	<p style="text-align: center;">GOVERNANCE POLICY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL MEDIA</p>	Policy Number Version Number Issued Last Review Next Review GDS	G1.27 4 August 2013 October 2023 November 2025 9.63.1.1
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SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

That The Flinders Ranges Council (the Council) utilises social media to complement existing communication and further improve information, access and delivery of key services. Social media describes the tools that people use to build online profiles and share content, opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives in the online environment.

The contents of, and the commitments that Council makes, in this policy are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be any more than a statement of the Council's general position in relation to those matters, and to facilitate its aspirations wherever it is reasonable to do so.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Define the methods by which Council communicates via Social Media;
2. Demonstrate accountability and responsibility of Council to ratepayers;
3. Be fair and equitable to all parties involved;
4. Enable all processes to be monitored and recorded;
5. Ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved for the Council and the community; and
6. Ensure that Council is consistent with its strategic, corporate and financial directions.

This policy applies to all Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of the Council who purport to use social media on behalf of Council. This policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to Council. The policy outlines requirements for compliance with confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social media to conduct Council business.

It aims to:

1. Inform appropriate use of social media tools for the Council;
2. Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media;
3. Minimise miscommunication or mischievous communications; and
4. Help the Council manage the inherent challenges of speed and immediacy.

The policy applies to those digital spaces where people may comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content.

As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list the specific sites or kinds of social media outlets, the absence of a reference to a particular site or kind of social media activity does not limit the application of this policy.

This policy is not intended to cover personal use of social media where:

1. The author publishes information in their personal capacity and not on behalf of, or in association with Council; and
2. No reference is made to the Council, its Elected Members, staff, policies and services, suppliers or other stakeholders or Council related issues.

When using social media Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers are expected to:

1. Consider whether prior approval from either the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer should be sought regarding their intended posting;
2. Adhere to Council's codes of conduct, policies and procedures;
3. Behave with caution, courtesy, honesty and respect;
4. Comply with relevant laws and regulations;
5. Reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of the Council; and
6. Support all decisions and the documented position of Council.

The following content is not permitted under any circumstances:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Electronic version on the Council Server Computer System is the controlled version. Printed copies are considered uncontrolled. Before using a printed copy, verify that it is the current version.</i></p>	Page 1 of 5
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1. Abusive, profane or sexual language;
2. Content not relating to the subject matter of that blog, board, forum or site;
3. Content which is false or misleading;
4. Confidential information about Council or third parties;
5. Copyright or trade mark protected materials;
6. Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation;
7. Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking;
8. Materials that could compromise Council, employee or system safety;
9. Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks);
10. Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency;
11. Material which would bring the Council into disrepute;
12. Personal details or references to Council Members, Council staff or third parties;
13. Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages; and
14. Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

Authorisation

Ensure appropriate authorisation from either the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer or relevant officer has been obtained before using social media including but not limited to uploading content and acting as a spokesperson on behalf of Council.

Media

Do not issue statements or make announcements through social media channels unless authorised. The Mayor is Council's only authorised spokesperson. Do not respond directly if approached by media for comment through social media. Refer the enquiry to the Chief Executive Officer.

Expertise

Do not comment outside your area of expertise. Do not commit Council to actions or undertakings.

Disclosure

Only discuss publicly available information. Do not disclose confidential information, internal discussions or decisions of Council, employees or third parties. This includes publishing confidential, personal or private information where there is sufficient detail for potential identification of Councillors, Council staff or third parties.

Accuracy

Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative. Correct any errors as soon as practicable. Do not publish information or make statements which you know to be false or may reasonably be taken to be misleading or deceptive.

Identity


Be clear about professional identity, or any vested interests. Do not use fictitious names or identities that deliberately intend to deceive, mislead or lie. Do not participate anonymously or covertly via a third party or agency.

Opinion

Council staff should not express or publish a personal opinion on Council generally or about Council business via social media. Council Elected Members should be mindful of Council's Code of Conduct when discussing or commenting on Council matters. Generally, Elected Members should not express personal opinions on Council decisions or Council business nor be critical of the Council. If it is not possible to separate official Council positions from personal opinions, Elected Members should consider using a formal disclaimer to separate interests.

Transparency

Do not seek to buy or recompense favourable social media commentary. Encourage online publishers to be open and transparent in how they engage with, or review Council personnel, services or wares.

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Professional Identity

Council staff that have been authorised to use social media for Council purposes will use position titles in place of names to distinguish between professional and personal identities. These professional identities remain property of the Council.

General duty under the Local Government Act 1999

Elected Members and employees must be aware of their respective duties under sections 62 and 109 of the *Local Government Act 1999 SA* (The Act) at all times and ensure that their use of social media is not contrary to these requirements.

Code of Conduct

Elected Member and Employee Code of Conduct apply to the use of social media.

Privacy

Be sensitive to the privacy of others. Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing these via any form of social media. If asked to remove materials do so as soon as practicable.

Intellectual Property

Seek permission from the creator or copyright owner, to use or reproduce copyright material including applications, sound recordings (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music. Also seek permission before publishing or uploading material in which the intellectual property rights, such as trademarks, are owned by a third party e.g. company logos. Seek permission from the website's owner wherever possible before linking to another site (including a social media application).

Defamation

Do not comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content that is malicious or defamatory. This includes statements which may negatively impact the reputation of another.

Reward

Do not publish content in exchange for reward of any kind.

Political or Religious bias

Do not endorse any political or religious affinity or allegiance.

Respect

Always be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors.

Discrimination

Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.

Language

Be mindful of language and expression.

State of Mind

Do not use social media when intoxicated, irritated, upset or tired.

Be safe

Protect your personal privacy and guard against identity theft.

Modification and moderation

Ensure that any social media sites created or contributed to can be readily edited, improved or removed and appropriately moderated.

Advertising

No private commercial advertising is permitted. Any commercial private third party advertising placed on Council's Social media sites will be removed. Continued breach of this clause will see person/company blacklisted and permanently barred from Council's sites.

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Access

Be mindful of the requisite government web standards for accessibility. Information made available via non compliant platforms should be made accessible in another form where practical.

Be responsive

Specify the type of comments and feedback that will receive a response and clearly communicate a target response time. Make it easy for audiences to reach Council via other methods by publishing Council's phone number, generic email, administration office address and Facebook accounts.

Monitoring

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.

Records Management

Social Media communication must comply with Council's Records Management Policy.

Enforcement

All content published or communicated by or on behalf of the Council using social media must be recorded (including the author's name, date, time and media site location) and kept on record.

Council monitors social media for relevant contributions that impact on the Council, its operations and reputation. Council will be able to find, and act upon, contributions made by Council Members and staff if deemed necessary. For staff, breaching this policy may result in a code of conduct complaint, disciplinary action, performance management and/or review. Serious breaches may result in suspension or termination of employment or association. For Elected Members, breaching this policy may result in a code of conduct complaint and/or referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The Council is regarded as the publisher of anything on its social media pages, including any defamatory comments posted by others. Any inappropriate or defamatory content will be removed in a timely manner. As a page owner the Council monitors and moderates social media pages to remove anything defamatory, or may turn comments off in certain circumstances.

Council Elections

During Council elections, candidates are not permitted to use any of Council's social media platforms or website for electioneering.

Council reserves the right to remove, where possible, content that violates this policy or any associated policies.

If you have any doubt about applying the provisions of this policy, check with the Chief Executive Officer before using social media to communicate. Depending upon the nature of the issue and potential risk, it may also be appropriate to consider seeking legal advice.


Acknowledgement of Third Parties

All content that refers to a project, program or similar that is or has been supported by external funding, a or grant funding program from a third party, such as the State or Federal Government, philanthropic or other organisation must acknowledge the contribution by the third party and ensure that this is done in accordance with instructions specified by the third party.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring the proper operation of this Policy.

The effectiveness of the Policy will be evaluated at least every 24 months. The Chief Executive Officer will report to Council on the outcome of the evaluation, and make recommendations for amendments, alteration or substitution of a new Policy if relevant.

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Any future amendment or alteration to the Policy, or substitution of a new Policy, will be subject to the public consultation provisions under Section 50 (6) of the Act unless the alteration has only minor significance and is likely to attract little or no community interest.

LEGISLATION

[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
[Civil Liability Act 1936 \(SA\)](#)
[Copyright Act 1968 \(Cth\)](#)
[Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 \(SA\)](#)
[Defamation Act 2005 \(SA\)](#)
[Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
[Fair Trading Act 1987 \(SA\)](#)
[Fair Work Act 1994 \(SA\)](#)
[Freedom of Information Act 1991 \(SA\)](#)
[Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012 \(SA\)](#)
[Local Government Act 1999 \(SA\)](#)
[Local Government \(Elections\) Act 1999 \(SA\)](#)
[Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
[Spam Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#)
[State Records Act 1997 \(SA\)](#)

REFERENCES

FRC Policy G1.9 Public Consultation
FRC Policy G1.7 Information Privacy
FRC Policy G1.15 Records Management Procedure
FRC Policy G1.2 Code of Conduct Elected Members
FRC Policy G1.6 Code of Conduct Employees
LGA SA Model Social Media Policy

REVIEW

To be reviewed within 12 months after a General Election, in line with legislation and any legislative changes or by resolution of Council.

Adopted by Council 13 August 2013
Resolution 181/2013

Review Date	Version Number	Change	Resolution
13 August 2013	1	Public Consultation 11 June until 19 July 2013 with no comments received	181/2013
15 March 2016	2	Update Responsibilities and Review clauses, add point 6 to "When using Social Media ..."	102/2016
19 October 2021	3	Grammar and alignment minor changes made. Inclusion of third party acknowledgement	246/2021
17 October 2023	4	Very minor grammar and formatting changes made as part of regular review	283/2023