

# Social Media Policy

## Purpose

This policy describes the standards expected of employees of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in their use of social media.

The Social Media Policy applies to all NDIA employees, including employees on secondment (both to and from the NDIA), employees on leave, casual and temporary employees and contractors. Managers should ensure their employees are aware of and understand this policy.

People with disability are at the heart of the NDIA. People with disability are also incredibly digitally connected and digitally savvy. If the NDIA is to communicate effectively and remain relevant with the more than 460,000 participants at full scheme roll out then social media platforms will remain key.

## Definitions

**Social media** includes social networking sites, blogs and other online media that allow user participation and interaction.

Use of social media by Australian Public Service (APS) employees can be split into two categories: official use and unofficial use.

**Official use** means use by persons authorised as agency spokespersons and representatives for official purposes who are permitted to post content within the approved scope on external social media channels.

**Unofficial use** of social media falls into two categories: **professional** or **private**.

**A: Professional use** is when an employee is a subject matter expert in a field that may relate to their APS employment—or that may be wholly separate from it—and uses social media to comment in that capacity. For example, an APS employee who is active in the disability sector might use social media to discuss issues on a disability forum in their own time.

**B: Private use** means use of social media in any other capacity.

## All social media use

NDIA employees should understand that the [APS Values](#) and [APS Code of Conduct](#) standards apply to all social media use.

The APS Code of Conduct requires APS employees to behave at all times 'in a way that upholds the APS Values and APS Employment Principles, and the integrity and good reputation of the employee's Agency and the APS' - section 13(11) of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The APS Values and Code of Conduct apply to using social media both officially and unofficially. The requirements include:

- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS and one's agency
- not acting in a way that would call into question the APS employee's ability to be apolitical, impartial and professional in the performance of their duties.

The APS Code of Conduct and APS Values apply even if material is posted anonymously or using a pseudonym and employees should be mindful that at some point their identity and employment may be revealed.

Possible sanctions, including termination, may apply if employees are found to have breached the APS Code of Conduct through their use of social media.

[APSC circular 2012/1](#) – *guidance on making public comment and participating online* – discusses the APS Code of Conduct and its relationship to social media in more detail.

## Official social media use

Acceptable official use by APS employees includes representing the agency online, monitoring issues relevant to agency business or engaging in authorised professional development forums or activities.

Employees using social media in an official capacity require written approval from the relevant SES (Branch Manager – Communications and Engagement). Communication and content standards that apply to official use of social media will be established as part of that agreement.

## Unofficial social media use

Acceptable unofficial use of social media while at work will include reasonable private use, consistent with this policy and other relevant policies including the department's IT Security Policy.

When using social media in an unofficial capacity, whether at work or not, employees should ensure that a comment they make is not (or could not be perceived to be):

- made on behalf of the NDIA
- a criticism of the Government, a member of parliament from another political party, or their respective policies, in that it raises questions about the APS employee's capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially. Such comment does not have to relate to the employee's area of work
- a criticism of an agency's administration that could seriously disrupt the workplace
- a gratuitous personal attack that might reasonably be perceived to be connected with their employment
- compromising the employee's ability to fulfill their duties in an apolitical, impartial and professional manner
- compromising public confidence in the agency or the APS.

Unless specifically authorised, agency employees should not develop or provide content for social media channels that:

- attempts to speak, or could be interpreted as speaking, on behalf of the agency or the Australian Government
- commits the agency or the Australian Government to any action or initiative.

Employees in doubt about acceptable use of social media as an APS employee should speak to their manager in the first instance.

## Accessibility

The NDIA is committed to social inclusion, and provides support for people with disabilities. In late 2011, [Media Access Australia](#) undertook research to determine how the accessibility issues found in each of the most popular social media tools can be overcome.

Australia's most popular social media tools were tested for accessibility. Users with disabilities contributed tips and tricks on how to overcome each social network's inaccessible features.

Download the full report: [Sociability: social media for people with a disability](#)

Where possible, content on official NDIA social media accounts should also be made available in an alternative [accessible format](#). This alternative may be represented on NDIA internet sites, however given the online interaction inherent in social media, it may also be appropriate to refer individuals to telephone or face-to-face channels.

## The Internet is forever

What you publish on the internet can remain public for a long time. Content can also be replicated and shared beyond the original intended audience and sent to recipients who were never expected to see it, or who may view it out of context. You should be aware that according to the terms and conditions of some third-party sites, the content you create is the property of the site where it is posted and so may be re-used in ways which you had not intended.

## References

The [APS Code of Conduct](#) is set out in section 13 of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The [APS Values](#) are set out in section 10 of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

[APSC Circular 2012/1](#): *Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online* is available on the APSC website.

## Policy authority

This policy is approved by Louise Glanville, NDIA Dep CEO on 20/1/2015

**January 2015**