



Media Release

Thursday 5 April 2012

Publishers Agree on Major Strengthening of the Press Council

Funding for the Australian Press Council is to be doubled, rising from \$0.8 million this year to \$1.6 million in 2012-13 and \$1.8 million in the following year.

News Limited, Fairfax Media, the media union (MEAA) and the other publisher members of the Australian Press Council have agreed to specific funding commitments for the next three years, with subsequent commitments to be agreed at least 2-3 years in advance.

Under the new arrangements, publisher members will be required to give four years' notice of withdrawal from the Council and will remain part of the Council throughout that period. Their obligations to provide funding and comply with Council processes will now become legally binding.

The Chair of the Press Council, Prof Julian Disney, said today:

“The publishers’ commitments are very welcome and will greatly strengthen the Council’s resources and effectiveness. Now that continued membership and greatly improved funding have been guaranteed for the next three years, the Council can implement a sustained program to fulfil its responsibilities across print and online media.

The package substantially addresses key concerns expressed by the Finkelstein Inquiry about the Council’s capacity to strengthen its independence and effectiveness.

We regret the decision of Seven West Media not to be involved in the program to strengthen the Council and therefore to withdraw from membership, but we recognise its right to do so. Under the new arrangements, the Council’s vulnerability to such withdrawals will be greatly reduced as they will not take effect until four years after notice is given.

Several significant online publishers, including ninemsn.com, have expressed interest in joining the Council. Some of them are likely to be admitted in the next month or two.”

The publisher members of the Council include ACP Magazines, Australian Associated Press, APN News and Media, Australian Rural Publishers Association, Community Newspapers of Australia, Country Press Australia, Fairfax Media and News Limited.

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