



*Australian*  
**Air League**

Federal Operations Circular No 03/2022

F/OC/03/22  
30 April 2022

## Australian Air League Social Media Guidelines - Updated

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Squadrons may wish to create an online presence on the Internet, to promote their Squadron and provide regular updates to members.
- 1.2 The Council of the League recognises that Squadrons and other Units may find it easier to create and maintain a presence on Social Networking sites such as (but not limited to) **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter** and does not wish to discourage the use of these resources as a means to communicate to their existing members as well as recruit to new members.
- 1.3 However, we do need to ensure these sites maintain the League's standards and present a positive image to the public, as well as protect our members.

### 2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the circular is to remind Squadrons and League members of the Australian Air League's **Internet and Social Media Policy** and to provide guidance to ensure that Squadrons can promote themselves whilst maintain the League's standards and public image.
- 2.2 It updates information that was contained in **Federal Operations Circular No 02/2018** – bringing it up to date as well as providing information on taking responsibility for social media accounts in light of recent High Court cases.
- 2.3 It should be read in conjunction with the **Internet and Social Media Policy** found at <https://www.airleague.com.au/download/internet-and-social-media-policy/>

### 3.0 Approval and Registration

- 3.1 Before setting up a website or social media page, approval should first be sought from the **Officer Command (OC)** of the Unit – this is to prevent sites being created by enthusiastic members, parents or Associate members who may later leave the Australian Air League, leaving an orphaned site that presents an un-professional image for the Air League. Potential new members might even see a site that is not being maintained and assume the Squadron has closed.
- 3.2 Any Squadron online presence (including social media page) must be registered with the Air League using the **Form 46i** which can be downloaded from the Australian Air League website <https://www.airleague.com.au/download/form-46i-aal-internet-application-registration/>. This application should be made to the Group Executive Commissioner who will approve before forwarding on to the Federal Operations Commissioner.

- 3.3 The task of creating and maintaining a website or social media page may be delegated to an appropriately skilled individual such as a Squadron Officer, Associate member or parent, however it should not be tasked to a cadet or minor.
- 3.4 This delegate will ensure that information on the website or social media page is kept up-to-date and look after the day-to-day running of the website or social media page. In the event that this person ceases membership of the Australian Air League then another person will be appointed, and their contact details advised to the Federal Operations Commissioner using the **Form 46i** as soon as possible
- 3.5 Responsibility for the content of any site ultimately lies with the Squadron OC who will be responsible for monitoring the compliance of the site or page on an ongoing basis.

## 4.0 Tips and Guidance

### 4.1 Which Social Media platform to use?

- 4.1.1 Squadrons may be tempted to create a presence on each new social media site that comes along, however this can create a headache to maintain and add content. A social media platform should be chosen based on the intended audience and purpose.
- 4.1.2 For example, is it to provide updates to members and parents on upcoming activities, to publicise Squadrons activities and events or to connect with other groups in the community such as Rotary and Lions? What social media do the Squadron member's parents use, and might an email list be more suitable?
- 4.1.3 Today the most popular social media platforms include **Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok** and **Twitter**, and Squadrons should limit their presence to one or two, so as to prevent dilution of their message and to reduce the workload of adding content to these sites.
- 4.1.4 Whilst photo and video sharing platforms like **Instagram** and **Tik Tok** may have a growing market share, before using them Squadrons should consider whether they are the best platform to use:
  - 4.1.4.1 Does your intended audience use this platform? If you are recruiting for new members – will the parents of potential cadet recruits use the chosen platform? For example, in 2020 the average age for **Tik Tok** users was 16 to 24 so it may not be the best platform for the task.
  - 4.1.4.2 Will you be able to produce regular and compelling video and photographic content to attract new members? What message are you going to be presenting? Will you be seen amongst other videos or lost in the crowd?
  - 4.1.4.3 It is also important to consider in what country the data is stored, and what the company's privacy policies are. Unfortunately, this is a detailed topic beyond the scope of this document however there is a wealth of information available online.

### 4.2 Setting up a Social Media Site

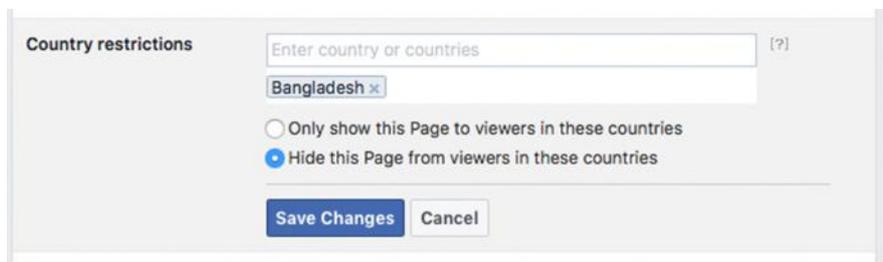
- 4.2.1 A social media site should represent actual Squadrons or Units, using the name that appears in the Squadron's charter and including reference to the **Australian Air League**. They should also not use any inappropriate imagery or designs that do not represent the **Aims and Objectives** of the League.

4.2.2 Squadrons should also consider the minimum age requirements for social media sites, for example the minimum age on **Facebook** is 13 years. For this reason, social media should not be used as the primary method of communication to cadets, and members should not be pressured to sign up for a particular server in order to access communications

### 4.3 Privacy Settings

4.3.1 Squadrons should consider setting the privacy of their site to control membership of the site and protect from unwelcome posts and comments. If the site is used to promote the Squadron, it may be necessary to set restrictions on who can access the page.

4.3.2 For example, you may find that your social media pages received a large number of “likes” from strangers or fake accounts located in other countries. You may wish to limit your audience by country to only Australia. If you find your cadets have relatives located overseas who would like to see and follow their activities, you might instead choose to block the countries that the “fake likes” come from – this is found in your page settings via **Settings -> General -> Country Restrictions**.



4.3.3 If comments are allowed, the Squadron OC should appoint a moderator to regularly check the site for unwanted comments and remove them, as well as possibly blocking any nuisance makers.

4.3.4 If you wish to learn more about this subject, please check the following links. This list is by no means exhaustive, and search engines will present a wide variety of guides on the matter.

- [https://www.facebook.com/help/248844142141117/?helpref=hc\\_fnav](https://www.facebook.com/help/248844142141117/?helpref=hc_fnav)
- <https://www.facebook.com/business/a/page/fake-likes>
- <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/fighting-fake-likes-update/?ref=u2u>
- <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security>
- <https://about.instagram.com/blog/tips-and-tricks/privacy-and-safety-tips-for-instagram>

### 4.4 Appropriate Content

4.4.1 When delegating the role of maintaining a Squadron social media presence, Squadron OCs should stipulate guidelines around the appropriate content to be posted to the Squadron social media page. This may include items such as;

- Squadron news and upcoming events
- Wing or Group news and coming events
- Aviation news and articles, or relevant events (for example, articles on ANZAC Day etc)
- Local area specific news and events (for example, a local festival the Squadron might take part in)

4.4.2 Care should be taken to ensure that any content is appropriate and is not knowingly false and/or defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, vulgar, hateful, harassing, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, invasive of a person's privacy, or otherwise breaches any law.

## 5.0 Taking responsibility for your social media accounts

- 5.1 In a recent High Court case – the Voller case <sup>1</sup> – the High Court affirmed that organisations can be liable in defamation law for comments made by a third party. This means the Australian Air League Inc. (AAL) needs to closely monitor our social media accounts and take responsibility for the information that is shared via our platforms.
- 5.2 In the Voller case, media organisations had created Facebook pages and posted content about Mr Voller. Members of the public (third parties, unrelated to the media organisations) had then commented and posted defamatory comments on that Facebook page. The High Court found that the organisations, by running the Facebook page, had facilitated, and encouraged the defamatory comments, and were therefore legally responsible.
- 5.3 Based on this case, the League’s solicitors have provided advice on Taking Responsibility for Social Media Accounts
- 5.4 What does this mean for the Air League?
- 5.4.1 This decision highlights the risks in facilitating and encouraging the posting of comments by third-party users on webpages and social media that an organisation, in our case the Air League, control. Simply allowing comments – or not removing them – may be seen as “facilitating and encouraging” the publication of those comments.
- 5.4.2 The Air League needs to ensure members are protected from defamatory comments, bullying and harassment online, both from other adult members and from parents, guardians, and carers.
- 5.4.3 We all need to actively monitor webpages and all social media used on Air League endorsed platforms to avoid defamation lawsuits.
- 5.5 Adult Member Example
- 5.5.1 The Air League has Duty of Care to all its members and not just junior members
- 5.6 Junior Member Example
- 5.6.1 The Voller decision could apply to other social media platforms that various members of the Air League use and where there are messaging or commenting functions and bullying could occur.
- 5.7 Branch/Squadron Facebook Group Example
- 5.7.1 The AAL will endeavour to distinguish official, authorised AAL social media accounts and pages from those created by friends or alumni of the AAL – such as a parent Group or an ex-member Group. Such pages should make it clear that:
- They are an unofficial page
  - They are not affiliated with the Australian Air League and the League has no control over their content
  - These groups should be made private and require registration, to reduce the likelihood of abusive or spamming posts and protect the administrators of these groups from potential liability
  - They should not use any AAL logos or other trademarks

---

<sup>1</sup> Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller; Nationwide News Pty Ltd v Voller; Australian News Channel Pty Ltd v Voller [2021] HCA 27

5.7.2 Where a parent, friend or alumni account appears for all intents and purposes like it is authorised by the Air League, the Air League will request the facilitator of the account to change the name or branding. The Air League has ownership of its logos which are trademark protected. Additionally, official pages will contain a reference that they have been authorised by the Air League via a pinned post at the top of the page.

## 5.8 Other issues relating to social media use

5.8.1 There is an increasing scope of activity for which we need to take responsibility as our world becomes increasingly digital.

5.8.2 Social media blurs the line between home and Air League life and means the Air League may need to take additional steps to ensure its members are safe and protected from risks presented in the online space, such as bullying or grooming.

5.8.3 Bullying online via social media can have significant impacts on members mental health. The recent COVID pandemic has seen the Air League engage in online learning such as the use of video conferencing software like Zoom and MS Teams for online Squadron.

5.8.4 This can also lead to its own problems such as "Zoombombing" (third parties joining calls that do not require registration) and private chatrooms when not configured correctly, as well as the potential risks of data breaches, causing harm to and interfering with the privacy of our members and other community members.

5.8.5 If harm occurs via the Air League platforms, like the **Voller case**, the Air League could also be liable for defamation.

5.8.6 The Air League has robust Code of Conduct and Social Media Policies to ensure acceptable standards of behaviour which empower the League to act as is necessary

## 6.0 Further Information

6.1 Questions can be directed to the National Marketing and Publicity Commissioner via email to [marketing@airleague.com.au](mailto:marketing@airleague.com.au)



Chief Comr. R G King, MSA  
Chief Commissioner