



**Mike Van Niekerk**  
Editor in Chief - Online  
Fairfax Media Limited

Telephone: (+612) 9282 2531  
Facsimile: (+612) 9282 1633  
Email: [mvanniekerk@fairfaxmedia.com.au](mailto:mvanniekerk@fairfaxmedia.com.au)

8 May 2009

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment  
Communications and the Arts  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Holland,

**Inquiry into the reporting of sporting news and the emergence of digital media**

I refer to the Supplementary Submission of Australian Associated Press Pty Ltd (**AAP**) to the Inquiry.

In light of all the evidence submitted to the Inquiry, if the Senate Committee forms the view that intervention is necessary, then subject to the comments below, Fairfax Media Limited endorses AAP's proposal for a mandatory industry code of practice as set out at paragraph 2.4 of the Supplementary Submission.

There is no doubt the nature of news reporting and communication undergoes constant change, and never more so than now, as media companies comprehensively revise business strategies to survive, and the fundamental principles of news presentation make a dynamic shift online.

Given these circumstances, any such code of practice must be framed in the context of a broad and dynamic news media arena, and recognise the breadth of scope in the nature and operations of entities carrying on business in it. This includes the business of news reporting, but also business related to news reporting.

We agree with submissions, including the Supplementary Submission of AAP referred to above, to the effect that no law or code should attempt to prescribe what "news reporting" is.

Finally, we submit that any such industry code should proceed on the fundamental basis, long recognised in this country, that a robust, independent media is essential to the functioning of a healthy, free democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Van Niekerk  
Editor in Chief - online