



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Corporate Document

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Purpose

To provide guidelines for both Councillors and Council staff for business and individual use of social media.

Objectives

- To provide instruction on when social media should be used
- To outline the process for managing content on social media and engaging with comments and requests
- To detail the guidelines for communication on social media both as an individual and when representing Mosman Council.

Scope

Applies to all Councillors and Council staff (permanent, temporary or casual), volunteers, contractors, administrators, Council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of Council.

Definitions

Authorised administrator - Council staff member who has been given authority in accordance with their delegations to represent Mosman Council on social media

Council staff - includes members of staff of Council, volunteers, contractors, administrators, Council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of Council

Mosman Council - includes all service-specific sub-brands of Council e.g. Mosman Art Gallery, Mosman Library Service, Mosman Youth, etc.

Social media - online platforms and applications such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, video and audio sharing sites and message boards that allow people to publish, share and discuss content. These sites include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- Engagement HQ
- Blogs

Social media account - refers to a page or profile created within a social media channel to promote a brand or service e.g. Mosman Council Facebook page, Mosman Art Gallery Facebook page

Social media channel - refers to the specific social media platform or service used e.g. Facebook, Instagram

Standards of Conduct

Councillors and Council staff must adhere to Council policies, procedures and its Code of Conduct when using social media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a council official. These interactions must not damage the Council's reputation, commercial interests and/or bring Council or holders of civic office into disrepute. Any inappropriate comments posted on social media may constitute a breach of Council's Code of Conduct.

Councillors and Council staff must not discuss personnel, confidential legal advice, commercial-in-confidence matters or any matters that are in contravention of the *Government Information Public Access Act* or fall under the provisions of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act* or the Privacy Management Plan on social media.

When in doubt, employees can seek guidance from the Manager Communications on how to comply with the following obligations.

To avoid breaching this policy individuals must:

- Not act as a spokesperson for Council unless delegated to act in this capacity in accordance with Council's Media Policy
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading
- Behave politely and respectfully at all times
- Adhere to the terms of use for using the social media platform or website, and adhere to legislation including copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and any other applicable laws
- Exercise caution when sharing, liking or retweeting content as this can be regarded as an endorsement and/or publication of the content.

Councillors and Council staff must not publish any content about Mosman Council that:

- Denigrates Mosman Council or its functions
- Breaches confidentiality
- Contains information that is not otherwise available in the public domain
- Comments on Council business or policy except as otherwise provided for in this policy
- In the case of Council staff, identifies them as Council employees, use their Council email address or include Council's logo when making private comment on social media sites.

Individual Use for Councillors and Council Staff

Mosman Council recognises that Councillors and Council staff may wish to use social media in various capacities. This policy does not discourage or limit usage of social media for personal expression or other online activities in a Councillor or Council staff member's personal life and unassociated with their employment or civic responsibilities.

Its purpose is to raise awareness of the potential risks and damage to Council, which can occur if Councillors and Council staff are not aware of their responsibilities.

Individuals are responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media channel.

Councillors, consistent with the Code of Conduct, may express their personal view on social media on matters relating to Council policy and other matters of public interest, however this should be clearly identified as the personal view of a Councillor and not an official Council position or policy

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and must not bring the Council, Council decisions or civic office into disrepute.

Council staff and contractors should avoid having clients with whom they conduct direct business as friends on their personal social media accounts. LinkedIn is an exception as it is considered a professional social networking channel. On LinkedIn Council staff and contractors may add business-related clients to their network but should not conduct business through the channel.

Council staff who are residents, ratepayers or customers of Council services are not precluded from participating in community debate about an issue that personally affects them.

Councillors and Council staff should be aware of their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct and that they are responsible for content they publish on any form of social media. Any breaches may be referred to the General Manager and may be dealt with under Council's Code of Conduct.

Mosman Council's Social Media Channels

Mosman Council's social media channels allow:

- Rapid sharing of information to a wide and targeted audience
- Engagement with the community on matters of interest
- Low-cost marketing of services and events
- Increased traffic to Mosman Council's websites

Account management

The Communications Team is primarily responsible for the management of Mosman Council social media channels. Other Council staff members may be delegated as authorised administrators if they are experts in the field for dedicated service-delivery channels and/or services e.g. Mosman Art Gallery, Mosman Library Service, Mosman Youth etc. Any new page or profile should first be approved by the Manager Communications, then relevant Director and General Manager before it is created.

General enquiries

If a general question is asked appropriate and approved information should be sourced and used to respond in a professional manner. General enquiries should be responded to in accordance with the Customer Service Charter.

If an issue is reported, e.g. a pot hole, authorised administrators can use Council's website to submit the request to the relevant department or respond directing the customer to report the issue via the website.

Negative comments or serious matters

If a negative comment or serious matter is published via social media authorised administrators should consult with the relevant Director and the Manager Communications to see what action is appropriate and required.

Responses should encourage the issue to be taken off line and handled via phone, email or in person.

These conversations should be recorded appropriately for future reference.

Removal of comments or posts

A comment or post may be removed by authorised administrators if it:

- Is not relevant to the themes being discussed
- Contains commercial advertising material
- Invades the personal privacy of any other person or groups without their consent
- Infringes the intellectual property rights of others or discloses their confidential information
- Is abusive, harassing, threatening or violates the legal rights of others
- Is misleading, deceptive, false, defamatory or libelous
- Uses insulting, threatening or provocative language, incites hatred or includes inappropriate language
- Monopolises or dominates Council's social media pages for the individual's purposes.

Authorised administrators may block users for interactions of this nature.

Related Information

- Council Code of Conduct
- Media Policy
- Media Corporate Practice
- Customer Service Charter
- Internet and Mobile Computing Corporate Practice
- Employee Information Security Corporate Practice
- Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Privacy Management Plan
- Records and Information Management Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or as otherwise directed by Council or the Executive Team.

Contact

Enquiries should be directed to the Manager Communications on 9978 4026.

Amendments

Date	Amendment	Reference
6 March 2018	Adopted	CD/4
4 April 2023	Adopted	CD/8