

# SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURE

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of Council utilising social media platforms is to:

- Provide an efficient method of delivering factual, up-to-date information online
- Provide two-way communication with stakeholders through online feedback and correspondence mechanisms
- Become more interactive with the community

The purpose of this procedure is to provide Coonamble Shire Council (CSC) employees with standards of use as they engage in conversations or interactions using digital media.

## 2. Definitions

*Social media*: refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies that enable two way communication.

*User Generated Content (UGC)*: content on website/social media platforms that is created by the audience. It can be wholly or partially moderated. Examples include blogs and discussions boards.

*Facebook*: an online network of individuals, businesses, events, organisations and government agencies, of which each has a 'profile'. People use Facebook to track the updates of those people with whom they are 'friends' or those entities and/or events of which they are 'fans' or 'followers'. It allows users with a profile to upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and provide status or news updates.

*Twitter*: a real-time information network that is built upon small bursts of information called Tweets – a message up to 140 characters in length. Twitter users follow the accounts of those that Tweet information of which they are interested.

*Blogs*: a log of events, experiences or commentary on a web platform to build credibility and create a readership of devotees.

*LinkedIn*: a virtual network of professionals from around the world. It allows individuals and organisations to create profiles that summarise their professional expertise and highlights their accomplishments.

*YouTube*: YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos via their own channel.

*Flickr*: an imaging and video hosting website where people can post materials to share. Flickr provides both private and public image storage.

*Wiki: A wiki is a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser.*

*Instagram: an online photo and video sharing app that allows users to upload, edit and share photos with other users. It can also allow photos to link to other social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.*

*Authorised Social Media Officer (ASMO): an employee of Council who is accountable for managing an official/corporate social media channel on behalf of Council.*

### **3. Procedure**

Council's Webmaster is an Authorised Social Media Officer (ASMO). Other ASMO may be authorised by the General Manager (or nominee).

#### **3.1 Content**

All ASMOs must exercise sound judgement in regard to content and material communicated via Council's social media channels. All communication via Council's social media channels must:

- Comply with all related Council policies and Code of Conduct
- Be approved by relevant staff when and where appropriate
- Be of a high standard
- Not plagiarise or breach copyright
- Comply with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- Be supported by a call to action (for example, include a link to a relevant website).

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

- Unassociated commercial advertising and sponsorship
- Intentionally misleading or inaccurate information
- Material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful .

Council's Authorised Social Media Officers reserve the right to remove material from social media if deemed inappropriate.

#### **3.2 User Generated Content**

User Generated content (UGC) encompasses a variety of views and modes of expression. Social media is a form of communication, and this communication needs to be transparent and honest. Attempts by Council to limit or suppress negative comments about itself taking place on social media sites will have an overall negative effect.

#### **3.3. Monitoring, responding and intervening**

All User generated Content (UGC) on Council's social media channels will be moderated.

##### **3.3.1 Moderation for content**

Coonamble Shire Council will not publish UGC, or will remove any previously published UGC, that:

- a) defames any individual, group or organisation
- b) vilifies any individual, group or organisation because of their political affiliation, race, religion, cultural background, gender, age or sexual identity
- c) contravenes any Coonamble Shire Council policies or guidelines

### 3.3.2 Moderation for accuracy

Council cannot reasonably be expected to verify the accuracy of UGC or to correct all inaccuracies in UGC. Council may exercise its discretion to refuse to publish, edit, remove or clarify UGC that contains an error or is otherwise false or misleading.

### 3.3.3 Moderation for criticism

Council will be open to a wide spectrum of views and give users a fair opportunity to participate. Council recognises that criticism of its operations may occur in UGC. Coonamble Shire Council will publish all criticism of itself provided it does not:

- a) defame any individual, group or organisation
- b) vilify any individual, group or organisation because of their political affiliation, race, religion, cultural background, gender, age or sexual identity
- c) contravene any relevant State or Federal legislation
- d) contravene any Coonamble Shire Council policies or guidelines.

### 3.3.4 Responding to communications

Council's response to communication via social media should be treated similarly to that received via telephone or email.

Complaints received via social media channels should be dealt with in accordance to Council's Complaint Handling Policy. A reply message with a link to Council's online Contact Form would be sufficient in most cases.

The discretion of the ASMO should be used when requests for services are received via social media. However, in most instances the request should be acknowledged with a reply message containing a link to Council's online Contact Form "general enquiry" at [coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au](http://coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au)

Community consultation/feedback received via social media should be acknowledged with a reply message that thanks them for their comments. The message should then be forwarded to the appropriate Council Manager and/or Director.

Where UGC is removed send a message such as: Hi Anna, Your comment is in breach of our Social Media Policy and will be deleted. We welcome your comments in future as long as they adhere to the social etiquette outlined in our Policy. You can read more about our Social Media Policy at [www.coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au) -Thanks, Jan.

### 3.4. Record management, measurement and reports

#### 3.4.1 Recording social media communications

An individual folder for each of Council's social media profiles exists in Records. Records of all incoming and outgoing correspondence via each profile is to be filed within the dedicated folder.

Incoming and outgoing communication should be recorded weekly for each social media profile by its ASMO. This information should be forwarded to Records on a monthly basis to be filed in the allocated folder.

#### 3.4.2 Measuring and reporting

a) Size of following and frequency of interaction: measured by tracking the number of fans or followers and the way they interact with each other (e.g. the number of people that have clicked on your links in the past 30 days).

b) Number of issues identified and user sentiment: mentions should be segmented into negative, neutral and positive conversations to track the trends in perception.

ASMOs are required to report the abovementioned metrics for each social media profile they are responsible to their Manager/Director at the end of every month.

## 4. Related documents

- Coonamble Shire Council Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Communications with the Media Policy
- Internet Email and Computer Use Policy

## 5. Legislative Provisions

- NSW Local Government Act 1993.
- Copyright Act 1968
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) (PPIP Act)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Regulation 2014 (NSW) (PPIP Regulation)
- Defamation Act 2005

### Procedure Review History

Date	Changes Made	Approved By
May 2016	Procedure developed	General Manager