

# RSPCA NSW Social Media Policy

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## 1. Statement

Maintaining a positive relationship with the media is essential to maintaining and enhancing the RSPCA NSW public image and to increase understanding of the work of RSPCA NSW.

Accurate communication of factual information is an important element in maintaining public confidence in RSPCA NSW and helps ensure RSPCA NSW remains transparent and accountable.

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to personnel (whether or not the person is employed by RSPCA NSW) in the responsible use of social media. The policy sets out the expectations and requirements for when personnel engage in social media activity in the following circumstances:

- while performing work for RSPCA NSW, regardless of where it is performed;
- when using RSPCA NSW Information Technology (IT) systems or equipment: and
- when conveying information about RSPCA NSW or a stakeholder.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel of RSPCA NSW.

## 3. Definitions

### 3.1 Personnel

The term personnel refers to:

- a member of the group of persons who is responsible for the executive decisions of RSPCA NSW at that time;
- any other person who has authority or responsibility for (or significant influence over) planning, directing or controlling the activities of RSPCA NSW at that time;
- any person who is responsible for the services provided by RSPCA NSW;
- any person who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the service, whether or not the person is employed by the RSPCA NSW;
- RSPCA NSW volunteers and branch members.

### 3.2 Social media

Social media is online media that is used for social interaction. For the purpose of this policy social media activity includes, although is not limited to:

- interacting with social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr);
- interacting with video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest);

- interacting with blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- interacting with blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. comments or 'your say' features on sites such as theage.com.au);
- micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter);
- interacting with wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia); and
- interacting with forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool, Reddit).

### 3.3 Stakeholder

Stakeholder means a person or entity that is or was a client, supplier, employee, volunteer, branch member, student placement, or contactor in relation to RSPCA NSW (or is a prospective client, supplier, employee, volunteer, branch member, student placement, or contractor in relation to RSPCA NSW).

### 3.4 Manager

Manager refers to Executive Managers and those site managers, coordinators, supervisors and team leaders who have been delegated the responsibility of managing this policy.

## 4. Social media risks

Posting or sharing information on social media and online generally is not like having a verbal conversation with a person or group. This equally applies to any posts made regarding work.

'Conversations' or posts online are electronic and have potentially wider circulation than a personal discussion. The nature of social media platforms means that comments might easily be captured in various forms and/or forwarded onto others, widening the audience for their publication, even if the privacy settings are limited.

Further, social media platforms often leave a permanent written record of statements and comments made by people. These can be read at any time in the future until they are taken down and, because of the nature of the internet, it can be difficult (if not impossible) to remove information.

RSPCA NSW respects an individual's right to use social media as a medium for personal communication and/or self-expression. However, considerable care should be taken in using social media including being aware that making comments and/or conducting conversations which relate to RSPCA NSW, personnel or stakeholders can affect reputation and business.

Social media use may result in liability for RSPCA NSW under laws dealing with workplace health and safety, anti-discrimination, intellectual property and consumer protection.

This policy is intended to ensure that the interests of all personnel and the reputation and business of RSPCA NSW are not adversely affected by an individual's use of social media.

## 5. Unacceptable use of social media

Unless prior written permission is provided, when using social media personnel must not:

- use RSPCA NSW information technology systems to access social media sites except for authorised work purposes;

- disclose or use information that is confidential to RSPCA NSW and/or intended for internal use only;
- speak on the behalf of RSPCA NSW;
- post anything in which RSPCA NSW or any other person has intellectual property rights;
- convey information that would allow a reasonable person to ascertain the work being performed for RSPCA NSW (whether by you or any other person) and/or the identity of a stakeholder and the fact that they have (or had) a relationship with RSPCA NSW;
- when using RSPCA NSW's information technology systems, use any other users ID or logon details or otherwise impersonate any other person;
- disparage, criticise or show disrespect for any personnel or stakeholder;
- discriminate, harass, bully, intimidate or victimise any personnel or stakeholder.

Where personnel become aware of unacceptable use of social media as described above, they must notify their manager, or an appropriate RSPCA NSW representative.

## 6. Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be viewed as serious by RSPCA NSW and may result in disciplinary action. This disciplinary action may also result in formal counselling, and for serious and/or repeated breaches, may result in the termination of employment or volunteer work with RSPCA NSW. Users may have their information technology access suspended immediately where there is a suspected breach of this policy.

Employees and volunteers may be individually liable if they aid and abet others who discriminate against, harass or vilify colleagues or any member of the public.

## 7. Interactions with other policies and procedural guidelines

It is expected that this policy is read and understood in conjunction with the existing policies and procedural guidelines of RSPCA NSW. In particular, it is expected that personnel understand and regularly review the following policies and procedural guidelines of RSPCA NSW:

- Employee Separation Policy (under development)
- Employee Separation Procedural Guideline (under development)
- Maintaining a Respectful Workplace Policy (under development)
- Maintaining a Respectful Workplace Procedural Guideline (under development)
- Managing Conduct and Performance Policy (under development)
- Managing Conduct and Performance Procedural Guideline (under development)
- Privacy Policy
- Information Technology and Mobile Communication Policy (under development)
- Code of Conduct

## 8. Revision, evaluation and review of policy and procedural guidelines

Executive Managers are responsible for monitoring the implementation and ongoing success of this policy and advising necessary amendments when desired outcomes are not being achieved.

The RSPCA NSW Chief Executive Officer through the Executive Managers shall authorise all changes pertinent to the policy and guideline. When a significant change to policy and guideline has occurred, the new or revised policy and guideline will, after approval by the Executive Managers, be implemented as soon as possible.

Consultation will occur with all personnel in relation to policy changes.

## 9. Endorsement

<b>Policy Name</b>	RSPCA NSW Social Media Policy 2017
<b>Status</b>	Approved for use by Executive Management team – December 2017
<b>Date Issued</b>	1 January 2018
<b>Policy Contact Officer</b>	Human Resources, RSPCA NSW
<b>Related Documentation and Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anti-Discrimination Act 1977</li><li>• Copyright Act 1968</li><li>• Fair Work Act 2009</li><li>• Privacy Act 1988</li><li>• Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 (NSW)</li></ul>
<b>Date implemented</b>	1 January 2018
<b>Next Review</b>	1 January 2020