## Template Resource

# Social Media Policy

### Implementation notes:

This template is designed to be adapted as an internal document for news publishers, to set expectations across teams and contributors on the use of company social media forums and provide guidance for best practice measures to protect organisational reputation in social media spaces.

### Policy Template:

#### Purpose

This policy outlines how (Publisher) represents itself online and who speaks on behalf of the organisation in online spaces.

Social media presents an opportunity to promote (publisher) content, share information relevant to our community, inform readers of our activities and achievements, collect feedback from our audience, and drive community engagement in our news products.

It is important for all (publisher) employees to be aware that much of the information exchanged within social media networks, online or otherwise, falls within the public domain, and the line drawn between what is considered to be personal and public is not always clear. It is also important to remember that information posted on social network sites can be easily traced and can generally be accessed at any time.

This document provides guidance to staff, contributors and volunteers working with (publisher) regarding minimum standards for tone, expectations, and safety online.

#### Social Media Account Ownership

The ownership of all social media and other online accounts created by (publisher) remains property of (publisher) unless contractually transferred as part of the sale of business or other commercial arrangement. Employees and volunteers may be required to undertake administrative functions on behalf of (publisher), but control of the online forum, its contacts, and its direction remains with (publisher).

#### Policy

Responsibility for posting content and/or contributing to online discussions under the (publisher/masthead) brand rests with (editor/nominated employee) and can be delegated to other staff where required. The (editor/nominated employee) will identify and approve staff to be given posting rights to (publisher) social media platforms. Employees may not invite direct participation from any persons in the administration or content of our sites without written approval from (editor/nominated leadership).

Any persons given administrative access to accounts and, therefore, capacity to post under our brand, should do so using the principles outlined below and adhere to our Online Community - Terms of Use at all times. Be conscious that you are representing a professional organisation, and behavioural expectations are equal to engagement in the workplace.

Social media sites should be moderated at least once per day. Any posts that contradict our Terms of Use should be removed and appropriate action taken to prevent repeat offences where appropriate. Responsibility for this task rests with (editor/nominated employee). Responses to questions and comments will depend on daily capacity.

Should a PR or security crisis emerge through our social media platforms, employees must notify (editor/nominated employee) immediately. (Editor/nominated employee) will be responsible for identifying an appropriate response relevant to the scope of the crisis and will communicate those actions internally.

#### Principles

When posting or contributing to online discussions under the (publisher) brand, the following principles will be upheld:

1. Protection – at all times posts and online interaction should protect the (masthead/publisher) brand and values, the privacy of our sources and information, any internal company information (including posts relating to your employment), and yourself as an individual. Our people and our community are our priority, so our online spaces need to be safe for all participants and for our business;
2. Be transparent and honest about who you are – no posting under pseudonyms, false questions on our sites, or spying on our competitors. Ensure relevant attributions are noted for text, video, and image production. We are proud to represent (publisher) and seek to maintain audience trust in all of our online activities. This includes transparency of commercial postings, noted as paid partnerships to promote reader awareness;
3. Obey the law – including copyright, defamation, and intellectual property laws;
4. When in doubt, do not post – we want to maintain a friendly and professional tone in our online spaces. If you’re worried something might not meet those objectives or our company values, leave it out. Play nice online;
5. Be conscious of mixing your business and personal lives – don’t post your holiday photos to the (publisher) site, or your personal opinions. Also, be wary that the views you express online in your own name reflect on (publisher) due to our public affiliation. As such, do not post content in any online space that conflicts with our company values (eg. hate speech, discrimination, vitriol, harassment). Respectful disagreement and reasonable criticism are acceptable, bullying and racism are not; and
6. Share great stories – that’s what we’re here to do. You are welcome to share (publisher) content in a positive and attributed manner through your own networks.

#### Personal use

It is expected that employees will utilise social media in the course of their work for (publisher) to research stories, source leads, promote content, and connect with our community. This will likely require logging in under your personal account and therefore a quick scroll of your personal feed is anticipated. However, time spent engaging in social media for personal reasons should be limited and ideally undertaken during short breaks.

#### Related policies

* Online community – Terms of Use (link)
* *Relevant HR policies*