

Tze Ming Mok
4 Raven Avenue
Mt Roskill
Auckland

19 March 2007

The Secretary
New Zealand Press Council
PO Box 10-879
The Terrace
Wellington

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: North & South/ACP Media's response to Press Council 'Asian Angst' complaint

The parties to the 18 December 2006 complaint against the 'Asian Angst' article wish to respond to comments made in the cover letter to the Press Council by Debra Millar, Group Publisher of ACP Media:

"I would like to emphasise the efforts gone to by *North & South* to verify the facts and opinions represented in this article. This article was subjected to a two week editing process, during which there was additional checking of stats and verification of quotes from subjects interviewed."

This does not address the issues we have raised. The subject of our complaint is not North & South's fact or quote verification process, but the selective use of facts, quotes and editorialisation which actively promoted an inaccurate representation of the most relevant underlying facts (eg. that the 'Asian' crime rate is decreasing not increasing). ACP Media has not provided any concrete information about what reasonable care they took to prevent the selective use of facts from presenting an innacurate impression.

Ms Millar also wrote:

"I have also enclosed copies of the Jan 2007 and Feb 2007 issues which include letters from a number of the complainants, as well as other letters ...related to the Asian Angst article."

The obfuscatory impact of the January 2007 issue's letter section was discussed in the original complaint. The magazine's publication of letters amounts to neither a correction nor an editorial acknowledgement of inaccuracy. We also note that North & South has omitted from its submissions the letters page of the March 2007 issue, which features a higher proportion of letters supporting the 'Asian Angst' article.

Our complaint was directed at the editorial process and judgement of North & South magazine, not against the author Deborah Coddington. As such we have no response to her comments – which in any case do not address the issues we raised.

However, Ms Coddington did make peculiar assumptions as to authorship, imputing that the complaints were instigated by the journalist Russell Brown (not a party to the complaint), rather than from people within Asian communities. Correspondence with Mary Major has hopefully dispelled any confusion. We further note that this complaint is independent of the complaint laid by the Asia:NZ Foundation, and strongly hope that it will be considered by the Council on its own merits.

As I will be shortly leaving the country, please continue this correspondence as discussed, with my co-complainant Associate-Professor Manying Ip of Auckland University.

We look forward to a resolution to our complaint.

Yours faithfully,

Tze Ming Mok (Ms)
(for the complainants)