



Communications and Social Media Policy

Number:	Admin. 19
Responsible Manager:	Chief Executive Officer
Head Policy:	Code of Conduct
Legislation:	Local Government Act 2009 Local Government Regulation 2012
Associated Policies:	Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022

Scope

As per Council's Corporate Plan, council values professional communication, a positive work environment and a work-life balance.

The intention of this "Communications and Social Media Policy" is to ensure employees, contractors and councillors are aware of the communication standards expected by council.

Application

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and councillors of Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, also known as "users".

Email

- Once an email has been received within council's working hours, users should respond to the sender within 24 hours or advise the sender when a full response will be provided.
- If the user is out of the office for more than ½ a day, automated "Out of Office" replies should be placed on emails. The "Out of Office" should state:
 - when the user will be due back in the office
 - where enquires should be directed to in their absence
- Whilst council encourages communication, users should consider:
 - Whether sending an email to multiple people or CC'ing multiple people is required (this is especially the case for including Executive Managers or users not responsible for the work area the email is in relation to).
 - The need to "reply all".
 - Whether it is appropriate to "on-forward", or to reply including additional people.

- “All staff” emails should be approved by an Executive Manager before being sent.
- Council values a diverse workplace and the importance of not discriminating against users in regards to their marital status or gender, therefore it encourages that users do not refer to each other in regards to their gender in emails, for example, “girls”.

Contacting users outside of working hours or on periods of leave

- Council recognises the importance of a work-life balance, and the importance of users spending dedicated time with their families, friends and communities. Therefore, where possible, communication with users (in regards to work matters) should ideally only occur during work hours unless there is an emergency or critical issue, this includes both email and telephone.
- When users are on leave, consideration is required about whether they should be contacted, or whether the matter can wait until they return.

Email structure

- In the spirit of positive and professional communication, users are encouraged to include “Dear”, “To”, “Good morning” or “Good afternoon” or another similar introduction in the initial email rather than just the name of the receiver.

Addressing Councillors and Directions from Councillors

- To support the separation of powers as required by Local Government legislation, Councillors, including the Mayor, should be addressed as “Councillor” or “Mayor” during work time, for example:
 - **Mayor:** “Mayor”, “Mr//Ms Mayor”, “Mayor [SURNAME]”, “Councillor [SURNAME]”, or “Councillor”;
 - **Deputy Mayor:** “Deputy Mayor”, “Mr//Ms Deputy Mayor”, “Deputy Mayor [SURNAME]”, “Councillor [SURNAME]”, or “Councillor”;
 - **Councillor:** “Councillor [SURNAME]”, or “Councillor”.
- General emails about operational matters should not be sent to Councillors unless approved by the CEO.
- As per the Local Government Regulation 2012:
 - The Mayor may give a direction to the Chief Executive Officer or senior executive employees (Executive Management Team).
 - No councillor, including the Mayor, may give a direction to any other local government employee.
 - A councillor may ask a local government employee to provide advice to assist the councillor carry out his or her responsibilities under this Act, however it is encouraged that Councillors direct requests to the Executive Manager of the department or the Chief Executive Officer.

Communication within and between Departments

- Users should be aware of Council's Organisational Structure and the responsibilities of each Executive Manager.
- Users should ensure that if a project or activity is likely to impact another department the Executive Manager of that department is informed. Where possible this should be communicated between the Executive Managers.
- Executive Managers are encouraged to have meetings with their Line Managers or contractors at least monthly to communicate:
 - council policies
 - projects
 - ensure work, health and safety needs are met
- Any issues should then be communicated through to the monthly Executive Manager Team Meeting by the Executive Manager.

Social Media

Users have the right to participate in public and political debate but in some cases, their responsibilities may limit their ability to participate fully in public discussions, including on social media. Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council users must comply with the following standards:

- Users, must not disparage or make any adverse comment about Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, any policy or decision of Council or any of Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council's related entities, employees, contractors and other Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council officials or any other person or organisation providing services to or on behalf of Council.
- Users must not harass, bully, intimidate or threaten another employee, councillor, contractor or other Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council official (or a person the user knows to be a relative or associate of a Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council official) when contributing on a social media site or platform.
- Users, who can be identified as a representative of Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, must not use social media networking sites and social media platforms to send, post or otherwise publish inappropriate content, including:
 - obscene messages/material
 - racially and/or sexually harassing messages/material
 - sexually explicit messages/material.
- Must only disclose publicly available information and must not disclose confidential information.
- Ensure that any information they post online about Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council or a related entity of Council is informed and factually accurate and will not adversely impact Council.
- Unless expressly authorised to do so by Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, a user must not transmit or send Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council documents, emails, or text messages to any external parties or organisations.

- If the user subsequently discovers a mistake on their blog or social networking entry, they are required to immediately inform Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council and then take steps authorised by Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council to correct the mistake. Any alterations should indicate the date on which the alteration was made.

Breaches

Breaches of this policy should be reported to the Executive Manager Governance and Operations, or in the case of a breach by the Executive Manager Governance and Operations, to the Chief Executive Officer or the Mayor.

In the case of breaches by a Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor, breaches should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Review

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

Resolution

Adopted by Council on the 23 January 2019 commenced on 23 January 2019

Approval

This policy was duly authorised by Council as the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council Staff Communications and Social Media Policy and shall hereby supersede any previous policies of the same intent.

A/Chief Executive Officer, Katherine Wiggins



Date

23 January 2019