Australian Government | acma

Australian Communications and Media Authority

MEDIA HANDLING STRATEGY

Four Corners breaches impartiality requirements in War Memorial story

Announcement

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has found the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) breached the impartiality provisions of the ABC Code of Practice 2024 in relation to the Four Corners episode Sacrifice, broadcast on 10 March 2025. The ACMA found no breach of the Code's accuracy provisions.

Sensitivities/considerations

> A breach finding against a flagship ABC current affairs program is likely to attract significant national media attention, with the complainant being former deputy Prime Minister Kim Beazley and the broadcast matter relating to soldiers having served in conflict for Australia. Resulting media commentary around the ACMA's investigation may call into question if the ACMA's expectations around impartiality are appropriate for the context of investigative journalism and accountability reporting.

> The matter is adjacent to, although not related to, Ben Roberts-Smith, which is both topical and sensitive in current public discourse.

> This will be the second time this year the ACMA found *Four Corners* breached the impartiality requirements of the ABC Code of Practice, following the *'Water Grab'* finding from March 2026.

> The ABC may criticise the ACMA's final report when it is made public as it does not agree with the ACMA's breach finding. The ABC maintains the *Four Corners* episode accurately conveyed the ANAO report's finding and contends the ACMA misunderstands the ANAO report.

> The ABC requested a meeting with the ACMA to discuss the breach findings of the report when it is finalised. The ACMA has not yet responded to that request.

> If the ACMA does not announce enforcement action at the same time as publishing the breach finding it may attract criticism that the breach is not being taken seriously enough.

Additional materials for publication

> Investigation report.

Media handling approach

Pitching

The media release will be distributed to the standard ACMA media subscriber list. It will not be distributed under embargo to any outlet. No interview requests will be considered.

Scheduling

Time	Date	Activity
9am	Wed 16 Sept	MR sent under embargo by media team to: - MO media and policy advisor - DITRDCA media team - ACMA customer service centre MR and investigation report sent by line area to: - DITRDCA line area - MO advisor
9am	Wed 16 Sept	Licensee notified 24 hours prior to the report being published.
9am	**Thur 17**	Complainant notified 1 hour prior to the report being published.
10am	**Thur 17 Sept**	**Media release published and distributed**
10.30am	**Thur 17**Sept	Headline is posted to Twitter