



06 May 2016

FOI ref: 1894

Mr James Smith  
Right to Know

foi+request-1862-bac0a940@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Smith

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

I refer to your request of 19 April 2016 under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the Act), seeking:

*"I seek access to the following documents under the Freedom of Information Act 1982:*

- 1. Current social media policy of the department, which covers departmental use and/or private use by employees in an individual capacity.*
- 2. Any current guidance material which is available for employees to make informed decisions about their private social media use."*

I am an authorised decision maker under section 23 of the Act and the following is my decision in relation to your application.

#### **Materials Relevant to Making of Decision**

The materials, information and advice to which I have had reference in making this decision are:

- the terms of your FOI request;
- advice provided by Treasury officers;
- the relevant provisions of the Act;
- guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner;
- the contents of the documents relevant to your request (as set out in the attached schedule).

#### **Decision**

Treasury has in its possession one document that fall within the scope of your request. I have decided that the document is appropriate for release in full and copies of the documents are attached.

**Rights of Review**

Treasury's policy is to provide rights of review with every decision, even when there is a full release. Accordingly, please find attached a document setting out your rights of review.

The Treasury publishes all documents disclosed in response to FOI requests (other than personal or business information that would be unreasonable to publish) on the Treasury website at the same time as the applicant receives the response. This is consistent with the arrangements established by section 11C of the Act, which formally commenced operation on 1 May 2011.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Alexander', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Alexander  
Division Head  
Business Services Division

enc

## RIGHTS OF REVIEW — ACCESS REFUSED

### INFORMATION ON RIGHTS OF REVIEW

#### 1. APPLICATION FOR INTERNAL REVIEW OF DECISION

Section 54 of the Freedom of Information Act gives you the right to apply for an internal review of the decision refusing to grant access to documents in accordance with your request.

Application for a review of the decision must be made in writing within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

No particular form is required but it would assist the decision-maker if you could set out in the application the grounds on which you consider that the decision should be reviewed.

Application for a review of the decision should be addressed to:

The Secretary  
The Treasury  
Langton Crescent  
PARKES ACT 2600  
Attention: Parliamentary and Legal Services Unit

OR

#### 2. APPLICATION TO AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION COMMISSIONER (INFORMATION COMMISSIONER) FOR REVIEW OF DECISION

Section 54L of the Act gives you the right to seek a review of the decision from the Information Commissioner. An application for review must be made within 60 days of receiving the decision.

Applications for review must be in writing and must:

- give details of how notices must be sent to you; and
- include a copy of the notice of decision.

You should send your application for review to:

The Information Commissioner  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

AND/OR

#### 3. COMPLAINTS TO THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

Section 70 of the Act provides that a person may complain to the Information Commissioner about action taken by an agency in the exercise of powers or the performance of functions under the Act.

A complaint to the Information Commissioner must be in writing and identify the agency the complaint is about. It should be directed to the following address:

The Information Commissioner  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The Information Commissioner may decline to investigate the complaint in a number of circumstances, including that you did not exercise your right to ask the agency, the Information Commissioner, a court or tribunal to review the decision.



AUDIENCE	CATEGORY
All staff	Communications Information Management and Technology

## THE TREASURY — POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

# Social Media Policy

This document was endorsed by S22, S22

It was last reviewed on 16 September 2014 and is scheduled for review in September 2015

### VERSION CONTROL

Date Modified	Version	Section of document	Author of change	Summary of change
25/06/2012	1.0	All	S22	First release
05/11/2012	1.1	Official Use		Minor wording clarifications
16/09/2014	1.2	Personal Use		Inclusion of internal social media in professional and personal use proctocols

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## OVERVIEW

Consistent with Australian Government policy and the *Strategic Review of the Treasury*, this policy supports greater engagement with stakeholders through the use of social media. It recognises that:

- Greater use of new information technology, social media and communication techniques has the potential to improve Treasury's productivity and effectiveness.
- There is an increased demand for access to information from a variety of platforms, and an expectation of greater transparency.
- Rapidly moving news cycles and improved real-time access to detailed information and news, including increasing use of social media, are increasingly being applied to government.
- Demands for access to government information are likely to continue to grow across a variety of platforms, including social media.

This policy has been prepared to provide Treasury employees who use social media as part of their work with guidelines on appropriate use, personal responsibilities and how the use of social media is related to other Treasury policies.

## PURPOSE

Treasury's social media policy helps enable external and internal engagement while ensuring protocols are in place for appropriate use of social media and to protect Treasury's reputation.

The Australian Government's [Declaration of Open Government](#) supports openness and transparency in Government through:

- Informing: strengthening citizen's rights of access to information, establishing a pro-disclosure culture across Australian Government agencies including through online innovation, and making government information more accessible and usable;
- Engaging: collaborating with citizens on policy and service delivery to enhance the processes of government and improve the outcomes sought; and
- Participating: making government more consultative and participative.

The *Strategic Review of the Treasury* highlights the need for Treasury to use social media to better engage with stakeholders and partners, including:

- Supporting stakeholder engagement.
- Trialling online consultation approaches.
- Enhancing use of information technology tools.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW CAN IT BE USED?

Although there is no universally accepted definition, social media is essentially about using technology to encourage online discussion, sharing and collaboration. Examples of social media tools include:

- Social networking sites: for example Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Video sharing websites: for example YouTube.

- Blogs and discussion forums and online journals: for example, commenting on an article on the ABC News website, the Department of Finance and Deregulation's e-government blog, and the World Bank's data portal and blogs.
- Wikis (which allow collaborative editing of information): for example Wikipedia.
- Private collaboration platforms: for example, Treasury's team sites, or govdex - a whole-of-government service that allows government agencies to collaborate on projects in a secure environment.
- MySite. As part of the SharePoint 2013 release to the Department, My Site introduces new social and microblogging features with the ability to 'follow' and keep track of what other users are interested in.
- For more information on social media and how it can be used please see the Department of Finance and Deregulation's Gov 2.0 Primer.

## WHAT OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDANCE APPLY?

Use of social media websites by public servants is governed by the [APS Values and Code of Conduct](#). Treasury employees are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere in connection with their employment. This includes:

- not acting in a way that would call into question the employee's ability to be apolitical, impartial and professional in the performance of their duties;
- 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; and
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS.

For more information on how the APS Values and Code of Conduct apply to social media, please see APSC's [Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online](#).

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Treasury policies and frameworks:

- [Information Security Policy](#) (including the [Treasury Information Security Staff Responsibilities](#))
- [Media Contact Policy](#)
- [Personal Accountability Framework](#).



## PROFILES

A profile is a way of identifying yourself online – typically a user name or an email address.

If you use social media sites for official and personal/professional reasons, you should, where possible, use separate official and personal/professional profiles. This will make it easier to participate in online social media by differentiating between your identity as a citizen and your identity as a public servant.

If a social media site allows anonymous or pseudonymous participation, you should always participate as if you were identifiable. At all times you must behave 'in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS'<sup>1</sup>, including when participating anonymously.

## PROTOCOLS FOR OFFICIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL USE

All use is covered by The Treasury [Information Security Policy](#) (including the [Treasury Information Security Staff Responsibilities](#)), and is only permitted if all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines are followed.

### OFFICIAL USE

Official use is when you are providing information or a response on a social media site as a Treasury official and you have Departmental approval to do so. Approval is not required to view or read social media content. This is no different to reading content on other types of websites.

When participating<sup>2</sup> in social media for official Treasury business purposes, you need to:

1. **Have approval**

All comment must be approved by your General Manager or a Manager in the Ministerial and Communications Division. General Managers should consult Ministerial and Communications Division on appropriate responses or frameworks for ongoing approvals.

2. **Remain alert to your role as a Treasury representative**

When you use social media for Treasury business, you should where possible disclose your position and title, and the fact that you are authorised to communicate an official viewpoint. While you should be receptive to ideas and comments provided online by stakeholders, you should avoid any statement that could be perceived as advocating or criticising Government policies.

Be responsible for ensuring that any references to the Treasury are factually correct and accurate and do not breach privacy, security or other sensitivity requirements. You must ensure that:

- You are aware of and comply with laws and policies for the protection of official information.
- Any information you communicate is factually accurate, clear and expressed in such a way that cannot be misrepresented.
- All communication is professional, courteous and constructive.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 13(11) of the Public Service Act 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Participating in this context means making a comment, providing feedback on a site, creating and posting a video, taking part in an online community.

- You offer advice or comment only on topics that fall within your area of responsibility and for which you are approved to comment.
- You do not disclose personal information about Treasury staff.
- Online communication is consistent with information and advice being provided through other media and forums.
- You adhere to the [Treasury Information Security Staff Responsibilities](#).
- You adhere to any intellectual property, copyright, and privacy requirements.

Of course, matters that are subject to handling security restrictions (e.g. Protected) cannot be discussed or mentioned online unless the system is specifically designed to manage these matters.

### 3. Show respect

You should show respect for the individuals and communities that you interact with in connection with your APS employment. You must uphold the [APS Values](#), [APS Employment Principles](#) and the [APS Code of Conduct](#) and [Treasury Personal Accountability Framework](#).

### 4. Inform and keep records

Inform the Ministerial and Communications Division of any significant social media contact and remember to keep a record ([Recordkeeping Policy](#)) of the communication.

## PROFESSIONAL USE

Professional use is when you are participating as a Treasury officer, or as an experienced person in your particular field.

### Internal social media

Treasury provides social media tools for the purposes of collaboration, sharing ideas and contributing to the outcomes of the Treasury. Examples of internal collaboration functionality include team based sites, community sites, and your MySite page. Your MySite enables you to connect with colleagues beyond your current role and responsibilities.

### External social media

When participating in social media, selection of your profile is important to differentiate between your identity as a public servant or as a citizen. An example of professional use is an experienced accountant employed by Treasury, discussing an accounting matter with peers, using social media that does not relate to government or Treasury policy, but nonetheless benefits from their professional experience.

In such cases, it is important for the employee to notify their manager of any comment that they propose to make in their 'professional' capacity that might reasonably reflect on their APS employment. It is important that the employee also make it clear, when making public comment in this role, that they are not representing their agency or the Government.

## PERSONAL USE

Personal use is when you are commenting on a matter in neither of the above capacities, for example, discussing your hobbies.

### External social media

This should be done with a profile linked to a personal email address. Do not use a Treasury profile (e.g. a Treasury email address) for personal use on external social media.

Reading or viewing social media content is treated the same way as reading or viewing content on other types of websites.

Note that use of all websites, including social media sites, is monitored by IMTD when accessed from Treasury-supplied equipment.

## CONTACTS

For advice on communications and authorisation, please contact the Communications Unit, Ministerial and Communications Division.

For advice on personal accountability and code of conduct issues, please contact the People and Organisational Strategy Division.

For advice on IT security please contact the IT Security Team.

For feedback or questions on this policy please contact <sup>S22</sup>

## TERMINOLOGY

**Blog**—An online journal of opinions or other content that is usually updated regularly. They include corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications (e.g. news articles that allow public comment).

**Micro blogging (or micro messaging)** – Communicating through the use of brief messages often 140 characters or less e.g. *Twitter*.

**Podcasting**—An audio file posted to a website which can then be played or downloaded.

**RSS (Really Simple Syndication)**—A way to allow users to receive updated information from websites, blogs or podcasts without having to visit a website repeatedly.

**Social networking sites**—Provide users with infrastructure and resources to connect and communicate with each other and share and exchange content e.g. *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*.

**Wikis**—Web-based systems allowing users to collaborate by adding, removing and editing content collectively e.g. *Wikipedia*.

