

 Adelaide Plains Council	Social Media Policy					
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	Administered by:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Last Review Date:</td> <td>2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Next Review Date:</td> <td>2025</td> </tr> </table>	Last Review Date:	2023	Next Review Date:	2025
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	Director, Corporate Services					
DOCUMENT NO: D18/32308	Strategic Outcomes Proactive Leadership 2: actively engage with and inform our communities					

1. Objective

The purpose of this Policy is to provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of Council Members and Council employees who represent Council on Social Media. This Policy aims to promote effective and productive community engagement through Social Media, reduce the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications through Social Media and assist Council employees to manage challenges associated with Social Media such as responsiveness, record keeping, privacy and security.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to Council Members, and Council employees who represent Council on Social Media, and includes personal use where reference is made to Council, Council Members, an employee or other Council related business.

3. Definitions

Business Unit Profile means a digital media channel or Social Media platform that operates for the purpose of a specific Council business unit or function.¹

community means all people who live, work, pay rates, conduct private/government business, visit, or utilise services, facilities or public spaces within the Council area.

content means media (written, visual, or audio) designed for easy, engaging delivery of information to an audience published for public distribution.

Council means Adelaide Plains Council.

Council Member means a member elected to Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Council Profile means a digital media channel or social media platform that operates for the purpose of Council as a whole. For clarity, Council Social Media refers to any Social Media Profile managed by Council administration.

¹ For example: the library.

employee means any person carrying out duties or performing tasks for and on behalf of Council, whether they are paid or unpaid, including staff, contractors, consultants, trainees, volunteers, students and any other person who has access to Council's electronic systems and services in a full-time, part-time or casual capacity.

Social Media means digital platforms where users can post or otherwise contribute content, for example: Facebook/Meta, Instagram, LinkedIn, or any other website that allows individuals to post, publish and/or interact.

spokesperson means a representative of Council authorised to make public statements on behalf of Council.

profile means an account on a social media platform that identifies or represents an individual or organisation.

publish means the uploading of content online, including but not limited to a status update, comment, post, photo, video or link.

4. Social Media Principles

4.1 Leadership and diplomacy

- 4.1.1 Use digital media strategically and with purpose
- 4.1.2 Publish content in line with Council's editorial guidelines
- 4.1.3 Provide timely, transparent and high-quality customer service

4.2 Teamwork

- 4.2.1 Establish clear internal frameworks and procedures for content and response workflows
- 4.2.2 Honesty and integrity
- 4.2.3 Publish factual and clear information
- 4.2.4 Acknowledge and correct or clarify content that contains errors, ambiguous or otherwise misleading information, as soon as is reasonably practicable
- 4.2.5 Remove public comments only when deemed inappropriate within the definitions of Council policies, guidelines, or the Terms of Use of the relevant platform
- 4.2.6 Refrain from content or interactions which could be seen as biased, showing undue favour or in response to real or perceived compensation or reward

4.3 Respect

- 4.3.1 Be inclusive and accessible to and for all members of our community
- 4.3.2 Publish content that includes reference to people only with their verbal or written consent
- 4.3.3 Moderate public comments on digital channels to maintain a safe and respectful online environment

4.4 Professionalism

- 4.4.1 Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and all Council policies, procedures, and guidelines
 - 4.4.1.1 For the purpose of clarity, this includes (but is not limited to) information management requirements, confidentiality, and copyright
- 4.4.2 Credit all third-party content where possible
- 4.4.3 Ensure security of logins and data
- 4.4.4 Monitor digital media appropriately

4.5 Innovative and open-minded

- 4.5.1 Encourage open, transparent and organic discussion
- 4.5.2 Listen to feedback
- 4.5.3 Proactively evaluate digital media for continuous improvement
- 4.5.4 Stay up to date with best practice and commit to ongoing learning

5. Usage

Council Members and employees who represent Council on Social Media must:

- 5.1 use Social Media in accordance with the *Behavioural Standards for Council Members*, or, in the case of Council Employees, act in a way that generates community trust and confidence in Council;
- 5.2 use Social Media in accordance with any other Council policy;
- 5.3 be aware of the spokesperson requirements of Council's *Media Policy* and remember that social media is the media;
- 5.4 clearly indicate their views are personal and are not those of Council when making public comments on Council decisions and Council matters;
- 5.5 remember that content published on Social Media may contribute to the community's overall perception of Council, and will not always differentiate that of a 'personal view' and an official statement from Council even when published with a disclaimer;
- 5.6 only disclose publicly available information;
- 5.7 not comment outside of area of expertise, or commit Council to actions or undertakings outside their delegated authority;
- 5.8 ensure that any comments made or information given does not purport to be legal or professional advice; and
- 5.9 seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Corporate Services Department if unsure about applying the provisions of this Policy.

6. Management of Council Social Media

Council uses Social Media to:

1. meet the digital communication needs and expectations of the community by providing an opportunity to engage in two-way communication online
2. effectively tell the story so the community understands the what, why, when, where, and how of Council decisions and projects
3. support Council's vision of a community and region that is productive, diverse, welcoming, ambitious, leading, and a lifestyle location
4. provide open, responsive government
5. share relevant information with the community.

6.1 Establishing Council Social Media profiles

Social Media sites must be approved by the CEO. Approval of new or removal of existing Social Media sites should consider the identified business objectives, target audience, resourcing requirements and must ensure alignment with Council's policies and *Marketing and Communications Strategy*.

New Social Media profiles must have a plan created which as a minimum will include: objectives, target audience, resourcing requirements, content strategy or plan, procedure for monitoring and responding, information management, security, reporting and evaluation.

6.2 Authorised access

Employees must be authorised by the CEO to access Social Media prior to gaining access. Authorisation will clearly define the extent to which Employees can access or manage Council Social Media, or communicate on behalf of Council.

6.3 Content

Content published will be in line with Council's Digital Media Principles (refer to Part 4 of this Policy) and Editorial Guidelines (**Appendix 1**).

Under no circumstances will Council publish content that contains:

- abusive, profane or sexual language;
- discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, 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 that are designed to, or are likely to, encourage law breaking;
- materials that could compromise Council, employee, Council Member 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, employee, members, or third parties;
- material which would bring the Council, Council Employees, or Council Members into disrepute, other than a complaint that is made using reasonable language; personal details or references to employees, Council Members or third parties, which may be inconsistent with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth);
- defamatory content;
- spam: meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages; statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

6.4 Security

All users with access to Council's Social Media Profiles must opt into two-factor authentication where available. Passwords must be secure in line with advice from IT or Federal Government requirements.

Administration access must be provided to IT and Corporate Services as designated, or username and password registered.

IT and Corporate Services will maintain a record of all Council Social Media Profiles and relevant access.

6.5 Information management

All content, comments, private messages and interactions between Council and its community on Social Media are records and will be captured within Council's Electronic Document Records Management System.

6.6 Evaluation and continuous improvement

Council's Social Media Accounts should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that business objectives are being achieved, and to identify opportunities for further improvement.

6.7 Monitoring and moderation

Council's Social Media Profiles will be monitored during regular hours of Council, or in the case of a Business Unit Profile, during the regular hours of that Business Unit.

Council acknowledges that Social Media is accessed outside of business hours. The hours that a Council Social Media Profile is monitored and an expected response timeframe will be clearly communicated where possible on the relevant platform.

6.8 Responding to enquiries

Council Employees authorised to respond to enquiries on Council Social Media will refer to the internal response procedures or workflow for the relevant Profile.

Responses to enquiries will not be at odds with Council's:

- *Customer Service Charter*
- *Requests for Services Policy*
- *Complaints Handling Policy*

6.9 Moderation of comments

Comments will generally be unrestricted (or the option for comments 'switched on') on posts. Council may hide or remove comments that do not adhere to the requirements identified in the Social Media Community Guidelines (**Appendix 2**) or the terms of use of the relevant platform.

Comments may be restricted (or the option for comments 'switched off') on posts where:

- repeated breaches of the Social Media Community Guidelines are received on that post;
- the post is generating, or likely to generate, increased engagement that requires quick responses beyond available resources or hours online;
- the post is no longer relevant, or the information is outdated, and the publishing of new comments risks the post reappearing in news feeds that could cause possible confusion in the community; or
- as otherwise directed by the CEO.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Council Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek authorisation from the CEO and/or Director Corporate Services in relation to the use of Social Media in connection with their capacity as a Council Member.• Seek approval for any Council branding of Social Media.• Register Social Media Profile with the Director Corporate Services.• Understand and comply with the provisions in this Policy.• Seek training and development for using Social Media effectively.• Support administration to manage social media as an operational task.
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide strategic direction for Social Media.• Provide guidance and approval on content involving, or responses to, sensitive topics or significant issues.• Approve new Council Social Media Profiles.• Authorise Council Employees to manage Council Social Media.

Executive leadership (Directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer and allow Council Employees to participate in reasonable Social Media training • Facilitate the demands of moderating and responding to communications received via Social Media • Monitor Council Employee usage of Social Media and manage performance and usage in accordance with this Policy • Provide reports, in line with the relevant Procedure, to the Executive Management Team regarding the performance of any Social Media Accounts • Ensure regular review of Social Media Accounts, with a focus on business objectives and effectiveness • Provide guidance and approval on content involving, or responses to, sensitive topics or significant issues relevant to the Department.
Corporate Services Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the success and implementation of Council's Social Media. • Monitor Council Social Media accounts and provide advice accordingly • Provide advice and assistance with the development of Communication Strategies and Plans • Approve the design and branding of Council Social Media Profiles • Educate Council Members, Council Employees and relevant third parties in relation to this Policy • Seek legal advice, as appropriate, where an issue is likely to be contentious or may create legal risk for Council
Employees with authorised access to Council Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and respond to enquiries on Council Social Media in line with authorisation • Manage and monitor Business Unit Profiles in accordance with this Policy where authorised • Develop a Social Media plan or content schedule ahead of time for Business Unit Profiles
All Council Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and comply with the provisions in this Policy. • Seek training and development for using Social Media effectively where required. • Seek advice from the CEO or Corporate Services Department if unsure about applying the provisions of this Policy.

8. Related Documents

Behavioural Standards of Council Members
Code of Conduct for Volunteers
Complaints Handling Policy
Complaints Handling Procedure
Council Members Communication Policy
Council Members Information Management Policy
Customer Service Charter
Human Resource Management Policy
Information Management Policy for Staff
Requests for Services Policy
Strategic Plan 2021-2024
Volunteer Management Policy

9. Records Management

All documents relating to this Policy will be registered in Council's Record Management System and remain confidential where identified.

10. Document Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two (2) years, including within six (6) months following a Council general election.

11. Further Information

11.1 Public Access

Members of the public may inspect this Policy free of charge on Council's website: www.apc.sa.gov.au or Council's Principal Office : 2a Wasleys Rd, Mallala SA 5502.

A copy of this Policy may be obtained on payment of a fee.

11.2 Questions

Any queries in relation to this Policy must be in writing to info@apc.sa.gov.au, marked: Attention: Director Corporate Services.

Appendix 1: Editorial Guidelines

Our editorial guidelines ensure that all content produced is consistent and aligned to our digital media principles and other guidelines. These editorial guidelines apply to content created by Council for publishing in print or online.

Content produced by Council must be:

1. created in accordance with Council policies, procedures, and brand guidelines
2. fair, transparent and factual
 - 2.1. by taking reasonable effort to ensure that all facts are accurate and presented in context
 - 2.2. by acknowledging and correcting or clarifying content that contains errors, ambiguous, or otherwise misleading information, as soon as is reasonably practicable
 - 2.3. by acknowledging when content has been provided by an external organisation
3. responsive to the needs and interests of our community
4. inclusive and accessible to and for all members of our community
 - 4.1. by following principles of accessible content outlined in industry standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), the Australian Government Style Manual, or by utilising the inbuilt accessibility tools of relevant platforms, and using Plain English where possible
 - 4.2. by ensuring that critical information is available in different formats where possible
5. not cause harm to Council, our members, employees, our community, or the broader community
 - 5.1. by not publishing abusive, profane, or sexual language, or be considered as bullying or harassment
 - 5.2. by not publishing content that is discriminatory towards a person or group of people based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation
 - 5.3. by not publishing material that would breach laws (including defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, copyright) or is designed to, or likely to, encourage law breaking
 - 5.4. by obtaining consent from people who are identifiable in the content
 - 5.5. by maintaining confidentiality and not publishing confidential or sensitive information about Council, our members, employees, or external parties
6. protecting of children and young people
 - 6.1. by obtaining consent from a guardian (if the subject is under 18 years old), and consent from the child or young person
 - 6.2. by ensuring that no visual content includes identifiable information such as name, address, or school

External (non- Council) content

Content provided by external organisations may be published when it has been provided by the:

1. Subsidiaries and external bodies of Council
2. South Australian Government and entities
3. Australian Government and entities
4. Local Government Association of SA
5. Australian Local Government Association
6. Emergency services

Consideration *may* be given to external content when it has been provided by a community group, not-for-profit organisation, or is a free community event that operates within or

adjacent to the Council region and the information is of potential positive social, economic, or environmental benefit for our community and region.

For example:

- horticultural volunteer groups that care for flora or fauna within our region
- events that are open to our community
- educational workshops
- awareness days or campaigns that address issues faced by our community

The method or platform for communication of the above requests will be decided depending on the target audience. Where there are competing priorities or dates, Council business will take priority.

External content not captured in the above may be published when it relates to a project or event endorsed by Council.

Appendix 2: Social Media Community Guidelines

Social Media provides Council with a means to engage in meaningful, two-way communication with our community.

We listen to our community's needs and generally allow uncensored discussion, only removing content that is deemed inappropriate within the definitions of our *Social Media Policy* or these community guidelines. We expect community members to treat each other with respect and courtesy. These standards apply to all interaction on our digital platforms, including official pages on social media websites.

Under no circumstances is the following content permitted on Council social media accounts, whether published by Council, Council Members, employees, or the community:

1. Abusive, profane or sexual language.
2. Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation.
3. Illegal material or materials that are designed to, or are likely to, encourage law breaking.
4. Materials that could compromise Council, employee, Council Member or system safety.
5. Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, copyright, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks).
6. Confidential information about council, employee, members, or third parties.
7. Material which would bring the Council, employees, members into disrepute, other than a complaint that is made using reasonable language.
8. Personal details or references to employees, Council Members or third parties, which may be inconsistent with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).
9. Defamatory content.
10. Spam: meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages.
11. Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

Any content containing the above will be hidden or removed. Breaches of our community guidelines may result in an account being blocked from accessing or engaging with our digital profiles. Repeated comments breaching our community guidelines on a single post may result in comments on that post being turned off.

If you have concerns about inappropriate content on an Council social media page you can alert us via a direct message on that same platform.

When accessing or participating in Council digital media spaces you agree to also comply with the terms and conditions specified by that platform.

Privacy and data

We recommend that our community understands the privacy settings for their individual accounts on each platform they use.

Under the *State Records Act 1997*, social media is an official record and all content posted in connection to an Adelaide Plains Council profile will be recorded (including direct/private messages and comments on posts).

We use online analytic services to help assess our content to help us improve the user experience and relevance of information. This is done using cookies, pixels, and Google Analytics which are services that collect information about internet usage. The [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#) provides easy to understand information on how data may be used across the internet and how Australian users can protect their privacy.