



2017-73 Sydney vs Toronto Star

October 18, 2017 – for immediate release

A complaint about insensitive language in the Toronto Star has been resolved due to corrective action taken by the news media organization.

The National NewsMedia Council mediated a complaint from Sean Sydney that a Toronto Star columnist used the term "transgenders" to describe transgender individuals. The reference was in a September 5 2017 column by Rosie DiManno, "Our statue grievances show we're getting out of control", in a sentence that otherwise expressed support for rights of transgender individuals.

The complainant contacted the public editor and the columnist, but reported that after a brief correction the term returned to the original wording. A question about whether columnists are exempt from the Star's style guide was not answered.

After the NNC was contacted, the paper reported the online article was edited to remove the word "transgenders" and replaced it with "transgender people."

The paper said the edit followed conversations with senior editors who stated that Star columnists are generally bound by the Star's style rules, and with the head of the style committee who confirmed that the paper's style is to use transgender as an adjective, not as a noun.

The paper noted that style is in line with CP (the Canadian Press), the GLAAD Media Guide and other sources.

As a result of various newsroom discussions regarding this column, a further note was added to the Star's style guide to clarify that *"transgender is an adjective; do not say 'a transgender' or 'transgenders'."*

The NNC noted the discussion about the complaint had a positive result in providing the Star opportunity to clarify its style guide, and that the complainant appreciated the opportunity to experience the paper's willingness to listen.