

# Council Policy



## 2.64 Social Media Policy

*A printed copy of this policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be obtained from the Policy Register in the policy section of Council's intranet or by contacting Council's Coordinator Governance and Legal Services for a hard copy of the latest version. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.***

*Where there is a delegation identified in this policy, the reader will need to confirm if an alternative delegation exists in any Register of Delegation. If there is a perceived conflict between the delegation/s identified in this policy and of those contained in a Register of Delegation, then the delegation/s in the Register takes precedence. The Chief Executive Officer will, if necessary, be the sole arbiter in resolving any issues of conflict.*

## 1. Purpose

Toowoomba Regional Council recognises the value in using social media to build relationships with customers, communities and stakeholders.

This policy contains Toowoomba Regional Council's position in relation to social media. It has been developed to inform individuals about using social media so they feel empowered to participate in discussions while being mindful of their obligations on any particular platform. This policy also informs staff of their responsibility under the Council's Code of Conduct and Organisational Values and Behaviours.

## 2. Scope and application

This policy applies to all Toowoomba Regional Council employees, Councillors, volunteers and contractors.

## 3. Content

### 3.1 Using social media on behalf of the organisation

The Customer, Communication and Engagement (CCE) Branch is responsible for managing the administration of Council's social media sites and channels. They manage content primarily for Council's corporate social media accounts, which includes maintaining the organisation's brand, building a positive and trusted online presence and maintaining records.

Customer Service Officers, within CCE, respond to social media enquiries of a general and operational nature during business hours on corporate channels.

For other specialist channels, approved officers from the relevant branch respond to enquires specific to that channel:

- All staff with administrative access to Council social media channels are required to undertake mandatory CCE training prior to accessing the channel and regular refresher training.
- Content should be planned in advance and reviewed by the CCE Branch. Alternatively, where this is not possible, regular content reviews will be performed by the CCE Branch across all channels.

Social media sites keep a running record of content posted. Where required, Council's organisational record keeping procedures are to be followed.

### 3.2 Staff, volunteers and contractors using social media at work

Access to approved social media sites is available to staff on Council supplied infrastructure. Compliance with Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, other Council policies and Organisational Values and Behaviours is to be maintained while accessing social media sites.

Example of appropriate use of social media in the workplace could include re-tweeting Council content on your personal Twitter account

Use at work on Council devices is monitored, and Council reserves the right to suspend or remove access.

Use of social media must not be excessive (interfering with productivity or noticed by supervisors as excessive) and is available as a resource to enhance business outcomes focussed on service delivery.

### 3.3 Personal use of social media by staff, volunteers and contractors

When using social media in a private context, staff, volunteers and contractors must be aware that:

- They are bound by the Code of Conduct for Employees.
- They are not to publicly criticise a colleague, the organisation's administration or any of Council's partners or stakeholder groups.
- Their comments must not appear to be made on behalf of the organisation or in relation to Council's decision making, unless authorised to do so.
- They are not to make comments which compromise their capacity or the capacity of others to fulfil their duties.
- They are not to compromise confidential information obtained via their engagement with Council.

### 3.4 Bullying, harassment and defamation on Council channels

Toowoomba Regional Council is committed to a workplace that is free from bullying and harassment, this includes online or cyber bullying.

Community guidelines are available on each Council social media channel outlining acceptable participant behaviour. The guidelines also provide for the removal of content or comments that are deemed to be harassment or bullying in nature. Users who persist in posting content of this nature will be blocked. Content that may be illegal in nature will be reported to Queensland Police Service or other authorities for investigation.

### 3.5 Councillor's official pages and social media use

The @TRCMayor Twitter account is a Toowoomba Regional Council asset supported by the CCE branch and made available to the Mayor during each term of government.

Councillor social media channels remain the property of the Councillor and are not supported by Toowoomba Regional Council staff.

Councillor conduct on social media is guided by the Queensland Government Office of the Independent Assessor and Local Government Association's 'A guide for elected council members in Queensland'.

### 3.6 New social media channels

Requests for new Council social media channels aiming to reach a specialist area or stakeholder group must be submitted through the CCE Branch to obtain approval having assessed the viability of the proposal.

### 3.7 Policy breaches

Relevant parties to this Policy are reminded that behaviour both in and out of the workplace (including online behaviour) must be consistent with the *Local Government Act 2009* and Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, Policies and Organisational Values and Behaviours.

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the *Local Government Act 2009*, Code of Conduct for Employees and / or terms and conditions associated with an individual or organisations engagement with Council, and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual or parties involved.

## 4. Relevant laws

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

[Fair Work Act 2009](#)

[Local Government Act 2009](#)

[Public Sector Ethics Act 1994](#)

[Human Rights Act](#)

## 5. Related policies/documents

Members of the public can access Council policies on Council's website. If a policy listed below does not appear on the website, please contact 131 872 or email [info@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@tr.qld.gov.au) to request a copy. Staff may access policies via the [Policy Register and Review Schedule](#).

### Council policies

- 2.24 Caretaker Period Protocol
- 2.35 Media Policy
- 4.09 Enterprise Risk Management Policy

### Other documents

- Queensland Councillor Social Media Community Guideline
- Your Social Media and You - A guide for elected council members in Queensland
- Social Media Guidelines DM#6468499
- Toowoomba Regional Council Code of Conduct for Employees
- Toowoomba Regional Council Values and Behaviours DM#5998347

## 6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Social media channels	Online tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information. Social media includes, but is not limited to forums, blogs, wikis, social networking sites and any other websites that allow individual users to upload and share content.
Specialist channels	Social media sites or channels additional to the main corporate channels that help reach a specific target audience for a defined Council activity or initiative.

## 7. Policy details

<b>Policy Category</b>	Council Policy
<b>Date Adopted</b>	13 December 2022
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Council
<b>Effective Date</b>	13 December 2022
<b>Policy Version Number</b>	3.00
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Customer, Communication & Engagement Branch
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Manager, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
<b>Review Date</b>	December 2025

## 8. Revision history

Policy version	Approval date	DM Reference
1.00	20 September 2016	7046928v2
2.00	26 June 2018	7435363v2
3.00	13 December 2022	10184474v2