

Code Conciliator's Annual Report

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Conciliator

I was appointed as Code Conciliator in 2017.

The Film Exhibition and Distribution Code has been preventing and resolving disputes between Australian distributors and exhibitors since 1998. It is a privilege to be the Code Conciliator.

Training on the Code

I was asked to present a short session at the ICA conference in May 2025. That invitation was later withdrawn due to scheduling issues. I am always happy to speak at any event that promotes the Code and fair and equitable dealings between exhibitors and distributors.

Clause 18 of the Code states that distributors and exhibitors must provide training on the Code for relevant staff, and new staff within 20 business days of commencement. Small independent distributors and exhibitors can instead provide relevant staff with a short document outlining their key rights and obligations under the Code.

In the past I have conducted some in-house Code and dispute resolution training for interested Code signatories.

In 2024 a FEDCAC Training sub-committee was established, which included Lori Flesker (MPDAA), Veronica Whitmee (Sony), Chris Jones (Showbiz Cinemas) and myself. We were tasked with developing a training program for Code signatories. Lori Fleskar drove the work of the sub-committee forward and during 2024-2025 the sub-committee worked on the following training material:

A short video – Introduction to the Film Code;

A short free downloadable Code information sheet for new members; and

A Piracy Guidance Information Sheet for Cinemas.

The sub-committee met several times to discuss training options, and reviewed draft scripts and material. The sub-committee also looked at the possibility of setting up a Learning Management System to host the FEDCAC training material, costs of producing a short video introducing the code, obtaining assistance from Code Signatories to produce a video and obtaining input into the training material from exhibitors and distributors, etc.

Secretariat/Conciliator Enquiries

The Code Secretariat has historically taken enquiries from exhibitors and distributors about issues that might escalate into disputes, and assisted to resolve complaints at an early stage. The vast majority of enquiries have, over the years been resolved at the Secretariat level, avoiding the need for conciliation. The role of the Secretariat has been vacant for some time. The FEDCAC Chair's office has continued to provide the administrative portion of that role. The 1300 phone line for the Secretariat has been forwarded to the Conciliator's office. I received a call in April 2025 about an exhibitor having issues with a Distributor. I provided information about the Code and the role of the Secretariat and the Conciliator. No further contact was made.

Number of Disputes

No disputes were received by the Conciliator in the past 12months.

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