

# BARCALDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL POLICY

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<b>SYSTEM:</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	<b>Social Media Policy</b>
<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>16 April 2014</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	<b>G0018</b>
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to provide understanding and guidance for the appropriate official use of social media platforms and tools by Council employees approved to utilise these sites to provide information to customers and stakeholders in regard to Council activities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emerging platforms for online collaboration are fundamentally changing the way we work, offering new ways to engage with customers, colleagues, and the world at large.

Barcaldine Regional Council recognizes the benefits which can accrue to Council, residents, employees and other stakeholders from utilising online collaboration platforms in its endeavours to effectively communicate with and deliver services to the people it serves and to engage with the wider community generally.

Council also recognizes the potential for harm to its reputation through inappropriate use of the various online platforms which are continually emerging. It is therefore important that specific guidelines are implemented to ensure the official use of social media by employees is undertaken within the boundaries and resource capabilities, as determined by Council.

This policy is designed to:

- Clearly define the boundaries and expectations with respect to acceptable social media use in the workplace or when representing Council;
- Protect Council's confidential information by guiding employees in the appropriate use of social media while conducting work related activities;
- Contribute to productivity in the workplace;
- Protect privacy, copyright and trademark laws; and
- Protect Council's corporate identity

## 2. SCOPE

This policy relates to Council employees and to some extent elected representatives, providing direction on the use of, and engagement with, all forms of online social media in order to maintain Council's credibility, integrity and customer confidence and reinforces Council's corporate values and brand.

This policy does not apply to personal use of social media platforms where no reference is made to Barcaldine Regional Council, its people, services, Councillors, contractors and/or other stakeholders.

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## 3. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- GO006 Councillor Communications and Media Policy
- GO007 Councillor Code of Conduct Policy
- GO008 Confidentiality Procedure
- GO009 Councillors Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters
- GO010 Access to Information Procedures
- HR003 Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy
- HR005 Code of Conduct Policy
- HR008 Performance and Misconduct Policy
- HR009 Gifts and Benefits Policy

## 4. DEFINITIONS

### 4.1 **Social Media**

Barcaldine Regional Council defines social media as the range of online technology tools that allow people to engage in communication and to share information and resources via the internet. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to:

- Podcasts
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Tagging
- Online photograph and video sharing
- Forums
- Message Boards
- Answer Services
- Presentation Sharing
- Social bookmarking
- Social reviews
- Social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn)

### 4.2 **Employee**

Any person who is employed by Council to perform work for or on behalf of Council including volunteers, part-time, temporary, casual and contract staff.

### 4.3 **Authorised Employee**

Any employee who has been given permission in writing from the Chief Executive Officer to develop, use or manage social media on behalf of the Council.

### 4.4 **Facility Pages**

Facebook pages or social media relating to Council facilities or specific services in addition to Council's endorsed corporate Facebook page and other social media.

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### **4.5 *Written Permission***

For the purpose of social media, written permission must be requested on the Social Media Authorisation Form available from InfoXpert.

## **5. POLICY STATEMENT**

### **5.1 *Applicability***

This policy relates to Council employees who use online social media to communicate messages to the community on behalf of Council. In such instances the employees are determined to be speaking directly to the community or other media, and must adhere to relevant Council policies, including:

- GO006 Councillor Communications and Media Policy
- GO007 Councillor Code of Conduct Policy
- GO008 Confidentiality Procedure
- GO009 Councillors Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters
- GO010 Access to Information Procedures
- HR003 Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy
- HR005 Code of Conduct Policy
- HR008 Performance and Misconduct Policy
- HR009 Gifts and Benefits Policy

All Barcaldine Regional Council employees, regardless of their employment status, role or position are expected to familiarise themselves with and follow the spirit and content of Council's Social Media Policy and protocols when using social media.

### **5.2 *Authority to Use Social Media***

Council permits only Authorised Employees to establish, manage and use social media on behalf of Barcaldine Regional Council for the purpose of marketing, communicating with and engaging the community, providing they:

- Have sought and received written permission from the Chief Executive Officer for each page/tool established on behalf of the Council;
- Follow Council's Social Media Protocols and Guidelines;

## **6. SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURES**

### **6.1 *Authorised Employees***

- (a) Only authorized employees may undertake social media activity on behalf of Council
  - (i) Authorised employees will moderate submissions to be posted on Council's social media sites
  - (b) Authorised employees will remove all posts of a political, vexatious, derogatory, offensive, obscene, or malicious nature or other material considered inappropriate and refer these to the Chief Executive Officer for review/action

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- (c) Enquiries/comments will be managed by authorised employees in a way that captures a record on Council's Electronic Document Records Management System and meets the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*
- (d) Authorised employees will distribute social media enquiries which require a response to the appropriate Area Executive Manager
- (e) Area Executive Managers will prepare a response to comments/enquiries as requested and obtain approval from the Chief Executive Officer prior to sending it to an Authorised Employee for posting
- (f) Responses to comments/enquiries are to be made in a timely manner, preferably within 48 hours
- (g) Site/s will be monitored during business hours – 8am to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday
- (h) Security/password procedures will apply to social media sites in order to protect Council's integrity and IT system
- (i) Care will be taken about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses, malware or material deemed inappropriate by these procedures
- (j) Updates to Council's website to reflect social media content will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for approval and uploaded to the website by Council's appointed employee

### 6.2 *Employees/Elected Representatives*

- (a) Elected Representatives are bound by this policy in relation to Council coordinated or administered social media communication only and not their own personal social media communications
- (b) False or fake personas may not be used
- (c) Employees may not pretend to be impartial individuals in order to promote the company, its brand, products or services
- (d) Elected members and employees may not provide any confidential or proprietary information in social media statements
- (e) Any person disregarding this policy will be liable for any negative outcomes that result and may also face disciplinary procedures or dismissal.

### 6.3 *Personal Use of Social Media*

- (a) Any personal social media communication on matters that relate to Council should include a disclaimer that the content is their personal view and not the official view of the Council
- (b) It should be assumed that you will be identified as a Council employee, so careful consideration of what is written is recommended when using social media on a personal basis
- (c) Employees and those acting on behalf of Council are provided access to social media on the understanding that using such tools are limited to personal time, unless their job requirements warrant such usage in work time

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### 6.4 *Social Media Content*

- (a) No reference is to be made to customers, colleagues, suppliers or sub-contractors without their express prior approval and according to privacy legislative requirements
- (b) Prohibited communications include postings that may be considered discriminatory or harassing, spam or junk type postings, profanity or pornography
- (c) Comment is not permitted on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties Council may be in litigation with
- (d) Employees who become aware of any negative comment made about Council, its brand, products or services on any social media will not respond directly, but are to inform the Chief Executive Officer
- (e) Social media content will be at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer
- (f) During an election period, general day-to-day business activities will continue to be processed through dissemination by Authorised employees to the appropriate Executive Manager
- (g) Details of limitations during the “caretaker” period during an election will be posted on Council’s social media as directed by the Chief Executive Officer
- (h) All Council social media sites will contain a disclaimer in regard to the accuracy, completeness or currency of information; that the data is free from defects or malicious code such as viruses; that Council does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage; to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer
- (i) All Council social media sites will contain a Privacy Notice to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer

The procedures apply to all employees. As social media is a fast-developing means of communication, any suggestions that may help Council adapt to new issues or improve on these procedures are welcome.

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**BARCALDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL  
EMPLOYEE APPLICATION FOR  
SOCIAL MEDIA AUTHORISATION**

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**EMPLOYEE APPLICATION SECTION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert name*), Employee No. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (*insert position*) with Barcaldine

Regional Council, seek authorisation to establish a Social Media Site and to moderate that site in accordance with Council's adopted Social Media Policy and Code of Conduct, for the purposes of:-

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPROVAL SECTION**

I approve/do not approve the establishment of a Social Media Site as detailed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
D A Howard  
**Chief Executive Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date