



## **GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA**

### **GSDCA Social Media Code of Conduct**

#### **Background**

Social media has become an integral part of day to day communication for individuals as well as businesses.

Social media is defined as the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social media may include but is not limited to magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Technologies include blogging, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-posting, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP.

Its ability to capture community sentiment and shape opinions is driven by its dynamic and immediate nature.

What constitutes ethical behaviour can be somewhat ambiguous when engaging in social forums, however the GSDCA believes it's Officers, Member Clubs and their members should uphold the highest ethical standards demonstrating respect, honesty and integrity when engaging with one another.

This Social Media Code of Conduct aims to provide guidelines on best practice behaviour when using social media.

#### **Guidelines**

- **Abide** by GSDCA Guiding Principles & Code of Ethics
- **Be reasonable and respectful** – do not post malicious, misleading or unfair content in relation to Officers, Member Clubs & their members or members of other ANKC affiliated bodies.
- **Be accurate** – any comment posted as fact should be able to be substantiated
- **Act** in manner that is consistent with good community expectations

The same values that apply in the real world also apply in the virtual world and in social media exchanges.

Despite the seemingly unregulated nature of social media, the law still pertains online. Postings online (and similarly in email or text messages) are subject to the law in areas such as defamation, sexual abuse, racial discrimination, intimidation and bullying.

#### **Breach of the Social Media Code of Conduct**

The GSDCA and through its Member Clubs continually monitors activity in relation to the organisation.

GSDCA takes compliance with this policy seriously. Detected breaches of the policy should be reported to GSDCA in first instance and then matter sent to Member Clubs for investigation.

A breach of this Code may result in disciplinary action which could result in, but is not limited to, the issuing of a formal warning or suspension.

The GSDCA will not tolerate, condone or support any posting it considers could be damaging to children. Such offences will be automatically referred to Police for action.

NOTE: matters relating to sexual abuse, racial discrimination, intimidation and or bullying may be referred for legal opinion or to Police.

#### **Consultation or advice**

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for GSDCA Officers, Member Clubs and their members

Any Officer or member of a Member Club who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online can seek clarification from Secretary, GSDCA or the Secretary of the Member Club they are a member of.