

**POLICY NAME: Athletics ACT Social Media Policy**

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**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Executive Officer – Athletics ACT**

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## **1. PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to protect the interests of Athletics ACT; its Clubs; members and associated stakeholders by defining the requirements expected in the use of social media.

Athletics ACT embraces the use of online social media and recognises its importance as a corporate communications tool. Athletics ACT seeks to encourage information and link-sharing amongst its membership, staff and volunteers, and to utilise the expertise of its employees and volunteers in generating appropriate social media content.

The appropriate and responsible use of all social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook offers athletes, teams and Athletics organisations the opportunity to connect with supporters and become more real and accessible than ever before. At the same time, social media posts should be in keeping with the image that Athletics ACT wishes to present to the public, and posts made through its social media channels should not damage the organisation's reputation in any way.

Along with those benefits are associated risks to the reputation of the organisation, its members and followers and individuals who might interact with the organisation through social media channels.

## **2. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media includes, but is not limited to, the generation or sharing of content by an individual or organisation. It can include (but is not limited to) such activities as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Shutterfly, Twitter or MySpace);
- Content sharing includes Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing);
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons;
- 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 or other editable page.

Athletics ACT has a long history and is a highly respected organisation. It is important that Athletics ACT's reputation is not tarnished by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that might reference the organisation.

### 3. INTENT OF THE POLICY

Appropriate use of social media relies on good judgment and common sense. The immediate, public and permanent nature of social networking expose the organisation, competitions, teams and athletes to a degree of risk.

The policy has been developed to provide clarity on how we conduct ourselves in the emerging and ever evolving world of online social media. The guidelines contained in this policy are intended to help empower staff, Clubs, athletes, officials and people in the Athletics community to participate in social media, but to do it sensibly and in a way that best represents the Athletics brand.

The policy also outlines our individual and collective responsibilities when using social media. This mostly comes down to personal good judgment about what material appears online, and in what context.

### 4. WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?

This policy applies to Athletics ACT members, staff or any individual representing themselves or passing themselves off as being a member of Athletics ACT.

When someone clearly identifies their association with Athletics ACT, and/or discusses their involvement in the organisation in areas defined as social media, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the following values:

**Integrity:** Athletics ACT and its members will not knowingly post incorrect, defamatory or misleading information about its own activities, the activities of other organisations, or individuals. In addition, it will post in accordance with the organisation's Member Protection Policy.

**Professionalism:** Athletics ACT's social media represents the organisation as a whole and should seek to maintain a professional and uniform tone. Staff and volunteers may, from time to time and as appropriate, post on behalf of [Athletics ACT using its online profiles, but the impression should remain one of a singular organisation rather than a group of individuals

**Information Sharing:** Athletics ACT encourages the sharing and reposting of online information that is relevant, appropriate to its aims, and of interest to its members.

### 5. WHERE DOES IT APPLY?

This policy covers all forms of social media.

This policy aims to provide some guiding principles to follow when using social media. This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media platforms by Athletics ACT members or staff where the member or staff makes no reference to Athletics ACT and its programs, competitions or related issues.

## 6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The web is not anonymous. Athletics ACT members and staff should assume that everything they write can be traced back to them.

Due to the unique nature of sporting groups such as Athletics ACT, the boundaries between a member's profession, participation, volunteer time and social life can often be blurred. It is therefore essential that members make a clear distinction between what they do in a professional capacity and what they do, think or say in their capacity as a volunteer and member of Athletics ACT.

Athletics ACT considers all members of Athletics ACT and affiliated Clubs as its representatives.

Honesty is always the best policy, especially online. It is important that Athletics ACT's members understand the web represents a permanent record of online actions and opinions.

When using the Internet for professional or personal pursuits, all members must respect Athletics ACT brand and follow the guidelines in place to ensure Athletics intellectual property, its relationships with sponsors and stakeholders and the rights of its members are not compromised, or the organisation is brought into disrepute.

## 7. USAGE

For Athletics ACT members and staff using social media, you must ensure you:

- Do not divulge personal information about yourself or others in your posts to social media channels (for example, email addresses, private addresses or phone numbers)
- Represent your own views and not impersonate or falsely represent any other person
- Are not abusive and do not harass or threaten others
- Do not make defamatory or libellous comments
- Do not use insulting, provocative or hateful language
- Do not use obscene or offensive language
- Do not post material that infringes the intellectual property rights of others
- Do not post material that infers authority to act on behalf of Athletics ACT unless cleared through the Athletics ACT Office.

For Athletics ACT representatives using social media, you must ensure you:

- Do not criticise other athletes, officials, coaches or support and administration staff involved in the delivery of the sport or event or their performance
- Show respect to all other athletes, officials, coaches and support and administrative staff involved in the delivery of an event or session.
- Provide a factual account of your own personal experiences
- Utilise social media in a time and place that is appropriate as determined by administrators and team leadership.

For Athletics ACT staff using social media, you must ensure you:

- Do not interfere with work commitments

- Abide by all existing policies and workplace rules and regulations

Furthermore, Athletics ACT members and staff may not use Athletics ACT brand to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate; and it must be abundantly clear to all readers that any and all opinions shared are those of the individual, and do not represent or reflect the views of Athletics ACT.

## **8. BRANDING AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY(IP)**

It is important that any trademarks belonging to Athletics ACT are not used in personal content such as websites, Facebook pages, Instagram and Twitter accounts, without the prior consent of Athletics ACT.

Requests to use these logos should be directed to the Executive Officer, Athletics ACT.

Trademarks include:

- Athletics ACT logos (including but not limited to the organisations logo and logos that are designed for specific events);
- Athletics ACT tag lines or slogans;
- Images depicting members, volunteers, staff and/or equipment, where they can be identified as being part of the Athletics ACT, except with the permission of those individuals and within other stated guidelines;
- Other Athletics ACT iconic imagery or official uniforms

## **9. USE OF OFFICIAL ORGANISATION SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE OR PROFILES**

When creating a new website, social networking page or forum for staff or members use, care should be taken to ensure the appropriate person at Athletics ACT has given written consent to create the page or forum.

Similarly, appropriate permissions must be obtained for the use of logos or images. Images of minor children may not be replicated on any site without the written permission of the child's parent and/or guardian.

For official Athletics ACT blogs, social pages and online forums:

- Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content;
- Some hosted sites may sell the right to advertise on their sites through 'pop up' content, which may be of a questionable nature. This type of hosted site should not be used for online forums or social pages as the nature of the 'pop up' content cannot be controlled;

Athletics ACT employees must not use Athletics ACT online pages to promote personal projects and all materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties.

## **10. CONSIDERATION TOWARDS OTHERS WHEN USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. Athletics ACT members and staff must recognise that it may not

be appropriate to share certain photographs, videos and comments. In certain situations, Athletics ACT members or staff could potentially breach the privacy act or inadvertently make Athletics ACT liable for breach of copyright.

Athletics ACT members and staff should be considerate to others in such circumstances and should not post information when they have been asked not to or consent has not been sought and given. They must also remove information about another person if that person asks them to do so.

Athletics ACT staff should not be seen to be in a position to be in photographs, videos or other social media content that might be considered controversial for Athletics ACT or the sport if it can in any way be linked to their role in Athletics ACT.

## **11.BREACH OF POLICY**

Athletics ACT continually monitor online activity in relation to the organisation and its members. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to the Executive Officer – Athletics ACT or the President or a director on the Athletics ACT Board.

Depending on the severity of the breach, Athletics ACT will deal with the offence through its internal policies and process (e.g. Athlete Code of Conduct etc.) or via the Athletics ACT By-Law 10 – Disciplining Members: actions incurring sanctions. Inappropriate use of social media could fall into the category of:

1. infringing any law or rule of the Association;
2. being found guilty of any misbehaviour or unfair practice concerning athletics, whether or not this relates to competition;

In such circumstances where a breach is deemed to have occurred, Athletics ACT may impose sanctions, which include but are not limited to:

- A reprimand
- A direction to make verbal or written apology
- Placing the individual on a bond
- Imposing a fine
- Imposing a ban on taking part in any Athletics ACT related activity
- Suspension from participation in athletics

## **12.CONSULTATION OR ADVICE**

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for Athletics ACT and its members and staff in the area of online social interaction. Athletics ACT members or staff who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online and seek clarification, should contact the Executive Officer – Athletics ACT.