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AFP policy on online social networking

Online social networking is the personal or professional use of internet-based sites developed for the purpose of people sharing information/data between one another.

Online social networking platforms and technology offer unprecedented avenues for the AFP to enhance its communications with key clients, stakeholders and the community. The AFP will utilise social networking both outside and within the organisation as much as practicable.

In response to the [2010 Report of the Government 2.0 Taskforce](#), the Australian government stated its expectation that all federal departments will fully utilise the internet in their professional interactions with the community. The desired outcome is to cultivate a more consultative, participatory, information-rich and transparent environment.

The AFP recognises the importance and utility of new advances in online technology. The use of online social networking within a corporate function will enhance the AFP's capabilities to deliver on both business and operational outcomes.

While online social networking is to be embraced as a platform that provides opportunities for the organisation, consequences can arise from careless use.

In principle, the AFP supports a philosophy of reasonable private usage of AFP ICT systems for online social networking, provided this does not compromise or detract from the appointee's official duties. The AFP Senior Executive may at any time restrict non-operational access to certain online social networking and other internet sites.

When using online social media platforms, appointees must take responsibility to ensure that their personal opinions and/or views are not at risk of being misconstrued or misinterpreted as AFP policy or otherwise sanctioned by the AFP. While it is recommended appointees do not identify their employment status online, the AFP trusts appointees to act responsibly and be fully cognisant of the personal and professional risks involved in doing so.

All use of social networking by the AFP and its appointees, both on and off duty, must be in keeping with relevant legislation (including privacy laws and laws governing the disclosure of information), organisational policies, governance instruments and practices. Appointee conduct will be assessed against legislation, the AFP's core values, code of conduct, the [Commissioner's Order 2](#) and the AFP professional standards framework.

The [AFP National Guideline on the use of Information and Communications Technology](#) provides further detail on:

- official use of social networking sites
- operational use of AFP ICT systems for social networking
- personal use of AFP ICT systems for social networking

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- issues surrounding being identified as an AFP appointee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. W. Negus". The signature is stylized with a large, circular loop for the letter 'O' in "Negus".

T. W. Negus APM
Commissioner

4 August 2011

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