



COOLAMON SHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Date Adopted	18 June 2020		
Council Minute	112/6/2020		
Version	Version 2		
Policy Responsibility	Corporate & Community Services		
Review Timeframe	Every 4 Years		
Last Review Date	December 2017	Next Scheduled Review Date	December 2021

1. Purpose

To support Council's use of social media and ensure that it remains a tool which compliments traditional communication channels and fosters two-way communication between Council and the community.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are:

- Outline the management and use of social media for council
- Establish the purpose of Council's involvement with social media
- To ensure the effective utilisation of social media channels to communicate with residents and visitors.
- To clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of any person acting in an official capacity as an officer of Council in respect to their use of social media.
- To support a proactive approach to Council's communication activities.
- Provide for the inclusion of social media as a tool in the delivery of Council's services and activities

3. Background

Coolamon Shire Council recognises the importance of providing information to the community relating to Council activities, programs, events, services and initiatives. The use of social media is becoming an increasingly popular way of connecting with the community and providing information in a timely and cost effective way.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all when acting in an official capacity as an officer of Council

5. Definitions

The following definitions are provided for the purpose of this policy.

Social Media - A collection of internet based tools that facilitate conversations. Social media can take many forms, including;

- Social networking sites (such as Facebook and LinkedIn, Google+).
- Video and photosharing (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram).
- Blogs.
- Micro-blogging (Twitter).
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (Google groups, hangout).
- Wikis (Wikipedia, wikispaces).
- Vodcasts and Podcasts.
- Instant messaging and chat services.

Officer of the Council - All staff (including volunteers, contractors, casual and part time employees) and Councillors.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Council Staff 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.

Council staff

All Council staff (including volunteers, contractors, casual and part time employees) are required to comply with this policy and related Council policies and legislation.

This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media when no reference or inference is made to Coolamon Shire Council. However, staff must ensure their personal comments cannot be seen as an official comment of Council. Staff should not respond in an official capacity to comments or questions raised on Council's social media accounts.

Councillors

Councillors should not respond in an official capacity to comments or questions raised on Council's social media accounts. Councillors are able to present their personal views or political position using social media, however, must clearly identify their comments do not represent the official position of Council. Councillors are encouraged to refer any questions or enquiries through official channels of communication.

7. Inappropriate content or behaviour

Coolamon Shire Council will not permit content on its social media accounts that;

- includes language or remarks that are racist, sexist, abusive, obscene or otherwise offensive.
- is defamatory towards a member of staff, Councillor, individual or group within the community.
- contains information that is inaccurate, deceptive or misleading.
- is potentially unlawful or violates the intellectual property right of another.
- includes advertising materials or any content that sells any good or services, any surveys, contents, chain letters, spam or other unsolicited commercial messages.

Council reserves the right to remove inappropriate material and block users who breach any of the above guidelines.

8. Customer requests and complaints

Council's Code of Conduct applies to the use of social media. Please refer to this document separately for further guidelines.

9. Personal Use of Social Media

An officer of the Council should at all times be aware that their personal use of social media and comments made regarding Council and the community are connected to the organisation and can be perceived as an official comment of Council. Council's Code of Conduct applies to the use of Social Media.

Officers should be mindful that their personal use of social media can be associated with their employment at Council and as such, can impact on the image and reputation of the organisation. Personal use of social media during work hours should be kept to a minimum and should never interfere with the performance of duties.

Generally, when using social media staff should:

- Take measures to ensure personal comments are not perceived as official comments.
- Not disclose confidential information relevant to their role.
- Act lawfully.
- Not post defamatory, disrespectful or deliberately misleading comments.

Failure to adhere to Council's Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Please refer to these policies separately for further guidelines.

10. Defamation

Council staff, Councillors and users (including the public) of Coolamon Shire Council social media channels should be aware of defamation laws when commenting in social media.

As a guide, under Defamation Act 2005, published material that identifies a person (not necessarily by name) and meets any of the below criteria may be considered defamatory:

1. Exposes a person to ridicule, or
2. Lowers the person's reputation in the eyes of members of the community, or
3. Causes people to shun or avoid the person, or
4. Injures the person's professional reputation.

Council will apply a 'no tolerance' approach to material that is defamatory.

11. Privacy

Council's Privacy Management Plan applies to the use of social media. Please refer to this document separately for further guidelines.

12. Associations & Relationships

Legislation	<i>Defamation Act 2005</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> <i>State Records Act 1998</i>
Policies	<i>Coolamon Shire Council - Code of Conduct</i> <i>Coolamon Shire Council - Records Management Policy</i> <i>Coolamon Shire Council - Statement of Business Ethics</i>
Procedures/Protocols, Statements, Documents	

13. Review

This policy may be reviewed at any time or as required in the event of legislative changes. Unless otherwise required, the policy will be reviewed at least once during a term of Council.

Version 2 Adopted Council Meeting held 18 June 2020 (Minute No. 112/6/2020)

Version 1 Adopted Council Meeting held 14 December 2017 (Minute No 235/12/2017)