

# Use of Social Media Policy

## Applicable to:

This Policy applies to staff and contingent workers in the following agencies:

- Transport for NSW (TfNSW)
- Department of Transport (DoT)
- Sydney Trains
- NSW Trains
- State Transit Authority (STA)
- Sydney Metro

The term 'staff' is used in this Policy to cover all ongoing, temporary and casual staff.

The term 'contingent workers' is used in this Policy to cover staff seconded from another organisation, labour hire workers, professional services contractors and consultants.

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Superseded Documents:	CP13003.5 Use of Social Media Policy

## 1 Purpose

The use of social media is an increasing part of everyday online activity. Transport supports appropriate use of social media as a legitimate part of communication and as a means of social interaction. However, comments made on social media are in the public domain, i.e. as if made to the media or in a public forum. Comments on social media on any Transport agency or associated organisation subject matter will be taken to be work-related, irrespective of how they are published, and could have broader impacts, like newspaper, television and radio media interest.

Transport is committed to establishing a culture of openness, trust and integrity for staff that use social media in a non-official capacity. This includes social media accessed either during work time (if the agency's relevant technology usage policies allows such access), or during private time (including out of office hours), and irrespective of whether Transport resources or personal resources are used.

The aim of this policy is to enable appropriate use of social media and at the same time:

- protect the reputation of Transport;
- maintain confidentiality of corporate and personal information;
- provide clear guidance on appropriate online behaviour towards customers and other staff members; and
- promote an online culture between staff members that is free from bullying, harassment and / or discrimination.

As a private citizen, staff members have a right to enter public debates and comment on public policy, political, social or any other issue. However, unless authorised to do so, any comment must be made strictly as a private citizen and be separate from, and avoid any reference to, employment within Transport.

Access to social media at work is covered by each agency's relevant technology usage policies. This policy does not seek to change any of the agency's policies related to access to social media at work.

### 1.1 Key Definitions

All terminology in this Procedure is taken to mean the generally accepted or dictionary definition with the exception of the following terms which have a specifically defined meaning:

Term	Definition
<b>Social media</b>	<p>Refers to social media sites, tools and platforms that provide users with infrastructure and resources to connect and communicate with each other and share and exchange content or information.</p> <p>They include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ social networking sites - e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Google Plus, Tumblr, LinkedIn</li> <li>○ video and photo sharing websites - e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Instagram</li> <li>○ micro-blogging sites - e.g. Twitter</li> <li>○ forums and discussion boards - e.g. Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups,</li> </ul>

	<p>Google Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ blogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs and blogs hosted by traditional media outlets</li> <li>○ online encyclopaedias – e.g. Wikipedia</li> <li>○ instant messaging software/applications e.g. MSN, WhatsApp, iMessage, QQ, WeChat, Skype</li> <li>○ any other websites that allow individual users or organisations to use simple self publishing tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Publish</b>	Includes but is not limited to posting, blogging, tweeting, uploading photographs, commenting, sharing, liking and re-tweeting content on social media.
<b>Supplier</b>	Includes a person or organisation who provides products or services to Transport as part of a contractual agreement.
<b>Transport or associated organisations</b>	Includes Transport for NSW, Department of Transport, State Transit Authority, Roads & Maritime Services, Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, their activities, people, products, services, suppliers or other business-related individuals or organisations.
<b>Business-related individual or organisation</b>	Includes a person or organisation who has a business contractual relationship with Transport. For example, law firms or engineering firms with whom Transport has a business contractual relationship.

## 2 Mandatory Requirements

### 2.1 Official use of social media

Official use of social media is covered by the [Transport Social Media Management Policy](#).

Official use of social media is when:

- a staff member is representing an agency in Transport on a Transport social media site, e.g. when the TfNSW Media & Public Affairs Officer posts a comment, using their name and title, on a TfNSW Facebook page; or
- a staff member is representing an agency in Transport on another social media site, e.g. when the TfNSW Media & Public Affairs Officer posts a comment, using their name and title, on the Sydney Morning Herald Facebook page.

In line with the [Transport Social Media Management Policy](#), unless authorised, a staff member must not comment as a representative of an agency in Transport.

The Customer Experience Division in TfNSW administers approvals and procedures for official social media accounts. Written approval must be obtained from the Deputy Secretary Customer Services Division, TfNSW before representing an agency in Transport in social media. Refer to the [Transport Social Media Management Policy](#) for more information.

## 2.2 Non-Official use of social media

While social media appears to blur private and public spheres, activities on social media websites are considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. Additionally, the terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted. This makes the public nature of these websites inescapable. Online content is also essentially permanent – a fact that must also be taken into consideration when posting.

Non-official use of social media is any use of social media where a staff member's comments or profile could identify them directly or indirectly as a staff member of Transport, and/or if they are making reference directly or indirectly to Transport or associated organisations. In such circumstances please refer to section 2.2.1, which provides guidance on appropriate use of social media.

Staff should recognise that inappropriate use of non-official social media may directly or indirectly result in damage to the reputation of Transport or colleagues. Accordingly, staff must comply with this Policy to ensure that risk of such damage is minimised.

Staff are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media platform. When in doubt, staff should seek guidance from their manager on how to comply with their obligations under this and other relevant policies.

### 2.2.1 Directly or indirectly identifying staff and / or comments with Transport or associated organisations

#### Staff must:

- follow the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform and abide by the [Code of Conduct](#);
- be polite and respectful to all people with whom they interact;
- only disclose and discuss publicly available information. For clarification about what information is available in the public domain, refer to the following websites:
  - [transport.nsw.gov.au](http://transport.nsw.gov.au)
  - [sydneytrains.info](http://sydneytrains.info)
  - [nswtrainlink.info](http://nswtrainlink.info)
  - [rms.nsw.gov.au](http://rms.nsw.gov.au)
  - [statetransit.info](http://statetransit.info)
- only publish content that is accurate; and / or
- if offering a personal perspective on a matter, be clear that their views and their own and be mindful that their commentary and opinion does not cause damage to the reputation of Transport or associated organisations. Staff should recognise that their comments made on social media that are disparaging or critical of the workplace are a matter of public record and are very likely to cause damage to the reputation of the organisation.

#### Staff must not:

- use their work email address;

- use a Transport agency or NSW Government logo or insignia;
- impersonate another staff member;
- publish content likely to bring Transport into disrepute;
- make disparaging comments about work colleagues;
- post material that is, or might be construed as offensive, obscene, defamatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court or is otherwise unlawful;
- imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of a Transport agency or the NSW Government, or give the impression that the views they express are those of Transport or the Government; and / or
- post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards other staff of Transport.

Transport recommends that staff do not post any work related phone numbers on social media. Publishing a work phone number (even a ported personal mobile number) may identify the staff member as part of Transport.

This section also applies to:

- social media activities undertaken by staff members anonymously;
- staff members who contribute articles to social media as subject matter experts or members of a professional network (e.g. project management or engineering technology) are also subject to the [External Papers, Reports and Presentations Process](#) . In addition, staff must:
  - state that the views expressed are their own and not those of Transport or the NSW Government; and / or
  - not use social media to make any transport related announcements reveal any confidential information or claim credit for work that is not theirs.

### **2.2.2 Reasonable and unreasonable use of Transport resources**

When accessing social media using a Transport agency resource, staff must follow the agency's relevant technology usage policies.

Reasonable use includes but is not limited to:

- re-tweeting content from Transport account/s on the staff member's personal Twitter account;

Unreasonable use includes but is not limited to:

- excessive use of social media during work hours and/or not related to work (where the agency's relevant technology usage policies allows such access);
- posting or viewing material which could reasonably be considered to be inappropriate.

### **2.2.3 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination**

All staff members are expected to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity and must ensure that their online behaviour does not constitute behaviours of bullying, harassment and / or discrimination. This may include comments staff make online, even on their own private social

media platforms and out of office hours towards other staff. Such grounds may include, but are not limited to:

- sex;
- gender;
- marital status;
- carer's responsibilities;
- ethnicity;
- religion;
- disability or illness;
- age;
- sexual orientation;
- transgender status – actual and presumed;
- political opinion/affiliation;
- Union involvement/non involvement;
- criminal record.

The [Transport Prevention and Management of Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) applies to online social media activity, and in the physical workplace.

Abusive, harassing, threatening or defamatory comments towards other staff may be considered a breach of the [Transport Prevention and Management of Bullying and Harassment Policy](#), and / or [Code of Conduct](#), and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **3 Accountabilities**

Staff are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media platform. When in doubt, staff should seek guidance from their manager on how to comply with their obligations under this Policy.

When using social media in a personal capacity staff should:

- be polite and respectful;
- uphold organisational values;
- use common sense and professionalism;
- know and follow the relevant agency policies including the [Code of Conduct](#), [technology usage policies](#).

Any use of agency resources to access social media must comply with the respective agencies policies.

Social media is not the forum to report/post suspected wrongdoing e.g. corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste and government information contravention. Staff should report any suspected wrongdoing within Transport in accordance with their respective agency's Public Interest Disclosures Policy.

Each Transport Agency is accountable for the implementation and monitoring of this Policy within it, for example ensuring systems are in place to:

- distribute this Policy to all persons in the agency impacted by it;
- ensure that any individuals or organisations that must observe this Policy as a result of a contract or other agreement with the agency are advised; and
- monitor implementation.

## 4 Breaches of This Policy

The Transport [Code of Conduct](#) provides staff with a framework for decisions, actions and appropriate behaviour. It explains the professional standards of conduct and ethical principles staff members are expected to adopt in the employment of their duties while employed by the agency. These professional standards and ethical principles apply to all online activity undertaken by staff.

Transport recognises that staff use social media in their personal lives. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit a staff member's online activities. The [Code of Conduct](#) allows staff members to act in a private capacity to influence public opinion or promote issues of public interest. However, staff members should ensure that their conduct is consistent with the responsibilities described above.

Transport may commence applicable disciplinary action if a person to whom this Policy applies breaches this Policy (or any of its related procedures) up to and including termination of employment.

## 5 Document History

Date & Policy No	Approved by	Amendment Notes
18 November 2013 V1.0	Director General – Transport for NSW	Approved
30 June 2014 CP13003.1	Executive Director, People and Corporate Services – Transport for NSW	Amended Human Resources and Business Services to People and Corporate Services. Amended Director General to Secretary.
3 July 2017 CP13003.2	Executive Director Group Human Resources	Amended to reflect title changes within People and Corporate Services Amended to reflect GSELA Amended the Transport Cluster to Transport Deleted references to individual Agency Code of Conduct. Now Transport Code of Conduct
1 July 2018 CP13003.3	Secretary	Inclusion of Sydney Metro as agency to which this policy applies from 1 July 2018.

Date & Policy No	Approved by	Amendment Notes
29 July 2019 CP13003.4	Chief People Officer	Updates to obsolete job titles, Division/Branch name and template changes to front page.
11 February 2020 CP13003.5	Chief People Officer	Removal of RMS as an Agency to which this Policy applies (update to front page).
16 December 2020 CP13003.6	Chief People Officer	Update to 2.2.3 – replaced the term sexual preference with sexual orientation.

## Attachments

The table below lists the Transport agencies documentation that supports or, is referred to in this document.

Title	Agency
ICT Service Access and Usage Policy	Sydney Trains
ICT Service Access and Usage Policy	NSW Trains
Information Security Policy	Sydney Trains
Information Security Policy	NSW Trains
Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Policy	Sydney Trains
Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Policy	NSW Trains
Access and Appropriate Use of RMS ICT Systems and/or ICT Infrastructure	RMS
Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Prevention Procedure	RMS
Information Security: Staff Accessing and Using Information Systems	STA
Information Security Policy (to be developed)	TfNSW
Acceptable Use of Technology Standard	TfNSW
Internet Policy	TfNSW
Transport <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a>	Transport
<a href="#">Transport Prevention and Management of Bullying and Harassment Policy</a>	Transport