

1. PURPOSE

Social Media allow online communities with common interest to connect, share and consume information, thoughts and ideas.

The District Council of Cleve recognises the opportunities that social media provides to engage in meaningful, two-way communication with the broader community. This can complement and enhance existing communication, customer service and consultation methods, and further improve access to, and delivery of, key services.

The Council also recognises the value of social media to the organisation provided through:

- networking;
- recruitment;
- continuing professional development;
- employee engagement;
- collaboration and innovation.

The intent of this policy is to provide understanding and guidance for the appropriate use of social media platforms and tools in order to enable and encourage its use by the Mayor, Councillors, and Council Employees for the purpose of conducting Council business.

The policy aims to:

- Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media;
- Provide guidance about the appropriate use of social media tools at the District Council of Cleve;
- Reduce the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications;
- Help the District Council of Cleve manage new challenges associated with social media such as speed and immediacy, record keeping, privacy and security;
- Provide clarity about roles and responsibilities in relation to use, approval and monitoring.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Mayor, Councillors and employees of the District Council of Cleve, who purport to use social media on behalf of District Council of Cleve. This policy will also apply to agencies and individuals who provide services to District Council of Cleve, and will be included in all relevant external supplier contracts.

The policy applies to all current and future social media tools and channels where people comment, view, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share content, including:

- Blogs, forums, discussion and bulletin boards, and citizen journalism and news sites which facilitate public comment;
- Instant messaging tools (e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp) Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, X, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest);
- Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia);
- Podcasts, Video podcasts and video sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo);
- Online and internal collaboration platforms (e.g. Yammer, Wiki, Slack);
- Any other websites that allow individuals to use simple publishing tools or new technologies emerging from the digital environment.

As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list the specific sites or kinds of social media activity, the absence of a reference does not limit the application of this policy.

This policy applies only to the use of social media for:

- The purpose of conducting Council business and were representing Council; and
- Personal use where reference is made to the Mayor, Councillors, staff, policies and services, suppliers, other stakeholders or Council-related issues.

Personal use of social media during work hours is prohibited.

3. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Mayor, Councillors and staff of the District Council of Cleve are expected to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies. A list of relevant legislation which may be used as a guide is included in Section 6 of this Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and guideline provisions which must be adhered to in relation to the use of social media include the following:

- District Council of Cleve Behavioural Standards – Employees;
- District Council of Cleve Behavioural Management Standards for Elected Members;
- District Council of Cleve Behavioural Management Policy;
- District Council of Cleve Employment Contracts;
- District Council of Cleve Information Management Policy;
- District Council of Cleve Records Management Policy;
- District Council of Cleve Public Consultation Policy;

- District Council of Cleve Caretaker Policy.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The District Council of Cleve encourages the appropriate and professional use of social media to aid the efficient and effective conduct of Council business.

Social media is recognised as an important channel, used in conjunction with traditional methods, to communicate, listen to, engage and collaborate with the community and enhance the delivery of services.

At all times, use of social media by the Mayor, Councillors and staff should be done in a professional manner, in accordance with relevant policies and legislation, and consistent with the values of the District Council of Cleve.

When using social media the Mayor, Councillors and Employees are expected to:

- Seek prior authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services for any social media posts or comments that purport to be made by the District Council of Cleve.
- All social media posts that purport to be made by the District Council of Cleve will be uploaded with the comments section turned off unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services.

Speak how you would like to be spoken to:

- Be courteous, patient and respectful of others' opinions, including detractors;
- Use your own voice, but be mindful of language and expression;
- Don't make statements or forward, share or upload content that is malicious, defamatory or may negatively impact the reputation of another;
- Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.

Stick to the facts:

- Only comment about matters within your area of expertise
- Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative, and correct any errors as soon as practicable
- Only publish content and statements that you know are true, clear and not likely to mislead or deceive
- If you make an error, be up front and correct it quickly

Keep your opinion, beliefs and political views separate from Council business

- Only publish content on Council's social media channels that is apolitical, in line with official Council positions and the District Council of Cleve's values, and free from personal opinions, beliefs and political views;

- Council staff using private social media channels outside of work hours to comment about Council-related matters should clearly identify their comments as their own personal opinions, be accurate and factual and not disparage Council. The Mayor, Councillors, employees or contractors etc.;
- The Mayor and Councillors should use social media in accordance with the Behavioural Management Standards for Elected Members. The Mayor and Councillors social media accounts should have a prominent statement that clearly identifies they are not speaking on behalf of Council. In expressing individual views, the Mayor and Councillors must do so in a way that does not undermine the community's trust or confidence in Council and maintains respectful relationship with fellow Councillors and staff.

Stay within your level of authorisation

- Only use social media channels in the manner for which you have been authorised and do not commit Council to actions or undertakings beyond your delegation;
- Leave formal statements and announcements to the official spokespeople and if you are unsure, check with your supervisor;
- Refer any media enquiries via social media or posts about potentially sensitive/political issues to the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services for a response.

Be fair and transparent

- Be clear about your professional identity and any vested interests and refrain from covert, anonymous or deceitful representation including via a third party;
- Encourage open, honest and transparent engagement and feedback by the online community;
- Refrain from any behaviour which could be seen as biased, showing undue favour or in response to real or perceived compensation or reward.

Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy and property of others

- Only discuss publicly available information and maintain the confidentiality of internal discussions, confidential decisions of Council, and personal or private information about the Mayor, Councillors, employees or third parties;
- Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing via any form of social media and, if asked to remove materials, do so as soon as practicable;
- Only use or reproduce copyright material, or the intellectual property of others, including applications, sound recordings (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music if you have permission from the creator or owner and ensure they are acknowledged;

Be responsible, accessible and responsive

- Appropriately monitor any social media sites created and ensure they can be easily edited, improved or removed. Ensure that inappropriate content is removed in a timely manner;
- Specify the type of comments and feedback that will receive a response and clearly communicate a target response time;
- Make it easy for audiences to reach Council via other methods by publishing Council's phone number, generic email, address and other social media contact methods;
- Ensure information on social media meets government web standards for accessibility and/or is available in another form where practical;
- Do not use social media when inebriated, irritated, upset or tired;
- Protect your personal privacy and guard against identity theft.

Uphold acceptable content standards

Under no circumstances is the following content permitted on Council social media channels. If found, you must formally report, record and then delete it immediately:

- Abusive, profane or sexual language;
- Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender identity, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation;
- Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking;
- Materials that could compromise Council, employees or system safety;
- Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation privacy, trade practices, copyright, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks);
- Confidential information about Council or third parties;
- Materials that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency;
- Material which would bring the Council into disrepute;
- Personal details or references to the Mayor, Councillors, Council Employees or third parties, which may be inconsistent with Councils Privacy Policy;
- Spam (the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages);
- Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment.

If you have any doubt about applying the provisions of this policy, check with the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services before using social media to communicate. Depending upon the nature of the issue and potential risk, it may also be appropriate to consider seeking legal advice.

MANAGEMENT APPROVAL

The establishment of new social media sites must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager of Corporate Services. Approval of new social media sites should consider the identified business objective, audience, proposed use in line with this policy, resourcing requirements and ensure alignment with Council's branding and style guidelines.

Security

To protect from unauthorised use of Council's social media channels, login information should be kept secure and changed at regular intervals:

- Choose passwords that combine upper and lower case letters and numbers;
- Store login information in a secure location and the Information Officer will maintain a centralised list of all of the District Council of Cleve's social media with appropriate access restrictions;
- Change passwords every six months and when an employee with access to a Council social media channel leaves the organisation;
- Remove administrator access to any Council social media channels immediately when the relevant staff member ceases employment with the organisation.

Monitoring

Council's social media channels should be regularly monitored and maintained to ensure appropriate use. Ensure that inappropriate content is removed in a timely manner. Where necessary keep formal records of social media activity in line with Council's Information Management Policy.

Council and non-Council social media channels should be monitored for information, research and insight into issues circulating in the community and/or matters that impact on the municipality, its operations or reputation.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

Use of Council's social media channels should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure they are achieving business objectives and to seek opportunities for further improvement. This includes review of qualitative (feedback, comments) and quantitative data (engagement, audience composition, click throughs to Council website etc.).

5. Adherence to Policy

Council reserves the right, for legal compliance purposes, to monitor social media usage on its systems without advance notice and consistent with any applicable state, federal or international laws.

The District Council of Cleve will actively monitor social media for relevant contributions that impact on the Council, its operations and reputation, and remove, where possible, content that violates this policy or any associated policies.

This policy will be published and promoted to the Mayor, Councillors and staff of the District Council of Cleve.

Any staff found breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, performance management and/or review. Serious breaches may result in suspension or termination of employment of association in accordance with Council policies. Any content that breaches the policy guidelines will be recorded and kept on personnel records.

For the Mayor and Councillors, breaching this policy may result in a code of conduct complaint.

If the Mayor, Councillors or staff become aware of any comments that breach these guidelines they should report them to the Chief Executive Officer and include a link or reference to the offending material.

6. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Mayor, Councillors and staff of the District Council of Cleve are expected to demonstrate standards of conduct and behaviour that are consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

Relevant legislation includes, but is not limited to the following:

Local Government Act 1999 (SA)

Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)

Defamation Act 2005 (SA)

Fair Work Act 1994 (SA)

Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)

Spam Act 2003 (Commonwealth)

Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

Copyright Act 1968(Commonwealth)

Fair Trading Act 1987 (SA)

Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA)

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

State Records Act 1997 (SA)

Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)

Further information

This policy is available for inspection at the District Council of Cleve principal office 10 Main Street, Cleve SA 5640 during ordinary business hours upon payment of the fee fixed by Council in accordance with Council's Fees & Charges. It is also available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website: www.cleve.sa.gov.au

Responsible Department/Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Applicable Legislation	See Section 6 of Policy
Related Policies	13.2 - Information Management Policy 9.30 - Behavioural Management Standards for Elected Members 12.8 - Behavioural Standards Employees Policy 9.3 - Behavioural Management Policy Caretaker Policy
Related Procedures	

Document Review

This document will be reviewed by the District Council of Cleve 2 yearly.

Document History:

Version	Adopted	Description of Change
4	December 2023	Formatting & Legislation updates
3	April 2021	Minor updates following Council election 2018
2	January 2015	

Appendix A – Council Member Social Media

The following guidelines apply to Council member social media in addition to those outlined in this Social Media Policy.

Accurate representation

- To provide clarity for the community between 'individual' views and the 'official' view of Council, a disclaimer statement must be displayed in accordance with the intended use of the social media channel. For example:
 - Personal use only – 'these are my personal, individual views';
 - Personal and professional use – 'the views expressed are my individual comments and opinions, not the official position of Council'.
- Council branding, including the Council logo, should only be on social media channels that are used purely for professional Council member reasons. In branding a channel, care must be taken to keep it distinct from 'official' Council channels.

Promotion and support

- Development, hosting, maintenance and monitoring of individual Council member social media is the responsibility of the individual councillor, however officers can provide guidance and advice if used for professional Council purposes;
- Individual Councillors can have social media channels included in their Council member contact details (for example, on Council website, newsletter, member stationery etc.) if these channels are only used for professional Council member purposes.

Record keeping

- Under section 99 of the Local Government Act 1999, the CEO has a legal responsibility to ensure that records are appropriately kept and maintained. This includes all Council member communication relating to Council business on social media;
- While it is not necessary to preserve all online conversations, anything significant that may influence Council policy, relates to Council decisions, or where there may have been breaches of policies or laws (i.e. inappropriate comments that you delete) must be appropriately recorded and stored in line with Information Management Policy.

Caretaker provisions

- Council members must ensure that Council resources are not used to create or distribute electoral material, or to advantage or disadvantage a candidate during the caretaker period. This includes the use of Council logos on individual Council member social media channels and posts by candidates on Council-owned social media channels. Refer to Caretaker Policy.