

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Editorial/Producers' Guidelines of Public Service Broadcasters in Selected Places

|                    | The United Kingdom (UK)  |  | Canada  | Australia  |  | Hong Kong  |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|
|                    | British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)   | Channel 4  | Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)   | Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)  | Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)               | Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK)  |
| Name of document   | <i>Editorial Guidelines – The BBC's Values and Standards</i>   | <i>Office of Communications (Ofcom) Broadcasting Code</i>  | <i>Journalistic Standards and Practices</i>   | <i>Editorial Policies</i>  | <i>Editorial Guidelines</i>                      | <i>Producers' Guidelines</i>   |
| Latest edition     | 2005   | 2005   | 2004  | 2002   | 2002   | 2003   |
| Legal basis        | The BBC Royal Charter and its accompanying Framework Agreement   | (a) <i>The Communications Act 2003</i> ; and<br>(b) <i>the Broadcasting Act 1996</i>   | <i>The Broadcasting Act (S.C. 1991, c. 11)</i>  | <i>The Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983</i>  | <i>The Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991</i> | The Framework Agreement between the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology and the Director of Broadcasting |
| Drafting authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BBC Editorial Policy Unit</li> <li>• The Controller of the Editorial Policy Unit reports directly to the BBC's Chief Executive, who is also the Editor-in-Chief, on all editorial matters.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ofcom Content Board</li> <li>• Chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Ofcom Board, the Content Board is composed of 12 members appointed by the Ofcom Board.</li> <li>• The majority of the Content Board members are part-time and drawn from diverse backgrounds across the UK.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices Committee</li> <li>• The Committee comprises the heads of news for English, French, Radio, Television and New Media.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Editorial Policies Committee of the ABC Board</li> <li>• The Committee comprises six members, including the Chairman, four Non-Executive Directors appointed by the Governor-General and one staff-elected Director.</li> </ul> | The SBS Policy Unit                              | The RTHK management team   |

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| Approving authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BBC Board of Governors</li> <li>The Board comprises 12 members, appointed by the Queen on advice from the government in accordance with the Nolan principles that public appointments should be made on merits.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ofcom Board</li> <li>The Ofcom Board comprises an Executive Chairman, five Non-Executive Directors and four Executive Directors including the Chief Executive Officer.</li> <li>Both the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Secretary of State for the Department of Trade and Industry are responsible for appointing up to six Members to the Board (known as "Members") and approving the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer.</li> <li>Additional members of staff (known as "Staff Members") may be appointed to the Board by the Members. There may be up to a total of nine Members and Staff Members (together known as the "Board Members").</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CBC Board</li> <li>Appointed by the Governor in Council, the Board comprises 11 members, including the Chairman and the President who also serves as the Chief Operating Officer.</li> <li>Board members are selected from among prominent citizens eminent in fields such as law, accounting, business, education and the arts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ABC Board</li> <li>The Board comprises the Managing Director, one staff-elected Director and up to seven Non-Executive Directors who are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the government.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SBS Board</li> <li>The Board comprises the Managing Director and between four and eight Non-Executive Directors.</li> <li>The Non-Executive Directors are appointed by the Governor-General, while the Managing Director is appointed by the Board.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Director of Broadcasting</li> <li>The post is a civil service establishment created by the Government.</li> </ul> |
| Public consultation | Nil.  | Public consultation among broadcasters, viewers, listeners and other interested parties.   | Nil.   | Nil.  | See Note 1.   | Nil.   |

Note 1: SBS is currently undertaking a review of its Code of Practice which sets out the principles and policies that SBS uses to guide its programming. A draft amendment to its previous Code was published on 11 August 2006 and the deadline for public consultation was 8 September 2006.

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| Key editorial principles/elements coverage | <p>(a) Truth and accuracy – programmes must be well sourced and presented in clear and precise language;</p> <p>(b) Impartiality and diversity of opinion – programmes must reflect all significant strands of opinion over an appropriate time scale;</p> <p>(c) Editorial integrity and independence – decisions are independent of both state and partisan interests;</p> <p>(d) Serving the public interest – stories of significance must be reported and analysed;</p> <p>(e) Fairness – output must be based on fairness, openness and straight dealing;</p> <p>(f) Privacy – there should be no coverage on private matters unless there is a clear public interest;</p> <p>(g) Programmes must safeguard the welfare of children and young people; and</p> <p>(h) Programmes must be accountable to the audiences.</p> | <p>(a) Material that might seriously impair the development of people under 18 must not be broadcast;</p> <p>(b) Harmful and offensive material is judged against "generally accepted standards";</p> <p>(c) Programmes should not encourage crime or lead to disorder;</p> <p>(d) Programmes should respect faiths and views of various religions;</p> <p>(e) News and controversial matters should be reported in due impartiality and due accuracy. Due impartiality may be achieved within a programme or over a series of programmes taken as a whole;</p> <p>(f) Undue prominence of views and opinions on controversial matters must be prevented;</p> <p>(g) Due weight must be given to the coverage of all parties concerned during the election period;</p> | <p>(a) Journalistic principles include accuracy, integrity and fairness;</p> <p>(b) Diversity – programming must not be limited to what the largest audience wants to know but what the public is entitled and needs to know and that the widest possible range of views is expressed;</p> <p>(c) Balance – programmes must ensure equitable treatment of views on matters of public interest. Programme balance should be achieved within a single programme or an identifiable series of programmes;</p> <p>(d) Privacy – individual's personal and private life, as opposed to his or her public life, must be protected from intrusion or exposure to the public view;</p> <p>(e) Confidentiality of sources should be respected to allow free flow of information; and</p> | <p>(a) Honesty – factual content of programmes must be correct and in context;</p> <p>(b) Balance – principal relevant viewpoints on matters of importance should be presented. This may not be achieved within a single programme but should be achieved as soon as possible;</p> <p>(c) Fairness – content of news and current affairs should be balance and impartial;</p> <p>(d) Independence – no external interference is allowed in the presentation or content of programmes;</p> <p>(e) Privacy – programmes must show respect for the rights of programme participants, audience and subject matters; and</p> <p>(f) Cultural diversity – programmes must represent Australia's cultural, ethnic and racial diversity.</p> | <p>(a) Editorial principles include balance and objectivity;</p> <p>(b) Programmes must present different sides of an issue in a fair and balanced manner. Balance can be achieved within the same programme or over a reasonable period of time;</p> <p>(c) Information must be truthful, reflect equitably the relevant facts and significant points of view;</p> <p>(d) Presenters and journalists must be aware of potential conflicts of interest and must not present a personal bias or partisan approach; and</p> <p>(e) Presenters/journalists must ensure that their programmes do not become or are not used by individuals or organizations as vehicles for inflaming community tensions.</p> | <p>(a) Impartiality – programme content must be accurate and impartial according to recognized standards of objective journalism. It may not be necessary to achieve the balance of views within a single programme. Instead, it can be done over a period of time;</p> <p>(b) Accuracy – programmes should not rely on only one source and factual matters should be checked;</p> <p>(c) Taste and decency – programmes should respect and reflect the generally accepted values in society;</p> <p>(d) Violence must not be exploited except where its depiction is an essential fact of the reality being portrayed;</p> <p>(e) Conflicts of interest – programme-makers are free from inappropriate outside commitments;</p> |

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| Key editorial principles/elements coverage (cont'd)            |  | <p>(h) Unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or organizations must be avoided in programmes;</p> <p>(i) Unwarranted infringement of privacy must be avoided in programmes and in connection with obtaining material included in programmes;</p> <p>(j) Programme-makers must ensure that (i) sponsorship arrangements are transparent; (ii) sponsorship messages are separate from programmes; and (iii) editorial control over sponsored programmes is maintained; and</p> <p>(k) Editorial independence over programme content must be maintained.</p> | <p>(f) Programmes must avoid taking unfair advantage of members of the public who may be ignorant of certain journalistic practices.</p>  |   |   | <p>(f) Fairness to interviewees – programme-makers should be open about their plans, and honest with anyone taking part in a programme; and</p> <p>(g) Respect for privacy – the rights of individuals to privacy should be respected in all programmes.</p> |
| Guidelines on the presentation of personal views of presenters | BBC staff, regular BBC presenters or reporters associated with news or public policy related programmes seldom present programmes with personal views on controversial subjects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenters and reporters (with the exception of news presenters and reporters in news programmes) may express their own views on controversial matters. However, alternative viewpoints must be adequately represented.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosts and interviewers must treat their guests fairly. They should refrain from personal advocacy in their public statements and discussions as well as the selection of questions.</li> </ul> | ABC editorial staff should observe the highest standards and should not allow their professional judgment to be influenced by pressures from political, commercial or other sectional interests or by their own personal views. | Presenters/journalists must not be seen to be representing any group, political viewpoint or party. They should ensure that affiliations or personal views be remained separate from their obligation to observe and advance the programming policies and practices of SBS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RTHK staff or regular presenters or reporters associated with news and public policy related programmes should not normally present personal platform programmes.</li> </ul>  |

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| Guidelines on the presentation of personal views of presenters (cont'd) |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenters must not use the advantage of regular appearances to promote their views in a way that compromises the requirement for due impartiality.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBC reporters must not take a partisan position on controversial matters, even when participating in an interview or discussion programme.</li> <li>In the event that reporters offer some context to news events, they should present an explanation of the background to the event based on careful research. They must keep their personal views separate from their reporting.</li> </ul> |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenters, using their journalistic knowledge and judgement, may question, comment, challenge or criticize to stimulate the debate, bring out new insights and encourage the widest possible airing of views in both talk shows and phone-in programmes.</li> <li>Presenters must treat the subject matter and their callers fairly.</li> </ul> |
| Circumstances not covered by / breaching the Code or Guidelines         | Any proposal to step outside these guidelines must be discussed with the Controller of the Editorial Policy Unit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ofcom will publish the case in the event that the Code is breached.</li> <li>In the event that a broadcaster deliberately, seriously or repeatedly breaches the Code, Ofcom may impose statutory sanctions against the broadcaster.</li> </ul> | Doubts on the application of the Journalistic Standards and Practices should be referred to a senior officer in information programming or an authorized delegate.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme-makers with problems or doubts on editorial management should consult the next higher level of editorial management for guidance.</li> <li>If a programme-maker does not refer the issue upwards, he or she will be responsible for the editorial decision made.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme-makers with doubts on the legal aspects of broadcasting a programme should refer the case upwards.</li> <li>Editorial material that has legal implications must be referred to the SBS Corporate Counsel. The final editorial decision on whether to broadcast, or in what manner, rests with the editorial staff.</li> </ul> | Programme-makers should refer potentially contentious issues upwards through their respective editorial chain of command.   |

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