



MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget brings welcome changes to super threshold and extra support for AAP but doubts remain about ABC funding

The abolition of the superannuation threshold announced in last night's Federal Budget will make a substantial difference to low-paid workers in the entertainment and arts industries, says their union.

The threshold of \$450 in earnings before employers must make superannuation contributions has meant that tens of thousands of workers in casual and part-time jobs at venues and cinemas have little in retirement savings.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance says scrapping the threshold will allow them to begin building a nest egg for when they finish work.

MEAA Chief Executive Paul Murphy welcomed the change which was confirmed by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg last night. Mr Murphy said it was the result of years of lobbying by unions.

"The arbitrary \$450 monthly threshold has penalised workers in insecure jobs, particularly women," Mr Murphy said.

"There are thousands of workers in the entertainment and arts industries who juggle several casual or part-time jobs so they have enough each month to feed, house and clothe themselves but because none of those jobs earn more than the threshold, they receive no superannuation contributions.

"We know of some workers with several decades of experience working in outdoor venues who have never been paid a cent of superannuation because of the threshold.

"Through bargaining, MEAA has managed to convince individual employers to pay super on every cent earned rather than just earnings over \$450, but the change in the Budget will level the playing field for everyone."

MEAA also welcomes the commitment in the Budget of an extra \$15 million to the national newswire service, AAP, along with giving it Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Mr Murphy said these measures would go some way towards ensuring the future of AAP, which was almost forced to close in 2020 when both News Corp and Nine Entertainment withdrew their support.

"AAP performs an essential service by providing balanced, independent and trusted news from all over Australia to dozens of outlets large and small," Mr Murphy said.

📍 PO Box 723 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 ☎ 1300 656 513

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“Having fought so hard for the survival of AAP, it would have been devastating if it ran out of funds again.

“We commend the federal government and the MPs who took up the AAP cause for providing some financial certainty over the next two years with this new funding of \$15 million.”

An extra \$8 million for the community radio sector is welcome, but the Budget has not clarified future funding for the ABC and SBS.

In regard to the ABC, there is still another year to run before the indexation freeze of its operating budget ends, while the \$44 million annual enhanced local and regional news gathering program expires next year with no guarantee it will be extended.

“Overall, funding of public broadcasters will fall in real terms with nothing to replace the massive cuts since 2013,” Mr Murphy said.

“The expected cessation of the regional and local news gathering funding is short-sighted and will hurt those communities it is meant to help.”

More information: Mark Phillips, 0422 009 011 or mark.phillips@meaa.org