

Strategic Outcome Supported: 12 – A well respected, professionally run organisation.

OBJECTIVE

1. To outline the appropriate and productive use of social media as a tool, method or channel for communication and community engagement by the Shire;
2. To identify who is authorised, along with responsibilities and obligations, in relation to publications, information or content shared and distributed via social media; and
3. To ensure that best practice is observed when social media is used for communication purposes.

SCOPE

4. This policy applies to Elected Members and employees of the Shire. It defines:
 - a. The social media platforms utilised by the Shire;
 - b. How these platforms are monitored and managed; and
 - c. How comments and enquiries are managed when submitted through social media.
5. This policy also applies in any situation where an authorised representative is representing the Shire, or otherwise making an official statement, on behalf of Council and/or the Shire.

DEFINITIONS

6. **Authorised Representative** means an individual or designated party who is permitted to speak on behalf of, or otherwise represent, the Shire in official communications.
7. **CEO** means Chief Executive Officer of the Shire.
8. **Community** is used when generally referring to all members of the public in the Shire, and is not limited to key groups of stakeholders.
9. **Elected Member** means a person who holds the office of Councillor on the Shire Council in accordance the *Local Government Act 1995*.
10. **Employee** means a person who is employed by the Shire, including external providers such as contractors and consultants.
11. **Official Communications** are formal messages or statements issued on behalf of the Shire that convey official information or relate to public business – this includes (but is not limited to) general public statements, media releases, community notices and announcements, and any comments or responses to a formal enquiry.
12. **Stakeholders** are key community members and/or groups including (but not limited to) families, residents and ratepayers of particular localities, local businesses and organisations, community groups, tourists and visitors, volunteers, and government agencies.
13. **Shire** means Shire of Donnybrook Balingup.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Official Platforms & General Communications

14. The Shire may use social media as a method of direct engagement with the community in an accessible and informal digital environment. The Shire utilises and manages official accounts on the following social media platforms:
 - a. Facebook and Instagram (Meta);
 - b. YouTube;
 - c. LinkedIn; and
 - d. Mailchimp (subscription-based community emails).
15. The Shire may also own and/or operate accounts and software on other platforms both internally and externally that may connect to its official platforms, however these are for administrative purposes only and are not to be used as an official communications platform unless otherwise authorised.
16. The Shire's social media pages may restrict or otherwise limit the availability of public comments on sensitive items and where otherwise necessary. Responses from the public relating to a consultation item are best made through the appropriate methods prescribed for that item, or as otherwise advised.
17. The Shire President may use an official social media account(s) to assist in fulfilling their role in speaking on behalf of the local government in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, however all content published to these accounts will be administered and moderated in accordance with this policy and will not be used for personal communications.

Moderation

18. Social media will not be used to communicate or respond to matters that are complex or are otherwise inappropriate for the particular platform or topic, or that relate to a person's or entity's private affairs.
19. Social media accounts or unsecured website forums must not be used to transact meetings which relate to the official business of the Shire.
20. The Shire actively seeks ideas, questions and feedback from our community, however participants are expected to behave in a respectful manner. The Shire may moderate its social media accounts to address, and where necessary delete, content deemed to be:
 - a. Offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false or misleading;
 - b. Promotional, soliciting or commercial in nature;
 - c. Unlawful or incites others to break the law;
 - d. Information which may compromise individual or community safety or security;
 - e. Scams and excessive repetitive (spam) material copied and pasted or duplicated;
 - f. Content that violates intellectual property rights or the legal ownership of interests or another party;

- g. Any other inappropriate content or comments at the discretion of the Shire.
- 21. The Shire and other authorised individuals may post and/or contribute to social media hosted by others to ensure that Council's strategic objectives are appropriately represented and promoted.
 - a. Where a third-party contributor to any of the Shire's social media accounts is identified as posting content in an unauthorised capacity and/or said content is found to meet any of the above, the Shire may block that contributor for a specific period of time or permanently at its complete discretion.

Personal Accounts of Elected Members & Employees

- 22. Communications and statements made privately, whether made in conversation, written, recorded emailed, texted or posted from a personal account, have the potential to be made public, whether intended or not. On the basis that personal or private communications may be shared or become public at some point in the future, Elected Members and employees should ensure that they do not breach the requirements of this policy, the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, Committee Members and Candidates, or the Code of Conduct for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers.
- 23. Comments which become public, and which breach this policy, or the relevant Code of Conduct may constitute a breach of the *Local Government Act 1995* and may be referred for investigation.

DELEGATION AND AUTHORISATION

- 24. Nil.

LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *State Records Act 2000*

APPENDIX

- 25. Nil.

GOVERNANCE

Related Policy(s):

- Council Policy: Official Communication (EXE/CP-14)
- Council Policy: Records Management (ADM/CP-1)
- Council Policy: Community Engagement Framework (COMD/CP-3)

- Administration Policy: Harvest and Vehicle Movement Ban SMS Communications (EMERG/AP-1)

Related Procedure(s):

- Code of Conduct for Elected Members, Committee Members and Candidates
- Code of Conduct for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

Revision Requirements and Version Control:

Responsible Department(s):	Executive			
Review to be conducted by:	Media & Communications Officer			
Revision Frequency:	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual (1yr)	<input type="checkbox"/> Biennial (2yr)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Triennial (3yr)	
Current Version Date:	25/02/2026	Next Due:	02/2029	
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