

WHY SUPPORT LOCAL & INDEPENDENT NEWS

Australia is one of the most concentrated media markets in the world. News business models sustained by advertising and user-fees have weakened, and audiences have shifted to digital news consumption over decades. Since 2019, the net number of newsrooms in Australia has decreased by 177 (Public Interest Journalism Initiative), leaving diverse and regional communities underserved.

However, in the midst of this global media crisis, local and independent news organisations are rising tall to provide quality, accessible, verified and locally relevant public interest news.

Local and independent publishers are the green shoots of an industry in transition. Many are emerging in news deserts, to deliver critical information that serves their diverse communities during the global pandemic, in times of environmental disaster, important elections, or when accountability from leaders and big economic players is more important than ever.

ABOUT LINA

The Local and Independent News Association (LINA) is an incorporated, ACNC registered, not-for-profit industry body. LINA was founded in 2021 by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), a DGR charity running for over 40 years, to support digital news publishers to increase the diversity, relevance and sustainability of news services in communities across Australia. LINA's vision is a vibrant and diverse news landscape providing news services to communities across Australia.

WHAT WE DO

LINA's work is focused on three strategic priorities: strengthening public interest journalism, providing hands-on, capacity building support and facilitating networking and shared services for digital newsrooms.

"LINA has connected Tasmanian Inquirer to a broader network of digital media startups, allowing us to learn from others' experience, represent the emerging sector to government, share tips of our own, and gain from shared programs and support we would otherwise not have time to develop on our own. LINA's work is invaluable"

Bob Burton, Tasmanian Inquirer

Over 2023/24, a third of all newsrooms supported by LINA increased their revenue and 53% generated a new revenue stream, supporting long-term sustainability. Forty-five percent launched a new service and 69% increased their number of subscribers, reaching diverse and previously underrepresented voices with the news they need.

SUPPORTING THE GREEN SHOOTS OF THE NEWS MEDIA

117 local and independent publications

37% launched in the past five years

Public interest journalism reaching over **9 million** people each month

2,000 otherwise untold local news stories produced each week

New staff hired in the communities of **30%** of newsrooms in 2023/24

LINA MEMBERS

LINA members are locally owned and controlled news publishers, creating news content by and for a defined community.

These members are in various stages of development, ranging from new start-ups to highly established newsrooms. LINA's role is to support all these members with resources, training and support, as well as informing effective media policy, to ensure their sustainability into the future.

LINA members are:

- Publishing high-quality news content that meets the **Australian Press Council and LINA Editorial Standards.**
- **Digital publications** that may also have a print publication and/or other distribution platforms.
- **Independently owned**, within the community they serve.
- Engaging journalists and contributors who are based within the location/community.
- Producing content that is community focussed, delivering public interest news and information on a broad range of topics to the community, and responsive to the needs and priorities of their community.

MEMBER DIRECTORY

NEW SOUTH WALES

- 1Earth Media
- Adelphi Printing - Galston, Glenorie & Hills Rural News, Dooral Roundup, Hills to Hawkesbury Community News
- A Home in the Outback
- Australian Rural and Regional News
- Bayside Beacon
- Braidwood Bugle
- Central Coast Council Watch
- CityHub Sydney
- Chinese Herald
- Coast Community News
- Coonamble Times
- News of the Area - Coffs Coast, Nambucca Valley, Port Stephens, Myall Coast
- Eastside Radio
- The Fold Southern Highlands
- The Fold Illawarra
- The Hawkesbury Post
- IndyNR
- The Illawarra Flame
- In The Cove
- Lismore App
- Manly Observer
- Mosman Collective
- New England Times
- North Sydney Sun
- The Point, Matchem News
- The Post
- PS Media
- State of Digital Publishing
- The Sydney Times
- TrueNorth
- Western Weekender - Parra News

QUEENSLAND

- 4RFM - Moranbah
- Echo News - Eatons Echo, Everton Echo, The Hills Echo
- Gympie Living
- Local News Publications - The Greater Springfield Times, The Lake News, Logan West News
- Newsport
- The Pineapple
- QNews
- Scenic Rim Media - Beaudesert Bulletin, Canungra Times
- South Burnett Online
- Sunshine Coast News
- Town Cryer Media - The Tamborine Bulletin, Yarrabilba Bulletin
- Western Echo

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- Fleurieu App & Coastline Magazine
- Murray Bridge News & Murraylands Life
- Naracoorte News
- The SE Voice
- Solstice Media - InDaily, InQueensland, InReview, SALIFE, CityMag

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Yanchee Online
- Post Newspapers
- Wangki Yupunanupurru Radio

NORTHERN TERRITORY

- 8CCC
- Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)

VICTORIA

- Australian Property Journal
- Brunswick Voice
- The Local Paper (8 area specific publications)
- Manningham Life
- Hyperlocal News - North West City News, CBD News, Docklands News, Inner City News, Southbank News
- Manningham Life
- Sunbury Life
- TWISK - This Week in St Kilda
- Waranga News
- Wimmera Mallee News - Warracknabeal Herald, The Horsham Times, Dimboola Banner, Rainbow Jeparit Argus
- The Westsider

TASMANIA

- Croakey
- New Norfolk & Derwent Valley News
- Tasmanian Inquirer
- Tasmanian Times

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

- Region Media - RiotACT, Region Riverina, About Regional, RiotACT China, Region Property Guide, Cape York Weekly

NATIONAL

- The Conversation
- The Jewish Independent
- The Klaxon
- National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS)
- Neos Kosmos
- Unmade
- 360info
- Missing Perspectives

SUPPORT THE WORK OF LINA

Help us build a thriving, diverse and sustainable Australian media landscape.



Strengthening Public Interest Journalism



Capacity Building Support



Networking and Services

Advantages for funders:

- All funding/support recipients and their projects are vetted by LINA to meet high standards in ethics and transparency.
- Flexible funding options.
- LINA is a Deductible Gift-Recipient.
- LINA facilitates funding so newsrooms maintain their editorial independence.
- Supporting public interest journalism also supports solutions across a range of other areas such as health, environment and inequality.

“Being a LINA member has made the impossible seem a bit more possible.”

Peri Strathearn, Murray Bridge News

Despite LINA’s positive impact on the news media landscape, there is still a lot of work to be done. The 2024 Digital News Report found that Australians are most interested in local news (64%), but only half of them say they are getting enough.

LINA is currently seeking investment on the following projects:

IMMEDIATE IMPACT: STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM

Build with AI

The Artificial Intelligence landscape is changing quickly and small businesses struggle to keep up with emerging trends and tools that can improve operational efficiency. LINA has partnered with Bastion Agency to develop an online symposium and 12-week program aimed at helping newsrooms test and trial AI tools with guidance from an expert mentor. Newsrooms will be supported to develop AI strategies, relevant editorial controls and tools to help identify misinformation such as deep fake images, to unlock efficiencies in operational and news gathering processes, without compromising editorial quality.

Seeking co-investment of \$60k.

Journalism programs

LINA administers a micro-grant program for news publishers, providing direct support for the production of investigative, extensive and/or solution-oriented public interest journalism. This is the type of in-depth reporting that requires additional resources, research, and multimedia production which often lies beyond the reach of small publishers. LINA supports the distribution of funds to publishers and collates reporting outcomes to share with funder.

Seeking co-investment of \$20k +

Our News. Your Voice: Coordinated fundraising campaign

The week-long matched funding campaign raised almost \$100,000 in contributions from local communities to 36 participating newsrooms. In addition, many readers committed to recurring payments, meaning newsrooms continue to benefit throughout the year. Newsrooms were trained in running digital campaigns and received support to implement donation tools on their websites. In 2025 we will build on this success, involving more newsrooms, growing local contributions and inviting funders to help exponentially grow the impact of the campaign with matched donations administered through LINA.

Seeking co-investment of \$10k +



The LINA team of staff and sub-contractors at the 2024 LINA Summit in Port Douglas, QLD.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF LINA

MEDIUM-TERM IMPACT: CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

Annual summit

Following two highly successful summits in Sydney 2023 and Port Douglas 2024, this three day, in-person event will be held in Melbourne in April 2025. Featuring networking, learning and sharing opportunities, the summit program focuses on capacity building and skills development for newsrooms, as well as facilitating important industry connections for publishers working in isolation within the communities they serve.

Seeking co-investment of \$5k +

Revenue growth program

Small newsrooms need support to help pilot and evaluate new income streams. Early in 2024 LINA piloted a 12-week revenue growth program, supporting newsrooms to develop new income streams with guidance from a news product mentor. Based on successful outcomes for participating newsrooms in the first year, LINA is seeking to repeat this activity with a fresh cohort of newsrooms in 2025. Funding will help subsidise program fees for small newsrooms and support access to expertise.

Seeking co-investments of \$20k +

“There is no doubt that LINA is helping to sustain a diverse news media ecosystem. The work of LINA and its members is vital to the communities you serve and what brings us together.”

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications

PERENNIAL IMPACT: SUSTAINABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

News REAM

Income from classified listings has moved online and away from news services, leaving a significant gap in revenue for news businesses and limited engagement with local audiences. In partnership with *Newsport*, LINA has a business plan to develop a plug-in for news websites, enabling a new revenue stream for news publishers. This bespoke publishing tool is conservatively estimated to return \$3.385 million in profit to the local news media industry over the next 10 years.

Seeking co-investment of \$120k

Design and technical audits

Many newsrooms start through necessity and enthusiasm for community building and evolve organically using tools that are no longer fit-for-purpose nor industry best practice. In partnership with Daylight, LINA is developing a scalable process for reviewing the tech stack used by individual publishers, making recommendations to curb technical costs and generate process efficiencies, saving newsrooms money and time. A concurrent design review will support audience engagement, ensuring websites don't become unwieldy and unmanageable.

Seeking co-investment of \$50k +



LINA members at the 2024 LINA Summit in Port Douglas, QLD.

2024-25 NEW MAJOR PROJECTS

PERENNIAL IMPACT: SUSTAINABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

Sustainability audit program

Newsrooms often struggle to step back and evaluate which activities are boosting their sustainability. Taking our lead from the successful Lion Publishers partnership with Google in the United States, LINA seeks to support Australian newsrooms to utilise a Sustainability Dashboard auditing the sustainability of business development activities and providing specific indicators on areas of focus for increased revenue.

Seeking investment of \$10k +

“LINA has done an exceptional job to service and represent its members. LINA has also provided so many opportunities to learn, not just about the publishing business but also for personal growth.”

Stella Yee, Manningham Life

Media literacy program

Local and independent newsrooms have the expertise and trust to provide education services within local communities that will grow media literacy among adults. LINA seeks to develop a program whereby local newsrooms are engaged to deliver media literacy programs to their own communities, supported by a centralised curriculum and teaching resources developed by a registered training organisation. In turn, newsrooms will grow their engaged audience and partnerships with local organisations, such as schools, libraries and councils, who will support the delivery of the program.

Seeking co-investment of \$100k +

“When it comes to local, community-based journalism, a quiet revolution is under way.”

Alan Sunderland

Accessing advertising revenue

While many news publishers are drawing income from online advertising, around 70% of LINA's member publishers are yet to unlock potential earnings through display advertising on websites, newsletters and multimedia channels. These publishers will be supported by a qualified coach to implement Google Ads Manager and adjust websites to meet industry standard sizing and reporting requirements for media buying agencies.

Seeking investment of \$80k

Emerging journalists pathways program

LINA has developed a skeleton concept to support emerging journalists beyond cadetships and into sustainable roles in hyperlocal newsrooms. This is a multi-year, scalable program involving partnerships with educational institutions, digital news publishers, other community media and individuals.

Seeking investment of \$40k +

“I would have quit long ago if not for LINA's support.”

Raphaella Crosby, The New England Times

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Please reach out to find out more about the work of LINA and how you can support local and independent newsrooms around Australia.

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