

# Traditional and Social Media Policy

## 1.0 Statement of Principles

This policy was developed to sit within the framework of the Guidance for the use of Social Media in the Victorian Public Sector, released by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. AMES Australia employees are bound by the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees.

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 Web 2.0, and in contact with journalists or replying to issues and articles in traditional media

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.

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.

## 2.0 Requirements

### 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's 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

## Identifying inappropriate or unreasonable use

If any personnel identify inappropriate or unlawful online content relating to AMES Australia, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances via email to the Communications Unit.

## 3.0 Scope

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

## 4.0 Authorities, Responsibilities and Delegations

The **General Manager, Public Affairs** is responsible for review, currency and effectiveness in reference to this procedure and any associated guidelines, forms and attachments.

The **General Manager, Public Affairs** is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is consistent and complies with relevant legislation, regulations, professional codes, Standards of Practice, contracts or frameworks.

## General Responsibilities

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://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/VPSC\\_Code\\_VPSE\\_WEB.pdf](http://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/VPSC_Code_VPSE_WEB.pdf).

## 5.0 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, MySpace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer)
- video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube)
- 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 SMS)
- geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)

## 6.0 Procedure

### 6.1 Professional use of traditional and social media

#### Background

Many AMES Australia personnel will have cause to access or relate with traditional or social media 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 the Public Affairs Unit 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, client approval must be gained 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.
- all AMES Australia website activity (including any social media) must be approved by the Public Affairs Unit.
- 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.

## **6.2 Personal use of Social Media**

### ***Overview***

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 or 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
- 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.

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 Public Affairs Unit
- use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of AMES Australia and
- 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's Internet 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:

- re-tweeting content from the AMES Australia account on personal Twitter accounts
- accessing and posting comments on the AMES Australia network within Yammer (microblog service)
- participating in AMES Australia working groups, including the Multicultural Hub
- updating Facebook status and posting messages 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.