

Social Media Policy

Social media gives individuals, groups, organisations and businesses the opportunity to instantly share information with online communities. Blogs, forums, social networking and video sharing sites are the most popular types of social media. However, any forum which allows a user to upload and share information is considered part of the social media space. It is also important to note that information that is shared need not be written; it could take the form of an image or audio visual material. The Australian Small Equine Association (ASEA) supports the use of social media as a timely and effective method of communication. In addition to engaging with members of the equestrian community, social media can help ASEA reach members of the broader public and traditional media. ASEA proactively seeks positive media coverage and does so for the benefit of its Members and Followers. Traditionally this media coverage has been through TV, radio and print media outlets however, the rise of social media has widened this landscape. Given these changes, all ASEA members and its Followers, have the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the association, simply by maintaining an online presence. While social media provides a great opportunity to raise ASEA's profile and reach new audiences, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of ASEA, its Followers, Members and supporters. It is therefore crucial that all ASEA Members, Followers of ASEA and other persons bound by this policy are aware of the potential implications of using social media. The purpose of this policy is to provide persons bound by this policy with guidance on the best way to engage in social media to maximise value and minimise risk. ASEA encourages all persons bound by this policy to use social media within the parameters outlined in this policy to ensure that the reputations of ASEA, and its Members, Followers, Officials, volunteers and Spectators are protected. Please note, this policy should be read in conjunction with the ASEA Code of Ethics, Bullying and Conduct.

Policy Application

This policy applies to all members of ASEA, and ASEA's Members, Officials (including the Executive Committee and National Committee Members), volunteers and State Representatives, as well as associated interested persons who have some form of 'duty' on behalf of ASEA.

What is social media?

Social media is any digital communication tool that can be used for public, social communication. This includes but is not limited to:

- social networking sites such as Facebook, Tik Tok, x (Twitter), or LinkedIn,
- content sharing platforms including Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest (photo sharing), YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing),
- blogs and websites that allow commentary,
- forums,
- discussion boards and online collaboration tools.

All forms of social media activity are covered under this policy. The absence or lack of explicit reference to a particular social networking site or application does, not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

Social media guidelines

When persons bound by this policy use social media the following guidelines must be considered.

- **It's still the real world.** Social media is a form of communication and connection. Present yourself in social media as you would in person, via the telephone, in a meeting or in any other public forum.

- **Your content is everywhere forever.** Assume everything you put on the internet, even if in private, can be read by anyone and can never be deleted. This is why you need to take particular care when communicating on social media. Information which is shared online can be difficult to retract. A person might be able to remove his/her original comments however, the very nature of social media encourages people to share information which makes it difficult to know where the information they post finishes up. Persons bound by this policy should assume that all posts and information they share via social media can be traced back to them.

- **You represent you.** Make it clear that your views that you post on social media, are your own and not those of ASEA. When using social media, write in the first person and do not give any impression of ASEA's official endorsement of your comments. If someone asks you a question on social media about ASEA, direct them to the relevant person within ASEA. You are personally responsible for your posts and comments on social media, including any impact on ASEA. Establishing personal sites, blogs and accounts that have an ASEA 'look and feel' and which could be perceived as being ASEA or one of its disciplines (when it is not), is strictly prohibited. ASEA National Committee members are not permitted to administer discipline specific accounts on social media. Information that National Committees and Committee members wish to share with ASEA followers on social media must be in accordance with their Policy as well as the Code of Ethics, Bullying and Conduct Policy and Privacy Policy.

- **You reflect ASEA.** Even if you don't identify yourself on social media as being associated with ASEA (whether as a member or otherwise), you can still be linked to ASEA. Think about what you say and how you're saying it. Don't engage in any conduct on social media that could directly or indirectly damage ASEA's name or which may otherwise bring the reputation of ASEA or its member associations or affiliates into disrepute. Comments that are contrary to the spirit and integrity of the small equine community will not be tolerated.

- **Be kind and respectful.** Be kind when on social media. Consider your audience and adopt a communication style that is appropriate. Be yourself, but do so respectfully. In particular, respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.

- **Don't engage in illegal or unethical behaviour.** Do not engage in any illegal or unethical behaviour when using social media. Respect copyright, privacy, anti-discrimination and harassment and intellectual property laws. Do not post or respond to any material on social media that is threatening, derogatory, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, pornographic, abusive, disparaging, racist, sexist, discriminatory, hateful, harassing, bullying or defamatory.

- **Think before you post.** Use common sense and think before you post on social media. You should be mindful that information shared on social media appears in public so give careful consideration to content before posting it. Never forget that information shared within online communities could have implications for the sport of equestrian and those associated with it.

- **Remain security aware.** Be vigilant about the security of your social media accounts and take all reasonable steps to protect yourself. For example, don't share passwords or allow others to log on to your accounts.

Related policies

When using social media you are bound by other ASEA policies including ASEA's Code Ethics, Bullying and Conduct Policy and the Privacy Policy. Please note also that competitors, handlers, officials, spectators and other representatives that participate in major events such as National and State Championships, should also adhere to the guidelines imposed by the governing bodies of those associations / societies.

Breach of this policy

With respect to Members of ASEA, breaches of this policy or related policies may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including the cancellation of your Membership. In respect of all other persons bound by this policy, breaches of this policy or related policies may lead to disciplinary action taken in accordance with the disciplinary measures set out in ASEA's Constitution.

Reporting a breach of this policy

Individuals who wish to report an alleged breach of this policy should follow the complaints procedure as outlined in ASEA's Constitution

Amendments/Interpretation

This policy may be amended by ASEA as it deems appropriate. The National Committee of the Australian Small Equine Association will be the ultimate authority with respect to the interpretation and implementation of this policy.

Further information

ASEA encourages all persons bound by this policy to seek clarification from the ASEA National Committee team if they are unsure what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate content on social media.

