

Social Media

Guidelines

October 2020

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SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Media Community Guidelines (the Community Guidelines) is to set the ground rules by which the community may participate on the Council's social media and digital platforms and in online engagement initiatives of the Central Coast Council (the Council). The Community Guidelines and moderation aim to discourage and manage anti-social, irrelevant, offensive, spam and/or other inappropriate posts.

The Community Guidelines and moderation are designed to protect all users of the Council's social media and digital platforms. The Community Guidelines aim not to discourage two-way conversations between the community and the Council, but the community's participation on the Council's social media platforms needs to be compliant.

1. COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Central Coast residents and people from other areas that use any of the Council's social media platforms should not post any material that may be considered:

- . Abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language;
- . Defamatory, abusive, harassing or hateful or capable of damaging the reputation of a person or organisation;
- . As invading anyone's privacy or impersonating anyone;
- . Off-topic, as irrelevant posts lower the value of the debate for everyone;
- . To be spam, repetitive, unauthorised advertising or solicits;
- . As encouraging conduct that may or would constitute a criminal offence or give rise to civil liability, or that otherwise violates any law;
- . To include your, or anyone else's, personal information;
- . To include inappropriate, vulgar or offensive user names; and
- . In breach of intellectual property rights including copyright law.

2. *COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION*

- . The Council's social media platforms have been created to engage and communicate with the community on matters of mutual interest. The Council encourages people to post polite and relevant comments on social media platforms. Please be pleasant and respectful of the opinions and beliefs of others;
- . The Council's social media platforms do not provide a forum for customer service or delivery complaints. Customer service or delivery complaints should be made by creating an online service request via the Council's website link: <https://service.centralcoast.tas.gov.au/webinput/home/new>, or contacting the Council in person, by email, telephone or by mail;
- . Employees of the Council may contribute to the conversations on social media platforms under their own names or use pseudonyms. Their posts, comments or opinions do not represent the official position of the Council and should be considered the product of each individual as member of the public. Council's employees should refer to the [Social Media Council Guidelines](#);
- . Representatives of the Council will identify themselves when posting comments by use of the Council logo. Information posted is current only at the time of publication. Council's employees should refer to the [Social Media Council Guidelines](#);
- . All posts made on the Council's social media platforms express the views and opinions of the author, and not of the Council. The Council does not endorse, approve or promote any comments by the public appearing on its social media platforms;
- . The Council will not be held legally responsible for the comments posted on its social media platforms. With the exception of material posted by third parties, the Council owns, or has the rights to the intellectual property of social media posts; and
- . The Community Guidelines assists the Council to create a welcoming space for intelligent discussion on their social media platforms. Participants are encouraged to notify the Council if potential problems are identified, and by helping each other to keep conversations inviting and appropriate.

3. MODERATION

- . Content posted on the Council's social media platforms is monitored and moderated daily on business days, except public holidays;
- . If a post breaches the Community Guidelines, it will be removed from public view;
- . A profanity filter is installed on the Council's Facebook page, but community posts will not be moderated before they appear. If the Council becomes aware of a published post that breaches the Community Guidelines, the post will be removed by the moderator;
- . The Council will not contact you directly if you post a comment that is removed by the moderator. The Council will not enter into dialogue about moderation;
- . The Council reserves the right to remove any overtly political posts or URL links to political websites or social media platforms;
- . Posts in languages other than English will be removed. Content of posts should be accessible to as many people as possible;
- . Posts that are irrelevant to the subject, overly long (in excess of 1000 words), contains irrelevant or long URL links or appear to contain code will be removed.
- . Users who breach the Community Guidelines may be banned from the Council's social media platform at the discretion of the General Manager; and
- . The community are encouraged to report content on the Council's social media platforms that may be non-compliant with the Community Guidelines. Reports can be emailed to: admin@centralcoast.tas.gov.au with the subject line: Social Media, and may include reproduced posts, pictures or logos.

SOCIAL MEDIA COUNCIL GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Media Council Guidelines (the Council Guidelines) is to ensure the effective service delivery of Council business and services through the use of social media and provide guidelines for workplace participants to ensure the protection and proper use of the Council's social media services and corporate computing resources. Direct Reports and the General Manager are responsible for workplace participants' awareness of, and observance to, the Council Guidelines.

The Council Guidelines aim to:

- Provide direction and guidance for the Council's staff and elected members on acceptable use of social media; and
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to good governance.

SCOPE

This Council Guidelines applies to all workplace participants, which include:

- Casual, fixed-term and otherwise temporary employees, employees on probation, part-time employees, managers, Councillors, employees working from home as well as full-time employees;
- People providing services to the Council on a contract basis or on secondment from or to another Council, even if they are only working on a temporary basis; and
- Students, graduates and others on work experience or undertaking voluntary work.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can provide unique opportunities for workplace participants to communicate and share information, and to build networks locally, nationally, and internationally. Information shared may include (but is not limited to) personal information, opinions, research, commentary, or business information. Social media, sometimes referred to as social networking or Web 2.0 technologies, are online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. Including emerging technologies, all social media platforms are within the scope of the Council Guidelines:

Blogs – A blog is a ‘web log’. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. Usually, viewers can comment, ask questions, share information and subscribe. A typical blog combines text, images, and links.

Forums/boards – An internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site. Users can post messages and comment on other messages. Other types of social media often incorporate forums, sometimes with their own social conventions and etiquette (or ‘netiquette’).

Micro-blogs – A micro-blog has a similar purpose to a blog, except that entries are smaller - usually limited to a certain number of characters (e.g. 140). A popular example is Twitter™. It allows users to ‘follow’ one another so that they are notified when a new update is posted. Users can connect quickly and through many different tools such as their mobile phone.

Photo sharing sites – A photo sharing site, such as Instagram®, allows users to upload images and is useful for categorising and organising pictures. They allow other users to comment on them, or re-use them with permission.

Social bookmarking – Social bookmarking is used for saving the address of a website or item of content and adding a tag to allow other users to easily find research. It is useful for organising and sharing links, and for keeping track of links recommended by others. Pinterest™ is an example.

Social networking websites – Social networking websites focus on building online communities of people who share interests. Popular examples include Facebook® and LinkedIn®. Users can build their own profile page, join groups, share photos and videos, post messages, and run other applications.

Video sharing sites – A video sharing site allows users to upload video clips to be stored on the server, allowing other users to view them. YouTube™ is a popular example.

Wikis – A wiki is a website using ‘wiki software’ that allows web pages to be created, interlinked, and edited by any user. The most well-known wiki is Wikipedia® – an online encyclopaedia.

COUNCIL GUIDELINES

The following Council Guidelines provide a point of reference for workplace participants regarding what they should, and should not, do when publishing content in social media. Workplace participants are responsible for content they publish in social media and can be held personally liable for content published. Workplace participants can also be subject to disciplinary action by the Council for publishing inappropriate or classified content. These Council Guidelines only cover a sample of all possible content publishing scenarios, and are not a substitute for good judgment. It is important to note that these Council Guidelines apply to all social media publishing, whether personal or Council sponsored.

When accessing social media via the Council's website and/or intranet systems, workplace participants must do so in accordance with the Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018, which requires workplace participants to use these resources 'reasonably', in a manner that does not interfere with their work and is not inappropriate or excessively accessed.

1. PRODUCTIVITY

The Council recognises that workplace participants may have a need (at times) to conduct business within social media while at work or using the Council's resources. The Council allows limited access to social media content. For example, workplace participants are allowed access to social media reasonably within the functions of their role at the Council as agreed by their Direct Report or the General Manager. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that personal use of social media is consistent with the Council's Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018.

2. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Social media may contain legitimate business and personal content, but it must not include content that is fraudulent, offensive, obscene, pornographic, sexually suggestive, abusive or discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist, that infringes copyright, or is otherwise unlawful. The Council Guidelines should be read in conjunction with a number of Council policies, including the Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018, which applies to the broader web and email and also applies to content found within social media.

Inappropriate content must not be accessed by workplace participants while at work, or while using the Council's resources. Likewise, workplace participants must not post inappropriate material on social media using Council's resources. Workplace participants are expected to use common sense, and consideration for others, when deciding on content appropriate for the Council.

3. *PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA*

The Council recognises that workplace participants may wish to use social media in their personal life outside of work time. These Council Guidelines do not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities. However, workplace participants should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the Council in certain circumstances via personal use of social media when they can be identified as a member of Council. The Council Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Employees Code of Conduct – July 2019.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct of Councillors – January 2019, workplace participants are not to make public Council statements without the consent of the General Manager. Do not disclose information that would otherwise not be disclosed, speculate on policy or possible policy, or indicate possible future decisions of the Council. Workplace participants should comply with the Council Guidelines to ensure that risk of damage to the Council is minimised.

Workplace participants are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform. When in doubt, workplace participants should seek guidance from their Direct Report or the General Manager on how to comply with their obligations under the Council Guidelines.

4. *PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS*

Personal posts are those made via a private social media account in an individual's name, or a name of their choosing. Personal accounts should not identify workplace participants as working for the Council, however it is noted that in the cyber-sphere it can be relatively easy to connect separate pieces of information to largely identify users.

Use of posts from personal accounts should follow similar considerations as the use of other Council ICT communication resources such as email; not disclose confidential or highly sensitive information that would otherwise not be disclosed; speculate on policy or possible policy; or indicate possible future decisions of the Council.

Personal social media accounts should not be linked to the Council's email accounts except when authorised to do so. If workplace members feel that they could be easily identified as affiliated with the Council, it is recommended a disclaimer for the account/post be used such as, "the views expressed on this site/post are my own, and don't necessarily represent those of the Council".

5. *DISCLOSING AN AFFILIATION WITH COUNCIL*

Where workplace participants can be identified as an employee of the Council or otherwise affiliated with Council, the following obligations apply for all social media content:

- . Include in all postings an identification of the position or affiliation with Council;
- . Express that the stated views are personal (not those of the Council) and do not imply an authorisation to speak on behalf of the Council;
- . Do not disclose information that would otherwise not be disclosed, speculate on policy or possible policy, or indicate possible future decisions of the Council;
- . Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading;
- . Maintain the standard of professionalism expected in the position held at Council;
- . Do not publish material that could harm the reputation of the Council (including elected Councillors, elected Mayor, or Council employees), stakeholders or customers.
- . Adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, discrimination, harassment and other applicable law;
- . Do not use the Council's email addresses or Council logos/identifiers unless authorised to do so;
- . Do not use or disclose any confidential information, or highly confidential information;
- . Do not post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another member of the Council, or towards customers, stakeholders or third parties; and
- . Do not post images or footage of colleagues, customers or stakeholders without their permission.

6. *COUNCIL'S OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS*

The Council reserves the right to make official posts on social media sites, as it does in the traditional media, to address queries, discussion and misinformation. The Council logo identifies an official Council post or comment, i.e. a workplace participant is authorised to use the Council logo as an identifier for authorised and approved Council comments or posts. Official posts will be executed by a fully authorised representative of the Council.

As with any public statements, any official posts must be developed in conjunction with relevant subject matter area(s) and approved by the General Manager. Care should be taken when considering official posts, as social media is an open and dynamic environment that can generally not be controlled - consider the potential implications of any proposed posts, the likely audience, and whether it will assist in delivering positive outcomes for the Council.

At any time, if the Council chooses to make official comment via social media, this will be managed by the Office of the General Manager in conjunction with the relevant subject matter area(s) and approved by the General Manager. Official posts are also required to follow the Council's Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018.

7. *AUTHORISATION TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON SOCIAL MEDIA*

Before engaging in social media as a representative of the Council in a work related capacity, workplace participants must be formally authorised to comment by the General Manager. Workplace participants may not comment as a representative of the Council unless authorised to do so. If authorised workplace participants engage in advocacy for the Council on social media, they should clearly identify their affiliation or position in the Council.

Authorisation to represent the Council in social media or create a new social media account must follow the guidelines of the Social Media Systems Management Policy. Request Forms can be submitted to the Office of the General Manager that updates and maintains the Council's register of official social media accounts.

Personal accounts should not be used to post official Council statements unless authorised by the General Manager to do so. Workplace participants should take due care that the use of social media, as agreed with their Direct Report or the General Manager, does not impinge on performing their work or be used excessively in line with the Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATION

1. MONITORING AND MODERATION

Content posted on the Council's social media platforms is monitored and moderated daily on business days, except public holidays. The Council will make reasonable efforts to monitor content to ensure social media comments are courteous and non-offensive.

The Council reserves the right to delete or hide comments that are non-compliant with the Community or Council Guidelines for Social Media. It is the responsibility of the workplace participant to ensure that personal use is consistent with the Social Media Guidelines – October 2020. Content including (but not limited to) the following may be removed:

- . Abusive, hurtful or inappropriate language or statements;
- . That violates privacy;
- . That breaches copyright laws or is otherwise unlawful;
- . That is considered spam;
- . That is not suitable to all ages;
- . That is overtly political; and
- . Unsolicited advertising.

2. MALWARE AND ONLINE CRIME PREVENTION

Social media is commonly used by the online criminal community to deliver malware and carry out schemes designed to damage property or steal classified information. While the Social Media Guidelines help to reduce risk, they do not cover all possible threats and are not a substitute for good judgment by users.

Security settings, applications and common sense should be used when using social media. Advice on social media security can be sought from the Council's Corporate Services Group Leader, Direct Reports or the General Manager.

3. *RECORDS MANAGEMENT*

The Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO) has record keeping requirements for social media posts that relate to business. The Council need only keep social media content considered to be business records under its existing record keeping policies and procedures.

Generally, for low risk forms of Council business, the social media information generated has limited ongoing value and content can be safely left in the online application. These policies and procedures will be reviewed periodically in light of changes to requirements of TAHO. A social media folder located within the Council's digital records system stores social media related communications that are not held within the corresponding digital platform.

4. *RESPONDING TO CUSTOMER ENQUIRIES*

Customer enquiries on Council's social media platforms that meet the requirements of the Community Guidelines, will be responded to by an authorised representative of the Council as soon as practicable. The Council recognises community expectations relating to timely response rates on social media and the Council will respond as soon as practicable. According to the Customer Service Charter - April 2019, 10 working days are provided for the Council to reply to customer enquiries.

POLICY BREACHES AND NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance and breaches by workplace participants of the Council Guidelines will be dealt with in accordance with the Employment Agreement, Employee Code of Conduct – July 2019 and Information and Communication Technology Guidelines – December 2018. Allegations of misconduct will be investigated according to established procedures. Sanctions for non-compliance or violations of this policy may include the following:

1. Temporary or permanent revocation of access to some, or all, computing and networking resources and facilities;
2. Disciplinary action including possible termination of employment or contract; and/or
3. Where inappropriate use constitutes a breach of any law, legal action may be taken in accordance with that law by the Council or concerned third parties.

STANDARDS (INCLUDING RELEVANT LEGISLATION)

This Policy was developed in accordance with:

1. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- . Local Government Act (1993) Tas; and
- . Local Government (General) Regulations 2015.

2. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

- . Central Coast Council Values
- . Code of Conduct of Councillors - January 2019
- . Communication and Engagement Policy - October 2020
- . Customer Service Charter - April 2019;
- . Employee Code of Conduct - July 2019
- . Employment Agreement
- . Information and Communication Technology Guidelines - December 2018; and
- . Records and Records Management Policy - April 2017

3. RELATED FORMS/TOOLS

- . Intranet Toolkit - Communications and Engagement;
- . Online New Employee Induction - Social Media Acceptable Use section;
- . Social Media checklist;
- . Social Media Registration Form;
- . Social Media Systems Management Policy; and
- . Website checklist.

EVALUATION PROCESS

These Guidelines are reviewed when any of the following occur:

- . The related information is amended or replaced;
- . Evidence that the Guidelines no longer meets the needs of Council; or
- . Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the General Manager.

Notwithstanding the above, these Guidelines are to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.

CHANGES TO THE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are to remain in force until otherwise determined by the General Manager.

SANDRA AYTON
GENERAL MANAGER

Date of approval: / /

Approved by:

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