



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Facebook and Google monies must go to newsrooms, not boardrooms

Media companies negotiating commercial deals with Facebook and Google for the payment of news content must ensure that the monies generated are allocated to journalism.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance says the deals under negotiation will provide a welcome new revenue stream for Australian media, but they will be pointless if the funds from the digital giants are not reinvested in the production of news content.

The union is also calling for targeted assistance to any small, independent, regional, community or freelance media organisations that are unable to access funding either through negotiation or the News Media Bargaining Code. This must also be extended to AAP.

"We have seen no guarantees from the big media companies that money raised from the digital platforms will be spent on journalism," said MEAA Media President Marcus Strom.

"If some of this the Facebook and Google's massive Australian revenue is now to be returned to media companies, there must be a corresponding commitment that the money is spent on news content not dividends or corporate bonuses. The media companies must provide transparency about how they intend to allocate these funds.

"The entire rationale for the News Media Bargaining Code which has led to the digital giants voluntarily agreeing to compensate media companies for content was the impact they have had on public interest journalism over the past decade. Almost 5000 Australian journalism jobs have been lost in that time because revenue which once supported journalism has been sucked up by the digital giants."

Mr Strom said MEAA was also concerned that small and independent outlets, including websites run by freelancers, could miss out in the rush by the big companies to finalise deals with Facebook and Google to avoid arbitration under the Code

"The modified Code now being considered by Parliament has the potential of reinforcing the current narrow base of Australian media ownership if there are not other measures to support media diversity.

"As Parliament debates these new laws this week, there must be a commitment to stable funding to the public broadcasters, tax incentives to support public interest journalism, and to supporting rural, suburban and regional media, along with freelancers. The News Media Bargaining Code alone will not be the salvation of Australian journalism. A range of other reforms are essential to foster a vibrant and diverse media ecosystem, and to encourage new entrants."

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