

The Complaints Committee
New Zealand Media Council

Dr Chris Pook
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2026-06-25

Re: Case 1260, Ruling 3865 - Request for Clarification

I write to thank the Media Council for its ruling of 22 June 2026 in the above matter, and to seek clarification on one point: The Council's ruling at paragraph 37 finds that the article's references to suicide “do not expressly assert” a causal relationship between gender dysphoria and suicidality and that they “present a range of observations, experiences, and concerns.” I respectfully note that the suicidality ground of my complaint was not advanced on the basis of an express causal assertion. It was advanced on the basis that the article breached the responsible reporting guidelines on suicide that are embedded in New Zealand's national suicide prevention framework. Specifically the Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2025–2029 (Ministry of Health) which do not require an express causal statement to be engaged. Those guidelines prohibit creating the impression that suicide is the expected or likely outcome in certain situations, and prohibit attributing suicide to a single cause that could form the basis of identification by vulnerable readers. My complaint cited these guidelines directly, together with the Review of Suicides and Gender Dysphoria at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Appleby, 2024), an official UK Government report that addresses this precise form of reporting in the context of gender dysphoria.

I note that the ruling at paragraph 14 explicitly records that my complaint cited the Suicide Prevention Action Plan in this context. The Council was therefore aware of the framework. However, the ruling's discussion and reasoning at paragraphs 37 to 41 makes no reference to it, nor to the responsible reporting guidelines it embodies, nor to the Appleby review. I would be grateful if the Council could clarify how these materials were weighed in reaching the finding at paragraph 37.

I raise this not to challenge the ruling's outcome but because the question of whether media reporting of suicide in the context of gender-dysphoric young people is subject to the same responsible reporting standards that apply in all other contexts is a matter of genuine public importance. A clarification from the Council on whether and how it engaged with the national suicide prevention framework would assist in understanding the scope of the Council's application of those standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.J. Pook', written in a cursive style.

Dr Chris Pook