

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GOVERNANCE POLICY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>EMAIL INTERNET ACCESS POLICY</b></p>	Policy Number Version Number Issued Last Review Next Review GDS	HR.03 4 July 2012 March 2022 March 2027 9.63.1.1
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## **EMAIL / INTERNET USAGE AND ACCESS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Policy, and associated Procedure, has been developed to provide all staff with an understanding of the boundaries that the organisation sees as appropriate for their professional, and in some circumstances, personal use of email, internet access and social media.

### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this Policy:

- Council owned/managed equipment or facilities means any electronic device, including but not restricted to computers of any description and mobile telephones, owned or managed by council, whether purchased, leased, borrowed or obtained in some other manner that is capable of accessing, to any extent, email, internet or social media.
- Email (electronic mail) means the exchange of computer-stored messages/documents/files between computers internally (intranet) or externally to Council (via the internet).
- Internet access means the use of a computer program to access external information data bases (eg web sites/pages)
- Social media includes, but is not limited to:

Social networking sites (eg Facebook, LinkedIn)  
Video and photo sharing websites (eg Flickr, YouTube)  
Blogs, including corporate, personal, and blogs hosted by media outlets  
Micro-blogging (eg Twitter)  
Forums, discussion boards and groups  
Instant messaging including SMS.

### **POLICY**

#### **1. E-mail (via Council owned/managed equipment or facilities)**

E-mail has legal status as a document and is accepted as evidence in a court of law. Even when it is used for private purposes, the Council can be held responsible for the contents of e-mail messages, including any attachments. In some circumstances, access to e-mails can be demanded as part of legal proceedings.

It is therefore important that The Flinders Ranges Council e-mail facilities be used within the following guidelines:

- E-mail should mainly be used for formal business correspondence and care should be taken to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information. Formal memos, documents and letters for which signatures are important, should be issued on Council letterhead, regardless of whether a physical or electronic delivery method is used;
- if electronic messages need to be preserved, they should be printed out and filed through the normal records management procedure and saved via Councils electronic records management system;
- limited private use of e-mail is permitted, provided that such does not interfere with or distract from an employee's work. However, management has the right to access incoming and outgoing mail messages to determine whether usage or involvement is excessive or inappropriate;
- non-essential e-mail, including personal messages, should be deleted regularly from the 'Sent Items', 'Inbox' and 'Deleted Items' folders to avoid congestion; and
- all e-mails sent must include the approved Council disclaimer.



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In order to protect Council from the potential effects of the misuse and/or abuse of e-mail, the following instructions are to be observed by all users:

- no material is to be sent that is defamatory, in breach of copyright or business confidentiality, or prejudicial to the good standing of The Flinders Ranges Council in the community or to its relationship with staff, residents, suppliers and any other person or business with whom it has a relationship;
- e-mail is not to contain material that amounts to gossip about colleagues or that could be offensive, demeaning, persistently irritating, threatening, discriminatory, involves the harassment of others or concerns personal relationships;
- e-mail records of other persons are not to be accessed except by management (or persons authorised by management) engaged in ensuring compliance with this policy, or by authorised staff who have been requested to attend to a fault, upgrade or similar situation. Access in each case will be limited to the minimum required to complete the task;
- when using e-mail a person must not pretend to be another person or use another person's computer without permission;
- excessive private use, including mass mailing, 'reply to all' etc. that are not part of the person's duties, is not permitted.

Failure to comply with these instructions is a disciplinary offence and will be subject to appropriate investigation. In serious cases, the penalty for an offence, or repetition of an offence, may include dismissal. Staff need to be continually aware that some forms of e-mail conduct may also be open to criminal prosecution.

2. Internet (via Council owned/managed equipment or facilities)

Access to the internet is a facility provided by The Flinders Ranges Council for business use. Access is authorised by management on the basis of business needs and is encouraged where a need exists to access information of relevance to the users position. Limited private use is permitted, provided that private use does not interfere with, or distract from, the person's work. Management has the right to access the system to determine whether private use is excessive or inappropriate and users access may be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The following activities, using The Flinders Ranges Council's internet facilities is not permitted:

- viewing, other than by accident, sites, or incoming e-mails, portraying obscene, violent defamatory and unlawful material and material that could cause the Council to be in breach of equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation, verbally, in writing or pictorially;
- downloading or printing material as described as above;
- showing to others, or allowing to be seen by others, items as described above;
- repeated or prolonged use that is not directly relevant to the person's work;
- attending to personal activities related to a private business owned or operated by the person or their close relations;
- introducing computer viruses by failing to follow Council's IT procedures; and
- downloading software of any description from the internet or from other unauthorised mediums such as USB's on to the internal network unless the prior approval in writing is received from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

3. Social Media (via Council owned/managed equipment or facilities)

Only officers specifically authorised by the CEO are allowed to make comment on behalf of Council to any media outlet, and this also applies to social media outlets. If authorised by the CEO:

- Do not comment outside your area of expertise;
- Do not commit Council to actions or undertakings;
- Only discuss publicly available information. Do not disclose confidential information, internal discussions or decisions of council or third parties. This includes providing confidential, personal or private information where there is sufficient detail for potential identification of Councillors, council staff or third parties;
- Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative. Correct any errors as soon as practical;



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- Do not publish information or make statements which you know, or suspect, to be false, or may reasonably be taken to be misleading or deceptive;
- Do not express or publish a personal opinion on Council generally or about Council business;
- Do not endorse any political affinity or allegiance;
- Do not comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content that is malicious or defamatory or contains material that amounts to gossip about colleagues or that could be offensive, demeaning, persistently irritating, threatening, discriminatory, involves the harassment of others or concerns personal relationships. This includes statements which may negatively impact the reputation of another;
- Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.

Council reserves the right, for legal compliance purposes, to monitor social media usage on its systems without advance notice and consistent with any state, federal, or international laws. Council may be legally required to produce logs, diaries and archives of social media use to judicial, law enforcement or regulatory agencies and will comply with any relevant requests.

Failure to comply with these instructions is a disciplinary offence and will be subject to appropriate investigation. In serious cases, the penalty for an offence, or repetition of an offence, may include dismissal. Staff need to be continually aware that some forms of internet conduct may also be open to criminal prosecution.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring the proper operation of this policy.  
All employees of Council are bound by the contents of this Policy.

## LEGISLATION

*Defamation Act 2005*  
*Equal opportunity Act 1984*  
*Freedom of Information Act*  
*Local Government Act 1999*  
*Privacy Act 1988*  
*State Records Act 1997*

## REFERENCES

Employees Code of Conduct  
Social Media Policy

## REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every 24 months or more frequently if legislation or Council needs changes to the content.

Adopted by Council      14 August 2012  
Resolution 164/2012

Review Date	Version Number	Change	Resolution
August 2013	2	Nil	181/2014
December 2014	3	Nil	255/2014
13 February 2018	3	Reviewed by PRRC 30Jan18 – No changes	020/2018
19 April 2022	4	Minor grammar and other amendments	65/2022