

Authorising Committee:	Board
Responsible Committee(s):	Corporate Governance and Risk Committee
Responsible Department(s):	Office of the President and CEO (OPCEO)
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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) is the principal organisation representing the medical specialty of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand. Within the RANZCP there is a Branch in each State and Territory of Australia (or a representative of the RANZCP) and a National Office in New Zealand.

The RANZCP receives media inquiries, produces media releases, and is asked to comment on a variety of issues at both a Bi-National and Branch/National Office level. It is important that the RANZCP presents information consistently, effectively, and professionally to the media.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the RANZCP's processes for interacting with the media in the following cases:

- Representing the views of the College as a whole.
- Representing the views of a Branch/Faculty/Section/Committee of the College.
- Representing the views of a member providing expert mental health opinion.
- Determine an avenue for commentary on operational matters relating to the College.

CONSTITUTION

Pursuant to Articles 8.4.1 and 8.4.2 of the Constitution, 'the President or the Board may authorise any Committee or individual to represent the College before any government or governmental body or committee or to make statements or express views on behalf of the College.

The authority may be given generally or for a specific situation and may be given on such conditions as the President or Board thinks fit. Unless duly authorised to do so under this Article, no member may make any statement or express any view which purports to be a statement or view of the College or as having been made or expressed on behalf of or with the concurrence of the College.'

As such the President and/or delegate reserves the right to review and approve any media statement made on behalf of the College.

DEFINITION OF THE MEDIA

The term 'media' encompasses all proactive and reactive communications activities undertaken by the RANZCP, including, but not limited to, coverage in the press, radio, and television, and on the internet.

WHO CAN PROVIDE COMMENT TO THE MEDIA?

President, Chief Executive Officer, and Board Director

- The President is the official spokesperson of the RANZCP.
- In their absence the President is authorised to nominate the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or another Board Director to comment on the RANZCP's behalf.
- The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to comment on College operational matters.

Board/Faculty/Section/Branch/Committee Chairs

The President, and, in the absence of the President, the President-Elect and CEO, is authorised to nominate RANZCP members to comment to the media in accordance with their expertise.

The President, President-Elect, or CEO may authorise Board/Faculty/Section/Branch/New Zealand National Committee/Committee Chairs to comment on certain relevant issues.

Branch Committee/New Zealand National Committee Chairs

Branch Committee Chairs and the New Zealand National Committee Chair may comment on local issues on behalf of their jurisdiction but may not make comments or represent the RANZCP on issues that may have an impact at a bi-national level.

The Branch and/or the New Zealand National Office should notify the Bi-National Office of all media inquiries and as best practice, work with the Media Team to develop relevant messaging. The President has the first and final authority to approve or change any media statement as they see fit.

Fellows

RANZCP members are not authorised to represent the RANZCP in the media, except where the President and/or Board have delegated their authority to the member to comment on behalf of the RANZCP.

Staff

Staff are not permitted to comment to the media on behalf of the RANZCP unless authorised by the President, the Board or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

WHAT ISSUES CAN PEOPLE COMMENT ON?

RANZCP position on specific issues

The RANZCP position can only be given by the President or their delegate. The President regularly calls upon the Chairs of Committees/Faculties/Sections/Branches to present the RANZCP position when it relates to a specific area of responsibility.

Regional/local issues

Branch Committee Chairs and the New Zealand National Committee Chair can comment on behalf of their jurisdiction on local issues after notifying the Bi-National Office.

If a local issue has bi-national implications, the Branch Committee/New Zealand National Committee Chair must consult the President via the Media Team before any comment is given to the media. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect should be consulted.

It is the responsibility of the Branch Committee/New Zealand National Committee Chair to inform the media of their position title i.e., Chair of the Branch/National Committee. They can comment on specific local issues without the approval of the President and/or Board.

Jurisdictions may not make comments on behalf of the RANZCP on issues that may be considered bi-national. Such items are to be referred to the RANZCP's Media Team for consideration by the President and/or Board.

Individual expert opinion

From time to time the RANZCP may receive a media inquiry on a current issue or an area in which the RANZCP does not have an official position. In such instances, the RANZCP may refer the inquiry to a suitably qualified member of the RANZCP for an expert opinion.

While members may identify themselves as members of the RANZCP, they are not authorised to represent the RANZCP or the views or policies of the RANZCP. In these instances, the opinions and advice offered by members must be clearly identified as theirs alone and not necessarily representing the view of the RANZCP.

Non-attributed quotes

While uncommon, there may be an instance when there is cause to provide a quote on behalf of the College which does not name the President, CEO, or other individual, but refers to "a spokesperson."

The most likely reason for this is expedience in meeting news deadlines on an issue where the College has a sound, published position to which media can be referred to, without needing expansion.

The Media Team members can act as 'spokesperson' in this instance.

Newsletters

While Branch and other newsletters are sent to members, they are formal RANZCP publications which can be accessed by external parties such as the media. RANZCP newsletters therefore must adhere to and represent considered RANZCP positions, and such matters should be communicated in an appropriate manner commensurate to the position of the RANZCP.

All published information must protect individual privacy and confidentiality.

The newsletters should represent the broad views of the Branch and the RANZCP. Editorial comments or opinions should come with the disclaimer that these are the views of the individual and are not representative of the Branch of RANZCP. If the Branch is unsure about any of the content of a newsletter they should communicate with the Bi-National Office.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA?

The CEO should be kept informed of all media enquiries by the Media Team.

Proactive media approaches

All proactive media approaches from the RANZCP/Branches/Faculties/Sections/Committees which pertain to issues of Bi-National interest are to be approved by the President and/or Board via the Media Team before distribution.

The President is the quoted spokesperson in RANZCP media releases. Media releases may also include further quoted comments from a specialist area as required.

Branch Committee Chairs and the New Zealand National Committee Chair may be the quoted spokesperson in jurisdiction-specific media releases.

Media inquiries

All media inquiries received by the RANZCP are referred to the Media Team, who will consult the Chief Executive Officer via email, or call the President if urgent, with their recommended approach.

In respect to media inquiries received by jurisdictions, the Branch/New Zealand National Office should, as

best-practice, notify the Media Team for support in developing a response appropriate to the specific medium, as well as to determine whether the inquiry is a purely local issue or whether there are College-wide Bi-National implications.

If it is a local issue, a comment can be made by the Branch/New Zealand National Committee Chair (or her/his delegate) as the opinion of the Branch of the RANZCP. The Media Team will track media interactions and resulting media coverage.

Some inquiries, such as a journal article specific to an author, will be forwarded directly to the appropriate person.

ATTRIBUTION

In media interviews and media releases, attribution should be in the following format (with the understanding that media outlets are under no obligation to follow the College's attribution style).

RANZCP example

- Dr X, President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

Branch example

- Dr Y, Chair of the New South Wales Branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

Faculty example

- Dr Z, Chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Member example

- Dr Bloggs, a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, *not* Dr Bloggs from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

CONTACT DETAILS

Media Team: media@ranzcp.org

Manager, Advocacy and Media: lex.guidier@ranzcp.org

President: president@ranzcp.org

President-Elect: president.elect@ranzcp.org

Executive Manager, Bi-National Offices and Partnerships: monique.devereux@ranzcp.org

REVISION RECORD

Contact:	Executive Manager, Bi-National Offices and Partnerships		
Date	Version	Approver	Description
24/05/2009	1.0	GC2009/2 R6	New document.
01/01/2011	1.1	OPCEO	Update to contact information.
11/05/2013	1.2	GRC	Updated to reflect new governance model. Contact information updated.
13/10/2015	1.3	OPCEO	Update to contact information and reference to New Zealand National Committee.
24/09/2017	1.4	B2017/6 R5	Change of Policy name, clarification of newsletter content, update to contact details and clarification of approval of media statements.
31/07/2018	1.5	CMG	Minor revisions including update to contact details and contact of Bi-national Office for media inquiries.
21/06/2023	1.6	PM	Updating to reflect best practices in media liaison and changes to College structure.
Next Review: 28/05/2024			