



## **Rowing Australia Social Media Policy**

Effective date: June 2016

Approved by: RA Board

### **Purpose**

Rowing Australia embraces social media as an important tool for stakeholder and community engagement. Rowing Australia encourages its athletes, coaches, officials, employees, contractors, officers and those members representing Rowing Australia in a voluntary capacity to use social media in an appropriate manner in a personal capacity as a way to reach out and develop their personal and professional networks.

Given Rowing Australia's prominent media profile as an organisation, it is especially critical that online comments do not generate negative sentiment from either the media or public.

This policy is designed to assist in clarifying the rights, responsibilities and obligations of all Rowing Australia athletes, coaches, officials, employees, contractors, officers and those members representing Rowing Australia in a voluntary capacity in regards to the use of social media.

Rowing Australia athletes, coaches, officials, employees, contractors, officers and volunteers must take care to clarify whom they are representing when using social media. They must take responsibility for the accuracy and appropriateness of what they say in any social media communications which reference Rowing Australia or Rowing Australia related activities, or from which communications Rowing Australia could reasonably be identified.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all athletes (including those athletes who nominate for the Australian Rowing Team – Junior, U21, U23 and Senior A), coaches, officials, employees, contractors, officers and volunteers of Rowing Australia. Other than what is set out in the 'Social Media for personal purposes' section of this policy, this policy does not apply to employees'/volunteers' personal use of social media.

### **Policy Statements:**

#### ***Social Media for Business purposes (Rowing Australia Staff, Athletes and Coaches)***

You must have approval from Rowing Australia's Communications and Government Relations Manager before you are permitted to represent Rowing Australia on social media channels by communicating ('posting') on social media sites on Rowing Australia's behalf.

When you post information or material ('content') on social media sites on behalf of Rowing Australia you must:

- Ensure that the content you post is factually accurate and complies with relevant Rowing Australia policies.



- Ensure that the content you post does not constitute legal advice or fall outside of your area of knowledge or expertise.
- Ensure that the content you post is not obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including Rowing Australia, its employees, its teams or athletes, its members, its contractors, its partners, its competitors and/or other business related individuals or organisations.
- Ensure that the content you post is not confidential or commercially sensitive to Rowing Australia, its employees, team members, athletes, coaches, members, contractors, partners, competitors and/or other business related individuals or organisations, or otherwise inappropriate for communication via these channels.
- Ensure that the content you post does not include another person's personal information without their express written consent.
- Ensure that the content you post does not breach applicable legislation including laws relating to copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, discrimination/equal opportunity and defamation.
- Be respectful of all individuals and communities with whom/which you interact online.
- Be polite and respectful of others' opinions.

Permitted posts relating to Rowing Australia activities via social media channels will generally be:

- Part of a marketing strategy developed by the Chief Commercial Officer
- Part of an overall communication strategy targeting specific stakeholder groups e.g. national team athletes.
- Part of an approved approach to communicating information regarding Rowing Australia to its stakeholders and the wider rowing community e.g. updates via Twitter or Facebook groups on Rowing Australia happenings or Member Association announcements

### ***Social Media for Personal Purposes (Rowing Australia Staff)***

Rowing Australia acknowledges that, generally, activities carried on outside your employment are your own affair. However, activities that impact on or affect your job performance, the performance of others, or Rowing Australia's business interests or reputation or those of its stakeholders or clients are a proper focus for Rowing Australia policy. Accordingly, in your personal use of social media you must follow these guidelines:

- You must not refer to Rowing Australia or its athletes, coaches, team members, employees, agents, officers or volunteers, in a derogatory or negative manner.
- If you cite Rowing Australia in your employment or professional profiles, you must ensure that the information is accurate and up to date.
- If you have a personal blog and wish to post content referring to Rowing Australia or from which Rowing Australia could reasonably be identified, you must ensure that the Rowing Australia Communications and Government Relations Manager approves the content before you post it.



- You must not represent any social media posts as being the views of Rowing Australia without consent from the Rowing Australia Communications and Government Relations Manager.
- You must not engage in conduct online that is likely to bring Rowing Australia into disrepute or otherwise damage its interests.
- You must not engage in conduct that would breach any policy of Rowing Australia including but not limited to policies proscribing discrimination, harassment and bullying.

### ***Social Media During Competition (Athletes and Coaches)***

#### **Rowing Australia recommends to its athletes that they should not actively engage with social media at least one hour before racing begins and at least one-hour post-racing.**

This is to assist athletes with maintaining a performance focus and limiting distractions that may be encountered by engaging on social media.

Crews and squads are encouraged to talk about and agree on their own expectations around social media usage and develop crew/squad ground rules. Issues that could be considered include:

- Do we agree as a crew/squad to publish footage of us training online?
- Do we agree to discuss online crew performances/ injuries (that have already been released by RA)/ training schedules/ training plans? Or is this confidential?
- What are our limitations around use of social media in a competition environment?

Coaches are encouraged to discuss their crew plans and also inform the Head Coach of their respective team about their crew/squad's plan.

### ***General Advice (All Persons Bound by this Policy)***

The following is some general advice on appropriate posts for social media:

- Use common sense and good judgment - your statements could have an impact on you, and on Rowing Australia's reputation. Remember that what you post or publish will become public information.
- If you would not say something to a member of the media, do not publish it on any form of social media.
- You are accountable for your actions and what you communicate via social media.
- Individuals are **strongly** encouraged to resolve internal disputes "offline" and not via social media channels which are a public forum. Individuals are encouraged to resolve any disputes between themselves, and where this is not possible then the dispute should be referred for resolution in accordance with the relevant Rowing Australia policies.

### ***Inappropriate Social Media Engagement***

For illustrative purposes, Rowing Australia is likely to consider the following engagement on Social Media as inappropriate:

- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in content;



- Any posts that breach Rowing Australia commercial agreements with other parties;
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting hateful or offensive material.
- Breaching the reasonable expectation of privacy of a person;
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting any kind of sexually explicit material, violent and/or graphic images;
- Accessing, downloading or transmitting information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and/or other tools of violence or terrorism; Accessing, downloading or transmitting any material deemed to be illegal under Federal, State or Territory law;
- Attempting to gain unauthorised access to the computing resources of Rowing Australia or any of its Member Associations or affiliated entities.

### **Breach of policy**

Social Media usage may be monitored. Any athlete, coach, employee, contractor, officer or volunteer of Rowing Australia identified as breaching this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. For employees or contractors, that may include termination of employment or contract. For athletes representing the Australian Rowing Team, it may include removal from the national team or disciplinary action under the team nomination and membership agreement.

It is the expectation of Rowing Australia that athletes, coaches, employees, contractors, officers or volunteers will promptly advise the Communications and Government Relations Manager of any facts or circumstances which may suggest a breach of the policy. This may include taking prompt action to remove the offending material if possible.

Volunteers should also be aware that the inappropriate or unlawful use of social media may expose the volunteer to personal legal liability. Rowing Australia will not be held liable for the acts and omissions of volunteers in breach of this policy.

In circumstances where a volunteer fails to comply with this policy, he or she may be asked to discontinue their association with Rowing Australia.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' means websites and internet-based applications used for social networking/interaction, sharing of information/content and creation of communities through online networks of people. Examples of social media to which this policy relates includes the following ('social media channels'):

- Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter
- Video and photo sharing sites e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Snapchat
- Weblogs including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- Forums and discussion boards
- Online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools

Rowing Australia's current official social media channels are as:  
Facebook ([facebook.com/RowingAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/RowingAustralia))



Twitter (@RowingAust)  
YouTube (RowingAustraliaOfficial)  
Instagram (RowingAustralia)  
Linkedin (RowingAustralia)

**Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the Rowing Australia board, management, staff, athletes, coaches, officials and contractors to ensure that they:

- Make themselves aware of this policy and comply with its standards of behaviour and all other requirements of the policy;
- Assist by reporting immediately any potential breaches of this policy to the Communications and Government Relations Manager;
- Understand the possible consequences of breaching this policy;
- Comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed for breaching this policy;

The Communications and Government Relations Manager is responsible for developing, maintaining, monitoring and implementing this policy and for reviewing it annually.

