

Submission on the Model Social Media Policy: Consultation Draft

August 2021

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Opening:

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the 'Model Social Media Policy: Consultation Draft' (MSM policy).

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing NSW general purpose councils and related entities.

This submission was endorsed by the LGNSW Board at its meeting of 20 August 2021. No revisions were made by the Board.

Submission:

In LGNSW's view the draft MSM policy is unlikely to add benefit to councils or councillors in the management of their social media accounts. This is, in large part, due to the highly prescriptive nature of the draft MSM policy and LGNSW's knowledge that, given the long-standing use of social media platforms by councils, councillors, and staff, many councils already have effective policies and procedures in place.

LGNSW has a Template Social Media Policy (Template Policy) available for its members through LGNSW's online human resources toolkit, LGNSW HR Advance.

The Template Policy is designed to apply to all people who contribute to external blogs and sites including social networking sites, who identify themselves as being associated with the applicable council. This can include both staff (including contractors) and elected officials of a council.

LGNSW is aware that a large number of our member councils have already adopted social media policies based on the Template Policy. The Template Policy has been an effective tool in managing the use of social media by staff and councillors alike. It is less prescriptive in nature than the draft MSM policy and, as such, allows for councils to adopt and adapt it as necessary to suit local needs. Further, LGNSW's Template Policy, has been independently reviewed for legal compliance by employment law firm, Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors.

Accordingly, LGNSW believes that the MSM Policy is unnecessary and that sufficient tools are already available to, and in use by, councils. LGNSW does not believe that additional benefit could be gained from the introduction of the MSM Policy.

LGNSW notes that the MSM Policy, if adopted by the OLG, would not be mandatory. LGNSW supports the maintenance of this position.