



22 May 2026

The ABC welcomes the opportunity to make the following submission to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

1. Introduction

a) About the ABC

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (**ABC**) is Australia's national public broadcaster and one of the country's most significant cultural institutions with a rich history dating back to its formation in 1932.

The ABC is governed by the *ABC Act (ABC Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983)*. The ABC is a statutory authority which includes a Charter setting out its functions. The ABC's independence is enshrined as a foundational principle in the ABC Charter, set out in Section 6 of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 ("ABC Act") and supported by other mechanisms in that Act.

The ABC Act Section 6(2) of the ABC Act requires the ABC to take account of "*the responsibility of the Corporation as the provider of an independent national broadcasting service*" and Section 79A establishes that the ABC is free to "*determine to what extent and in what manner political matter or controversial matter will be broadcast*".

To protect the ABC's independence, the Corporation was set up as a self-regulating entity, primarily accountable to the ABC Board. It is the duty of the ABC Board to "*maintain the independence and integrity*" of the Corporation that it oversees as set out in Section 8 of the ABC Act which sets out the duties of the Board.

The ABC Board is further responsible for the Corporation acting with utmost accountability by performing "*efficiently and with the maximum benefit to the people of Australia*".

The Charter states as follows.

(1) The functions of the Corporation are:

(a) to provide within Australia innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard as part of the Australian broadcasting system consisting of national, commercial and community sectors and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to provide:

- (i) broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community; and*
- (ii) broadcasting programs of an educational nature;*
- (b) to transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will:*
 - (i) encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs; and*
 - (ii) enable Australian citizens living or travelling outside Australia to obtain information about Australian affairs and Australian attitudes on world affairs;*
- and*
- (ba) to provide digital media services; and*
- (c) to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia.*

(2) In the provision by the Corporation of its broadcasting services within Australia:

- (a) the Corporation shall take account of:*
 - (i) the broadcasting services provided by the commercial and community sectors of the Australian broadcasting system;*
 - (ii) the standards from time to time determined by the ACMA in respect of broadcasting services;*
 - (iii) the responsibility of the Corporation as the provider of an independent national broadcasting service to provide a balance between broadcasting programs of wide appeal and specialized broadcasting programs;*
 - (iv) the multicultural character of the Australian community; and*
 - (v) in connection with the provision of broadcasting programs of an educational nature—the responsibilities of the States in relation to education;*
- and*
- (b) the Corporation shall take all such measures, being measures consistent with the obligations of the Corporation under paragraph (a), as, in the opinion of the Board, will be conducive to the full development by the Corporation of suitable broadcasting programs.*

(3) The functions of the Corporation under subsection (1) and the duties imposed on the Corporation under subsection (2) constitute the Charter of the Corporation.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be taken to impose on the Corporation a duty that is enforceable by proceedings in a court.

As well as being governed by legislation, the ABC is guided by a range of internal policies, codes and corporate social responsibility principles, relevant copies of which are appended to this submission.

The ABC is principally funded by direct appropriations from the Australian Government and is administered by a Cabinet-appointed board where members are ratified by the Executive Council and then appointed by the Governor General. As a Commonwealth entity, the ABC operates under the ABC Act and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA).

The ABC is in more than 60 capital city and regional locations in Australia and has 12 international bureaux. It employs around 5000 people, including one of the largest rural reporting workforces in the world.

For more than 90 years the ABC has created and shared stories that have helped to shape Australia's identity, strengthen its democracy and nurture its artistic and cultural life. The ABC reflects the diversity of Australia's people and communities in the wide range of services it provides and the content it creates. It is the nation's largest producer of scripted content, the primary national source of children's content and the major provider of specialist programming in areas such as Religion and Ethics, Science and the Arts.

The ABC respects and values its connection with Australians and the trust they place in it.

It sets high standards for its content, governed by its Editorial Policies, an independent Ombudsman to investigate audience complaints, and a Code of Practice with oversight by the Australian Communications and Consumer Authority (**ACMA**).

b) ABC submission to the Royal Commission

To assist the commission, this submission will focus on specific areas that relate to the Terms of Reference that may intersect with the operations of the ABC and its statutory obligations.

In particular, the commission's mandate to tackle antisemitism by "*investigating the nature and prevalence of antisemitism in institutions and society*" and to make recommendations "*strengthening social cohesion and countering the spread of religiously and ideologically motivated extremism in Australia*".

Specifically, the ABC submission will focus on:

- The ABC's statutory duties and the connection to social cohesion
- Editorial governance; including the Editorial Policies and guidance, the independent Ombudsman, the Code of Practice and ACMA oversight
- The coverage of antisemitism in Australia
- The Israel-Gaza war, editorial guidance and the broader relevance of the coverage of conflicts in the Middle East
- Audience complaint handling and the findings of the independent Ombudsman.

The ABC respects the work of the Royal Commission and recognises the vital importance of its work.

2. Executive Summary

The ABC is Australia's national public broadcaster. It serves a public service mandate to inform and entertain and through its storytelling to reflect the nation's cultural diversity and contribute to a sense of national identity.

It is legislatively independent, as obliged under its statute, and has the highest editorial standards, set out in its comprehensive Editorial Policies, to ensure it meets its commitment to integrity, independence and impartiality in its news services.

The ABC Board is responsible for the Corporation, which is publicly accountable through its direct connection to the community, a transparent complaint handling system, an independent Ombudsman, which publishes investigation reports with respect to content complaints, a Code of Practice with oversight from the Australian Communications and Media Authority and reports to the Parliament of Australia, which also exercises oversight through statutory committee processes and other inquiries as arise from time to time.

The ABC is among the most trusted organisations in Australia, which it never takes for granted.

Its pursuit of fair, accurate, independent and impartial news content is in the public interest. It reports without fear or favour, free from personal, political or commercial interests.

Through its reporting the ABC has tracked the rise in antisemitism in Australia over the past few years. Across all its platforms it has covered the increase in attacks on the Jewish community at synagogues, schools, homes and on the streets. It has told the stories of the impacted people, heard from community representatives and questioned authorities and lawmakers about their responses.

Likewise, it has reported on the rise of Islamophobia in Australia and the impact on the nation's Muslim communities.

It is undeniable that the rise in both antisemitism and Islamophobia has occurred amid increasing division at home and abroad over the various wars in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and the Sudan. Australia, like many countries around the world, has not escaped the societal impact of these conflicts.

The ABC has had an ongoing presence in the Middle East for decades covering and contextualizing the events and issues of these ongoing conflicts, which have manifested in a variety of heightened expressions of community reaction through protests and advocacy programs.

The ABC extensively covered the terrorist attack in Israel on October 7. It has also extensively and appropriately covered the subsequent war in Israel and Gaza (and other regions, most particularly in Southern Lebanon and Iran) and the ongoing humanitarian tragedy from these sustained conflicts.

The ABC recognises coverage of these events has been for many Australians intensely personal and deeply challenging. Many Australians have loved ones who live in the Middle East and are directly affected.

For them it has resulted in hurt and anger. Some in the community have formed the view that the ABC is biased -- in fact we are accused almost equally of bias on both primary sides of the conflict.

On objective analysis across the broad spectrum of coverage, the ABC does not believe that it has exhibited or promoted bias. It is the ABC's role to hear from all relevant perspectives in the coverage of these often-harrowing matters and to investigate and report accurately and impartially on their impacts both abroad and at home.

We do this with responsibility and sensitivity. At all times the ABC strives to meet its editorial standards, not just for accuracy and impartiality, but also to mitigate against harm and offence where it can.

ABC personnel cannot look away from this story, which would be an abrogation of the Corporation's core public service obligation. Australians have a right to know and the ABC not only has a reporting responsibility but also a crucial explanatory role.

In its reporting the ABC also appropriately takes into account community concerns. It has the most transparent and responsive complaint process in the Australian media. Its content teams who often deal directly with audience members who, if dissatisfied, can complain to an independent Ombudsman and ultimately to the ACMA.

The ABC Ombudsman's Office has published multiple investigation reports in relation to complaints about coverage of antisemitism and the wars in the Middle East.

The few breaches found by the Ombudsman have been isolated to a limited number of stories, supporting the conclusion that this coverage has met the ABC's obligations for accuracy, fairness and impartiality.

As this submission demonstrates, the ABC has:

- Clear statutory responsibilities and strong accountability
- Comprehensive and rigorous editorial policies
- Provided in-depth coverage of international events and the rise of antisemitism
- Published a diversity of perspectives and content which meets the highest editorial standards, including creating and publishing important educational resources for schools on antisemitism and social cohesion
- A robust and best practice complaints process
- Produced a huge volume of content with minimal breaches of editorial policies

The ABC rejects any suggestion that its journalism has inflamed social divisions or undermined social cohesion. The tone of coverage is carefully calibrated and aims to report and review while not provoking anxiety or inflaming community tensions.

A robust independent public service media is critical to the effective function of our democracy. This is the core role the ABC plays in Australian life.

3. The ABC's statutory duties and social cohesion

a) The ABC's Editorial Policies and Code of Practice

The ABC is governed by the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act (1983)*¹ and exists to provide broadcast and digital services to the community that contribute to a sense of national identity, to inform and entertain, to reflect the nation's cultural diversity and to encourage the promotion of musical, dramatic and other performing arts.

The ABC is independent in all its activities.

It is the duty of the ABC Board, enshrined in section 8 of the ABC Act:

- To ensure that the functions of the Corporation are performed efficiently and with the maximum benefit to the people of Australia
- To maintain the independence and integrity of the Corporation
- To ensure that the gathering and presentation of its news and information is accurate and impartial according to the recognized standards of objective journalism.

These obligations for independence, integrity and impartiality underpin the trust and value placed in the organisation by the Australian community.

The ABC Editorial Policies set out the key areas where the ABC seeks to meet these obligations. As the preamble says², *'They recognise that ABC content must be created in a way that is respectful towards audiences and mindful of community standards in areas like harm and offence.*

At the same time, they recognise that the ABC needs to be adventurous, brave and creative:

Adventurous in encouraging new and sometimes confronting forms of art and entertainment.

Brave in reporting without fear or favour, even when that might be uncomfortable or unpopular; and

Creative in finding new ways of telling Australian stories, reflecting Australian culture and sharing in the Australian conversation.'

The ABC's Editorial Policies are the basis for the editorial standards content must meet.

There are 13 separate Editorial Policies, each with an overarching statement of principles and a series of standards that detail how these principles should be met.

¹<https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A02723/latest/text>

² <https://www.abc.net.au/edpols/preamble/13637608>

ABC content makers are also provided with a separate series of editorial guidance documents that help further interpret and give context to how these policies apply.

The Editorial Policies are:

- Independence, integrity and responsibility
- Accuracy
- Corrections and clarifications
- Impartiality and diversity of perspectives
- Fair and honest dealing
- Privacy
- Harm and Offence
- Children and young people
- Public access and participation
- Announcements about ABC programs and activities
- Advertising and sponsorship restrictions
- Commercial references
- External funding and relationships

The ABC's Editorial Policies are available to the public. They are included as an Attachment.

Changes to the ABC's Editorial Policies must be approved by the Managing Director and as relevant the Board. All changes are presented to the Board, which may amend them.

Within the ABC, the Editorial Policies division is responsible for providing advice and guidance to content makers about the application of the Editorial Policies.

The ABC has a separate Code of Practice. The Code of Practice *'serves as a promise to audiences of what they can expect of their national broadcaster'*.³

The Code of Practice informs the public of the ABC's editorial policies on accuracy, impartiality, fair and honest dealing, privacy, harm and offence and children and young people. It also includes the ABC's classification standards.

The code ensures the ABC meets its statutory obligations under section 8(1)(e) of the ABC Act to develop codes of practice about programming matters and to notify these codes to the ACMA.

The Code of Practice informs audiences about recourse to the ACMA for complaints about content once they have first complained directly to the ABC and if they remain dissatisfied.

³ <https://www.abc.net.au/about/plans-reports-and-submissions/other/code-of-practice/103718532>

The Editorial Policies and the Code of Practice form the ABC's commitment to the community that its content will meet high editorial standards. They capture some of the complexity of the relationship a public media organisation must have with its audience who fund it and to whom it is accountable.

While it must be impartial and accurate in its news and information services this is not done without respect to community standards and a consideration of potential harm and offence. However, its content must also be brave and adventurous, and at times it may also challenge and offend so long as it is reasonable within the service of the public interest.

The ABC recognises its content may not always align with the views of all members of the community. At times it will generate complaint and concern.

It does not do this without thoughtful reason. It acts with a commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of speech, parliamentary democracy and non-discrimination.

It aims to equip the community with independent, accurate and impartial information from a diversity of perspectives so Australians can make up their own minds about issues relevant to their lives, contemporary issues and matters of community consequence.

A strong, bold and brave public broadcaster, independent, empowered and funded to meet its Charter, that promotes free speech and an exchange of ideas, strengthens Australia's society, culture and democracy, drives national identity and builds social cohesion.

b) The ABC Ombudsman

The ABC's current complaints framework, including the role of an independent ABC Ombudsman, was established following a comprehensive external review of the ABC's complaints handling system conducted in 2022 by former Commonwealth Ombudsman Professor John McMillan and former news media executive Jim Carroll. The review was commissioned by the ABC Board and involved a forensic examination of complaint handling practices, public submissions and interviews with relevant stakeholders. While the reviewers found that the ABC's existing internal complaints unit operated efficiently and in accordance with best-practice standards, they identified a significant perception problem around independence and public confidence that warranted structural reform.

As a result of the McMillan–Carroll review, and following acceptance of all recommendations by the ABC Board, the ABC established the position of ABC Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is appointed by, and reports directly to, the ABC Board and operates independently from the ABC's newsrooms and content-making areas. The role sits within a two-tier complaints framework: internal complaint handling led by the Ombudsman, with external regulatory oversight provided by the ACMA. This model was explicitly designed to strengthen independence, transparency and public confidence, while preserving editorial independence and avoiding an overly adversarial or combative approach to complaints handling. The Ombudsman leads a dedicated complaints team and has the authority to assess content complaints and investigate where it deems necessary, review any concerns from complainants who remain unsatisfied after receiving a complaint directly from an ABC division and

recommend that action be taken to ensure consistency with the ABC's Editorial Policies and Code of Practice. The Ombudsman's work is made transparent to audiences through the publication of its proportionate complaints handling processes, breach and other significant findings, and periodic reports. The reforms implemented following the review also strengthened procedural fairness and accessibility for complainants, including clearer review mechanisms, improved consultation, greater assistance navigating the system, extended timeframes for making complaints, faster resolution pathways and increased transparency around outcomes. Importantly, the review cautioned against complaint systems that risk making content makers fearful of robust, innovative journalism, emphasising that an effective complaints framework must balance accountability with the ABC's Charter obligations to fearless and independent public interest reporting.

4. Antisemitism in Australia

a) Coverage of antisemitism

The ABC has extensively covered across hundreds of stories and interviews on radio, television and digital platforms, the increase in antisemitism and the impact on the Australian community over the past few years.

This coverage has appeared across national flagship programs and on regional and local services, reflecting both the national significance of the issue and its local impacts. Reporting has examined antisemitic incidents in communities, law-enforcement and security responses, government policy debates and the lived experiences of those affected.

For example, the ABC extensively covered the Adass Israel Synagogue fire in Melbourne and the ongoing antisemitic graffiti and vandalism targeting schools, synagogues and homes in different locales.

ABC News and current affairs programs reported on these events through breaking news, follow-up reporting, timelines and explanatory journalism, placing the experiences of affected community members at the forefront of stories.

The ABC also reported extensively on the discovery of a caravan filled with explosives in Dural and the subsequent counterterrorism investigation. Coverage examined the implications for community safety and policing, the arrests and charging of alleged perpetrators and the possibility of foreign interference. This reporting culminated in a *Four Corners* investigation, 'The Fugitive', which examined the alleged orchestration of the attacks. Related investigative reporting also explored Iran's foreign interference activities and national security concerns.

In the period leading up to the 2025 federal election ABC coverage examined the Government and Opposition approaches to combating antisemitism, including proposals for mandatory sentencing in hate-speech legislation, deliberations at the national cabinet on antisemitism and changes to hate-speech laws in NSW. This coverage incorporated perspectives from Jewish

community organisations and representative bodies on the effectiveness of policy responses, alongside political analysis featuring senior ministers, opposition figures and state leaders.

More recent coverage has focused on developments following the release of the plan by the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism's, criticism of Australia by the Israeli Prime Minister, reactions across the political spectrum to proposed recognition of Palestinian statehood and the Government's intention to list Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation after ASIO revealed links to antisemitic attacks in Melbourne and Sydney. News and current affairs programs including the 7PM news, 7.30, *News Breakfast*, *ABC News Daily*, *Radio National Breakfast*, *AM*, *PM* and *The World Today* examined these developments through interviews, analysis and explanatory reporting as did rolling news coverage on the ABC NEWS channel.

Across this work, the ABC has consistently featured a broad range of voices. These include affected community members, such as parents from Jewish schools, synagogue congregants and small business owners targeted by antisemitic graffiti; religious leaders, including rabbis from the Great Synagogue in Sydney, Maroubra synagogue and synagogues near the Adass Israel Synagogue; and representatives from bodies such as the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council, the Jewish Board of Deputies and, to a lesser extent, the Jewish Council of Australia (which has inspired spirited comment from some other sections in the Jewish community). Where appropriate, community members have been de-identified to protect privacy and safety.

At all times the ABC has sought to include the most relevant perspectives on issues while recognising that not all groups are representative of the wider Jewish community and that the need to respect diversity of views can result in some inevitable community division.

The ABC has also drawn on academic and expert analysis to provide context and explore broader issues, including antisemitism's historical roots in Australia, contemporary manifestations online and offline, links between extremism and hate crimes and impacts on cultural and creative sectors. Programs such as Radio National's *The World's Oldest Hatred*, *The Religion & Ethics Report*, *Late Night Live* and *The Law Report* have featured scholars, extremism researchers and community leaders discussing analyses and possible responses and solutions.

On the evening of 14 December 2025 ABC NEWS moved into continuous rolling coverage following confirmation by police of a terrorist attack at a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach. Regular programming on the ABC NEWS Channel was suspended and live coverage was provided across television, radio and digital platforms. Early reporting centred on verified information from NSW Police, emergency services and government authorities, alongside public safety messaging as the area was secured and evacuated and the scale of the attack became clear.

ABC NEWS maintained an extensive live blog as events unfolded, reporting police briefings, statements from the Prime Minister and the NSW Premier, and updates on the victims as they

were formally confirmed. Press conferences and official statements were carried live or in full. Care was taken to avoid speculation in the early stages of the investigation while providing audiences with timely updates during a rapidly developing information landscape.

In the immediate aftermath, victims were identified progressively, with names and personal details published following formal confirmation and, where applicable, family consent. Coverage included tributes and profiles focusing on the lives of those killed and injured, as well as reporting on acts of bravery by police, first responders, volunteer surf lifesavers and members of the public who intervened during the attack.

The ABC has continued to investigate what led to the Bondi terrorist attack, including a *Four Corners* investigation into allegations of intelligence failures.

In March, the ABC hosted the first of its new *National Forum* programs. Guests included Bondi attack survivors, relatives of those killed and leaders in the Jewish community. The program focused on the experiences of Jewish Australians and the rise in antisemitism.

b) The Segal Report and the ABC

The ABC extensively covered the release of the report by Jillian Segal, the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, across multiple platforms, including same day and follow-up interviews with Ms Segal on ABC NEWS digital and radio programs. Coverage included a flagship 7.30 interview (10 July 2025) which examined key elements of the report. It attracted complaints that were not upheld by the Ombudsman. There were also *Radio National Breakfast* interviews both before and after the report's release. These interviews addressed the report's core claims, including its assertions about the role of the media.

The ABC has also carefully considered the recommendations of the Segal report.

The report proposes measures that would introduce oversight of editorial standards, monitoring of media content and potential links between public funding and editorial programming, with potential punitive sanctions exercised on the sole judgement of the Special Envoy. These proposals, if adopted, would represent a departure from existing accountability arrangements overseen by the ACMA and the ABC's independent complaints and Ombudsman processes. The ABC considers its editorial independence to be a non-negotiable principle under the ABC Act and any additional external oversight of editorial decision-making, particularly were it linked to funding, would pose a risk to both independence and the public perception of impartiality. The attribution of heightened adjudication powers to an external individual in their sole and absolute right, no matter how well intentioned, would result in a serious challenge to core principles of ethical fairness.

The Segal report also calls for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The ABC acknowledges the adoption of this definition by the Royal Commission and the comments by Commissioner Bell who has described it as an "uncontroversial" basis for the commission's work.

The ABC accepts that many organisations may find the IHRA definition useful and choose to use it, however, it has chosen not to adopt it. This is not because the ABC disagrees with the underlying concept of antisemitism, but because it is longstanding ABC practice to develop its own editorial policies and guidance to ensure independence and maintain public trust. In this context, the question is not only whether the IHRA definition may be useful, but whether the ABC, consistent with its statutory independence, should adopt an externally formulated definition as part of its editorial architecture. The ABC's position is that it should not. While the ABC recognises the seriousness of antisemitism and accepts that the IHRA definition may assist other institutions, it is an important feature of the Corporation's independence that its editorial policies and guidance are developed, owned and applied by the ABC itself, under the ABC Act, the Charter and the Corporation's existing accountability mechanisms.

The ABC's existing guidance on hate speech is clear and unambiguous, including the principle that legitimate criticism of the State of Israel or the actions of some Israelis becomes antisemitism when the target shifts from "Israel" to "Jews".

The ABC notes that the IHRA's core definition -- "antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews" -- is not inconsistent with the ABC's understanding or practical application of antisemitism. However, the broader IHRA framework includes a series of illustrative examples which have become increasingly contentious. These examples have been the subject of highly politicised debate internationally and have, in some contexts, been applied in ways that risk conflating legitimate political and policy critique with antisemitism.

In developing and maintaining its editorial policies, including guidance on hate speech, the ABC consults widely with external experts and community organisations. However, the ABC considers it essential that these policies remain ABC policies which are developed, owned and applied independently, rather than externally imposed definitions or frameworks.

c) ABC Education and antisemitism.

ABC Education creates educational resources for teachers and students mapped to the Australian Curriculum and as they relate to the education departments in the states and territories.

In February 2025 ABC Education in partnership with the Melbourne Holocaust Museum released *Journeys of Hope*, a collection of interviews with Holocaust survivors who shared their stories of migration to Australia and reflected on the lives they built here. The series was supported by educational notes and was published on the ABC Education website and ABC iview. Almost 3700 teachers and an estimated 60,000 students have accessed the series on the ABC Education platform.

The content can be accessed here: [Journeys of Hope - ABC Education](#)

In June 2025 ABC Education commenced discussions with the Victorian Education Department to produce an explainer of the Holocaust for younger students to support the department's ongoing work on Holocaust education. *The Holocaust Explained* was produced in 2025 and released on the ABC Education website and ABC iview at the beginning of 2026.

It can be seen here: [The Holocaust Explained - ABC Education](#)

5. Coverage of the October 7 terrorist attack and the wars in the Middle East

The ABC has had a continuous presence reporting from the Middle East for decades. This ongoing commitment reflects the importance of events in the region on international affairs and on the lives of Australians.

The ABC's foreign correspondents document and tell stories through Australian eyes to help Australians better understand the events and issues that shape their world.

Prior to the October 7 attacks the ABC had two correspondents in the region with a permanent presence in Jerusalem and secondary bureau operating out of Istanbul. This secondary bureau was established when it became difficult to operate in Lebanon.

In the wake of the October 7 attacks and the subsequent war the ABC increased its resources assigned to cover this story, with reporting teams rotating into the region from London, Bangkok, Jakarta, Beijing and Sydney.

The restriction on reporting inside Gaza has meant the ABC, like many news organisations, has had to rely on a network of producers and some international news agency stringers inside the strip for firsthand reporting of the events there.

The ABC has routinely asked for additional access into Gaza. Two brief and tightly controlled deployments have been facilitated since the outbreak of the war.

The ABC understands the security issues, however it disagrees with the ban on entering Gaza. A free press relies on access to conflict zones to witness events firsthand, to question all sides about their conduct and to independently review accounts and, where relevant, evidence.

a) October 7

On 7 October 2023 ABC NEWS treated the Hamas-led attacks in Israel as a major breaking news event, with continuous coverage across platforms as information emerged. Early reporting focused on establishing what was known about the scale and nature of the attacks, including rocket fire into Israel, armed infiltrations into Israeli communities, reported casualties and the taking of hostages. ABC NEWS provided live updates as events unfolded, alongside explanatory content outlining how the attacks occurred and the information being provided by Israeli authorities and other official sources at the time.

In the days and weeks following the attacks ABC NEWS reporting prioritised the human impact. Coverage documented the experiences of residents in affected communities, the attacks on civilian locations, including homes and a music festival near Re'im, and the trauma experienced by survivors and families of victims. Reporting included verified accounts from Israeli communities that were targeted, as well as coverage of the killing of Australian-Israeli citizen Galit Carbone, including reporting from her funeral and from kibbutz Be'eri through the accounts of family members returning to the site of the attack.

ABC NEWS also maintained sustained coverage of the hostage-taking arising from the October 7 attacks, treating it as an ongoing issue in its own right. This included reporting on the experiences of Israeli families whose relatives were taken hostage, coverage of negotiations and ceasefire arrangements linked to hostage releases and detailed reporting when hostages were released. Across this period, ABC NEWS continued to report on the October 7 attacks as a defining event, distinct from and not subsumed by subsequent coverage of the war in Gaza.

ABC NEWS has also reported on Australians whose family members were killed or taken hostage, as well as covering vigils, memorials and anniversary events held across Australia that centered on remembrance of those killed by Hamas on October 7 and concern for hostages still held in Gaza. The reporting has consistently framed these stories as the ongoing personal and communal consequences of the October 7 attacks, reflecting the enduring trauma for Jewish Australians with close ties to Israel.

b) War in Gaza

ABC NEWS has delivered comprehensive coverage of the war in Gaza and related events since the outbreak of the conflict. Coverage has been timely, accurate and impartial, reflecting the complexity and sensitivity of the issues involved. Daily news reporting has focused on establishing and reporting the facts of the conflict, while analysis and discussion programming has been careful to ensure that a diversity of perspectives has been presented over time, consistent with the Editorial Policies.

The ABC has taken particular care to ensure that a wide variety of relevant perspectives have been fairly represented. The organisation has been criticised by both supporters of Israel and critics of Israel. The ABC has not sought to adjudicate between competing political or legal claims, but has instead focused on robust journalism, including careful questioning and appropriate challenge of interviewees, while avoiding the expression of editorial opinion. Criticism has been aimed at proportionality in commentary from different sectors of the Jewish community itself. The ABC respects the diversity of perspectives in the representations of Australian Jewish opinion and analysis and does not seek to underrepresent dominant mainstream commentators. The ABC acknowledges these issues are complex and comment and difference is in some ways inevitable over matters of policy substance which often can provoke passionate opposing opinions.

Coverage has tracked key phases of the war, from the initial Hamas attacks in Israel and subsequent Israeli military response, through ground operations across Gaza, including the expansion of fighting into southern areas, and periods of ceasefire and renewed hostilities linked to hostage negotiations. Reporting has also consistently addressed the role of Hamas as both a militant group designated by the Australian Government as a terrorist organization and the governing authority in Gaza, including its conduct of the October 7 attacks, the taking and holding of hostages, its ongoing military activity throughout the conflict and its position in ceasefire negotiations.

Our reporting has consistently addressed the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, including civilian casualties, large-scale displacement, the delivery and restriction of aid and the impact on critical infrastructure such as hospitals. The coverage has extended beyond Gaza

to include cross-border attacks on Israeli towns in northern Israel and the risk of broader regional escalation.

The ABC has reported on the diplomatic and legal dimensions of the war, including proceedings before the International Court of Justice and allegations of breaches of international law.

At all times, ABC NEWS has been careful to check facts, properly attribute information and report responsibly to avoid spreading misinformation or inflaming hostilities. Accuracy errors have been few in number and have been quickly corrected when identified.

c) Middle East Guidance

Comprehensive internal guidance on reporting the Middle East conflict was prepared by representatives of the News and Editorial Policies divisions in late 2023 soon after the October 7 terrorist attacks. It followed internal consultations with subject matter experts, discussions with ABC staff with lived experience and reference to external sources.

This guidance has supported journalists in navigating complex and contested issues arising from the conflict and has been updated in response to unfolding events. It emphasises that while facts, legal processes and circumstances evolve, the ABC's core commitments to accuracy, impartiality and fairness remain constant. The guidance makes clear that the ABC takes no position on contested issues arising from the conflict. It emphasises that it is not the ABC's role to determine guilt or innocence or to adjudicate between competing claims, but to provide factual information, properly attributed, and present relevant perspectives so audiences can make up their own minds.

The guidance recognises that coverage takes place in an environment of uncertainty and competing claims. It stresses verification, caution, clear attribution and transparency about what is known, disputed or unclear.

Journalists must prioritise accuracy and scrutiny over speed, acknowledge uncertainty where relevant and follow stories as facts develop.

The guidance reiterates that impartiality does not require equal time or equal weight for all perspectives in every piece of content, nor does it permit journalists to reach their own conclusions on contested issues. Instead, balance should follow the weight of evidence and be achieved across coverage as a whole, with appropriate challenge of interviewees, careful distinction between reporting, analysis and opinion and fair representation of competing arguments over time.

The guidance provides detailed advice on framing and language, recognising that terminology in this conflict is often politically charged and easily misunderstood. Journalists are encouraged to use clear, precise language and to prioritise explanation and context over labels.

The guidance also addresses the reporting of highly contentious allegations, including allegations as to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, apartheid and settler-colonialism. Across all such issues, the guidance reiterates that it is not the ABC's role to

determine guilt or innocence or indeed pass any judgement. Coverage should explain relevant legal and factual frameworks, present competing interpretations and challenge the substance of claims made by all sides.

Specific guidance on allegations of genocide outlines the relevant international legal context and ongoing court processes, while making clear that interim findings or reports do not constitute final determinations.

The guidance makes clear that not every use of the term “genocide” by interviewees requires routine qualification. However, where substantial allegations of genocide are made they should be explored and, where appropriate, challenged. Journalists are instructed not to present genocide as an established fact and to seek and fairly report Israel’s responses to substantive allegations over time. The guidance also emphasises that perspectives both for and against Israel’s conduct and motives must be presented fully and fairly over time, in accordance with the Editorial Policies, while recognising that incidental references to genocide do not require automatic qualification where the issue is not the focus of the story.

6. Audience complaints about coverage of the Israel-Gaza war

The ABC treats all legitimate complaints in good faith and welcomes engagement with audiences. Complaints can form part of a public exchange where all parties can benefit.

Coverage of the Israel-Gaza war has generated a significant volume of audience complaints. This reflects the heightened community interest in this ongoing story and the strength of views in the community.

The ABC is not alone in experiencing an increase in audience complaints about this story. Many media organisations around the world have reported an increase in audience contacts about this ongoing story.

Since the outbreak of the war the Israel-Gaza conflict has been the single largest topic of complaint to the ABC.⁴

The ABC Ombudsman’s Office regularly reports on complaint volume and outcomes. Its bi-annual statements are publicly available.

Most of the complaints have related to claims of bias. In the 6 months between July and December 2025 complaints about the ABC’s coverage were split, with 51% claiming the ABC was pro-Palestinian and 47% claiming the ABC was pro-Israel.

This six-month figure broadly reflected the views of the audience over the entirety of the content.

⁴ [Recent Complaints and Reports - ABC Ombudsman's Office - About the ABC](#)

The ABC is aware of ‘sentiment analysis’ submitted to the Royal Commission and reported in the media which purports to show that ABC reporting in the first two weeks after 7 October 2023 was more sympathetic to Gaza or Palestinians than to Israel or Israelis.

The analysis is based on prompts to a generative AI model asking whether ABC headlines and article text created “sympathy” for particular parties to the conflict. The report does not define how sympathy is measured or what counts as bias in this context. Such use of AI models to assess editorial tone is inherently dependent on how prompts are framed and the way the model is constructed. The ABC does not accept that this analysis establishes systemic editorial bias.

Beyond these methodological limitations, criticisms of tone or perceived sympathy in ABC coverage do not reflect how editorial impartiality is assessed in practice. While some critiques focus on particular headlines or individual stories in isolation, the ABC’s editorial approach does not assess impartiality on a story-by-story basis. As reflected in its Editorial Policies and guidance, due impartiality is achieved over the breadth of coverage, with journalists required to present relevant facts, apply appropriate scrutiny to claims and ensure that significant perspectives are represented fairly over time. Coverage of fast-moving and complex events may, at times, emphasise particular aspects of a story — whether human impact, legal developments or military activity — depending on the information available at that moment. This does not constitute bias but reflects the evolving nature of news reporting.

The ABC’s assessment of tone and balance is therefore grounded not in subjective interpretations of individual headlines or excerpts, but in the totality of its output. This includes sustained coverage of the October 7 attacks, the experiences of Israeli victims and hostages, the conduct of Hamas, and the humanitarian consequences of the war in Gaza. Independent assessment by the ABC Ombudsman of individual complaints, together with the Corporation’s editorial policies, guidance and complaint-handling processes, has not identified systemic bias in ABC coverage of the Israel-Gaza war.

On both sides of the debate coordinated campaigns have at times sought to highlight or escalate perceived issues with coverage.

In each instance the ABC Ombudsman has charted a fair and reasonable path in assessing complaints and determining outcomes in accordance with established processes.

Since the beginning of the Israel-Gaza war there has also been a steady increase in automated duplicated complaints. These complaints come from different email addresses but are identical or only differ by a few words. At times it is apparent that the complainant has not viewed or watched the specific story themselves but has reflected in their complaint criticism from other media about the ABC (a long-established practice by some other media enterprises).

Some of these complaints appear to be generated by AI or through an automated email generation system. The ABC Ombudsman may deal with these identical complaints together as a single issue.

Some audience members have also expressed criticism of the ABC for giving people they disagree with an opportunity to express a view. The ABC understands that people have strongly held views, but a free and informed society relies on hearing different perspectives. As the public broadcaster, the ABC will not deplatform people with relevant views simply because others may disagree with them.

Despite the volume of stories about the Israel-Gaza war and the increase in complaints the ABC has had very few breaches of its editorial policies.

The ABC Ombudsman has found breaches for issues with four separate stories.

Three of these breaches were for accuracy issues. The fourth breach was an impartiality breach for comments made on a hip hop show on the ABC's music network triple j.

There have been no successful complaints about the ABC's coverage to the ACMA.

This is not to suggest that the ABC does not always have room for improvement or does not treat audience complaints as an opportunity to ensure all its content is of a high standard.

Where we recognise our stories could be better we have updated stories or added additional context and clarifications. The ABC Ombudsman also publishes reports on significant investigations and review findings or where suitable action has been taken to update a story to ensure the ABC's standards are met.

It is the ABC's view that the formal complaint outcomes, as well as broader informal feedback, indicate that most observers recognise that the ABC has sought, and largely succeeded, in presenting a very difficult and highly polarised conflict in an impartial and accurate manner.

Conclusion

The ABC recognises the seriousness of antisemitism in Australia and the vital importance of the Royal Commission's work in examining its nature, prevalence and impact on social cohesion. The increase in antisemitic attacks and incidents has caused fear, hurt and anger within the Australian Jewish community. The ABC has reported extensively on these events, including attacks on synagogues, schools, homes, businesses and public gatherings, and has sought to place the experiences of affected people and communities at the centre of that coverage.

The ABC also recognises that its reporting on the October 7 terrorist attacks, the Israel-Gaza war, the wider conflicts in the Middle East and their effects in Australia has been intensely personal for many Australians. These events have generated strong views, significant community concern and a large volume of complaints. The ABC does not dismiss that concern. It has sought to respond through careful reporting, editorial guidance, transparent complaint handling and independent investigation and review by the ABC Ombudsman, while continuing to meet its statutory obligations to independence, accuracy and impartiality.

The ABC rejects any suggestion that its journalism has inflamed social divisions or undermined social cohesion. Its role is not to avoid difficult or confronting stories, nor to adjudicate

between competing political, legal or moral claims. Its role is to provide factual information, properly attributed where necessary, to present relevant perspectives fairly over time, to challenge claims appropriately and to equip Australians to make up their own minds. A public broadcaster that reports without fear or favour, and remains independent of political, personal or commercial interests, is essential to Australia's democracy.

The ABC accepts that it will not always get every piece of content right. Where errors occur they should be corrected promptly and transparently. The evidence set out in this submission demonstrates, however, that the ABC has extensive statutory, editorial and complaints frameworks in place, that it has produced a large volume of careful and substantial reporting on antisemitism and the Middle East conflict, and that no systemic breaches of its Editorial Standards have been identified. Some recent commentary in commercial media has accused the ABC of bias and of contributing to the rise of antisemitism. As a public institution, the ABC expects and accepts robust scrutiny. At the same time, serious claims about the ABC, its journalism and its staff should be grounded in evidence and assessed fairly. Commentary that is not properly evidenced does not contribute to an informed or reasoned public debate. It risks undermining confidence in public interest journalism and may contribute to further polarisation in the community. The ABC will continue to take antisemitism seriously, to report on its impact in Australia and to cover international events that bear directly on Australian communities. It will do so with independence, accountability, sensitivity and a commitment to the public interest. In that work, the ABC's contribution to social cohesion is not achieved by avoiding difficult issues, but by reporting them accurately, impartially and responsibly, whilst always striving to offer respect to community views and individuals, so as to ensure a fair representation of opinion, belief and difference is displayed to inform public knowledge and to assist the formulation of individual community member's understanding and as relevant, judgement.

Appendix A – Noteworthy ABC coverage of contested events or issues

To assist the Royal Commission in its work the following information is intended to provide information on highly contested issues which have been the focus of complaints.

This does not encapsulate the depth and breadth of ABC storytelling on these issues or the conflict more broadly and should not be read as such. It does not indicate or suggest that matters not included were not also given appropriate relevance or treated with the same level of journalistic scrutiny to the high standards set by the ABC.

The number of upheld complaints compared to the overall output is very low. However, the ABC takes all complaints seriously and where it has been found to be in error updates its stories and attaches editor's notes so the audience can transparently see any changes that have been made.

The ABC Ombudsman publishes breach, resolved and other noteworthy findings.

1) Genocide

South Africa launched a case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in December 2023 accusing Israel of committing genocide in the Gaza strip.

Israel strenuously denied these allegations at the time and continues to do so.

The ABC has consistently covered this highly contentious and contested issue.

This has included coverage of the South African ICJ submission, the ICJ order in May 2024 ordering Israel to cease its operations in Rafah, ongoing criticism of Israel by some in the international community and Palestinians continuing to accuse Israel of genocide in Gaza and finally the UN Human Rights Council inquiry finding in September 2025.

Editorial guidance was provided to staff at the time the ICJ case was launched with a particular focus on how to accurately report the details of the ICJ case and the need to ensure Israel's denials of genocide.

Guidance was updated at each significant step in the international legal process and to give weight to the impact of Israel's actions in Gaza and the weight of evidence supporting the allegations of genocide.

At all times the ABC guidance has included a requirement to include Israel's response to allegations of genocide when the issue is the substantive a focus of the story.

This does not mean that every mentioned of genocide requires a rebuttal from Israel.

The guidance currently states:

- *It is not necessary to say every time someone describes the war as a genocide in live content to include the pro forma statement that Israel denies the allegation.*

- *Likewise, in news stories where victims or their relatives describe Israel's actions as genocide where genocide is not a focus of the story it is not necessary to include a pro forma denial by Israel.*
- *In substantive interviews, particularly with officials or spokespersons of any sort where genocide is alleged, reporters and presenters should engage with the substantive issues underlying the allegation. You can do this by asking additional questions that provide the audience with additional accurate information that helps them make up their own mind. In addition, you should seek to present additional context.*
- *In scripted and digital content where genocide is raised as an issue or allegation, the substance of Israel's perspective should be included.*
- *Arguments both for and against the allegation of genocide should be challenged and critically examined.*

Over the course of the conflict the ABC has been criticised for its reporting by both sides of this conflict.

The ABC has consistently held the view that it is not our role to take a stance or determine or label Israel's actions in Gaza as amounting to genocide or not. This is the role of the International Court of Justice.

The ABC Ombudsman considered complaints about a July 2025 episode of *Radio National Hour* featuring a panel discussion on whether events in Gaza met the definition of genocide. Complainants alleged bias and offence in the way the topic was framed and the questions posed to panellists. The Ombudsman found no breach of the Editorial Standards, concluding that discussion of contested terminology such as "genocide" is permissible where it is appropriately contextualised and that posing challenging questions to experts does not imply endorsement of the views contained within those questions. ([Ombudsman report: Genocide panel discussion](#))

In relation to an October 2025 episode of *Late Night Live*, the Ombudsman reviewed complaints concerning an interview with Francesca Albanese about her United Nations report titled "Gaza Genocide: A Collective Crime". Complainants argued that the program lacked impartiality and did not sufficiently challenge the use of the term "genocide." The Ombudsman found no breach, determining that the term arose as part of the guest's perspective and that the program's treatment of the issue was consistent with the requirements of due impartiality, having regard to the nature of long-form interview content and the expectation that a diversity of perspectives be presented over time. ([Ombudsman report: Late Night Live – Francesca Albanese](#))

The Ombudsman also assessed complaints about a September 2025 edition of *Radio National Breakfast* that included discussion of proceedings before the ICJ under the Genocide Convention. Complainants alleged that references to the ICJ's findings were inaccurate, particularly in relation to statements about the plausibility of genocide. The Ombudsman found no breach, concluding that the presenter's characterisation of the ICJ position was an acceptable paraphrase in the context of a live broadcast and did not materially mislead the audience. ([Ombudsman report: ICJ findings interviews](#))

In August 2025 complaints were made about a 7.30 interview with an Israeli government minister, with some audience members characterising the content as “manufacturing consent for genocide”. The Ombudsman found no breach, noting that such references arose from complainants’ descriptions rather than the ABC’s editorial framing. The finding emphasised that the Editorial Standards do not preclude the broadcast of contentious or potentially offensive views provided they are appropriately contextualised and examined. ([Ombudsman report: 7.30 – Amichai Chikli interview](#))

2) Gaza casualties

The death toll in Gaza since the outbreak of the war has been heavily contested.

The ABC’s editorial guidance to staff points out that: *“In the context of war, verifying data on casualties that have come from those involved in the conflict, or third parties monitoring it, is extremely difficult.”*

As such the ABC relies on Gazan authorities for Gazan casualties, as it does Israeli authorities for Israeli casualties.

The ABC guidance is that all death tolls figures should be attributed to their source.

The ABC has been criticised for referencing death toll figures by the Gaza Health Ministry which, as a governing body in Gaza, has been under the control of Hamas since 2007.

However, historically the health ministry has had a degree of independence and its data on casualties have been considered reliable.

The ABC guidance is that if the claims of the Palestinian or Gazan Health Ministry go beyond the health of the people in Gaza then the story should include a line that the ministry is “Hamas controlled” or similar.

Given the ABC is prevented from assessing independently the situation in Gaza and the toll on civilians it must rely on these local sources.

The editorial guidance says: *“Be scrupulous about properly attributing and contextualising any data on casualties. For example, in the current circumstances the Gazan health ministry says it cannot reliably count all casualties, which would be a material fact in a story focused on the death toll.*

“Distinguish between civilians and combatants wherever possible. Civilians play no role in armed conflict. The death and casualty data released by the Gaza Health Ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Therefore, do not say or write that ‘x thousand civilians have been killed according to the Gazan Health Ministry’, say ‘people’. It is accurate to say most or many are believed to be civilians.”

At various times across the conflict the ABC has written stories to examine the death toll claims in Gaza, for example when the Palestinian Health Ministry reported the death toll was

more than 50,000 people. ([A closer look at the human toll in Gaza as deaths pass 50,000 - ABC News](#))

While the death toll in Gaza remains contested, in January some Israeli media reported the Israeli Defence force had confirmed the number of Palestinian deaths in Gaza was around 70,000, largely consistent with the number given by the Gaza Health Ministry.

The ABC has had a variety of complaints about its reporting of the death toll.

The ABC Ombudsman reviewed a complaint about a September 2025 episode of *News Breakfast* in which a guest stated that more than 680,000 people had been killed in Gaza. Complainants argued that the figure was unverified and had not been challenged by the presenters. The matter was resolved after the ABC issued an on-air clarification the following day, noting that the figure was not supported and contrasting it with the Gaza Health Ministry's reported death toll. The Ombudsman accepted that this correction addressed the concern. ([News Breakfast – Death toll in Gaza](#))

In a November 2025 investigation report concerning an ABC NEWS online article about conditions in Gaza following a ceasefire, complaints included allegations that the ABC had uncritically relied on casualty figures provided by the Gaza Health Ministry. The Ombudsman found no breach, concluding that it was appropriate for the ABC to use those figures with context. The finding noted that, while the Health Ministry operates under Hamas, its data have historically been regarded as reliable by international organisations and remain the primary available source of casualty information. ([ABC News Online – One month after the ceasefire](#))

Finally, the Ombudsman considered a complaint about a May 2024 ABC NEWS digital timeline article summarising events leading up to an Israeli airstrike in Rafah. Complainants raised concerns about inaccuracies and omissions affecting the presentation of key events, including those involving casualties. The Ombudsman found a breach of the Editorial Standards, concluding that the omission of relevant contextual information amounted to a failure to present material facts accurately. The finding emphasised that summary formats such as timelines carry a high obligation to ensure completeness and accuracy when depicting conflict events and their consequences. ([ABC News Digital – Gaza war timeline](#)) The ABC corrected the timeline and posted a correction.

3) Famine

The ABC has provided ongoing coverage on the availability of food in Gaza during the war.

This has included reporting on Israel's three-month blockade of aid into the strip in early 2025 and allegations aid was being withheld and exploited by Hamas, food shortages, particularly impacting children, the return of some aid via a private aid model delivered by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, rather than relying on established UN channels, and attacks on aid sites and aid convoys. This is not a comprehensive summary of all of the ABC's reporting.

ABC reporting on these issues has attributed claims to relevant authorities and experts including the World Food Program and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

The ABC's reporting has been accurate and fair, providing all sides in the conflict with the opportunity to respond to any claims. Reporting on these issues has been made more difficult by the ban on international media entering Gaza.

In July 2025, during what was then the height of international concerns about the access to food and supplies in Gaza, the ABC reported on Palestinian boy Muhammad Zakariya Ayyoub al-Matouq. His photo had been featured on the front page of *The New York Times* and was widely republished by major media outlets, including the BBC, CNN, Sky News, and *The Guardian*.

The ABC showed the image to the Prime Minister during its Sunday *Insiders* program to illustrate the issue of malnutrition in Gaza. It did not in that segment cover in detail the boy's personal circumstances.

The photo was also included in the 7PM News in a sequence about lack of food and as part of a story reporting Mr Albanese's reaction on *Insiders*.

Questions about the photo and the child's underlying medical condition arose a few days later. The ABC did its own research into the background to the picture, which resulted in a more detailed story. ([ABC News - Controversy-over-image-of-a-skeletal-one-year-old-gazan-boy](#))

The ABC's *Media Watch* also covered the story. The program later added an editor's note as more information became available which read: *"Since broadcast, The New York Times has confirmed earlier unverified claims that in addition to experiencing severe malnutrition, Muhammad Zakariya Ayyoub al-Matouq has pre-existing health conditions."*

Critics of reporting on the boy's story have claimed that it was not evidence of starvation and his emaciation was the result of a medical condition that had been concealed to perpetuate a narrative about famine. The ABC reported this criticism. Some critics have even gone as far as to attack the boy's mother.

However, the original story was not inaccurate in that, notwithstanding the child's underlying health condition, he was malnourished. When the ABC became aware of the greater context to the story that was included.

An editor's note was added to digital story related to the interview with Mr Albanese. It reads *"An interview with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Insiders on July 27, and in ABC News coverage of Gaza on July 26 and 27, a photo and vision of Muhammad Zakariya Ayyoub al-Matouq was shown to illustrate the issue of malnutrition and starvation in Gaza. While there has been subsequent reporting around al-Matouq's medical history, the material facts of the story remain the same. We therefore remain satisfied the inclusion of his story in our coverage on the malnutrition crisis in Gaza was appropriate."*

Across its reporting on this issue the ABC consistently updated the audience with the most current information and, where helpful to audience understanding, added appropriate editor's notes to its stories.

Separately, the ABC Ombudsman investigated complaints about ABC NEWS reporting in May 2025 that repeated a United Nations-attributed claim made on the BBC that 14,000 babies in

Gaza were at risk of dying within 48 hours due to starvation. Complainants argued that the figure was inaccurate and misleading.

The Ombudsman found a breach of the Editorial Standards, concluding that the ABC failed to ensure the accuracy of the statistic and did not correct a significant material error in a timely manner. The finding clarified that the figure had been misinterpreted from an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, which in fact referred to projected cases of severe acute malnutrition over a longer period rather than imminent deaths. ([ABC NEWS | Various | 14,000 babies in Gaza | 21 May 2025 | Breach](#))

A related Ombudsman investigation into *Planet America* similarly found a breach where the same statistic was relied upon after it had been corrected, noting that the program did not make reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy prior to broadcast, and required a subsequent on-air correction. ([Planet America \(Weekend Edition\) | 14,000 babies in Gaza | 23 May 2025 | Breach](#))

The Ombudsman also investigated reporting on the delivery of aid and humanitarian conditions. An Ombudsman investigation into a 7.30 interview noted that the program included contextual clarification about the limited scale of operations by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and the occurrence of killings at aid distribution sites, as part of testing contested claims made by an interviewee. The Ombudsman found no breach, concluding that these clarifications were appropriate and relevant. ([ABC NEWS | 7.30 | Mike Huckabee interview | 14 August 2025 | No breach](#))

Similarly, a significant no-breach finding relating to post-ceasefire coverage considered complaints about the treatment of claims concerning aid needs in Gaza, noting that the ABC relied on the limited reporting sources available in the conflict environment and that such reliance, when appropriately contextualised, did not breach editorial standards. ([ABC NEWS online | One month after the ceasefire | 15 November 2025 | No breach](#))

4) War crimes

Allegations of war crimes have been a highly contentious issue across the Israel-Gaza war.

The ABC's guidance clearly informs staff that war crimes as defined in the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute do not automatically amount to genocide. This is a distinction some members of the community commenting on the war often fail to identify.

In 2024 the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. The Israeli government denied the allegations against its officials.

The ICC's Prosecutor also requested warrants for Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar. Sinwar and Haniyeh were confirmed dead before the Pre-Trial Chamber decision.

The ABC's guidance on reporting on these allegations and the ICC actions says: *"The ICC's actions and relevant reactions are material facts in relation to claims or denials of war crimes"*

or crimes against humanity in the Israel-Gaza war and must be included in content that focusses primarily on those claims.

“As with the issue of genocide, there may be occasions, for example in live content or if the story’s focus is principally on the personal experience of a person whose family has been killed, by an Israeli airstrike in Gaza, or in attacks by Hamas, where a discussion of the ICC’s actions is impractical or jarring.”

The guidance goes on to make it clear it is not the job of the ABC to label particular acts a war crime but to look for and report on facts and evidence.

It says: *“In the current context the 1949 Geneva convention’s definition is useful: ‘Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated’.”*

Some of the ABC’s reporting on allegations of war crimes include,

- An explainer on the rules of war in Gaza. [Human Rights Watch alleges Israel is breaching the rules of war in Gaza — what are they? - ABC News](#)
- Attacks on aid sites in southern Gaza. [United Nations says Gaza aid site attacks 'may constitute a war crime' - ABC News](#)
- The Israeli military inquiry into an aid site attack. [IDF launches investigation into possible war crimes after deaths near aid sites - ABC News](#)
- UN concerns about Israeli strikes on Gaza hospitals. Israel’s response that Hamas uses hospitals as command centres. [UN warns Israeli strikes on Gaza hospitals could constitute war crimes - ABC News](#)

In all the reporting the ABC clearly attributes any allegations made, presents accurate information and provides an opportunity for a response.

Reporting on the al-Ahli Arab Hospital blast was one highly contentious story with some audience members.

An explosion at the hospital in northern Gaza in late October 2023 is thought to have killed hundreds of people. Subsequently both Israel and Hamas blamed each other for the explosion.

The ABC initially reported a story from the Reuters news agency that the blast had been the result of an Israeli airstrike. Reuters is considered a reliable source.

The Israeli military quickly cast doubts on these reports. Twenty-five minutes after the first story the ABC updated its story to include the Israeli military denial of responsibility for the attack and updated the headline to: *“Israel blames Palestinian militants after hospital bombing kills hundreds in Gaza”*.

The ABC continued to report on the blast:

- [What we know about the blast at al-Ahli Arab hospital in northern Gaza - ABC News](#)
- [Israel and Palestinian militants blame each other after hospital blast in Gaza - ABC News](#)
- [Deleted posts, edited videos and competing narratives: What the evidence says about the Gaza hospital blast - ABC News](#)
- [New assessments point to rocket failure in Gaza hospital blast, but questions remain - ABC News](#)

These stories in the days after the blast explored how responsibility remained unclear and laid out in detail the analysis conducted by various intelligence agencies.

The ABC Ombudsman's Office received 47 editorial complaints, of which 35 complained of anti-Israel bias and 12 complained of pro-Israel bias. This again demonstrates that ABC stories are often complained about by both sides.

The Ombudsman did not find any impartiality breaches. The Ombudsman was also satisfied the ABC did not breach the accuracy standards.

The Ombudsman said: *"As more information became available, the ABC's reporting continued to change and updated stories as appropriate. We find this coverage does not breach the accuracy standards."* [ABC NEWS | Gaza hospital explosion | 18-20 October 2023 | No breach/Resolved](#)

This story coverage demonstrates the difficulty of reporting on a fast-moving conflict where journalists are denied direct access. However, the coverage did not reflect bias in ABC reporting. A blast occurred; the ABC attributed the first claims to local authorities; subsequent denials by Israel were included within 25 minutes; the ABC made audiences aware there was no independent verification; the ABC then proceeded to explore and explain to the audience relevant information as soon as it was available. This is an example of breaking news reporting of the highest standards.

Appendix B – ABC stories about Antisemitism

This is a non-exhaustive list focusing on digital and digital version of video stories ABC News has published about Antisemitism in recent years.

It does not capture audio or broadcast stories or discussions.

2023

- [New research shows widespread antisemitism in universities and online](#) — 14 Aug 2023 — 7.30 / program page
- [Jewish students bullied at Melbourne's Brighton Secondary College win discrimination case](#) — 14 Sep 2023
- [Jewish and Muslim students say they've become targets on American university campuses](#) — 15 Nov 2023
- [Islamophobic and anti-Semitic incidents in Australia at unprecedented levels amid Israel-Gaza war](#) — 2 Dec 2023

2024

- [Envoy says criticism of Israel after October 7 attacks 'antisemitic'](#) — 30 Jan 2024
- [US sanctions on Israeli settlers have sparked accusations of anti-Semitism — and cracked open a long-running international debate](#) — 5 Feb 2024
- [Victorian MPs condemn anti-Semitic graffiti attack on Melbourne school](#) — 27 May 2024
- [Overnight attack on Labor MP's Melbourne office 'not the way we do democracy', PM says](#) — 18 Jun 2024
- [Labor MP Josh Burns condemns 'dangerous' vandalism of his office](#) — 19 Jun 2024 — video
- [Prime minister names Jillian Segal as first Australian anti-Semitism envoy](#) — 8 Jul 2024
- [Teenagers charged over politically motivated graffiti on MP Josh Burns' office](#) — 26 Jul 2024
- [Study of online hate finds Islamophobic and anti-Semitic comments are increasing](#) — 4 Aug 2024
- [Brisbane Greens councillor asked to repay \\$20k for 'anti-Semitic' newsletter](#) — 4 Sep 2024
- [Islamophobia envoy Aftab Malik appointed after months of delay](#) — 30 Sep 2024

- [Thousands gather at pro-Palestine marches around the country](#) — 6 Oct 2024
- [Across Australia, Jewish communities are gathering to ‘create light’ in October 7 anniversary’s deadly shadow](#) — 6 Oct 2024
- [If we can’t show empathy to each other in Australia, how do we expect those at the heart of this conflict to?](#) — 7 Oct 2024
- [Communities across Australia gather to remember lives lost in October 7 attack](#) — 7 Oct 2024
- [Coalition refuses to support motion marking the first anniversary of the October 7 attacks](#) — 7 Oct 2024
- [Protesters cause nearly \\$90,000 in damage to Victorian MP’s office](#) — 18 Oct 2024
- [Police investigate alleged anti-Semitic abuse of Melbourne high school students](#) — 5 Nov 2024
- [Car set alight, others vandalised with anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney’s eastern suburbs](#) — 20 Nov 2024
- [Man charged days after buildings and cars spray-painted with anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney’s east](#) — 25 Nov 2024
- [Melbourne synagogue fire condemned by PM as ‘act of hate’, as witnesses describe fleeing flames](#) — 6 Dec 2024
- [Adass Israel Synagogue fire leaves Melbourne’s Jewish community reeling](#) — 7 Dec 2024
- [Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu links Melbourne synagogue firebombing to Australia’s UN vote](#) — 7 Dec 2024
- [Melbourne Adass Israel Synagogue fire being treated as terror attack, police say](#) — 9 Dec 2024
- [AFP anti-Semitism taskforce ‘Avalite’ established after synagogue attack](#) — 9 Dec 2024
- [What is the joint counter-terrorism team investigating the Adass Israel Synagogue fire?](#) — 9 Dec 2024
- [Albanese rejects blame for rise in anti-Semitism](#) — 9 Dec 2024
- [PM says anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney aimed at ‘promoting fear’](#) — 10 Dec 2024
- [Car set alight, properties vandalised in anti-Israel attack in Sydney](#) — 10 Dec 2024 — video

- [Community 'devastated' following anti-Semitic attack in Sydney](#) — 10 Dec 2024 — video
- [Vandals spray graffiti and burn a car in latest anti-Semitic attack in Woollahra](#) — 11 Dec 2024 — 7.30 / video
- [Police presence increased around Jewish sites in Sydney](#) — 12 Dec 2024
- [After suspected terror attack on synagogue, Australia's Jewish community reflects on hopes and fears](#) — 14 Dec 2024
- [Police investigating alleged Islamophobic and anti-Semitic incidents in Melbourne](#) — 21 Dec 2024
- [Alleged leader of anti-Semitic rally at Parliament House in Melbourne arrested](#) — 23 Dec 2024

2025

- [Allawah synagogue in southern Sydney vandalised with swastikas, Jewish leaders call for 'stronger leadership'](#) — 10 Jan 2025
- [Sydney synagogue and house targeted with swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti](#) — 10 Jan 2025
- [Sydney synagogue and house sprayed with anti-semitic graffiti](#) — 10 Jan 2025 — video
- [Another Sydney synagogue targeted with offensive graffiti](#) — 10 Jan 2025 — audio
- [Counter terrorism police investigate anti-Semitic synagogue incidents in Sydney](#) — 11 Jan 2025
- [Terrorism authorities probe Sydney graffiti attacks](#) — 12 Jan 2025 — video
- [VIDEO: NSW police investigating anti-Semitic incidents across state](#) — 13 Jan 2025 — video
- [Wave of attacks on Sydney's Jewish and Muslim communities points to serious racism issue](#) — 17 Jan 2025
- [Coalition vows minimum jail terms for anti-Semitic acts](#) — 19 Jan 2025
- [Police arrest and charge woman over anti-Israel attack in Sydney's east](#) — 19 Jan 2025
- [Childcare centre set alight, graffitied with anti-Semitic words at Maroubra in Sydney's south-east](#) — 20 Jan 2025
- [The series of antisemitic attacks that have shocked Sydney](#) — 21 Jan 2025

- [Anti-Semitic incidents in Sydney could shape future of hate crime laws](#) — 22 Jan 2025
- [NSW Police charge man over anti-Semitic attack and attempted fire at Sydney's Newtown Synagogue](#) — 21 Jan 2025 — video
- [Man charged by police investigating anti-Semitic attacks pleads guilty over Bondi brewery fire](#) — 22 Jan 2025
- [Police say criminals for hire could be behind Sydney anti-Semitic attacks](#) — 22 Jan 2025
- [Jewish school, house in Maroubra vandalised with graffiti in latest antisemitic attack](#) — 29 Jan 2025
- [Jewish school in Sydney's east sprayed with anti-Semitic graffiti](#) — 30 Jan 2025 — video
- [Behind the scenes of Operation Shelter, with NSW Police targeting antisemitism in Sydney](#) — 1 Feb 2025
- [White supremacist network hit with sanctions in antisemitism crackdown — as it happened](#) — 2 Feb 2025 — live blog
- [Why Sydney is seeing so many antisemitic attacks of late](#) — 3 Feb 2025
- [Unis told to tidy up complaints process for antisemitic incidents](#) — 14 Feb 2025
- [Jewish Australians feeling unsafe after anti-Semitic attacks](#) — 17 Feb 2025 — video / program page
- [Man charged over anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east granted bail](#) — 5 Mar 2025
- [Man police allege to be key figure in five Sydney antisemitic attacks revealed](#) — 12 Mar 2025
- [The figures allegedly behind Sydney's high-profile antisemitic attacks](#) — 15 Mar 2025
- [Man charged over antisemitic graffiti sprayed on Sydney school, homes and shopping centre](#) — 20 Mar 2025
- [21yo accused of setting car alight, anti-Israel graffiti in Sydney's east granted bail](#) — 9 May 2025
- [Antisemitism inquiry told Jewish school students subject to abuse and threats](#) — 4 Jul 2025
- [Man sets fire to synagogue in East Melbourne as Israeli-owned restaurant targeted by protesters](#) — 4 Jul 2025

- [Police lay charges over synagogue fire amid condemnation of alleged attack](#) — 6 Jul 2025
- [Melbourne synagogue fire shows Australia’s multicultural project needs defending](#) — 6 Jul 2025 — analysis
- [Victorian government announces new police taskforce in wake of antisemitism attacks](#) — 6 Jul 2025
- [Melbourne Jewish community ‘reeling’ after anti-Semitic attacks](#) — 7 Jul 2025 — video
- [Sweeping antisemitism plan expected to be handed down](#) — 10 Jul 2025
- [Antisemitism plan would strip funding from unis, arts events who fail to act](#) — 10 Jul 2025
- [Why the government is unlikely to follow Donald Trump’s university funding-cut approach](#) — 10 Jul 2025
- [Melbourne Jewish school students allegedly targeted with antisemitic slurs](#) — 24 Jul 2025
- [Man arrested over fire that destroyed Adass Israel Synagogue of Melbourne](#) — 30 Jul 2025
- [Police investigate graffiti attacks at synagogue in Melbourne’s south-east](#) — 4 Aug 2025
- [Police are investigating Melbourne synagogue graffiti attacks](#) — 4 Aug 2025 — video
- [Police charge 20-year-old Meadow Heights man over Adass Israel Synagogue arson](#) — 20 Aug 2025
- [Man charged after South Yarra synagogue vandalised with graffiti](#) — 25 Aug 2025
- [ASIO says Iran behind Australian antisemitic attacks, diplomatic ties cut](#) — 25 Aug 2025
- [Revelations Iran was behind antisemitic attacks show IRGC tentacles reach Australia](#) — 26 Aug 2025
- [What we know about Iran’s involvement in antisemitic attacks in Australia](#) — 26 Aug 2025
- [Australia ‘primarily’ responsible for investigation that uncovered Iran links to antisemitic attacks](#) — 26 Aug 2025
- [Hatred must be fought ‘where we live our lives’, says antisemitism envoy](#) — 4 Sep 2025

- [Two men charged over antisemitic attacks at Allawah synagogue, Maroubra childcare centre](#) — 10 Sep 2025
- [Two men charged over antisemitic attacks](#) — 10 Sep 2025 — video
- [Police name UK synagogue attacker as Israel calls for action on rising antisemitism](#) — 3 Oct 2025
- [‘Deeply wrong’ pro-Hamas graffiti condemned as Australian Jewish community marks October 7](#) — 7 Oct 2025
- [Israel names Iranian it says is responsible for attacks in Australia](#) — 26 Oct 2025
- [Accused Adass Israel Synagogue arsonist Giovanni Lauu granted bail](#) — 14 Nov 2025
- [Report details attacks and abuse faced by Australian Jews](#) — 2 Dec 2025
- [Jewish leaders attend Adass Israel Synagogue for anniversary of firebombing](#) — 3 Dec 2025
- [Sussan Ley accuses Albanese of failing to keep Jewish Australians safe](#) — 15 Dec 2025
- [Bondi’s antisemitic attack is the Jewish diaspora’s worst nightmare](#) — 15 Dec 2025
- [Bondi attack caused by ‘cascading hate’ left unchecked, critics say](#) — 15 Dec 2025
- [Bondi attack came after huge increase in online antisemitism](#) — 16 Dec 2025
- [Greens councillor rejects ‘antisemitic’ newsletter claims from mayor](#) — 17 Dec 2025
- [Albanese announces tougher hate speech laws in wake of Bondi terror attack](#) — 17 Dec 2025
- [Humbled PM shifts gear amid Jewish community anger](#) — 18 Dec 2025
- [Australian Jews speak out about antisemitism after Bondi Beach shooting](#) — 18 Dec 2025
- [Tougher hate speech laws used four times before government vowed to strengthen them](#) — 18 Dec 2025
- [Jewish man Gaby Silver never felt unsafe in Australia, then October 7 changed everything](#) — 19 Dec 2025
- [Families of Bondi victims call for federal royal commission](#) — 28 Dec 2025

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- [Queensland Police employee faces court over alleged antisemitic online posts](#) — 5 Jan 2026
- [Federal politics: PM announces antisemitism royal commission after Bondi terror attack — as it happened](#) — 7 Jan 2026 — live blog

- [Antisemitism royal commission welcome, but some say it was called too late](#) — 8 Jan 2026
- [What is in the proposed new hate speech laws?](#) — 15 Jan 2026
- [Police investigate report of antisemitic incident against five teenage boys](#) — 19 Jan 2026
- [New hate laws have passed parliament. What do they actually do?](#) — 21 Jan 2026
- [Man jailed over antisemitic graffiti spree in Sydney fails to have sentence overturned](#) — 29 Jan 2026
- [Queensland Jewish leader wants stronger crackdown on symbols, flags and conduct in schools](#) — 6 Feb 2026
- [Albanese's invitation to Herzog is a shift in his approach to Israel](#) — 7 Feb 2026
- [Israeli President Isaac Herzog tells Sydney event antisemitism has been 'festering' since October 7](#) — 9 Feb 2026
- [Brandan Koschel's antisemitic speech at Sydney March for Australia event before court](#) — 17 Feb 2026
- [Hate laws put free speech at risk, constitutional expert tells NSW inquiry](#) — 18 Feb 2026
- [Royal commission into antisemitism, Bondi Beach terror attack begins](#) — 23 Feb 2026
- [Antisemitism royal commission underway, but does it have time to deliver?](#) — 24 Feb 2026
- [ABC National Forum: David Speers leads discussion on experiences of Jewish Australians](#) — 9 Mar 2026 — live blog / program page
- [Labor MP warns against 'dangerous' linking of Israeli government to antisemitism in Australia](#) — 9 Mar 2026
- [Nicholas James Alexander jailed over antisemitic attacks across Sydney](#) — 10 Mar 2026
- [Protesters arrested for using phrases banned under new Queensland hate speech laws](#) — 11 Mar 2026
- [Dennis Richardson says sense of urgency 'didn't quite align' with royal commission](#) — 14 Mar 2026
- [Sydney Swans take responsibility for Bondi tribute script change](#) — 16 Mar 2026

- [School taking disciplinary action after antisemitic phrase allegedly uttered to Jewish student](#) — 19 Mar 2026
- [Former royal commissioner casts doubt on antisemitism, Bondi Beach inquiry timeline](#) — 1 Apr 2026
- [Antisemitism and social cohesion royal commission launched after Bondi attack](#) — 29 Apr 2026
- [Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion interim report delivers 14 recommendations](#) — 29 Apr 2026
- [Royal commission into antisemitism told of 'real-world consequences of hate'](#) — 3 May 2026
- [Man charged after wearing swastika shirt outside royal commission](#) — 6 May 2026
- [High-profile witness tells royal commission that antisemitism is a 'virus'](#) — 6 May 2026
- ['Scared for my life': Jewish teacher feared Mardi Gras attack](#) — 8 May 2026
- [Royal commission exposes depths of antisemitism in Australia after anonymous witnesses give evidence](#) — 8 May 2026
- [Woman charged after alleged antisemitic slur at children's netball game](#) — 10 May 2026

Attachments

- **Attachment A** -- ABC Editorial Policies
- **Attachment B** – ABC Code of Practice
- **Attachment C** – ABC Ombudsman Charter
- **Attachment D** – ABC Complaint Form

Editorial Policies

Policies

1 Independence, integrity and responsibility

2 Accuracy

3 Corrections and clarifications

4 Impartiality and diversity of perspectives

5 Fair and honest dealing

6 Privacy

7 Harm and Offence

8 Children and young people

9 Public access and participation

10 Announcements about ABC programs and activities

11 Advertising and sponsorship restrictions

12 Commercial references

13 External funding and relationships



ABC CODE OF PRACTICE
1 JANUARY 2024



TRUST AND THE ABC

The ABC plays an essential role in Australian life. It is trusted by the Australian people to inform, entertain and educate them, tell their stories, and hold power to account on their behalf.

For more than nine decades the ABC has built the trust of its audiences by maintaining the highest editorial standards of any media organisation in Australia.

To fulfil its Charter, the ABC must create innovative and challenging content and pursue strong public interest journalism. In doing so, the ABC will at times cause offence, discomfort, even outrage. Brave public broadcasting can ruffle feathers. It can also bring people together, reflect the nation back to itself, disinfect with sunlight, and give a platform to diverse communities and perspectives.

This Code of Practice sets out the fundamental standards the ABC must adhere to in order to prioritise and strengthen the trust of its audiences. They are drawn from the ABC Editorial Policies, a detailed handbook for journalists and content makers available in full at abc.net.au/edpols.

The Code of Practice represents the ABC's public commitment to high standards. It serves as a promise to audiences of what they can expect of their national public broadcaster.

It also serves as a promise of rigorous accountability to the Australian public. The ABC will engage with feedback and complaints in good faith, reflect on its performance, and respect the decisions of the ABC Ombudsman's Office and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

SCOPE

This Code of Practice has been developed by the ABC and notified to the ACMA as required by section 8(1)(e) of the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*. By law, the ACMA has the power to investigate complaints alleging that content on an ABC broadcasting service has failed to comply with the Code of Practice, if the complainant has first complained directly to the ABC and has not received a response within 60 days or is dissatisfied with the response they received.

Accordingly, the Code of Practice applies to all content broadcast by the ABC on its free-to-air domestic television and radio broadcasting services. It does not apply to the ABC's digital media services. Like all ABC content, those services are subject to the comprehensive principles and standards set out in the wider ABC Editorial Policies.

INTERPRETATION

The Code of Practice is to be interpreted and applied:

- with due consideration of the relevant principles outlined in the Editorial Policies, and any associated guidance notes;
- with due regard for the nature of the content under consideration in particular cases; and
- in ways that maintain independence and integrity, preserve trust and do not unduly constrain journalistic enquiry or artistic expression.

CODE OF PRACTICE



Accuracy

The ABC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.



Impartiality

The ABC will gather and present news and information with due impartiality.



Fair and honest dealing

Participants in ABC content will normally be informed of the general nature of their participation. Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, the ABC will make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.



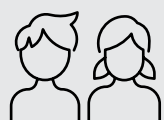
Privacy

Intrusion by the ABC 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.



Harm and offence

ABC content that is likely to cause harm or offence must be justified by the editorial context. Where content is likely to cause harm or offence, having regard to the context, the ABC will make reasonable efforts to provide information about the nature of the content through the use of classification labels or other warnings or advice.



Children and young people

The ABC will take due care over the dignity and physical and emotional welfare of children and young people (under the age of 18) who are involved in making, participating in and presenting content we produce or commission. Before significant participation of a child or young person in content we produce or commission, or in interactive services we offer, the ABC will consider whether it is appropriate to obtain the consent of both the child/young person and the parent/guardian.



Classification

The ABC will ensure all domestic broadcast television programs – with the exception of news, current affairs and sporting events – are classified G, PG, M or MA15+ in accordance with the guidelines below. More details, including time zone charts setting out when programs of each classification are permitted on each channel, are available at abc.net.au/classification.

CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

G – GENERAL

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)

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.

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)

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.

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)

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.

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.

COMPLAINTS

If you are concerned that content on an ABC broadcasting service has failed to comply with the Code of Practice, you are welcome to make a complaint.

Complaints must be submitted to the ABC in the first instance. You can submit your complaint online at abc.net.au/contact/complain.htm or by writing to:

ABC Audience Support
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
GPO Box 9994
Sydney NSW 2001

Your complaint should:

- include your name and email or postal address;
- specify the ABC content which concerned you, including the time, date and channel or station;
- be made within three months from the date the content was first made available or, if made after three months, explain why you believe the ABC should nevertheless investigate the matter;
- provide a short summary of what concerned you.

The ABC endeavours to respond to simple complaints within 30 days and more complex, significant complaints within 60 days. Some complaints may take longer to finalise due to their complexity and the availability of staff.

The ABC will generally not respond to complaints which:

- are or become the subject of a legal claim;
- are anonymous, offensive, abusive, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith; or
- are submitted more than three months from the date the content was first made available.

If you are dissatisfied with the ABC's response to your complaint, or if you have not received a response within 60 days, then you are entitled to complain to the ACMA. You can do so by using the complaint form at acma.gov.au/broadcasting-complaint-form or by writing to:

Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230



GPO Box 9994
in your state/territory capital

Phone 13 9994
Fax 02 8333 5344
TTY 1800 627 854
abc.net.au



About the ABC

ABC Ombudsman Charter

Posted

Tue 31 Mar 2026 at 9:02am

The Ombudsman reports to the ABC Board and assists the Board to achieve the dual aims of ABC self-regulation: effective accountability and continuous quality improvement in editorial output.

The Ombudsman provides an internal independent complaints function creating a link between audiences and ABC news providers and content makers.

Objective

The Ombudsman helps to support and sustain public trust in the ABC by:

- holding the ABC to the high standards it sets in the [ABC's Editorial Policies](#)
- prompting continuous quality improvement and consistency in editorial output
- helping to safeguard the ABC's independence and integrity

Independence

The Ombudsman makes decisions objectively and independently from ABC content teams, ABC management and the ABC Board.

Mandate

The Ombudsman is responsible for assessing and investigating complaints about specific ABC content (published or broadcast) that raises concerns about the ABC's editorial standards set out in the [ABC's Editorial Policies](#) ('content complaints').

The Ombudsman's mandate is to:

- Establish procedurally fair, transparent and accountable processes for proportionate handling of content complaints that include:

- assessing if complaints should be handled by the Ombudsman or an ABC division
- Ombudsman review if a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome from an ABC division
- determining if appropriate action has been taken to address (resolve) concerns raised
- determining if ABC content meets the published editorial standards
- responding to complaints and publishing findings or a summary of findings wherever practicable.
- Collect and share insights of its activities across the ABC for the purpose of continuous improvement.
- Conduct other investigations about ABC content as requested by the ABC Board from time to time.

Authority

In carrying out its mandate, the Ombudsman may in good faith:

- Consult with relevant ABC staff, complainants, participants and others as necessary.
- Request transcripts, rough cuts, notes, background information, research and other material as necessary.
- Determine the scope of its complaint investigations, within the parameters of the relevant content and the mandate.
- Communicate internally to ABC staff about its activities.
- Make recommendations to ABC divisions to address concerns raised or remedy a breach of editorial standards but may not mandate any changes to editorial output.
- Take other steps that are reasonably necessary to deal with a complaint in accordance with the mandate and objectives of the Office.

The Ombudsman will not engage with external experts in the subject matter complained of without consulting the Chair.

Ombudsman's determinations are final. Audience members may have external review options which are to be set out in the processes.

Appointment

The Ombudsman is appointed by the ABC Board, for a fixed term.

Reporting

The Ombudsman reports and is accountable directly to the ABC Board.

The Ombudsman will meet with the ABC Managing Director periodically to discuss any significant concerns.

The Ombudsman will work with the Editorial Director on initiatives to address editorial policy refinement and training priorities for evidence based potential improvement and engage with the Editorial Director as required in carrying out the Mandate.

The Ombudsman will meet with senior editorial leaders periodically to discuss key issues and themes in ABC content complaints.

The Ombudsman will publish a report on an annual basis and periodically publishes its decisions online.

The ABC Board will review this Charter after an initial two years of operation.

Dated:14 December 2025

Posted

Tue 31 Mar 2026 at 9:02am



[ABC Help - Australian Broadcasting Corporation Help Centre](#) > **Contact Us**

 Search

Make a complaint

To help expedite and track your complaint use the contact form below.

If your complaint relates to a specific legal matter you may [use this online contact form](#), write to ABC Legal, GPO Box 9994, Sydney NSW 2001 or call the ABC National Switchboard on 13 99 94 for further information.

Before submitting your complaint, you may wish to see if your concern has been addressed in our [ABC Help FAQs](#), the [ABC's Corrections and Clarifications](#) page or the [Ombudsman's published complaint findings](#).

Information about how the ABC deals with complaints is available on the [ABC website](#). You may also wish to review the [Ombudsman Complaint Procedure](#)

If you prefer to make your complaint via mail, please write to:

ABC Audience Support
Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABC Ultimo Centre
GPO Box 9994
Sydney NSW 2001

If you need help in submitting a written complaint (for example, language, literacy, additional needs), you may call the ABC during business hours on 13 99 94 and a written summary of your complaint will be made and forwarded to the appropriate area for handling.

Anonymous complaints may be submitted. If you provide a valid email address, you will receive confirmation of receipt explaining the likely next steps and a reference number.

Please help us to understand your complaint

Tell us which content you are complaining about - for example, the network or service the content was provided on, the name of the program or publication or the webpage address (URL), and the date and time it was broadcast or published.

Clearly outline the nature of your concerns - if you are alleging a breach of the [Editorial Policies](#) or [Code of Practice](#), tell us your reasons for coming to this view.



Help

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

Please select the area your complaint relates to

-

First name

Last name

Subject *

Your email address

Comments *

Paragraph

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   **99**  

Attachments

[Add file](#) or drop files here

Please note: attachments are for supporting material only eg. screenshots. Multiple files can be uploaded. Individual files can't exceed 7MB, and the total uploaded can't exceed 10MB.

The information you provide to us will be used in accordance with the [ABC Privacy Collection Statement](#).

Submit

ABC Help - Australian Broadcasting Corporation Help Centre

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