

Free TV welcomes Treasury report on first year of the News Media Bargaining Code

Free TV Australia has welcomed the release of Treasury's report on the operation of the News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code, which finds that the Code has been successful in achieving its objectives during its first year of operation.

Free TV Australia chief executive Bridget Fair said: "Since the Code's inception, we have been pleased to see commercial broadcasters entering into agreements with Google and Meta, confirming the value of trusted Australian news to both the platforms and our audiences.

"Without the News Media Bargaining Code, these agreements and the payment for our valuable news content would not have been possible," Ms Fair said.

Free TV notes Treasury's recommendation that the Government should direct the ACCC to report on the bargaining power imbalance between news media businesses and digital platforms that use news content, as well as ongoing regular reviews of the Code.

In responding to this recommendation, the Government should also issue a statement that clearly sets out its expectations that digital platforms continue to enter and maintain agreements with all relevant news media companies. If these agreements are not reached, the Government should exercise its power to designate digital platforms under the Code.

This should include services operated by Google and Meta such as Google Search, Facebook Feed and Instagram and social video platforms, YouTube and Facebook Watch, that are a critical path to market for television news services.

"While the Code has so far been successful in incentivising platforms to enter into commercial agreements with news media organisations, this incentive must be maintained. We look forward to engaging with the Government as it develops its response to this review," Ms Fair said.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Bridget Fair
Chief Executive Officer
Free TV Australia
M: 0417 260 478
E: bfair@freetv.com.au



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