



# Volunteer Marine Rescue Brisbane Inc

## Providing a Safer Marine Environment for Our Community

95 Allpass Parade, Shorncliffe Qld 4017

PO Box 201, Sandgate Qld 4017

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## Social Media Policy

### 1.0 Introduction

This policy is intended to provide volunteers and supporters of Volunteer Marine Rescue Brisbane Inc (VMR Brisbane) with clarity on the use of social media platforms in order to maximise our social media reach whilst protecting our public reputation. It provides guidelines to employees or volunteers who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds or any other kind of social media.

**NOTE:** This policy does not apply to employees' personal use of social media platforms outside of work-hours where the employee or volunteer makes no reference to VMR Brisbane related topics.

#### **Document Scope**

Social media is online media that allows for interaction and/or participation.

#### **Examples include:**

- Social networking and micro-blogging sites like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Myspace, Bebo, Foursquare, Tumblr and Pinterest
- Video and photo sharing sites like Flickr, Instagram, Vimeo and YouTube
- Online forums and discussion blogs on WordPress and Blogger
- iTunes/Podcasting/Webinars

### 2.0 References

Nil

### 3.0 General Information

#### 3.1 Audience

This Social Media Policy applies to all people who volunteer, contract for or represent VMR Brisbane in Australia or overseas.

#### 3.2 Definitions

This policy applies to employees, volunteers and persons who represent for lawful reason VMR Brisbane.

##### a) Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as 'any conversation or activity that occurs online, where people can share information or data that might impact on VMR Brisbane or the people who use our `services`'.

##### b) Official Use

Official use is when an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media as a representative of VMR Brisbane with permission from the President, Member of Management or Communications or Marketing Representative (or a proxy). An alternative definition is when an employee or volunteer is posting from a social media account that is labelled as an official 'VMR Brisbane' account, i.e. not a distinct individual person. Posts from the 'VMR Brisbane' must:

- Comply with VMR Brisbane's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within this policy.
- Not promote individual staff and/or volunteer businesses or money making ventures or individual political candidates, preferences or Parties.
- Do no harm.

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### c) Personal Use

Personal use is when an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media as themselves, not officially representing VMR Brisbane, but identifying themselves as affiliated with VMR Brisbane in their online biographies, profiles or posts, or through other digital platforms.

People who are volunteers or supporters who do not identify themselves as being affiliated to VMR Brisbane are still counted as representing the organisation as the nature of the online world means they could be traced back to the organisation through their online presence. Posts from these accounts must:

- Comply with VMR Brisbane's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within this policy.
- Do no harm.
- Not suggest or imply that VMR Brisbane endorses individual businesses, money making ventures or political candidates or Parties.

### 3.3 Background

VMR Brisbane and its affiliated squadrons has a well-established presence across a range of social media channels, both at the State Office and squadron level. These channels are used as additional communication and promotion tools to complement our existing communication and marketing avenues.

Predominantly social media is being used to provide VMR Brisbane volunteers, our supporters and the general public with:

- Help-seeking messages
- Updates and information for the public to support VMR Brisbane including learning about the organisation, our services, resources and campaigns
- Community interaction

This document aims to establish a process by VMR Brisbane official social media interactions can be managed with the best interests of VMR Brisbane brand and reputation in mind. This policy also sets out expected behaviour for people who do not officially represent VMR Brisbane on social media, but could, through their behaviour, impact on the reputation of VMR Brisbane.

### 3.4 Guiding Principles

VMR Brisbane volunteers and supporters are encouraged to participate in social media. Whenever VMR Brisbane volunteers or supporters are interacting on social media, whether in an official or personal capacity (see **Definitions** within this Policy), the following guiding principles should be top of mind:

- I will not represent VMR Brisbane in a false or misleading way.
- I will not disclose information where it might reasonably breach policy.
- I will not comment on any topic relating to legal matters, litigation or any parties VMR Brisbane or its affiliated squadrons may be in litigation with.
- I will not criticise members or clients of VMR Brisbane or other squadrons or related Government policy.
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally.
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of the volunteer position.
- I will not harass, bully or intimidate.



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- I will ensure posts are supportive and relevant to VMR Brisbane or marine related subjects.
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly.
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able.
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information.
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly where possible.
- I will be polite, considerate, kind and fair.
- I will always ensure my activity does no harm.

### 3.5 Identification

Identification is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as 'how a social media bio, post, tweet, account, blog or page description identifies that particular social media channel as being affiliated with VMR Brisbane.

#### a) Official Accounts

An official account (being it a blog, webpage, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that represents VMR Brisbane should stipulate this within its bio, page or account description. The account must carry the following or a version of the following, words:

'This is the official account/page/etc for VMR (enter squadron name)' (followed by a brief description of the VMR squadron) and the purpose of the account relating to the particular social media platform. For example, on twitter, it might say 'VMR Brisbane is a non-profit volunteer organisation dedicated to providing a safer marine environment for our community and uses this account to promote help-seeking messages with the community'.

#### b) Personal Accounts

Accounts (being it a blog, webpage, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that are not official, but are set up by employees, volunteers or supporters of VMR Brisbane for personal reasons can have an affiliation to the organisation, so long as the following is undertaken:

- It should not have the affiliation with VMR Brisbane as the primary identifier.
- It should stipulate that the opinions expressed are the persons' own, and not that of VMR Brisbane.
- It should state a disclaimer that reposting, 'likes', retweeting, etc do not represent the views of VMR Brisbane.

### 3.6 Permissions

#### a) Personal Use

Individuals who are volunteers or supporters of VMR Brisbane do not have permission to post official VMR Brisbane content. They can, however, repost, retweet etc VMR Brisbane or any other squadron's posts, material or comment without substantial or meaningful change as part of showing their affiliation or support for the organisation.

#### b) Inappropriate Use

Inappropriate use of social media includes, (but not limited to):

- Conducting a private business on VMR Brisbane's social media presence.
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language on VMR Brisbane, other squadrons, other individuals or other organisations Social Media accounts.
- Breach of data protections or privacy laws or the privacy of an individual.



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- Promoting religious belief or standard.
- Posting of personal views or opinions or material unrelated to VMR Brisbane's philosophy and doctrine.
- Stalking, bullying, trolling or marginalising any individual or group.
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content, including extreme images of graphic content (blood and gore etc) or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism etc.
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values.
- Direct political affiliation, unless an individual is running for election (but only on a personal account).
- Uploading information of a confidential nature, especially in regards to VMR Brisbane services, clients or operations.
- Hacking or attempting to infiltrate the systems of VMR Brisbane, other VMR squadrons or another organisation.
- Activity that interferes with work commitments.
- Activity that uses excessive bandwidth, either uploading or downloading, within the VMR Brisbane network.
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in kind services or gifts.
- Activity that brings VMR Brisbane or other VMR squadrons or the person's professionalism or ability to act in a professional manner into disrepute. It is the duty of everyone who is affiliated with VMR Brisbane to alert either a member of the Management or Communications Officer, to any inappropriate content they may come across.

### 3.7 Procedure for an Inappropriate Post or Comment

If a post appears only once, remove the post as soon as possible and contact the person privately to explain why you have removed the post and highlight VMR Brisbane's guidelines.

If a poster continues to post inappropriate content or the post is considered as spam, remove the post as soon as possible and ban/block the poster to prevent them from posting again.

### 3.8 Policy Breach

Misuse of social media can have serious consequences for VMR Brisbane and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences in terms of disciplinary action for volunteers. VMR Brisbane is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Social Media Policy by their volunteers. This includes undertaking appropriate risk assessment and performance management or disciplinary action, of any suspected or identified breach. In the event of serious misconduct, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may occur.

### 3.9 Delegations

#### a) Squadron

VMR Brisbane management has delegation for all official Social Media activity undertaken by the VMR Brisbane, with a secondary delegation falling to their official Communications Officer.

#### b) Others

Individuals who undertake personal activity in the social media space can self-moderate. They should use common sense and be sensible about their use, always ensuring they are in line with the requirements of this social media policy. Advice can be sought from a member of management for the respective squadron.



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### 3.10 Support Through Social Media

It is not appropriate, for a number of reasons for VMR Brisbane to undertake any crisis support through social media channels. VMR Brisbane's inability to resource 24 hour monitoring of social media platforms means that we are not able to provide crisis support within a guaranteed time frame.

For this reason, official social media accounts, blogs or pages should all carry the following, or a similar, message.

VMR Brisbane does not monitor this account/page/blog 24/7 and we are unable to provide support through this medium/blog/platform/account/etc. Support is available by phoning the After Hours Emergency number of the squadron you wish to contact.'

### 3.11 Life Threatening Emergency

If an emergency indicates that it could be life threatening, the following or similar should be posted:

'I am concerned about your wellbeing/safety, please call triple zero immediately.'

In the case of this message being posted, you are required to contact a member of the Management or person in charge of Activations from VMR Brisbane, regardless of whether it is from an official or personal account.

### 3.12 Complaints Through Social Media

Complaints or negative comments regarding VMR Brisbane might be made through social media channels. Both official and personal users of social media are discouraged from arguing or refuting complaints or negative feedback through social media channels. This behaviour can antagonise or fuel attacks on VMR Brisbane's brand and/or reputation.

In the event of a complaint or negative comment about VMR Brisbane it is important to address the comment as soon as possible by responding with a satisfactory reply or solution.

### 3.13 Deleting Posts

Organisations that heavily control content on their social media pages, blogs and accounts, mostly through the deletion of questionable or disapproving content, significantly reduce the impact, and usefulness, of social media as a channel for information distribution.

VMR Brisbane should not delete posts that are complaints, or negative, except when they breach any of the conditions outlined for employees, volunteer and supporters in the 'inappropriate use' within this Policy. Where possible, the administrator will contact the user whose post has been removed, providing them with an explanation why it has been removed and the necessary action(s) for it to be reposted.

### 3.14 Using Photos Through Social Media

VMR Brisbane allows photos to be used through Social Media to promote its interests. Guidelines for using photos are:

- a) Photos are only to be used showing Active Crew members wearing and using appropriate safety equipment on-board vessels (e.g. wearing life-jackets)
- b) Full names of people in the photo should not be used for privacy. Members can tag themselves in or share the post to their personal Social Media account.



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### 4.0 Summary

By following this Policy, volunteers who promote VMR Brisbane by Social Media will have an understanding of do's and don'ts to best represent VMR Brisbane and not bring our organisation in disrepute.

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