

2024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR COUNCILLORS



This advice relates to the following types of social media platforms:

1. A Councillor's official Facebook or other social media pages
2. A Councillor's election campaign Facebook or other social media page. (It is noted that a Councillor may use one social media site for the purpose of 1 and 2)
3. A Councillor's personal or family Facebook or other social media page used solely or predominantly for private purposes
4. Facebook or other social media pages that are used or associated with the Councillor but which are in false names.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING ELECTION PERIOD

The Code of Conduct for Queensland Councillors applies to your online conduct in relation to 1 and 2 above and may also apply to your online conduct in 3 and 4 above if that online activity can be identified as you and reflects adversely on your role as a councillor and as a leader in your community.

WHAT SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS ARE THERE FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD?

Posts on social media containing election material must comply with the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 if they are posted during an election period. This is the case regardless of whether you are posting on your personal or official social media account. Election material includes anything able to, or intended to, influence an elector about voting at an election, or affect the result of an election.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you use social media to campaign for an election, your account must state the name and address (other than a post office box) of the person who authorised the account. If you post any videos, images, or other material that can be downloaded and distributed separately from your account as a distinct piece of election material, it is recommended that those videos, images or materials include the same authorizations.

HOW TO AVOID MISLEADING VOTERS DURING AN ELECTION

Your posts on social media (both your official and personal accounts) must not:

- Mislead or intend to mislead an elector about the ways of voting at the election;
- Contain a false statement of fact about the personal character or conduct of the candidate, if you knew it was false when you made the post;
- Purport to be a representation of a ballot paper for use in the election, if it is likely to induce an elector to cast an informal vote.

MODERATING COMMENTS ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The principles, values and behavioural standards outlined in the Code of Conduct for Queensland Councillors should

guide your engagement on official social media platforms, including during an election period. In particular, all councillors are required to show respect for all persons and accept and value differences of opinion when engaging with the community.

Councillors are held to a higher standard of conduct than general members of the public. This reflects the choice that a councillor makes when deciding to run for public office, and if successful, in accepting the position and obligations that are inherent in being an elected representative.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Ensure your social media posts contain information which is factually accurate. Any breaches of the above are considered an offence under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The Office of the Independent Assessor and the Local Government Association of Queensland have jointly developed a model Queensland Councillor Social Media Community Guideline for councillors to adopt and publish on their official social media pages.

It is recommended you:

- Adhere to and display the official Queensland Councillor Social Media Community Guideline on your page in the 'About section', with the following suggested text: "This page is moderated according to standards of best practice recommended by the Office of the Independent Assessor and the LGAQ – www.lgaq.asn.au/socialcommunityguidelines or oia.qld.gov.au/socialcommunityguidelines"

The guideline has been written to ensure constituents can comment and engage with you – making comments which may be positive, neutral or negative. It also outlines to the public what acceptable social media engagement looks like, in what circumstances you will hide or delete comments, and in what circumstances you will block constituents from the page.