Shire of Denmark

Social Media Policy

FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS & EMPLOYEES

Contents

Acknowledgements

This Policy is based on the Model Social Media Policy produced by the Local Government Association of Tasmania(LGAT).

Scope

This policy outlines what is expected of elected members and employees in relation to managing Shire of Denmark social media in order to protect the reputation and legitimate interests of Council.

The aim of the policy is to build an understanding of what is appropriate and productive use of social media, to minimise miscommunication and prevent misuse of social media tools that will undermine Council's brand.

What is social media and why do we use it?

Simply put, social media is a collection of internet based tools which facilitate conversations, for example Facebook, Twitter, Youtube.

Social media is now strongly embedded in Australian culture as a personal tool for networking and communication and is increasingly being used as core component of marketing and communications strategies by governments and businesses.

There is increasing use of social networking by Australians. Over 11 million Australians use Facebook – this is more than half the population[i]. It is estimated that Australians spend 20 hours a month online.

The desire to connect with governments using social media is increasing along with an expectation that this form of communication will be available. The digital age is well and truly here.

Social media can support organisations in the following:

- providing information and getting feedback;
- demonstrating the business personality/brand;
- ensuring organisational transparency;
- improving internal communications; and
- market research which is low cost.

Among the advantages of social media are that it:

- is fast/can be immediate;
- allows for easy content creation/development/dissemination;
- can establish large, powerful networks;
- is always on;
- potentially can reach a large audience; and

- can build reputation through attracting attention.

Around the world, councils are using social media in a myriad of ways including event promotion, communication including local laws, getting community feedback including from hard to reach groups, establishing ongoing networks, emergency management, recruitment, branding and consulting in strategic and specific issues.

Use of social media needs to be embedded within broader governance, communications and marketing strategies, an understanding that there is a need to choose the right tool for the task and awareness of what is appropriate or inappropriate use of social media.

Key principles

1. *Social media can be used as a communication tool and to facilitate professional development and online collaboration. Social media will not be the driver for building a communications strategy, but rather, a tactic applied.*

2. *Information disseminated through social media will be accurate, authorised and aligned with Council strategies, policies and decisions.*

3. *Use of social media will always follow clear identification of objectives and the right tools to meet those objectives.*

4. *Private information will be protected and copyright, privacy and other applicable laws will be taken into account when interacting with social media.*

5. *There will continue to be appropriate record keeping of information disseminated or collected via social media.*

6. *The use of social media is a personal responsibility regardless of whether it is authorised or individual, in or out of work.*

7. *All elected members and employees are responsible for being familiar with this policy.*

Key rules & defining of postable information

1. *All Shire of Denmark Facebook postings are to be authorised by either the Department Director or the CEO prior to posting.*
2. *Shire of Denmark recordkeeping principles are to be applied to Social Media postings.*
3. *Use discretion. Take care not to publish information that should not be made public. If you aren't 100% sure, seek advice.*
4. *Stick to your area of expertise and talk about what you know.*

5. *It's a conversation, so be human, use your own voice and bring your personality into the conversation. It makes it more interesting.*

6. *Admit our mistakes (unless there is a risk of liability whereupon the Council's legal advisor/and or insurer should be contacted in the first instance) – we all make them so when you do, be quick to admit and correct them.*

7. *Types of Information to be posted can include:*

    I.   *Link to Shire website.*
    II. *Notices of upcoming events*
    III. *Emergency Information –*
        ➢ *Road/trail closures*
        ➢ *General location of fires*
        ➢ *power shutdowns*
        ➢ *media releases*
        ➢ *links to DFES/ABC Radio*
    IV. *Photographs/information pertaining to Shire events – eg. Australia Day.*
    V.   *Information regarding works to be carried out that may impact on traffic or access.*
    VI. *Road conditions.*
    VII. *Photos of employees in workplace situations – introductions to new/current employees or changes in employees.*
    VIII. *Selected Community events hosted by other community organisations – eg Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade.*
    IX. *Upgrades to Shire facilities – eg photovoltaic at the Shire Admin building.*
    X.   *Information regarding breakdowns in rubbish trucks and alternative arrangements.*
    XI. *Information regarding Inlet sand bar openings.*
    XII. *Reminders regarding upcoming dog reregistrations etc.*

Objectives to be achieved through the use of social media

Social media tools are to be used by the Shire of Denmark within the framework of one or more of the following:

- *in complement to other communication activities;*
- *as part of a communications plan;*
- *as part of a media strategy;*
- *as part of a community engagement / consultation plan; or*
- *as part of a crisis management plan.*

Council can selectively use approved social media sites to:

- *enhance Council's reputation;*

- *develop stronger relationships with community members;*
- *provide an informal and accessible way for the public to communicate with Council;*
- *support traditional media by broadening its reach and scope;*
- *promote selected services, events, projects, policies and activities;*
- *expand Council's community engagement opportunities; and*
- *provide essential updates to the community during a crisis or emergency.*

Council also uses specific online media sites selectively to:

- *protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Shire of Denmark;*
- *place Council's statements of facts directly onto the public record; and*
- *respond or clarify an issue in detail.*

Links to other Council policies

Using social media is not without risks and challenges and this policy aims to address some areas of concern such as inappropriate use, record keeping and resourcing. Some other issues are best covered in other policies and those related policies are outlined here:

- Responsible use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy
- Customer Service Charter
- Records Management /Archiving
- Emergency Management Plan
- Freedom of Information
- Policy Manual
- Organisation Wide Procedure Manual

These policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with this Social Media Policy.

Corporate use of social media

Authorised officers

Elected members and employees intending to use social media to communicate about Shire of Denmark activity or policy should ensure appropriate authorisation as per the Responsibilities/Delegations table below.

As at 28th June 2013 the following social media accounts are approved for use:
Shire of Denmark Facebook
Shire of Denmark Library Facebook
Shire of Denmark Recreation Centre Facebook
Shire of Denmark Youth Centre "Tha House" Facebook

All elected members and employees should register their social media account/tools/site being used for corporate activity with the Shire of Denmark IT Officer and/or the Shire of Denmark Facebook Administrators.

Responsibilities/Delegations

The Roles and Responsibilities Table has been established to identify who will write and post content, who will approve/moderate incoming content, and who will respond to negative and positive posts (and how). These roles and Responsibilities are linked to the Shire of Denmark Code of Conduct, the Shire of Denmark Organisation Wide Procedures Manual and the Shire of Denmark Policy 40111 – Public Relations – Media Releases.

CEO	• Should ensure responsibilities/delegations in relation to Social Media are clearly defined and act as a source of advice to the organisation. • Should approve use of Council branding. • Should ensure compliance with Social Media provider conditions. • Should act as the spokesperson on operational issues or issues of fact.
Elected Members	• Should seek advice from the CEO and be sure not to speak on behalf of the Council excepting for the Shire President. • A person authorised to comment on behalf of Council may be limited to a particular topic or specific types of social media or both. • Comment only on topics within your area of expertise and express authority received from the Shire President or the CEO. • Comply with terms of use.
All employees	• Should have approval for postings initially from the relevant Director and/or from the CEO or A/CEO. • Must maintain records as per the Shire of Denmark Recordkeeping Plan. • Adhere to the Shire of Denmark Operational Procedures 040213 and 040214.
Directors	• Departmental employees training in responsible use of

	social media.
	• Departmental approval for potential postings.
Social Media Administrators *1.Records Officers* *2. A Customer Service Officer(backup)* *3. Website Manager*	• Training in responsible use of social media. • Posting, reviewing and updating content. • Develop record keeping procedures. • Monitoring/moderating. • Manage content.
IT Officer	Secure access/backup.
Moderator (DF&A) (Should be a person with knowledge of Council's policies or guidelines ad with experience in managing sites/software.)	• Approve and authorise postings. • Moderate and remove offensive public postings. • Monitor Social Media is used in accordance with the Shire of Denmark Policies and Procedures.

Content

- The Shire of Denmark has a clearly established and disseminated plan as to who will write, approve post content, who will approve/moderate incoming content, and who will respond to negative and positive posts (and how). Corporate content will only be posted by authorised officers as outlined earlier.

- When communicating on behalf of the Shire of Denmark, elected members and employees must identify their relationship with the Shire of Denmark by stating their name and position. Generally, no-one should provide email or phone number contacts.

Uploaded content will only disclose information which is classified as suitable for the public domain.

Content Managers will ensure the information posted is accurate and not misleading in any way.

In developing, posting and responding to content, authorised officers WILL:
- uphold the values of the Shire of Denmark by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism;
- ensure that all relevant legislation has been complied with and that there is adherence to the Shire of Denmark codes, policies and procedures;
- avoid political bias;
- act in a timely manner; and
- take steps to avoid real or potential conflicts of interest.

When developing or posting content, authorised officers must NOT:

- use abusive, profane or sexually explicit language;
- undertake commercial solicitations or transactions;
- use copyright or ownership protected materials without appropriate approvals;
- be discriminatory, defamatory, or encourage law breaking;
- compromise Shire of Denmark, employee or system safety;
- spam; or
- air personal campaigns.

Content Removal

- The Shire of Denmark reserves the right to remove certain content such as illegal or offensive material. Material that is reasonably critical of the Shire of Denmark will not be deleted.

- The Shire of Denmark will always state why a post or content was removed regardless of who posted.

Monitoring/moderating/responding

As a general requirement, relevant administrative employees will monitor social media content and exchanges at least once daily, Monday to Friday (dependent upon circumstances – emergency situations may require more postings) and establish whether:
- comments need replies or removal.
- current content is factual, accurate and up-to-date.
- posts are relevant.
- new information needs uploading.

Council will make use of digital monitoring tools whenever available as part of their evaluation of social media activities.

Access

Employees members who are authorised to post comments on behalf of Council must do so from the administrative profiles set up for Shire of Denmark Council Facebook page.

Branding

The brand is the corporate identity of the Shire of Denmark and can take many forms (name, sign, symbol, colour combination, slogan). A clear brand is an essential tool in online communications.

The Shire of Denmark logo should always be attached to corporate content.

Authorised officers will adhere to Council's corporate style guide when developing and uploading content.

Engagement

Social Media tools may be used for community engagement as appropriate. Consideration will first be given to what the desired outcome is, the resources available and relevance of social media tools.

Use of Social Media for engagement will be supported by a Community Consultation Plan or business case which clearly articulates how the process will be managed.

Copyright

Material which is copyrighted (applications, audio, video, graphics, images, photographs, publications) will not be used unless prior written consent is obtained from the creator or copyright owner and the original author or source of the material is acknowledged.

Authorised officers will be diligent in their consideration of brand, copyright, fair use and trademarks.

Website

Information of a general nature (not responding to posts) provided through social media will, where practical, be replicated on the Council's website.

Risks

A risk analysis with related mitigation strategies will be undertaken for each new planned aspect of social media use. Such analysis will consider things like lack of followers, blurring of professional and personal communications, online activism and negative comments, expectation of instant responses, breaches of law or codes of conduct, unauthorised posts.

The liabilities section of this policy covers off on some specific risks but legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

In considering how to proceed, The Shire of Denmark will give detailed consideration as to:

- The protection of privacy and the confidentiality of Shire of Denmark and ratepayer information.
- Preventing disclosure of corporate information outside that which is authorised or publically available.
- How Shire of Denmark's intellectual property and copyright will be protected.
- The terms of service for nominated social media sites.
- How the Shire of Denmark will respond to orchestrated campaigns by skilled social media users.
- The level of response for issues raised by people outside the municipality.

Record Management

In using social media, The Shire of Denmark will comply with the requirements of the *State Records Act 2000* and Shire of Denmark Recordkeeping Plan with reference to the requirements on digital record management.

Consideration of recording keeping requirements will be made before each new planned use of social media.

The five key questions to help identify whether a record is a state record are:

1. Was it made, sent or received in the course of business?
2. Does it document a decision taken?
3. Does it document advice given?
4. Does it document the process of arriving at a decision?
5. Is it required to be kept by legislation?

Resource/Training

The Shire of Denmark will ensure that social media activities are adequately resourced to allow for content development, monitoring, interpreting the volume and content of messages and responding as required.

Evaluation

The Shire of Denmark's social media activity will be evaluated through simple metrics which are sustainable and related to the desired outcomes.

The mechanisms for evaluation will be determined in relation to each new planned use of social media.

Misuse of corporate social media

Prohibited or offensive activities

- Employees and elected members must not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist or infringes copyright.

- Employees and elected members must not establish fictitious names or identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.

- Employees and elected members must not bring the Shire of Denmark's integrity into disrepute, or harm the operations or reputation of Council.

- Employees and elected members must separate personal opinions from professional ones.

- Employees and elected members must avoid the use of business email addresses for personal social media logins.

Breach of policy penalties.

Employees and elected members must comply fully with the policy at all times.

If you are not sure if an activity complies, speak to your Director, the CEO or, if an elected member, the Shire President.

Non compliance is serious matter and appropriate action will be taken.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as diminishing or attempting an employee's right to engage in lawful industrial activities.

An Elected Member breaching this policy may be subject to a Code of Conduct complaint (as per *the Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Rules of Content) Regulations 2007*.

Employees breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Defamation/offensive/obscene

- Social media can appear to blur private and public spheres but activities on social media websites should be considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. Additionally it should be noted that the terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted.

- Online content is essentially permanent and should NEVER be considered private.

- Use of offensive, obscene or defamatory content may breach a number of Federal and State Laws.

- Employees and elected members will not post offensive, obscene or defamatory content.

The following legislation applies:

- *Defamation Act 2005* (Western Australia)
- *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995* – offences related to telecommunications for example Section 474.17 deals with using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.

Privacy/confidentiality

- In using social media, employees and elected members will be cognisant of requirements under the *Shire of Denmark (adopted) Privacy Policy, Freedom of Information Act 1992* and the *Local Government Act 1995.*

- Personal and sensitive information cannot be published without permission of the person to which that information belongs.

- Employees and elected members will not disclose confidential Council information, including but not limited to matters relating to closed meetings of the Shire of Denmark.

Security Risks

Employees and elected members will be cognisant of security risks to the Shire of Denmark through the use of social media and will comply with this policy in relation to use of equipment.

Employees and elected members will also give consideration to security risks in relation to content development and uploading, recognising that while one small fact alone might not form a security risk collectively all posted information can form part of a jigsaw puzzle that can be used against the interests of the Shire of Denmark.

Dispute resolution

Disputes will be managed in accordance with Council's Complaint Management Policy P040214, Shire of Denmark Policy Manual (for internal disputes) and within the scope of the Shire of Denmark's Customer Service Charter for issues from the public.

Adoption of the Social Media Policy

This policy was adopted by the Council on (as yet not submitted to Council – as of 10/10/2013)

Last modified 14/10/2013

Shire of Denmark

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
SECURITY POLICY

22 October 2013 - Attachment 8.4.2b

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY POLICY

Information technologies (IT) are vital to Shire of Denmark's operations. They are tools that improve the quality and efficiency of our work. They are the repositories for critical and sometimes highly proprietary corporate information. Improper access to or the destruction of these resources will have serious consequences for the Council. It is the purpose of this policy to:

- Ensure the corporate IT resources are appropriately protected from destruction, alteration or unauthorized access.
- Ensure that these protections are accomplished in a manner consistent with the business and work flow requirements of the Council.

2.0 Definition

Information technologies include:

- Computer hardware and peripherals
- Software
- Electronic data stored on standalone devices, networks, diskettes, databases, etc.
- Network infrastructure devices
- The Company Intranet and access to and data transmissions across the Internet and World Wide Web

3.0 Policy

- Information technologies are tools intended for business operations.
- The Council's Director of Finance and the IT Coordinator shall identify and maintain an organizational structure appropriate to the maintenance of Company IT security.
- The Director of Finance has a primary responsibility and authority for all components of the IT infrastructure. All devices, applications, databases and other components must comply with the Council's IT policies.
- The Council will cooperate with law enforcement agencies in their efforts to investigate any violation of federal and state laws, regarding information security. If the Council suspects the violation of any law, the Council may ask the WA Police Service to investigate the matter.
- Employees reasonably believed by the Council to have willfully compromised its information security will be subject to termination.
- Any employee who interferes with or refuses to cooperate in the investigation of violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- Departments may establish additional procedures that are relevant to their operations. These procedures may provide additional detail, be more specific, and/or be more restrictive, provided they do not conflict with this policy.

4.0 Scope

This policy covers all Company employees, consultants, agents, and others (collectively, employees) working on any premises of the Company which includes the Depot, Recreation Centre andLibrary.

5.0 Employee Responsibilities

Most employees will be given access to the systems and information which they need to perform their jobs. They must only access those systems/information that is required to undertake their duties and for which they have been authorised. They must not attempt to access data, software or configuration files that are not relevant to their job.

If an employee password protects any confidential files (such as MS Word/Excel/Project) that may be located on either the network or portable media (eg CD, thumb drives) the passwords used to protect the files MUST be registered with that employees' Director.

Every employee has a personal responsibility for protecting systems and information, and must at all times comply with the security procedures. Any Council employee who becomes aware of any violation or suspected violation of this policy must inform the Director of Finance.

Employees are prohibited from using software that is designed to destroy data, provide unauthorised access to the computer systems, or disrupt computing processes through the use of invasive software eg viruses.

Employees must **not** deliberately attempt to degrade the performance of the Shire's computer system or subvert it in any way eg deliberately crashing the system or causing performance bottlenecks (Denial of Service).

Each employee is responsible to ensure their data files maintained on the Shire's central servers are deleted/removed when no longer required. Data that is no longer required and left on the server uses up valuable space and causes the nightly backups to take longer to complete.

No employee shall without permission pass confidential Shire information in any form to another employee unless sure of their right to receive it. No employee shall on any account, pass information to external parties unless there is written authority at the appropriate level.

No employee shall misuse the Shire's computer resources in any way for whatever reason.

No employee shall download 'streaming music' to their PC as this consumes valuable internet bandwidth to all other users.

No employee will install any software (including screen savers, desktop backgrounds, social networking sites, RSS feeds, etc) on any PC or server without the approval of their Director **and** the Director of Finance.

Any attempt to breach security, which comes to an employee's attention must be reported immediately to their Director, who must then advise the Director of Finance.

No employee shall utilise the Internet for viewing pornography or accessing sites that could be in any way be considered racist or discriminatory.

No employee shall download or on-forward pornographic images or offensive material either in hard copy or via email (both internally & externally).

Failure to comply with any of these provisions will lead to disciplinary action being taken and may involve notifying the WA Police Service.

Logon Ids and Passwords

Employees are accountable for ALL computer system access affected using their personalised login ID.

No employee may attempt to use a login ID belonging to another employee. Incorrect use of login Ids must be reported immediately to the Director of Finance.

Note that personal "login" passwords must remain the sole property of the individual and must not be revealed to any other member of staff.

Passwords must not be written down, displayed on workstations or stored electronically (eg floppy disks, hard disk or network drives).

Staff Movements

The relevant Director is required to notify the Director of Finance when staff commence, change their name, leave the organisation or transfer positions, indicating the access required when a transferred staff member's access requirements change.

Virus Scanning

All Council's PC's and consultant PC's must have appropriate antivirus software installed prior to connecting to Council's LAN or wireless networks.

All disks should be virus scanned before use. When transferring data from a home PC to a work PC, the data should be virus scanned first. Data downloaded from the internet must be virus scanned.

Care should be exercised when opening email attachments, especially when received from an unknown source, in case these attachments contain virus components, root kills or trojans. If unsure, consult the Director of Finance or the IT Consultant.

Workstations/PCs

All CDs, printouts and other media used in conjunction with IT equipment, must be regarded as holding information confidential to the Shire of Denmark and must be properly safeguarded.

No employee may remove equipment from its location for any purpose unless prior written permission has been obtained from their Director, and the Director of Finance is notified. No equipment may be relocated within any site or location Director of Finance approval.

Commercial Software Packages

It is expressly forbidden to copy commercial software packages subject to Federal & State Law copyright regulations, or to use in any way **unauthorised** copies of such software. Users shall not make, accept or use unauthorised copies of software for any purpose.

Unauthorised copying of computer software is a breach of Australia's copyright laws and carries severe penalties. Both individuals and the Shire of Denmark can be found in breach of these laws.

Software must not be installed on any work PC without first consulting with the Director of Finance. This will enable the software register to be updated and also ensure only standard approved software is loaded onto the Shire of Denmark's PCs.

Backup/Recovery

Employees must ensure that information and software of particular value held on the server is properly protected against loss by taking at least one back-up copy. Back-ups must be taken regularly and copies must be stored in a safe and secure place.

Data stored on the network must be reviewed periodically by each user and unwanted files deleted.

Network Security

No equipment of any description is to be connected to the network without the permission of the Director of Finance. This is to ensure that the reliability of the network is not comprised.

All equipment which is connected to the network, must not be relocated without having notified the Director of Finance and obtaining the appropriate permission.

No wireless devices allowing access to networks external to the Shire of Denmark, shall be connected, without the prior approval of the Director of Finance.

Confidential Information/Software

Floppy disks, CDs, hardcopy listing, etc., holding confidential information must be properly safeguarded and must not be transferred to any media being the property of any other employee or company, unless such transfer is properly authorised.

Any removal of data for the purpose of working at home or elsewhere on Shire of Denmark business, must be safeguarded and returned to the normal place of work for storage or destruction as appropriate. Information held on PCs with hard disks are particularly at risk.

Repairs to equipment should only be carried out via the Director of Finance and care must be taken when such equipment is being replaced or transferred to other users that all confidential information has been removed from it.

Games on Shire of Denmark PCs

Games are not permitted to be installed on any PC that is the property of the Shire of Denmark.

NOTES

This policy applies to all Shire of Denmark employees (including contractors and subcontractors).

If a particular issue has not been addressed within the policy, it does not imply that it is condoned by the organisation.   Employees must always use their judgement in determining whether a particular activity is likely to breach the Information Technology Security Policy and is therefore contrary to the best interest of the Shire of Denmark's business.

Reporting to Your Community

Division A - population less than 30,000

1.Overall Report Strategy

The northern part of Moree Plains Shire flooded in January 2011 with the flood waters from the Macintyre River inundating the town of Boggabilla and the community of Toomelah.

One of the recommendations from the Boggabilla and Toomelah flood recovery committee was that Council and Emergency Services investigate better ways of keeping residents and the public informed during such disasters.

Moree Plains Shire Council considered that Council's Facebook page www.facebook.com/MoreePlainsShireCouncil could be used more effectively during emergencies to:

- get information out fast to the community regardless of their isolation or tyranny of distance
- provide a place for people to share their images, thoughts and concerns
- act as a communication path between Council, other services and the community
- ensure clear, accurate and concise information was widely available.

Moree Plains Shire Council used its Facebook page and Facebook Avatar Moreen Plains (www.facebook.com/moreen.plains) during the Shire's floods in November 2011 and February 2012.

During the times of emergency, questions and queries posted on Council's Facebook site where been acknowledged immediately. Friends were also able to use the chat feature on Facebook.

Our Facebook page was also a mechanism for people outside the Shire to monitor the flood situation and keep up to date on the issue. Many people were very concerned about loved ones, neighbours and friends and were able to use the page to gain an understanding of what was happening and connect with people.

Council's use of Facebook during the floods was an outstanding success because it was an effective medium to inform the public about rising water, road issues and closures and provided a forum for the community to interact with each other on numerous issues including the welfare of friends and relatives.

The positive feedback that Council received for its coverage and the increased PR was overwhelming. Attachment – Council Focus

The main staff behind Moree Plains Shire Council's business page and profile are:

- Communications Officer, Catherine Davis – developer, administrator, monitor and analytics
- Communications Webwriter, Rebel Woodham – administrator, daily monitor and graphics creator
- Technical Officer, Kelly James – posts flood and roads information, facilities and wet weather reports
- Communications Director, Kerrie-Anne Hare – overseeing area Manager.

This small group has established the rules and responsibilities of Moree Plains Shire Council's Facebook site and determined how Facebook is used in respect to disseminating organisational information.

22 October 2013 - Attachment 8.4.2c

2. Visual Presentation

All the content is written by staff. The team uses everyday language to post content but change the way it is delivered to suit the purpos. For example, recommendations from Council meeting are factual, without commentary, whereas a campaign on waste will be educational. There are editorials and invitations. The Mayor and General Manager also provide comment and put their name and position at the end of the post.

Posts can be text, photos, graphics, video, an offer or a combination of all. A status update can be just a couple of sentences informing the public about a decision, or several paragraphs long.

Our team posts as many times as possible during the month, with a minimum of once daily. During the February 2012, the team posted 258 entries.

Our Facebook Avatar, Moreen Plains was created so that she can be readily identifiable by all sectors of our diverse community. Instead of stereotypical 'blonde, blue eyed girl', she has darker features. Moree Plains LGA has over 45 different cultures and has demographic of 22% identifying as Indigenous.

Moreen Plains is 42 years old but looks younger than her age (benefits of being virtual!). She is eight years older than the median age of the Moree Plains community and is in the third largest demographic group for Moree Plains Shire Council Facebook page.

3. Budget

The costs for Council using Facebook are associated with the human resourcing of the site. To keep the site useful and dynamic, staff must regularly monitor, post and maintain Council's business page and profile. Staff must also spend time building the audience and study the Facebook Insights.

During rain events and throughout the floods, the Technical Officer is on-call to collate the 'Closed Road' information for media release. This Officer posts the same information on Facebook and answers any questions that are asked relating to roads, parks and playgrounds. The Facebook page has dramatically decreased the calls and enquiries received by the on-call Officer and after hours reception service. The team behind Council's Facebook page were able to post and monitor and manage the site from remote locations during the floods. Between them, they were able to cover 16 hours of a 24 hour period.

Our latest initiative is a Facebook card (similar to a business card) which Council's Communications Officers will distribute at various functions. Council incurred an expense of $25 for 50 cards.

Moree Plains Shire Council has also used 'pay and click' advertising for audience participation at the Moree Superstar competition. Council has limited the advertising to $100 each advertising period.

To build awareness and to promote Council's Facebook page, we also use the *Council Clipboard*, a full page advertisement appearing in the local newspaper on the second, fourth and fifth weeks of the month. The full page advertisement cost $1156. Attachment – Council Clipboard.

4. Distribution Methods

Describe your distribution methods and print run or coverage (online).

Facebook pages are public spaces, so people searching for Moree Plains Shire Council on the World Wide Web will find our Council's Facebook presence and be able to view our pages' photos and basic information. In order to view the page in its entirety, like a page, or post on it, the person must log into Facebook.
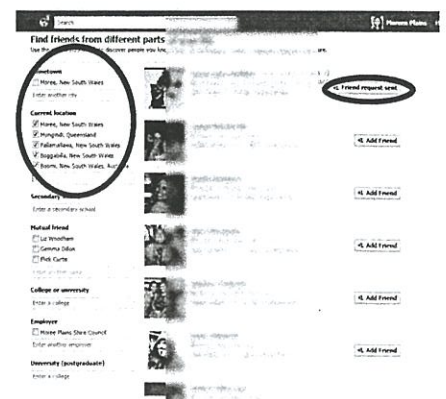
Building an audience by targeting location

As a Facebook profile, Moreen Plains can generate interest as she is able to target friends based on hometown or current location. She then invites others to be her friend and then she can encourage them to become a fan of Council's business page. This feature is not possible by just having a Facebook business page.

The business page is also able to build an audience based on friends of Moreen Plains.

To increase the profile of www.facebook.com/MoreePlainsShireCouncil, Communications often runs editorial and Facebook logos in the Council (paid) section of the local newspaper, the Moree Champion. The newspaper also references many comments from Council's business page and other local pages. Attachment – Moree Champion

Moreen Plains appears on the home page of Council's website and directs traffic to Facebook.

Council's quarterly newsletter *Council Focus* provides information direct to residents from Facebook. Attachment – Council Focus

Our latest initiative is a Facebook card (similar to a business card) that directs people to Council's Facebook page to view their images captured during Civic and community events. It is a way of mixing of online social media and offline networking.

Moree Plains Shire Council has also used 'pay and click' advertising to build awareness about events, particularly for promoting events regional, such as the Moree SuperStar competition.

5. Evaluation
Describe any feedback or evaluation methods received.

At the height of the November 2011 flood, our coverage went viral with 4634 unique views on one day. We were thrilled our fans considered the information Council provided was worthy enough to share and spread.

On 24 December 2011, Council's business page had 1059 followers, a fan-base increase of 499% in less than two months.

On 2 February 2012 when 10,000 Moree residents were isolated after the Mehi River peaked at 10.69 metres, flooding CBD businesses and cutting the town in two. Council's Facebook page covered the event by providing vital information to the community on the rising water, road issues and provided a forum for the community to interact with each other on numerous issues including the welfare of friends and relatives.

During the period 26 January 2012 to 16 February 2012, www.facebook.com/MoreePlainsShireCouncil was visited 23,717 times. (During a normal week, this figure averages 1500 times).
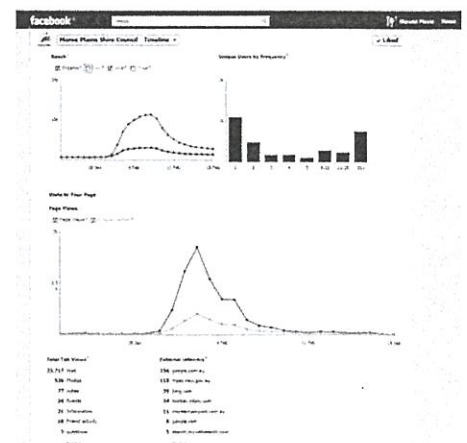
Viral readings registered in excess of 3000 per day and peaked during four days of the flood (30, 31 January and 1, 2 February) with over 10,000 viral readings each day.

During the flood events, Council's Facebook page and profile grew a reputation as a place for rapid response, quality customer service and accurate and concise information.

Moree Plains Shire Council has built a total Facebook audience of 2495 – Moreen Plains has 474 friends and Council's page has 2021 fans.

February 2012
Chart 1 - Viral Readings.
Chart 2 - Number of Visits

To put this achievement into relative local terms:
- Local radio FM station, *NowFM* has 2039 Facebook fans
- Local newspaper, *the Moree Champion* has 885 fans
- SES NW has a base following of 1067
- Facebook group, *Items for sale in Moree* has 1487.

6.Thematic Unity

Our Facebook Avatar, Moreen Plains has been created it so that people in the community can identify with her. The community has accepted her as the virtual face of Council. She has conversations with others and provides answers to queries.

During the floods, Council's business page (and Moreen Plains' profile) included a host of information like:

- Updates from SES
- Flood Watch
- River Heights
- Bureau of Meteorology updates
- Road Closed information from Moree Plains, Walgett, Narrabri, Gwydir as well as National Highways

The community found this information invaluable because all the relevant information was collated in one place.

Throughout the floods many people posted on Council's page calling for assistance. There were long threads where Users had posted words of encouragement and offered empathy. Some Users, even though they were complete strangers, messaged each other and provided the help as requested.

Council has a large Facebook fan-base that regularly interacts with the site. This makes Council's Facebook site attractive to community groups, clubs, organisations and other Government bodies who want to promote their events and meetings. Our large fan-base also is very valuable in getting out Council information, building awareness and PR.

Attachment – Various posts from Facebook (extracted download version)

7. Innovation

Moree Plains Shire is a regional remote area. It covers 17,000m² with a population density of 0.8 persons per kilometre. The community of 14,425 people is spread across the Shire with approximately 9270 people living in the major town, Moree. Mungindi located 121 km north-west of Moree, Pallamallawa 35km to the east and Boggabilla 115km to the north.

In the past, getting information out to residents in a timely manner across such an expansive area has plagued Council. The cost and logistics were very difficult to maintain and still there have been segments of the community where information was received late.

Of all the major information channels within our region, Moree Plains Shire Council has set the pace for disseminating community information and providing a platform for interaction through use of its Facebook site.

Council's Facebook site targets a sector of the community that in the past has largely been untapped. Generation X and Y account for 75% of our Facebook demographic.

The combined number of fans and friends on www.Facebook.com/MoreePlainsShireCouncil and Moreen Plains' profile tells us that our Facebook site is widely accepted as a source of information and as two-way communication path between Council and the community.

Moree Plains Shire Council successful use of Facebook has led other Shire Council's to seek information from Council's staff regarding the set up and use of Facebook.