

# The Royal Institution of Australia Editorial Policy

## Introduction

The Royal Institution of Australia is an independent not for profit charitable organisation with a mission contribute to a better, smarter world by making science accessible and compelling to people of all ages, and to inspire future generations to pursue this knowledge and approach in their lives and careers.

The Royal Institution of Australia publishes content in three core areas: Cosmos (print and online); Australia's Science Channel Education portal; and through events such as SCINEMA.

## 1. Content

### 1.1 Definition

Content in the context of this editorial policy and the activities of The Royal Institution of Australia is described as printed or digital content in the form of written words, stills photography, recorded audio, animation and videography. We deliver content through printed magazines, websites, social media and through live events.

### 1.2 Public Interest, Independence and Trust

Our content strives to make evidence-based truths engaging and understandable. We investigate and report on research and discoveries in science, engineering and technology that may have profound outcomes for human progress and sustainability. The trust our audience has in The Royal Institution of Australia depends on our editorial independence and integrity and care in collecting and reporting information. We believe that independence, trust and wider public responsibility go hand in hand.

### 1.3 Facts and Consilience

All information provided by The Royal Institution of Australia will be fact-based and editorially independent, free from any bias and based on the consilience of the science available. If a material is to be presented that is outside the consilience or if a consilience on the issue does not exist or is unclear, this material must be presented in an appropriate context.

A note on Consilience: Consilience is where independent lines of research reach the same or similar conclusions. It is not the consensus of opinions of scientists. It is where the conclusions of the majority of research on a subject converges.

## 1.4 External Engagement

When The Royal Institution of Australia is engaged to provide a service for a specific organisation we will do so within the parameters of our organisational mission and this policy. We will always identify all sponsors, funding partners or contributors of content to ensure full transparency.

## 1.5 Editorial Control

Full editorial control of the production of any content or materials made by Royal Institution of Australia will rest with The Royal Institution of Australia on all occasions

Full editorial control of all material aggregated from external sources for dissemination by The Royal Institution of Australia will rest with The Royal Institution of Australia. The Royal Institution of Australia reserves the right to not publish anything that it deems contrary to our mission or is contrary to this policy at its sole discretion.

## 1.6 Editorial Accountability

All editorial decisions are the ultimate responsibility of the CEO and Head of Publishing for The Royal Institution of Australia. This includes the determination of the consilience on a subject as well as the veracity and efficacy of all content. In making editorial decisions the Head of Publishing has recourse to consult experts in their fields across Australia and internationally if required.

The day-to-day editorial decisions to be made by production staff and contributing editorial staff must be consistent with the editorial policy. Where questions arise over the editorial content, they must be referred up to The Royal Institution of Australia management team for consideration.

## 2. Science

### 2.1 Definition

The use of the word 'science' at the The Royal Institution of Australia encompasses the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. 'Science' refers to a body of knowledge amassed via specific methodologies, conclusions that are supported by evidence and phenomena or propositions that are measurable or testable. Weight is given to results reported in peer-reviewed literature.

## 3. Good Science Content

### 3.1 Principle

To capture a wide audience with science stories our content needs to be informative, educational and entertaining. Content also needs to be accessible to a wide audience and relevant to their daily lives. Our content needs to work on every personal entertainment screen.



## Guidance note 1:

We acknowledge that we are asking our users to give us their time to read or view our contents. Our content standards need to be of the highest quality to deliver value to our users.

## Guidance note 2:

Audiences travel to The Royal Institution of Australia's editorial and educational products by their own choice. This means that they are searching for something. Generally, choices are motivated by aspirations; the aspiration to improve themselves or their lifestyles. We need to respect our audiences by pitching our content with high levels of integrity, accuracy, veracity and production values.

## 3.2 Content Requirements

The Royal Institution of Australia content is entertaining, informative, educational and addresses a wider public interest for information that is underpinned by verified evidence. It is accessible and relevant to a general audience and invites them into discussions about issues in science and the relevance of science to their everyday lives and to informed public decision-making. Our content takes the consumer seriously. All content is suitable for delivery on smart phones, tablets, computer screens and connected televisions.

We aim to deliver the highest possible production values but acknowledge that different types of content and production circumstances will deliver various levels of quality to different audiences.

## 4. Content Decisions

The Royal Institution of Australia gathers its content through internal productions, through content partners and through third party publishers and acquisitions. Content that appears on The Royal Institution of Australia's editorial products is curated by our editorial team and our contributing publishers. All content needs to abide by our Editorial and Quality Guidelines outlined in the clauses under sections 1, 2, and 3. Content needs to be current, or otherwise relevant. All our content is compliant with the standards of good taste and community acceptability.

### 4.1 Internally Produced Content

The Royal Institution of Australia has the facilities and capacities to produce a certain amount of our own material.

## Procedural note 1:

Internally produced content is subject to a decision-making process referred to as the Content Pipeline. Content ideas can originate with various sources but travel through the decision and production process in the same fashion. Ideas can be presented at the weekly content meeting. A pitch framework has been developed to aid the development process of ideas. Ideas that are approved travel through the content pipeline and get allocated resources for production and delivery. External requests for productions are treated in the same way as productions initiated by the The Royal Institution of Australia. The pitch framework is used to assess the business case, as well as the suitability of the ideas for The Royal Institution of Australia.

## 4.2 Externally Produced and Third-Party Content

The Royal Institution of Australia is able to take submissions from third parties, commission and acquire content and be involved in co-productions with one or more external parties. To assess third-party content The Royal Institution of Australia uses the same principles as it uses to approve internally produced content. Production value criteria, as well as veracity and accuracy of the science content, are the deciding factors, as well as compliance with the standards of good taste and community interest and acceptability.

## 5. Content Partners

### 5.1 Content Partner Relationship

The Royal Institution of Australia works with third party Publishers to ensure a complete channel profile and audience experience. These Publishers are invited to publish on the Royal Institution of Australia's platforms. Partner Publishers need to be a credible scientific institution, science organisation, university, museum or media organisation.

Sponsors and Corporate Members are entitled to provide limited content to The Royal Institution of Australia, but their contributions must fall within the definitions of our broader content policy.

Besides Sponsors and Corporate Members, The Royal Institution of Australia may partner with other organisations that have a similar or complementary public interest agenda as The Royal Institution of Australia, and require distribution for their content through The Royal Institution of Australia, under a formal agreement.

### 5.2 Third Party Content Criteria

Third party content is editorial content and must not be mistaken for advertising. The Royal Institution of Australia will assess the content against the content criteria set out in this editorial policy in the clauses under sections 1, 2, and 3.



## 5.3 Right of Refusal

The Royal Institution of Australia holds the right to refuse content from any third party if the content doesn't comply with this editorial policy.

## 5.4 Production Guidance and Assistance

The Royal Institution of Australia can advise on production from, or produce content for, third parties at a fee for service.

## 5.5 Publishing Rights to Third Party Content

The Royal Institution of Australia has the right to publish content produced and owned by third parties in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing.

## 6. Commissions and Acquisitions

The Royal Institution of Australia has the ability to work with independent content producers for the acquisition and commissioning of content.

### 6.1 Commissions

In the case of a commission, The Royal Institution of Australia will function as the Executive Producer of the project. The Royal Institution of Australia will require final script/draft approval and will need to have full insight in the projects' financials. If the involvement of other parties is required, provisional approval from The Royal Institution of Australia is needed.

### 6.2 Terms of Trade

Relationships with independent content producers are assessed on a case by case basis and are subject to commercial in confidence.

### Guiding note 3:

The Royal Institution of Australia commits to delivering the best possible audience experiences. These experiences are achieved through a combination of content and user interface. We acknowledge that time is valuable, and we will not waste the time of our users. We are storytellers and our stories give shape and form to the human experience. They allow us to see the world in an unexpected way. We are readers, creators and consumers ourselves, living in the exploding world of digital media. Like our users, we are driven by our desire to find the next great story: one that will excite and change us.

## 7. Value for Membership

The Royal Institution of Australia strives to create extra value for our audience, and considers the value we provide to our audience in every step of the editorial decision-making process.

## 8. Audience Care and Engagement

### 8.1 Sharing and Republishing content from The Royal Institution of Australia platforms.

We encourage users to share and republish our content where copyright arrangements allow.

### 8.2 Closed Feedback Loop

The Royal Institution of Australia welcomes feedback and comments on content and services and encourages active discussions around the issues we present. Appropriate communication channels are offered and publicised. All feedback will be considered and followed up with an appropriate action.

### 8.3 Public Forum Moderation

The Royal Institution of Australia reserves the right to moderate public contributions on all our social media platforms and all feedback and interactive portals. The Royal Institution of Australia can delete, republish and endorse comments provided by the public at its own discretion. All comments need to be relevant to the item or topic the comments refer to, adhere to the standards set out in this Editorial Policy and they need to be compliant with the standards of public interest, good taste and community acceptability. The Royal Institution of Australia cannot be held responsible for the content of comments made by members of the public through our social media, commenting and other feedback channels. The Royal Institution of Australia will refer cases of defamation, threatening behaviour, or other inappropriate contributions to the appropriate authorities.

#### Guiding note 4:

On social media, users can comment on, endorse, share and campaign around issues and content. It is our intention to build communities around our content – communities of loyal users that are brand ambassadors. We are committed to being responsive to the feedback we receive from our users and will reply to comments, complaints and suggestions from a customer care point of view. We install a sense of ownership within our user base by asking them for their feedback on our services, and welcome a user base that is critical, engaged and passionate about 'their' platform.

## 9. Corrective Action and Complaints

The Royal Institution of Australia will take corrective action in case of errors such as the inclusion in content of inaccurate information, or the omission of relevant contextual or balancing information. The Royal Institution of Australia will correct, remove or substantiate the content in question. The Royal Institution of Australia's approach to dealing with errors is based on proportionality, common sense and reasonableness. The Royal Institution of Australia's detailed procedures for resolving complaints about editorial content and all other issues are dealt with in the document "The Royal Institution of Australia Complaint Policy".

### Guiding note 5:

The Royal Institution of Australia will avoid the creation of false balance in the presentation of any issue. We will be guided by and seek to represent the consilience of the science on every issue. We will not have to take corrective action if the complaint seeks to create false balance on the issue under consideration.

### Procedural note 2:

Any decision to retract or remove content must be upwardly referred to The Royal Institution of Australia management team. Any decision to issue a formal apology as part of corrective action must be upwardly referred to The Royal Institution of Australia's CEO.

## 10. Advertising and Commercial Messaging

The Royal Institution of Australia reserves the right to accept advertising and commercial messaging on its platforms consistent with this Editorial Policy. As an independent not-for-profit charitable organisation, The Royal Institution of Australia relies on its commercial activities and government, industry, philanthropic and public funding for its existence and the delivery of services. All advertising and commercial messaging will be identified as such for transparency.

### 10.1 Editorial Independence in relation to commercial interests

The Royal Institution of Australia values its editorial independence and the trust relationship with its users. Commercial agendas and sponsorship arrangements will not interfere with the editorial choices or the reputability of the science portrayed on The Royal Institution of Australia.

### 10.2 Commercial messaging placement and treatment

The Royal Institution of Australia values the user experience it offers as its greatest asset, therefore commercial messages and sponsorship and partnership related branding are integrated into the user experience, delivered in an unobstructed and inoffensive way and deemed relevant to the content and audience profile.



## 10.3 Excluded advertising material

The Royal Institution of Australia reserves the right to exclude advertising, the promotional or commercial material at management's discretion.

## 11. Updates to this policy

Amendments to this policy need to be approved by The Royal Institution of Australia Management Team and Board prior to being executed.

This policy was reviewed on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020.