

# **BOWLS VICTORIA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**



## **1.0 PURPOSE**

This policy has been developed to provide guidelines for the appropriate use of social media in professional and personal capacities by Bowls Victoria stakeholders including full-time and part-time employees, the Bowls Victoria board, Victorian representative squad members, committee members and volunteer coordinators when as part of a person's social media activity there is a connection to Bowls Victoria including references to Bowls Victoria through a person's profile.

Social media is one of the most effective communication tools organisations use to communicate to their audiences and promote their business activity.

This policy is designed to protect the interests and reputation of Bowls Victoria, all stakeholders of Bowls Victoria and the sport of bowls in Victoria. It is also designed to encourage stakeholders to use social media in a positive and promotional manner for the sport of bowls in Victoria.

It is important that Bowls Victoria's reputation is not tarnished by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that might reference the organisation. Those who work and are associated with Bowls Victoria (including all staff and squad members) need to understand that comments made or photographs, videos or images posted using social media or online platforms are as public as if these comments were made directly to the media or in a public forum.

## **2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Bowls Victoria stakeholders (i.e individuals representing themselves as being associated with Bowls Victoria (refer 1.0)) regardless of the details contained within their public profile.

If you require any clarification about any aspects of the policy and how it applies to your own circumstances, please contact Bowls Victoria's Chief Executive.

Social media activity (even if posted outside of normal business hours), if deemed to be inappropriate by Bowls Victoria, could also be subject to disciplinary action (refer 7.0)

## **3.0 WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?**

Social media is any online user generated content shared in a public forum aimed at engaging social interaction and may include (but is not limited to);

- Social networking websites (eg Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, etc.)
- Micro-blogging sites (eg Twitter)

- Video and photo sharing websites (eg YouTube, Flickr, Snapchat, etc.)
- Blogs (including weblogs, corporate blogs, personal blogs and blogs hosted by traditional media publications)
- Online forums, chat rooms and discussion boards
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools (eg Tumblr or similar alternatives)

#### **4.0 WHY IS BOWLS VICTORIA USING SOCIAL MEDIA?**

Social media can be a cost-effective and powerful communication tool. It enables Bowls Victoria to create an online community that can be engaged with on a real-time basis. It also provides a platform to communicate with new audiences and promote business activity.

Bowls Victoria encourages all stakeholders to use social media in both a professional and personal sense.

#### **5.0 WHAT BOWLS VICTORIA EXPECTS IN SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING**

Bowls Victoria encourages positive promotional messages including (but not limited to)

- Overall promotion of the sport of bowls
- Endorsements of decisions by Bowls Victoria
- Promotion of all bowls events, regardless of level
- Acknowledge player successes
- Bowls Victoria sponsor servicing with positive brand messaging
- Avoidance of personal sponsor endorsement
- Promote RBM (Regional Bowls Manager – formerly CDO) activity

Stakeholders assume ambassadorial role for Bowls Victoria

Ensure that content you post **is factually accurate** and complies with Bowls Victoria policies particularly those that relate to confidentiality and disclosure

(Please note: When using Twitter and Facebook, re-tweeting a message and ‘Liking’ a Facebook post is considered your view and an endorsement of the original tweet or post)

#### **6.0 WHAT BOWLS VICTORIA DOES NOT EXPECT IN SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING**

##### **6.1 PROFESSIONAL USAGE**

Be mindful that any comments made or images, videos and photographs posted on social media platforms, irrespective of privacy settings are public remarks and can be shared, copied and distributed to a wider audience than may have been originally intended and therefore become publically published views.

**6.1.1** As a stakeholder of Bowls Victoria, when using social media, you are required to;

- Ensure that you do not post any content that could be considered obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, libellous or hateful to another person or entity, including Bowls Victoria and its employees, its contractors, its clubs, its partners, its participants, its competitors and/or any other bowls related organization or individual
- Be respectful of all individuals and communities with which you interact online
- Be polite and respectful of others people's opinions
- You must not make any comment or post, like or re-tweet any material that might otherwise cause damage to or bring into disrepute Bowls Victoria's reputation, brand or that of the sport of bowls
- You must not use the Bowls Victoria brand to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political message/belief without prior consent
- Disclose only publically available information. You must not comment on or disclose confidential Bowls Victoria information (such as business plans and financial information) and always respecting copyright, privacy, financial disclosure and other applicable laws when posting content on social media

## **6.2 PERSONAL USAGE**

Bowls Victoria is aware and encourages its stakeholders (refer 1.0) to use social media in their personal lives. This policy is not intended to discourage the personal use of social media.

However, the potential to damage Bowls Victoria's reputation because of the personal use of social media where a person can be identified as associated with Bowls Victoria means that all persons listed in 1.0 must comply with this policy to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised.

Bowls Victoria recommends that its stakeholders remain aware of their personal online reputation at all times. You should be aware that, even when not discussing Bowls Victoria or bowls related matters, if you engage in inappropriate conduct it can have an impact on your employment or engagement with Bowls Victoria.

If a representative of the media contacts you via social media or by other means, in relation to Bowls Victoria, you should refer the contact to the Chief Executive of Bowls Victoria.

Accessing social media during working hours must not interfere with the performance of your work and if Bowls Victoria identifies that an employee is spending excessive work time accessing social media; disciplinary action may be initiated in accordance with your employment agreement.

## **7.0 OFFICIAL BOWLS VICTORIA SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

Bowls Victoria's Communications and Marketing team is responsible for uploading all official Bowls Victoria content to Bowls Victoria's Facebook, YouTube pages and Twitter account. Other stakeholders will be given access to these platforms to contribute where relevant and necessary.

## **8.0 VICTORIAN SQUADS**

This policy applies to members of each squad. Bowls Victoria acknowledges that many squad members are active social media users. The squad must abide by Bowls Victoria's professional and personal usage guidelines (6.1 Professional Usage and 6.2 Personal Usage) as well as abiding by the following additional rules:

- You may not upload social media content while a game is in play. You must wait until you have finished the game, all formalities following the game are complete and you have departed the green
- You must not engage in discussion around a sponsor's product/services or their competitors' products/services without approval of Bowls Victoria's Chief Executive.

## **9.0 REGIONAL BOWLS MANAGERS**

Notwithstanding anything else in this policy, Bowls Victoria recognises that social media is an effective way for the Regional Bowls Managers (RBMs) formerly Community Development Officers (CDOs) to promote their work. As joint Bowls Australia/Bowls Victoria employees, if RBMs feel that using Bowls Victoria social media platforms will have greater impact to promote their work, then the Marketing and Communications team will facilitate. The Communications and Marketing team are available to upload any relevant content to promote their work through the official Bowls Victoria Facebook and Twitter accounts.

## **10.0 IDENTIFYING INAPPROPRIATE USE**

If you become aware of inappropriate or unlawful content in social media that relates to Bowls Victoria or individuals associated with Bowls Victoria, or that may otherwise have been published in breach of this policy, and you would like to report these please contact Bowls Victoria's Chief Executive.

## **11.0 BREACH OF POLICY**

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or dismissal from the squad. A written warning will be issued in the event of a breach of this policy. A breach of this policy may also amount to breaches of other Bowls Victoria policies including the player contracts for squad members. Refer to Bowls Victoria Disciplinary Policy.

## **12.0 CONSULTATION**

Any persons who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online can contact the communications and marketing team for further clarification.

Graeme Bridge  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

July 2016