



KENTISH COUNCIL POLICY

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Number 02:35:2014

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OBJECTIVE	To purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Kentish Council to engage and manage new forms of technology in its communication activities with the community.
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	All with the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> section 75.
POLICY	Adopted: 16 September 2014 Minute number: 11.2.1

1. INTRODUCTION:

Kentish Council recognises the importance of electronic resources to carry out the daily tasks required of Council Officers. With the rapid growth surrounding electronic resources within both the work and home environment, Council recognises the need to have a policy which ensures that employees, who access and use these resources either as part of their job, or in a personal capacity, have guidance as to the organisation's expectations.

Electronic resources assist officers to undertake research and communicate with the wider community. This policy serves to guide employee behaviour regarding the responsibilities and permissions associated with the use of both Council supplied electronic communications systems and private use which may have an impact on the reputation of the organisation.

There are benefits of social media technology that can be utilised for both private and business use. Given the potentially wide reach of Social Media, its use requires consideration and management of the potential risk of damage to



Kentish Council's reputation and interests and potentially that of our customers, employees, contractors and all service providers. This Policy also aims to provide some guiding principles for Council employees when using Social Media, both for personal and work related use and either during or outside work hours in order to protect employees, contractors and customers as well as Kentish Council's reputation and legitimate interests.

It is important for employees to understand that information transmitted electronically is a permanent record and therefore carries with it responsibilities and obligations.

DEFINITIONS

Electronic Communications - Includes email, telephone, faxes, SMS, instant messaging, chat rooms and the like.

Personal Use - Presumed to be less than 10 minutes per day on average. Personal use time includes the time taken to enter and read non work related messages.

Internet - for the purposes of this policy the term internet is used to represent the World Wide Web.

Social Media - web-based technologies enabling online communication including text, audio, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia. Examples of Social media include; Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, blogs and chats.

Electronic Resources - for the purposes of this policy are defined as;

- Internet;
- Social Media and;
- Email

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Mayor, Councillors and Officers personal use and when representing Council or posting on behalf of Council on social media in order to protect the reputation and legitimate interests of Council.

The aim of the policy is to build an understanding of what is appropriate and productive use of social media, to minimise miscommunication and prevent misuse of social media tools that will undermine Council's brand.

In describing appropriate activity, the Policy recognises that elected members and employees may use social media in a private capacity or a work capacity, either during work time or personal time, using Council property or personal property.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. *Social media will be used as a communication tool and to facilitate professional development and online collaboration. Social media will not be the driver for building a communications strategy, but rather, a tactic applied.*



2. *Information disseminated through social media will be accurate, authorised and aligned with council strategies, policies and decisions.*
3. *Use of social media will always follow clear identification of objectives and the right tools to meet those objectives.*
4. *Private information will be protected and copyright, privacy and other applicable laws will be taken into account when interacting with social media.*
5. *There will continue to be appropriate record keeping of information disseminated or collected via social media.*
6. *The use of social media is a personal responsibility regardless of whether it is authorised or individual, in or out of work.*
7. *In developing, posting and responding to content, employees and elected members will uphold the values of the Council by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism and will not be discriminatory, defamatory, harassing or encourage law breaking.*
8. *All elected members and employees are responsible for being familiar with this policy.*

HOUSE RULES

This page provides a place to inform you of what's happening within the Kentish Municipality, Tasmania.

We reserve the right to remove comments, without notification, including those which:

- bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation;
- are unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- infringe or violate someone else's rights;
- violate the law;
- Contain personal information about another person, including name, if they have not already provided it. This includes identifying a member of Council staff by name;
- discuss ongoing legal proceedings;
- are political advertising;
- are spam;
- advertise products or services;
- are irrelevant or off-topic;
- are disruptive;
- are repetitive;
- are click bait.

We will also remove or ban any user who:

- continues to post comments such as those listed above;



- uses offensive images as their profile picture, for example, sexually explicit images;
- has an offensive user name.

Disclaimer

Kentish Council has made reasonable effort to ensure that the information contained on its social media pages was current and accurate at the time the content was created or last modified. Council makes no guarantee of any kind, and no legal contract between the Council and any person or entity is to be inferred from the use of or information on the Facebook site.

Council gives no warranty and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information. No user should rely on the information, but instead should check for confirmation with the originating or authorising body. Council reserves the right at any time to make such changes as it deems appropriate to that information. Council has no responsibility for the accuracy of any content obtained from this medium and stored by a user in any form or any loss incurred as a result of use of this information.

Any links to external websites and/or non-Kentish Council information provided on Kentish Council's social media page are provided as courtesy. They should not be construed as an endorsement by Kentish Council of the content or condition or views of the linked materials.

Any advertisement that may appear when viewing our page is not endorsed by Kentish Council, nor are we directly affiliated with the advertisement unless stated otherwise.

The act of Kentish Council “liking” or “following” an organisation , business, group, individual person, location or event through social media platforms does not indicate that Kentish Council endorses the products, views, activities or services relating to the “liked” or “followed” entity, business or group.

Moderation

This page is monitored between 8:00am - 4:30pm weekdays (not including public holidays). If you have an urgent query, please email council@kentish.tas.gov.au or phone (03) 6491 0200 (Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4.30pm).

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Customer Service Charter
- Code of Conduct
- Information and Communication Technology Acceptable Use
- Privacy Statement
- Harassment, bullying and Anti-Discrimination
- Councillor Code of Conduct



RELATED LEGISLATION

- Tasmanian Personal Information Protection Act 2004
- Tasmanian Archives Act 1983
- Tasmanian Defamation Act 2005
- Tasmanian Right to Information Act 2009
- Tasmanian Local Government Act 1993
- Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
- Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968
- Commonwealth Spam Act 2003
- Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Elected members and staff intending to use social media to communicate about Council activity or policy should ensure appropriate authorisation.

Councils General Manager is responsible for appointing authorised officers.

CONTENT

The posting of content on social media websites is governed by the following guidelines for use.

When communicating on behalf of Council, users must identify themselves by their stating their name.

Uploaded content will only disclose on information which is classified as suitable for the public domain.

Content Managers will ensure the information posted is accurate and not misleading in any way.

In posting and responding to content, authorised officers WILL:

- uphold the values of the Council by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism;
- ensure that all relevant legislation has been complied with and that there is adherence to Council codes, policies and procedures;
- avoid political bias;
- act in a timely manner; and
- take steps to avoid real or potential conflicts of interest.

When developing or posting content, authorised officers must NOT:

- use abusive, profane or sexually explicit language;
- undertake commercial solicitations or transactions;
- 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.

Content removal

Council reserves the right to remove certain content such as illegal or offensive material. Material that is reasonably critical of Council will not be deleted.

Council will always state why a post or content was removed regardless of who posted.

Monitoring/moderating/responding

As a minimum requirement, council will monitor social media content and exchanges at least twice daily, Monday to Friday and establish whether:

- comments need replies or removal.
- current content is factual, accurate and up-to-date.
- posts are relevant.
- new information needs uploading.

Access

- 1) Officers authorised to post comments on behalf of Council must do so from the profiles set up for Kentish Council.

Engagement

Social Media tools may be used for community engagement as appropriate. Consideration will first be given to what the desired outcome is, the resources available and relevance of social media tools.

Copyright

Material which is copyrighted (applications, audio, video, graphics, images, photographs, publications) will not be used unless prior written consent is obtained from the creator or copyright owner and the original author or source of the material is acknowledged.

Authorised officers will be diligent in their consideration of brand, copyright, fair use and trademarks.

Risks

In considering content to post, Council will give detailed consideration as to:

- The protection of privacy and the confidentiality of Council and ratepayer information.
- Preventing disclosure of corporate information outside that which is authorised or publically available.
- How Council's intellectual property and copyright will be protected.
- The terms of service for nominated social media sites.
- The level of response for issues raised by people outside the municipality.
- What constitutes a representation as defined under the *Local Government Act*



Record management

In using social media, Council will comply with the requirements of the *Archives Act 1983* and with reference to the State Archivists Guidelines on digital record management.

Resourcing

Council will ensure that social media activities are adequately resourced to allow for content development, monitoring, interpreting the volume and content of messages and responding as required.

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Prohibited or offensive activities

Employees and elected members must not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist or infringes copyright.

Employees and elected members must not establish fictitious names or identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.

Employees and elected members must not bring Council's integrity into disrepute, or harm the operations or reputation of Council.

Employees and elected members must separate personal opinions from professional ones.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Council will not require staff or elected members to hand over credentials to a personal social media account. However, personal use must comply with this policy.

In work time

Council supports the use of social media for professional purposes such as communicating with fellow employees or professional colleagues, acquiring or sharing information, and use for educational or professional development activities.

Incidental use of social media during work time is permissible provided use of equipment and consumption of space on network is kept to a minimum and does not compromise, pre-empt or impact adversely upon council business. Such use should not interfere with productivity, effectiveness and legitimate work activities and the time spent on personal use must be kept to minimum. Excessive use will not be tolerated.

Council will provide notice if monitoring of social media usage is to be introduced.

Making comments about Council

In using social media for personal communication, staff and elected members must not purport to represent the Council. It is permissible to mention where you work provided the website is appropriate for people of all ages – e.g. not a



gambling or adult website, but you must make it clear you don't speak on behalf of council.

Staff and elected members can post public information about Council – that is information which can be found on Council's website. They may also join and participate in official Council social media sites.

In using social media for personal communications, staff must not:

- damage the reputation of Council,
- use Council's intellectual property or copyrighted materials,
- disclose sensitive or confidential information, or
- post offensive or defamatory comments – particularly about the Council, council staff or elected members.

Consideration should be given to the following:

1. Could what you are doing harm the reputation of your Council?
2. Are you disclosing Council material that you are not authorised to disclose?
3. Have you made it clear to others when your contribution is as a private individual, not an employee of council?
4. Are you willing to defend your post to your Manager?
5. Would you be comfortable saying it to a stranger at a bus stop or posting in on a public shop window?
6. Are you behaving with integrity, respect and accountability?

BREACH OF POLICY PENALTIES.

Employees and elected members must comply fully with the policy at all times. If you are not sure if an activity complies, speak to your Manager or General Manager.

Non compliance is serious matter and appropriate action will be taken.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as diminishing or attempting an employee's right to engage in lawful industrial activities.

An Elected Member breaching this policy may be subject to a Code of Conduct complaint (as per *the Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*).

Employees breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action as per Councils disciplinary procedure.

LEGAL ISSUES/LIABILITIES



Defamation/offensive/obscene

Social media can appear to blur private and public spheres but activities on social media websites 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. Additionally it should be noted that 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.

Online content is essentially permanent and should NEVER be considered private.

Use of offensive, obscene or defamatory content may breach a number of Federal and State Laws.

Employees and elected members will not post offensive, obscene or defamatory content.

Privacy/confidentiality

In using social media, employees and elected members will be cognisant of requirements under the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 and the Local Government Act 1993.

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

Employees and elected members will not disclose confidential council information, including but not limited to matters relating to closed meetings of Council.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Disputes will be managed in accordance with Council's dispute resolution policy.