

18 May 2026

News Bargaining Incentive — Revenue Distribution Consultation

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Submitted via consultation portal

Dear Consultation Team,

Submission on proposed News Bargaining Incentive statutory payment scheme

Introduction

The Australian Publishers Association (APA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed statutory payment scheme for the distribution of revenue collected through the News Bargaining Incentive.

The APA supports the Government's recognition that a robust public sphere may, from time to time, require active regulatory intervention. We recognise that the proposed scheme is directed specifically to news and journalism, and do not seek in this submission to expand its immediate eligibility beyond that purpose. However, the scheme's underlying policy rationale has wider implications for the Australian information and publishing ecosystem, including the organisations that invest in the creation, editing, publication, distribution and preservation of trusted knowledge and cultural content.

About the APA and Australian publishing

The APA is the peak national body for Australian book, educational and scholarly publishers. Our 220 members include trade, independent, children's, educational, scholarly and professional publishers, university presses and multinational publishers operating in Australia. Together, they are central to a publishing sector estimated by IFRRO to be worth \$4 billion.

Australian publishing is both a creative industry and a knowledge industry. Publishers invest in Australian authors, educators, researchers and other contributors, and in the editorial, rights, production, accessibility, metadata and distribution systems that make trusted content available to readers, learners and the wider public.

Scope and policy precedent

The APA recognises that the proposed scheme is not a general publishing, copyright or creative industries measure. Eligibility is tied to registered news businesses, core news content and FTE journalists, leaving

most book, educational and scholarly publishers — along with education-related services, AI services and related copyright/licensing questions — outside its scope.

That narrow scope does not reduce the scheme's broader significance. The model establishes an important policy precedent: it recognises that professionally produced content can serve a clear public purpose, and that market conditions shaped by large digital platforms may require statutory intervention.

Relevance to the wider publishing ecosystem

The same policy logic has relevance beyond news. Book, educational and scholarly publishers also operate in markets reshaped by digital distribution, online search, platform recommendation, digital retail, learning platforms, content aggregation and emerging AI services. These technologies can bring benefits, including wider access, improved discovery and new formats, but they also affect the economics of investment in Australian books, learning materials and journal articles.

The APA therefore submits that future policy work should consider the wider publishing ecosystem, so that books, educational publishing and scholarly communication are not treated merely as ordinary market commodities while journalism is recognised as democratic infrastructure.

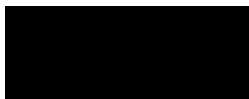
Conclusion and Recommendation

We recommend that, as this work proceeds, the Government also recognises the broader policy challenge it highlights: how Australia sustains trusted information, creative content, reading, learning and knowledge infrastructure in a digital environment shaped by large global platforms.

Future policy work should consider how Australian book, educational and scholarly publishers are affected by digital-platform bargaining power, online discoverability, search and retail concentration, AI systems, platform substitution, fair licensing, accessibility obligations and the sustainability of investment in Australian content.

The APA would welcome further engagement with the Government on these broader issues. Australian publishers are not merely participants in a commercial content market; they are investors in the cultural, educational and knowledge infrastructure of the nation.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Stuart Glover

Head of Policy

Australian Publishers Association