

PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDELINES

Organisation:	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Responsible:	Editorial Policies
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Related Policy:	Code of Conduct

PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

The ABC has a significant and important role to play under law in informing Australian communities, and to do so in a manner that is accurate and impartial.

ABC workers are members of the communities that we serve and the ABC does not wish to unnecessarily curtail their engagement in civic life, including by expressing personal views outside of work.

However, what ABC workers say in public has the potential to damage the ABC's reputation, or the independence or integrity of ABC content. What all ABC workers say in public can also impact their effectiveness in serving the ABC's purpose.

As a result, the ABC considers what workers say in public relevant to their roles and the purpose of these Guidelines is to outline the ABC's expectations of its workers when making public comments.

They apply to all comments made by ABC workers on social media, at public events or in any context where comments may reasonably be expected to reach a public audience.

ABC editorial content and public comments requested or authorised by the ABC are not subject to these Guidelines.

These Guidelines replace the Personal Use of Social Media Guidelines. They should be read in conjunction with the [Code of Conduct](#) which sets out the values, behaviours and standards which all workers must demonstrate.

WHO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO

These Guidelines apply to all ABC workers whilst engaged with the ABC. Workers refers to ABC employees or others who are contracted to comply with these Guidelines. These Guidelines may apply for specific time periods, as outlined in the relevant contract.

STANDARDS

The following standards apply to all public comments made by ABC workers. It is expected that you will not make any public comment that:

- Undermines your perceived or actual ability to perform your role.
- Undermines the independence or integrity of the ABC or any ABC editorial content.
- Implies ABC endorsement of your personal views.

- Is on behalf of the ABC, or in a way that could be seen as representing the ABC, without prior authorisation.

YOUR ROLE

These standards will be applied with due regard to a worker's role, seniority, public profile and public association with the ABC.

The higher a worker's public profile or seniority, the greater the potential reputational damage a breach of these standards may cause, both to the individual and the ABC.

Workers whose public comments carry the highest risk of undermining the independence and integrity of ABC content are typically those involved in editorial decision-making, including journalists, producers, editors, other content makers, and their managers.

Senior leaders, including Directors, Heads of Departments and other senior roles, also carry particular risks, as they are more likely to be viewed as representing the ABC. Due to their leadership roles, the potential impact of their public comments is inherently greater.

Public comments made by workers with little or no connection or involvement with content creation generally pose a lower risk of breaching these standards. These workers are unlikely to affect the independence or integrity of ABC content but of course remain subject to the Code of Conduct.

Similarly, actors, artists, performers, and external commentators and contributors are typically not seen as representing the ABC, and their public comments are less likely to be associated with the ABC.

Contractual obligations

A worker's contract may include specific restrictions regarding public comments, which will be taken into account when assessing any breach of the standards.

MANAGING THESE GUIDELINES

Public comments that do not meet the standards set out in these Guidelines will be managed by line management, in consultation with People & Culture and Editorial Policies where required and may constitute a breach of the ABC's Code of Conduct.

A breach of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant ABC employment contract and/or enterprise agreement and may lead to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

For non-employees required to comply with these Guidelines, a breach may result in consequences as outlined in their contract.

Workers should be aware that any conduct that breaches the law (such as defamation or vilification) may lead to action by the ABC, third parties or law enforcement. Workers will be personally liable for any such claims or actions, including associated costs and damages.

OTHER RELEVANT PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- [ABC Code of Conduct](#)
- [ABC Cybersafety resources](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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