



# MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, December 16, 2024

## News MAP funding a welcome leg up for Australian journalism

The union for Australian journalists welcomes the delivery by the federal government of more than \$150 million to support the sustainability of public interest journalism over the next four years.

Combined with last week's announcement of the revamped News Bargaining Initiative, this could result in up to \$400 million in additional funding for the sector over the coming years.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance says the new funding under the News Media Assistance Program (News MAP) will boost journalism and media diversity but must be tied to the enforcement of minimum employment standards for all media workers, including freelancers.

The acting Director of MEAA Media, Michelle Rae, said the Albanese Government had picked up on recommendations from the union during consultation over the News MAP earlier this year.

"We are pleased that the government has adopted a holistic and structured approach to support for the news media industry, rather than the patchwork of band aid solutions that have been implemented in the past," she said.

"MEAA has long argued that commercially produced public interest journalism requires systematic, long-term support beyond a three-year time frame to ensure its viability and to promote a diverse media landscape.

"The longer-term approach confirmed by the government will allow media outlets to plan for their future sustainability with additional certainty about their income over the next four years.

"Importantly, the new funding is primarily directed at local and community news, the sector that has been most impacted by the decline of advertising revenue over the past two decades.

"The \$116.7 million to support this sector will go a long way towards helping communities in regional Australia and the suburbs of our main cities to rebuild local journalism in areas that have become or are in danger of becoming news deserts.

"The unique role of Australian Associated Press as an independent and accessible news service has been recognised with \$33 million in new funding.

"MEAA also welcomes the government's commitment to mandate at least \$6 million of its advertising budget is spent in regional newspapers."

Ms Rae said that while it was worthwhile to explore measures to attract philanthropic funding of the news media industry, any solutions to the decline of public interest journalism must not be reliant on sponsorships or donations that undermine the independence of media outlets.

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“There is a place for demand-side incentives to subscribe and pay for quality news media through the use of subsidies, vouchers or tax deductibility,” she said.

“But care must be taken to ensure that philanthropic funding does not allow donors to dictate the editorial policies of media outlets

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