

POLICY NO LG05 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

DEPARTMENT:	Governance
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Human Resources Manager
LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:	Maintain workforce standards and procedures that ensure that the occupational health safety and welfare of employees, contractors and public is protected and enhanced
STATUTORY AUTHORITY:	Local Government Act 1993 Local Government (General) Regulations 2005
OBJECTIVE:	This policy will set guidelines that must be followed when Break O'Day Council employees and elected members use social media in a private capacity. The purpose is to ensure that employee and elected member posts do not expose the council to legal liability or public embarrassment. Any breaches of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.
POLICY INFORMATION:	Adopted 18 February 2013 – Minute No 02/13.15.5.60 Amended 16 June 2014 – Minute No 06/14.15.3.179 Amended 15 February 2016 – Minute No. 02/16.12.5.29 Amended 20 May 2019 – Minute No. 05/19.16.5.120

POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The lines between work and personal lives are blurring and guidance is required as to the expectations of Break O'Day Council regarding the conduct of employees and elected members when using social media. This policy refers to content that directly references Break O'Day Council as an organisation/employer. The nature of the online world means that anything posted or commented on social media may be traced back to the organisation with the perception that the content is endorsed by Council. There is no such thing as a 'private' social media site, regardless of the privacy settings. Due to the nature of the internet, social media posts can be seen by many people even if you think you have high privacy settings, all it takes is for one person to share your post or even screen shot your post. These reasons are also why deleting a post does not always mean it has been deleted completely or permanently.

Legally, posting on-line is no different from publishing in a newspaper. If an employee or elected member makes a comment on social media or shares a post, they are making a public comment.

2. DEFINITIONS

Social media and Social Media Channels includes any online interactive site and may include, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites (Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, Bebo, Linkedin, Yammer)
- video and photo sharing (Instagram, Flickr, Youtube)
- blogs, including corporate and personal blogs
- blogs hosted by media outlets ("comments" or "your say" features)

- micro-blogs
- wikis and online collaborations (Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (Google groups, Whirlpool)
- vod and podcasting
- online multiplayer gaming platforms (World of Warcraft, Second life)
- instant messaging (SMS)
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)

Employee or elected member means all paid employees, volunteers, contractors, elected members, students on work experience and those employed under labour hire arrangements.

3. APPLICATION

This policy applies to individual use of social media channels as well as the Break O'Day Council channels.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1) Council has no interest in employee or elected member participation in social media when no mention of Break O'Day Council is made and there is no association with Break O'Day Council activities or other employees or elected members
- 2) The public may consider employees and elected members to be representing Council at all times, even when using individual Social Media accounts or commenting on other posts. This can reflect on Council as an organisation.
- 3) Employees are not permitted to use the Break O'Day Council Logo or their work email address in any social media forums.
- 4) Workplace grievances are not to be aired on social media sites, there are alternative grievance policies and procedures available.
- 5) Social Media postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to Break O'Day Council or any third party associated with Break O'Day Council.
- 6) If an employee or elected member comments on any aspect of Break O'Day Council business or operations they must clearly identify themselves as an employee/elected member and include a disclaimer, for example "the views expressed here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Break O'Day Council"
- 7) Be mindful that sharing posts gives the impression that you support the content of the post.
- 8) If an employee or elected member shares or posts content related to Break O'Day Council that evokes discussion/ contention, the person who posted the material must ensure any conversations remain respectful. Private use of social media is not permitted during work hours with the exception of designated meal breaks
- 9) Employees and elected members are encouraged to ensure they have social media privacy settings set to the highest level possible.
- 10) Employees and elected members are at all times personally responsible for material posted on social media sites under their control.
- 11) Any posting that may be considered discriminatory, threatening, harassing or bullying and breaches Break O'Day policies, may be subject to disciplinary action
- 12) Councillors and Employees are expected to act within our organisation's values; Working as a TEAM with OPEN & HONEST COMMUNICATION; we act with INTEGRITY whilst showing RESPECT and being POSITIVE and proactive in our actions.

5. BREACHES OF POLICY

Employees and elected members must comply fully with the policy at all times.

If you are not sure if an activity complies, speak to your Manager, General Manager or Mayor. Non-compliance is a serious matter and appropriate action will be taken.

An Elected member breaching this policy may be subject to a Code of Conduct complaint as per the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*. Staff breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action as per the Staff and Councillor Codes of Conduct Policies (LG35 and LG03)

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every three (3) years in line with the Council's Policy Framework or earlier in the event of major changes to legislation or related policies, procedures or if deemed necessary by the General Manager.

7. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Computer Use, Internet and Email Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Induction Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy