

Media Guidelines

Version 1

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Introduction

1. The Barrett Adolescent Centre Commission of Inquiry (the Commission) recognises that the media has an important role to play informing the community about the work of the Commission and the matters within its Terms of Reference.
2. These guidelines provide details of the arrangements for media access to the Commission's public hearings.
3. The guidelines will be updated as necessary, including to incorporate arrangements for the full schedule of public hearings.
4. The Commission may, at any time, vary or depart from these guidelines if it considers it appropriate to do so.

Background

5. The Commission seeks to work co-operatively with news media organisations to facilitate fair and accurate public reporting of the work of the Commission, its Terms of Reference and evidence given at public hearings.
6. The Commission defines a news media organisation as a commercial enterprise or public broadcasting service that engages in the broadcasting or publication of news.
7. Journalists representing news media organisations are expected to comply with the standards in the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance *Journalists' Code of Ethics*.
8. The Commission may release information it holds subject to legal and privacy considerations, the Commission's Confidentiality Protocol¹ and any non-publication orders made by the Commissioner.
9. The Commission will publish details of public hearings, witness lists, lists of parties with leave to appear or to be legally represented before the inquiry and hearing transcripts on its [website](#).²
10. Media organisations and journalists should be aware that it remains their responsibility to ensure they comply with relevant legislative requirements and not breach any orders made by the Commissioner.

¹ Available at www.barrettinquiry.qld.gov.au/practice-guidelines/

² www.barrettinquiry.qld.gov.au/

11. Relevant legislation may include (without limitation):

- a. *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950*;
- b. *Mental Health Act 2000*;
- c. *Child Protection Act 1999*;
- d. *Disability Services Act 2006*;
- e. *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*;
- f. *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000*;
- g. *Hospitals and Health Boards Act 2011*; and
- h. *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*.

Reporting on mental illness and suicide

12. Journalists and commentators should be aware that media reports on issues relating to mental illness and suicide can have an impact on community attitudes towards persons living with a mental illness and on others who may be at risk of suicide. Appropriate, responsible and sensitive reporting can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, and encourage affected people to seek help from appropriate services.
13. When reporting on suicide, journalists should try to avoid any description of how someone died or the location where they did so, to reduce the risk of other persons taking their own lives in a similar way.
14. Mindframe has produced specific resources for Australian media professionals reporting on mental illness and suicide, which are available [here](#).³
15. Media outlets are requested to include contact details for crisis services such as Lifeline and Kids Helpline wherever possible in their reports about the Commission. Given the focus of the inquiry on issues relating to adolescent mental health, media should also consider including contact details for specialist services supporting children and adolescents.
16. Mindframe provides contact details for 24-hour crisis counselling services, mental health support services and services supporting children and adolescents [here](#).⁴

³ Page link: www.mindframe-media.info/home/resource-downloads/media-resources

⁴ See the helplines card on the resources page:

www.mindframe-media.info/home/resource-downloads/media-resources

Hearings

17. The Commission's hearings will generally be open to the public and live-streamed via its website, subject to the Commissioner's discretion to exclude the public or any portion of the public from any of its sittings.
18. Public hearings will be conducted in Courtroom 34 on level 7 of the Brisbane Magistrates Court building at 363 George Street, Brisbane.
19. Information about public hearing dates and other arrangements will be published on the Commission's website.

Use of electronic devices by journalists

20. During the public hearings, representatives of news media organisations **may** use electronic devices for the purposes of reporting on proceedings, subject to the conditions below. This includes laptop computers, tablets and mobile telephones, used for note-taking, text messaging, tweeting, and filing or publishing reports from the hearing room.
21. Any devices in the hearing room must be switched to silent mode.
22. Electronic devices **may not** be used in hearings:
 - a. in a manner that interferes with the decorum of proceedings, or with the Commission's recording system;
 - b. to make or receive audio or video calls; or
 - c. to take photographs or video footage.
23. These guidelines do not authorise use of electronic devices in hearings by members of the general public.
24. Representatives of news media organisations (as defined in paragraph 6 above) may make private audio recordings of sittings, providing it is done unobtrusively and without interruption to the proceedings. Such recording is permitted only to maintain accuracy in the reporting of proceedings. The audio recording must not be broadcast or published.
25. Media representatives are not otherwise permitted to film, record or conduct interviews inside the Brisbane Magistrates Court building, in accordance with established practice relating to media access to Queensland courthouses.

Live streaming

26. Public hearings will be streamed live through the Commission's [website](#).⁵
27. The live stream is provided on condition that it not be recorded, rebroadcast, published or shared in any form. This applies to video and audio recordings, and still images from the live stream.
28. The Commission has power to exclude the public or any portion of the public from any of its sittings, where it considers it is in the public interest to do so for reasons relating to the subject matter of the inquiry or the nature of the evidence to be given. The live stream may be muted or suspended at any time by order of the Commissioner in the event that this occurs.
29. Note the availability or quality of the live stream may be affected from time to time by technical issues beyond the Commission's control.

Recording and filming

30. The Commissioner granted media permission to film, record and photograph her opening statement at the commencement of the initial hearing on 30 September 2015.
31. A television camera filmed the opening statement on a pool basis, on the condition that the material is promptly made available on request to other news media outlets, and the Commission if required.
32. Media were not permitted to film or photograph the public gallery in the courtroom.
33. Apart from the Commissioner's opening statement on 30 September, media are not permitted to film or broadcast any of the Commission's hearings, including re-broadcasting the live-stream published through its website.

Media facilities

34. Media representatives may use the public gallery in the hearing room to report on proceedings, when there are seats available. However, seating in the public gallery is limited and available on a first-in basis. News organisations are asked to limit the number of personnel in the hearing room at any given time, to avoid unduly compromising the convenience of members of the public attending the proceedings.
35. The Commission will also provide a dedicated media area to assist reporters covering hearings in person. The media area will be outside Courtroom 34 on level 7 of the Brisbane Magistrates Court building.

⁵ Page link: www.barrettinquiry.qld.gov.au/hearings/live-streaming/

36. Facilities will include TV monitors showing a live broadcast of proceedings and relevant evidence from the hearing room. Copies of the Media Guidelines and other material relevant to media coverage will be made available to reporters in the dedicated media area.
37. Please note that the live broadcast to the media area may be muted or suspended at any time by order of the Commissioner, including in the event that the public is excluded from any portion of the sittings. This is consistent with the conditions on live streaming generally in paragraph 27 above.
38. The live broadcast to the media area is subject to the restrictions on recording and filming in paragraphs 30 to 33 above.
39. Mobile phones may be used in the dedicated media area (subject to the convenience of other journalists and members of the public on level 7) but not in the hearing room.

Media sign-in

40. All media attending a public hearing must sign the register located in the Commission's media area each day they attend the inquiry.
41. Media representatives should carry media credentials and show their credentials on request.

Non-publication orders and confidential information

42. The Commission has powers to direct that any evidence not be published and to exclude the public or any portion of the public from any of its sittings.
43. A non-publication order may be made, varied and/or lifted during a public hearing.
44. Non-publication orders will be published on the Commission's website as soon as practicable, but at all times it is the responsibility of the media to comply with any orders in place.
45. The Commission will manage confidential information or documents in accordance with Part G of [Practice Guideline 01/2015](#) and its [Confidentiality Protocol](#).⁶
46. The Commission will not make comment to media about confidential information.

Transcripts

47. Public hearing transcripts will be published on the Commission's website as soon as reasonably practicable after each sitting day.

⁶ Both available at www.barrettinquiry.qld.gov.au/practice-guidelines/

48. Transcripts will be edited to correct errors and to address confidentiality issues.

Interviews

49. Interviews with witnesses, counsel and members of the public will not be facilitated by the Commission and are not permitted within the Brisbane Magistrates Court building.

Media contact

50. Journalists can contact the Media Director at media@barrettinquiry.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3239 6040 for more information.