



CP6 – COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

MANAGEMENT PRACTICE: COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

DELEGATION: N/A

OBJECTIVE

This policy establishes protocols for the Shire of Jerramungup's official communications with our community to ensure the Shire of Jerramungup is professionally and accurately represented and to maximise a positive public perception of the Shire.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. Communications initiated or responded to by the Shire of Jerramungup with our community; and
2. Council Members when making comment in either their Shire of Jerramungup role or in a personal capacity.

DEFINITIONS

'Social Media' – Social media is a tool for communication and sharing of information.

'Inappropriate Content' –

- a) is offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false or misleading;
- b) is promotional, soliciting or commercial in nature;
- c) is unlawful or incites others to break the law;
- d) is overtly sexual or explicit;
- e) is threatening or describing violent events or behaviours;
- f) refers to or encourages the use of illegal drugs;
- g) is harassing or hateful to an organisation or person, including the Shire of Jerramungup, our employees, stakeholders, associates and suppliers;
- h) contains information which may compromise individual or community safety or security;
- i) is repetitive material copied and pasted or duplicated;
- j) promotes or opposes any person campaigning for election to the Council, appointment to official office, or any ballot;
- k) violates intellectual property rights or the legal ownership of interests or another party; and
- l) contains inappropriate content or comments at the discretion of the Shire.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Official Communications

The purposes of the Shire's official communications include:

- Sharing information required by law to be publicly available.
- Sharing information that is of interest and benefit to the Community.
- Promoting Shire of Jerramungup events and services.
- Promoting Public Notices and community consultation/engagement opportunities.
- Answering questions and responding to requests for information relevant to the role of the Shire.
- Receiving and responding to community feedback, ideas, comments, compliments and complaints.

The Shire's official communications will be consistent with relevant legislation, policies, standards and the positions adopted by the Council. Our communications will always be respectful and professional.

The Shire will use a combination of different communication modes to suit the type of information to be communicated and the requirements of the community or specific audience, including:

- Website;
- Advertising and promotional materials;
- Media releases prepared for the Shire President, to promote specific Shire of Jerramungup positions;
- Social media; and
- Community newsletters, letter drops and other modes of communications undertaken by the Shire's Administration at the discretion of the CEO.

2. Speaking on behalf of the Shire of Jerramungup

The Shire President is the official spokesperson for the Shire of Jerramungup and may represent the Shire in official communications, including; speeches, comment, print, electronic and social media.

[s.2.8(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1995]

Where the Shire President is unavailable, the Deputy Shire President may act as the spokesperson.

[s.2.9 and s.5.34 of the Local Government Act 1995]

The CEO may speak on behalf of the Shire of Jerramungup, where authorised to do so by the Shire President.

[s.5.41(f) of the Local Government Act 1995]

The provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* essentially direct that only the Shire President, or the CEO if authorised, may speak on behalf of the Local Government. It is respectful and courteous to the office of Shire President to refrain from commenting publicly, particularly on recent decisions or contemporary issues, until such time as the Shire President has had opportunity to speak on behalf of the Shire of Jerramungup.

Communications by Council Members and employees, whether undertaken in an authorised official capacity or as a personal communication, must not:

- bring the Shire of Jerramungup into disrepute,
 - compromise the person's effectiveness in their role with the Shire,
 - compromise the effectiveness of the Shire of Jerramungup,
 - imply the Shire's endorsement of personal views,
 - imply the Council Member or employee is speaking on behalf of the Shire, unless authorised to do so;
- or
- disclose, without authorisation, confidential information.

Social media accounts or unsecured website forums must not be used to transact meetings which relate to the official business of the Shire of Jerramungup.

Council member communications must comply with the Shire of Jerramungup Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates and the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*.

3. Responding to Media Enquiries

All enquiries from the Media for an official Shire of Jerramungup comment, whether made to an individual Council Member or Employee, must be directed to the CEO or a person authorised by the CEO. Information will be coordinated to support the Shire President or CEO (where authorised) to make an official response on behalf of the Shire of Jerramungup.

Council Members may make comments to the media in a personal capacity – refer to clause 7.1 below.

4. Website

The Shire of Jerramungup will maintain an official website, as our community's on-line resource to access to the Shire's official communications.

5. Social Media

The Shire of Jerramungup uses Social Media to facilitate interactive information sharing and to provide responsive feedback to our community. Social Media will not however, be used by the Shire to communicate or respond to matters that are complex or relate to a person's or entity's private affairs.

The Shire of Jerramungup maintains the following Social Media accounts:

- Social networks, including Facebook.

The Shire of Jerramungup may also post and contribute to Social Media hosted by others, so as to ensure that the Shire's strategic objectives are appropriately represented and promoted.

The Shire actively seeks ideas, questions and feedback from our community however, we expect participants to behave in a respectful manner. The Shire of Jerramungup will moderate its Social Media accounts to address and where necessary delete content deemed to be Inappropriate Content as soon as the Shire becomes aware or as soon as practicable once notified.

Where a third party contributor to a Shire of Jerramungup's social media account is identified as posting content which is deleted in accordance with the above, the Shire may at its complete discretion block that contributor for a specific period of time or permanently.

5.1.1 Shire President and Elected Member Social Media Official Accounts

The Shire of Jerramungup supports the Shire President and Elected Members in using official social media account/s to assist them in fulfilling their role as elected officials.

Where an Elected Member chooses to use social media in fulfilling their role under section 2.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, he/she will moderate their own social media accounts to address and where necessary delete Inappropriate Content, with the exception of b), i), j) and l) as identified in the definition as soon as the Elected Member becomes aware or as soon as practicable once notified,

These official Shire of Jerramungup accounts must not be used by the Shire President or Elected Members for personal communications.

5.1.2 Use of Social Media in Emergency Management and Response

The Shire of Jerramungup will use Facebook to communicate and advise our community regarding Emergency Management.

6. Record Keeping and Freedom of Information

Official communications undertaken on behalf of the Shire of Jerramungup, including on the Shire's Social Media accounts and third party social media accounts must be created and retained as local government records in accordance with the Shire's Record Keeping Plan and the *State Records Act 2000*. These records are also subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Council Member communications that relate to their role as a Council Member are subject to the requirements of the Shire's Record Keeping Plan and the *State Records Act 2000*. Council Members are responsible for transferring these records to the Shire's administration. Council Member records are also subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

7. Personal Communications

Personal communications and statements made privately; in conversation, written, recorded emailed, texted or posted in personal social media, have the potential to be made public, whether intended or not.

On the basis that personal or private communications may be shared or become public at some point in the future, Council Members should ensure that their personal or private communications do not breach the

requirements of this policy, the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates and the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*.

7.1 Council Member Statements on Shire Matters

A Council Member may choose to make a personal statement publicly on a matter related to the business of the Shire of Jerramungup.

Any public statement made by a Council Member, whether made in a personal capacity or in their Local Government representative capacity, must:

1. Clearly state that the comment or content is a personal view only, which does not necessarily represent the views of Shire of Jerramungup;
2. Be made with reasonable care and diligence;
3. Be lawful, including avoiding contravention of; copyright, defamation, discrimination or harassment laws;
4. Be factually correct;
5. Avoid damage to the reputation of the local government;
6. Not reflect adversely on a decision of the Council;
7. Not reflect adversely on the character or actions of another Council Member or Employee;
8. Maintain a respectful and positive tone and not use offensive or objectionable expressions in reference to any Council Member, Employee or community member.

A Council Member who is approached by the media for a personal statement may request the assistance of the Chief Executive Officer.

Comments which become public and which breach this policy, the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates or the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*, may constitute a minor breach of the *Local Government Act 1995* and may be referred for investigation.

Relevant Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1992</i>
Related Documents:	Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
Related Local Law:	N/A
Related Policies:	AP4 – Records Management Policy
Adopted:	23 March 2022
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