

**11.4 OUTCOME OF ADVERTISING AND ADOPTION OF NEW COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

- Attachments:**
1. **Communications and Social Media Policy**
  2. **4.1.20 - Social Media Protocol**
  3. **4.1.25 - Media Policy**

**RECOMMENDATION:****That Council:**

1. **ADOPTS the Communications and Social Media Policy at Attachment 1; and**
2. **REPEALS 4.1.20 Social Media Protocol at Attachment 2 and 4.1.25 Media Policy at Attachment 3.**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To present the outcome of community consultation and seek approval of the proposed Communications and Social Media Policy at **Attachment 1** and repeal of 4.1.20 Social Media Protocol at **Attachment 2** and 4.1.25 Media Policy at **Attachment 3**.

At its 21 June 2022 Meeting, Council approved conducting community consultation of its intention to adopt the Communications and Social Media Policy.

In accordance with the City's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy, community consultation was undertaken between Thursday 28 June 2022 and Friday 22 July 2022, which is in excess of the 21 days required.

The policy was advertised on the City of Vincent website, social media and through the following public notices:

- Perth Voice Newspaper – 30 June 2022 and
- notice exhibited on the notice board at the City's Administration and Library and Local History Centre.

No public submissions were received.

**DETAILS:**

The new Communications and Social Media policy expands on the existing Social Media Protocol and Media Policy to better reflect contemporary practice for Local Government communications, media and social media while removing procedural information not suited to a documented policy position.

It draws from a WALGA policy template which aligns the roles and responsibilities for the Mayor, Council Members and City employees for communications, media relations and social media to relevant legislation and regulations.

**CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:**

No further consultation is required.

**LEGAL/POLICY:**

Section 2.7(2)(b) of the Act provides Council with the power to determine policies.

The City's Policy Development and Review Policy sets out the process for repealing and adopting policies.

The policy aligns to other sections of the *Local Government Act 1995*, as well as the *State Records Act 2000* and the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Low: Adopting the proposed policy is low risk.

**STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Innovative and Accountable

*Our community is aware of what we are doing and how we are meeting our goals.*

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

This does not contribute to any environmental sustainability outcomes. This action/activity is environmentally neutral.

**PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:**

This does not contribute to any public health outcomes in the *City's Public Health Plan 2020-2025*.

**FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

No budget implication.

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



<b>Legislation / local law requirements</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i> <i>Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007</i>
<b>Relevant delegations</b>	
<b>Related policies, procedures and supporting documentation</b>	Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates. Code of Conduct for City of Vincent Employees and Contractors.

## PRELIMINARY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the City of Vincent approach to official communications and social media.

### OBJECTIVE

This policy details legislative obligations and establishes protocols for the City of Vincent’s official communications with our community, to ensure the City is professionally and accurately represented.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- communications initiated or responded to by the City of Vincent with our community; and
- Council Members when making comment in either their City of Vincent role or in a personal capacity about matters relevant to the City of Vincent.

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



## POLICY PROVISIONS

### DEFINITIONS

**Act** means the Local Government Act 1995.

**Code of Conduct** means the Code of Conduct for Employees and Contractors and/or the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates.

**Council** means the Council of the City of Vincent.

**Council Member** means a person who is currently serving a term of office as an elected member of the Council in accordance with the Act.

**Employee** means a person employed by the City of Vincent, including contractors engaged under a contract of service.

**Media** means a media or news organisation including print, broadcast or online.

**Official communications** mean communication that has been prepared to share information via broad communication channels which may include website, social media, newsletters, advertising or media release.

**Social media** means a social networking channel that enables users to create and share information.

**Website** means a website managed by the City including sites to promote a particular service or function such as community consultation, the Library and Local History Centre and Beatty Park Leisure Centre.

### POLICY

#### 1. Official Communications

The purposes of the City of Vincent'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 City 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 City.
- Receiving and responding to community feedback, ideas, comments, compliments and complaints.

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

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



The City 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:

- websites
- advertising and promotional materials
- media releases prepared for the Mayor, to promote specific City of Vincent positions
- social media
- community newsletters including email newsletters, and
- letter drops and other modes of communications undertaken by Administration at the discretion of the CEO.

## 2. Speaking on behalf of the City of Vincent

The Mayor is the official spokesperson for the City of Vincent, representing the Local Government in official communications, including; speeches, comment, print, electronic and social media.

Where the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor may act as the spokesperson.

The CEO may speak on behalf of the City of Vincent, where authorised to do so by the Mayor.

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

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

- bring the City of Vincent into disrepute,
- compromise the person's effectiveness in their role with the City,
- breach the City's Code of Conduct,
- imply the City's endorsement of personal views,
- imply the Council Member or employee is speaking on behalf of the City, 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 City of Vincent.

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



Council member communications must comply with the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates and the Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007.

### 3. Responding to Media Enquiries

All enquiries from the media for an official City of Vincent 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 Mayor or CEO (where authorised) to make an official response on behalf of the City of Vincent.

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

### 4. Website

The City of Vincent will maintain an official website, as our community's online resource to access to the City's official communications.

### 5. Social Media

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

The City of Vincent maintains the following Social Media accounts across its business which may include accounts for the City, Beatty Park and the Library and Local History Centre:

- Social networks, including Facebook and LinkedIn,
- Media sharing networks, including Instagram,
- YouTube and Podcasts,
- Apps (applications), including Snap Send Solve and Facebook Messenger.

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

The City actively seeks ideas, questions and feedback from our community however, we expect participants to behave in a respectful manner. The City of Vincent will moderate its Social Media accounts to address and where necessary delete content deemed to be:

- offensive, abusive, defamatory, objectionable, inaccurate, false or misleading,
- promotional, soliciting or commercial in nature,
- unlawful or incites others to break the law,
- information which may compromise individual or community safety or security,

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



- repetitive material copied and pasted or duplicated,
- content that promotes or opposes any person campaigning for election to the Council, appointment to official office, or any ballot,
- content that violates intellectual property rights or the legal ownership of interests or another party, and
- any other inappropriate content or comments at the discretion of the City.

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

## 5.1 Mayoral Social Media Official Accounts

The City of Vincent may support the Mayor in using official social media accounts to assist the Mayor in fulfilling their role under section 2.8 of the Local Government Act, to speak on behalf of the Local Government.

The content will be administered and moderated in accordance with this policy. These official City of Vincent accounts must not be used by the Mayor for personal communications.

## 5.2 Use of Social Media in Emergency Management and Response

The City of Vincent will use the following channels to communicate and advise our community regarding Emergency Management:

- social media
- website
- advertising
- media releases or media statements
- community newsletters including email newsletters,
- SMS messaging, and
- letter drops and other modes of communications at the discretion of the CEO.

## 6. **Record Keeping and Freedom of Information**

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

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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

## 8. Council Member Statements on City matters

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

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

- clearly state that the comment or content is a personal view only, which does not necessarily represent the views of City of Vincent,
- be made with reasonable care and diligence,
- be lawful, including avoiding contravention of; copyright, defamation, discrimination or harassment laws,
- be factually correct,
- avoid damage to the reputation of the local government,
- not reflect adversely on a decision of the Council,
- not reflect adversely on the character or actions of another Council Member or employee,
- 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 CEO.

Comments which become public and which breach this policy, the Code of Conduct or the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*, may constitute a minor breach of the *Local Government Act 1995* and may be referred for investigation.

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 and the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*.

# COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



OFFICE USE ONLY	
Responsible Officer	Manager Marketing & Partnerships
Initial Council Adoption	DD/MM/YYYY
Previous Title	Social Media Protocol and Media Policy
Reviewed / Amended	DD/MM/YYYY
Next Review Date	MM/YYYY

**POLICY NO: 4.1.20****SOCIAL MEDIA****OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance for the City of Vincent to engage and manage social media (SM) in its communication activities with the community.

**POLICY STATEMENT****1. SCOPE**

- 1.1 This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the Council to use social media to facilitate collaboration and sharing between the City, Council Members, Employees, ratepayers and the community.
- 1.2 This Policy applies to all City Employees and Council Members.
- 1.3 The requirements of this Policy apply to all uses of social networking applications, which are applied to any City of Vincent related purpose and regardless of whether the applications are hosted corporately or not. They must also be considered where City representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

**2. BECOMING AN AUTHORISED CONTRIBUTOR**

- 2.1 Before engaging in social media *as a representative of the City*, Employees must become authorised to comment.
- 2.2 To become authorised to comment in an official capacity, an Employee will need to gain approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- 2.3 Once you have been authorised, you will be referred to as an 'Authorised Contributor' (see 'Definitions' below).

**3. CEO, MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS COMMENTS**

- 3.1 The CEO and Mayor are not required to obtain authorisation to contribute to the City's page – though they must follow the City's Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement below.
- 3.2 Councillors do not have to obtain authorisation to contribute to the City's page – though contributions are not encouraged – and they can only "comment", "like" or "share" existing content. Councillors cannot post any new content onto the City's page.
- 3.3 Councillors must also follow the City's Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement below, except for 5.3 relating to employees.
- 3.4 Councillors will only be permitted to "comment", "like" or "share" providing they disclose that they are a Councillor, and the views expressed are their own.
- 3.5 Councillors shall not post any material on the Social Media Platform concerning a Council Decision unless;
  - 3.5.1 The City's Mayor has released the information on the Social Media Platform or to the Media and Public; or
  - 3.5.2 The Official Minutes have been made public.
- 3.6 The CEO, Mayor and Councillors will use their own personal profiles to contribute to the City's SM platforms.

#### 4. CONTRIBUTING TO OUR PAGE BY STAFF

- 4.1 No staff member may post on the City's page from their own personal SM account, including comments/share/like/re-tweet (and so on), unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.2 However, as it is 100% innocuous, a staff member is welcome to 'like' the City of Vincent page and also 'like' any post that an Authorised Contributor adds to our page.

#### 5. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Once authorised to comment as a City representative, all 'Authorised Contributors' must:
- 5.1.1 Disclose they are an Employee of the City in all cases (this is a given if you are posting using the City's account).
- 5.1.2 Disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information.
- 5.1.3 Post only factual information.
- 5.1.4 Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant City of Vincent Policies, including the City's Media Policy and Code of Conduct.
- 5.1.5 Ensure comments are respectful of the community in which you are interacting online.
- 5.1.6 Adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws.
- 5.2 If a person is authorised to comment, they must not:
- 5.2.1 Post/respond to material or allow material to stay 'live' on our page that you know or could reasonable be expected to know is:
- offensive;
  - obscene;
  - defamatory;
  - threatening;
  - harassing;
  - bullying;
  - discriminatory;
  - hateful;
  - racist;
  - sexist;
  - infringes copyright;
  - constitutes a contempt of court;
  - breaches a Court suppression order; or
  - is otherwise unlawful.
- 5.2.2 Use or disclose any confidential or secure information.
- 5.2.3 Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the City's reputation or bring it into disrepute.

- 5.3 Employees must ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of information acquired at work is protected at all times and treated in accordance with relevant laws and policies. The potential scope and ramifications of a breach of privacy or confidentiality when using social media are severe.
- 5.4 City of Vincent social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:
- 5.4.1 Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon.
- 5.4.2 Profane language or content.
- 5.4.3 Content that promotes fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of:
- race creed;
  - colour;
  - age;
  - religion;
  - gender;
  - marital status;
  - status with regard to public assistance;
  - national origin;
  - physical or mental disability; or
  - sexual orientation.
- 5.4.4 Sexual content or links to sexual content.
- 5.4.5 Solicitations of commerce.
- 5.4.6 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- 5.4.7 Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public.
- 5.4.8 Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- 5.5 The Australian Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) has made a landmark ruling that Facebook is an *advertising* medium and as such therefore falls under the industry's self-regulatory code of ethics – the Australian Association of National Advertiser's (AANA) Code of Ethics. Social media pages must comply with pertinent codes and laws, vetting all public posts to ensure they are (eg) not sexist, racist or factually inaccurate.
- Companies can now be fined or publicly shamed for the comments that appear on their social media "brand" pages. The ASB ruled in general that Australia's advertising laws were applicable to everything on a brand's page — the Code applies to the content generated by the page creator as well as material or comments posted by users or friends.

## 6. COMPLIANCE

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this Policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of the law.

Any employee who fails to comply with this Policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment.

Council Members who fail to comply with this Policy will be removed from the Social Media Platform and may also face action under the City's Code of Conduct.

The CEO is delegated the authority to take appropriate action (including removing a person from the social media platform) if a breach occurs of the City's Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed below apply to this document only.

"*Social Media*" is content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. Social media is distinct from industrial media, such as newspapers, television and film. Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone to publish or access information – industrial media generally requires significant resources to publish information. (Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media)).

Social media may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer);
- video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube);
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' feature on perthnow.com.au);
- micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter);
- wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia);
- forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool);
- vod and podcasting;
- online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second Life);
- instant messaging (including SMS); and
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare).

"*Authorised Contributor*" is a person who creates and is responsible for posted articles and information on social media sites on behalf of the City of Vincent.

"*Chief Administrator*" is the person responsible for the set-up, maintenance and management of all the City's SM pages and policies.

"*Comment*" is a response to an article or social media content.

CITY OF VINCENT POLICY MANUAL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
POLICY NO: 4.1.20 SOCIAL MEDIA

*"Blog"* (an abridgment of the term web log) is a website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video.

*"Public Domain"* is clip art, images, text, programs etc. that is not copyrighted (i.e. a law that gives only one person the right to produce, sell or use something).

**This Policy should be read in conjunction with the attached Policy Procedure and Guidelines and "Public Usage Guidelines".**

<b>Date Adopted:</b>	<b>28 February 2012</b>
<b>Date Amended:</b>	<b>6 November 2012</b>
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	<b>23 October 2012</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>November 2017</b>

## POLICY PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA (SM)

### OBJECTIVE

The City will use the Policy and Guidelines to assist the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees in understanding the processes for the correct management of all forms of social media (SM) that are operated by the City.

The following procedures and protocols are to be followed:

The City's prime objective is to maintain positive and quality communications at all times.

Secondary objectives are:

- Reach a wide range and large number of residents and stakeholders
- Promote council offerings with a focus on positive, 'social' content including news, events, arts, festivals and initiatives that benefit the community
- Disseminate time-sensitive/emergency information
- Drive traffic to the council's website
- Correct misinformation

### MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATORS

1. Before engaging in SM as a *representative of the City*, Employees must become **authorised** to comment by the Chief Executive Officer – you are then an 'Administrator'.
2. The City's Marketing and Communications Officer (MCO) is an Authorised Contributor and the Chief Administrator of all SM accounts.
3. MCO does not require authorisation to post, though will make all attempts to work under the guidance of the CEO and/or Mayor (where appropriate).
4. The City's Arts & Creativity Coordinator (ACC) is authorised by the CEO to post/respond to Community Development content only.
5. All ACC posts must be authorised by Manager Community Development (MCD) before going 'live'. If MCD is unavailable, posts must be authorised by MCO who will decide if further approval is required.
6. If staff wish to post, content is to be emailed to MCO for uploading (or ACC for all Community Development content only).
7. The MCO, utilising media relations expertise, will ensure that:
  - a. Messages are sufficiently authorised and accurate
  - b. Responses are coordinated and posted in a timely manner
  - c. The City's voice is consistent and reflects our brand

**CONTRIBUTING TO OUR PAGE BY STAFF**

1. At this stage, no staff member may post on the City's page from their own personal SM account, including comments/share/like/re-tweet (and so on).
2. However, as it is 100% innocuous, a staff member is welcome to 'like' the City of Vincent page and also 'like' any post that an Authorised Contributor adds to our page.

**CONTRIBUTING TO OUR PAGE BY CEO, MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

1. All content published must be accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant City of Vincent Policies, particularly the City's Code of Conduct and Media Policy.
2. The CEO, Mayor and Council Members are not required to obtain authorisation to make comments/share/like/re-tweet (and so on) on the City's page.
3. The CEO may post or respond to a comment via the Chief Administrator (MCO) using an appropriate signoff.
4. If the Mayor and Council Members wish to participate, they will contribute using their personal profile/account.
5. The CEO is delegated the authority to take appropriate action (including removing a person from the Social Media Platform) if persistent breaches occur of the City's Social Media Policy and Guidelines.
6. The CEO is delegated the authority to temporarily suspend a person from contributing to the SM platforms as deemed appropriate, eg: suspending Councillor's from contributing to our SM platforms once an election is called and during Council election periods.
7. The CEO is delegated the authority to suspend or shut any SM platform down.

**MONITORING**

1. MCO and ACC will endeavour to check all platforms at least every 4 hours during business hours to ensure posts are moderated if necessary (removal of content that breaches our 'Public Usage Guidelines'(see below) or the AANA Code of Ethics.
2. All attempts should be made to address 'hot' comments (ie: pertinent or contentious questions or requests for information) within four (business) hours, or earlier if deemed necessary by CEO/MCO.
3. MCO and ACC will work together closely to monitor and moderate page content, informing each other of all illegal or inappropriate content.
4. All staff are welcome – within the nominated hours – to assist the MCO and ACC in monitoring the City's pages – the more eyes the better.
5. MCO and ACC will attempt to monitor pages during evenings and weekends for breaches (even though it is understood that the City's administration does not normally operate after hours).
6. MCO and ACC will set up notification emails when someone has posted to our page, so they can check them after hours and respond -if necessary/crucial.

**RESPONDING TO POSTS**

1. MCO will 'triage' the need to respond to posts – the quality of posts will always be a trade-off between staff/information availability and (real) time.
2. Not all posts need to be answered though attempts should be made where possible to foster two-way communication and community engagement.
3. MCO is authorised to obtain information at an Officer level (just like a public enquiry) and post without approval to suit the 'real-time' aspect of SM.
4. All staff should be forthcoming with information and provide this to MCO in a timely, efficient manner for real-time responses.
5. In keeping with the City's Media Policy, MCO will consult (where MCO deems necessary):- CEO – for administration and day-to-day matters  
- Mayor – for Council decisions/Council matters

**DEALING WITH NEGATIVE POSTS BY USERS**

1. Content must not be deleted simply because it is unfavourable – The City must remain open and transparent.
2. All breaches of our 'Public Usage Guidelines' or the AANA Code of Ethics will be removed instantly, or as soon as possible.
3. The City's Public Usage Guidelines will be asserted and the user warned or blocked as deemed necessary by MCO.
4. If it is crucial that a response is required, especially for controversial or 'hot' topics, then the MCO will attempt to consult the CEO or Mayor – but only if MCO deems necessary – and as follows:  
- CEO – for administration and day-to-day matters  
- Mayor – for Council decisions/Council matters
5. If CEO/Mayor unavailable, queries will be referred to the most senior staff member available pertinent to the situation. (e.g. Director).
6. MCO will attempt to diffuse the issue by first acknowledging the comments and then responding with facts and information (versus emotion) at all times.
7. If the negative posts continue after a suitable response, MCO will attempt to take the conversation 'offline' by providing direct contact details (phone number, email address, etc) of the relevant person/department to speak to.
6. If negative posts continue to occur, MCO will not engage further but simply monitor the post for breaches.
7. MCO is authorised to warn the user and refer them to the 'Public Usage Guidelines' - and also block the user permanently if breaches continue.
8. MCO will notify staff (including CEO and Mayor) if they are mentioned or directly addressed – though not all posts can be monitored/seen. If they are unavailable to respond in real-time, MCO will take the conversation offline by providing direct contact details. If the user breaches our Public Usage Guidelines/AANA Code at any time (abusive, defamatory, etc) the content will be removed immediately.
9. If a crucial response is required, especially for controversial or 'hot' topics, then the MCO will refer to the above point but is authorised to respond as best they can.

**MANDATORY ITEMS FOR ALL SM PLATFORMS**

1. The City of Vincent logo.
2. All of the City's SM pages must clearly display the City's 'Public Usage Guidelines' (see below).
3. Offensive language controls and filters should be in place.
4. A 'disclaimer' to also be prominently displayed which states (adapted to suit SM platform):  
"Welcome to Vincent's official News, Arts, Festivals and Events page! Please contact us by phone, email or post if you need a response, and ensure your posts follow our 'Public Usage Guidelines', thanks.
5. Appropriate 'About', 'Contact' and other details to suit the SM platform must be displayed before going live.
6. MCO's contact details to discuss the removal of a previous post, request a current post be removed or for any other matters related to our page or 'Public Usage Guidelines'.

**RECORD KEEPING**

1. With regards to the Local Government record keeping and the *State Records Act 2000*, attempts must be made by MCO to keep records where practical of activity that has a liability element, is of public concern or has a contentious nature.
2. MCO will screen grab such activity and file (digitally) on the City's server. In this way, we do not have to rely on a third party (eg: facebook itself) provider (which are often overseas) to obtain records.
3. Not everything must be recorded – as long as the City attempts to uphold the 'spirit' of the Act, then that will suffice.

**City of Vincent's 'Public Usage Guidelines'**

*[This will be placed on all SM platforms to be clearly visible for the public and may be called something a little different to suit the platform. The below example is for facebook].*

Welcome and thanks for visiting Vincent's space for inspired, cooperative and interesting community news, arts, festivals and events. We look forward to connecting with you – but we do have a few Guidelines to follow if you'd like to contribute to our facebook page.

We do encourage open discussion but facebook isn't a formal communication channel for the Council and we just can't respond to everything. So if you do need a response, then feel free to visit, call, write or email us.

When interacting with this page, we request that you:

- use the space to contribute positively
- contact us 'offline' for serious matters or for a response
- exercise common sense and courtesy
- do not post your personal contact details
- do not post advertising material or solicitations
- adhere to facebook's guidelines which can be found at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>

CITY OF VINCENT POLICY MANUAL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
POLICY NO: 4.1.20 SOCIAL MEDIA

All fan comments on this page are not representative of the opinions of the City of Vincent, nor do we make any warranty to their accuracy. We will make all attempts to immediately remove comments which contravene these Guidelines and the Australian Association of National Advertiser's (AANA) Code of Ethics.

Any posts or comments made on our page may be removed at any time without notice. We won't remove content simply because we don't like it – but we will act swiftly to protect the privacy and rights of any individual or group. Any comments which specifically identify or refer to individuals in a negative manner, including our employees, will be removed.

Posts may also be deleted - at our absolute discretion - if they contain:

- any discussion or promotion of behaviour that is unlawful
- inappropriate, violent, obscene, profane, hateful, derogatory, racist or sexist language, content or links
- threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory language, content or links
- content or links that infringe copyright
- comments that threaten or defame any person or organisation
- information that may compromise the public's safety or security
- solicitations, advertisements or endorsements; spam or nuisance posts
- discusses Local Government elections and/or candidates
- multiple successive off-topic posts by a single user or any repetitive posts
- any other inappropriate comments or content as determined by us

Please note that by 'liking' this page you acknowledge all of the above Guidelines and that you may be blocked from this page if we decide you're in breach.

To discuss the removal of a previous post, request a current post be removed or for any other matters related to these Guidelines please contact our Communications department on 08 9273 6011 or email [marketing@vincent.wa.gov.au](mailto:marketing@vincent.wa.gov.au)

Thanks for your interest, happy posting!

**POLICY NO: 4.1.25****MEDIA****OBJECTIVES**

To provide guidance to the Mayor, Councillors and the City's Administration for a consistent and co-ordinated approach relating to communication with the media with the objective of ensuring that the City's affairs and activities are promoted and are objectively and fully reported in the media.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The media policy sets out clear, consistent protocols for all contact with news media which are to be followed by the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees of the City of Vincent and has been established to:

- Formalise the roles of the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees in communication with the media.
- Proactively represent the City in media communications.
- Ensure communication with media is consistent, in line with the City's strategic direction and aligned with the City's Communication Strategy.
- Maintain positive and quality communications with the media at all times.
- Ensure that media communication with the City is in accordance with relevant statutory provisions, City's Code of Conduct or this Policy.

The Council is committed to open and transparent procedures and to being fully accountable. It will provide the media with information about projects and initiatives, and to respond to media enquiries (where appropriate), in a timely manner.

The City aims to maximise its media exposure by:

- demonstrating that it is an open and accessible local government;
- providing accurate information (where appropriate) to the media in a timely manner; and
- building positive relationships with the media.

---

**Media Statements/Releases**

The City's policy on the issue of media statements/releases is as follows:

1. The Mayor (or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor) and/or the Chief Executive Officer are the only persons authorised to speak on behalf of the Council/City to members of the media, unless prior approval has been granted to another person.
2. All media statements/releases are to accurately reflect the Council's position and shall be in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct – Section 8 – *"Communication and Public Relations"*.
3. Media releases are issued to appropriate media outlets to communicate the City's activities, actions, initiatives or decisions (determination of media outlets is at the discretion of the Mayor/Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with circumstance and the City's Communication Strategy).
4. A copy of the media statement/release is to be placed on the City's webpage as soon as is practicable after being issued. Council Members will be able to inspect and/or obtain a copy of any media statement after it has been released.
5. Media statements/releases must not include information considered to be electioneering or for personal promotional purposes.
6. Any comments by the Mayor, Council Members or the Chief Executive Officer to the media shall be in accordance with the requirements of the City's Code of Conduct Section 8 – *"Communication and Public Relations"* and any legislative requirements which prevail at the time.

**Guidelines and Policy Procedures**

The attached Guidelines and Policy procedures are to be followed at all times.

<b>Date Adopted:</b>	<b>23 January 2007</b>
<b>Date Amended:</b>	<b>May 2010</b>
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	<b>1 February 2010, 25 May 2010</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>May 2015</b>

---

**GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR  
MEDIA POLICY NO. 4.1.25**

The City will use the policy and guidelines to assist the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees in understanding the correct communication processes when handling media enquiries, identifying spokespersons for media interviews, preparing media releases and making comments/statements to the media.

The following procedures and protocols are to be followed:

1. Only persons authorised by the *Local Government Act* and the City's Media Policy are to provide comment to the media on behalf of the Council and/or Administration.
2. Verbal and/or written media communications are to be made by the Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer relating to Council decisions, initiatives, activities or issues.
3. Comments by Councillors to the media are only to be made on the basis that the media are informed by the Councillor that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the Council and the comment is qualified as being of a personal nature. Councillors are not to announce Council initiatives/decisions unless previously authorised by the Mayor.
4. Details of matters that occur as part of the decision-making process which are confidential are not to be disclosed.
5. Employees are not permitted to make any comment to the media about any Council/City matter unless prior approval has been granted by the Chief Executive Officer.
6. When applying these procedures and protocols, the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and employees are to have regard to ethical and professional behaviour and comply with the City of Vincent Code of Conduct 2010 (Section 8).

**Dealing with a Media Enquiry**

Enquiries are to be directed to the City's Public Relations Officer in the first instance. The Public Relations Officer will forward the enquiry to either the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer for appropriate action, who will deal with the matter as follows:

Mayor

Where appropriate, the Mayor is to respond to media enquiries related to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.

---

#### Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer, or approved nominee, may respond to media enquiries that are administrative, operational or technical in nature, provide factual information or information on the public record.

#### Employees

#### Procedure

The following procedure is to be strictly followed by all employees in responding to media enquiries:

1. If approached by a media representative, an employee should direct the caller to the City's Public Relations Officer or, if unavailable, to the Chief Executive Officer. The employee should not continue the conversation further with the journalist/reporter.
2. However, if the enquiry is minor and/or regarding something that is a matter of public record, for example the date of the next Council Meeting, the enquiry can be answered immediately by an employee. It can also be helpful to refer some journalists/reporters to the City's website for information ([www.vincent.wa.gov.au](http://www.vincent.wa.gov.au)).
3. If there is any doubt or the matter is more detailed/controversial, the employee should advise the journalist/reporter that the City's policy is for all media liaison to be directed to the City's Public Relations Officer and/or Chief Executive Officer, in the first instance.
4. The Chief Executive Officer will either:
  - (a) refer the matter to the Mayor;
  - (b) respond to the media enquiry; or
  - (c) nominate an appropriate spokesperson to deal with the enquiry.

**Note:** Employees specifically authorised to make comments to the media are to confine themselves to providing such information as is necessary to explain Council policy or to provide factual, explanatory or background material pertinent to the question. No personal opinion is to be expressed at any time. Requests for supporting materials, related information and drawings/photographs are to be referred to the Public Relations Officer/Chief Executive Officer and are on no account to be released without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

---

**Preparation and Distribution of Media Releases**

1. Media releases are to be authorised and issued under the name of the Mayor for matters relating to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.
2. The Chief Executive Officer, or approved nominee, may authorise media releases or provide information to the media that relates to the "day-to-day" administration or operation of the City's Administration.

The following procedure must be followed in the preparation of media releases:

1. The Mayor and/or the Chief Executive Officer will identify the requirement for the preparation of a media release for matters relating to Council decisions, initiatives or issues of a controversial nature.
2. Employees are encouraged to provide information to the Public Relations Officer relating to any event, project or activity which is newsworthy and has the potential to generate positive publicity for the City (employees should follow the internal procedure). If appropriate, a media release will be created and distributed.
3. Matters relating to the Council decisions or of a controversial nature are to be drafted by the Chief Executive Officer via the Public Relations Officer and referred to the Mayor for approval, prior to being released.
4. If the media release is of an administrative or operational matter the Chief Executive Officer may authorise the release.
5. For matters related to mental health or suicide, staff to refer to the Mindframe National Media Initiative ( <http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media> ) for more information. Staff to also refer journalists/reporters reporting on these issues to the website for more information.
6. Authorised media releases will be distributed to targeted media outlets by the Public Relations Officer at an appropriate time (in accordance with circumstance and the City's Communications Strategy). Employees are not to forward copies of media releases to any party.
7. Copies of media releases are to be placed on the City's website at an appropriate time.