

# The Riverine Grazier

- The Heartbeat of Hay since 1873 -

## **News Media Assistance Program (NewsMAP)**

### **Submission by The Riverine Grazier Pty Ltd**

#### **Background**

The Riverine Grazier is a hyper-local print masthead, with a developing digital footprint and product range. We cover the local government areas of Hay and Balranald and southern section of the Central Darling Shire in NSW.

We have a print circulation of 1000 and publish weekly. Our digital subscription base is growing, expanding our readership beyond our physical location.

Our communities are low on the SEIFA index, with double the NSW average population of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. The median age is 47.

Most importantly many of our readers have no access to internet because it is either a) unaffordable, or b) not available where they live. The internet and mobile network telephone service is notoriously bad, leaving print media as the most reliable source of information.

Our company is owned by the editor, Tertia Butcher and myself, in partnership, demonstrating a life-long tradition of local, independent ownership, and a dedication to public interest journalism.

#### **Submission**

The Riverine Grazier supports the Country Press Australia call for government support, namely:

- A full page of Federal Government advertising/public messaging in every regional and local newspaper every week in line with the Victorian Government model.
- A refundable tax credit of 35% of eligible newsroom employee costs for publishers of public interest journalism up to a salary cap of \$85,000 per eligible newsroom employee per annum in line with the Canadian model. Supplementary funding to be implemented with one or both the above mechanisms.
- Funding 70% of first year wages for 100 cadet journalists per year employed in regional and local newspapers.

Our business runs at a low profit margin, which we implement as a deliberate business model. All profits are re-invested, either in our business, by increasing hours for journalists and creative content staff, and my delaying increases in the cost of advertising or the cover charge of our newspaper.

My business partner and I see the value in employing local people to cover local news, and to upskill and nature those people into their roles. An increase in ad spend by the government and tax credits on employee costs would ensure the stability our business and allow us to grow our newsroom, and cover more news in our region.

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We have already stepped up to visit Balranald and Ivanhoe (NSW) on a regular basis, to ensure these communities without their own newspaper are given a voice, and with the commitment outlined above, we could reach so many more outlying isolated villages and communities.

Funding the majority of the costs of a cadet would mean we could seriously consider investing in another young person in our business, and give them the opportunity to become involved in independent public interest journalism.

This submission is not purely about economics, although it will support publishers and stall the closure of any more rural and regional publications. In essence this submission is about ensuring people stay connected and informed, both about news in their area, about national issues that directly affect them and about services they can take advantage of.

No other industry is brought into the living rooms of Australians like independent regional newspapers and we call on government to recognise and support this value we bring.

Sincerely,



Krista Schade

Managing Director



[www.thegrazier.com.au](http://www.thegrazier.com.au)