

## CP 24 Social Media Policy

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
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### Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Council maintains a consistent and appropriate approach to managing its social media communications for the purpose of conducting Council business. This is to ensure that views, policies and information are communicated in a timely, accurate and appropriate way that reinforces the Council's reputation as a decisive and responsible governing body.

The Council recognises that social media provides new opportunities for dynamic and interactive two-way communication which can complement existing communication and further improve information, access and delivery of key services.

This Social Media Protocol supports the Council Policy No 15 (Internet Use Policy).

### What is Social Media

Social media includes web and mobile-based technologies where individuals or organisations comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload or share content for the purpose of communication.

Forms of social media include, but are not limited to:

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- Blogs
- Citizen journalism and news sites
- Forums and discussion boards
- Instant messaging (IM) facilities
- Micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter)
- Online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Photo sharing sites (e.g. Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest)
- Podcasts
- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn and Yammer)

- Video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube)
- Wikis
- Any other websites that use simple publishing tools or new technologies emerging from the digital environment to communicate with individuals, communities and organisations.
- Electronic newsletters including Mail Chimp

The tools and sites listed above are likely to change and develop and others are likely to emerge over time. As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list all the specific social media tools and sites or types of social media activities, the absence of a reference to a particular social media tool or site or type of social media activity does not limit the application of this policy.

## Procedure

### **Media Policy Matters**

The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer are the two (2) official spokespersons for Benalla Rural City Council and are responsible for making public statements on Council decisions, policy issues and matters which affect the community at large.

In this regard, the Mayor forgoes the right to generally engage in public debate on internal issues during the Mayoral term. This protocol is designed to avoid confusion as to whether the Mayor is speaking on behalf of Council or from a personal perspective.

### **Day to Day Operations**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that factual information is provided via all forms of social media.

The Chief Executive Officer shall be responsible for any content published relating to the:

- day to day operations of Council
- routine Council business
- administrative and staffing decisions

If a matter requiring the Council's attention is raised on social media, a response will be determined by the CEO and the Arts, Communications and Events Department.

The response will come from an official Benalla Rural City Council social media account, which is administered by the Communications Co-ordinator who will publish the determined response, with the consent of the Chief Executive Officer.

## **Council staff**

Staff members are required to comply with the Council's Social Media Protocol and Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff are not authorised to make statements on social media, respond to social media enquiries regarding policy issues or provide personal interpretations of Council decisions or actions. If a staff member receives an enquiry on their personal social media accounts relating to Council business, the enquiry is to be forwarded to the Communications Co-ordinator.

Council staff are not to respond to social media posts from their personal account on behalf of the Council or for any matter relating to Council business.

Council staff are not to publish any information on any form of social media without first going through the appropriate approval process, which in every instance, includes as a minimum the approval of the Department Manager.

All tools, sites and content of Council social media are the property of the Council. Each of these Council assets must be administered using Council email addresses ending in @benalla.vic.gov.au. The Communications Co-ordinator is to be a joint administrator on all Council social media assets and is to maintain a current register of logon details.

Council staff are not to attach personal email addresses to the administration of Council assets.

All Council social media assets are to be connected through a central management tool as overseen by the Communications Co-ordinator. This is to ensure consistency in reporting, co-ordination in the timing of post and to prevent exclusive administration access to a single Council Officer.

At no time are volunteers, Committee members, contractors or any person other than Council staff to have logon access to a Council social media asset or to publish to any Council social media asset.

## **Delegations by the Chief Executive Officer**

The Council recognises that social media can be a proactive and less formal way to communicate with the community. The Chief Executive Officer may delegate the authority to publish on social media to the appropriate Council Officer in relation to specific areas within their functional area of expertise including:

- Benalla Art Gallery
- Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre
- Benalla Festival
- Benalla Youth (Wots4Me, B-Town Youth, YOUth Matter)
- Enjoy Benalla

- Benalla L2P Program
- Supporting Benalla Business

All Council Officers who receive delegation from the Chief Executive Officer are to adhere to the Social Media Protocol and are not to publish any content regarding policy issues or provide personal interpretations of Council decisions or actions

The Chief Executive Officer may revoke this delegation at any time.

The Council does not allow excessive tagging in social media posts.

### **Councillors**

Councillors may issue statements regarding their personal policies and views and provide comment in response to social media enquiries to and from their personal social media accounts.

When Councillors engage in this type of response, they are to make clear, in every post, that the views they are expressing are their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Council.

Where a Councillor receives an enquiring that does require a response on behalf of Council, this should be referred to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

All comments on behalf of the Council are to be posted from an official Benalla Rural City Council social media account.