national museum australia

Social media policy

POL-G-077

Version 1.5   5 October 2022

Contents

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History	The Social media policy replaces the *Staff Circular in online social media*. The policy was formerly miscategorised as a 'C-type' policy (POL-C-057). The Executive Management Group amended the policy number at their meeting on 6 December 2022 to reflect its General Operational status (POL-G-077). – *EMG Secretariat*
Review date	October 2024
Related documents	Social media procedures Online content and participation policy
Contact	National Museum of Australia GPO Box 1901 CANBERRA ACT 2601 Tel: (02) 6208 5000 Email: information@nma.gov.au Website: www.nma.gov.au

1. Title

Social media policy

2. Introduction

The National Museum of Australia (the Museum) is a major cultural institution charged with researching, collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical material of the Australian nation. The Museum focuses on the three interrelated areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, Australia's history and society since European settlement in 1788 and the interaction of people with the environment.

Established in 1980, the Museum is a publicly funded institution governed as a statutory authority in the Commonwealth arts portfolio. The Museum's building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra, opened in March 2001.

3. Scope

This policy informs all staff of their responsibilities when using social media. The policy applies to ongoing employees, non-ongoing employees and persons engaged under a contract between the Museum and a recruitment agency.

As with other Australian Government agencies and cultural institutions, the Museum embraces the use of social media as a way of connecting and engaging with audiences, promoting the Museum's activities and sharing the National Historical Collection online.

The Museum recognises that many staff use social media to communicate, participate and contribute to online communities. This policy seeks to empower staff to participate confidently in social media conversations whilst protecting the interests of the Museum.

3.1 Purpose

All staff are required to read, understand and adhere to this policy.

This policy is informed by the APS Values and Code of Conduct, as well as Section 6 of the Australian Public Service Commission publication 'APS Values and Code of Conduct in practice'.

3.2 Background

Social media broadly refers to online platforms which enable users to share content online and interact with others. Examples of social media platforms include but are not limited to:

- social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- video and photo sharing platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, Periscope, Vimeo, Flickr, TikTok, Discord
- blogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs and those hosted by media outlets which include a comments or 'your say' feature
- public wikis and online collaborations, such as Wikipedia
- forums, discussion boards and groups, such as Google+ and Whirlpool, as well as online review sites such as TripAdvisor, Yelp and Booking.com
- instant messaging, such as Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and including SMS
- geo-spatial tagging such as Foursquare, Geocaching, 'check in' features on social media platforms.

As of October 2022, the Museum uses the following social media platforms as an official way of communicating and connecting with the Museum's audiences:
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Vimeo
- Flickr
- Blogs
- LinkedIn
- TripAdvisor
- Weibo
- Oasis.

3.3   Rationale

Staff are expected to exercise good judgment about their social media activity, and consider the context and implications of their actions.

The policy aims to provide clarity to staff about how to conduct themselves in their social media activity.

4.   Principles or guidelines

These principles apply to all Museum staff in their use of social media.

Mandatory principles are described as actions that staff 'must' or 'must not' do. Where staff are expected to take something into account, the terms 'should' or 'recommended' are used.

Staff use social media in two capacities – official and unofficial. An outline of these, and the principles applying to each, are described below.

4.1   Official use: the Museum's accounts

'Official use' refers to authoring content for the Museum's branded social media accounts, which are the digital voice, brand and public face of the Museum, the Director and its staff.

All content appearing on these accounts is an official comment made on behalf of the Museum. All official Museum accounts are authored, maintained and coordinated by the Social Media Manager within the Communication, Media and Public Affairs section of the Directorate.

The Social Media Manager may grant access to other staff members to author content for the official Museum social media accounts on a project-by-project basis. Examples include 'Ask a Curator' day or promotion of an offsite Museum event.

Museum staff **must not** use an official account unless they have been given approval to do so by the Social Media Manager and the Manager of Communications, Media and Public Affairs or the Director.

It is a requirement for any staff member using the official accounts to have received current social media training from the Social Media Manager.

The following principles apply to all Museum staff when authoring the Museum's official accounts.

Staff:

- **must** read, understand and adhere to this policy and its principles, the [APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct](#)
- **must** act in a manner which is apolitical, impartial and professional
- **must** avoid any statement which may bring the Museum or APS into disrepute
- **must** protect the privacy and personal information of Museum staff and others
- **must** respect and protect the relationships established by the Museum with external stakeholders and partners
- **must** defer to the Manager of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs in relation to crisis communications
- **should** acknowledge content sources and **must** ensure they have appropriate permission to use the material
- **should** liaise with the Social Media Manager regarding their content schedule to avoid any scheduling clashes.

Further, when authoring the official Museum social media accounts, staff:
- **must not** advocate for and/or criticise current government policies, the views of individual politicians, political parties, or lobby groups
- **must not** disclose sensitive or official information unless authorised to do so
- **must not** commit the Museum to any action or initiative without prior approval from their manager, including committing funding to social media advertising and promoted content
- **must not** share their access or password with others, including Museum colleagues
- **must not** post or create content outside the scope of their project, including moderating or responding to comments unrelated to their project
- **must not** comment on behalf of other sections, branches or individuals within the Museum
- **must not** comment in a way that adversely affects the reputation of parties with whom the Museum is formally partnered or has a significant relationship.

Staff **should** contact the Social Media Manager for guidance and clarification if they are unsure about their responsibilities or obligations relating to official social media activity.

4.2   Unofficial use of social media

Unofficial use of social media refers to any social media activity other than that undertaken using the Museum's branded accounts.

All APS employees are bound by the APS Values and Code of Conduct in their unofficial social media activity. The [APS Values and Code of Conduct](#) requirements include:

- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- delivering services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS
- not acting in a way that would call into question the APS employee's ability to be apolitical, impartial and professional in the performance of their duties.

Note that a breach of the Code of Conduct can result in sanctions, ranging from a reprimand to termination of employment.

Staff **must** consider how their unofficial social media activity reflects on the Museum's and the APS' reputation and core business objectives. Staff **must** be aware that their unofficial social media activity

can call into question their objectivity, integrity and ability to perform their duties as Museum and/or APS staff.

Many Museum staff use social media in an unofficial capacity. This use broadly falls into two categories: professional and personal use.

4.2.1 Professional use

'Professional' refers to staff establishing and maintaining social media accounts which are used to comment individually but as an expert in their field, where that field relates to their employment at the Museum. In using such accounts staff are not representing the Museum or the government, nor speaking on their behalf. An example could be a curator tweeting about historical subjects of interest to them, or a learning officer authoring a blog on trends in museum education.

Staff maintaining professional social media accounts **must** declare their position at the Museum, for example:

- Jane Citizen, Senior Curator at the National Museum of Australia
- Jane Citizen, a member of the 'Australian Society and History' curatorial team at the National Museum of Australia
- Jane Citizen, I work at the National Museum of Australia.

Staff maintaining professional social media accounts **must** include a disclaimer or statement making it explicit that their views do not represent those of the Museum, even if they have not identified themselves as Museum staff. For example:

'Views expressed here are my own and do not reflect those of the National Museum of Australia'

'These are my own views and do not reflect those of my employer'.

Staff members who maintain professional social media accounts **must** also comply with the requirements of paragraph 3.2.2 below (personal use) when using their professional accounts.

4.2.2 Personal use

'Personal' use refers to staff using social media accounts as a private citizen. Some examples of personal use include maintaining a Facebook account to keep in touch with friends and family, using a Pinterest account to collate inspiring images or using Twitter to follow news outlets.

Staff are expected to behave at all times in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and reputation of the Museum and the APS, including in their unofficial social media activity.

Staff:
- **must** read, understand and adhere to these principles, the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct
- **must** avoid any statement which may bring the Museum and/or the APS into disrepute
- **must** assume that they can be identified as Museum staff despite using pseudonyms, posting anonymously or from private accounts, and that their activity can be made public and therefore shared
- **must** be respectful of other Museum staff and their work
- **must** protect the privacy and personal information of Museum staff.

Staff engaging in personal social media activity **must** be aware of the **risks** involved in discussing their work and political views. It is recommended that staff be aware of the FAQs included in the APSC's 'Personal Behaviour on Social Media' and 'Social media: Tips for employees'.

In addition to this, staff should be aware of how to assess the intersection of personal behaviour and employment in the APS on social media. Assessing the risks should take into consideration three risk factors:

1. Seniority. The more senior you are, the more likely your comments are to influence public confidence in the APS.
2. Connection between the topic and your work. The closer the content of your post is to your area of work, the higher the risk of it affecting public confidence and trust in the APS and your agency.
3. Expression. The further the tone, language or expression of your comment falls outside the norms of acceptable social behaviour, the higher the risk of damage to public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the APS.

When applying the risk assessment in practice one of the underlying principles is your perceived capacity to be impartial. This can be assessed in a number of ways, for example, criticising or praising the Museum, the government etc.

It is strongly recommended that staff familiarise themselves with 'Social media: Guidance for Australian Public Service Employees and Agencies' from the APSC.

Staff:
- **must not** make comments or 'like' content which could be perceived to be made on behalf of the Museum or the government, rather than an expression of a personal view
- **must not** make comments so harsh or extreme in their criticism of the government, a member of parliament from another political party, or their respective policies, such that their capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially for the APS or the Museum is questioned (note: comments need not relate to the staff member's specific area of work)
- **must not** make comments which could be seen as compromising their capacity to fulfil their duties as a Museum or APS staff member in an unbiased manner
- **must not** make comments **or 'like' content** that are strongly critical of the Museum's core business, policies and staff that it could seriously disrupt the workplace
- **must not** disclose sensitive or official information relating to the Museum or the APS that is not already in the public domain
- **should** consider the implications if their comments or 'likes' are taken out of context, and the potential implications if this occurs.

5. Definition of terms

Account: A profile or account on a social media platform. i.e. 'The Museum has a Twitter account', or 'Jim updated his Facebook profile'.

Author: A person who finds or creates content and then publishes it onto a social media platform.

Content: Text, images, video, audio, infographics, documents and links to websites which are published by authors onto social media platforms.

Official: The Museum's accounts and the social media activity that is undertaken on behalf of the Museum's accounts.

Personal: Social media accounts which are established and maintained by Museum staff for the primary purpose of engaging in social media activity as a private citizen and for personal means.

Post: The act of publishing any content or comment on social media.

Professional: Accounts which are established and maintained by Museum staff for the primary purpose of engaging in social media activity as an expert in their work-related field.

Staff: Ongoing employees, non-ongoing employees and persons engaged under a contract between the Museum and a recruitment agency.

Social media activity: Posting content; liking, following and subscribing to social media accounts; sharing, commenting on and marking content as a favourite; sending a private message to a user or account; tagging other users in posts; using geo-tagging to declare a user's location; interacting with others using social media platforms.

Unofficial: Staff social media accounts, content and activity which are not authored on behalf of the Museum.

6. Definition of responsibilities

Social Media Manager: The responsibility of the Social Media Manager is to source and post social media content on the Museum's official accounts, overseeing and managing all social media activity on these accounts. They engage with social media communities on behalf of the Museum, and work to protect and manage the Museum's reputation online.

Manager, Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs: The Manager of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs accountable for official social media channels and collaborates with Human Resources to ensure the policy is understood and training is offered across the Museum.

7. References

APS Values and Code of Conduct in practice and Employment Principles

8. Implementation

8.1 Coverage

This policy applies to all Museum staff in their use of social media, both official and unofficial.

8.2 Other related policies, guidelines and principles

Social media: Tips for employees
Social media authoring guidelines (internal)
Moderator guidelines for web and social media (internal)
National Museum of Australia Code of conduct guidelines and procedures
Guidelines on preventing bullying and harassment in the Museum
Social media: Guidance for Australian Public Service Employees and Agencies

8.3 Exclusions

N/A

8.4   Superseded policies

This policy supersedes:

Former policy/ies title	Version number	Version date	Executive Approval Date
Staff participation in online social media	2.0	23 May 2013	1 July 2013
Social media policy	1.1	15 May 2016	15 December 2015
Social media policy	1.2	12 December 2016	20 December 2016
Social media policy	1.4	11 October 2020	20 October 2020

8.5   Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.