

Free TV Australia

Questions on Notice taken at the hearing

1. In updating your code of practice and your public consultation, is this coming up for you, and are you considering including a provision on misinformation in your updated Free TV code?

Response:

- Free TV is currently undertaking a public consultation on proposed changes to the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice.
- Free TV shares concerns about mis- and disinformation, particularly when it can circulate online through social media and other digital platforms.
- However, free-to-air commercial television broadcasters are not like digital platforms, as they are subject to robust regulation through the Code as well as numerous other industry regulations and journalistic and advertising codes of practice. They employ professional journalists to investigate, analyse and report information of importance to the public.
- Free TV does not propose to make changes as the Code already requires news and current affairs programs to present factual material accurately, and for news to be presented fairly and impartially. This means the risk of mis- or disinformation is extremely low.

Question:

2. Can I just clarify something? In the broadcasting code, are the words 'misinformation' or 'disinformation' mentioned?

Response:

The Code does not use the terminology of 'misinformation' or 'disinformation'. Code 3.3 of the Free TV Code relates to accuracy and fairness of factual material in a news or current affairs program. The text of the Code is set out below:

3.3 Accuracy and fairness

3.3.1 In broadcasting a news or Current Affairs Program, a Licensee must present factual material accurately and ensure viewpoints included in the Program are not misrepresented.

3.3.2 Clause 3.3.1 applies to material facts and material misrepresentations of viewpoints only.

3.3.3 Licensees must make reasonable efforts to correct or clarify significant and material errors of fact that are readily apparent or have been demonstrated to the Licensee's reasonable satisfaction in a timely manner.

3.3.4 If a Licensee makes a correction in an appropriate manner within 30 days of a complaint being received or referred to the ACMA (whichever is later), then the Licensee will not be in breach of clause 3.3.1 in relation to that matter.

3.3.5 A correction under clause 3.3.4 may be made in one or more of the following ways:

- a) during a later episode of the relevant Program;*
- b) on a Licensee's news website;*
- c) on the official website of the relevant Program; or*

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d) any other way that is appropriate in the circumstances.

Clause 3.4 relates to fairness and impartiality in news, as well as a requirement to distinguish between fact and commentary.

3. On that question on notice, could you also expand that out as far as you can in terms of your intention towards that code, including the words 'misinformation' and 'disinformation', which we know ACMA is asking for? If the answer to that is that you don't intend to include it, could you please give us a rationale for why you would not be doing that?

Response:

- Free TV shares concerns about mis- and disinformation, particularly when it can circulate online through social media and other digital platforms.
- However, free-to-air commercial television broadcasters are not like digital platforms, as they are subject to robust regulation through the Code as well as numerous other industry regulations and journalistic and advertising codes of practice. They employ professional journalists to investigate, analyse and report information of importance to the public.
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Question

4. I want to go to the question Senator Sharma asked before about the shocking lapse of standards by Channel 7 earlier this year, with the broadcast of the incorrect name of an individual in relation to the Bondi Junction stabbings. When did Channel 7 correct the record on air? At what time on, I believe, Monday 14 April did Channel 7 correct the record on air?

Response:

Seven has provided a response to this question.

Question

5. Whether, from Free TV's perspective, all of your members can attest to the fact that all the content on their online platforms has been either broadcast on free-to-air television or published in a hard-copy newspaper.

Response:

While a significant amount of content that appears online has already been broadcast, Free TV members also create content specifically for online platforms. This content is professionally produced, overseen by experienced professionals, and broadcasters take editorial responsibility for the content.