

	Social Media Policy
	Strategic

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Warrumbungle Shire Council's ('Council') use of social media platforms for engagement with the community, recognising that social media is fundamental to not just how people interact with one another, but also to how we work, play and consume information and ideas.

2. Objectives

To provide a robust framework for the administration and management of Council's usage of social media platforms.

To set standards of conduct for all Council officials who are required to interact with social media in their official capacity.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the councillors, staff, and other officials of Council, and to members of the public engaging with Council on various social media platforms.

4. Legislation and Associated Documents

ASSOCIATED POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct • Complaint Handling Policy • Councillor Induction and Professional Development • Media Policy • Records Management • Records Management for Councillors
ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)</i> • <i>Health Records and Privacy Information Act 2002 (NSW)</i> • <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> • <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)</i> • <i>State Records Act 1998 (NSW)</i> • <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)</i>
ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Procedure • Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct • Records Management Procedures • Records Management for Councillors Procedures • Social Media Procedure

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Council official	Councillors, members of staff and delegates of Council (including members of committees that are delegates of the Council).

Term	Definition
Social media	Online platforms and applications - such as but not limited to social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards - that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.

6. Policy

- 6.1 Council recognises that social media is an integral part of modern communication.
- 6.2 The councillors, staff, and other officials of Warrumbungle Shire Council (Council) are committed to upholding and promoting the following principles of social media engagement:
- Openness – our social media platforms are places where anyone can share and discuss issues that are relevant to our Council and the community we represent and serve.
 - Relevance – we will ensure our social media platforms are kept up to date with informative content about our Council and community.
 - Accuracy – the content we upload onto our social media platforms and any other social media platform will be a source of truth for our Council and community and we will prioritise the need to correct inaccuracies when they occur.
 - Respect – our social media platforms are safe spaces. We will uphold and promote the behavioural standards contained in this policy and Council's code of conduct when using our social media platforms and any other social media platform.
- 6.3 Council will maintain a presence on the following social media platforms:
- Facebook
 - LinkedIn
- 6.4 Council's social media platforms must specify or provide a clearly accessible link to the 'House Rules' for engaging on the platform.
- 6.5 A new Council social media platform, or a social media platform proposed by a council related entity (for example, a council committee), can only be established or deleted with the written approval of the General Manager or their delegate.
- 6.6 Where a Council social media platform is established or deleted in accordance with clause 6.5, the General Manager or their delegate may amend clause 6.3 of this policy without the need for endorsement by the Council's governing body.
- 6.7 The General Manager will appoint a member of Council staff to be the social media coordinator (SMC). The SMC should be a suitably qualified member of staff.
- 6.8 Authorised users are members of Council staff who are authorised by the SMC to upload content and engage on social media on Council's behalf.
- 6.9 When engaging on social media on Council's behalf (such as, but not limited to, on a community social media page), an authorised user must identify themselves as a member of Council staff but they are not obliged to disclose their name or position within the Council.

- 6.10 Authorised users must not use Council's social media platforms for personal reasons.
- 6.11 Councillors are responsible for the administration and moderation of their own social media platforms, and ensuring they comply with the record keeping obligations under the *State Records Act 1998* and Council's records management policy.
- 6.12 Clause 6.11 also applies to councillors in circumstances where another person administers, moderates, or uploads content onto their social media platform.
- 6.13 Council officials, including councillors, must comply with Council's *Code of Conduct* when engaging with social media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a Council official.
- 6.14 Councillors must comply with the rules of the platform when engaging on social media.
- 6.15 Councillors who engage, or intend to engage, on social media must receive induction training on social media use. Induction training can be undertaken either as part of the councillor's induction program or as part of their ongoing professional development program.
- 6.16 Councillors must identify themselves on their social media platforms in the following format:
- Councillor "First Name and Last Name"*.
- 6.17 A councillor's social media platform must include a profile photo which is a clearly identifiable image of the councillor.
- 6.18 If a councillor becomes or ceases to be the mayor, deputy mayor, or the holder of another position (for example, chairperson of a committee), this must be clearly stated on the councillor's social media platforms and updated within seven days of a change in circumstances.
- 6.19 Councillor social media platforms must specify or provide a clearly accessible link to the 'House Rules' for engaging on the platform.
- 6.20 A councillor's social media platform must include a disclaimer to the following effect:
- "The views expressed and comments made on this social media platform are my own and not that of the Council"*.
- 6.21 Despite clause 6.20, mayoral or councillor media releases and other content that has been authorised according to the Council's media and communications protocols may be uploaded onto a councillor's social media platform.
- 6.22 Councillors may upload publicly available Council information onto their social media platforms.
- 6.23 Councillors must uphold and accurately represent the policies and decisions of Council's governing body but may explain why they voted on a matter in the way that they did (see section 232(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 1993*).

- 6.24 Councillors may use more personal, informal language when engaging on their social media platforms.
- 6.25 Questions from councillors relating to their obligations under the *Social Media Policy* and/or this procedure, technical queries relating to the operation of their social media platforms, or managing records on social media may be directed to the General Manager in the first instance, in accordance with Council's councillor requests protocols.
- 6.26 A councillor must advise the General Manager of any social media platforms they administer on which content relating to Council or Council officials is, or is expected to be, uploaded. The councillor must do so within:
- a) 28 days of becoming a councillor, or
 - b) 28 days of becoming the administrator.
- 6.27 Councils and Council officials may be considered a 'publisher' of any content uploaded onto a social media platform they administer, including content that:
- is uploaded by a third party; and/or
 - appears on their social media platform because they have 'liked', or 'shared' the content, or similar.
- 6.28 Councillors or people responsible for the moderation of councillors' social media platforms may remove content and 'block' or ban a person from those platforms.
- 6.29 The duration of the block or ban under clause 6.28 is to be determined by the councillor.
- 6.30 Social media content created, sent and received by Council officials, including councillors, acting in their official capacity is a Council record and may constitute open access information or be subject to an information access application made under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. These records must be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998* and Council's approved records management policies and practices.
- 6.31 The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* applies to the use of social media platforms by Council and councillors. To mitigate potential privacy risks, Council officials will:
- a) advise people not to provide personal information on social media platforms;
 - b) inform people if any personal information they may provide on social media platforms is to be used for official purposes;
 - c) moderate comments to ensure they do not contain any personal information;
 - d) advise people to contact Council or councillors through alternative channels if they have personal information they do not want to disclose in a public forum.
- 6.32 Council officials must ensure they comply with the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* when engaging on and/or moderating social media platforms. In fulfilling their obligations, Council officials should refer to any guidance issued by the Information and Privacy Commission of NSW, such as, but not limited to, the Health Privacy Principles.

- 6.33 When/if a councillor's term of office concludes, the councillor must contact Council's records manager and General Manager to manage/transfer records of social media content created during their term of office and comply with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998*.
- 6.34 For the purposes of this policy, a Council official's social media engagement will be considered 'private use' when the content they upload:
- a) is not associated with, or does not refer to, Council, any other Council officials, contractors, related entities or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council in their official or professional capacities, and
 - b) is not related to or does not contain information acquired by virtue of their employment or role as a Council official.
- 6.35 If a Council official chooses to identify themselves as a Council official, either directly or indirectly (such as in their user profile), then they will not be deemed to be acting in their private capacity for the purposes of this policy.
- 6.36 The associated Social Media Procedure is to be applied for administration and usage of Council's social media platforms.
- 6.37 A breach of this policy or the procedures will be a breach of Council's *Code of Conduct*.

7. Getting Help

The staff member who can assist with this Policy:

Position: Manager Corporate Services

Department: Corporate and Community Services

8. Version Control

Next Review Date: September 2025

Staff Member Responsible for Review: Manager Corporate Services

Policy Name	Version	Resolution	Date
Social Media Policy	1	355/2223	15 June 2023