

FILE NO: PSC2014-02845
TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES
OWNER: COMMUNICATIONS SECTION MANAGER

Council's Social Media Accounts

Port Stephens Council (Council) uses various social media platforms to share community news and information, provide a forum for the community to engage with Council in an informal manner and showcase our region to wider audiences as a beautiful place to live, work and visit.

We view our social media platforms as another forum for the community to have a direct conversation with us and we value the insights shared by members of our community.

When necessary, Council will respond to enquiries and direct messages on social media platforms, and these responses may be relatively informal. If you are seeking a formal response, please send your request to us in writing via email, letter or via our website.

Our social media platforms are monitored during business hours, Monday to Friday.

Social Media Guidelines

Council has Social Media Guidelines in place to safeguard users of our social media platforms and Council staff operating those accounts. The Guidelines outline expectations for online behaviour and the actions Council will take if these Guidelines are breached.

By engaging with Council on any of our social media platforms, you will be considered to accept these Guidelines.

OUR GUIDELINES

Treat us how you would like to be treated

Our social media platforms are monitored by real people. Please consider that your comments will be seen by another person behind the screen and may have a direct impact.

Be polite and respectful

Like the wider internet, our social media platforms are a public space. Please engage in a polite manner and be respectful of potential audiences, contributors, and Council staff. We encourage dialogue and debate, but personal attacks on members of the community, Council Staff, Councillors, or the Mayor will not be tolerated.

Do not:

- Breach the terms of use of any social media platform that hosts Council's social media channels;
- Abuse, harass, stalk, threaten, defame, attack, humiliate, intimidate, or otherwise violate the legal rights of other contributors and/or Council staff;
- Post content which:
 - is insulting, threatening, or hateful towards a certain group of people, including Council staff or Councillors;
 - is libellous, offensive, obscene, vulgar, or violent;
 - you do not have the legal right to post (eg material that infringes the copyright or other intellectual property rights of another person or material which is confidential);
 - is misleading, deceptive, or contains false information (ie information that has since been updated, has not been supplied, or has not been cleared by Council) about current services, facilities or projects;
 - contains personal website and/or email addresses, telephone numbers, or any other personally identifiable information relating to someone other than yourself;
 - identifies staff members or their family by name;
 - incites hatred on the base of race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, socio-economic status or any other personal characteristics;
 - advertises or offer to sell any goods or services for any commercial purpose unless you have Council's written consent to do so;
 - uses an account that obscures your identity; and spams Council's social media platforms or website by sending multiple copies or versions of comments or correspondence.

Disclaimer

Council has made a reasonable effort to ensure that the information contained on our online platforms, including social media accounts, is current and accurate at the time the account was created or last modified. Council makes no guarantee of any kind, and no legal contract between Council and any person or entity is to be inferred from the use of or information on any social media channel. Council gives no warranty and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of information found on its channels. No user should rely on the information, but instead should check for confirmation with the originating or authorising body.

Council reserves the right at any time to make such changes as it deems appropriate to that information. Any links to external websites, applications and/or information provided on Council's online platforms, including social media accounts, are provided as courtesy. They should not be construed as an endorsement by Council of the content or condition or views of the linked materials. Any advertisement that may appear when viewing our accounts is not endorsed by Council, nor are we directly affiliated with the advertisement unless stated otherwise.

Employees of Port Stephens Council

Employees of Council are required to adhere to our Code of Conduct. Only employees who are authorised officers may use Council's social media platforms as official communication tools on behalf of Council.

Contributions by Council's employees with personal profiles/accounts are permitted to engage with Council on our various social media platforms as an individual, as long as it is something unrelated to their area of responsibility and they declare their views are theirs alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Council. In posting comments any employee acknowledges and agrees that in doing so any post is bound by Council's Code of Conduct Policy.

Third Party Content

From time to time Council may choose to link to, republish, or share third party content, or content that links to third party material. This does not necessarily constitute endorsement by Port Stephens Council.