

## **Uralla Wordsworth Editorial Policies**

The purpose of these Editorial Policies is to assist the Uralla Wordsworth Incorporated (Uralla Wordsworth) and our community of contributors to provide content which fulfils its functions as a not for profit community newspaper, to a high standard.

The Principles set out the Uralla Wordsworth's approach to each of the main issues to be addressed by an independent newspaper that regulates itself.

The Principles are intended to assist the interpretation and application of the Standards.

The Editorial Policies are intended to be applied with due regard for the nature of the content under consideration in particular cases. The Uralla Wordsworth is conscious that its dual obligations – for accountability and for high quality – can in practice interact in complex ways. It can be a sign of strength not weakness that journalism enrages or art shocks. The Standards are to be applied in ways that maintain independence and integrity, preserve trust and do not unduly constrain journalistic enquiry or artistic expression. However, all who are involved with content for the Uralla Wordsworth are required to act with integrity and take account of likely harms in exercising their power and responsibility.

### **1 Independence, integrity and responsibility**

#### Principles

The trust and respect of the community depend on the Uralla Wordsworth's editorial independence and integrity. Independence and responsibility are inseparable. The Editorial Team has ultimate editorial power and responsibility.

#### Standards

- 1.1 Maintain the independence and integrity of the Uralla Wordsworth.
- 1.2 Exercise Uralla Wordsworth editorial control over the content the Uralla Wordsworth publishes.
- 1.3 Ensure that editorial decisions are not improperly influenced by political, sectional, commercial or personal interests.
- 1.4 External activities of individuals providing submissions to the Uralla Wordsworth must not undermine the independence and integrity of the Uralla Wordsworth's editorial content.
- 1.5 Exercise editorial independence as authorised and accept responsibility for it. When in doubt about an editorial matter, refer it up to another member of the Editorial Team for advice or decision.

1.6 When any editorial matter, including an editorial matter not being referred on for advice or decision, is likely to cause controversy or have an extraordinary impact, give proper notice of it to the Uralla Wordsworth Public Officer and full Editorial team.

## **2 Accuracy**

### Principles

The Uralla Wordsworth has a duty to ensure that the gathering and presentation of news and information is accurate according to the recognised standards of objective journalism.

Credibility depends heavily on factual accuracy. Types of fact-based content include news and analysis of current events, documentaries, factual dramas and lifestyle programs.

The Uralla Wordsworth requires that reasonable efforts must be made to ensure accuracy in all fact-based content.

The Uralla Wordsworth gauges those efforts by reference to:

- the type, subject and nature of the content;
- the likely audience expectations of the content;
- the likely impact of reliance by the audience on the accuracy of the content; and
- the circumstances in which the content was made and presented.

The Uralla Wordsworth accuracy standard applies to assertions of fact, not to expressions of opinion. Contributors must be mindful that an opinion, being a value judgement or conclusion, cannot be found to be accurate or inaccurate in the way facts can. The accuracy standard requires that opinions be conveyed accurately, in the sense that quotes should be accurate and any editing should not distort the meaning of the opinion expressed. The efforts reasonably required to ensure accuracy will depend on the circumstances. Sources with relevant expertise may be relied on more heavily than those without. Eyewitness testimony usually carries more weight than second-hand accounts. The passage of time or the inaccessibility of locations or sources can affect the standard of verification reasonably required. Contributors to the Uralla Wordsworth should make reasonable efforts, appropriate in the context, to signal to audiences gradations in accuracy, for example by querying interviewees, qualifying bald assertions, supplementing the partly right and correcting the plainly wrong.

### Standards

2.1 Make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.

2.2 Do not present factual content in a way that will materially mislead the audience. In some cases, this may require appropriate labels or other explanatory information.

## **3 Corrections and clarifications**

### Principles

A commitment to accuracy includes a willingness to correct errors and clarify ambiguous or otherwise misleading information. Swift correction can reduce harmful reliance on inaccurate information, especially given content can be quickly, widely and permanently disseminated. Corrections and clarifications can contribute to achieving fairness and impartiality.

## Standards

3.1 Contributors must bring to the attention of the Uralla Wordsworth in an appropriate manner as soon as reasonably practicable, and with sufficient detail to allow the Uralla Wordsworth on behalf of the contributor, to acknowledge and correct or clarify

a significant material errors that are readily apparent or have been demonstrated; or  
b information that is likely to significantly and materially mislead.

3.2 Contributors are obliged to accept corrections to syntax, grammar, sentence structure and spelling. If agreement can not be reached on revised content then Contributors will be asked to consider taking out a paid advertisement. The Uralla Wordsworth reserves the right to decline to publish items that our Editors feel contains errors of syntax, grammar, sentence structure and spelling.

## **4 Impartiality and diversity of perspectives**

### Principles

The Uralla Wordsworth has a duty to ensure that the gathering and presentation of news and information is impartial according to the recognised standards of objective journalism. Aiming to equip audiences to make up their own minds is consistent with the public service character of the Uralla Wordsworth. A democratic society depends on diverse sources of reliable information and contending opinions. Judgements about whether impartiality was achieved in any given circumstances can vary among individuals according to their personal and subjective view of any given matter of contention. Acknowledging this fact of life does not change the Uralla Wordsworth's obligation to apply its impartiality standard as objectively as possible.

In doing so, the Uralla Wordsworth and those who contribute content to the Uralla Wordsworth, are guided by these hallmarks of impartiality:

- a balance that follows the weight of evidence;
- fair treatment;
- open-mindedness; and
- opportunities over time for principal relevant perspectives on matters of contention to be expressed.

The Uralla Wordsworth aims to present, over time, content that addresses a broad range of subjects from a diversity of perspectives reflecting a diversity of experiences, presented in a diversity of ways from a diversity of sources, including content created by Uralla Wordsworth members and those invited to contribute to the Uralla Wordsworth, generated by audiences

and commissioned or acquired from external content-makers. Impartiality does not require that every perspective receives equal time, nor that every facet of every argument is presented.

Assessing the impartiality due in given circumstances requires consideration in context of all relevant factors including:

- the type, subject and nature of the content;
- the circumstances in which the content is made and presented;
- the likely audience expectations of the content;
- the degree to which the matter to which the content relates is contentious;
- the range of principal relevant perspectives on the matter of contention; and
- the timeframe within which it would be appropriate for the Uralla Wordsworth to provide opportunities for the principal relevant perspectives to be expressed, having regard to the public importance of the matter of contention and the extent to which it is the subject of current debate.

## Standards

4.1 Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.

4.2 Present a diversity of perspectives so that, over time, no significant strand of thought or belief within the community is knowingly excluded or disproportionately represented.

4.3 Do not state or imply that any perspective is the editorial opinion of the Uralla Wordsworth. The Uralla Wordsworth takes no editorial stance other than its commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity.

4.4 Do not misrepresent any perspective.

4.5 Do not unduly favour one perspective over another.

## **5 Fair and honest dealing**

### Principles

Fair and honest dealing is essential to maintaining trust with audiences and with those who participate in or are otherwise directly affected by Uralla Wordsworth content. In rare circumstances, deception or a breach of an undertaking may be justified. Because of the potential damage to trust, deception or breach of an undertaking must be explained openly afterwards unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.

### Standards

#### Dealing with participants

5.1 Participants in Uralla Wordsworth content should normally be informed of the general nature of their participation.

5.2 A refusal to participate will not be overridden without good cause.

## Opportunity to respond

5.3 Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.

## Attribution and sources

5.4 Aim to attribute information to its source.

5.5 Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motive and any alternative attributable sources.

5.6 Do not misrepresent another's work as your own.

## Undertakings

5.7 Assurances given in relation to conditions of participation, use of content, confidentiality or anonymity must be honoured except in rare cases where justified in the public interest.

## Secret recording and other types of deception

5.8 Secret recording devices, misrepresentation or other types of deception must not be used to obtain or seek information, audio, pictures or an agreement to participate except where:

- a) justified in the public interest and the material cannot reasonably be obtained by any other means; or
- b) consent is obtained from the subject or identities are effectively obscured; or
- c) the deception is integral to an artistic work and the potential for harm is taken into consideration.

## Mandatory referral

5.9 An appropriately senior Uralla Wordsworth person designated for the purpose must approve in advance, having consulted the Uralla Wordsworth Public Officer, any proposal:

- a) to use secret recording during the production of content commissioned, produced or co-produced by the Uralla Wordsworth; or
- b) to broadcast or publish material obtained by deception; or
- c) to broadcast or publish without attribution information that forms the basis of a report and the Uralla Wordsworth is to be committed to protect the identity of the source of the information; or
- d) not to honour an assurance given in relation to conditions of participation, use of content, confidentiality or anonymity.

## **6 Privacy Principles**

Privacy is necessary to human dignity and every person reasonably expects that their privacy will be respected. But privacy is not absolute. The Uralla Wordsworth seeks to

balance the public interest in respect for privacy with the public interest in disclosure of information and freedom of expression.

## Standards

6.1 Intrusion into a person's private life without consent must be justified in the public interest and the extent of the intrusion must be limited to what is proportionate in the circumstances.

## **7 Harm and offence**

### Principles

The Uralla Wordsworth publishes comprehensive and innovative content that aims to inform, entertain and educate diverse audiences. Innovation involves a willingness to take risks, invent and experiment with new ideas. This can result in challenging content which may offend some of the audience some of the time. But it also contributes to diversity of content in the media and to fulfilling the Uralla Wordsworth's function to encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts. The Uralla Wordsworth acknowledges that a community newspaper should never gratuitously harm or offend and accordingly any content which is likely to harm or offend must have a clear editorial purpose. The Uralla Wordsworth potentially reaches the whole community, so it must take into account community standards. The Uralla Wordsworth must also be able to provide content for specific target audiences whose standards may differ from generally held community attitudes. Applying the harm and offence standard requires careful judgement. Context is an important consideration. What may be inappropriate and unacceptable in one context may be appropriate and acceptable in another. Coarse language, disturbing images or unconventional situations may form a legitimate part of reportage, debate, documentaries or a humorous, satirical, dramatic or other artistic work. Consideration of the nature of the target audience for particular content is part of assessing harm and offence in context, as is any signposting that equips audiences to make informed choices about what they see, hear or read.

### Standards

7.1 Content that is likely to cause harm or offence must be justified by the editorial context.

7.2 Where content is likely to cause harm or offence, having regard to the context, make reasonable efforts to provide information about the nature of the content through the use of classification labels or other warnings or advice.

7.3 The reporting or depiction of violence, tragedy or trauma must be handled with extreme sensitivity. Avoid causing undue distress to victims, witnesses or bereaved relatives. Be sensitive to significant cultural practices when depicting or reporting on recently deceased persons.

7.4 Where there is editorial justification for content which may lead to dangerous imitation or exacerbate serious threats to individual or public health, safety or welfare, take appropriate

steps to mitigate those risks, particularly by taking care with how content is expressed or presented.

7.7 Avoid the unjustified use of stereotypes or discriminatory content that could reasonably be interpreted as condoning or encouraging prejudice.