



FAIRFAX MEDIA NEW ZEALAND JOURNALISM CHARTER

The launch of Fairfax New Zealand News, Fairfax's news service which will include national, international and local news, features, business, sport, video and photographs, has led to the drawing up of a Charter pledging our independence and upholding of standards, as well as an updating of the company's long-established Code of Ethics.

CHARTER

Fairfax Media is a multi-media news and information company. Our primary objective is to be the leading provider of information through any medium and across all sectors locally, regionally and nationally.

Our newspapers, magazines and digital operations exist to provide readers throughout New Zealand with informed coverage of the news and information they need to lead fulfilled lives and to participate as citizens in a democratic society, of which a free press is a vital part. Fairfax provides through its network of newspapers and websites an unparalleled national news service. Through our words, pictures, video and audio, we tell stories of people and places and all that affects us.

The continued success of Fairfax Media depends on providing present and future readers of all its outlets with high-quality journalism that they trust and value.

Independence, courage and initiative underpin all our journalism. Editors and journalists:

- Maintain a fierce independence free from political or commercial influences;
- Report without fear or favour on events of public interest everywhere;
- Commit themselves to the highest standards of accuracy and ethical behaviour;
- Act with integrity;
- Support company and industry codes endorsing high standards of conduct, and;
- Stand up for and are part of the communities they serve.

Our editors and journalists regard freedom of expression as a right and pledge to defend it against any threat that might undermine our independence, freedom and right to publish.

CODE OF ETHICS

Fairfax editors and editorial staff will strive to be:

- accurate
- fair
- independent

In pursuit of these goals, they will:

1. Present news and comment honestly, bearing in mind the privacy and sensibilities of individuals as well as the public interest.
2. Correct mistakes by prompt correction and clear explanation and, where necessary, apology.
3. Ensure journalists and photographers respect the law, identify themselves and their purpose clearly and not misrepresent themselves unless there is a case of compelling public interest and the information cannot be obtained in any other way.
4. Approach cases involving personal grief or shock with sympathy and discretion.
5. Ensure that staff act professionally so as not to compromise the integrity or reputation of themselves or their publication.
6. Value originality in journalism, take every reasonable precaution to avoid plagiarism, respect the copyright and other intellectual property rights of others, and ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in this regard.
7. Not allow the personal interests of journalists to influence them in their professional duties.
8. Not allow the professional duties of journalists to be influenced by any consideration, gift or advantage offered and, where appropriate, disclose any such offer.
9. Not tamper with photographs to distort and/or misrepresent the image – except for purely cosmetic reasons -- without informing the reader what has occurred and why.
10. Protect confidential sources.
11. Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical appearance, social status or illness, without avoiding legitimate public debate on such issues in the public interest.
12. Exercise care in reporting suicides and abide by the Fairfax Media Protocols for Suicide Reporting.

Fairfax editors have also agreed to abide by the industry-wide undertaking given to Parliament in May 2004 that police who use lethal force in carrying out their public duty will be named only if there is a compelling matter of public interest.

Editorial staff will avoid prominent activity in partisan public causes that compromise or might be seen to compromise the journalist and/or their organisation. Those responsible for covering news, current issues and opinion shall not be members of a political party or stand in an election for public office. If the activities of a member of a journalist's immediate family might compromise them or their publication, the journalist must inform the editor.

Editors agree to publish fair and reasonable accounts of any Press Council decisions involving their publications as soon as practicable.

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