



# Social Media Policy

Adopted by Council

23 July 2013

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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The Social Media Policy (the Policy) provides guidelines and direction for the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools by Council Members, Council staff, contractors, volunteers and any other groups who use official City of Prospect accounts for the purpose of conducting Council business.
- 1.2 The Policy outlines requirements for compliance with confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social media to conduct Council business. It aims to:
  - 1.2.1 Inform appropriate use of social media tools for City of Prospect;
  - 1.2.2 Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media; and
  - 1.2.3 Minimise miscommunication or mischievous communications.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 The Policy applies to Elected Members, employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of City of Prospect who purport to use social media on behalf of City of Prospect. The Policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to City of Prospect, and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.
- 2.2 The Policy applies to those digital spaces where people may comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, including:
  - 2.2.1 Blogs;
  - 2.2.2 Bulletin boards;
  - 2.2.3 Citizen journalism and news sites which facilitate public comment;
  - 2.2.4 Forums and discussion boards;
  - 2.2.5 Instant messaging facilities;
  - 2.2.6 Microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter);
  - 2.2.7 Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia);
  - 2.2.8 Podcasts;
  - 2.2.9 Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Google+, Bebo, Friendster, LinkedIn);
  - 2.2.10 Video and photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr);
  - 2.2.11 Video live stream conferences (e.g. Council meetings);

- 2.2.12 Video podcasts;
  - 2.2.13 Wikis; and
  - 2.2.14 Any other websites that allow individuals to use simple publishing tools or new technologies emerging from the digital environment.
- 2.3 As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list the specific sites or kinds of social media outlets, the absence of a reference to a particular site or type of social media activity does not limit the application of the Policy.
- 2.4 The Policy is not intended to cover personal use of social media where:
- 2.4.1 No reference is made to City of Prospect, its Elected Members, employees, policies and services, or council related issues, as well as suppliers and other stakeholders in their relationship with Council; and
  - 2.4.2 The author publishes information in their personal capacity and not on behalf of, or in association with City of Prospect.

### **3 Definitions**

- 3.1 (Deliberately left blank)

### **4 Effective Date**

- 4.1 The Policy is effective from 24/07/2013.

### **5 Legislative and Corporate Requirements**

- 5.1 Elected Members and employees of City of Prospect are expected to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies.
- 5.2 A list of relevant legislation which may be used as a guide is included below:
  - Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
  - Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)
  - Defamation Act 2005 (SA)
  - Fair Trading Act 1997 (SA)
  - Fair Work Act 1994 (SA)
  - Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)

- Local Government Act 1999 (SA)
- Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Spam Act 2003 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- State Records Act 1997 (SA)
- Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)

5.3 Use of social media must also be in accordance with the following Council policies and provisions:- which must be adhered to:

5.3.1 Code of Conduct for Elected Members;

5.3.2 Code of Conduct for Employees;

5.3.3 Community Engagement and Consultation Policy; and

5.3.4 Privacy Policy.

## 6 Responsibilities

### 6.1 Elected Members

6.1.1 Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer/Communications Team on using social media;

6.1.2 Seek approval for Council branding of social media;

6.1.3 Understand and comply with the provisions of the Policy;

6.1.4 Seek training and development for using social media; and

6.1.5 Seek advice from the Communications Team if unsure about applying the provisions of the Policy.

### 6.2 Employees, volunteers, contractors and agencies

6.2.1 Seek approval from relevant manager for business strategy incorporating social media;

6.2.2 Seek authorisation from the Communications Team on using social media and developing a communications plan to support business strategy;

- 6.2.3 Seek approval for Council branding of social media;
  - 6.2.4 Register social media accounts/tools/sites with the Communications Team;
  - 6.2.5 Seek training and development for using social media;
  - 6.2.6 Understand and comply with the provisions of the Policy;
  - 6.2.7 Maintain records of email addresses, comments, friends, followers, and printed or electronic copies of screen grabs when using externally hosted sites to the extent practicable;
  - 6.2.8 Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer or Communications Team if unsure about applying the provisions of the Policy;
  - 6.2.9 Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of the Policy; and
  - 6.2.10 Familiarise self with the End User Licence Agreements of any external social media tools being used.
- 6.3 Managers
- 6.3.1 Approve business strategy incorporating use of social media where necessary;
  - 6.3.2 Ensure employees obtain authorisation from the Communications Team on their planned use of social media;
  - 6.3.3 Ensure contractors are provided with a copy of the Policy; and
  - 6.3.4 Provide appropriate training for employees using social media.
- 6.4 Information Technology Department
- 6.4.1 Facilitate secure access to internally hosted social media sites to support delivery of Council business via social media;
  - 6.4.2 Regularly back up and archive internally hosted social media sites; and
  - 6.4.3 Maintain password control on corporate systems.
- 6.5 Communications Team
- 6.5.1 Support use of social media tools for conducting Council business once communications plans are in place;
  - 6.5.2 Provide advice and assist with the development of communication plans using social media;
  - 6.5.3 Educate Elected Members, employees, volunteers and contractors about the Policy and their responsibilities when using social media;
  - 6.5.4 Advise appropriate precautions e.g. disclaimers;

- 6.5.5 Maintain a register of social media being used for conducting Council business, including records of the business case for using social media, its strategic imperative, the intended audience, the intended administrators, the intended content creators, URL, login and password;
- 6.5.6 Assist employees to retain some record explaining the context or purpose of social media and a sample of posts where it is impractical to retain large volumes of screen grabs;
- 6.5.7 Monitor social media accounts/tools/sites registered for conducting Council business; and
- 6.5.8 Seek legal advice as appropriate where an issue is likely to be contentious or may create unacceptable legal or public perception risk for Council.

## **7 Policy Statement**

- 7.1 Council will use Social media to:
  - 7.1.1 Increase community engagement and interaction with our diverse audience;
  - 7.1.2 Promote staff expertise;
  - 7.1.3 Provide immediate responses and commentary on Council related matters; and
  - 7.1.4 Strengthen City of Prospect's brand/image.
- 7.2 Council will actively and increasingly use social media in a responsible manner in accordance with the Policy in conducting council business.
- 7.3 Council will provide guidelines and direction for the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools by Council Members, Council staff, contractors, volunteers and any other groups who use official City of Prospect social media accounts for the purpose of conducting Council business and will monitor this use.

## **8 Application of Policy**

- 8.1 Council recognises that social media provides new opportunities for dynamic and interactive two-way communications which can complement existing communication and further improve information, access and delivery of key services.
- 8.2 Council also recognises the value of social media for:
  - 8.2.1 Networking;
  - 8.2.2 Recruitment;
  - 8.2.3 Continuing professional development;

- 8.2.4 Employee engagement; and
- 8.2.5 Innovation.
- 8.3 When using social media, the following is expected:
  - 8.3.1 Staff should seek prior authorisation from the Communications Team;
  - 8.3.2 Adhere to City of Prospect's codes of conduct, policies and procedures;
  - 8.3.3 Behave with caution, courtesy, honesty and respect;
  - 8.3.4 Comply with relevant laws and regulations; and
  - 8.3.5 Reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of City of Prospect.
- 8.4 The following content is not permitted under any circumstances:
  - 8.4.1 Abusive, profane or sexually suggestive language;
  - 8.4.2 Content not relating to the subject matter of that blog, board, forum or site;
  - 8.4.3 Content which is false or misleading;
  - 8.4.4 Confidential information about Council or third parties;
  - 8.4.5 Copyright or trademark protected materials;
  - 8.4.6 Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, culture, 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;
  - 8.4.7 Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking;
  - 8.4.8 Materials that could compromise Council, employee or system safety;
  - 8.4.9 Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks);
  - 8.4.10 Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency;
  - 8.4.11 Material which would bring the Council into disrepute;
  - 8.4.12 Personal details or references to Elected Members, employees or third parties, which may be inconsistent with Council Privacy Policy;
  - 8.4.13 Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages; and
  - 8.4.14 Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

- 8.5 If you have any doubt about applying the provisions of the Policy, check with the Communications Team 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.
- 8.6 **Authorisation**  
Ensure appropriate authorisation has been obtained before using social media, including but not limited to uploading content and extent to which staff can communicate on behalf of Council.
- 8.7 **Media**  
Do not issue statements or make announcements through social media channels unless authorised. Do not respond directly if approached for comment by media through social media. Refer media inquiry to the Communications Team, who will determine the best person to respond as per Council Policy.
- 8.8 **Expertise**  
Do not comment outside your area of expertise. Do not commit Council to actions or undertakings outside delegated authority.
- 8.9 **Disclosure**  
Only discuss publicly available information. Do not disclose confidential information, internal discussions or confidential decisions of Council, employees or third parties. This includes publishing confidential, personal or private information where there is sufficient detail for potential identification of Elected Members, Council employees or third parties.
- 8.10 **Accuracy**  
Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative. Correct any errors as soon as practicable. Do not publish information or make statements which you know to be false or may reasonably be taken to be misleading or deceptive.
- 8.11 **Identity**  
Be clear about professional identity, or any vested interests. Do not use fictitious names or identities that deliberately intend to deceive, mislead or lie. Do not participate anonymously or covertly via a third party or agency.
- 8.12 **Opinion**
- 8.12.1 Council employees should not express or publish a personal opinion on Council generally or about Council business via social media.
- 8.12.2 Elected Members should be mindful of Council's Code of Conduct when discussing or commenting on Council matters. When using social media, Elected Members must state clearly whether they are expressing a personal viewpoint rather than that of the Council (unless an Elected Member has been authorised by the Council to speak on its behalf). When expressing personal views, ensure care is taken to show respect for the Council, its decisions, and its decision making process, and for other Elected Members, officers and staff. Elected Members should consider using a formal disclaimer to separate personal interests from official Council interests.

- 8.13 General duty under Local Government Act 1999**  
Elected Members and employees must be aware of their respective duties under sections 62 and 109 of the *Local Government Act* 1999 at all times and ensure that their use of social media is not contrary to these requirements.
- 8.14 Privacy**  
Be sensitive to the privacy of others. Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing these via any form of social media. If asked to remove materials, do so as soon as practicable.
- 8.15 Intellectual property**  
Seek permission from the creator or copyright owner to use or reproduce copyright material including applications, sound recordings (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts, logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music. Also seek permission before publishing or uploading material in which the intellectual property rights, such as trademarks, are owned by a third party e.g. company logos. Seek permission from the website's owner wherever possible before linking to another site (including to a social media application).
- 8.16 Defamation**  
Do not comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content that is malicious or defamatory. This includes statements which may negatively impact the reputation of another.
- 8.17 Reward**  
Do not publish content in exchange for reward of any kind.
- 8.18 Transparency**  
Do not seek to buy or recompense favourable social media commentary. Encourage online publishers to be open and transparent in how they engage with, or review Council personnel, services or wares.
- 8.19 Political bias**  
Do not endorse any political affinity or allegiance.
- 8.20 Respect**  
Always be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors.
- 8.21 Discrimination**  
Be mindful of language and expression.
- 8.22 State of mind**  
Do not use social media when inebriated, irritated, upset or tired.
- 8.23 Be safe**  
Protect your personal privacy and guard against identity theft.
- 8.24 Modification and moderation**  
Ensure that any social media sites created or contributed to can readily be edited, improved or removed and appropriately moderated.

**8.25 Access**

Be mindful of the requisite government web standards for accessibility. Information made available via non compliant platforms should be made accessible in another form where practical.

**8.26 Be responsive**

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 phone number, generic email, Facebook, Twitter and Skype accounts.

**8.27 Monitoring**

8.27.1 City of Prospect reserves the right, for legal compliance purposes, to monitor social media usage on its systems without advanced notice and consistent with any applicable state, federal or international laws.

8.27.2 The Council may be legally required to produce logs, diaries and archives of social media use to judicial, law enforcement and regulatory agencies and will comply with any lawful requests.

**8.28 Enforcement**

8.28.1 All content published or communicated by or on behalf of City of Prospect using social media must be recorded.

8.28.2 City of Prospect actively monitors social media for relevant contributions that impact on the Council, its operations and reputation. City of Prospect will be able to find – and act upon – contribution made by Elected Members and employees if deemed necessary.

8.28.3 The Policy will be published and promoted to Elected Members and staff of City of Prospect. For employees, breaching the Policy may result in a code of conduct complaint, disciplinary action, performance management and/or review. Serious breaches may result in suspension or termination of employment or association. For Elected Members, breaching the Policy may result in a code of conduct complaint.

8.28.4 City of Prospect reserves the right to remove, where possible, content that violates the Policy or any associated policies.

## **9 Delegated Officers**

9.1 Delegated officers are employees who have access to all social media accounts.

9.2 City of Prospect delegated officer(s) is as follows:

9.2.1 Chief Executive Officer

9.2.2 Director Business and Economic Development

- 9.3 Additions to delegated officers can be made as required by the Director Business and Economic Development.

## 10 Review

- 10.1 The Policy will be reviewed in line with Council's Corporate Governance Framework.

## 11 Access to the Policy

- 11.1 The Policy is available for public inspection on Council's website [www.prospect.sa.gov.au](http://www.prospect.sa.gov.au) and from Customer Service at the Civic Centre, 128 Prospect Road, Prospect SA 5082.

## 12 Further Information

- 12.1 For further information about the Policy please contact:

Director Business and Economic Development  
City of Prospect  
128 Prospect Road  
Prospect SA 5082

Ph: (08) 8269 5355

Email: [admin@prospect.sa.gov.au](mailto:admin@prospect.sa.gov.au)

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