

POLICY		Responsible Department	Corporate Governance & Strategy
		Original Adoption Date	13.09.2016
		Current Adoption Date	26.02.2026
		Date of Next Review	26.02.2029

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA	
Latest Review Changes	<p>A review of the existing Media Policy and Social Media Policy determined that the two documents substantially overlap in purpose, scope and operational application. These policies were consolidated into a single Communications and Media Policy</p> <p>Review and update references to job titles</p>
Previous Council Reviews	13.09.16, 31.07.19, 28.07.21

Applicable Legislation

<p>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</p> <p>Roxby Downs (Indenture Ratification) Act 1982 (SA)</p> <p>Copyright Act 1968</p> <p>Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)</p> <p>Defamation Act 2005 (SA)</p> <p>Fair Trading Act 1987 (SA)</p> <p>Fair Work Act 1994 (SA)</p> <p>Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)</p> <p>Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012</p> <p>Spam Act 2003 (Cth)</p> <p>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</p> <p>State Records Act 1997 (SA)</p> <p>Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)</p>
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Related Policies

<p>Council's Public Consultation Policy determines the nature and extent of community engagement required for this matter</p> <p>Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees</p> <p>Employee Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>ICT Acceptable Use Policy</p> <p>Records Management Policy</p> <p>Privacy Policy</p>
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Related Procedures

<p>Employment Contracts</p> <p>Communications and Media Procedure</p>

Reference Documents

Communications & Engagement Strategy 2026-2030 – Under Development

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1. PURPOSE

Council recognises that traditional media and social media provide opportunities for Roxby Council to proactively communicate and engage with its community and stakeholders in a professional, timely and positive manner.

This policy formalises Council's position on the creation and dissemination of official content through media channels and applies to all traditional and digital spaces where people may comment, contribute, create, forward, post, upload and share official content on, as individuals or on behalf of Roxby Council.

The policy is not intended to curtail (nor be construed as curtailing) an individual's right to free speech or the use of traditional media or social media to publish information in their personal capacity.

As it is not possible to expressly refer to or list all traditional media outlets and social media platforms, the absence of any reference does not limit the application of this policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Authorised employee	A content creator who has been approved and trained to post on Social Media on behalf of Council.
CEO	Refers to the Chief Executive Officer (including their delegate) of Roxby Council.
Community	People who live, work, study, conduct business and use the facilities or public places in Roxby Downs.
Content	Words, imagery, videos or web links published to a social media account.
Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager	Refers to an employee who shares responsibility for liaising with and distributing media material through different platforms.
Employee(s)	A person that works for Council and includes employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience placements, students or any other person who has access to Council's electronic systems and services either in a permanent or temporary role.
Media	Media channel employees, such as reporters and editors.
Media channels	The distribution stream(s) for different media material. These can be mainstream channels (e.g. newspapers and website) or social media (e.g. Facebook and Instagram).
Media representative(s)	An employee identified by the Chief Executive Officer to represent the organisation due to their expertise in a specific area.
Publish	The uploading of content to a social media account, such as a status update, comment, post, tweet, photo, video or link.
Roxby Council	The Municipal Council of Roxby Downs, staff, policies, services, suppliers, stakeholders, or any other council related issues.
Social media	Web-based tools and smartphone applications that allow users to easily connect and communicate with each other as well as publish, share, and discuss

	information content such as text, photos, video, and audio. Social media websites are characterised by interaction, collaboration, and user-generated content, with a focus on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities.
Social media account	Includes an account, profile, page, group, chat group, channel, platform, company, presence or avatar (a graphical representation of a user or their alter-ego/character) used for Social Media.
Social media platform	Means a third-party online tool used for communication, promotion and conversation including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.
Social media publisher	Staff authorised to create, publish and manage Social Media content on behalf of Roxby Council.
Staff	Any person carrying out duties or performing tasks for and on behalf of Roxby Council whether they are paid or unpaid, including employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, students or any other persons that are involved with Roxby Council.

3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY

Local Government Act 1999

Section 58 under the Act specifies that the Chief Executive Officer is Council's principal spokesperson, unless otherwise resolved by the Council.

This policy is based on a model policy developed by the Local Government Association.

4. POLICY

Council requires a professional approach when liaising with the media and the community, whether it is through traditional mechanisms or online. Traditional media and social media will be used as a coordinated medium for strategic external communications, with the aim to:

- a) inform, communicate and initiate community involvement and discussion
- b) extend the reach of our communications and direct the community to Council information
- c) provide a convenient, accessible and flexible form of service delivery, and
- d) build and enhance relationships with the community and stakeholders.

When representing Council in traditional media or social media, employees must:

- a) act with honesty, integrity and transparency
- b) use Council information and resources appropriately
- c) not put forward their own personal commentary or opinions, and
- d) not present themselves as official representatives without appropriate authorisation and training.

Use of traditional media and social media must not intentionally:

- a) damage Council's reputation
- b) disclose sensitive or confidential Council information
- c) use Council's intellectual property or copyrighted materials or otherwise reproduce material in a manner that gives rise to breach of copyright, and

- d) communicate offensive or defamatory information or commentary – particularly about Council, or employees.

Most Council decisions, except those deemed confidential, are public documents and public property which are accessible on our website www.roxbydowns.sa.gov.au

Confidential employee matters and matters discussed at an 'in confidence' Council session (subject to the resolution of the 'in confidence' Council session) cannot be conveyed externally in any form.

5. MEDIA

5.1. Administration

All traditional media and social media are administered by the Corporate Governance & Strategy Team. This ensures Roxby Council is able to monitor and respond to issues and provide a consistent and professional message and image.

5.2. Traditional media

As delegated by the Chief Executive Officer, the Corporate Governance & Strategy team is responsible for handling all media enquiries (including photograph and filming requests) and providing prompt and professional response in partnership with the authorised media representative(s).

5.3. Media enquiry

When a media enquiry is received, it is to be directed to the Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Governance & Strategy team, who will determine the appropriate method and level of response. Responses may be in the form of a media release, email, written or verbal statement.

Employees must also advise the Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Governance & Strategy team where an event or issue is likely to generate significant public and/or media interest. This ensures Council is prepared to respond to public and media enquiries.

5.4. Proactive media

Where a proactive news story is generated by the Corporate Governance & Strategy team, the appropriate representative will work with the relevant people to ensure information is correct and appropriately approved.

If an employee identifies a news opportunity that they intend to release as an official communication, it must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Corporate Governance & Strategy team before any information is released.

The Corporate Governance & Strategy team, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and/or relevant Manager/Lead will determine whether to proceed with the opportunity, and if so, how best to engage the media. The decision will be based on:

- i. Alignment with Council's Strategic Plan & Communications and Engagement Strategy
- ii. Timeliness
- iii. Newsworthiness
- iv. Audience reach and relevance
- v. Media appeal
- vi. Competing priorities

Any media release requires the approval of the Administrator and Chief Executive Officer prior to being issued. The appropriate Manager/Lead of the area under discussion must also provide prior approval. During this process, both the Administrator, Chief Executive Officer and the Manager/Lead can request changes to content and representation.

Copies of every media release issued must be sent to the Senior Leadership Team.

5.5. Principal spokespersons

The principal spokespersons for Roxby Council are Council's Administrator and the Chief Executive Officer, unless authority is delegated, and another spokesperson nominated to act in place of or represent him/her. This applies to both traditional media and social media.

In accordance with Section 58(2) of the *Local Government Act 1999*, the principal spokesperson of Council is the Chief Executive Officer, in lieu of the Administrator. In the absence of the Chief Executive Officer, the acting principal spokesperson should be nominated in the following order:

- i. The Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager.
- ii. A member of the appropriate area of the Senior Leadership Team, and

Council's Administrator as the principal spokesperson is responsible for all political, policy matters and decisions. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for responding to all overarching organisational and operational matters and decisions.

The principal spokesperson is responsible for communicating information that is consistent with the views and decisions of Council.

The departmental Manager/Lead is the default media representative for a specific area. Following a media enquiry, the Corporate Governance & Strategy Team will liaise directly with the relevant media representatives or employee to generate an appropriate response.

It is the responsibility of the media representative or staff member to ensure the accuracy of their information and to obtain all relevant departmental approvals prior to responding to the Corporate Governance & Strategy team. Responses to media enquiries must be made within one working day.

If the media representative is not available to respond to an urgent media enquiry, the Corporate Governance & Strategy Team can decide who is the next most appropriate and available person to approach.

While media representatives have been authorised to represent Council, they must not comment on areas outside of their expertise.

All media representatives will undergo training or guidance relevant to the expertise required.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1. Rationale

Social Media has become an integral part of how we communicate with each other in a modern world. Social Media provides Roxby Council with an unprecedented opportunity to safely connect with our community, engage in meaningful conversations and dialogue, and keep people up to date with the latest news, events and initiatives. Social Media contributes to the achievement of the following strategic objectives as outlined in the Roxby Council Strategic Plan 2021-2025:

- LG3** We will use a range of communication tools to improve how information is shared, how we engage with our community and understand its needs by seeking feedback.
- CV5** We will recognise and celebrate our community's achievements.
- ES4** We will educate and support local residents in making environmentally responsible decisions.
- ED1** We will build economic networks and relationships based on issues of common interest with the local business sector, Regional Development Australia, other Councils and State and Federal Governments.
- CC1** We will proactively communicate mechanisms and opportunities for community and stakeholder engagement, comment, input and involvement in Council decision-making processes.

- CC2** We will provide targeted, relevant and consistent communication in a timely and professional manner.
- CC3** We will communicate Council's brand, function and identity, facilitating an enhanced understanding of the role of Council.
- CC4** We will promote the Roxby Downs township to the community, potential residents and visitors.

6.2. Statement

Roxby Council uses Social Media as a safe and effective tool to engage and communicate with the community and reach targeted audiences on specific issues, events, and initiatives.

All Social Media usage and content published by or on behalf Roxby Council:

- complies with third-party platform terms of service and community guidelines, and all local, state, and federal laws and regulations;
- is accurate, relevant and appropriate; and
- upholds the highest standards of behaviour, integrity and professionalism.

6.3. Objectives

The primary objectives of this Policy are:

- To increase community access to Council and Council's access to the community.
- To communicate quickly and safely with the community and reach targeted audiences on specific issues, events, and initiatives.
- To actively engage with the community and improve relationships with residents, partners and stakeholders.

6.4. Social Media Policy Scope and Implementation

6.4.1. Scope

This Policy applies to all Social Media activity and accounts for Roxby Council and its business units.

This Policy also comes into effect if the personal use of Social Media by Staff:

- references Roxby Council or relates to Council business or operations
- contains inappropriate content (refer Staff Use of Social Media)
- damages or defames (or has the potential to damage or defame) Roxby Council, Council Staff, volunteers or contractors

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Social Media Procedure and applicable Code of Conduct.

6.4.2. Implementation

Roxby Council uses social media to:

- Communicate and promote Roxby Council news, initiatives, and events; and actively listen to community views.
- Raise the profile and public awareness of Council business, services, public resources, and facilities.
- Quickly respond to relevant customer enquiries and provide timely referrals to other communication methods if needed, particularly other digital tools and online services such as the website.

- Increase access between Council and the community, especially with different audiences who may not receive messages through traditional channels.
- Strengthen Council's reputation as being responsive, consultative, participatory, and transparent.
- Develop and manage an online community that is a safe and respectful place where members are encouraged to communicate and interact with Roxby Council and each other, without any defamatory or inappropriate content.
- Involve the community in strategic direction and planning processes by promoting community consultation projects and opportunities to seek public opinion.
- Identify issues circulating in the community.
- Promote local businesses, organisations, and events located within the local and surrounding catchment area that may be of interest to the local community.
Note: Promotion is at the absolute discretion of the Roxby Council.
- Promote Roxby Council's Social Media Accounts and other Council accounts by sharing posts or mentioning other accounts where possible.
- Rapidly correct inaccuracies and false allegations levelled against Council Staff.

Social Media Accounts

Roxby Council opens and maintains Social Media Accounts to positively engage and communicate with target audiences in the community.

Approval is required from the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager to open or close Social Media Accounts for Roxby Council.

Social Media Publishers

Social Media Publishers are appointed to Social Media Accounts and assigned responsibility for creating, publishing and managing account content.

6.5. Staff use of Social Media

Use of Social Media whilst at work

Staff may access Social Media Accounts whilst at work to perform assigned duties and when contributing to the achievement of Roxby Council's goals and objectives.

Staff may access Social Media in a personal capacity whilst at work, when not on duty, subject to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (Doc ID 375459).

Personal use of Social Media

Staff who are residents, ratepayers or customers of Council services may participate in community debate about an issue that personally affects them. Staff must make it clear that any comments posted on the issue are purely personal and do not represent the views or official position of Council.

When using Social Media for personal use, Staff must never disclose or comment on confidential information about the Roxby Council or its operations that has been acquired through their position in Council.

6.6. User posts on Roxby Council Social Media Accounts

User Conduct

Roxby Council encourages open conversation and debate, and welcomes ideas, questions, complaints, and feedback via its Social Media Accounts.

Users are expected to:

- comply with third-party platform terms of service and community guidelines, and all local, state, and federal laws and regulations
- communicate and behave in a respectful and appropriate manner
- not post or publish inappropriate or irrelevant content.

Disclaimer

Roxby Council does not warrant the accuracy of user content posted on its Social Media Accounts. Any content, comments, views or opinions posted by users may not necessarily represent the views or official position of Roxby Council.

6.7. Inappropriate or irrelevant Social Media content

For the purpose of this Policy, inappropriate or irrelevant Social Media content includes but is not limited to:

- racist, sexist or sexual content
- threats or abuse
- bullying or harassment
- offensive or obscene content or profanity
- derogatory or defamatory content
- unlawful or discriminatory content
- content that breaches a person's privacy or personal details e.g. phone number, without consent
- content that is confidential or subject to copyright or intellectual property that is posted without consent
- political lobbying or anti-social content
- spam, junk or advertising
- content relating to a third party not affiliated or connected with Roxby Council
- content that does not relate to Roxby Council or Council business
- content that is not suitable for a community of all ages
- any other content that Roxby Council deems inappropriate or irrelevant.

6.8. Policy breaches or non-compliance

Staff

Staff who fail to comply with this Policy may be deemed in breach of their Employment Agreement/Contract and Employee Code of Conduct, and may be subject to performance counselling and/or disciplinary action. Depending upon the seriousness of the matter, this may include suspension or termination of employment as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Third party users

Roxby Council reserves the right to remove inappropriate or irrelevant content posted on its Social Media Accounts or block a user who fails to meet conduct expectations in order to maintain a safe and respectful online community.

6.9. Authorised employees

Employees must be authorised and trained to post on social media on behalf of Council. Authorisation and training is administered by the Corporate Governance & Strategy Manager.

6.10. Records management

Social Media record management will comply with the requirements pursuant to the *State Records Act 1997* and Council's Records Management Policy.

6.11. Monitoring and reporting

Traditional media and social media activity is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Corporate Governance & Strategy team.

Relevant information is reported in a timely manner to the Administrator, Chief Executive Officer, appropriate managers/leads and other relevant staff.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Social Media Publisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Create and publish content for assigned Roxby Council Social Media Accounts.- Monitor and review account content on a regular basis; update or remove content as required.- Respond to Social Media enquiries in a timely manner.- Manage inappropriate or irrelevant content posted by users; remove content or block users as approved.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Comply with this Policy.
Corporate Governance & Strategy Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appoint Social Media Publishers.- Approve the opening and closing of Social Media Accounts for Roxby Council.- Approve the removal of content or blocking of third-party users who fail to meet conduct expectations for posting on Roxby Council's Social Media Accounts.

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Manager/Lead and managed in accordance with Council's scheme of delegations.

Hard copies can be provided in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges Register at Council's Office, 6 Richardson Place, Roxby Downs.

9. REVIEW & EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated no less than once every three (3) years. The effectiveness of this Policy will be reviewed and evaluated from time to time within Council's strategic management planning framework.