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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Background

Web-based and mobile technologies such as social media can transform communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media tools provide an opportunity to enhance the level of two-way conversation with our communities, build more meaningful relationships with our key stakeholders and inform them about activities, initiatives and projects being considered and undertaken by Council.

Social Media can also assist Council in understanding, responding to and attracting audiences.

1.2 Purpose

The intent of this policy is to provide a culture of openness, honesty and respect relating to social media use and to encourage employees to be mindful of both their own and Council's reputation when using social media.

This policy defines Council's commitment to the use of social media and to creating a positive social media presence for Council. It also provides guidance regarding the use of social media for private versus professional use.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to the use of any forms of social media by all Elected Members, staff (including work experience placements and trainees), volunteers, and consultants and contractors across Council, including Alwyndor.

1.4 Definitions

Social media refers to the various web based technology tools that enable individuals and organisations to connect, socialise and participate in communities online. It may include social network sites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer, Google+), video, photo and file sharing websites (such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Flickr), blogs and micro-blogs (such as Twitter), wikis, forums, discussion boards and groups, podcasting and webcasting, instant messaging and push marketing, geo-tagging (such as Foursquare, Gowalla) and other similar technologies that may be developed in the future.

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Public forum or discussion refers to participation in social media that is known to be open to, or could be made open to, a public or broad-scale audience.

Users refers to people using social media covered by this policy, namely Elected Members, staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors.

1.5 Strategic Reference

Wellbeing objective: increase participation rates in community engagements across all age groups, particularly under-represented demographics such as children and young people by using methods that are appealing and appropriate.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 Professional Use of Social Media

- 2.1.1 Council embraces social media as a useful engagement tool and recognises that it provides a valuable and cost-effective method for Council to connect, engage and involve our community.
- 2.1.2 Council will establish and operate a variety of social media channels as part of its on-going commitment to engagement with the broader community.
- 2.1.3 The use of social media will complement other relevant processes and strategies to support engagement, communications, marketing and promotional initiatives.
- 2.1.4 Council has both a duty of care and an obligation to provide a safe environment for people to participate, converse and exchange ideas. To meet this obligation, nominated Council staff will regularly monitor relevant social media platforms and provide moderation to ensure discussions stay on topic and are respectful. Any comment considered offensive, including defamatory remarks, name calling, racist, sexist and any other derogatory comments, threatening, abusive or offensive language, heated arguments which become personal or off topic and links to other websites or promotion, and/or not aligned with Council's values, Code of Conduct or policies will be removed. Moderation and comments on behalf of Council are managed by nominated Council staff, with comments published through the City of Holdfast Bay social media account.
- 2.1.5 Staff are permitted to use social media for professional and work related purposes including research and analysis, industry networking and participating in professional forums and discussions pertinent to their work. However, where they are participating in a public forum or discussion, the employee must not present their views as being representative of Council. Where relevant, a disclaimer along the lines of "these views are not representative of the City of Holdfast Bay" may be appropriate to include on comments made in a public forum or

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discussion. Any engagement undertaken in a professional capacity should align with Council's values, Code of Conduct and relevant policies.

- 2.1.6 Elected Members may use social media for professional purposes including research and analysis, industry networking and participating in public forums and discussions pertinent to their roles. In line with the Code of Conduct and relevant policies, Elected Members must make it clear if they are participating in an official or personal capacity.
- 2.1.7 Volunteers are not permitted to represent Council on social media, or present themselves in a public forum or discussion as operating in a professional capacity for Council.
- 2.1.8 Contractors, consultants and similar third parties must not use Council owned or Council related information on their social media without prior approval.
- 2.1.9 Social Media forms part of official records as defined by the *State Records Act 1997*, and as such all employees responsible for social media channels must ensure that appropriate records are kept.

2.2 Personal Use of Social Media

- 2.2.1 Council recognises that people use social media in their personal time and this policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities. However, users must be cognisant of potential reputational impacts (either direct or indirect) on Council in circumstances where they can be clearly associated with Council and act to minimise such risks. Matters that may cause damage to Council or bring it into disrepute may include (but are not limited to) material or comments that are offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court order or is otherwise unlawful.
- 2.2.2 Where social media is being used in a personal or private capacity, users must not imply either directly or through omission, that are authorised to speak as a representative of Council or that the views expressed are in any way the views of Council. Items such as Council email addresses, logos or other information or material belonging to Council should not be used when engaging on social media for personal or private use. For clarity, this does not apply to:
 - sharing employment opportunities
 - sharing council event information or networking opportunities, or similar.
- 2.2.3 For staff, limited personal use of social media during work hours is permitted, but must be undertaken in a manner that does not interfere with their work program.

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3. REFERENCES

3.1 Legislation

Local Government Act 1999
State Records Act 1997

3.2 Other References

Mobile Device Policy
Elected Member Code of Conduct
Employee Code of Conduct