

MEDIA GUIDELINES

Released 21 October 2025

INTRODUCTION

1. These Guidelines are issued under section 103(1) of the *Inquiries Act 2014* (Vic) (**Act**) and deal with media matters in relation to the Forum for Truth and Recognition: Victim-Survivors of Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools (the Forum), a formal review established under section 93(1) of the Act.
2. These Guidelines apply to all news media organisations, freelance journalists and other individuals who report and publish information on the Forum.
3. These Guidelines may be updated and varied from time to time.
4. The Forum may, at any time, depart from these Guidelines if it considers it appropriate to do so.

OBJECTIVES

5. The Forum recognises that the media has an important role to play in relation to its review.
6. The Forum seeks to work co-operatively with news media organisations to:
 - 6.1. communicate with the public and develop community understanding of the Forum's work and child sexual abuse more generally; and
 - 6.2. facilitate fair and accurate public reporting of the Forum's work.
7. The Forum intends to release as much information about its review as possible, subject to legal, privacy and safety considerations, especially given the sensitive nature of much of the information relevant to its review.

DEFINITIONS

8. In these Guidelines, these terms have the following meanings:

Chair means the Chair of the Forum, Angela Connors.

Exclusion Order means an order made by the Chair excluding any person from the Forum's proceeding under section 104(1) of the Act.

News media organisation means:

- (a) a commercial enterprise that engages in the business of broadcasting or publishing news; and
- (b) a public broadcasting service that engages in the dissemination or publishing of news.

Publish means disseminate or provide access to the public or a section of the public by any means, including by:

- (a) publication in a book, newspaper, magazine or other written publication;
- (b) broadcast by radio or television;
- (c) broadcast or electronic communication, including by publication on the internet; or
- (d) bring to the notice of the public or any member of the public by any other means.

Restricted Publication Order means an order made by the Chair prohibiting or restricting the publication of information under section 106 of the Act.

BACKGROUND

9. The Forum will generally adopt the following approach to information:
 - 9.1. written submissions may be made available to the general public, unless the person or organisation making the submission has requested anonymity or confidentiality (in whole or in part) or the Forum otherwise determines the submission should not be made available;
 - 9.2. information from personalised sessions with the Chair will generally not be made available to the general public; and
 - 9.3. information from any community consultations and stakeholder roundtable discussions will generally not be made available to the general public.

MEDIA REGISTRATION

10. If an accredited news media organisation wishes to access the Forum's information, they may apply for registration with the Forum. The Forum may also consider applications for registration from any freelance journalists who wish to report upon and publish information about the Forum.
11. All applications for registration must be made on the form attached to these Guidelines entitled "Registration form for news media organisation representative".

LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS

12. Various legislation prohibits, or imposes limitations on, the publishing of certain types of information which may potentially be received by the Forum.
13. Such legislation includes (without limitation):
 - 13.1. sections 41, 191 and 534 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic);
 - 13.2. sections 3 and 4 of the *Judicial Proceedings Reports Act 1958* (Vic); and
 - 13.3. sections 17, 20, 25 and 26 of the *Open Courts Act 2014* (Vic).
14. The onus is on news media organisations and their representatives to understand these requirements, including ascertaining whether any relevant suppression orders exist and to comply with all such requirements.

RESTRICTED PUBLICATION ORDERS

15. At all times, any access to information, evidence or documents contemplated by these Guidelines is subject to the Chair exercising the power under section 106 of the Act to make a Restricted Publication Order.
16. The Chair may make a Restricted Publication Order prohibiting or restricting

the publication of:

16.1. any information that may enable the identity of a person who has given, or is to give, information to the Forum for the purposes of its review to be ascertained; or

16.2. any information given to the Forum for the purposes of its review.

17. The Chair may make a Restricted Publication Order if:

17.1. prejudice or hardship might be caused to any person, including harm to their safety or reputation;

17.2. the nature and subject matter of the information is sensitive;

17.3. there is a possibility of any prejudice to legal proceedings;

17.4. the conduct of the proceeding would be more efficient and effective; or

17.5. the Chair otherwise considers the prohibition or restriction appropriate.

18. On the same grounds, the Chair may make an Exclusion Order under section 104 of the Act.

19. Any Restricted Publication Orders or Exclusion Orders will be made available to any news media organisation.

20. The onus remains on news media organisations and their representatives to ascertain whether any Restricted Publication Orders or Exclusion Orders exist and, if so, strictly comply with all such orders.

MEDIA LIAISON WITH THE FORUM

21. All news media organisation contact with the Forum as contemplated by these Guidelines (unless indicated otherwise), including registrations and requests for comment, should in the first instance be directed to the Communications team, on 1800 967 933 or email at contact@truthandrecognition.vic.gov.au.

Registration form for news media organisation representative

News media organisation:	
Contact address:	(State) (Postcode)
Representative name:	
Representative title:	
Contact telephone number:	(Business) (Mobile)
Contact email address:	

We undertake, and will procure that each of our news media organisation's representatives undertakes, to:

- a) only use any Forum information for the purposes of, and to the extent necessary for, fair and accurate public reporting of the Forum's work and not use that information (or permit it to be used) for any other purposes;
- b) exercise all reasonable care in accessing, storing and publishing any Forum information;
- c) comply with all relevant legislative requirements (including, without limitation, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), the *Judicial Proceedings Reports Act 1958* (Vic), and the *Open Courts Act 2013* (Vic));
- d) comply with any Restricted Publication Orders or Exclusion Orders; and
- e) comply with all Forum Practice Directions and any reasonable requests by Forum officers.

We acknowledge that a breach of these undertakings may result in our registration and access to the Forum's information being withdrawn.

Signed for and on behalf of the news media organisation by:

Name: (Print):

Title:

Date:

Please lodge this form by sending it to
contact@truthandrecognition.vic.gov.au.