

## Social Media Procedure

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### Scope

CFA recognises that many members use social media in their professional and personal lives. This is the CFA procedure for social media use and applies to all CFA members and external contractors who use social media both professionally and personally.

#### Compliance

Not following these guidelines may constitute a breach of CFA's Code of Conduct, employment or contractual obligations, or misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, and may lead to dismissal.

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### Definitions

#### Social media

Content created by people using highly accessible digital publishing technologies. Social media is distinct from industrial media, such as newspapers, television and film, in that it comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone to publish, access and share information using the internet.

Social media includes but is not limited to:

- social networking websites (eg Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer);
- video and photo sharing websites (eg Flickr, Youtube);
- blogs, a type of website regularly updated and typically maintained by an individual, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- blogs hosted by media outlets (eg "comments" or "your say" feature on the Age website);
- microblogging, mini blogs used to exchange short messages and links (eg Twitter);
- wikis, simple web pages that allow users to freely edit and create content from any web browser (eg Wikipedia);
- forums, discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool, CFA Connect);
- video on demand (vod) and podcasting, systems that allow users to select and watch/listen to video or audio content on demand;
- instant messaging (including SMS);
- geo-spatial tagging, adding location-specific information to media including photos, video, SMS messages, websites (eg Foursquare).

#### Member

A person who is registered by CFA as a volunteer or member of brigade and/or person who is employed by CFA.

#### Avatar

A graphical image that represents a person on the internet.

#### Microsite

An individual web page or small group of pages which function as a supplement to a primary website (eg CFA's Annual Report 2010-2011 microsite)

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## Procedure Objective

The intention of this procedure is to define our obligations as CFA members with regards to online comment and social media.

This procedure is also intended to raise awareness among CFA members that comments made via social media platforms are as public as if they were made to the media or at a public forum.

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## Procedure

### Professional use of social media

#### *Becoming authorised to make official comment*

- CFA members may not comment as official representatives of CFA unless authorised to do so in accordance with the CFA Media Policy.
- Media Policy authorisation is not required to engage via social media as part of normal professional duties (in the same way that members do not require authorisation to engage with the community via the phone, email or at public meetings). For example, a FireReady presenter who is authorised to provide bushfire safety advice at public meetings does not require additional Media Policy authorisation to provide that same advice via social media.

#### *Rules of engagement*

When engaging in social media activity members must:

- disclose that they are a CFA member or contractor of CFA (if it is not obvious) and use only their own identity, or an official account or avatar approved by CFA Strategic Communications;
- disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information;
- take all reasonable measures to ensure that online content is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant CFA policies;
- ensure they are not the first to make an announcement about official CFA business (unless specifically given permission to do so);
- comment only on their area of expertise and authority;
- ensure comments are respectful of the online community with which they are interacting;
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws, and CFA's Information Privacy Policy.

Members must not:

- post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- use or disclose any confidential or secure information;
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to CFA's reputation, perception and standing in the community or bring it into disrepute.

#### *Moderation of CFA owned social media*

- Official CFA online channels must have a moderation policy in place that outlines what content and conduct is considered acceptable and what action will be taken if this policy is breached. It is the responsibility of the moderator to ensure comments from the public on a CFA website (eg CFA Connect blog) or social media platform (eg CFA Facebook page) adhere to the website or page's terms of use.

- All websites established as official CFA online channels, including social media platforms and microsites, must be authorised by the Executive Manager Strategic Communications or delegate.

### **Personal use of social media**

This procedure does not intend to discourage or unduly limit personal expression or online activities. However, members should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to CFA in certain circumstances via personal use of social media where they can be identified as a CFA member.

CFA members are personally responsible for the content they publish in a personal capacity on any social media platform. When in doubt, they should seek guidance from Strategic Communications on how to comply with the following obligations.

Where comments or social media profiles (eg personal Twitter accounts or Facebook pages) can identify individuals as CFA members, members must not:

- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- use their CFA email address or any CFA logos or insignia;
- use the identity or likeness of another member or contractor of CFA;
- use or disclose any confidential information obtained in their capacity as a member or contractor of CFA;
- imply they are authorised to speak on behalf of CFA or give the impression that any views they express are representative of CFA;
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to CFA's reputation, perception and standing in the community or bring it into disrepute.

### ***Reasonable/unreasonable personal use***

When accessing social media via CFA's internet, intranet and extranet systems, members must do so in accordance with CFA's Electronic Media Usage Policy, which sets out criteria for acceptable use.

Examples of acceptable use include:

- looking at, contributing to and commenting on stories on 'CFA Connect', including watching videos, viewing picture galleries and discussing topics in the online forums;
- sharing content from official CFA social media accounts on your own social media accounts;
- updating your Facebook status or posting messages during an official work break.

Members should not use CFA's internet and computer resources to provide comments to journalists, politicians and lobby groups outside their official duties.

### ***Identifying inappropriate use***

Inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to CFA, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this procedure, should be reported via email to Strategic Communications: [strat.comms@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:strat.comms@cfa.vic.gov.au)

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## **Delegations/Authorisations/Responsibilities**

1. Manager Corporate Communications
2. Manager Media and Marketing
3. Digital Media Manager

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## Links and References

- **Media Policy (PA05008)**
- **Electronic Media Usage Policy (AM 0.01)**
- **Information Privacy Policy (HR 02005)**

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## Document Manager

Executive Manager Strategic Communications

Directorate: Strategic Communications

### Document Stakeholders

CFA members

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