

## Social Media Policy

### Objectives

The Social Media policy provides guidance about the professional and personal use of social media to Town employees, Council members, contractors, consultants and volunteers, to mitigate risk and protect the Town's reputation and brand.

The Policy aims to balance the opportunities that social media presents with associated risks, whilst limiting Town resources allocated to managing social media.

### Policy statement

The Town recognises the importance of social media as part of integrated communications and marketing campaigns. The policy sets out expectations for the use of social media by Town employees, Council members, and other representatives for Town and personal business. It has been developed to ensure:

- a) The number of Town social media accounts is limited to those that serve a specific strategic and/or operational purpose, as referenced in 2.2 (g).
- b) The Town's social media channels are used in accordance with relevant Town policies, and the applicable Code/s of Conduct.
- c) The Town uses social media primarily to share information with the community.
- d) The Town's reputation is protected, legal ramifications minimised, and the management of the Town's social media channels is sustainable.
- e) Employees, Council members, and Town representatives are aware of the risks associated with social media and their responsibilities when using social media.
- f) There are clear instructions about the appropriate use of social media for conducting Town business.
- g) The Town prevents the perception that personal comments or information published to social media represent the position of the Council or Town.

### Scope and Definition

This Policy applies to all Town employees, Council members, contractors, consultants, and volunteers, including those affiliated with third parties who access, or are involved with, social media.

'Social media channels' refers to (but is not limited to):

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn).
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. YouTube, Instagram).
- Blogs, including corporate and personal blogs, micro-blogging wikis, forums and discussion groups.

### **Management of Town social media channels**

- a) The Town of Bassendean social media accounts are to be used as tools for communicating with the community and stakeholders, and will support and reflect the Town's vision, values and strategic objectives.
- b) The Town will regularly engage with its master and sub-brand social media accounts:
  - i. Town of Bassendean Facebook
  - ii. Town of Bassendean Instagram
  - iii. Bassendean Memorial Library Facebook
  - iv. Bassendean Memorial Library Instagram
  - v. Town of Bassendean YouTube
  - vi. Town of Bassendean LinkedIn

Limiting the Town's social media accounts supports audience growth and engagement with the master brand account and increases its impact.

- c) Administrator rights for all Town social media accounts must be shared with the Communications business unit.
- d) Business units seeking to communicate information to stakeholders will liaise with Communications for strategic communications support. The Town's social media accounts will be used as part of an integrated marketing and communications approach.
- e) The Town maintains editorial rights over its social media accounts and reserves the right to share or remove third party content at its discretion. If a formal partnership or sponsorship arrangement is in place, third party content relating to these arrangements may be shared to the Town's social media pages, if it is aligned with the Town's policies and strategies.
- f) The Town's social media accounts will not be used for commercial promotion.
- g) Content that is inappropriate, illegal, discriminatory, or likely to be offensive must not be posted or shared on the Town's social media accounts. All content must comply with the social media platform's terms of use and community guidelines/standards.

- h) The Town will follow any government directives in relation to social media.
- i) Copyright, privacy, trademark, defamation, and other applicable laws must be strictly adhered to when posting to and managing Town social media channels.
- j) There must be appropriate record keeping of information disseminated or collected via social media, in accordance with the Town's policies and the *State Records Act 2000 (WA)*.

### **Establishment of social media accounts**

- a) When requesting a new Town social media account, Business Units must present a robust business case to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) supported by evidence of the need for the account. The business case should include the account objectives, how the content is to be generated, approved, monitored and resourced.
- b) New Town social media accounts must be approved by Communications in conjunction with the CEO. Each account must present a social media strategy and be overseen by the Manager of the Business Unit.

### **Social media content**

- a) All Town social media accounts must be recognisable as belonging to the Town and must comply with the Town's branding.
- b) While Town staff are encouraged to submit content for the Town's social media accounts, only approved content authors may post content and respond to comments.
- c) Social media content authors are permitted to publish content on their assigned social media accounts in line with the approved strategy. Content authors may be designated by agreement between the Business Unit Manager and Communications and must receive appropriate training before being granted account access.
- d) Communications can at any time, request or administer the removal of any inappropriate material at its discretion, including material that:
  - Is damaging to the Town's reputation.
  - Presents a legal risk to the Town.
  - Is promotional, soliciting, or commercial in nature.
  - Is unlawful or incites others to break the law.
  - Is offensive, abusive, defamatory, false, or misleading.
  - Is repetitive or duplicated.

- Promotes or opposes any person campaigning for election.
  - Violates copyright or intellectual property rights.
- e) Where a third-party contributor to a Town of Bassendean social media account is identified as posting content that is in violation of the Town's Code/s of Conduct or as outlined in 2.5(d), the Town may block that contributor for a specific period or permanently. The contributor's inappropriate posts or comments may also be hidden or deleted.
- f) Staff and Council members who are not authorised content managers should refrain from commenting on social media. Authorised content managers must abide by the Town's Code of Conduct when participating, posting, commenting or otherwise on the Town's social media channels.
- g) The Town primarily utilises social media for information sharing purposes. Questions and comments from users on the Town's social media pages are not considered formal correspondence and replies to queries or questions raised on these platforms are made at the discretion of authorised content managers. If an issue is important enough to warrant a detailed Town response the resident will be advised to submit an online enquiry via the Town website or email [mail@bassendean.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@bassendean.wa.gov.au).

### **Council Members use of social media**

- a) Council Members may establish a personal social media account. The Town will not provide administration or moderation support or create content for these accounts.
- b) Council members must clearly emphasise on their social media accounts:
- That the account is personal.
  - That views expressed on or from their account are their own.
  - That their account is not managed or supported by the Town of Bassendean.
- c) Personal Council Member accounts should not be branded with Town of Bassendean logos or portrayed as a Town of Bassendean official channel in any way. All accounts should refrain from using the Councillor or Council Member's Town of Bassendean title and should state that they are not an official Town page and not endorsed by the Town of Bassendean.
- d) Should a mayoral social media account be used as a Town official communication channel, that account will be managed and moderated by the Town, to assist the Mayor in fulfilling their role as the Town's official spokesperson under the Act. Official town accounts should not be used for personal communications.

- e) To ensure accuracy of information and brand compliance, Council Members may share current Town of Bassendean branded social media content or other current Town content (e.g. links to content published to the website) on their own social media accounts but may not re-create or alter Town content in any way.
- f) Any public statement or publications made by a Council Member, whether it be personal or in their capacity as a local government representative (including any content or comments posted on social media), must:
  - Be made with reasonable care and diligence.
  - Be factually correct.
  - Avoid damage to the reputation of the Town of Bassendean and its employees.
  - Not reflect adversely on a decision of Council.
- g) Council Members are responsible for transferring all social media records that relate to their role as a Council Member, to the Town's records office. All elected member social media records are subject to the *WA Freedom of Information Act (1992)*.
- h) Comments made by Council Members privately may become public and are accountable under the Code of Conduct and the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations (2007)*, and inappropriate comments may constitute a serious breach of the *Local Government Act (1995)*.
- i) The Town will not be held liable for any loss or damage, however caused, which Council Members or others suffer in connection with the use of Council Members' social media accounts.
- j) Council Members are not encouraged to post comments on the Town's social media channels. If Council Members choose to do so, comments must be made using their own name, not aliases.

Document responsibilities:			
Owner:			
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Compliance requirements:		Repeal and replace:	
Legislation:			
	<p><i>Local Government Act 1995</i>  <i>State Records Act 2000</i>  <i>WA Freedom of Information Act</i>  <i>Local Government Regulations 2007</i></p> <p>Town of Bassendean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates</li> <li>• Employee Code of Conduct</li> </ul>		

