

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2020 5:03 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: PING funding application [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

FYI

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2020 5:01 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>; s47F
@communications.gov.au>
Subject: FW: PING funding application [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

let's compare to the other one.

and then we should discuss next steps.

Pauline

For Official Use Only

From: Victoria Buchan <VBuchan@nine.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2020 4:53 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Subject: PING funding application

Pauline this was in my draft folder so not sure if I sent it to you already or not....so in case...

Hi Pauline,

Thanks for the time on the phone yesterday it was good to get an understanding of where we are at in the process with PING grants. I thought I would just confirm what we discussed and clarify the numbers we have settled on in terms of impacted roles in our Regional news service.

Firstly I want to make sure you are clear on the arrangements we have in place with SCA. The deal between us is based on Nine receiving a revenue share, to provide all programming required by SCA. We designed our regional news service on a budget agreed with SCA based on anticipated revenue at the time we launched the service in 2018. s47

Based on our ratings data we know the audience has increased for the hour national bulleting year on year and we believe our new model which will add a half local bulletin at the top of this national news service will be appealing to audiences in all regions.

We understand that the Department is concerned about ensuring regional journalism jobs remain in place. s47

s47

Many thanks

Victoria Buchan

Director of Communications & Public Relations



T 61299652296 **M** 0408114864

A 24 Artarmon Rd, Willoughby, Sydney, NSW, 2068

E ybuchan@nine.com.au

Victoria Buchan

Director of Communications & Public Relations



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E ybuchan@nine.com.au

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s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2020 2:10 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: confirmation [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

FYI – update on Nine’s PING application.

s47G Mike is working on a formula to go back on how much this will reduce their amount. I think they will just accept it (as it may not be too much), noting we will need to make adjustments to their GA.

Regards

s47F

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From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2020 1:14 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>; s47F
 s47F @communications.gov.au
Subject: FW: confirmation [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

fyi – can you give me an update by Tuesday 10 am. even if we are not ready with an answer I would like to go back with a holding response so they don’t think that I have forgotten them.

thanks

Pauline

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2020 1:12 PM
To: 'Victoria Buchan' <VBuchan@nine.com.au>
Cc: Rachel Launder <rlanders@nine.com.au>
Subject: RE: confirmation [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Victoria

appreciate the update and we will come back to you early next week with final details of where we land with the grant amount.

enjoy your weekend.

Kind regards

Pauline

For Official Use Only

From: Victoria Buchan <VBuchan@nine.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2020 12:51 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Launder <rlanders@nine.com.au>
Subject: confirmation

Hi Pauline,

We just checked with the regional news group around the changes we are making in our regional services and I can confirm ^{s47} [REDACTED]

Thanks again for your time on the call and for the team's efforts.

Regards

Victoria Buchan

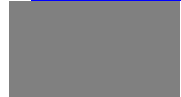
Director of Communications & Public Relations



T 61299652296 **M** 0408114864

A 24 Artarmon Rd, Willoughby, Sydney, NSW, 2068

E ybuchan@nine.com.au



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s47F

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 4:15 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline; s47F
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Seems a good approach – will put their minds at ease so they can start planning while we get letters together.

Mike

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 4:13 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au; Makin, Mike
 <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au; s47F @communications.gov.au
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

super. thanks. s47C and that the basis upon which we have made this calculation will be outlined in a letter.

is that ok?

P

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 4:08 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; Makin, Mike
 <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au; s47F @communications.gov.au
Subject: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Importance: High

Hi Pauline – for discussion with VB.

As requested, please see below a draft email for Nine. Note that this may not be the final wording but gives you a feel for what it will contain.

Broadly the emails will contain:

- Objective of the PING Program and supporting conditions
- Information provided by the grantee where they cannot meeting the condition (s)
- Specific condition that has been contravened
- Metrics used to determine revised grant amount.
- Revised grant amount

Regards

s47F

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 3:48 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear [Grantee]

Thank you for providing the Department with additional information regarding your PING Grant and production/distribution of public interest journalism.

The objective of the Public Interest News Gathering Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant agreement contains the following conditions to meet this objective.

- H1A.1 The Grantee must, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement, as described at Item C of this Agreement).
- H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- H1B.3 For the purposes of this Item H1B, the term, 'journalist staff' means employees engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect, write and present information as a news story.

On XX date, you advised that Nine Entertainment Co Pty Ltd (Nine) will be reducing staff in their Southern Cross Austereo market. As a result, there is a deficit of s47G compared to the figure as at 1 February 2020. This is in contravention of clause H1B.1

As you have identified that you are unable to comply with the grant conditions the Department has made amendments to your grant offer.

Nine identified a reduction of s47G since 1 February 2020. This reduction in journalist staffing level is s47G of Nine's total journalist staffing level.

s47C

On acceptance of this amended grant amount, the Department will reopen the Grant Activity and Expenditure Details form for you to update your activities and budget in line with the amended grant amount.

Regards

s47F

From: Sullivan, Pauline
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 6:36 PM
To: s47F; Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

thanks for this. as discussed, if we could get the agreement out to Nine tomorrow that would be good (I have relayed this to Nine and they assure me that they will be ready with their pens poised).

can you please give me an update on the others at cob tomorrow.

thanks

Pauline

For Official Use Only

s22 - duplicate document



s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2020 2:43 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: PING Amended Grant Offer [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

The below text in blue is in response to Mike's comment. All of his other changes have been made.

Let me know what you think.

Cheers

s47F

Senior Policy Officer / Media Markets / News and Media Industry
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
 s47F
[@communications.gov.au](#)

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

[communications.gov.au](#) / @CommsAu
[arts.gov.au](#) / @artsculturegov
[infrastructure.gov.au](#) / @infra_regional

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s47C

s42





s42









FILE NOTE – PING PROGRAM – MAJOR GRANTEES' CONDITIONS

s22 - out of scope







S42



3 February 2021

s42



3 February 2021

s42



3 February 2021

s42



3 February 2021

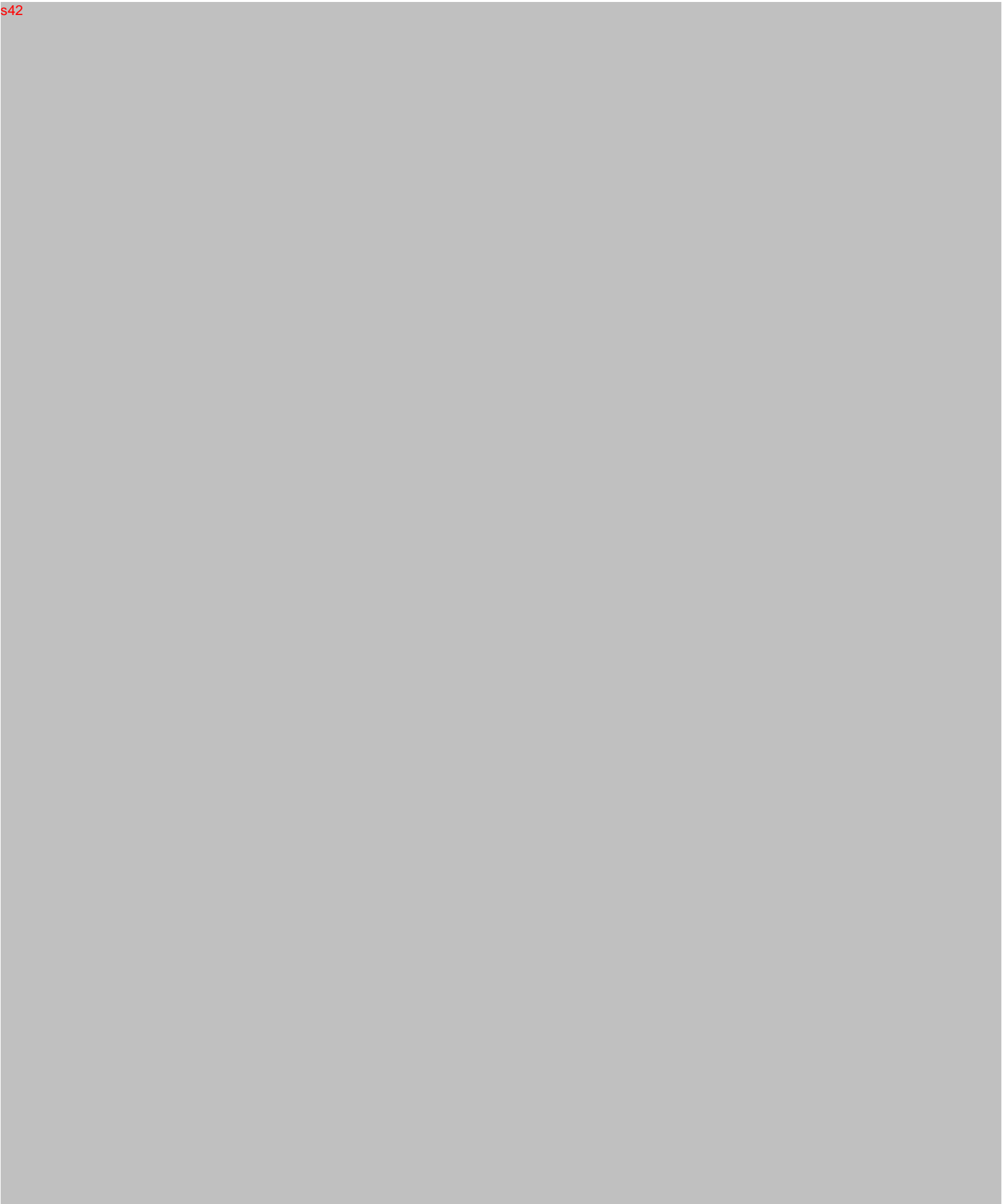
s42



s42





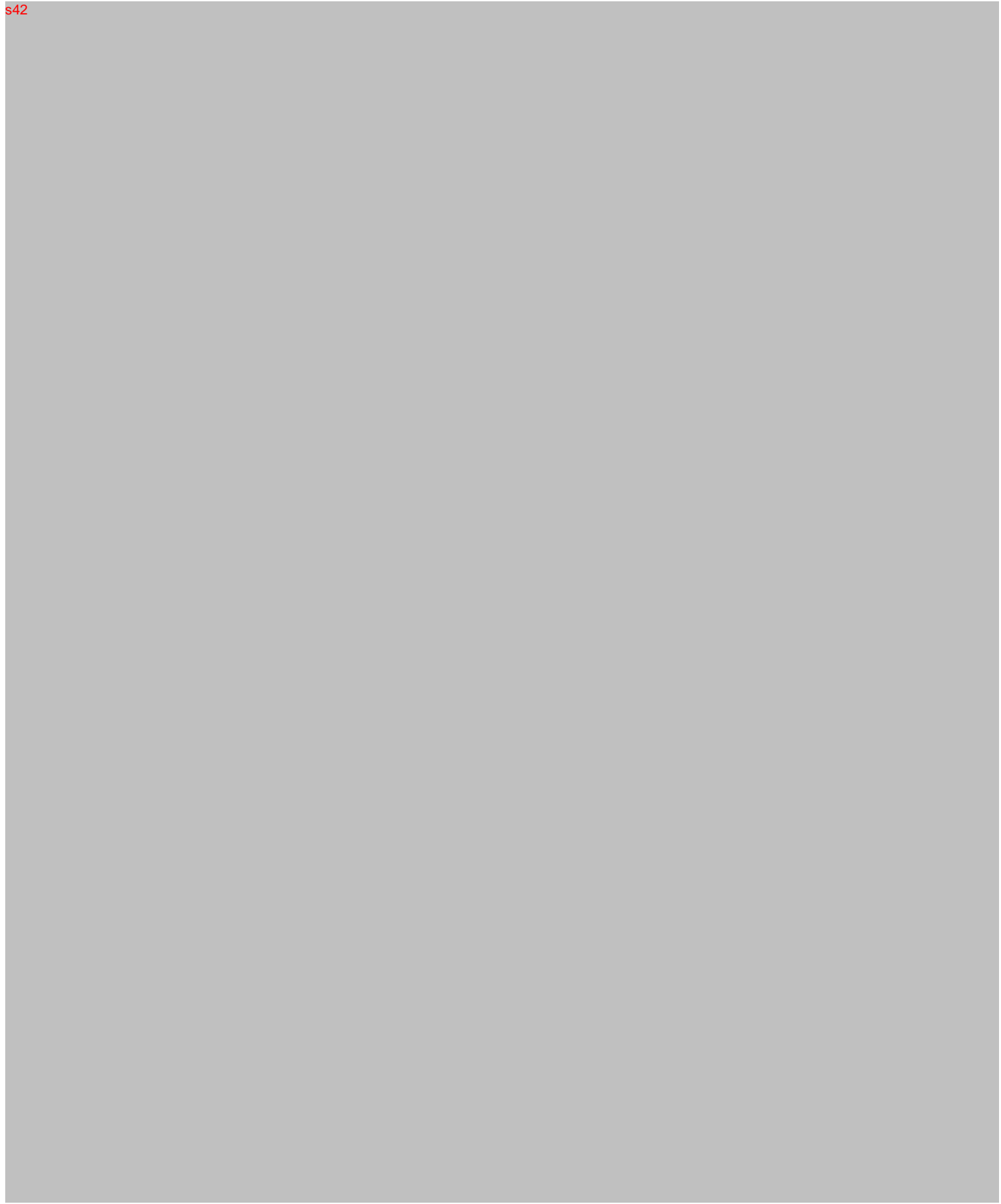


s42











s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Thursday, 6 May 2021 1:40 PM
To: s47F
Subject: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Dear s47F

Thank you for submitting your Interim Report and our apologies for not being in contact sooner.

We are contacting you to seek additional information regarding Nine Entertainment Co.'s (Nine's) regional journalists and bulletin numbers, following media reports that these numbers are expected to be reduced as a consequence of the new affiliation agreement with WIN commencing 1 July this year.

We acknowledge you have submitted your Interim Report with no issues in the first six months of the grant period, however we are after some information regarding future impacts.

As you would be aware, as per the clauses in H1A, H1B and H1C of your grant funding agreement, Nine is required to maintain s47G for the duration of the grant period in order to receive the full funding amount.

The Department is seeking additional details regarding your compliance with these conditions during the grant period.

It would be appreciated if you could provide us with a summary of the situation and how it impacts Nine's grant activity and compliance with the grant conditions through to the end of the grant period.

If you could get back to us by 12 May 2021, it would be very appreciated.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

s47F

Director • Media Markets Section / News & Media Industry Branch • Content Division

s47F [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s47F@infrastructure.gov.au)

s47F

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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UNOFFICIAL

s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 11:34 AM
To: s47F
Cc: Rachel Launders; Ping Program
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear s47F

Just wondering if you were able to provide any further clarification on the affiliation agreement and impacts on the PING agreement? In particular, July 1 to the end of your activity agreement on 10 September 2021.

We are aiming to finalise the remaining reports and payments by the EOFY.

Regards

s47F

Director • Media Markets Section / News & Media Industry Branch • Content Division
 s47F @infrastructure.gov.au
 s47F

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OFFICIAL

From: Ping Program
Sent: Wednesday, 2 June 2021 2:47 PM
To: s47F
Cc: Rachel Launders ; Ping Program
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear s47F

Thank you for providing us with the additional information.

You mentioned you might be in a position to update us on changes due to your new affiliation deal, which takes effect on 1 July 2021. We are interested in any information on changes between 1 July 2021 and the end of your PING grant activity period (10 September 2021) that could impact your obligations regarding bulletins and journalist staff under the PING funding agreement.

Appreciate if you could come back to us as soon as practical. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

s47F

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
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communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

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OFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 10 May 2021 11:47 AM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Launderers <rlaunderers@nine.com.au>
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Dear s47F

Thank you for your email. On a confidential basis, we are happy to provide some information regarding Nine Entertainment Co.'s (Nine's) new affiliation agreement with WIN which is set to commence on 1 July this year.

Once the new affiliation agreement starts, Nine will not be providing news bulletins in the regional markets of Southern NSW, regional Queensland and regional Victoria, as WIN provides its own news service in those areas. Nine is currently assessing the best possible options for staff affected by that change (including redeployment within Nine or transfer to WIN), to minimise the change from the conditions in our grant funding agreement. That said, Nine can ensure that compliance with the conditions under the grant agreement will continue as it has until July 1 2021.

During the recent cyber-attack which affected Nine, we continued to meet the grant obligations relating to the number of news broadcasts in our Northern NSW and Darwin operations.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss. Otherwise, we will provide you with an update when we have determined the impact on our structure of the change in affiliation partner.

Kind regards

s47F

s47F [REDACTED]

Chief Operating & Financial Officer,
Nine Television/Nine Radio



T s47F [REDACTED]

A 1 Denison St, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

E s47F [REDACTED]

s22 - duplicate email trail

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 10:49 AM
To: s47F
Subject: Channel Nine [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Channel Nine

Drop of s47G

The loss is over two months of the grant agreement which equals s47G

s47G

s47F

Senior Policy Officer • Media Markets Section / News & Media Industry Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division
s47F @infrastructure.gov.au
s47F

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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OFFICIAL

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 25 June 2021 11:43 AM
To: s47F
Subject: nine [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Schedule 1 Commonwealth General Grant Conditions

8. Payment of the Grant

8.1 The Commonwealth agrees to pay the Grant to the Grantee in accordance with the Grant Details.

8.2 The Commonwealth may by notice withhold payment of any amount of the Grant where it reasonably believes the Grantee has not complied with this Agreement or is unable to undertake the Activity.

8.3 A notice under clause 8.2 will contain the reasons for any payment being withheld and the steps the Grantee can take to address those reasons.

8.4 The Commonwealth will pay the withheld amount once the Grantee has satisfactorily addressed the reasons contained in a notice under clause 8.2.

s47F

Senior Policy Officer • Media Markets Section / News & Media Industry Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

s47F [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s47F@infrastructure.gov.au)

s47F

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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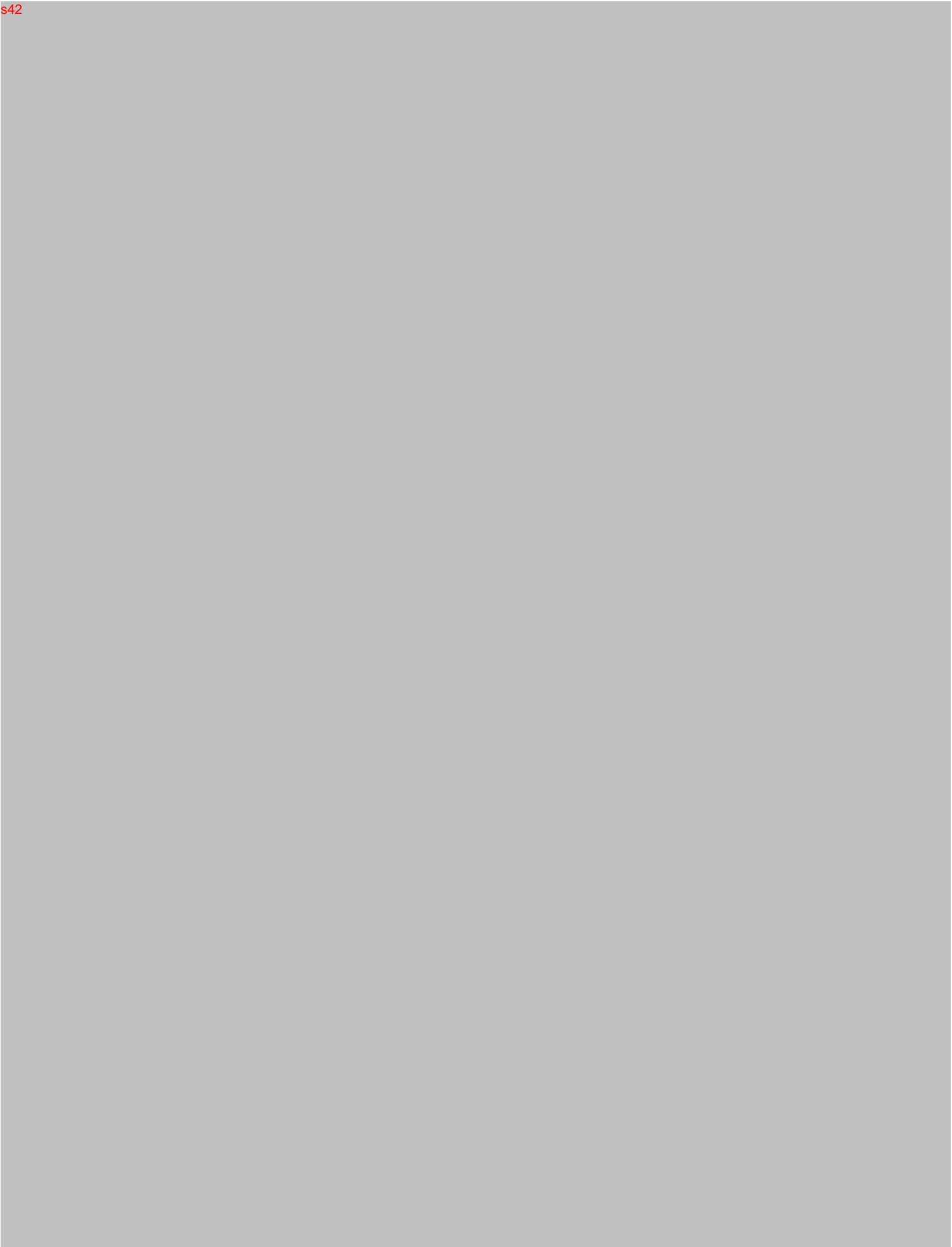


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OFFICIAL

s42







Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**

First Assistant Secretary

PDR ID: EC21-000227
s47F

Chief Operating and Financial Officer
Nine Network
1 Denison Street
North Sydney NSW 2062
By email: s47F

Dear s47F

RE: PING Additional Information

We refer to your letter dated 23 June 2021 which provided, in response to the Department's inquiry, supplementary information to Nine Entertainment Co.'s (Nine's) Interim Report under the Grant Agreement dated 20 September 2020 under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program. The information specifically related to a potential reduction in journalist staffing numbers from 1 July 2021 as consequence of Nine's new affiliation agreement with WIN.

Your letter states that it is expected that from 1 July 2021, s47

As you may be aware, clause H1B.1 of Nine's Grant Agreement, Nine is required to, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement,). Clause H1B.1 does not apply in any circumstances which are exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of and justification for, the proposed changes (refer clause H1B.2).

s47

To assist in the Department's deliberations on this issue, I request Nine provides further information and justification as to why it considers these circumstances giving rise to the journalism staffing reduction to be exceptional thereby warranting the application of Clause H1B.2. I request that this information is submitted to me by no later than [INSERT DATE AND TIME]. The Department will carefully consider any information supplied by Nine this information and may seek further clarification.

In the event that the Department, acting reasonably and in good faith, were to determine that clause H1B.2 is not applicable, the Department reserves its rights under clause 8.2 of Schedule

1 of the Grant Agreement to withholding part of the Second Payment due to the non-compliance with clause H1B. If any Grant amount was to be withheld from the Second Payment, ^{s47}

[REDACTED]

This loss would be applied over the two-month period remaining in your grant activity period (16.67 per cent of the total grant activity period)).

Mike Makin

A/g First Assistant Secretary
Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

June 2021



23 June 2021

The Commonwealth of Australia represented by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Attention: s47F

By email: s47F @infrastructure.gov.au

Private & Confidential

Dear s47F

Re: PING Additional Information

We refer to your inquiry dated 9 June 2021 regarding Nine Entertainment Co.'s (Nine's) new affiliation agreement with WIN (the **New Agreement**).

Nine understands the objective of the PING Program was to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant funds have been used, and will continue to be used, to provide public interest journalism in regional Australia, despite the changes to our affiliation arrangements brought about by the New Agreement.

Nine has taken steps to achieve compliance with the conditions under our PING grant agreement to the maximum extent possible, despite the changes which will be effected on implementation of the New Agreement from 1 July 2021. s47

s47

Nine will continue to meet its obligation to broadcast 625 news bulletins over the 12 month period of the PING grant, as that number was calculated on the basis of our owned operations in Northern NSW and Darwin, and did not include the affiliate regions owned by Southern Cross in Queensland, regional Victoria and southern NSW.

As such, while redundancies from implementation of the New Agreement are unfortunately inevitable, this was not a situation which was anticipated at the time that Nine applied for funding last year. s47

Nine's nominated use of the grant funds was to maintain employment in Northern NSW and to allow for the expansion of the Darwin newsroom, which worked to increase the news content delivered to Territorians and increased the number of camera operators in the region. The funding has been used for those purposes, as demonstrated in our interim report. s47

As you are aware, there are significant costs associated with broadcast journalism in regional areas (including vast distances to travel and the use of file transfer technology). However, the grant funding has allowed, and will continue to allow Nine to service regional areas. This is particularly important during snap lockdown periods, due to various public health matters, which often mean we rely more on technology and the costs associated with that, and the public has greater need for local news services.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information or would like to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

s47F

**Chief Operating and Financial Officer
Nine Network**

s42

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 1:40 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Launders <rlausders@nine.com.au>; Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=OFFICIAL] [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Dear Mr Makin

Thank you for providing Nine with the opportunity to respond to your letter dated 28 June 2021.

Our response is attached.

Kind regards

s47F

Chief Operating & Financial Officer,
Nine Network Australia



T s47F

A 1 Denison St, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

E s47F

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 28 June 2021 5:01 PM
To: s47F; Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Launderers <rlaunders@nine.com.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=OFFICIAL] [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Dear s47F

Please see attached a response to you correspondence of 23 June 2021.

Kind regards

PING Program

News & Media Industry Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division
pingprogram@communications.gov.au
P +61 2 6271 1142
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 5:10 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Rachel Launderers <rlaunders@nine.com.au>
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

I hope you are well.

Please find attached further details as requested.

Kind regards

s47F

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 11:34 AM
To: s47F
Cc: Rachel Launderers <rlaunders@nine.com.au>; Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear s47F

Just wondering if you were able to provide any further clarification on the affiliation agreement and impacts on the PING agreement? In particular, July 1 to the end of your activity agreement on 10 September 2021.

We are aiming to finalise the remaining reports and payments by the EOFY.

Regards

s47F

Director • Media Markets Section / News & Media Industry Branch • Content Division

s47F

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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s22 - duplicate email trail

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29 June 2021

Mr Mike Makin
A/g First Assistant Secretary
Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 2154
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Makin

PING Program

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to respond to your letter dated 28 June 2021. s47

1. s47
- 2.
- 3.
4. Given WIN's own significant commitment to regional news and employment of local journalists, it does not require Nine to provide a regional news service, comparable to that provided to Southern Cross. This combination of events is an exceptional circumstance which justifies the change in our journalist numbers from 1 July 2021.
5. Nine's stipulated use of the funding was to support its owned operations in Northern NSW and Darwin, and it has used the funding for those purposes, to continue providing news services in those locations and to expand the number of staff employed in Darwin. Nine intends to maintain that increased level of employment after expiry of the PING funding in September. This demonstrates that the purpose of the PING program has been satisfied, where it is within Nine's control to do so.
6. s47



s47

7.

8.

Please let me know if you require any further information before finalising your assessment of Nine's entitlement to the remaining grant funding.

Yours sincerely

s47F

**Chief Financial and Operating Officer
Nine Network Australia Pty Ltd**

s47F

From: s47G
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 5:30 PM
To: s47G Makin, Mike
Subject: Minute Regarding Nine Interim Report 30 June 2021.pdf [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Minute Regarding Nine Interim Report 30 June 2021.pdf

OFFICIAL

Dear s47G

As per your discussion earlier with Mike, please find attached a Minute providing reasoning for the accrual of funds under the PING Program for Nine.

Please let me know if you have any questions or wish to discuss.

Kind regards

s47G

OFFICIAL

For Official Use Only**Australian Government****Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**

Minute—Acceptance of Nine Entertainment Co Pty Ltd's Public Interest News Gathering Interim Report

To: Mike Makin (Assistant Secretary, News & Media Industry Branch).

Prepared by: PING Team (Media Markets Section).

Acceptance of interim report

Nine Entertainment Co. Pty Ltd (Nine) received a grant of s47G under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program. The Department executed a Grant Funding Agreement (Funding Agreement) with Nine, on behalf of the Commonwealth; on 10 September 2020.

Nine submitted their Interim Report on 24 March 2021, in accordance with the milestones outlined in their Funding agreement. The Department has assessed this report and found that at the time of reporting, Nine has met the conditions as outlined in its Funding Agreement. Acceptance of the Report, and advice to Nine to this effect, trigger the payment of Nine's second final instalment payment of s47G

On 12 March 2021, just prior to the receipt of Nine's Report, the media reported that Nine had entered into a new affiliation agreement with WIN Corporation following the end of Nine's affiliate arrangement with Southern Cross Austereo. Given the potential impacts on Nine's current regional news services due to the change in affiliation arrangements, the Department sought additional information from Nine as to whether it could continue to meet its obligations under the PING Program.

While the Department is working with Nine to clarify the implications of the changes in affiliation arrangements the Department has paused finalising the payment and processing in the SmartyGrants system, which is used to manage the administrative components of Nine's grant. As such, while the Department have accepted the six monthly report it has not finalised its advice to Nine that this Report has been accepted.

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Possible reduction in grant funding

Following from the request by the Department for Nine to clarify the impacts of the change in affiliation arrangements, on 23 June 2021 ^{s47G}

^{s47G}

If the Department form the view that Nine are in contravention of the funding agreement due to this change, the Department can seek a return of grant funds on a proportional basis. The Department is reviewing all advice provided by Nine in relation to this change, is still yet to finalise its view.

Nine's Funding Agreement outlines only two payments delivered over the life of the program, 90 per cent on execution of a grant agreement and the remaining 10 percent on acceptance of its six month report. The changes associated with the change in affiliate arrangement only take effect in the final two months of the Agreement. To avoid making a payment while considering a decision to seek a return of funds, the Department will finalise this decision as quickly as possible and may add any action stemming from this onto the action to make the payment associated with the interim report.

It is therefore, recommended that the Department records acceptance of the interim report but does not advise Nine of the acceptance of this Report until the Department finalises its view in relation to a possible contravention of the requirement to maintain journalist numbers.

Sensitivities

Nine submitted its Interim Report on 24 March 2021 as per the requirements under its Funding Agreement. The Department assessed the report noting that Nine has met its activities under its Funding Agreement during the reporting period.

Recommendation

We recommend that

- The Department accept Nine's Interim Report agreeing that it has met its obligations under the PING Program for the first six months of the grant activity period.
- The Department delay providing Nine with advice regarding the acceptance of its Report until the issue of whether to reduce its funding due to non-compliance is resolved.
- The Minister, as decision maker for the PING Program, and/or his Office is advised of the Department's final decision on this matter.

DECISION: AGREED / NOT AGREED / PLEASE DISCUSS

COMMENT:

s47F

Mike Makin
Assistant Secretary, News & Media Industry Branch

30 / 6 / 2021

s42



s42





s42





s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 1:33 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: PING program - resolution of issue with Nine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Dear Mike

Draft TPs for your review below. I wasn't quite sure if we need more or whether we can provide the level of detail that I have below. Happy to revise.

Kind regards

s47F

- Nine Entertainment Co. Pty Ltd (Nine) was awarded a grant of s47G under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program.
- On the announcement of the change in Nine's affiliation arrangements, Nine provided the Department with information detailing how this change in circumstances may impact Nine's obligations under the PING Program.
- On consideration of this information, the Department decided that the circumstances detailed by Nine were *exceptional*.
- The Department does not comment on the individual detail of Funding Agreements of PING Grantees.

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 12:35 PM
To: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Subject: FW: PING program - resolution of issue with Nine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

s47F noting the point I added at the end, can you please draft some talking points to have available should they be required. Suggest we need this available by COB today.

Thanks

Mike

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 12:34 PM
To: McCarthy, Justine <Justine.McCarthy@COMMUNICATIONS.gov.au>
Cc: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; s47F
s47F @communications.gov.au <s47F @communications.gov.au>; s47F
s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; Richard Windeyer (Richard.Windeyer@communications.gov.au)
<Richard.Windeyer@communications.gov.au>
Subject: PING program - resolution of issue with Nine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hi Justine

s47C

Nine was awarded a grant of s47G under the PING Program. A Funding Agreement was executed between Nine and the Department; on 10 September 2020. Nine submitted their Interim Report at the six-month mark (24 March 2021), in accordance with the milestones outlined in their Funding agreement.

The Department assessed this report and is satisfied that Nine, at the time of reporting, met its obligations under the Funding Agreement. Additional information was sought from Nine regarding the impacts of the termination of its affiliation deal with Southern Cross Austereo and its new affiliation agreement with WIN Corporation.

s47G

While Clause H1B.1 of PING Funding Agreements, require Grantees to, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement), this provision is made subject to clause H1B.2. Clause H1B.2 provides that the requirement in Clause HB1.1 does not apply in any circumstances which are exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of and justification for, the proposed changes. On 29 June 2021, and in response to a request for advice from the Department, Nine provided additional information to the Department detailing the circumstances surrounding these changes to its journalist staff numbers. Nine asked that this information be considered by the Department when deciding whether or not the circumstances as outlined by Nine met the requirements of the exceptional circumstances clause.

s47C

Exceptional Circumstances Clause

The objective of the Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic phase.

As the impacts of COVID-19 on both businesses and the broader economy had to be considered during the development and negotiation of Funding Agreements, it was essential that both Grantees and the Commonwealth were provided protection in the event that a Grantee was not able to maintain the supplementary conditions set out in the Funding Agreements.

This includes, but was not limited to, circumstances where a Grantee might be forced to incur a significant financial loss or even close their business if forced to maintain the conditions (such as maintaining journalism staffing levels or mastheads levels) as set out in their Funding Agreement. The exceptional circumstance clause was included in the Funding Agreements, as a safeguard. The circumstances leading up to Nine's future reduction are considered to be exceptional (and within scope of clause HB1.2) and noting that prior notice has been given, all of the requirements of clause H1B.2 have been met. Nine must continue to apply the grant money for the specified grant activity and this continues to remain the subject of audit.

Additionally, it should be noted that even if the exceptional clause was not included in PING Funding Agreements, it is likely that grantees would assert there is an implied duty for the Department to act in good faith when exercising its contractual rights and discretions in circumstances such as the one encountered by Nine. ^{s47C}

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cheers,

Mike

Mike Makin

Assistant Secretary • News & Media Industry Branch • Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

mike.makin@infrastructure.gov.au

P +61 2 6271 1031 • ^{s47F}

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

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OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Talking Points for Discussion with Nine

- Grants awarded under the PING Program are intended to fund a broad range of activities that relate to the applicant's production and distribution of public interest journalism in support of the objective and outcomes of the Program as outlined in the PING Program Guidelines (Guidelines).
- In particular successful applicants are required to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the grant period.
- In line with the Guidelines, applicants were required to disclose their revenue for the financial year 2018/19.
- As outlined in the Guidelines, this revenue figure was to be derived from broad publishing or broadcast activities that includes the production and distribution of public interest journalism.
- The Guidelines only required that applicants *exclude* revenue which was derived from other businesses activities not related to the stream for which they were applying or which was derived from activities in metropolitan areas.
- It was a matter for applicants as to what revenue figures were provided in relation to the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional communities.
- While assessing Nine's application, the Assessment Panel sought additional information regarding the commercial relationship between SCA and Nine regarding the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional areas.
- Nine provided clarification regarding this relationship and the disaggregated revenue figures which were used to determine the funding awarded to Nine.
- Under each PING Grant Agreement (Agreement), it is expected that the minimum grant activity is directly proportionate to the size of the funding which is being provided by the Commonwealth.
- It was also outlined in the Guidelines that each Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the eligibility process or other considerations made by the decision maker.
- As such, under the Agreement each Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- The term, 'journalist staff' means employees engaged by each Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect write and present information as a news story.
- Additionally for Streams 1 and 2 (Regional Commercial Television and Radio Providers) there is a requirement that each Grantee must produce and distribute the same level of regional news bulletins that were broadcast by the Grantee as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date that the Agreement is executed).

- The application process, assessment process and administration of the PING Grant was and will be conducted in line with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 which outline the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 3:12 PM
To: Rachel Launders
Cc: s47F Ping Program
Subject: FW: PING Additional Information [SEC=UNOFFICIAL] [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Rachel

We have been trying to contact s47F in regards to the below query. s47F may be on leave.

We need to settle PING interim reports by 30 June.

s47F noted below that you may have an update for us. We are seeking information in regards to changes due to Nine's new affiliation deal, which takes effect on 1 July 2021. We are interested in any information on changes between 1 July 2021 and the end of your PING grant activity period (10 September 2021) that could impact your obligations regarding maintaining bulletins and journalist staff in regional areas (as recorded in your PING funding agreement).

It would be appreciated if we could get a response by Friday this week to finalise assessment of your PING interim report and final payment.

Regards

s47F

OFFICIAL

s22 - duplicate email trail




Australian Government
**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**
First Assistant Secretary

PDR ID: EC21-000227

s47F

Chief Operating and Financial Officer
Nine Network
1 Denison Street
North Sydney NSW 2062
By email: s47F

Dear s47F

RE: PING Additional Information

We refer to your letter dated 23 June 2021 which provided, in response to the Department's inquiry, supplementary information to Nine Entertainment Co. (Nine's) Interim Report under the Grant Funding Agreement (Grant Agreement) dated 20 September 2020 under the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program. The information specifically related to a potential reduction in journalist staffing numbers from 1 July 2021 as consequence of Nine's new affiliation agreement with WIN.

Your letter states that it is expected that from 1 July 2021, s47

s47

As you may be aware, clause H1B.1 of Nine's Grant Agreement, Nine is required to, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement.). Clause H1B.1 does not apply in any circumstances which are exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of and justification for, the proposed changes (refer clause H1B.2).

s47

s47

The Department would however, like to offer Nine with an opportunity to provide any further information that could satisfy this clause.

I request Nine provides further information and justification as to why it considers these circumstances giving rise to the journalism staffing reduction to be exceptional thereby warranting the application of Clause H1B.2. I request that this information is submitted to me at mike.makin@infrastructure.gov.au (cc. pingprogram@communications.gov.au) by COB

Tuesday 29 June 2021. The Department will carefully consider any information supplied by Nine this information and may seek further clarification.

In the event that the Department, acting reasonably and in good faith, were to determine that clause H1B.2 is not applicable, the Department reserves its rights under clause 8.2 of Schedule 1 of the Grant Agreement to withhold part of the Second Payment due to the non-compliance with clause H1B.

If any Grant amount was to be withheld from the Second Payment, the amount withheld would

s47

s47

This approach is in keeping with the treatment of all other grant recipients who have similarly not been willing or able to meet the requirements as outlined in their Grant Agreements. s47

s47

This reduction would be applied for the two-month period remaining in your grant activity period.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Mike Makin

s47F

A/g First Assistant Secretary
Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

28 June 2021

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2020 5:38 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: Paul Fletcher - Press Conference - 29 June 2020 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

s47C

I'll make one other point. In the case of newspaper publishers, the funding is conditional on titles which have been suspended. recommencing printing, recommending publication, and that will be a condition of the former grant agreements, which must be entered into before funding can flow. And so a significant measure from the Morrison Government moving quickly to respond to the challenges, the unprecedented challenges that regional media outlets are facing. We've moved quickly, based upon advice from the ACCC and consistent with what we said we would do to support regional broadcasters, television and radio, and regional newspaper publishers. And as a consequence of our quick action, in a number of towns around Australia, newspapers which had suspended publication, will now be in a position to recommence the distribution of printed copies of print editions and that is good news for those regional communities.

What are the terms and conditions regional media will have to follow to receive this funding?

PAUL FLETCHER:

The guidelines set out what the funding is for, namely the provision of public interest journalism and then there's a series of specific categories for which the funding can be used and so the grant agreements will set out the details there and the grant agreements will also specify, in the case of newspaper publishers, that the funding is for print newspapers. And so where printing of newspaper editions has been suspended, that will need to recommence before the funding can flow. So those are the kinds of matters that will be dealt with in the grand agreements, along with all of the usual measures in terms of accountability and proper dealing with public funds.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: media
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2020 4:53 PM
To: s47F Makin, Mike
Cc: media
Subject: FW: Paul Fletcher - Press Conference - 29 June 2020 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi team

FYI.

Cheers

s47F

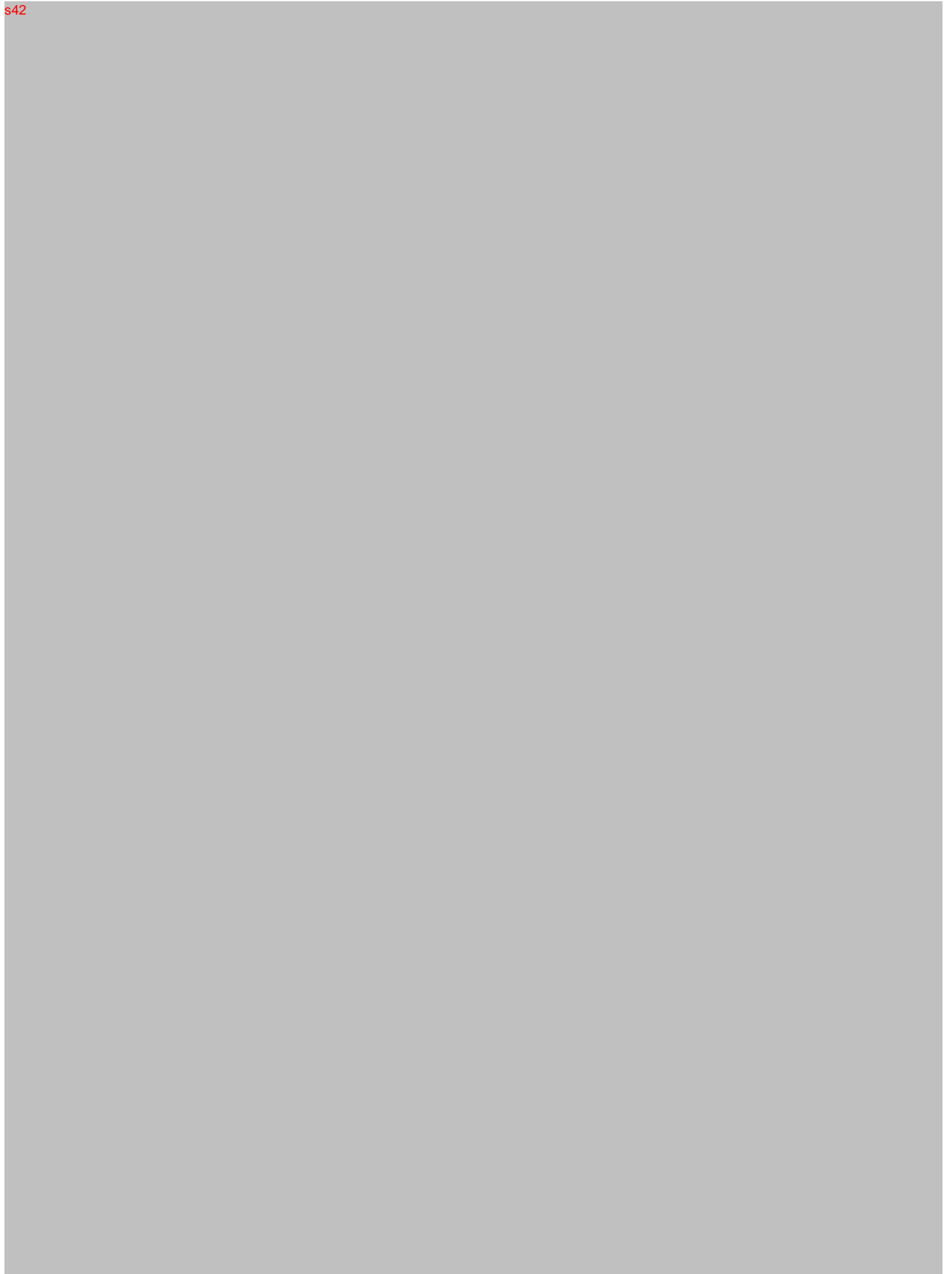
s22 - out of scope

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s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 7 July 2020 2:16 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: FW: Grant Agreement and Schedule 2 Form [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike,

Please see Draft PING Simple Grant Agreement for your review.

The new conditions as discussed are located on page 5 under *Purpose of the Grant*. The blue shaded masthead condition will only be provided to Stream 3 grantees. s47F has provided advice to inform these but has not done a review on the current wording.

The *Grant Activity and Expenditure Details* link is the form that will be completed by grantees via Smarty Grants. This will be used to populate Schedule 2 and other parts of the Grant Agreement. Subject to the journalism condition, we may need to add a section to this form requesting grantees to provide their journalist numbers for reporting purposes (unless we only want it to be an overarching expectation without reporting against it?).

Regards

s47F

Record Title	Draft PING Simple Grant Agreement 6 July 2020.docx
Record Number	PAD/20/58856

Record Title	Grant Activity and Expenditure Details 6 July 2020.docx
Record Number	PAD/20/58857

s22 - duplicate document

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2020 9:44 AM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: Filenote [SEC=PROTECTED, DLM=Sensitive:Cabinet]

Hi s47F

As discussed, happy for you to take the first go at this. s47F and I will be doing OCDAs at different times this morning.

See what mike wants covered, which is broadly in 3 parts:

- Our general statements in Guidelines / MR about Maintain/Increase.
- broadly what people said they would do in their apps to meeting this – 4/5 dot points.
- conditions we are proposing to put in the Agreement to measure, e.g. number of journo's, bulletins, newspapers/ online at as XXX dates.

Please put in an IMS link and then the rest of us can refine if needed.

Regards
 s47F

PROTECTED Sensitive: Cabinet

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2020 9:02 AM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: Filenote [SEC=PROTECTED, DLM=Sensitive:Cabinet]

s47F

Can you get the team to turn the following into a filenote that we can circulate and refine with PS, RW and then the MO to settle how we apply maintain production and distribution of news

It needs to open by quoting from the guidelines, that grants are for maintaining or increasing the production and distribution of news. Also quote MR or other relevant points

We need to note what applicants were asked to provide in this regard, and make some remarks on what they did provide/what we took from this

Then make clear we need to now interpret the statement into measurable/quantifiable concepts that we can tie to the grant funding use in the grant agreements

Note Ministers statement about mastheads returning to print as being the first line in the sand/example

Two key components, but what we settle must be in keeping with the scale and nature of the funding;

So proposal is to interpret production, as being number of journalists employed at 31 December 2019, and distribution as being mastheads in print, bulletins kept, and online domains maintained.

Key issues on production;

- Does not protect all staff – however can't push harder due to scale of grant relative to business turnovers, so businesses could get more efficient in production teams, editorial staff, print staff etc. Also only number, so could drop high profile journo and replace with cadet, also doesn't extend to freelancers/contractors
- Requires us to define journalist, which we have done but could still be applied differently

Key issues on distribution;

- Does not extend to quality, diversity, geographic coverage, length, etc. Is limited only to key outlet continuing

Thanks

Mike

Mike Makin

Assistant Secretary / News & Media Industry

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

P +61 2 6271 1031

s47F

mike.makin@communications.gov.au

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arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

PROTECTED Sensitive: Cabinet

s47F

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2020 5:02 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline; Windeyer, Richard
Cc: s47F
Subject: URGENT Filenote PING Grant Agreement applying maintain production and distribution [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Filenote PING Grant Agreement.docx

Pauline, Richard,

For your urgent consideration, see attached a file note the sets out how we are proposing to interpret the key requirement in the PING program that grantees maintain production and distribution of public interest journalism. This will lock in how its approach in the grant agreement, and will then apply in the subsequent reporting at 6 and 12 months by grant recipients.

Very happy to explain, and noting that once settled the team are right now ready the system to release the draft agreements to successful applicants.

Cheers,

Mike

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File Note: PING Program Grant Agreement

1. References to Maintaining or Increasing Public Interest Journalism

The objective of the PING Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their provision public interest journalism in regional areas. This objective has been expressed in the PING Program Guidelines and Media Releases.

- [Section 2 of the PING Grant Guidelines \(Page 5\): About the Grant Program](#)

The objective of the Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers **to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia** during the COVID-19 pandemic phase.

- [Section 5.1 of the PING Grant Guidelines \(Page 8\): Eligible Grant Activities](#)

Grants awarded under this Opportunity are intended to fund a broad range of activities that relate to the applicant's production and distribution of public interest journalism in support of the objective and outcomes of the Program as outlined in section 2 of the guidelines. In particular to **maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia** during the grant period.

- [Section 9.1 of the PING Grant Guidelines \(page 13\): The Grant Agreement](#)

Grantees will be required **to maintain existing levels of journalism production and distribution** during the grant period.

- [Section 9.2 of the PING Grant Guidelines: How we pay the grant](#)

The payment instalments reflect the immediate financial support required by broadcasters and publishers to **maintain the provision of public interest journalism** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [Media release 7 May 2020 \(Release of Guidelines & Opening of opportunity\)](#)

Minister quote: 'PING will provide support to media businesses so they can **continue to deliver quality news** to the communities they serve'

2. Application Form

In the Application Form applicants provided an explanation of how they provide public interest journalism to regional communities, including details on their production and distribution of local news. Applicants listed the type of journalism they provide (television/radio/print), areas they service and content of their public interest journalism.

Applicants were required to list:

- Number of journalism employees
 - Full time
 - Part time
 - Casual
 - Total journalism employees
 - Total full time equivalent journalism positions
 - Freelance journalists

- Average salary for journalism employees
- Locations of where their journalists are based and number of journalists at that location
- Personnel: all other roles
 - Full time
 - Part time
 - Casual
 - Total
 - Total full time equivalent
 - Average salary
- Regions serviced

Other information requested included total revenue for 2018-19 (to determine grant amount), total expenditure on the production and distribution of public interest journalism, and total labour costs for 2018-19.

Applicants were required to confirm and explain how the funding will be used to maintain or increase production and distribution of public interest journalism by their organisation. Their responses detailed the impact of COVID-19 on their business and how funding would be used to assist their journalism activities. Note that applicants did not know their grant amount at the time of producing their application. However the application did require them to list what they intend to do with their grant fund. Some applicants provided detailed breakdowns of activities and expenditure with dollar figures attached, others just gave an overview.

Examples of activities and expenditure listed by applicants include:

- Covering in whole or subsidising journalism employee wages so that they can hire new staff, return staff stood down back to their original role and/or supplementing the shortfall of salaries.
- Covering in whole or subsidising the salary of sales employees
- Paying for the introduction or update of their online presence, including new websites or content delivery
- Purchasing of equipment required to undertake journalism activities, including computers, printers, mobile phones, camera etc.
- Covering the costs of distributing the publications, including printing, advertising and marketing
- Covering the cost of acquisition of content to be broadcast or published

3. FUNDING AGREEMENTS

In order to evaluate the program's effectiveness in meeting its objective to maintain or increase the level of public interest journalism in regional areas, and for six monthly and 12 monthly reporting purposes during the grant period, it is proposed the Grant Agreement contain a number of measureable conditions.

The conditions have been informed by provisions in the PING Grant Guidelines and statements made by the Minister (note also decision-maker for the PING Grant Program).

- [Section 8 of the PING Program Guidelines: Notification of application outcomes](#)

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, **we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.**

- [Section 9.1 of the PING Program Guidelines: The Grant Agreement](#)

Grantees will be required to maintain existing levels of journalism production and distribution during the grant period. **Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the eligibility process or other considerations made by the decision maker. We will identify these in the agreement.** We are committed to achieving value-for-money outcomes while reducing red tape for grantees, so it applies a risk-based approach to managing grant agreements.

In particular, Section 11.1 of the PING Grant Guidelines states that Grantees must inform the Department if there has been a reduction of the production of journalism or the number of journalists engaged.

- [Section 11.1 of the PING Grant Guidelines: Keeping us informed](#)

Grantees must notify us as soon as they become aware of any likely delays to a project or milestone. Grantees must immediately contact us as soon as they become aware of a breach of the terms and conditions under the grant agreement. **This will include a reduction of the production of journalism or the number of journalists engaged.**

- [Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts Media Release – 29 June 2020 \(Announcement of Funding\)](#)

Consistent with the PING guidelines, **grants are conditional on publishers of suspended mastheads returning them to operation and recommencing print distribution.**

- [Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts Press Conference – 29 June 2020](#)

“I’ll make one other point. **In the case of newspaper publishers, the funding is conditional on titles, which have been suspended. Recommencing printing, recommending publication, and that will be a condition of the former grant agreements, which must be entered into before funding can flow.** And so a significant measure from the Morrison Government moving quickly to respond to the challenges, the unprecedented challenges that regional media outlets are facing. We’ve moved quickly, based upon advice from the ACCC and consistent with what we said we would do to support regional broadcasters, television and radio, and regional newspaper publishers. **And as a consequence of our quick action, in a number of towns around Australia, newspapers which had suspended publication, will now be in a position to recommence the distribution of printed copies of print editions** and that is good news for those regional communities.”

The guidelines set out what the funding is for, namely the provision of public interest journalism and then there's a series of specific categories for which the funding can be used and so the grant agreements will set out the details there and **the grant agreements will also specify, in the case of newspaper publishers, that the funding is for print newspapers. And so where printing of newspaper editions has been suspended, that will need to recommence before the funding can flow.** So those are the kinds of matters that will be dealt with in the grant agreements, along with all of the usual measures in terms of accountability and proper dealing with public funds.

[Summary of what grantees have been told](#)

- It is an objective and condition of the grant to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia.
- They will be advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant
- The grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the eligibility process or other considerations made by the decision maker and these will be identified in the grant agreement
- Grantees must immediately notify the Commonwealth of a breach under the grant agreement including a reduction of the production of journalism or the number of journalists engaged

- Via media releases and public appearances by the Minister, grantees have been made aware that for publishers there is a condition that they recommence printing, operations and publication of suspended mastheads.
- No timeframe of which suspended mastheads are included under this condition has been disclosed publicly.
- Correspondence with successful grantee, Australian Community Media, disclosed the condition to resume suspended mastheads.
- It is intended that all PING grant specific conditions will be disclosed when we release a draft agreement and Grant Activity and Expenditure Details form for Grantees to complete.

Proposed Grant Conditions

Consistent with the PING program guidelines and statements made by the Minister, the Department proposes to include conditions to assess whether Grantees have met the Program's object to maintain or increase the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional areas.

The proposal is to interpret production, as being **number of journalists employed as at 1 February 2019**, and distribution as being **mastheads in print, bulletins kept, and online domains maintained**.

Maintaining production of public interest journalism

To maintain or increase the production of public interest journalism grantees, at a minimum, must maintain the same number of journalism staff employed at 1 February 2020.

Journalism staff are defined in the grant agreement as "employees, engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect and present information as a news story." This could include but is not limited to, journalists, cameramen, photographers, editors, producers and newsreaders.

Under the draft grant agreement any proposal to changes journalism staffing levels in such a way that would affect the grantee's ability satisfy this condition must be notified to the Department in writing as soon as possible.

Key notes on this approach include:

- It does not protect all staff within an organisation. This condition cannot be pushed to include all staff due to the scale of the grant compared to the business turnover. As this condition would only apply to journalism staff it would provide organisations the flexibility to make changes elsewhere in line with efficiency.
- Definition of journalism staff could be interpreted in a variety of ways
- As we are only monitoring the number of journalists, grantees have the flexibility regarding freelance journalists and contractors and have the ability to reduce full time journalists to part time or casual and/or hire cadets rather than fully qualified journalists.

Maintaining distribution of public interest journalism

Stream 1 – Television:

To maintain or increase the distribution of public interest journalism applicants, at a minimum, must maintain the same number of regional news bulletins as broadcasted as at 1 February 2020.

Key notes on this approach include:

- This does not extend to the quality, diversity, geographic coverage or length of news bulletin. It is only limited to the key outlet continuing for the duration of the grant period.

Stream 2 – Radio:

To maintain or increase the distribution of public interest journalism applicants, at a minimum, must maintain the same number of regional news bulletins as broadcasted as at 1 February 2020.

Key notes on this approach:

- This does not extend to the quality, diversity, geographic coverage or length of news bulletin. It is only limited to the key outlet continuing for the duration of the grant period.
- Radio has news content requirements under the relevant ACMA codes/licences and this condition should not impose a major burden on radio providers.

Stream 3 – Publishers

To maintain or increase the distribution of public interest journalism applicants, at a minimum, must maintain the same number of mastheads in print and return mastheads that were suspended after 31 December 2019.

Key notes on this approach:

- Whilst intended to capture Australian Community Media, this may also capture some smaller organisations who suspended mastheads during COVID-19.

Proposed conditions

H1A Maintenance of Production and Distribution levels [all Streams]

H1.1 The Grantee must, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement, as described at Item C of this Agreement).

H1B Maintenance of regional Journalism staffing levels [all Streams]

H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalism staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020, until the Activity Completion Date.

H1B.2 The requirement under Item H1B.1 does not apply in circumstances which are exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of the proposed details of the change and justification; and

H1B.3 For the purposes of this Item H1B, the term, ‘journalism staff’ means employees engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect and present information as a news story.

H1B Maintenance of Production News bulletin [Stream 1 and 2]

H1B.1 The Grantee must produce and distribute all regional news bulletins that were broadcast by the Grantee as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.

H1C Resumption of production and distribution of mastheads [Stream 3]

H1C.1 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute all of its mastheads (print and/or electronic form) that were in circulation (or online distribution) as at the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement, until the Activity Completion Date. ***[This clause is intended to capture those mastheads (print and electronic) that were not cancelled]***

H1C.2 Within 30 days from the execution of this Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and distribution of each of its mastheads in print form which had been suspended at any

time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement ('resumed print mastheads'). ***[This clause is intended to capture those print mastheads that were suspended]***

HC.3 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute the resumed print mastheads in print form up until the Activity Completion Date.

H1C.4 The Grantee must resume the production and electronic dissemination of each of its online mastheads that had been suspended at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement ('resumed electronic mastheads'). ***[This clause is intended to capture those electronic mastheads that were suspended]***

HC.3 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute the resumed electronic mastheads in electronic form up until the Activity Completion Date.

Measurable Data in Grant Agreements

For **Schedule 2 of the Grant Agreement** the Department will be asking grantees to complete a Grant Activity and Expenditure Details Form. This form will allow grantees to provide details on how they intend to spend the grant money and follow the conditions of the agreement and Program objective.

This form will ask grantees to provide:

- A summary of how the grant funding support your organisation to maintain or increase your production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the grant period
- A list of key deliverables they intend to complete by the end of the grant period, including
 - Masthead, publication, radio station or TV station the activity relates to
 - Key deliverable
 - Outcome – what will be achieved by the activity
 - Planned date of completion
- Details of the number of regional 'journalism staff' as at 1 February 2020 at their organisation:
 - Full time journalism employees
 - Part time journalism employees
 - Casual journalism employees
 - Total journalism employees
- For **Stream 1 and Stream 2**, the number of news bulletins they provided in 2018-19.
- For **Stream 3**
 - A list of the suspended mastheads after 31 December 2019 they are required to resume.
 - A breakdown of how they plan to resume operations and recommencing printing of the suspended mastheads including key deliverables, outcomes and planned date of completion
- Budget for their planned activities, including the cost category (as identified in the grant guidelines) and dollar figure

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 10 July 2020 11:48 AM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: Filenote PING Grant Agreement.docx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Filenote PING Grant Agreement.docx

For info

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 10 July 2020 11:48 AM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>; Sullivan, Pauline
 <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: Filenote PING Grant Agreement.docx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47F

I think Pauline may have mentioned this to you yesterday. Attached is our internal draft note regarding the specific conditions we are proposing to place on PING grantees to ensure they maintain production and distribution of news. Welcome your thoughts on the approach, particular the yellow highlights.

I will call to discuss.

Mike

Mike Makin

Assistant Secretary / News & Media Industry
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
 P +61 2 6271 1031
 s47F
mike.makin@communications.gov.au

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 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

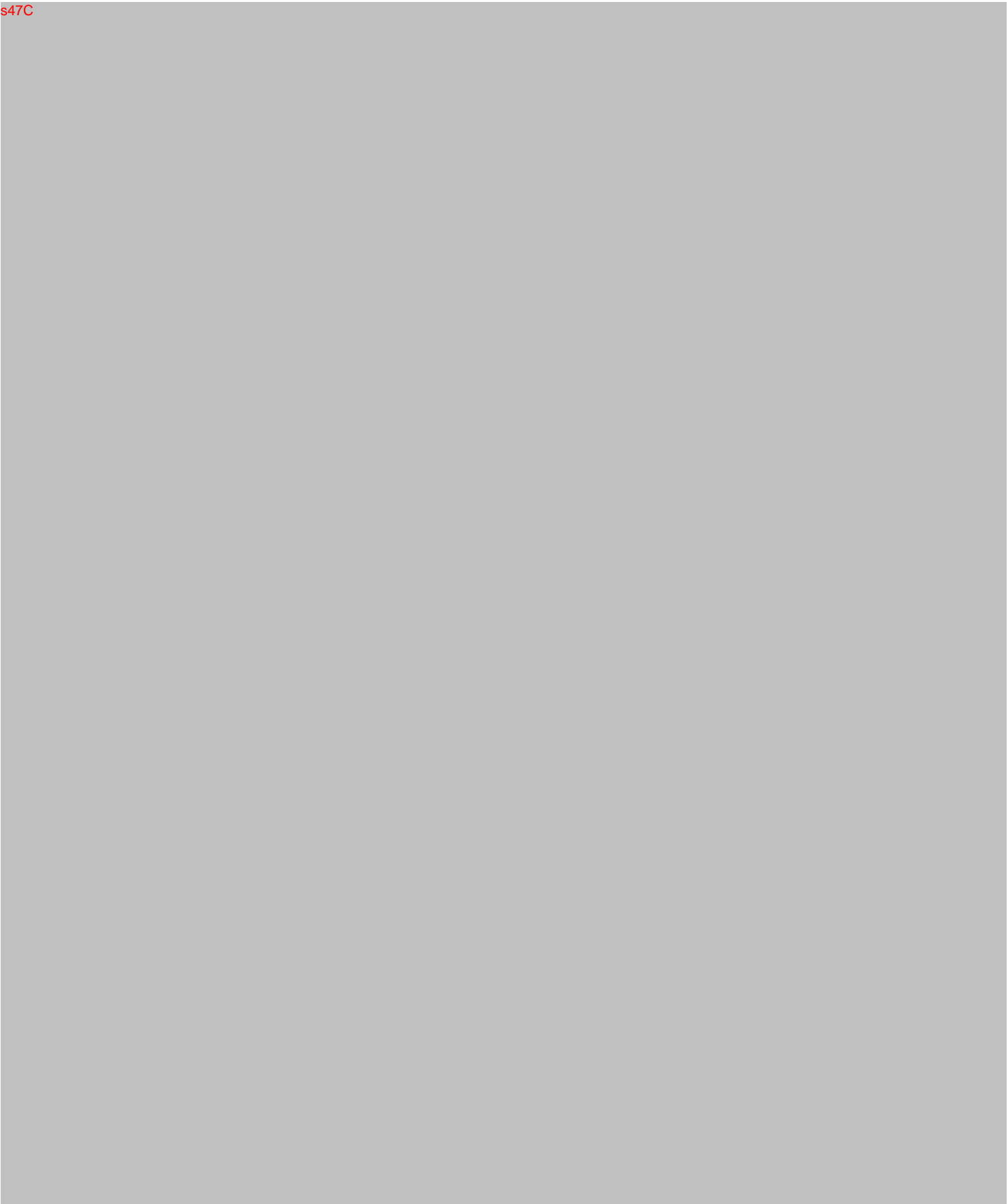
I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

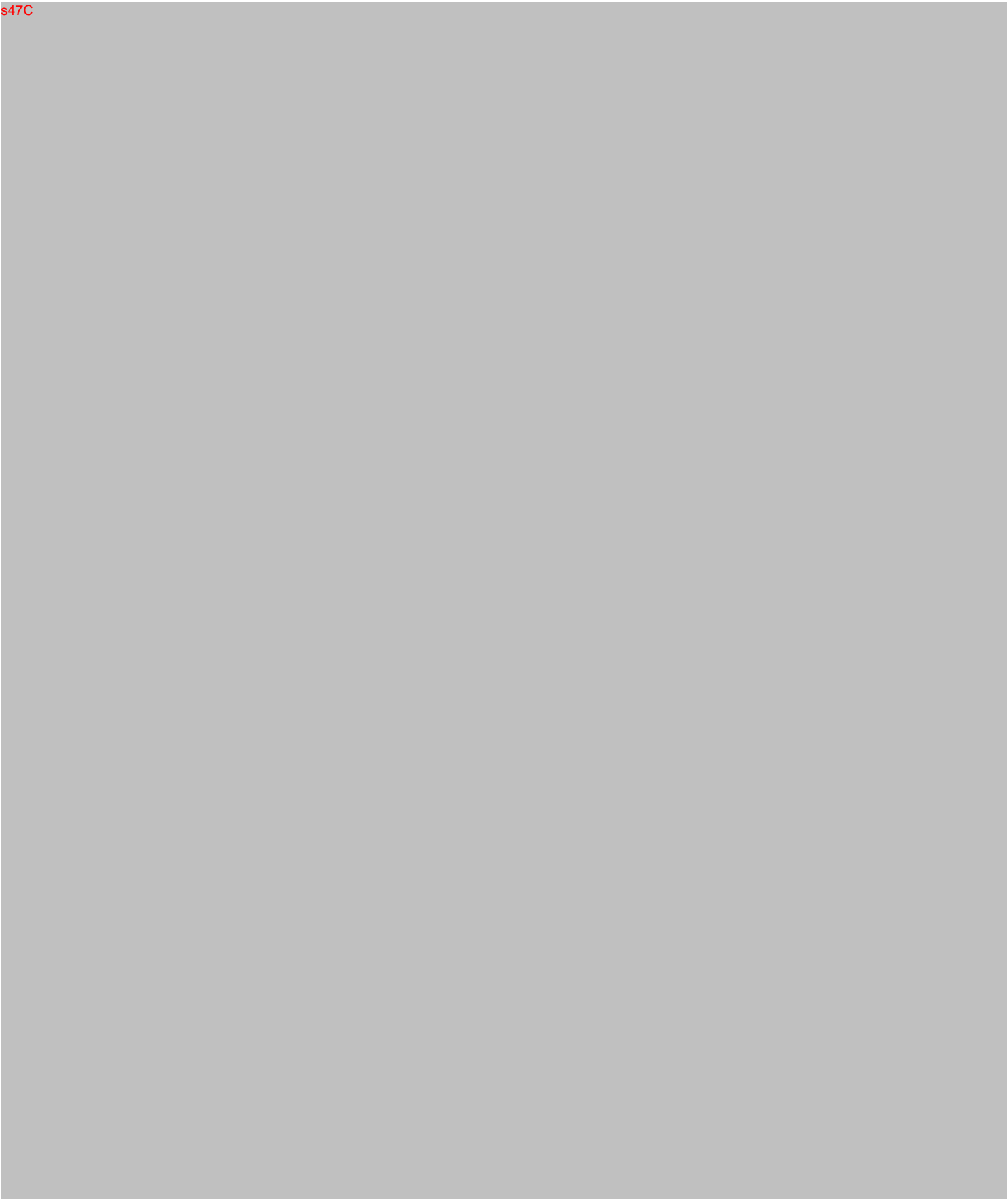
s47C











s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 3 August 2020 1:56 PM
To: s47F
Cc: s47F
Subject: FW: File Note (WAN, Nine and ACM).docx [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: File Note (WAN, Nine and ACM).docx

Hi s47F

Here is the table for issues that need to be discussed / progressed. Please add any others.

Can you also please put into IMS and circulate?

Regards
s47F

UNCLASSIFIED

FILE NOTE – PING PROGRAM – MAJOR GRANTEES' CONDITIONS

Company	Grant Condition	Issue	Proposed Action
West Australian News (WAN)	<p>H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.</p> <p>H1B.3 For the purposes of this Item H1B, the term, 'journalist staff' means employees engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect, write and present information as a news story.</p>	s47G	<p><u>Proposed action</u> – inform WAN that cadet journalists are considered journalists for the purposes of the PING Grant Agreement conditions.</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> The condition only applies to journalists as defined in H1B.3. Based on WAN's breakdown, cadet journalists would appear to fit the definition of the H1B.1 and H1B.3.</p>
Nine	<p>H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.</p> <p>H1B.3 For the purposes of this Item H1B, the term, 'journalist staff' means employees engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect, write and present information as a news story.</p>	<p>In an email to MO on 24 July 2020 and in its Grant Activity Form, Nine states funding will be used for:</p> <p>s47G</p>	<p><u>Proposed action:</u> Confirm with Nine that the s22 - out of scope in SCA markets are journalists. If yes, inform Nine that they would be in breach of H1B.1 and to revise grant activity form.</p> <p><u>Reasons:</u> H1B.1 states the Grantee must maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level as at 1 February 2020</p> <p>Nine's funding was based on its total revenue for SCA and Nine markets. They should be accountable for all its markets, including SCA broadcast areas.</p>

FILE NOTE – PING PROGRAM – MAJOR GRANTEES’ CONDITIONS

		<div>\$47C</div>	Further issue to be discussed.

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 6:12 PM
To: Makin, Mike; Sullivan, Pauline
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Pauline / Mike

The team broadly support the methodology in the file note.

We are concerned, however, that smaller grant recipients may be severely impacted, particularly by the journalist reduction formula. Small operators may only have a few journalists, and if any are reduced it would see their grant amount heavily reduced percentage wise. There may be criticism that we have heavily reduced nominal grants given to small publishers, while bigger operators would only have a bit shaved off for losing the same number of journalists. The vast majority of queries sent down from the MO from MPs etc. are in relation to small operators.

s42

We believe that there should be a revenue / grant threshold when these requirements are to be imposed. We note Section H1B.2 of the Grant Agreement states that the maintaining of journalists requirement may not apply in exceptional circumstances. This could be used to exclude smaller operators.

We will look to now apply this methodology on the handful of affected grantees and come back to you with revised grant amounts.

Regards

s47F

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 3:33 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>; Sullivan, Pauline
 <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Subject: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Pauline, s47F

Updated filenote following yesterdays conversations for your review/thoughts/discussion.

Mike

For Official Use Only

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 4:22 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47F will come asking for it.

No decisions on that front. It would depend on the money leftover and appetite to go again.

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From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 4:18 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Also – what is the decision on what we do with the funding that will now not be allocated – we do have case for the SA operator who put in 1 month revenue. If this comes out that not all funding allocation, there will surely be question during senate estimates.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 4:16 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Good point s47F share this view too.

I will pass onto Mike.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 4:11 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47C

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 4:00 PM
To: s47F

Subject: FW: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

From a quick read, this seems like an okay solution....

Next step for us will be to apply this to the grantees / funding amounts and see what the impact is.

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 20 August 2020 3:33 PM

To: s47F [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@communications.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@communications.gov.au)>; Sullivan, Pauline
<Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>

Subject: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Pauline, s47F [REDACTED]

Updated filenote following yesterdays conversations for your review/thoughts/discussion.

Mike

For Official Use Only

s47F

From:
Sent:
To:
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments:

s47F

Friday, 21 August 2020 5:25 PM

Makin, Mike

s47F

PING Grantees - reducing journalist numbers [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

PING Grantees - Journalist reduction.xlsx

Hi Mike

As discussed, please see the impacts on PING Grantees that have indicated they are reducing journalist numbers. s47C

Regards
s47F

Reduction in Journalists										
Application ID	Organisation Name	Public interest journalism production and distribution costs	Public interest journalism labour costs	Total Journalism Employees (FT/PT/Casual)	Stream 1 Certified Revenue in 2018-19	Stream 1 Funds Available (FINAL)	Reduction Journalists	Reduction %	Reduction Grant	Revised Grant
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD	s47G								
PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited									

s22 - out of scope

s47F

Director / Media Markets / New and Media Industry
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
s47F
s47F @communications.gov.au

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arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 1 September 2020 5:32 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F n
Subject: PING breakdown [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike

Two more signed agreements have come in for your signature tomorrow. If Pauline can sign SCA and ACE tomorrow, we will have 7 more executed to send to MO. Taking the tally to 93 executed.

Of the remaining 14:

- 9 for discussion (file note)
- 4 sent out but not signed by Grantee s22 - out of scope
- 1 has not returned grant activity form. Called today and they will hopefully action tomorrow.

Application ID	Organisation Name	Masthead	Applicant State	Applicant Electorate	Grant Amount (FINAL)	Grant Activity and Expenditure Agreed
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD		NSW	North Sydney	\$4,102,564.68	For Discussion
s22 - out of scope						
PING0046	Rural Press Pty Limited		NSW	Macquarie	\$11,633,098.88	For Discussion

PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited		QLD	Fairfax	\$1,937,828.54	For Discussion
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s22 - out of scope

				\$50,000,000.00	14

s47F

Director / Media Markets / New and Media Industry
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F

s47F [@communications.gov.au](mailto:communications.gov.au)

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s47F

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Wednesday, 2 September 2020 4:53 PM
To: Windeyer, Richard; Sullivan, Pauline
Cc: s47F
Subject: PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Filenote_PING_Approach to reducing grant amounts where agreement terms not met in full (1092020).docx

Richard,

See attached a short file note setting out our proposed approach to reducing the amount received by a grant recipient under the PING program where they either reduce the number of journalists they employ or do not return mastheads to print/bulletins broadcast. At this stage we have 9 grantees that have flagged issues of this nature, including both some smaller recipients as well as some of the largest. We are close to finalising all agreements with no such changes, and now need to resolve all final agreements. The team have developed the attached approach in consultation with Pauline and I, and we would welcome your views so we can proceed with advising grantees.

We will also advise the office of the approach and confirm there are no concerns in relation to the Ministers views on the program.

Happy to explain further as required.

Cheers,

Mike

Mike Makin

Assistant Secretary / News & Media Industry
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

P +61 2 6271 1031

s47F

mike.makin@communications.gov.au

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 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

Filenote – 1 September 2020 – PING program, formula for reducing grant amounts

As at 1 September 2020 there are nine grant recipients that have identified either changes or possible changes to their operations that will make meeting the program objective and associated conditions difficult. These relate to decisions about recommencing production of print publications, changes to the number or frequency of print publications, or changes in journalist staffing levels.

Program objective

The objective of the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program is to maintain or increase the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional areas during the grant period. PING funding is also being provided as part of a COVID-19 relief package for the media industry.

To support this objective, a series of conditions have been included in grant agreements that must be met by grantees (subject to stream pool):

- Maintain production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- Maintain the same level of journalist staff as at 1 February 2020;
- Maintain the same level of news bulletins as at 1 February 2020;
- Produce and distribute all of its mastheads (print and/or electronic form) that were in circulation (or online distribution) as at the day immediately before the execution of the Agreement
- Within 30 days from the execution of the Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and distribution of each of its mastheads in print form and online (where applicable) which had been cancelled at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediate before execution of the Agreement.

This approach is consistent with public statements made by the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts in relation to the PING Program and feedback provided by the Minister to the Department in his role as the decision-maker for the PING program.

In keeping with this approach it is proposed that where a grantee does not agree to fully meet the program objective of maintaining or increasing the production and distribution of public interest journalism in full, through maintaining the number of journalists employed or maintaining the print production/number of bulletins, then the total grant offered should be reduced in a manner that is proportional to the reductions disclosed by the grantee.

For a reduction in production (number of journalists);

A number of grantees have advised that they are proposing to reduce the number of journalists they employ.

In keeping with the number of journalists being used as the only measure of the production of public interest journalism it is proposed that the overall grant amount be reduced by the proportional reduction in journalists. For example, if a grantee employs 50 journalists and proposes to make 5 of these redundant (10 per cent), then the overall grant amount would be reduced by 10 per cent.

In providing advice on this approach to a grantee, it should be made clear that this does not apply to the specific persons employed, the locations they are employed at or the seniority of the role. A news business may choose to change the location of the journalists to another regional location, may change the seniority of their staff or may farewell a particular journalist and hire someone new

and continue to meet this requirement so long as the total number of journalists employed stays at or above the specified level.

Consideration was also given to moderating this approach based on the proportional amount a grantee spends on the production of public interest journalism or the proportion of the costs are used to fund journalists salaries, however these would reflect a diminishment of the importance of this objective to the program and is not in keeping with the objective. An approach involving consideration of the particular salaries of the journalists being made redundant could also be contemplated, however this could be interpreted as then impacting on any grantee who changed the salaries of any journalists, and may therefore limit the flexibility that was sought to be enable by using only a count of the total number of journalists employed as the measure of the production of public interest journalism.

For a reduction in distribution (mastheads/bulletins);

Two known instances present in relation to meeting the objective of maintaining the distribution of public interest journalism.

This first issue is where a newspaper publisher will not return a masthead to print.

In keeping with the operation of the formula for determining grant amounts i.e. based on an applicant's 2018-19 certified revenue, the complete revenue stream associated with the publication not being kept would be taken off the total initial application revenue amount, and a proportional reduction would be applied to the overall grant amount. Working with a grantee this should be achievable for a print publication, however the team will need to work with the grant recipient to identify all revenue specifically associated with the publication, including advertising (both specifically for that publication as well as share of any group advertising sales), classifications, lift outs, subscriptions and physical sales. This will rely on the grantee being forthcoming with data, and the grant assessment team having confidence in this data. Thus, using the ratio of new total revenue for the grant recipient compared to the original application amount, a new lesser grant amount will be determined. For example, if a grantee produces 4 mastheads and applied with an initial total revenue of \$1 million decides they want to stop producing one of the mastheads, and that the total revenue associated with this masthead was \$200,000, then the overall grant amount would be reduced by $\$200,000/\$1,000,000 = 20$ percent. This approach would also apply if a grantee moves a print publication to digital only.

In the instance where the frequency of a print publication is reduced, the grant amount is to be reduced by the decrease in frequency. For example, if a tri-weekly print edition (3 times a week) moves to a weekly print edition, the grant would be reduced by 66 per cent.

The second issue relates to where a newspaper publisher proposes to replace several mastheads with a merged or single masthead.

A key aspect in relation to a merger or replacement of mastheads relates to the distribution area. Where two mastheads that serve different geographic regions with largely the same content are replaced with a single masthead still presenting largely the same content, the assessment team will seek information on the distribution data. If the distribution data shows no loss of distribution from the merge there would be no reduction in the distribution of public interest journalism and therefore no reduction in the grant amount. Where a significant reduction in distribution occurs, the revenue for the original publications needs to be determined, and a percentage reduction in the grant be determined based on the reduction in distribution. This is to reflect that the program uses revenue as a surrogate measure of reach. For example if a grantee has two publications serving two

separate regions that they replace with a single publication and this publication has a 20 per cent smaller distribution, then the grant amount should be reduced by 20 per cent.

In the situation where the publications that are proposed to be merged or replaced are serving the same geographic region, there the grant amount should be reduced in the same way as if a masthead is not being returned to print.

While no instances of a radio or TV grant recipient not continuing news bulletins at the same frequency have been identified, it is proposed that if this situation arises a simple formula be used to reduce the grant amount by the proportional reduction in numbers of bulletins. The revenue streams associated with individual bulletins on radio or TV are not clearly identifiable in a manner that allows for an approach equivalent to that that is proposed for printed newspapers.

For a reduction in both production and distribution

Where a grantee proposes to reduce both the number of journalists and the number of printed mastheads or radio/television bulletins, both of the two separate reductions should be calculated as per the above approaches and the higher of the two is to be applied to the grant amount.

For example, where a print news business proposes to cut 25 per cent of their journalist staff and stop printing 4 of their 10 mastheads (40 per cent), the overall grant amount would be reduced by 40 per cent.

Small grant recipients

Some smaller grantees have indicated that they will not be able to meet some of the conditions of the PING Program. Given the impacts on small-to-medium business in regional Australia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some discretion needs to be given to grantees receiving a small grant amount. Many small grantees only employ 1-3 journalists. If the journalism reduction formula was applied to a grantee that employs 2 journalists, losing one journalist would reduce their grant amount by 50 per cent. Similarly, in regards to mastheads/ bulletins, this group generally has only very small distribution outputs, e.g. one or two mastheads. A small grantee would be heavily impacted by any reduction, either by the journalist or masthead reduction formulas, and may not have access to alternative financial sources.

Based on the eligible applications, journalist staffing levels begin to reach double figures where a grantee has revenue over \$1 million. Under \$1 million, the journalist numbers are mostly single digits. Revenue of \$1 million broadly equates to a grant amount of \$40,000 (subject to the sector stream). The Department proposes to exercise its discretion to exempt grantees receiving a grant of \$40,000 or less from the production and distribution conditions. This treatment would be consistently applied to this group if the inability to meet these conditions occurs before the execution of a grant agreement or during the grant activity period.

Small grantees would still be required to adhere to other requirements in the Agreement, including reporting obligations and returning any monies if the business closes down.

s47F

From: Sullivan, Pauline
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 3:30 PM
To: Makin, Mike; s47F
Subject: RE: Draft PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

excellent. I will let VB know that I will be in touch.

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 3:29 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; s47F
 @communications.gov.au
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au
Subject: RE: Draft PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

The team are onto it, we will get you something shortly

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 2:58 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>; s47F
 @communications.gov.au
Subject: RE: Draft PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Mike, s47F

great. I think the Minister's idea of a letter is very sound and yes, assume it will end up in the media. in regards to Nine, noting my commitment to Victoria, what can I tell her this afternoon. might be worth drafting dot points that I can follow – this will then provide the basis for the letter (so the work will not be wasted).

I would like to call her at 4.30 so can you get me something by 4 pm?

if you could confirm if the above is possible so that I can let her know that I will be calling her (as opposed to radio silence and she assumes that I have forgotten her or worse am ignoring her).

thanks

P

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 2:47 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au; Sullivan, Pauline
 <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Draft PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Pauline,

I had a call from s47F regarding the PING reduction formula file note. She advised that the Minister is happy with our approach, but has suggested that we now write to each affected grant recipient noting exactly what they have told us, how we have interpreted the program objective, and then how and why we are proposing to reduce their grant. This should be as specific as possible, particularly in terms of what they are proposing to change and where

we know it the implications or rationale. We should consider in drafting these notes that these may be made publically available at some point so useful to be as complete as possible in supporting our rationale.

s47F also suggested updating s47F regarding those papers or locations likely to be impacted (as soon as we are ready to) so he can consider the strategy in the MO for fielding enquiries from concerned members/senators and others.

Mike

For Official Use Only

From: Makin, Mike

Sent: Friday, 4 September 2020 12:59 PM

To: s47F <s47F@communications.gov.au>

Cc: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; s47F <s47F@communications.gov.au>

Subject: Draft PING grant reduction approach [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47F

See attached a short draft file note setting out the Departments approach to reducing the amount received by a grant recipient under the PING program where they either reduce the number of journalists they employ or do not return mastheads to print/bulletins broadcast. At this stage we have 9 grantees that have flagged issues of this nature, including both some smaller recipients as well as some of the largest, however it will also affect those who seek the vary their grant agreements over the next year. We will be having a final discussion on Monday to settle the approach so we can inform the affected grant recipients and would welcome any comments you have.

Happy to explain further as required.

Cheers,

Mike

Mike Makin

Assistant Secretary / News & Media Industry

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

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communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only





s42



s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 10 September 2020 5:04 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline; Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Pauline

- Nine has signed their agreement. Will come to you this afternoon for execution.
- 7QLD has accepted the revised grant amount and are adjusting their activity form to reflect this.
- ACM has not come back on their revised grant amount.

Regards

s47F

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2020 7:06 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au; Makin, Mike
 <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

great. thanks v much. keep me posted.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2020 6:00 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; Makin, Mike
 <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Pauline

Emails with amended offers have been sent to Nine and 7QLD.

See below response from Rachel Launder from Nine received this afternoon. As discussed, Nine submitted a revised activity form which only included their funded journalists (not their total amount). This has been returned to them to revise a second time. Once we get this back tomorrow, we will then send out their Grant Agreement.

ACM will go out tonight. Just wanting to do a final check on numbers as their reduction is more complex.

Regards

s47F

Dear s47F

Thank you for your email. We agree to the revised grant amount. We got a revised expenditure form yesterday which we've returned, and a request for further information on total journalist numbers today which we're compiling, and hope to send back to you tomorrow.

Kind regards
Rachel

For Official Use Only

From: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 6:36 PM
To: s47F <[REDACTED]>@communications.gov.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

thanks for this. as discussed, if we could get the agreement out to Nine tomorrow that would be good (I have relayed this to Nine and they assure me that they will be ready with their pens poised).

can you please give me an update on the others at cob tomorrow.

thanks

Pauline

For Official Use Only

From: s47F <[REDACTED]>@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 4:08 PM
To: Sullivan, Pauline <Pauline.Sullivan@communications.gov.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Email to Grantee/Nine Specific Details - not meeting PING conditions [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Importance: High

Hi Pauline – for discussion with VB.

As requested, please see below a draft email for Nine. Note that this may not be the final wording but gives you a feel for what it will contain.

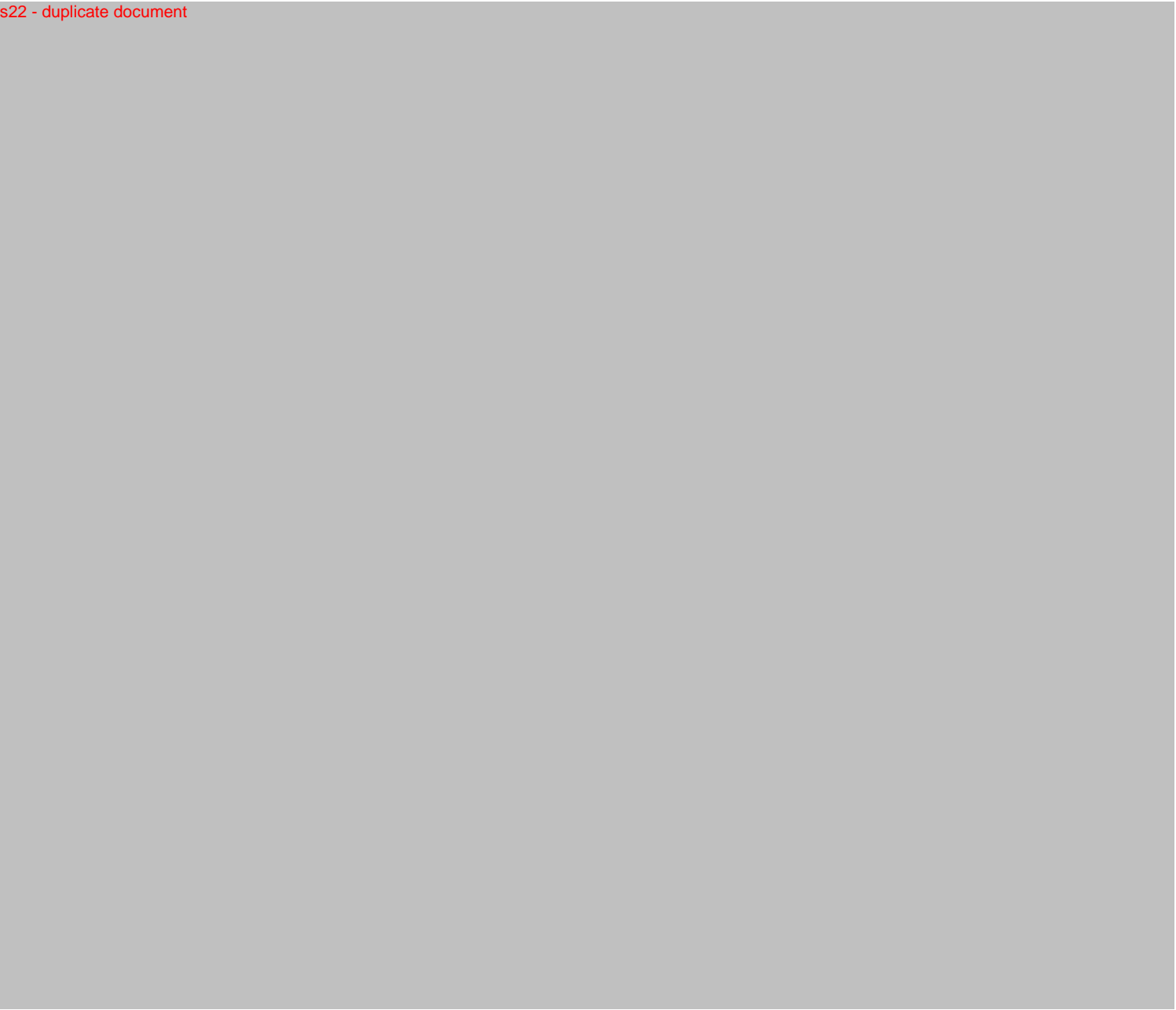
Broadly the emails will contain:

- Objective of the PING Program and supporting conditions
- Information provided by the grantee where they cannot meeting the condition (s)
- Specific condition that has been contravened
- Metrics used to determine revised grant amount.
- Revised grant amount

Regards
s47F <[REDACTED]>

For Official Use Only

s22 - duplicate document



s42





s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 23 September 2020 10:41 AM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING Grant Condition Changes: Australian Community Media [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47F – sorry took so long to get back. Not sure if you have already gone back to s47F I have put my suggested changes in red and some queries/comments in []. Happy to discuss.

s47F

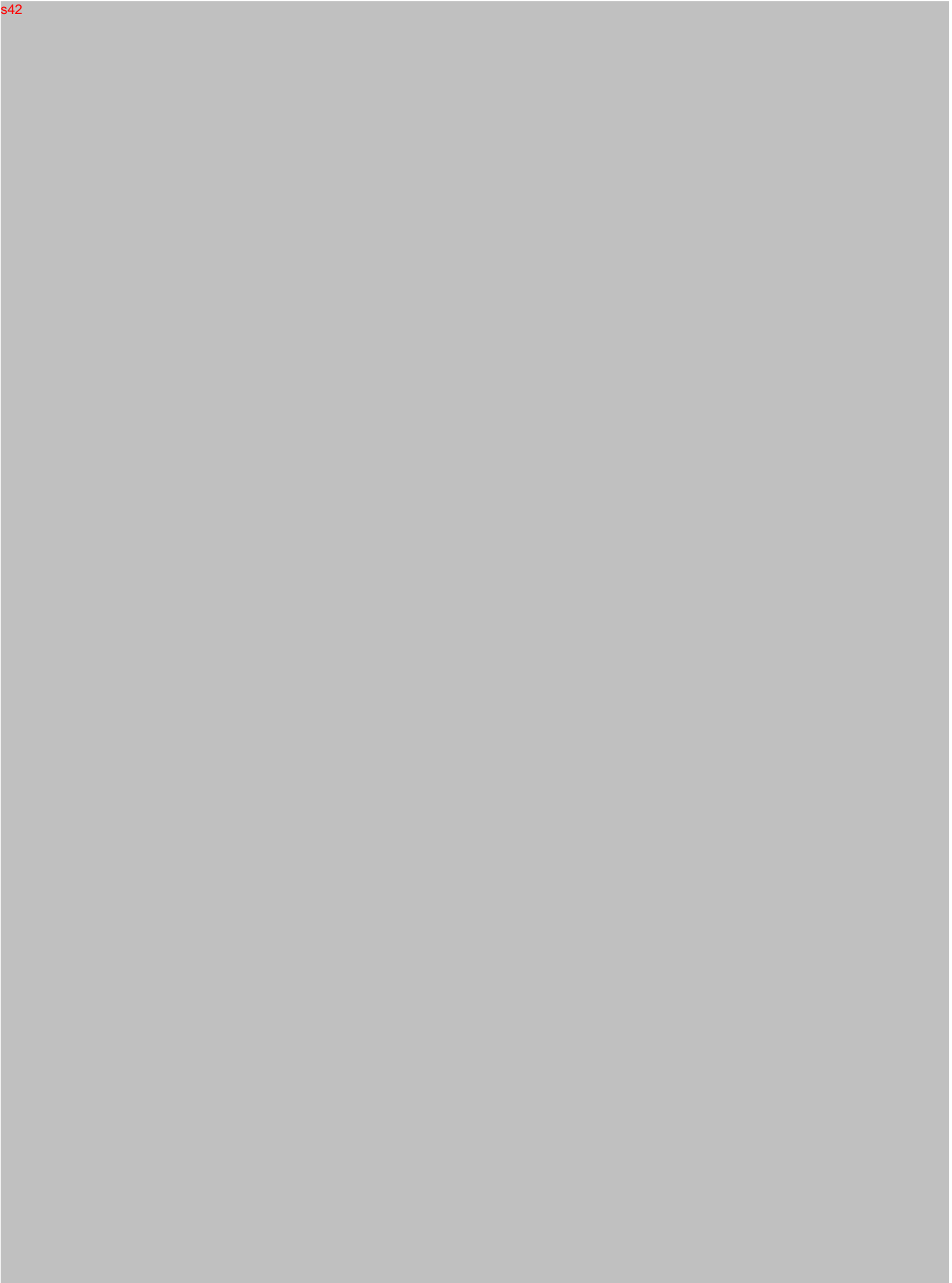
For Official Use Only

From: s47F@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 22 September 2020 2:02 PM
To: s47F@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING Grant Condition Changes: Australian Community Media [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

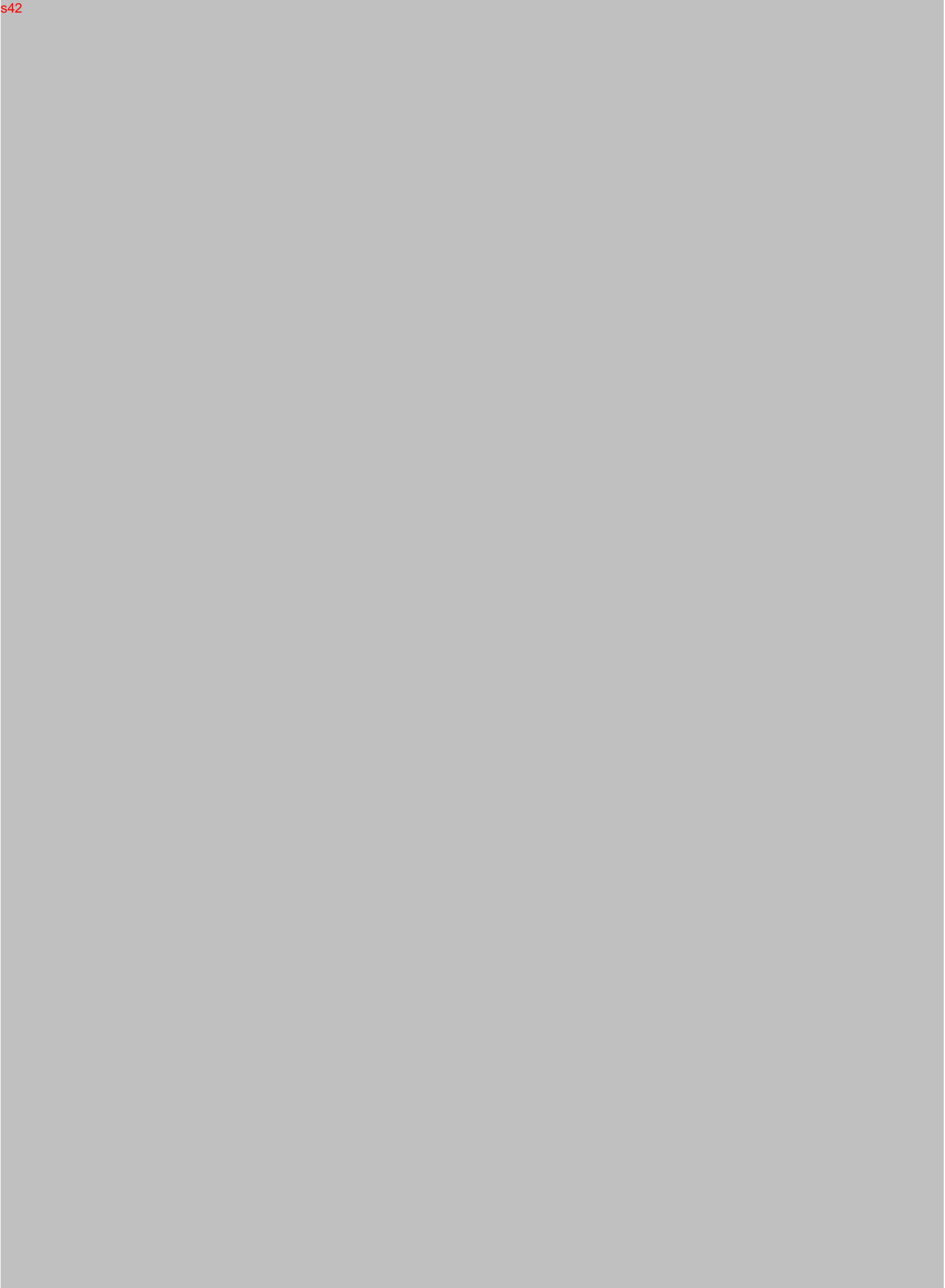
Hi s47F,

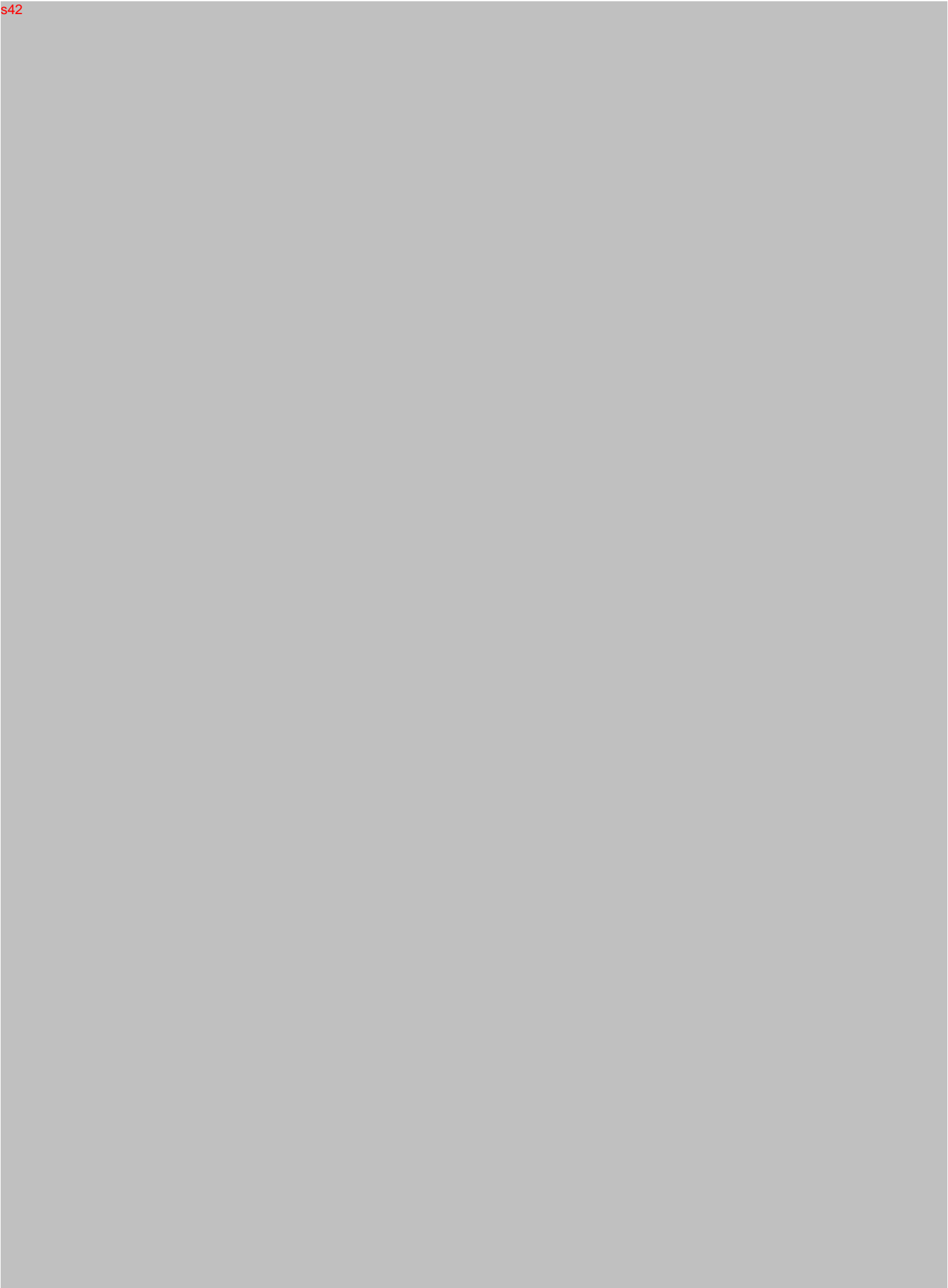
See below for my proposed response to s47F. For ease I am also going to attach a full agreement when I send the email.

s42









s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 12 October 2020 3:31 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: BPB Assistance [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: Backpocket Rural Press Grant Reduction.docx; s22 - out of scope
 Backpocket Stream 1 and 2 Successful Grantees.docx; Backpocket List of Reduced PING Grants.docx; Backpocket List of Successful Stream 3 PING Grantees.docx; Back Pocket Brief - PING Oct 2020.docx

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 9 October 2020 4:59 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: BPB Assistance [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

For your viewing pleasure....

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 9 October 2020 4:45 PM
To: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Subject: FW: BPB Assistance [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Halp

s47F

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 9 October 2020 4:30 PM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: BPB Assistance [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F back pockets attached

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 9 October 2020 4:25 PM
To: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s47F @communications.gov.au>; s47F @infrastructure.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s47F @infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: BPB Assistance [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hey Team

Can you please send you BPB's and any attachments to me.
 As an attachment not an IMS link ☺

Thank you!!

s47F

Executive Assistant / Pauline Sullivan, First Assistant Secretary, Content Division
Executive Assistant / Bridget Gannon, Assistant Secretary, Digital Platforms and Online Safety Branch
Executive Assistant / James Penprase, Assistant Secretary, Broadcasters & Content COVID response
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
s47F
@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNCLASSIFIED

BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CONTENT

PUBLIC INTEREST NEWS GATHERING (PING)
PROGRAM AND REGIONAL AND SMALL
PUBLISHERS INNOVATION (RASPI) PROGRAM

KEY ISSUES – PING

- Of the **107** eligible applicants:
 - **5** were regional commercial TV broadcasters;
 - s22 - out of scope
 - **92** were regional publishers
 - **3** applicants were successful in two streams).
 - Further details of these applicants is at **Attachment A**.

s22 - out of scope

Range of Grants

s22 - out of scope

Range of Grant	Number of Grantees	Proportion of total Grantees
s22 - out of scope		
\$200,000 +	19 Grantees	15%

BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CONTENT

Distribution of Grants

- The data in the tables below was extracted by the *smartygrants* system:
- The regional numbers in all three streams are high, but this reflects that more than one applicant identified the same region as part of their service area coverage.
- Generally, the more populous states received higher proportions of distribution among the states and territories and the regions within.

Stream 1 Commercial TV

State/Territory	Distribution per State/Territory	Regions Serviced Within State/Territory
ACT	1	3
NSW	2	26
VIC	1	13
QLD	1	30
SA	0	3
WA	0	9
NT	0	1
TAS	0	3
Totals	5	88

s22 - out of scope

BACKPOCKET BRIEF - CONTENT

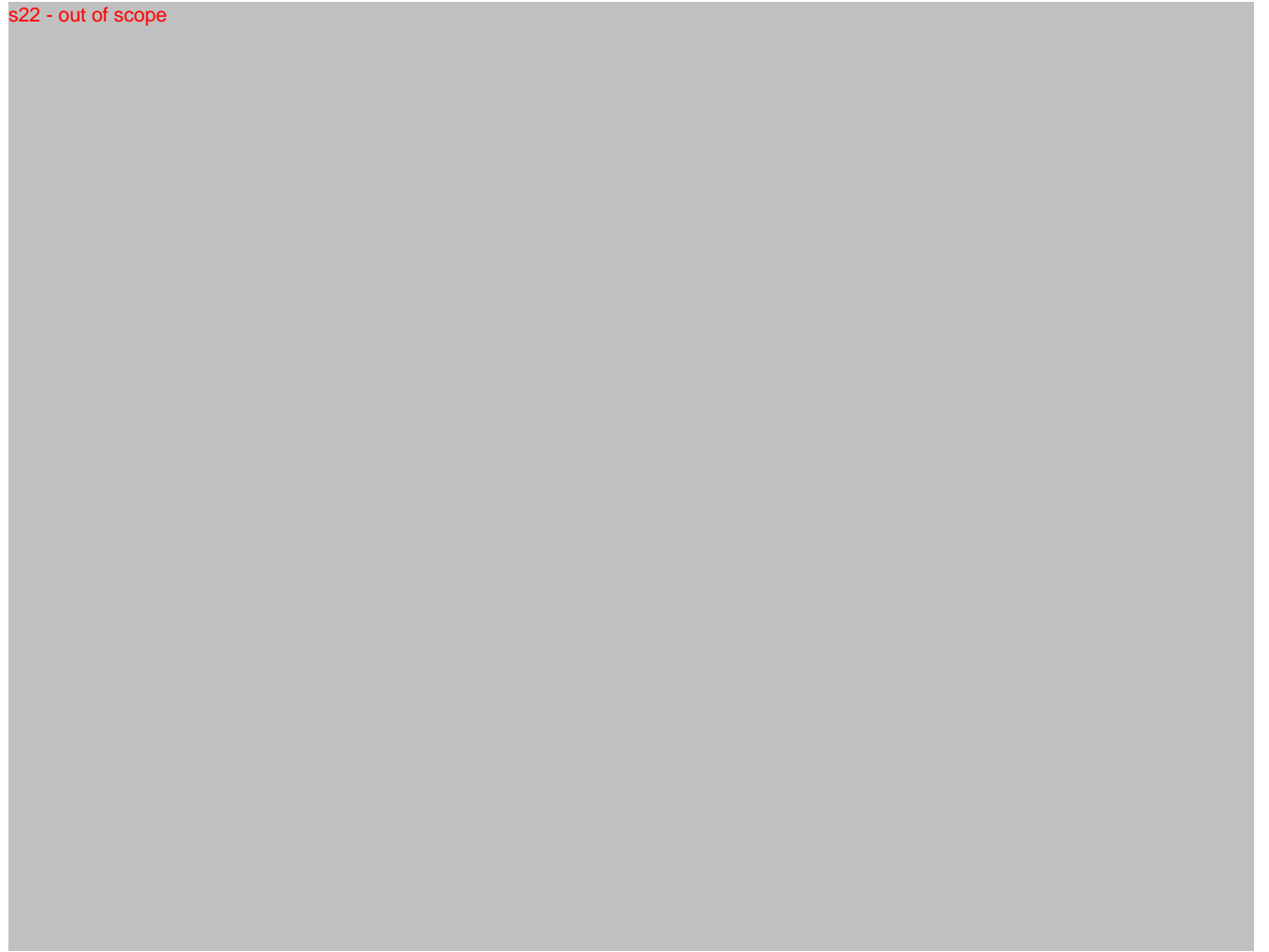
s47G

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s22 - out of scope

A large rectangular area of the document is completely redacted with a solid gray fill, covering the majority of the lower half of the page.





LIST OF APPLICANTS WITH REVISED/REDUCED PING GRANTS

Organisation	PING ID	Issue	Reduction of Journalist / Mastheads	Reduction % of Journalists/ Revenue	Reduction % of Grant	Reduction \$ of Grant	Original Grant	Revised Grant
Rural Press Pty Ltd (ACM) (NSW/VIC)	PING0046	Masthead Reduction	s47G					\$10,416,593.90
Nine Entertainment Co Pty Ltd (NSW/ VIC/QLD/WA)	PING0014	Journalist Reduction						\$4,034,188.60
Channel Seven Queensland Pty Ltd (QLD)	PING0054	Journalist Reduction						\$1,869,701.76

s22 - out of scope

File Note- Rural Press Grant Reduction

s47G

Program objective

The objective of the PING Program is to maintain or increase the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional areas during the grant period. PING funding is also being provided as part of a COVID-19 relief package for the media industry.

To support this objective, a series of conditions have been included in grant agreements that must be met by grantees (subject to stream pool):

- Maintain production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- Maintain the same level of journalist staff as at 1 February 2020;
- Maintain the same level of news bulletins as at 1 February 2020;
- Produce and distribute all of its mastheads (print and/or electronic form) that were in circulation (or online distribution) as at the day immediately before the execution of the Agreement
- Within 30 days from the execution of the Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and distribution of each of its mastheads in print form and online (where applicable) which had been cancelled at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediate before execution of the Agreement.

This approach is consistent with public statements made by the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts in relation to the PING Program and feedback provided by the Minister to the Department in his role as the decision-maker for the PING program.

In keeping with this approach, where a grantee does not agree to fully meet the program objective of maintaining or increasing the production and distribution of public interest journalism in full, through maintaining the number of journalists employed or maintaining the print production/number of bulletins, then the total grant originally offered will be reduced in a manner that is proportional to the reductions disclosed by the grantee.

Reduction of Production and Distribution

s47G

The amended grant amount is therefore \$10,416,593.90.

Reduction in distribution (mastheads/bulletins)

Two known instances present in relation to meeting the objective of maintaining the distribution of public interest journalism.

This first issue is where Rural Press will not return a masthead to print. The second issue is where Rural Press is reducing the frequency of a masthead.

Mastheads

In keeping with the operation of the formula for determining grant amounts i.e. based on an applicant's 2018-19 certified revenue, the complete revenue stream associated with the publication not being kept would be taken off the total initial application revenue amount, and a proportional reduction would be applied to the overall grant amount. This includes publications that are moving to digital only.

Rural Press identified 46 publications not returning to print. Two of the 46 publications merged into another with no reduction in distribution area or journalism production. Therefore the revenue for those two publications has not been included in the reduction of the grant amount. s47G

Rural Press identified 12 publications that will be returning as digital only publications. As they are not returning to print, 100 per cent of their revenue must be considered. s47G

Frequency

In the instance where the frequency of a print publication is reduced, the grant amount is to be reduced by the proportional decrease in frequency. For example, if a tri-weekly print edition (3 times a week) moves to a weekly print edition, the grant would be reduced by 66 per cent.

Reduction in production (journalists)

In keeping with the number of journalists being used as the only measure of the production of public interest journalism, it is proposed that the overall grant amount be reduced by the proportional

reduction in journalists. For example, if a grantee employs 50 journalists and proposes to make 5 of these redundant (10 per cent), then the overall grant amount would be reduced by 10 per cent.

This does not apply to the specific persons employed, the locations they are employed at or the seniority of the role. A news business may choose to change the location of the journalists to another regional location, may change the seniority of their staff or may farewell a particular journalist and hire someone new and will continue to meet this requirement, so long as the total number of journalists employed stays at or above the specified level.

s47G

Reduction in both production and distribution

As Rural Press is reducing both the number of journalists and the number of printed mastheads both of the two separate reductions should be calculated as per the above approaches and the higher of the two is to be applied to the grant amount.

For example, where a print news business proposes to cut 25 per cent of their journalist staff and stop printing 4 of their 10 mastheads (40 per cent), the overall grant amount would be reduced by 40 per cent.

For Rural Press the loss of mastheads is greater than the loss of staff and funding has been reduced in line with the larger impact only. Therefore, no funding will be reduced for the reduction in staff.

Reduced Grant Offer

The reduced grant offer has been calculated in line with Rural Press’ reduction in distribution of mastheads.

The grant offer will therefore be reduced by s47G with a new grant offer of \$10,416,593.90.

Original Grant Offer	s47G	
Reduction %		
Reduction of grant with %		
New Grant Offer	\$	10,416,593.90

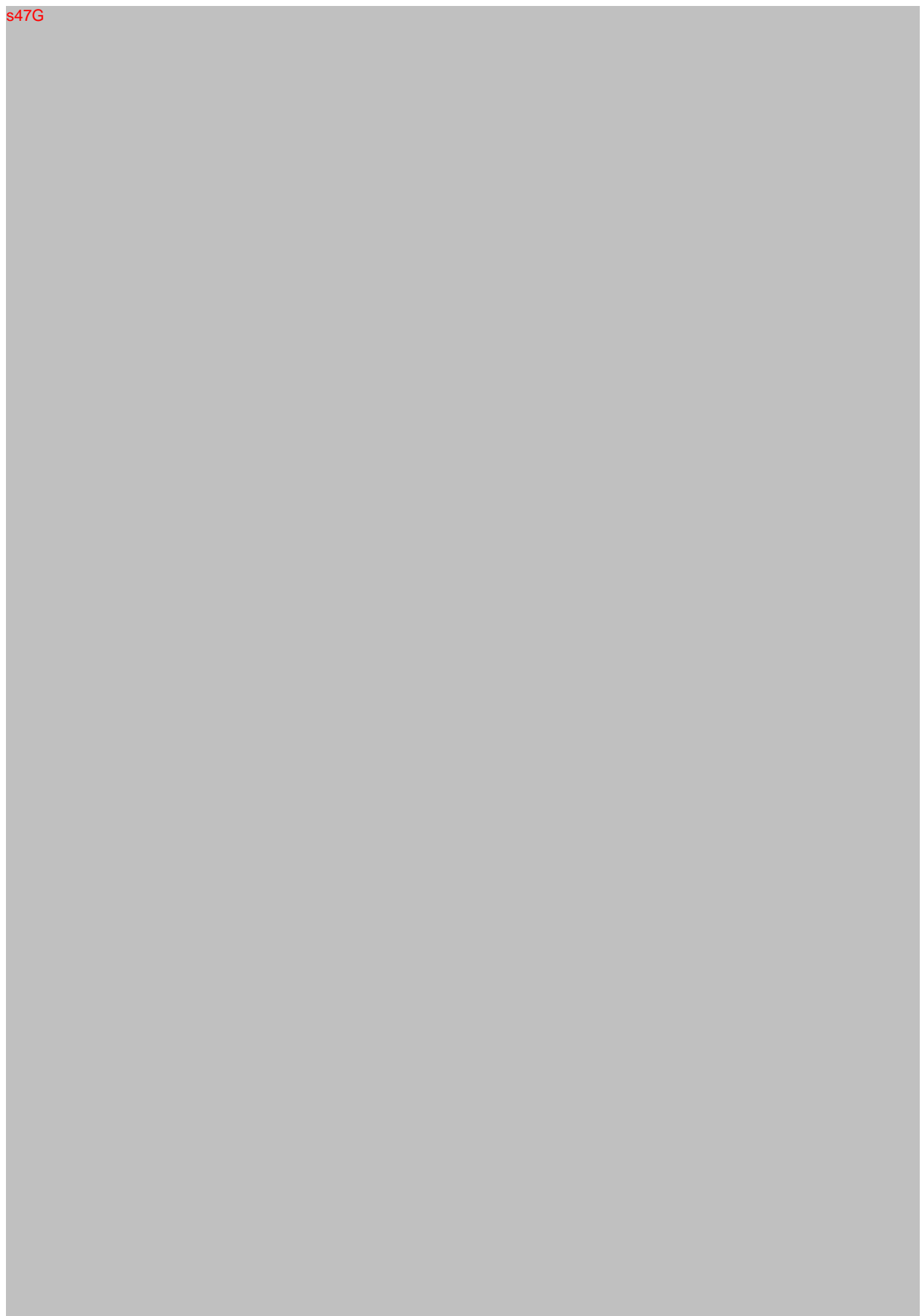
Appendix

Details of Mastheads in Production/Distribution for Duration of Grant

Ref.	Name of Masthead	Frequency Daily (D) Weekly (W) Bi-Weekly (Bi-W) Fortnightly (F)	Print Only / Digital Only / Print & Digital	Never Suspended / Resumed in Full / Reduced Frequency / Move to Digital Only
1	Canberra Times	D	Print & Digital	s47G
2	Border Mail Albury	D	Print & Digital	
3	Oberon Review	W (Paid)	Print & Digital	
4	Western Times	W (Free)	Print & Digital	
5	Western Advocate Bathurst	D (Paid)	Print & Digital	
6	Cowra Guardian	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
7	Grenfell Record	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
8	Young Witness	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
9	Mailbox Shopper	W (free)	Print Only	
10	Dubbo Daily Liberal	D	Print & Digital	
11	Merimbula News Weekly	W	Print & Digital	
12	Bega District News	Bi-W	Print & Digital	
13	Illawarra Mercury	D	Print & Digital	
14	Macleay Argus	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
15	Mid Coast Observer	W (free)	Print & Digital	
16	Port Stephens Examiner	W (free)	Print & Digital	
17	Town & Country Hunter	F (free)	Print & Digital	
18	The Irrigator	Bi-W	Print & Digital	
19	Lithgow Mercury	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
20	Mudgee Guardian	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
21	Newcastle Herald	D (paid)	Print & Digital	
22	Central Western Daily	D	Print & Digital	
23	Blayney Chronicle	W (paid)	Print & Digital	
24	Northern Daily Leader Tamworth	D	Print & Digital	
25	Tamworth Times	W (free)	Print & Digital	
26	Bay Post	Bi-W	Print & Digital	
27	South Coast Register	Bi-W	Print & Digital	
28	Milton Ulladulla Times	W	Print & Digital	
29	Narooma News	W	Print & Digital	
30	Shoalhaven Nowra News	W (free)	Print & Digital	
31	Manning River Times	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital	
32	The Rural	W	Print & Digital	
33	Wagga Daily Advertiser	D	Print & Digital	
34	Western Magazine	W (free)	Print & Digital	
35	Jimboomba Times	W (free)	Print & Digital	
36	Beauresert Times	W (paid)	Print & Digital	
37	Redland City Bulletin	W (free)	Print & Digital	
38	Victor Harbor Times	W	Print & Digital	
39	The Islander	W	Print & Digital	
40	Launceston Examiner	D	Print & Digital	
41	Burnie Advocate	D	Print & Digital	
42	Ballarat Courier	D	Print & Digital	
43	Bendigo Advertiser	D	Print & Digital	

44	Warrnambool Standard	D	Print & Digital
45	Augusta - Margaret River Mail	W	Print & Digital
46	Busselton-Dunsborough Mail	W	Print & Digital
47	Mandurah Mail	W	Print & Digital
48	Katherine Times	W	Print & Digital
49	Parkes Champion Post	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital
50	Forbes Advocate	Bi-W (paid)	Print & Digital
51	Boorowa News	W (paid)	Print & Digital
52	Canowindra News	W (paid)	Print & Digital
53	Eden Magnet	W	Print & Digital
54	The Area News	Tri-W	Print & Digital
55	Tenterfield Star	Weekly	Print & Digital
56	Camden Haven Courier	W (free)	Print & Digital
57	Great Lakes Advocate	W (paid)	Print & Digital
58	Gloucester Advocate	W (paid)	Print & Digital
59	Cessnock Advertiser	W (free)	Print & Digital
60	Singleton Argus	W (paid)	Print & Digital
61	Naracoorte Herald	W	Print & Digital
62	Border Chronicle	W	Print & Digital
63	Whyalla News	W	Print & Digital
64	Port Augusta Transcontinental	W	Print & Digital
65	Port Pirie Recorder	W	Print & Digital
66	The Wimmera Mail Times	Tri-W	Print & Digital
67	The Ararat Advertiser	Bi-W	Print & Digital
68	The Stawell Times News	Bi-W	Print & Digital
69	Moyne Gazette	W	Print & Digital
70	Country Leader	W (free)	Print & Digital
71	Southern Highlands News	W	Print & Digital
72	Goulburn Post	W	Print & Digital
73	Maitland Mercury	W (paid)	Print & Digital
74	Glen Innes Examiner	W (paid)	Print & Digital
75	Inverell Times	W (paid)	Print & Digital
76	Moree Champion	W (paid)	Print & Digital
77	Port Macquarie News	W (paid)	Print & Digital
78	Murray Valley Standard	W	Print & Digital
79	Port Lincoln Times	W	Print & Digital
80	Yass Tribune	Bi-W	Digital Only
81	Crookwell Gazette	Bi-W	Digital Only
82	Dungog Chronicle	W (paid)	Digital Only
83	Bellingen Courier Sun	W (free)	Digital Only
84	Nyngan Observer	W (paid)	Digital Only
85	Bunbury Mail	W	Digital Only
86	Cootamundra Herald	W	Digital Only
87	Armidale Express	Bi-W	Digital Only
88	Goondiwindi Argus	W (paid)	Digital Only
89	Namoi Valley Independent	Bi-W (paid)	Digital Only
90	North West Star	W	Digital Only
91	Wingham Chronicle	Bi-W (paid)	Digital Only

s47G



STREAM 1 – REGIONAL COMMERCIAL TV

Organisation	PING Ref No	Broadcast TV Stations	State	Grant Amount	Other Info	Grant Connect Published Date
Channel Seven Queensland Pty Limited	PING0054	Sunshine Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Toowoomba	QLD	\$1,869,701.76	s47G	29 September 2020
Nine Entertainment Co Pty Ltd	PING0014	Lismore, Tamworth, Orange, Newcastle, Wollongong, Albury Canberra Bendigo, Ballarat, Stratford, Shepparton Cairns, Townsville, Mackay Rockhampton, Maryborough	NSW NT VIC QLD	\$4,034,188.60		11 September 2020

s22 - out of scope

STREAM 1 – REGIONAL COMMERCIAL TV

Organisation	PING Ref No	Broadcast TV Stations	State	Grant Amount	Other Info	Grant Connect Published Date
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s22 - out of scope

STREAM 1 – REGIONAL COMMERCIAL TV

Organisation	PING Ref No	Broadcast TV Stations	State	Grant Amount	Other Info	Grant Connect Published Date
s22 - out of scope						
				\$19,863,507.13 [\$20,000,000.00]	s47G	

STREAM 2 – REGIONAL COMMERCIAL RADIO

Organisation	PING Ref No	Broadcast Radio Stations	State	Grant Amount	Other Info	Grant Connect Published Date
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s22 - out of scope

s47F

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 2:31 PM
To: s47F
Subject: Re: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Can you bring a hard copy to the branch meeting please - want to make a few tweaks

Sent from my iPhone

On 5 Nov 2020, at 14:08, s47F <[REDACTED]>@infrastructure.gov.au> wrote:

Hi Mike – proposed response for clearance. ABC News must have received the list of mastheads from either ACM / MO or MP.

Regards

s47F

Enquiry:

I'm doing a story about the Commonwealth funding announced for 91 ACM newspapers today. It appears the 3 newspapers in WA that received grants were ones that were able to continue operating during the pandemic.

However the 4 papers that didn't receive funding including the Bunbury and Collie Mail, Esperance Express and Avon Valley Advocate, were the ones that had to close, mostly haven't reopened and appear to be struggling the most.

Wondering if these 4 papers actually applied for this funding? If so, I wanted to know why they missed out on funding considering they haven't been able to start up again after the pandemic, what is the funding criteria and will there be more funding to come out of this PING program?

Proposed response:

Rural Press Proprietary Limited (Australian Community Media) applied for funding on behalf of their mastheads and it is within their discretion how they spend their grant in accordance with the objective of the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program, the PING Program Guidelines and conditions in their executed grant agreement. As stated by the Minister on 29 June 2020, it is a condition of all grantee's that they resume suspended mastheads to receive the full grant amount. Any suspended mastheads not returned to operation and in print resulted in a reduced grant amount. All grantees that have executed agreements under the PING Program are published on GrantConnect.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: media <media@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 1:33 PM
To: s47F
Cc: media <media@communications.gov.au>; s47F
 <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Hi team,

We've received an enquiry from ABC News on the grants provided to ACM newspapers, see below. Apologies for the tight turn around, the MO have asked for this response by 3:00pm today. I suspect this may have been a decision by ACM, not our end. If you could please come back to me before then on the grants process for this one, that would be great. Thanks.

Enquiry:

I'm doing a story about the Commonwealth funding announced for 91 ACM newspapers today. It appears the 3 newspapers in WA that received grants were ones that were able to continue operating during the pandemic.

However the 4 papers that didn't receive funding including the Bunbury and Collie Mail, Esperance Express and Avon Valley Advocate, were the ones that had to close, mostly haven't reopened and appear to be struggling the most.

Wondering if these 4 papers actually applied for this funding? If so, I wanted to know why they missed out on funding considering they haven't been able to start up again after the pandemic, what is the funding criteria and will there be more funding to come out of this PING program?

Kind regards,

s47F

Media Officer / Media Services / Communication Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
s47F
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

UNCLASSIFIED

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 21 January 2021 10:39 AM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: PING Program: Reduction of Journalist Numbers [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike,

As discussed with s47F, we are seeking your approval on the below approach when dealing with reduction in journalist numbers under the PING Program.

As we head into reporting, we have established an approach on how to deal with reduction in journalist numbers when:

1. Journalists resign with an intention to rehire/no new staff immediately available
2. Journalists resign and no intention to rehire
3. Journalists are made redundant or terminated employment with no intention to rehire

In relation to 3. If there is no intention to maintain the journalists as stated in the grant conditions, a reduction in grant funds would be made in accordance with the formula (the agreed Filenote). This could be reducing the second payment or recouping funds (depending at what time it occurs).

In relation to 1. And 2. We must consider that resignations are out of the Grantee's control and immediately penalising them for loss of staff will be questioned by auditors. If resignations occur there should be a discussion with the Grantee about their intentions to rehire.

If they intend to rehire, they must be able to show reasonable efforts to fill the vacant position during the life of the program. If the Department is satisfied they have made efforts to rehire, no reduction in grant funds should occur. The exceptional circumstances clause in the grant agreement will allow for this.

If they do not intend to rehire,

1. the exceptional circumstance clause could be utilised or
2. the grant could be immediately reduced.

If there is exceptional circumstances, this should be the first option. If the Grantee makes no effort or ignores the grant condition, a reduction may be warranted.

Note, any grants under \$40,000 would not be reduced as per the agreed Filenote.

For reference, relevant Grant Agreement conditions

H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.

H1B.2 The requirement under Item H1B.1 does not apply in any circumstance which is exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of the proposed details of the change and justification.

Kind Regards,

s47F

Senior Policy Officer / Media Markets / News and Media Industry
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F

@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

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For Official Use Only

Friday, 22 January 2021

PING File Note - Journalist Reduction

As we head into reporting, we have established an approach on how to deal with reduction in journalist numbers when:

1. Journalists resign with an intention to rehire/no new staff immediately available
2. Journalists resign and no intention to rehire
3. Journalists are made redundant or terminated employment with no intention to rehire

In relation to 3. If there is no intention to maintain the journalists as stated in the grant conditions, a reduction in grant funds would be made in accordance with the formula (the agreed Filenote). This could be reducing the second payment or recouping funds (depending at what time it occurs).

In relation to 1. And 2. We must consider that resignations are out of the Grantee's control and immediately penalising them for loss of staff will be questioned by auditors. If resignations occur there should be a discussion with the Grantee about their intentions to rehire.

If they intend to rehire, they must be able to show reasonable efforts to fill the vacant position during the life of the program. If the Department is satisfied they have made efforts to rehire, no reduction in grant funds should occur. The exceptional circumstances clause in the grant agreement will allow for this.

If they do not intend to rehire,

1. the exceptional circumstance clause could be utilised or
2. the grant could be immediately reduced.

If there is exceptional circumstances, this should be the first option. If the Grantee makes no effort or ignores the grant condition, a reduction may be warranted.

s22 - out of scope

For reference, relevant Grant Agreement conditions

H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.

H1B.2 The requirement under Item H1B.1 does not apply in any circumstance which is exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of the proposed details of the change and justification.

s42



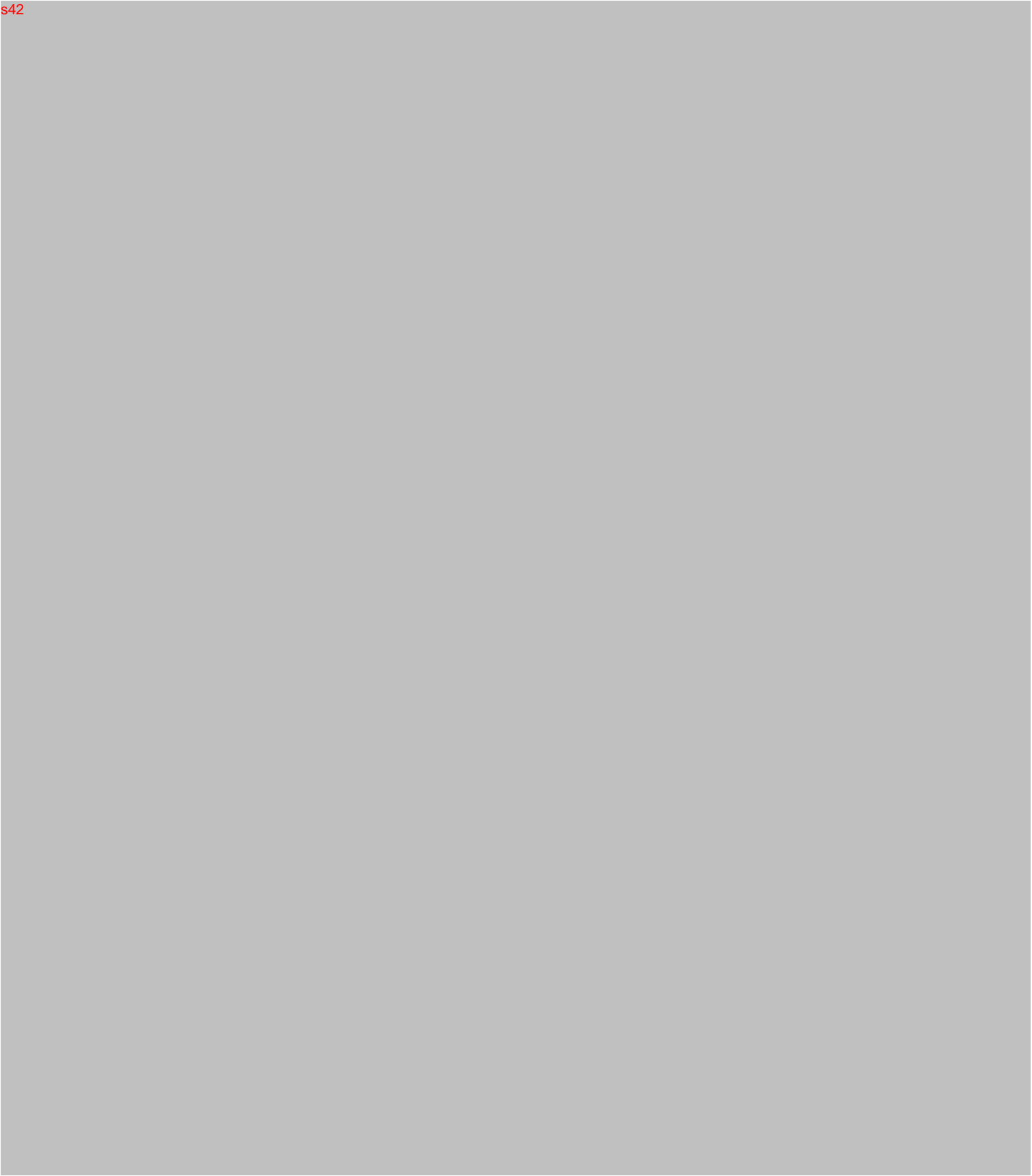


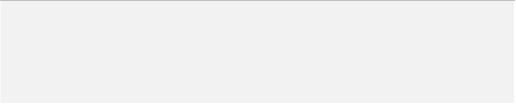
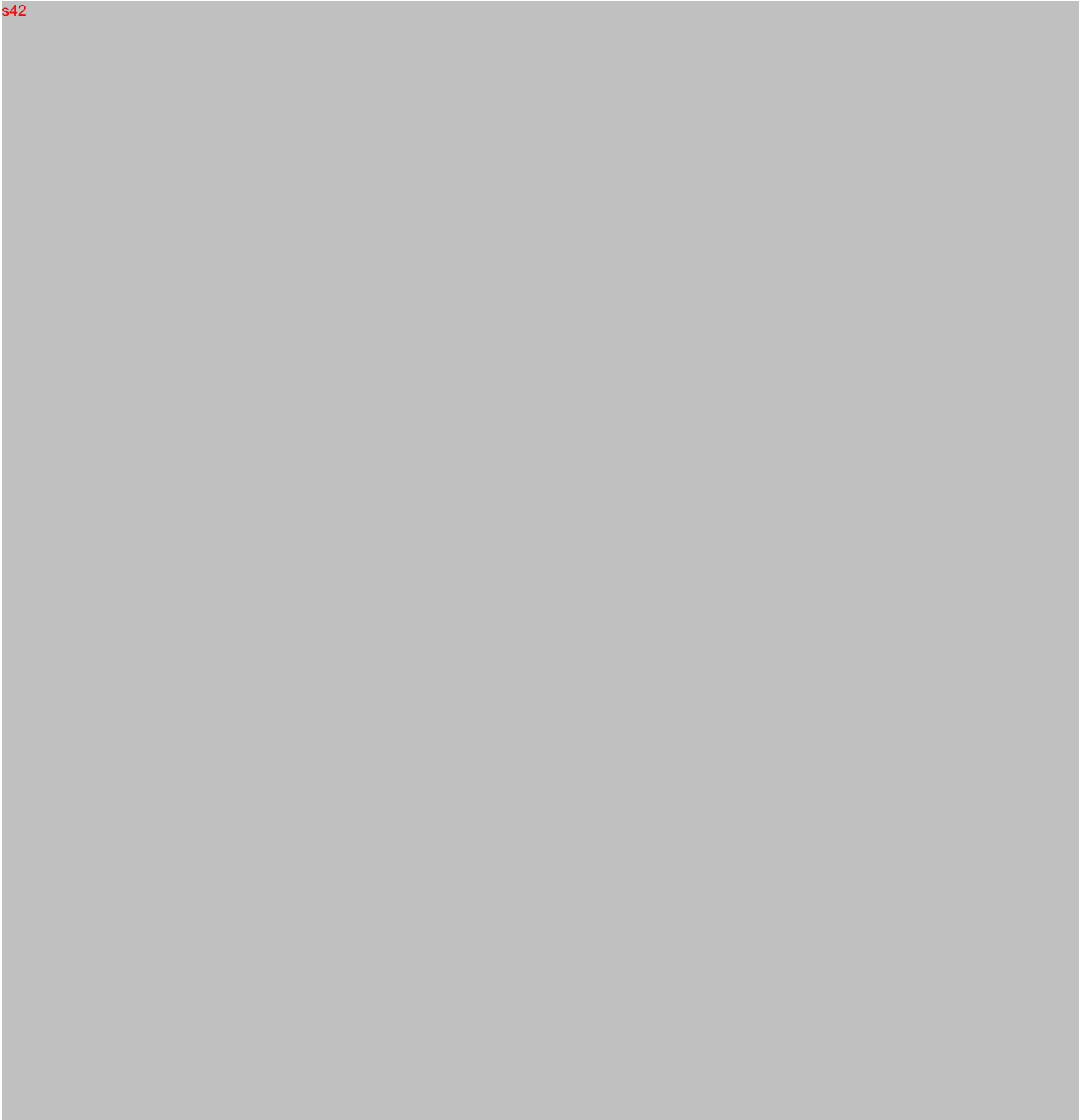


s42



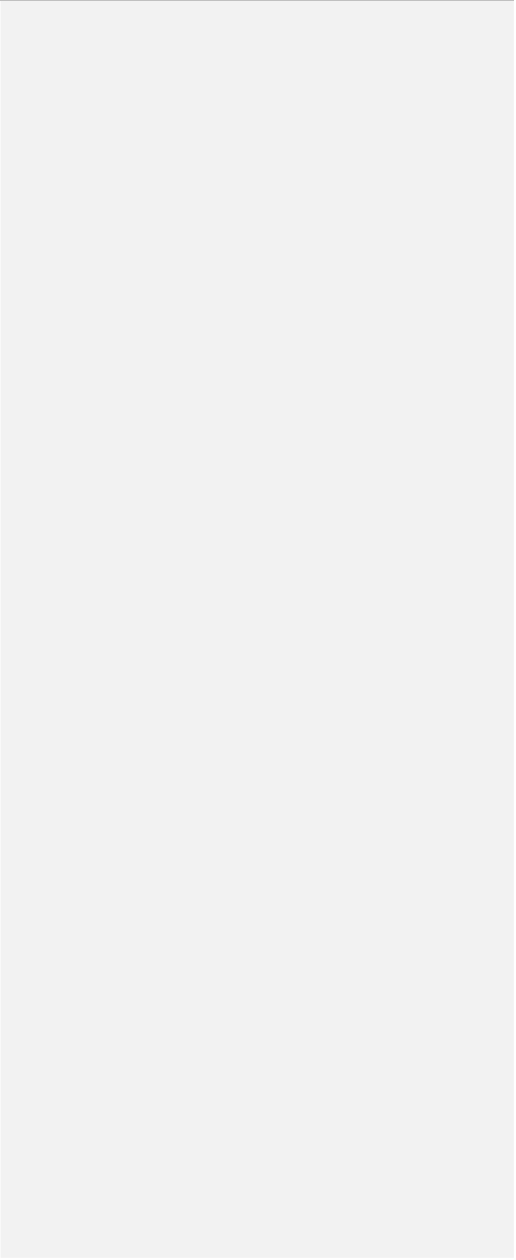
Three short vertical black lines are visible on the left margin of the page, located at approximately one-third, one-half, and three-quarters of the page height.



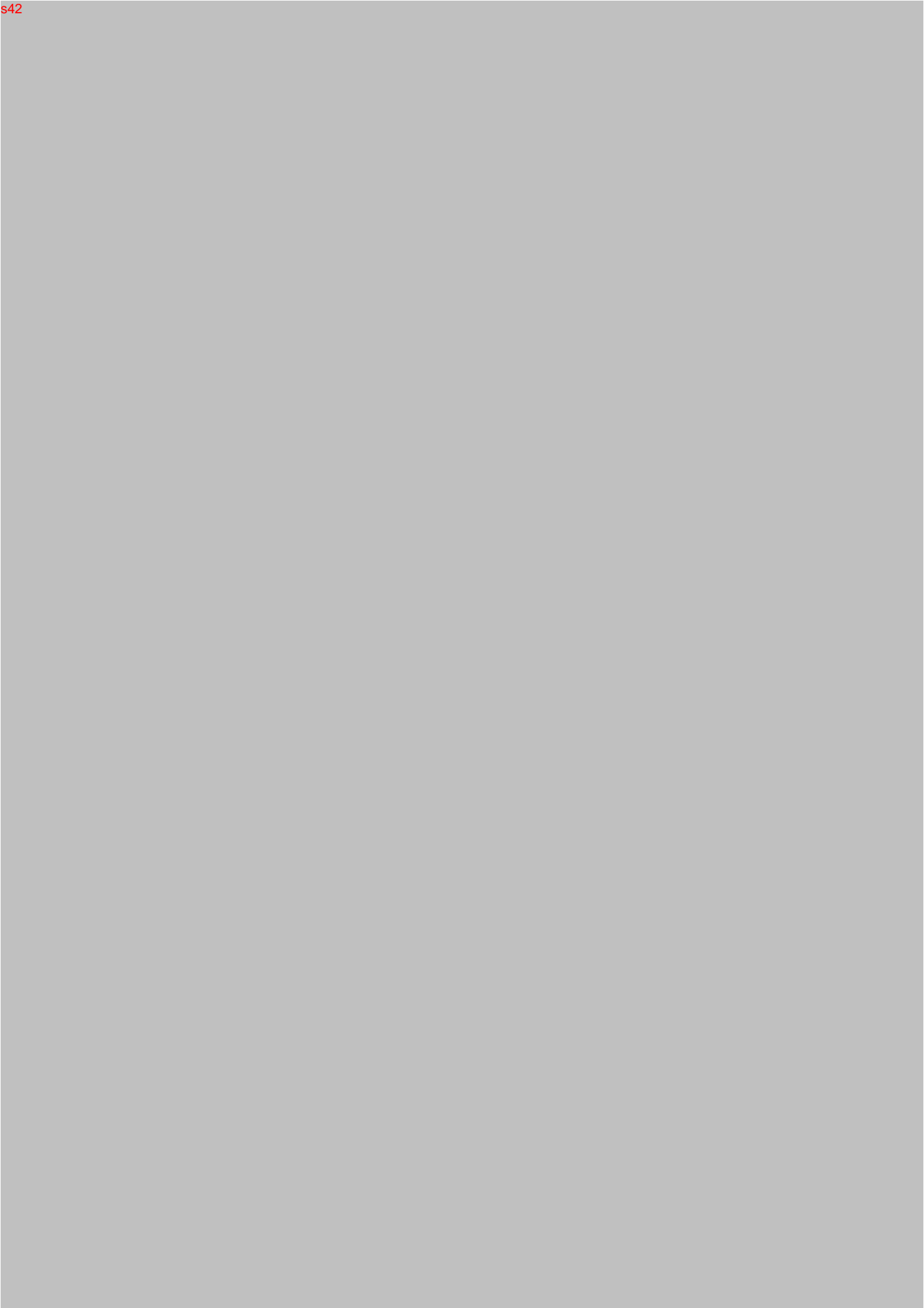








s42







File Note – PING Grant Activity

Grant Activities to consider

Issues that have arisen in grant activity and expenditure details, requiring consideration include whether transmitter equipment and broadcasting rights are covered by the grant. The majority of these issues appeared in the high value grants.

Transmitter Equipment

Grantees are proposing to spend large amounts on transmitter assets and equipment. It is unclear whether this spending directly links to public interest journalism.

Must consider whether this:

- Falls within accepted activity:
 - “purchase or lease of assets and equipment
 - the costs of acquiring technology to assist with production or distribution of content”
- Is excluded under:
 - “projects that will devolve grants to other bodies
 - site preparation activities which are not directly related to public interest journalism
 - routine operational expenses that are not directly related to the production of public interest journalism including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing, stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges”

We may consider accepting if they can show it directly links to public interest journalism.

s22 - out of scope



Summary

Resuming Suspended Mastheads

- Currently have seven publishers with suspended mastheads. Five have already returned to print.
- Mastheads must be returned to print before Interim Report in six months

s22 - out of scope



Extensions Granted

- Nine Entertainment Co – 24 July 2020
- Rural Press Pty Ltd – 24 July 2020
- Seven Queensland – 31 July 2020
- West Australian Newspapers – 31 July 2020

s22 - out of scope



s22 - out of scope



Application ID	Organisation Name	Masthead	Applicant State	Applicant Electorate	Grant Amount (FINAL)	Grant Agreement signed by Commonwealth	Purchase Order No.
PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited		QLD	Fairfax	\$1,869,701.76	22/09/2020	45136780

s22 - out of scope

s22 - out of scope



s22 - out of scope



Application	Organisation	Amendments Required	Resuming Mastheads	Part Funded
s22 - out of scope				
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD	Yes		
s22 - out of scope				
PING0046	Rural Press Pty Limited	Yes		
s22 - out of scope				

Notes	Agreed	GA Ready
s22 - out of scope		
to be decided	No	
s22 - out of scope		
to be decided	No	
s22 - out of scope		

GA Sent	GA Signed by Grantee	Paid

s22 - out of scope

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s22 - out of scope

Application	Organisation	Resuming Mastheads	Name of Mastheads Resumed	Date to be completed by	Notes
s22 - out of scope					

Application ID	Organisation Name	Issue	Reduction of Journalist/Mastheads
PING0046	Rural Press Pty Limited	Masthead Reduction	s47G
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD	Journalist Reduction	
PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited	Journalist Reduction	

s22 - out of scope

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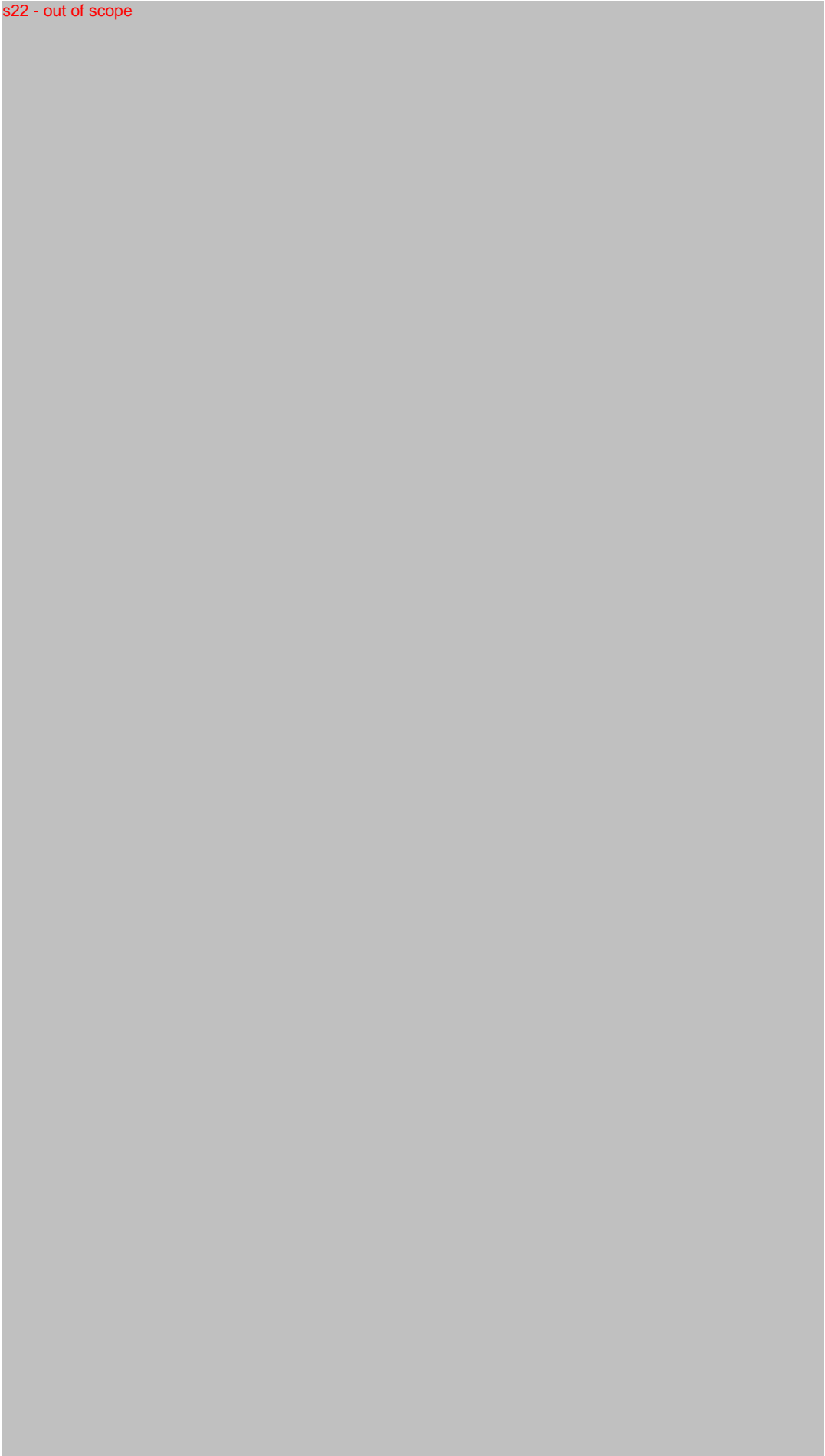
Additional Information	Reduction % of Journalists/ Revenue	Reduction of Grant
s47G		
s22 - out of scope		
	Total Reduction	\$1,651,376.62

Reduction of Grant %	Grant Amount (FINAL)	Revised Grant Amount
s47G		\$10,416,593.90
		\$4,034,188.60
		\$1,869,701.76

s22 - out of scope		

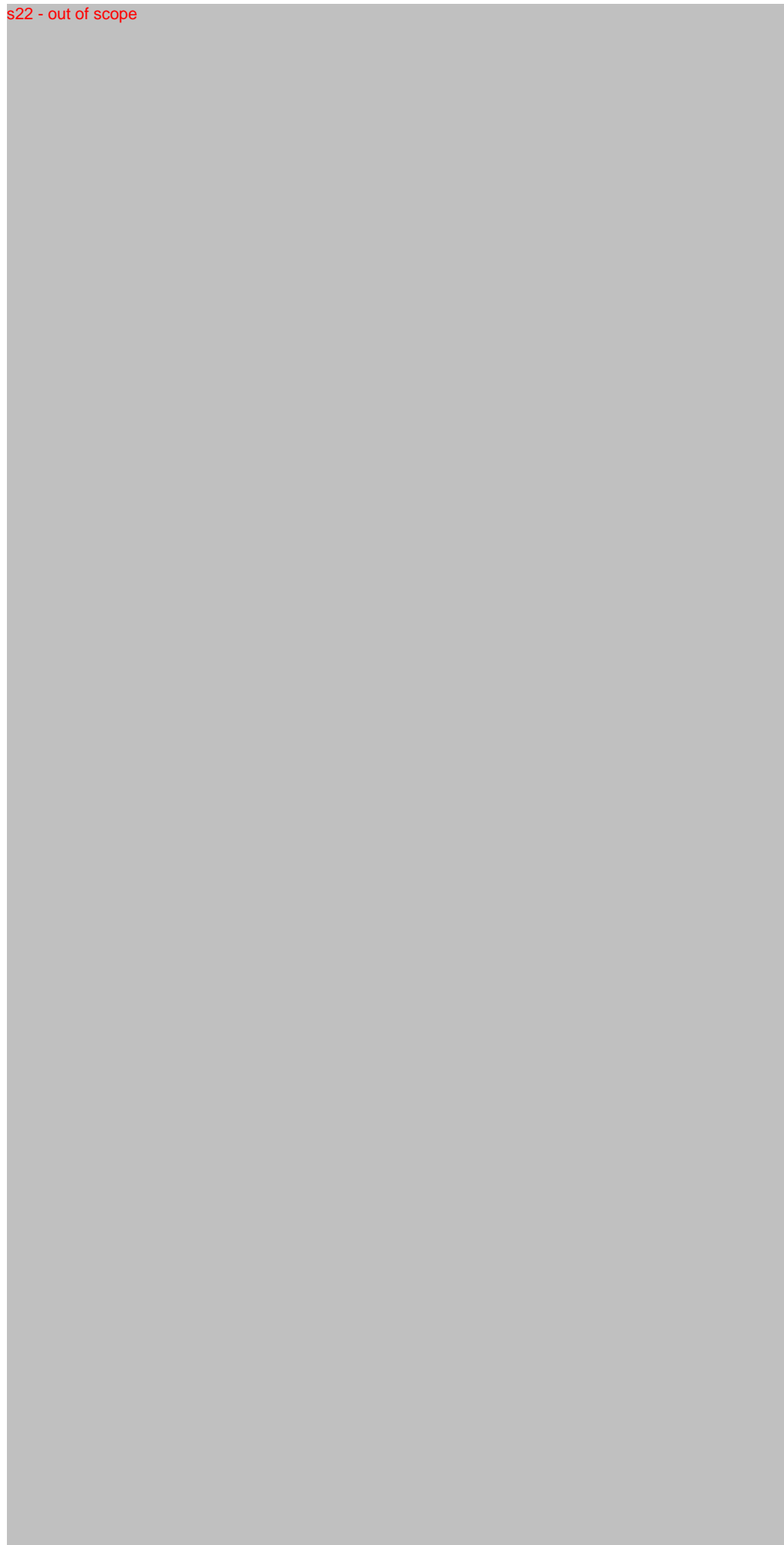
s22 - out of scope













3 February 2021

PING File Note - Journalist Reduction

Program objective

The objective of the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program is to maintain or increase the production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional areas during the grant period. PING funding is also being provided as part of a COVID-19 relief package for the media industry.

To support this objective, a series of conditions have been included in grant agreements that must be met by grantees (subject to stream pool):

- Maintain production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- Maintain the same level of journalist staff as at 1 February 2020;
- Maintain the same level of news bulletins as at 1 February 2020;
- Produce and distribute all of its mastheads (print and/or electronic form) that were in circulation (or online distribution) as at the day immediately before the execution of the Agreement
- Within 30 days from the execution of the Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and distribution of each of its mastheads in print form and online (where applicable) which had been cancelled at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediate before execution of the Agreement.

This approach is consistent with public statements made by the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts in relation to the PING Program and feedback provided by the Minister to the Department in his role as the decision-maker for the PING program.

In keeping with this approach it is proposed that where a grantee has not fully met the program objective of maintaining or increasing the production and distribution of public interest journalism in full, through maintaining the number of journalists employed or maintaining the print production/number of bulletins, then the Department will assess the non-compliance and determine the appropriate response or action to undertake.

The original file note regarding reductions of grant amounts dated 1 September 2020 is now historical as we enter into a new stage of the program where grant agreements are in place and the terms of these agreements must be adhered too.

Prior to settling grant amounts and signing agreements

For a reduction in production (number of journalists);

Prior to agreements being signed, a number of grantees have advised that they are proposing to reduce the number of journalists they employ.

In keeping with the number of journalists being used as the only measure of the production of public interest journalism the overall grant amount was reduced by the proportional reduction in journalists. For example, if a grantee employs 50 journalists and proposes to make 5 of these redundant (10 per cent), then the overall grant amount would be reduced by 10 per cent. This was undertaken prior to grant agreements being signed to minimise the need for grant reductions during the grant period.

In providing advice on this approach to a grantee, it was made clear that this does not apply to the specific persons employed, the locations they are employed at or the seniority of the role.

A news business may choose to change the location of the journalists to another regional location, may change the seniority of their staff or may farewell a particular journalist and hire someone new

and continue to meet this requirement so long as the total number of journalists employed stays at or above the specified level.

Staff included in the total journalist number also includes any journalist staff on paid or unpaid leave e.g. maternity or long service leave.

Consideration was also given to moderating this approach based on the proportional amount a grantee spends on the production of public interest journalism or the proportion of the costs are used to fund journalists salaries, however these would reflect a diminishment of the importance of this objective to the program and is not in keeping with the objective. An approach involving consideration of the particular salaries of the journalists being made redundant could also be contemplated, however this could be interpreted as then impacting on any grantee who changed the salaries of any journalists, and may therefore limit the flexibility that was sought to be enable by using only a count of the total number of journalists employed as the measure of the production of public interest journalism.

During Grant Period (After Grant Agreement has been signed)

In the event of resignation

As we head into reporting, we have established an approach on how to deal with reduction in journalist numbers when:

- 1. Journalists resign with an intention to rehire/no new staff immediately available**
- 2. Journalists resign and no intention to rehire**
- 3. Journalists are made redundant or terminated employment with no intention to rehire**

In all circumstances, there would be communication with grantees to gauge their situation, why the reductions have occurred and their plans in response to their circumstances. This could include;

- Reopening the Interim Report to allow them to explain their situation in writing in more detail
- Provide the grantee with the opportunity to respond to the Department's proposed course of action, initial views or final decision via email or phone (file note of calls to be retained)
- Setting up meetings via telephone to discuss the situation (file note of meeting to be retained)

The Department has the right under clause 8.2 of Schedule 1 of the Grant Agreement to withhold the Second Payment by written notice where certain conditions are met, and withholding payment is a way of ensuring that grant funds are being spent appropriately. The withholding payment of any future grant payment is not an automatic right; the exercise of that right requires the Departmental delegate to "reasonably believe" that the Grantee has not complied with the Agreement or is unable to undertake the activity i.e. the delegate needs to be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to hold the belief.

A reasonable belief could be based on the assertions contained, for example, in an Interim Report or notice by the Grantee under clause 3.1, but more may be required depending on the nature of the non-compliance. For instance,

- A failure to meet clause H1C.2 or H1C.3 could be readily ascertained as there was a time point for the particular action to be undertaken.
- On the other hand, there may be other types of non-compliance, such as rehiring arrangements for vacant journalism positions cannot be readily ascertained from a Report and requires further enquiries to be made of the Grantee's future actions (e.g. decision to rehire).

Any decision to withhold the Second Payment or to propose a variation to the grant agreement would consider how this non-compliance with the grant conditions impacts the grant activity and objective of the program. This may include whether the reduction in staff has reduced their public interest

journalism, whether that staff member was funded under the agreement and is part of their activity, and whether the reduction impacts the COVID-19 relief objective of the program.

Note, the Department cannot unilaterally vary the grant agreement (variations covered by Item E) and any communications relating to a proposed grant variation should be appropriately worded to avoid the Commonwealth inadvertently waiving rights associated with the particular instance of non-compliance.

Note: clause 3.3 of Schedule 1 does allow the Commonwealth, by notice, to advise the grantee of changes that are minor or of an administrative nature.

It is also open to the Department (or the Grantee itself) to initiate a proposal to vary the Agreement in accordance with Item E: both parties must have discussed and agreed on the outcome before the Department formally writes to the Grantee about the variation. This may be an appropriate course of action where the Grantee wishes to be relieved of certain obligations and is amenable to a reduction in the grant amount.

[Journalists are made redundant with no intention to rehire](#)

In relation to **3**. If the Grantee indicates that they have no intention to maintain the journalists as stated in the grant conditions, the Department would consider how this non-compliance with the grant conditions impacts the grant activity and objective of the program.

This may occur in situations where the Grantee has informed us either in correspondence or via reporting that their journalist staff number has reduced since 1 February 2020 as stated in Schedule 2 of their Grant Agreement, due to their decision to cut staff, terminate employment or make redundancies and they have no intention to return to the same journalist staffing levels.

As this is completely within the Grantee's control the Department could consider this to be an exceptional circumstance on a case-by-case basis where the grantee can justify in writing why their decision to cut staff is necessary for the survival of their business.

If the Department considers the circumstance is not an exceptional circumstance, further action may be considered, such as initiating a grant variation proposal to reflect the reduced new levels of journalism staff and a related reduction in the amount of grant or (as a last resort) repayment. The Grantee is not compelled to agree to any Item E variations initiated by the Department.

For instances where the Grantee terminates the employment of journalists with no intention to rehire there is no grant amount limit whereby grants less than that would cause no recovery or withholding action. Note, if the Department seeks to exercise any contractual rights under the Grant Agreement (for example, recouping funds) or to waive any rights, legal advice will be obtained in the first instance.

[Journalist Resignation](#)

In relation to **1. and 2.** The Department must consider that resignations are out of the Grantee's control. If resignations occur, there should be a discussion with the Grantee about their intentions to rehire.

If the Departmental delegate is satisfied that the exceptional circumstance clause H1B.2 applies, no further action or inquiries need to be undertaken.

If they intend to rehire and clause H1B.2 does not apply, they must be able to show reasonable efforts to fill the vacant position during the life of the program.

Reasonable efforts to rehire and fill the vacant position include;

- Job advertisements going beyond just the local area for journalists, cadets etc. seeking to fill the position immediately for at a minimum, the term of the agreement
- Current negotiations with a potential new journalist staff member

3 February 2021

- Moving a current staff member into a journalist staff position
- Undertaking a hiring process

If they are unable to find a new hire to fill the journalist staff position after reasonable efforts have been undertaken, the Grantee, should provide evidence of the efforts undertaken and indicate why they were not successful. For example, no applications were received for the position, applicants did not have the required skills etc.

If they do not intend to rehire,

1. and the Departmental delegate is satisfied that reasonable efforts have been made and the circumstance is exceptional (other than an exceptional circumstance covered by clause H1B.2), s/he could decide to exercise the Commonwealth's broad discretion and not undertake any further action (this decision should be documented);
2. in other cases, the Departmental delegate could choose to temporarily withhold some or all of the second payment by formal notice in accordance with clause 8 (which includes the issuance of a notice containing the reasons for any repayment and the steps the Grantee can take to address those reasons), until further discussions are made to ascertain the grantee's situation or the grantee rectifies the particular non-compliance.

If there withholding of some or part of the Second Payment occurs, once the grantee has satisfactory addressed the reasons for the Department's original withholding of any amount of the grant, the Commonwealth is required to pay the withheld amount (clause 8.4 of Schedule 1).

Note, for grants totalling under **\$100,000**, no recovery or withholding action would be undertaken as these organisations are much smaller operations servicing more regional areas with less capital to be able to put towards journalists. It is often hard to recruit journalists at these small publishers and penalising them for circumstances out of their control is not in line with the program's relief fund objectives. The Department would still enter into discussions with these grantees on their circumstances.

Organisations who received over \$100 000.00 in grant funds cover larger areas with more people willing to work as journalists in those organisations. Therefore withholding actions and ascertaining their actions to rehire would be appropriate.

Note, if the Department seeks to exercise any contractual rights under the Grant Agreement (for example, recouping funds) or to waive rights, legal advice will be obtained in the first instance.

Recouping Funds

Under section 9.1 of the PING Program Grant Guidelines the Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement. This must be done in accordance with legal advice, the grant agreement, grant guidelines, Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines and any other relevant processes.

If the Department seeks to exercise any contractual rights or waive rights under the Grant Agreement, legal advice will be obtained in the first instance.

For reference, relevant Grant Agreement conditions

H1B.1

The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.

H1B.2

The requirement under Item H1B.1 does not apply in any circumstance which is exceptional and the Grantee has provided the Commonwealth with prior written notice of the proposed details of the change and justification.

Schedule 1 Commonwealth General Grant Conditions

8. Payment of the Grant

8.1 The Commonwealth agrees to pay the Grant to the Grantee in accordance with the Grant Details.

8.2 The Commonwealth may by notice withhold payment of any amount of the Grant where it reasonably believes the Grantee has not complied with this Agreement or is unable to undertake the Activity.

8.3 A notice under clause 8.2 will contain the reasons for any payment being withheld and the steps the Grantee can take to address those reasons.

8.4 The Commonwealth will pay the withheld amount once the Grantee has satisfactorily addressed the reasons contained in a notice under clause 8.2.

10. Repayment

10.1 If any of the Grant has been spent other than in accordance with this Agreement or any amount of the Grant is additional to the requirements of the Activity, the Grantee agrees to repay that amount to the Commonwealth unless agreed otherwise.

10.2 The amount to be repaid under clause 10.1 may be deducted by the Commonwealth from subsequent payments of the Grant or amounts payable under another agreement between the Grantee and the Commonwealth.

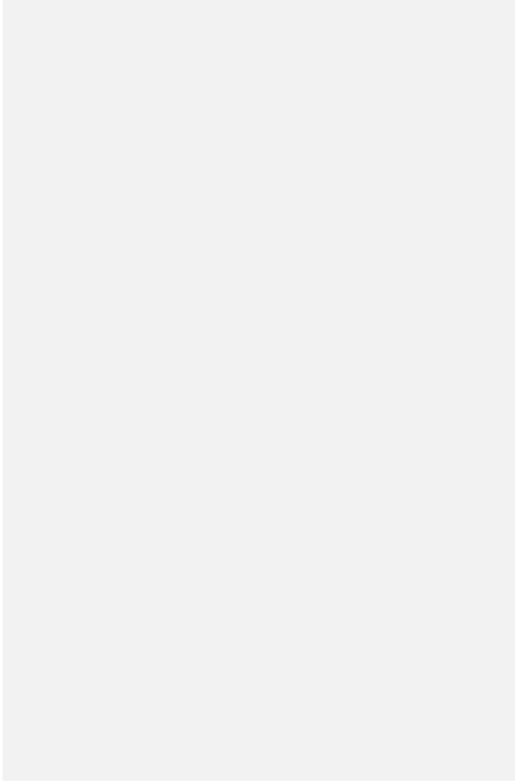
s47C











Reduction in Journalists										
Application ID	Organisation Name	Public interest journalism production and distribution costs	Public interest journalism labour costs	Total Journalism Employees (FT/PT/Casual)	Stream 1 Certified Revenue in 2018-19	Stream 1 Funds Available (FINAL)	Reduction Journalists	Reduction %	Reduction Grant	Revised Grant
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD	s47G								\$ 4,034,188.60
PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited									\$ 1,869,701.76

s22 - out of scope

Reduction in Journalists

Application ID	Organisation Name	Public interest journalism production and distribution costs	Public interest journalism labour costs	Total Journalism Employees (FT/PT/Casual)
PING0014	NINE ENTERTAINMENT CO. PTY LTD	s47G		
PING0054	Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited			

s22 - out of scope

Stream 1 Certified Revenue in 2018-19	Stream 1 Funds Available (FINAL)	Reduction Journalists	Reduction %	Reduction Grant	Revised Grant
s47G					\$ 4,034,188.60
					\$ 1,869,701.76
s22 - out of scope					

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Sunday, 19 July 2020 4:58 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING0046 - Next steps Grant agreement [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

This is right. In line with Minister's notation, they must bring them all back and in print to get the full amount. Otherwise we start reducing it.

Have we gone back to s47F

Regards
s47F

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 15 July 2020 8:09 AM
To: s47F @communications.gov.au>; s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: FW: PING0046 - Next steps Grant agreement [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

For info

For Official Use Only

s42

Kind regards

s47F

Assistant Director / Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F

@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F

Sent: Tuesday, 14 July 2020 10:08 AM

To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>

Subject: PING0046 - Next steps Grant agreement

Hi There,

I represent Rural Press Pty Ltd with our submission for the PING grant.

We are currently reviewing the Grant activity & expenditure application process.

One of the sections indicates that funding is conditional on bringing back mastheads that have been suspended due to COVID. We would like to understand the following ~

1. To get the full funding outlined, does it require that all Mastheads need to be operational ? Or is the grant proportional to the mastheads that are back in terms of revenue contribution ?
2. Does it require that suspended mastheads are brought back in print, can the resources be directed towards digital ?

Also, in relation to the work plan section, instead of listing each masthead, are we able to list 1 or 2 overarching deliverables and outcomes ? It is likely that each of our mastheads will have the same deliverable and outcome. Listing each may not be feasible.

Thank you

--

s47F



s47F

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s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2020 5:38 PM
To: s47F Makin, Mike; s47F
Subject: Rural Press Spreadsheet raw numbers snapshot [DLM=Sensitive:Legal]

Have done a quick assessment of the Rural Press spreadsheet provided today and key stats below:

47G

s47F

Assistant Director / Media Markets / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F

@communications.gov.au

s47F

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Sensitive: Legal

s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Monday, 3 August 2020 1:12 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Rural Press submission [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Rural Press publications.docx; PING publications summary (Rural Press).xlsx

Hi s47F

Thank you for sending through the spreadsheet.

We have reviewed the spreadsheet and, as a first step, can we please confirm our understanding of the information that you have provided?

Please see the table and spreadsheet attached, which outlines the following:

Category	Number	Notes
----------	--------	-------

47G

Can you please review and make changes to the totals in the attached document as appropriate? The attached spreadsheet shows which publications were included in the totals.

Regards

s47F

Director / Media Markets / New and Media Industry
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F

[@communications.gov.au](mailto:s47F@communications.gov.au)

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2020 1:02 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F
Subject: Rural Press submission

Good Afternoon,

Confirming that Rural Press Pty Ltd has now completed the PING submission.

As per instructions, please find attached further details of publications that have been re-opened or are coming into production. This also includes a work plan and key deliverables. As discussed, this detail was not included in the portal submission.

The funding will be used to pay for a % of journalist wages and salaries across these mastheads as indicated. We have allocated this same % across all mastheads based on the funding allocation and salaries and wages of the included journalists.

Please note ~

- The number of journalists submitted on the portal application INCLUDE publications currently in suspension. s47G
- The definition of "Journalist" - The primary role of these news-gathering employees is to investigate/collect, write and present information as a public interest news story. By definition, this excludes roles such as editor, editorial administration, sport journalist, photographer, production support and advertising features journalist.

As part of the next phase of the grant process, we will be forwarding some questions in relation to interest, tax and insurance implications of grant acceptance.

Thank you

Regards

--

s47F

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53 Not suspended			85 publications suspended			40 publications returned / will be returned excl Port Express				45 publications (not being returned inc Port express)							
Publication		Base Frequency	Stood down	Publication		Base Frequency	Stood down	Publication		Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back as of 29 June	Publication		Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back as of 29 June
Canberra Times	2	D	N	Queanbeyan Age/Canberra Chronicle	1	W (free)	Y	Southern Highlands News	7	Tri-W	Y	Y	Queanbeyan Age/Canberra Chronicle	1	W (free)	Y	N
Border Mail Albury	3	D	N	Southern Highlands News	7	Tri-W	Y	Parkes Champion Post	9	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Highlands Post	8	(free) W	Y	N
Oberon Review	4	W (Paid)	N	Highlands Post	8	(free) W	Y	Forbes Adocate	12	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Yass Tribune	23	Bi-W	Y	N
Western Times	5	W (Free)	N	Parkes Champion Post	9	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Boorowa News	13	W (paid)	Y	Y	Crookwell Gazette	24	Bi-W	Y	N
Western Advocate Bathurst	6	D (Paid)	N	Forbes Adocate	12	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Canowindra News	14	W (paid)	Y	Y	Braidwood Times	25	W	Y	N
Cowra Guardian	10	Bi-W (paid)	N	Boorowa News	13	W (paid)	Y	Eden Magnet	21	W	Y	Y	Post Weekly	27	(free) W	Y	N
Grenfell Record	11	Bi-W (paid)	N	Canowindra News	14	W (paid)	Y	Goulburn Post	22	Tri-W	Y	Y	Dungog Chronicle	28	W (paid)	Y	N
Young Witness	15	Bi-W (paid)	N	Eden Magnet	21	W	Y	Town & Country	26	(free) W	Y	Y	Advertiser / Lake Times	29	(free) W	Y	N
Mailbox Shopper	16	(free) W	N	Goulburn Post	22	Tri-W	Y	Maitland Mercury	39	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	Kiama Independent	30	W	Y	N
Dubbo Daily Liberal	17	D	N	Yass Tribune	23	Bi-W	Y	The Area News	40	Tri-W	Y	Y	Lower Hunter Star	38	W (free)	Y	N
Bombala Times	18	W	N	Crookwell Gazette	24	Bi-W	Y	Cootamundra Herald	42	Bi-W	Y	Y	Harden Murrumburrah Express	43	W	Y	N
Merimbula News Weekly	19	W	N	Braidwood Times	25	W	Y	Nambucca Guardian	48	W (paid)	Y	Y	The Observer	44	W	Y	N
Bega District News	20	Bi-W	N	Town & Country	26	(free) W	Y	Armidale Express	53	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Southern Cross Junee	45	W	Y	N
Illawarra Mercury	31	D	N	Post Weekly	27	(free) W	Y	Glen Innes Examiner	57	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Bellingen Courier Sun	49	W (free)	Y	N
Macleay Argus	32	Bi-W (paid)	N	Dungog Chronicle	28	W (paid)	Y	Tenterfield Star	58	Weekly	Y	Y	Armidale Express Extra	50	(free) W	Y	N
Macleay Valley Happenings	33	W	N	Advertiser / Lake Times	29	(free) W	Y	Inverell Times	59	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Guyra News	51	W (paid)	Y	N
Mid Coast Observer	34	W (free)	N	Kiama Independent	30	W	Y	Moree Champion	60	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Walcha News	52	W (paid)	Y	N
Hibiscus Happenings	35	W	N	Lower Hunter Star	38	W (free)	Y	Goondiwindi Argus	61	Weekly	Y	Y	Newcastle Star	54	(free) W	Y	N
Port Stephens Examiner	36	W (free)	N	Maitland Mercury	39	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Namoi Valley Independent	68	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Lakes Mail	55	W (free)	Y	N
Town & Country Hunter	37	F (free)	N	The Area News	40	Tri-W	Y	Port Macquarie News	71	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	Border News	62	W	Y	N
The Irrigator	41	Bi-W	N	Cootamundra Herald	42	Bi-W	Y	Camden Haven Courier	72	W (free)	Y	Y	Country Leader	66	W (free)	Y	N
Lithgow Mercury	46	Bi-W (paid)	N	Harden Murrumburrah Express	43	W	Y	Port Express	73	(free) W	Y	Y	North West Magazine	67	W (free)	Y	N
Mudgee Guardian	47	Bi-W (paid)	N	The Observer	44	W	Y	Eurobodalla Indep	80	(free) W	Y	Y	Wauchope Gazette	74	W	Y	N
Newcastle Herald	56	D (paid)	N	Southern Cross Junee	45	W	Y	Great Lakes Advocate	82	W (paid)	Y	Y	Moruya Examiner	79	W	Y	N
Central Western Daily	63	D	N	Nambucca Guardian	48	W (paid)	Y	Gloucester Advocate	83	W (paid)	Y	Y	Manning Great lakes Extra	85	W	Y	N
Blayney Chronicle	64	W (paid)	N	Bellingen Courier Sun	49	W (free)	Y	Wingham Chronicle	84	W (paid)	Y	Y	Hunter Valley News	89	W (free)	Y	N
Mid State Observer	65	(free) W	N	Armidale Express Extra	50	(free) W	Y	Muswellbrook Chronicle	87	W (paid)	Y	Y	Scone Advocate	90	W (paid)	Y	N
Northern Daily Leader Tamworth	69	D	N	Guyra News	51	W (paid)	Y	Cessnock Advertiser	88	W (free)	Y	Y	Eastern Riverina Chronicle	93	W	Y	N
Tamworth Times	70	(free) W	N	Walcha News	52	W (paid)	Y	Singleton Argus	91	W (paid)	Y	Y	Riverina Leader	94	(free) W	Y	N
Bay Post	75	Bi-W	N	Armidale Express	53	Bi-W (paid)	Y	North West Star	102	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	Wellington Times	96	W (paid)	Y	N
South Coast Register	76	Bi-W	N	Newcastle Star	54	(free) W	Y	Murray Valley Standard	105	Bi-W	Y	Y	Nyngan Observer	97	W (paid)	Y	N
Milton Ulladulla Times	77	W	N	Lakes Mail	55	W (free)	Y	Naracoorte Herald	106	W	Y	Y	Narromine News	98	W (paid)	Y	N
Narooma News	78	W	N	Glen Innes Examiner	57	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Border Chronicle	108	W	Y	Y	On the Coast	110	M - free	Y	N
Shoalhaven Nowra News	81	(free) W	N	Tenterfield Star	58	Weekly	Y	Coastal Leader	109	W	Y	Y	Flinders News	114	W	Y	N
Manning River Times	86	Bi-W (paid)	N	Inverell Times	59	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Whyalla News	111	W	Y	Y	Barossa & Light Herald	115	W	Y	N
The Rural	92	W	N	Moree Champion	60	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Port Augusta Transcontinental	112	W	Y	Y	Northern Argus	116	W	Y	N
Wagga Daily Advertiser	95	D	N	Goondiwindi Argus	61	Weekly	Y	Port Pirie Recorder	113	W	Y	Y	West Coast Sentinel	118	W	Y	N
Western Magazine	99	(free) W	N	Border News	62	W	Y	The Wimmera Mail Times	125	Tri-W	Y	Y	EP Tribune	119	W	Y	N
Jimboomba Times	100	W (free)	N	Country Leader	66	W (free)	Y	The Ararat Advertiser	126	Bi-W	Y	Y	Hepburn Shire Advocate	122	W	Y	N
Beaudesert Times	101	W (paid)	N	North West Magazine	67	W (free)	Y	The Stawell Times News	127	Bi-W	Y	Y	Bunbury Mail	134	W	Y	N
Redland City Bulletin	103	(free) W	N	Namoi Valley Independent	68	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Moyne Gazette	129	W	Y	Y	Esperance Express	135	Bi-W	Y	N
Victor Harbor Times	104	W	N	Port Macquarie News	71	Tri-W (paid)	Y						Avon Valley & Wheatbelt Advocate	136	W	Y	N
The Islander	107	W	N	Camden Haven Courier	72	W (free)	Y						Collie Mail	137	W	Y	N
Port Lincoln Times	117	Bi-W	N	Port Express	73	(free) W	Y						Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail	138	M	Y	N
Launceston Examiner	120	D	N	Wauchope Gazette	74	W	Y										
Burnie Advocate	121	D	N	Moruya Examiner	79	W	Y										
Ballarat Courier	123	D	N	Eurobodalla Indep	80	(free) W	Y										
Bendigo Advertiser	124	D	N	Great Lakes Advocate	82	W (paid)	Y										
Warrnambool Standard	128	D	N	Gloucester Advocate	83	W (paid)	Y										
Augusta - Margaret River Mail	130	W	N	Wingham Chronicle	84	W (paid)	Y										
Busselton-Dunsborough Mail	131	W	N	Manning Great lakes Extra	85	W	Y										
Mandurah Mail	132	W	N	Muswellbrook Chronicle	87	W (paid)	Y										
Katherine Times	133	W	N	Cessnock Advertiser	88	W (free)	Y										
				Hunter Valley News	89	W (free)	Y										
				Scone Advocate	90	W (paid)	Y										
				Singleton Argus	91	W (paid)	Y										
				Eastern Riverina Chronicle	93	W	Y										
				Riverina Leader	94	(free) W	Y										
				Wellington Times	96	W (paid)	Y										
				Nyngan Observer	97	W (paid)	Y										

Narromine News	98	W (paid)	Y
North West Star	102	Tri-W (paid)	Y
Murray Valley Standard	105	Bi-W	Y
Naracoorte Herald	106	W	Y
Border Chronicle	108	W	Y
Coastal Leader	109	W	Y
On the Coast	110	M - free	Y
Whyalla News	111	W	Y
Port Augusta Transcontinental	112	W	Y
Port Pirie Recorder	113	W	Y
Flinders News	114	W	Y
Barossa & Light Herald	115	W	Y
Northern Argus	116	W	Y
West Coast Sentinel	118	W	Y
EP Tribune	119	W	Y
Hepburn Shire Advocate	122	W	Y
The Wimmera Mail Times	125	Tri-W	Y
The Ararat Advertiser	126	Bi-W	Y
The Stawell Times News	127	Bi-W	Y
Moyne Gazette	129	W	Y
Bunbury Mail	134	W	Y
Esperance Express	135	Bi-W	Y
Avon Valley & Wheatbelt Advocate	136	W	Y
Collie Mail	137	W	Y
Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail	138	M	Y

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 24 August 2020 12:22 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: FW: Copy of PING publications summary (Rural Press 11082020).xlsx
 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: Copy of PING publications summary (Rural Press 17082020).xlsx

Hi Mike,

FYI. Please see ACM 'affected mastheads' – second tab.

This is our interpretation of information they provided in the first tab. It would appear that 63 mastheads will be affected – either not returning, going digital only or less frequency. This has been split into the 3 groups as we may treat them differently when reducing the grant offer.

I will send a version of the second tab to s47F to confirm our understanding to inform the next round of discussions. We had done this before but ACM has since updated their approach to some mastheads.

As mentioned, you may wish to raise with s47F that it's clear that ACM will not be returning all mastheads and their grant amount is likely to be reduced.

Regards

s47F

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 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNCLASSIFIED

Phase 3 - Publications stood down and to be stood down 17/08/2020							
Publication	No.	Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back	Comment	2018/19 Revenue	Adjustment (frequency / Digital only)
Queanbeyan Age/Canberra Chronicle	1	W (free)	Y	N			
Highlands Post	8	(free) W	Y	N			
Bombala Times	18	(free) W	Y	N			
Braidwood Times	25	W	Y	N			
Town & Country	26	(free) W	Y	N			
Post Weekly	27	(free) W	Y	N			
Advertiser / Lake Times	29	(free) W	Y	N			
Kiama Independent	30	W	Y	N			
Lower Hunter Star	38	W (free)	Y	N			
Harden Murrumburrah Express	43	W	Y	N			
The Observer	44	W	Y	N			
Southern Cross Junee	45	W	Y	N			
Nambucca Guardian	48	W	Y	N			
Armidale Express Extra	50	(free) W	Y	N			
Guyra News	51	W (paid)	Y	N			
Walcha News	52	W (paid)	Y	N			
Newcastle Star	54	(free) W	Y	N			
Lakes Mail	55	W (free)	Y	N			
Border News	62	W	Y	N			
North West Magazine	67	W (free)	Y	N			
Port Express	73	(free) W	Y	N			
Wauchope Gazette	74	W	Y	N			
Moruya Examiner	79	W	Y	N			
Eurobodalla Indep	80	(free) W	Y	N			
Manning Great lakes Extra	85	W	Y	N			
Muswellbrook Chronicle	87	W (paid)	Y	N			
Hunter Valley News	89	W (free)	Y	N			
Scone Advocate	90	W (paid)	Y	N			
Eastern Riverina Chronicle	93	W	Y	N			
Riverina Leader	94	(free) W	Y	N			
Wellington Times	96	W (paid)	Y	N			
Narromine News	98	W (paid)	Y	N	TBC		
Coastal Leader	109	W	Y	N			
On the Coast	110	M - free	Y	N			
Flinders News	114	W	Y	N			
Barossa & Light Herald	115	W	Y	N			
Northern Argus	116	W	Y	N			
West Coast Sentinel	118	W	Y	N			
EP Tribune	119	W	Y	N			
Hepburn Shire Advocate	122	W	Y	N			
Esperance Express	135	Bi-W	Y	N			
Avon Valley & Wheatbelt Advocate	136	W	Y	N			
Collie Mail	137	W	Y	N			
Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail	138	M	Y	N			
Total not returning	44						
Reduced Frequency							
Publication	No.	Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back	Comment		
Southern Highlands News	7	Tri-W	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week		

Overall Table	
Total Eligible Publications	138
Not suspended	52
Suspended	86
Return in full	23
Not coming back	44
Reduced Frequency	7
Digital Only	12
Total Affected Publications	63

Goulburn Post	22	Tri-W	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week		
Maitland Mercury	39	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	Weekly		
Glen Innes Examiner	57	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week		
Inverell Times	59	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week		
Moree Champion	60	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week		
Port Macquarie News	71	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week		
Total reduced frequency	7						
Returning - Digital Only							
Publication	No.	Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back	Comment		
Yass Tribune	23	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Crookwell Gazette	24	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Dungog Chronicle	28	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Bellingen Courier Sun	49	W (free)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Nyngan Observer	97	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back *		
Bunbury Mail	134	W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Cootamundra Herald	109	W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Armidale Express	42	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Goondiwindi Argus	48	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Namoi Valley Independent	53	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
North West Star	61	Weekly	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Wingham Chronicle	68	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back		
Total digital only	12						

*may come back

TOTAL AFFECTED PUBLICATIONS 63

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 27 August 2020 12:28 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: Rural Press Adjustment - Suspended Mastheads [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Revised Mastheads Summary - (Rural Press 17082020).xlsx

Hi Mike,

Based on Rural Press initial revenue figures for suspended mastheads, their grant offer amount would reduce from s47G.

I will confirm with s47F that the revenue figures include both national and local advertising. I will also ask for a reduction in journalists from 1 Feb. As per the file note, the greater of the two reductions will be applied. Rural Press recorded s47G in their application form.

Happy to discuss.

Regards

s47F

s47G

s47F

Director / Media Markets / New and Media Industry
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

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Phase 3 - Publications stood down and to be stood down 17/08/2020					
Publication	No.	Base	Stood	Back or coming	Comment
Queanbeyan Age/Canberra Chronicle	1	W (free)	Y	N	
Highlands Post	8	(free) W	Y	N	
Bombala Times	18	(free) W	Y	N	
Braidwood Times	25	W	Y	N	
Town & Country	26	(free) W	Y	N	
Post Weekly	27	(free) W	Y	N	
Advertiser / Lake Times	29	(free) W	Y	N	
Kiama Independent	30	W	Y	N	
Lower Hunter Star	38	W (free)	Y	N	
Harden Murrumburrah Express	43	W	Y	N	
The Observer	44	W	Y	N	
Southern Cross Junee	45	W	Y	N	
Armidale Express Extra	50	(free) W	Y	N	
Guyra News	51	W (paid)	Y	N	
Walcha News	52	W (paid)	Y	N	
Newcastle Star	54	(free) W	Y	N	
Lakes Mail	55	W (free)	Y	N	
Border News	62	W	Y	N	
North West Magazine	67	W (free)	Y	N	
Port Express	73	(free) W	Y	N	
Wauchope Gazette	74	W	Y	N	
Moruya Examiner	79	W	Y	N	
Eurobodalla Indep	80	(free) W	Y	N	
Manning Great lakes Extra	85	W	Y	N	
Muswellbrook Chronicle	87	W (paid)	Y	N	
Hunter Valley News	89	W (free)	Y	N	
Scone Advocate	90	W (paid)	Y	N	
Eastern Riverina Chronicle	93	W	Y	N	
Riverina Leader	94	(free) W	Y	N	
Wellington Times	96	W (paid)	Y	N	
Narromine News	98	W (paid)	Y	N	TBC
Coastal Leader	109	W	Y	N	
On the Coast	110	M - free	Y	N	
Flinders News	114	W	Y	N	
Barossa & Light Herald	115	W	Y	N	
Northern Argus	116	W	Y	N	
West Coast Sentinel	118	W	Y	N	
EP Tribune	119	W	Y	N	
Hepburn Shire Advocate	122	W	Y	N	
Esperance Express	135	Bi-W	Y	N	
Avon Valley & Wheatbelt Advocate	136	W	Y	N	
Collie Mail	137	W	Y	N	
Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail	138	M	Y	N	nc in Collie (mthly wrap
Total not returning	43				
Reduced Frequency					
Publication	No.	Base Frequency	Stood down	Back or coming back	Comment
Southern Highlands News	7	Tri-W	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week
Goulburn Post	22	Tri-W	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week
Maitland Mercury	39	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	Weekly
Glen Innes Examiner	57	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week
Inverell Times	59	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week
Moree Champion	60	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	1 fewer editions/week
Port Macquarie News	71	Tri-W (paid)	Y	Y	2 fewer editions/week
Total reduced frequency	7				
Returning - Digital Only					
Publication	No.	Base	Stood	Back or coming	Comment
Yass Tribune	23	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Crookwell Gazette	24	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Dungog Chronicle	28	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Bellingen Courier Sun	49	W (free)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back

s47G

Overall Table	
Total Eligible Publications	138
Not suspended	52
Suspended	86
Return in full	23
Not coming back	43
Reduced Frequency	7
Digital Only	13
Total Affected Publications	63

s47G

Nyngan Observer	97	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back *
Bunbury Mail	134	W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Cootamundra Herald	109	W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Armidale Express	42	Bi-W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Goondiwindi Argus	48	W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Nambucca Guardian	48	W	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Namoi Valley Independent	53	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
North West Star	61	Weekly	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Wingham Chronicle	68	Bi-W (paid)	Y	Y	Digital Comes back
Total digital only	13				

s47G

TOTAL AFFECTED PUBLICATIONS 63

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 3:09 PM
To: Makin, Mike
Cc: s47F
Subject: FW: Rural Press Adjustment - Suspended Mastheads [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike – for consideration.

We have confirmed with s47F (Rural Press) that the revenue figures at the link include both national and local sources.

Rural Press Affected Mastheads (Revenue reduction): <http://ims.dept.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx?uri=6215444&openUri=6284796>

Regarding journalists, the revised figure of s47G reflects the definition of *journalist staff* included in the Grant Agreement. s47F has confirmed that s47G. The other impacted staff will be used elsewhere in the organisation.

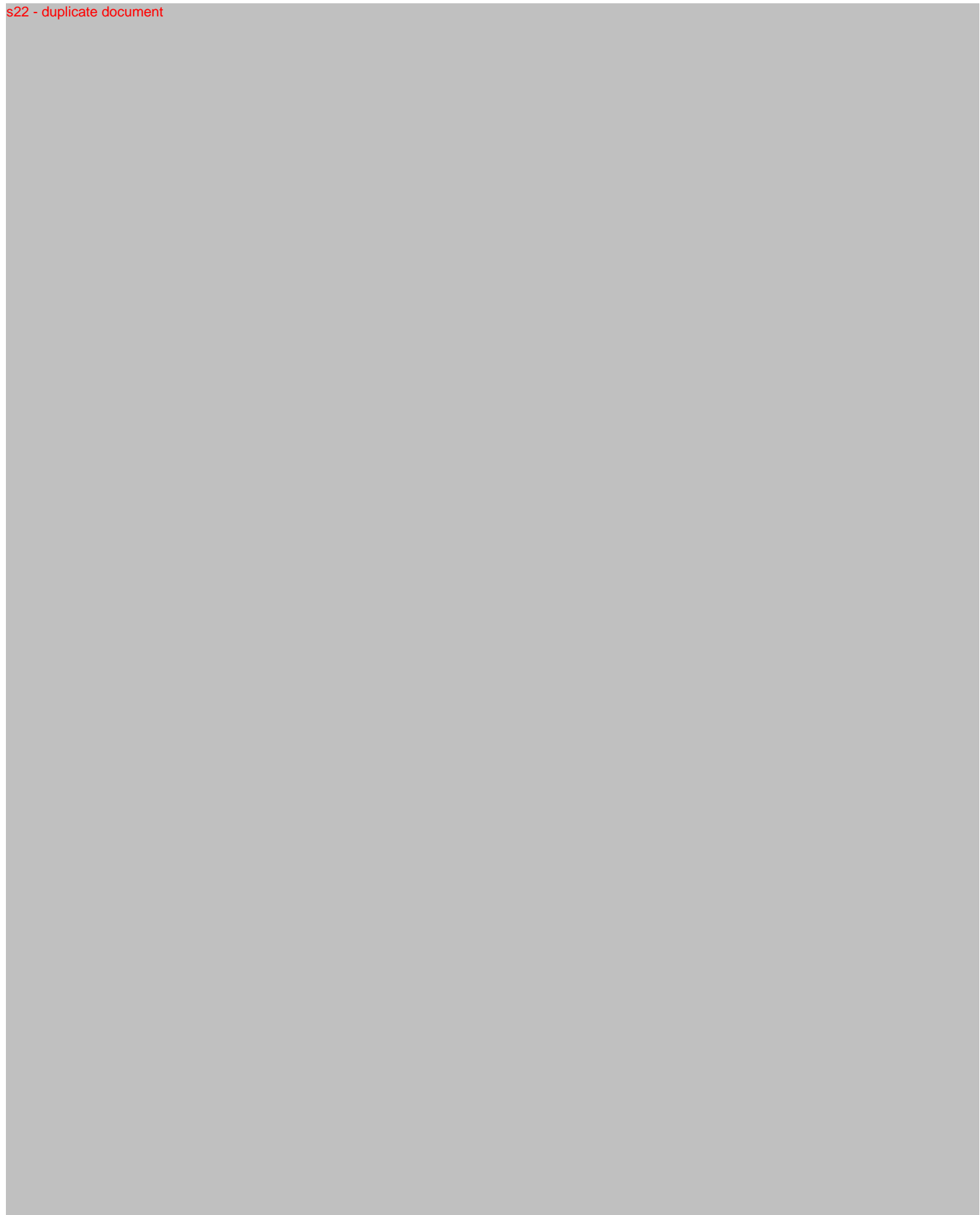
As per the file note, the bigger reduction of the two would be based on revenue figures of impacted mastheads. As per the link and in the table below, the grant offer would be revised to \$10,461,432.76, s47G

Regards

s47F

s47G

s22 - duplicate document



s47F

From: Makin, Mike
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2020 1:51 PM
To: s47F
Cc: s47F
Subject: RE: PING Amended Grant Offer [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Thanks s47F – few comments to consider in red in the below. Happy to discuss.

For Official Use Only

From: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 September 2020 1:38 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au>; s47F @communications.gov.au>; s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: FW: PING Amended Grant Offer [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike,

This is the draft email we will send out to grantees informing them of their revised grant amounts.

Example is to Nine. Does this capture the elements that s47F wanted to cover?

Regards

s47F

For Official Use Only

s47C

Please advise if you accept this amended grant amount. If agreed, the Department will release your Grant Activity and Expenditure Form for you to revise to reflect the amended grant amount. Following receipt of this revised form, the Department will provide you a Grant Agreement for signature.

If you have any further queries please contact us at the PING Program (PingProgram@communications.gov.au) or by phone on 02 6271 1142.

Regards

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

For Official Use Only

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 14 September 2020 3:45 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: Rural Press submission [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: Mastheads Summary - (Rural Press 17082020).xlsx **Attachment out of scope (s22) - duplicate document.**

For Official Use Only

From: Ping Program
Sent: Wednesday, 26 August 2020 1:38 PM
To: Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au; s47F @communications.gov.au; s47F @communications.gov.au
Subject: FW: Rural Press submission [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Mike

As discussed, please see attached. This has now been confirmed by s47F /ACM. s47F affected mastheads to differing degrees.

He did mention some of the s47F may still come back but they simply just don't know. However, the ACM board is keen to wrap this process up.

I did reiterate that mastheads not coming back will reduce the grant offer, potentially based on revenue but nothing has been confirmed.

In a discussion with them, we could put to them:

- Give us your definite outs / reduced forms and associated revenue figures. This will reduce your grant offer which we will come back to you.
- Include the 'strong' maybes, but if they don't come back, grant money (and the six mth 10% payment) will need to be proportionally returned / forfeited.

Regards

s47F

For Official Use Only

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 25 August 2020 11:44 AM
To: Ping Program PingProgram@communications.gov.au
Subject: Re: Rural Press submission [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

We have now aligned, see attached as final list.

Let me know the next steps.

Thank you

On Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 2:20 PM s47F wrote:

Thank you s47F

I will get back to you shortly.

On Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 1:11 PM Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au> wrote:

Hi s47F

Thank you again for providing an updated spreadsheet of Rural Press mastheads and their future.

Please see the attached spreadsheet that we have put together based on your information of 17/8/2020. Can you please review and inform us as to whether this is an accurate account of the future of Rural Press mastheads? Note we have divided the affected mastheads into 3 groups – not returning, returning as digital only, and returning with less frequency. Absolutely fine with you putting in any comments or changes in the spreadsheet.

As Mike mentioned at our last discussion, returning suspended mastheads to operation and to print is a condition of the PING grant agreement, and reductions will impact the final grant offer (note the methodology is still to be determined).

Please note there will be opportunities to discuss the impacts on the grant amount before any final decisions are made. At this stage, we just want to make sure we have a shared understanding to inform these next lot of discussions.

Regards

s47F

Director / Media Markets / New and Media Industry

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

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GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

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For Official Use Only

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 19 August 2020 11:43 AM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Rural Press submission [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

Hope you are well.

Are there any updates as to next steps?

On Tue, Aug 11, 2020 at 11:22 AM s47F wrote:

Hi s47F

Sorry about the delay. There have been some changes to the pubs I sent due to the latest COVID activity in VIC.

Please find the attached latest summary.

Important to understand that although some of these pubs are suspended currently, they are not closed and in some cases will be putting out digital editions (as indicated).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks

On Tue, Aug 4, 2020 at 11:29 AM s47F wrote:

Hi s47F

Thank you for sending this through.

I will endeavour to come back to you in the next few days to confirm numbers.

s22 - duplicate document



s22 - duplicate document



s22 - duplicate document



s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2020 11:38 AM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: ACM Instruction for Next Steps [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

s47F agrees to the approach as discussed in the team meeting, are you able to review the below email for s47F
Let me know if I need to go into more detail or need to be clearer about what is required.

Cheers,

s47F

Senior Policy Officer / Media Markets / News and Media Industry
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

s47F
[@communications.gov.au](mailto:s47F@communications.gov.au)

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

s22 - duplicate document

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2020 1:36 PM
To: s47F
Subject: FW: ACM Draft Terms.docx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Attachments: ACM Draft Terms.docx

s47F – looking good - the only thing I would suggest is adding another sub item to identified agreed mastheads not required to be resumed. Along the lines of:

- H1C.6 For the purposes of this item H1C, the Grantee is not required to resume the mastheads as specified in the table at Item x of Schedule 2 of this Agreement and this has been reflected in the funding provided under this Agreement.

s47F

For Official Use Only

From: s47F@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2020 1:12 PM
To: S s47F@communications.gov.au>
Subject: ACM Draft Terms.docx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi s47F

I am going to send the attached document to s47F to review our proposed changes to ACM's conditions, what do you think of the draft terms and do you have anything else to add?

Cheers,

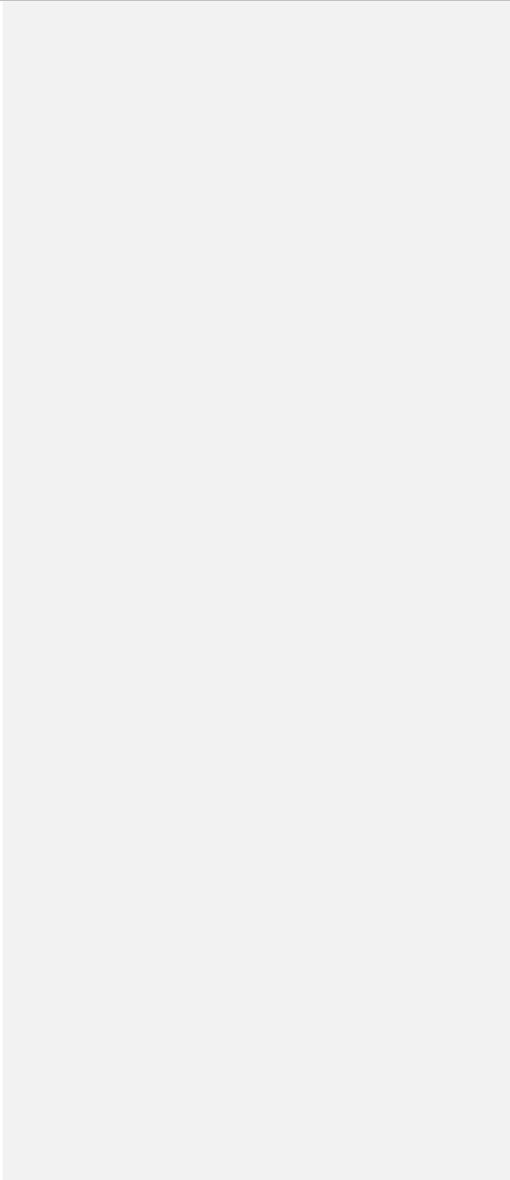
s47F

For Official Use Only

s47C







s42

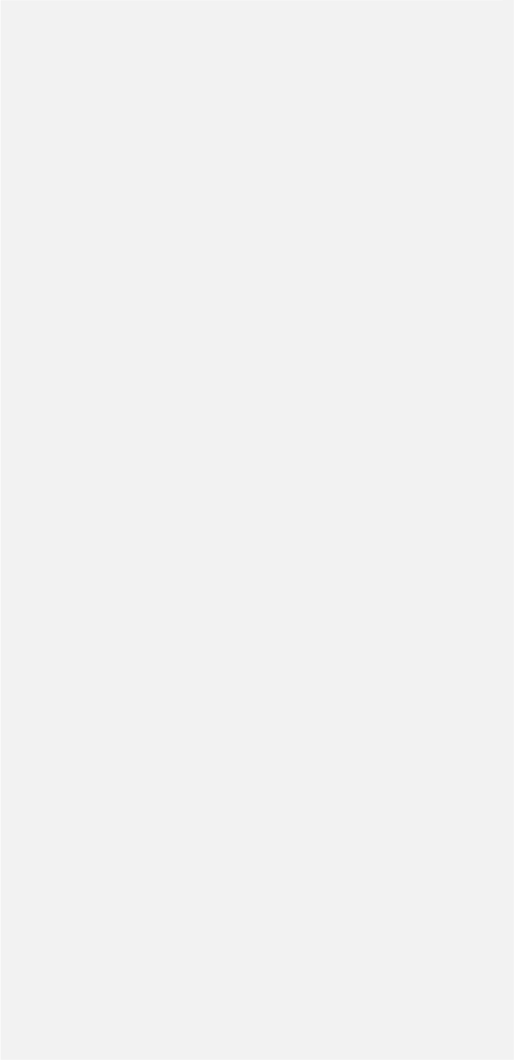




s42







s42

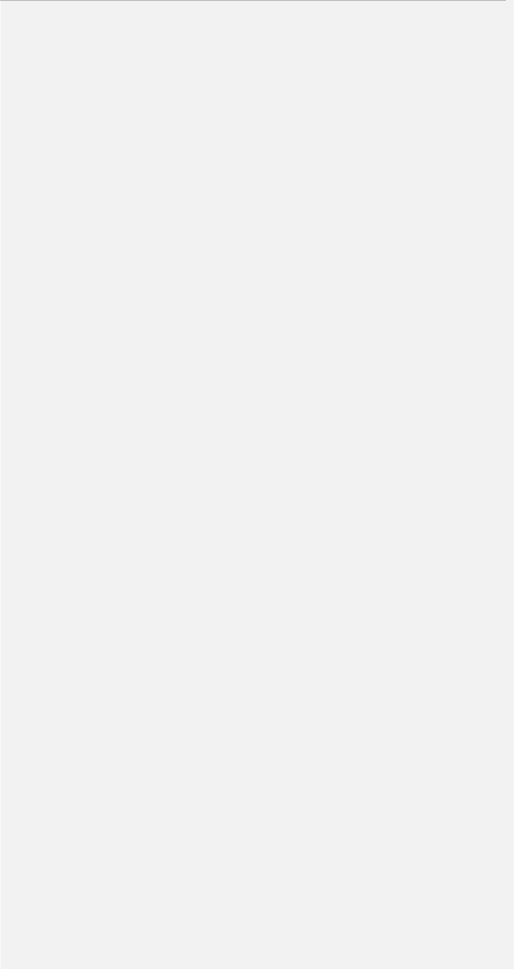


s42











s42



s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 22 September 2020 2:29 PM
To: s47F
Cc: Ping Program
Subject: FW: PING Program - Amended Grant Amount (PING0046) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Ping Program
Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2020 1:37 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING Program - Amended Grant Amount (PING0046) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear s47F

Thank you for accepting the amended offer made by the Department on 9 September 2020.

Shortly you will receive an email from SmartyGrants reopening your Grant Activity and Expenditure Details Form. Please complete in line with the changes agreed and the revised grant amount. This will enable us to draft up the Grant Agreement.

We note you previously sent grant activity and expenditure details to us through an emailed spreadsheet. However, for the final grant agreement it must be submitted in the appropriate section in SmartyGrants form. As this is for auditing and reporting purposes, we are unable to do this on a grantee's behalf.

Grant Activity and Expenditure Details Form Instructions

The following are key headings in the Form and we have outlined what is required to complete the form.

Grant Activity Work Plan

Please edit and add the agreed work plan item for each masthead, detailing how you intend to spend the grant. See the examples in the form for further details.

Regional Journalism Employees

Please amend the regional journalist figures to include the agreed deficit of s47G journalists. Please ensure these numbers accurately reflect your number of journalists as it is the number included in the Agreement and you will be expected to maintain this number for the duration of the grant period.

Mastheads

Please amend the number of mastheads to reflect the agreed deficit of s47G mastheads which will not be returned from suspension. In total, there should be s47G mastheads under this section (as you have informed the Department that of the s47G eligible mastheads, there will be s47G mastheads not returning). Please ensure these numbers are correct and accurately reflect your position in terms of number of mastheads. These numbers will be included in the grant agreement and are the numbers you will be expected to maintain for the duration of the grant period.

Returning Suspended Mastheads

Please amend and update the table to accurately reflect **all** mastheads that were suspended and the agreed deliverable.

There should be 86 mastheads listed in this section with details on each masthead which will be returned in full, not coming back, reduced frequency and/or digital only. See the below example for how to address each situation.

Name of Masthead	Key Deliverable	Outcome – what will be achieved	Planned Date of Completion
XYZ Chronicle	Resume suspended masthead in full	We will resume this masthead which was suspended on XX/XX/XX to its original print form and frequency	XX/XX/XX
XXX Chronicle	Resume suspended masthead – digital	We will resume this suspended masthead which was suspended on XX/XX/XX as a digital publication only	XX/XX/XX
XYZ Paper	Resume suspended masthead with reduced frequency	We will resume this suspended masthead which was suspended on XX/XX/XX to its original print form with a reduced frequency (daily to weekly)	XX/XX/XX
YYY Trader	As agreed, this masthead will not be resumed	As agreed, this masthead will not be resumed	14/09/2020

Approved Grant Budget Expenditure

Please amend to reflect how you intend to spend the grant. See the examples in the form for further details. If appropriate, you do not need to list each masthead, only each expenditure item. For example, if \$4 million of the grant is being spent to cover salaries across 30 mastheads, this can be included as one expenditure item.

Additional Information

Due to the number of mastheads you publish we also require you to **email** through a list of the ^{s4} _{7G} mastheads you are currently publishing / agree to resume as per the below table. This will provide a record of the agreed position to be maintained during the grant period.

Name of Masthead	Frequency	Print / Online / Print & Online

Please have this form completed as soon as practicable and on receipt of the completed form we will have the grant agreement sent out within 2 business days.

Please contact us if you need any clarification.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 14 September 2020 3:31 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: Re: PING Program - Amended Grant Amount (PING0046) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

We accept this revised amount, subject to a final grant agreement being reviewed.

Thanks

On Wed, Sep 9, 2020 at 10:29 AM Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au> wrote:

Dear s47F

Thank you for providing the Department with additional information in response to the conditions outlined in your Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program grant agreement (Grant Agreement)

The objective of the PING Program is to support regional broadcasters and publishers to maintain or increase their production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Grant Agreement contains the following conditions to meet this objective:

- H1A.1 The Grantee must, at a minimum, maintain its production and distribution of public interest journalism in regional Australia at the same level that existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date (12 months from the date of execution of this Agreement, as described at Item C of this Agreement).
- H1B.1 The Grantee must at a minimum, maintain its regional journalist staffing level at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.
- H1B.3 For the purposes of this Item H1B, the term, 'journalist staff' means employees engaged by the Grantee whose primary role is to investigate, collect, write and present information as a news story.

- H1C.1 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute all of its mastheads (print and/or electronic form) that were in circulation (or online distribution) as at the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement, until the Activity Completion Date.
- H1C.2 Within 30 days from the execution of this Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and distribution of each of its mastheads in print form which had been cancelled at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement ('resumed print mastheads').
- H1C.3 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute the resumed print mastheads in print form up until the Activity Completion Date.
- H1C.4 Within 30 days from the execution of this Agreement, the Grantee must resume the production and electronic dissemination of each of its online mastheads that had been cancelled at any time between 31 December 2019 and the day immediately before the execution of this Agreement ('resumed electronic mastheads').
- H1C.5 The Grantee must continue to produce and distribute the resumed electronic mastheads in electronic form up until the Activity Completion Date.

The conditions will be used to determine whether the objective of the PING Program is being met by grantees. We acknowledge the independence of media businesses to make operational decisions in the interests of their organisation, however, an adjustment to the grant amount is required to ensure all grantees are being held to the same standard.

On 25 August 2020, Rural Press Pty Ltd (Rural Press) advised the Department that it will not be resuming ^{s47G} eligible mastheads to their original form ^{s47G} as at 1 February 2020. The mastheads not being resumed represent ^{s47G} per cent of Rural Press's revenue for 2018/19.

The Department has determined that this is a contravention of clause H1A.1 and H1C.2 of the Grant Agreement. As a result of this contravention, the Department has determined it appropriate to reduce the amount of the grant being awarded to account for this change in a manner proportional to the degree of change being made by Rural Press.

A reduction of ^{s47G} mastheads out of ^{s47G} eligible mastheads equates to a reduction in ^{s47G} per cent of revenue from 2018/19. As funding was provided based on 2018/19 revenue, this will inform the Department's amended grant offer.

Therefore the Department has determined that Rural Press's total grant amount of ^{s47G}

The amended grant amount is therefore \$10,480,263.56

On 14 August 2020, Rural Press advised the Department that the company is reducing the number of regional journalists it employs. This will be a deficit of **s47G** journalist staff compared to the figure as at 1 February 2020. The Department has determined that this is a contravention of clause H1B.1 of the Grant Agreement. However as the loss of mastheads is greater than the loss of staff the decision has been made to reducing funding in line with the larger impact. Therefore no funding will be reduced for the reduction in staff. However it is important to note that Rural Press is required to maintain the agreed journalist employees for the duration of the grant period.

Please advise if you accept this amended grant amount. If agreed, the Department will release your Grant Activity and Expenditure Form for you to revise to reflect the amended grant amount. Following receipt of this revised form, the Department will provide you a Grant Agreement for signature.

If you have any further queries please contact us at the PING Program (PingProgram@communications.gov.au) or by phone on 02 6271 1142.

Regards

s47F

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

P +61 2 6271 1142

pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

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infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 28 September 2020 12:04 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: Mastheads Summary - (Rural Press 24092020).xlsx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

s47F – the financial figures and reduction appear in order as do the list of publications in the different categories.

The only issue I have is the number of publications. Based on your summary table which I have copied below (which is one that Mike will need for Senate estimates), Suspended + not suspended should equal total publications – at moment it is 47G. If you adjust the 47G

I have highlighted the changes in yellow. Does this work out?

Happy to discuss. s47F

Overall Table	
Total Eligible Publications	138
Not suspended	47G
Suspended	
Return in full	
Not coming back	
Reduced Frequency	
Digital Only	
Total Affected Publications	

22/09/2020

47G

For Official Use Only

From: Mifsud, Erin <Erin.Mifsud@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 28 September 2020 10:23 AM
To: 47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au
Subject: Mastheads Summary - (Rural Press 24092020).xlsx [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Record Title [Mastheads Summary - \(Rural Press 24092020\).xlsx](#)
Record Number PAD/20/83052

For Official Use Only

s47F

From:

s47F

Sent:

Wednesday, 7 October 2020 11:36 AM

To:

s47F

Subject:

File Note - Rural Press Grant Reduction [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Attachments:

File Note - Rural Press Grant Reduction.docx **Attachment out of scope (s22)
- duplicate document**

Hi team,

See the attached document for the File Note on Rural Press' grant reduction.

Let me know if there is additional information that should be included.

Cheers,

s47F

Record Title

[File Note - Rural Press Grant Reduction](#)

Record Number

PAD/20/87201

For Official Use Only

s47F

From: media
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 3:56 PM
To: s47F media; s47F Makin, Mike; s47F
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

Thanks for your prompt turnaround on this one, much appreciated. I have passed this onto the MO. I will let you know if they require anything further on this. Have a nice evening.

Kind regards,

s47F

Media Officer / Media Services / Communication Branch
 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
 s47F
 GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. **UNCLASSIFIED**

From: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 3:17 PM
To: media <media@communications.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

Cleared response below.

Proposed response:

Rural Press Pty Ltd (Australian Community Media) applied for and were successful in receiving funding under the PING Program. They are required to spend this grant in accordance with the objective of the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program, the PING Program Guidelines and conditions in their executed grant agreement. As stated by the Minister on 29 June 2020, it is a condition for all grant recipients that they resume suspended mastheads to receive the full grant amount. However, where a grant recipient does not return a suspended masthead to operation and back into print, the amount of funding received is reduced in a proportional way. Details of executed agreements under the PING Program are published on GrantConnect.

Regards

s47F

UNCLASSIFIED

From: media <media@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 3:15 PM
To: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; media <media@communications.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>;

s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks s47F

Much appreciated. I've just advised the MO we're running a touch behind on their requested deadline. Looking forward to hearing from you and the team shortly.

Kind regards,

s47F

Media Officer / Media Services / Communication Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6274 6673
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

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UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 1:35 PM
To: media <media@communications.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; Makin, Mike <Mike.Makin@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

Will come back to you with a response by 3pm.

Regards

s47F

UNCLASSIFIED

From: media <media@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 5 November 2020 1:33 PM
To: s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s47F @INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Cc: media <media@communications.gov.au>; s47F @communications.gov.au>
Subject: FOR ACTION: Media enquiry - ACM paper announcement - ABC News - 5/11 2:45pm [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Hi team,

We've received an enquiry from ABC News on the grants provided to ACM newspapers, see below. Apologies for the tight turn around, the MO have asked for this response by 3:00pm today. I suspect this may have been a decision by ACM, not our end. If you could please come back to me before then on the grants process for this one, that would be great. Thanks.

Enquiry:

I'm doing a story about the Commonwealth funding announced for 91 ACM newspapers today. It appears the 3 newspapers in WA that received grants were ones that were able to continue operating during the pandemic.

However the 4 papers that didn't receive funding including the Bunbury and Collie Mail, Esperance Express and Avon Valley Advocate, were the ones that had to close, mostly haven't reopened and appear to be struggling the most.

Wondering if these 4 papers actually applied for this funding? If so, I wanted to know why they missed out on funding considering they haven't been able to start up again after the pandemic, what is the funding criteria and will there be more funding to come out of this PING program?

Kind regards,

s47F

Media Officer / Media Services / Communication Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
s47F
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

UNCLASSIFIED

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 3 March 2021 9:56 AM
To: s47F
Subject: ACM not resuming three WA titles [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike,

As discussed with s47F this morning, Avon Valley Advocate was not required to be resumed under ACM's grant agreement. The Esperance Express and the Collie Mail were also not required to be resumed.

[Northam community hurting as Australian Community Media silent on The Avon Valley Advocate's return - ABC News](#)

Cheers,

s47F

Senior Policy Officer / Media Markets / News and Media Industry
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
s47F
[@communications.gov.au](#)

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

[communications.gov.au](#) / @CommsAu
[arts.gov.au](#) / @artsculturegov
[infrastructure.gov.au](#) / @infra_regional

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OFFICIAL

s47F

From: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin s47F
Sent: Monday, 14 September 2020 10:23 AM
To: Ping Program
Subject: Re: PING Grant - Additional Information [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear s47F

I can confirm we hold s47G Journalist positions as noted.

We also employ s47G Journalist positions which are held on our books but whom will only be provided work were appropriate. For example these casual staff cover full time staff leave, resignation gaps, work place injury gaps, and full time staff sick leave.

It is important to understand these casual staff will remain on on our books although they may not required in some instances, hence casual employees.

Please let me know if you require further explanation.

Regards

Ben

Ben Roberts-Smith

General Manager, Seven Brisbane/Regional Queensland

s47F



Seven Network (Operations) Limited
[560 Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mount Coot-Tha QLD 4066 Australia](#)
GPO [Box 604, Brisbane QLD 4001 Australia](#)

On 14 Sep 2020, at 10:13, Ping Program wrote:

Hi Ben,

Thank you for updating your Grant Activity Form and Expenditure Details.

We would just like to confirm whether the s47G journalists include the s47G journalists that were made redundant?

The grant reduction was made in line with the reduction of s47G journalists so we do not want to include those journalists in this figure. You will need to maintain this number during the grant activity period and report against it. (We note in the form you submitted on 5 August the journalist figure was s47G).

Can you also confirm whether the s47G journalist positions that we redundant were full time, part time or casual. This will ensure the figures remain accurate.

Once you provide us with the above information we can send a grant agreement out to you today.

Kind Regards,

s47F

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au
2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601
communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
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UNCLASSIFIED

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s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 1:36 PM
To: Ping Program
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin; s47F
Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Attachments: 2021 05 27 PING Program Interim Report.pdf

Thank you
 I have updated and resubmitted the Interim Report.
 Kind Regards

s47F



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications

Logged in: Ben Roberts-Smith s47F

My Submissions Log Out

Thank you, your submission has been received.

Submission Number: PING0054

A copy of your submission has been sent to your email address. You can also return and log in to [this site](#) submission. If you have any questions please contact us directly.

From: Ping Program
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 1:07 PM
To: s47F Ping Program
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin ; s47F
Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for your email.

Thank you for clarifying and sorry if we caused any confusion. Are you able to update your interim report to reflect this. We will reopen the form in SmartyGrants so that it can be updated.

Once updated we send your report through the clearance process.

Sorry again for the delays and please let us know if you have any further questions.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
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UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 12:55 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin <s47F>
Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Good Afternoon

Thank you for your reply and providing the email from Sept 2020.
This helped me reconciled the figures.

Full time Journalists	Part time Journalists	Casual Journalists	Total Journalists
s47G			

The figures confirmed to PING on 14 Sept 2020 of s47G Full time and s47G Part time were broken down as follows:

Included are:

Journalists
Producers
Camera Operators
Presenters
Studio staff

Excluded are:

Executive Assistants
Graphic Artists

Based on the roles included and excluded in the figures provided in Sept 2020, I can confirm the number of News positions remain the same presently (s47G Full time and s47G Part time) and we have not closed any News positions.

We were using the attached guideline for the definition of a 'Journalism Employee'.
In my previous email I excluded and included different roles.

I would be pleased to schedule a call with you to discuss.

Kind regards

s47F

Station Accountant Seven Queensland

s47F



Seven Network (Operations) Limited
140-142 Horton Parade, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia
PO Box 296, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 10:41 AM
To: s47F Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin s47F
Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s47F,

Thank you for the additional information and sorry for the delay in getting back to you.

Your email confirms the casual numbers have not changed. However correspondence from Ben Roberts-Smith (attached email) after the reduction in grant amount occurred, and immediately prior to grant signing, confirmed your total number of full and part time positions was s47G plus s47G casuals equal the total s47G journalists listed in your agreement.

The variance of s47G staff in Gladstone, Maroochydore and Wide Bay aligns with the details provided to us prior to the grant agreement being signed and were what the grant reduction was based off.

However the further loss of staff is the discrepancy we need explained as Ben Roberts-Smith was clear in his email prior to the execution of the grant agreement that the s47G total journalists excluded the staff who caused the grant reduction.

Please let us know if you have any questions. We are happy to schedule a call to discuss.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
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UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 4 May 2021 3:37 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin s47F
Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Thank you for clarifying the question.
The breakdown of the variance of s47G staff is detailed below.

It is difficult to retain news staff in regional 7QLD as employees move to the city for career advancement.

Casual Journalists often move into full time and part time roles as they are vacated and then we need to recruit again.

The casual numbers fluctuate regularly depending on availability of qualified staff in the local area.

The Interim report I included employees with current casual contracts.

In Feb 2020 we had s47G casuals; in March 2021 we have s47G which is a variance of s47G casuals.

As the Director of News recruits casual employees new contracts are issued, this is constant and changes often.

In regards to this table I believe the breakdown between Full Time and Part Time is incorrect however total of 67 employees is correct as at Feb 2020.

Full time Journalists	Part time Journalists	Casual Journalists	Total Journalists
s47G			

Full Time Journalists / Part Time Journalists

I have balanced to our head count reports.

In Feb 2020 we had s47G staff (Full Time/Part time)

s47G Full Time
s47G Part Time

In June 2020 we had s47G staff (Full Time/Part time)

s47G Full Time
s47G Part Time

Variance s47G staff (breakdown below)

s47G Full Time
s47G Part Time

Date Closed	No of People	FTE
1/05/2020 s47G		
1/05/2020		
1/05/2020		
3/04/2020		
1/05/2020		

Please feel free to call me to discuss.

Regards s47F

Station Accountant, Seven Queensland Station Finance

s47F



Seven Network (Operations) Limited
140-142 Horton Parade, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia
PO Box 296, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 4 May 2021 2:14 PM

To: s47F

Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin s47F

Subject: RE: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for your email.

Thank you for the clarification, we note the four journalists you are referring to were closed prior to the grant agreement and the grant was reduced accordingly.

However in your Interim Report, it appears there is a further reduction of s47G staff. Please let us know if this is an error.

As per your grant agreement, Seven Queensland must maintain s47G journalists as listed in Item 6 of Schedule 2 of your Grant Agreement (the table below).

Full time Journalists	Part time Journalists	Casual Journalists	Total Journalists
s47G			

Your Interim Report lists the following,

Full time journalists *Required

s47
G

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Part time journalists *Required

s
4

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Casual journalists *Required

s47
G

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Total journalists *Required

s47
G

If this is not an error, can you please confirm whether you intend to fill these positions and any efforts you have made to rehire.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

P +61 2 6271 1142

pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu

arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 4 May 2021 1:33 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: Roberts-Smith, Benjamin s47F
Subject: 7QLD : PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Thank you for your email.

These roles closed in April and May 2020 (please see exact dates below) prior to the Grant being approved on 22 Sept 2020.

- The Gladstone Office Closed – s47G – positions closed not rehiring.
- s47F

- s47F [REDACTED]
- Wide Bay Camera Operator role is closed (covered with casual or covered by VJ or other camera operators).

The Grant amount was decreased prior to it being approved/signed due to these roles being closed.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Regards s47F [REDACTED]

Date Closed	No of People	FTE
1/05/2020 s47G [REDACTED]		
1/05/2020 [REDACTED]		
1/05/2020 [REDACTED]		
3/04/2020 [REDACTED]		
1/05/2020 [REDACTED]		

s47F [REDACTED]

Station Accountant, Seven Queensland Station Finance

s47F [REDACTED]



Seven Network (Operations) Limited
140-142 Horton Parade, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia
PO Box 296, Maroochydore QLD 4558 Australia

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Date: 4 May 2021 at 11:59:48 AEST
To: "Roberts-Smith, Benjamin" s47F [REDACTED]
Subject: PING Interim Report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi Ben,

Thank you for submitting your Interim Report.

We just need some additional information on the reduction of journalist numbers as identified in your report.

Can you please confirm when these reductions occurred and your efforts to rehire/fill these positions?

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNOFFICIAL

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Public Interest News Gathering Program (PING) 2020
PING Program Interim Report (Version 2 of 2)
Application PING0054 From Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited - DRAFT

Interim Report

*** indicates a required field**

Under item F. Reporting of your Grant Agreement, you agree to provide an Interim Report to the Commonwealth in accordance with the Activity Schedule in Item C of the agreement.

The Interim Report will include:

- a detailed breakdown of the expenditure of the Grant money received under First Payment Milestone itemised based on the agreed Activities and cost categories
- the total amount of expenditure by the Grantee on public interest journalism related activities during the reporting period (i.e. 6 months following commencement of this Agreement)
- the total amount of labour costs directly associated with the production of regional journalism for the reporting period
- total number of journalists employed (fulltime, part-time and casual)
- total number of broadcasts and publications produced and distributed
- a written statement on how the Grantee is using the Grant money under First Payment Milestone to contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the PING Program
- a detailed statement on the impact of the Grant money received under the First Payment Milestone on the ongoing sustainability and solvency of the Grantee's business
- examples of public interest journalism funded by the grant.
- Unless the Grantee is a sole trader, all reports will need to be accompanied by a statement in the form of a statutory declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cth) from:
 - the Grantee's Chief Financial Officer (or a person holding or responsible for performing the duties of an equivalent role), or
 - a registered Chartered Accountant,

indicating that the Grant money for the reporting period has been spent in accordance with this Agreement.

Where the Grantee is a sole trader, all reports will require a statement in the form of a statutory declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cth) from the Grantee indicating that the Grant money has been spent in accordance with the Agreement.

The Department will review the information provided in your Interim Report and if further information or clarification is required, the Department will contact you to outline what is required. You must provide this information to the Department in a timely manner so the Department can be satisfied with your Interim Report.

Once the Department accepts this Interim Report, we will provide written notice of its acceptance. Once you receive this notice, you must invoice the Commonwealth within 10 business days. Please do not provide an invoice to the Department until you have received written notice that we accept your Interim Report.

As per the Activity Schedule in item C. Duration of the Grant in your Grant Agreement, the Second Payment will be made within 10 business days of the receipt of a correctly rendered invoice.

Eligible Stream/s *

- ☒ Stream 1: Regional commercial television
- ☐ Stream 2: Regional commercial radio
- ☐ Stream 3: Regional publishers

Activity

*** indicates a required field**

Grant Activity Work Plan

Please update and provide information in this Work Plan on how you have achieved key deliverables during the reporting period as identified in Schedule 2 of your Grant Agreement.

For example;

What service does this activity relate to? e.g. Name of Masthead/Publication, Radio Station or TV Channel

Key Deliverable

Outcome - achievement update

Planned date of completion

The XYZ Radio

Salary of 3 part-time Journalists.

We will use the grant to pay 20% of the salaries of our journalists, allowing them to attend and report on local events, local council and community issues.

30/06/2021

The XYZ Chronicle

Cost of printing masthead.

We will use this grant to subsidise the printing cost of The XYZ Chronicle. This will cover 100% of our printing costs for 2 months and print 20,000 copies of the masthead.

30/10/2021

The XYZ Chronicle

Purchase new camera.

This portable camera allows our journalists to capture photos for their public interest journalism stories, as our current camera is outdated.

30/09/2020

You can select '+' or 'Add more' to create new lines as required.

What service does this activity relate to?	Key Deliverable / Activity	Outcome - achievement update	Planned date of completion
---	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

E.g. Name of Mast-head / Publication, Radio Station or TV Channel.			Must be a date.
--	--	--	-----------------

s47G

Expenditure

*** indicates a required field**

Approved Grant Funding

Approved Grant Amount (GST Exclusive)

\$1,869,701.76

This question is read only.

Approved Grant Budget Expenditure

As per Schedule 2 of your Grant Agreement please list all of the agreed activities you have used this grant to fund and how much you spent on each item. This section will be used to calculate the Approved Grant Amount minus the total of this budget section.

Eligible expenditure must primarily be for the applicant's production and distribution of public interest news journalism during the Grant period and agreed by the Commonwealth.

Without limitation, this includes:

- purchase or lease of assets and equipment
- acquisition of relevant content, intellectual property or other rights
- the costs of acquiring technology to assist with production or distribution of content
- salaries for employees that are directly connected to the production of public interest journalism or to the generation of revenue to fund the production of public interest journalism
- costs to assist journalists with content production and distribution
- costs of staff training
- office and travel costs related to public interest journalism
- other costs that directly support the production and distribution of public interest journalism.

There are several categories of expenses that are not appropriate for funding through a grant made under the Program. These are expenses that are unlikely to align with, or further the achievement of the objective and outcomes of the Program.

The following non-exhaustive list provides some examples of activities that cannot be funded by grant money:

- general leadership or administrative staffing costs
- projects that will devolve grants to other bodies

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Application PING0054 From Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited - DRAFT

- activities for which the applicant has already received funding from the Australian Government (including from a previous round of the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund)
- costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports (except costs of independent audit reports) and preparing any project variation requests
- costs of purchasing, leasing, depreciation or development of land
- building acquisition or modification
- financial costs, including interest
- costs related to obtaining resources used on the project, including job advertising and recruiting and contract negotiations
- site preparation activities which are not directly related to public interest journalism
- routine operational expenses that are not directly related to the production of public interest journalism including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing, stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges
- activities paid for using cash/in-kind consideration
- activities involving the acquisition of other businesses by the applicant

to pay any creditors and other debts owed by the Grantee in the event that the Grantee is insolvent, entered into a scheme of arrangement with creditors, or come under any form of external administration or the winding up of the Grantee's business. Refer to section 5 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for further details on eligible grant activities and expenditure.

If any of your intended activities are part funded by other government grants or payments, including the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation (RASPI) Fund and JobKeeper, please explain in the *Certification* section of this form below.

When providing the dollar figure for how much an activity will cost only include the money from this grant, which you have spent on the activity. If an activity is part funded by other government funding only include the money from this grant which will contribute to the activity.

E.g. Grantee A intends to use the grant money for the cost for staff training. The cost of staff training is \$8500. Grantee A receives \$4000 from a different Commonwealth grant for this activity. Grantee A therefore can only put \$4500 of their PING grant towards costs for staff training. Grantee A lists the costs of staff training as \$4500 in the form below.

You can select '+' or 'Add more' to create new lines as required.

Grant activity or expenditure Item	Cost category	Budgeted amount	Updated amount (spent to date)
		Must be a dollar amount.	Must be a dollar amount.
s47G			

Total Budget Expenditure *

\$1,869,701.76

This number/amount is calculated.

In the field below, the balance of the Total Grant Amount minus the Total Budget Expenditure must equal to \$0 to continue.

Balance *

\$0.00

This number/amount is calculated.

Must be equal to \$0.

Evidence of Grant Budget Expenditure

Please upload evidence of your grant budget expenditure. This can include but is not limited to receipts, payroll summaries and/or financial or bank statements.

*

Filename: 2021 03 7QLD News - PING Oct20 to Mar21.pdf

File size: 21.8 kB

Expenditure of Labour Costs

What is your organisation's total amount of expenditure on public interest journalism related activities during the reporting period (i.e. the first six months of this grant)? *

s47G

Must be a dollar amount.

What is your organisation's total labour costs directly associated with the production of regional journalism for the reporting period (i.e. the first six months of this grant)? *

s47G

Must be a dollar amount.

Activity Details

*** indicates a required field**

Regional Journalism Employees

It is a condition of the grant that you at minimum, maintain regional journalist staffing at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020, until the Activity Completion Date, unless there are exceptional circumstances or real efficiencies identified which would affect this level not being maintained. Changes to journalist staffing that would affect the Grantee meeting this condition must be conveyed to the Department in writing as soon as possible.

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For the purposes of this term, 'journalist' means employees engaged by the Grantee to investigate, collect, write and present information as a news story.

Please provide details of the number of regional 'journalists' at your organisation.

Please confirm you have at a minimum, maintained regional journalist staffing at the same level which existed as at 1 February 2020, as identified in Item 6 of Schedule 2 of your Grant Agreement, for the reporting period (i.e. the first six months of this grant).

*

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please provide updated details of the current number of regional 'journalists' at your organisation.

Full time journalists *

s47G

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Part time journalists *

s47G

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Casual journalists *

s47G

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).

Total journalists *

s47G

This number/amount is calculated.

News Bulletins

For Streams 1 and 2, it is a condition of your grant agreement that you at a minimum maintain the production and distribution of regional news bulletins that were broadcasted as at 1 February 2020 until the Activity Completion Date.

Please confirm you have at a minimum, maintained the production and distribution of regional news bulletins that were broadcasted as at 1 February 2020, as identified in Item 7 of Schedule 2 of your Grant Agreement, for the reporting period (i.e. the first six months of this grant).

*

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please state the number of regional news bulletins you currently deliver.

If a field requires a nil response, enter '0' to continue.

Weekly

Monthly

Year to date

Must be a whole number (no decimal place).	Must be a whole number (no decimal place).	Must be a whole number (no decimal place).
35	140	441

Certification

If your grant activities are part funded by other government grants (including JOBKEEPER and RASPI), please select 'No' below, followed by an explanation in the section provided. By selecting 'Yes', you certify that you do not have any activities funded by other government grants.

When providing the dollar figure for how much an activity will cost only include the money from this grant, which you intended to spend on the activity. If an activity is part funded by other government funding only include the money from this grant which will contribute to the activity.

E.g. Grantee A intends to use the grant money for the cost for staff training. The cost of staff training is \$8500. Grantee A receives \$4000 from a different Commonwealth grant for this activity. Grantee A therefore can only put \$4500 of their PING grant towards costs for staff training. Grantee A lists the costs of staff training as \$4500 in the form below.

Do you certify that the above activities are not funded by other government grant opportunities. *

☒ Yes ☐ No

Public Interest Journalism

*** indicates a required field**

How have you used the Grant funds under the First Payment Milestone to contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the PING Program? *

7Qld has utilised the grant funds to subsidise the salaries of all news personnel directly involved in the gathering and production of public interest news services across Queensland. All news services have been maintained and continue to support and inform the communities of regional Queensland.

Must be no more than 500 words.

What is the impact of the Grant funds received under the First Payment Milestone on the ongoing sustainability and solvency of your business? *

Grant funding has enabled 7Qld, (as part of the broader SWM business) to maintain an acceptable cost base and meet debit obligations under existing covenants. The PING grant created a viable financial environment from which to continue to evolve business practices and more effectively manage the total cost base across areas which do not effect news production and dissemination. This opportunity has provided for a sustainable model moving forward.

Must be no more than 500 words.

Examples of public interest journalism

Public Interest News Gathering Program (PING) 2020

PING Program Interim Report (Version 2 of 2)

Application PING0054 From Channel Seven Queensland Pty. Limited - DRAFT

Please provide examples of public interest journalism produced by your organisation and delivered to regional areas funded by this grant during the grant period. This might include, but is not limited to, sample articles, links to articles or broadcast pieces online or transcripts of broadcasts.

You can select '+' or 'Add more' to create new lines.

Date of publication	Description of published piece	Online link	or file upload
Must be a date.			
01/04/2021	Local News service Central Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSCQ	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service for Sunshine Coast Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSSC/	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service Cairns Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSCairns/	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service Townsville Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSTownsville/	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service Toowoomba Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSToowoomba/	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service Mackay Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSMackay/	No files have been uploaded
01/04/2021	Local News service Wide Bay Qld	https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSWideBay/	No files have been uploaded

Other Supporting Documentation

* indicates a required field

Statutory Declaration

Unless the Grantee is a sole trader, all reports will need to be accompanied by a statement in the form of a statutory declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cth) from:

- the Grantee's Chief Financial Officer (or a person holding or responsible for performing the duties of an equivalent role), or
- a registered Chartered Accountant

Where the Grantee is a sole trader, all reports will require a statement in the form of a statutory declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cth).

Please upload a statutory declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959 (Cth) from your Chief Financial Officer, or registered Chartered Accountant, indicating that:

1. all financial information provided in this report is true and accurate

2. the Grant money for the reporting period has been spent in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

Details on how to complete and download a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration can be found [here](#).

Completed Statutory Declaration *

Filename: 2021 04 07 7QLD Statutory Declaration signed.pdf
File size: 72.0 kB

Signatory

*** indicates a required field**

Grantee Representative Contact

Please enter your Grantee Representative Contact details below, this is the contact entered into your Grant Agreement. If details have changed, please update below.

Contact Name *	Mr Ben Roberts-Smith
Position *	General manager Seven Queensland
Phone Number *	<div>s47F</div> <div>tralian phone number.</div>
Email *	<div>s47F</div> <div>ress.</div>

s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 2 March 2021 7:16 PM
To: Ping Program
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Hello, PING

I am collecting information for our interim report, and wanted to confirm FTE numbers. s47G

I wanted to quickly discuss this with someone from PING if possible ahead of the submission date ?

Regards s47F

Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA
6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

From: Ping Program
Sent: Monday, 22 February 2021 8:32 AM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

Thank you for your email.

This week you will receive an email detailing the reporting process. This will include details on the information you will be required to provide in your report.

Unfortunately we cannot provide access to the report until the due date, however you can expect it to look very similar to your Grant Activity and Expenditure Form, with most information prepopulated from that form.

Please let us know if you have any further queries.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNCLASSIFIED


From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 19 February 2021 5:41 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Ping,

Hope all is well,

I wanted to check if you have an interim reporting template we can use for our upcoming six month interim report on our PING grant program,
This is referred to under 11.2 reporting schedule 3 in the PING grant guidelines,

Many thanks s47F


Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA
6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 16 September 2020 1:25 PM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

We are following up regarding the First Payment Invoice.

It is expected that on receipt of a correctly rendered invoice we would make the payment within 3 business days.

Please let us know if you have any queries.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 5:22 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F s47F
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s47F

See attached signed grant agreement from WAN,
We will forward our first payment invoice shortly,
Thank you for all your help,

Cheers s47F

Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA
6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 10:23 AM
To: s47F Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Hi s47F

We have adjusted the dates to 4/9/2021 in the revised version attached. Just also updated the Milestone 1 due date to include September 2020 (top of page 7); and the footer now reads August 2020.

Regards
s47F

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s47F
Sent: Monday, 31 August 2020 11:49 AM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>; s47F
<s47F@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi PING

I just noticed that the date on page 18 – planned date of completion is set for 30/06/2021, however the grant activity period is 12 months,
Can I confirm that we will have 12 months for the grant activity period, rather than until the planned date of completion ?

Should I change this date to 04/09/2021 ?

Cheers s47F

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 28 August 2020 1:27 PM
To: s47F
Cc: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: PING0116 Grant Agreement [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Dear s47F

Thank you for completing the Grant Activity and Expenditure Form for your PING Program Grant.

The Department accepts the activities and expenditure you have listed and this information has been populated into Schedule 2 to your Grant Agreement (Agreement).

Please see attached your final Agreement for signature. Please carefully **read, sign and return** the Agreement to the Department at pingprogram@communications.gov.au as soon as possible.

Once we receive your signed Agreement, the Department will then counter-sign and return the executed copy for your records. We will also provide you with details on sending us an invoice for your first instalment payment.
Please note that the Grant Agreement is not executed until both parties have signed the Agreement.

In accordance with the PING Grant Guidelines, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 days after the date of effect as required under the PING Program Guidelines. Please be advised that there may also be other public announcements regarding your grant.

We ask that you do not make any announcement or public statement regarding your grant until you receive your executed Agreement, noting that the Grant Agreement is not executed until the Commonwealth has counter-signed the Agreement.

Please let us know if you have any further queries or wish to discuss.

Kind Regards,

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov
infrastructure.gov.au / @infra_regional

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

UNCLASSIFIED

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s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Thursday, 4 March 2021 11:09 AM
To: s47F
Subject: Seven West Journalist Issues [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hi s47F,

See below for a response/ approach to Seven West for your phone call and follow up email.

Cheers,

s47F

Hi s47F

As discussed, you will need to maintain the s47G FTEs for the duration of the grant.

s47G

Please let us know if you have any further questions, we would be happy to assist.

Kind Regards

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
arts.gov.au / @artsculturegov

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OFFICIAL:Sensitive

s22 - duplicate document



s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 6:28 PM
To: s47F
Cc: Ping Program
Subject: RE: Update on application PING0116 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thanks for the chat.

As discussed, on page 7 of your Interim Report, you mention that WAN is advertising for replacement staff.

Are you able to provide any evidence of these advertisements, e.g. job ads etc?

s47F

Thanks for your patience on this one. We will aim to progress this to payment as soon as practical.

Regards

s47F

OFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Tuesday, 18 May 2021 11:31 AM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: Update on application PING0116

Hello PING program,

Just want to check in on application PING0116

If you have everything you need from West Australian Newspapers,
 or require further information,

Regards, s47F

Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA 6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

s47F

From: Ping Program
Sent: Monday, 21 June 2021 12:07 PM
To: s47F Ping Program
Subject: RE: PING report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for this. Appreciate it.

As per the email last week, we have accepted your report.

Please do send us an invoice and we can action payment this week.

Regards

s47F

UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Thursday, 17 June 2021 1:02 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PING report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hello PING s47F

Sorry for delay, please see attached FTE headcount by month, for your records,

Cheers s47F

Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA 6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

From: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 June 2021 11:31 AM
To: s47F
Subject: RE: PING report [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi s47F

Thank you for sending this through.

Yes, send through the FTE and we will look to come back to you by the end of next week.

Cheers,

s47F

PING Program

Media Markets Section / News and Media Industry Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1142
pingprogram@communications.gov.au

2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
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communications.gov.au / @CommsAu
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UNOFFICIAL

From: s47F
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2021 12:26 PM
To: Ping Program <PingProgram@communications.gov.au>
Cc: s47F
Subject: FW: PING report

Hi s47F

Sorry for delay, see attached job ad for Journalist in s47G
s47F

Attached is the excel file from HR (as below) that includes all the ad's placed since Feb-20.

I will chase up a current FTE list for you Monday,

Cheers s47F

Head of Investment & Business Development WA | Finance



SEVEN WEST MEDIA (WA)

s47F

A 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017 | GPO Box D162, Perth WA 6840

s47F

W thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au | 7news.com.au

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 9 June 2021 4:07 PM
To: s47F
Subject: PING report

Hi s47F

Sorry for the delay in getting this information to you.

This report has been generated within PageUp using data from PageUp. I have filtered it by location and then extracted that so it only shows our regional offices. I have included rem and employee data but this can be excluded if you would like.

I have also sent through some examples of current job ads for our regional areas.

Thanks
s47F

ER Advisor | People and Culture

T s47F



Seven West Media (WA)
Newspaper House, 50 Hasler Rd, Osborne Park WA 6017
GPO Box D162, Perth WA 6840

thewest.com.au | perthnow.com.au
communitynews.com.au | 7news.com.au

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