

# COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



CITY OF VINCENT

<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>	Nil.
<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.

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## 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.

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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.

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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.

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,

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- information which may compromise individual or community safety or security,
- 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.

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## 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*.

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.

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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*.

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Responsible Officer	Manager Marketing & Partnerships
Initial Council Adoption	20/09/2022
Previous Title	Social Media Protocol and Media Policy
Reviewed / Amended	N/A
Next Review Date	09/2026