

COUNCIL POLICY

Social Media

Policy Number:	PO020		
Strategic Plan Objective:	4. Community Engaged and Supported		
Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer	Record Number:	16/13901 [v4]
Responsible Officer:	Manager Economic Development & Business Sustainability	Minute Reference:	246/2022
Date Adopted:	14/12/2022	Next Review Date:	September 2026

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Yorke Peninsula Council aims to provide employees, Elected Members and the wider community with an understanding of the role social media plays as a tool for engaging with the community and disseminating information.

This policy sets out the expectations of Council representatives when using social media in both an official and personal capacity.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the use of social media from any location, network or device, at any time, and relates to:

- Council employees;
- Elected Members; and
- Contractors or consultants acting on behalf of Council including Council managed Caravan Parks.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to Attachment 1.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council recognises the opportunities social media provides to effectively engage with a wide audience.

Social media allows Council to communicate with our community and stakeholders in a professional and timely manner, as well as to provide content in a digitally accessible format.

Council's website remains the primary and predominant internet presence. Council content posted to social media sites will also be made available on Council's website wherever practicable.

Council will use social media as follows:-

- As an engagement tool utilised in conjunction with Council's PO057 Community Engagement Policy;
- To actively encourage community engagement and discussion;
- To regularly communicate Council news, initiatives, projects and events;
- To raise public awareness of Council business, services and facilities;
- To increase openness and transparency;
- To promote local community events or other items of interest;
- To aid in reuniting lost pets with their owners; and
- As a channel for disseminating time sensitive information as quickly as possible (e.g. road flooding, fire danger etc.).

4.1. Professional use of social media

Only those Council representatives authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may post, and respond to, content on Council's social media channels.

Council employees will only receive permission to respond to social media comments in limited circumstances, and always at the discretion of the CEO or their designated officer.

Authorised Council representatives are to ensure:

- Content disclosed is publicly available information;
- Content posted is directly related to Council events, news, information, projects, initiatives, issues, authorised statements or directly relevant to the local community, not personal opinions;
- Content posted is factually accurate, not misleading, and complies with all Council policies and procedures;
- They comment only on their area of expertise and topics within their area of responsibility;
- They protect our customers' privacy and be conscious regarding any personally identifiable information for all people included in posts and photos, including staff;
- They do not disclose an individual's personal information without their prior consent;
- Council's PO063 Records Management Policy is adhered to;
- Council's Mandatory Codes of Conduct is followed at all times;
- They uphold the values of Council at all times by acting with integrity, accountability, customer commitment and professionalism and not breach their duty of loyalty to the Council;
- They exercise sound judgement and common sense;
- They are cognisant of the fact all online content is permanent – even if it is removed/deleted it can still be found by users; and
- They adhere to the Terms of Use as provided as Attachment 2 of this policy.

Council's social media sites will be monitored during normal business hours (Monday to Friday).

4.2. Personal use of social media

Council recognises that Council representatives are using a myriad of social media channels in their personal lives. This policy is not intended to discourage or unduly limit personal expressions or online activities. However, when Council representatives are using social media for personal use, they must ensure that:-

- Personal comments are not misconstrued by readers as representing official Council position and policy;
- If content posted identifies the user as a Council representative, it must be stated that the views expressed are personal and not those of Council;
- Content posted does not damage Council's reputation, commercial interests or bring Council into disrepute, nor damage the reputations of Elected Members or employees;
- Content disclosed is publicly available information;
- Content posted is factually accurate and not misleading;
- If negative or disparaging posts regarding Council are found, individuals must avoid temptation to respond themselves and refer the matter to Council's authorised employees;
- The Council logo is not used on any personal social media posts; and
- Adhere to the Terms of Use as provided as Attachment 2 of this policy.

Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by Council representatives will be managed through the relevant Codes of Conduct and in line with Council's PO146 Support, Disciplinary and Performance Management Policy.

4.3. Visitors to Council social media sites

Community members, ratepayers, visitors and stakeholders are actively encouraged to react to, comment on and share Council's social media posts.

Council reserves the right to disable/remove comments that are derogatory in nature, that contain offensive language, are defamatory or harmful in nature towards particular person(s) or groups, contain misinformation or are deliberately misleading. Comments posted will not be deemed as formal submissions or feedback unless specifically indicated by Council.

Direct messages to Council's social media pages will not be considered formal submissions or feedback, and no specific response will be given. An automated reply will ask the sender to email their message to admin@yorke.sa.gov.au.

All users must adhere to the Terms of Use as provided as Attachment 2 of this policy.

4.4. Disclaimers

Council will make all reasonable efforts to ensure information contained on its social media sites is current and accurate at the time of creation or last modification. Council makes no guarantee of any kind, and no legal contract between the Council and any person or entity is to be inferred from the use of information on social media sites.

Council will not accept responsibility for any user content on any Council social media site, nor guarantee its accuracy. Any content shared on any Council online presence reflects the views of the author and will not necessarily reflect the official views of the Council. However, Council staff will regularly monitor (not moderate) all comments posted in its pages to ensure that all material posted in contravention to the Terms of Use (Attachment 2) is hidden from view in a timely manner.

Users understand, and agree, that if the Council or users of its social channels provide information and advice of any kind, any use of such advice or information is solely at their own risk. Users are granting Council and anyone viewing this page irrevocable permission to copy, distribute, make derivatives, display or perform the contributor's work publicly and free-of-charge.

Any links to external websites and/or non-Council information provided on Council's social media sites are provided as a courtesy. They should not be construed as an endorsement by Council of the content or condition or views of the linked materials.

Any advertisement that may appear when viewing our page is not endorsed by Council, nor are Council directly affiliated with the advertisement unless stated otherwise.

Council may vary the terms of use for social media tools and sites from time to time and users should review the Terms of Use regularly to ensure they are aware of any changes.

5. COMPLAINTS

Complaints about this policy can be made in writing to the Manager of Economic Development and Business Sustainability and, if necessary, elevated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). All complaints will be managed in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy PO147.

6. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four (4) years.. The policy will also be reviewed as deemed necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation and relevant standards, codes of practice and guidelines.

7. TRAINING

Council is committed to supporting Elected Members and employees in complying with this policy.

This policy will be provided to Elected Members and all employees who have responsibilities under this Policy.

Training needs will be reviewed annually, during individual performance reviews or when deemed necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation and relevant guidelines.

8. RECORDS

Records shall be maintained as required by Council's Records Management Policy (PO063) and relevant legislation.

9. RELATED COUNCIL POLICIES/PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

PO014 Employee Code of Conduct Policy

PO057 Community Engagement Policy

PO063 Records Management Policy

PO088 Elected Members Use of Council Supplied Electronic Equipment
PO123 Statutory – Code of Conduct for Council Members Policy
PO146 Support, Disciplinary and Performance Management Policy
Yorke Peninsula Council, Community Engagement Strategy

10. REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

Australian Humans Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)
Local Government Act 1999 (SA)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Spam Act 2003 (Cth)
State Records Act 1997 (SA)

11. COUNCIL DELEGATION

Details of Delegation:	Chief Executive Officer
Delegate:	Nil

12. VERSION HISTORY

Version No	Issue Date	Description of Change
1	08/07/2015	New Policy
2	12/10/2016	Minor Revision.
3	15/01/2020	Minor Revision.
4	5/01/2022	Updated responsible officer, scope, policy statement, frequency of updates required, and related Council documents. Formatting changes throughout.

ATTACHMENT 1: DEFINITIONS

Term/Reference	Definition
Authorised Employee	For the purposes of this Policy, an employee who has been approved and trained to post on social media on behalf of Council as per the Social Media Policy.
Content	Any information that is published to an account such as statements, photos and videos.
Council	The Yorke Peninsula Council.
Council representatives	Anyone identified as a Yorke Peninsula Council employee, contractor or Elected Member.
Employee	A person who works for Council, including employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience placements, students or any other person who has access to Council's electronic systems.
Channel / platform / tool / site	A social media website such as Facebook, or Instagram.
Post	Means an entry i.e. comment, statement, photo, meme etc. onto a social media site.
Social Media	Social media generally is defined as a group of web based applications that enable the creation and exchange of user generated content. For the purpose of this policy, social media will specifically refer to Facebook, Council blogs and Instagram (at this point in time).
Stakeholder	A person or group who may be interested in or affected by matters of Council.

ATTACHMENT 2: TERMS OF USE

The Yorke Peninsula Council Facebook page is intended to provide a genuine opportunity for open discussions with our community. This page aims to regularly communicate information about upcoming events and activities, projects and initiatives, important news updates as well as information about Council business, services and facilities.

Whilst we strongly encourage user participation and open discussion, Council has the right to remove any content that is not in the spirit of the Terms of Use outlined below. Council also retains the right to ban any repeat offenders from the Yorke Peninsula Council Facebook page.

This page will be monitored during normal business hours and we aim to respond within 24 hours (with the exception of weekends and public holidays).

All personal complaints or grievances about the Yorke Peninsula Council and its services should be formally reported as per Council's Complaints Policy.

Please report any situations requiring immediate attention by telephoning (08) 8832 0000 or the emergency after hours number on (08) 8832 2999.

Terms of Use

All content must be in line with both the Yorke Peninsula Council's and Facebook's Terms of Use (<http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>). Content might be removed if it is:-

- Obscene (including swearing), hateful, derogatory, threatening, sexist or racist,
- Illegal, fraudulent, misleading or deceptive,
- Singling out any individual, group or business for negative comment,
- Compromising the safety or security of the public,
- Spam or advertising,
- Containing personal details or sensitive information,
- Off topic or repetitive posts copied/pasted or duplicated,
- Promoting political parties,
- Containing viruses, corrupted files, or any other software or programs that may damage the operation of another's computer.

Your access to and use of Council's online sites constitutes your acceptance of these terms. **VERY IMPORTANT:** if you see a comment that you think is inappropriate, please let us know by emailing us at admin@yorke.sa.gov.au or phone (08) 8832 0000.

Disclaimer

The Yorke Peninsula Council does not accept responsibility for any user content on this page, nor do we guarantee their accuracy. Any content shared on any Yorke Peninsula Council online presence, reflects the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Yorke Peninsula Council. However, that being said, Council staff will regularly monitor (not moderate) all comments posted in its pages to ensure that all defamatory material is hidden from view in a timely manner.

Users understand and agree that if the Yorke Peninsula Council or users of this page provide information and advice of any kind, any use of such advice or information is solely at their own risk. Users are granting the Yorke Peninsula Council and anyone viewing this page irrevocable

permission to copy, distribute, make derivatives, display or perform the contributor's work publicly and free-of-charge.

The Yorke Peninsula Council may vary the terms of use for social media tools and sites from time to time and users should review the Terms of Use regularly to ensure they are aware of any changes.