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Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1999 Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 Copyright Act 1968 State Records Act 1997 Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i>
Relevant Policies:	<i>Code of Conduct for Elected Members Code of Conduct for Employees Public Consultation Policy Media Contact Policy Records Management Policy Privacy Policy Public Consultation Policy Electronic Communication Facilities Policy</i>

1. Purpose

Social media will allow the District Council of Robe to keep the community informed on a timely basis.

District Council of Robe recognises the opportunities that social media provides to engage in meaningful communication with the broader community. This can complement and enhance existing communication, customer service and consultation methods, and further improve access to, and delivery of, key services.

The policy aims to:

- 1.1 Promote effective and productive community engagement through social media
- 1.2 Provide guidance about the appropriate use of social media tools at District Council of Robe
- 1.3 Reduce the likelihood of miscommunication or inappropriate communications
- 1.4 Help District Council of Robe manage new challenges associated with social media such as speed and immediacy, record keeping, privacy and security
- 1.5 Provide clarity about roles and responsibilities in relation to use, approval and monitoring

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- 2.1 Council employees authorised to use social media on behalf of Council.
- 2.2 All current and future social media tools and channels identified by Council administration and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 2.3 All Council employees, Elected Members and Volunteers' personal use of social media where it may impact upon the Council's reputation.
- 2.4 Social Media includes web-based and mobile technologies/platforms including, but not limited to:
 - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube

3. Policy Statement

Council encourages the appropriate and professional use of social media to aid the efficient and effective conduct of Council business.

Social media is recognised as an important channel, used in conjunction with traditional methods, to communicate with the community and enhance delivery of services.

At all times, use of social media should be done in a professional manner, in accordance with relevant policies and legislation, in particular, Council's Code of Conduct Policy.

3.1 Key principles of Social Media

- Maintain accounts for target audiences where positive social media engagement might be most successful.
- Regularly communicate and promote Council news, initiatives and events
- Raise the profile and public awareness of council business, services, public resources and facilities.
- Increase information sharing from Council to the community, especially with different audiences who may not receive messages through traditional channels, such as young people and people who are non-residents.
- Strengthen Council's reputation as being responsive and transparent.
- Involve the community in strategic direction and planning processes by promoting community consultation projects and engagement opportunities to seek public opinion.
- Promote organisations and events that are located with the council that may be of interest to the community.

3.2 Usage

District Council of Robe will use social media as follows:

- Don't make statements or forward, share or upload content that is malicious, defamatory or may negatively impact the reputation of another.
- Be mindful of anti-discrimination laws and do not publish statements or information which may be discriminatory.
- Be accurate, constructive, helpful and informative, and correct any errors as soon as practicable.
- Only publish content on Council's social media channels that is apolitical, in line with official Council positions and District Council of Robe's values, and free from personal opinions, beliefs and political views.
- Council staff using private social media channels outside of work hours to comment about Council related matters should clearly identify their comments as their own

personal opinions, be accurate and factual and not disparage Council, Councillors, employees or contractors etc.

- Council members should use social media in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct. Generally, Council members should not express personal opinions on Council decisions or Council business nor be critical of the Council. If it is not possible to separate official Council positions from personal opinions, Council members should consider using a formal disclaimer to separate interests.
- Only use social media channels in the manner for which you have been authorised and do not commit Council to actions or undertakings.
- Leave formal statements and announcements to the official spokespeople and if you are unsure, check with your supervisor.
- Refer any media enquiries via social media or posts about potentially sensitive/political issues to the Chief Executive Officer for a response in line with Council's Media Policy.
- Only discuss publicly available information and maintain the confidentiality of internal discussions, confidential decisions of Council, and personal or private information about Councillors, employees or third parties.
- Seek permission from anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing via any form of social media and if asked to remove materials do so as soon as practicable.
- Only use or reproduce copyright material, or the intellectual property of others, including applications, sound recordings (speeches, songs), footage (video), graphics (graphs, charts and logos), images, artwork, photographs, publications or music if you have permission from the creator or owner.
- Appropriately monitor any social media sites created and ensure they can be easily edited, improved or removed.

Employees are to ensure is the following content is not placed on Council social media channels:

- Abusive, profane or sexual language
- Discriminatory material in relation to a person or group based on age, colour, creed, disability, family status, gender identity, nationality, marital status, parental status, political opinion/affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, race or social origin, religious beliefs/activity, responsibilities, sex or sexual orientation
- Illegal material or materials designed to encourage law breaking
- Materials that could compromise Council, employee or system safety
- Materials which would breach applicable laws (defamation, privacy, trade practices, copyright, financial rules and regulations, fair use, trademarks)
- Confidential information about Council or third parties
- Material that would offend contemporary standards of taste and decency
- Material which would bring the Council into disrepute
- Personal details or references to Council members, Council staff or third parties, which may be inconsistent with Council's Privacy Policy
- Spam, meaning the distribution of unsolicited bulk electronic messages
- Statements which may be considered to be bullying or harassment

If you have any doubt about applying the provisions of this policy, check with Chief Executive Officer before using social media to communicate. Depending upon the nature of the issue and potential risk, it may also be appropriate to consider seeking legal advice.

3.3 Principles of Use

The following practices will be adhered to whilst using social media:

- The use of responsive 'comments' will not be allowed on any of Council's social media sites
- The use of 'messages' will not be allowed on any of Council's social media sites
- The social media sites will be used as an informative basis only, with no formal consultation to occur through any site
- Link to more information on Council's website or relevant external websites will be used where possible
- A minimum of one post per week must be published

3.4 Management

Approval

Only create social media pages/sites representing Council with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer.

Security

To protect from unauthorised use of Council's social media channels, login information should be kept secure and changed at regular intervals. A copy of all necessary passwords or login codes for various sites to be kept with the Senior Finance and Rates Officer in case of staff absence or departure and when changes are required.

Monitoring

Council's social media channels should be regularly monitored and maintained to ensure appropriate use. Where necessary, keep formal records of social media activity in line with Council's Information Records Policy.

Council and non-Council social media channels should be monitored for information, research and insight into issues circulating in the community and/or matters that impact on the municipality, its operations or reputation.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

Use of Council's social media channels should be reviewed quarterly to ensure they are achieving business objectives and to seek opportunities for further improvement. This includes a review of quantitative data (engagement, audience make-up, click throughs to Council websites etc).

4 Authorised users of Social Media

The following Council employees are authorised to post communications and monitor content posted on Council's social media channels:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Customer Service Officer
- Senior Finance and Rates Officer

Employees entrusted as administrators of Social Media sites must conduct themselves properly and are required to act in accordance with Council policies and procedures, with failure to do so resulting in disciplinary action being taken.

5 Personal Use of Social Media

As representatives of Council, Employees and Elected Members are not permitted to post details, photos or comment on Council activities on social media without first obtaining the approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

6 Adherence to policy

- Council will actively monitor social media for relevant contributions that impact on the Council, its operations and reputation, and remove, where necessary, content that violates this policy or any associated policies.
- Non-compliance with the Social Media Policy by Council representatives will be managed through the relevant Code of Conduct and disciplinary systems.