

# Annual Report

## The Code of Practice for Sports News Reporting

This is the annual report of the Code of Practice for Sports News Reporting, which was established on March 30, 2010, by the Australian Government with agreement of major sports and news organisations.

The Code was created with the assistance of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to establish practices that respected the rights of a free press while ensuring the protection of established media licensing and marketing models of sports organisations. It covers text and images. It excludes broadcast, video and audio.

It was established following an inquiry by the Senate Committee on the Environment, Communications and the Arts into the "Reporting of Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media". This inquiry made its report and recommendations on May 14, 2009. The Government responded to those findings in January 2010.

### **Administration**

On March 30, 2010, a Code Committee was elected. In turn, it elected a chair, Mr Kevan Gosper AO, of the International Olympic Committee. It elected as secretary, Mr Mark Hollands, of the Newspaper Publishers' Association.

### **Members**

As of March 30, 2011, the Code has 25 signatories.

Members consist of national and international media publishers and agencies, and leading sports organisations in Australia.

Of these members, 10 organisations make up the Code Committee charged with oversight of the Code and practices of signatories within it. The members of the Code Committee are:

#### **News Organisations**

- Australian Associated Press
- Agence France-Presse
- Fairfax Media
- Getty Images
- News Ltd

#### **Sports Organisations**

- Australian Football League
- Australian Rugby Union
- Cricket Australia
- National Rugby League
- Tennis Australia

A list of members and their key contacts for matters related to the Code are submitted separately.

## **Membership Growth**

Members must be legitimate news reporting organisations. The founding members are those elected to the Code Committee. The entry of new members must be accepted by the 10 members of the Code Committee. No membership request was refused in the first 12 months of the Code, or objected to by any individual organisation.

New signatories in the first 12 months include a number of overseas media organisations.

This occurred as a result of preparations for media coverage of The Ashes cricket tour of Australia by England. Some requested membership, wanting to ensure its accreditation and responsibilities were aligned with those of Code members.

Many British news media organisations also wanted to be a Code Member based on its regular coverage of Australian sports events, such as the Australian Open.

## **Meeting of the Code Committee**

Under the terms of the Code, the Committee is to meet bi-annually. It held its first meeting on October 8, 2010. Members reported no outstanding issues during the first six months of the Code.

Due to extraordinary circumstances of the sports calendar, the second meeting of the Code committee will be held after the Cricket World Cup and launch of the Australian Football League season.

## **Arbitration**

Since the formation of the Code, there has been no request for arbitration.

Attempts to find acceptable arbitrators appointed to the Code, as outlined in the Code, have been modified due to the lack of demand, and initial feedback from Media Members on proposed selections by the Code Chair and Secretary. Therefore, it was decided by the Chair and Secretary that a mutually-acceptable arbitrator will be appointed as is necessary. This was accepted by the Code Committee as a practical approach, at its meeting of October 8, 2010.

## **Impact of the Code**

There has been a positive impact generally, on the basis of anecdotal feedback by Code Members to the Secretary. Some accreditation processes have required side-letters between the sports organisation and the media organisation. However, media companies have reported a significant reduction in such side-letters and confirm that issues covered by the Code have been resolved and, in particular, media accreditation simplified. To this end, the Code would appear to be achieving its designed and desired outcome.

## Website

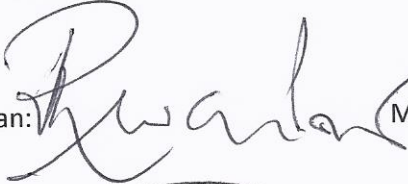
A website has been established to provide publicly available information on the Code. Its address is <http://codeofpracticeforsportsnewsreporting.com.au> . As stated in the Code, it contains an explanation of the Code and its purpose, plus relevant media accreditation documents, associated side-letters and contact information.

## Summary

The Code is not seen by the Chair or the Secretary to have had a negative impact on either sports administrators or media organisations. It has had a positive impact in terms of reducing issues of concern raised by news organisations. Any issues reported to the Secretary have been outside the workings of the Code. Therefore, the Code appears to be functioning as designed.

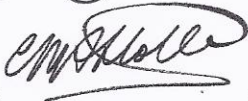
However, it is important that the practical outcomes stemming from the Code are monitored to ensure the recommendations of the Senate inquiry, and the subsequent support of the Australian Government, are upheld.

Chairman:



Mr Kevan Gosper, AO

Secretary:



Mr Mark Hollands