

Free TV commences public consultation on Code of Practice

Free TV Australia today opened public consultation on its updated draft Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (the **Code**) [[insert hyper link](#)].

Free TV has undertaken a thorough review of the Code to consider whether it provides appropriate community safeguards. After taking into account relevant research and investigation reports of the Australian Communications and Media Authority, which registers and enforces the Code, Free TV has updated the Code which remains broadly fit for purpose and retains the comprehensive framework that has ensured over many years that commercial television is considered a trusted source of news, current affairs, sport and entertainment for all Australians.

Free TV CEO Bridget Fair said, “The Free TV Code of Practice provides robust safeguards in accordance with community standards in areas such as program classification, accuracy and impartiality in news, placement of commercials and program promotions and advertising time limits. The Code assists viewers in making informed choices about their own television viewing and that of the children in their care, and provides effective mechanisms for receiving and handling viewer feedback and complaints.

Free TV has updated the Code in the following key respects:

- Simplifying our M-zone classification times, to better align with the codes of practice of other television broadcasters
- Strengthening and increasing timeliness of corrections and clarifications of errors of fact in news and current affairs programs
- Enhancing the delivery of warnings during high impact news reporting
- Making it easier to lodge a complaint online
- Removing outdated references and modernising the language in the Code.

“These changes will ensure that the Code remains in line with community standards and continues to operate effectively well into the future. Commercial television broadcasters in

Australia are some of the most highly-regulated content platforms, and have a strong track record of compliance with the Code provisions,” Ms Fair said.

“The community expects commercial television broadcasters to deliver content that that is safe, entertaining and informative, while also empowering Australians to make choices about what they and their families watch. They also expect accurate and impartial news journalism and current affairs that brings public interest stories to light, while also balancing fairness to individuals. That is exactly what the Code achieves,” Ms Fair said.

Free TV has not at this stage reviewed the Code provisions with respect to gambling advertising. Those provisions will be updated in due course when the Government has finalised its review of gambling advertising and related matters. Changes to these provisions of the Code will form part of a separate public consultation at a later time.

The public is invited to provide feedback by email, electronic form or post. Public consultation will close on **11 November 2024**. For further information, see Free TV’s Code Review website. [insert hyperlink]

ENDS

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ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia’s commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, WIN Network and Imparja Television.