

### C6 ONLINE COMMUNICATION AND ACCESS POLICY

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide direction for Council's social media and website activities, and other online promotional methods.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Shire of Irwin understands the requirement to provide a framework for using social networking sites, the Shires website and other online promotional methods such as the electronic Community Information Sign, including clarity on appropriate conduct, and emphasizes the need for its employees to use good judgement about what appears and its context within these venues/spaces.

The objective of this policy is to ensure all the organisation's employees are aware of appropriate professional and personal online conduct to ensure the greatest benefit to the Shire of Irwin.

#### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all employees and contractors (whether paid or unpaid) at the Shire of Irwin who access social media for professional or social purposes whether via personal devices or those supplied by the Shire of Irwin and/or whom have the ability to make alterations to the Shires website and electronic Community Information Sign.

Social Media means forms of electronic communication (eg. Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (e.g. videos). Some examples include (but are not restricted to) Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

This policy also extends to cover Shire of Irwin website alterations and staff accessing other websites within work hours. It is emphasised that staff are to only access websites required for work related purposes and should not access anything that does not align with Council's values.

Similarly, only authorised staff are to access the electronic Community Information Sign website for adding, deleting and/or altering community messages, with the sign only to be used for authorised purposes (Community event advertising, Shire advertising etc).

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION FOR SHIRE OF IRWIN PURPOSES**

The Shire of Irwin may directly specify employees to use social media or other forms of online communication for Shire purposes. Only employees with appropriate training and knowledge who are expressly authorised by the CEO may carry out these activities via use of social media or other forms of online communication.

If a person is provided with express permission by the CEO to use social media or other forms of online communication s/he must provide information that is truthful, accurate and in the interests of the Local Government. S/he must not disclose anything that is confidential financial or technical information, commercially sensitive information, personal information about employees, or any information about customers, suppliers or members of the general public.

Employees who are required to use social media in the course of their work must:

- Use spell check and proof read each post;
- Understand the context before entering any conversation;
- Know the facts and verify the sources;
- Be respectful of all individuals and communities with which the person interacts with online;
- Be polite and respectful of other opinions;
- Seek to conform to the cultural and behavioural norms of the social media platform being used;
- If a mistake is made, the person must correct it quickly by disclosing it was a mistake (including the particulars of the correction) and inform his/her supervisor; and
- Understand and comply with any directions given by the CEO on topics that are not to be discussed for confidential, operational or legal reasons.

A person required to use social media who has been trained and given express permission by the CEO should always be aware that the Shire of Irwin may be liable for any posts made. Accordingly s/he should always seek guidance from his/her supervisor or the CEO if s/he is ever unsure about stating or responding to something on a social media site.

### **WEBSITE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNITY INFORMATION SIGN USE FOR SHIRE OF IRWIN PURPOSES**

The Shire of Irwin may directly specify employees to make alterations to the Shire of Irwin website and/or electronic Community Information Sign, only employees with appropriate training and knowledge who are expressly authorised by the CEO are able to make such adjustments.

If a person is provided with express permission by the CEO to make these alterations s/he must provide information that is truthful, accurate and in the interests of the Local Government. S/he must not disclose anything that is confidential financial or technical information, commercially sensitive information, personal information about employees, or any information about customers, suppliers or members of the general public.

Employees who are required to alter the Shires website and/or Community Information Sign must:

- Use spell check and proof read;
- Know the facts and verify the sources;
- Be polite and respectful of other opinions;
- If a mistake is made, the person must correct it quickly by disclosing it was a mistake (including the particulars of the correction) and inform his/her supervisor; and
- Understand and comply with any directions given by the CEO on topics that are not to be discussed for confidential, operational or legal reasons.

If in the event that the person editing the website/community information sign is unsure of whether the content proposed is relevant, S/he must always seek guidance from his/her supervisor or the CEO.

### **PERSONAL/PRIVATE USE OF THE SHIRE OF IRWIN'S CORPORATE SITES**

An employee cannot comment on behalf of the Shire of Irwin unless expressly authorised by the CEO. If the person wishes to broadcast something (either as an initial broadcast or a response) then a request to the CEO (or his/her authorised delegate) must be made.

A person of the Shire of Irwin is able to share links that the Local Government has posted on the social media sites, or submitting a “like” action, or comment on an event, initiative and/or program, provided that it is in the best interests of the Local Government.

### **PERSONAL/PRIVATE USE OF NON-SHIRE OF IRWIN SITES**

Employees at the Shire of Irwin are permitted reasonable use of social media for personal/private purposes on the condition that it does not interfere with the performance of their work.

Employees who use social media for personal/private purposes must not infer or state they are speaking on behalf of the Shire of Irwin and are reminded that any inappropriate postings or actions carried out on social media may result in disciplinary action.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THIS POLICY**

The policy constitutes a lawful instruction to all of the organisation’s employees and contractors and breaches may lead to disciplinary action or termination by the Shire of Irwin, or referral to appropriate external Authorities where applicable. Employees who breach the law may also be personally liable for their actions.

### **VARIATION TO THIS POLICY**

This policy may be cancelled or varied from time to time. All the organisation’s employees will be notified of any variation to this policy by the normal correspondence method. All users of social media (be it for personal or professional purposes) within the organisation and those making alterations to the Shire website and accessing of other websites are responsible for remaining familiar with this policy.

### **REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

Council will review this policy annually in line with the formal Policy Manual review.

<i>Date of Last Amendment – 15 December 2015</i>	<i>(reviewed 27 June 2017 Minute 140617)</i>
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