

EDITORIAL STANDARDS POLICY

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR EDITORIAL CONTENT

SCA recognises the importance of the role it plays in the gathering and provision of editorial content for our metropolitan and regional communities, and we value the responsibility of ensuring those communities are informed accurately and without bias. This policy sets out SCA's commitment to ethical practice in the creation and delivery of editorial content.

This policy applies to SCA employees, and those engaged, commissioned or contracted by or for SCA, who prepare or are involved in the preparation of editorial content produced, commissioned, or otherwise obtained by SCA for broadcast or publication by any of the following channels:

- live radio broadcasts (FM, AM, DAB+) which are also available by digital live stream
- on-demand audio programs (which are available on SCA websites, apps and social media and on smart speakers)
- on-demand podcasts (which are available on SCA websites, apps and social media and on smart speakers)
- text articles and other online content (which are available on SCA websites, apps and social media),

(SCA Editorial Staff).

"Editorial content" refers to content which has the character of news, current affairs or a documentary; consists of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs or a documentary; or consists of other editorial content relating to news, current affairs or a documentary.

In relation to linear radio broadcasts, this policy applies in addition to the Commercial Radio Code of Practice (**Radio Code**)¹, including in particular section 3 (News and Current Affairs Programs) of the Radio Code (reproduced in schedule 1 to this policy).

The requirements and principles set out in section 3 (News and Current Affairs Programs) of the Radio Code apply equally to SCA's news and current affairs content on other platforms.

SCA Editorial Staff must endeavour to meet the following standards in the execution of their daily duties.

1. Serve our audience and communities to a high standard.

¹ <http://www.commercialradio.com.au/CR/media/CommercialRadio/Commercial-Radio-Code-of-Practice.pdf>.

2. Meet our legislative responsibility on local content quotas for our commercial radio licence areas.
3. In respect of news content, provide accurate, balanced and fair coverage, without political, ethnic, commercial or personal bias.
4. Ensure news content is distinguishable from other material such as commentary and opinion.
5. Maintain a thorough knowledge of media law and the Radio Code.
6. Avoid plagiarism and always be mindful of copyright.
7. Seek guidance from SCA legal counsel on the reporting of court and other matters that carry legal risk.
8. Only publish material relating to a person's personal or private affairs, or which invades an individual's privacy, where it is in the public interest to do so, or the person has provided implied or express consent for the material to be published (or in the case of a person under 16, a parent or guardian has given implied or express consent).
9. Deliver locally significant and breaking news stories in an engaging format that fits our brands.
10. Exercise editorial independence and accept responsibility for it.
11. Produce content with integrity and accuracy.
12. Disclose any benefit that has been received in respect of editorial content that you are preparing or involved with.
13. Disclose any conflict of interest that could affect, or be seen to affect, your accuracy, fairness or independence.
14. Acknowledge and correct or clarify any errors as soon as reasonably practicable, as guided by the next most senior person or SCA legal counsel.
15. When questioning editorial matter, the journalist/producer must refer the issue up to the next most senior person for advice or decision.
16. Ensure advertising is readily distinguishable from editorial content, and content selection is not influenced by SCA commercial interests.
17. Approach the reporting of graphic or confronting news events with sensitivity and respect and be mindful of key periods when children or young people are more likely to be listening to live content. For on-demand audio content, this will require inclusion of appropriate advance warnings about sensitive content.
18. Understand SCA's reputation is a valuable asset, as is the trust of our audiences and clients.
19. Ensure any use of AI technology is compliant with Australian laws, codes and standards and that AI technology output that is inaccurate, misleading or biased is not used.

Complaints

Section 10 of the Radio Code explains how listeners may complain about a matter covered by the Radio Code in relation to news or other content in a live radio broadcast. All of SCA's radio station websites have an online complaint form that may be used for this purpose.

If a person wishes to complain about a matter covered by this policy in relation to SCA's editorial content on any platform other than a live radio broadcast, please send an email to companysecretary@sca.com.au. You will need to include the following details in your email:

- include the following in the subject of your email: Complaint –Editorial Standards Policy
- a description of the relevant editorial content
- when you saw or heard it
- where you saw or heard it (for example, on an SCA or third party website or app, or on a smart speaker)
- your concerns about the relevant editorial content including which aspects of this policy you think might have been breached by the relevant editorial content.

SCA will use best endeavours to respond in writing to your complaint within 30 Business Days after receiving the complaint. The Australian Media and Communications Authority does not have authority to consider or investigate complaints about matters covered by this policy.

Complaints in relation to advertisements in news content will generally be referred for response by Ad Standards (formerly known as the Advertising Standards Bureau).

Most recently updated: 1 July 2025

SCHEDULE 1

COMMERCIAL RADIO CODE OF PRACTICE²

15 March 2017

3. News and Current Affairs Programs

- 3.1. In broadcasting News Programs, a Licensee must use reasonable efforts to:
- 3.1.1. present news accurately and impartially;
 - 3.1.2. present news in a way that is not likely to create public panic, or cause serious distress to reasonable listeners, unless it is in the public interest to do so; and
 - 3.1.3. distinguish news from comment.
- 3.2. In broadcasting Current Affairs Programs, a Licensee must use reasonable efforts to ensure that:
- 3.2.1. factual material is reasonably supportable as being accurate;
 - 3.2.2. factual material is clearly distinguishable from commentary and analysis; and
 - 3.2.3. viewpoints expressed to the Licensee for broadcast are not misrepresented or presented in a misleading manner by giving wrong or improper emphasis on certain material or by editing material out of context.
- 3.3. In broadcasting News Programs and Current Affairs Programs, a Licensee must not broadcast material relating to a person's personal or private affairs, or which invades an individual's privacy, unless it is in the public interest to do so, or the person has provided implied or express consent for the material to be broadcast (or in the case of a person under 16, a parent or guardian has given implied or express consent).
- 3.4. A Licensee must make reasonable efforts to correct or clarify significant and material errors of fact which would be readily apparent to a reasonable person in the Licensee's position or which have been demonstrated to the Licensee's reasonable satisfaction in a timely manner.³
- 3.5. There will be no breach of the accuracy requirements at 3.1.1 or 3.2.1 if:
- 3.5.1. the Licensee can establish on the balance of probabilities that the news or factual material is accurate; or
 - 3.5.2. a disputed fact was not a material fact; or
 - 3.5.3. a correction, which is appropriate in all the circumstances, is made within 30 Business Days of the Licensee receiving either a Code Complaint, or notice of a Code Complaint being referred to the ACMA (whichever is later).

² Capitalised terms are defined in the Definitions section of the Radio Code.

³ For the avoidance of doubt, a Licensee will not breach this provision by failing to correct errors of fact which are of a trivial or minor nature.

- 3.6. A correction under this section 3 may be made in one or more of the following ways:
- 3.6.1. during a later episode of the relevant Program or a comparable Program;
 - 3.6.2. on the Program's website, the station's home page or the Licensee's main website as appropriate; or
 - 3.6.3. in any other way that is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 3.7. For the purposes of 3.2 above, a contribution made to a Current Affairs Program by a talkback participant will not be considered factual material, unless it is factual material that is endorsed or adopted by the Presenter. 'Talkback participant' means a member of the public who contributes to open-line discussions via the Licensee's dedicated talkback line or by other communication methods accepted by the Licensee.
- 3.8. Nothing in this section 3 obliges the Licensee to allocate equal time to different points of view, nor to include every aspect of a person's viewpoint, nor does it preclude a critical examination of, or comment on, a controversial issue as part of a fair report on a matter of public interest.
- 3.9. Current Affairs Programs are not required to be impartial and may take a particular stance on issues. However, a Licensee must provide reasonable opportunities for significant alternative viewpoints to be presented when dealing with controversial issues of public importance, while the issue has immediate relevance to the community.⁴
- 3.10. Compliance with 3.1 and 3.2 must be assessed by taking into account all of the circumstances at the time of preparing and broadcasting the material, including:
- 3.10.1. the facts known, or readily ascertainable, at that time;
 - 3.10.2. the context of the material within the News Program or Current Affairs Program in its entirety;
 - 3.10.3. the time pressures associated with the preparation and broadcast of News Programs and Current Affairs Programs; and
 - 3.10.4. in relation to a Current Affairs Program, the format and style of the Current Affairs Program.

⁴ For the purposes of this provision, 'reasonable opportunities' can be accommodated within the same Program or a similar Program. The requirement does not impose an obligation on Licensees to allocate equal time to different points of view, nor to broadcast all viewpoints expressed to it.