

## BARCOO SHIRE COUNCIL POLICY SOCIAL MEDIA

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| Policy Number: BSC-042                              | Version: 1   |
| Classification: Statutory                           | Section: Corporate Services - IT   |
| Date Adopted by Council: 22 October 2019            | Resolution Number: 2019.10.018   |
| Responsible Officer: Director of Corporate Services | <p>Review: Note: This Policy is reviewed when any of the following occur:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The related information is amended or replaced.</li> <li>2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer.</li> </ol> <p>Notwithstanding the above, this Policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.</p> |

### PURPOSE

This policy sets out standards of behaviour expected when referring to Barcoo Shire Council (BSC) on social media platforms, including social networking sites when the person is using a computer or hand-held device not owned or controlled by BSC.

### SCOPE

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. The policy is not intended to override the terms of any award, certified agreement or contract that applies to an employee.

This policy does not address Social Media Guidelines for Councillors.

### APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees of BSC and all other people (Users) who contribute to external blogs and sites including social networking sites who identify themselves as being associated with BSC or can be identified as an employee or representative of Council.

This policy does not generally apply to personal use of social media platforms where the user makes no reference to BSC or any BSC employees, contractors or other Council officials, related entities or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of BSC, unless they adversely impact Council.

### USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

BSC Users of Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms must comply with the following standards:

- Users, must not disparage or make any adverse comment about BSC, any policy or decision of Council or any of BSC's related entities, employees, contractors and other BSC officials or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council.
- Users must not harass, bully, intimidate or threaten another employee, contractor or other BSC official (or a person the user knows to be a relative or associate of a BSC official) when contributing on a social media site or platform.
- Users, who can be identified as a representative of BSC, must not use social media networking sites and social media platforms to send, post or otherwise publish

inappropriate content, including:

- Obscene messages/material,
- Racially and/or sexually harassing messages/material, and
- Sexually explicit messages/material.
- Must only disclose publicly available information and must not disclose confidential information.
- Ensure that any information they post online about BSC or a related entity of Council is informed and factually accurate and will not adversely impact Council.
- Unless expressly authorised to do so by BSC, a user must not transmit or send BSC documents, emails, or text messages to any external parties or organisations.
- If the user subsequently discovers a mistake on their blog or social networking entry, they are required to immediately inform BSC and then take steps authorised by BSC to correct the mistake. Any alterations should indicate the date on which the alteration was made.

## **USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DURING ORDINARY WORK HOURS**

The following standards are expected when using Council IT to access personal social networking sites and social media platforms at work:

- All users are permitted to have access to social networking sites and social media platforms during ordinary work hours for limited and reasonable personal use. It is expected that such access would be limited to lunch and rest breaks.
- Using social networking sites and social media platforms for personal use must not impact upon the users work performance or BSC resources or violate this policy or any other Council policy.

## **REPRESENTATION**

When contributing to a social networking site or accessing a social media platform, Users must not represent or indicate that they represent BSC or any of its related entities, unless specifically authorised to do so in writing by the BSC.

If authorised to represent the BSC or any of its related entities, the user must disclose that they are an employee, contractor or other official of the BSC or a related entity and what their role and accountabilities are.

If the user is authorised by BSC they must ensure:

- Any content they publish is factually accurate and complies with relevant policies of Council;
- They only comment on topics that fall within their area of responsibility or authority;
- They do not post inappropriate material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity or which causes (or could cause) insult, offence, intimidation or humiliation;
- They do not disclose another person's personal information;
- Compliance with copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, occupational health and safety, employment and any other applicable laws;
- They do not create any legal or contractual obligations on behalf of BSC unless expressly authorised to do so;
- They do not send or cause chain or SPAM emails or text messages in any format.

Further to the potentially damaging effects a blog or social networking entry may have on the Council, inappropriate blogs on internal or external sites can also have adverse consequences for a user in terms of future career prospects, as the material remains widely and permanently accessible to other site users.

Further, making inappropriate comments or references to BSC employees, contractors or other officials (or a person the user knows to be a relative or associate of a BSC official) on social media platforms, can cause risks to their health and safety and could constitute bullying, harassment and/or discrimination.

## DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

**“Blogging”** means the act of using web log or ‘blog’. ‘Blog’ is an abbreviated version of ‘weblog’ which is a term used to describe websites that maintain an ongoing chronicle of information. A blog is a frequently updated website featuring diary-style commentary, audio-visual material and links to articles on other websites.

**“Confidential Information”** includes but is not limited to trade secrets of Council; non-public information about the organisation and affairs of Council such as: pricing information such as internal cost and pricing rates, production scheduling software, special supply information; marketing or strategy plans; exclusive supply agreements or arrangements; commercial and business plans; contractual arrangements with third parties; tender policies and arrangements; financial information and data; training materials; technical data; schematics; proposals and intentions; designs; policies and procedures documents; concepts not reduced to material form; information which is personal information for the purposes of privacy law; and all other information obtained from Council or obtained in the course of working or providing services to Council that is by its nature confidential.

**“Computer”** includes all laptop computers and desk top computers.

**“Council Official”** includes employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors), administrators appointed under section 256 of the *Local Government Act 2009 (QLD)*, members of council committees, conduct reviewers, delegates of council, work experience employees and volunteers of the Council.

**“Hand held device”** includes all such devices which are used by users, inside and outside working hours, in the workplace of the Council (or a related corporation of the Council) or at any other place. Such devices include, but are not limited to, BlackBerrys, Palm Pilots, PDAs, iPhones, tablets, iPads, other handheld electronic devices, smart phones and similar products, and any other means of accessing social networking sites or a social media platform.

**“Intellectual Property”** means all forms of intellectual property rights throughout the world including copyright, patent, design, trade mark, trade name, and all Confidential Information and including know-how and trade secrets.

**“Person”** includes any natural person, company, partnership, association, trust, business, or other organisation or entity of any description and a Person’s legal personal representative(s), successors, assigns or substitutes.

**“Social Networking Site” and “Social Media Platform”** including but not limited to, Facebook, My Space, Bebo, Friendster, Flickr, You Tube, Twitter, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups, Whirlpool and other similar sites.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

*Industrial Relations Act 2016*  
*Information Privacy Act 2009*  
*Local Government Act 2009*  
*Local Government Regulation 2012*  
*Barcoo Shire Council Code of Conduct*

## ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

*Barcoo Shire Council Internet and Email Usage Policy*