

Online Engagement

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to ensure that all online communications and references to, from, or about Melbourne Theatre Company and/or our artistic peers, made by Melbourne Theatre Company employees and others associated with the Company (such as contractors, volunteers and interns), are respectful, informed, polite and clear.

This Policy sets out the appropriate behaviour for all Melbourne Theatre Company employees and other workers including contractors, actors and creatives and others associated with the Company) when using online platforms, whether in personal use or when representing Melbourne Theatre Company online through official channels.

2. SCOPE

This policy and associated procedural principles applies to all Melbourne Theatre Company staff.

All other individuals engaged in activities reasonably connected with Melbourne Theatre Company (including activities that extend beyond Company premises and encompass electronic communications and virtual environments) are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy. Typically, such individuals include:

- a) consultants;
- b) secondments and interns;
- c) volunteers; and
- d) visitors

Where there is inconsistency or uncertainty between this policy and other employment related policies, this policy prevails.

This policy relates to online platforms including but not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.
- Video and photo sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube
- Online instant-messaging and collaboration platforms such as Slack, Teams and Milanote
- Personal blogging sites such as Tumblr and WordPress
- Corporate blogs, or opinion blogs hosted by traditional media publications (e.g. Guardian Australia's *Comment is Free*)
- Forums, discussion boards and comment sections
- Online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia
- Any other web sites or online platforms, that allow individual users or companies to communicate online

3. PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

Melbourne Theatre Company expects the highest level of professional courtesy and conduct from its staff in any public communication, including online. All staff are required to be respectful of all individuals and communities, to both protect the reputation of Melbourne Theatre Company as well those of individuals and companies in the broader industry.

Melbourne Theatre Company recognises that staff may use social media and other online platforms in their personal life, and this Policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities. However, staff should remain considerate and mindful of their online activities, especially where they can be identified as a Company staff member.

It is expected that any posts mentioning or referring to Melbourne Theatre Company, its products, services, staff, or its artistic peers in the live performance industry, adhere to the following requirements:

- Be respectful of all individuals and communities;
- Be polite and respectful of other opinions, even as of heated discussion and debate;
- Ensure post material is not unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including about Melbourne Theatre Company, its employees, its contractors, its partners, its competitors and/or other business related individuals or organizations;
- Ensure a post is not the first to make a Melbourne Theatre Company announcement;
- Disclose only publicly available information. The post must not comment on or disclose confidential Company information (such as casting, shows under consideration, financial information, business performance, future business plans, the departure of key staff). If clarification is required about what Company information is in the public domain, consult the Director, Marketing & Communications;
- Ensure no posts knowingly take on the identity of another Melbourne Theatre Company employee or that of a Company business partner or competitor employee (including name or variation of a name);
- Be mindful of the importance of not damaging Melbourne Theatre Company's reputation, interests and/or bringing the Company into disharmony or disrepute;
- Respect copyright, privacy, financial disclosure and other applicable laws, as well as any applicable online platform Terms of Use.

Melbourne Theatre Company staff are personally responsible for the content they post on their personal online profiles. It is important that readers of these posts do not misconstrue personal comments as representing an official Melbourne Theatre Company position:

- When posting on their personal online profiles, employees must ensure they do not imply in any way that authorisation has been obtained to speak on Melbourne Theatre Company's behalf.
- Where an employee chooses to list their Melbourne Theatre Company affiliation in their personal online profile, they must take steps to clearly distinguish that they are posting in a personal capacity: e.g. "Views are my own" or similar.

4. OFFICIAL COMPANY REPRESENTATION

Only authorised Melbourne Theatre Company representatives may post on Company branded online profiles. Authorisation must be gained from the Digital Manager, and with the approval of the department head. Before authorising access to the Company's profiles, the Digital Manager may wish to discuss the Company's Digital Strategy to ensure posts are in keeping with the Company style.

If accreditation is received to post on behalf of the Company as part of position responsibilities, the individual posting must take responsibility for ensuring that any reference to Melbourne Theatre Company is factually correct and accurate, is lawful and does not breach confidentiality requirements, and that respect is demonstrated for the individuals and communities with whom interaction occurs.

It is required that authorised Melbourne Theatre Company representatives, when using the Company's branded online profiles:

- Remain polite and respectful at all times, to all individuals and communities
- Only post approved content, via the approved Melbourne Theatre Company profiles
- Do not use the Company's branded profiles to express or promote the representative's personal opinions
- Ensure post material is not unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including about Melbourne Theatre Company's partners, its competitors and/or other business related individuals or organizations
- Disclose only publicly available information. The post must not comment on or disclose confidential Company information (such as casting, shows under consideration, financial information, business performance, future business plans, the departure of key staff). If clarification is required about what Company information is in the public domain, consult the Director, Marketing & Communications.
- Respect copyright, privacy, financial disclosure and other applicable laws, as well as any applicable online platform Terms of Use.

Authorised representatives are to keep records of online interactions and communications, in acknowledgement that online statements can be held to the same legal standards as traditional media communications.

5. BREACH OF POLICY

Melbourne Theatre Company takes its public profile and good reputation seriously and expects all employees to do the same. Whilst the initial response to any breach of this policy will always be a conversation about how to fix any problems, disciplinary action may be taken depending on the seriousness of the issue.

In the case where this or related policies are breached, resolution may be according to the CAST Disciplinary Procedure.

If an employee is subjected to, or witness to, bullying, harassment, or victimisation, resolution may be according to the CAST Grievance Resolution Procedure.

6. RELEVANT COMPANY DOCUMENTS

- Melbourne Theatre Company Code of Conduct
- CAST Respectful Workplace Policy
- CAST National Code of Behaviour
- CAST Disciplinary Procedure
- CAST Grievance Procedure

7. RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

- Executive Management
- Director Marketing & Communications
- Managers and Supervisors
- All staff including employees, contractors, actors, creatives and Board members.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

- Digital Manager
- Director Marketing & Communications
- Director People & Culture

9. REVIEW

Routine review, branding update, clarification of expectations for 'Official Company Representation', integration of 'Actors and Creatives' into Employees.

10. VERSION HISTORY

Version Control			
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