

Social Media Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy provides the principles for social media use within the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. It applies to all staff, Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) when making public comment on social media, in both professional and personal capacities.

1. Background

Social media refers to internet-based tools that allow individuals and groups to communicate, to advertise or share opinions, information, ideas, messages, experiences, images, and video or audio clips. They may include (but are not limited to) platforms such as blogs, social networks, video and photo-sharing sites, and are used for:

- social networking (Facebook, Twitter, WEChat, Weibo, WhatsApp)
- professional networking (LinkedIn)
- discussion forums (Reddit, Whirlpool)
- media sharing (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram)
- content production (blogs [Tumblr, Blogger] and microblogs [Twitter])
- knowledge/information aggregation (Wikipedia)
- virtual reality and gaming environments (Second Life), and
- booking sites and apps (HealthEngine, Whitecoat, Podium).

RANZCOG has and maintains accounts with the following social media platforms:

- a) Facebook
- b) Instagram
- c) Twitter
- d) LinkedIn

2. Policy

2.1 Official use of social media by RANZCOG

- 2.1.1** The Communications and Public Affairs team and delegated persons (e.g the Wellbeing Committee Co-ordinator) are responsible for the creation and management of the official RANZCOG social media accounts. This encompasses posting, responding to, or reviewing social media content.
- 2.1.2** Social media is used in RANZCOG for promoting and upholding the RANZCOG brand and reputation, sharing RANZCOG news and celebrating the achievements of the College and its members, and promoting membership engagement activities.
- 2.1.3** RANZCOG is only responsible for content posted by RANZCOG on its official social media accounts.

- 2.1.4** Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates, SIMGs and staff are not permitted to create a social media account on behalf of RANZCOG, or speak on behalf of RANZCOG through their social media unless specifically authorised.

2.2 Use of social media by RANZCOG staff, Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates and SIMGs

2.2.1 Participation in online forums should reflect the same high standards of professional behaviour that are expected when RANZCOG business is conducted in person. This includes upholding RANZCOG's Organisational Values, and adherence to the RANZCOG Code of Conduct. When engaging in social media, RANZCOG employees, and Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates and SIMGs are expected to exercise care and discretion in all online communications.

2.2.2 RANZCOG Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates and SIMGs should not purport to represent the views of RANZCOG, and should:

- a) not use the RANZCOG logos and branding unless authorized, and in line with the relevant RANZCOG policies
- b) declare that all communications and content are their own and do not represent the views of RANZCOG or their employer. For example, *'This account reflects my personal views and not the views of RANZCOG, or any RANZCOG committees or boards with which I am involved.'*

2.2.3 When using social media RANZCOG staff, Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates and SIMGs must not:

1. disclose RANZCOG confidential information
2. post, communicate or create content which references RANZCOG and may adversely or negatively affect RANZCOG's reputation, image, or commercial interests
3. represent themselves as, or communicate in such a way that the public would believe that they are acting for or communicating on behalf of RANZCOG
4. post any material that defames, harasses, vilifies, discriminates against, sexually harasses, bullies, stalks, victimises, brings into disrepute, or threatens another RANZCOG employee, Fellow, Trainee, Diplomate, SIMG or any RANZCOG affiliated body or association.

2.3 General obligations in the use of social media by Staff, Fellows, Diplomates, Trainees and SIMGs

The behaviour of Fellows, Diplomates, Trainees and SIMGs is guided by relevant professional policies such as the Medical Board of Australia's social media policy; the Medical Council of New Zealand's 'Statement on use of the internet and electronic communication', relevant national laws and regulations and the RANZCOG Code of Conduct. The behaviour of Staff is guided by their individual employment contracts, College HR policies as well as the RANZCOG Code of Conduct.

2.3.1 Examples of social media behaviours that staff, Fellows, Diplomates, Trainees and SIMGs should not engage in, include:

- a) discrimination or harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, stalking, victimisation, abusive or threatening interactions
- b) defaming or criticising colleagues in an untruthful, misleading, or deceptive manner
- c) disclosing confidential or personal information about their patients or their colleagues

2.4 Use of social media for Sponsors and Partners

RANZCOG may choose to recognise sponsorship arrangements or promote sponsorship initiatives through social media channels. Such social media activity should adhere to the parameters set out for sponsors and partners in the Sponsorship Policy and Procedure. Social media posts will not be used to directly advertise a partner's product or services or provide them with a platform for product placement. Final approval rights for social media activity related to partners and sponsors rests with RANZCOG.

3. Breaches of this Policy

All Staff and members of the College are required to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in RANZCOG incurring significant legal, financial or reputational risks, and are considered to be a breach of the RANCOG Code of Conduct policy. Individual members may also be subject to AHPRA investigation or Medical Defence Organisation review.

4. Related references

- [RANZCOG Code of Conduct](#)
- [The Medical Board of Australia's social media policy](#)
- [The Medical Council of New Zealand's "Use of the internet and electronic communication"](#)
- [AMA's Social media and the medical profession: A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners](#), and
- [AHPRA advertising resources](#)
- Sponsorship Policy and Procedure
- [Endorsement Policy](#)

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