

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

<b>Approval Level:</b>	CEO
<b>Policy Type:</b>	Organisation
<b>Approval Date:</b>	26/05/2020
<b>Review cycle:</b>	4 years
<b>Review Date:</b>	1/03/2024
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Manager Communications
<b>Owner:</b>	Communications
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	Office of the CEO
<b>Relevant Legislation/Authority:</b>	<i>Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)</i> <i>Defamation Act 2005 (Vic)</i> <i>Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)</i> <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1991 (Cth)</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i> <i>Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)</i>
<b>DOCSETID:</b>	1863281

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1 provide understanding and guidance for Staff on the appropriate use of Social Media for the purposes of promoting Council activities and the Personal Use of Social Media where the City is referred to (whether explicitly or implicitly);
- 1.2 minimise inaccurate information the City places in the public realm;
- 1.3 minimise mischievous communications; and
- 1.4 protect the City's reputation.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The City currently manages 28 Social Media accounts across various platforms. Social Media assists the City to:

- 2.1.1 communicate and engage with the community about services and programs;
  - 2.1.2 provide important community information;
  - 2.1.3 promote community events and opportunities;
  - 2.1.4 enable better engagement and feedback;
  - 2.1.5 encourage people to be involved in local decision making;
  - 2.1.6 promote behaviour change aligned with Council objectives;
  - 2.1.7 understand its perception in the eyes of the community; and
  - 2.1.8 improve the City's reputation by partaking in relevant Social Media discussions.
- 2.2 The City recognises that Staff use Social Media in their personal lives. This policy is not intended to discourage Staff from expressing their personal views or engaging in online activities. However, Staff should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the City in certain circumstances via Personal Use of Social Media when they can be identified as a City employee. Accordingly, Staff should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised.
- 2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the employee *Code of Conduct*.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Staff engaged by the City.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Authorised User** means a member of Staff who has been authorised by the Communications unit to engage with the community on Social Media as a representative of the City.

**City** means Greater Bendigo City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic).

**Councillor** means the individuals holding the office of a member of Greater Bendigo City Council.

**Personal Use** means using a personal Social Media account belonging to or operated by an individual Staff member in their personal capacity, whether during business hours or outside of business hours. This includes a Staff member's personal Facebook account or their non-City related business account.

**Professional Use** means using Social Media when acting as a representative of the City.

**Social Media** means internet-based tools that facilitate communication and the sharing of information including, photos, written, audio and video. Social Media includes, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Yammer;
- video and photo sharing applications such as Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest;
- blogs such as Tumblr, corporate blogs and personal blogs, as well as blogs hosted by media outlets including comments or a 'your say' feature;
- micro-blogging such as Twitter;
- wikis and online collaborations such as Wikipedia;
- forums, discussion boards and groups such as Reddit, Google groups and Whirlpool;
- review platforms such as TripAdvisor and Yelp;
- vod and podcasting;
- online multiplayer gaming platforms;
- instant messaging such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber; and
- geo-spatial tagging.

**Staff** means employees, students, agents, and volunteers engaged directly by the City as well as all contractors either engaged by the City or by an authorised contractor of the City.

## 5. PRINCIPLES

The following five principles underpin this policy:

- 5.1 Respect - Staff should respect their audience, valuing different opinions and building positive relationships.
- 5.2 Integrity - Staff should be reliable, truthful and open when using Social Media, conducting all online activities professionally and ethically and by ensuring published material is not influenced by conflicts of interest.
- 5.3 Accuracy - Staff must ensure that factual material is accurate, not misleading and is distinguishable from other material such as personal opinion.
- 5.4 Excellence - Staff should aim to improve their unit's performance through Professional Use of Social Media, listening to their audience and engaging with them.
- 5.5 Accountability - Staff should take personal accountability for what they say and do while using Social Media, including owning up to and rectifying their mistakes.

## 6. POLICY

- 6.1 General

6.1.1 The City expects all Staff to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and City policies when engaging in any online activities (Personal Use or Professional Use).

6.1.2 If in doubt about the provisions of this policy, Staff are advised to contact the Communications unit prior to engaging in Social Media activities (Personal Use or Professional Use).

## 6.2 Personal Use of Social Media

6.2.1 Staff are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any form of Social Media platform.

6.2.2 Content published on Social Media is public and potentially permanent regardless of privacy settings. Deleting material posted in a relatively secure setting on a personal Social Media account does not guarantee that it has not been copied and reproduced elsewhere on the internet.

6.2.3 In the event that the City is the topic of online discussion, Staff must ensure that when engaging in Personal Use of Social Media, they do not:

- imply they speak as a representative of the City or that the views expressed are those of the City;
- make any comment or post that may cause reputational damage to the City, Staff or Councillors;
- disclose personal details or references to Councillors, Staff or third parties, which may breach privacy laws;
- use fictitious names or identities that deliberately intend to deceive, mislead or lie;
- participate anonymously or covertly via a third party or agency;
- disclose any confidential information obtained in the course of their employment at the City;
- disclose any internal City discussions or decisions;
- disclose material which could compromise the City, Staff or system safety; or
- post or 'like' material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful.

6.2.4 Clause 6.2.3 includes, but is not limited to, situations where reference is made to the City, its Councillors, Staff, projects, strategies, policies and services, suppliers and other stakeholders or City related issues.

6.2.5 Staff must ensure they do not utilise any of the City's logos or trademarks on their personal Social Media accounts.

6.2.6 Staff must not register personal Social Media accounts using their City email address.

6.2.7 Staff are encouraged to like or share content from a City account to their own personal Social Media account in accordance with this policy and any related policies and procedures.

### 6.3 Professional Use of Social Media

6.3.1 When engaging in any form of Social Media for Professional Use, Staff are expected to:

- obtain authorisation from the Communications unit prior to engaging in Social Media activities on behalf of the City (see clause 6.4);
- obtain authorisation from the Communications unit and relevant Director prior to creating a new Social Media account for the City;
- adhere to this policy;
- demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies;
- behave with courtesy, honesty, respect and caution;
- refrain from using Social Media whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- reinforce the integrity and reputation of the City and adhere to the values outlined in the City's *Code of Conduct*; and
- contact Legal Services prior to posting content which could potentially become a legal issue or may pose a risk to the City's reputation.

### 6.4 Authorised users

6.4.1 Before engaging in Social Media as a representative of the City, Staff must be authorised by the Communications unit and become an Authorised User.

6.4.2 Authorised Users may make comments and posts which:

- offer advice and support in their area of expertise;
- are factually correct (must correct any errors as soon as practicable);
- contain publicly available information;
- are courteous and respectful of others' opinions within the community;
- are mindful to language and expression and adhere to the City's *Style Guide* and *Writing Guide*; and
- adhere to the City's *Social Media Guidelines*.

6.4.3 Whilst engaging with the community on behalf of the City, Authorised Users must not, under any circumstances:

- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, false or misleading, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes on copyright or is otherwise unlawful;

- announce new information unless authorised to do so;
- comment outside their area of expertise;
- endorse any political affinity or allegiance;
- make personal comments about a Council or organisational policy;
- disclose any confidential or secure information, including personal information;
- commit the City to actions or undertakings unless authorised to do so;
- publish content in exchange for reward of any kind; or
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause reputational damage to the City.

## 6.5 Monitoring and compliance

- 6.5.1 Staff are encouraged to report positive and negative comments about the City and its activities to the Communications unit.
- 6.5.2 If Staff become aware of, or suspect, content or activity may breach this policy this must be reported to your immediate supervisor or manager, a member of senior management or the People and Culture unit.
- 6.5.3 Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying or other breaches of the law.
- 6.5.4 Staff who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action in accordance with the *Employee Code of Conduct*, *Managing Misconduct Procedure* and/or *Managing Underperformance Procedure*, which may include termination of employment.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 7.1 Staff

When using the City's Social Media platforms, Staff must:

- 7.1.1 understand and comply with the provisions in this policy; and
- 7.1.2 seek advice from the Communications unit if unsure about applying the provisions of this policy

### 7.2 Managers and supervisors

Managers and supervisors must:

- 7.2.1 ensure their Staff are provided with a copy of this policy; and
- 7.2.2 ensure their Staff comply with this policy.

### 7.3 Communications unit

The Communications unit must:

- 7.3.1 appoint and coordinate Authorised Users;
- 7.3.2 monitor Social Media accounts/sites/tools registered or created for City business;
- 7.3.3 remove any content posted by Authorised Users contrary to this policy (where possible);
- 7.3.4 provide advice and assist with the use of Social Media for business purposes;
- 7.3.5 educate Staff about this policy and their responsibilities when using Social Media;
- 7.3.6 monitor Social Media for references to the City;
- 7.3.7 maintain a list of Social Media being used for conducting City business; and
- 7.3.8 refer matters to the Governance unit where an issue is likely to be contentious or could become a legal issue for the City.

## 8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Employees are encouraged to access the related internal documents which are available on the intranet and/or external resources which are available as per the below.

*Employee Code of Conduct*  
*Internet Policy*  
*Communications and Media Policy*  
*Managing Misconduct Procedure*  
*Managing Underperformance Procedure*

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to Communications.

## 9. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

## 10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Business unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

## 11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Change Type</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
<i>May, 2020</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>Communi- cations</i>	<i>Review (administrative)</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>March, 2024</i>
<i>Month, year</i>	<i>Insert initials</i>	<i>Business Unit</i>	<i>Eg. Develop, Review (significant) Review (administrative), Update</i>	<i>Increase version number each time document is updated/changed</i>	<i>Month, year</i>