

ACMA news media bargaining code eligibility assessment report

News business name: The Brag Media Australia

News business ID: ACMA-NBC 3114NIEU08

News sources: The Brag|Tone Deaf|The Industry Observer|Don't Bore Us|Rolling
Stone Australia|Rolling Stone Australia

Date submitted: 19/05/2021

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

Financial statements for year ending 30 June 2020 were submitted showing revenue

A statutory declaration was submitted attesting that the accounts were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The stat dec was made by the company director.

Connection requirements

Initial assessment: Pass

An ABN search reveals that the applicant is a registered Australian Private Company.

The applicant provided a statutory declaration stating that it operates and controls the news sources listed in the application. The applicant states that it is not owned or controlled by a party with commercial or political interest.

Don't Bore Us (a website or part of a website)

Professional standards test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant claims it is subject to the APC professional standards. However, a review of the APC membership list and APC constituent bodies reveals that the applicant news corporation, business and source is not a member.

A review of the news source website could not locate internal editorial standards or editorial complaints handling mechanism on the website. The applicant states it is not owned or controlled by a party with political or commercial interests. The preliminary decision found applicant failed this criterion and the applicant was advised of this on 22 June 2021.

Applicant response to the Preliminary decision

The Applicant provided a response on 9 July 2021 confirming it was not a member of the APC and stated that its editorial standards are located at the footer of the news source website. The applicant also provided a direct link to a page titled 'The Brag Media Editorial Code' at <https://thebrag.com/media/editorial-code/>.

A review of the news source was conducted on 16 July 2021. A link at the bottom of the page was found titled 'Editorial Code'. Clicking this link takes the user to 'The Brag Media Editorial Code'.

The internal standards largely reflect the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics and contain relevant standards relating to accuracy and fairness. The internal standards also contain a complaints mechanism that allows for complaints to be accepted, adjudicated and for matters to be rectified.

The applicant advises that the news source is not owned or controlled by an entity that is a political party, union, or a political lobby or advocacy group or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced. Following the provision of this additional information, the applicant passes this criterion.

Content test

The news source <https://dontboreus.thebrag.com/> is a popular music website, focusing on current pop music artists, pop music news, and feature articles related to music interest matters. The About us page at <https://thebrag.com/media/about/> describes 'Don't Bore Us as:

'The only Gen Z dedicated music publisher in the country. They are our youngest audience who are among our most intelligent and passionate. They value positivity, smell bullshit from a mile off, are our BFFs who also hold us accountable, see people for what they're worth beyond appearance, call out bad behaviour, and stand for what they believe in.'

[Redacted content]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

While there may be some content that could meet the core news definition from time to time, it would be in the minority compared to the overwhelming focus on specialist music reporting and related content on this site. The primary purpose of this news source is not the creation of core news. The preliminary decision found applicant failed this criterion and the applicant was advised of this on 22 June 2021.

Applicant response to the Preliminary decision

The Applicant provided a response on 9 July 2021 stating it considered the ACMA had identified the exceptions to core news rather than the majority. [REDACTED]

Australian audiences test

Initial assessment: Pass

An IP look up of the URL indicates that the domain registrant is located in Australia. Much of the content produced on the website would be of interest to people in the Gen Z age range with an interest in modern popular music. While the applicant provided no other information relating to the number of local editorial staff etc, based on the content reviewed it is likely that the news source would meet the Australian audience test.

Rolling Stone Australia 1. (a website or part of a website);
and 2. (magazine)

Professional standards test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant claims it is subject to the APC professional standards. However, a review of the APC membership list and APC constituent bodies reveals that the applicant news corporation, business and source is not a member.

An initial review of the news source website could not locate internal editorial standards or editorial complaints handling mechanism on the website. The applicant states it is not owned or controlled by a party with political or commercial interests. The preliminary decision found applicant failed this criterion and the applicant was advised of this on 22 June 2021.

Applicant response to the Preliminary decision

The Applicant provided a response on 9 July 2021 confirming it was not a member of the APC and stated that its editorial standards are located at the footer of the news source website. The applicant also provided a direct link to a page titled 'The Brag Media Editorial Code' at https://thebrag.com/media/editorial_code/.

A review of the news source was conducted on 16 July 2021. A link at the bottom of the page was found titled 'Editorial Code'. Clicking this link takes the user to 'The Brag Media Editorial Code'. The internal standards reflect the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics and contain relevant standards relating to accuracy and fairness. The internal standards also contain a complaints mechanism that allows for complaints to be accepted, adjudicated and for matters to be rectified.

The applicant advises that the news source is not owned or controlled by an entity that is a political party, union, or a political lobby or advocacy group or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced. Following the provision of this additional information, the applicant passes this criterion.

Content test

The applicant provided the following URL (<https://au.rollingstone.com/>) as the content location for two separate news sources it is seeking registration for: a website or part of a website; and a magazine.

In the case of the magazine news source, no specific online link was provided by the applicant. The assessment has therefore made the assumption that the content on the submitted URL is included in the digital version of the quarterly *Rolling Stone Australia* magazine.

A review of the content on the submitted URL was conducted on 10 June 2021. It indicates it is a music focused website, linked to the well know Rolling Stone magazine.

The About us page at <https://thebrag.com/media/about/> describe 'Rolling Stone' as:

...the leading voice of music and pop culture for over 50 years and is the most iconic music and lifestyle brand in the world. We have a quarterly print edition, exclusive Australian digital and social channels, world class events, multiple content series', and more.

Australian
Communications
and Media Authority
www.acma.gov.au

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Australian audiences test

Initial assessment: Pass

An IP look up of the URL indicates that the domain registrant is located in Australia. The news source, at the contact link at the bottom of the page contains an email link to hello@thebrag.media. A review of the news corporation (Seventh Street Media Pty Ltd) company profile was conducted online and it indicates that this news corporation is located in Chiswick, NSW.

It is noted that the news source is titled Rolling Stone Australia and that the website contained a range of articles across the tabs for Music, Sports, Politics, TV Movie and Culture. The submitted news source contains many articles and stories that are targeted at or would be directly of interest to Australian Audiences, eg the plan for a WAAPA music degree in 2022 and multiple articles about Australian bands. This indicates that the news source <https://au.rollingstone.com/> operates predominantly in Australia for the dominant purpose of serving Australian audiences.

*If the applicant submitted the <https://au.rollingstone.com/politics/> as an individual news source for registration under the code, the news source (in and of itself) it would probably satisfy the definition of core news but may not meet the Australian audience test because while news source/ website operates predominantly in Australia (as evidenced by the Australian domain registration and Australian office presence), it could not be assessed as having the dominant purpose of serving Australian audiences (as a very high percentage of the content in the political section is not geared toward Australian audiences and has a focus on US federal politics. Our assessment of this tab shows it only occasionally features stories reporting or explaining Australian politics).

The Brag (a website or part of a website)

Professional standards test

Initial assessment: Pass

The applicant claims it is subject to the APC professional standards. However, a review of the APC membership list and APC constituent bodies reveals that the applicant news corporation, business and source is not a member.

A review of the news source website could not locate internal editorial standards or editorial complaints handling mechanism on the website. The applicant states it is not owned or controlled by a party with political or commercial interests. The preliminary decision found applicant failed this criterion and the applicant was advised of this on 22 June 2021.

Applicant response to the Preliminary decision

The Applicant provided a response on 9 July 2021 confirming it was not a member of the APC and stated that its editorial standards are located at the footer of the news source website. The applicant also provided a direct link to a page titled 'The Brag Media Editorial Code' at <https://thebrag.com/media/editorial-code/>.

A review of the news source was conducted on 16 July 2021. A link at the bottom of the page was found titled 'Editorial Code'. Clicking this link takes the user to 'The Brag Media Editorial Code'. The internal standards reflect the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics and contain relevant standards relating to accuracy and fairness. The internal standards also contain a complaints mechanism that allows for complaints to be accepted, adjudicated and for matters to be rectified.

The applicant advises that the news source is not owned or controlled by an entity that is a political party, union, or a political lobby or advocacy group or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced. Following the provision of this additional information the applicant passes this criterion.

Content test

The submitted news source, <https://thebrag.com/> is a popular culture website, focusing on content such as gig guides, film and TV, comedians, local food and drinks and gaming and where to find the best coffee in Potts Point etc.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Australian audiences test

Initial assessment: Pass

An IP look up of the URL indicates that the domain registrant is located in Australia (Beaconsfield VIC). The news source did not contain contact information on the website. However, a review of the news corporation (Seventh Street Media Pty Ltd) company profile was conducted online and it indicates that this news corporation is located in Chiswick, NSW.

A review of the content on the news source indicates that the majority of articles on the news source are either about Australian issues or targeted at an Australian Audience, eg an article about the death of a boy who was sleeping in an industrial garbage bin in Queensland, a story about an extension of the NSW Dine and discover voucher program, various articles about food and drinks services available in Australian markets etc.

The news source satisfies this criterion as it meets the requirement of operating in Australia for the purpose of serving Australian audiences.

Initial assessment: Fail

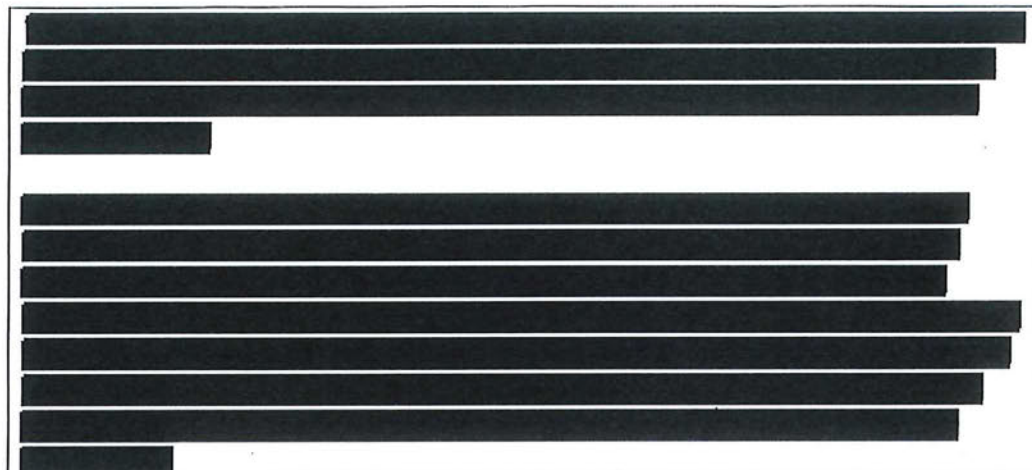
The applicant advises that the news source is not owned or controlled by an entity that is a political party, union, or a political lobby or advocacy group or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced. Following the provision of this additional information, the applicant passes this criterion.

The news source <https://theindustryobserver.thebrag.com/> is an Australian focused music/entertainment industry news and information website. It focuses on articles and content about people in the Australian music industry, such as interviews with music industry executives and performers and the publication describes itself as: *The Industry Observer will keep you up to date on the latest artist signings, music events, partnerships involving companies, and basically anything to do with the managerial side of the music business*

[REDACTED]

[illegible]

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Australian audiences test

Initial assessment: Pass

An IP look up of the URL indicates that the domain registrant is located in Australia (Beaconsfield VIC). The news source did not contain contact information on the website. However, a review of the news corporation (Seventh Street Media Pty Ltd) company profile was conducted online and it indicates that this news corporation is located in Chiswick, NSW.

A review of the content on the news source indicates that the majority of articles on the news source that are about Australian issues or are targeted at an Australian audience, eg an article about an Australian created video game, stories concerning Australian music industry figure etc. There is a tab at the top of the page dedicated to Australian music festivals and the jobs tab only lists employment opportunities in Australia.

The news source satisfies this criterion as it meets the requirement of operating in Australia for the purpose of serving Australian audiences.

Tone Deaf (a website or part of a website)

Professional standards test

Initial assessment: Fail

The applicant claims it is subject to the APC professional standards. However, a review of the APC membership list and APC constituent bodies reveals that the applicant news corporation, business and source is not a member.

A review of the news source website could not locate internal editorial standards or editorial complaints handling mechanism on the website. The applicant states it is not owned or controlled by a party with political or commercial interests. The preliminary decision found applicant failed this criterion and the applicant was advised of this on 22 June 2021.

Applicant response to the Preliminary decision

The Applicant provided a response on 9 July 2021 confirming it was not a member of the APC and stated that its editorial standards are located at the footer of the news source website. The applicant also provided a direct link to a page titled 'The Brag Media Editorial Code' at <https://thebrag.com/media/editorial-code/>.

A review of the news source was conducted on 16 July 2021. A link at the bottom of the page was found titled 'Editorial Code'. Clicking this link takes the user to 'The Brag Media Editorial Code'. The internal standards reflect the MEAA Journalist code of ethics and contain relevant standards relating to accuracy and fairness. The internal standards also contain a complaints mechanism that allows for complaints to be accepted, adjudicated and for matters to be rectified.

The applicant advises that the news source is not owned or controlled by an entity that is a political party, union, or a political lobby or advocacy group or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced. Following the provision of this additional information, the applicant passes this criterion.

Content test

The news source <https://tonedeaf.thebrag.com/> is an Australian focused music information website. It focuses on articles and content about people in the music industry, with many articles being about Australian based performers and events.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Australian audiences test

Initial assessment: Pass

An IP look up of the URL indicates that the domain registrant is located in Australia (Beaconsfield VIC). The news source did not contain contact information on the website. However, a review of the news corporation (Seventh Street Media Pty Ltd) company profile was conducted online and it indicates that this news corporation is located in Chiswick, NSW.

A review of the content on the news source indicates that it contains a majority of content and articles about Australians, issues related to the Australian music industry or are targeted at an Australian audience, eg articles about Australian music industry executives, personalities and events etc.

The news source satisfies this criterion as it meets the requirement of operating in Australia for the purpose of serving Australian audiences.

Recommendation for Preliminary Decision

Decision maker: Elizabeth Press (EL2)

Comments from decision maker

The Applicants should be advised of the Preliminary Decisions as follows:

1. The application appears to have been completed correctly.

3. While the 6 news sources have suggested membership of the Australian Press Council and adherence to the APC standards. No membership is established, and the sources Fail the first limb. There's no evidence on internal professional standards and complaints mechanisms for any of the news sources.

5. Each news source passes the Australian audience test as they operate in Australia for the purposes of Australian audiences.

6. The Applicant passes the connection requirement.

Final decision

Decision-maker: Rochelle Zurnamer (SES1)

Date of final decision: 8 August 2021

Final decision: Fail

Comments from decision maker

Following a review of the application and further submissions from the applicant I agree that

1. The application appears to have been completed correctly.

3. The applicant passes the Professional Standards Test with its internal editorial policies and complaints handling process. I note, the applicant is not owned or controlled by a political or advocacy organisation.

[REDACTED]

5. The news sources pass the Australian audience test as they operate in Australia for the purposes of Australian audiences.

6. The Applicant supplied the Statutory Declaration required to pass the connection test.



Signature of delegated officer:

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Name: Rochelle Zurnamer

Date: 9 August 2021