



Light
Regional
Council

Social Media Policy

Reference Number:
Responsible Department:
Related Policy/Procedure:

Section 6 No. 16
Business & Finance
2.02 Code of Conduct for Council
Members
2.04 Code of Conduct for Employees
5.09 Information and Records
Management
6.17 Social Media Procedure
17 December 2013
September 2020
2020/163
Amendment No. 2
Local Government Act, 1999
September 2022
Every two years

Date of Adoption:
Latest Review Date:
Minute Reference:
Version Number:
Applicable Legislation:
Next Review Date:
Review Frequency:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide a position in respect to the expectations of Council's representatives when engaging in social media both in an official and personal capacity.

Light Regional Council recognises the opportunities that social media provides to engage in meaningful, two-way 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.

The intent of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools. For further direction regarding procedures for using social media refer to Council's Social Media Procedure.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Expectations are growing on councils to engage, work openly, be more accountable and move quicker on issues. Social media represents opportunities to achieve real value by engaging residents, listening more and harnessing local energy.

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.

This policy applies only to the use of social media for:

- the purpose of conducting Council business and where representing Council; and
- personal use where reference is made to Councillors, staff, policies and services, suppliers or other stakeholders or Council related issues.

3. Aim

3.1 The policy aims to:

- Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media
- Provide guidance about the appropriate use of social media tools
- Reduce the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications
- Help manage new challenges associated with social media such as speed and immediacy, record keeping, privacy and security
- Provide clarity about roles and responsibilities in relation to use, approval and monitoring

4. Definitions

4.1 Social Media

The use of online tools for communication, promotion and conversation. Types of Social Media include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Forums, Instant Messaging facilities, Photo Sharing Sites (e.g. Instagram), Microblogs (e.g. Twitter), Social Networks (e.g. Facebook), Podcasts and Video (e.g. YouTube)

4.2 Council

Light Regional Council

4.3 Council Representatives

Elected Members, Development Assessment Panel Members, Committee Members, Volunteers and Staff when acting in their official capacity

5. Policy Details

5.1 Using Social Media

Council representatives using social media must:

- Only disclose publicly available information. Not comment on Social Media sites regarding confidential, private or legal matters.

- Align use with the Corporate Style Guide and use only corporate imagery such as logos and official Council photographs with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer (or nominee).
- Ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission.
- Ensure that information posted online is not illegal, libellous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusive, or obscene.
- Ensure that information posted online does not infringe the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, Development Assessment Panel Members and Committee Members or any other Council code or policy

Further information about the use of social media is available in Council's Social Media procedures.

5.2 Council's Social Media Sites

When using Council social media sites, Council representatives authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (or nominee) will:

- Ensure the social media site aligns with the settings specified in Council's Social Media Procedure
- Follow Council's endorsed Style Guides
- Connect any new social media sites/accounts to the corresponding official Light Regional Council account and can only be created with written permission from the CEO (or nominee).
- Ensure a minimum of two staff members have access to the social media channel to ensure continuity of access
- 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.
- Only post content that is genuinely expected to be of interest to followers.
- Provide accurate, fair and thorough information.
- Avoid using social media sites to promote personal political endeavours

5.4 Management

Approval

The establishment of new social media sites must be approved by the CEO (or General Manager delegate) 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.

Security

To protect from unauthorised use of Council's social media channels, login information should be kept secure and changed at regular intervals:

- Choose passwords that combine upper and lower case letters and numbers
- Change passwords every six months and when an employee with access to a Council social media channel leaves the organisation

Monitoring social media

Council's social media channels will be regularly monitored and maintained to ensure appropriate use. Where necessary keep formal records of social media activity in line with Council's Information and Records Management Policy.

Council and non-Council social media channels should be monitored for information, research and insight into issues circulating in the community and/or matters that impact on the municipality, its operations or reputation

The Council reserves the right, for legal compliance purposes, to monitor social media usage on its systems without advance notice and consistent with any applicable state, federal or international laws.

The Council may be legally required to produce logs, diaries and archives of social media use to judicial, law enforcement and regulatory agencies and will comply with any relevant requests.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Council members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) on using social media • Seek approval for Council branding of social media • Register social media account/tools/site with the Information Services Department • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy • Seek training and development for using social media
Staff and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek approval from your Manager for business strategy incorporating social media • Seek <advice/authorisation> from the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) Communications and/or media relations staff> on using social media and developing a communications plan to support business strategy • Register social media account/tools/site with the IT Department • Seek training and development for using social media • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy • Maintain records of email addresses, comments, 'friends', followers and printed copies or electronic 'screen grabs' when using externally hosted sites to the extent practicable • Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) if unsure about applying the provisions of this policy • Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of this policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise yourself with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used
Business Unit Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve business strategy incorporating use of social media Ensure staff obtain authorisation from <the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate)> on their planned use of social media Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of the social media policy Ensure the demands of moderating and responding to user comments can be adequately resourced Offer training for staff using social media Ensure regular review and evaluation of social media channels in line with business objectives and for the purpose of continuous improvement
IT Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate secure access to support delivery of Council business via social media Maintain a register of social media being used for conducting Council business including records of the business case for using social media, its strategic imperative, the intended administrator, URL, login, password and audience
CEO and General Managers	<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 Approve the design and branding of social media Educate Councillors, staff and contractors about this policy and their responsibilities when using social media Advise appropriate precautions (e.g. disclaimers) Monitor social media accounts/tools/sites registered for conducting Council business Seek legal advice as appropriate where an issue is likely to be contentious or may create legal risk for Council

5.4 Record Keeping

When using social media in an official capacity, staff are creating records which provide evidence of business transactions and activity.

Methods of capturing social media content as a record may vary according to the tools being used. Refer to Council's Social Media Procedure for specific advice.

5.5 Personal Use of Social Media

Council staff members and Elected Members should be aware that content published on social media sites is publicly available – even on their personal accounts. As such, you must ensure:

- you are mindful that your behaviour is still bound by the Light Regional Council values and Code of Conduct – even outside of working hours.
- you don't make comments that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to or about your work or about another person or entity.
- your comments are not or could be perceived to be:
 - made on behalf of the Council rather than an expression of a personal view,

- so harsh or extreme in your criticism of the Council that questions are raised about your capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially as a Council employee (such comments would not have to relate to the employee's area of work),
- compromising your capacity to fulfil your duties as a Council employee in an unbiased manner. This applies particular where comment is made about policies, projects and programmes of the Council,
- so strong in your criticism of the Council's administration that it could seriously disrupt the workplace. Council employees are encouraged instead to resolve concerns by informal discussion with the manager or by referring to the grievance procedures in the Light Regional Council & Officers Enterprise Agreement at Clause 29 and the AWU Enterprise Agreement at Clause 29,
- a personal attack connected with your employment,
- unreasonable criticism of Council's community and other stakeholders,
- compromising public confidence in the Council,

Staff and Elected Members should not reveal information about Council that is not available to the public.

5.6 Non-compliance

Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by Council representatives will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct and disciplinary systems.

6. References

6.1 Social Media Procedure

6.2 Corporate Style Guide

7. Review and Re-evaluation

7.1 This Policy will be reviewed every two years. The Chief Executive Officer will report to Council on the outcome of the review and make recommendations for amendment, alteration or a substitution of a new Policy if considered necessary.

8. Policy History

Policy adopted by Council on 17 December 2013, Council Minutes Reference GAP9.2.2/201, Page 410/2013

Policy Amendment No. 1 adopted by Council on 24 February 2015, Council Minutes Reference GAP9.2.1/2015, page 2015/70

Amendment No. 2 adopted by Council on 22 September 2020, Minute Reference GAP9.2.3/2020 Page Reference 2020/163

Policy No:	<i>Section 6 No. 16</i>	Date of this Policy:	<i>22 September 2020</i>	Page 6 of 6
Version:	<i>Amendment No. 2</i>			