



Media Release

Monday 22 August 2011

Regulation of News and Comment

In light of an article in today's *Australian*, the Australian Press Council has released a statement concerning its submission to the Convergence Review. The statement is set out below. It was provided earlier this month to the author of the article.

The Council's submission to the Convergence Review will be finalised over the next few weeks and then made public.

Council Submission to the Convergence Review

The Press Council submission to the Convergence Review will deal only with regulation of news and comment (not, for example, regulation of advertising or of images relating to sex or violence).

At present, regulation in that area is principally by a government authority (ACMA) for radio and TV, and a non-government council (APC) for print media and associated Internet publications. Media convergence will make it increasingly difficult to operate entirely separate regulatory systems across different media and platforms. This must be taken into account in any rational and forward-looking submission on media regulation in this area.

Accordingly, the Council is considering a draft submission to the Convergence Review suggesting that, over time, the same regulatory system should apply irrespective of the media or platform. The three main options for such a "unified" system are for (a) everything to be done by a government authority, (b) everything to be done by a non-government council, or (c) a division of responsibility between a government authority and non-government council which distinguishes between different aspects of the regulatory tasks rather than being based on which medium or platform is involved.

The submission is unlikely to deal with the question of which option is preferable. It is likely to focus principally on suitable structures and processes for any non-government council which may be involved in the regulatory system. This reflects the Council's focus on strengthening the structures and processes which it applies in its area of responsibility, namely print and Internet publications. It will continue, however, to initiate cooperative activities with ACMA and other bodies in order to learn from each other's experiences.

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