



OUR NEWS. YOUR VOICE.

A BLUEPRINT FOR COLLABORATIVE FUNDRAISING

How an industry association supported 32 of its members to raise their own funds from their own communities, signing up over 500 new regular givers over a one-week campaign.

Project Coordinator
Local and Independent News Association (LINA)

Fundraising Agency
Balanced Effect

Online Platform
PressPatron

LINA
Local & Independent News Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In April 2025, the Local and Independent News Association (LINA), a peak body supporting over 170 newsrooms across Australia, spearheaded the '**Our News, Your Voice**' fundraising campaign.

With the support of fundraising agency, Balanced Effect and platform partner PressPatron, the campaign was designed to provide a new way for LINA to support its member publishers, fully funding a centralised effort to develop the campaign, materials and tools each of the 32 participating members needed to then execute the campaign to their own communities, backed by LINA's larger scale marketing campaign.

This 7-day campaign collectively **raised \$87,592** over the week and **acquired 543 new monthly donors** and **82 new annual donors** that take the 12-month revenue for this annual campaign to \$131,000. A significant achievement for a short, concentrated campaign, particularly given the disruption of a federal election in the same week.

This collaborative, centrally supported model for distributed fundraising represents a groundbreaking approach in the Australian philanthropic landscape, offering a replicable pathway for other peak bodies and associations.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR INDEPENDENT NEWS



Australia's media landscape is one of the most concentrated globally, with traditional news business models struggling against shifting digital consumption habits, the rise of misinformation, and changes to social media platforms.

In this challenging information environment, independent and hyperlocal news publishers serve a vital role, providing critical, locally relevant, and fact-based journalism to communities often underserved by mainstream media.

LINA was established in 2021 to bolster the sustainability and growth of these "green shoots of a news industry in transition". Its mission is to increase the diversity and relevance of news services across Australia by offering to its members capacity-building support, expert advice, and access to critical third-party services.

The 'Our News, Your Voice' campaign was conceived as a direct response to the financial challenges faced by LINA's members, aiming to empower them to secure vital reader revenue and highlight the indispensable value of public interest journalism.

A COLLECTIVE FUNDRAISING MODEL



Drawing inspiration from the Institute of Non-Profit News' News match program in the USA, the 'Our News, Your Voice' campaign stands out as a pioneering fundraising model in Australia due to its collaborative, centralised body-led design. Rather than individual newsrooms fundraising in isolation, LINA provided a centralised, comprehensive support system, enabling smaller, often resource-constrained publishers to participate in a sophisticated national campaign.

Building on a successful pilot in 2024, Balanced Effect was engaged by LINA to provide strategic fundraising expertise, including seeking matched funding, promoting the campaign to LINA members, onboarding new members, refreshing creative assets, supplying campaign materials, communication templates, and developing a campaign timeline.

PressPatron served as the crucial online fundraising platform, handling member onboarding, donation processing, receipting, and reporting.

KEY INNOVATIONS:



- **Centralised Matched Giving:** A core difference a centralised effort makes is to allow LINA to cultivate large gifts from a growing major donor pool and use those gifts to stimulate giving across the network by offering matched giving. While the ambitious goal of \$80,000+ was not fully met, \$20,000 was secured from Tripple and the Menzies Leadership Foundation and these results are expected to grow in coming years.
- **Comprehensive Resource Portal (Google Site):** Balanced Effect developed a dedicated Google Site Portal, serving as a central, user-friendly hub for all participating members. This portal provided a wealth of resources, including a campaign timeline, instructions with videos on asset management and creation, social media and email templates. This standardised, accessible toolkit significantly reduced the burden on individual newsrooms and ensured consistency and professionalism across the diverse member base.
- **Emphasis on Regular Giving:** A deliberate strategy, highlighted during presentations at the LINA Summit in May 2025 by both Balanced Effect and PressPatron, was to educate publishers on the long-term benefits of acquiring regular givers over one-time donations. This focus proved pivotal to the campaign's overall success and sustainability.
- **Streamlined Online Giving:** PressPatron's role in onboarding members and facilitating the donation process provided a seamless and professional experience for donors and newsrooms alike. Each publication received donations directly from their communities via unique donation pages. Many of these publications are now utilising the fundraising portal ongoing, increasing vital funds to their organisations. The centralised giving platform meant donations were made directly to publishers, but also that LINA had visibility of donations coming in for matching purposes.

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION AND ENGAGEMENT



The '**Our News, Your Voice**' campaign ran for a 7-day period, from Monday, April 28, to Sunday, May 4, 2025. LINA extended the opportunity to participate to over 90 members, with 52 officially joining and 32 actively engaging in fundraising efforts.

The campaign materials provided were extensive and designed for easy customisation, allowing each newsroom to personalise their messaging while maintaining a consistent national brand. These included email and social media templates for various stages of the campaign, from announcement to outcome, including specific calls to action for matched giving days and World Press Freedom Day.

A significant challenge arose mid-campaign when a federal election was called, with the date set for May 3rd, six days into the campaign. This unexpected overlap impacted member resources and potentially overshadowed the crucial final days of the fundraising drive, particularly for small newsrooms. Despite this, the campaign's momentum and strategic foundation allowed it to achieve remarkable results.

REMARKABLE RESULTS: A SURGE IN REGULAR GIVERS



Total Funds Raised:

- Campaign Week: **\$87,592**
- Overall: **\$131,651** (incl. annualised regular giving)
- Matched Funding: **\$20,000**

Community Goal Achieved:

- **\$100,000** target for members was surpassed.

New Donors:

- A staggering 93% of donations came from new donors indicating broad reach and successful community engagement.

Donor Breakdown:

- 883 one-time donations averaging \$76.55 per gift.
- 543 new monthly donors, a 216% increase in monthly donors compared to the 2024 campaign and valued at \$69,882 per year.
- 82 new annual donors a 49% increase, contributing \$9,619

The 'Our News, Your Voice' campaign cultivated sustainable revenue streams for independent newsrooms and provided members with the tools and confidence to raise money.



“[On matched giving]... It's a finite offer. It's deadline driven. You know they've been thinking about it. You know we've had a couple of communications over the week and they've been thinking about it. And then suddenly, bang!”

**– Bob Burton, Editor,
*The Tasmanian Inquirer***

REMARKABLE RESULTS: A SURGE IN REGULAR GIVERS



The significant increase in regular givers is key to fostering long-term financial stability for independent newsrooms.

Donations to most newsrooms are not tax deductible, making regular giving a well aligned form of giving for donors, who are intrinsically motivated by their philosophical belief in the integrity of journalism and values alignment over tax deductibility.

LINA brings DGR1 eligibility for matched donors, however communities are motivated purely by supporting their local news service. The average gift was at the lower end of the spectrum by broader not-for-profit benchmarks at \$10 average monthly gift, however this is in line with a news subscription value and matches the media sector expectations.

The campaign also successfully raised awareness for LINA and its members, with media coverage from ABC Radio National, ABC Illawarra, ABC Hobart, and The Guardian, among others.

A key outtake from the campaign is capacity building for small newsrooms who were given the skills and confidence to call on their communities for support. In a sector unaccustomed to fundraising for itself, learning how to deliver a digital fundraising campaign and establishing donation processes for future, self-driven actions increases the sustainability of essential news businesses ongoing, giving this campaign perennial impact.

CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS



While highly successful, the campaign encountered some challenges:

- **Matched Giving:** The goal of securing \$80,000+ in matched funding was not fully realised, with \$20,000 secured. This highlighted the need for longer-term cultivation of philanthropic relationships for LINA, as it establishes a reputation in circles of philanthropy.
- **Federal Election Impact:** The unexpected timing of a federal election being called, occurring six days into the campaign, likely impacted member resources and attention. Future campaigns will carefully consider timing to avoid such overlaps where possible.
- **Member Variability:** While 32 members actively participated, there was significant variability in funds raised, ranging from \$20 to \$15,221 per newsroom. This suggests opportunities for further sharing of best practices among high-performing members.

A BLUEPRINT FOR AUSTRALIAN PEAK BODY FUNDRAISING



The 'Our News, Your Voice' campaign represents a compelling case study for innovative, collaborative fundraising in Australia.

The development and successful utilisation of the Google Site Campaign Portal means it can be readily adapted and used for future campaigns, providing an enduring asset for LINA and its news publisher members.

Most significantly, the profound increase in regular givers acquired during this short, intensive campaign demonstrates a powerful model for building sustainable revenue in the non-profit sector. In the long term, this type of giving is much more beneficial to LINA members over time, improving return on investment of fundraising and improving their ability to plan ahead with known future income.

This peak body-led approach, offering centralised support, shared resources, and a strategic focus on regular giving, provides a unique and effective blueprint that can be adapted by other associations and umbrella organisations seeking to empower their members through collective fundraising initiatives.

TESTIMONIALS



"We are very happy with our results, especially those who have chosen to continue to support on a monthly/annual basis. Back Country Bulletin news is very new, so it is really heartening to know it is appreciated."

– **Krista Schade, General Manager, Back Country Bulletin & The Riverine Grazier**



"It's an awareness raising thing and you might get them to donate the first time but I think it just puts the thought in the back of their head – you're supporting Brunswick Voice...you're supporting a growing movement of independent publishers.... you're not just financially supporting one publication but you're actually showing that you value hyper local news all around Australia and the role they play."

– **Mark, Editor, Brunswick Voice**



"Another fantastic action from LINA. Just terrific, thank you. The results absolutely blew me away."

– **Kim Smee, Editor, Manly Observer**

CONCLUSION



The 'Our News, Your Voice' 2025 campaign was an outstanding success, not just in the funds raised, but in its collaborative approach and acquisition success of new regular givers.

By equipping its members with comprehensive tools, strategic guidance, and the compelling incentive of matched funding, LINA has demonstrated a powerful and replicable model to build capability within their network and create a sustainable income stream. This campaign sets a new benchmark for collaborative fundraising innovation in Australia.

In 2026 we will be putting even more support in place for participating newsrooms so they can do even better engaging their community and raising the funds they need. Given the crisis facing the news industry, the need to respond to mis and disinformation in communities and the reliance on local news media for emergency response and community resilience, the results from 2025 fortify our resolve to expand this campaign next year. We've already started talking to the donors who will be making the matched gifts that will take next year to even greater heights!