

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework of what is appropriate and productive use of social media in relation to the Burnie City Council and to protect Council's reputation and legitimate interests by preventing the misuse of social media.

2 OBJECTIVE

This objectives of this policy are:

- a) To protect Council's reputation and branding through a policy framework.
- b) To set appropriate standards, roles and responsibilities in relation to creating and managing Council's social media sites.
- c) To clearly state what is expected from elected members when using social media.

3 SCOPE

This policy extends to:

- a) Elected members of Burnie City Council
- b) Workers at Burnie City Council who have a role in managing or moderating social media sites on behalf of Council.

Please note that the Workplace Policy *Social Media WP-OGM-HR-025* is a specific policy for Burnie City Council workers in relation to use of social media. The Workplace Policy is developed by the General Manager and must be consistent in principle with this policy.

4 DEFINITIONS

Administrator means the person authorised to oversee the creation and management of Council's social media sites. Unless otherwise stated, the Administrator will be the Communications Officer.

Moderator means a person who has been given permission to post on behalf of Council (or a business unit of Council) and to moderate the content on that council site.

Moderate means to monitor content by removing posts or responding to posts on behalf of Council (or a business unit of Council).

User means a member of the general public who may communicate with any of Council's social media sites by viewing and/or posting to that site.

Post means to place information to users on a social media site.

5 POLICY

5.1 What is social media?

Social media refers to internet and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information. It can take many different forms, including internet forums, weblogs, wikis, podcasts, pictures and video.

Technologies include blogs, picture-sharing, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowdsourcing, and voice over IP. Examples of social media applications are Google Groups, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter.

Simply put, ***social media is a collection of internet based tools which facilitate conversations.***

5.2 Key principles of social media use

Social media will be used by Burnie City Council as a communication tool, appropriate to the message/s being conveyed or sought. Social media is not the driver of a communication strategy, rather it is another communication tool that can be used in facilitating communication, from awareness and instruction through to consultation and collaboration, depending on the specific communication need.

Information disseminated through social media will be accurate, authorised and aligned with council strategies, policies and decisions.

Use of social media will always follow clear identification of objectives and the right tools to meet those objectives.

Private information will be protected and copyright; privacy and other applicable laws will be taken into account when interacting with social media.

There will continue to be appropriate record keeping of information disseminated or collected via social media.

The use of social media is a personal responsibility regardless of whether it is authorised or individual, in or out of work.

In developing, posting and responding to content, moderators and elected members will uphold the values of the Council by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism and will not be discriminatory, defamatory, harassing or encourage law breaking.

All elected members and moderators are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

5.3 Links to other Documents

This policy specifically addresses how social media will be used by Council as a corporate tool of communication; and appropriate use by elected members.

In particular, this policy is linked to the Workplace Policy *Social Media WP-OGM-HR-025* which applies to workers at Burnie City Council.

A number of other polices or codes also relate to this policy and are listed under Part 7 *Related Documents*.

5.4 Corporate use of Social Media

5.4.1 Roles and responsibilities

In relation to Burnie City Council social media sites, the following table sets out the roles and responsibilities applicable to various people connected with Council's social media sites.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should seek advice from the General Manager and/or Communications Officer regarding tools available and should be communicating in their role as outlined in 27(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1993 (ie act as spokesperson of the council). Should clarify clearly when communicating that a view is your own, when not speaking on the behalf of Council.
General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should ensure responsibilities/delegations in relation to Social Media are clearly defined and act as a source of advice to the Mayor. Should approve use of council branding. Should ensure compliance with social media provider conditions. Should act as the spokesperson on operational issues or issues of fact. Should clarify clearly when communicating that a view is your own, when not speaking on the behalf of Council. Legal advice.
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should seek advice from the Mayor or General Manager and be sure not to speak on behalf of the Council as this is the Mayor's role (see above). A person authorised to comment on behalf of Council may be limited to particular topic or specific types of social media or both. Comment only on topics within your area of expertise and authority. Comply with terms of use. Should clarify clearly when communicating that a view is your own,

	when not speaking on the behalf of Council.
All Workers and Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have approval from the General Manager to operate Council related social media sites (coordinated by Communications Officer). Must maintain records as per the Information Management Policy. Must comply with conditions of use. A person authorised to comment on behalf of Council may be limited to a particular topic or specific types of social media or both. Comment only on topics within your area of expertise and authority and unless otherwise authorised comment only on matters which are operational or routine in their own area of responsibility. Should clarify clearly when communicating that a view is your own, when not speaking on the behalf of Council.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in responsible use of social media. Training for moderators. Should clarify clearly when communicating that a view is your own, when not speaking on the behalf of Council.
Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake the role of Administrator for Council’s Social Media. Establish and review principles of moderating. Training in responsible use of social media and training for moderators. Assist moderators to develop targeted strategies for each of Council’s sites. Disclaimers Develop record keeping procedures Monitoring
Moderators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply principles of moderating according to established house rules Requires knowledge of Council’s policies or guidelines and experience in managing sites/software etc.
IT Department (Tas Communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure access/backup of electronic document management system

5.4.2 Commencing a new social media tool for any council purpose

A worker must not register or use social media for work purposes without consent from the General Manager.

Workers interested in becoming a moderator or commencing a Council site via social media should speak with the Communications Officer to begin the approval process and explore social media options.

5.4.3 Posting content

Council will provide established plans as to who will write and post content, who will approve/moderate incoming content, and who will respond to negative and positive

posts (and how). Corporate content will only be posted by moderators as outlined earlier.

Uploaded content will only disclose information which is classified as suitable for the public domain.

Moderators will ensure the information posted is accurate and not misleading in any way.

When developing, posting and responding to content, moderators **MUST**:

- uphold the values of the Council by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism;
- ensure that all relevant legislation has been complied with and that there is adherence to Council codes, policies and procedures;
- avoid political bias;
- act in a timely manner; and
- take steps to avoid real or potential conflicts of interest.

When developing, posting and responding to content, moderators **must NOT**:

- use abusive, profane or sexually explicit language;
- undertake commercial solicitations or transactions;
- use copyright or ownership protected materials without appropriate approvals;
- be discriminatory, defamatory, or encourage law breaking;
- compromise council, employee or system safety;
- spam; or
- air personal campaigns.

5.4.4 Removing content

Council reserves the right to remove certain content such as illegal or offensive material. Council also reserves the right to remove a person from their site if that person repeatedly posts illegal and or offensive material.

Material that is reasonably critical of Council will not be deleted. Users contributing to Council social media sites are required to act within Council's social media 'house rules' as shown on each of its sites.

House Rules:

- *Do not harass, abuse or threaten other visitors, people or organisations.*
- *Do not post comments that are likely to offend others, particularly in reference to an individual's race, age, gender, sexuality, political leaning, religion or disability.*

- *Do not use obscene or offensive language.*
- *Do not post repeat comments continuously.*
- *Do not promote anything that may constitute spam, such as commercial interests, solicitations, advertisements or endorsements of any non-governmental agency.*

Council will when possible state why a post or content was removed regardless of who posted it.

5.4.5 Monitoring and responding

As a minimum requirement Council will monitor its corporate Facebook site and exchanges at least twice daily, Monday to Friday and establish whether:

- comments need replies or removal
- current content is factual, accurate and up-to-date
- posts are relevant
- new information needs uploading

Response times on social media will generally be during business hours. Other social media sites will have specific plans to guide the content monitoring expectations.

5.4.6 Moderator's access

Moderators who are authorised to post comments on behalf of Council must do so from the administrative profiles set up for each site.

5.4.7 Branding

The brand is the corporate identity of Council and can take many forms (name, sign, symbol, colour combination, slogan). A clear brand is an essential tool in online communications.

The Council logo should always be attached to corporate content. Social media sites belonging to business units of Council that have their own branding must always carry their relevant logo. Examples include the Burnie Arts and Function Centre and the Burnie Regional Museum.

Authorised officers will adhere to Council's *Logo Style Guide GL-CBS-SG-001* when developing and uploading content.

5.4.8 Community engagement

Social media tools may be used for community engagement as appropriate. Consideration will first be given to what the desired outcome is, the resources available and relevance of social media tools.

Use of social media for engagement should be supported by a communications plan which clearly articulates how the process will be managed.

5.4.9 Procedural matters

Council is not to use social media to communicate or disclose any detail, deliberation or determination in relation to individual matters that must follow a legislative, regulatory, permit or approval process, a public notification process, or a judicial appeal or review process, including but not limited to:

- Building control and compliance
- Disposal of public land
- Land use planning processes, including amendment to a planning scheme, assessment and determination of a permit application, appeals, and enforcement action
- Parking infringements
- Dog control
- Public health, including for environmental nuisances, food premises and immunisation
- Fire hazard abatement
- Tender processes

In relation to such matters, elected members should not provide comment, regardless of whether they are aware or otherwise of an issue actively under consideration by a Council officer.

The Council may choose to use social media to provide generic advice in relation to any obligation it is required to observe or enforce, or any process which may be required under legislation.

However, it should not use social media as a platform for conduct of any statutory process or for disclosing information or opinion in relation to any individual matter for which it is actively or likely to become actively involved. The basic premises for such a restraint are natural justice, and the statutory protection of personal information. In addition, most statutory processes prescribe a method by which to undertake an action, and any departure from the prescribed process may be determined as a breach of the rules and principles for procedural fairness for which all subsequent action is void.

5.4.10 Copyright

Material which is copyrighted (applications, audio, video, graphics, images, photographs, publications) must not be used unless prior written consent is obtained from the creator or copyright owner and the original author or source of the material is acknowledged.

Moderators will be diligent in their consideration of brand, copyright, fair use and trademarks.

5.4.11 Record management

With regard to social media sites established by Council, Council will comply with the requirements of the *Archives Act 1983* and with reference to the State Archivists Guidelines on digital record management.

Consideration of recording keeping requirements will be made before each new planned use of social media.

The five key questions to help identify whether a record is a state record are:

- a) Was it made, sent or received in the course of business?
- b) Does it document a decision taken?
- c) Does it document advice given?
- d) Does it document the process of arriving at a decision?
- e) Is it required to be kept by legislation?

5.4.12 Resourcing and training

Social media activities will only be approved by the General Manager where there is adequate resource available to allow for content development, monitoring, interpreting the volume and content of messages and responding as required.

Moderators are required to ensure they adhere to *Guidelines for Moderators* [PRO-CBS-SG-047], and will be accountable to the Communications Officer for the management of the sites. In-house training for Moderators is available from the Communications Officer.

5.4.13 Evaluation and reporting

Council's social media activity will be monitored through simple metrics which are sustainable and related to the desired outcomes. Council will provide reporting on social media activity in its open agenda each month.

5.5 Use of Social Media by Elected Members

The following section relates to elected members. Workers' use of social media is addressed in the Workplace Policy *Social Media and Use of Technology*.

5.5.1 *Prohibited or offensive activities*

Elected members must not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist or infringes copyright. In addition to relevant legislative authorities (listed below under Part 6 Legislation), Section 7(b) of the Aldermen's Code of Conduct applies:

Aldermen are expected to ensure that they do not make allegations to or about other Aldermen or members of the public which are defamatory, slanderous, derogatory or discriminatory;

Elected members must not establish fictitious names or identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.

Elected members must not bring Council's integrity into disrepute, or harm the operations or reputation of Council.

Elected members must not use Council's intellectual property or copyrighted materials.

Elected members must not disclose sensitive or confidential information. In particular, Section 5 of the Aldermen's Code of Conduct relating to *Proper Use of Information* applies:

Council sites are not to be used for personal use. For example, advertising items for sale.

5.5.2 *Personal use of social media*

Council will not require elected members to hand over credentials to a personal social media account. However, personal use must comply with this policy.

5.5.3 *Council email not permitted for personal sites*

Elected members are not permitted to use a council email address (for example myname@burnie.net) as the contact address for a personal social media site. A personal email address must be used for personal sites.

5.5.4 Making comments about Council

The use of social media by an elected member is no different to using any other communication tool. In particular, Section 8 of the Aldermen's Code of Conduct applies:

Representation of the Council

Aldermen are expected to ensure that:

- a) When giving information to the community, they accurately represent the policies and decisions of the Council;*
- b) They do not speak on behalf of the Council unless they have been specifically authorised or delegated by the Mayor;*
- c) They clearly indicate when they are putting forward personal views;*
- d) They do not knowingly misrepresent information they have obtained in the course of their duties; and*

A breach of this nature on social media may be dealt with under Code of Conduct provisions.

The following questions provide an effective litmus test for whether a post is appropriate or not. These principles apply to workers as well as elected members:

Extract from Workplace Policy Social Media (WP-OGM-HR-025)

When commenting, consideration should be given to the following:

- a) Could what you are doing harm the reputation of your Council?
- b) Are you disclosing Council material that you are not authorised to disclose?
- c) Have you made it clear to others when your contribution is as a private individual, not an elected member of Council?
- d) Are you willing to defend your post to your fellow Aldermen?
- e) Would you be comfortable saying it to a stranger at a bus stop or posting in on a public shop window?
- f) Are you behaving with integrity, respect and accountability?

5.6 Penalties for breach of policy

Elected members must comply with this policy at all times. Queries about whether an activity complies should be directed to the General Manager.

An elected member breaching this policy may be subject to a Code of Conduct complaint (as per the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*).

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as diminishing or attempting a person's right to engage in lawful activities.

5.7 Legal Issues and Liabilities

5.7.1 Defamation / offensive or obscene material

Social media can appear to blur private and public spheres but activities on social media websites should be considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. Additionally it should be noted that the terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted.

Online content is essentially permanent and should never be considered private.

Use of offensive, obscene or defamatory content may breach a number of federal and state laws.

A range of related legislation is included under 6.0 Legislation.

Moderators and elected members will not post offensive, obscene or defamatory content.

5.7.2 Privacy and confidentiality

In using social media, moderators and elected members will be cognisant of requirements under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Personal and sensitive information cannot be published without permission of the person to which that information belongs.

Moderators and elected members will not disclose confidential council information, including but not limited to matters relating to closed meetings of Council.

5.7.3 Security risks

Moderators and elected members will be cognisant of security risks to Council through the use of social media and will comply with the Workplace Policy *Information Security* in relation to use of software and equipment.

Moderators and elected members will also give consideration to security risks in relation to content development and uploading, recognising that while one small fact alone might not form a security risk collectively all posted information can form part of a jigsaw puzzle that can be used against the interests of Council.

6 LEGISLATION

Archives Act 1983
Defamation Act 2005
Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995
Tasmanian Criminal Code 1924
Personal Information Protection Act 2004
Local Government Act 1993
Copyright Act 1968
Work Health and Safety Act 2012
Anti-Discrimination Act 1998

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Workplace Policy – Social Media [WP-PGM-HR-025]
Workplace Policy – Bullying, Harassment and Violence [WP-OGM-HR-023]
Workplace Policy – Grievance Reporting and Resolution [WP-OGM-HR-002]
Guidelines for Moderators [PRO-CBS-SG-047]
Worker’s Code of Conduct [WP-OGM-HR-008]
Aldermen’s Code of Conduct [CP-CBS-SG-024]
Code of Conduct Complaint Form [FO-CBS-SG-011]
Customer Service Charter [CP-CBS-SG-022]
Code for Tenders and Contracts [CP-CBS-SG-012]
Burnie City Council Logo Style Guide [GL-CBS-SG-001]
Burnie City Council Corporate Plan
Burnie City Council Communications Strategy

8 OTHER REFERENCES

LGAT Social Media animation



COUNCIL POLICY

Social Media Policy

Approved By: **Council**
 Doc Controller: **General Manager**
 File: 4/14/2

Document Number: **CP-CBS-SG-045**
 Version: **1.0**
 Approved Date: **20 Oct 2015**
 Next Review Date: **20 Oct 2019**

Policy Endorsement	
Responsibility:	It is the responsibility of individual Aldermen to ensure the integrity of the policy is maintained. It is the responsibility of the General Manager to enforce this policy and refer formal complaints to the Code of Conduct process. It is the responsibility of Governance Unit to administer and maintain this policy.
Minute Reference:	Item AO254/15; Resolution MO 291/15
Council Meeting Date:	20 October 2015
Strategic Plan Reference:	Strategy 7.2.1 Enhance the level of community and organisational engagement across a range of Council operations. Strategy 7.1.1 Formulate policy that is equitable, inclusive and responsive to current needs, and ensure decision-making is informed and accountable.
Previous Policies Replaced:	This is the first version to introduce a social media policy for Burnie City Council.
Date of Commencement:	21 October 2015
Publication of policy:	Members of the public may inspect this policy at the City Offices where copies can be obtained free of charge. Alternatively it can be accessed on Council's website (www.burnie.net) Staff may also access this policy through the Council intranet.