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## Social Media Policy

**INTRODUCTION** Social media provides Hunter Region Landcare Network with the opportunity to engage in ongoing conversations with its diverse stakeholder base. It allows Hunter Region Landcare Network to connect with the community, improve our understanding of current attitudes and issues and share Landcare activities and programs.

Hunter Region Landcare Network supports its employees' and volunteers' participation in social media as a means of complementing traditional communication channels (eg. web, print, radio, television).

**DEFINITION** Social Media refers to the platforms of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

**SCOPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE** This policy applies to all staff, contractors and committee of Hunter Region Landcare Network. It applies to these uses of social media:

- Creating a social media presence as an official representative of Hunter Region Landcare Network;
- Publishing messages, responding to comments + uploading content, including data, to official, public facing Hunter Region Landcare Network social media channels and / or third party social media channels;
- Making reference to Hunter Region Landcare Network within a private capacity on social media; and
- When a staff member participates in discussion that relates directly or indirectly to the field in which they are employed by Hunter Region Landcare Network.

**PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT** Importantly, all content posted on social media sites immediately becomes public information, freely available to those who access it and potentially permanent, difficult to erase, remove or retract.

Staff use of social media should adhere to the same standard of professional practice and conduct associated with all communication activities. Staff are to operate within the Hunter Region Landcare Network's social media policy

and within the professional standard of the Hunter Region Landcare Network Code of Conduct. This includes:

- Be honest, polite and considerate
- Be apolitical and impartial when using social media for official purposes.
- Demonstrate the values of Hunter Region Landcare Network.
- Staff must not do anything that may adversely affect Hunter Region Landcare Network, or use social media in a way that could bring Hunter Region Landcare Network into disrepute. This may lead to disciplinary action.
- All staff and committee must exercise caution and adopt a risk minimisation approach when using social media.

### **OFFICIAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Staff / volunteers participating in an official capacity on third party or Hunter Region Landcare Network hosted social media platforms must:

- Have the prior consent of the Chairperson to act as an authorised social media user.
- Only post or discuss information that is publicly available.
- Disclose in a manner suitable to the platform that they are an employee / volunteer of Hunter Region Landcare Network and specify their role within Hunter Region Landcare Network.
- Do not mix personal views with official comments.
- Inform the Chairperson of any media involvement or interest by journalists.
- Follow and comply with the requirements of existing Hunter Region Landcare Network policies.
- Ensure there is no conflict of interest for Hunter Region Landcare Network.
- Contribute to reporting on the performance of social media channels against Hunter Region Landcare Network targets for community engagement.

### **PRIVATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Staff / committee participating in social media in a private capacity are expected to:

- Exercise sound judgement and behave in accordance with Hunter Region Landcare Network policy, values and Code of Conduct.
- Clearly separate private opinions from the Hunter Region Landcare Network official position.
- Not allow the use of social media to undermine their effectiveness at work.
- Use a private social media account, established with a private email address (staff / committee must not use a Hunter Region Landcare

Network social media account or a Hunter Region Landcare Network email address for private use of social media).

- Not disclose confidential information obtained through work.
- Understand the risks, benefits and implications that may arise from making private contributions to discussions that relate to their work.
- Seek advice from the Chairperson to address any issues or concerns.

## ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Roles of the Chairperson in relation to social media include:

- Maintain a register of official social media accounts and channels.
- Arrange social media training where appropriate.
- Advise on and approve social media content frameworks.
- Track and monitor discussions and respond to emerging issues.
- Ensure that any staff / volunteers who are authorised to operate social media are aware of this policy.
- Ensure adherence to protocols such as photo release forms + Child Protection Guidelines.
- Oversee the use of social media tools.
- Maintain internal processes to ensure quality, technical accuracy and currency of content posted to social media sites.
- Authorise staff / volunteers to represent Hunter Region Landcare Network in approved social media channels.

### AUTHORISATION:

This version was approved on: 19/04/2018  
This version takes effect on: 19/04/2018  
Authorised by: The Network Committee  
Chairperson: Leslie Pearson

Chairperson signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of December 2013. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Landcare NSW or the user's independent advisor.

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Department of Primary Industries

