

# Commercial radio industry strongly supports draft news media bargaining code

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The Australian radio industry strongly supports the proposed News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code and said it would assist in addressing the fundamental bargaining power imbalance between Australian news media and major digital platforms.

In a submission lodged with the ACCC, industry body Commercial Radio Australia said it broadly supports the principles of compensation, collective and individual bargaining options and dispute resolution measures contained in the draft bill.

Chief executive officer Joan Warner said CRA had made several recommendations for amendments to ensure that the code would be practical and workable for its members.

“We appreciate the efforts of the ACCC to balance the interests of a wide range of stakeholders. Our priority is to ensure that commercial radio stations are able to benefit from the code and are not inadvertently excluded or disadvantaged,” she said.

CRA’s submission recommends that the eligibility criteria for participation in the code should not be limited to public interest journalism but should be broadened to include coverage of community and local events as well as talk back radio programs that discuss core news content.

CRA also said it was vitally important that the digital platforms adhere to “minimum standards” for providing information to news media businesses and advance notice of changes to their algorithmic ranking and presentation of news.

The submission also said the arbitration process should be refined to provide transparency on the division of cost and the selection of arbitrators.

Under the proposed bargaining arrangements, commercial media organisations would be able to enter into negotiations with Google and Facebook to determine an appropriate payment for news content, with arbitration to follow if they are unable to reach agreement.

The development of a mandatory code of conduct is part of the Government’s response to the ACCC’s Digital Platforms Inquiry final report to promote competition, enhance consumer protection and support a sustainable Australian media landscape.

Final legislation is expected to be introduced to Parliament shortly after conclusion of the consultation process.

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## **About Commercial Radio Australia**

Commercial Radio Australia is the peak industry body representing the interests of commercial radio broadcasters throughout Australia. CRA manages industry codes and standards, regulatory and legislative matters, metropolitan and regional audience measurement surveys, revenue reporting, industry innovation including the automated trading platform RadioMatrix, RadioApp, the Australian Podcast Ranker, consumer research, marketing and industry training and development programs. CRA also hosts the Australian Commercial Radio Awards and the Siren Creative Awards.

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