

1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

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| Policy title: | Social Media Policy |
| Policy number: | ADM013 |
| Category: | Policy |
| Classification: | ADM |
| Status: | Approved |

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Media Policy is to establish protocols for managing the use and content of Roper Gulf Regional Council's social media sites, and to provide guidelines for staff and Councillors on professional use of social media sites.

3. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

The Social Media Policy applies to all Roper Gulf Regional Council Councillors and employees, including Executive Officers, contractors, volunteers, trainees and clients.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Roper Gulf Regional Council recognises that social media provides new opportunities for dynamic and interactive two-way communications which can complement existing communication methods and further improve information, access and the delivery of key services.

The Roper Gulf Regional Council Social Media Policy outlines the requirements for compliance with confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social media to conduct Roper Gulf Regional Council business. The policy aims to:

- promote effective and productive community engagement through social media,
- inform appropriate use of social media tools for Roper Gulf Regional Council,
- minimise miscommunication or mischievous communications, and
- help Roper Gulf Regional Council manage the inherent challenges of speed and immediacy

5. DEFINITIONS

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| Blogs | A website that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments and often links to further reading provided by the writer |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| Communication | The means by which information is conveyed to the community through written and electronic means. This policy relates to all corporate communication. |

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| Community | Roper Gulf region residents, visitors, ratepayers, businesses, community and government organisations, neighbouring councils and other stakeholders with an interest in the Roper Gulf Regional Council. |
| Council affairs | Includes matters before the Council or other Council affairs and business, RGRC policy, interpretation of policy, management of Council business, management of RGRC staff, or actions or matters that may commit the RGRC's resources to any purpose. |
| Delegate | A person or body, and the individual member of that body, to whom a function of Roper Gulf Regional Council is delegated. |
| Forum | Online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. |
| Media | Media defines tools used to store and deliver information or data, including but not limited to print media, broadcast media, electronic media and multimedia. |
| Nominee | Staff nominated by CEO to look after media issues |
| RGRC | Roper Gulf Regional Council |
| Social Media | Software tools that allow groups to generate content and engage in peer-to-peer conversations and exchange of content. Examples include, but are not limited to, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, blogs, wikis, online video sharing sites like YouTube, and online photo sharing sites like Instagram. |
| Social networking sites | An online service, platform or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. |
| Video and photo sharing sites | An online site utilised for the publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online, thus enabling the user to share them with others both publicly and privately. |
| Video podcasts | Video clips or web television media distributed through subscribed to and downloaded web syndication or streamed online to a computer or mobile device. |
| Wikis | A website which allows its users to add, modify or delete its content via a web browser usually using a simplified mark-up language or a rich-text editor. |

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1 Using Council social media sites

When using RGRC social media, RGRC Councillors and employees, including Executive Officers and volunteers, must:

- adhere to RGRC codes of conduct, policies and procedures
- behave with caution, courtesy, honesty and respect
- comply with relevant laws and regulations
- reinforce the integrity, reputation and values of RGRC

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- only disclose publicly available information, no comment is to be made on social media sites regarding confidential, private or legal matters
- only use corporate imagery such as logos and official Council photographs with the permission of the CEO (or nominee)
- ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission
- ensure that information posted online is not illegal, libellous, discriminatory, defamatory, abusive, or obscene
- ensure that information posted online does not infringe the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, employee and contractors.

While using RGRC social media sites, employee authorised by the CEO (or nominee) will:

- only post content that is genuinely expected to be of interest to followers
- respond to enquiries within 24 hours (Monday to Friday) where possible
- keep messages simple and engage in conversations where appropriate
- provide accurate, fair and thorough information
- link to more information on Council's website where possible. If external websites are required to be linked to, this must be authorised by the CEO (or nominee).

6.2 Monitoring social media

The content posted on RGRC official social media outlets will be monitored by an officer nominated by CEO to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message and consistency in branding.

Comments from social media users will be monitored and moderated where possible.

Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by RGRC representatives will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct and disciplinary systems.

6.3 Prohibited behaviours and actions

While using social media sites, RGRC Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers must not under any circumstances engage, participate or contribute to the following:

- abusive, profane or sexual language
- content not relating to the subject matter of that blog, forum or site
- content which is false or misleading
- confidential information about Roper Gulf Regional Council or third parties
- copyright or trademark protected materials
- discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation
- illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking
- materials that could compromise RGRC employee or system safety

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- Material which would breach applicable law (defamation, privacy, trade practices, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks)
- Material which would bring Roper Gulf Regional Council into disrepute
- Personal details or references to Councillors, employees or third parties which may breach privacy laws
- Spam, the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages
- Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment

In the event an RGRC Councillor, employee, contractor or volunteer encounters such materials, it should be immediately reported to the CEO or the person nominated by the CEO.

6.4 Standards and expectations

6.4.1 Authorisation

Ensure appropriate authorisation has been obtained before using official RGRC social media, including but not limited to uploading content and acting as a spokesperson on behalf of Roper Gulf Regional Council.

6.4.2 Expertise

Do not comment outside your area of expertise. Do not commit RGRC to actions or undertakings.

6.4.3 Disclosure

Only discuss publicly available information. Do not disclose confidential information, internal discussions or decisions of Council, employees or third parties. This includes publishing confidential, personal or private information where there is sufficient detail for potential identification of Councillors, Council staff or third parties.

6.4.4 Accuracy

Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative. Correct any errors as soon as practicable. Do not publish information or make statements which you know to be false, or which may reasonably be taken to be misleading or deceptive.

6.4.5 Identity

Be clear about professional identity or any vested interests. Do not use fictitious names or identities that deliberately intend to deceive, mislead or lie. Do not participate anonymously or covertly via a third party or agency.

6.4.6 Opinion

Clearly separate personal opinions from professional ones and be mindful of Council's Code of Conduct when discussing or commenting on Council matters. In general, don't express personal opinions using Council hashtags or other identifiers. Only where this is not possible, consider using a formal disclaimer to separate official Council positions from personal opinions and distance Council from comments made by public and other outside interests.

6.4.7 Privacy

Be sensitive to the privacy of others. Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing these via any form of social media. If asked to remove materials, do so as soon as practicable.

6.4.8 Intellectual property

Seek permission from the creator or copyright owner, to use or reproduce copyright material including applications, audio tracks (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music. Also seek permission before publishing or uploading material in which the intellectual property rights, such as trademarks, are owned by a third party e.g. company logos. Seek permission from the website's owner wherever possible before linking to another site (including a social media application).

6.4.9 Defamation

Do not comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content that is malicious or defamatory. This includes statements which may negatively impact the reputation of another.

6.4.10 Reward

Do not publish content in exchange for reward of any kind.

6.4.11 Transparency

Do not seek to buy or recompense favourable social media commentary. Encourage online publishers to be open and transparent in how they engage with, or review Council staff, services or wares.

6.4.12 Political bias

Do not endorse any political affinity or allegiance.

6.4.13 Respect

Always be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors.

6.4.14 Discrimination

Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.

6.4.15 Language

Be mindful of language and expression.

6.4.16 State of mind

Do not use social media when inebriated, irritated, upset or tired.

6.4.17 Be safe

Protect your personal privacy and guard against identity theft.

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6.4.18 Media

Do not issue statements or make announcements through social media channels unless authorised. Do not respond directly if approached by media for comment through social media. Refer the inquiry to the Governance Unit, as per Council’s Media Policy and Communication Policy.

6.4.19 Modification and moderation

Ensure that any social media sites created or contributed to can be readily edited, improved or removed and appropriately moderated.

6.4.20 Access

Be mindful of the requisite government web standards for accessibility. Information made available via non compliant platforms should be made accessible in another form where practical.

6.4.21 Be responsive

Specify the type of comments and feedback that will receive a response, and clearly communicate a target response time. Make it easy for audiences to reach Council via other methods by publishing Council’s phone number, generic email and Facebook account.

7. REFERENCES

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| Acknowledgements (original author/source documents) | |
| Related Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ADM005 - Communication Policy ▪ ADM010 - Media Policy ▪ ADM011 - Conflict of Interest Policy ▪ CL001 - Members Code of Conduct ▪ HR001 - Employee and Contractor Code of Conduct ▪ HR002 - Bullying and Harassment Policy ▪ HR003 - Employee Discipline Policy ▪ HR005 - Confidentiality and Privacy Policy |
| Related Legislations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copyrights Act, 1968 ▪ Defamation Act, 2006 (NT) ▪ Human Rights Act, 2004 ▪ Information Act, 2003 (NT) ▪ Local Government Act, 2008 (NT) ▪ Spam Act, 2003 ▪ Privacy Act, 1988 |
| Related Forms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photographic/Video Consent & Release Form |

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8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Policy number | ADM013 |
| Policy Owner | Governance |
| InfoXpert Id | 658203 |
| Endorsed by | OCM |
| Date approved | 18 December 2013 |
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| Amendments | |
| Next revision due | July 2018 |

9. CONTACT PERSON

Position **Manager, Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance**

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