



**Queensland University of Technology**  
Digital Media Research Centre /  
Centre for Emergency and Disaster Management



# Support Frameworks for the Use of Social Media by Emergency Management Organisations

## Policy Report

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# Executive Summary

## Objective

This policy seeks to improve knowledge sharing across Australian emergency management organisations about the effective uses of social media for crisis communication. It suggests the establishment of a support framework that provides guidance and direction on methods to promote and maintain effective information flows, to meet emergency management organisations' targets in times of crisis, for the benefit of the wider population at national, state and local levels.

## Abstract

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely recognised as playing an increasingly important role in the dissemination of information during crisis events. They are used by emergency management organisations as well as by the public to share information and advice. However, the official use of social media for crisis communication within emergency management organisations is still relatively new and ad hoc, rather than being systematically embedded within or effectively coordinated across agencies. This policy report suggests a more effectively coordinated approach to leverage social media use, involving stronger networking between social media staff within emergency management organisations. This could be realised by establishing a national network of social media practitioners managed by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC), reinforced by a Federal government task force that promotes further policy initiatives in this space.

## Key Recommendations

Our four main recommendations are designed to improve knowledge-sharing across Australian emergency management organisations about the effective uses of social media in crisis communication. These consist of: 1. The development of a national framework for the use of social media in crisis communication; 2. the creation of a national network of social media units; 3. the establishment of a central coordinating office to oversee the network; and 4. the formation of a Federal government task force lobbying for further policy initiatives in this space.

1. **A national framework for the use of social media in crisis communication** will define fundamental strategy, guidelines, standards, principles and practices for using social media in emergencies and disasters. The national framework is offered as a launching point for organisations seeking to adopt best practices for social media use in crises. It utilises a self-assessment checklist, rather than a performance appraisal model, to ensure quality in service provision to the community. Preliminary strategic guidelines are presented for discussion in further detail in Annex E.
2. **A national network of Australian emergency management organisations' social media practitioners** will enable direct engagement between the frontline social media staff in these organisations. Two types of support are proposed here as the first phase of activities by this network: a) offering standardised professional development and training options, and b) establishing a shared web space for the network.
3. **A central coordinating office within the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC)** will oversee the creation and management of the suggested national network. The office will provide advocacy for increased social media use by emergency management organisations, operate a resource centre for social media units in these and related organisations, and document best practice in social media-based crisis communication.
4. **A federal government social media task force**, focusing initially on policy initiatives designed to enhance and regulate the use of social media in crisis communication, will encourage and facilitate the development of innovative and effective approaches to the use of social media by emergency management organisations.

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# Overview

## Name of Policy

*Support Frameworks for the Use of Social Media by Emergency Management Organisations*

## Objective

This policy seeks to improve knowledge sharing across Australian emergency management organisations about the effective uses of social media in crisis communication. It provides guidance and direction on the establishment of frameworks to promote and support effective information flows, to meet emergency management organisations' targets in times of crisis, for the benefit of the wider population in national, state and local levels.

## Background

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely recognised as playing an increasingly important role in the dissemination of information during crisis events, including natural disasters as well as human-made crises (Bruns, 2014; White, 2011). Social media have been crucial tools in recent disasters from the 2011 Queensland floods, Christchurch earthquakes (Bruns & Burgess, 2014), and Japanese earthquake and tsunami (Acar & Muraki, 2011) to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings (Holman, Garfin, & Silver, 2014) and 2015 Nepalese earthquake (Noubel, 2015). They have been used by emergency management organisations as well as by the general public to share information and advice about the current situation on the ground (Brengearth & Mujkic, 2015), and content mined from social media platforms is now being incorporated into the overall event picture by some emergency management organisations (Meier, 2015).

However, emergency management organisations' use of social media remains ad hoc and lacks cross-agency coordination (Newton, 2014). Most Australian emergency management organisations now have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, but for many, their use remains tentative and experimental. Experiences and insights into the effective use of social media for crisis communication are yet to be shared systematically across emergency management organisations; such systematic sharing could facilitate better service responses by maximising social media effectiveness in similar situations. Similarly, tools and techniques for sourcing situationally relevant information from public social media streams have been developed in-house or bought in by some emergency management organisations (Disaster Management and Social Media, 2011), but the expertise developed through their use is locally limited and unevenly distributed.

To address these substantial gaps and inefficiencies in sharing knowledge across Australian emergency management organisations, a more coordinated approach is needed. Coordinating activities for as wide and varied a sector as emergency management requires joint and concerted efforts across state and federal government levels. Therefore, the organisation charged with managing the proposed activities should be an independent national body that serves and regularly communicates with all kinds of emergency management organisations, at all levels. Based on these considerations, we suggest the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) as the body responsible for implementing this policy initiative. As a committee situated under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), ANZEMC is appropriately placed to support and oversee the collaborative, cross-jurisdictional activities proposed here.

## Scope

This policy applies to the internal practice and external interoperability of emergency management organisations' staff and contractors as they relate to public information in times of crisis. It proposes internal procedures and practices that promote knowledge sharing within these sectors to improve the functionality of emergency management organisations, both in acute crises and on an ongoing basis, including:

- developing a *national framework* to set fundamental strategy, guidelines, standards, principles and practices for the use of social media in crisis communication;
- establishing a *national network* of Australian emergency management organisations' social media practitioners, to enable direct engagement between the frontline social media staff in these organisations;
- establishing a *central coordinating office* within the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC), to provide advocacy for increased social media use by emergency management organisations, operate as a resource centre for social media units in these and related organisations, and document best practice in social media-based crisis communication;
- creating a *federal government social media task force*, focusing initially on the use of social media in crisis communication, to encourage and facilitate the development of innovative and effective approaches to the use of social media by emergency management organisations.

# Recommendations

## 1. National Framework for the Use of Social Media in Crisis Communication

At present, social media activities by Australian emergency management organisations are variously situated within existing media and communication units, operated by dedicated social media units, or run ad hoc by enterprising staff members. Disjunctures between outward-facing media and communication units (disseminating information via social media) and inward-facing intelligence units (using social media-sourced information to complement other information sources) also exist. This haphazard and uncoordinated approach to the positioning and use of social media in crisis communication has thus far hindered the effective sharing of knowledge and experience across agencies by those staff who are most directly involved in using social media as part of their day-to-day activities. Staff confidence in adopting and using social media for crisis communication is also affected by the fact that organisational support for such efforts often still depends in part on the personal and professional support provided by specific individuals within the organisation, including their team leaders, line managers, and commissioners, and is thus affected by personnel changes and organisational restructures.

In the first place, it is therefore necessary to provide a strong, sector-wide endorsement for the use of social media in crisis communication by Australian emergency management organisations at all levels of government. The value of social media for such purposes has already been widely documented by scholarly and industry research and professional experience in many organisations. A formal endorsement of the many, largely uncoordinated efforts at using social media for crisis communication by Australian services is also a useful point of departure for a greater synchronisation and standardisation of activities across the sector. Such standardisation must proceed, however, with an awareness of the specific needs of particular services and their constituencies, and must avoid stifling innovation and responsiveness.

We therefore propose the development of a national framework for the use of social media in crisis communication that takes the form of a self-assessment checklist for emergency management organisations, rather than instituting formal performance appraisal procedures managed by ANZEMC or a similar body. A draft sketch of key elements of this checklist is presented for further discussion in Annex E of this document. They include national training criteria for social media staff; standardised policy approaches for emergency management organisations; ethical practices in communicating with the community; use of social media for internal communication; and effective communication across organisations.

Emergency management organisations at all levels of government, as well as other relevant organisations, whose social media units are active contributors to crisis communication efforts (such as local governments, media organisations, service providers, etc.), will be able to assess their current activities against this checklist and use this as a prompt for developing the strategies to enhance their positioning where a need for further improvements has been identified. The guidelines should be regularly reviewed and revised as appropriate, reflecting the constantly changing nature of social media platforms themselves and of their uses in crisis communication.

## 2. National Network of Emergency Management Organisations' Social Media Units

The social media units which now exist in most Australian emergency management organisations still remain poorly connected with each other, and there is only very limited organised sharing of knowledge and best practice across organisational boundaries. To date, where such sharing takes place at all, it takes place at the sidelines of emergency management conferences or through informal personal networks within emergency management organisations. This policy builds on these existing, informal networks by proposing the establishment of a national network of Australian emergency management organisations' social media units and social media practitioners, situated under the umbrella of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee.

ANZEMC has strong links to all levels of government, emergency management organisations, and non-government organisations in the area of disaster mitigation and management; it is therefore very well positioned to facilitate the operation of this network. Participation in the network will be open to representatives of any of these organisations. Participation by social media staff in local government organisations as well as by relevant social media units in media organisations and corporate entities, which play important roles in crisis communication (such as local radio or key service providers), should also be invited. Network activities are designed to be informal and grassroots-focussed, enabling the free and open sharing of first-hand experience amongst various frontline social media practitioners.

The national network will also enhance collaboration and synergies between individual social media units and staff through:

- sharing knowledge about activities, best practice and lessons learnt in social media use;
- facilitating inter-organisational social media staff exchanges and internships across Australian emergency management organisations;
- engaging in shared problem-solving initiatives;
- undertaking further research into social media and emergency communications;
- pooling resources to deliver training and development opportunities for social media staff;
- developing and disseminating state-of-the-art social media policies;
- supporting and advocating for innovation in the use of social media in crisis communication;
- facilitating networking opportunities between emergency management organisations, local government bodies, non-governmental organisations, media organisations, service providers, researchers and research institutes, and other relevant organisations.

These activities are presented in detail below.

## 2.1 Professional development and training options

Professional development and training options address the constant need of social media units and their staff to keep up with technological and social trends in order to maximise staff performance, and to teach and train future staff members with mandatory skills. Four professional development options are suggested here: coursework, mentoring, staff exchange, and professional gatherings.

### 2.1.1 Coursework

The use of social media in emergencies is a relatively new field of practice and study. Consequently, to date, no comprehensive learning programs are offered by professional and higher education institutions to extensively address this area of expertise. Higher education organisations could fill this gap by leveraging relevant knowledge and skills to develop, manage and run academic and professional syllabi for this field of interest.

Coursework could be held in various formats to suit different audiences, including long- and short-term seminars, academic and vocational training, a focus on new and existing staff, onsite and online delivery, and local and national focus. Training topics and formats will be set by the central coordinating office (see below).

Four main areas of study are presented here as the foundation for social media use in crises, and include social media basics, communication skills, communication management, and digital media literacy.

- *Social media basics* – this topic will cover the definition of social media, and review recent developments in social media, different social media platforms, and best practices in social media use.
- *Communication skills for social media* – these hands-on courses improve communication practice in social media. Among suggested subjects are effective two-way interactive communication, community engagement, storytelling, writing, photos and videos, and creating effective, appropriate and responsible content in emergency management contexts.
- *Communication management* – although content creation is at the heart of social media, proficiency in complementary topics is crucial for effective and successful performance in this field, including an understanding of organisational norms, communication strategies, message consistency, content moderation, dealing with criticism, and crowdsourcing information. Basic knowledge in marketing strategies is also required to maximise content visibility for the benefit of the emergency management organisation. Relevant marketing courses include public relations, crisis and issues management and brand awareness.

- *Digital media literacy* – Social media activity strongly depends on the effective use of online platforms. To improve productivity, staff would professionally benefit from learning basic technological concepts and skills, including familiarity with telecommunication and internet-technology basics, graphic design (including photo and video editing), monitoring tools, and social media engagement metrics and analytics.

### **2.1.2 Mentoring**

Mentoring provides a hands-on approach to improving the performance of social media units. Ongoing visits by nominated mentors could provide onsite support in real-life situations. Onsite visits will allow adjustment of support to suit specific organisations and individuals and their particular circumstances. Mentors could include professionals from academia, leading staff from other emergency management organisations, or professional social media experts. Face-to-face visits could include hands-on training, simulations, discussions, and performance reviews. Mentoring could also continue online, in between visits. Mentors' reports on supervised staff could be converted into case studies and best practices for future reference by wider audiences.

### **2.1.3 Staff exchanges**

Staff exchange opportunities between emergency management organisations enable staff to learn new strategies and tactics for social media engagement, and promotes knowledge sharing. Hosted staff could document and publish their insights and reflections from their exchange experience for the benefit of the wider national social media network. Staff exchanges could be facilitated especially between similar organisations (e.g. from one fire service to another), but exchanges across service categories (e.g. from police to state emergency management organisations) could also foster more effective cooperation and better informal networks between services.

### **2.1.4 Gatherings**

Professional gatherings are an effective additional method to provide social media units with professional support in an informal atmosphere:

- *Annual gatherings* – to facilitate knowledge-sharing between professionals within various organisations, including emergency management organisations, media, academia, local governments and additional stakeholders. Different activities could be conducted in such gatherings, including: presentations, workshops, panels, posters and informal networking;
- *Discussion groups* – to communicate regularly (online or offline) and discuss topics of shared interest. It is important that content created within discussion groups is also available to the wider social media network.

- *Focus groups* – to gain periodic feedback and insights from social media staff on the functionality of the network and on ways to improve its performance. Such encounters could be recorded and analysed, also for research purposes.

## 2.2 Network Website

A website should be developed to support social media units in ongoing activities, training and networking. It will provide a central location for different types of information and interactions, including: news, learning resources (online courses, case studies, publications, website links), career opportunities, blogs, discussion groups, chat options, and invitations to offline events and training activities.

In order to maintain a sustainable, vibrant and up-to-date website, national network members are expected to consistently contribute content. This activity should be recognised in their organisational role definitions and acknowledged in their workloads. In addition, dedicated personnel will be appointed by ANZEMC to manage the platform.

### **3. Central Coordinating Office within ANZEMC**

In order to manage ongoing activities in the suggested network, this policy proposes the establishment of a central office within ANZEMC. The office will actively oversee and coordinate the strategic development of social media capabilities across Australian emergency management organisations and related organisations, leading eventually to the establishment of a National Resource and Advisory Centre in the area. The office will carry out:

- reviews of current social media policies within emergency management organisations, with the aim to harmonise approaches and enhance compatibility across agencies;
- research into and monitoring of best-practice social media policy and use, both nationally and internationally, in order to provide a benchmark for Australian emergency management organisations' social media activities;
- federal, state, and local government-level advocacy for the further development of social media strategies in crisis communication, and guidance where social media policies remain ill-defined; and
- the establishment of a sector-wide National Resource and Advisory Centre, which collects information on the state of the art in crisis communication through social media and engages in targeted research and development activities.

#### **3.1 National Resource and Advisory Centre**

Operated by the central coordinating office, the National Resource and Advisory Centre also has the remit to form special interest groups as they relate to specific issues and aspects of social media use in emergency management organisations. Such groups may address:

- 'skunkworks': experimental technological development activities to provide enhanced social media communication and monitoring systems which can be deployed across the sector, enhancing interoperability;
- standardised policies and strategies for social media use during acute crisis events, and during day-to-day operation;
- conceptual and technical approaches to the gathering and verification of intelligence from ordinary social media users;
- enhanced workforce recruitment and training programmes for social media units.

Each group would be responsible for identifying common issues in their practice area, agreeing on a shared position, with subsequent research, discussion papers, policies, guidelines and/or standards being developed where applicable.

Centre membership will be available, via invitation, to any police, fire or emergency management agency of a federal, state or territory government in Australia. The Centre will also provide associate membership to local government bodies and relevant media organisations, NGOs, service providers, and other relevant organisations that have a stake in social media and crisis communication.

## **4. Government Social Media Task Force (GSMTF)**

In addition to these activities within and across emergency management organisations, this policy proposes the creation of a corresponding task force at Federal government level. Building on the earlier, bipartisan Government 2.0 Task Force, which in 2009 explored the opportunities now available to government agencies from emerging web platforms and technologies, this Government Social Media Task Force focusses specifically on the opportunities arising for governments from the widespread use of social media within contemporary Australian society.

The overall aims of the GSMTF could extend well beyond the area of emergency management, addressing the uses of social media in government in general; however, as an already well-established area within which there is a clear and urgent need for further advances in policy and practice, crisis communication through social media provides an obvious starting-point.

Situated within PM&C or another appropriate government department, the GSMTF would seek to develop clear and up-to-date frameworks and guidelines for the use of social media in crisis communication by federal agencies. It will advocate strongly for the adoption of such guidelines at state and local levels, in order to create a unified and effective policy environment for the social media units of Australian emergency management organisations. Through targeted support for further research and development of tools and approaches, and through the identification and support of existing and emerging leaders in the use of social media for crisis communication, the Task Force would encourage the further enhancement of social media activities by emergency management organisations at all levels of government. This will enable Australia to play a leading role in the effective deployment of social media for crisis communication worldwide.

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## Annex A: About the Authors



**Terry Flew** is Professor of Media and Communications at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of *The Creative Industries, Culture and Policy* (Sage, 2012), *Global Creative Industries* (Polity, 2013), *New Media: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2014) and co-author of *Media Economics* (Palgrave, 2015). He is the author of 42 book chapters and 76 refereed journal articles, and the founding editor of *Communication Research and Practice*. He is a member of the Australian Research Council (ARC) College of Experts for Humanities and Creative Arts, and in 2011-12 he worked for the Australian Law Reform Commission, chairing a review of the National Classification Scheme. He is an International Communications Association (ICA) Executive Board member, and chairs the Global Communication and Social Change Division.



**Axel Bruns** is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow and Professor in the Digital Media Research Centre at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life and Beyond: From Production to Prodisage* (2008) and *Gatewatching: Collaborative Online News Production* (2005), and a co-editor of *Twitter and Society* (2014), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (2012) and *Uses of Blogs* (2006). His current work focusses on the study of user participation in social media spaces such as *Twitter*, and its implications for our understanding of the contemporary public sphere, drawing especially on innovative new methods for analysing 'big social data'. See <http://mappingonlinepublics.net/> for more details on his research into social media.



**Jean Burgess** is Director of the QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC) and Professor of Digital Media in the Creative Industries Faculty. She is an expert in digital media, with a focus on the everyday uses and politics of social and mobile media platforms, as well as new digital methods for studying them. She was awarded an Australian Research Council (ARC) Postdoctoral Fellowship for the ARC Discovery Project 'New Media and Public Communication' (2010-2013) and is a Chief Investigator on the ARC Linkage Projects 'Digital Storytelling and Co-Creative Media' (2011-2014) and 'Social Media in Times of Crisis' (2012-2015). Her books are *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Polity Press, 2009), *Studying Mobile Media: Cultural Technologies, Mobile Communication, and the iPhone* (Routledge, 2012), *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), and *Twitter and Society* (Peter Lang, 2014). Jean has worked with a large number of government, industry and community-based organisations, helping them address the practical opportunities and challenges of social and participatory media, and collaborates widely with international research partners. In 2013 she spent four months as a Visiting Researcher at Microsoft Research New England's Social Media Collective.



**Orit Ben-Harush** is a QUT Creative Industries researcher currently involved in a research project of social media in times of crisis. Her main research interests are social networks, real and virtual communities, social impact of the internet, development of online and mobile tools and apps for research purposes. In 2013-4 Orit conducted a postdoctoral research as part of the LINKS excellence center at Ben-Gurion University, Israel. Previous to her PhD studies, Orit has been employed in telecommunication companies in marketing positions as well as in internet research projects. For further details: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/oritb>.



**Emma Potter** is a PhD candidate in the QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC). She graduated from the University of Canterbury (Christchurch, New Zealand) with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Media & Communication and Political Science. Her PhD research investigates the use of social media platforms in emergency management organisations and involves an ethnographic study of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), observing and participating in their use of social media.



**Judith Newton** has had an extensive career in emergency services, working in the areas of policy, community education and research for the former Department of Community Safety and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. Since 2013, Judith is a Research Associate at QUT on the Australian Research Council Linkage project “Social Media in Times of Crisis” and in July 2013 commenced her Master of Arts (Research) to examine how social media is positioned and utilised in Australian Emergency Management Organisations and Local Governments.

## Annex B: QUT Digital Media Research Centre

The QUT Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC) conducts world-leading research that helps society understand and adapt to the changing digital media environment. It is a leading Australian centre for media and communication research, areas in which QUT has achieved the highest possible rankings in ERA, the national research quality assessment exercise. We also work actively with researchers in law, economics and education across a number of problem-focused research programs. Our projects cover the challenges of digital media for journalism, public communication and democracy; the dynamics and regulatory challenges of emerging digital media economies; and the embedding of digital media technologies into the practices of everyday life. The DMRC has a particular focus on innovative digital methods for social and cultural research, including the analysis of 'big social data'; is actively engaged with the Asian region; and has a strong commitment to research training for academic and industry researchers alike.

### Aims and objectives

We aim to: 1. generate significant new findings and be a leader in methodological innovation; 2. provide a vibrant, welcoming research environment for research students and research partners; 3. facilitate further collaboration with other research and industry partners - locally, nationally, and internationally.

### Who are we?

The DMRC is based in the Creative Industries Faculty at QUT, with collaborators in the law, science and engineering, education, and business faculties. It involves a core group of chief investigators, a broader community of centre members and associated researchers, and a vibrant and high achieving community of research students.

For further details see: <http://www.qut.edu.au/research/dmrc>

# Annex C: QUT Centre for Emergency and Disaster Management

The QUT Centre for Emergency and Disaster Management (CEDM) coordinates and conducts interdisciplinary research to understand and reduce the impacts of emergencies and disasters on health, community and infrastructure.

The centre fosters interdisciplinary collaboration between QUT researchers and our industry and research partners, and promotes the field of emergency and disaster management research as an emerging, selective area of research concentration and strength at QUT.

## Research

Our research is organised into three integrated programs: health, community and infrastructure.

## Leadership

The centre is managed by Professor Gerry FitzGerald, who is supported by an executive team with members from each QUT faculty, and by an advisory board consisting of senior industry and academic representation. Researchers and practitioners are affiliated with the centre as fellows in addition to a number of research students.

## Study

The centre also provides a variety of study opportunities including research training, postgraduate and undergraduate coursework options, and professional development and customised education.

For further details see: <http://www.qut.edu.au/research/cedm>

## Annex D: Eidos Institute

Eidos is a network of partners dedicated to developing ideas through collaboration to improve economic and social outcomes in the public interest. It works by applying shared intelligence to public policy challenges and building partnerships between universities, governments, businesses and other social partners.

Eidos has been described as a public policy think tank encouraging the use of evidence and research expertise in public policy.

### What we do

Eidos is grounded in the expertise and disciplines of university research. It works across a wide range of partners and locations by developing projects which enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise and encourage new ways of solving major public policy challenges.

Eidos's long term goal is to encourage collaborative solutions to major public policy challenges through the application of shared intelligence, evidence and research expertise.

It achieves this goal by connecting together its unique network of university members with a wider community of policymaking and partner organisations and developing projects and tools which apply their distributed expertise to concrete public policy challenges.

For further details see: <http://www.eidos.org.au/>

# Annex E: Towards a National Framework for the Use of Social Media in Crisis Communication

To promote awareness and establish guidelines for improving social media use in crisis situations within emergency management organisations across Australia, we propose the development of standards that will serve as a launching point for organisations seeking to adopt best-practice approaches. Preliminary guidelines that require further expansion include:

1. **National training criteria:** Social media units in emergency management organisations are trained according to a set of national criteria registered with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), to ensure a consistent level of quality in service provision by social media units across different service categories and jurisdictions in Australia.
2. **Standardised policy approaches:** Standardised social media policy approaches, reviewed and aligned according to conventions and guidelines determined by the sector, are adopted across emergency management organisations in order to promote excellence and best practice. This standardisation provides uniform support to social media units to ensure mutual compatibility without inhibiting innovation and responsiveness.
3. **Ethical practice in communicating with the community:** During acute crises as well as in their day-to-day conduct, social media units engage in behaviour that builds trust in the community. They aim to build long-term engagement and partnerships to establish themselves as trusted sources of information.
4. **Use of social media for internal communication:** Emergency management organisations embed and model the use of social media in their day-to-day communication activities as appropriate to ensure that there are clear lines of communication, responsible behaviour and ethical practice at all times.
5. **Effective communication across organisations:** Social media units share best practice in using social media across the sector on an ongoing basis, both online (via websites and social networks) and offline (in meetings and conferences).

