

Attached is the information I was requested to provide on notice, comparing the IMC with the APC.

The Hon. James McGinty
Member
Independent Media Council

The principles of the Australian Press Council and the Independent Media Council are very similar.

The key points of comparison between the two bodies are:

Australian Press Council: The APC has 22 members, comprising the independent Chair; eight “public members”, who have no affiliations with a media organisation; nine nominees of media organisations, including major publishers of newspapers and magazines as well as the principal union for employees in the media industry; and four independent journalist members, who are not employed by a media organisation. My understanding is that the APC has about seven staff and an annual budget of about \$1.6 million.

The Independent Media Council: The IMC has three members. The chair is a former Supreme Court judge and Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission of WA. The other members are both former Attorneys-General of WA. There are no journalists or publishers’ representatives. The IMC has one part-time staff member and an annual budget of about \$75,000

APC: The APC is based in Sydney. Its core funding is provided by the “constituent bodies”, which comprise News Limited, Fairfax Media, and other newspaper and magazine publishers, and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance which represents journalists and other workers in the media industry. The APC constitution allows it to seek government funding to meet any shortfall in its budget.

IMC: The IMC is based in Perth and membership is open to all publishers who are prepared to sign up to its code of conduct. Funding is provided by the membership (currently only West Australian Newspapers Ltd, which owns 23 newspapers) No other funding is permitted.

APC: In my experience, the APC generally took three to six months to resolve an issue.

IMC: The IMC has a fast resolution process – generally days, not months — to deal with a complaint therefore limiting any distress or damage that may be caused by unfair or inaccurate reports being uncorrected.

APC: Heavily involved in unilaterally setting media standards. In 2011 it published a specific standard in relation to suicide. Between November 2010 and October 2011, it conducted 13 “roundtables” in various cities, but no other specific standard has emerged.

IMC: Operates under a code of conduct to which member publishers must commit. This code was drawn up by the IMC after consultation with various groups, including Muslim organizations, mental health bodies, the disability sector, journalists, academics and a media proprietor. The Council and the funding bodies review the code from time to time.

APC: Each publisher must ensure that any Council adjudication relating to a publication which it controls is published in that publication. The adjudication must be published in full and headed “Press Council Adjudication” or “Press Council Ruling”, together with the Council’s logo. It must be differentiated from surrounding copy by a distinctive font or a text box, and must not be accompanied by editorial comment.

In the case of daily publications, the adjudication must be published within seven days of the final adjudication being notified to them. In the case of other publications, it must be published no later than the first issue after the seven-day period.

IMC: The IMC has the power to require publication of its determinations or of a specified part or parts thereof; specify the page or place of publication of a determination, on the understanding that this will be complied with as closely as is reasonably practicable; recommend the making of an apology; and recommend the withdrawal of an online print media publication.

APC: Members are required to give four years’ notice of withdrawal and pay three years’ fees.

IMC: Any funding body may cease to be a funding body by giving written notice to that effect to the Council, provided that the funding body first discharges its funding obligations current at the date of the notice.