

Social Media Protocols

Updated August 2019

1 Introduction

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Examples of accounts covered by these protocols include:

- Commissioners' Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts
- The Australian Human Rights Commission Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts
- Project accounts such as the Twitter account for *Racism It Stops With Me*

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7 Moderation and Responding to the General Public

All Commission accounts must be moderated. This is to ensure that inappropriate material is deleted.

It is also important because social media is interactive, and the Commission needs to respond to queries, questions and comments. Being responsive sends a positive message to the general public, while ignoring people's queries has the opposite effect.

At the same time responding to queries shouldn't become a time-consuming process that is a burden on staff. Social media isn't the place to explain complicated policy positions.

Where an issue can't be summarised in two or three sentences, usually the best approach is to refer the person to the relevant section of our website for more detail or to just respond in general terms. There is also the option of suggesting that the issue is best dealt with 'offline' and asking for an email or phone contact.

It is worth being aware that some individuals use social media to vent their anger or frustration over a particular issue, and in some cases will not be satisfied with any response the Commission might make. It is important to respond initially but becoming involved in a protracted or emotionally charged debate is not productive.

There are also individuals who set out to cause controversy or hurt, commonly known as 'trolls'. Offensive comments by trolls should be deleted, and advice sought from Communications as to whether to ban the individuals.

Another aspect of moderation is fulfilling our duty of care. We have a responsibility to refer any people clearly in crisis to appropriate services like Lifeline or Kids Helpline.

Any posts threatening self-harm or suicide should be immediately referred to Communications – who will follow the protocols set down for this. The same applies to posts about child protection, such as allegations that a child has been abused or is in

danger. Please talk to your manager if you have been exposed to material that is distressing.

Facebook allows owners of pages to input a list of banned words. This means that any comment left on that Facebook page containing that word in the future will be automatically 'hidden' – i.e. can be seen by the page moderators and the original commenter but nobody else. This can be a very useful tool for preventing unwanted comments on Facebook posts without blocking or banning commenters.

In general the more contentious the subject matter, the more important it is that the relevant social media site is moderated. In some cases moderation may need to extend outside business hours, in which case appropriate work arrangements need to be instituted by the manager.

- 7.1 All Commission accounts must be moderated.
- 7.2 Responses to queries should be short and in plain English.
- 7.3 Always be respectful of other's opinions. Respond briefly and politely to criticisms or comments, and avoid engaging in a protracted debate.
- 7.4 Seek advice from the relevant team within the Commission if the question is outside your expertise.
- 7.5 Keep records of interactions in social media. For example, screen-shots should be taken of offensive comments before they are deleted.
- 7.6 Refer people clearly in crisis to appropriate support services.
- 7.7 If in doubt about how to respond, please refer up to your Manager or to Communications.
- 7.8 Accounts that are time-specific because they relate to a particular project should be closed when the project is completed.

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From: Twitter <notify@twitter.com>
Sent: Friday, 29 July 2022 3:03 PM
To: Communications Unit
Subject: More information about your report.



Hello,

After reviewing the available information, we want to let you know **s 11C(1)** hasn't broken our [safety policies](#). We know this isn't the answer you're looking for. If this account breaks our policies in the future, we'll notify you.

You can [block](#) the account, which means they won't be able to follow you, see your Tweets, or message you.

Reports like this inform our policies, and we're always reviewing them and how we apply them. We hope you'll continue to make reports if you see things that might break our policies.

Here's a summary of what isn't allowed on Twitter, according to our safety policies.

- Threatening violence against someone or a group of people
- Celebrating or praising violence
- Harassing someone or encouraging people to harass someone
- Wishing harm on someone
- Promoting violence, threatening, or harassing people because of their identity (like race or gender)
- Promoting or encouraging suicide or self-harm
- Images or videos that show sexual violence and assault
- Child sexual exploitation
- Threatening or promoting terrorism or violent extremism

We know we don't always get it right. So if you think we made a mistake, you can report them again.

Thanks,
Twitter

