



**Social Media Policy**

**Introduction**

Social Media is a two way form of communication between Council, residents, the community, partners and stakeholders. It offers an opportunity to disseminate information immediately and swiftly as well as being a tool for consultation and engagement.

Walcha Council accepts social media has the potential to improve communication with stakeholders including residents, partners and business and industry organisations. Council also recognises the value of social media as a listening mechanism to improve the understanding of community expectations and to respond as it sees fit.

This policy sets out the purpose, responsibilities, management and other issues concerning the use of social media and also outlines Council's expectations of staff in regards to personal use of social media.

**Purpose & Objectives:**

**Social Media use at Walcha Council:**

Social media refers to internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information by people. Social media includes but is not limited to:

- ✓ Social networking sites (such as Facebook and Linkin, Google=+)
- ✓ Video and photosharing (Youtube, Flickr, Instagram)
- ✓ Blogs
- ✓ Micro-blogging (Twitter)
- ✓ Forums, discussion boards and groups (Google groups, hangout)
- ✓ Wikis (Wikipedia, wikispaces)
- ✓ Vodcasts and Podcasts
- ✓ Instant messaging and chat services

**Purpose of Policy:**

The purpose of Council utilizing social media platforms is to:

- ✓ Complement and enhance other council communication channels and objectives including traditional media, Council's dedicated websites, face-to-face communication
- ✓ Provide an efficient method of delivering factual, up-to-date information
- ✓ Provide a listening mechanism to gather information about Council or the town.
- ✓ Provide a listening mechanism to inform Council, Council business and facilities on community expectations.
- ✓ To enhance Council's ability to be transparent, accessible and responsive to the community through encouraging dialogue and two-way communication.

## ADMINISTRATION POLICIES



### Social Media Policy

The Objective of this Policy is:

- ✓ To ensure Council's use of social media conforms with its corporate identity standards
- ✓ To define roles and responsibilities for the management of social media tools on behalf of the Organisation
- ✓ To ensure Council's use of social media platforms is aligned with Council's communication objectives
- ✓ To inform Council employees of their responsibilities when using social media.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

Staff:

All Staff have a responsibility to act ethically and honestly when making comment on social media platforms. In addition staff should take measures to ensure personal comments cannot be mistaken for an official comment of Council.

Corporate Administration:

The Corporate Administration section will maintain a register of approved social media platforms and channels used within Walcha Council. The Section will also maintain a register of Authorised Social Media Officers, login details and passwords for each platform/channel. The General Manager will authorise appropriate Social Media Officers.

Authorised Social Media Officers:

Only Authorised Social Media Officers (ASMOs) may comment via social media channels on behalf of Walcha Council. The Authorised Media Officer for each channel is responsible for developing a strategy for social media use in consultation with the General Manager, monitoring and reporting of the respective channel.

General Manager:

The General Manager is the approving officer of all requests for new social media channels.

### **Procedures:**

Content:

All Authorised Social Media Officers must exercise sound judgement in regard to content and material communicated via Council's social media channels. All material published or communication via Council's social media channels must:

- ✓ Comply with all related Council policies, including the Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Be approved by relevant staff when and where appropriate
- ✓ Be a high standard

## ADMINISTRATION POLICIES



### Social Media Policy

- ✓ Not plagiarise or breach copyright
- ✓ Comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- ✓ Be supported by a call to action (eg: include a link to a relevant website).

The following content is not appropriate to be communicated via Council's social media channels:

- ✓ Un-associated commercial advertising and sponsorship
- ✓ Intentionally misleading or inaccurate information.

Authorised Social Media Officers are responsible for establishing rules of use for the relevant social media channel and monitor and moderate that channel appropriately.

#### Dealing with inappropriate content and behaviour:

Walcha Council will not publish User Generated Content, UGC (content on a social media site that is created by the audience), or will remove any previously published UGC, that:

- ✓ Defames any individual, group or organisation
- ✓ Vilifies any individual, group or organisation because of their political affiliation, race, religion, cultural background, gender, age or sexual identity
- ✓ Contains obscene, racist, sexist, threatening or otherwise offensive language or images
- ✓ Breaches copyright
- ✓ Is or potentially unlawful
- ✓ Contravenes any policies or guidelines set forth by Walcha Council.

#### **Copyright:**

Walcha Council respects the copyright of others and will protect the copyright of its own materials. Walcha Council retains the copyright on all material created by Walcha Council and posted to Council's social media channels.

Authorised Social Media Officers will ensure content posted on Walcha Council's social media channels does not breach copyright and that Council copyrighted material is approved for acceptable use on social media.

#### **Record Management, Measures & Reports:**

Records of all social media correspondence will comply with Council's Record Management Policy. Any post to a social media site is defined as a Council record in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and must be recorded in Council's electronic management system (TRIM).

## ADMINISTRATION POLICIES



### Social Media Policy

#### **Personal Use of Social Media:**

Walcha Council accepts employees will engage social media for professional and personal reasons. Staff should be aware that comments, including personal comments, made on social media regarding the organisation are connected to the organisation and as such relate to their employment with Council.

When using social media staff should at all times:

- ✓ Ensure personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of duties
- ✓ Clearly distinguish personal comments from official comments
- ✓ Do not disclose confidential information obtained through your role
- ✓ Act lawfully
- ✓ Do not post defamatory, disrespectful or deliberately misleading comments.

In appropriate behaviour may lead to a breach of Council's policies or Code of Conduct. This breach may result in disciplinary action including formal warnings and/or dismissal.



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