



Media Release

For immediate release – 23 July 2014

Press Council issues Specific Standards on Contacting Patients

The Australian Press Council has today issued new Specific Standards of Practice for media practitioners wishing to contact patients in hospitals or residents in other care facilities.

The Standards will be applied by the Council when considering any complaints made to it about the behaviour of journalists, photographers and other practitioners in print and online media.

The Standards have been developed after extensive consultation with representatives from the media and the public and private health sectors. Their main aims are to

- prevent unreasonable exclusion of journalists from hospitals;
- promote a co-operative approach between journalists and hospitals;
- prevent inappropriate contact by journalists with a patient who is in a vulnerable position;
- prevent undue intrusion by journalists on other patients and hospital staff.

The new Standards are the second in a series of Specific Standards which apply the Council's General Principles in particular contexts. A revised version of the General Principles was issued by the Council last week. The next set of Specific Standards will relate to aspects of digital publishing.

The Specific Standards on Contacting Patients are attached and are also available at [http://www.presscouncil.org.au/uploads/52321/ufiles/Contacting_Patients - 23 July 2014.pdf](http://www.presscouncil.org.au/uploads/52321/ufiles/Contacting_Patients_-_23_July_2014.pdf)

For further information or to arrange an interview with Council Chair Prof Julian Disney, contact the Director of Research and Communications, Michael Rose, on 02 9261 1930 or by email: michael.rose@presscouncil.org.au

The Australian Press Council was established in 1976 and is the principal body that issues and monitors Standards of Practice for the publication of news and comment in Australian newspapers, magazines and associated online material. It is also the principal body that considers complaints about coverage of news or comment across this range of publications.

The Council currently receives about 700 complaints each year. Many complaints result in a correction, apology or some other form of action being taken due to the involvement of Council staff. Where the complaint cannot be resolved without a formal adjudication, the publisher is required to publish the adjudication promptly and with due prominence.