



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

15 August 2023

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

To provide a framework and guidelines in respect to the expectations of Council Officials when engaging in social media in both an official and personal capacity.

PART 2 – POLICY OBJECTIVES

Information technology has changed the way in which people communicate and share information. Social media represents opportunities to increase engagement with residents, listen more and directly harness local opinions. Social media can:

- a) Increase residents' access to Council
- b) Increase Council's access to residents and improve the accessibility of Council communication
- c) Allow Council to be more active in its relationships with residents, partners and other stakeholders
- d) Increase the level of trust in Council
- e) Reach targeted audiences on specific issues, events and programs
- f) Provide effective, fast communication channels during crises
- g) Provide insights into how Council is perceived

PART 3 – SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Council Officials, which includes Councillors, staff (permanent, temporary or casual), volunteers, contractors, administrators, council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of council.

PART 4 – POLICY STATEMENTS

4.1 Guiding Principals

Junee Shire Council uses approved social media pages to:

- a) Develop stronger relationships with community members
- 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 crises or emergency
- g) Respond or clarify an issue in detail
- h) Protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Council.
- i) Enhance Council's reputation

4.2 Content

To ensure accurate distribution of Council information it is requested that Council Officials only share information:

- a) That is publicly available on Junee Shire Council's website or social media channels
- b) In adopted policies
- c) Resolutions of Council

4.3 Application

This policy applies to all Council Officials that make use of social media:

- a) In a work related capacity
- b) When reference is made on behalf of Council or representing Council
- c) In a personal capacity where the Council Official chooses to make references to Junee Shire Council, its people, customers or business related individuals or organisations

This policy does not apply to personal use of social media when no reference or inference is made to Council related issues.

When using social media in an official capacity on behalf of Council, Council Officials must:

- Maintain the high standard of professionalism at all times
- Never engage in behaviour that is harassing, bullying, illegal or in breach of Council's Code of Conduct whether using an official or private social media account
- Under no circumstances disclose information or make commitments on behalf of Council unless authorised to do so.

Council Officials who are residents, ratepayers or customers of Council services are not precluded from participating in community debate about an issue that personally affects them. However, they must make it clear that they are commenting as a resident/ratepayer, not as a Council Official. It is important that Council Officials do not provide personal comments that can be misconstrued by readers as representing an official Council position.

Confidential information that has been acquired through your position as a Council Official, should never be shared in a public forum.

Council Officials who administer their own personal social media accounts are welcome to do so, provided that their application is in line with this policy and Junee Shire Council's Code of Conduct.

4.4 Junee Shire Council's Official Social Media Platforms

Typical Council social media platforms include:

Facebook:

- Junee Shire Council
- Visit Junee
- Athenium Theatre
- Junee Library

- Junee Youth Council
- Junee Recreation and Aquatic Centre
- Canola Trail (Linked to Junee Shire Council)

Twitter

- Junee Shire
- Think Junee

Instagram

- You Me & Junee
- Junee Youth Council
- Junee Recreation and Aquatic Centre
- Athenium Theatre

The creation of additional social media accounts must first seek approval from the General Manager.

4.5 Conduct

The conduct of Council Officials in their professional capacity, when at work or when using Council equipment, must always comply with Council policies and procedures, including Council's Code of Conduct.

Any comments and contributions made by Council Officials when posting in a private capacity also fall under this Council policy, including the Code of Conduct, where those comments are made about Junee Shire Council, its services, its people, its Councillors and/or other business related individuals or organisations.

Inappropriate comments, cyber bullying, harassment or intimidation of other Council employees, contractors, customers or providers made by a Council Official may be subject to disciplinary action.

Social media must not be used by any Council official in a way which might:

- Constitute a personal attack on Council staff
- Constitute intimidation or harassment
- Have a negative impact on your working relationships within the council or with external parties
- Damage the Council's reputation or contains content about the council that may be misleading or deceptive
- Be defamatory
- Breach the privacy obligations of Council
- Disclose confidential information of Council without appropriate authorisation
- Breach any Council policy or the code of conduct
- Be perceived to be an official comment on behalf of the Council where you have not been authorised to comment

4.6 Legal Responsibilities

Information added to social media sites by Council Officials must comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct, uphold confidentiality, privacy and copyright provisions and not subject Council to legal action. For example, where Council has obtained a photo from a third party it must be determined that any license associated with that agreement does not prevent the use of that photo online.

No confidential information or information that is private in nature should be transmitted or stored online as a result of the use of Social Media sites. Council Officials must ensure that permission has been obtained before transferring any information to a social media site that may be considered private, for example, photographs of minors or information about ratepayers.

4.7 Dealing with Offensive Behaviour

Junee Shire Council will not tolerate content that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes contempt of courts, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful.

Pages are monitored and such content will be moderated and may be removed and users who breach Council's Social Media Policy may be denied access to Council's social media pages. Council also reserves the right to moderate content from individuals who seek to monopolise and dominate Council's social media pages for their own purposes.

4.8 Record Keeping

Records in all formats must be managed in accordance with legislation and Council's record keeping program. Records that are created as a result of using Social Media must be stored in Council's corporate recordkeeping system.

Council Officials who administer their own personal social media accounts need to be responsible for and use their own judgement on what should be recorded officially.

PART 5 – IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The following Council Officials are responsible for the implementation and the adherence to this policy:

- The Communication & Event Coordinator manages the corporate Council accounts and oversees the individual services who are authorised to manage their corporate accounts.
- The Communication & Event Coordinator manages the Tourism related social media platforms and is authorised to delegate responsibility to staff within that service.
- Council Officials who administer their own personal social media accounts are free to do so, provided that their application is in line with this policy and Junee Shire Council's Code of Conduct.

- Council officials who administer private or community group social media accounts are required to declare such accounts to the Council in writing.
- If an official statement is required on social media, it will be issued by the Mayor or General Manager.
- Council officials should not participate in creating false social media accounts or get other people to post on their behalf to enable content that is in breach of this policy.
- The creation of additional, official social media accounts can only be approved by the General Manager.

5.2 Communication

Following adoption by Council the Policy will be made available on Council's website.

5.3 Associated Documents

The following documentation is to be read in conjunction with this policy - Council's Model Code of Conduct.

PART 6 – REVIEW

Review of this policy will incorporate relevant legislation, documentation released from relevant state agencies and best practice guidelines.

This Policy will be reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer every four years from the effective date.

PART 7 – LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Media Policy sets the foundation for JSC compliance with:

- Digital Information Security Policy (NSW)
- State Records Act 1998 (NSW)
- Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Government Information Classification and Labelling Guidelines 2013 (NSW)
- Privacy Amendments (Privacy Alerts) Bill 2013 (Cth)
- Privacy Amendment Act 2012 (Cth)
- Government Cloud Services Policy and Guidelines (NSW)
- Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF)
- Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW

This policy is aligned with the following Council internal Policies and protocols:

- Business Continuity Plan
- Enterprise Risk Management Policy & Framework
- Code of Conduct
- Records Management Policy

Council Officials shall refrain from personal activities that would conflict with proper execution and management of Council's Social Media Policy. Council's Code of Conduct provides guidance for recognising and disclosing any conflicts of interest.

PART 8 – DEFINITIONS

Social Media is the use of online tools for communication, promotion and conversation – blogs, microblogs (eg. Twitter), social networks (eg. Facebook), podcasts and video (eg. YouTube) are all types of social media.

Council Official includes Councillors, staff (permanent, temporary or casual), volunteers, contractors, administrators, council committee members, conduct reviewers and delegates of council.

Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Action
V1.0	19 March 2019	Adoption of Policy
V2.0	15 August 2023	Re-adoption of Policy