



Surf Life Saving  
Lower North Coast Branch Inc.

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## **SLSLNC Social Media Policy**

### **What is social media?**

Social media is a type of media which enables social interaction between an author and active readers, incorporating the publishing of those interactions and conversations online. This is in contrast to more traditional forms of media where the audience has a strictly passive role.

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

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

If your club or branch is utilising social media it is important that it is used appropriately to ensure the organisation's reputation is maintained and is not brought into disrepute.

### **Using Social Media for your Surf Club/Branch**

Before you create a new website, social networking page or forum for your surf club or branch it is important to get permission from the President and Committee. Furthermore you must ensure that only appropriate content is put onto these platforms.

Understanding how different social media channels work and tailoring content to those channels will ensure the message gets across effectively to your audience. Communicating to your audience in a particular style of written language will also help represent your club/branch and the organisation's brand and image. The most effective social media sites adopt a definite 'voice' to communicate to audiences by writing content in a personality that possesses attributes that are friendly, real, honest, Australian, helpful, encouraging, trustworthy, motivating, educational, welcoming, energetic and positive.

As a best practice guide, clubs are encouraged to engage Facebook as their primary use of social media, followed by the use of Twitter and photo sharing networks like Flickr or Instagram. Utilising social media tools can be a very time consuming task so it is important clubs focus their energies on one or two channels rather than taking on the entire social media sphere.

**Create interest** among your followers and the audience as a whole. Post relevant articles, promotions and information about your products and services using relevant keywords. Furthermore, social media is a great way to give your members a voice.

Use pictures, promotions, videos to let the **fans drive the traffic for you**. For example, you could run a campaign where the most number of likes for a promotional poster of your surf club wins a prize. This will ensure that you are not the only one doing all the hard work; suddenly your members have joined in the conversation.

**Don't be repetitive.** If you overload the user with information and even worse, if the information is repetitive then the audience will opt out and stop following your page.

**Never self promote too much.** Always link your posts and tweets to some interesting current information that will add value to your audience.

Social media is a two way channel for communication. It's a great medium for delivering your message but it is also a medium that can be used to listen. Always **listen** to what your audience and follower base are telling you. Pretty soon you will start to anticipate the feedback. Trust is the key element in building relationships online. Build trust by keeping a respectful tone, even when disagreeing with others and by responding to comments in a timely manner. If a member or club realises that they have made a mistake, they should try to correct it promptly.

Remember that online conversations and interactions are not conducted in the same way as telephone or face to face communication and increases the risk of misinterpretation and comments being taken out of context.

It is important to consider the audience and keep in mind that this may include current and potential members, government agencies, corporate sponsors and suppliers and the media. Before posting, the content should be considered to ensure it is appropriate for the audience and does not exclude or offend any particular group.

Clubs/Branch and members should be aware that the tone used in online interactions can be interpreted in different ways by audiences, due to a lack of non-verbal communication or cultural differences. Some participants may not be familiar with abbreviations, emoticons and other common codes used in online communication.

Clubs/Branch and members have the ability to engage with other groups in Surf Life Saving by using social media. Through Facebook, clubs can engage and promote activities and opportunities available to members by posting onto Branch or SLSNSW pages. This could include sharing photos from a recent Branch camp to your club's page or re-posting a link to an SLSNSW opportunity ie. applications open for a coaching course in your area.

#### **Things to remember when using social media**

Members of Surf Life Saving are obliged to adhere to the SLSA Policy Statement – Use of Social Media – Policy number 6.20, which is available on the SLSA Member Portal.

Club/Branch social media sites must not contain, or link to, defamatory, harassing, pornographic or otherwise inappropriate content, including photos, illustrations or nicknames.

Clubs/Branch and their members are not to comment on, or publish, information that is confidential or in any way sensitive to SLSNSW, its affiliates, partners or sponsors.

Clubs/Branch and members should consider social media and online interaction as a permanent record of their online action, conversations and opinions. They should be aware that the internet is not anonymous and should assume that everything that they may write or comment on could be traced back to them. Clubs/Branch are required to take responsibility for any information they post.

Clubs/Branch and members are expected to refrain from engaging in activities that may damage the reputation of the organisation and are to foster a positive organisational image at all times.

Executive members of Clubs/Branch should also actively monitor their pages for derogatory, defamatory or inappropriate posts, possibly deleting or blocking the post if it breaches the club/branch's policy.