

From: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: 23 July 2026 14:11
To: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: For advice Thursday AM - Journalism Assistance Fund [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

s22(1)(a)(ii)
a/g Assistant Director • News and Journalism Branch • Broadcasting, Media and News Policy Division
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From: Verdon, Andrew <Andrew.Verdon@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: 23 July 2026 1:59 PM
To: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: For advice Thursday AM - Journalism Assistance Fund [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Sorry for delay. Proposed response following on from your words.

- Through the Journalism Assistance Fund, the Government delivered \$67.6 million of support to more than 2,000 journalists across 185 Australian news publishers. This included \$25.4 million for over 90 regional media organisations.
- As with all Government grant processes, funding was awarded following assessment against eligibility criteria stated in the Grant Guidelines available at [Journalism Assistance Fund | business.gov.au](https://www.business.gov.au/journalism-assistance-fund).
- Grantees were required to execute a grant agreement and submit regular progress reports to the department, which are monitored closely to ensure the obligations of the grant are being met.
- As stated in the Grant Guidelines, the Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.
- The Journalism Assistance Fund is paid in 3 instalments over 3 years. This allows for any funds to be returned or subsequent payments to be withheld if required. These matters are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Regards
Andrew

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 July 2026 12:51 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: Verdon, Andrew <Andrew.Verdon@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: Re: For advice Thursday AM - Journalism Assistance Fund [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Importance: High

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Hi team

Sorry to chase - the MO is keen for this info soon. I understand you were aiming for end of day but could we please have it ASAP?

For context, Media Watch has reached out about it.

Cheers

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 6:16 PM
To: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: Verdon, Andrew <Andrew.Verdon@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; Media <media@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: For advice Thursday AM - Journalism Assistance Fund [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hello s22(1)(a)(ii)

One for the morning (Thurs)

You may have seen some reporting yesterday around the Journalism Assistance Fund - e.g. on [2gb](#), though the original story was on the (partisan) One News Australia site (see attached for full text, the site seems to be blocked on our devices). I've pulled out an extract below - MO is just keen for some holding lines mainly around eligibility requirements and what happens should an outlet who received a grant subsequently folds.

From article -
Taxpayer money went to a company two days old, a publisher in liquidation and a dead ABN
Wire Media Group Pty Ltd, publisher of The Southern Wire in the NSW Southern Highlands, had its ABN registered on 19 November 2025, two days before applications opened. It registered its business name the day after that, then collected \$85,800. No public record names its owners.
Business News Australia Pty Ltd had its \$128,700 grant published on 17 December 2025. Five weeks later, on 22 January 2026, the company entered creditors' voluntary liquidation, with founder Camilla Westerlund reportedly describing the funding as "too little, too late". The masthead's website later resumed publishing under ownership that remains unclear.
Korean News Pty Ltd had its \$39,000 grant approved on 10 February 2026. Its ABN has been cancelled since 30 June 2026.
Some recipients doubled up through related companies. The Intermedia Group and its majority owned Mumbrella Media collected \$471,900 between them. The two Vision China Times entities took \$251,394. Several other recipients are family trusts that can't be matched to any masthead from public records at all. All of it went through the process the guidelines describe, and that's exactly the problem: the net was this loose by design.

I thought we'd had a query along these lines previously but it was actually about the closure of the ACM printing site and it wasn't clear at that time whether or not online publication was continuing (also attached for reference). I've popped together a few lines as a start but grateful for your input -

Through the Journalism Assistance Fund, the Government delivered \$67.6 million of support to more than 2,000 journalists across 185 Australian news publishers. This included \$25.4 million for over 90 regional media organisations.

As with all Government grant processes, funding was awarded following assessment against robust eligibility criteria, with guidelines available at [Journalism Assistance Fund | business.gov.au](#). All recipients are required to submit regular progress reports to the department, which are monitored closely to ensure the objectives of the grant are being achieved.

[input on what happens if an outlet fails to meet requirements and/or folds]

[background for MOs on any instances we are aware of where this has occurred]

Happy to chat!

Cheers

s22(1)(a)(ii)



Media Manager • Media Services • Communication Branch

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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

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I 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 respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: 23 July 2026 14:42
To: s22(1)(a)(ii) Verdon, Andrew; s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: draft words for media re JAF [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii)

Some suggestions on the below. Please note that I haven't yet spoken to s22(1)(a)(ii) - we are chatting at 4pm.

Journalism is facing systemic pressures that threaten Australians' access to quality, public interest reporting, and further consolidate control over production and distribution of news in an already concentrated sector.

Through the Journalism Assistance Fund (JAF), the Government delivered \$67.6 million of support to more than 2,000 journalists across 185 Australian news publishers. This included \$25.4 million for over 90 regional media organisations. The JAF forms part of the News Media Assistance Program (News MAP) which includes \$99.1 million in grants over three years to support public interest journalism and media diversity in Australia. This is in recognition that public interest journalism is critical to a healthy democracy, social cohesion and informed citizens.

As with all Government grant processes, funding was awarded following assessment against robust eligibility criteria, with guidelines available at [Journalism Assistance Fund | business.gov.au](https://www.business.gov.au/journalism-assistance-fund). All recipients are required to submit regular progress reports to the department, and all recipients are monitored closely to ensure the objectives of the grant are being achieved.

The Government is aware of these matters and are managing the concerns as per the granting agreement between the Government and the grantee. Should a grantee no longer satisfy the granting agreement, the Government may seek to terminate a grant agreement and explore cost recovery methods to reclaim grant funding that is not used in accordance with the agreement. The Government notes the changing business circumstances of grantees and acknowledges the financially turbulent nature of the news media sector.

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From: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 23 July 2026 1:26 PM
To: Verdon, Andrew <Andrew.Verdon@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: draft words for media re JAF [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Through the Journalism Assistance Fund, the Government delivered \$67.6 million of support to more than 2,000 journalists across 185 Australian news publishers. This included \$25.4 million for over 90 regional media organisations.

As with all Government grant processes, funding was awarded following assessment against robust eligibility criteria, with guidelines available at [Journalism Assistance Fund | business.gov.au](#). All recipients are required to submit regular progress reports to the department, which are monitored closely to ensure the objectives of the grant are being achieved.

The Government has been made aware of these matters and are managing the concerns as per the granting agreement between the Government and the grantee. Should a grantee no longer satisfy the granting agreement, the Government may explore cost recovery methods to reclaim granted funding. The Government notes the changing business circumstances of grantees and acknowledges the financially turbulent nature of the news media sector.

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