



## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Policy Number:	09	Version:	4
Updated by:	Paul Taylor	Approved by Board:	5 November 2025
Reason of Review:	Scheduled Review	Scheduled review date:	As per schedule

### INTRODUCTION

Established in 2000, Mercy Works Limited (MWL) is the development arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

We work in partnership with vulnerable communities and local organisations domestically and in the Asia Pacific region. We work with the people of these communities and organisations to build capacity, dignity and self-reliance.

### 1. SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to MWL Board Directors, committee members, employees contractors and volunteers (defined as Workers) in relation to their work with/for MWL.

The policy also applies to visitors to our programs, and contractors and consultants such as freelance writers, designers, multimedia producers, fundraising consultants, partner organisations and other external parties using our stories, images, name or logo.

Unless specified otherwise, this policy applies regardless of where or when workers post or communicate information online. It applies to posting and online activity at home, work or other locations, while on duty or off duty, and regardless of whether workers are using their own property or the property of MWL.

To meet the regulatory requirements, MWL has reasonable processes in place to ensure the procedures and tools for seeking consent meet ethical guidelines, are made available in the local languages of PNG and Timor Leste with all exceptions clearly explained.

### 2. PURPOSE

All workers need to be aware of the appropriate boundaries and responsibilities when communicating or engaging in an online environment. This policy makes workers aware that there is a strong connection between their online activities and behaviours and that of MWL's activities and reputation. All workers should understand their words, images, social media accounts, posts and comments, whether made inside or outside the work environment, may be attributed to MWL or impact the reputation of MWL.

MWL is committed to ensuring that internal and external communication of both publications and commentary in the use of social networking communications, are responsible, respectful and

lawful. It is important that MWL and its workers makes every effort to ensure the safety of producers and consumers of Social Media.

MWL have aligned this policy to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct Principles 6.2:

- Commitment 6.2.1 - Members' communications are accurate, respectful, and protect privacy and dignity; and
- Commitment 6.2.2 - Members have organisational requirements for the collection of information, images, and stories.

It is also noted that the following ACFID Code of Conduct Principles support ethical communications:

- Quality Principle 1 - Rights, protection and inclusion
- Quality Principle 2 - Participation, empowerment & local ownership
- Quality Principle 4 - Quality and effectiveness
- Quality Principle 6 - Communication
- Quality Principle 7 - Governance
- Quality Principle 9 - People & Culture

Any exemption to this policy must be applied for in writing, for approval by the Executive Director. Any exemption granted by the Executive Director must be in writing.

### **3. DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS**

Terms used in this policy are:

**Social Media** - means any application, service, website or tool that enables or supports online publication and commentary.

**Social network** - is a platform that is entirely driven by user-generated content. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings; in posting text, photos, video, links, and other information; and in level of interaction with other members. Examples (but not limited to): Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Snap Chat and Flickr

**Idea** - is a thought or suggestion as to a possible course of action.

**Information sharing** - is the act of entities or people passing information from one to another, either intentionally or unintentionally. This can be done electronically or through systems and includes comments and posts in private and public social media or networking sites/applications.

**Personal website** - is a social network page, blog, or any Internet website/tool created by workers and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and associates.

**Workers** - are defined as MWL Board Directors, committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers (defined as Workers) in relation to their work with/for MWL.

### **4. APPLICATION**

#### **4.1 Commitment**

MWL understands that its workers will participate in social networking sites, and create and maintain personal websites, including blogs. MWL respects worker's right to have an online social networking and personal internet presence, using their own devices and resources.

In doing so, however, those covered by this policy need to be aware of appropriate boundaries and activities when communicating in the name of MWL in an online environment. Please also refer to MWL Policy on Acceptable Use of Communications Systems and Devices and MWL Code of Conduct Policy.

#### **4.2 General Use of Social Media**

Social media is a very powerful, far reaching and positive way for MWL to communicate and facilitates opportunities to engage with wider audiences. This form of communication enables MWL to be more active in relationships as well as increasing the frequency and speed of engaging with the public.

#### **4.3 Official Use of Social Media**

Employees must not engage in, speak on behalf of MWL or open accounts on behalf of the organisation unless they have been explicitly authorised by MWL.

Employees who have been authorised by MWL to use or engage with online social media on behalf of MWL as part of their duties must conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of behaviour as set out in the organisation's policies.

The overriding principle is that all behaviour online should reflect the standard of appropriate behaviour which is expected in all person-to-person interaction. Such behaviour should at all times demonstrate a respect for the dignity of each person.

Only those authorised to speak on behalf of MWL should identify themselves and/or represent the view of MWL online. In addition, comments etc should be done using the formal MWL accounts, which clearly identifies the organisation, and also protects the individual.

You must ensure that any content (posts, comments etc.) associated with you is consistent with MWL policies. This applies regardless of whether you are participating in social media inside or outside of working hours (unless specified otherwise), and whether you are using your own property or the property of MWL.

Conditions of publishing or commenting via social media:

- That the reputation, or interests of MWL are not brought into disrepute.
- That no disparaging, discriminatory or harassing commentary is published.
- That no person or organisation is defamed.
- The collection of information, images and stories does not harm people or the environment.
- That media authorisation processes apply in relation to making any kind of statement or comment on behalf of MWL.
- That compliance is maintained with relevant legislation, including copyright, privacy and anti-discrimination legislation.
- That information about MWL or our partners which is not in the public domain is not published.
- Workers endorsing MWL services and activities, must disclose their relationship with MWL (for example employee, volunteer etc.) and must ensure that endorsements do not contain representations that are deceptive or cannot be substantiated.

#### **4.4 Use of Public Sites**

When using public sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc., whether for authorised MWL activities, or for personal use on your own devices/platform the following will apply:

#### **4.4.1 Developing a Social Media Channel**

Any individual working on behalf of MWL who wishes to use social networking as part of their professional duties should first seek the permission from MWL Executive Director.

#### **4.4.2 Protection of One's Own Privacy**

The private use of social networking sites by persons covered by this policy should be kept distinct from their professional use of such sites.

#### **4.4.3 Respect for Audiences**

Workers are not to publish or disclose information or comment on any matters that contradict or are in conflict with MWL website or its policies.

#### **4.4.4 Communicate respectfully**

Workers are expected to use social media in a way that is respectful towards MWL and all persons associated with MWL and its values. This includes not only matters that could be deemed discriminatory (for example those areas covered by Equal Employment Opportunity or Human Rights legislation and regulations) but also consideration of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

#### **4.4.5 Respect Intellectual Property Laws**

It is critical that workers show respect and adhere to the laws governing intellectual property. This includes MWL's own copyrights and branding. To avoid plagiarism, workers must always reference or attribute written work to the original author and source. If you are unsure of the potential intellectual property risk, please consult your Manager and the Executive Director before publishing on social media.

#### **4.4.6 Controversial Issues**

If workers read misrepresentations, opinions or views online that are likely to negatively impact the reputation of MWL, they must bring them to the attention of the Executive Director; in doing so, they must do so respectfully, presenting the facts. If workers speak about others, they need to ensure the information is factual and that it does not disparage another person(s).

#### **4.4.7 Use of photos and/or videos**

Workers maintaining official MWL social networking sites should take particular care with the use of photographs or video. Permission should be sought from all individuals in photos or in videos or parents and guardians of those under the age of 18 before they are posted. Material that might embarrass or offend those pictured should at all times be avoided. Material should be removed at once if it is the subject of a complaint or if the posting of a particular item makes an individual uncomfortable. The collection of information, images and stories does not harm people or the environment.

### **5. BREACH**

A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action that may involve severance from the organisation.

### **6. AUTHORITY**

This policy is approved and reviewed by the Board.

### **7. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Other organisational policies, legislation, and codes that should be read in conjunction with this Policy and with MWL's ethical value principles include:

- Acceptable Use of Communications Systems and Devices Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy

- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Framework Policy
- Ethical Decision-Making Framework for Communications Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- One to One Interactions with Children Policy
- Management of Concerns, Complaints and Commendations Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

## 8. CONTACTS

Executive Director  
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## 9. REVIEW

Review of this Policy, related forms and resources will be undertaken every two years by the Executive Director and approved by the MWL Board.

## 10. REVISION/MODIFICATION HISTORY

Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
26 November 2014	1	Social Media Policy	• New	26 November 2014	27 November 2014
28 August 2019	2	Social Media Policy	• Reviewed and updated	28 August 2019	29 August 2019
16 June 2021	3	Social Networking Policy	• Change of policy name, • Review and update to all areas of the policy	16 June 2021	17 June 2021
10 October 2025	4	Social Networking Policy	• Revised Introduction • Style consistency	5 November 2025	6 November 2025

## 11. APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

Approved by: Board, Mercy Works Limited

Date: 5 November 2025

To be Revised: November 2027

<b>Board Chair Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	15 January 2026