

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12  
15 February 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Social Media

**REFERENCE:** Bushby

**QUESTION No.:** AI-234

Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since publication of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issue. If no, please explain why not.

**ANSWER**

**Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education**

There has been no change to social media access and usage protocols within the department following the release of the APSC circular. The circular closely aligns with the department's existing policies for governing the use of social media. The department will incorporate any additional guidance into its social media policies in due course.

**Australian Research Council**

There has been no change to the social media access and usage protocols for staff at the ARC.

The ARC's Social Media Policy, finalised in September 2011, is assessed as sufficiently outlining the general requirements for official, professional and personal use of social media.

**IP Australia**

IP Australia's Electronic Media Use Policy was updated to include more specific information relating to staff responsibilities when commenting in a personal capacity on public issues, including contributing to online discussion and debate. This update was made to reflect the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online.

The new sections of the policy are:

- 1.1.3 Personnel are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour when using electronic media as would be expected in a physical environment. This includes upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of IP Australia and the Australian Public Service (APS) both in and outside of work.

- 4.1.11 Personnel are entitled, as citizens, to comment in a personal capacity on public issues, including contributing to online discussion and debate. Personnel should remember however that they must avoid communications which could:
- a) disclose any official information which you are not specifically authorised to disclose;
  - b) be interpreted as an official statement on behalf of IP Australia (unless you are authorised to make such statements);
  - c) compromise perceptions of your ability to do your job in an unbiased and professional manner;
  - d) misrepresent your role or your position within IP Australia; or
  - e) bring IP Australia or the APS into disrepute.
- 4.1.12 Be aware that if you publish inappropriate comments in your personal capacity and in your own time that reflect badly on IP Australia or the APS, that disciplinary action could follow. This includes publications on social media sites.
- 4.1.13 Personnel who hold senior positions or who work in politically sensitive areas need to be particularly mindful of whether any personal communications they make could be misunderstood as expressing the positions or opinions of IP Australia or the Australian Government, simply by virtue of their position. If in doubt, consult your General Manager or the Director, Marketing & Customer Engagement.

Please note – as this information is as at 29 February 2012 this does not include Outcome 3 and associated Agencies transferring from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations due to the recent Machinery of Government.