

Social media is now a part of everyday life for a growing number of people, and is changing the way we communicate with each other. Masters Swimming Australia (MSA) is also finding new ways to increase the visibility of our organisation through the use of social media.

Social media are works of user-created text, video, audio or multimedia that are published and shared online in a social environment, such as a blog, wiki or video hosting sites.

Social media tools include:

- social networking sites e.g. Facebook Google+,
- forums and discussion boards e.g. Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups
- blogs, including corporate, personal or media publication blogs
- micro-blogs e.g. Twitter, Snapchat
- video and photo sharing sites e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Flickr,
- wikis e.g. Wikipedia
- any other sites that allow individuals to publish comments and/or content

MSA recognises that social media, online communities and online networks are a significant way that Australians are communicating and engaging with one another. MSA employees and voluntary administrators are encouraged to engage online to discuss masters swimming with friends and communities and share information and build new connections.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to individuals linked with MSA that are engaging in the social media environment. These guidelines outline MSA's expectations when an individual discusses the organisation, its athletes, or other MSA related issues in the social media environment.

MSA recognises that complete control over the social media space is impossible, but it is expected that individuals linked to the administration and governance of masters swimming adhere to these guidelines.

It is also important to note that as the social media environment evolves, these guidelines will change in order to meet new requirements.

These guidelines do not apply to a representative's personal use of social media if they do not make reference to any masters swimming related issues.

Masters Swimming Australia's top 10 online guidelines

1. If you are authorised to represent MSA through social media we expect you to follow these guidelines.
2. Only those authorised by MSA have permission to represent the organisation through social media. If you do not have authority then you must not imply that you are in any way authorised to speak on behalf of MSA.
3. If expressing your own views and opinions about masters swimming, please use a disclaimer. An example of a disclaimer is: "the views expressed in this post are mine only and do not necessarily reflect the views of MSA."
4. Please be aware that it is very easy for electronic communications to be traced in the social media environment.
5. If you are unsure of answering a question directed at you, please do not answer, but instead respond with: 'That's a good question. Let me check and I'll get back to you as quickly as I can', then contact the MSA General Manager.
6. Please be aware that it is very difficult to take-back or remove any comments or photos from the social media environment. Please be certain that your comments or photos will not be damaging to any parties.
7. Please do not respond directly to any media enquiries you receive online. Please refer any media to the MSA General Manager.
8. If you do make a mistake in the social media environment (i.e. accidentally posting inaccurate information) please notify the MSA General Manager as soon as possible; she will advise on the best course of action.
9. When engaging in the social media environment please avoid "astroturfing". Astroturfing involves unethical influencing of online polls, rankings, or to increase web traffic to a website.
10. Please ensure you are not the first to make any MSA announcement unless you have received appropriate approval from the MSA General Manager. Do not include the MSA logos in your postings.

Engaging through social media:

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- **Do not try to control** – do not attempt to manipulate the direction of any online discussions
- **Avoid online fights** - voice your opinion, but avoid personal arguments and hostile discussions
- **Be transparent** - identify yourself when engaging through any social media
- **Do not misrepresent** - do not use fake identities in the social media environment or position your comments as if from another person
- **Be friendly** - be mindful to behave to a high standard online as you would offline
- **Show consideration** - do not use insulting, provocative, hateful, obscene or offensive language, nor harass and threaten others
- **Be fair** - do not make defamatory or libelous comments
- **Obey social media rules** - ensure you obey the Terms Of Use of any social media platforms that you are using
- **Be a responsible global citizen** – be sensitive to cultural diversity.
- **The MSA Member Protection Policy** provides codes of behaviour and MSA’s position on individual responsibilities. Refer to the [MSA website](#) for more information.

PROTECTION ONLINE

- **Protect your profile** - you should protect your privacy by setting social media profiles to ‘private’ so that people cannot click into your profiles. Further guidance can be sourced from the Stay Smart Online & esafety.gov.au
- **Protect yourself** - do not use social media to share any of your personal information. Information including your email addresses, private addresses, phone numbers, or financial information should be protected.
- **Protect others** - do not post or discuss any personal information about others through social media.
- **Do not invade the privacy of members** – engage with members, but do not invade their privacy by engaging beyond an acceptable online response.
- **Protect reputations** - do not make any statement that might bring MSA into disrepute.

CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

- **You are legally liable** – anybody can pursue legal action against you and/or MSA for your postings.
- **Be accurate and informative** - do not make any misleading or false statements.
- **Be mindful of confidentiality** - do not disclose any confidential information, whether that information belongs to MSA or any other person, unless authorised to do so.
- **Post only your own content** - do not post copyright material that infringes the intellectual property rights of MSA or others.