

20 February 2015
Media Release

Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice Invitation for Public Comment

Free TV Australia is reviewing the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (the Code) and seeks public comment. The new Code has been revised to reflect Australia's modern digital media landscape, uphold community standards and ensure appropriate viewer safeguards.

In developing the new Code, Free TV has considered Australia's diversified media environment in which viewers are accessing content whenever and wherever they wish, across a range of devices and a variety of platforms. Many of these alternative platforms remain unregulated.

The new Code:

- Contains no change to the amount of advertising on commercial free-to-air television;
- More accurately reflects how Australians are actually consuming television content;
- Contains key community safeguards in the areas of classification, news and current affairs, advertisements, and effective complaints-handling;
- Is simplified, more concise and consumer-friendly; and
- Ensures commercial television remains Australia's safest and most heavily regulated platform.

Free TV Chairman Harold Mitchell AC said: "This is a strong Code that continues to provide the most comprehensive community safeguards for viewers.

"It has been simplified and is much more user friendly.

"We are confident that the proposed Code catches up with the range of ways people now access content, while ensuring Free TV remains Australia's safest place for viewers."

The closing date for public comment is Friday, 3 April 2015. Submissions may be sent to Free TV Australia via post to 44 Avenue Road, Mosman NSW 2088 or via email to Code2015@freetv.com.au.

A copy of the proposed Code and the review documents are available from the Free TV Australia website, www.freetv.com.au

After a six week public consultation process, the Code must be submitted to the Australian Communications and Media Authority for registration.

For media enquiries contact Free TV Australia on (02) 8968 7100

About the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (the Code)

Commercial free-to-air television content is regulated under the Code, which is developed by Free TV Australia in consultation with the public, and registered with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The Code regulates content in accordance with community standards; assists viewers in making informed choices about their own television viewing and that of children in their care; and provides effective measures for receiving and handling viewer complaints.

Before registering the Code, the ACMA must be satisfied that it provides appropriate community safeguards for the matters it covers; is endorsed by a majority of commercial television stations, and; members of the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment. The Code operates alongside other regulatory instruments, including the requirements of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (BSA) and ACMA Standards.

The Code was last reviewed in 2009 and its current provisions came into effect on 1 January 2010. The commercial free-to-air television industry has updated the Code for the modern media era, taking into consideration practical experience and external research[^] into community attitudes, standards and expectations about content regulation, and how consumers interact with various media. The invitation for public comment offers the viewing public the opportunity to contribute.

[^]Sources include the ACMA's [Contemporary Community Safeguards Inquiry](#) and The Australian Law Reform Commission's [Classification-Content Regulation and Convergent Media Report](#).