



Systemic Investigations

The Systemic Investigation process enables the Council to consider whether the reporting on an issue or subject aligns with its Standards of Practice and its aim of promoting high standards of media practice.

For example, the Systemic Investigation process will assist the Council to respond to complaints about a specific issue or subject effectively and efficiently.

The Systemic Investigation process draws together the Council's work in effective complaint handling and the promotion of high media standards.

Definition of a systemic issue

The Council may define a systemic issue as an expression of concern with how an issue or subject is presented or reported in the print and online media.

Identification of a systemic issue

The Council may identify a potential systemic issue through a range of means, including:

- analysing complaint trends
- consulting with community groups, peak bodies, academia and others
- consulting with publications
- complaint handling.

Consideration of a systemic issue

When the Council identifies a Systemic Issue, and decides to instigate the Systemic Investigation process the Council will:

- notify a publication or publications that a Systemic Investigation has commenced
- engage with internal and external stakeholders.
- assess complaints received and, where appropriate, request a response from a publication or publications and possibly refer a matter to Adjudication.

Handling of complaints that have been identified as being part of a Systemic Investigation

Complainants will be informed that the matters raised in their complaint align with, and will be treated as part of, the Systemic Investigation that is underway by the Council. The Council will:

Australian Press Council

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- provide a complainant with a letter informing them that the matters they raise are being considered as part of the Council's Systemic Investigation that may assist the Council in the future development of its Standards of Practice or in educating editors
- inform the Complainant that it will usually not proceed with a complaint that concerns a systemic issue or subject under a Systemic Investigation. However, as part of the Systemic Investigation, the Council may proceed with selected complaints involving a systemic issue or subject if it considers it raises an important issue for consideration by an Adjudication Panel
- require publications to respond to an individual complaint or to a number of complaints concerning a Systemic Investigation.

Systemic Investigations outcomes

At the conclusion of the Council's consideration of a systemic issue or subject, it may:

- issue a letter to editors informing them of a systemic issue or subject and asking them to be mindful to take reasonable steps to comply with the Council's Standards of Practice
- issue a media release on the findings of the Systemic Investigation
- amend an existing advisory guideline or standard or commence development of a new advisory guideline or standard
- provide a report to Council that will be published on the Council's website

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