

# SOCIAL MEDIA

HRS017



NARRANDERA SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

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| <b>Policy No:</b>           | <b>HRS017</b>                            |
| <b>Policy Title:</b>        | <b>Social Media Policy</b>               |
| <b>Section Responsible:</b> | <b>Executive Services/Communications</b> |
| <b>Minute No:</b>           | <b>17/138</b>                            |
| <b>Magiq File No:</b>       | <b>17812</b>                             |
| <b>Next Review Date:</b>    | <b>As Required</b>                       |

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### Objective

#### 1. 1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected of persons when making reference to Narrandera Shire Council ("Council") on social media platforms, including social networking sites when the person is using a computer or hand held device not owned or controlled by Council.

To provide guidance on the establishment, management and use of social media at Narrandera Shire Council; to clarify who is authorised to speak on behalf of Council in a social media context; and to provide guidance to Council staff and Councillors on the use of their personal social media accounts in relation to Council matters.

This policy also deals with acceptable use of the social media platforms during ordinary work hours.

#### 2. **COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY**

- 2.1 This policy will commence from 24 April 2017. It replaces all other policies relating to access to social media platforms and social networking sites other than on computers or hand held devices owned or controlled by the Council (whether written or not).

#### 3. **APPLICATION OF POLICY**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Council staff and Councillors (**Users**) who contribute to external blogs and sites including social networking sites who identify themselves as being associated with Council.
- 3.2 This policy does not apply to personal use of social media platforms where the User makes no reference to Council or any of Councils employees, contractors, other Council Officials, related entities or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council that relate to that person's employment or relationship with Council.
- 3.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. Nor does it form part of any other User's contract for service.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

### 4.1 In this policy:

- (a) “ **Blogging** ” means the act of using web log or ‘blog’. ‘Blog’ is an abbreviated version of ‘weblog’ which is a term used to describe websites that maintain an ongoing chronicle of information. A blog is a frequently updated website featuring diary-style commentary, audio-visual material and links to articles on other websites.
- (b) “ **Confidential Information** ” includes but is not limited to trade secrets of Council; non-public information about the organisation and affairs of Council: pricing information such as internal cost and pricing rates, production scheduling software, special supply information; marketing or strategy plans; exclusive supply agreements or arrangements; commercial and business plans; contractual arrangements with third parties; tender policies and arrangements; financial information and data; training materials; technical data; schematics; proposals and intentions; designs; policies and procedures documents; concepts not reduced to material form; information which is personal information for the purposes of privacy law; and all other information obtained from Council or obtained in the course of working or providing services to Council that is by its nature confidential.
- (c) “ **Computer** ” includes all laptop computers and desk top computers.
- (d) “ **Council Official** ” includes Councillors, employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors), administrators appointed under section 256 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW), members of council committees, conduct reviewers, delegates of council, work experience employees and volunteers of the Council.
- (e) “ **Hand held device** ” includes all such devices which are used by Users, inside and outside working hours, in the workplace of the Council (or a related corporation of the Council) or at any other place. Such devices include, but are not limited to, Smartphones, tablets, iPads, other handheld electronic devices, and similar products, and any other means of accessing social networking sites or a social media platform.
- (f) “ **Intellectual Property** ” means all forms of intellectual property rights throughout the world including copyright, patent, design, trade mark, trade name, and all Confidential Information and including know-how and trade secrets.
- (g) “ **Person** ” includes any natural person, company, partnership, association, trust, business, or other organisation or entity of any description and a Person’s legal personal representative(s), successors, assigns or substitutes.
- (h) “ **Social Networking Site** ” and “ **Social Media Platform** ” includes Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups, and all similar sites defined as social media platforms.

## 5. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

- 5.1 When contributing to a Social Networking Site or accessing a Social Media Platform, a User must not identify him or herself as representing Council or any of Council's related entities unless specifically authorised to do so in writing by the General Manager.(DELEGATION)
- 5.2 As it may be possible for any user of an external site to conduct a search that will identify any blogged comments about Council except where permitted in the policy otherwise, Users must **not** publish any material which identifies themselves as being associated with Council or a related entity of Council.
- This would include making comments about Council policies, decisions or activities. This applies to both making disparaging comments about Council and defending Council and staff.
- If you do see inaccurate or disparaging comments about Council or the staff on social media, please bring this to the attention of the Communications Officer who will inform management.
- Authorised officers of Council will then determine the appropriate way to respond to inaccurate information being portrayed about Council and its staff.
- 5.3 A User must not disparage or make any adverse comment about Council, any policy or decision of Council or any of Council's related entities, employee's contractors and other Council Officials or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council that relate to that person's employment or relationship with Council.
- 5.4 A User must not harass, bully, intimidate or threaten another employee contractor or other Council Official (or a person the User knows to be a relative or associate of a Council Official) when contributing to a Social Networking Site or accessing a Social Media Platform.
- 5.5 A User may only disclose publicly available information and must not disclose or cause to be disclosed Confidential Information.
- 5.6 A User must ensure that any information he or she posts about Council or a related entity of Council is informed and factually accurate.
- 5.7 A User must use a disclaimer when referring to Council or a related entity of the Council or a Council Official. Such a disclaimer is "*the views expressed in this post are mine only and do not necessarily reflect the views of Council*"
- 5.8 A User must not transmit or send Council's documents or emails or text messages (in any format) to any external parties or organisations unless expressly authorised to do so.
- 5.9 If the User subsequently discovers a factual inaccuracy or error in their blog or social networking entry, they are required to immediately notify the General Manager of the error and include a plan to correct the error. All alterations should indicate the date on which the alteration was made.

*Use of Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms during ordinary work hours*

- 5.10 All Users are permitted to have access to Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms during ordinary work hours for a limited and reasonable personal use. Councils ordinary work hours are generally 8.15am to 4.30pm.
- 5.11 Using Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms for personal use must not impact upon the User's work performance or Council resources or violate this policy or any other Council policy.
- 5.12 Users must not inappropriately use Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms. Inappropriate use includes but is not limited to:
- a) using Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms to send, post or otherwise publish:
    - i. obscene messages
    - ii. racially and/or sexually harassing messages
    - iii. sexually explicit material

## **6. REPRESENTATION**

- 6.1 Users must not represent or indicate that they represent Council or any of its related entities unless specifically authorised to do so in writing by the General Manager.
- 6.2 If a User is authorised to represent the Council or any of its related entities, the User must disclose that he or she is an employee, contractor or other Council Official of the Council or a related entity and what the User's role and accountabilities are.
- 6.3 A User authorised to represent the Council or a related entity must ensure that:
- (a) Any content he or she publishes is factually accurate and complies with relevant policies of Council;
  - (b) He or she only comments on topics that fall within his or her area of responsibility at Council;
  - (c) He or she does not post material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity or which causes (or could cause) insult, offence, intimidation or humiliation.
  - (d) He or she does not disclose another person's personal information
  - (e) He or she respects copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, work health and safety, employment and other applicable laws.
  - (f) He or she does not create any legal or contractual obligations on behalf of Council unless expressly authorised by Council;
  - (g) The use of Council's Facebook page is in accordance with the electoral act, particularly in relation to individual Councillors;
  - (h) He or she does not send or cause to be sent chain or SPAM emails or text messages in any format.

## **7. BLOGGING FACILITY SOCIAL NETWORK SITE**

- 7.1 The OFFICIAL website of Council includes blogging and social networking facilities that only authorised Users may use.
- 7.2 Authorised Users are only permitted to contribute to blogs and social network entries on Council's website in order to share information and knowledge, obtain constructive feedback, interact directly with rate payers or clients, collaborate over projects and solve problems, promote our organisation, and raise Council's profile, or in the pursuit of the relevant departments of their tourism and marketing and/or economic development work.

## **8. STANDARDS IN RELATION TO BLOGS AND SITES OPERATED BY THE COUNCIL**

- 8.1 Users must not engage in prohibited conduct. Further:
- (a) Only Users who are authorised by the General Manager are permitted to publish a blog or social network entry on any sites operated by Council, and the content of any such blog or entry must first be approved by the General Manager.
  - (b) Public communications concerning Council must not violate any provisions of any applicable Council policy, procedure or contract.
  - (c) A User may participate in Council-related public communications during normal work time. However, if doing so interferes with any of the User's normal work responsibilities, the Council reserves the right to withdraw the User's access to the communication facilities.
  - (d) A User must not communicate any material that violates the privacy or publicity rights of another party.
  - (e) A User must not cite or refer to clients, rate payers, business partners, suppliers, other Users etc without their prior approval.
  - (f) A User may respectfully disagree with Council's actions, policies, or management, but must not make personal attacks on any person.
  - (g) Users will be personally legally responsible for any content they publish and need to be aware of applicable laws.

## **9. WARNING**

- 9.1 Apart from the potentially damaging effects a blog or social networking entry may have on the Council, inappropriate blogs on internal or external sites can also have adverse consequences for a User in terms of future career prospects, as the material remains widely and permanently accessible to other site users.

## **10. ENFORCEMENT**

- 10.1 Users must comply with the requirements of this policy. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment (or, for Persons other than employees, the termination or non-renewal of contractual arrangements).

10.2 Other disciplinary action that may be taken includes, but is not limited to, issuing a warning, suspension or disconnection of access to all or part of the Council’s Computer Network whether permanently or on a temporary basis.

| <b>Social media site</b>  | <b>Administrators</b>   |
|---|---|
| Narrandera Shire Council Facebook page  | Communications Officer, Corporate and Community Administration Officer, Executive Assistant to Mayor and CEO. |
| Narrandera Tourism Facebook page  | Marketing and Tourism Officer, Events Officer   |
| Narrandera Library (to be closed and Library matters communicated through Council’s page) | Community Development and Library Manager   |
| Live Well Narrandera (to incorporate Disability and Aging)                                | Community Development and Library Manager   |
| Narrandera 150 – Sesquicentenary  | Community Development and Library Manager, Events Officer   |

**Purpose of Official Council Social Media sites**

- Directing people to Council information and services
- Educating the community
- Extending the reach of publically available information
- Enhancing the Council’s reputation online (with respect, responsibility and transparency)
- Creating a platform for community engagement and interaction.

**Set up or disestablishment of a NSC Social Media site and/or specific purpose group page**

- The General Manager must formally approve the set up or disestablishment of any social media site, and approve who are the administrators for each specific site.
- Any proposals to set up or disestablish a social media site must be presented in the first instance to the Communications Officer who will prepare – in partnership with the recommending officer – a recommendation to the Executive Leadership Team for consideration.
- Any proposal for a new site or group page should consider purpose, suitability, audience fit, strategy, administration and sustainability (including whole of life costings). It should be noted that NSC’s preference is to have fewer, quality and well administered sites.

**Administration of NSC Social Media sites**

- Only formally nominated and authorised staff may post official messages on the relevant NSC social media site.

- Administrators must be clear that they are ambassadors for Narrandera Shire Council and must reflect the organisation in a professional and appropriate manner at all times.
- Only factual information and standard templated replies to compliments and criticism may be posted by administrators.
- Only publically available information may be disclosed at any time. It is important not to comment on or disclose confidential Narrandera Shire Council information or intellectual property at any time.
- Sites need to be actively administered during working hours and responses to comments need to be within 24 hours (or within 2 hours of the first day back following a weekend, RDO or public holiday).
- All administrators should seek advice and written approval from the relevant Director prior to posting a response to a comment that is critical of Council (including Councillors, staff, services etc).
- All administrators responding should identify themselves formally in the first response to any public post thread using the following introduction “Hi – this is (name), (position) at Narrandera Shire Council.
- Administrators are to have regard to the “Guidelines for NSC Social Media Administrators” when formulating responses.
- The Communications Officer has overarching oversight of the social media sites and is authorised to remove any defamatory posts or inappropriate Council supplied posts.
- Via the Communications Officer, an Administrator may recommend to their Director or the General Manager that a user be banned from a platform where that user continually displays abusive behavior, makes vexatious complaints or consistently unsubstantiated negative comments that unfairly compromise the reputation of NSC, its Council or its staff.

### ***Associated Documents***

- Email and Internet Usage Policy
- Guidelines for NSC Social Media Administrators
- Code of Conduct

### ***Variations***

*The Council reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.*



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**Policy History**

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|----------|------------|
| Adopted  | 02/04/2014 |
| Reviewed | 10/05/2017 |
| Amended  | 16/05/2017 |



Signed: Interim General Manager

Date: 24 May 2017

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*I acknowledge:*

- *receiving the Council Social Media Policy;*
- *that I should comply with the policy; and*
- *that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment.*

Your name:

Signed:

Date:

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