

## Traditional and Social Media Policy | ADM-01

### 1. Purpose

This policy sits within the framework of the Guidance for the use of Social Media in the Victorian Public Sector, released by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

The objectives of this policy are compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Public Sector Standards Commissioner Guidelines for the use of Social Media in the Victorian Public Sector.

It is essential that all AMES Australia personnel understand that comments made on traditional and social media platforms are as public as if the same comments were made at a public forum. The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of openness, trust and integrity in activities related to media, and in contact with journalists or replying to issues and articles in media.

### 2. Policy Statement

AMES Australia welcomes engagement by its personnel on all media platforms and promotes media relationships, particularly by senior members, to generate positive stories about AMES Australia and its clients.

AMES Australia also welcomes engagement by personnel on forums related to AMES Australia activity, including any Facebook or other sites that engage with clients or the wider community in pursuit of better learning or employment outcomes for clients.

#### 2.1 Professional use of traditional and social media

Many AMES Australia personnel will have cause to access or relate with traditional social media, and/or websites as part of their responsibilities. Before doing so, AMES Australia personnel should follow the following policy.

##### ***Becoming authorised to comment***

Authorisation to comment must be obtained from Senior Manager Development and Innovation, Chief Executive Officer or Media Manager before engaging in traditional or social media as a representative of AMES Australia.

If media activity is to promote an AMES Australia product, service or client outcome, and client information is being used, written client approval must be gained and stored by a staff member of the Marketing and Communications team before proceeding with any interview or release of information.

##### ***Rules of engagement***

Once authorised to comment as an AMES Australia representative, personnel **must**:

- disclose affiliation with AMES Australia
- disclose and comment only on information classified as being in the public domain
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant AMES Australia policies
- comment only on their area of expertise and authority
- ensure comments are respectful of the community in which they are interacting with personally or online
- 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 AMES Australia Privacy Policy.

If you are authorised to comment as an AMES Australia representative, personnel **must not**:

- post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful
- use or disclose any confidential or secure information

- use or disclose details, including any images or photographs about any individual client without their express approval
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the reputation of AMES Australia or bring it into disrepute.

### ***Moderation of AMES Australia produced social media***

Personnel engaged in the development and publication of materials on official AMES Australia social media sites **must** ensure:

- a moderation policy is clear when inviting comments from the public on an AMES Australia website or social media platform.
- 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 AMES Australia Privacy Policy.

## **2.2 Personal use of Social Media**

AMES Australia recognises that personnel may wish to use traditional or social media in their private life. This policy does not intend to discourage or unduly limit a personnel's personal expression or online activities. Personnel should, however, recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to AMES Australia in certain circumstances via personal use of social media when they can be identified as an AMES Australia employee.

Where personal comments or profiles can identify them as AMES Australia personnel,

Personnel **must**:

- only disclose and discuss publicly available information or information previously approved or published by AMES Australia on its social media, broadcast platforms or in print form
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant AMES Australia policies
- expressly state on all postings (identifying personnel as an AMES Australia employee) the stated views are personal and are not those of AMES Australia
- be polite and respectful to all people with whom there is interaction
- adherence 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 AMES Australia Privacy Policy.

Personnel **must not**:

- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful
- imply they are authorised to speak as a representative of AMES Australia or give the impression that the views expressed are those of AMES Australia
- use an AMES Australia email address or any AMES Australia logos or insignia without express permission from the Senior Manager Development and Innovation
- use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of AMES Australia
- use or disclose any confidential information obtained in their capacity as an employee/contractor of AMES Australia
- post material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee/contractor of AMES Australia
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to AMES Australia's reputation or bring it into disrepute
- post material that may identify AMES Australia personnel or clients without their express approval.

### **Reasonable/Unreasonable Personal Use**

When accessing social media via AMES Australia's Internet, intranet and extranet systems, personnel must do so in accordance with AMES Australia Internet Usage Policy and Email Usage Policy, which requires these resources are used 'reasonably', in a manner that does not interfere with their work, and is not inappropriate or excessive.

Examples of reasonable use include:

- sharing content from the AMES Australia account on personal social media accounts, for example, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and You Tube
- participating in AMES Australia private groups
- participating Facebook social media and posting messages content during a lunch break.

Personnel should also note:

- AMES Australia resources should not be used to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful.
- Personnel should not use AMES Australia's Internet and computer resources to provide comments to journalists, politicians and lobby groups, other than if specifically authorised.
- It is not acceptable to spend long period of times using social media that is not related to an AMES Australia personnel's work.

### **3. Implementation**

This policy applies to all AMES Australia personnel; identified as employees, volunteers, partners, contractors, subcontractors, Board members and Board Committee members.

AMES Australia personnel must be aware of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (VPS Code of Conduct) to which AMES Australia defers. This policy is based on sections:

- 2.2 Remaining apolitical
- 3.2 Using powers at work
- 3.4 Official Information
- 3.5 Public comment
- 3.9 Public trust
- 5.3 Work resources
- 5.4 Open to scrutiny
- 6.1 Fair and objective treatment
- 6.2 Privacy and confidentiality
- 6.3 Maintaining confidentiality
- 6.4 Equity and diversity

The VPS Code of Conduct can be accessed at [http://vpssc.vic.gov.au/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/VPSC\\_Code\\_VPSE\\_WEB.pdf](http://vpssc.vic.gov.au/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/VPSC_Code_VPSE_WEB.pdf).

#### **3.1 Compliance**

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct (under HR Disciplinary/Performance Management Policy), sexual harassment, discrimination, or other contravention of the law. Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.

The following is offered as general guidance to help AMES Australia personnel comply with the obligations set out in this policy.

### ***Privacy, Confidentiality and Information security***

Personnel should only use personal information obtained in the course of their employment/engagement with AMES Australia in a manner consistent with AMES Australia Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures.

Personnel should not publish or report on conversations or information deemed confidential or classified or that deals with internal matters.

### ***Unacceptable Behaviour Policy***

Personnel should also refer to AMES Australia Unacceptable Behaviour Policy for guidance on personal responsibilities.

### ***Copyright***

Respect copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted material and attribute work to the original author/source wherever possible.

### ***Harassment and bullying***

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy applies online and in the physical workplace.

Workplace bullying and harassment includes any bullying or harassing comments AMES Australia personnel make online, even on their private social networks or out of office hours.

Abusive, harassing, threatening or defaming postings are in breach of HR Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, and may result in disciplinary action.

All AMES Australia personnel are expected to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity and must ensure their behaviour does not constitute bullying and/or harassment.

### ***Defamation***

Personnel should refrain from publishing material that may cause injury to another person, organisation, association or company's reputation, and should seek further guidance if publication of such material is thought to be necessary. The law says people are defamed if they are held up to hatred, ridicule or contempt.

### ***Offensive or obscene material***

Material may be offensive or obscene and may infringe relevant online classification laws if it is pornographic, sexually suggestive, harassing, hateful, racist, sexist, abusive or discriminatory.

## **4. Related Policies, procedures, forms, guidelines or other resources**

AMES Australia Code of Conduct| HR-04

Disciplinary/Performance Management Policy| HR-03

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy | HR-02

Internet Usage| ADM-19

Email Use| ADM-30

Privacy Policy| GOV-18

## **5. Evaluation/Reporting/ Review**

The **Senior Manager Development and Innovation** is responsible for the review and currency of this policy and any associated guidelines, forms and attachments.

The **Senior Manager Development and Innovation** is responsible for ensuring that this policy complies with relevant legislation, regulations, professional codes, Standards of Practice, contracts or frameworks.

Any personnel identifying inappropriate or unlawful online content relating to AMES Australia, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, should report the circumstances via email to the Senior Manager Development and Innovation.

## **6. Definitions**

### ***Traditional/Electronic and Print Media***

Broadly, traditional/electronic and print media are those that existed before the internet, such as newspapers, magazines, printed newsletters, television and radio.

### ***Social Media***

Social Media may include, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, LinkedIn, Bebo, Microsoft Teams, Yammer, Twitter)
- video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' feature on theage.com.au)
- micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter)
- wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
- vod and podcasting
  - online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second life)
  - instant messaging (including Whatsapp, SMS)
  - geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)

**This policy was reviewed on 17 September 2019.**