



COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Responsible Officer

Chief Executive Officer

Objective

This Policy establishes the protocols for the Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Island's communications with our community to ensure the Shire is professionally and accurately represented and to maximise a positive public perception of the Shire.

Scope

The Communications and Social Media Policy applies to:

- Any communication initiated or responded to by the Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Island; and
- Elected Members when making comment in either their role as an elected member for the Shire or in a personal capacity.

Policy

The purposes of the Shire's official communications include:

- Sharing information required by law to be publicly available;
- Sharing information that is of interest and benefit to the Community;
- Promoting the Shire's projects, facilities, events and services;
- Answering questions and responding to requests for information relevant to the Shire;
- Receiving community feedback, ideas, comments, complaints and compliments.

The Shire's official communications will be consistent with relevant legislation, policies, standards and positions adopted by Council. Our communications will always be respectful and professional.

The Shire will use a combination of different communication modes to suit the type of information to be communicated and the requirements of the community or specific audience including:

- Website;
- Advertising and promotional materials;
- Newsletter articles / Media Releases prepared for the Shire to promote specific information;
- Social media; and

- Letter drops or any other modes of communication undertaken by the Shire at the discretion of the CEO.

As per the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA) (CKI)* the Shire President is the official spokesperson for the Shire. Where the Shire President is not available, the Deputy Shire President may act as the spokesperson or this task may be delegated to other Councillors at the Shire President's discretion. The CEO may speak on behalf of the Shire where authorised to do so by the Shire President.

Communications by Elected Members, whether undertaken in an authorised official capacity or as personal communication, must not:

- Bring the Shire into disrepute;
- Compromise the person's effectiveness in their role with the Shire;
- Imply the Shire's endorsement of personal views; or
- Disclose confidential information.

Elected member communications must comply with the *Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands Code of Conduct* and the *Local Government Act (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*.

Social Media

The Shire uses Social Media to facilitate interactive information sharing and to provide responsive feedback to our community. Social Media will not however, be used by the Shire to communicate or respond to matters that are complex or relate to a person's or entity's private affairs. The Shire maintains its own social media presence but may also contribute to social media hosted by others so as to ensure the Shire's strategic communication objectives are achieved.

The Shire will actively seek questions, ideas and feedback from our community but expects all participants to behave in a respectful manner. The Shire will moderate its social media accounts to address, and where necessary delete, content that is deemed as:

- Offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false or misleading;
- Soliciting or commercial in nature;
- Unlawful or incites others to break the law;
- Information which may compromise individual or community safety or security;
- Content that promotes or opposes any person campaigning for an election to the Council, appointment to any official office or any ballot;
- Content that violates intellectual property rights or the legal ownership or interests of another party;
- Material that is deemed of a sexual and/or violent nature; and
- And any other inappropriate content or comments at the discretion of the CEO.

Where a third party contributor to a Shire social media account is identified as posting content that is deleted in accordance with this policy, the Shire may at the discretion of the CEO, block that contributor for a specific period of time or permanently.

Record Keeping

Official communications undertaken on behalf of the Shire, including on social media, will be created and retained as local government records. These records are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1992.

Personal communications

Personal communications and statements made privately in conversation, written recorded email or posted in personal social media have the potential to be made public, whether it intended or not. Therefore, on the basis that personal and private communications may be shared or become public at some time in the future, Elected Members must ensure that their personal or private communications do not breach the requirements of this policy, the Code of Conduct and the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*.

Statements on Shire Matters

An Elected Member may choose to make a personal statement publicly on a matter relating to the business of the Shire. Any such statement, whether in a personal capacity or in their Elected Member Capacity, must:

- Clearly state that the comment is a personal view only, which does not necessarily represent the views of the Shire;
- Be made with reasonable care and diligence;
- Be lawful, including avoiding contravention of copyright, defamation, discrimination, or harassment laws;
- Be factually correct;
- Avoid damage to the reputation of the Local Government;
- Not reflect adversely on a decision of the Council;
- Not reflect adversely on the character or actions of another Elected Member, employee, contractor of the Shire or Shire stakeholder;
- Maintain a respectful and positive tone and not use offensive or objectionable language or expressions in reference to any Elected Member, employee, contractor of the Shire, Shire stakeholder or community member.

Breaches of Policy

Comments which become public and breach this policy, the Code of Conduct or the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*, may constitute a serious breach of the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA)(CKI)* and, in the case of Elected Members, may be referred to the Standard Panel for investigation; and in the case of employees be subject to disciplinary measures, including and up to termination of employment.

Definitions

CEO (Chief Executive Officer) - A person who holds an appointment under section 194 of the Local Government Act 2009.

Council - Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Employee – person engaged by the Shire on a permanent or casual basis either full or part time, a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a labour hire company assigned to work for Council, work experience student or a volunteer.

Shire President – person elected by the Council into the position of Shire President.

Social media – social networks including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn.

Elected Member – any member holding the office of Councillor.

Relevant Legislation/Local Law

Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4308:2008

Australian Standard 4760-2006.

Australian Standard AS 3547-1997

Office Use Only				
Relevant Delegations	Nil			
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