

# Social Media Policy

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## 1. Overview

Randwick City Council is committed to engaging with our local community.

We recognise that social media tools enable Council to engage in real time in communication with local residents, visitors and business owners in their preferred method and time schedule.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- identify the parameter of Council's use of social media tools
- outline the process for managing Council's social media presence and responding to comments and requests
- provide guidelines to staff about the personal and professional use of social media sites
- protect the interests of Council.

## 3. Scope

### 3.1 How is social media used?

Randwick City Council acknowledges social media has great potential as:

- a two-way mechanism to encourage feedback and comment from staff and residents
- a listening mechanism to improve our understanding of public attitudes towards particular topics or issues;
- a tool to share information and consult with specific communities on current or planned policies, programs or services;
- a tool to share highly targeted information, for example media releases to journalists, activities and events to subscribers;
- legislative and policy information to stakeholders;
- a way of fostering debate on a topic or issue; and
- an innovative way of delivering or supporting direct services such as self-help programs, lifestyle activities, advice services and more.

### 3.2 When does social media policy apply?

This policy has been developed to assist Council staff and business units who:

- are authorised to administer, or contribute to, Council's official social media sites;
- propose to use a social media platform or online community to promote the Council's policies, programs, events and services to engage internally with staff or with the Randwick community or to distribute content;

- are staff members using social media in a personal capacity.

## 4. Social media tools

Social Media and Web 2.0 are terms that describe internet-based technology communication tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing in multiple ways. Just as email and static websites were new communication venues in the previous decade, social media today refers to content like blogs, video/photo posting sites, social networks, forums and online customer support chat sites.

Social media tools are defined in this policy as all online media which allow user participation and interaction.

Some common examples are:

- social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Friendster
- video and photo sharing web sites, e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Blip.tv
- micro-blogging and activity stream sites, e.g. Twitter, Jaiku, Yammer
- blogs and blogging platforms, e.g. WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr
- forums and discussion boards, e.g. Trove Forum, Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups
- online encyclopaedias, e.g. Wikipedia
- any other web sites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, e.g. wikis
- various applications (APPs – apple + Android) run on intelligent mobile devices for people to interact with each other all the time with location detection features

### 4.1 Council's position in adopting social media tools

Social media tools are used by Randwick City Council within the framework of one or more of the following:

- a communications plan
- a media strategy
- a community engagement / consultation plan

Randwick Council selectively uses approved social media sites to:

- enhance Council's reputation
- develop stronger relationships with community members
- provide an informal and accessible way for the public to communicate with Council
- support traditional media by broadening its reach and scope
- promote selected services, events, projects, policies and activities
- expand Council's community engagement opportunities
- provide essential updates to the community during a crisis or emergency

Council also uses specific online media sites selectively to:

- protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Randwick Council;
- place Council's statements of facts directly onto the public record; and
- respond or clarify an issue in detail.

and to not place themselves in a position where they have a conflict of interest.

## **5.5 Emergencies**

In the event of emergency, publishing to social media sites will be the responsibility of Council's Communications Unit.

## **5. Procedures**

### **5.1 Who can comment**

Council's Public Comment to the Media Policy also applies to social media. This policy authorises the Mayor to be the official Council spokesperson at all times. On matters of policy or operations, the General Manager, Communications Manager and Media Officer are official spokesperson. All other staff require prior approval of the General Manager to comment to the media or comment on social media. The policy does not inhibit the right of individual Councillors to express their own views at any time.

### **5.2 Managing, moderating and maintaining approved sites**

Only the approved site author may post content on behalf of Randwick Council on social media sites. This includes posting text, videos and photos, interacting with other social media users and responding to questions and requests.

### **5.3 Dealing with offensive behaviour**

Randwick Council will not tolerate content that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful. Such content will be removed. Users who breach Council's Social Media Policy may be banned from accessing Council's social media sites. Council also reserves the right to moderate content from individuals who seek to monopolise and dominate Council's social media sites for their own purposes.

### **5.4 Council staff use of social media**

Council recognises that staff may wish to use social media in a personal capacity. Staff should be aware they are personally responsible for content they publish on any form of social media. Staff should take measures to ensure their personal comments cannot be mistaken for the official view of Council or impact on the staff member performing their role within Council. Council's Code of Conduct also applies to staff use of social media. Particularly s5.6 of the Code of Conduct requires staff to project a positive image of Randwick City Council at all times