REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOYDER

GOYDER South Australia's Heartland	***Social Media Policy***	**Department**	Governance
		Version No:	2.0
		Adopted:	Nov 2019
		Reviewed:	Aug 2026
		Next Review:	Aug 2028
		Minutes Ref:	247/26
		Responsibility:	CEO

1. PURPOSE

Social media allows online communities with common interests to connect, share and consume information, thoughts and ideas.

Council recognises the opportunities that social media provides to engage in meaningful, two-way communication with the broader community. This can complement and enhance existing communication, customer service and consultation methods, and further improve access to, and delivery of, key services.

The Council also recognises the value of social media to the organisation provided through networking, recruitment, professional development, employee engagement, collaboration and innovation.

The intent of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools in order to enable and encourage its use Councillors, Council and Contractors in a way that protects the reputation of Council to legal and reputational risk for the purpose of conducting Council business.

The policy aims to:

- Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media;
- Provide guidance about the appropriate use of social media tools at Council;
- Provide guidance in relation to confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters;
- Reduce the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications;
- Protect the privacy of a worker and Councillors where it is appropriate to do so;
- Promote equity in information communications to the whole of community;
- Help Council manage new challenges associated with social media such as speed and immediacy, record keeping, privacy and security; and
- Provide clarity about roles and responsibilities in relation to use, approval and monitoring.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors (as defined by the *Local Government Act 1999*) and Worker(s) (as defined by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*) of Council who use social media on behalf of Council. This policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to Council, and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.

The policy applies to all current and future social media tools and channels where people comment, view, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, such as, but not limited to:

- Blogs, forums, discussion and bulletin boards, and citizen journalism and news sites which facilitate public comment;
- Social networking sites;
- Podcasts, video podcasts and video sharing sites;
- Instant messaging tool;

- Online encyclopaedias;
- Online and internal collaboration platforms; and
- Any other websites that allow individuals to use simple publishing tools or new technologies emerging from the digital environment.

As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list all specific sites or kinds of social media activity, the absence of a reference does not limit the application of this policy.

This policy applies only to the use of social media for:

- the purpose of conducting Council business and where representing Council; and
- personal use where reference is made to Councillors , workers, policies and services, suppliers or other stakeholders or Council-related issues.

3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Councillors and workers of Council are expected to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures of Council. Policies and guideline provisions which must be adhered to in relation to the use of social media

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council encourages the appropriate and professional use of social media to aid the efficient and effective conduct of Council business.

Social media is recognised as an important channel, used in conjunction with traditional methods, to communicate, listen to, engage and collaborate with the community and enhance the delivery of services.

At all times, use of social media by Councillors, workers and Contractors should be done in a professional manner, in accordance with relevant policies and legislation, and consistent with the values of Council.

4.1 Use

Speak how you would like to be spoken to

- Be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors;
- Use your own voice, but be mindful of language and expression;
- Don't make statements or forward, share or upload content that is malicious, defamatory or may negatively impact the reputation of another; and
- Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.

Stick to the facts

- Only comment about matters within your area of expertise;
- Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative, and correct any errors as soon as practicable;
- Only publish content and statements that you know are true, clear and not likely to mislead or deceive; and
- If you make an error, be up front and correct it quickly.

Keep your opinion, beliefs and political views separate from Council business

- Only publish content on Council's social media channels that is apolitical, in line with official Council positions and Council's values, and free from personal opinions, beliefs and political views;
- A Worker using private social media channels outside of work hours to comment about Council related matters should clearly identify their comments as their own personal opinions, be accurate and factual and not disparage Council, Councillors , workers or contractors etc;
- Councillors should use social media in accordance with the Behavioural Management Policy. All Councillor social media accounts should have a prominent statement that clearly identifies they are not speaking on behalf of Council. In expressing individual views, Councillors must do so in a way that does not undermine the community's trust or confidence in Council and maintains respectful relationship with fellow Councillors and workers.

Stay within your level of authorisation

- Only use social media channels in the manner for which you have been authorised and do not commit Council to actions or undertakings beyond your delegation;
- Leave formal statements and announcements to the official spokespeople and if you are unsure, check with the Principal Member, the Chief Executive Officer or your Director; and
- Refer any media enquiries via social media or posts about potentially sensitive/political issues to a Director or the Chief Executive Officer.

Be fair and transparent

- Be clear about your professional identity and any vested interests and refrain from covert, anonymous or deceitful representation including via a third party;
- Encourage open, honest and transparent engagement and feedback by the online community; and
- Refrain from any behaviour which could be seen as biased, showing undue favour or in response to real or perceived compensation or reward.

Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy and property of others

- Only discuss publicly available information and maintain the confidentiality of internal discussions, confidential decisions of Council, and personal or private information about Councillors , workers or third parties;
- Seek permission from anyone (other than Councillors and workers) who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing via any form of social media and, if asked to remove materials, do so as soon as practicable; and
- Only use or reproduce copyright material, or the intellectual property of others, including applications, sound recordings (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music if you have permission from the creator or owner and ensure they are acknowledged.

Be responsible, accessible and responsive

- Appropriately monitor any social media sites created and ensure they can be easily edited, improved or removed. Ensure that inappropriate content is removed in a timely manner;
- Specify the type of comments and feedback that will receive a response and clearly communicate a target response time;
- Make it easy for audiences to reach Council via other methods by publishing Council's telephone number, council default email, address and other social media contact methods;

- Ensure information on social media meets government web standards for accessibility and/or is available in another form where practical; and
- Protect your personal privacy and guard against identity theft.

Uphold acceptable content standards

Under no circumstances is the following content permitted:

- Abusive, profane or sexual language;
- Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender identity, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation;
- Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking;
- Materials that could compromise Council, workers or system safety;
- Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, copyright, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks);
- Confidential information about Council or third parties;
- Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency;
- Material which would bring the Council into disrepute;
- Personal details or references to Councillors , workers or third parties;
- Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages; and
- Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

If you have any doubt about applying the provisions of this policy, check with a Director or the Chief Executive Officer before using social media to communicate. Depending upon the nature of the issue and potential risk, it may also be appropriate to consider seeking legal advice.

4.2 Management Approval

The establishment of new social media sites must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Approval of new social media sites should consider the identified business objective, audience, proposed use in line with this policy, resourcing requirements and ensure alignment with Council's branding and style guidelines.

Security

To protect from unauthorised use of Council's social media channels, login information should be kept secure and changed at regular intervals:

- Choose passwords that combine upper and lower case letters and numbers;
- Store login information in a secure location and the department will maintain a centralised list of all Council's social media with appropriate access restrictions;
- Change passwords when an employee with access to a Council social media channel leaves the organisation; and
- Remove administrator access to any Council social media channels immediately when the relevant worker ceases employment with the organisation.

Monitoring

- Council's social media channels will be regularly monitored and maintained to ensure appropriate use. Ensure that inappropriate content is removed in a timely manner. Where necessary keep formal records of social media activity;

- Council and non-Council social media channels will be monitored for information, research and insight into issues circulating in the community and/or matters that impact on the municipality, its operations or reputation;
- The Mayor will be kept informed of any relevant social media content that could foreseeably escalate into an adverse Council reputational or legal matter ; and
- The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the removal of any content published on Council social media sites which may adversely affect Council's reputation or put it at risk of legal action.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

Use of Council's social media channels should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure they are achieving business objectives and to seek opportunities for further improvement. This includes review of qualitative (feedback, comments) and quantitative data (engagement, audience composition, click throughs to Council websites etc.).

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Councillors	• Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer when using social media • Prior to the use on social media approval must be given by the Chief Executive Officer for the use (link/tag/post and or/other) of any workers name, personal information, private social media account or photo; (in the absence of the Chief Executive Officer a Director); • Prior to the use on social media approval must be given by any affected Councillors for the use (link/tag/post and/or other) of Councillor(s) name, personal information, private social media account or photo; • Seek approval from the Chief Executive Officer for the use of Council branding in social media; • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy and the Behavioural Management Policy • Seek training and development for using social media; • Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer if unsure about applying the provisions of this policy; • Ensure appropriate records management practices are implemented; • Familiarise yourself with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used; and • Refer enquiries to the Principal Office only e.g., council@goyder.sa.gov.au or 8892 0100
Workers and contractors	• Prior to the use on social media approval must be given by the Chief Executive Officer for the use (link/tag/post and or/other) of any workers name, personal information, private social media account or photo (in the absence of the Chief Executive Officer a Director); • Prior to the use on social media approval must be given by any affected Councillors for the use (link/tag/post and or/other) of Councillor(s) name, personal information, private social media account or photo; • Seek advice from a Director or the Chief Executive Officer when using social media and developing a communications plan to support Council business; • Seek approval from a Director or the Chief Executive Officer for the use of Council branding in social media; • Seek advice from a Director or the Chief Executive Officer regarding social media account / tools / sites;

	• Seek training and development for using social media; • Understand and comply with the provisions in this policy; • Ensure appropriate records management practices are implemented; • Seek advice from a Director or the Chief Executive Officer when unsure about applying the provisions of this policy; • Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of this policy; and • Familiarise yourself with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used.
IT	• Facilitate secure access to support delivery of Council business via social media; and • Regularly back up and archive internally hosted social media sites.
CEO	• Authorise use of social media tools for conducting Council business; • Approve the design and branding of social media; • Monitor social media accounts/tools/sites registered for conducting Council business; • Monitor social media for references to Council; and • Seek legal advice when an issue is likely to be contentious or may create legal risk for Council.

6. ADHERENCE TO POLICY

Council reserves the right, for legal compliance purposes, to monitor social media usage on its systems without advance notice and consistent with any applicable state, federal or international laws.
Council will actively monitor social media for relevant contributions that impact on the Council, its operations and reputation, and remove, where possible, content that violates this policy or any associated policies.

This policy will be published and promoted to Councillors and workers of Council.

Any worker found breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, performance management and/or review. Serious breaches may result in suspension or termination of employment in accordance with Council policies.

Councillor breaching this policy may result in a Behavioural Management complaint.

If Councillors or workers become aware of any comments that breach these guidelines they should report them to the Chief Executive Officer or a Director and include a link or reference to the offending material.

7. RECORDS

All records should be treated in accordance with Local Government GDS40.

8. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This document shall be reviewed by the Council every two (2) years (or on significant change to legislation or aspects included in this policy that could affect the health and safety of workers).

9. REVIEW HISTORY

Document History	Version No:	Issue Date:	Description of Change:
	1.0	19.11.2019	Adopted refer minute 254/19
	2.0	16.02.2021	Adopted refer minute 017/21
	2.0	20.08.2024	Reviewed 20/08/2024 Refer Minute 136/24

	2.0	15.09.2026	Reviewed w/- Minor adjustments Refer Minute 247/26