

# Social Media Policy Statement

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## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Document Purpose

This policy is intended to provide Lions Australia employees, volunteers, and members with clarity on the use of social media platforms.

#### 1.2 Document Scope

Social media is online media that allows for interaction and/or participation. Examples include:

- Social networking and micro-blogging sites like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram
- Video and photo sharing sites like Snapchat, Flickr and YouTube
- Online forums and discussion blogs, including comments on online news articles

#### 1.3 Audience

This social media policy applies to all people who work, volunteer or represent Lions Australia in Australia or overseas.

### 2. Background

The Lions Australia National Office has a well-established presence across a range of social media platforms. These platforms are used as additional communication and promotion tools to complement our existing communication and marketing avenues. Social media is primarily used to provide Lions members and the general public with community interaction and an opportunity for the public to support Lions, while learning about the organisation, our services, resources and campaigns.

Lions clubs are also increasingly using social media to interact with their members and communities. As with the National Office, social media is used in clubs, zones, and districts as a complimentary tool to other engagement and promotion activities.

The National Office encourages the use of social media as an effective tool to reach our communities and promote the work we do. We are also able to provide assistance to any individual or club needing guidance and advice on managing their social media profile, however we cannot manage the pages for you.

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as 'any conversation or activity that occurs online, where people can share information or data that might impact on Lions Australia or the people who use our services'.

#### 3.2 Official use

Official use is when an employee, volunteer or Lions member is using social media as a representative of Lions Australia.

#### 3.3 Personal use

Personal use is when an employee, volunteer or member is using social media as themselves, not officially representing Lions, but identifying themselves as affiliated with Lions in their online biographies, profiles or posts, or through other digital platforms. People

who are employees, volunteers or members who do not identify themselves as being affiliated to Lions Australia are still counted as representing the organisation, as the nature of the online world means they could be traced back to the organisation through their online presence. Post from these accounts must:

#### **4. Guiding Principles**

Lions Australia employees, volunteers, and members are encouraged to participate in social media as it is a powerful tool to complement our other PR activities. Whenever Lions Australia employees, volunteers or members are interacting on social media in a capacity that clearly represents the organisation, the following guiding principles should be considered:

- Respond to comments and opinions respectfully and professionally.
- Acknowledge and correct mistakes as soon as possible. Everyone makes mistakes, but we should acknowledge or correct them when identified.
- Disclose conflicts of interest. E.g. any paid partnerships or sponsorships should be clearly stated.
- Don't make statements on your Facebook or other social media pages that you wouldn't make in any other type of advertising.
- Be polite, considerate, kind and fair.
- Avoid making misleading or false claims. Use examples and evidence where possible.
- Be mindful that the Lions Clubs International Board Policy applies on social media too.
- Ensure images, videos or other content do not infringe copyright – attribute photographers or owners of content where appropriate.
- Ensure content does not contain spam or viruses.

#### **5. Inappropriate use**

Inappropriate use of social media includes (but is not limited to):

- Conducting a private business on Lions Australia's social media presence
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language
- Stalking, bullying, trolling or marginalising any individual or group
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content including extreme images of graphic content or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism etc.
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values
- Direct political affiliation, unless an individual is running for election (but only on a personal account)
- Excessive debate on public policy
- Hacking or attempting to infiltrate the systems of Lions Australia or another organisation
- Criticising or denigrating Lions Australia, or other organisations, and our/their employees, volunteers or members
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in kind services or gifts
- Activity that interferes with work commitments

#### **6. Social media and defamation law**

Lions should be aware that defamation laws apply to the online world, including social media. Slater and Gordon (2014) recommend: "When posting on Facebook or Twitter, take the newspaper test – think of yourself as an editor of a newspaper or media outlet, because you will be just as liable if you defame someone."

Defamation is defined as: “being subjected to slanderous, libellous or defamatory comments or publications that can tarnish a person's reputation.”

Slater and Gordon go on to state five things you should know about social media defamation:

- In general terms, defamation occurs when a person intentionally spreads information about another person, group of people, or small company that damages their reputation, or can make others think less of them.
- Defamation is actionable regardless of the medium. A person can be defamed, for example, in print, through photos and on the internet.
- Defamation cases involving the internet and social media are relatively new, but the same principles apply.
- A person who did not create the defamatory material, but only shares it (for instance, by “retweeting” a tweet), can also be held found liable guilty of defamation.
- There are several defences to defamation, including that the statement was true, or that it was an expression of an honest opinion. Consequently, you may be liable for defamation if you spread information which constitutes a hurtful and untrue statement of fact about another person.