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## SOCIAL MEDIA

### APPROVALS

<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	CORP-POL-069	<b>DOC.ID</b>	4491305
<b>CATEGORY</b>	Administrative		
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Brand, Media and Communications		
<b>APPROVAL DATE</b>	17 March 2020	<b>RESOLUTION NUMBER</b>	6512

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## OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Demonstrate Council's commitment to communicating with the community through social media.
- Protect and enhance Council's reputation and image.
- Ensure Councillors, council employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities when using social media.
- Provide an agreed protocol for the use of social media platforms by persons communicating with or on behalf of Council.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of local government set down in the *Local Government Act 2009*.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Circumstances where Council wishes to engage with the community through social media platforms and the professional use of social media on behalf of Council.
- Council staff, contractors and volunteers accessing council's social media platforms as an administrator, moderator or content generator under council's account profiles.
- Use of social media in a private capacity or a work capacity, either during work time or personal time, using Council assets or personal property by council staff, contractors and volunteers using private or third-party accounts.
- Standards of behaviour by any parties wishing to interact on social media platforms administered by council, including councillors

This policy should be read in conjunction with Council's Social Media Procedure.

## DEFINITIONS

### TERM / ACRONYM

### MEANING

Social media

An online environment which facilitates the creation, sharing and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks

Social media platforms:

Programs or applications developed for the purpose of providing a network for social media interactions and content sharing. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, Pinterest, Google+, in

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addition to blogs, wikis and podcasts, photo and video sharing sites.

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## POLICY STATEMENT

Isaac Regional Council recognises the role of social media and social networking sites as a communications tool and information source of the community.

Council acknowledges the benefits of engaging with the community through current and emergent social media platforms as a means to communicate key council policy and messages.

Such communications assist IRC in demonstrating its commitment to the principles of local government including transparency, effective service delivery, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.

Chapter 1 Section 4 of the *Local Government Act 2009* lists the principles of local government as follows:

(2) The local government principles are—

- (a) transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest; and
- (b) sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; and
- (c) democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement; and
- (d) good governance of, and by, local government; and
- (e) ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and local government employees.

Council acknowledges that social media and networking sites are a public forum, but as the administrator of its accounts, it also has a duty of care to ensure commentary and materials posted to such platforms adhere to appropriate standards of behaviour. As such, content will be moderated to reflect such standards.

Comments posted on Council's social media platforms are considered to be conversational in nature and, as such, do not constitute a formal request for service/action by Council or a complaint under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

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

Any commentary Council staff, contractors or volunteers on social media platforms from private or third-party accounts must adhere to this policy, the Social Media Procedure and Council's Code of Conduct.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Appropriate content

Council considers the following types of activity on its social media platforms to be appropriate, but not limited to:

- Council announcements and notifications deemed to be in the public interest;

- Operational announcements relating to Council projects and services, including highlighting the achievements of the organisation;
- Pre-event and post-event promotion of regional events and community activities;
- Community engagement and consultation;
- Emergency and disaster management;
- Recruitment;
- Regional and organisational branding; and
- Recommunication of announcements from government agencies, statutory agencies or credible sources of information in the public interest.

## **Content moderation and terms of use**

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

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.

## **Authorisations**

Any content published and/or shared on Council's social media platforms is to be prepared, edited and issued through the Brand, Media and Communication department under delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, using an official Council account.

Moderation of social media content on Council's platforms, consistent with Council's Terms of Use, will be undertaken by the Brand, Media and Communication department under delegation from the Chief Executive Officer.

Council staff, contractors or volunteers using social media platforms from private or third-party accounts are subject to the provisions of Council's Code of Conduct when posting, sharing and commenting on social media.

The Code of Conduct expressly states: "Employees and contractors are not permitted to make public comment on IRC business".

## LEGISLATION AND RELATED GUIDELINES

- *Anti-discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Copyright Act 1968*
- *Copyright Amendment Act 2006*
- *Information Privacy Act (Queensland) 2009*
- *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*
- *Trademarks Act 1995*
- *Defamation Act 2006*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Public Records Act 2002*

## REFERENCES

TYPE	DOCUMENT ID/NAME
POLICY	Media Policy
	Information Privacy Policy
	Code of Conduct
	Right to Information Policy
PROCEDURE	Social Media Procedure
	Public Notice Procedure
	Media Relations Procedure