted to the officer responsible for the media release (i.e. if it is a Be Connected release, the media line would divert to the Senior Communications Advisor responsible for the release for a suitable period of time e.g. three days).

Incoming reactive media query

In business hours: [*Via Media enquiry form on the eSafety website*] > email autogenerated and sent to media@esafety.gov.au for the two Senior Communication Advisors for action as per process below. Those queries will be predominantly managed by whoever is on call that week.

Outside business hours: Officer takes responsibility for monitoring and managing the eSafety inbound email media enquiries and will have the media line number diverted to their work mobile phone.

Queries management

eSafety provides background and comment where the query falls within our role and remit. Where the query falls outside our remit it is referred to the relevant agency (i.e. ███████).

Title	Responsibility
Commissioner or Acting Commissioner	Main spokesperson for eSafety
Other Executive members	Spokespeople for field-specific areas in the event of Commissioner's delegation.

- Special exemptions to this may be made in unique circumstances upon the Commissioner's approval (e.g. a low-risk background briefing on a specific issue with a specialist). Ordinarily, a member of the eSafety Executive and/or a Communications representative should also be present for such a circumstance.

- The usual method of response to an enquiry is attributable quotes to the Commissioner or Acting Commissioner. When eSafety wishes to release a non-attributable statement, Communications will request that the quote is attributed to 'an eSafety spokesperson'.

The standard process for managing a media query and sign off process is:

⇒ Enquiry received via eSafety website, email or phone

⇒ Relevant Senior Communications Advisor drafts response (with subject matter experts where required, and that area's Exec member, where required)

⇒ Senior Communications Advisor sends to Comms Manager to review

⇒ Comms Manager to discuss with EM as needed (or if controversial/ politically sensitive)

⇒ Senior Communications Advisor to send to Commissioner for review and approval (copy in Comms Manager and EM of Comms)

⇒ Senior Communications Advisor responds to journalist.

Tracking and saving media queries

The final response (in the form of an email with the query and the signed off response sent to the journalist) is then saved ███████████████████████, to act as a repository, or knowledge database, to inform the starting point for drafting responses to future queries of a similar nature.

Media releases

A media release template is saved in the ████████████████

The standard process for developing a media release is:

⇒ Relevant Senior Communications Advisor drafts the media release (with subject matter experts, where required)
⇒ Business unit's Exec member approves media release
⇒ Seniors Communications Advisor sends to Comms Manager to review
⇒ Senior Communications Advisor to send to Commissioner for review and approval (copy in Comms Manager and Comms EM)
⇒ Media release is sent to IT to be posted on the eSafety website (staged for a certain time, if necessary), ██████████████
⇒ Senior Communications Advisor sends out media release to email distribution list / Medianet distribution service (for newswire).

All finalised media releases should also be saved in the ██████████████

Information on any planned media release should be included in that day's media summary sent to the Executive, with a copy of the media release attached.

A wrap up of any media coverage received will be in the next day's media summary for Exec, and for all staff in the next edition of Yabber.