

DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy
TITLE	SOCIAL MEDIA
NUMBER:	POL-1013

PURPOSE

1. To ensure that high quality messaging and content is issued through social media, consistent with Council's brand and formal position on strategic and operational matters.
2. To assist with the generation of positive social media coverage and to protect and enhance the organisations' reputation.

DEFINITIONS

Social Media is any form of electronic communication through which users create and/or join online communities to share information; this includes all websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking.

Social Media Content refers to all forms of content published through social media channels, such as, but not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

Official Use is defined as staff using social media as a representative of the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley.

Personal Use refers to a personal presence on social media separate to an individual's professional association with the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley.

Third Party Contributor any person/ organisation that is not an authorised Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Officer.

POLICY STATEMENTS

OFFICIAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley (SWEK) uses Social Media to facilitate interactive information sharing and provide responsive feedback to the community. SWEK Administration supports Council in using official social media accounts to fulfil their role under section 2.8(d) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, to speak on behalf of the Local Government in adherence with the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley CP/GOV-3102 Media & Corporate Communications Policy.

Social Media will not however, be used by the Shire to communicate or respond to matters that are complex or relate to a person's or entity's private affairs.

The Shire actively seeks ideas, questions and feedback from the community however expect participants to behave in a respectful manner. SWEK will moderate its Social Media accounts to address and where necessary delete content, which is deemed as:

- Offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false or misleading;
- Promotional, soliciting or commercial in nature;

- Unlawful or incites others to break the law;
- Information which may compromise individual or community safety or security;
- Repetitive material copied and pasted or duplicated;
- Content that promotes or opposes any person campaigning for election to the Council, appointment to State or Federal Parliament, official office, or any ballot;
- Content that violates intellectual property rights or the legal ownership of interests or another party; and
- Any other inappropriate content or comments at the discretion of the Shire.

Where a third party contributor to a SWEK social media account is identified as posting content that meets one or more of the above criteria, the Shire may, at its complete discretion, delete the content and block that contributor for a specific period of time or permanently. If the content is found to be defamatory or a personal attack on Councillor or Member of Staff, the Shire will seek legal action.

ELECTED MEMBER STATEMENTS ON SHIRE MATTERS

An Elected Member may choose to make a personal statement using social media on a matter related to the business of the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. However, it is not the Elected Member's role to find the answers to social media enquiries, or become involved in resolving a community member's request, as that is the role of the Local Government Administration.

If Elected Members are using social media to connect with their community, then it is important that the Elected Member forward any community requests to the Chief Executive Officer for action by the Administration.

Any public statement made by an Elected Member, whether made in a personal capacity or in their Local Government representative capacity, must:

- Clearly state that the comment or content is a personal view only, which does not necessarily represent the views of the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley;
- Be made with reasonable care and diligence;
- Be lawful, including avoiding contravention of; copyright, defamation, discrimination or harassment laws;
- Be factually correct;
- Avoid damage to the reputation of the local government;
- Not reflect adversely on a decision of the Council;
- Not reflect adversely on the character or actions of any other person/s;
- Maintain a respectful and positive tone and not use offensive or objectionable expressions in reference to any other person/s.

An Elected Member may request the assistance of the CEO.

Publicly criticising the work, the administration, the Council, Elected Members, Employees or Contractors of your Local Government is likely to be seen as a breach of the Rules of Conduct. As an Elected Member, there is a public presumption that as an Elected Member, you have a high level of knowledge about what your Local Government does, therefore your comments have a strong capacity to affect the Shires reputation.

Comments which become public and which breach this policy, the Code of Conduct, the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007* or the *Local Government Act 1995*, may be referred for investigation. Complaints may be made to the Local Government Standards Panel,

which may determine sanctions under the Local Government Act. Serious misconduct may be referred to the Corruption and Crime Commission.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES OF THE SHIRE OF WYNDHAM EAST KIMBERLEY

Personal communications and statements made privately, written and posted in personal social media have the potential to be made public, whether it was intended to be made public or not.

Council recognises that staff may wish to use social media in a personal capacity. Employees should be aware they are personally responsible for content they publish on any form of social media. Therefore, on the basis that personal or private communications may be shared or become public at some point in the future, employees must ensure that their personal or private communications do not breach the requirements of this policy or the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Code of Conduct.

Staff are not permitted to comment on behalf of SWEK unless expressly authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and therefore should take measures to ensure their personal comments are not mistaken for the official view of the Shire or impact on a staff member performing their role within the Shire. Social Media interactions should not create an actual or perceived conflict of interest between official and private business interests, contradict SWEK provided/endorsed information, inflame community issues or damage the reputation of the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. Disciplinary action may occur if found to be in contradiction of this policy, the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Code of Conduct or the *Local Government Act 1995*.

APPLICATIONS

This policy applies to Council Members, Employees and Third Party Contributors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

POL-1007 Media & Corporate Communications policy provides Council Members, Committee Members and Employees in the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley with guidelines to ensure media and corporate communications about the Shire are consistent, factual and that a positive image of the Shire is created. This policy should be used in conjunction with the POL-1013 Social Media policy.

RISK

Risk: Wrong advice provided, leading to reputational damage or financial loss.

Control: Seek specialist technical and legislative/legal advice from relevant agencies and organisations.

Risk: Inappropriate use of social media by Councillors and/or Shire Staff.

Control: Relevant policy and Code of Conduct included in staff induction.

Risk: Poor communication of Council issues to the community.

Control: Media and Communications policy and procedures, media training for Councillors.

Risk: Failure to comply with legislative requirements leading to damage of reputation and/or financial loss.

Control: Review policies and procedures in accordance with review schedule.

DOCUMENT AND VERSION CONTROL

Responsible Directorate		Office of the CEO	
Responsible Officer		Chief Executive Officer	
Statutory References		Local Government Act 1995	
Related Documents		WALGA Social Media Guideline 2017 POL-1007 Media and Corporate Communications POL-1005 Code of Conduct for Council Members Committee Members and Candidates for Local Government Elections DIR-1022 Code of Conduct for Employees	
Amendment History (Adoption and last 3 amendments)			
Version	Date Issued - Resolution Number	Item #	Description of Change
1.0	11/12/2018 - 115895	12.2.3	Council Adoption
1.1	01/11/2023 – CEO018	--	Reference Updates as per POL-1014 Policy Management (previously CP-GOV-3111)
Date of Next Review		December 2023	