



EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

For use across
on-line, radio and
television platforms



GROUP EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Spiritcorp Pty Ltd recognises that accurate news and public affairs services play an important role in keeping the community informed in a free and democratic society.

Spiritcorp and Newcastle Live arose out of a need to provide the community of Newcastle and the Hunter with an alternative local operator to the ever-dwindling media landscape of the area. These editorial guidelines aim to ensure high-quality news and public affairs services across all of our platforms and a commitment to provide balanced reporting that reflects the broad and diverse audiences we serve.

These guidelines are to be applied to:

- **Online internet and social media assets** – editorial and news
- **Online radio** (news programs, news updates and public affairs programs)
- **Online television** (news programs, news updates and public affairs programs)

Any, and all, activities undertaken in the delivery of news and public affairs on behalf of Newcastle Live must be done so with a commitment to ethical practice. Independence and integrity are to be enshrined in the presentation of our news and public affairs services. All information produced is to be accurate and impartial.

Our editorial decisions are to be based on the merits of public interest and our alignment to the **Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)** Journalist code of ethics as below:

- Respect for truth and the public's right to information are fundamental principles of journalism. Journalists search, disclose, record, question, entertain, comment and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be responsible and accountable.

All **Newcastle Live** journalists and broadcasters are to educate themselves on the **MEAA** ethics and apply the following standards:

- Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts. Do not suppress relevant available facts or give distorting emphasis. Do your utmost to give a fair opportunity for reply.
- Do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability.
- Aim to attribute information to its source. Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motives and any alternative attributable source. Where confidences are accepted, respect them in all circumstances.
- Do not allow personal interest, or any belief, commitment, payment, gift or benefit, to undermine your accuracy, fairness or independence.
- Disclose conflicts of interest that affect, or could be seen to affect, the accuracy, fairness or independence of your journalism. Do not improperly use a journalistic position for personal gain.
- Do not allow advertising or other commercial considerations to undermine accuracy, fairness or independence.
- Do your utmost to ensure disclosure of any direct or indirect payment made for interviews, pictures, information or stories.
- Use fair, responsible and honest means to obtain material. Identify yourself and your employer before obtaining any interview for publication or broadcast. Never exploit a person's vulnerability or ignorance of media practice.
- Present pictures and sound which are true and accurate. Any manipulation likely to mislead should be disclosed.
- Do not plagiarise.
- Respect private grief and personal privacy. Journalists have the right to resist compulsion to intrude.
- Do your utmost to achieve fair correction of errors.

MEAA Guidance Clause:

- Basic values often need interpretation and sometimes come into conflict.
- Ethical journalism requires conscientious decision-making in context.
- Only substantial advancement of the public interest or risk of substantial harm to people allows any standard to be overridden.

Governing Law & Australian Press Council:

All editorial, news and public affairs staff must comply with Australian Law. If you have concerns regarding this at any time you are advised to speak with the Managing Director who will seek legal advice when or where necessary.

All journalists and broadcasters are also bound to comply with the Australian Press Council's standards of practice for print and digital publishers. These standards of practise can be found on the Press Council's website. <https://www.presscouncil.org.au/statements-of-principles/>

Newcastle Live requires that all editorial, news and public affairs staff will follow the recommendations and requirements of these codes of practice and any existing guidelines applicable to the medium in which they operate as listed previously in this document.

Contribution to Public Interest Journalism:

Public interest journalism is the antithesis of negative side of the media, this includes fake news, propaganda, censorship and voyeurism.

The outcomes of public interest reporting can expose corruption, launch royal commissions, remove improper politicians from office, and jail wrongdoers

The public interest includes, but is not confined to:

- Identifying or exposing crime or serious impropriety
- Protecting public health and safety
- Preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.
- Providing voice to marginalised or underserved sectors of the community.
- *In situations involving children under 16, the rights of the child is paramount over and above a public interest story.*

Conflict of Interest:

Newcastle Live encourages all journalists and broadcasters to declare relevant conflicts of interest. These include but are not limited to:

- Financial ties
- Personal relationships
- Institutional affiliations – including political

All journalists and broadcasters are to ensure that any conflicts of interests are avoided or adequately disclosed, and that they do not influence news and public affairs services.

General Expectations:

All journalists and broadcasters are to ensure at all times in the pursuit of news and public affairs provide;

1. Accuracy and clarity
2. Fairness and balance
3. Integrity and transparency
4. All factual material is presented with reasonable fairness and balance, and not expressions of opinion which are based on inaccurate factual material or the omission of key facts.
5. When news and public affairs material refers adversely to a person, that a fair opportunity is given for a subsequent reply if that is reasonably necessary to address a possible breach of clause 4.
6. To not intrude on a person's reasonable expectations of privacy, unless doing so is deemed to be in the public interest.
7. Avoid causing or contributing to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently deemed in the public interest.
8. Avoid publishing material which has been gathered by deceptive or unfair means, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.

Spiritcorp and Newcastle Live will adopt the overarching MEAA guidelines with the addition of item four listed below:

Honesty
Fairness
Independence
Respect for the rights of others