



CHARTERS TOWERS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Exceptional Service for an Exceptional Community

STRATEGIC POLICY

NUMBER: STRAT-0004/ CEO
ACT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2009
POLICY TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected of persons when making reference to CTRC ("Council") on social media platforms, including social networking sites when the person is using a computer or hand held device not owned or controlled by Council. This policy also deals with acceptable use of the social media platforms during ordinary work hours.

2. COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY

2.1 This policy will commence from 1 December 2013. It replaces all other policies relating to access to social media platforms and social networking sites other than on computers or hand held devices owned or controlled by the Council (whether written or not).

3. APPLICATION OF POLICY

- 3.1 This policy applies to all people (**Users**) who contribute to external blogs and sites including social networking sites which identify themselves as being associated with Council.
- 3.2 This policy does not apply to personal use of social media platforms where the User makes no reference to Council or any of Council's employees, contractors, other Council officials, related entities or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council.
- 3.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. Nor does it form part of any other User's contract for service.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 In this policy:

- (a) " **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.
- (b) " **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



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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.

- (c) **“Computer”** includes all laptop computers and desk top computers.
- (d) **“Council Official”** includes employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors), administrators appointed under section 124 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (QLD), members of council committees, conduct reviewers, delegates of council, work experience employees and volunteers of the Council.
- (e) **“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.
- (f) **“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.
- (g) **“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.
- (h) **“Social Networking Site”** and **“Social Media Platform”** includes Facebook, My Space, Bebo, Friendster, Flickr, You Tube, Twitter, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups, Whirlpool and other similar sites.

5. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

- 5.1 When contributing to a Social Networking Site or accessing a Social Media Platform, a User must not identify him or herself as representing Council or any of Council’s related entities unless specifically authorised to do so in writing by CEO.
- 5.2 As it may be possible for any user of an external site to conduct a search that will identify any blogged comments about Council except where permitted in the policy otherwise, Users must **not** publish any material which identifies themselves as being associated with Council or a related entity of Council.
- 5.3 A User must not disparage or make any adverse comment about Council, any policy or decision of Council or any of Council’s related entities, employees, contractors and other Council officials or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council.
- 5.4 A User must not harass, bully, intimidate or threaten another employee, contractor or other Council official (or a person the User knows to be a relative or associate of a Council official) when contributing to a Social Networking Site or accessing a Social Media Platform.
- 5.5 A User may only disclose publicly available information and must not disclose or caused to be disclosed Confidential Information.
- 5.6 A User must respect copyright laws and attribute work to the original author/source wherever possible.



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- 5.7 A User must ensure that any information he or she posts about Council or a related entity of Council is informed and factually accurate.
- 5.8 A User must use a disclaimer when referring to Council or a related entity of the Council or a Council official. Such a disclaimer is *“the views expressed in this post are mine only and do not necessarily reflect the views of Council”*
- 5.9 A User must not transmit or send Council’s documents or emails or text messages (in any format) to any external parties or organisations unless expressly authorised to do so.
- 5.10 If the User subsequently discovers a mistake in their blog or social networking entry, they are required to immediately inform the CEO and then take steps authorised by CEO to correct the mistake. All alterations should indicate the date on which the alteration was made.

Use of Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms during ordinary work hours

- 5.11 All users are permitted to have access to Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms during ordinary work hours for a limited and reasonable personal use. Councils ordinary work hours are generally 8.10am to 4.30pm.
- 5.12 Using Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms for personal use must not impact upon the User’s work performance or Council resources or violate this policy or any other Council policy.
- 5.13 Users must not inappropriately use Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms. Inappropriate use includes but is not limited to:
 - a) using Social Networking Sites and Social Media Platforms to send, post or otherwise publish:
 - i. obscene messages
 - ii. racially and/or sexually harassing messages and,
 - iii. sexually explicit material

6. REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 Users must not represent or indicate that they represent Council or any of its related entities unless specifically authorised to do so in writing by CEO.
- 6.2 If a User is authorised to represent the Council or any of its related entities, the User must disclose that he or she is an employee, contractor or other Council official of the Council or a related entity and what the User’s role and accountabilities are.
- 6.3 A User authorised to represent the Council or a related entity must ensure that:
 - (a) Any content he or she publishes is factually accurate and complies with relevant policies of Council;
 - (b) He or she only comments on topics that fall within his or her area of responsibility at Council;
 - (c) He or she does not post 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;



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- (d) He or she does not disclose another person's personal information;
- (e) He or she respects copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, occupational health and safety, employment and other applicable laws;
- (f) He or she does not create any legal or contractual obligations on behalf of Council unless expressly authorised by Council; and
- (g) He or she does not send or cause to be sent chain or SPAM emails or text messages in any format.

7. WARNING

7.1 Apart from 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.

8. ENFORCEMENT

8.1 Users must comply with the requirements of this policy. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment (or, for persons other than employees, the termination or non-renewal of contractual arrangements).

8.2 Other disciplinary action that may be taken includes, but is not limited to, issuing a warning, suspension or disconnection of access to all or part of the Council's Computer Network whether permanently or on a temporary basis.

Variations

The Council reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

Associated Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Harassment policy

POLICY VERSION AND REVISION INFORMATION

Policy Authorised by: Mark Crawley

Original issue: 01/12/2013

Title: CEO

Policy maintained by: Dennis McLeod

Current version: 1

Title: Manager People and Culture

Review date: 1/08/2014



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COUNCIL OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge:

- *receiving the Council Policy;*
- *that I should comply with the policy; and*
- *that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment.*

Your name:

Signed:

Date:
