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MEAA condemns APN's sale of regional media

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the union and industry advocate for Australia's journalists, condemns APN News & Media for abandoning regional media and the communities it serves.

The company announced it intends to sell its Australian Regional Media arm after APN reported a 7% slide in profit. The regional media division consists of 12 daily newspapers, 60 community and non-weekly publications and 30 regional news web sites.

The announcement comes after management at APN has savagely slashed \$40 million in costs from the regional media division over the past three years resulting in the loss of jobs and a marked increase in work intensification for the staff that remain. As well as starving the business of resources, APN has repeatedly frustrated attempts to renew enterprise bargaining agreements.

MEAA is concerned that APN fails to appreciate the importance of the regional mastheads to local communities.

MEAA CEO Paul Murphy said: "The APN publications that serve the people of regional Queensland and New South Wales are a vital source of local news and information. They have historic and crucial links to their communities, are an avenue for local stories to be told and local voices to be heard.

"They provide an essential public service. But over several years, APN management has slashed away at these mastheads, diluting them of quality local content and starving them of the crucial resources needed to do their job.

"When your only strategy is to cut and cut, something has to give. In the end, it is the local communities that suffer."

MEAA is seeking an urgent meeting with APN management to ensure that any sale process is accompanied by a guarantee that employee service and all entitlements are acknowledged and transferred under the Fair Work Act.

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