

Social Media Policy

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Supporting documentation

Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Act 2009 Local Government Regulation 2012 Public Records Act 2002 Information Privacy Act 2009
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Conduct for Councillors Code of Conduct for Employees Code of Conduct for Contractors Media Policy Caretaker Period Policy
Delegations	NA
Forms	NA
Supporting Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media Community Guidelines Carpentaria Shire Council – Brand Identity Recipe

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Purpose

This policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected in relation to professional use of social media platforms on behalf of Carpentaria Shire Council and personal use of social media by Council employees and Elected Members.

The objectives of this policy are:

- develop a culture of openness, trust and integrity in Council through appropriate use of social media;
- provide direction on the responsibilities and expectations for:
 - the professional use of social media on behalf of Council;
 - the personal use of social media by employees and Elected Members; and
 - standards of behaviour by any parties wishing to interact on social media platforms administered by council, including elected members.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Councils Social Media Community Guidelines.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Council and Elected Members who use social media platforms either professionally or privately. Social media encompasses platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and more, including blogs, forums, and podcasts.

Policy Statement

Council employs various social media platforms to provide information on Council initiatives, public notices, activities, facilities, services, events, and programs. Social media should be used where the purposes of Council or the benefit to the community is advanced. There may be exceptions to this rule under the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Social media is considered an important tool for Council to actively engage with our community and provides a platform for active discussion and the exchange of ideas, promoting the Carpentaria Shire as a place to live, work, play, visit and invest.

Carpentaria Shire Council Social Media will be maintained by CEO, Executive Officer – Communications and Community Development Director and/or their nominees.

Les Wilson Barramundi Discover Centre will be maintained by Manager of the Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre and/or their nominees.

Social media platforms include:

Carpentaria Shire Council

- Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter

Discover Carpentaria (Community tourism and events)

- Facebook, Instagram

Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre

- Facebook, TikTok

Guiding Principles

Acceptable use of social media channels

Council's social media assets are managed by Social Media Editors/Moderators and are used for engaging with the community, advertise matters required by legislation, advise the public of decisions made by council at its meetings, council announcements, conducting community consultation, promoting the region, promoting careers at Council, promoting Tender and grant opportunities, pre and post event promotion of regional events and community activities, emergency and disaster communication, promoting economic development and increasing Council's brand awareness.

Authorities and responsibilities

The primary responsibility for Council's social media is the CEO and is generally responsible for all Council social media accounts across all platforms.

All social media accounts are to be set up and transacted in the name of Carpentaria Shire Council.

All content published and/or shared on Council's social media platforms is to be prepared, edited and issued through either the CEO, Executive Officer – Governance, Projects, and Communications, Director Community Development, Tourism and Regional Prosperity and/or delegated Social Media Editors using an official Council account, to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy, messaging and consistency in branding. The Social Media Editors will ensure they consult and receive approval of content by the subject matter expert and their relevant supervisor.

Moderation of social media content on Council's platforms, consistent with Council's Terms of Use, will be undertaken by the CEO and Executive Officer – Governance, Projects and Communications (Social Media Editors/Moderators).

The CEO and Executive Officer – Governance, Projects, and Communications reserve the right to remain an administrator of any accounts created to ensure risk management measures to protect Council's reputation are satisfied.

Employees may not have access to Council's social media accounts and comment on behalf of Council unless they are authorised by the CEO.

Access will be based upon the duties of each position with relevant officers only having access to relevant platforms.

Communication Tool

Social media facilitates the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual communities and online networks. It invites communication, collaboration, discussion, and debate. It also enables the development of social and professional networks, groups, followers, and contacts.

Social media communication by Council falls broadly into three categories:

1. Proactive communication – predominantly used on official social media accounts to promote Council programs, services, and campaigns.
2. Reactive communication – when Council responds to incoming enquiries and comments via our Official social media accounts or when Council reacts to emerging issues with

outgoing messages.

3. Crisis communication – for use during emergencies such as significant weather events that may impact community safety, includes messaging from Council as well as the sharing of messaging from trusted authorities/agencies e.g., Queensland Police, Bureau of Meteorology, SES etc.

Comments and Replies

Any commentary by councillors, staff or contractors on Council's social media platforms and other forums from private or third-party accounts, which could reasonably be interpreted as relating to the Council, must adhere to the organisation's relevant Codes of Conduct.

Service requests, requests for information or complaints must be submitted through Council's official correspondence channels via phone, email, in writing or in person.

This is to ensure they are genuine and captured via the appropriate customer service and records systems and responded to accordingly.

Should Council deem it appropriate to respond to a comment or post, these will be responded to generally within normal business hours. Comments received outside of normal business hours will be responded to on the following business day where possible.

Election/Caretaker Period

Council's social media channels may continue to provide regular communication with residents, including Council run event information, program initiatives and general day-to-day Council business that is of public interest during the caretaker period.

Council will not respond to any political comments made or posted during the caretaker period and Council retains the right to remove messages which contravene caretaker conventions, whether from Councillors or members of the public.

Social media undertaken during the caretaker period can continue in accordance with the Social Media Policy.

Section 90D of the Local Government Act 2009 prohibits the publication or distribution of election material during the caretaker period.

Creation of new accounts

A full list of Council's official social media accounts can be obtained from the Executive Officer – Communications. The creation of new social media accounts is at the discretion of the CEO.

Access Control

Access controls are of critical importance to managing risks in the use of social media platforms because they are often the first line of defence in protecting Council information and reputation.

Council requirements include but are not limited to:

- Changing of and/or removal of access of social media representatives that leave Council or change roles.
- Periodic (annual) review of social media representatives who have access to official social media accounts.

- Systems in place to ensure access removed when staff movements occur in the Social Media Representative role.
- Must use Multi Factor Authentication (MFA), sometimes called two-factor authentication, to control all Council access to and use of social media platforms and social media management tools where supported by the social media platform or tool. This is to manage the prevailing threats and risks of password-only access (e.g. phishing emails).

Obligations when using Social Media

When using social media, the following obligations apply:

- only publish content that is classified as public information. No comment will be made on social media sites regarding confidential, personal, private or legal matters;
- only use corporate imagery such as logos and official Council photographs with the permission of the CEO (or nominee);
- all content posted is accurate and has been approved by the CEO, a director, or a manager.
- comments will be respectful of the community and portray the Council in a positive way;
- all content will be impartial, apolitical and will not promote Elected Members or specific projects and announcements that have not received approval from Council;
- users must adhere to the terms of use and guidance associated with the relevant social media platform/website;
- ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission;
- ensure that information posted online is not illegal, libellous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusive, or obscene; and
- ensure capture of information/records and information privacy meet all legislative obligations.

Following External Social Channels

The term 'following' is a function of social media. It refers to publicly showing you have an interest in an individual or organisation and is a form of endorsement via your social channel. For this reason Council must choose carefully who it follows and endorses.

These social channels can be seen as the source of truth and can also be referenced in social media content when required. A business organisation or person that has a formal relationship with Council through sponsorship or a partnership.

Moderation and Terms of Use for third parties

Council's social media platforms generally will only be monitored within business hours.

An open dialogue on social media is encouraged, however, comments and materials published on Council's social media platforms must adhere to appropriate standards of behaviour.

Council will not tolerate the following, and will remove any posts/messages that meet this unacceptable behaviour, including:

- Content considered defamatory, prejudicial, racist, inflammatory, repetitive, vexatious, offensive, cyberbullying, trolling or otherwise inappropriate;
- Comments or remarks which are off-topic to the source subject;
- Swearing, foul language or profanity;
- Harassment of, or personal attacks against, other users, council, councillors or council staff;
- Disclose of personal or sensitive information about others;

- Material that could be considered spam, including links to other sites, such as commercial, non-government or off-topic pages; and
- If something is not in the public interest, Council may or may not remove and/or recall the article.

Any comments deemed to fit under these definitions will be subject to immediate removal. Users who engage in the above behaviours may be permanently banned or blocked from Council's social media sites. Determinations regarding breaches of the above will be made by an authorised council staff member.

The above actions will acknowledge record keeping procedures.

Personal Social Media Use

Guidelines for Elected Members

The Mayor and Councillors will act in accordance with this policy, Council's Media Policy, Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland, and all other related council policies and procedures.

Elected Members will manage their own social media and Council has no role in the creation or management of these platforms.

This policy does not preclude Elected Members from making their own statements or comments which may conflict with Council's position, or on matters that are not current Council programs or initiatives. In these scenarios, Elected Members must be aware of their Code of Conduct obligations by ensuring that their comments are not portrayed by them as the official view of Council.

Elected Members are to take reasonable steps to ensure that any comment they make will be understood as representing their personal views, not those of Council.

Guidelines for Employees

Council recognises that social media is a part of everyone's daily life. This policy does not limit the usage of social media for personal use, but reminds employees, you may be viewed as representatives of Council by the public. Any information that is shared, must only be what is available publicly.

All employees are reminded to act in accordance with this policy, the Code of Conduct (staff), the Media Policy and all other related council policies and procedures.

Record-Keeping

A public record includes any form of recorded information, created or received by, or created on behalf of a Queensland public authority in the transaction of government business.

Social Media postings, messages, attachments and polls are digital public records under the *Public Records Act 2002* and must be recorded and stored according to Council's records management policy and procedures.

Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with Council's policies and procedures or relevant legislative requirements (the latter in respect to elected members).

Review Triggers

This policy will be reviewed for applicability, effectiveness, and consistency with relevant legislation, Council resolutions, and other Council documents. Reviews of this policy will occur as required.

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
CEO	Chief Executive Officer (of Council)
Council	Carpentaria Shire Council
Councillors / Elected Member	All elected representatives who hold (current) office with Council, including the Mayor and all Councillors.
Employee/s	includes a person who carries out work in any capacity for Council (i.e. temporary or permanent employee, contractor, sub-contractor, employee of a labour hire company, outworker, trainee, apprentice, volunteer, work experience student).
Public Record	Has the meaning provided in the Public Records Act 2009.
(Social Media) Moderator	Designated Council employee who monitors online communications. The moderator may also answer general questions via the channel and respond to complaints or provide basic Council information or clarifications. A moderator may also be a Social Media Editor.
Social Media	Computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. These technologies include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - messaging technologies (e.g. email, SMS, WhatsApp, Chat, Facebook Messenger); - social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Yammer, LinkedIn); - mass communication platforms (e.g. Twitter, Reddit, Viber); and video and image sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram).
Social Media Accounts	All social media accounts, platforms and pages that Council support and manage, that have been created and approved by the CEO.
Social Media Editor	A Council staff member who has the authority, in accordance with their delegations, to represent Council on social media. Includes CEO and other delegated officers, as set out in the Social Media Community Guidelines

Adopted by Council on 17 January 2024 by Resolution number 0124/009.



Mark Crawley
Chief Executive Officer