



These are the principles we will strive to uphold - Respect, responsibility, integrity, fairness and accuracy.

RESPECT FOR OUR CULTURE:

Civil society is founded on the three pillars of Cook Islands community. We will be respectful to the cultural rules and traditions of these three founding institutions.

1. Enea (Traditional Leaders),
 2. Evangelic (Church) and;
 3. Ture (Government).
- We will respect the Cook Islands Constitution and the rule of law, while recognizing the importance of robust criticism and the right to peaceful protest.
 - We will respect the churches and religions of the Cook Islands, acknowledging the freedoms of all to practice their beliefs so long as they do not impinge upon others.
 - We will respect the distinctive character, value and dignity of the indigenous and migrant cultures of these islands.
 - We will stand up for and engage robustly in the public life of the islands and communities we serve.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY:

Our journalism should be crafted in an awareness of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others, acknowledging that the truth may sometimes be painful but showing kindness and empathy in how we seek out that truth and deliver it to our community.

- We will respect private grief and shock, approaching those affected with sympathy and discretion.
- We will not highlight, discriminate or stereotype by social or ethnic origin, religious or political belief, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital or social status, physical appearance or disability.
- We will seek out new voices to ensure the vulnerable, disadvantaged and dispossessed in our communities are heard as clearly as those in positions of strength.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Our role is not just to speak; equally, we must empower others to speak, express their views and opinions, and we must listen. We must provide an atiangā (space) for uriuriangā manako (public debate) and akaotianga o te uriuriangā (resolution).

- We will promote public access to information and informed participation in the media across our different print, digital and mata-ki-te-mata platforms.
- We will listen to the concerns of our audience, and will provide rights of reply.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

The kupu (words) may be ours but te au tata'anga (information) belongs to our community. We are accountable not just to Cook Islands News but to the public for using that information for the public interest and social good.

TRUST AND INTEGRITY:

Trust is everything; our reputation in the Cook Islands community and beyond is all we have.

- We will practice journalism that people trust and value, identifying and declaring ourselves, keeping our promises, respecting confidences and protecting whistleblowers, and being true to our consciences.
- Opinions published in our newspaper and on our online forums should be clearly attributed; so too, we will seek transparency from our leaders and decision-makers.
- Our obligation is to the truth, and we will use fair and honest means to get to it.

ACCURACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Getting the facts right is the most basic principle of journalism. We must seek after tika tika'i (truth).

- We will report the news by giving all the essential facts we have, checking them as best we can, and not distorting them by improper emphasis.
- We will correct any published information found to be materially or harmfully inaccurate, as soon as we become aware of it.

FAIRNESS AND BALANCE:

Every story is woven from two or more often contrasting voices, two or more strands of rau'ara. We must bring those strands together to ensure the most robust journalism.

SIMPLICITY:

We will be clear, simple and concise in our language. We will strive to explain matters of significance in ways that are revealing, interesting and relevant.

COURAGE AND INDEPENDENCE:

The media has a duty to serve as a watchdog on public affairs and leadership, vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable; tireless in giving voice to the voiceless; always taking the initiative in highlighting matters of the public interest.

- We will report without fear or favour on events of public interest everywhere, maintaining a fierce independence free from political, cultural or commercial influences. No person or organisation shall be given special treatment, copy approval, preference or favour.
- We will declare any affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.
- We will seek to ensure the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.
- We will be brave, original, and imaginative to show initiative in investigating and reporting the stories that matter to the people of the Cook Islands.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:

We play a leading role in safeguarding freedom of expression, which is fundamental to the freedom of both the media and the people of the Cook Islands.

- We will defend freedom of expression against any threat that might undermine a robust and independent news media, social media and community discussion.
- We will encourage people to express opinions without offence.
- We will support the open and civil exchange of views and information.

HUMILITY AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS:

A journalist wields a pen like a koke rua mata (two-edged sword). We must use it sharply against those who abuse their power, we must use it with compassion to defend those who are vulnerable – and we must know when it's best to not use it at all.

*For the cause that lacks assistance, the wrong that needs resistance,
for the future in the distance, and the good that I can do.*

- George Linnaeus Banks