

Editorial Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to lay down the ethics, principles and guidelines to be followed by any journalist, including citizen journalist, submitting material for publication in, or on, any media platform owned and operated by The Big Fix (TBF). If any clarification is required, please consult with the Senior Editor.

The Big Fix's Mission

To change the story to grow a collaborative, solutions-focused culture.

We share the 'fixing news not the breaking news'.

Solutions Journalism

TBF publishes evidence-based content that is strictly focused on presenting issues and challenges within a solutions framework. This means that we report on responses to problems, not just the challenges or issues. We focus on how problems are solved, and how change happens, thereby offering a way for people to learn from each other.

We believe that balanced public interest journalism requires that we report on both problems AND solutions.

If we fail to cover the many ways individuals, groups, organisations and institutions are working to solve problems — successful or not — we are not telling the whole story.

To do this, journalists writing for TBF need to identify and discuss issues, problems or challenges, but then also need to look at how people have worked, or are working to solve these problems.

We do not speculate about, or advocate for, possible solutions. Our focus is on what HAS been done to fix problems, or what IS happening - not what could or should happen. The exceptions are our stories reporting on solutions discovered through peer-reviewed research, where researchers draw conclusions and make speculations from the knowledge gained in their actual research. We support learning from solutions that have been tried but may have failed.

Solutions Journalism is not simply 'good news'.

It addresses problems first and foremost, but then looks at 'how' people are addressing these problems. Often the issues may take up most of the story, but there must also be coverage of the solutions.

Solutions Journalism is NOT public relations.

While our journalists are often embedded in, and closely involved with, the communities they write about, and who may manage the media they write for, they must take an objective approach to developing their stories and analyse whether stories really are about solutions and whether these solutions are for the common good.

Collaboration

TBF seeks to work collaboratively with other media organisations to increase coverage of solutions media.

Code of Conduct

This set of guidelines is designed to nurture and protect the bond of trust with our readers and our communities.

Storytellers/writers/journalists/artists/cartoonists must familiarise themselves with this code of conduct and apply the following standards:

1. Personal opinion

- a. In this environment there is no place for a personal opinion on the cause or the effect of issues being reported, and any reference to this must include an informed view where a difference of opinion is able to be identified.
- b. Any person submitting work for inclusion in TBF has the right to participate in any political or community organisation activities but it is important to keep political or other personal beliefs from influencing your work.

2. Honesty, Accuracy and Clarity

- a. Write with honesty, accuracy, balance and fairness. No work submitted for publication should be your personal opinion.
- b. Verify information and attribute sources always. No unattributed content will be published and, as a general rule, no content from an anonymous source will be published. TBF adopts a 100% transparency policy.
- c. Authenticity and reliable sources are essential. Where possible, the piece should be an accurate representation of the narrative provided by the original decision-maker or the authorised Media Representative. Editorial copy may be submitted to its source for verification prior to publication on request, but as a general rule will not be offered.
- d. If a significant inaccuracy has been published, correct or clarify it promptly, especially on digital platforms. Our goal here is to inform readers clearly what the error was and what the correction is.
- e. Direct quotations should not be altered unless it is for the deletion of swear words and/or offensive language or minor corrections to grammar as long as the change does not alter the meaning and/or context of the quotation.
- f. Any email signature must include the words 'The Big Fix inc.', a return address to the parent organisation and a contact phone number. All email must be CC'd to the Senior Editor unless otherwise negotiated.

3. Discrimination

- a. Avoid publishing a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, religious belief, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, family relationships, physical or mental illness or disability unless those details are directly relevant to the story.

- b. Respect the cultural and ethnic sensitivities of others.
- c. Do not allow personal interest or beliefs to undermine your accuracy, fairness or your focus on solutions.

4. Plagiarism

- a. Do not plagiarise.
- b. All material that is supplied or obtained from an external source should be attributed to the correct source and permission to republish should be sought unless the original source is clearly labelled Creative Commons.

5. Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and Balance

- a. Be aware of the possibility that activities and connections outside work could have an effect on what you are writing.
- b. Avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and be transparent about any conflicts that could arise.
- c. Disclose conflicts of interest, or perceived bias (where it can be reasonably inferred) that are unavoidable, especially where this may affect your impartiality.
- d. Resist pressure from donors, advertisers or any other consideration which could potentially compromise the integrity of your work or damage credibility. If in any doubt, consult with a Senior Editor.
- e. Do not use your position for personal gain.
- f. No threat or inducement of any kind must be offered when negotiating a story.
- g. 'Balance' in the traditional sense requires that if an opinion is expressed, an alternative view is obtained. Balance in solutions journalism requires that both problems AND solutions are reported.

6. Children

- a. Children under the age of 16 should not be photographed or interviewed without the consent of a parent or guardian. Journalists should, as a matter of course, obtain a Working With Children clearance.
- b. Any photograph submitted by an interviewee that contains identifiable images of children must include a declaration in writing that the appropriate permissions have been sought and received.

7. Photographs

- a. Images taken by the journalist should be a fair and accurate representation of the subject and not be taken without consent.

- b. Images supplied by an interviewee must be their original work. If a photo from, say, a 3rd party is supplied, a written permission to publish must be obtained and appropriately attributed.
- c. Digitally altered photographs should be clearly labelled as such.
- d. Where required, a Creative Commons image (stock photo) may be used but must be clearly labelled and should be an accurate reflection of the content.

8. Harassment

- a. Always respect the rights and obligations of others. If a potential news source declines to be interviewed, their decision must be respected.
- b. Clearly identify yourself and TBF when seeking interviews or material for publication.
- c. Do not obtain material such as information, images or documents through harassment, deception or persistent pursuit.
- d. You should not remain on private property when asked to leave.

9. Privacy

- a. Everyone is entitled to respect of their privacy. This includes both personal privacy and privacy in communications.
- b. Never publish information that compromises a person's privacy and security. This includes contact details such as phone numbers, home addresses or personal details such as health and family affairs.
- c. No unattributed content (an anonymous source) will be published unless permission is sought from a Senior Editor.

10. General Professionalism

- a. Respect your fellow colleagues.
- b. Be courteous during exchanges in person, by phone or email.
- c. Always strive to honour commitments, uphold appointments, return phone calls, and respond to other means of communications.
- d. Documents, photographs or other material that is borrowed should be responsibly cared for and returned in a timely manner.