NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose
This policy provides guidance and advice on the appropriate use of Social Media by those representing Neighbourhood Watch Queensland (NHWQ).

This policy is intended to provide clarity to NHWQ and Queensland Police Service (QPS) members representing NHWQ on how to conduct themselves in the emerging world of social media. NHWQ embraces the use of social media as a communication, community building and engagement tool. NHWQ encourages the use of social media by all members of NHWQ in accordance with this policy.

Scope
This policy applies to all persons formally associated with NHWQ (referred to as ‘NHWQ Representative’) including but not limited to:

- NHWQ executive members and QPS members;
- Persons acting for or on behalf of NHWQ;
- Persons recruited to act on behalf of NHWQ and committees and sub-committees of NHWQ;
- Officials and volunteers affiliated with NHWQ;
- Community members, businesses and government representatives actively participating in NHWQ online;
- Persons participating in NHWQ sanctioned events, programs and initiatives; and
- Sponsors of NHWQ and those associated with NHWQ.

Background

What is Social Media?
Social media, within this policy, is deemed to be any interactive web-based application used to provide public communication or collaboration and can include, but not limited to services such as:

- Blogs (including local NHWQ blogs and the myPolice site, as well as comments);
- Social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn);
- Micro-blogging sites (Twitter);
- Video and photo sharing websites (Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest);
- Forums and discussion boards (Google Groups, Yahoo! Groups, Road Grime); and
- Online Encyclopaedias (Wikipedia etc.).
Policy

Use of Social Media
A NHWQ representative should not post anything on a Social Media platform that:

- Is a political comment of any kind (endorsement, electioneering or debate);
- Unlawfully discriminates against any person(s), race, gender, religion or sexual orientation;
- Promotes vigilantism or any activities that can be deemed as such;
- Discloses any confidential, internal or sensitive information about the Queensland Police Service (QPS), NHWQ, NHWQ representatives (as defined above), without the prior written approval by the State Coordinator, NHWQ;
- May bring the QPS, NHWQ or NHWQ representatives into disrepute;
- Provides access to any unauthorised links or websites (not related to goals and principles of NHW);
- Breaches any other relevant NHWQ policy or guidelines, including but not limited to the NHWQ Charter, Strategic Plan and Management Guide, or is otherwise illegal;
- As a QPS member representing NHWQ, does not breach relevant QPS social media and code of conduct policies or Operational Procedures Manual (OPM);
- May embarrass or defame the QPS, NHWQ, sponsors, staff or members;
- Impersonates or falsely represents any other person(s) or entity;
- Is abusive and/or harasses or threatens others;
- Makes defamatory or libellous comments;
- Uses obscene or offensive language;
- Infringes the intellectual property rights of others;
- Promotes commercial interests unrelated to NHWQ or is in direct conflict with existing NHWQ supporters, sponsors and sanctioned activities.

Any communications that may be viewed to represent the opinion or view of NHWQ must be approved in writing by NHWQ prior to the posting by the State Coordinator, NHWQ or the Inspector, Crime Prevention Programs Unit, QPS.

NHWQ representatives who utilise social media platforms must ensure that they are aware of, understand and comply with this Policy and associated guidelines. All NHWQ representatives are accountable for their actions.

NHWQ created online Social Media sites
Local NHWQ blogs are administered by the QPS even though they are on a public or commercial server.

NHWQ will monitor local blogs that allow public comment or interaction and will review all NHWQ created social media sites on a regular basis to:

1. Protect the reputation and legal position of the QPS, NHWQ and stakeholders; and
2. Ensure compliance with the NHWQ Social Media Policy, Guidelines and all applicable legislation.

There are a number of online social media sites that are not moderated or administered by NHWQ State Office. These sites include but are not limited to Facebook and Twitter.
Where public comment or interaction is moderated by local NHWQ groups, there should be additional consideration (as per above use of social media) before any content is posted to these sites for NHWQ purposes.

**Passwords**

Passwords and other access details to NHWQ created online Social Media sites (blogs) must be kept confidential and restricted to only those system users approved by NHWQ to publish official NHWQ content online.

**Breaches**

NHWQ representatives who publish content that is deemed not in the best interest of NHWQ may result in the closure of the social media site (blog) and removal of QPS support for that local NHW group/area. If inappropriate content is published on local NHW blogs and other social media sites and is deemed to be an offence (under Commonwealth or State legislation) the responsible person(s) could be liable to criminal and/or civil sanctions.

Breaches of this policy by QPS members representing NHWQ will be dealt with in accordance with the QPS Social Media and other operational policies. Non-compliance with these policies and procedures, depending on the severity and nature of the non-compliance, may result in action being taken in accordance with the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service and QPS HR Policies:

- Professional Conduct policies (2012/02 and 2012/33);
- Complaint Management policies (2005/01 and 2011/12); and
- Grievances policies (2008/01).

Under certain circumstances, cyber bullying (e.g. bullying that is carried out through an internet service such as email, a chat room, discussion group, instant messaging, social media platform or website) is a criminal offence that can be reported to the police. All cases of cyber bullying will be investigated by NHWQ and if appropriate reported to the relevant authorities for action.

A NHWQ representative, or a QPS member representing NHWQ, who publishes false or misleading comments about another person in the public domain (e.g. blog, Facebook, YouTube or Twitter) should be aware that they may be liable for defamation and accountable to the relevant authority.

**Personal consent**

I _________________________________ have read and understand my responsibilities regarding the use of social media on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch Queensland (NHWQ). I also understand that I am personally liable for any misuse of NHWQ social media and that the Queensland Police Service, or Queensland Government do not hold any responsibility or liability for my actions.

_________________________  __________________________
Signed                        Date