

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTENT

Cook Shire Council Social Media Policy applies to Council, staff and contractors who use social media for professional and personal use.

SCOPE

This policy applies to situations where Council staff or Councillors use social media to communicate to customers or the community on Council's behalf or as a representative of Council, or where they are commenting or posting on matters which relate to Council, whether in a professional or personal capacity.

Council's Media Policy continues to apply and takes precedence over this policy for all media requests, including those received via social media channels.

Social Media shall mean Web-based technology allowing an exchange of dialogue between organisations, communities and individuals. Social media may include (but is not limited to):

- Social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Instagram, Flickr, Youtube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- Blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. 'comments' on news articles etc.)
- Micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter)
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups)
- Podcasting
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms
- Instant messaging (including SMS)
- Geospatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare, Facebook Check-in)

POLICY

Council's official social media channels are maintained by the Media and Communications Officer and/or their nominees. Councillors and staff are not allowed, unless authorised by the Media and Communications Officer, CEO or Mayor, to post or comment on behalf of Council on these channels.

Council representatives using social media must:

- Only disclose publicly available information. No comment will be made on social media regarding confidential, private or legal matters.

- Only use corporate imagery such as logos and official Council photographs with the permission of Council's official spokespeople or Media and Communications Officer.
- Ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission.
- Ensure that information posted on social media is not illegal, libelous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or obscene.
- Ensure that information posted online does not infringe the Councillor Code of Conduct, Employee Code of Conduct, Media Policy or any other Council code or policy.

In using social media, whether personally or during their Council role, Councillors and staff:

- Must not use false or fake personas.
- Must not pretend to be an impartial individual not linked to Council to either promote, defend or attack Council or other staff or Councillors.
- Must not speak on behalf of Council unless previously authorised to do so.
- Must not provide any confidential or proprietary Council information.
- Must not refer to Council customers, colleagues, suppliers or sub-contractors without their prior approval and according to privacy requirements.
- Must not use social media to damage Council's credibility, integrity, customer confidence, corporate values, brand or trademarks.
- Must not enter into a debate regarding, or answer questions pertaining to, Council services or issues.

Employees are provided access to social media in the work environment on the understanding that, unless their job requirements warrant such usage during work time, the use of such access is limited to personal time and is subject to this policy and other applicable policies (such as the Code of Conduct, Media Policy and Internet Usage policies).

Non compliance with the Social Media Policy by Councillors or staff will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct disciplinary systems.

REFERENCES. LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Local Government Act 2009
 Local Government Regulation 2012
 Councils Code of Conduct Policy
 Councillors Code of Conduct Policy

THIS POLICY IS TO REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL OTHERWISE DETERMINED BY COUNCIL.

Officer responsible for review:	Chief Executive Officer
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