There was a time when someone with a story would happily tell it to the media … possibly out of public interest, possibly for the self-satisfaction of seeing themselves in print or on TV. Not any more it seems. These days, when there’s a witness to, or a participant in, a major event, it’s only a short time before there’s talk of how much they’ll get for their story. People want to sell their story. The media are often willing to buy it. The sellers will say the money covers their expenses, hardship etc. The buyers want exclusivity and the promotional value. There’ll be an agent and there’ll be bids and negotiations. The chequebook carries the day, sadly, usually at the expense of good journalism. The driver, of course, is media competition – the very thing that proponents of cross-media ownership regulations want to promote.

There’s a clear commercial advantage in having an exclusive interview with someone like miraculous Thredbo landslide survivor Stuart Diver, for example. If you are the only television network or magazine that has him, people will watch your network or read your magazine. That boosts audience and that, in turn, boosts revenue.

It may be legitimate for Stuart Diver or those like him to make a deal – it keeps the media pack at bay. It’s good for business to have the story. Readers will be interested to read it, and the subject matter isn’t controversial. There’s no need for hard questions, no need to verify facts independently.

But there are great dangers in waving the chequebook around. The obvious risk in some cases is that the story-teller may feel obliged to enhance the story. It also devalues good journalism. Good journalists would surely boast that they got an exclusive story by sheer determination, digging and fact checking. It’s not much of a journalistic boast to say the story was won because “we outbid the rest”. Journalists become less relevant in chequebook journalism.

And there are risks for the story-tellers who sign exclusivity agreements: they may think they’ll get favourable treatment but others can take pot-shots at them in competitive media (the ones who missed out), leaving them unable to defend themselves because of their exclusivity contract.

The Karen Brown case in Sydney didn’t do anyone any favours. Ms Brown was the security guard who shot dead a would-be hold-up man, signed for an interview with a television current affairs program for $100,000. Then was charged with murder; and the payment was frozen. The sequence of events leads to the question: what was the purpose of doing the interview when there was growing speculation she could be charged? And how was it she was able to do the interview, but was not well enough to be interviewed by police at that time? Certainly, the payment would have helped pay for her defence against the charges she must have seen coming.

In this case, it is not a question of whether the interview represented good journalism – though most commentators described it as “soft”. The question is more whether the media allowed themselves to be manipulated into creating an impression in the community before the charges were laid, possibly even influencing the outcome.

Many would question whether the media should have such a role. The courts subsequently ordered the television network to surrender the $100,000 payment to the Public Trustee. Ms Brown had previously responded to outrage at the payment by saying she would decline it. A sorry mess.

Next, the Schapelle Corby case. She is facing drug charges in Bali, and a possible death sentence. A lawyer from her defence team said the 60 Minutes television program would foot the bill for expert witnesses, forensic tests and other services. The network confirmed it was making no payment directly to Ms Corby but was considering assisting with some “services”.

The network confirmed it was making no payment directly to Ms Corby but was considering assisting with some “services”.

The defence lawyer then backtracked and said that there was no deal with 60 Minutes. Another sorry mess that did journalism no favours.

Why a television network would want to get involved before the outcome of a case is not obvious: sure, she may need financial or other assistance and she is innocent until proven guilty. But what if the media involvement influences a false
outcome, say, a guilty person being acquitted because of favourable publicity? And where does it leave the media outlet if she turns out to be guilty? Unfortunately, all this will reflect poorly on journalism.

(Editor's note: In March 2004, a case before the Campbelltown (NSW) District Court saw the first instance in Australia of a trial being aborted because a witness - the major complainant in this case of allegations of inflicting of grievous bodily harm on a child by a parent and step-parent - had been offered an exclusive contract by a media organisation before her testimony and during the trial. The judge did not conclude that the offer had affected the witness's testimony but noted that “the serious problem that such an offer raises is that on the occasion when an honest and truthful complainant comes before the Court to whom such an offer is being made, their credit may be so impugned as to prevent a conviction, when a conviction should occur in the interests of justice”. In the judge’s view “media organisations should refrain … from making any such offer until trial proceedings have concluded.”)

Most recently there was the spectacle of freed Guantanamo Bay detainee Mamdouh Habib and his family being approached for their story as soon as Mr Habib set foot back in Australia. The Federal Government was quick off the mark to declare its opposition to him ‘profiting’ from his story. We now know the deal was done with 60 Minutes. It has been speculated that it was worth $200,000.

There’s no doubt Mr Habib had a story to tell. But how much of the story he was willing to tell or how much a media outlet was willing to investigate his story remains unclear.

Mr Habib’s lawyer, Stephen Hopper, said before the deal was announced that the family was concerned that the chosen media outlet “could do a hatchet job on him and ruin (Mr Habib’s) reputation”.

So where does that leave the viewer who saw the 60 Minutes interview? Questions must remain about what was agreed to be included and what was agreed to be omitted.

The media are often gentle on subjects. When was the last time we saw a scathing attack on facilities at a resort on the Getaway program? So what would be the problem with going easy on Mr Habib?

There’s a significant element here. The Getaway program doesn’t purport to be a news or current affairs program. It employs presenters rather than journalists. Consumers see it for what it is: entertainment (or “infotainment” to use the word coined by the industry).

The Habib interview was shown on a program that is staffed by journalists. Viewers would have every right to expect good journalism – no holds barred.

They saw questions and answers. But journalism is more than that. Research, checking of facts, canvassing of views and counter-views are a vital part of journalism.

The Habib interview was shown on a program that is staffed by journalists. Viewers would have every right to expect good journalism – no holds barred.

And the suspicion remains that even though he may have looked uncomfortable at times, Mr Habib may have set down ground rules for the interview – particularly in view of what his lawyer had said previously.

Sometimes journalists have to accept ground rules to get information.

But they must always remember that the public is owed the complete story.

I hope that there will be follow-ups to the Habib interview. The researchers will go off and check his claims and statements. They’ll talk to other people about Mr Habib’s activities. They’ll find out what he was doing in Pakistan and Afghanistan by investigating there. They’ll test his claims. They’ll test the claims made about him. The tough question “Are you a terrorist?” was only ever going to get one answer from Mr Habib.

Getting the full story would have been much harder work. A couple of hundred thousand dollars might have bought entertaining television. But did it buy good journalism?

Chris McLeod

(Editor’s note: The question of chequebook journalism is currently before the Council which is considering general questions related to the practice and whether disclosure of payment to sources should be noted by publications as well as the particular question of whether the Council needs to issue guidelines to the press on the question of payments to witnesses before or during the conduct of trials.)
Press Council Prize

There will be no Essay Prize in 2005. Instead the Council will be making a series of awards for outstanding scholarship through the various journalism departments and faculties at Australian tertiary institutions. The Council will endow prizes for such courses, particularly in the study of ethics.

National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2004

The Federal Government has amended its latest national security legislation after the Council raised concerns about some of the definitions in the legislation. The Bill was intended to prevent information that could threaten national security being made public during terrorism trials.

The Government has argued that such legislation is needed to ensure that those accused of terrorism can be charged without, for instance, tipping off accomplices about where information came from or providing terrorists with additional information that might help them plan attacks. It allows the Attorney-General to order that sensitive evidence should be considered in a hearing closed to the public, the media and even to lawyers who do not have a security clearance.

When the proposed legislation was introduced, the Senate referred it for examination to a Committee to which the Council made a detailed submission, published in the August 2004 APC News. The Council was particularly concerned with the definition of “national security” which included within it matters related to Australia’s “national interests”. The Council saw this as unnecessarily broad and argued that it would allow a government to keep almost anything in such a trial secret.

While the Council had other concerns with the proposed Bill, some of which were addressed by the Senate Committee’s recommendations, accepted by the government, it was the overly broad definition of national security which remained the Council’s primary concern.

Late last year, the Council, together with representatives of John Fairfax Publishing, met with the Attorney-General. The definition was subsequently narrowed to say “national security means Australia’s defence, security, international relations or law enforcement interests”.

The amended National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Bill passed the Senate and now goes to the lower house.

On the Council

John Fairfax Publications has appointed Sam North as its new representative on the Australian Press Council, replacing the recently retired John Digby. Sam North has been at Fairfax for the past 28 years, coming from the Newcastle Herald to The Sydney Morning Herald in 1989. At the SMH he has been, variously, deputy sports editor, Olympics editor, letters editor, Olympic productions editor, Northern Herald editor, Fairfax chief of staff Sydney Olympics, and he organised and led the Fairfax team to the Athens Olympics. Sam has been a senior writer, winning a National Press Club award for writing, and the Fosters Racing Writer of the Year award for best feature. At the moment he is Managing Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Sun-Herald. Born in March 1951, Sam is married, with two children.

Gerard Noonan will continue to serve as Fairfax’s alternate representative.

Apology - Annual Report 28

The editor apologises to all readers for the unprofessional way in which the annual report was issued last year. Due to a mix-up between the office and the printer of the report, the penultimate version of the report, rather than the final, proofread version, was printed. The published version contained a number of typographical and other errors for which I am sorry.

Defamation

The Council’s Chairman, Professor Ken McKinnon has written to all State Premiers and both territory Chief Ministers to congratulate their Attorneys-General on the progress made by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General towards uniformity of Australian defamation law.

“The release of the model law for the states and territories following its meeting in November creates a unique opportunity to reform defamation law in Australia and to eliminate the variations across jurisdictions which have given rise to extensive forum shopping,” he said.

The Council, which represents the major newspaper and magazine publishers, has been urging uniformity of defamation laws across Australia’s jurisdictions for some time. When the Council took up defamation reform in 2000 and 2001, the matter had dropped off the SCAG agenda. Given that its constituent publishers distribute periodicals in a large number of jurisdictions, the Council was concerned with the risk created by the uncertainty created by publications having to have regard for so many different standards.

The Chairman noted, “The Council is pleased to see that the draft developed by the Attorneys addresses a number of the important
issues which the Council has sought to include in any reformed defamation law, particularly the proposal for extensive pre-litigation procedures which deal with the question of restoration of reputation, through Offers of Amends. The Council believes that such a procedure will have the effect of settling a greater number of cases without the need for extensive court time to be occupied by lengthy trials. The Council also believes that the inclusion of a recommendation for a defence of truth alone, of caps on damages for non-economic loss, and a shortened limitation period are all positive developments.”

Having seen SCAG move so far towards reform and uniformity in the last twelve months, he told the Premiers and Chief Ministers that the Council looked forward to the early introduction of legislation into the various Parliaments and to the passage of the reforms. “The ability of the states and territories to be able promptly to harmonise defamation across the jurisdictions will demonstrate the co-operation can work to the advantage of the Australian people”, he concluded.

At the same time, the Chairman has been in further contact with the federal Attorney-General, who has been developing a separate national defamation law. The Chairman drew attention to the developments in the states and territories and commended the Attorney for his efforts in encouraging the move towards harmonisation of the various extant defamation laws. The Council expects that the further development of the proposed federal legislation will be dependent on the actions taken by the states and territories.

**Privacy submission**

The Press Council has made a submission to the Office of then federal Privacy Commissioner in response to its review of the private sector provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

As the body which administers the Privacy Standards for the Print Media under the media exemption in the federal *Privacy Act 1988*, the Australian Press Council submitted that the exemption appears to be working well, that the Council’s experience indicates that an appropriate balance between the flow of information of public interest and concern and individuals’ rights to privacy in their private affairs has been struck and that, within the print media, the appropriate organisations and activities are covered by the exemption. The Council also appended a brief summary of the privacy matters with which it has dealt in the last three reporting years.

The Council is making a submission along similar lines, but in more detail, to a Senate Committee which is concurrently reviewing the *Privacy Act*. In that submission the Council notes the recent formal subscription to the Privacy Standards of APN News & Media Ltd. That subscription means that all major newspaper publishers (and most large magazine publishers) now subscribe to the Standards.

The Council also noted that, following inquiries from a number of other organisations about the possibility of subscribing to the Standards, the Council considered the position of, *inter alia*, schools, churches, hospitals, and telecommunication companies which claimed to engage in ‘journalism’. It determined that the Privacy Standards for the Print Media can only be subscribed to by ‘media organisations’ as the Act allows exemption only for such organisations, and not others who might, incidentally, publish periodicals.

The Council noted that its experience with administering the Standards has been positive. By and large, the print media respect such provisions, as demonstrated by the low number of complaints received each year by the Council on such matters, fewer than 5% of complaints to it are about invasion of privacy. Similarly, the most recently available statistics from the NSW Privacy Commissioner indicate that only 1.6% of complaints received by his office arise from intrusions by the media. Polls and complaints overwhelmingly indicate that the public main concern with respect to privacy invasions is through the proliferation and cross-matching of databases.

In the year 2001-2002, there were 23 complaints on privacy matters dealt with by the Council. From among these, five were refused, four were settled by mediation or otherwise settled to the complainant’s satisfaction; and four were adjudicated (No. 1144 upheld a complaint against a general interest magazine; No. 1160 was dismissed; No. 1162 dealt with complaints against two newspapers, one of which was upheld and one dismissed).

During the reporting year 2002-2003, there were 22 complaints which cited the Privacy Standards. Two were the subject of adjudication (No. 1189 and No. 1192, both complaints were dismissed); in four cases the complainant preferred to take legal action; and the vast majority were settled by mediation or otherwise settled to the complainant’s satisfaction.

In the most recent year, 2003-2004, there were 24 new complaints which cited the Privacy Standards. One was the subject of adjudication (No. 1219 which was upheld in part but not on the question of privacy invasion); in two cases the complainant preferred to take legal action; and three were carried forward. Another fourteen were settled by mediation or otherwise settled to the complainant’s satisfaction. Two matters carried forward from the previous year were also successfully mediated.

The Council concluded that its experience with administering the Standards indicates to it that no changes are needed to the media exemption as it currently stands.

The submission to the Senate Committee will be posted in full to the Council’s website in due course.

**Research**

The Australian Press Council is initiating a new research grant which will be first applied in 2005.

Following a meeting with a number of tertiary researchers in areas directly related to journalism and the press, and in a number of ancillary research areas which also deal with matters related to the Council’s primary functions, the maintenance of a free and a responsible press, the Council took the decision to assist where possible researchers whose work was seen as having practical benefits in furthering the Council’s Objects.

This assistance would take several forms. The Council, and its office, would be receptive to requests from researchers for non-
monetary assistance, either by access to the Council’s records or by providing access, where possible to its Constituent members, the publishers and associations of publishers. In such a way, the Council might be able to assist researchers in meeting some criteria for the securing of ARC grants.

Of more immediate and practical impact is the Council’s decision to allocate up to $5000 in its current budget towards the provision of bridging finance to enable researchers better to develop projects for submission to the Australian Research Council or to similar granting bodies.

The Council has sought from tertiary researchers a submission of an outline of proposed research, together with a précis of the practical outcomes envisaged by the researchers. These proposals will be submitted to a judging panel that will include senior newsroom personnel and one grant (or more) will be made by the Council along the lines noted above. The time for the submission of expressions of interest has now passed and the Council would expect to make a decision on any grants as soon as possible.

**Mediated complaints**

The Council office tries to solve matters by direct contact with the publication concerned. This often leads to a settlement of the matter satisfactory to both parties. On occasion, a Public Member of the Council (or a member of the secretariat) will convene a face-to-face mediation, by agreement with the parties. Below are some examples of the matters recently settled in these ways.

- A magazine published a letter, without first checking that the complainant was its author (she wasn’t). After discussions with the Council, the magazine has changed its procedure to include the need for readers to submit a contact telephone number for verification. As the letter had been run over a set of initials, and the magazine was prepared to review its procedures, the complainant was satisfied with the result.

- An academic complained about an article on climate change which had appeared in a gardening magazine. He disagreed with the assertions made in the article. After the matter had been brought to its attention by the Council office, the magazine agreed to publish a letter from the complainant in its next available edition. The publication of his letter satisfied the academic’s complaint.

- A Sunday metropolitan misquoted a politician’s comments regarding an education program. After the matter had been brought to the editor’s attention by the Council, he contacted the politician direct. The newspaper and complainant agreed on the contents of a follow-up article, clarifying the inaccurate comment. It was published the following week, satisfying the complainant.

**Privacy Standards**

In February 2005, APN News and Media Ltd formally subscribed its newspaper publications to the Council’s Privacy Standards. This means that all major newspaper publishers now subscribe to the Standards.

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**Editor’s comment:**

**More matters of opinion**

In the May 2002 *APC News*, there was an article detailing the Council’s view on opinion pieces. It noted that, by and large, the Council supported a publication’s right to publish opinions, even strong opinions. The article noted that the Council gave a wider licence to opinion writers (whether in columns, editorials, cartoons, letters or articles) but not a free pass. It also noted that the Statement of Principles applied equally to expressions of opinion, particularly in areas like offensiveness and accuracy and in the need for publications to afford those singled out for criticism with an adequate opportunity to respond.

In Adjudication No. 1257, published elsewhere in this issue, the Council reinforced a number of these issues and, in effect, fired a warning shot across the bows of commentators. The Council says in the finding:

> However, the … commentary went further and singled out [the complainant] for criticism. In the Council’s view material clearly labelled as opinion has a wider licence than, for example, news reports. However, this is not an unfettered licence and columnists are still bound by the ethical requirement that they not publish what they could reasonably know is false, nor fail to take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of what they report. This is especially the case where there are no news reports on the same material in the newspaper. The published opinion was based on an assumption of the facts, without seeking any input from the [complainant]. As a result, the article was unbalanced and unfairly derogatory of [him], characterising him in a manner not justified by the matters raised in the column.

In the same issue that the newspaper published the finding, the columnist commented on it under the heading “Assaulting freedom of speech”, suggesting that the adjudication shows “how little value [the Council] places on free speech …” The columnist, himself a former member of the Council, appears unable to distinguish the Council’s work on press freedom and its work in dealing with complaints from readers, where the emphasis is on press responsibility. The Council is a strong supporter of press freedom, as demonstrated by its activities in areas like privacy, defamation, contempt, freedom of information and, as noted elsewhere in this issue, national security legislation. But the Council recognises that a free press needs to be a responsible press, and so it deals with complaints about allegations of unethical conduct in the press.

In saying that a newspaper breached its principles in one instance, the Press Council is in no way placing a restriction on press freedom or the freedom of any columnist to publish opinions, even strong opinions. It is an expression of the opinion, by a body of the columnist’s peer, representing the publishers, journalists and members of the public, that in this instance the newspaper crossed the ethical line on questions of accuracy and whether an opportunity to respond to criticism should have been afforded.

The Council has reinforced its view that the fact that a piece of writing is an expression of opinion is not an absolute defence.

Jack R Herman
Offensive words

JACK R HERMAN, the Council’s Executive Secretary, discusses some of the Council’s rulings on complaints about offensive language in the press.

The Press Council regularly encourages complainants to write letters to the editor when they want to take issue with published material. In this case, the [complainant] followed this practice promptly, but to no avail. It is by encouraging debate on the changing use and meanings of words that the appropriateness of terms such as “psycho” will be decided over time. [Adjudication No. 1047]

In other recent adjudications, the Council has stressed the difficulties in defining out of existence terms which some complainants would like to see censored. In 1999, The Courier-Mail, Brisbane, used the word ‘infamous’ to describe politician Pauline Hanson in its first edition; replacing it with ‘controversial’ in subsequent editions because it considered the original word ‘was not appropriate’. Nonetheless a third party complained about the use of infamous in this context. The Council, in its adjudication said:

[T]he word ‘infamous’ now has various shades of meaning and, as a result, its use in the article does not warrant an adverse finding. [Adjudication No. 1021]

An article about the temporary release program at a high security unit which houses individuals whose mental illness precluded them standing trial for various serious crimes brought a further complaint from advocates for the mentally ill. In this case it was argued that the people referred to are “patients”, not “inmates” or “prisoners”, the terminology used by the newspaper. This was one aspect of a wider complaint. The complainant alleged that the language used in the article helped to instil fear and loathing of people with mental illness - in particular those

The Press Council recognises that some readers would regard the use of the word “psycho” as contributing to a damaging stereotype of people with a mental illness. However, it is not for the Press Council to judge newspapers’ language in circumstances where the use of a word remains controversial in the community generally. …

The Press Council is consistently asked to rule on language usage and to issue prescriptive and enforceable guidelines which would have the effect of restricting the press’ ability to report or seek to have them couch those reports in ‘acceptable’ language. While upholding the occasional complaint about language use in extreme circumstances, and issuing the odd advisory on the need to be careful in the choice of words in particular cases, the Council has studiously avoided instructing the press what terms are acceptable and what terms are not. It is wary of what has been termed ‘political correctness’, and also wary of making news reporting bland and dull, by limiting language options.

Additionally, the Council has been loath to issue prescriptive guidelines, because it sees English as a living and evolving language and that it is not always easy to pinpoint which aspects of language are offensive. Meanings, shades of meaning and connotations change over time and the Council is reluctant to prescribe words, particularly when this year’s euphemism becomes next year’s offensive term.

In 1985 it confronted such a question when an evening newspaper used the epithet “illegal” to describe marriage ceremonies between gay men. In adjudicating the matter the Council stated [T]he Press Council is not concerned to enforce niceties of English usage, but with the substantial question whether readers are likely to have been misled. Given the ambiguities of the term “illegal” in popular speech, and the whole context of the article, the Council does not think that most readers would have been misled in this case, although some might have been left in doubt about the state of the law. [Adjudication No. 271]

It went further a couple of years later when confronted with a complaint about the use of the term “manning levels” to mean staffing levels, the complainant arguing that such non-inclusive language was discriminatory. Using the Council principle on offensiveness that existed at the time (it has since been amended and the revised Principle 6 is discussed below), the Council argued:

The Council has stated previously (No. 271 of February 1985) that it does not assume the role of arbitrator in newspapers’ use of English. It cannot, therefore, grant imprimatur to guidelines issued by groups within the community concerning sexist language, nor would it be appropriate to issue its own guidelines. The role of the Council is to determine whether the words used … were irresponsible and in breach of its principles. The Council’s principles include consideration of language which disparages or belittles women, but in this instance the Council does not consider that [the] use of these words had such an effect. It rejects the complainant’s claim that they constitute a lapse of taste so gross as to bring the freedom of the press into disrepute, and dismisses the complaint. [Adjudication No. 335]

More recently the Council has further clarified why it is reluctant to be definitive about language use and the extent to which newspapers and commentators have to recognise the changing nature of the language. The ruling arose from a second complaint within a short time from a mental illness advocacy group concerned with the use of the term “psycho” in newspaper and magazine reports. The Council said, on this occasion,
diagnosed with schizophrenia – and caused great distress to some of the families. In its finding, the Council said:

The Council does not consider that prescriptive directions on language would be helpful nor that the newspaper’s use of language created a “pejorative” tone. [Adjudication No. 1219]

Sometimes individuals are concerned with terms used about themselves. Peter Foster was convinced that the term “fraudster” was an inappropriate description of him. In support of his complaint Mr Foster, like many other complainants, relied on a dictionary definition to say the wrong term was used. He also provided details of his convictions dating back to 1982, which resulted in four separate periods of imprisonment and a substantial fine. The Council concluded:

Mr Foster has obtained international recognition for this series of offences, most of which involve false claims.

While none of Mr Foster’s convictions are explicitly for “fraud”, the Council believes that the word “fraudster” has been used by the newspaper in an accurate, collective sense. Accordingly the complaint is dismissed. [Adjudication No. 1223]

Principles and Guidelines

The Council’s principles which govern the question of language usage include Principle 6 which deals with potentially offensive material. In discussing offensive material the Council previously spoke of questions of “taste” and was concerned, as noted above, with lapses of taste likely to bring the press into disrepute. In 2003, it changed its Principle 6 to read:

Publications have a wide discretion in publishing material, but they should have regard for the sensibilities of their readers, particularly when the material, such as photographs, could reasonably be expected to cause offence. Public interest should be the criterion and, on occasion, explained editorially.

Other applicable ethical standards include Principle 7 which seeks that publications avoid gratuitous emphasis on a number of matters including race, religion and ethnicity and Principle 8 which mandates that those singled out for criticism should have an opportunity to respond.

The Council has seen fit to issue guidelines on some aspects of language use in more recent times. These guidelines are, in essence, amplifications on particular issues arising from the Statement of Principles. The guidelines apply the Principles to the practice of reporting and are intended to guide the press on how it should report certain matters. These guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive instructions to the press but act as a series of advisories on the application of the Principles which the Council seeks the co-operation of editors in maintaining. One guideline is of a very general nature and two are warnings which do not restrict the press’ ability to report but which urge restraint.

Guideline 248 which discusses the issues related to the reporting of “race” and ethnicity makes clear that the Council’s principal concern is with material that reinforces stereotypes and not so much with slang terminology as such:

In the broadest terms, the Council has found that the tone and context of such reporting are usually the crucial elements in deciding whether its principles have been breached. …

The Council is principally concerned about references to race, colour, ethnicity or nationality which promote negative stereotypes in the community. It acknowledges that the question of stereotypes is not cut and dried, and much depends on the context.

The Council in principle condemns gratuitous use of offensive slang terms for minority groups. However, if someone controversially used such expressions, a publication may well be justified in reporting them in direct quotes. The Council also generally believes that the use of such terms is permissible in opinion articles, when it is to make a serious point, and sometimes in humorous articles and satire. But here again the boundaries are usually determined by tone and context. [Guideline 248]

The particular question of putatively offensive (or ‘racist’) slang terms will be dealt with in more detail below.

In 2004, the Council issued two guidelines on particular aspects of language use. Each arose from complaints about particular articles which had been referred to the Council for adjudication. The first followed reports of terrorist activities where two separate headlines used the names of a particular religion, with an implication that the group as a whole had been responsible for the actions. The Council upheld one of the complaints (where the religious term was unmodified) and dismissed a second (Adjudication No. 1236). In addition it urged newspapers … to be careful about using in their headlines terms for religious or ethnic groups that could imply that the group as a whole was responsible for the actions of a minority among that group.

Currently, the use of the words “Islam”, “Islamic” and “Muslim” in headlines on reports of terrorist attacks is causing problems both for the Muslim community in Australia and the Australian media. It is important for newspapers to identify as clearly as possible the sources of terror; casting the net of suspicion and accusation too widely can be harmful.

The Council is also aware of instances beyond the Australian Muslim community, and the current concern with terrorism, where the use of overly general terms has caused concern for the Indigenous people and the Australian Jewish community, among many others.

The Press Council acknowledges that, in some cases, the linking of words with religious connotations to terrorist groups may be, in the strictest sense, accurate - but it is often unfair. Terrorists may be Muslims, but Muslims are not necessarily terrorists, as some headlines have implied.

The Press Council urges publications to be aware of the sensitivities of groups about whom they are reporting. Headlines are a particular problem, given the need to capture the essence of a story within a limited compass, and require particular care.

In a September 2001 press release, the Council expressed its concern “about references to race, colour, ethnicity or nationality which promote negative stereotypes in the community”. Similarly, the Council considers that the use of wide, too-general terms for religious or ethnic groups in headlines could contribute to the promotion of a negative stereotype of that group.

Even, the use of headlines of the style “Muslim terror” and “Islamic bomb attack” would be best avoided as they can be seen to link religious belief and its adherents to deliberate acts of terror. [Guideline No. 261]

The Press Council received a large number of complaints about the terminology that is applied, and ought to be applied, to those arriving in Australia who do not have normal immigrant credentials. These arose from a small number of articles but a campaign co-ordinated through a pro-refugee website ensured that many
complaints were received about each instance. The complainants were particularly concerned with references to such arrivals as “illegal immigrants”, or even “illegals”. Following the issuing of Adjudication No. 1242, which upheld a complaint about a particular instance of the use of “illegal immigrants”, the Council issued further guidance to the press.

The problem with the use of terms such as “illegal refugee” and “illegal asylum seeker” is that they are often inaccurate and may be derogatory. The Council cautions the press to be careful in the use of such unqualified terms in reports and headlines. [Guideline No. 262]

Offensive slang

According to a complainant, an edition of the Oxford dictionary describes the term ‘pom’ as ‘derogatory’ and a coming edition of the Macquarie Dictionary will describe it as ‘sometimes derogatory’. Whether it is or is not derogatory, racist or offensive, the use in publications of the word ‘pom’ (or ‘pommy’) gives rise to more complaints to the Press Council than any other term. Over the years, the Council has issued four adjudications which dealt with its usage, the first in February 1983, arising from the use of the term to describe an English cricket team. Then the Council said:

The Press Council finds difficulty in seeing the terms “Pom” and “Pommie” in reports about a cricket series as racist, derogatory and generally degrading. [Adjudication No. 153]

Subsequently it has found that the use of ‘pom’ in a humour column was not a breach of the principles because “the article relied on hyperbole for its effect, rather than malice [Adjudication No. 585]; that a reference to “pommy poofers” in another opinion column (about a series of feuds) “would be offensive to some people but [was] unable to find that the fact that an obviously irreverent column is offensive to some is in itself a breach of the Council’s principles governing honest, fair and decent press behaviour and publication” [Adjudication No. 735]; and recently ruled headline and sub-heading: Filthy Poms - Mayor blames tourists for Bondi rubbish “was plainly going to be offensive to many readers, was exaggerated and ill-advised and brought no credit to the paper” but was not a breach of the principles[Adjudication No. 1111].

Despite the number of times that the Council has asserted its view that the use of the term ‘pom’ is no more offensive than other slang terms like ‘yank’ or ‘ocker’, and despite even its jocular use by the British High Commission in Australia, the appearance of ‘pom’ or ‘pommy’ in the press, with or without an epithet, and whatever the context, will bring a complaint about its use. In the Council’s view, unless the complainant can demonstrate that the use is gratuitous (as required under Principle 7) or used, in the context, to promote a negative stereotype in the community, the complaint should be refused.

Other slang terms for groups have also attracted complaints, many of which have been settled amicably. Given its gentility, it is ironic that writing about cricket has given rise to a number of these. In addition to the ‘pom’ complaint from 1983, the Council secretariat has recently dealt with concerns (and settled) that the use of ‘Vindaloos’ to describe the Indian cricket team was racist and offensive (the columnist has desisted from the use of the term subsequent to the settlement of the complaint); that the term ‘chimaman’ to describe a left-hander’s leg-break was racist (refused because it is not a reference to any group); and that ‘to swing Irish’ to mean a ball which apparently swings the wrong way was vilification (the matter was not pursued).

The Council has also dealt with complaints about the use of, among other terms used by the print media, “jaapie” (for South African), “chimman” (as the description of an individual, rather than a cricket delivery), “gypsy” or “gypsy conman” (for a person of Romany descent), “Asian gangs” (to describe groups in Perth), “mafia” (to describe criminal activities of Italian-Australians), and “blacks” (as a descriptor of Indigenous Australians). In each case, the complainant asserted that no other group would be treated this way. In some cases, the Council concluded, as it has in the case of ‘pom’, that the connotation of the term in its contemporary usage is clear. In others, it has found, as it did with ‘psycho’ as noted above, that the debate is an on-going one.

On the question of ‘blacks’, for instance, it said in 1988

However, many Aborigines have, at times, referred to themselves as being black and the use of the term by a newspaper to describe Aborigines is understandable. The term “Black” to describe Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders has been used by the National Aboriginal Conference and other Aboriginal organisations. The complaint is dismissed; however, the Press Council has discussed this issue on a number of previous occasions and reiterated its view that care is needed in the use of the word “Black” to avoid any racist connotation. [Adjudication No. 375]

In 2002, the Council reiterated the importance of context. When The Australian used the headline Scheming blacks behind fires: farmers over a story about bushfires in the Northern Territory, complainants made the point that terms like “scheming blacks” discriminate and dehumanise Aboriginal people and such “language contributes to the continuation of racism”. The Council found against the newspaper, arguing that this was a case where a negative stereotype was reinforced:

In the context of this case, the phrase “scheming blacks” was not only insensitive but perpetuated the racist notions of “them” against “us”. [Adjudication No. 1154]

The question of whether the use of the term ‘gypsy’ to describe a gang of confidence tricksters constituted an unnecessary emphasis on ethnic or national origins was before the Council. In the article, there were nine references to “gypsy” or “gypsies” in the headline and the body of the story which detailed numerous repair work and cheque scams, mainly against the aged, by a group identified as “con-artist English gypsies”. One question was whether the term was used as an identifier of an ethnic group or in its metaphoric sense. Another was whether the constant repetition of the descriptor amounted to a gratuitous emphasis on ethnicity. In the end, the Council was again concerned with the context:

In the context of the obvious public interest in the operations of the gang, the newspaper was justified in providing the essential descriptions needed for potential victims to identify the scammers. Failure to do so could well have been a breach of a newspaper’s duty to inform readers properly and accurately about matters of public interest. [Adjudication No. 1152]
Adjudication No. 1257

The Press Council has upheld a complaint by an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) correspondent against the Sydney Daily Telegraph over a bylined opinion column dealing with the aftermath of the killing of an Australian-born 15-year-old girl by a suicide bomber in Jerusalem.

The Piers Akerman column claimed that the correspondent, Tim Palmer, had revealed either “an appalling absence of any moral compass” or “a total lack of understanding of the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict”.

The killing occurred more than three years ago at a time when Mr Palmer was based in Jerusalem, and the article itself appeared more than a year ago. In the intervening years e-mails, letters and phone calls have passed between the girl’s father, Arnold Roth, and Mr Palmer, the Federal member for Melbourne Ports, Michael Danby, and his staff joined the dispute; and the ABC managing director, Russell Balding, and Mr Roth himself had letters published in the Telegraph.

At the core of the dispute was an attempt by Mr Palmer to organise a feature story based on interviews with both Mr Roth and the father of the Palestinian bomber. At first Mr Roth agreed, but that was before he knew that the bomber’s father was to be included in the story. Mr Roth was immediately outraged at what he regarded as gross insensitivity and an attempt to create a false symmetry between the two deaths. Mr Palmer dropped the project.

The Piers Akerman commentary criticised Mr Palmer and the ABC’s “babbling” about balance, asking: “Does it [the ABC] believe there can be some equivalence in presenting the father of a murdered teenager who spent her life supporting the mentally handicapped and the school holidays providing care for severely handicapped children and the father of a young man who believed it was his religious duty to murder innocent people?”

In his complaint Mr Palmer says that since the project was dropped, Mr Akerman could not possibly have known what form the story would have taken or how the two projected interviews would have been used.

Mr Palmer produced print-outs of two Daily Telegraph stories about the bombing that both appeared on page 5 on 11 August 2001. One quoted Mr Roth and included a picture of his daughter, Malki, “murdered by a fanatic who didn’t know a thing about her”; and the other quoted the bomber’s father as saying he was “filled with pride and sadness, and I will weep for him all my life.”

This, says Mr Palmer, “is exactly the same scenario Mr Akerman suggests is without moral compass, and it is in his own newspaper”.

Mr Palmer, who says he was on the scene of the bombing within five minutes, quotes a paragraph from the report he provided for the ABC programme AM a day later: “When the Islamic Jihad group first claimed responsibility for this blast, it described the action as heroic, but this was cowardly butchery. Indiscriminate in its cutting down the old and the very young, it is believed as many as six of the dead are infants.”

The Press Council believes that amid the arguments about the shades of meaning of the words “counterpoint”, “balance” and “symmetry”, it remains clear that Piers Akerman did not contact Mr Palmer, and indeed he could not have known how the story would have been handled. He had Mr Roth’s side of the story, plus the extensive correspondence between the two.

The columnist was entitled to comment, even to comment strongly, on the question of the ABC’s concept of balance. On this question the newspaper published a letter of rebuttal from the ABC managing director.

However, the Akerman commentary went further and singled out Mr Palmer for criticism. In the Council’s view material clearly labelled as opinion has a wider licence than, for example, news reports. However, this is not an unfettered licence and columnists are still bound by the ethical requirement that they not publish what they could reasonably know is false, nor fail to take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of what they report. This is especially the case where there are no news reports on the same material in the newspaper. The published opinion was based on an assumption of the facts, without seeking any input from the ABC journalist. As a result, the article was unbalanced and unfairly derogatory of Mr Palmer, characterising him in a manner not justified by the matters raised in the column. For these reasons the complaint is upheld.

NOTE: Following an appeal from the newspaper, the Council reconsidered the matter at its December meeting. It decided to retain the finding but amended the last paragraph more clearly to explain its reasoning.

Adjudication No. 1260

The Australian Press Council has considered a complaint brought by Ross Copeland of Western Australia and others against The Advertiser, Adelaide, concerning the use of the term “illegal boat immigrants” in a report about a child living in a mainland detention centre with his parents who arrived in Australia by boat.

Mr Copeland referred to a previous Australian Press Council adjudication (1242) which upheld a complaint against The Sydney Morning Herald, and to the Council Guideline No 262 which relates to the status of unauthorized arrivals and which issued a caution to the press to be careful in the use of unqualified terms in reports and headlines.

The editor Mel Mansell said it was not the intention of The Advertiser to cause offence and the paper apologised to those people who had objected to this phrase. He said the Guideline had again been circulated to senior staff urging them to be aware of the possible offence certain terms may cause.

He said there was still no satisfactory, generic term which could be easily understood and safely used by newspapers. He said the term of “unlawful non-citizens” used in Commonwealth immigration legislation was a “clumsy, non-specific description containing two negative terms.”

He said that clearly, from the similarities in the complaints and letters of support to complainants being received by The Australian Press Council News, February 2005
Adjudication No. 1263

The Press Council has considered a complaint from Ali Kazak, Head of the General Palestinian Delegation in Australia, against The Australian over two editorials published in the 20 and 23 July 2004 editions of the paper.

The complainant alleges that the editorials are a part of a wider pro-Israeli bias in the newspaper. More particularly he notes an alleged inaccuracy in the editorial of 20 July and the failure of the newspaper to publish a letter from him responding to the editorial.

The Press Council has consistently held that a newspaper is clearly entitled to express an editorial opinion. In expressing an opinion on a matter involving a highly emotive context, such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, a newspaper inevitably exposes itself to claims of bias from at least one of the contending parties to the conflict. The relevant issue is really whether the newspaper has provided an avenue for other points of view to be published. The Press Council has also made it clear that no reader has an absolute right to have a point of view published in a newspaper. Given the large number of letters received each day by most newspapers, editors have a discretion in the selection of the letters to be published, provided the Press Council is of the view that the discretion has been reasonably exercised. The newspaper pointed out that it had published two letters responding to the matters raised in the editorials.

The complaint of inaccuracy arises from the following sentence in the 20 July editorial:

‘Overall, almost 1000 people in Israel and 2500 Palestinians have been killed in the struggle since 2000, but in the past three months fewer than five have died.’

Mr Kazak said that the statement may have been correct in reporting the number of people killed in Israel in the period but that the context implies that the figure refers to deaths of both Israelis and Palestinians. The contention by Mr Kazak that there was an intentional suppression of the facts was based on the claim that the newspaper failed to ‘mention that in the same period 221 Palestinians have been killed including 46 children’. Mr Kazak claimed that this omission was ‘deliberate’ and ‘misleading to the public’.

In its reply to Mr Kazak, the newspaper said that the editorial of 20 July was ‘exploring acts of terrorism within Israel’ and that its main theme was the ‘apparent success of Israel in reducing terrorism in Israel’. The newspaper suggests that, when read in context, the reference to the five deaths was a reference to the killing of Israelis.

In the Council’s view, the sentence was, at best, ambiguous. In the context of the editorial, it appears to the Council to be an inaccuracy, which the newspaper should, when it was brought to its attention, have made an effort to clarify or correct. The editorial published on 23 July partially clarifies this by counter-pointing the death toll among Israelis and Palestinians over a six-month period. However, Mr Kazak took the step recommended by the Council of promptly sending to the newspaper a letter for publication. The newspaper chose not to publish the letter nor did either of the two letters published in response to the 20 July editorial address the question of accuracy raised by Mr Kazak. To the extent that the newspaper published what appeared to be inaccurate information and then failed to provide for a balancing response to be published, the complaint is upheld.

Guideline No 262

Status of unauthorised arrivals

Issued: 18 June 2004

The Australian Press Council has received complaints about the terminology that is applied, and ought to be applied, to those arriving in Australia who do not have normal immigrant credentials. Technically in Commonwealth immigration legislation they are referred to as “unlawful non-citizens”. However, they are often referred to as “illegal immigrants”, or even “illegals”.

The problem with the use of terms such as “illegal refugee” and “illegal asylum seeker” is that they are often inaccurate and may be derogatory.

The Council cautions the press to be careful in the use of such unqualified terms in reports and headlines.

NOTE: Following an appeal from the newspaper, the Council reconsidered the complaint at its December meeting, and decided to change the adjudication by noting that the complaint had been “considered” rather than “upheld”, but it left the body of the finding untouched.

Adjudication No. 1264

The Australian Press Council has upheld (by 9 votes to 8) a complaint by Commissioner Kelvin Anderson, of Corrections Victoria, about an article, in the Bendigo Advertiser, Jail shame: Prison source says drugs, corruption rife, in which an anonymous source alleged there was a culture of corruption, drug smuggling and cover-ups in central Victorian prisons.

The source, identified only as a prison insider, claimed Corrections Victoria employees had been gagged from speaking out about conditions in prisons and their jobs threatened if they raised issues of concern. The article detailed other claims about guns and knives found in vehicles, tennis balls containing drugs being thrown over prison walls, a visitor discovered to have $7000 in her underpants and others with drugs in their possession.

In his complaint, Commissioner Anderson said the newspaper had approached him the afternoon before publication with five allegations. He had responded by fax later that afternoon denying three of the
allegations and offering explanations for the others.

Commissioner Anderson said the newspaper had not published any of his denials of the specific allegations. It had also chosen not to print his comments that there was no problem with prison drug smuggling; that guns or other weapons had not been found in prison car parks recently; and that the seizure of marijuana plants and seeds demonstrated the effectiveness of prison security.

While the article concluded with a comment from Commissioner Anderson rejecting the allegation of a cover-up of events in one prison, the Press Council believes the story was unbalanced in that the Commissioner’s specific responses were not included in the article and he was not given the opportunity to respond to all the allegations, and that the newspaper did not fulfil its duty to provide a fair news report of a matter of public controversy.

**Adjudication No. 1265**

The Australian Press Council has dismissed a complaint by Dr R T Lange of Robe, South Australia, against an article headed Royalties, red tape undermine explorers published by The Independent Weekly, Adelaide, in the Business & Money pages on 24 September.

The article contained criticism by the SA Chamber of Mines that, despite government pledges to increase funds for incentive packages to boost exploration, the mining industry feared royalty rises and were unhappy with provisions concerning native vegetation replenishment and a trend to exclude the industry from parks.

Dr Lange said the article breached Press Council principles that newspapers should not publish what they know to be false, fail to check the accuracy of what they report, distort the facts or fail to make fact and opinion clearly distinguishable.

Dr Lange said the headline failed to distinguish fact from opinion by excluding the words “Miners say” and that throughout the article statements from the mining sector and the South Australian Premier were reported “complete with their distortions, nonsense and suppressions of fact, as if such distortions, nonsense and suppressions did not exist.”

Concerning the heading, The Independent Weekly carried a paragraph before the introduction of the article that clearly explained that the comments were from a peak industry group. The Press Council believes that this method of balancing the heading, a practice becoming common in many newspapers, meant the heading itself did not breach any principles, although claims purporting to be facts should be identified as such.

The balance of the article also clearly identified the sources making comments and attributed the comments to these sources.

Newspapers have a vital role in advancing debate on matters of public interest and importance and in this instance The Independent Weekly article fulfilled this role.

In any debate there are counter views and Dr Lange submitted a brief letter to the editor criticising miners and inviting the newspaper to examine their claims.

The letter was not published.

In response the newspaper’s editor said Dr Lange’s letter arrived too late for use in the next issue of The Independent Weekly and was not read until after this issue had been published.

The editor said that she had the right to choose which letters were used and which were discarded.

Although Dr Lange’s letter was brief and well argued, the Press Council generally upholds the right of an editor to select letters for publication and does so again in this case.

**Adjudication No. 1266**


The headline Lawyers order charities to throw oldies on the scrap heap led an article and editorial describing the problems charities face securing insurance coverage for volunteers over 65 years of age.

Mr Skuse argued that the editor could reasonably be expected to know the condemnation of lawyers in the headline was false. He claimed that the newspaper failed to make a prompt correction, explanation or apology and did not publish his 6 September letter to the editor that provided a swift balancing response.

The editor of the Gold Coast Bulletin wrote to Mr Skuse on 14 September 2004 and defended the headline saying it is fairly well established in Parliament and elsewhere that a nexus exists between rising insurance costs and the dubious victories of lawyers. He claimed the letter from Mr Skuse was not used, because it was similar to several others published. The Council saw evidence of one letter, critical of the headline, published by the newspaper on 9 September.

The Press Council found no justification for the headline when the article and the editorial did not mention lawyers and focussed on insurance companies as the problem in securing coverage for

**Adjudication No. 1267**

The Australian Press Council has upheld in part a complaint against The Sun-Herald by Dr Jim Saleam about a profile, published on 29 February, arising from his candidature in the Marrickville Council elections.

The article, published under the headline, White Separatist’s Return, deals with Dr Saleam’s past association with National Action, described as a “far right group”, his politics, his criminal conviction and his subsequent academic record. It was illustrated by two pictures, one contemporary and a larger image apparently showing him wearing Nazi insignia.

Dr Saleam pointed out a number of instances of what he says are inaccuracies in the article. These included a picture caption which described him as “the public face of far-right group National Action, in the 1980s”. Dr Saleam says the image was taken in the 1970s. He also says that it is not correct to say he earned his PhD during his three and a half years in jail for his involvement in an attack on an African National Congress representative in Australia or that he invaded church services or wore a paramilitary uniform in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Sun-Herald says that, even if these matters were inaccurate, they were minor and trivial within the context of the profile.

In the Council’s view, the newspaper acted in the public interest by publishing the article about a candidate’s past and current political positions. However, to the extent that the newspaper failed to take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of its report and did not provide Dr Saleam with an opportunity to have clarified or corrected any inaccuracy, the complaint is upheld.
When confronted with the use of the term ‘mafia’ in the context of a series of articles about crime and killings within the Italian-Australian community, the Council has been more definitive on the current connotation of the term. A report headed Mafia link in execution of Melbourne frustrater described the death as an ‘execution-style murder’. The Italian Australian Foundation complains about what it describes as a slander on the Italo-Australian community. The Council ruled:

However, it remains true that a small minority of that community has been found to operate in what can reasonably be called mafia-style.

Further, the use of the term ‘mafia’ no longer implies only an Italian fringe group; the US has to deal with a largely indigenous mafia, and today Russia and the broken-up republics of the old USSR commonly use the term ‘mafia’ to describe their criminal elements. It has become a generic term.

[Adjudication No. 1065]

By and large, the Council has not had to deal with the more offensive slang terms used to describe groups, whether they are ethnic, ethno-religious, or religious groups, because the press rarely if ever uses such offensive terms. A rare exception in a humour column in a country newspaper, the Kilmore Free Press, over its use of words “boong” and “poofier,” brought an immediate condemnation:

The use of the words “boong” and “poofier” as essentially derogatory terms is widespread in Australian society, but the words are deeply offensive to the groups concerned and are generally avoided in newspaper, even in idiosyncratic columns of the Dingo Dan type. [Adjudication No. 540]

But the Council has not used such rare exceptions to issue prescriptive guidelines to newspapers on what terms they should or should not use. The Australian press has generally shown itself to be responsible in this area and, while that continues, the Council sees no need to publish an Index of ‘wrong’ words.

Jack R Herman

### ABOUT THE PRESS COUNCIL

The Australian Press Council was established in 1976 with the responsibility of preserving the freedom of the press within Australia and ensuring the maintenance of the highest journalistic standards, while at the same time serving as a forum to which anyone may take a complaint concerning the press.

It is funded by the newspaper industry, and its authority rests on the willingness of publishers and editors to respect the Council’s views, to adhere voluntarily to ethical standards and to admit mistakes publicly.

The Council consists of 21 members. Apart from the chairman (who must have no association with the press), there are 10 publishers’ nominees, ten public members (7 attend each meeting), two journalist members and an editor member. The newspapers’ representatives are drawn from the ranks of metropolitan, suburban, regional and country publishers as well as from AAP. The public is represented by people who can have had no previous connection with the press.

The Press Council is able to amend its Constitution with the approval of its Constituent Bodies. Significantly, great importance is placed on members acting as individuals rather than as the representatives of their appointing organisations.

### Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint against a newspaper or periodical (not about advertising), you should first take it up with the editor or other representative of the publication concerned.

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may refer it to the Australian Press Council. A complaint must be specific, in writing, and accompanied by a cutting, clear photostat or hardcopy print of the matter complained of, with supporting documents or evidence, if any. Complaints must be lodged within 3 months of publication.

The Council will not hear a complaint subject to legal action, or possible legal action, unless the complainant signs a waiver of the right to such action.

Address complaints or inquiries to:

Executive Secretary
The Australian Press Council
Suite 10.02, 117 York Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9261 1930 or (1800) 02 5712
Fax: (02) 9267 6826
E-Mail: info@presscouncil.org.au

A booklet setting out the aims, practices and procedures of the Council is available free from the above address.

It, together with other relevant material, is available from the Council website: http://www.presscouncil.org.au/

### MAILING LIST AND MAILING LABEL

If you change address and would like to continue to receive the Press Council’s publications, please advise the office of any such change.

Also, check the label on the envelope to ensure that it is accurate. Any correction to the information on the label should be forwarded to the Press Council’s office (see above).

As the News and all adjudications are now published direct to the Internet, if you would prefer to access it that way and therefore want your name removed from the mailing list for the printed version, please so advise the Council’s office. The Internet address is printed above.