Document 01

1 Independence, integrity and responsibility

Principles

The trust and respect of the community depend on the ABC's editorial independence and integrity. Independence and responsibility are inseparable. The Managing Director is the Editor in Chief who has ultimate editorial power and responsibility.

Editorial decision making at the ABC is based on upward referral. Those who create, acquire, commission or oversee ABC content are responsible for ensuring that it complies with the Editorial Policies, but they are also required to upwardly refer any editorial matter where they are in doubt. Editorial content that is controversial or likely to have an extraordinary impact should also be upwardly referred, even if there is no doubt, to allow closer consideration of any editorial policy issues.

Upward referral is made to line managers and to appropriately senior people within Divisions who are designated with responsibility. In addition, editorial advisers are available and should be consulted for advice and guidance.

Where an editorial issue is being upwardly referred to the Managing Director, it must first be referred to the Editorial Director for input and advice.

Standards

1.1 Maintain the independence and integrity of the ABC.

1.2 Exercise ABC editorial control over the content the ABC broadcasts or publishes.

1.3 Ensure that editorial decisions are not improperly influenced by political, sectional, commercial or personal interests.

1.4 External activities of individuals undertaking work for the ABC must not undermine the independence and integrity of the ABC's editorial content.

Document 01

1.5 Exercise editorial independence as authorised and accept responsibility for it. When in doubt about an editorial matter, refer it up to the next most senior person for advice or decision.

1.6 When any editorial matter, including an editorial matter not being referred up for advice or decision, is likely to cause controversy or have an extraordinary impact, give proper notice of it to the most appropriate senior manager.

1.7 Any editorial matter which is considered by a Divisional Director to be sufficiently significant to be referred to the Managing Director for information or decision must first be referred to the Editorial Director. If a Director is in doubt as to whether an editorial matter is sufficiently significant, advice should be sought from the Editorial Director.

Issued 11 April 2011, Revised 1 April 2016

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Document 01

Sports
Indigenous
Emergency
Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Accessibility
Help
Contact Us
Commercial
Careers
About the ABC
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 02

2 Accuracy

Principles

The ABC has a statutory duty to ensure that the gathering and presentation of news and information is accurate according to the recognised standards of objective journalism. Credibility depends heavily on factual accuracy.

Types of fact based content include news and analysis of current events, documentaries, factual dramas and lifestyle programs. The ABC requires that reasonable efforts must be made to ensure accuracy in all fact based content. The ABC gauges those efforts by reference to:

- the type, subject and nature of the content;
- the likely audience expectations of the content;
- the likely impact of reliance by the audience on the accuracy of the content; and
- the circumstances in which the content was made and presented.

The ABC accuracy standard applies to assertions of fact, not to expressions of opinion. An opinion, being a value judgement or conclusion, cannot be found to be accurate or inaccurate in the way facts can. The accuracy standard requires that opinions be conveyed accurately, in the sense that quotes should be accurate and any editing should not distort the meaning of the opinion expressed.

The efforts reasonably required to ensure accuracy will depend on the circumstances. Sources with relevant expertise may be relied on more heavily than those without. Eyewitness testimony usually carries more weight than second hand accounts. The passage of time or the inaccessibility of locations or sources can affect the standard of verification reasonably required.

The ABC should make reasonable efforts, appropriate in the context, to signal to audiences gradations in accuracy, for example by querying interviewees, qualifying bald assertions, supplementing the partly right and correcting the plainly wrong.

Document 02

Standards

2.1 Make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.

2.2 Do not present factual content in a way that will materially mislead the audience. In some cases, this may require appropriate labels or other explanatory information.

Issued: 11 April 2011, Revised: 25 September 2014

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Sports

Emergency

Indigenous

Careers

Document 02

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Accessibility
Help
Contact Us
Commercial
Careers
About the ABC
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 03

4 Impartiality and diversity of perspectives

Principles

The ABC has a statutory duty to ensure that the gathering and presentation of news and information is impartial according to the recognised standards of objective journalism.

Aiming to equip audiences to make up their own minds is consistent with the public service character of the ABC. A democratic society depends on diverse sources of reliable information and contending opinions. A broadcaster operating under statute with public funds is legitimately expected to contribute in ways that may differ from commercial media, which are free to be partial to private interests.

The ABC takes no editorial stance other than its commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and non discrimination.

Judgements about whether impartiality was achieved in any given circumstances can vary among individuals according to their personal and subjective view of any given matter of contention. Acknowledging this fact of life does not change the ABC's obligation to apply its impartiality standard as objectively as possible. In doing so, the ABC is guided by these hallmarks of impartiality:

- a balance that follows the weight of evidence;
- fair treatment;
- open-mindedness; and
- opportunities over time for principal relevant perspectives on matters of contention to be expressed.

The ABC aims to present, over time, content that addresses a broad range of subjects from a diversity of perspectives reflecting a diversity of experiences, presented in a diversity of ways

Document 03

from a diversity of sources, including content created by ABC staff, generated by audiences and commissioned or acquired from external content makers.

Impartiality does not require that every perspective receives equal time, nor that every facet of every argument is presented.

Assessing the impartiality due in given circumstances requires consideration in context of all relevant factors including:

- the type, subject and nature of the content;
- the circumstances in which the content is made and presented;
- the likely audience expectations of the content;
- the degree to which the matter to which the content relates is contentious;
- the range of principal relevant perspectives on the matter of contention; and
- the timeframe within which it would be appropriate for the ABC to provide opportunities for the principal relevant perspectives to be expressed, having regard to the public importance of the matter of contention and the extent to which it is the subject of current debate.

Standards

4.1 Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.

4.2 Present a diversity of perspectives within a reasonable timeframe, aiming to reach a similar audience, so that no significant strand of thought or belief within the community is knowingly excluded or disproportionately represented.

4.3 Take care in the presentation of analysis and commentary. Do not present them as the editorial opinion of the ABC.

4.4 Do not misrepresent any perspective.

4.5 Do not unduly favour one perspective over another.

Issued: 11 April 2011, Revised: 13 December 2023

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

Document 03

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Sports

Emergency

Indigenous

Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies

Accessibility

Document 03

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 04

5 Fair and honest dealing

Principles

Fair and honest dealing is essential to maintaining trust with audiences and with those who participate in or are otherwise directly affected by ABC content. In rare circumstances, deception or a breach of an undertaking may be justified. Because of the potential damage to trust, deception or breach of an undertaking must be explained openly afterwards unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

Standards

Dealing with participants

5.1 Participants in ABC content should normally be informed of the general nature of their participation.

5.2 A refusal to participate will not be overridden without good cause.

Opportunity to respond

5.3 Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.

Attribution and sources

5.4 Aim to attribute information to its source.

5.5 Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motive and any alternative attributable sources.

5.6 Do not misrepresent another's work as your own.

Undertakings

Document 04

5.7 Assurances given in relation to conditions of participation, use of content, confidentiality or anonymity must be honoured except in rare cases where justified in the public interest.

Secret recording and other types of deception

5.8 Secret recordings, misrepresentation or other types of deception must not be used by the ABC or its co production partners to obtain or seek information, audio, pictures or an agreement to participate except where:

a justified in the public interest and the material cannot reasonably be obtained by any other means; or

b consent is obtained from the subject or identities are effectively obscured; or

c the deception is integral to an artistic work.

In all cases, the potential for harm must be taken into consideration.

Mandatory referral

5.9 An appropriately senior ABC person designated for the purpose must approve in advance, having considered the applicable editorial standards (such as 5.5, 5.7 or 5.8), any proposal:

a to use secret recording during the production of content commissioned, produced or co produced by the ABC; or

b to broadcast or publish material obtained by deception; or

c to broadcast or publish without attribution information that forms the basis of a report and the ABC is to be committed to protect the identity of the source of the information; or

d not to honour an assurance given in relation to conditions of participation, use of content, confidentiality or anonymity.

Advice must be sought from ABC Legal on any proposal involving secret recording (5.9a) or deception (5.9b).

Issued: 11 April 2011, Revised: 13 December 2023

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

Document 04

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Sports

Emergency

Indigenous

Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies

Accessibility

Document 04

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 05

6 Privacy

Principles

Privacy is necessary to human dignity and every person reasonably expects that their privacy will be respected. But privacy is not absolute. The ABC seeks to balance the public interest in respect for privacy with the public interest in disclosure of information and freedom of expression.

Standards

6.1 Intrusion into a person's private life without consent must be justified in the public interest and the extent of the intrusion must be limited to what is proportionate in the circumstances.

Issued: 11 April 2011

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Document 05

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News
Local
Listen
iview
TV Guide
Kids
Lifestyle
Entertainment
Sports
Emergency
Indigenous
Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Help
Commercial
About the ABC
Terms of Use
Accessibility
Contact Us
Careers
Privacy Policy
© 2026 ABC

Document 05

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 06

7 Harm and Offence

Principles

The ABC broadcasts and publishes comprehensive and innovative content that aims to inform, entertain and educate diverse audiences. This involves a willingness to take risks, invent and experiment with new ideas. It can result in challenging content which may offend some of the audience some of the time. But it also contributes to diversity of content in the media and to fulfilling the ABC's function to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts. The ABC acknowledges that a public broadcaster should never gratuitously harm or offend and accordingly any content which is likely to harm or offend must have a clear editorial purpose.

The ABC potentially reaches the whole community, so it must take into account community standards. However, the community recognises that what is and is not acceptable in ABC content largely depends on the particular context, including the nature of the content, its target audience, and any signposting that equips audiences to make informed choices about what they see, hear or read. Applying the harm and offence standard, therefore, requires careful judgement. What may be inappropriate and unacceptable in one context may be appropriate and acceptable in another. Coarse language, disturbing images or unconventional situations may form a legitimate part of reportage, debate, documentaries or a humorous, satirical, dramatic or other artistic work.

Standards

7.1 Content that is likely to cause harm or offence must be justified by the editorial context.

7.2 Where content is likely to cause harm or offence, having regard to the context, make reasonable efforts to provide information about the nature of the content through the use of classification labels or other warnings or advice.

7.3 Ensure all domestic television programs with the exception of news, current affairs and sporting events are classified and scheduled for broadcast in accordance with the ABC's

Document 06

Associated Standard on Television Program Classification.

7.4 If inadvertent or unexpected actions, audio or images in live content are likely to cause harm or offence, take appropriate steps to mitigate.

7.5 The reporting or depiction of violence, tragedy or trauma must be handled with extreme sensitivity. Avoid causing undue distress to victims, witnesses or bereaved relatives. Be sensitive to significant cultural practices when depicting or reporting on recently deceased persons.

7.6 Where there is editorial justification for content which may lead to dangerous imitation or exacerbate serious threats to individual or public health, safety or welfare, take appropriate steps to mitigate those risks, particularly by taking care with how content is expressed or presented.

7.7 Avoid the unjustified use of stereotypes or discriminatory content that could reasonably be interpreted as condoning or encouraging prejudice.

Issued: 11 April 2011, Revised 9 October 2014

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Document 06

Listen
iview
TV Guide
Kids
Lifestyle
Entertainment
Sports
Emergency
Indigenous
Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Accessibility
Help
Contact Us
Commercial
Careers
About the ABC
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 07

8 Children and young people

Principles

The ABC aims to provide children and young people (under the age of 18) with enjoyable and enriching content, as well as opportunities for them to express themselves. Children and young people participate and interact with the ABC in various ways as actors, presenters, interviewees, subjects, content makers and audience members.

The ABC has a responsibility to protect children and young people from potential harm that might arise during their engagement with the ABC and its content. The ABC shares this responsibility with parents/guardians and with the child or young person him/herself. In particular, the ABC recommends that parents/guardians supervise children and young people's access to content, their participation in interactive services, and their exposure to news and current affairs. It is not always possible to avoid presenting content that may be distressing to some audience members.

Standards

8.1 Take due care over the dignity and physical and emotional welfare of children and young people who are involved in making, participating in and presenting content produced or commissioned by the ABC.

8.2 Before significant participation of a child or young person in content produced or commissioned by the ABC, or in interactive services offered by the ABC, consider whether it is appropriate to obtain the consent of both the child/young person and the parent/guardian.

8.3 Adopt appropriate measures wherever practicable to enable children and young people, or those who supervise them, to manage risks associated with the child/young person's participation with, use of and exposure to ABC content and services designed for them.

8.4 Take particular care to minimise risks of exposure to unsuitable content or inappropriate contact by peers or strangers.

Document 07

Issued: 11 April 2011

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Sports

Emergency

Indigenous

Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Document 07

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Accessibility
Help
Contact Us
Commercial
Careers
About the ABC
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 08

12 Commercial references

Principles

The ABC needs to be able to reflect the world as it is, and this involves referring appropriately to commercial organisations, products and services, while maintaining the ABC's editorial independence and integrity.

Standards

12.1 References to trade names, brand names, and logos may be made provided that:

a the references are editorially relevant in the context; and

b the ABC's editorial independence or integrity is not undermined.

12.2 Commercial references must not be unduly frequent or unduly prominent.

12.3 Take particular care to minimise commercial references in content designed for children.

12.4 Do not state or imply that the ABC endorses any commercial organisation, product or service.

Issued: 11 April 2011

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

Document 08

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News

Local

Listen

iview

TV Guide

Kids

Lifestyle

Entertainment

Sports

Emergency

Indigenous

Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies

Accessibility

Help

Contact Us

Document 08

Commercial

Careers

About the ABC

Privacy Policy

Terms of Use

© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 09

13 External funding and relationships

Principles

The ABC relies on public funding from Parliament to fulfil its charter obligations and carry out its functions under the ABC Act. The ABC is permitted to supplement its public funding and work collaboratively with others to extend the variety and reach of content offered to the community. The ABC is permitted to accept direct external funding from public sources and enter into funding arrangements with bona fide producers and publishers of content.

The production of content by independent producers, including co production arrangements, regularly involves funding from the public sector, bona fide industry funding sources and other permitted sources some of which the ABC may not be able to access directly. The ABC is also able to accept free or discounted products, services or facilities to support the creation of content where that does not undermine the ABC's independence and integrity.

External funding sources for ABC produced, commissioned or co produced content must be scrutinised by the ABC to ensure the ABC's editorial independence and integrity are maintained. Contentiousness alone is not a reason to reject a proposal. The ABC Act requires innovative services of a high standard. The Editorial Policies require the ABC to present a diversity of perspectives over time on contentious matters. Innovation, high quality, diversity and contentiousness can travel together, so long as risks are properly managed.

In these Standards, "external partners" includes funders, producers, publishers and distributors.

Standards

13.1 Before the ABC enters into an arrangement for external funding or co production of content, the arrangement must be scrutinised by an appropriately senior ABC person designated for the purpose who must reject the arrangement unless satisfied that the independence and integrity of the ABC are fully protected. Factors to consider include:

a whether the arrangement is permissible under the ABC Act;

Document 09

b whether the content is something that the ABC would consider producing for broadcast or publication without external funding;

c the nature of the external partners' interest in the subject matter of the content and in broadcast or publication of the content by the ABC, and how that interest whether it be political, commercial, sectional, personal or otherwise is likely to be perceived;

d the extent to which the making, promotion or scheduling of the content will be influenced by any funder and how that influence is likely to be perceived;

e the reputations of the external partners, including where relevant whether they have editorial standards similar to the ABC's;

f the willingness of external partners to contract to comply with the Editorial Policies and to assist the ABC to comply;

g how the ABC will exercise an appropriate level of editorial control that is commensurate with the ABC's contribution and consistent with its obligations under the ABC Act and Editorial Policies; and

h the degree to which the subject matter or proposed treatment of the subject matter or scheduling of the content is likely to be contentious, and ways to manage that contentiousness consistent with obligations under the ABC Act and Editorial Policies.

13.2 A record of the reasons for acceptance or rejection of external funding proposals must be kept.

13.3 The sources of funds obtained by external partners must be disclosed to the ABC before an external funding or co production arrangement is formalised.

13.4 Do not accept public funding from Commonwealth, State or Territory governments or their authorities for the production and broadcast or publication of content which is or appears to be party political.

13.5 Free or discounted products, services or facilities may be accepted to support the creation of content provided that:

a there is no obligation imposed on or accepted by the ABC to structure or present any matter with a particular editorial perspective;

b prior approval is obtained from an appropriately senior ABC person designated for the purpose;

c the independence and integrity of the ABC are fully protected; and

d accurate records are kept of what is accepted.

Document 09

13.6 Any credits acknowledging creative, managerial and financial contributions must be editorially justified and not unduly prominent.

13.7 Ensure appropriate disclosure of any external funding arrangement, and any acceptance of free or discounted products, services or facilities, where the arrangement or acceptance, if it were not disclosed but later became public, may reasonably be perceived to distort the editorial content or otherwise undermine the ABC's independence or integrity.

Issued: 11 April 2011

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

Document 09

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Accessibility
Help
Contact Us
Commercial
Careers
About the ABC
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

Document 10

Associated Standard on TV Program Classification

Television Program Classification

Status of Associated Standard

This Associated Standard is approved by the ABC Board and is binding. It is for consideration by relevant editorial decision makers when providing advice on compliance and by complaints bodies when dealing with complaints. The Associated Standard is provided to assist interpretation of or otherwise supplement the standard in the Editorial Policies to which the Associated Standard relates.

Key Editorial Standard

7.3 Ensure all domestic television programs with the exception of news, current affairs and sporting events are classified and scheduled for broadcast in accordance with the ABC's Associated Standard on Television Program Classification.

Principles:

The ABC applies the classifications listed below to the broadcast of all its domestic television programs with the exception of news, current affairs and sporting events.

The ABC classifications are adapted from the Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games issued by the Classification Board made under the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995.

The guiding principle in the application of the following classifications is context. What is inappropriate and unacceptable in one context may be appropriate and acceptable in another. Factors to be taken into account include: the artistic or educational merit of the production, the purpose of a sequence, the tone, the camera work, the intensity and relevance of the material, the treatment, and the intended audience.

Document 10

Standards:

7.3.1 Television Classifications

G – GENERAL

G programs may be shown at any time. G programs, which include programs designed for pre school and school aged children, are suitable for children to watch on their own.

Some G programs may be more appropriate for older children.

The G classification does not necessarily indicate that the program is one that children will enjoy. Some G programs contain themes or storylines that are not of interest to children.

Whether or not the program is intended for children, the treatment of themes and other classifiable elements will be careful and discreet.

Themes: The treatment of themes should be discreet, justified by context, and very mild in impact. The presentation of dangerous, imitable behaviour is not permitted except in those circumstances where it is justified by context. Any depiction of such behaviour must not encourage dangerous imitation.

Violence: Violence may be very discreetly implied, but should:

- have a light tone, or
- have a very low sense of threat or menace, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Sex: Sexual activity should:

- only be suggested in very discreet visual or verbal references, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Artistic or cultural depictions of nudity in a sexual context may be permitted if the treatment is discreet, justified by context, and very mild in impact.

Language: Coarse language should:

- be very mild and infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Drug Use: The depiction of the use of legal drugs should be handled with care. Illegal drug use should be implied only very discreetly and be justified by context.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context should be:

- infrequent, and
- not detailed, and
- not gratuitous.

PG – PARENTAL GUIDANCE

(Parental Guidance recommended for people under 15 years)

Subject to the Implementation Guidelines at 7.3.2, PG programs may be shown in accordance with Time Zone Charts at 7.3.5.

PG programs may contain themes and concepts which, when viewed by those under 15 years, may require the guidance of an adult. The PG classification signals to parents that material in this category contains depictions or references which could be confusing or upsetting to children without adult guidance. Material classified PG will not be harmful or disturbing to children.

Parents may choose to preview the material for their children. Some may choose to watch the material with their children. Others might find it sufficient to be accessible during or after the viewing to discuss the content.

Themes: The treatment of themes should be discreet and mild in impact. More disturbing themes are not generally dealt with at PG level. Supernatural or mild horror themes may be included.

Violence: Violence may be discreetly implied or stylised and should also be:

- mild in impact, and
- not shown in detail.

Sex: Sexual activity and nudity in a sexual context may be suggested, but should:

- be discreet, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Verbal references to sexual activity should be discreet.

Language: Coarse language should be mild and infrequent.

Document 10

Drug Use: Discreet verbal references and mild, incidental visuals of drug use may be included, but these should not promote or encourage drug use.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context should not be detailed or gratuitous.

M – MATURE

(Recommended for people aged 15 years and over)

Subject to the Implementation Guidelines at 7.3.2, M programs may be shown in accordance with the Time Zone Charts at 7.3.5.

The M category is recommended for people aged over 15 years. Programs classified M contain material that is considered to be potentially harmful or disturbing to those under 15 years.

Depictions and references to classifiable elements may contain detail.

While most themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in the M category the less explicit or less intense material will be included in the M classification and the more explicit or more intense material, especially violent material, will be included in the MA15+ classification.

Themes: Most themes can be dealt with, but the treatment should be discreet and the impact should not be strong.

Violence: Generally, depictions of violence should:

- not contain a lot of detail, and
- not be prolonged.

In realistic treatments, depictions of violence that contain detail should:

- be infrequent, and
- not have a strong impact, and
- not be gratuitous.

In stylised treatments, depictions of violence may contain more detail and be more frequent if this does not increase the impact.

Verbal and visual references to sexual violence may only be included if they are:

- discreet and infrequent, and
- strongly justified by the narrative or documentary context.

Sex: Sexual activity may be discreetly implied.

Document 10

Nudity in a sexual context should not contain a lot of detail or be prolonged.

Verbal references to sexual activity may be more detailed than depictions if this does not increase the impact.

Language: Coarse language may be used.

Generally, coarse language that is stronger, detailed or very aggressive should:

- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous.

Drug Use: Drug use may be discreetly shown.

Drug use should not be promoted or encouraged.

Nudity: Nudity outside of a sexual context may be shown but depictions that contain any detail should not be gratuitous.

MA15+ – MATURE AUDIENCE

(Not suitable for people under 15 years)

Subject to the Implementation Guidelines at 7.3.2, MA15+ programs may be shown in accordance with the Time Zone Charts at 7.3.5.

MA15+ programs, because of the matter they contain or because of the way it is treated, are not suitable for people aged under 15 years.

Material classified MA15+ deals with issues or contains depictions which require a more mature perspective. This is because the impact of individual elements or a combination of elements is considered likely to be harmful or disturbing to viewers under 15 years of age. While most themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in the MA15+ category the more explicit or more intense material, especially violent material, will be included in the MA15+ classification and the less explicit or less intense material will be included in the M classification.

Themes: The treatment of themes with a high degree of intensity should not be gratuitous.

Violence: Generally, depictions of violence should not have a high impact.

In realistic treatments, detailed depictions of violence with a strong impact should:

- be infrequent, and
- not be prolonged, and
- not be gratuitous.

Document 10

Depictions of violence in stylised treatments may be more detailed and more frequent if this does not increase the impact.

Depictions of sexual violence are permitted only if they are not frequent, prolonged, gratuitous or exploitative.

Sex: Sexual activity may be implied.

Depictions of nudity in a sexual context which contain detail should not be exploitative.

Verbal references may be more detailed than depictions if this does not increase the impact.

Language: Coarse language may be used.

Coarse language that is very strong, aggressive or detailed should not be gratuitous.

Drug Use: Drug use may be shown but should not be promoted or encouraged.

More detailed depictions should not have a high degree of impact.

Nudity: Nudity should be justified by context.

7.3.2 Implementation Guidelines

The time zones for each program classification are guides to the most likely placement of programs within that classification. They are not hard and fast rules and there will be occasions on which programs or segments of programs appear in other time zones.

There must be sound reasons for any departure from the time zone for a program classification. Possible reasons might include, for example, the need to schedule programs which are serious presentations of moral, social or cultural issues, in timeslots most suitable for their target audiences.

Programs, including those having a particular classification under the Classification Board's Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games, may be modified so that they are suitable for broadcast or suitable for broadcast at particular times.

Broken Hill in New South Wales shares a time zone with South Australia but ordinarily receives the ABC's New South Wales TV services. Given the time zone difference, some programs are broadcast outside their classification time zone. Similarly, services delivered via satellite in South Australia and the Northern Territory may be delivered in different time zones to their terrestrial equivalents.

7.3.3 Television Classification Symbols

The classification symbol of the PG, M or MA15+ program (except for news, current affairs or sporting events) being shown will be displayed at the beginning of the program.

Document 10

The classification symbol of the PG, M or MA15+ program (except for news, current affairs or sporting events) being promoted will be displayed during the promotion.

7.3.4 Consumer Advice

Audio and visual consumer advice on the reasons for an M or MA15+ classification will be given prior to the beginning of an M or MA15+ program.

7.3.5 Classification of Live Content

Many live programs fall into the classification exemption categories (news, current affairs and sporting events). Some, such as live music or comedy programs, do not fall into the exemption categories and pose a particular challenge to classify accurately. The ABC makes reasonable efforts to classify these programs accurately by reviewing scripts, lyrics, outlines, and any pre recorded material, and briefing program makers and talent as required.

A failure to provide an accurate classification symbol or consumer advice prior to a live (or as live) program will not be regarded as a breach of standards as long as reasonable efforts were made to classify it and appropriate steps are taken to mitigate any harm or offence.

7.3.6 Time Zone Charts

ABC

Editorial Policies

Contact ABC →

The Editorial Policies site provides policies and guidance to ensure we maintain high editorial standards for all ABC content.

SECTIONS

Home

Policies

Guidance

ACROSS THE ABC

News
Local
Listen
iview
TV Guide
Kids
Lifestyle
Entertainment
Sports
Emergency
Indigenous
Careers

ALL ABC NEWSLETTERS

Stay informed and connected with the ABC. Covering a wide range of topics and brands including News, iview, listen, and more.

Browse all ABC newsletters →

ABC

INFORMATION & SERVICES

Editorial Policies
Help
Commercial
About the ABC
Terms of Use
Accessibility
Contact Us
Careers
Privacy Policy
© 2026 ABC

FOLLOW THE ABC

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.