

Social Media Policy

Professional and personal use of social media

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Classification	Council Policy
Responsible Officer	Manager Public Relations & Community Service
Relevant Legislation	Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA) Defamation Act 2005 (SA) Fair Trading Act 1997 (SA) Fair Work Act 1994 (SA) Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA) Local Government Act 1999 (SA) Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA) Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) Spam Act 2003 (Cth) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) State Records Act 1997 (SA) Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)
Related Policies	Code of Conduct for Elected Members Town of Walkerville Community Engagement and Consultation Policy Town of Walkerville Sponsorship Policy Town of Walkerville Request for Service and General Complaint Handling Policy
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. Social media allows online communities with common interests to connect, share and consume information, thoughts and ideas.
- 1.2. The Corporation of the Town of Walkerville recognises the opportunities that social media provides to engage in meaningful communication with the broader community. This can complement and enhance existing communication, customer service and consultation methods, and further improve access to, and delivery of, key services.
- 1.3. Council recognises the value of social media for:
 - Networking;
 - Recruitment;
 - Continuing professional development;
 - Marketing;
 - Employee engagement;
 - Innovation.
- 1.4. The intent of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools in order to enable its use by Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of the Town of Walkerville for the purpose of conducting Council business.
- 1.5. This policy also applies to the abovementioned who engage in personal use of social media.
- 1.6. This policy outlines requirements for compliance with confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social media. It aims to:
 - Inform appropriate use of social media tools for the Town of Walkerville;
 - Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media;
 - Promote staff expertise;
 - Minimise miscommunication or inappropriate communications;
 - Provide timely responses and commentary on Council-related matters;
 - Strengthen the Town of Walkerville brand/image.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of the Town of Walkerville who purport to use social media on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2. The Town of Walkerville encourages the appropriate and professional use of social media to aid the efficient and effective conduct of Council business.

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- 2.3. Administration recognises that social media is an important channel, used in conjunction with traditional methods, to communicate, listen to, engage and collaborate with the community and enhance the delivery of services.
- 2.4. At all times, use of social media by Elected Members and staff should be done in a professional manner, in accordance with the relevant policies and legislation.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Social media is a website or application based-system that enables users to create and share content, publish and/or participate in social communications. The policy applies to all current and future social media tools and channels where people comment, view, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, such as:
 - Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Google+);
 - Blogs/micro blogging (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr, Wordpress);
 - Crown wisdom (e.g. Buzzfeed, Reddit);
 - Q&A (e.g. Quora);
 - Social marketplace (e.g. Etsy, Airbnb);
 - Business (e.g. LinkedIn);
 - Reviews (e.g. Yelp);
 - Video sharing (e.g. YouTube, Vevo, Vimeo);
 - Events (e.g. Eventbrite, TryBooking);
 - Photo sharing (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Pinterest);
 - News sites (e.g. news.com.au, ABC);
 - Media webpages (e.g. nova.com.au);
 - Dating sites (e.g. Tinder, RSVP.com);
 - Encyclopaedia (e.g. Wikipedia);
 - Multimedia messaging (e.g. Snapchat).
- 3.2. As it is not possible to expressly refer to, or list all specific sites or kinds of social media activity, the absence of a reference does not limit the application of this policy.
- 3.3. This policy applies to the use of social media for:
 - The purpose of conducting Council business and where representing Council;
 - Personal use where reference is made to Elected Members, staff, policies and services, suppliers or other stakeholders or Council-related issues.

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4. Legislative and policy framework

- 4.1. Elected Members and staff are expected to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies.
- 4.2. A list of relevant legislation which may be used as a guide is included in Policies Related.
- 4.3. Council policy and guideline provisions which must be adhered to in relation to the use of social media include the following:
 - Code of Conduct for Elected Members;
 - Town of Walkerville Community Engagement and Consultation Policy;
 - Town of Walkerville Sponsorship Policy;
 - Town of Walkerville Request for Service and General Complaint Handling Policy.

5. Authorisation

- 5.1. The Manager Public Relations & Community Service must authorise any individuals to post on social media channels on behalf of the Council.
- 5.2. A minimum of one responsible person must monitor the Council's social media platforms both during, and out of, business hours.
- 5.3. The establishment of new social media sites must be approved by the Manager Public Relations & Community Service. Approval of new social media sites should consider the identified business objective, audience, proposed use in line with this policy, resourcing requirements and ensure alignment with Council's branding and style guidelines.
- 5.4. Social media is considered critical during an emergency scenario where the Council is required to release immediate notifications to the community. Responses will be developed with input from the Mayor, CEO, Manager Public Relations & Community Service, Manager Community Development & Engagement, Group Manager Planning, Environment, Regulatory & Customer Service and Program & Events Officer and; where appropriate; aligned to Council's Business Continuity Plan.

6. Personal use of social media

- 6.1. Council acknowledges that employees and Elected Members use social media in a private capacity.

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- 6.2. Individuals must exercise discretion and use judgement when deciding to make public comment or participate online, on any social media platform, as they are responsible for the content they publish.
- 6.3. Council employees should not express or publish a personal opinion on Council generally or about Council business via social media. When using social media, in a personal capacity, employees must not:
- Post material or images that are obscene, offensive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or infringes copyright in relation to work, another staff member, a stakeholder or Council;
 - Imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of Council or give the impression that the views they express are those of Council. This includes the use of email addresses and Council logo;
 - Post material or images that might otherwise cause damage to the Council's reputation;
 - Use or disclose confidential Council or staff information;
 - Imply they are representing the Council when endorsing any political affinity or allegiance particularly on public forums.
- 6.4. Elected Members should be mindful of Council's Code of Conduct when discussing or commenting on Council matters. When using social media, Elected Members must state clearly whether they are expressing a personal viewpoint rather than that of the Council (unless an Elected Member has been authorised by the Council to speak on its behalf). When expressing personal views, ensure care is taken to show respect for the Council, its decisions and its decision making process, and for other Elected Members, officers and staff. Elected Members should consider using a formal disclaimer to separate personal interests from official Council interests.

7. Media

- 7.1. Employees are not to issue statements or make announcements on behalf of Council through social media channels unless authorised to do so. Staff members are required to refer any media inquiries to the Manager Public Relations & Community Service.

8. Publishing and enforcement

- 8.1. All content communicated by, or on behalf of, the Town of Walkerville through social media channels must be from an authorised individual who has been approved for publishing by the Manager Public Relations & Community Service.
- 8.2. Any photography that is posted to social media of underage persons must have a record of authorisation from a parent or caregiver.

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- 8.3. The Town of Walkerville actively monitors social media for relevant contributions that impact on Council, its operations and its reputation.
- 8.4. The Town of Walkerville has the authority to act upon contributions made by employees, Elected Members, contractors and temporary employees that breach the Social Media Policy. A breach in this policy may result in disciplinary action as per the Code of Conduct.
- 8.5. Any inquiries through social media should be forwarded to the appropriate Manager for either their information or their preferred response.
- 8.6. Social media users will be informed that all requests or complaints are required to be lodged formally through the Town of Walkerville via phone, email, in writing or in person.
- 8.7. The Town of Walkerville reserves the right to remove or hide, where possible, content that violates this policy or any associated policies.
- 8.8. The Town of Walkerville has the right to block, report or remove certain social media profiles if they are deemed to be serial complainants or act with unreasonable persistence.
- 8.9. Where comments received through social media channels are deemed to be of an offensive or defamatory nature, the following approach will be adopted:
 - If constructive feedback is provided, regardless of how the offensive language is used, the comment will be recorded and then removed from social media. The feedback will be shared with the appropriate Manager;
 - In cases where the commentary is unrelated to Council business or the social media topic, and is of a threatening or defamatory nature, the response will be removed from social media and the respondent may be blocked, removed or reported.
- 8.10. All content of social media posts may be made available under the *Freedom of Information act 1991*.

9. Record keeping

- 9.1. Under section 99 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, the CEO has a legal responsibility to ensure that records are appropriately kept and maintained.
- 9.2. While it is not necessary to preserve all online conversations, anything significant that may influence Council policy, relates to Council decisions, or where there may have been breaches of policies or laws (i.e. inappropriate comments that are deleted) must be appropriately recorded and stored in line with the Town of Walkerville Records and Information Management Procedure.

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10. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice/authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer on using social media; • Seek approval for Council branding of social media; • Understand and comply with the provisions of this policy; • Seek training and development for using social media; • Seek advice from the Legal or Communications Department if unsure about applying the provisions of this policy.
Staff and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice/authorisation from the Manager Public Relations & Community Service on using social media and developing a communications plan to support business strategy; • Manager Public Relations & Community Service to maintain a register of Council staff who are authorised to use Council social media profiles; • Seek training and development for using social media; • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy; • Seek advice from the Manager Public Relations & Community Service if unsure about applying the provisions of this policy; • Familiarise self with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve business strategy incorporating use of social media; • Ensure staff consult/obtain authorisation from the Manager Public Relations & Community Service on their planned use of social media; • Offer training for staff using social media.
Marketing and Communications Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorise use of social media tools for conducting Council business; • Provide advice and assist with the development of communication plans using social media; • Educate Elected Members, employees and contractors about this policy and their responsibilities when using social media; • Advise appropriate precautions (e.g. disclaimers); • Monitor social media accounts registered for conducting Council business; • Monitor social media for references to the Town of Walkerville; • Seek legal advice as appropriate where an issue is likely to be contentious or may create legal risk for Council.