



Howe Island Ratepayers – Editorial Policies

“Dedicated to the preservation and improvement of Howe Island, our quality of life and our public services.”

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure consistent content and clarify website user's rights and responsibilities. The focus is mutual respect and improvement of local communication. Subscribers (see section 3.1) are empowered to post articles and photos. You are encouraged to propose changes and additions by sending your suggestions to info@howeisland.org.

2.0 Frequency of Changes / Additions to this Site

Site visits increase within a day or two of new content. The most popular items are transportation news, council minutes, photos and local events. Postings to the site are encouraged. Updates should be spaced to avoid too many 'new content notification' emails being received.

3.0 Site Access

Most areas of the site can be viewed by anyone. 'Subscribers' can be notified of new content, see additional content inside the site and may be able to contribute content. A subscriber is someone who meets all of the following conditions:

- is a member of The Howe Island Ratepayers Association 'HIRA', local politics, or the media (there is also provision for island special interest groups, non-residents and temporary 'guests'), AND
- has clicked on 'Create an Account' on the main page and set up a login, AND
- has been validated and given access to groups and categories on the site by one of the HIRA Website Administrators, AND
- wishes to make a positive contribution to our community

3.1 Subscriber Groups

There are currently seven subscriber Groups for the HIRA website. Subscribers can be given additional access and options depending on the group that they are assigned to. All subscribers can set personal preferences such as notification of new articles. The Groups are:

1. HIRA Administrators

2. HIRA Executive

Members of the HIRA executive. **Global read/post access.**

3. HIRA Members

Howe Island residents who are members of HIRA and are over 18 years of age. These users have **Read and Post Access** to most areas and **Read Access** to 'Special Interest Group' areas of the site. **Posting access is conditionally provided when the user logs in with his/her valid login thereby indicating acceptance of the AUP conditions and enforcement provisions in this policy document.**

4. HIRA Member Friends and Relatives

Anyone who is over 18 years of age, not yet a member of HIRA, AND a resident of Howe Island, OR a relative or confirmed friend of a Howe Island resident.

Government and Media

Same as HIRA Members, but members of government or the media. "Government and media certainly should have **Read and Post Access** to the site as long as they understand that interventions must be fact based and the site is not to be used to lobby a particular point of view" March 5, 2007...HIRA Executive

5. Special Interest Group Members

Space is set aside for members of Howe Island-based special interest and volunteer groups like the Garden Buds, Howe Island Computer Interest Group, Howe Island Fire and Rescue and St. Philomena's. These users have **Post Access** to the group area. They also have **Post Access** to other areas of the HIRA site if they are or become a member of HIRA.

6. Guests

Anyone who is not yet a member of HIRA.

To learn more about this site and benefits of becoming a member of the Howe Island Ratepayers Association please email HIRA at info@howeisland.org.

4.0 Scope of Contents

Content is typically news, photos, events and other content of **general Howe Island interest** to a majority of the users and separated into three key areas:

- HIRA-authored communications. External communications in a time of urgency would allow the Chair and Vice Chair to speak on behalf of the HIRA without consultation with the board. Any other time, written or verbal communications would be reviewed by the board for approval.
- Community at large communication (community news)
- Howe-island-based special interest groups.

Contents include, but are not limited to:

- **HIRA Activities, meeting dates, meeting agendas and meeting minutes**
- Island and Gananoque Calendar of Events
- Island Services
- Island Photos
- Island News
- Council and County Minutes
- Parish Bulletin items of general interest
- Balanced, neutral reporting of Island Public and Transportation News
- Island History with links to local historical websites
- Local recipes
- Opinion polls on items of public interest. Election candidate polls of Howe Island residents are prohibited.
- Political Discussions. This site may be used to introduce government staff, council members, election candidates and issues. HIRA does not and will not show any political bias.

Contents not allowed and that will be removed include, but are not limited to:

- Material that violates the “**Responsibilities - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**” section of this document.
- Issues between neighbors that have no potential to affect the general Howe Island population
- Paid Advertising, ‘Buy and Sell’, Lost and Found, Auctions

4.1 HIRA Site Main Page Purpose, Content and Security

4.1.1 Purpose

The main page:

- presents HIRA's image and communications to the general public,
- introduces our island character through the header images
- provides real-time island calendar, weather and media news via RSS links.
- serves as a convenient hub, containing links to key local sites of interest to Howe Islanders
- captures visitor counts and locations
- contains a Login area welcoming visitors and including a link to Acceptable Use.
- contains a menu that expands to restricted areas inside the site depending on the login name

4.1.2 Main Page Content Guidelines

Not-Logged In (Unrestricted) Postings

Editorial Rule: Prior to login, the main page will only display postings by the HIRA Executive and Executive Committees. Multiple postings regarding same topic on the unrestricted main page are to be avoided so that important information is not overlooked. Sidebar, header and footer content may be created or changed by Administrators provided that it meets the requirements of this policy document. HIRA branding-related items such as the HIRA logo and main page title font and style may not be changed without full executive approval. Main page layout and control:

Header		
Sidebar	Active Content (Executive postings only prior to login)	Sidebar
Footer		

Logged-in (Restricted) Postings

Additional Restricted recent photos and postings that have the 'Bubble Up' posting option selected, appear depending on categories subscribed to for the Group that the user belongs to.

4.1.3 Main Page Security

Security is provided by Category and User Permissions features accessed by the HIRA Site Administrators.

Menu

The menu lists all categories that are subscribed to by the logged in user as determined by the Group that the user has been added to by an Administrator. Unrestricted categories are listed prior to login.

Enforcement

One or more HIRA Site Administrators visit this site daily. Executive is also encouraged to make routine visits to at least the main page of the site. Report violations of this policy immediately to an Administrator via his/her email and info@howeisland.org.

5.0 HIRA Website Continuity

DomainDirect.com hosts the HIRA website. The Administrator maintains the website content and user list offline in the event that the site needs to be reconstructed. To remain active, HIRA renews the site annually. The current administrators are Robert Hall and Gerry Ross. There must be multiple Administrators for redundancy. Administrator functions include, resetting user passwords, setting up new users on the site and adjusting site appearance.

6.0 Features of this Site

- HIRA page (<http://howeisland.org>)
- User pages accessed by login
- User types are defined by Group
- Shared Calendar
- Photo upload/download for users granted posting rights (photos can be grouped into albums). ***Please upload photos in max 1024x768 or 'web quality' to conserve space and maintain high view speed for dialup users.***
- News
- Support of RSS for unattended content updates (eg: Newspaper feeds).
- Polls
- Ability to immediately write replies to postings (dependent on group access provided during login)
- Automatic notification to your email of any new postings or replies (see "Automatic Notification Setup" procedure)
- Global access over the internet for travelling residents to keep in touch with the island.

7.0 Administration

This is a shared site. *The goal is to encourage each user to contribute to content.* Selected groups of users are empowered to contribute content. The role of the administrator is primarily password reset, login rights setting, public page design and general site maintenance and assisting the host with Acceptable Use Policy AUP compliance. Content Deletion and/or Archival.

Items are deleted to save space or because they might no longer be of interest (eg: a meeting announcement).

Notification will usually be given in advance of any housekeeping so that users have the opportunity to download prior to deletion. The Administrator reserves the right to remove offending comments that may be perceived as libelous or contravening the Criminal Code and to rescind use of the Website (Responsibilities – Acceptable Use Policy).

8.0 Responsibilities - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Selected groups of users are empowered to post directly to this site and are encouraged to do so to maintain readership so it is important that all users understand this AUP.

Users agree to the host and HIRA's Acceptable Use Policy.

This is a 'not for profit' site. At no cost, there is a clearing house section on the site that lists island services and tradespersons known within our neighborhood.

Postings on this group site are the personal opinions and submissions of the various users. Offensive or otherwise inappropriate material will be removed by the Administrator(s).

Disclaimer

Disclaimer: Each user is solely responsible for his/her input and that it complies with the Host's Terms and Conditions and HIRA's AUP and this document. Non-compliant material will be deleted. No liability is implied, offered or assumed by the sponsor, any user or other participant. If you find offense or error with any item, please forward your concern to the [Administrator](#).

I will distinguish between factual information/commentary and advertising
 I will never publish information I know to be inaccurate
 I will not reprint or distribute items without permission of the author. * See also "[Deep Linking](#)" below.
 I will disagree with other opinions respectfully
 I will strive for high quality with every post - including basic spellchecking
 I will write deliberately and with accuracy
 I will reply to emails and comments when appropriate, and do so promptly
 I will not distribute or use other users email addresses outside of this group without his/her permission.
 I will restrict my posting to community topics and not engage in [gossip](#).
 Gossip is defined as information or rumors of a personal or trivial nature not affecting the wider community, often inaccurate and frequently hurtful to an individual. It carries with it a high risk of introduction of errors. It will not be tolerated on this site.

Enforcement: To protect all users, any major concerns will first be addressed by a warning from the Administrator, then loss of use of the site if the situation is repeated.

Deep Linking: It is permissible to provide a link to home pages and information about how to find pertinent information within a web site. However, deep linking, or providing a link to a page deep within a non-government database or web site is not recommended without permission from the sites webmaster. It is not allowed if that website specifically forbids the practice in their AUP. Rules regarding this area of copyright and intellectual property law are unclear.

9.0 Security

Access to this site is by login. Only validated, logged-in users can see restricted areas of the site. To help control content, please do not share your password.

9.1 Use a Strong Password... help protect your privacy

We recommend that you use a [strong password](#) for any work that you might do over the Internet. Strong passwords contain a minimum of 8 characters made up of numbers, letters and symbols.

9.2 User Profiles

The site comes with a user profile feature that lets you share your contact information with others. By default, the privacy setting is set to 'Public' meaning that anyone can see the information that you enter on that profile line when you create your account. You can change this setting to 'Friends Only' or 'Private' at any time to limit access using the drop down box.

Revision Record

January 2007	Initial Release
March 2007	Updated levels of membership to include politicians, and media. Updated material not allowed on site per direction from HIRA Executive.
March 26, 2007	Numbered sections to make it easier to locate changes. Section 3.0 "Users – Restricted Access Site" was "Users – Public Site". Following text revised accordingly. Section 3.2 previously read: "Howe Island residents who are members of HIRA and are over 18 years of age. These users have Read Access to all areas of the site and can request Posting rights to the 'HIRA Ratepayers Forum' and 'Special Interest Group' areas of the site. <u>Posting access is restricted to users who agree to this policy and are approved by the HIRA board of directors. To request posting rights please indicate your acceptance on the AUP section of this policy in an email to info@howisland.org.</u> "
April 3, 2007	Section 3.3 "HIRA Member Friends and Relatives" was "Friends of the Island". Clarified that members of this group had to be confirmed friends or relatives of Howe Island residents. Also set this group to 'Read-only'. Membership into HIRA upgrades privileges to 'Read and Post'.
April 13, 2007	Section 10.1. Added additional causes of 'Authentication Failure' message. Added 10.1.2 requiring account applicants to also send an email to info@howeisland.org to introduce themselves so that they can be set up with the appropriate site access rights.
April 24, 2007	Section 10.1: Added: "Administrators may not add subscribers to this site from the HIRA membership list without the approval of the member."
April 24, 2007	Section 3.0 previously read: "Users who are not logged in can only see the Main page and 'About HIRA' categories." Clarified wording to make it clear that the main page containing HIRA communications could be seen by anybody.
April 24, 2007	Section 10.1: Added 'Lost Password' note.
November 5, 2007	Section 2.0. Removed limitation of updates 'every week or so'. Section 4.0 Added note that front page prior to login reserved for HIRA-specific content. Added mention of Special Interest Groups. Added security additional sections 9.1 and 9.2. Added condemnation of Gossip in section 8.0 (AUP).
November 9, 2007	Revised Section 3 to clarify site access of Special Interest Group Members Added Section 4.1
December 22, 2007	Added a tile for Section 3.1 "Who Can Enter this Site (Subscriber Groups)" Renamed to 'Editorial Policies'. Removed Procedures to shorten document. They will be in separate 'Howto' documents. Section 4.1.2. Clarified main page content guidelines to allow Administrators to have some creative freedom within the guidelines of this policy document.
October 29, 2008	Sections 4.0. Added expanded text to bullets: "HIRA-specific communications", "Opinion polls", "Political Discussions". Clarification that HIRA-authored postings could only appear under the direction of HIRA executive. Some residents did not want HIRA to produce polls indicating party preference of Howe Islanders.