

# ACMA news media bargaining code eligibility assessment report

**News business name:** Broadsheet

**News business ID:** ACMA-NBC-1636BGML04

**News sources:** The "city-file tabs" of Broadsheet Melbourne|Broadsheet Sydney|Broadsheet Brisbane|Broadsheet Adelaide|Broadsheet Perth

**Date submitted:** 18/08/2021

**Link to CRM entry:** [Click here to open the CRM record in a new window](#)

Initial assessor: Lachlan Habgood (Ag EL1)

QA assessor: Elizabeth Press (EL2)

**Officer recommendation:** Ineligible

## Revenue test

Assessment: Pass

The Applicant has provided financial statements for year ended 30 June 2021 showing that it has a revenue of over \$150,000. The applicant submitted a statutory declaration relating to the Revenue test. The statutory declaration is from Damien Burke, a chartered accountant who affirms that the submitted financial accounts are accurate and prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

## Connection requirements

Initial assessment: Pass

A review of the submitted ABN 46 112 061 382 confirms that it is for BROADSHEET MEDIA Pty Ltd, a registered Australian private company.

The applicant provided a signed statutory declaration from Director and publisher, Nicholas Shelton, declaring that the corporation Broadsheet Media Pty is the sole owner or controller of the news sources in the application. The applicant passes the connection requirement.

## Professional standards test

Assessment: Pass

The applicant states that the 5 news sources (being the city-file tabs) it is seeking registration for:

- Broadsheet Melbourne
- Broadsheet Sydney
- Broadsheet Brisbane
- Broadsheet Adelaide
- Broadsheet Perth

are all subject to the same internal editorial standards. The applicant provided the same URL [www.broadsheet.com.au/national/info/editorial-standards](http://www.broadsheet.com.au/national/info/editorial-standards) as the location

for the editorial standards and <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/national/info/complaints> for the complaints mechanism. As such, a review covering all news source listed in the application was conducted on 21/08/2021.

### **Editorial Standards**

The Editorial Standards states that the applicant adheres to the Australian Press Council's standards. A link to the APC standards is included in the Editorial Standards. The page lists the Editorial Standards it adheres to. All are based on the APC standards, including accuracy and clarity, fairness and balance, privacy, integrity and transparency. Users are able to navigate to Editorial Standards page via a link titled 'Editorial Standards' at the bottom of the news source page. The Internal editorial standards meets the requirements of the criterion.

### **Complaints mechanism – submitted link**

The complaints page (<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/national/info/complaints>) submitted by the applicant informs users that it adheres to the standards established by the APC and that it will 'enact requests made by the APC'. However, the applicant corporation and the news sources are not listed on the APC membership and constituent bodies lists, meaning the applicant is under no such obligation or required to abide by, or action, any APC ruling.

The complaints process allows complaints to be made, along with provisions relating to adjudication and notification of the outcome of complaints about news content. The process also allows the applicant to not consider a complaint if it thinks it is more appropriate for consideration by some other process, comprising referral to a third party, amendment of (existing) processes, or referral for consideration by the APC or a similar industry body. The complaints process also informs users that complainants who are dissatisfied by the outcome can escalate the complaint the APC for further resolution. The complaints page submitted by the applicant is not able to be accessed from the submitted news source link.

The applicant's submitted link

(<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/national/info/complaints>) fails this part of the test as:

- This complaints process is not accessible to users
- The complaints mechanism incorrectly advises users of a referral and escalation process they cannot access as the applicant is not an APC member.

### **Complaint mechanism included in the Editorial Standards page**

The Editorial Standards page also contains a complaints procedure. This is very similar to the complaint process accessed via the applicant's link. As it is included on the Editorial Standards page it is therefore accessible to users from the news source link. Relevantly, this complaints process states the applicant adheres to the standards established by the APC and will enact requests made by the APC. The complaints process allows complaints to be made, along with provisions relating to adjudication and notification of the outcome of complaints about news content.

As with the other complaints process, it allows to applicant to not consider the complaints if it thinks it is more appropriate for consideration by some other process. The processes are referral to a third party, amendment of processes, or referral for consideration by the APC or a similar industry body. The process also

informs users that complainants who are dissatisfied by the outcome can escalate the complaint to the APC for further resolution.

While this process is available to users, each of the news sources fails the criterion because the complaints mechanism available to users in the Editorial Standards page incorrectly advises users of a referral and escalation process they cannot access as the applicant is not an APC member.

#### **Response to the preliminary view**

On 7 September 2021, the applicant emailed the ACMA an updated link to the online Editorial Standards, which also contain the applicant's complaints mechanism. The editorial standards are available to users via a link at the bottom of each news source page. The editorial standards are unchanged from those assessed on 21/08/2021. The complaints process has removed the references that advise users they can refer unresolved complaints to the APC or other body. The complaints process meets the test.

## Broadsheet Melbourne

### Content test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant submitted <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/melbourne/city-file> as the news source link (a website or part of a website), along with following other links where content is available:

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/melbourne>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.melbourne> and  
[www.instagram.com/broadsheet\\_melb](https://www.instagram.com/broadsheet_melb).

**News source link** <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/melbourne/city-file>

A review of the content on this link was conducted on 23/08/2021. The news source features journalistic articles that focus primarily on Victorian issues of importance. For example, articles about the Covid-19 impact on Melbourne and regional Victoria (Victorian Childcare centres close, Regional Victoria to go into lockdown, a website showing the 5km lockdown from a user's location). The majority of articles appear to focus on Covid-19 issues, although there are other articles that meet the core news definition, eg Brisbane to host the 2032 Olympics.

Overall, the majority of content on the news source link is comprised of journalistic content that constitutes 'core news' as it engages Australians in public debate, and reports on current issues and events of public significance. The content is published on a regular basis and appears to be created by the provider itself, based on an assessment of the by-lines of the authors and the lack of attribution to other sources for the core news content.

The news source has links at the top of the page that go to specialised content sections. These links include: Art and Design, Entertainment, Fashion and Style, Food and Drink, Things to do, Travel, City File. With the exception of the Cityfile link (which is the news source link), the content found in these links are related to the respective link title (eg food and Drink) and has little, if any, core news content. The content on these links would not be likely to be defined as core news.



It is considered that the applicant's news source meets the content test. However, it is noted that the majority of core news content relates to Covid-19 news content and that while this currently is a matter of great importance in the community, this kind of content may decrease as the Covid-19 pandemic dissipates in the community. It is recommended that the applicant be reminded that in order to maintain eligibility into the future it should be mindful of:

- the amount of core news content created by the news source (and that this content should be content that reports, investigates or explains:
  - issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making; or
  - current issues or events of public significance at a local, regional or national level.
- the frequency with which the news source creates core news content and the degree of prominence given to core news content created by the news source.

## Broadsheet Sydney

### Content test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant submitted <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/sydney/city-file> as the news source link (a website or part of a website), along with following other links where content is available:

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/sydney>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.sydney> and  
[www.instagram.com/broadsheet\\_sydney](https://www.instagram.com/broadsheet_sydney).

**News source link** <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/sydney/city-file>

A review of the content on this link was conducted on 24/08/2021. The news source features journalistic articles that focus primarily on Sydney and NSW issues. For example, articles about the Covid-19 impact on Sydney, (Sydney lockdown extended to end of September, a website showing the 5km lockdown radius from a user's location, reporting on new 3 new LGAs added to the areas of concern list).

The majority of articles appear to focus on Covid-19 issues, although there are other articles that meet the core news definition, eg Brisbane to host the 2032 Olympics, the Afghanistan humanitarian crises. The majority of content on the news source link is comprised of journalistic content that constitutes 'core news' as it engages Australians in public debate, and reports on current issues and events of public significance. This content is published on a regular basis and appears to be created by the provider itself, based on an assessment of the by-lines of the authors and the lack of attribution to other sources for the core news content.

The news source has links at the top of the page that go to specialised content sections. These links include: Art and Design, Entertainment, Fashion and Style, Food and Drink, Things to do, Travel, City File. With the exception of the Cityfile link (which is the news source link), the content found in these links are related to the respective link title (eg food and Drink) and has little, if any, core news content. The content on these links would not be likely to be defined as core news.

It is considered that the applicant's news source meets the content test. However, it is noted that the majority of core news content relates to Covid-19 news content and that while this currently is a matter of great importance in the community, this kind of content may decrease as the Covid-19 pandemic dissipates in the community. It is recommended that the applicant be reminded that in order to maintain eligibility into the future it should be mindful of:

- the amount of core news content created by the news source (and that this content should be content that reports, investigates or explains:
  - issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making; or
  - current issues or events of public significance at a local, regional or national level.
- the frequency with which the news source creates core news content and the degree of prominence given to core news content created by the news source.

## Broadsheet Brisbane

### Content test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant submitted <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/brisbane/city-file> as the news source link (a website or part of a website), along with following other links where content is available:

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/brisbane>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.brisbane> and  
[www.instagram.com/broadsheet\\_brisbane](https://www.instagram.com/broadsheet_brisbane).

**News source link -** <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/brisbane/city-file>

A review of the content on this link was conducted on 24/08/2021. The content has a broad Qld/Brisbane focus, for example, an article about the Covid-19 lockdown being lifted in Brisbane, another article explaining additional restrictions for Queensland, an article describing new online apps that allows users to find the 10km radius from their location. Many of the articles focus on Covid-19 issues, although there are other articles that meet the core news definition, eg Brisbane to host the 2032 Olympics, the Afghanistan humanitarian crises.

The majority of content on the news source link is comprised of journalistic content that constitutes 'core news' as it engages Australians in public debate, and reports on current issues and events of public significance. The content is published on a regular basis and appears to be created by the provider itself, based on an assessment of the by-lines of the authors and the lack of attribution to other sources for the core news content.

The news source has links at the top of the page that go to specialised content sections. These links include: Art and Design, Entertainment, Fashion and Style, Food and Drink, Things to do, Travel, City File. With the exception of the Cityfile link (which is the news source link), the content found in these links are related to the respective link title (eg food and Drink) and has little, if any, core news content. The content on these links would not be likely to be defined as core news.

It is considered that the applicant's news source meets the content test. However, it is noted that the majority of core news content relates to Covid-19 news content

and that while this currently is a matter of great importance in the community, this kind of content may decrease as the Covid-19 pandemic dissipates in the community. It is recommended that the applicant be reminded that in order to maintain eligibility into the future it should be mindful of:

- the amount of core news content created by the news source (and that this content should be content that reports, investigates or explains:
  - issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making; or
  - current issues or events of public significance at a local, regional or national level.
- the frequency with which the news source creates core news content and the degree of prominence given to core news content created by the news source.

## Broadsheet Adelaide

### Content test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant submitted [https://www.broadsheet.com.au/adelaide/city\\_file](https://www.broadsheet.com.au/adelaide/city_file) as the news source link (a website or part of a website), along with following other links where content is available:

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/adelaide>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.adelaide> and  
[www.instagram.com/broadsheet\\_adelaide](https://www.instagram.com/broadsheet_adelaide)

**News source link** [https://www.broadsheet.com.au/adelaide/city\\_file](https://www.broadsheet.com.au/adelaide/city_file)

A review of the content on this link was conducted on 24/08/2021. The news source features journalistic articles that focus primarily on Adelaide and South Australia. For example, articles about Covid 19 such as South Australia lockdown restrictions to ease, a website showing the 2.5km exercise radius from a user's location, New SA rules for venue capacity.

Many articles focus on Covid 19 issues, although there are other articles that meet the core news definition, eg the Afghanistan humanitarian crises, the 2021 census. However, the majority of content on the news source link is comprised of journalistic content that constitutes 'core news' as it engages Australians in public debate, and reports on current issues and events of public significance. The content is published on a regular basis and appears to be created by the provider itself, based on an assessment of the by-lines of the authors and the lack of attribution to other sources for the core news content.

The news source has links at the top of the page that go to specialised content sections. These links include: Art and Design, Entertainment, Fashion and Style, Food and Drink, Things to do, Travel, City File. With the exception of the Cityfile link (which is the news source link), the content found in these links are related to the respective link title (eg food and Drink) and has little, if any, core news content. The content on these links would not be likely to be defined as core news.

It is considered that the applicant's news source meets the content test. However, it is noted that the majority of core news content relates to Covid 19 news content and that while this currently is a matter of great importance in the community, this kind of content may decrease as the Covid-19 pandemic dissipates in the



community. It is recommended that the applicant be reminded that in order to maintain eligibility into the future it should be mindful of:

- the amount of core news content created by the news source (and that this content should be content that reports, investigates or explains:
  - issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making; or
  - current issues or events of public significance at a local, regional or national level.
- the frequency with which the news source creates core news content and the degree of prominence given to core news content created by the news source.

## Broadsheet Perth

### Content test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant submitted [https://www.broadsheet.com.au/perth/city\\_file](https://www.broadsheet.com.au/perth/city_file) as the news source link (a website or part of a website), along with following other links where content is available:

<https://www.broadsheet.com.au/perth>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.perth> and  
[www.instagram.com/broadsheet\\_perth](https://www.instagram.com/broadsheet_perth)

**News source link** <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/perth/city-file>

A review of the content on this link was conducted on 24/08/2021. The news source features journalistic articles that focus primarily on Perth and Western Australia, for example, articles about Covid 19 such as Perth and Peel lockdown to be lifted, an article describing what the lockdown restrictions are, A plan for the federal government to provide payments for people unable to work in hotspots.

There are other articles that meet the core news definition, eg the Afghanistan humanitarian crises, the 2021 census. However, the majority of content on the news source link is comprised of journalistic content that constitutes 'core news' as it engages Australians in public debate, and reports on current issues and events of public significance. The content is published on a regular basis and appears to be created by the provider itself, based on an assessment of the by-lines of the authors and the lack of attribution to other sources for the core news content.

The news source has links at the top of the page that go to specialised content sections. These links include: Art and Design, Entertainment, Fashion and Style, Food and Drink, Things to do, Travel, City File. With the exception of the Cityfile link (which is the news source link), the content found in these links are related to the respective link title (eg food and Drink) and has little, if any, core news content. The content on these links would not be likely to be defined as core news.

It is considered that the applicant's news source meets the content test. However, it is noted that a significant proportion of core news content relates to Covid-19 news content and that while this currently is a matter of great importance in the community, this kind of content may decrease as the Covid-19 pandemic dissipates in the community. It is recommended that the applicant be reminded that in order to maintain eligibility into the future it should be mindful of:

- the amount of core news content created by the news source (and that this content should be content that reports, investigates or explains:
  - issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making; or
  - current issues or events of public significance at a local, regional or national level.
- the frequency with which the news source creates core news content and the degree of prominence given to core news content created by the news source.

## Australian audiences test

### Initial assessment: Pass

The content from the submitted news source website provides (on the Contact page) an address in Melbourne and Sydney along with contact information for the editors for Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, Brisbane, and Perth offices. Based on this information, it is clear that source operates in Australia. An IP search reveals that the News source URL is registered in Australia, with the Registrant being the company Director, Nick Shelton.

Based on the content on the news source submitted for assessment, it is clear it serves an Australian audience as it is targeted at people in the relevant state and capital city. Accordingly, the content would be of interest and relevance to Australian audiences.

With the news source operating in Australia for the dominant purpose of serving Australian audiences, it passes the Australian Audience test.

## Recommendation for Preliminary decision-making

Decision maker: Elizabeth Press (EL2)

### Comments from decision maker

At the preliminary decision making phase, the applicant does not meet the professional standards test. It does, however, meet the other eligibility criteria.

The news source has internal professional standards and complaints handling both of which are available to users viewing the various capital the news source. Unfortunately, the editorial standards are NOT analogous as the complaints procedure refers to escalation and adjudication by the Australia Press Council although this would not apply due to the applicant's lack of constituent membership of this organisation.

In addition, the complaints process and links presented by the applicant are confusing because they are detailed in both the editorial standards and in a separate complaints area of the applicant's website.

It is recommended that the applicant be advised that it fails the professional standards requirement at the preliminary stage.

## Final decision

Decision maker: Elizabeth Press

Date of final decision: 9 September 2021



Final decision: Pass

Comments from decision maker

Australian  
Communications  
and Media Authority

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

On 7 September 2021, the applicant provided the ACMA with a revised Editorial Standards and complaint processes. These have been assessed and the applicant now meets this eligibility criterion as access to the editorial standards and complaints information is now much cleared. The incorrect references to the APC and its role in unresolved complaints has now been removed.

I note the applicant has tended to characterise its news sources by the website titles Broadsheet Melbourne, Broadsheet Sydney, Broadsheet Brisbane, Broadsheet Adelaide, and Broadsheet Perth, however, this decision provides that only part of those websites (being the "city-file tabs") are eligible news sources according to this assessment decision.

As the applicant has passed each of the eligibility criteria, it can be registered.



Signature of delegated officer:

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Name: Elizabeth Press

Date: 9 September 2021