



On 29 January 2020 NewsCorp published front pages with the headlines 'Chinese Virus Panda-monium' (Herald Sun) and 'Back to school plea: China kids stay home' (The Daily Telegraph). These headlines played on fears of coronavirus to publicly and gratuitously target the Chinese community.

We formally submit a complaint from more than 800 people based on the following breaches to items 1, 3 and 6 of the General Principles:

Item 1:

- While the virus originated in China, it would be remiss to brand it as 'Chinese virus'.
- Instructing 'China kids stay home' despite there being no link between the virus and children of Chinese descent goes against medical advice that the only risk of transmission is from someone who has travelled and returned from the city of Wuhan.

Item 3:

- As above.
- The reporting goes against WHO recommendations and information relating to coronavirus.

Item 6:

- The headlines have contributed to substantial offence and prejudice towards the Chinese community. This has been evident by the backlash from the Chinese community as well as many of the community complaints we received. Eg.

*"My family and I are of Cambodian Chinese descent. Recently we were aggressively stared at in anger while we were at our normal coffee place. People looked at Asian looking people as if we are all infectious. Something bad may happen soon and there is no value to whipping up this frenzy."*

*"As someone who has been targeted with racist abuse, it horrifies me that in this day and age media outlets continue to stoke the flames of racism."*

- The prejudice is evidenced by the increase in hostility and discrimination directed towards Asian Australians, as reported in the news below:
  - a) Australian doctors warn of rise in racist abuse over coronavirus, The Guardian, 4 February

b) 'This is racism': Chinese-Australians say they've faced increased hostility since the coronavirus outbreak began, SBS, 1 February

In addition, the headlines are contrary to the Council's Advisory Guidelines: Reporting of 'race' (September 2001) and Health and medical matters (April 2001).

The superficial apologies issued by the editors were insufficient – failing to take responsibility for the negative impacts on the affected communities, or make commitments to better standards in future. We ask that the Press Council take appropriate action. We feel that NewsCorp must apologise more fully, and make a formal commitment to ensure racist reporting like this doesn't happen again.