

1. RACGP Social Media Policy

- 1.1 Policy number: CO-O-065.0
- 1.2 Category: Organisational
- 1.3 Approval date: February 2016
- 1.4 Revision date: February 2019
- 1.5 Unit responsible: Communications and Media Unit

2. Policy declaration

The RACGP is best represented by its people, and what RACGP representatives publish will reflect its reputation. RACGP representatives are encouraged to engage with Social Media to add value, provide worthwhile information and perspective.

This policy regulates how RACGP representatives communicate through social media channels and online platforms in connection with the RACGP, and provides disciplinary procedures should communications be inappropriate.

This policy is authorised by the CEO and endorsed by Council.

3. Background

The general practice leadership role played by the RACGP is reflected in its public brand as a credible and ethical professional organisation. This policy aims to ensure this public image is maintained across social media platforms.

RACGP representatives must be aware of the increasing convergence of private and professional involvement in social media. This is particularly relevant as the line between private and professional comments / posts is becoming increasingly blurred.

RACGP representatives must be aware of the possible workplace ramifications resulting from ordinarily private social media comments.

The RACGP is committed to ensuring its representatives participate in social media responsibly and respectfully, guided by the RACGP's workplace values and behaviours.

3.1 Objectives

This policy aims to:

- A ensure the RACGP produces high quality, professional statements to external audiences
- B outline RACGP expectations regarding use of social media relevant to RACGP representatives
- C guide RACGP representatives in best practice of online conversation
- D protect the RACGP by mitigation, including risk of damage to reputation
- E provide RACGP representatives with guidance regarding who can and cannot speak on the RACGP's behalf
- F provide RACGP representatives with information on content approval processes
- G have processes in place on how to deal with inappropriate, disrespectful, inaccurate or confidential posts

3.2 Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all RACGP representatives in all circumstances involving their use of social media, whether or not in a workplace and whether or not during working hours, where the RACGP is or could possibly be associated or connected with that use.

For example, this policy will apply to any social media comment made about the RACGP, or any comment about its partners, service providers or funding bodies that may reflect upon the RACGP.

3.3 **Matters out of scope of this policy**

This policy does not apply to:

- A breaches of employment conditions (breaches of relevant RACGP policies such as the Code of Conduct will be dealt with under those policies), and
- B comments made by former RACGP representatives or by anyone not an RACGP representative.

4. **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

RACGP representatives includes all:

- A permanent, casual, fixed-term or specific task employees,
- B people who are engaged to provide services to the RACGP, whether on contract or otherwise, or engaged by somebody who is,
- C RACGP members, to the extent they are representing the RACGP,
- D volunteers, training apprentices and students participating in work experience, and
- E Social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Social media includes: internet forums; weblogs; social blogs; microblogging; wikis; podcasts; photographs or pictures; video; rating and social bookmarking, but does not include traditional or industrial media such as newspapers, television and film.

Workplace includes all areas of RACGP work and training activities and refers to any of the RACGP premises or workplaces during working hours. Importantly, workplaces:

- A extend beyond the physical boundaries,
- B include interaction (whether in person, by telephone or other electronic means or through social media) between employees, and
- C include interaction with other organisations and the public.

5. **General principles**

The following principles should be considered in all professional and private use of social media.

5.1 **Authority to speak on behalf of the RACGP**

Councillors and RACGP Expert Committee Chairs have a standing authority to represent the RACGP in social media in the context of their respective roles.

Otherwise, only people expressly authorised by Council or the CEO (or their appropriately authorised delegates) may represent the RACGP in social media.

Ordinarily, RACGP employees are not authorised to publish online content or comment on behalf of the RACGP. Care must be taken to ensure RACGP endorsement of unauthorised comments is not implied by the content or nature of the comment (see item 6.2 below).

5.2 **Quality and content of social media statements**

Statements by RACGP representatives must be factually accurate, and should also be ethically sound, morally appropriate and reflect RACGP policies, values and responsibilities.

Statements must not bring the RACGP into disrepute.

RACGP employees must comply with all copyright laws and fair use of copyright material and attribute work to the original author/source wherever possible

5.3 **Social media in private and professional environments**

RACGP representatives must ensure they do not mix their personal and professional lives in a manner impacting upon the RACGP or is likely to bring the RACGP into disrepute, or which undermines or affects RACGP employees' effectiveness at work.

5.4 **Confidentiality**

The RACGP and RACGP representatives must remain aware of the obligations of confidentiality imposed on them by third party or engagement agreements.

Comments made on social media must not disclose (directly or indirectly) information which:

- A is confidential,
- B is commercially sensitive,
- C involves business performance, results or plans, or
- D includes personal information of anyone other than themselves.

If RACGP representatives require clarification about what information is or isn't in the public domain they should confirm with management or refer to information published on the RACGP website.

5.5 **Control and longevity**

Social media posts rapidly leave the control of the poster. Even deleted tweets or posts may be retained, or may be forwarded or viewed by others.

RACGP representatives should note social media comments will remain in the public for a long time and may be used for unintended purposes with unintended consequences.

6. **RACGP social media guidelines**

6.1 **General expectations**

In all social media comments concerning the RACGP, its brands, or its business, RACGP representatives must familiarise themselves with this policy and act in accordance with its letter and spirit.

6.2 **Personal use of social media**

RACGP representatives must understand the broad reach of social media, and the potential for social media to disseminate messages rapidly and uncontrollably.

RACGP representatives using social media outside the workplace should be aware this policy may still apply.

RACGP representatives must:

- A not post or tweet comments which oppose RACGP views, or which the RACGP representative should know opposes organisational views,
- B not post or tweet content concerning or containing confidential information,
- C demonstrate respect for others' opinions, be polite and respectful of all individuals and communities with which they interact, even in times of heated discussion and debate,
- D comply with the RACGP's Code of Conduct, Equity and Diversity, Values and Behaviours and all other relevant organisational policies as relevant,
- E comply with the RACGP's Privacy of Personal Information policy (which governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information to meet the Privacy Act obligations), and

- F when posting content relevant to RACGP but in a personal capacity, use a disclaimer substantially similar to "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the RACGP's official position on this issue" and/or "views are my own" as appropriate.

This disclaimer requirement does not derogate from any obligation RACGP representatives have under this policy, and does not apply to reposting of existing RACGP social media content.

6.3 **Expectations of authorised RACGP representatives**

This item 6.3 only applies to RACGP representatives with express or standing authority to comment or publish content on the RACGP's behalf.

RACGP representatives must ensure they use their own username and password for access, and must keep these confidential and not transfer them to any other person, unless expressly authorised for business purposes.

RACGP representatives must comply with the RACGP's Code of Conduct Policy and Equity and Diversity Policy and Values and Behaviours, and must attend of RACGP social media training prior to engaging in online conversations relevant to their delegated authority.

When publishing content on behalf of the RACGP, RACGP representatives must:

- A ensure content published on social media is accurate and reflects the RACGP's official position on an issue, or where the RACGP does not have an official position, must not conflict with any possible position the RACGP may reasonably take on an issue,
- B conduct themselves in a conservative and professional manner at all times, and
- C identify themselves (by name and role at the RACGP) when they discuss RACGP related matters such as RACGP positions, products or services.

6.4 **Prohibited use of social media**

RACGP representatives must not:

- A post any material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including the RACGP, its employees (including all persons covered under the scope of this policy) or external stakeholders related to the RACGP, or which uses ethnic slurs, hateful remarks or personal insults,
- B use the identity of another RACGP employee,
- C use RACGP logos or trademarks unless authorised,
- D publish material that may cause injury to another person, organisation, association or company, or
- E post material which may be offensive or obscene and may infringe relevant online classification laws (including pornographic or sexually suggestive material).

6.5 **Bullying and harassment**

RACGP representatives must abide by RACGP's Equity and Diversity Policy when engaging in social media. It is important to note in Victoria cyberbullying is against the law.

Brodie's Law applies to all forms of serious bullying, including physical bullying, psychological bullying, verbal bullying and cyberbullying. Brodie's Law makes serious bullying a criminal offence by extending the application of the stalking provisions in the Crimes Act 1958 to include behaviour involving serious bullying.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Managers

Managers must:

- A know, understand and comply with this policy,
- B ensure RACGP representatives they deal with are aware of the contents of this policy and use reasonable efforts to ensure they comply,
- C promote this policy within their area,
- D make it clear they will not tolerate any behaviour that may breach this policy,
- E be a good role model and not engage in behaviour that may breach this policy,
- F act immediately if they witness or are told about any conduct that may breach this policy, and
- G assist with resolution of any complaint under this policy confidentially, seriously, impartially and promptly.

7.2 Employees

RACGP employees must:

- A know, understand and comply with this policy,
- B know and understand they must comply with related state, territory and Commonwealth legislation,
- C promptly report to their manager any breaches of this policy they may witness or become aware of,
- D report to their manager any posts or commentary on topics requiring subject matter expertise,
- E cooperate in any investigation, and
- F maintain complete confidentiality if they provide information during the investigation of a complaint.

8. Non-compliance with this policy

Breaches of this policy and any associated procedures, or any deviation from the above expectations, may be met with disciplinary action under this or another relevant policy.

Consequences may include discipline action for unacceptable behaviour and/or underperformance in the workplace which could result in investigation, warning and/or termination. Any breach may also result in instigation of formal legal proceedings where there is a corresponding breach of law.

9. Related policies, documents and legislation

9.1 Policies

- A RACGP Code of Conduct
- B RACGP Equity and Diversity Policy
- C RACGP Disciplinary Action for Unacceptable Behaviour/Underperformance in the workplace.
- D RACGP Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- E RACGP Computer Usage Policy
- F RACGP Whistle-blower Policy
- G RACGP Privacy of Personal Information Policy

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9.2 **Documents**

- A Values and Behaviours Document
- B Grievance Flow Chart
- C Grievance Incident Report

10. **Administrative procedures**

10.1 **Access to published policy**

This policy will be available via the RACGP intranet.

10.2 **Promulgation of published policy**

Relevant RACGP employees will be provided communications explaining the function and role of this policy.

10.3 **Review of this policy**

This policy will have a review cycle of three (3) years.