

Brian Savvas second submission to the Public Interest Journalism Inquiry

I uploaded my first submission on 12 June and given the number 9. Now (7 August), the most recent submission has the number 68. By adding in the transcripts, verbal submissions and answers to questions on notice, we can count almost 90 documents in this Inquiry.

I have read all of them.

About two-thirds of the submissions describe Australia's media landscape, as seen by the authors, but make no recommendations on the matter of future funding of Public Interest Journalism.

About one-third of the submissions do make recommendations. Of these, I judge that, with the exceptions below, all involve funding from the public purse.

I note on page 49 of the transcript of the 11 July Hearing, in response to a witness suggestion involving subsidies, Senator Xenophon said, ***"We have a situation where we have a government that wants to reduce the deficit. Unless there is a revenue stream to offset that, I would imagine that there would be political resistance within the government."***

Invasion and defence

The names **Google** and **Facebook** litter the submissions and transcripts. They invade from out of left field with journalists, the media, publishers and advertisers seemingly helpless and hopeless in their own defence. Supporting submissions from left field are few in number.

About one-third of submissions are from academics, logically from journalism, media and law schools. Contributions from business, economics or information technology faculties were not evident to me.

Exceptions to funding from the public purse

Submission #19 page 4 from Deakin University:

Deakin recommendation 1: The applicability of the innovative approaches detailed above to the Australian media landscape should be explored urgently with a view to developing effective and independent funding mechanisms to sustain, and in some cases, incubate, rigorous reporting in the public interest.

Greg Hywood, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Fairfax Media:

Page 21 transcript of the 17 May Hearing:

... The issue is scale and whether media organisations in this country can work together—who knows what the mix would be—to get the right range of assets across multiple platforms to compete at scale with the major international over-the-tops: Google and Facebook. That is the essential bottom line. Unless we can compete effectively, tax breaks here and bits and pieces there are not going to address the fundamental problem. We need to be able to do that.

Paul Wallbank, transcript of the 17 May Hearing:

Page 44: The concentration of market power has left Australian media organisations saddled with a protected and well-paid breed of managers incapable of responding to the threats posed by US and Chinese social media networks, not to mention the streaming services like Netflix or the continuing catastrophic decline of advertising revenues.

Page 45: So it may well be that the best path for governments to bring diversity and new thinking into the media and to protect our domestic media industry is to encourage a new breed of entrepreneurs and a new breed of journalists that can harness the power of the 21st century technologies.

Brian Savvas, Intran Australia Pty Ltd, submission #9:

Under the heading 'Initial media reports' on page 2:

... 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.

Brian Savvas
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