



POLICY – 5.14 Social Media

Relevant Delegation

N/A

Objective

To ensure responsible use of social media for official business whilst protecting the interests of the Shire of Menzies and to give guidelines for engaging in online conversations as representatives of the Shire of Menzies regardless of private or work-related access.

Policy Statement

The Shire of Menzies recognises the importance of the internet and social media as a modern and widely popular tool for community engagement.

These guidelines are intended for use by Councillors, staff members and other representatives of the Shire of Menzies to apply to any online medium where information may reflect on the image of the Shire of Menzies.

Therefore, this Social Media Policy applies to all forms of social media including, but not limited to: blogs, Facebook, Wikipedia or other wikis, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.

These guidelines also apply to any comments representatives of the Shire of Menzies may leave on others' blogs or Facebook pages, edits to wikis, responses to tweets, posting on message boards/forums and opinions on online polls. Reference should also be made to the Shire of Menzies Code of Conduct.

As a Local Government agency, the Shire of Menzies and its representatives must follow certain rules when participating in social media. This policy applies to:

1. Communications initiated or responded to by the Shire of Menzies with our community; and
2. Elected Members when making comment in either their Shire of Menzies role or in a personal capacity.

Members and staff must be aware that any comments or interactions they perform on a social media platform will be perceived by the public that their comments and views are that of the Shire of Menzies. Members and staff should therefore ensure that their positions are in line with Shire policies and positions.

Most conversations on social media platforms are held in an informal manner, so the normal professional writing style is not required for social media communications; however, professional discourse is expected.

All social media accounts, blogs and web pages carrying the Shire of Menzies brand identity are to be endorsed by the Shire of Menzies. If the Shire of Menzies is referenced in any media by its representatives these social media guidelines apply.

As in all interactions, whether face to face or virtual, elected members and staff are representatives of the Shire of Menzies.

Official Communications

The purposes of the Shire of Menzies' official communications include:

- a. Sharing information required by law to be publicly available.
- b. Sharing information that is of interest and benefit to the Community.
- c. Promoting Shire of Menzies' events and services.
- d. Promoting Public Notices and community consultation / engagement opportunities.
- e. Answering questions and responding to requests for information relevant to the role of the Shire of Menzies.
- f. Receiving and responding to community feedback, ideas, comments, compliments and complaints.

The Shire of Menzies' official communications will be consistent with relevant legislation, policies, standards and the positions adopted by the Council. Our communications will always be respectful and professional.

The Shire of Menzies will use a combination of different communication modes to suit the type of information to be communicated and the requirements of the community or specific audience, including:

- a. Website;
- b. Advertising and promotional materials;
- c. Media releases prepared by the Shire President, to promote specific Shire of Menzies positions;
- d. Social media; and
- e. Community newsletters, letter drops, and other modes of communications undertaken by the Shire of Menzies' Administration at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

1. Guidelines

The internet is not anonymous, nor does it forget

Everything written on the Web can be traced back to its author one way or another and very easily.

There is no clear line between your work life and your personal life. Always be honest and respectful in both capacities.

With the ease of tracing authors back from their posts and the amount of information online, finding the actual identity of a poster from a few posts and a screen name is not impossible. This creates an avenue for outside parties to link your personal writings to the Shire of Menzies. Always write as if everyone knows you. Never write anything you wouldn't/couldn't say out loud to all parties involved.

Avoid hazardous materials

Do not post or link to any materials that are defamatory, harassing or indecent.

Don't promote other brands with our brand

Do not promote personal projects or endorse other brands, causes or opinions when posting on behalf of the Shire of Menzies. The endorsement of the Shire can be sought if required. If a personal opinion must be posted, clearly state that it does not represent the opinions of the Shire.

Maintain confidentiality

Do not post any confidential information in regard to the Shire of Menzies including personal information of employees, Councillors and other individuals associated with the Shire of Menzies.

Always acknowledge

When reposting/referencing a post or someone else's comments provide a link to the original item or acknowledge the author.

Identify yourself

When relevant, identify your affiliation with the Shire of Menzies to add credibility to your profile and to increase the visibility of the Shire of Menzies.

Do not qualify your work

Do not post statements regarding the quality or quantity of your work/load.

Do not return fire

If a negative post or comment is found online about the Shire of Menzies or one of its representatives, do not counter with another negative post. Publicly offer to remedy the situation through positive action.

Do not action requests made through social media

Actioning requests must be done only through our regular procedures to avoid conflicts and other ethical problems.

It should be noted that comments considered to be offensive or defamatory will be removed by the Administrator and repeat offenders blocked.

– *End of Policy*

ADOPTED: 30 AUGUST 2018

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