

# AlburyCity Social Media Policy

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines our expectations in relation to the acceptable and responsible use of social media platforms, in both a professional and personal capacity.
- 1.2 This Policy has been developed in consultation with the NSW Government *Model Social Media Policy*.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Our People at AlburyCity (full-time, part-time and casual), Councillors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, graduates and interns. It relates to the use of social media for business purposes, including platforms owned and maintained by AlburyCity, as well as Our People commenting on external sites.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to personal use of social media where no reference is made to AlburyCity.

## 3. Protecting Our People

- 3.1 Online abuse is behaviour that uses technology to threaten, intimidate, bully, harass or humiliate someone. It can take place via online platforms (social media, online chat and messaging services), telephone (calls and text messages), email or other technology used in workplaces.  
(source: safe work australia)
- 3.2 At AlburyCity, we will create a safe and secure online work environment for Our People through the use of security settings and the tools on online services to block, mute or remove abusive content.
- 3.3 We encourage Our People to report online abuse and will address inappropriate behaviour early.
- 3.4 The behaviours indicated in clause 6.6 shall result in that content being removed and a person blocked or banned from the platform.
- 3.5 We are committed to upholding and promoting the following principles of social media engagement:
  - a) Openness: Our social media platforms are places where anyone can share and discuss issues that are relevant to our Council and the community we represent and serve.

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- b) Relevance: We will ensure our social media platforms are kept up to date with informative content about our Council and community.
- c) Accuracy: The content we upload onto our social media platforms and any other social media platform will be a source of truth for our Council and community and we will prioritise the need to correct inaccuracies when they occur.
- d) Respect: Our social media platforms are safe spaces. We will uphold and promote the behavioural standards contained in this policy and our Council's code of conduct when using our social media platforms and any other social media platform.

#### **4. Platforms**

- 4.1 Social media is an ever-evolving tool and new external platforms will be considered as they become operational. Council presence on social media platforms includes but is not limited to:
- a) Facebook
  - b) X (formerly Twitter)
  - c) YouTube
  - d) LinkedIn
  - e) Instagram
- 4.2 Council's social media platforms must specify or provide a clearly defined link to the AlburyCity House Rules - section 6, for engaging on each platform.

#### **5. Authorised Users**

- 5.1 Authorised users are employees who are authorised to upload content and engage on the Council's social media platforms on the Council's behalf.
- 5.2 Authorised users should be employees that are responsible for managing, or have expertise in, the events, initiatives, programs or policies that are the subject of the social media content.
- 5.3 The role of an authorised user is to:
- a) ensure, to the best of their ability, that the content they upload onto the Council's social media platforms is accurate;
  - b) correct inaccuracies in Council-generated content;
  - c) engage in discussions and answer questions about the substantive content on the Council's social media platform in a timely manner
  - d) keep the Council's social media platforms up-to-date;
  - e) moderate the Council's social media platforms;
  - f) ensure the Council complies with its record-keeping obligations under the State Records Act 1998 in relation to social media.
- 5.4 Authorised users upload content and engage on social media platforms on behalf of Council. Authorised users must use language consistent with that function and avoid expressing or appearing to express their personal views when undertaking their role.

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5.5 Authorised users must not use Council's social media platforms for personal reasons.

## 6. House Rules

6.1 AlburyCity Social Media House Rules in full are available on the AlburyCity website and referenced across all social media channels. [Social Media House Rules | AlburyCity \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/social-media-house-rules)

6.2 The principles referred to in clause 3 shall apply to all social media interactions.

6.3 The behaviours indicated in clause 6.5 shall result in that content being removed and a person blocked or banned from the platform.

6.4 The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* applies to the use of social media platforms by Council and councillors. To mitigate potential privacy risks, the Council and councillors will:

- a) advise people not to provide personal information on social media platforms;
- b) inform people if any personal information they may provide on social media platforms is to be used for official purposes;
- c) moderate comments to ensure they do not contain any personal information;
- d) advise people to contact the Council or councillors if they have personal information they do not want to disclose in a public forum.

6.5 Council's official social media platforms will be regularly monitored, as defined in section 10 – Moderation and Monitoring, within the designated business hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

6.6 For the purposes of clause 6.2, third parties engaging on social media platforms must not post or share comments, photos, videos, electronic recordings or other information that:

- a) is defamatory, offensive, humiliating, threatening or intimidating to Council officials or members of the public
- b) contains profane language or is sexual in nature;
- c) constitutes harassment and/or bullying within the meaning of clauses 3.7 and 3.9 of the *Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW*, or is unlawfully discriminatory;
- d) contains content about the Council, council officials or members of the public that is misleading or deceptive;
- e) breaches the privacy of council officials or members of the public;
- f) contains allegation of suspected breaches of the Council's code of conduct of information about the consideration of a matter under the *Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW*;
- g) violates an order made by a court;
- h) breaches copyright;
- i) advertises, endorses or solicits commercial products or business;
- j) constitutes spam;
- k) would be in breach of the rules of the social media platform.

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- 6.7 In addition to clause 6.6, Council officials must not use social media to post or share comments, photos, videos, electronic recordings or other information that:
- a) is contrary to their duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and their responsibilities under any policies or procedures adopted by the Council to ensure workplace health and safety;
  - b) divulges confidential Council information;
  - c) could be perceived to be an official comment on behalf of the Council where they have not been authorised to make such a comment;
  - d) commits the Council to any action.

## 7. Definitions

- 7.1 Social media is broadly defined as online platforms and applications – such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards – that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.
- 7.2 Social media platforms include but are not limited to:
- Social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn
  - Micro-blogging sites like Twitter and Tumblr
  - Blogs, both personal and corporate, such as Tumblr and WordPress
  - Video and photo sharing sites like Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, or Vimeo
  - Forums and discussion boards like Google Groups
  - Online encyclopaedias and collaboration sites like Wikipedia
  - Comments posted on blogs hosted by media outlets. For example, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Border Mail websites
  - Livestreaming sites and apps, such as Twitch
  - Podcast and vodcast sites
  - Instant messaging including SMS, iMessage, and direct message (DM).
- 7.3 “Content” is described as any information, opinion, text, video, audio, image, link, or document published to social media.

## 8. Content

- 8.1 Social media platforms are an effective tool used to reach and engage with our community, while providing timely and relevant information. Increasingly, councils are expected to engage, work transparently, be more accountable, and take decisive and swift action on issues.
- 8.2 It is essential that all employees who use social media as part of their roles exercise sound judgement about the context, nature, and type of material that appears online. Our People are expected to follow the rules set out in section 6 - House Rules, the AlburyCity Social Media Procedure and Guidelines (under development) as well as those of the social media platforms to which they are posting content.

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- 8.3 We recognise that Our People are also residents, ratepayers and customers of our council services and are open to participating in community debate about an issue that personally affects them. They must, however, make it clear that they are commenting as either a customer or resident, and not as a council employee.

## **9. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 9.1 The AlburyCity Communications and Engagement Team are the Authorised Officers for all AlburyCity social media channels. They will be responsible for scheduling, approval, and publishing processes for ongoing content, along with monitoring and responding to user activity.
- 9.2 The creation and sharing of content for third parties is at the discretion of the Communications and Engagement Team.
- 9.3 The management of social media profiles is the responsibility of approved teams and content authors. Including:
- Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA),
  - Albury Entertainment Centre,
  - Retro Cafe,
  - Write Around the Murray,
  - Albury Animal Care Centre,
  - Invest Albury Wodonga,
  - Visit Albury Wodonga,
  - Albury Wodonga Sustainability Festivals,
  - LibraryMuseum,
  - Lavington Library and;
  - any future profiles
- 9.4 As Authorised Officers, the AlburyCity Communications and Engagement Team will be responsible for the recruitment, induction, training, set up and strategy development for any new profiles added in the future, along with the department lead. Teams can work with the AlburyCity Communications and Engagement Team for channel audits and reviews to optimise their accounts.

## **10. Moderation and Monitoring**

- 10.1 As per the Roles and Responsibilities outlined in clause 9.2, each authorised Cluster team is accountable for moderating and monitoring social media channels other than AlburyCity.
- 10.2 Council employees who are responsible for the moderation of the Council's social media platforms may remove content and 'block' or ban a person from those platforms.
- 10.3 Any content that channel owners believe breaches this policy must be reported to the Social Media Coordinator or Team Leader Communications and Engagement.

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- 10.4 Prior to removing content, the Authorised Officer must make a record of it (for example, taking a screenshot).
- 10.5 If the Authorised officer removes content under clause 9.2, they must, where practicable, notify the person who uploaded the content that it has been removed and the reason(s) for its removal.

## **11. Private Use of Social Media**

- 11.1 This policy does not apply to personal use of social media where no reference is made to AlburyCity.
- 11.2 If Our People engage in commentary about an issue that affects AlburyCity, they are required to highlight that their comments reflect their own personal views and are not expressed as a representative of AlburyCity.
- 11.3 This policy specifies that any comments or information about AlburyCity acquired through a position at AlburyCity should never be shared in a public forum.
- 11.4 Councillors must advise AlburyCity of any social media platforms they administer on which content relating to the Council or council officials is, or is expected to be, uploaded. Councillors are responsible for the administration and moderation of their own digital and social media platforms.
- 11.5 This policy only applies to council officials' use of social media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a council official. The policy does not apply to personal use of social media that is not connected with a person's role as a council official.
- 11.6 Council officials must comply with the Council's Code of Conduct when using social media in an official capacity or in connection with their role as a council official. Councillors must also ensure that they comply with the record-keeping obligations under the *State Records Act 1998* in relation to social media. This also applies to Councillors in circumstances where another person administers, moderates, or uploads content onto their digital and social media platforms.
- 11.7 Councillors must identify themselves on their social media platforms in the following format: Councillor "First Name and Last Name".
- 11.8 A councillor's social media platform must include a disclaimer to the following effect: *"The views expressed, and comments made of this social platform are my own and not that of the council."*

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## 12. Use of Social Media During Emergencies

12.1 During emergencies, such as natural disasters or public health incidents, the CEO and Authorised Officers will be responsible for the management of content on the Council's social media platforms.

12.2 Authorised users and council officials must not upload content onto the Council's or their own social media platforms which contradicts advice issued by the agency coordinating the emergency response.

### References

- Social Media House Rules
- Social Media Content Creation Workflow
- AlburyCity Brand Book December 2018
- NSW State Records 1998
- NSW Office of Local Government – Model Social Media Policy 2021

### Authorisation

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	Business, Growth and Community
	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Team Leader Communications and Engagement
<b>Authorisation</b>	Endorsed Executive 5 December 2023	
<b>Review Date</b>	February 2026	
<b>Register</b>	Once adopted by Council, this policy will be included in the Public Policy and Procedure Register.	
<b>Record of Amendments</b>	November 2023	Changes to align AlburyCity's existing Social Media Policy with the NSW OLG Model Social Media Policy. Addition of Protecting Our People in clause 3.
	Insert date	Provide brief description of the change.

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