***The Brief* Policy**

Maintaining high quality content and standards of impartiality

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| **Last review** | **6 January 2020** |
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*This policy was written by Sarah Li Yee Lien (Director – Publications 2017; The Brief EIC 2016), Nick Owczarek (The Brief EIC 2017) and Patrick Barkachi (Secretary and Acting President 2016; The Brief EIC 2015). Section 8 has been added by Daniel Lim (Director – Publications 2018; Executive Officer – Publicity 2017) and Swatilekha Ahmed (The Brief EIC 2018)*

# Introduction

*The Brief* is the flagship student-run publication of the Macquarie University Law Society (MULS) with several print edition magazines released each year, as well as an ongoing online edition, published on a website and Facebook page (collectively referred to as ‘the publication’).

The publication is managed by an Executive Officer (The Brief Editor-in-Chief) (‘EIC’).

The EIC is responsible for coordinating a subcommittee of volunteer student writers, subeditors and contributors who are members of MULS and/or students of Macquarie Law School.

Coordination of the subcommittee involves commissioning, editing and publishing content submitted by writers and contributors, as well as delegating subediting to volunteers within the subcommittee for the print edition magazine.

The EIC, along with the Director (Publications), shall engage a designer, whether affiliated with MULS or otherwise, to design pages and set out written content for the print edition magazine.

# Purpose

To promote consistent high quality content, to ensure the publication remains independent, and to keep the publication’s content focused in order to maintain its quality as a source of news, opinion and analysis.

To establish guidelines under which the EIC and any appointed Deputy Editors and/or Online Editors (collectively referred to as ‘the Editors’) will be held accountable in regards to their conduct in the commissioning, editing and publishing of editorial content, as well as to guarantee the integrity of the publication.

To clarify who owns the intellectual property of content in the publication.

# Editorial Policy

The Editors have autonomy over the content which the Editors commission and choose to publish, as well as the way in which they edit content. They invariably set the tone of the publication and frame its image towards readers in MULS, outside of MULS within Macquarie University, stakeholders (i.e. the Macquarie Law School, sponsors of MULS and other relevant bodies) and the general public.

The reputation and integrity of the publication is important to the MULS brand and must be upheld.

As such, the Editors must commit to:

* Working in the best interests of the MULS student body, ensuring there is ample opportunity for all willing MULS students to have content published;
* Ensuring representation of the wide range of perspectives, viewpoints and opinions held by the MULS student body, including ensuring the subediting process preserves the opinions of individual writers;
* Ensuring the impartiality of the publication, by recognising the importance of balance and the need to cover issues fairly and honestly, without any intention to mislead or misrepresent, or to promote an ulterior agenda;
* Protecting the independence of the publication, ensuring that any vested interests and/or affiliations, whether political, business or otherwise, do not interfere with the way in which editorial content is normally commissioned, edited and published, and that any interests and/or affiliations are disclosed where appropriate; and
* Recognising and conceding when the publication has erred, correcting the record when necessary in a timely manner by either publishing a clarification, an official correction or issuing an official apology.

Editors should promote and encourage freedom of opinion and ideas as an essential part of ensuring the representation of the wide range of perspectives, viewpoints and opinions held by the MULS student body.

Editors should also regularly emphasise the importance of impartiality and independence to volunteer student writers in the subcommittee, as well as emphasise the importance of preserving the opinions of individual writers to delegated subeditors.

The EIC is accountable for all decisions collectively made by the Editors, and is responsible for all content published.

# Content

Topics published by the publication should fall into or relate to the following categories:

* Law and legal affairs
* National, state and world politics
* Business, economics, finance and general commerce
* Technology, science and environmental affairs
* Macquarie University students

The Editors may commission and publish content not relating to the above list on occasion. In exercising this discretion Editors should be aware of the need to keep the publication’s content focused.

The Director (Publications) may retract an article from publication if it clashes with the branding and image of MULS.

The MULS Board may retract an article from publication if it brings MULS and its internal and external stakeholders into conflict. This must be an independent decision of the Board and reasons for retracting an article must be documented or minuted.

In all other instances the Editors hold full discretion, in line with this policy and the MULS Constitution, as to the content published by the publication.

# Copyright Policy

Content published by *The Brief* is protected by copyright. Except as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed by any process, electronic or otherwise, without the specific written permission of the copyright author, including but not limited to writers and interviewees. Neither may be stored electronically in any form whatsoever without such permission.

Copyright authors are not constrained from publishing their works in other publications, including electronic publications.

Examples of what may constitute a breach of copyright include:

* Failing to remove content as requested by the author within a reasonable time period
* Creating new content derived from the original work which changes the author’s intended meaning and purpose
* Selling an article for money

# Breaches of the Editorial and Copyright Policy

If you believe the Editorial and/or Copyright Policy have been breached, please contact the EIC in writing at thebrief@muls.org.

If the response from the EIC is not satisfactory, please contact the Director (Publications) in writing at publications@muls.org.

# The Brief Strike Policy

To uphold the high quality of the Brief, the Publications Department has decided to introduce a strike policy. Two strikes will restrict a person from writing or subediting for the **print edition** of The Brief.

If a student is made aware of any circumstances such as an unforeseeable emergency, work commitments, illness, change in family circumstances, **they must let the Editor-in-Chief know within 24 hours** to discuss an extension or ways that support can be provided.

Examples of items that may constitute a strike include:

* Failure to meet deadlines as stipulated by the Editor-in-Chief of The Brief when submitting an article without a valid reason,
* Failure to meet deadlines as stipulated by the Editor-in-Chief of The Brief when sub-editing without a valid reason,
* Failure to properly communicate with the Editor-in-Chief e.g. not respond to emails
* Inappropriate emails, posts and communication,
* Reneging on commitment to writing or editing an article without a valid reason,
* Plagiarism.

Please note that general illness will not be accepted as an unforeseeable circumstance unless notice is accompanied by a doctor’s certificate.

The decision to strike against a student will be determined by the Editor-in-Chief AND the Publications Director). A document will be prepared by the Publications Director and emailed to you, outlining the reasons why the strike has occurred and to ensure that the presentation of information regarding a strike is transparent and unbiased.