



# HUMAN GENETICS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA

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**Title:**

## Policy ASGC Social Media Guidelines

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The growing use of social media and networking sites provides ASGC and its members with more opportunities to engage with each other and the wider community.

### Introduction

Australasian Society of Genetic Counsellors (ASGC), a special interest group of the Human Genetics Society of Australia (HGSA), acknowledges the benefits of participating in social networks and online communities and encourages members to engage in the conversations taking place. Social media refers to sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter etc.

These guidelines have been produced to help ASGC members to harness the benefits of social media while minimising the risks. It is envisaged that these guidelines will evolve and develop as we continue to learn, adapt and build on new ideas and innovations.

The ASGC will also have their own social media accounts, to allow information to be shared with our members and the public. This will create an opportunity to increase the awareness and engagement of the public with genetic counselling and the ASGC.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the HGSA Code of Ethics for Genetic Counsellors available at: <https://www.hgsa.org.au/documents/item/9589>.

ASGC members should also familiarise themselves with their workplace social media policy (if applicable) and follow any guidelines set out by their employer in addition to these guidelines.

Many ASGC members who undertake interviews and other social media activities have guidance from their institutional public relations teams and this document is not meant to supercede that advice.

### Private Use of Social Media

The majority of people using online social networks do so to stay in touch with family and friends. As genetic counsellors however, it is important that you 'know who your friends are' and most importantly understand your privacy settings.

Think carefully before you post and don't say, or show, anything you would not want printed on the front page of a newspaper or for an employer to see.

Both the Australian and New Zealand Medical Associations and the Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA) recommend against accepting 'friends requests' from former or existing patients as this can breach professional boundaries.

It is important to maintain the same professional conduct on social media that you would in your workplace. This includes (but is not limited to) maintaining confidentiality, presenting unbiased information, and adhere to the legal obligations with respect to advertising (eg national law prohibits the use of testimonials in

advertising)<sup>1</sup>

It is also important for ASGC members to recognise that their professional and private use of social

*1. AHPRA National Board for registered health professional. Social Media Policy, March 2014*

media may intersect on occasion. Members are advised to be judicious when promoting activities such as personal or professional podcasts, their own private business pages or when being interviewed by the media.

### ASGC Social Media Accounts

The ASGC social media accounts are managed by the Communications Officer and other members of the current Executive Committee.

Currently ASGC has a twitter account: @GCAustralasia

Once this policy is in place, ASGC will also commence a Facebook account. This Facebook page will be a 'public facing' page but the ability to post will be restricted to the moderators of the ASGC Facebook page. Any followers will be able to comment, but only approved moderators will be able to post on the page. Implementing Social Media is a key part of ASGC's communication strategy. There are key goals and strategies, which are relevant to making this a success.

#### Goals:

- Communicate useful and helpful information to ASGC members and community via social media pages
- Engage with health professionals, partners, organisations and community members
- Broadcast relevant news in a timely manner
- Receive feedback and respond appropriately
- Meet expectations of modern organisations and enhance reputation and awareness of ASGC/HGSA

#### Objectives:

- Link followers to information on the ASGC/HGSA website.
- Increase reach of ASGC/HGSA resources and initiatives.
- Link with partners by promoting relevant events and activities e.g. Genetic Counsellor Awareness Day, Rare Diseases Day, and the HGSA Annual Scientific Meeting.
- Link followers to opportunities to participate in community advocacy and policy discussions

#### Who ASGC will follow

ASGC will be selective about whom to follow. The ASGC will primarily, but not exclusively, follow:

- ASGC members
- Key Genetic organisations
- Genetic Experts
- Universities
- Government health bodies and organisations
- Related not for profit organisations
- Organisations with a similar objective to the ASGC and HGSA
- Related genetics pages

Review of who to follow will be ongoing.

#### Promoting Twitter and Facebook

ASGC's Twitter and Facebook profiles will be promoted to others via:

- A link from the ASGC website
- Finding and following relevant Twitter and Facebook users

- Adding the link to the email signatures of the executive
- Participating in #hashtag conversations related to Human Genetics and Genetic Counselling

Responsibility of posts

The Chairperson and Communications Officer of the ASGC will be responsible for posts. Only one person at a time will be posting/monitoring the Twitter and Facebook accounts rotated monthly with others on the executive as necessary. A record of the roster must be kept by the Communications Officer. Others wishing to post during this time will have to liaise with the person designated for that month.

Frequency of posts

ASGC will aim to post relevant information in a timely manner, however, where there is a targeted event or awareness day, more frequent posts may be required.

Content of posts

Posts from ASGC will primarily focus on

- New information: highlighting key articles in peer reviewed journals, key conference and academic presentations
- Key issues: linking media stories to genetics information and resources as they arise
- Events: promoting professional and consumer events in genetics and genomics health and genetic counselling

Nature of responses to posts from the community

ASGC will maintain informative responses when comment is necessary or appropriate. This may be related to events and issues but the position will be as an authority around genetic counselling in Australasia only.

Response to tags on others posts

ASGC will respond to tags on other posts when appropriate using a professional and informative manner.

Negative traffic involved with the ASGC's account

Any complaint mentioned on social media regarding the position of ASGC or HGSA will be recorded as a 'written complaint' and treated in the same way as others aimed at the Society.

ASGC may consider the following when responding to a negative comments:

- Address the comment immediately by investigating internally first
- Be polite and professional in response
- Explain the situation
- Say what we will do and then do it
- Thank the commenter for their feedback
- Know when no response is the best response

The table below identifies risks and provides a response flowchart to be used as a guideline for providing appropriate responses to potentially types of tweets.

(This may be updated in due course to reflect the HGSA genetic counsellor complaints policy, once in effect)

Type of Post	Issue	Response
<b>Appropriate Post</b>	Do you want to Respond? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concur with the post</li> <li>• Let the post stand as it is</li> <li>• Provide additional Information</li> <li>• Provide positive review/appreciation</li> </ul>	ASGC may or may not respond
<b>Inaccurate</b>	Post contains inaccurate information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASGC/HGSA</li> </ul> Or contains media or news questions	ASGC responds with factual information already available and provide links
<b>Low Risk</b>	Post contains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document the incident</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offensive language</li> <li>• Inflammatory statements</li> <li>• ASGC social media accounts mentioned in inappropriate posts/tags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept that there could be some criticism.</li> <li>• Respond to 'themes', not individual replies.</li> <li>• Offer to respond to the concerned party privately via email</li> </ul>
	Not able to answer questions posed by follower/s in timely manner, or on ASGC topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use replies that limit inflammatory debate</li> <li>• Respond to 'themes', not individual replies.</li> <li>• Refer to ASGC/ASGC website.</li> </ul>
	Inappropriate content being published eg out of purview of the HGSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All messages to only relate to ASGC/HGSA activities, priorities, interests.</li> </ul>
<b>High Risk</b>	Post contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate, violent comments</li> <li>• Statements with serious concerns/issues with ASGC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document the incident</li> <li>• Where possible, provide a link to information already publicly available</li> <li>• Consider providing an interim message if more time is required to respond</li> <li>• Refer complaint to the Chairperson for assessment</li> <li>• Offer to respond to the concerned party privately via email</li> </ul>