



Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

CSG009

BACKGROUND

Social media is an important tool for stakeholder engagement and a means of communicating with Lachlan Shire Council's (LSC) residents, ratepayers and service users. Social media enables anyone with a computer and internet connection to quickly and easily publish opinion and information, and listen to and engage with those who read it. This presents exciting opportunities for organisations to have conversations with the wider community to share news and information regarding services and to seek opinions from those with whom they work and serve.

Alongside these opportunities there are also risks. Distribution of material through social media cannot be controlled. Once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond. It is therefore important that users of social media understand the pitfalls as well as the benefits of the technology.

PURPOSE

This policy has been introduced to ensure appropriate, legal and effective use of social media as a communication channel for LSC and its workers for business related matters.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all LSC workers. Other than what is set out in the 'Social media for personal purpose's section of this policy, this policy does not apply to worker's personal use of social media.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- ensure that social media used to communicate with the public, and other stakeholders by all LSC workers in the performance of their duties is undertaken in an effective and managed way
- ensure that all LSC social media sites are easily identifiable as originating from Council and correctly apply the Council's logo and brand guidelines
- protect the reputation of the Council while embracing the opportunities associate with social media
- ensure that any Council communication through social media meets legal requirements and is consistent with other communication activities

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- prevent the unauthorised use of Council branding on worker’s personal social media sites.

APPLYING THIS POLICY: COUNCIL-RUN CHANNELS

- LSC workers considering the use of, or wishing to use, social media as a channel for a project or campaign must first discuss and agree this with their manager and a member of the ICT Services team.
- social media channels already featuring the Council’s logo or branding must comply with brand guidelines
- the unauthorised use of the Council logo or branding on social media channels may result in disciplinary action
- individual employees must not post any items on sites unless this has been reviewed by another LSC worker before publication to avoid unintentional errors being posted.

DEFINITIONS

Social Media

In this policy the term “social media” includes (not limited to):

- social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- video and photo sharing sites e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Instagram
- weblogs, including corporate blogs or personal blogs
- forums and discussion boards
- online encyclopaedias including Wikipedia.
- any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.

Post

In this policy the term “post” means broadcasting information in a public forum.

Worker

In the context of this policy has the same meaning as that in the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and includes Councillors.

GUIDELINES

LSC workers must take care to clarify whom they are representing when using social media. They must take responsibility for the accuracy and appropriateness of what they say in any social media

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communications with reference to LSC activities or from which communications LSC could be easily identified.

A LSC worker must have approval from the ICT Services team before representing LSC on social media channels.

When posting information or material on social media sites on behalf of LSC, workers must:

- ensure the content posted is factually accurate
- ensure the content does not constitute legal advice or fall outside their area of expertise or knowledge
- ensure the content posted is not obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, hateful or inappropriate to another person or entity, including LSC, its workers, partners and /or any other business related individuals or organisations
- ensure the content posted is not confidential or commercially sensitive to LSC, its workers, partners and / or any other business related individuals and / or organisations
- ensure the content posted does not include another person’s personal information without their express written consent;
- ensure that the content posted does not breach applicable legislation including laws relating to copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, discrimination or equal opportunities, harassment or defamation.
- be respectful of individuals and communities with whom are interacted with online; and
- be polite and respectful of other’s opinions.

Permitted posts relating to LSC’s activities via social media channels will generally be part of:

- a communications strategy developed by LSC;
- an overall communications strategy targeting specific stakeholder groups or community groups;
- an approved approach to communicating information regarding LSC to its stakeholders, for example, Facebook updates on LSC happenings.

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Social media for personal purposes

LSC acknowledges that, generally, activities carried on outside of its worker’s employment are their own affair. However, activities that impact on or affect work performance, the performance or others or LSC’s activities and business, its reputation and contractors are a legitimate focus for LSC policy. In the personal use of social media, LSC workers must follow these guidelines:

- Workers must not refer to LSC, its workers, contractors or other stakeholders in a derogatory or negative manner
- If a worker cites LSC in their employment or professional profiles they must ensure that the information is up to date and accurate
- Workers must not ‘tag’ or identify as relating to Lachlan Shire Council, any images or videos taken at LSC premises, events or social occasions, without prior written approval from the ICT Services
- Workers must not represent any social media posts as being the views of LSC without the consent of the ICT Services team;
- Workers must not engage in conduct that breaches any Lachlan Shire Council policy including discrimination, harassment and bullying and
- Using social media platforms for personal purposes during work hours must be kept to a reasonable minimum

Breach of policy

Social media use may be monitored. Any LSC worker identified as breaching this policy will be subject to appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action.

Lachlan Shire Council’s Social Media Procurement is included in Appendix 1.

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SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURE

STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY COUNCIL

Facebook Standards

Facebook is a global social networking site which enables users to send messages and update their profiles to share information with friends. It is free to use with a relatively low impact on resources and has the potential to deliver many benefits in support of Council’s communication objectives

Positioning and appearance of Council’s Facebook page

LSC uses a page format on Facebook. The page picture is the LSC Logo.

LANGUAGE

The administrator will use proper grammar, avoiding jargon and abbreviations. Facebook is more casual than most other communication tools though still represents LSC at all times.

ADMINISTRATORS

Administrators must be approved by the Information Service Manager.

COMMENT MANAGEMENT

Fans will not be prevented from commenting on posts if the comments do not include inappropriate content. If a comment is inappropriate, the administrator will reply privately and politely, requesting that the inappropriate comment be removed. Comments should be addressed as soon as possible with a maximum time frame of 48 hours for return comments.

Comments must relate to current or future LSC events or opportunities.

Council does not approve the addition of Facebook applications to the page unless specifically authorised by a Director or General Manager.

SOURCES OF CONTENT AND APPROVAL

Content for the Facebook page will comprise a mixture of existing communications and content produced exclusively for Facebook and include:

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- published media releases – the headlines of media releases. These may be paraphrased to lighten the tone depending on subject matter and length
- marketing messages – These may include information about events LSC is hosting or attending
- videos and photos
- leveraging website updates – new or updated sections on www.lachlan.nsw.gov.au, new publications, or website user surveys
- crisis communications – in the event of a major incident where LSC needs to provide up to the minute advice and guidance, Facebook will be used in addition to the corporate website.
- leadership – Highlighting relevant research, events and awards.

PROMOTION

The page will be promoted by a link from LSC’s website homepage, news page and events page.

Further promotional opportunities include:

- adding the link to media releases; and
- an email to staff and Councillors.

Robert Hunt

General Manager

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