

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by the Rowing ACT Board on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015

### INTRODUCTION

Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube and blogging represent a growing form of communication for not-for-profit organisations, allowing them to engage with their members and the wider public more easily than ever before. Rowing ACT recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement.

However, it is also an area in which rules and boundaries are constantly being tested. This policy acts to maximise our social media reach while protecting our public reputation.

### PURPOSE

This policy covers all forms of social media, including but not limited to activities such as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Shutterfly or Twitter)
- Content sharing including Flickr (photo) and YouTube (video)
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites, or customer review sites
- Taking part in on-line votes and polls
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards)
- Editing a Wikipedia page

Rowing ACT seeks to encourage information and link sharing amongst its membership, officials and volunteers, and seeks to utilise the expertise within these groups in generating appropriate social media content.

When someone clearly identifies with Rowing ACT and discusses their involvement in this type of forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in ways that are consistent with Rowing ACT's values and policies. At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that Rowing ACT wishes to present to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage the organisation's reputation in any way.

This policy aims to provide some guiding principles to follow when using social media. It does not apply to personal use of social media platforms by members or officials where no reference to Rowing ACT or related issues have been made. The intent of this policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect members, colleagues, clients, sponsors or Rowing ACT as an organisation.

Due to the fast-moving nature of social media and the constant development of new social media programs, it is important that this policy and its procedures be reviewed at regular intervals.

## CORE POLICY

Rowing ACT's social media use shall be consistent with the following core values:

- **Integrity:** Rowing ACT will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory, misleading or harassing content about its own work, the work of other organisations, or individuals. Rowing ACT will not knowingly post, or allow to be posted, material that is discriminatory or material that vilifies, ridicules, or is likely to promote hatred against, any person or group on the basis of age, politics, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or marital status. The Rowing ACT Brand must not be used to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate. In addition, it will post in accordance with the organisation's Copyright and Privacy policies.
- **Professionalism:** Rowing ACT's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Officials and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of Rowing ACT using its online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals. When using the Internet for professional or personal pursuits, the organisation's members, affiliates and sponsor brands must be respected to ensure intellectual property is not compromised, except where such use can be considered incidental – (where incidental is taken to mean 'happening in subordinate conjunction with something else').
- **Information Sharing:** Rowing ACT encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members.
- **Confidentiality:** Information that is confidential or in anyway sensitive to Rowing ACT, its members, affiliates, partners or sponsors, must not be published or commented on in any way that may breach that confidentiality.

Rowing ACT should seek to grow its social media base and use this to engage with existing and potential members, sponsors and stakeholders. At the same time, a professional balance must be struck which avoids placing the organisation's reputation at risk.

## SOCIAL MEDIA PROCEDURES

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board shall empower the Executive Officer to co-ordinate Rowing ACT's social media management.

The Executive Officer will oversee expansion of social media and help to develop the Social Media Strategy in line with the organisation's communications strategy.

Officials and volunteers may, from time to time and where appropriate, post on behalf of Rowing ACT using the organisation's online social media profiles. This is to be done only with the express knowledge and authorisation of the Executive Officer.

The Executive Officer has ultimate responsibility for:

- Ensuring that all posts are in keeping with Rowing ACT's core Social Media Policy.
- Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken to correct or remove inappropriate posts (including defamatory and/or illegal content) and in minimising the risk of a repeat incident.
- Ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken in repairing relations with any persons or organisations offended by an inappropriate post.
- Moderating and monitoring public response to social media, such as blog comments and Facebook replies, to ensure that trolling and spamming does not occur, to remove offensive or inappropriate replies, or caution offensive posters, and to reply to any further requests for information generated by the post topic.

It is important to maintain the balance between encouraging discussion and information sharing, and maintaining a professional and appropriate online presence.

### Delegation

Social media is often a 24/7 occupation. As such, such responsibilities as outlined above may be delegated by the Board or Executive Officer to another appropriate official, member or volunteer.

## PROCESSES

### Posting to social media

Before social media posts are made, volunteers and officials should ask themselves the following questions:

- Is the information I am posting, or reposting, likely to be of interest to Rowing ACT's members and stakeholders?
- Is the information in keeping with the interests of the organisation and its constituted aims and core policy?
- Could the post be construed as an attack on another individual, organisation or project?
- Would Rowing ACT's stakeholders be happy to read the post?
- If there is a link attached to the post, does the link work, and have I read the information it links to and judged it to be an appropriate source? Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content.
- If reposting information, is the original poster an individual or organisation that Rowing ACT would be happy to associate itself with?
- Is the tone and the content of the post in keeping with other posts made by Rowing ACT? Does it maintain the organisation's overall tone?
- Has appropriate permission been obtained for the use of logos or images owned by others?
- Does the content published or used respect the copyright of third parties?

Where there is uncertainty in regard to the suitability of post content input should be sought from the Executive Officer, or in the case of a proposed post by the Executive Officer, a Director of the Board.

### Damage limitation

In the event of a damaging or misleading post being made, the Executive Officer should be notified as soon as possible, and the following actions should occur:

- The offending post should be removed.
- Where necessary an apology should be issued, either publicly or to the individual or organisation involved. The issue of an apology must always be discussed with Rowing ACT President or Vice President prior to issue.

- The origin of the offending post should be explored and steps taken to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

## **Moderating social media**

The reputation of Rowing ACT is first and foremost, and this involves maintaining a safe and friendly environment for its members.

From time to time social media forums may be hijacked by trolls or spammers, or attract people who attack other posters or the organisation aggressively. In order to maintain a pleasant environment for everybody, these posts need to be moderated.

Freedom of speech is to be encouraged, but if posts that do not comply with this policy, of which contain any of the following:

- Excessive or inappropriate use of swearing;
- Repetitive advertisements; or
- Topics which fall outside the realms of interest to members and stakeholders, and which do not appear to be within the context of a legitimate discussion or enquiry will be removed.

If a post appears only once:

- Remove the post as soon as possible
- If possible/appropriate, contact the poster privately to explain why you have removed the post and highlighting Rowing ACT's posting guidelines.

If a poster continues to post inappropriate content, or if the post can be considered spam:

- Remove the post as soon as possible
- Ban or block the poster to prevent them from posting again.

Banning and blocking should be used as a last resort only, and only when it is clear that the poster intends to continue to contribute inappropriate content. However, if that is the case, action must be taken swiftly to maintain the welfare of other social media users.

The decision to block, ban and remove posts ultimately lies with the Rowing ACT Board, but may be delegated to a Director or Directors and/or the Executive Officer.