

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

QUALITY CONTROL			
TRIM REFERENCES	D17/9747		
RESPONSIBLE POSITION	Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator		
APPROVED BY	Council Resolution		
REVIEW DATE	February 2026	REVISION NUMBER	2
EFFECTIVE DATE	ACTION	MINUTE NUMBER	
28 February 2018	Public Exhibition	45745	
26 April 2018	Adoption	45800	
30 March 2022	Public Exhibition	46790	
25 May 2022	Adoption	46857	

1. INTRODUCTION

Australians are among the most prolific users of social media in the world, and 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 residents' access to Council
- Increase Council's access to residents and improve the accessibility of Council communication
- Allow Council to be more active in its relationship 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

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To provide a policy position in respect to the expectations of Council's representatives when engaging in social media, in both an official and personal capacity.

3. POLICY SCOPE

This Policy applies to Councillors, Council officers, volunteers, consultants and contractors.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Authorised Users using social media must:

- Only disclose publicly available information, or information intended to be made publicly available at the time of disclosure.
- Publish copyright or trademark material only with permission from the copyright/trademark holder.
- Ensure that information posted on accounts they oversee is not illegal, libellous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or obscene.
- Maintain compliance with the Model Code of Conduct, and all other relevant Council policies when publishing content.
- Ensure parental consent has been obtained before posting an image of a minor, except where the minor's identity cannot be determined by a viewer.
- Use the content flowchart (attached) to determine if the content should be posted.
- Respond to genuine enquires within the timeframe outlined in the Customer Service Strategy where possible.
- Only engage in public conversation where relevant and appropriate.
- Not release CCTV footage on Council's social media without authorisation from the General Manager.
- Not communicate on behalf of the Mayor or Councillors without authorisation from the General Manager.

4.2 The Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator and the Digital Officer will monitor content posted on official social media channels to ensure adherence to the social media policy and associated documents.

4.3 Authorised Users will moderate user content. Any content that the Authorised User believes breaches this policy or associated documents is to be reported to the Digital Officer or the Communications and Community Engagement Officer. Offending content will be documented before being removed.

4.4 Council representatives must not use personal accounts in a manner that is likely to breach Council's Code of Conduct.

4.5 Council may utilise live streaming at Council meetings and events. During meetings, a disclaimer will be published in the business papers informing attendees they are consenting to their image, voice and comments being recorded and published. The Mayor and/or General Manager have the authority to pause or terminate the stream if comments or debate are considered defamatory or otherwise inappropriate for publishing. Attendees will also be advised that they may be subject to legal action if they engage in unlawful behaviour or commentary. Signage will be posted at events to inform the public if live streaming is in process.

4.6 Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by employees will be managed in line with Council's Disciplinary Policy. Non-compliance by all other Council Representatives will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct disciplinary systems.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Roles and Responsibilities

The following Council officers are responsible for the implementation and the adherence to this policy:

- General Manager
- Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator
- Digital Officer
- Authorised Users

5.2. Communication

This Policy will be communicated to staff in accordance with Council's Policy, Procedure and Process Framework. Following approval by the General Manager, the Policy will be made available on Council's intranet.

5.3. Associated Documents

The following documentation is to be read in conjunction with this policy.

- BHCC Model Code of Conduct
- BHCC Disciplinary Policy
- BHCC Email, Internet and Computer Systems Usage Policy
- BHCC Media Relations Policy
- BHCC Social Media Guidelines
- BHCC Customer Service Strategy

6. REVIEW

Review of this policy will incorporate relevant legislation, documentation released from relevant state agencies and best practice guidelines.

The standard review period will be annually from the effective date, but is not limited to earlier review subject to changes in legislation and/or organisational directives. The responsible Council officer will be notified of the review requirements three (3) months prior to the expiry of this policy.

The Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator is responsible for the review of this policy.

7. LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
- *Archives Act 1983*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 199*
- *Copyright Act 1968*
- *Copyright Amendment Act 2006*
- *Copyright Amendment (Disbaility Access and Other Measures) Act 2017*
- *Defamation Act 2005*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *State Records Act 1998*

Council employees shall refrain from personal activities that would conflict with proper execution and management of Council's Social Media Policy. Council's Code of Conduct provides guidance for recognising and disclosing any conflicts of interest.

8. DEFINITIONS

"Authorised User" is a staff member authorised by the General Manager or the Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator to manage, maintain, publish to and operate a Council social media channel.

"BHCC" is the acronym for Broken Hill City Council

"CCTV" is Closed Circuit Television

"Content" is any information, opinion, text, video, audio, image, link, or document published to social media

"Council Representative" is any employee, elected member, volunteer, consultant or contractor

"Minor" is a person under the age of 18 years

"Moderate" is the process of assessing content (normally user generated) against predetermined standards and removing content which does not meet those standards.

"Platform" is a specific Social Media network, website, application or service (for example Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc).

"Post", "Publish", "Comment" are all terms meaning to make information, opinion or content available for others to view on a social media platform.

"Public Domain" means available to the public.

"Social Media" is the term for websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

"User" is any content consumer or creator other than the account owner, operator, publisher or author.

