

ADOPTED		VERSION NO	1.0
COUNCIL MEETING MIN	28/20	REVIEW DATE	20 MARCH 2024
DATE:	20 MARCH 2020	FILE NUMBER	GOV400087, GOV400047

Objective

- To provide clear guidelines around the use of Council’s social media platforms.
- To provide clear guidelines around the personal social media use for Council staff.
- To provide a framework on when and how Council will be active on social media.

Introduction

Mid-Western Regional Council recognises social media as a primary communications tool. The Social Media Policy provides guidelines for Council staff for business and individual use of social media.

Related policies and plans

- Mid-Western Regional Council Media Policy
- Mid-Western Regional Council Code of Conduct
- Mid-Western Regional Council Electronic Telecommunications – Acceptable Use

Policy

Account management and creation

The Corporate Communications Officer is responsible for the management of Mid-Western Regional Council’s corporate and event social media accounts, and will have administration access to all Council’s secondary social media accounts. Other Council staff may be delegated administrator roles for secondary social media accounts if they are subject matter experts or employed within the relevant department e.g.: Mid-Western Regional Council Library, Mid-Western Regional Youth Council. Managers are responsible for delegating access to members of their team who are responsible for managing social media accounts that fall within their department.

Development of a new social media account must be approved by the Corporate Communications Officer and Manager Economic Development in consultation with the General Manager.

Delegation

In the absence of the Corporate Communications Officer, the Manager Economic Development and Director Development will have delegation and may assume administration responsibilities.

Responsibilities

Council staff who are authorised administrators of Council's social media accounts are responsible for:

- Creating and publishing relevant content in accordance with Council's internal style guide to ensure brand consistency and key messages.
- Removing content that does not comply with House Rules (referred to below).
- Responding to public comments within 24 hours during business hours, if a reply is deemed necessary.
- Managing paid promotions in accordance with delegations.
- Publish emergency information (such as road closures due to motor vehicle accidents, storm events) in accordance with delegations.
- The Corporate Communications Officer is responsible for managing the corporate and event-related Mid-Western Regional Council social media accounts.
- The Library Team is responsible for managing Mid-Western Regional Council Library social media accounts.
- The Community Services Team is responsible for managing Mid-Western Regional Council community services related accounts.

Conduct

Staff responsible for managing Council social media accounts must:

- Maintain a level a professionalism expected of them in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure published content is accurate and complies with relevant legislation, the social channel policies and terms of use.
- Only disclose publicly available information.
- Never engage in behaviour that breaches Council's House Rules or Code of Conduct.
- Provide the equivalent level of customer service as would be provided to any other customer engaging with Council either in person or over the telephone.
- Only publish posts when the page is being monitored.
- Only invite co-hosts to Facebook events that are directly sponsoring or delivering the event.

And must not:

- Post as themselves, only under the page handle.
- Post or share on behalf of Council social media accounts into non-Council sites.
- Publish photographs of individuals without their express permission.
- Tag individuals (Council staff or otherwise) in posts to Council social media pages.

Level of service

- Council's Corporate social media accounts will be monitored by the Corporate Communications Officer and Manager Economic Development out of business hours on an ad-hoc basis to minimise conflict with Council's Social Media Policy and to ensure appropriate use by those posting to the page.
- Council's secondary social media accounts will be monitored between business hours from 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday.
- Complex enquiries or those requiring personal information and correspondence will not be dealt with on social media and will be moved offline via a referral to Council's Customer Service Team.
- Private messages will be responded to within 48 hours during business hours, Monday to Friday by the Corporate Communications Officer, Customer Service Team or relevant Page Managers as delegated.

House Rules

The following house rules will be applied to all Council social media accounts.

This site is monitored from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. In times of emergency, we will provide up-to-date information as quickly as possible.

We respect your right to express your opinion and encourage constructive discussion however if your contributions don't comply with Facebook's Terms (<http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>) or the following House Rules then they (and you) may be removed.

1. *Obscene, offensive or defamatory posts will not be tolerated.*
2. *Bullying, harassment and vilification will not be tolerated. This includes other users as well as Council staff.*
3. *Show respect for other people.*
4. *Do not repeat posts or unsolicited ads.*
5. *Keep comments relevant to the page, posts and thread.*
6. *Please be mindful of people's privacy and any personal information about you or others that you may post on this page.*

Removal of comments or posts

Comments or posts that contravene Council's Facebook and social media account House Rules will be removed, that includes comments that are:

1. Obscene, offensive or defamatory.
2. Abusive, threatening, vilifying or harassing.
3. Not relevant to the thread to the page, posts and thread.
4. Breaches individuals' privacy.
5. Infringes the intellectual property of others.
6. Defamatory or libellous.
7. Unsolicited commercial advertisement.

Personal use of social media

This policy does not discourage the personal use of social media by staff, however is intended to highlight the reputational risks and damage to Council that can arise from personal social media use. Staff should understand they are personally responsible for content published to their personal page and must:

- Comply with the terms of use of the social media platform or website, and all relevant legislation including privacy, defamation, discrimination, harassment and any other applicable laws.
- Act in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and Media Policy.
- Only disclose publicly available information.
- Be respectful to others.
- Alert the Corporate Communications Officer to any social media comments, posts or threads on a non-Council public page that might otherwise cause damage to Council's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

Staff must not:

- Comment or publish content that might otherwise cause damage to Council's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- Speak on behalf of Council, nor give the impression they are authorised to do so.
- Publish photographs of another Council staff member in a social media space without their express permission.
- Use their Council email address or any Council logos or artwork that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment.
- Disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained as a Council staff member.
- Post threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory content directed towards another Council staff member.

Mid-Western Regional Council social media accounts

FACEBOOK

ACCOUNT NAME	URL	HANDLE
Mid-Western Regional Council	https://www.facebook.com/mwrcouncil/	@mwrcouncil
Flavours of Mudgee	https://www.facebook.com/flavoursofmudgee/	@flavoursofmudgee
Mid-Western Regional Council Library	https://www.facebook.com/MudgeeLibrary/	@mudgeelibrary
Mid-Western Regional Youth Council	https://www.facebook.com/midwesternyouthcouncil/	@midwesternyouthcouncil
Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care Scheme	https://www.facebook.com/Mid-Western-Regional-Family-Day-Care-Scheme-348740388666559/	N/A

INSTAGRAM

ACCOUNT NAME	HANDLE
Choose Mudgee Region	@choosemudgeeregion
Flavours of Mudgee	@flavoursofmudgee
MWR Youth Council	@mwr_youthcouncil
Mid-Western Family Day Care	@midwesternregionalfdc

TWITTER

ACCOUNT NAME	HANDLE
MWRC	@MWRCouncil

SNAPCHAT

ACCOUNT NAME	HANDLE
Flavours of Mudgee	@Flavoursmudgee

YOUTUBE

ACCOUNT NAME	HANDLE
MWRC	@MWRCouncil

LINKEDIN

ACCOUNT NAME	HANDLE
Mid-Western Regional Council	Mid-Western Regional Council