

Bayside Council

Serving Our Community

Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

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Τηλεφωνικές Υπηρεσίες Διερμηνέων

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Social media has become an essential part of our personal and work lives. It has created a fundamental shift in how we communicate and relate to friends, colleagues, government, business and communities.

Participating online provides Council with unprecedented opportunity to engage in the conversation with our community in a professional and respectful manner.

Social media can:

- Increase resident's access to Council
- Increase Council's access to residents and improve the accessibility of Council communication
- Allow Council to be more active in its relationships with residents, partners and other stakeholders
- Increase the level of trust in Council
- Reach targeted audiences on specific issues, events and programs
- Provide effective, fast communication channels during crises
- Provide insights into how Council is perceived

Council embraces the use of social media as a form of corporate communication and an important community-building tool. It also recognises the need to have a policy to guide employees who use social media either as part of their job or in a personal capacity.

1.2 Definitions

The definitions of certain terms are:

Social media

Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement.

Social media tools

Examples of social media applications include:

- Micro-blogging sites (examples: Twitter, Yammer)
- Social and professional networking sites (examples: Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing websites (examples: YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest)
- Weblogs, or 'blogs' - online diaries for pictures and updates (examples: Wordpress, Tumblr, Blogger)
- Wikis - libraries of collaborative documents that anyone can edit (example: Wikipedia)
- Forums and discussion boards (examples: Google Groups, Yahoo Groups)

1.3 Policy statement

Council is committed to providing guidance to all employee's for social media use, where it is about Council, its business units and services, its people, its Councillors and/or other business related individuals or organisations.

1.4 Scope of policy

This policy is intended to align with existing Council policies, such as the Code of Conduct, Electronic Communications Policy, communications strategy, and policies on acceptable use of information technology.

The policy applies to:

- Council officials who may be using social media on behalf of council
- Council officials who may be using social media for personal use.

2 Staff Use of Social Media

2.1 Personal use

Employees are permitted to access social networking sites while at work for research purposes and when appropriate, for personal undertakings in accordance with the Electronic Communications Policy.

Employees who are residents, ratepayers or customers of Council services are not precluded from participating in community debate about an issue that personally affects them.

Where an employee's personal use of social media relates to the business of Council, its operations, or other council related information, that use is governed by Council's Code of Conduct. Employees must make it clear that they are commenting as a resident / ratepayer, not as a Council employee. It is important that readers of posts do not misconstrue personal comments as representing an official Council position.

Employees using social media for personal use should **never** disclose, or comment on, information in regard to Council or its operations as a result of knowledge that has been acquired through their position in Council.

2.2 Official use

It may be appropriate for specific business units of Council to use social media to promote their activities and engage with specific community groups.

Use of social media by specific business units are to be approved by Council's Executive or General Manager and guided by Council's social media procedures.

2.3 Principles of Social Media use

Social media users will be guided by the following principles:

- Include content that is factual;
- Be credible, accurate, fair, thorough and transparent;

- Be respectful, cordial, honest and professional at all times;
- Be responsive and share information where appropriate;
- Behave with honesty and integrity;
- Be consistent with other Council information;
- Only post content that is genuinely expected to be relevant and of interest to followers;
- Respond to enquiries within 24 hours (Monday to Friday) where possible;
- Keep messages simple and engage in conversations where appropriate;
- Link to more information on Council's website where possible. If external websites are required to be linked to, this must be authorised by the General Manager (or nominee);
- Provide relevant, accurate, fair and thorough information.

3 Policy implementation

3.1 Policy responsibilities

The General Manager is responsible for the authorisation of social media use by specific service units.

The Coordinator Media, Communications and Public Relations is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 Record Keeping

Social media content is a record and carries obligations for Council under the *State Records Act 1988*. For example, if the 'tweet' carries a conversation that led to Council decision-making; if the 'post' informs the community and influences their decision-making; if the "have you say" comment by a member of the community, demonstrates the approach to a decision taken by Council. Council will ensure that Council's social media procedures meet legislative requirements for social media record keeping.

3.3 Procedures

The General Manager may approve procedures that outline process including the following:

- common approach to social media;
- initiating a social media outlet;
- business case details;
- training needs;
- record keeping;
- access to social media sites.

3.4 Monitoring social media

Content relating to Council that is posted on the internet by Councillors, employees, residents, community members or organisations will be monitored.

Council will monitor content posted on all official social media outlets to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy, and for its appropriateness, use, message and consistency in branding. Where necessary, content will be addressed in an appropriate manner.

Comments from social media users on Council's social media sites will be monitored and moderated where appropriate.

3.5 Breaches

Council employees must act in accordance with Council's values, the Code of Conduct and the Electronic Communications Policy.

A breach of this policy may be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct.

4 Document control

4.1 Review

The Policy should be reviewed every 4 years. The Director or Manager Governance and Risk may approve non-significant and/or minor editorial amendments that do not change the policy substance.

4.2 Related documents

Relevant legislation:

- Workplace Surveillance Act
- Local Government Act 1993
- Copyright Act 1968
- State Records Act 1998
- Private & Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Relevant Council Policies:

- Code of Conduct
- Electronic Communications Policy

4.3 Version history

Version	Release Date	Author	Reason for Change
1.0	12/04/2017	Liz Rog	New document