



Nascon Media Pty Ltd

News and market intelligence for Australian agriculture

Submissions on News Bargaining Incentive: *News Media Bargaining (Administration) Bill 2026 and Revenue Distribution Model*

18 May 2026

Our online agricultural news publishing business was created 15 years ago to bring competition and diversity to an Australian rural media sector dominated at the time by a single agricultural newspaper publishing business.

Our team of experienced journalists produce original and fact-checked news and information for key industries that make up the \$100 billion per year Australian agriculture sector (cattle, sheep, cropping, carbon, rural property and ag careers) and public interest journalism on issues of importance to regional Australia. Our news websites are now visited by more than 300,000 individual readers every month, which have helped to create a more diverse and competitively healthy rural media sector.

Greater competition has helped readers to be more informed, has given advertisers greater choice and efficiency in reaching customers and has provided new and wider career options for rural journalists.

The major change that has occurred in that 15-year period has been the rampant and aggressive growth of the major tech platforms like Google and Meta, which have, as has been widely-documented, consumed an ever-increasing amount of the advertising revenue which once helped to fund the creation of original, fact-checked journalism.

Federal Governments have worked to overcome this challenge by creating the News Media Bargaining Code and now the News Bargaining Incentive. Regrettably these efforts in our view continue to favour and benefit primarily the larger corporations and media publishers that dominate Australia's media sector, making the playing field even more inequitable for the smaller independent publishers these initiative were intended to encourage.

As Federal Communications Minister Michelle Rowland said when launching the News Bargaining Incentive in December 2024: "A strong and diverse news sector is vital for a

healthy democracy”.¹ The Explanatory Memorandum to the Admin Bill also states that the purpose of the NMI is to promote the sustainability and diversity of the Australian news media sector.

The more recent emergence of AI-based online search platforms with Large Language Models which take original content created at significant cost by small independent media publishers and repackage it in search answers without delivering traffic back to the rightful source has only served to further undermine the efforts of small independent publishers to continue providing much-needed media diversity and journalistic oversight in Australia.

We fully support the position taken in the submission to this review by the Digital Publishers Alliance (DPA), which represents more than 70 independent digital publishers across Australia, including Nascon Media.

In summary, the recommendations proposed by the Digital Publishers Alliance are:

News Media Bargaining (Administration) Bill 2026 (**Admin Bill**):

- (a) Increase the minimum number of deals a platform may include in any NMI offset;
- (b) Require at least 25% of eligible expenditure apply to small and medium business entities;
- (c) Increase the offset rate for small and medium business entities to 200%;
- (d) Remove exclusions of LLMs and business / professional networking from search and social media service definitions;
- (e) Include a mechanism to add / vary service definitions within the rules and a statutory review trigger;
- (f) Define eligible news businesses as those which primarily create ‘covered news content’ rather than the narrower ‘core news content’.

Statutory Payment Scheme for NMI distribution:

- (g) Define eligible news businesses as those which primarily create ‘covered news content’ rather than the narrower ‘core news content’;
- (h) Apply a broader definition of ‘news staff’ for the payment allocation formula, instead of ‘journalist’; and
- (i) Create a reserve of 15% of NMI revenue to be distributed to small and medium news publishers.

¹ <https://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/rowland/media-release/albanese-government-establish-news-bargaining-incentive>

Thank you for your consideration of these matters and our submission along with that of the Digital Publishers Alliance. We and our fellow DPA members individually and collectively invest significantly every year in the creation of original, important and professionally-sourced news and information, without which we believe the Australian media landscape would be considerably less diverse and the Australian population considerably less well informed.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Condon and James Nason

Co-founders and publishers

Nascon Media Pty Ltd

Nascon Media Pty Ltd is a member of

