

Social Media Policy

1 Purpose

This policy has been developed to detail standards for Council workers when engaging in conversations or interactions using social media for official, professional or personal use. The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of openness, trust and integrity in activities around interactive online tools.

2 Policy

This policy sets the parameters for the use of social media and to manage the risks associated with this platform.

It is essential that workers understand that comments published or broadcast via social media platforms are public statements and should always consider the parameters of the Council's Code of Conduct and Media Policy.

2.1 Personal use of social media

While this policy does not aim to discourage or unduly limit the use of social media for personal expression, workers should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to Council that can arise, either directly or indirectly, from their personal use of social media.

Workers are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media platform and should seek guidance from *Council's Social Media Guidelines* to comply with the following obligations:

- Only disclose and discuss publicly available information.
- Ensure compliance with Council's Code of Conduct and Media Policy.
- Be polite and respectful.
- Adhere to the terms of use set out by the social media platform or website, and legislation including copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and any other applicable laws.

Workers must not:

- Imply that they are authorised to speak as representatives of Council, nor give the impression that the views expressed are those of Council unless authorised to do so.
- Use the identity or likeness of another Council worker in a social media space.
- Use their council email address or any council logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment.
- Use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in their capacity as a worker of Council.
- Post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another worker of Council.
- Comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Council's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

2.2 Professional use of social media

2.2.1 Becoming authorised to comment (on behalf of Council in a non-Council space)

- Before engaging in non-Council social media platforms (e.g. a Facebook site run by a local resident) as a representative of Council, workers must become authorised to comment.
- To be authorised to comment or be an authorised spokesperson, workers must have the explicit approval of the General Manager through Council Media Delegations.

2.2.2 Rules of engagement

Authorised representatives must:

- Disclose that they are a worker at Council and use only their own identity, unless authorised to use an approved official account or avatar.
- Disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information.
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant council policies and other relevant requirements.
- Ensure they are not the first to make an announcement (unless specifically given permission to do so).
- Comment only on their area of expertise and authority.
- Ensure comments are polite and respectful.
- Ensure compliance with Council's Code of Conduct and Media Policy.
- Adhere to the terms of use set out by the social media platform or website, and legislation including copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and any other applicable laws.

2.2.3 Creation and moderation of Council-produced social media

All Council websites and social media accounts must go through an application and approval process before being created. Refer to Council's Social Media Guidelines for more information.

2.3 Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of council's Code of Conduct.

2.3.1 Identifying and reporting inappropriate use

Where a worker or a member of the public becomes aware of inappropriate or unlawful online content that relates to Council or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, the situation and circumstances should be reported immediately to the General Manager.

3 Definitions

Social Media: Social media is the term used for internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared over open digital networks.

Worker: As defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and varied to include councillors. A worker is:

- a councillor, or
- an employee, or
- a contractor or subcontractor, or
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or



- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person’s business or undertaking, or
- an outworker, or
- an apprentice or trainee, or
- a student gaining work experience, or
- a volunteer.

4 Key Responsibilities

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead councillors in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and guidelines.
General Manager	Executive	To lead workers (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and related guidelines.
Directors, Group and Section Leaders	All Directorates	To communicate, implement and comply with this policy and related guidelines.
Communication Officers	Business Services	To support workers in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy and related guidelines.
All Council workers	Council	To implement this policy and related guidelines.
Council Committees		To be aware and adhere to this policy and related guidelines.

5 References (laws, standards and other Council documents)

- [Victorian Department of Justice](#) - Social Media Policy
- [NSW Department of Education and Training](#) – Social Media Policy and Guidelines
- Council’s Social Media Guidelines

6 Details of Approval and revision

- **Approval date: 10/08/2017**
- **Responsible Section: N/A**
- **Superseded policies/procedures:**
- **Next review date: 10/08/2021**

Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date

7 Appendices

- Council’s Social Media Guidelines – a document covering the do’s and don’ts of personal and official social media usage.