

ANS Policies and Procedures

ANS Media and Communications Policy

Purpose

This document describes the policy and procedures for operating the Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) media and communications platforms, which include the ANS Website, Newsletters, Email, Traditional Media Relationships and Social Media.

Scope

The policy applies to all ANS members when engaging media as a form of communication in any of the following circumstances:

- While you are performing work or study for the ANS, regardless of where it is performed; or
- When you utilise the information dissemination systems developed by the ANS for communication between members and staff, even if you are engaged in personal use; or
- When you convey information about the ANS and its members regardless of where or what communication platform is used

Background

The ANS acknowledges the influence of its members in shaping the views of the public, research community and industrial sector, through their use of traditional and modern media and communications. The ANS understands the importance of this influence in shaping thinking about the discourse and direction of the society itself, including the research conducted by its members. We are therefore committed to appropriate use of both traditional, such as newspapers, and social media.

Policy Statement

1. Media platforms

1.1. The ANS Website

1.1.1. The ANS website is a primary mode of communication with members and non-member groups, such as related profes-

sional groups, funding bodies, the government and the lay community. All website content is considered to reflect the views of the Society and therefore must be in accordance with the values of ANS (refer to Strategic Plan).

1.1.2. Webpage updates may be made by the Secretary or another approved person, such as the Secretariat or another member awarded special responsibility for a specific section of the website, such as ACAN or the ABBC. All non-member-generated advertising material must be approved by the Secretary prior to posting on the webpage.

1.1.3. The webpage may contain promotion materials for ANS Corporate member bodies and, at the Secretary's discretion, non-ANS-generated content, such as relevant automatic newsfeeds.

1.1.4. Society documents of general interest for the community, such as the newsletters, may be made available in an open access manner to both members and the public via the website.

1.1.5. Archived documents, such as AGM Minutes, annual Financial reports and approved Policies, should be made available to members only via a restricted "members only" portion of the website.

1.1.6. The webpage may also be used to allow membership applications and renewals and to organise and promote the annual conference.

1.2. Newsletters

1.2.1. ANS newsletters are a primary mode of communication with members, and with selected non-members who agree to receive these, such as ANS Patrons.

1.2.2. Newsletters are published four times a year, and are emailed to members by the

Secretariat and also placed on the website and social media platforms.

1.2.3. The newsletter is used to advertise calls for nominations for ANS Council, ANS awards, annual meeting Plenary lecturer nominations and symposia, proposed changes to the ANS Constitution and other matters of interest to all members.

1.2.4. Newsletter drafts must be approved by the Secretary before release.

1.3. Email

1.3.1. The ANS aims to reduce bulk emails to the membership as much as possible, therefore emails to all members should be restricted to content which is considered to be of interest to all, or a large majority, of members, but cannot be suitably advertised via the newsletter and/or webpage. Examples of suitable content for bulk email include advising of upcoming event of interest to all members, such as the annual meeting, advising of upcoming membership renewals, promote nominations for the annual conference.

1.3.2. Newsletter drafts must be approved by the Secretary before release to the membership.

1.4. External Traditional Media Relationships

1.4.1. The ANS members may interact with traditional media platforms, such as newspapers, as a representative of the Society.

1.4.2. Any commentary or information should only be in relation to your professional work or study and must be in clear accordance with ANS's values (outlined in the Strategic Plan).

1.4.3. The ANS Members must refrain from providing comment or information beyond their immediate area of responsibility and/or expertise. Permission must be requested from the Secretary to provide broader information about the ANS.

1.5. Social Media Activity

1.5.1. Social media officers and/or members posting on a social media platform which makes reference to the ANS must identify

they are connected to the Society, but that the views expressed are their own and do not necessarily represents the views of the Society.

1.5.2. Any commentary or information should only be in relation to your professional work or study and must be in clear accordance with ANS's values (outlined in the Strategic Plan).

1.5.3. Social media officers and/or members must refrain from providing comment or information beyond their immediate area of responsibility and/or expertise. Permission must be requested from the Secretary to provide broader information about the ANS.

1.5.4. Social media activities include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites: Facebook, LinkedIn, Yammer
- Video and photo sharing sites: Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest
- Micro-blogging sites: Twitter
- Weblogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs and on-line media blogs/ publications
- Interaction with wikis and on-line collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Forums and discussion boards: Whirlpool, Reddit, The Conversation, Yahoo or Google groups
- Any other web sites that allow individual users to publish content

2. Media Operation

2.1.1. Media associated with the annual conference is managed by the Professional Conference Organiser and Secretariat under the direction of the Council Executive. This is the particular responsibility of the Conference Executive Chair.

2.1.2. Social media platforms operated by the ANS Student Body Committee (SBC) aim to encourage student participation and networking, promoting the Society, its activities and neuroscience in general. Administrator access to social media accounts is held by the SBC executive, and may be shared with other members who belong to the social media subcommittee within the SBC. All activity and content shared on the

social media platform operated by the SBC must be in accordance with the policies and guidelines stated in this document.

3. Media and Communication Platforms Guidelines Governing Conduct

3.1. Confidential Information

- 3.1.1. Members are not to share or divulge any information that is confidential to or within the society. This includes, but is not limited to, information about non-published research, trademarks, commercial agreements, contractual arrangements, or finances.
- 3.1.2. Members of the Society must seek advice from the ANS Secretary before releasing information which could potentially harm the society.

3.2. Respect and Privacy

- 3.2.1. All members are encouraged to write knowledgeably, accurately and to use appropriate professionalism on the Society's media platforms.
- 3.2.2. Media users and operators must not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, explicit, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful.
- 3.2.3. Media users and operators must not use or disclose of any confidential secure information, make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the society's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- 3.2.4. The privacy and rights of the Society's members and staff must be honoured by seeking their permission before writing about, or displaying any material or images of them that might be considered to be either disrespectful, or a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.

3.3. Cyberbullying

- 3.3.1. Cyber-bullying is described as information displayed in technologies, described in

Paragraph 1.5.4.) that support the deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour towards another member of the Society or staff member that intends to harm or defame them.

- 3.3.2. Cyberbullying is never acceptable and may result in membership termination if claims of cyberbullying are substantiated.

3.4. Consequences of Policy Breaches

- 3.4.1. A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, which includes non-refundable cancellation of society membership.
- 3.4.2. The society may request that you delete any information contained on any media platform that is in breach of this policy.
- 3.4.3. The society may also request you restrict your access to social media and refrain from making comment on any affiliated page of the ANS if you do not adhere to the policy, or whilst an investigation occurs to determine if you have breached the policy.
- 3.4.4. Staff and members must recognise that they may be legally liable for anything they write or present in social media and that they can be disciplined for commentary, content, or images which are defamatory, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or which can create hostility in the workplace.
- 3.4.5. They can also be sued by other individuals and any other group or company who views your comments, content or images as being defamatory or untrue. Note that any comments made on a social media site are permanent; even after deleting the content, it cannot be guaranteed that copies have not been kept by other sources.

Related Material

- ANS Strategic Plan

Version Information

- Approved ANS Council Meeting 3 December 2018.
- Approved ANS Council Meeting 19 June 2020.

