

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY****1. SCOPE**

1.1 This Policy applies to:

- (a) The use of all social media by Authorised Representatives of Council;
- (b) The use of all social media by Elected Members and Staff where their relationship with Council is clearly identifiable, in any capacity other than an Authorised Representative; and
- (c) The use of social media by Elected Members or Staff in a personal capacity if the acts or omissions:
 - are incompatible with their duty to Council or employment relationship or engagement; or
 - do not comply with the Personal Use of Social Media requirements as outlined in this policy and associated guidelines.
- (d) This policy is supported by and should be read in conjunction with Council's Social Media Guidelines.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The aims of this Policy are to:

- (a) provide a framework for appropriate and acceptable use of social media;
- (b) outline the standards expected at all times in relation to the business use of social media;
- (c) operate in conjunction with the applicable laws and policies; and
- (d) recognise that Elected Members and Staff are accountable for their own behaviour relating to their personal use of social media, and that personal use of social media is also subject to the principles outlined in this policy.

2.2 For the purpose of this policy, social media is considered as online platforms that promote social and professional networking and sharing of information. Social media does not only involve text commentary or statements it can also include audio, multimedia, and images. Social Media includes:

- (a) social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat);
- (b) video and photo sharing websites (e.g. YouTube, Instagram);
- (c) blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- (d) micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter);
- (e) wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia);
- (f) forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups)
- (g) podcasting;
- (h) instant messaging (including SMS); and/or
- (i) any successor or equivalent to the above

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Council supports the use of social media for professional purposes and recognises the importance of social media as one of many effective communication tools available to deliver outcomes in line with Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy.

3.1 Social media will be used by Council within the framework of one or more of the following:

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- (a) As part of a strategic communications plan.
- (b) To complement other communication activities.
- (c) As part of a media strategy.
- (d) As part of a community engagement / consultation plan.
- (e) For time-critical information sharing.
- (f) Where appropriate as a primary communication tool.
- (g) As part of a crisis management plan.

- 3.2 Council will strategically use approved social media sites to:
- (a) develop stronger relationships with the community through open and transparent communication.
 - (b) provide an informal and accessible way for the public to communicate with Council.
 - (c) support traditional media by broadening its reach and scope.
 - (d) promote selected services, events, projects, policies and activities.
 - (e) expand Council's community engagement opportunities.
 - (f) provide essential updates to the community during a crisis or emergency.
- 3.3 Council may also use social media sites selectively to:
- (a) protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Council.
 - (b) place Council's statements of facts directly onto the public record.
 - (c) respond to or clarify an issue in detail.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 All social media content published by an Authorised Representative must be appropriate as directed by the policy and the following principles apply:
- (a) Information disseminated through social media will be accurate, authorised and aligned with Council strategies, policies and decisions.
 - (b) Private information will be protected, and copyright, privacy and other applicable laws will be respected.
 - (c) In developing, posting and responding to content on official Councillor or Council social media sites, Elected Members and Authorised Representatives will uphold the values of Council by acting with integrity, respect and professionalism.
 - (d) No posts, comments or responses that are discriminatory, defamatory, harassing, bullying or offensive will be tolerated.
 - (e) Use of social media is a personal responsibility, regardless of whether it is used in an authorised or personal capacity.
 - (f) Elected Members or Staff who post, share or comment on social media in a manner that is deemed inconsistent with the above principles may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Councillor and Staff Code of Conduct.
 - (g) Whilst public comment on social media may be considered by Council as a gauge of public sentiment, comments will not be treated as official communication with Council and as such public will be directed to use official contact methods to make a request for service, complaint or provide feedback.

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- 4.2 Unless authorised to do so, no Elected Member or member of Staff is permitted to post, share or respond to public comments on behalf of Council.

5. BUSINESS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 5.1 When using social media for Council business, Elected Members and Authorised Representatives must:
- (a) adhere to any communication protocols, authorisations or requirements of their role, position description or contractual arrangements and apply any warnings, notices, protocols or other identifications as required by Council.
 - (b) act with integrity, courtesy and professionalism.
 - (c) always be respectful of others using language that is polite and appropriate to the circumstances.
 - (d) comply with applicable laws including not engaging in, for example:
 - defamatory comments (e.g. falsely naming a person as a criminal);
 - inappropriate or unlawful workplace behaviour comments (e.g. discriminatory, harassing, bullying or repeated unreasonable behaviour);
 - contempt (e.g. publicising court orders or matters under consideration);
 - infringements of intellectual property rights (e.g. breach of copyright); or
 - the disclosure of personal or sensitive information
 - (e) keep personal opinions separate from professional.
 - (f) avoid political bias and real or potential conflicts of interest.
 - (g) not establish fictitious identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.
 - (h) not disclose Council's confidential information or engage in use likely to damage Council's interests or reputation.

6. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 6.1 When using social media for personal use Elected Members, Authorised Representatives and Staff:
- (a) Must not post, comment or respond on any social media using Council's official persona.
 - (b) Must not disclose Council's confidential information or engage in use likely to damage Council's or Staff interests or reputations or engage in conduct in breach of this policy.
 - (c) May disclose they are Elected Members or Staff, provided they make it clear that that they are not speaking on behalf of the Council and their views are personal.
 - (d) Must not cite, reference or identify (including conduct that is likely to identify) other Elected Members or Staff without their prior approval.
 - (e) Must not start or participate in a social media community using Council's identity.
 - (f) Must not comment on matters of Council under a false or misleading profile, or the profile of another person.



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7. PERMISSIONS

7.1 The following table sets out the roles and responsibilities applicable to Council social media use:

Role	Authority and responsibility
Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorised to speak on behalf of Council under the Local Government Act 1993
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not authorised to speak on behalf of Council unless specifically directed by the Mayor on a particular topic.• Should clarify when using social media that the view is your own when commenting/posting
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act as spokesperson on operational matters or clarification of facts.• Ensure responsibilities are clearly defined and act as an advisor to the Mayor and other Authorised Representatives
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May speak to operational matters when specifically directed by the General Manager
Manager, Tourism and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorised to produce content for social media on behalf of Council as guided by this policy and authorised by, or in consultation with the General Manager• Authorised to respond to comments on behalf of Council in accordance with this policy in consultation with the General Manager
Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorised to produce content for social media on behalf of Council as guided by this policy or authorised by the Manager, Tourism and Marketing and/or the General Manager• Authorised to respond to comments on behalf of Council in accordance with this policy in consultation with the Manager, Tourism and Marketing and/or the General Manager
Administrators of ancillary Council social media sites (e.g. Wonders of Wynyard, Tulip Festival, Wynyard Tasmania Facebook sites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorised to post content in line with the guidelines for the individual sites and in relation to the specific purpose of the page only (e.g. Wonders of Wynyard or Tulip Festival Facebook administrators are not authorised to post or comment on behalf of Council on other Council official sites).
Other Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not able to produce content or respond on behalf of Council on any matter.• Should clarify when using social media that the view is your own when commenting/posting• Must be aware of and not contravene Council's Social Media Policy and Guidelines



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8. DEFINITIONS

Authorised Representative: A person authorised under this policy and associated guidelines to comment on behalf of Council.

Business use: Any use of a social media that is required or directed for work purposes or made public by an Elected Member or Authorised Representative that identifies them as speaking on behalf of Council, whether on official Council social media sites or other sites.

Personal Use: The use of social media to share, comment or create content that is not directed for work purposes and is not authorised as Council business use on any social media site, business or private.

9. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:

Age Discrimination Act 2004
Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
Copyright Act 1968
Criminal Code Act 1924
Defamation Act 2005
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Fair Work Act 2009
Local Government Act 1993
Local Government Electoral Act 2011
Privacy Act 1988
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Right to Information Act 2009
Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Spam Act 2003

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Communication and Engagement Strategy
Social Media Guidelines
Customer Service Charter
Public Consultation Policy
Councillors Code of Conduct

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**SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES****1. PURPOSE**

These guidelines are designed to ensure effective and appropriate use of social media platforms for the purpose of delivering Council information, promotion of Council and community activities and encouraging community engagement.

These guidelines cover:

- Corporate use of social media;
- Elected Member use of official Councillor social media; and
- Personal use of social media by Elected Members, Authorised Representatives and Staff.

2. PERMISSIONS

Council's Social Media Policy outlines the roles within Council that have permission to represent Council on social media, and the responsibilities regarding social media use by Elected Members and Staff.

3. CORPORATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Individuals intending to use social media to communicate on behalf of Council should ensure they have appropriate authorisation from the Mayor and/or General Manager. All social media activity must occur in line with permissions and the following procedures:

3.1 Developing, posting and responding to content

Uploaded content must only disclose information which is suitable for the public domain.

In developing, posting and responding to content, Authorised Representatives must:

- uphold the values of the Council by acting with respect, integrity and professionalism;
- ensure that relevant legislation has been complied with and that Council codes, policies and procedures are adhered to;
- avoid political bias;
- avoid conflicts of interest.

When developing, posting and responding to content, Authorised Representatives must not:

- use abusive, profane or sexually explicit language;
- undertake commercial solicitations or transactions except in accordance with an agreed Council strategy;
- use copyright or ownership protected materials without appropriate approvals;
- be discriminatory, defamatory, or encourage law breaking;
- compromise Council, employee or system safety;
- spam; or
- air personal campaigns.

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3.2 Removing content

Council reserves the right to remove certain content such as illegal or offensive material.

Comments that negatively impact the experience of other community members (including Council Staff) may also be removed. Those posting such comments will receive a warning. If members of the public continue to post such comments after receiving two warnings, they may be blocked from the page.

Comments that contravene the House Rules (see below) may also be removed.

3.3 House rules

The following house rules apply to all Council official Facebook pages and will be posted clearly for public to access.

This social media channel is maintained by Waratah-Wynyard Council. This is a supportive online community that is built on respect. Everyone is encouraged to participate in an open and constructive conversation about relevant topics. This page supports the Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and related policies – and requests visitors to this page do the same.
<https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/>

This page is moderated in a way which recognises that everyone has a right to comment and engage with the content in a way which may be positive, neutral or negative. Council reserves the right to remove content that:

- harasses, abuses or threatens an Elected Member, Council staff or a member of the public
- discriminate based on age, gender, impairment, political beliefs, race, religion or sexuality;
- contain obscene or offensive language;
- constitute spam or solicit business;
- are unlawful or incite others to break the law;
- might compromise the safety or security of the public;
- are misleading, off-topic, knowingly false or mischievous.

Repeated contravention of these rules will result in the person responsible being blocked from the page. Comments that negatively impact the experience of other community members (including Council Staff) may also be removed and those posting such comments will receive a warning. If offending comments continue after receiving two warnings, the person responsible may be blocked from this page.

This page is not for official complaints, requests for service or feedback and contributions to the page will not be treated as official correspondence requiring Council action. Please see Council's Customer Service Charter for details on official contact methods or contact Council here <https://www.warwyn.tas.gov.au/feedback/>.

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3.4 Managing public comment on Council social media

Where practical, Authorised Representatives will monitor official Council social media content daily during business hours and establish whether:

- content is factual, accurate and up-to-date.
- posts are relevant.
- comments need removal.

Whilst Authorised Representatives will attempt to answer simple matters with a direct response, many matters cannot be resolved through social media.

Responding to individual comments will generally NOT occur unless:

- a response will correct a factual error that will likely make a message clearer for other users or if the factual error may cause reputational harm to Council.
- a response will provide information that will benefit the wider audience.

3.5 Direct messaging through Council's social media

Comments/enquiries/complaints/requests for service made via direct message through Council's social media platforms will not be considered official correspondence and therefore are not subject to the Customer Service Charter guidelines.

If a community member sends a request/comment through social media they will receive an automated message requesting they submit their message via Council's approved feedback channels via email, phone or website forms.

3.6 Commenting as Council

Only those Authorised Representatives as outlined in these guidelines may post, reply or comment on any site on behalf of Council.

3.7 Sharing of third-party content

Authorised Representatives may choose to share posts or social media content from third party sites. Material shared should:

- abide by these guidelines;
- be of broad public interest or benefit (eg public health notices);
- be of specific interest to the local community (eg a local event);
- not unduly benefit one private business or entity over another.

3.8 Prohibited or offensive activities

Elected Members and Authorised Representatives must not:

- post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist or infringes copyright.
- establish fictitious identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.
- bring Council's integrity into disrepute or harm Council's operations or reputation.

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- use Council's intellectual property or copyrighted materials.
- disclose sensitive or confidential information.
- use Council sites for personal use (eg. advertising items for sale).

3.9 Privacy and confidentiality

Personal and sensitive information cannot be published without permission of the person to which that information belongs.

No person is permitted to disclose confidential Council information, including but not limited to matters relating to closed meetings of Council.

3.10 Public content

Any activities on social media should be considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. The terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted therefore online content is essentially permanent and should never be considered by the author as private.

3.11 Infringements

Persons covered under the policy scope who engage in infringing workplace behaviour may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Waratah-Wynyard Council Enterprise Agreement or Councillor Code of Conduct.

4. ELECTED MEMBER USE OF OFFICIAL COUNCILLOR SITES

4.1 This advice relates to the following types of social media platforms:

- **A Councillor's official social media sites** - You are identified as a councillor on this page and the page is predominantly about your work as a Councillor.
- **A Councillor's election campaign social media sites**: You are identified as a Councillor and your activity on this page is predominantly about campaigning for re- election.

4.2 Councillor responsibilities

Councillors are responsible for the management of their own official social media platforms and it is important councillors understand:

- Councillors are held to a higher standard of conduct than the general public and Councillors accept this as an obligation of public office.
- How to moderate comments on social media platforms as a Councillor.
- How to deal with complaints lodged via social media platforms.
- What constitutes a 'public record' on social media platforms and how these need to be managed.
- Specific requirements for using social media during an election period.

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4.3 Making comments about Council

The use of social media by an Elected Member is no different to using any other communication tool, and as such is subject to the guidelines of the relevant Councillor Code of Conduct.

The following questions provide an effective litmus test for whether a post is appropriate. When commenting, consideration should be given to the following:

- Could what you are doing harm the reputation of your Council?
- Are you disclosing Council material that you are not authorised to disclose?
- Have you made it clear to others when your contribution is as a private individual, not an elected member of Council?
- Are you willing to defend your post to your fellow Councillors/work colleagues?
- Would you be comfortable saying it to a stranger at a bus stop or posting in on a public shop window?
- Are you behaving with integrity, respect and accountability?

4.4 Content standards

All Councillors are required to show respect for all persons and differences of opinion when engaging with the community.

To uphold Council values when using official Councillor social media sites it is recommended Elected Members:

- ensure that comments do not reflect adversely on the reputation of Council and/or local government.
- maintain confidentiality of local government information that is not publicly available.
- do not undermine the position of other Councillors or Staff.
- do not attempt to unduly influence other Councillors or Staff or undermine public confidence in Council and its processes.
- are aware that personal comments about public issues may compromise their capacity to perform in an unbiased manner.
- ensure comments do not indicate that they have come to a conclusive view on a matter coming before Council, prior to fully considering a proposal.

Any conduct on social media which breaches the Councillor Code of Conduct is inappropriate. This includes behaving in a way which contradicts the Local Government principles outlined in the Code of Conduct including transparency, meaningful community engagement, social inclusion and ethical and legal behaviour.

Councillors are encouraged to publish a link to these guidelines on their official sites.

4.5 Moderating comments on official Councillor social media

It is important that the general public can comment and engage with Councillors – making comments which may be positive, neutral or negative.

It is equally as important that there are clear guidelines as to what acceptable social media engagement looks like, in what circumstances comments may be hidden or

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deleted, or when a person may be blocked from the page.

These guidelines are intended to provide a set of standards for acceptable social media behaviour for both the Councillor and the general public.

If there is a need to delete or hide social media comments or block a user from your page (e.g. if the post is offensive), the offending person should be referred to Council's social media house rules outlined in 3.3 of this document.

4.6 Dealing with complaints

If an individual appears to be making a complaint about either you, another Councillor or the Council in general, Councillors should refer the complainant to the appropriate avenue to have their complaint heard.

If the complaint appears to be against a Councillor, a suggested

response is: Hi [name],

The official way to lodge a complaint against an elected member in Tasmania can be viewed here: <https://www.warwyn.tas.gov.au/our-council/about-council/>

If the complaint is about Council in general a suggested response is:

Hi [name],

Sorry you feel that way. If you want to lodge this feedback, our official council complaint and feedback channels are the correct way to raise your issue. You can find out how to do this here <http://www.warwyn.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=248>

4.7 Specific requirements for using social media during an election period

Election material includes anything intended to influence an elector about voting at an election or affect the result of an election.

If a Councillor uses social media to campaign for an election, their account must state the name and address (other than a post office box) of the person who authorised the account.

If a Councillor posts any videos, images, or other material that can be downloaded and distributed separately from their account as a distinct piece of election material, it is recommended that those videos, images or materials include the same authorisations.

A Councillor's posts on social media (both official and personal accounts) must not:

- mislead or intend to mislead an elector about the ways of voting at the election.
- contain a false statement of fact about the personal character or conduct of the candidate, if you knew it was false when you made the post.
- purport to be a representation of a ballot paper for use in the election, if it is likely to induce an elector to cast an informal vote.
- contain information which is factually inaccurate.

5 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As an Elected Member, Authorised Representative or Council Staff, personal use of any social media must comply with Council's Social Media Policy.

Personal use of social media must not:

- purport to represent or speak on behalf of the Council;
- damage the reputation of Council or breach any Council policy;
- use Council's intellectual property or copyrighted materials;
- disclose sensitive or confidential information;
- disclose information before Council has officially released it; or
- post offensive, harassing or defamatory comments.

General guidelines for personal social media use are:

- Use common sense and be thoughtful how you present yourself – if you wouldn't say it in public don't say it online.
- Respect your audience, colleagues and audience.

Nothing in these guidelines should be interpreted as diminishing or attempting a person's right to engage in lawful activities as individuals expressing opinions that are clearly identified as their own.