

Jenny Allen

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 17 May 2021 11:38 AM
To: Rochelle Zurnamer
Cc: Jenny Allen; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request for further information – WIN News reports about a campaign to save local voices [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Rochelle,

Thank you for the opportunity to further respond to your query.

"how the report complied with the impartiality requirements in the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2015 (the Code)."

WIN believes the reports are compliant because they are referring to whole of industry which includes all regional broadcast, radio and print. We have not presented the stories as a WIN only issue. All representatives have had a right of reply as demonstrated in all reports on the issue of an industry in crisis. The reports include a broad section of the community and their political representatives who were interviewed about an industry in crisis and their views were broadcast.

The views of regional Members of Parliament and leaders are important because they speak on behalf of the communities they represent. Politicians are elected to represent the people. Their views represent the views of many and not just their own. Regional media has provided everyone from community members to leaders to politicians with a platform to express their views. WIN has provided everyone from all sides of politics and walks of life, with the opportunity to express their views on an industry in crisis.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind Regards



From: Rochelle Zurnamer <Rochelle.Zurnamer@acma.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 11 May 2021 8:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Jenny Allen [REDACTED]

Subject: Request for further information – WIN News reports about a campaign to save local voices [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email, to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) received on Friday 13 November 2020, about a *WIN News Canberra* broadcast on 21 October 2020.

The ACMA agrees that the issues facing regional television stations is newsworthy. The ACMA's focus, in this context is how the report complied with the impartiality requirements in the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2015 (the Code). It was not apparent in your letter how WIN thought the news report complied with the impartiality requirements.

We would be grateful for your additional comments on this point by COB 28 May 2021.

The Facebook link to the relevant report had been here:

https://www.facebook.com/154161871315519/videos/374749543950876/?so=channel tab&rv=all videos_card but now appears to be broken.

Should you require a different example to refer to, I have provided a link to WIN News Townsville report from 29 October 2020 <https://m.facebook.com/WINNewsTownsville/videos/save-our-voices-election-coverage/360110835261264/>.

For your information, the ACMA is also writing to other regional broadcasters with a similar request. We will also flag the matter with Free TV.

Please do not hesitate to call me or Jenny Allen if you have any questions about this request. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rochelle
Rochelle Zurnamer
Executive Manager
Content Safeguards Branch

Australian Communications and Media Authority

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 13 November 2020 5:09 PM
To: Jenny Allen [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]; Broadcasting [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Request for information - WIN News Canberra broadcast on 21 October 2020 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear Jenny,

Request for information - WIN News Canberra broadcast on 21 October 2020

To answer your question on how WIN's report complies with the impartiality provision of the Commercial Television industry Code of Practice we will introduce some background behind why this story is so important to all regional media and the communities they serve. The narrative is loud and clear with many media outlets and Government agencies taking it very seriously because it is an industry in trouble. Most recently the **Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**, [Australian Content Multi-Channel Obligations for Regional Broadcasters Regulation Impact Statement](#), which was tabled to get the multi-channel Bill passed, talks very clearly about an industry under immense pressure.

"regional and remote commercial television broadcasters are experiencing a period of significant disruption due to declining advertising revenue as advertisers follow audiences who have migrated online to access news and entertainment content."

Background:

Regional media is an industry in crisis and has been for almost a decade. Thousands of jobs have been lost in regional and rural areas, hundreds in media alone. The downward trajectory has spiralled recently due to the 2019/2020 bushfires and COVID-19. This has been widely reported by all media including WIN News.

Outdated media laws continue to cripple regional media with many reforms needed. This has been widely reported by media including WIN News.

On December 4, 2017, the then Treasurer, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, directed the ACCC to conduct an inquiry into digital platforms. The ACCC Digital Platforms Inquiry final report was published on 26 July 2019 and contained 23 recommendations. The report was seen to mainly address issues regional publishers' face, not the issues faced by broadcasters. This has been widely reported by media including WIN News.

The \$50m Public Interest News Gathering Fund saw 107 regional publishers and broadcasters receive funding in 2020/2021. The majority of funds being allocated to regional publishers. This has been widely reported by media including WIN News.

The Save Our Voices campaign was launched mid October 2020, to help save regional media from an untimely but impending death. This has been widely reported by media including WIN News.

Response:

WIN News is obligated to report on an industry in crisis – that industry just happens to be the regional media industry. Rural and regional communities are reliant on local news and regional media broadcasters provide a lifesaving public interest service to communities in need. The Government has been vocal about the need for regional news, communities and businesses across regional Australia have been equally vocal about the need for regional news – however without media reform, regional broadcasters will not survive and news services will be lost.

Members of Parliament from across the major political parties have been asked if they support the abolishing of the one to a market rule and their responses, including for, against and indifferent have been broadcast. It has also come to the attention of journalists that the future of regional broadcasters lies in the hands of Members of Parliament who do not understand the issues faced by regional broadcasters. When asked questions about media reforms, many MP's have admitted they do not understand the issues.

The reports on an industry in crisis has in fact exposed a degree of complacency as a result of misunderstood policies and proposed reform.

The response to questions about urgently needed media reform, are never answered. The ACCC Digital Platforms Inquiry and PING funding announcement are constantly spruiked and viewers are led to believe that both provide a long-term solution to the issues faced by regional media broadcasters. They do not.

Summary:

This is not a story solely driven by WIN News but a story that's being covered by many regional print and broadcast outlets. The topic is very front of mind with the public, politicians and government agencies as highlight in the story its self. It is any media outlets right to report using opinions and commentary from public and political figures on an industry in trouble even if it is their own. It would be remiss of WIN as one of regional Australia's leading media outlets to be the only one not reporting on a very serious issue at our own back door.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions.

Kind regards



From: Jenny Allen [redacted] >
Sent: Friday, 30 October 2020 12:58 PM
To: [redacted] >
Cc: [redacted] >; Broadcasting <[redacted]>
Subject: Request for information - WIN News Canberra broadcast on 21 October 2020 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear [redacted]

Request for information - WIN News Canberra broadcast on 21 October 2020

It has come to the attention of the ACMA that the above broadcast contained a report about current issues facing regional television broadcasters and discussions about associated potential policy responses.

The relevant report about media reform is available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/154161871315519/videos/374749543950876/?so=channel tab&rv=all videos card>.

The ACMA is seeking information from you about how this report complied with the impartiality provisions of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2015.

I would appreciate it if you could provide this information by **COB Friday 13 November 2020**.

Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny

Jenny Allen
Manager
Content Investigations Section

Australian Communications and Media Authority

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