

Title:	4.31 Social Media
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Objective:

1. Principle and context

These guidelines are intended to provide clarity to employees on how to conduct themselves in social media, both for official Shire of Goomalling business and/or for any personal use.

The Shire of Goomalling embraces the use of social media as a council communications and community-building tool. All employees need to use good judgment about what material appears online, and in what context.

Social media can increase community engagement and collaboration in policy development and service provision, leading to more open and democratic government processes. It can also contribute to early identification of public issues or concerns, leading to more effective, responsive risk management and stakeholder engagement.

This policy is designed to help us build capability and capacity to engage through social media in a deliberate and considered way.

2. Objective

The aim of these guidelines is to encourage employees to find a voice in social media, but at the same time protect the interests of the Shire of Goomalling. It also informs employees of their responsibilities when using social media.

Policy:

This policy applies:

- to all Shire of Goomalling employees, contractors and councillors, and
- for all online social media tools (eg, facebook, twitter, Flickr, YouTube, wikis, LinkedIn, etc).

Personal use guidelines

What you publish online in social media:

- is not private (even if you have set strict privacy settings),
- will be visible and recorded for a long time (even if you delete something),
- belongs to the social media provider (eg, what you type on facebook belongs to facebook).

You are free to chat about whatever you like offline. However, when writing online, it's not a private conversation, it's visible for a long time, and you may be seen as representing the shire, so please:

- Don't:
 - write as if you're speaking for the shire (or in a way that may be seen as doing so),
 - write anything you couldn't justify to your manager (eg, something that breaches shire policies),
 - assume people know you work for the shire.
- Do:
 - protect your privacy,
 - consider the 'grandma rule' (don't post anything you wouldn't show your grandma).

Work use rules

- Do
 - identify yourself with your name in the post or comment,
 - use your common sense,
 - remember you are representing the shire,
 - apply the guidelines of our normal Shire policies and the local, state and federal laws they refer to,
 - protect the privacy of individuals and groups,
 - apply good customer service,
 - be accurate,
 - be the first person to correct any mistakes you make,
 - consider copyright/Creative Commons,
 - have a positive tone,
 - respond positively and in a timely manner to negative posts (which may include commenting "Thanks *[their name]*. I will ask *[name of appropriate staff member, position title]* to give you a call about this. Could you please private message me your contact details?")
 - carefully consider if social media is the appropriate communication channel and avoid posting any statement on social media if it is not intended for wide public distribution,
 - check with your supervisor before commenting on controversial, sensitive, confidential or political matters,
 - be apolitical, impartial and professional,
 - check with people before using images or videos of them,
 - check with people before using images or videos created by them, and then give credit to them,

- proofread for spelling and grammar before you post (type into Word, spell check, then copy and paste into the social media).
- Don't
 - discuss complex Shire related issues without prior approval of the CEO,
 - compromise the privacy of any person,
 - be flippant or sarcastic (a reader might not get it),
 - post confidential information about any individual or group,
 - post inaccurate or inappropriate information,
 - don't make promises or give statements regarding the Shire's operations which aren't true or which you haven't been authorised to make or give,
 - alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so,
 - speak for other people or areas in the Shire, let them speak for themselves.

Public use of Shire of Goomalling's social media

Make the rules for public use clear in the social media.

For example, below is text from the 'About' section in our Shire of Goomalling facebook page, that clearly lays out the rules of using that page and what will happen if they're breached.

Follow Shire of Goomalling policies when using social media

It is mandatory that we understand and adhere to all Shire of Goomalling policies and the underlying laws when using online social media.

Employee conduct

Use of and access to social media channels, whether in a official capacity or in an unofficial- professional or private capacity, is governed by the APS Code of Conduct, this policy and other departmental policies and instructions that apply to employee conduct.

Shire employees are expected to maintain the high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere.

Shire employees need to ensure that they fully understand the APS Values and Code of Conduct and how they apply to official or unofficial online communications.

For more information, you should view the APSC social media guidance⁴. Staff should be aware that in some instances these policies will apply to both official departmental use and their unofficial use of social media channels.

Staff should use a separate personal profile that differentiates their identity as a citizen and as a Shire employee and ensure that the personal profile cannot be perceived as an official source of departmental information.

Staff are responsible for ensuring the content they post does not constitute defamation or a breach of a privacy, confidentiality, or intellectual property or could be viewed as offensive or discriminatory.

Staff participating in social media who identify a potential legal issue caused by the actions or comments of third parties are required to notify the CEO.