Submission from Brian Savvas[1]
Intran Australia Pty Ltd
to the
Public Interest Journalism Committee

Obvious but perhaps not noted

This submission commences with three points, obvious but perhaps not generally noted.

1. The person placing a *'lawn mower for sale'* advertisement in a newspaper classifieds unwittingly supports journalism.
2. One paper manufacturer might very well supply newsprint to many newspapers.
3. Sydney newsagencies sell both the *SMH* and the *Telegraph*.

Terms of Reference

Intran addresses only some items in the Terms of Reference:

(a) the current state of public interest journalism in Australia and around the world, including the role of government in ensuring a viable, independent and diverse service;

- **Intran will leave others to address this matter.**

(b) the adequacy of current competition and consumer laws to deal with the market power and practices of search engines, social media aggregators and content aggregators, and their impact on the Australian media landscape;

- **This matter is addressed. Rather than seeking recourse through legislation or the tax system, Intran's approach is to establish an Australian enterprise that will compete with these entities, thus diminishing their impact**.

(c) the impact on public interest journalism of search engines and social media internet service providers circulating fake news, and an examination of counter measures directed at online advertisers, 'click-bait' generators and other parties who benefit from disinformation;

- **Comment is not made on the *impact*. On *counter measures*, the proposed Australian enterprise would steadfastly avoid such practices and hopefully diminish their impact.**

(d) the future of public and community broadcasters in delivering public interest journalism, particularly in underserviced markets like regional Australia, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities;

- **Intran's business model could address this concern.**

(e) examination of 'fake news', propaganda, and public disinformation, including sources and motivation of fake news in Australia, overseas, and the international response;

- **Intran will leave others to examine this matter. The proposed Australian enterprise would contribute to an international response.**

(f) any related matters.

- **As below.**

Initial media reports

Soon after the announcement of the establishment of the Select Committee on 10 May, the media reported the following statements by Committee Members (**my emphasis**):

- Senator Xenophon: "… Facebook and Google … are cannibalising the content of Australian journalists. As a consequence we have a situation where **Australian journalism is in crisis**."
- Senator Xenophon: "Media companies in Australia will **wither and die** unless we tackle the haemorrhaging of advertising revenue to Facebook and Google, which between them are hoovering up $3.2 billion of ad revenue from the Australian market."
- Senator Ludlam: "We want to know, what is the **business model** that allows any entity – public, private, third sector, whatever – to keep well-resourced journalists in the field, keeping this building and its people accountable and serving up the news and information that we need to maintain a healthy democracy."

If the Senators are correct and we do have a crisis, and there will be withering and even deaths, then a lateral shift in thinking is required to find an appropriate business model. This submission contains such lateral thinking.

Transcripts and written submissions

To 12 June, those written submissions and hearing transcripts suggesting solutions to the Inquiry's concerns, propose the use of the taxation system through tax relief, or tax incentives, or tax deductibility for subscriptions, or tax write-off, or taxing content aggregators, or taxing international corporations we don't like, and even funding consumers to buy media products (as the French Government reportedly did).

Intran holds the view that neither the current government, nor that which will be formed after the 2019 election, nor probably the one after, will have any appetite for such approaches.

Rather, Intran sees its venture, explained below, although having a different goal, can assist journalism.

The *National Internet Platform*

Intran's creations **August Watershed** and its **Dynamic Map**, and other components in its **Watershed Package**[2] are listed in the Endnote to this submission.

In its endeavours to gain a global audience for its internet content, Intran was faced with the prospect of:

- Using foreign platforms, such as iTunes, on which Intran's production would be one of many thousands, thus requiring an unaffordable promotional campaign. Then, if Intran was successful, it would receive very poor revenue after Apple Inc., an aggregator, the promoter and the US Internal Revenue Service had extracted their take, or
- Using an underfunded Australian website that had very little Australian presence and virtually none globally.

Visits to websites such as YouTube, iTunes, Amazon and Google Play reveal that Intran is not alone. They contain a large quantity of Australian created content. Consequently, Intran has been campaigning to initiate a pooled endeavour to see established a **National Internet Platform**, which has as its primary focus, gaining a global audience for Australian created content suitable for the internet.[3]

Price Waterhouse Coopers have assembled data for the Australian screen industry for this century projected out to 2020. What they found is similar to other countries.

With one exception, all the graphs are trending downwards:

- Cinema attendance – down
- Cinema box office – down
- Television audiences – down
- Television advertising revenue – down
- DVD sales have just about reached the X-axis

The one exception is consumption of content on the internet. Its upward climb is quite dramatic with growth figures of a few hundred percent in just a few years being recorded. Telstra's subsidiary Ooyala advises that '*UK adults will watch almost 1 hour of digital video every day in 2017, and the rest of the world isn't far behind*'.

This is the question:
In participating in this new, rapidly growing global industry, are we Australians to be only consumers of its product, or will we become creators also?

Intran expects that the **National Internet Platform** will give birth to a self-sustaining **Content Industry**, encouraging innovation, engaging in technology, providing income for Australians, exporting product to the global market.

It is noted that the transcript of 17 May contains the following statements by Mr Greg Hywood, CEO and MD of Fairfax Media:

- *"… The issue is scale and whether media organisations in this country can work together— who knows what the mix would be …"*;
- *"… To this point, no-one has sold this issue [solved this problem?], so, therefore, I think it is a broader issue. There are things that the industry can do, and we are in discussions within the industry …"*;
- *"… what we do as commercial organisations is compete for traffic … if we want the sort of diversity that I think everyone wants, in terms of as many players as possible in this local marketplace, the commercial organisations need to be as healthy as possible… "*;
- *"… Therefore, the ability of publishers to work, maybe, right across the industry at the back end, or for a number of media companies to get together to improve scale, has some potential benefits for the industry …"*;

On reading between the lines of those statements, I have formed the opinion that Fairfax thinking overlaps with Intran's **National Internet Platform**, with the latter plans addressing the essential matters of **_scale_** and **_driving traffic_**.

Assisting endeavours to maintain a vibrant public interest journalism sector is not the primary goal of the **National Internet Platform**. Rather, assistance would be a by-product, unwittingly like the lawn mower advertisement mentioned at the start of this submission.

The names Google and Facebook litter the Inquiry's transcript and although not named, are the likely organisations with the market power referred to in Terms of Reference (b). The Committee would be aware that computer software is fundamental to those organisations success and growth. Intran advises that computer software is the basis of its developments also. Furthermore, the corporations, which Senator Xenophon referred to as '***these market mammoths that have so much power***', the former was started by two men in a garage and the latter by a university dropout, and both not so long ago.

Written submissions appearing on the website after the May hearings (to 12 June) have reinforced Intran's views on using the taxation system and the *National Internet Platform*:

- The Fairfax Media answers to QoNs show that the opinions of Fairfax and Intran overlap even more so than above: On governments directing online expenditure mainly through Google, and most certainly on what seems a sinister practice of the ABC paying taxpayer funds to Google to enhance its search position.
- Reflecting on coordinated efforts by publishers in the past, the UTS response to QoNs contains a suggestion for a new platform, not unlike the *National Internet Platform*.

Agonothetes and Freelance Journalists

Although there is no plan for the Platform to employ journalists, some freelancers might enjoy an income stream by applying their detailed knowledge in a particular subject area by becoming an *Agonothete* (now there's a word that will have some people engaging in guesswork). In due course, the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, when approached, might arrange some introductions.

The MEAA might also introduce some journalists, freelance or otherwise, whom it considers could report appropriately and tell the story of the endeavours to see the *National Internet Platform* established in Australia.

Productivity Commission

In March 2015, the Federal Treasurer requested that the Productivity Commission undertake a research study into barriers to growth in Australian services exports. The point was made that while services account for approximately 70 per cent of the Australian economy, they represent only 20 per cent of Australia's total exports indicating there is scope for significant growth (in a media release the Treasurer used the words *'indicating massive export growth potential'*.

The PC's 309-page report is on their website:
http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/service-exports/report/service-exports.pdf

The only mention of video content for the internet having export potential came from Intran. The PC's report allocated just one sentence to it despite the submission containing the vision of a birth of a new industry. The PC failed to see that the absence of a facility which could export product, is a barrier.

Brian Savvas,
Managing Director, Intran Australia Pty Ltd,

[1] CV Brian Savvas

Education

Brian Savvas was born in Perth and educated at South Perth Primary and Perth Modern School from where he matriculated in Maths A and B, Physics, Chemistry, Technical Studies, English, History and Music. Brian was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study Engineering at the University of Western Australia, gaining an Honours Degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering. He subsequently completed a Degree in Computer Science from the University of Melbourne (the first class to graduate in Australia with that qualification). Brian also attended courses in Data Processing at Chisholm Institute of Technology (now Monash University), and Economics and Business Management at the University of Adelaide.

Defence Electronics

On graduating in engineering Brian worked in defence electronics in Melbourne designing military electronics and communications equipment, including Australia's first solid state man-pack radio, the single-sideband A512 replacing the A510 used in WW2. He led the Australian Army's Radio Frequency hazards evaluation. Brian was involved in R&D into frequency synthesizers for generating thousands of precise frequencies from a single crystal. Other areas of work involved equipment testing against Military Specifications, filter design and radio field-testing.

CSIRO

In the 1970s Brian was the South Australian Manager of the CSIRO Division of Computing Research. He headed the software development program in that state and was responsible for the division's facilities in Adelaide. He was a member of the team developing computer operating systems and CSIRONET, that organisation's nation-wide packet switched computer network (before the internet). He was responsible for the development CSIRONET's automated monitoring system. He also developed software applications and provided consulting to scientists and engineers. He is the author of various technical papers and reference documentation.

Professional associations

For two years in the 1970s, Brian was Chairman of the SA Branch of the Australian Computer Society and a member of its National Council. He was the Society's inaugal Professional Development Manager, serving in that role for six years. He also served on the SA Board of the Australian Information Industries Association.

Intran Australia Pty Ltd

Brian formed Intran Australia Pty Ltd in 1980 as a company developing computer software under contract and software product development, and later extending its activities into computer network design, installation project management and support. Intran's customers have included the Environment Departments SA & Commonwealth, National Parks and Wildlife Service SA & NSW, Agriculture Departments SA & WA, WA Tourist Commission, Council of Environment Ministers, the CSIRO, Rio Tinto Ltd (formerly CRA), SA Gas Company, Advertiser Newspaper, WA Environment Protection Authority, Department of Home Affairs and Environment, Assembly of Fire Authorities, Alstom IT, BHP Whyalla, Attorney-General's Department, SA Justice Information System, SA Police, Australian Submarine Corporation, Flinders University, SA Road Transport Department, SA Museum, State Bank of SA, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet, SA Housing and Urban Development, SACON for TAFE, SA Art Gallery, SANTOS, Finlaysons Lawyers, AeroSpace Technologies, EDS Australia, Vision Systems, Normandy Poseidon, DSTO, Oracle Systems, Whittaker Xyplex Communications (USA). Brian was a member of the United Nation's team which travelled to PNG in the mid-1980s to advise on Informaton Technology.

The National Internet Platform

Through Intran, Brian is pursuing a venture to see established a single, private sector, widely owned, ASX listed company that would operate a national platform for internet content, of many genres, created by talented Australians to take to a global market. If achieved, Brian expects the consequence will be the birth of an *Internet Content Industry* in Australia.

The Watershed Package

Not to be satisfied just with promoting the establishment of the *National Internet Platform*, Brian has developed a Package of *Components*, many complete. They will be offered to the **Platform.** The Components are listed in the document *Watershed Package Components Description Status table*.

Writing

Although his early professional working life has been in electronics, communications and information technology, Brian's leisure time reading, even from his teen years, has been mostly history: Of exploration, of technology and a lot of military. He is the author of **Australian Watershed**, published by Dymocks in 2012, of a number of other writings in various stages of development, and the creator of **August Watershed** (see below).

August Watershed

Brian created the concept of *August Watershed*, conducted the history research, wrote the script, lyrics and song melodies, commissioned the musical arrangement and orchestration, contracted the singers and recording studios, auditioned and selected the cast, and engaged a production company to do the filming. Production, which Intran funded, was completed in October 2015.

Brian also wrote the **Dynamic Map** computer software for **August Watershed** which runs under Microsoft Windows and on an iPad.

August Watershed tells the story of the first month of the First World War, August 1914, history's most significant month. Filmed in Adelaide, South Australia, it is a video production of 92 minutes. **August Watershed** has 35 pieces of purpose-composed music, of which 25 are songs with lyrics sub-titled in English (one in German). Its cast numbers more than 70 while contributions to the production have been from some 250 people in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Wellington, Newfoundland, The Republic of Ireland, Britain, France, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Here is a link to the trailer.

Further reading is in the documents:
- **August Watershed and its Dynamic Map brief description,**
- **August Watershed credits** and
- **August Watershed music**.

Watershed Model

In the *Watershed Model* Brian explains how the course of history can be changed in a short **Period** of time, in a small **Place**, by just a few **People.** An overriding requirement for an event to meet the model is that: **"History took the unlikely path and thus the world now stands on improbable ground**". The Battle of Gettysburg is not the only event in history which meets the requirements of the **Watershed Model**. So also do the events which took place at the end of August 1914, the first month of the First World War (see **August Watershed** above). In the lead up to the Battle of the Marne, the 3Ps can be identified:
- The short **Period** of time: Monday 31 August 1914 and a few days following;
- The small **Place**: A girls' school, Lycée Victor Duruy in the centre of Paris;
- The few **People**: General Joseph-Simon Gallieni, commander of the Garrison of Paris and staff in the school.

August 1914 is history's most significant month because the **angle of significance** for the events at the end of that month is larger than all others.

2 Watershed Package Components Description Status table 2017 05 31

The Intran *Watershed Package* contains a number of components, each dovetailing to others in a variety of ways.

Computer software is a common thread.

Component	Description	Status
National Internet Platform (NIP)	The goal is to see established a single, private sector, widely owned, national platform for internet content, of many genres, created by talented Australians to take to a global market.	Actively campaigning.
August Watershed™ (AugW)	A 92 minute video production with 35 pieces of music of which 25 are songs telling the story of the first month of the First World War, August 1914. Here is the trailer.	Complete. Will be made public on the NIP.
Dynamic Map for AugW	This enables an audience with an iPad to watch the movement of German, French, British and Belgian troops in Western Europe during August 1914 while viewing AugW with both screens being synchronized.	Complete. Available for download from iTunes.
The *Watershed Model*	A 3 minute video explaining the concept of the Watershed. It is pertinent not only to the novel AusW (see below) but also to many events in history, the most significant being the events of August 1914 as told in *August Watershed*.	Complete. Presently on YouTube but will be moved to the NIP.
Return of the Pinnacle	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Complete. Phase 2: Well advanced.
The Pinnacle	A song.	Complete. Will be made public on the NIP.
Australian Watershed (AusW)	A novel by Brian Savvas, originally published by Dymocks. Was on Amazon.	Complete. Will be made public on the NIP.
Canvas	A serial for the NIP, painting a grand story on the canvas of the Asia Pacific.	Phase 1: Complete Phase 2: Work in progress.
Dynamic Maps for *Canvas*	They enable an audience with an iPad to watch pertinent developments while viewing *Canvas* on an internet connected screen.	Complete. Will be uploaded to iTunes when *Canvas* is public on the NIP.
Gibraltar Retrocede	A story to create more content for the NIP.	Phase 1: Complete. Phase 2: Work in progress.
Dynamic Map for *Gibraltar Retrocede*	This enables an audience with an iPad to watch events pertinent to the penultimate scene in *Gibraltar Retrocede*.	It will take 1 hour to produce. Will be made public on the NIP.
The Pinnacles	Sporting events delivering content for the NIP providing a viable alternative to the Olympics, both financially and organisationally.	Phase 1: Commenced.

The Content Factory	A facility to constantly create content for the NIP, with actors interacting with purpose written software and some purpose built hardware and facilities.	Phase 1: Software complete. Phase 2: Will be to establish production hardware configuration and facilities.
Incident Protocol	This is the Intran proprietary data format for the Dynamic Maps and the Content Factory. Phases: 1=Specify, design and document. 2=Implement under Windows for replay. 3=Implement for live under Windows. 4=Implement on the iPad for replay. 5=Interface to TCP & UDP/IP stacks and for Multicasting. 6=Implement on the iPad for live. 7=Implement on the iaBoard (see below) for live and replay.	1=Complete. 2=Complete. 3=Complete. 4=Complete. 5=Work in progress. 6=Commenced. 7=Commenced.
Sino Watershed	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Commenced.
Mississippi Crossing	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Commenced.
Occupy The Palace	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Commenced.
Gender Contests	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Commenced.
Defend the Arts	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: To be commenced.
An Aussie national flag	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: To be commenced.
Old North Wales	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: To be commenced.
Pommie indignation	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: To be commenced.
iaBoard	Intellectual Property (a game changer).	Phase 1: Commenced.
iaStats	Intellectual Property.	Phase 1: Commenced.
Internet Content Industry	If the NIP is established, the consequence will be the birth of an **Internet Content Industry** in Australia.	Eternally: Work in progress.

[3] The address by Brian Savvas at the World Premiere of ***August Watershed*** in Melbourne on 20 November 2016, a 24-minute video, contains the advice that he will be pursuing a goal to see established an Australian ***National Internet Platform***.