

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

To provide a clear, professional, and respectful framework for the City of Karratha's (City) use of social media.

This policy outlines expectations for official and personal use of social media by Council Members, employees, and authorised users.

It reinforces the City's commitment to inclusive, responsive, and accountable communication with the community.

Definitions

Council Member means a person currently serving as an elected member of the Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Authorised User means an employee authorised by the CEO or their delegate to post or respond on behalf of the City on official platforms.

Employee includes any person working for the City in paid employment, volunteers, work experience participants, and consultants and contractors engaged in official duties for the City.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction about the City's services, decisions, staff, or conduct, where a response or resolution is expected.

Social Media includes platforms that enable content sharing, including but not limited to Facebook.

Social Media Coordinator (SMC) means the officer nominated by the CEO to oversee social media governance and moderation.

Policy Statement

The City of Karratha values community engagement. Social media provides the City with useful tools for promoting City services, encouraging feedback, communicating decisions, providing useful information and receiving requests for information.

The Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates and the Customer Service Charter are to be referred to as related policies.

1. Our Service Commitments

The City of Karratha is committed to inclusive, respectful, timely, and responsive service delivery. We will uphold the following commitments as we deliver services to our community:

- (a) Place-based: Tailoring policies and services to the unique needs, characteristics, and aspirations of local communities.
- (b) Culturally-informed: Respecting and uniting diverse cultural identities and values, including Traditional Owners, in planning and decision-making processes.
- (c) Inclusive: Ensuring equitable access to resources and services, fostering participation and belonging for all community members.

- (d) Sustainable: Balancing economic, environmental, and social factors to support long-term community wellbeing and resilience.
- (e) Dynamic: Embracing innovation and adaptability to address emerging challenges and opportunities.
- (f) Fair: Promoting fairness, transparency, and equity while challenging inequalities and upholding individual rights.

2. Principles of Social Media Use

All social media activity associated with the City must reflect these principles:

- (a) Inclusive & Respectful – Value diversity and engage respectfully with the community.
- (b) Accountable & Transparent – Clearly identify official communication and take responsibility for content.
- (c) Accurate & Timely – Ensure content is factual, up-to-date, and in line with City decisions.
- (d) Constructive & Empathetic – Support community connection and productive dialogue, acknowledging difficult issues and sensitive or controversial issues.

3. Official City Social Media Accounts

- (a) Creation of accounts must be approved by the CEO or delegate.
- (b) The SMC is responsible for platform setup, user authorisation, and recordkeeping.
- (c) Authorised Users must:
 - Complete social media training.
 - Follow moderation protocols and the City's administrative tone.
 - Not post personal views via City accounts.
- (d) City responses to community questions will aim to:
 - Provide public answers within 24 hours during business days.
 - Respond with empathy to feedback.
 - Direct sensitive or private issues to the City's formal contact channels.

4. Use by Council Members

Council Members:

- (a) May maintain personal or campaign accounts but must clearly distinguish personal views from those as a Council Member.
- (b) Must include a disclaimer on their profile such as: "These are my personal views and not those of the City of Karratha."
- (c) Will maintain a public, transparent and accountable profile when discussing matters related to the City of Karratha and its districts.
- (d) Encourage and support community participation in the City's community engagement processes.
- (e) Must not:
 - Disclose confidential information.
 - Comment adversely on Council decisions, other Council Members' conduct or City employees.
- (f) Must refer complaints, service issues, or feedback received via social media to the CEO using the Councillor Request process.

5. Use by Employees

When using social media on behalf of the City of Karratha or as part of your role:

- (a) Only authorised users may post content on official City channels.

- (b) Communications must be accurate, respectful, and in line with the City's branding and communication protocols.
- (c) Any content related to policy, Council decisions, or public matters must be approved by the relevant Manager or Director before publication.
- (d) Users must not post confidential, sensitive, or legally protected information.

While the City respects employees' rights to use social media privately:

- (a) Employees must not imply they are speaking on behalf of the City unless expressly authorised.
- (b) Personal posts must not disclose any confidential or work-related information.
- (c) Employees must not post content that could reasonably be perceived to damage the City's reputation, offend community standards, or bring the City into disrepute.
- (d) Any online conduct that breaches the Code of Conduct or policies (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination) may be subject to disciplinary action.
- (e) City employees must not use work time or resources for personal social media use unless authorised.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the City's Performance Management and Disciplinary Action policy. Serious breaches may lead to termination of employment and/or legal consequences.

6. Community Interaction and Moderation

- (a) Page rules will be published and visible on each City-operated platform.
- (b) The City reserves the right to delete or hide content that:
 - Is offensive, defamatory, or threatening.
 - Discloses private information.
 - Breaches laws or social media terms of service.
 - Promotes commercial, political, or religious messages without approval.
 - Repeat offenders may be blocked or banned at the discretion of the SMC.
 - Moderation actions must be recorded and follow due process.

7. Social Media During Emergencies

- (a) Only authorised spokespersons may post on official platforms.
- (b) Employees and Council Members may share, and must not contradict, emergency messaging from authorised agencies.
- (c) Sharing should be limited to verified, publicly available information from reliable sources.

8. Recordkeeping and Privacy

- (a) All social media communications, including posts and private messages, are public records under the *State Records Act 2000*.
- (b) Council Members have responsibility for archiving on their social media accounts and will maintain public profiles to allow content archiving.
- (c) Private messaging and direct messaging records will be submitted to the City for retention on an annual basis.
- (d) Council Members will advise the CEO of all social media accounts used in community discussions to allow content archiving.
- (e) Personal data must not be disclosed without consent of the individual or the CEO.

9. Personal Use of Social Media

Where employees or Council Members identify themselves in connection with the City, their conduct must reflect the values, policies and decisions of the City and Council.

Related Documents

Legislation & Local Laws	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>
Relevant Delegations	
Strategies & Plans	Council Plan 2025–2035
Related Council Policies	CG-15 Customer Service Charter [Draft] Community Complaints Management Policy Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
Procedures, Documents & Forms	Records Management Framework Internal Customer Service Guidelines Employee Code of Conduct Performance Management and Disciplinary Action

Policy Owner

Directorate	<i>Executive Services</i>
Department	<i>Marketing & Communications</i>

Review Management

Next review due:	<i>June 2027</i>
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Version Management

Version	Date	Council Resolution #	Description
<i>1.0</i>	<i>July 2025</i>	<i>TBD</i>	<i>New Policy Adopted</i>