



MEDIA RELEASE

News Bargaining Incentive marks a new chapter for democracy in the digital age

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The passage of legislation that will see global tech giants help fund Australian journalism is a positive step to foster Australians' access to factual news and information.

Key points:

- The News Media Bargaining Bill 2026 and associated News Journalism Payments Bill 2026 passed the Senate yesterday afternoon
- Democracy advocates and representatives of local and independent media successfully pushed for some changes to encourage the benefits flow beyond the big media companies
- However, they say more should be done to strengthen media diversity, including supporting news publishers serving regional towns, special interest, and CALD communities

Claire Stuchbery, Executive Director of the Local and Independent News Association, said:

"Ensuring the sustainability and diversity of Australian newsrooms, big and small, is crucial for the health of democracy.

"It is vital that the stories that impact the places where we live and work are amplified. This is how we understand and navigate our own communities.

"The News Media Bargaining legislation recognises the immense public value of news and the people who produce it.

"We're pleased to have successfully argued for amendments to more equitably support newsrooms right across the media ecosystem.

"We will continue to work with the government on further measures needed to support a growing local and independent media industry."

Reece Kinnane, of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, said:

"Australia is leading the way through innovative reforms to tackle the damaging social impacts of the digital age.

"This package will strengthen Australian media and secure the supply of diverse public interest journalism on major digital platforms.

"We continue to hold concerns that many community media outlets will fall through the cracks in the NBI's design and urge the Government to remain vigilant in monitoring the impact of the scheme on outlets that miss out.



DEMOCRACY COUNTS

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“We expect large media companies will be the main beneficiaries and therefore ask the Government to continue its proactive approach to media reform with policy and funded-programs that target new support to small, independent media outlets.”

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Democracy Counts is a growing alliance of organisations and Australians who care about the way democracy functions in Australia. Partners include the Centre for Public Integrity, Digital Rights Watch, the Local and Independent News Association, Sentiment and the Alliance for Journalists' Freedom. The campaign is powered McKinnon, an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to empower better governments for a stronger Australia.