



**Launch of 2013 Annual Report of the Press Council of Ireland and
Office of the Press Ombudsman**

by An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD

Westin Hotel, Dublin 2

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EMBARGO: 3 PM

The Press Council of Ireland will, as part of its response to the evolving media landscape, continue to seek acceptance by of its Code of Practice by all digital publishers who meet the membership criteria of the Council, the Chairman of the Council, Mr. Daithi O’Ceallaigh, said today (Thursday).

“Best professional practice in journalism is platform-neutral”, he said.

He was speaking at the launch by the Taoiseach of the 2013 Annual Report of the Press Council of Ireland and Office of the Press Ombudsman in Dublin.

Mr O’Ceallaigh said that the Press Council’s Articles of Association, when they were drawn up in 2006, plainly foresaw this situation, and that the Press Council and the Press Ombudsman were well placed to deal with the challenges posed by ongoing changes in the media landscape.

He also expressed the thanks of the Press Council to the media industry for its continuing support in challenging economic circumstances.

The Press Ombudsman, Professor John Horgan, revealed that in the six and a half years since his Office was established, the percentage of decisions about complaints that had been upheld by him - 38% - was identical to the percentage that had not been upheld. Other decisions included those which accepted that publications had made sufficient offers of redress, and on complaints that had been referred directly to the Council for adjudication.

The fact that the percentage of complaints upheld and not upheld was identical was not, Professor Horgan emphasised, the result of any deliberate policy on his part, as the extent to which any complaint was upheld depended on the merits of each case and on the Principles of the Code of Practice, which governed all his decisions.

His experience of his period as Press Ombudsman, he said, had demonstrated that there was immense public goodwill for honest, courageous journalism. It had also made it clear that investment by the press in the quality of journalism – including staffing levels and support for the Press Council – was an investment in public trust.

Ethical decisions in journalism, he added, were not made by slavish adherence to rules and precepts, but by ethical human beings who were clear about their own values and practices, and who reflected the injunction of the Code of Practice to honour it in the spirit as well as in the letter in the interests of developing best professional practice in the service of the whole community

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