



# Social Media Policy.

## Policy Statement

This policy provides standards for staff, Ministers and Volunteers within the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT ('the Synod') engaging in communications using public facing social media channels.

## Definitions

Social media:

an umbrella term that defines the various activities that use technology, primarily internet, web and mobile based tools, for social interaction and content creation and sharing. In the interests of simplicity, this social media policy is focused on those social media activities that are used for discussions and information sharing such as social networks, blogs, wikis, and forums.

Social media platform:

software or technology that enables users to build, integrate or facilitate community, social interaction and user-generated content. Examples include blogs, wikis, forums/discussion boards, social networks, social bookmarking, and video and photo sharing websites

Social media channel:

a presence on a social media platform. Examples include a Facebook page, a wiki page, a YouTube channel or a Twitter account

## Scope

All official social media accounts are managed by the Synod Communications and Marketing Team, Uniting Resources. It applies to the use of social media in the following capacities:

- Creating a social media presence as an official representative of the Synod
- Adding content to official, public facing Synod social media channels
- Referring to Synod within a private capacity on a social media channel

This policy does not apply to Uniting Church staff in their personal use of social media where the staff member, Minister or Volunteer makes no reference to the Synod, its services and people.

Social media is an umbrella term that describes a range of activities and technologies that promote discussion, conversation and sharing of information, primarily over the internet.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Media Protocols and Telling Our Story Guidelines issued by the Synod Communications and Marketing Team, Uniting Resources.

## Policy Statement

This policy provides standards for Administration staff, Minister in Placement Community, Church Councillors, Team Leaders, Volunteers and Congregational members within the Parramatta Centenary Uniting Church, engaging in communications using public facing social media channels.

This includes, but is not limited to, blogs, discussion forums, discussion boards, podcasts, video and photo sharing, social networks and micro blogs.

### 1. Principles of Conduct

All staff, Ministers in Placement, Community Worker, Church Councillors, Team Leaders, Volunteers and Congregation members using social media must exercise and adopt a risk minimisation approach given that all the content posted on social media immediately becomes:

- a. Public information and freely available to those who can access it
- b. Information that can be used as source material by journalists and other interested parties
- c. Information that can be used in legal matters
- d. Information that may breach the Privacy Act.

### 2. Official presence of social media

An official social media presence must be approved by Church council and show it has a specific need and outcome. It will come under a continuous review process through the Communications Committee and the Church Council.

### 3. Official use of social media

Staff, Ministers in Placement, Church Councillors, Team Leaders, Volunteers and Congregation members using social media platforms must:

- a. Have a prior approval
- b. Use an official social media account

c. Not mix personal and official comments

d. Exercise sound judgment and common sense and behave online in accordance with associated Synod Policies and Procedures

#### **4. Private use of social media**

Staff, Ministers in placement, Community Worker Church Councillors, Team Leaders and Volunteers participating in social media in a private capacity must:

- a. Not allow the use of social media to undermine their effectiveness at work
- b. Use a private social media account established with a private email address. Staff must not use a Synod social media account for private use of social media.
- c. Not disclose any confidential information obtained through work. This includes information relating to employment, email addresses, contact lists, work duties or photographs of Synod activities or staff, Ministers and Volunteers.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities for establishing an official social media presence are as follows.**

- Prepare and maintain social media strategy including procedures, templates and disclaimers.
- Maintains a register of official social media accounts and channels.
- Provide content, frameworks and outlines relevant engaging content.
- Maintain internal process to ensure quality and efficiency and currency of content.
- Ensure that our social media strategy is maintained and monitored.

#### **6. Actions of Communications Team and Uniting Resources**

- Activity or Function Delegated Officer Approve Social Media Platform for official use.
- Communications Team, Uniting Resources approve the establishment of a public facing social media channel and/or account and/or profile that will speak with the voice of the Synod
- Communications and Marketing Team, Uniting Resources approval to act as a social media user for official purposes
- Communications and Marketing Team, Uniting Resources Approval of a content framework as a source for social media

Ethical standards and related policies Staff, Ministers in Placement, Community Worker, Church Councillors, Team Leaders and Volunteers need to follow the same behavioural standards online as they would through print or personal interaction. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with members, families, donors, media, and other stakeholders also apply online. Staff, Ministers in Placement, Community Worker, Church Councillors, Team Leaders and Volunteers are

liable for anything they post to social media sites whether in a professional capacity or through a personal post and may be held accountable.

To assist you in making the correct choices, this policy should be read in conjunction with the policies below: - Media Protocols - Staff Procedures and Policies - Privacy Policy - Telling Our Story Guidelines

**7. Posting Guidelines Before posting anything in either a personal or professional capacity, stop and ask yourself the following questions:**

**Do I really want the world to see this?**

There's no such thing as a private social media site. The web is viral – comments can be forwarded worldwide in seconds. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you've posted something you wish you hadn't, it's already too late to change it!

**Is this information accurate?**

Make sure you have all the facts before you post to avoid posting incorrect information about you or the organisation. If you make an error, be the first to correct it – quickly.

**Should I be responding to this post?**

Let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts. From time-to-time you may come across negative posts about our organisation or the spheres in which we operate. Avoid the temptation to react yourself – instead please pass the information to the Synod Communications and Marketing Team, Uniting Resources, who will determine the responsible spokesperson to address such comments.

(Adapted from Social Media Guidelines NSW and ACT Synod Uniting Church, 2014)