



MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNCILS TO COMMENT, LIKE AND SHARE VIEWS ON NEW SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Councils across NSW will be able to comment on a new social media policy, designed to equip officials and staff with tools to strengthen behaviour standards and navigate their way through today's digital age.

Minister for Local Government Minister Hancock said the policy will help promote best practice, and ensure councillors and council staff are performing their civic duties on social media to the highest standard.

"The policy will provide local councils with a robust framework for the use of social media and instill appropriate behaviors from elected representatives when using the platforms in their official capacities," Mrs Hancock said.

"It has been developed to be fit-for-purpose in a digital age where innovation and emerging trends have fast-become the norm, and local communities are calling on their council to engage with them more frequently online.

"Following the COVID-19 pandemic and recent natural disasters in NSW, the policy will detail how councils can appropriately use social media channels during emergencies and major incidents to keep local communities educated and informed."

Mrs Hancock said in addition to the social media policy, councils will be consulted on a framework to promote positive interactions between staff and councillors.

"Encouraging meaningful and respectful dealings between staff and elected representatives is a key component in the effective operation of a council," Mrs Hancock said.

"A good professional relationship between councillors and staff is based on both having a mutual understanding, and respect for each other's roles and responsibilities, sharing the same goal to ensure they are serving their local communities in the best way possible."

Mrs Hancock said the model policies are based on examples of best practice from councils in NSW and other jurisdictions.

"They're not mandatory and councils will be free to choose whether to adopt or to adapt them for their own purposes," Mrs Hancock said.

“If adopted, policies will form part of a council’s code of conduct, with breaches resulting in potential disciplinary action.”

Councils, staff and elected representatives can make submissions until the consultation period closes on Friday 23 July.

The draft *Model Social Media Policy* and *Model Councillor Staff Interaction Policy* is available on the Office of Local Government website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/governance/best-practice-governance-policies.

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