

COUNCIL POLICY: SOCIAL MEDIA

Date Adopted:

(Governance to insert)

Committee Reference:	<i>Corporate and Community Services 17 September 2013; (Item Number 1.1).</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Coordinator Communications and Councillor Support, Office of the Mayor and CEO</i>
Next review date:	<i>February 2020</i>
File Reference:	<i>02/15/005; 04/15/004</i>
Related Policies/Local Laws/Legislation:	<i>Nil</i>
Related Documents:	<i>Code of Conduct for Councillors Code of Conduct for Employees</i>

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- Demonstrate Council's commitment to communicating with the community through social media
- Provide an agreed protocol for the use of social media platforms by persons communicating with or on behalf of Council

Corporate Plan:

Priority Area	Open and responsive government Council will provide leadership that supports the diverse needs of our community. We value this diversity and will actively engage to deliver a range of affordable services in an efficient and fair manner. We will acknowledge the aspirations of our community when making decisions in an ethical and transparent way.
Strategy	Continue to develop initiatives and processes to communicate and engage with our diverse community.

POLICY STATEMENT

Scenic Rim Regional Council recognises the role of social media and social networking sites as a communications tool and information source of the community.

Council acknowledges the benefits of engaging with the community through current and emergent social media platforms as a means to communicate key council policy and messages.

Council acknowledges that social media and networking sites are a public forum, but as the administrator of its accounts, it has a duty of care to ensure commentary and materials posted to such platforms adheres to appropriate standards of behaviour.

Any commentary by councillors, staff or contractors on Council's social media platforms and other forums from private or third-party accounts, which could reasonably be interpreted as relating to the Council, must adhere to the organisation's relevant Codes of Conduct.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Circumstances when Council wishes to engage with the community through social media platforms
- All councillors, council employees and contractors accessing council's social media platforms as an administrator, moderator or content generator under council's account profiles.
- Any social media user who wishes to interact on social media platforms administered by council.
- Councillors, council staff and contractors using private or third party accounts.

DEFINITIONS

Social media: An online environment which facilitates the creation, sharing and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social media platforms: Programs or applications developed for the purpose of providing a network for social media interactions, such as Facebook or Twitter.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Author

Coordinator Communications and Councillor Support

Policy Owner

Chief Executive Officer

Guidelines and procedures -
Scenic Rim Regional Council Social Media Guidelines

Coordinator Communications and Councillor Support

Approved By:

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Date

ATTACHMENT A: SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

1.0 Purpose

Council recognises that social media provides opportunities for interactive two-way communication with the community which can complement existing communication and further improve the dissemination of information. Council has chosen to establish an official presence on a number of social media platforms as a means to provide information to and engage with the community. This information may include, but is not limited to:

- Council announcements and notices
- Community engagement and consultation opportunities
- News updates and media releases
- Notification of upcoming events and activities at Council venues
- General communication on behalf of Councillors and the organisation
- Links to information and documents published on Council's website
- Links to useful information provided by third parties, including but not limited to, government departments and agencies, statutory authorities and the emergency services

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to councillors, council staff, contractors and members of the community who wish to interact with or on behalf of Council through its social media platforms.

2.0 Authorisations

~~The following people are authorised to access council's social media platforms for the purposes of administering or moderating these accounts. This includes the uploading of materials on behalf of council; responding to commentary or material uploaded by other users; and removing material or commentary which breach Council's Terms Of Use.~~

- ~~• Chief Executive Officer – as the principal officer of council. The CEO may delegate this authorisation to other staff as appropriate.~~
- ~~• Communications & Community Engagement Section – as primary administrators of Council social media platforms maintained to promote the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation, in addition to providing communications support to the Local Disaster Management Group.~~
- ~~• Local Disaster Management Group Co-ordinator – The LDMG Co-ordinator is the primary administrator of social media platforms maintained by Council for the purpose of providing emergency and disaster related information to the community. The co-ordinator may delegate his authorisation to other members of the LDMG as appropriate.~~

Only staff delegated by the Chief Executive Officer, as the principal officer of Council, are authorised to access Council's social media platforms for the purposes of administering or moderating these accounts. This includes the uploading of materials on behalf of the Council; responding to commentary or material uploaded by other users; and removing material or commentary which breach Council's Terms of Use. Social media accounts maintained for the purposes of communicating emergency or disaster management information are administered by the Local Disaster Management Coordinator or their delegate.

3.0 Terms of Use

An open dialogue between Council and social media users is encouraged. However, all comments and materials must adhere to Council's Terms of Use. In posting any commentary or material, users agree to be bound by the following conditions

DO NOT

- Post anything that could be considered defamatory, prejudicial, racist, inflammatory, repetitive, vexatious, offensive or otherwise inappropriate.
- Post comments or make remarks which are off-topic to the source subject. Swear, use foul language or profanity.

- Harass or make personal attacks against other users, council, councillors or council staff.
- Disclose any personal or sensitive information about others on this page.
- Post any material that could be considered spam, including links to other sites, such as non-government or off-topic pages.
- Any comments deemed to fit under these definitions will be subject to immediate removal. Users who engage in the above activities will be permanently banned or blocked from Council's social media sites. Determinations regarding breaches of the above will be made by an authorised council staff member.

4.0 Formal requests, comments or enquiries

Council considers social media to be an informal communication channel. Direct messages, posts or comments are not considered official correspondence for the purpose of actioning by Council. 'Correspondence' means communications written, faxed, emailed or by other means that includes your proper name and contact information in order for us to act on your enquiry. Official correspondence should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Scenic Rim Regional Council, and sent to:

Letters: PO Box 25, Beaudesert, QLD, 4285

Fax: (07) 5540 5103

Email: mail@scenicrim.qld.gov.au

Phone: (07) 5540 5111 or 1300 360 555

4.1 Organisational responses to commentary on social media

Although Council considers social media to be an informal communication channel, we acknowledge that immediacy is one of the key benefits of social media and the community's expectation is for a two-way conversation. To this end, authorised Council staff will respond to messages or posts assessed as requiring a reply or the provision of additional information for the benefit of the submitter or other users. Authorised Council staff will also remove materials determined to breach Council's Terms of Use. As a general rule, social media will only be actively monitored during Council business hours.

4.2 Commentary on social media by Councillors, Staff and Contractors

Council respects the right of Councillors, Staff and Contractors to maintain social media accounts and to interact on social media as a private citizen. **Staff and Contractors should not use a personal social media account to undertake activity which may be construed as Council business. However, it is the choice of individual councillors if they wish to use a personal social media account as a tool or platform to engage with constituents. Councillors may also wish to establish a public profile page for this purpose.**

~~However, any commentary by these individuals on Council's social media platforms from private or third-party accounts is subject to Council's relevant codes of conduct and administrative policies.~~

Any commentary by Councillors, Staff and Contractors on either Council's social media platforms or on private or third-party accounts which could reasonably be interpreted as relating to the Council is subject to the organisation's relevant codes of conduct and administrative policies. Therefore, care should be exercised in posting any personal material or statements which may be wrongly perceived by others as the being the official organisational position of the Council. Such materials and statements carry the same weight as those made at public meetings and forums and in traditional media. Councillors, in addition to staff and contractors regarded as subject matter experts, who believe an organisational response is required to comments made by other parties should refer the matter to authorised Council staff in the first instance and not respond directly.

4.3 Emergencies and life-threatening situations

Council's social media sites are not a tool for reporting emergencies and life-threatening situations, please contact the following if required:

Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade 000

SES 132 500

Energex (Electricity supply) 136 262

5.0 Privacy

Activity on Council's social media sites may be documented for information management and recordkeeping purposes. Your user identity, profile or other personal information will not be captured and stored beyond what is physically visible on the social media platforms managed by Council. However, please be aware that the internet and social media is a public forum and access to your personal information by other users and third party organisation is governed by the privacy setting options you apply.

6.0 Retransmission of Information

Council's following of other social media accounts or the retransmission of information through its site does not imply a formal endorsement or recommendation by Council. It is done for the purposes of capturing third party information and notifications which may be of general interest to the Scenic Rim community. Council endeavours to maintain the currency and accuracy of information published on its social media sites, however, it does not guarantee that the information is accurate, complete, or current, or that the data is free from defects or malicious code such as viruses. It is advisable that users ascertain the currency of information immediately prior to use. Scenic Rim Regional Council disclaims all responsibility for any loss or damage which may arise from the use of this channel. Links to external websites and other social media accounts are provided for the information and convenience of other users and such sites and associated content are not under the control of Scenic Rim Regional Council. The inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement of that website, service or person by Scenic Rim Regional Council. Council is not responsible for the content or reliability of links, or for any loss or inconvenience arising from their use.

7.0 Evolution of social media and Council's presence

Council acknowledges that social media, its associated technologies and platforms is a constantly evolving environment. As such, authorised Council staff will periodically review the choice of social media platforms utilised as communications tools by the organisation.

Approved By:

SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL
Date