

AUSTRALIAN PRESS COUNCIL

COMPLAINT STATISTICS, JULY TO DECEMBER 2013

SECTION A OVERVIEW OF CASELOAD

Table 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS, COMPLAINANTS AND ISSUES

	July to Dec 2013
New complaints received during year ¹	214
Issues raised in these complaints ²	308
Complainants making these complaints ³	381
Contacts not included above	
- out-of-scope complaints ⁴	51
- inquiries ⁵	185

Notes

1. Where there was more than one complainant about a particular matter, only one complaint is recorded in this total.
2. Two issues will be counted here if, for example, a complaint relates to alleged inaccuracy and breach of privacy. Results for July to December 2013 are not comparable with previous years. See end notes for explanation.
3. In previous Annual Reports, this was the result presented as "complaints received".
4. These are matters which are outside the Council's jurisdiction.
5. For example, seeking information rather than making a complaint.

SECTION B THE COMPLAINANTS

Table 2
TYPE OF COMPLAINANT

For complaints received during year	July-Dec 2013
Individuals	376
Associations, companies and other non-government bodies	3
Government and other public bodies ¹	0
Politicians, councillors, electoral candidates and political parties	0
Other ²	2
Total	381

Notes

1. This includes local councils but, for example, does not include individual councillors or members of parliament.
2. This includes anonymous complaints and anything not otherwise classifiable.

Table 3
LOCATION OF COMPLAINANT

For complaints received during year	July-Dec 2013
New South Wales	240
Victoria	70
Queensland	42
Western Australia	11
South Australia	6
Tasmania	6
Australian Capital Territory	4
Northern Territory	2
Overseas	0
Total	381

SECTION C THE PUBLICATIONS

Table 4
TYPE OF PUBLICATION

For complaints received during year	July-Dec 2013
Newspapers and their digital platforms	
- National	50
- State	105
- Regional and rural	38
- Suburban	0
Magazines and their digital platforms	2
Online-only publications ¹	17
Other	2
Total	214

Note

1. Not including the websites and other digital platforms of print publishers.

Table 5
TYPE OF PLATFORM

For complaints received during year ¹	July-Dec 2013
Online only	36
Print only	60
Print and online	118
Total	214

Note

1. These data relate to the platforms in which the relevant material appeared, not only the platform in which the complainant accessed it.

SECTION D THE OUTCOMES OF COMPLAINTS

Table 6
OUTCOME OF COMPLAINT

For complaints closed during year ¹	July-Dec 2013
Declined by the Council at initial stage	93
Withdrawn or discontinued ²	74
Remedy without adjudication	61
Adjudication	
Complaint fully or partly upheld	17
Complaint not upheld	5
Total	250

Note

1. The numbers in this table relate to the different complaints that were closed during the period, including any which had been opened earlier. The total number is therefore different from the total number of complaints represented in Tables 2 and 3 (number of complainants making complaints during the period) and Tables 4 and 5 (complaints received during the period).
2. Includes complaints withdrawn by the complainant and those discontinued by the complainant or the Council.

Table 7
DETAILS OF REMEDIES

For complaints closed during year ¹	July-Dec 2013
Remedy without adjudication	
Apology (public or private)	5
Retraction, correction or clarification published	17
Material deleted entirely	8
Response by complainant published	3
Other similar action	28
Remedy by adjudication	
Complaint fully or partly upheld and adjudication published	17
Total	78

Note

1. The table provides a breakdown of the remedies recorded in Table 6.

SECTION E THE ISSUES

Table 8
ISSUES RAISED BY COMPLAINT

For issues in complaints received during year	July-Dec 2013
Inaccuracy or misrepresentation	92
Lack of balance	53
Failure to distinguish fact and opinion	16
Unfair or dishonest presentation	39
Unfair or dishonest investigation	6
Intrusion on privacy	31
Gratuitous emphasis or disparagement	23
Other offensive material	34
Other	14
Total	308

Annex to Table 8
Indicative scope of categories of issues
(showing the relevant Council Principles)

Inaccuracy or misrepresentation (General Principles 1 and 2 and part of General Principle 6) (E.g. failure to take reasonable steps to ensure accuracy in texts, quotes, headlines, captions and images; misrepresentation or suppression of facts; failure to correct an inaccuracy; opinion based on false factual claims)
Lack of balance (General Principles 1, 2 and 3 and Privacy Principle 6) (E.g. lack of balance in an article; lack of balance in a series of articles or in a particular publication over time; failure to publish a letter to the editor or other response)
Failure to distinguish between fact and opinion (Part of General Principles 4, 6) (E.g. presenting opinion as fact, or blurring the line between fact and opinion)
Unfair or dishonest presentation (General Principle 1; part of General Principle 6) (E.g. failure to identify reports as rumours or unconfirmed; unfair headlines, captions and images; failure to declare conflict of interest, including commercial interest; advertorial not identified)
Unfair or dishonest investigation (General Principle 5; Privacy Principles 5, 7) (E.g. unfair or dishonest methods of newsgathering (such as deception); breach of confidence; identifying anonymous sources; exploitation of a victim or bereaved person)
Intrusion on privacy (General Principle 4; Statement of Privacy Principles) (E.g. unjustified breach of privacy or failure to take account of sensibilities)
Gratuitous emphasis or disparagement (General Principle 8; Privacy Principle 7) (E.g. gratuitous emphasis on race, religion, nationality, colour, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness or age)
Other offensive material (General Principle 7) (E.g. material (except matters falling under another Principle) that could reasonably be expected to cause offence, especially photographs, illustrations or cartoons)

SECTION F OUTCOMES ON THE ISSUES

Table 9
OUTCOMES ON ISSUES

For issues in complaints closed during year ¹	July-Dec 2013
Declined by the Council at initial stage	129
Withdrawn or discontinued	109
Remedy without adjudication	95
Adjudication	
Complaint fully or partly upheld	26
Complaint not upheld	9
Total	368

Note

1. The numbers in this table relate to the different issues raised in complaints that were closed during the period, including any which had been opened earlier. The total number is therefore different than the total number of issues represented in Table 8 (issues in complaints received during the period).
2. Includes issues withdrawn by the complainant and those discontinued by the complainant or the Council.

Table 10
DETAILS OF REMEDIES ON ISSUES

For issues in complaints closed during year ¹	July-Dec 2013
Remedy without adjudication	
Apology (public or private)	7
Retraction, correction or clarification published	24
Material deleted entirely	16
Response by complainant published	3
Other similar action	45
Remedy by adjudication	
Complaint fully or partly upheld and adjudication published	26
Total	121

Note

1. This table provides a breakdown of the remedies recorded in Table 9.

Notes:

These provisional complaint statistics are issued ahead of a full report on complaints during the year which will be included in the Annual Report 2013-14.

In order to improve the accuracy of reported data, some changes have been made in the categorisation and reporting methods. This means that results may not be directly comparable with previous years. For example, the category of "complaint" has been redefined so that if a number of separate complainants complain about the same article, the number of complaints recorded in the statistics will be only one.

Similarly, the category of "issue" has been redefined so that if a number of separate complainants complain about the same issue in the same article, the number of issues recorded in the statistics will be only one. As the change in the category of "issue" has only been introduced in the 2013-14 reporting year, results are not comparable to 2012-13 and previous years.