

Policy No. 81: Online Communication

POLICY MANUAL

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Online Communication

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide direction to assist the Mayor, Councillors and employees in the appropriate and productive use of the Council's social media.

Department

Governance

Author

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Council Meeting Date

12 December 2023

Minute Reference

289/2023

Next Review Date

December 2027

POLICY

1. Definitions

Social Media

A collection of on-line technologies that enable users to engage and communicate by creating and sharing content. It can take on many forms including, but not limited to:

- (i) social networking sites; and
- (ii) video and photo-sharing sites.

Council Social Media Users

Those employees authorised to administer the Council's managed social media platforms.

Council Managed Social Media Platforms

Those social media platforms created and managed by the Council, such as the Meander Valley Council FaceBook page or a Meander Valley YouTube channel.

2. Objective

This Policy outlines the Meander Valley Council's approach to official social media use by employees and public participation in our social media channels with the aim of:

- a. enhancing community engagement through effective use of social media to build trust and confidence in the Council's information and services;
- b. ensuring appropriate and productive use of social media; and
- c. minimising risks associated with the Council's use of social media.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all elected members and employees of the Council.

4. Policy

- a. All the Council's social media users must:
 - i. be authorised by the General Manger, and
 - ii. act in accordance with the Council's Values.
- b. If the Council's employees or Councillors comment publicly through the Council's social media channels or using a personal account, the user must make it clear that their comments represent their opinion as a private individual or as a member of an external organisation and not their opinion as a Council employee or a Council representative.
- c. Social media communication, activity and content are considered a public record and must be documented and captured in a corporate system in line with the Council's Social Media procedure.
- d. The Council may turn off public comments or not respond to comments due to workloads and volumes of traffic.
- e. The Council encourages open conversation and debate, but expect participants to behave in a respectful manner. We reserve the right to delete comments that are:
 - i. knowingly false or mischievous complaints or statements about individuals, companies or the government;
 - ii. misleading, obscene, off-topic, sexist, racist or spam;
 - iii. promotional or commercial in nature;
 - iv. unlawful or incite others to break the law;
 - v. defamatory or harassing of our employees, volunteers of the participants in our channels;
 - vi. information that may compromise the safety or security of the public;
 - vii. repetitive posts copied and pasted or duplicated by single or multiple users; and
 - viii. any other inappropriate content or comments as determined by the Meander Valley Council.

5. Legislation and Related Standards

Local Government Act 1993

Archives Act 1983

Copyright Act 1968

Right to Information Act 2009

Tasmanian Defamation Act 2005

Tasmania Anti-Discrimination Act 1998

Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988

Meander Valley Council Policy No. 1: Risk Management

Meander Valley Council Policy No. 45: *Information Management*

Meander Valley Council Policy No. 49: *Media Communications*

Customer Service Charter

Human Resources Policies

Customer Service Standards

6. Responsibility

Responsibility for the operation of this Policy rests with the General Manager.