

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

**LINA**  
Local & Independent News Association





Part-time content creator Orlando Rubuntja won the Young Leaders Award on behalf of CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Association) at the most recent First Nations Media Awards. CAAMA also took home the Organisational Excellence Award.



# Acknowledgement of Country



The Local and Independent News Association (LINA) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We acknowledge First Nations' sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities by Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present. We support and contribute to the process of reconciliation.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been telling stories for millennia and we continue this rich tradition of sharing, protecting and enhancing culture. We honour the dedication and expertise of First Nations newsrooms and their work to strengthen and connect communities.

# About LINA

The Local & Independent News Association (LINA) is a national industry association supporting local and independent digital news publishers. Its job is to help news publishers increase the diversity and relevance of news services in communities across Australia. It seeks to grow existing, and encourage new, local media entrants by providing capacity building support, expert advice and access to critical third-party services, providing a deep level of hands-on support to its members.

LINA was established in 2021 in response to industry demand for representation and coordination to assist small digital publishers to build their sustainability and provide quality, public interest news services to their communities. With guidance from an industry-based advisory group, a foundational Board was formed and hallmarks of membership, including editorial standards.

LINA's role is to help news publishers provide local, diverse and trusted news sources to Australian communities and to grow workforce participation in sustainable local journalism in the process. To do this, we focus on capacity building support and generating economies of scale across a collective of independent businesses.

LINA began accepting membership applications in September 2022. As of 30 June 2025 it represents 98 publishers with a combined 166 mastheads.

LINA is an incorporated, ACNC registered, not-for-profit association with an independent Board of Directors. Its work is supported by a broad range of industry partnerships, funding support from the Commonwealth Government and operational support from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia to increase economies of scale across the media industry.



Delegates at LINA's 2025 Annual Summit

# Our key pillars



## Strengthening public interest journalism

LINA works to ensure that engaged local audiences are served with independent, accessible, original, high-quality public interest news reportage, covering issues and information important to communities.

### Actions in this area in 2024-25 included:

- Developing a Newsroom Starter Kit to provide comprehensive guide to launching a newsroom, as well as numerous guides and resources supporting editorial policies
- Partnership with the Australian Associated Press (AAP), allowing for LINA members to access to state, national and world coverage at subsidised rates
- Group membership for Australian Press Council to ensure professional editorial standards are met and that audiences and publishers have a mechanism for handling complaints
- Continuation of a sub-editing service for newsrooms' use on-demand, with new fully-subsidised option for intern written work and smoother booking system
- Continuation of a strategic partnership with the ABC to share knowledge and relevant resources
- Distribution of micro grants and Environmental Reporting Grants to fund the production of public interest journalism stories

- Delivering training sessions on topics including impact tracking, multimedia content engagement, findings from reports like the Digital News Report, Medianet Australian Media Landscape Report, and more
- Storyleads calendar: monthly article ideas for news publishers, spanning a twelve month period. Included are ideas based around the time of year, holidays and revenue-based content



## Building capacity of newsrooms

LINA provides publishers with access to training events, resources, tip sheets, templates, guides and playbooks to support local and diverse newsrooms. This includes best-practice business structure advice, including templates on practical issues such as social media terms of use and relevant policies. In addition, LINA facilitates education and up-skilling on key topics.

***"There is no way funding bodies etc will listen to me, I'm too small. But collectively we are huge! LINA is crucial for us to all have our voices heard and to advocate for us."***

Susie Williams, Fleurieu App



The Riverine Grazier staff

### Actions in this area in 2024-25 included:

- Providing on-demand, 1:1 technical and IT support
- Continued one-on-one support for newsrooms to implement and use 'Impact Tracker' to support communicating their value to funders and advertisers
- Coordinating the week-long awareness and fundraising campaign *Our News, Your Voice*, for the second year raising \$131K for newsrooms
- Monthly LINA webinar sessions (shop-talks) across a number of topics from monetising AI bots to media kit improvements
- Sharing of resources and programs of relevance to newsrooms, like Google webinars, conferences, information packs etc
- Regular facilitation of discussion in Slack channel for LINA newsrooms
- Hosting of LINA's Annual Summit event with subsidised ticketing and travel support for LINA members, offering a plethora of panels, workshops and sessions relevant to independent local newsrooms
- Access to newsroom journey map checklists for early, growing and mature news publishers, with check-listed and regularly updated areas for growth and improvement

# Our key pillars



## Growing financial sustainability of member publishers

LINA supports news publishers to diversify and improve revenue streams through collective fundraising and advertising projects, discounts to products and services, subsidies and more.

### Actions in this area in 2024-25 included:

- Continued partnership with Bastion Agency to run a 12 week Revenue Growth Program for eight newsrooms
- Coordination of *Our News, Your Voice* week-long collective fundraising campaign for LINA newsrooms
- Grant application support, including for government programs as well as LINA micro-grants
- Sharing of Google Analytics 4 and Monks program, to provide a virtual and free accelerator program for news publishers. The program looked into growing subscriptions, improving ad performance and driving business growth
- Partnership with Broadstreet Ads, with LINA members gaining access to the ad manager to book and manage advertising campaigns - as well as 1:1 installation support
- Discounted partners including Newsletter Glue, KBI Insurance, Canva Pro, Nurture HR consulting and more described later in this report



## Building LINA's sustainability and capability

In its third year of operation, LINA ensured it remains well placed to support news publishers through member retention and maintaining funding.

### Actions in this area in 2024-25 included:

- Launching a new LINA website, focused on easier access to resources for members, and increase visibility and understanding of LINA's work
- Welcoming 55 additional newsrooms since July 2024 - membership is steadily growing
- 100% staff retention - all LINA staff members remaining employed
- Consistent, positive feedback from LINA member newsrooms citing the value of a LINA membership to the sustainability of their news business



Sean Car, Hyperlocal News

## Representation and recognition

LINA champions work produced by local independent publishers through representation in policy forums, support with award recognition and impact tracking.

### Actions in this area in 2024-25 included:

- Direct engagement with relevant government representatives and the Australian Communications and Media Authority
- Written submissions on relevant policy consultations and participation in academic, stakeholder and funding forums
- Involvement in numerous policy discussions around the News Media Assistance Program, the News Media Relief Fund, the News Bargaining Incentive, the social media inquiry and other areas outlined in the policy section of this report



# Chairperson's report

It's been another turbulent year in media policy. Global tech negotiations, national and international elections and rapid developments in AI continue to challenge and preoccupy publishers. These shifts underscore the vital role of strong, independent newsrooms that serve communities with trusted information.

Throughout the election period, LINA worked to ensure local and independent news remained central to public discussion. We welcomed the Hon Anika Wells as Minister for Communications and thank her for continuing the strong support shown under the Hon Michelle Rowland. I also acknowledge the Commonwealth of Australia for its ongoing support of LINA and our members, and for meaningful, cross-party consultation on industry issues.

When local news disappears, communities lose trust and democracy weakens. Australia's media concentration and regional news decline make this threat real, not theoretical. Community media and independent publishers are vital to rebuilding trust, strengthening democracy, and holding power to account.

LINA's initiatives this year, including the Newsroom Starter Kit, Broadstreet advertising partnership and targeted grant programs, have delivered practical support with real impact.

My sincere thanks to Executive Director Claire Stuchbery and her team for their commitment and innovation in supporting newsrooms across Australia.

Thank you also to the LINA Board for its leadership and insight. Our September strategy planning day refined LINA's priorities: continuing to strengthen public interest journalism and newsroom capacity, with a renewed focus on financial sustainability and recognition of members' work.

This year we farewelled founding Board member Alan Sunderland and thank him for his substantial contribution, particularly his work on LINA's editorial policy, which continues to guide our membership. Nelson Yap stepped down due to the successful sale of Australian Property Journal and was replaced by Louise Cornege bringing expertise from her role as Director of Engagement at The Conversation. We also welcomed Jordan Guiau to the Board, who brings valuable expertise in navigating technology and digital changes in the media industry, further strengthening the skills and perspective of our leadership team. It remains a pleasure to work alongside this dedicated group who voluntarily share their knowledge and expertise to guide LINA to a sustainable future and the news industry to surer footing.



Jon Bisset at Board Planning Day



**Jon Bisset**

**Chair**

# LINA Board

The LINA Board held **seven meetings** in 2024-25, including one in-person planning day in Sydney.



## **JON BISSET, CHAIR – APPOINTED FEB 2022**

Jon is the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). He is also CEO of RPH Australia, the peak body for the Radio Reading Network, a Non-Executive Director of the Community Council for Australia, Infoxchange and Spots and Space.



## **PERI STRATHEARN – APPOINTED NOV 2022**

Peri Strathearn is the founder and managing editor of Murray Bridge News. He has worked as a journalist since 2010, previously undertaking reporting roles for Fairfax and Australian Community Media (ACM).



## **JACKY BARKER – APPOINTED FEB 2022**

Jacky is the founder of *In the Cove* since its launch in 2012. Jacky has also worked as a solicitor, and is a director of Got a Pen and a founding member of The Sydney Library of Things.



## **NELSON YAP – APPOINTED SEPT 2022, STEPPED DOWN NOV 2024**

Nelson Yap is the editor and publisher of Australian Property Journal (APJ). Nelson is a member of the Australian Press Council (APC) and co-chair of the Public Interest Publishers Alliance (PIPA).

Find more about board members on [LINA's website](#).



## **EMMA BONES – APPOINTED FEB 2022**

Emma is currently the General Manager of the Sydney Environment Institute. She is a registered Chartered Accountant and was previously Director, Ideas at the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism.



## **ALAN SUNDERLAND – APPOINTED FEB 2022**

Alan is a journalist, author and editorial consultant with more than forty years' experience working for the ABC and the SBS. He has won two Walkley Awards. He is the Executive Director of the international Organisation of News Ombudsman (ONO) and is a member of the Walkley Public Fund Committee.



## **CLAIRE STUCHBERY – APPOINTED MAY 2022**

Claire Stuchbery joined LINA from 1 July 2022. Previously, Claire has worked in policy and stakeholder engagement for First Nations Media Australia, as well as in a range of senior management roles with the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF).



## **LOUISE CORNEGE – APPOINTED NOVEMBER 2024**

Louise Cornegé has more than two decades of experience in marketing and communications in the media and publishing including roles at Allen & Unwin, Pan Macmillan, the ABC, and the University of Queensland. She now works at The Conversation as Director of Engagement.



Left image:

Left to right – Jacky Barker, Peri Strathearn, Claire Stuchbery, Emma Bones

Right image:

Left to right – Jacky Barker, Peri Strathearn, Jon Bisset, Clare Hastings, Adrian O'Hagan





# Executive Director's report

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2024-25 has brought both growth and stability to LINA. Our membership grew around one-third again and the range of services and partnerships we offer to support news publishers in their work has expanded significantly, as detailed throughout this report.

The information landscape continues to shift as we've navigated responses to AI generated content and summaries, a rising creator economy, challenges to the very notion of what 'news' is and is not, localised and global mis and disinformation campaigns and the very real and immediate need to support communities through increasingly common extreme weather and climate events. Technology is changing, audience expectation is changing, distribution models are changing and throughout these changes to the communications environment, core journalistic processes remain essential to trust.

Public interest journalism produced under professional editorial standards to meet the information needs of the communities our member publishers serve lies at the very heart of everything we do at LINA. We support newsrooms to deliver reliable services to their communities.

Amid all this change, our little team at LINA was stable this year and I'm proud to share the work this ardent crew have created together throughout the year. I acknowledge the support provided by the numerous partners and stakeholders who have got around small and independent publishers through LINA. We are heartened by the number of organisations and companies who have welcomed LINA's emergence in the news industry over the past couple of years and worked alongside us to strengthen the diversity of news media in Australia - thank-you.

**Claire Stuchbery**  
LINA Executive Director

# LINA staff team

**Claire Stuchbery, Executive Director**  
Commenced July 2022

**Clare Hastings, Executive Support Officer**  
Commenced February 2024

**Nell O'Shea Carré, Policy & Strategic Communications Officer**  
Commenced January 2024

**Adrian O'Hagan, Technical Manager**  
Commenced June 2024

**Emma Marshall, Membership Engagement Coordinator**  
Commenced August 2023

**Zahra Khalid, Data & Insights Analyst**  
Commenced October 2023

**Evie Dinkelmeyer, Communications Officer**  
Commenced April 2024

**Adam Weatherhead, Consultant, Newsroom Starter Kit**  
March, April 2025



LINA staff at the 2025 LINA Summit in Melbourne  
From left: Adrian O'Hagan, Claire Stuchbery, Emma Marshall, Nell O'Shea Carre, Evie Dinkelmeyer, Clare Hastings



LINA staff at team planning day 2024  
From left: Evie Dinkelmeyer, Adrian O'Hagan, Claire Stuchbery, Emma Marshall, Nell O'Shea Carre, Clare Hastings, Zahra Khalid

# About LINA members

LINA members are locally owned and controlled news publishers, creating high-quality news content that meets the LINA Editorial Standards, by and for a defined community. While publishers might also have a print publication and/or other distribution platforms, LINA members are digital-native and our member services focus on strengthening online news distribution and responding to audience demand in digital spaces.

LINA membership is open to all digital news publishers who meet our membership requirements, however most of our services are tailored to growing small businesses with the majority of LINA members having an annual income less than \$350k and operating with fewer than five staff.

A full list of LINA members can be viewed on our website's [Member Directory](#).

*"There's a global shift toward trusting people within our own communities, often over experts and politicians. We want to receive information from 'people like us'"*



98 PUBLISHERS  
166 NEWSROOMS

# Hallmarks of LINA membership

To be accepted as members of LINA, publishers must:

- Publish quality news content that meets the LINA Editorial Standards and Australian Press Council Standards of Practice;
- While news businesses might also have a print publication and/or other platforms, LINA members are digital native;
- Be independently owned (whether not-for-profit, sole traders, partnerships, cooperatives or companies, these publications are owned and operated within the community in which the organisation serves);
- Engage journalists and contributors who are based within the organisation's location/community; and
- Be community focused, delivering public interest news and information on a broad range of topics to the community and responsive to the needs and priorities of the identified community

*"Well-functioning economies rely on widely accessible, verified, and trustworthy information ... Public interest journalism provides a vital supply of such information."*

Open letter from High Level Panel Forum  
on Information and Democracy



Mark Phillips,  
Brunswick Voice



Dr Mary Jo Fortuna *Waranga News*,  
Angela Priestley *Women's Agenda*



Delegates at LINA's 2025 Summit



In the Cove staff, Sydney NSW



Editor of *The Conversation*,  
Misha Ketchell

# Membership overview

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

## Publisher growth in 2024-25

**31%**

Grew their staff teams in 24-25

**3.5**

Average number of staff per newsroom at FTE. up from 2.8 in 23-24

**51%**

Believe trust in their newsroom has increased over the past year

**12 mill**

Website visitors reached by LINA newsrooms collectively in June 2025

**10%**

Average growth for newsletter distribution

**\$50K**

Average revenue growth per newsroom

Without local-based newsrooms ... accountability just disappears."

Troy Dodds, Editor of Western Weekender

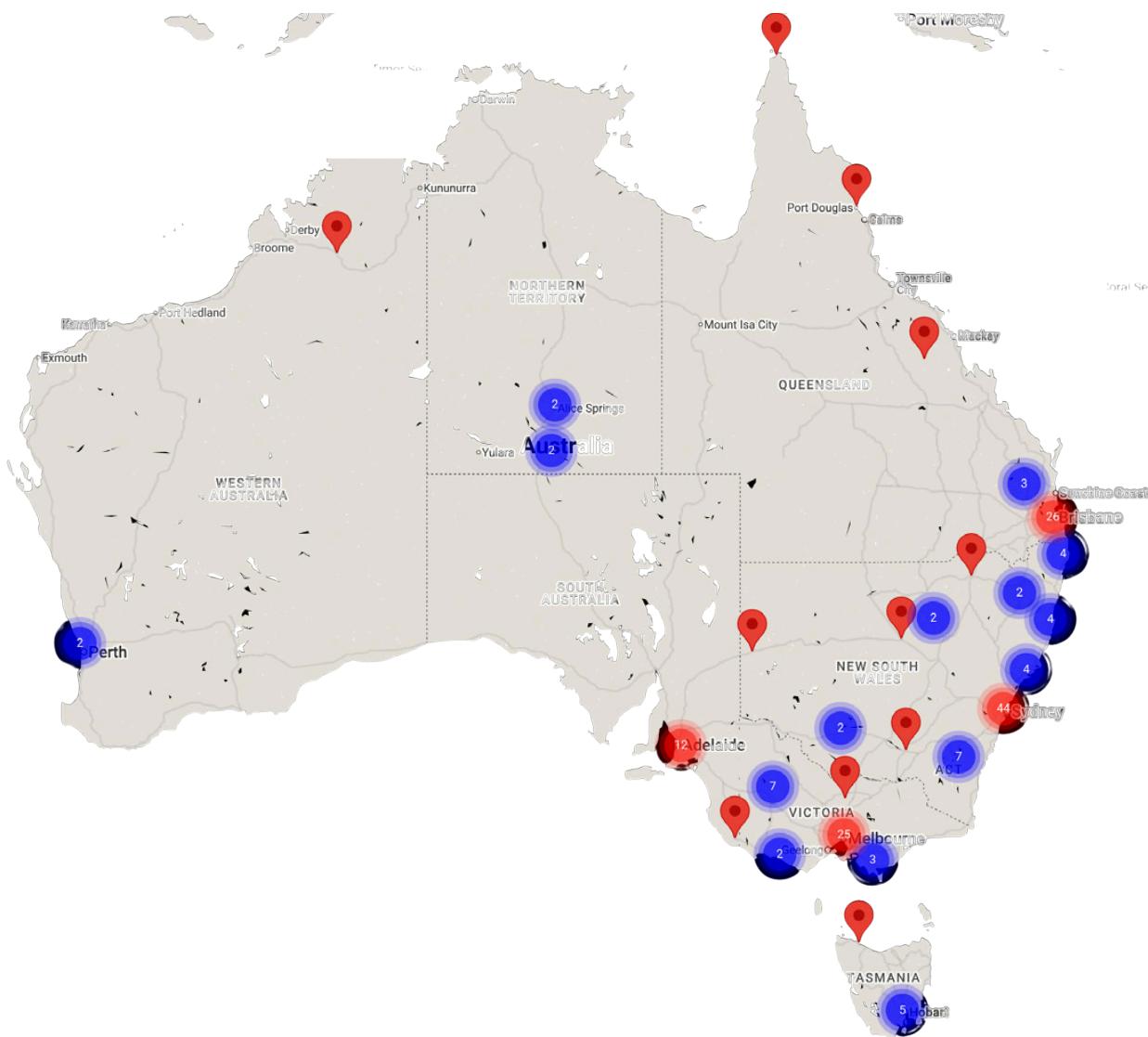
Findings from respondents to LINA's 2024-25 Annual Member Survey, snapshot of 30 June 2025

Jason Cherry, East Regional View



# Membership overview

LINA is proud to represent members across all of Australia's state and territories.



**"Hyperlocal journalism really helps keep misinformation and disinformation at bay. If local people with real responsibilities and obligations report truthfully in their region, it has to help the overall balance."**

Sam Cullen, *Newspoint*

# 2024-25 Highlights

## Revenue building: Broadstreet Ads

Broadstreet is a digital advertising platform offering flexible ad formats and LINA members have been quick to monetise the opportunities it facilitates.

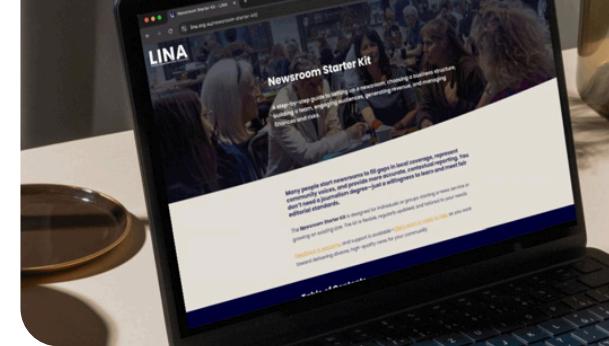
In the last twelve months LINA's Technical Manager, Adrian O'Hagan has assisted with the implementation, onboarding and training of 18 members, representing 27 newsrooms, with various stages of setup. Publisher feedback has been positive, with a number crediting the implementation with being able to generate previously-unavailable income.

Publishers can manage all website, newsletter and audiovisual advertising inventory, monitor performance and provide advertisers with detailed reports.



*"I've been able to sell actual concepts, versus selling static ads."*

Troy Dodds from Western Weekender sold a \$1200 digital ad with Broadstreet during an advertising session at LINA's 2025 Summit



## Green shoots: Newsroom Starter Kit

The Newsroom Starter Kit is LINA's step-by-step guide for individuals or groups launching or growing a news service, providing comprehensive support across operations, revenue generation, and risk management.

Designed to help newsrooms fill local information gaps, the Kit offers tailored, regularly updated guidance on choosing a business structure, engaging audiences, and ensuring financial sustainability.

By guiding founders toward long-term viability and robust operations, the Kit directly supports the local news industry by helping to fill information gaps, counter the decline of local news, and strengthen civic engagement in communities.

***"Local media is not dying, it is transforming ... there is certainly consensus that there is a direct correlation between the health of local news organisations and civic participation."***

Poynter Institute Summer Report 2024

# Growing public interest journalism

Applications for microgrants were available throughout 2024-25, supporting publishers to cover investigative, multi-platform and/or solutions-oriented reporting projects that lie beyond the scope of their day-to-day journalism activities. The application process allows a maximum two week turnaround on requests for support and a maximum 12-week window to complete the project. **In 2024-25, 17 projects were supported across 12 publishers, distributing a total \$29,730 to LINA member publishers.**

LINA member newsrooms were also invited to apply for funding toward solutions oriented journalism projects around environmental reporting. In particular, to counter misinformation and spark community conversation around renewables and environmental issues. Fourteen projects were approved and published during the year.

## Borumba Pumped Hydro dams will be 'extremely safe'. Operator responds to local unease

VIVIENNE WYNTER

The Borumba Pumped Hydro project operator is reassuring local residents that the new upper dam and enlarged Lake Borumba dam will be safe and built to withstand 'extreme and prolonged weather events'.

Queensland Hydro was responding to concerns from residents and one dam expert that a dam Failure Impact Assessment (FIA) was not conducted before the state government decided to proceed with the project (yet to be approved by the federal government).

Landholder and cattle grazier Glenda Pickersgill said her acreage on the Mary River between Kandanga and Amamoor flooded regularly.



## Case studies

### CABLING COWBOYS AND REGULATORY GRIDLOCK

IN THE COVE  
IN THE COVE IN THE KNOW

*In The Cove* published an investigation into the company QC Communications, dubbing them the 'cabling cowboys'. The cabling cowboys are responsible for months of widespread property damage in Lane Cove, Sydney. Damage included a destroyed yard, and \$70-80 thousand in flood damage for two separate residents. Local authorities were unable to step in due to federal legislation (the Telecommunications Act 1997) which grants powers that "trump local measures". *In the Cove* highlighted this regulatory gridlock, demanding accountability for the abandoned works. This series by journalist Jack Kelly was nominated in the 2025 mid-year Walkley awards.

### BORUMBA PUMPED HYDRO DAM SAFETY DEBATE



*The Pineapple* published an investigation into the Borumba Pumped Hydro project, contrasting Queensland Hydro's reassurance of "extremely safe" dams with expert concerns. The report highlighted the delay of the Failure Impact Assessment, with a hydrology expert warning of a "huge risk of engineering failure and flooding" due to the geological setting. *The Pineapple* balanced this by noting that Engineers Australia maintained the overall safety risk is "very low".

Hawkesbury Post / October, 2024

## News

### PFAS in the Hawkesbury: Unseen, Unchecked, Unstoppable



In a significant policy shift, the NSW government announced in September that it would begin testing the state's drinking water for per- and polyfluorochemicals, known as PFAS - compounds linked to cancer and other health issues. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the results of these tests, the government's rivals continue to assure the public that drinking water in Sydney and the Blue Mountains is safe.

This sudden and overdue reversal follows a year-long investigation that uncovered PFAS levels exceeding government guidelines in drinking water across the state.

Jack Kelly, *In the Cove* Walkley award nominee

*"Without the grant I could not have contracted a journo to do all the leg work or covered the costs of obtaining liquidator documents from the ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission)."*

*"As a result of our reporting, the Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland has asked ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority) and TIO (Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Limited) to explain. We discovered this is a common issue across local government areas due to the broad powers granted under the Telecommunications Act."*

Jacky Barker, *In the Cove*

### THE HAWKESBURY POST PUBLISHED A FIVE-PART INVESTIGATIVE SERIES.



The outlet looked into the cancer-causing chemical PFAS which had spread in the Hawkesbury region.

Originating from an RAAF airbase, the chemical had infiltrated the water supply in the town of Richmond. The series looked into failures by the RAAF and government authorities, as well as the health implications for the affected community. The NSW Government tested most of the state's drinking water following this report.

*"Thanks for keeping us informed on the progress of this debacle. Without the Post we would be left in the dark."*

The Post reader Christine Paine via Facebook, Sept 2024

# 2024-25 Highlights



aap

## ELECTION COVERAGE SUPPORT

LINA compiled a list of resources and services publishers can use to assist with election coverage. These include guidance on solutions journalism, utilising ABC legal pre-publication review and AAP's LINA member election package, as well as external tools.

LINA members accessed election specific AAP stories and images for an exclusive, discounted rate.

Publishers also participated in a 'prepare for elections' training session with Google focused on tools for reporting, leveraging coverage to drive revenue and newsletter sign-ups.

## REVENUE GROWTH PROGRAM

In partnership with Bastion Agency, LINA offered a Revenue Growth Program for a second year, to enhance the long-term sustainability and growth of news publishers. This initiative equipped newsrooms with the knowledge and skills necessary to grow new revenue streams.

The program ran from February to April 2025 involved eight newsrooms in a structured 12-week process; four weeks planning and eight weeks piloting. Participants received 1:1 coaching from industry expert mentors Jocelin Abbey, Kristin Carlos, and AX Mina.

## Outcomes:

**\$3.5K**

Generated in two months  
from TikTok content

**NEWSROOM A**

**\$2K**

Advertising revenue in  
two weeks from new eDM

**NEWSROOM C**

**+24%**

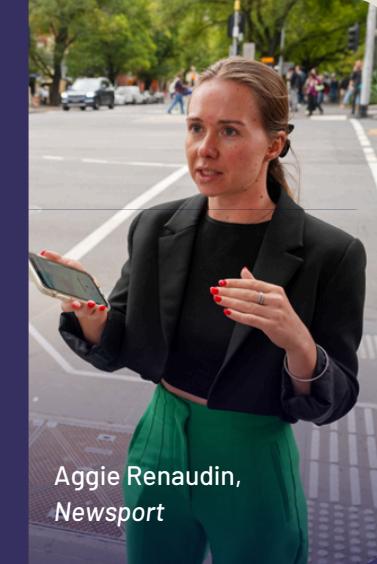
Increase in revenue bookings  
after updated media kit

**NEWSROOM B**

**+55K**

Increase in value of paid  
membership platform

**NEWSROOM D**



Aggie Renaudin,  
Newspot



Melanie Grevis-James,  
Echo News

## BUILDING CAPACITY | LEARNING AND SKILL BUILDING PROGRAMS

In 2024-25 LINA coordinated nine industry 'shop-talk' sessions including discussion topics and presentations on:

- Insurance with KBI Group
- News Media: From Platforms to AI
- Tech LINA members are using
- Medianet - 2024 Australian Media Landscape Report
- How Canadian newsroom 'The Green Line' monetised solutions journalism
- Using multimedia content for engagement
- Impact tracking
- LinkedIn and newsrooms
- Digital News Report 2025 briefing
- HR and team building training
- Legal fundamentals

## Raising awareness | Our News, Your Voice campaign

LINA's annual *Our News, Your Voice* campaign ran from 28 April to 4 May as a collaborative fundraising and awareness week for local and independent news services. .

LINA provided comprehensive tools and strategic guidance to 32 member newsrooms in partnership with Balanced Effect and PressPatron. The campaign focussed in particular on engaging regular givers to ensure long-term sustainability.

Despite the disruption of a federal election being called mid-campaign, the 7-day drive was highly successful, raising **\$87,592** (with total revenue reaching **\$131,651** when including annualised regular giving) and acquiring **543 new monthly donors**.

LINA and Balanced Effect researched and shortlisted potential Trusts and Foundations to secure matched funding, with generous commitments from Tripple and the Menzies Leadership Foundation.

This was the second collective fundraising campaign coordinated by LINA with improvements to the program including:

- An emphasis on regular giving
- Comprehensive Resource Portal (Google Site)



**+\$131k**

**raised for newsrooms**

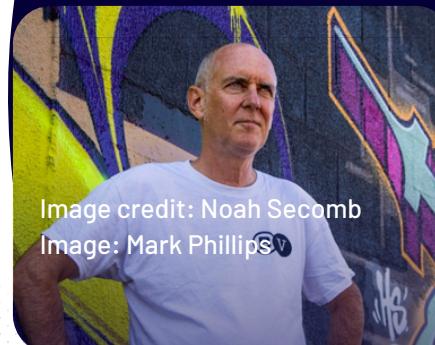
**543**

**new monthly donations**



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

Krista Schade, *Back Country Bulletin* & *The Riverine Grazier*



*"It's an awareness raising thing ... 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 Phillips, Editor, *Brunswick Voice*

# Saving time and money | Member services

In 2024-25 LINA offered members:

## SUBSCRIPTION AND SERVICE DISCOUNTS FROM THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS:

- Entry level access to AAP services for small newsrooms
- Australian Press Council membership
- Newsletter Glue – newsletter building tool
- KBI Group – specialist insurance brokers
- Free Canva Pro subscriptions for all LINA members
- Group membership to Broadstreet Ads
- 360info - discounted access to content sharing platform
- Nurture HR Consulting - discounted access
- LinkedIn Premium subscription

## GUIDES ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- How newsrooms can monetise AI bots
- What to include in a media kit
- Why local newsrooms should pay attention to WhatsApp channels
- Copyright guides: copyright infringement notices, avoiding infringing someone else's copyright, what to do if your material has been used without permission
- How to turn a newsletter into a podcast
- Engaging a younger readership: stats from the Next Gen News Report
- AI scraping, content protection and monetisation
- Election reporting resources for newsrooms
- Tips and tools to improve SEO
- How to monetise news reporting
- How to build newsletter subscribers
- AI tools for newsrooms
- Hiring a digital designer

- How to add your publication to the National Collection
- Video and graphic content resources
- How a LINA member launched a real estate listings page
- Building an aggregated booking platform
- Print vs digital debate for newsrooms
- Emergency reporting resources
- Monetising solutions journalism: case study
- How an advisory group can strengthen your news service
- How to register a news organisation as a charity
- Open-source website tracking for journalists: Klaxon tool
- Impact tracking for newsroom revenue
- Mental health reporting tips and resources
- How to get news articles indexed on Google/Apple News

## OTHER MEMBER SERVICES

- Monthly and bi-monthly newsletters with resource updates, industry news, grants and award opportunities, upcoming conferences, relevant articles and blogs
- Risk management, complaints policy, social media terms of use and privacy policy templates as well as a comprehensive 'AI in the Newsroom: Tools, policies & resources' guide including AI policy templates for newsrooms
- Media kit design and audience survey templates
- Social media tile design templates
- Checklist of essentials for start-up, growing and mature news businesses
- On demand, hands-on, one-to-one IT technical support provided to 35 members

- On demand HR support services
- A resource of free tools to assist with productivity, content production, social media tracking, images, video and sound
- Facilitation of an active Slack channel with daily posts, discussion between members and questions for LINA staff
- A searchable quick-reference research repository collating useful quotes, statistics and statements from a broad range of academic and industry research on topics such as purpose, impact, sustainability, policy context in Australia and globally, audience trends, journalism trends, consumer trust and access
- Support for awards nominations and other recognition of local journalism excellence. This includes hands-on support to nominate member publishers for recognition and the sharing of opportunities with members
- A 'track your tech' template tool to help monitor payments and subscription renewals on tech services
- A guide for registering a news organisation as a charity, produced by LINA member, The Pineapple as a relatable publisher example
- Pointers to emergency preparedness resources coming into summer and collated resources on World Mental Health month, including specific supports for journalists

*"I've only just discovered LINA. What a breath of fresh air - innovative, modern, looking to solutions for industry-wide problems. Other bodies claim to do these things, but they are often staid and traditional in thinking."*

Simon Holt, My City Media



## Making connections | Annual Summit

The third annual LINA Summit was the largest so far, held in Melbourne from April 2 to 4 at Melbourne Connect in partnership with The Westsider.

The program began with three all-day workshop intensives designed for small group delivery on the Wednesday, followed by a welcome evening at Kindred Bandroom in Footscray as a social evening and the launch of Westsider Radio.

151 people registered for the Summit, representing 85 organisations.

The program content focused on three themes: operations, revenue and content.

The Summit featured a keynote presentation from Jodie Hopperton, International News Media Association.

Event sponsorship helped LINA heavily subsidise registration fees and provide travel subsidies to small publishers to attend the event.

97.44% of attendees rated the Summit as "excellent".

*"(We) have benefitted from information from the LINA Summit – both from presenters and sharing of ideas with other participants. LINA's promotion of the local and independent media sector also offers more confidence as we are recognised as credible publishers of news, outside our communities as well as within."*

Mary-Jo Fortuna, Waranga News

LINA thanks our Summit sponsor partners: ABC, Pongrass, DailyMotion, Google News Initiative, Everymind/Mindframe, Copyright Agency, The Conversation, Centre for Advancing Journalism, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), KBI Insurance and PressPatron



# Partnerships

LINA strives to connect its members with relevant industry partners to leverage expertise, scale and resources for developing news services.

## New partnerships for 2024-25 include:

### BROADSTREET ADS

LINA has taken out a discounted 'parent' account with Broadstreet, meaning member publishers now have free access to digital advertising services. See page 14 for further information.

### TOLLBIT

LINA newsrooms can access a TollBit account for free, and receive 1:1 support for set-up. This platform is for AI content licensing at scale that helps publishers monitor AI traffic, manage licensing deals and monetise digital content used by AI companies.

### NOTA

A suite of assistive AI tools to reformat content for increased reader engagement and reduced production time. Member publishers can receive a significant discount to trial this tool.

### Just some of our continuing partnerships this year include:

#### AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS (AAP)

LINA member newsrooms can access AAP coverage of state, national and world events so their journalists can better focus on local stories. AAP's photo archive can also be accessed. Members can use an exclusive AAP discount per article.

AAP put together an Australian Federal Election package for LINA discounted access including daily coverage of major party leaders' campaigning, specialist profiles and explainers, election announcements and more.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

Boundless provides support for newsrooms, through LINA to report stories that increase discussion of environmental issues and renewables in communities.

### LEGITIMATE

This AI platform is available to LINA members for free. It is designed to increase readership trust and ensure that journalists receive due credit for their work. One key offering is the Universal Bio widget, which shows the reader of an article a bio about who the writer is.

### SEMBRA MEDIA

LINA contributed to the Project Oasis global newsroom mapping initiative, ensuring Australian newsrooms are represented in this global directory.

### MERCATO

A partnership providing networked access to retail screens to promote news content and generate revenue for publishers in local areas.



Kenny Katzgrau from Broadstreet Ads presenting at LINA's 2025 Summit.



Eva Wright, Nurture HR Consulting



Matt Brown, ABC, Jo Johnston, Copyright Agency & Sean Davies, Bastion Agency

# Partnerships

LINA strives to connect its members with relevant industry partners to leverage expertise, scale and resources for developing news services.

## Ongoing partnerships continued in 2024/25 include:

### BASTION AGENCY

Bastion Agency worked with newsrooms directly during LINA's Revenue Growth Program.

### AUSTRALIAN PRESS COUNCIL

Group membership of the Australian Press Council has ensured professional editorial standards are met and that audiences and publishers have a mechanism for handling complaints.

### DIGITAL PUBLISHERS ALLIANCE (DPA)

Our partnership with DPA facilitated the showcasing of relevant suppliers and tools for digital publishers at all levels.

### CANVA

LINA newsrooms access a free Canva Pro subscription as well as templates for social content.

### DAILYMOTION

Video expert Jean-Baptiste Alary from DailyMotion offers ad-hoc support to local publishers, as well as support for LINA Summit events.

### NEWSLETTER GLUE

Newsrooms can use a discount code to receive 75% off the Newsletter Glue platform.

### AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

The ABC donates news tech equipment to LINA newsrooms, as well as offering pro-bono defamation and legal advice during pre-publication. ABC was also a key supporter at LINA's 2025 Summit.

### LINKEDIN

Ensuring publishers can distribute relevant news content through this platform.

### COMMUNITY MEDIA TRAINING ORGANISATION

The CMTO offers self-paced webinars and courses. In 2024/25, LINA and the CMTO re-launched the following sessions: Media Law for Publishers, Audio Editing Basics, Interview Skills Refresh.

### IMPACT ARCHITECTS

Support with newsroom impact tracking support while LINA's Data and Insights Analyst was on leave from March 2025.

### COPYRIGHT AGENCY

Copyright Agency has helped publishers understand their rights and obligations relating to copyright and to respond to copyright challenges caused by AI. Copyright Agency also sponsored the Summit and presented a session at the event.

### PRESSPATRON

A giving platform that newsrooms can integrate into their websites for donations. PressPatron has presented at the LINA Summit and supported with the Our News, Your Voice collective fundraising campaign.

### GOOGLE

LINA's ongoing partnership with Google means LINA newsrooms are presented with a myriad of training and growth opportunities through the Google News Initiative, including the GA4 Accelerator Program, a 16-week AI program with Bastion x GNI and a six-monthly webinar series covering a revenue, digital growth, newsletters and more, with 1:1 consultation available.

### LION PUBLISHERS

LINA works alongside our US-based counterparts to progress independent news organisations globally.



*"LINA has been a huge support in the provision of knowledge and networking opportunities. We appreciate the approachability and support of all the staff at LINA as we navigate the complex environment of a local news publication."*

Kaye Rodden, Prom Coast News

# Industry leadership



LINA maintained significant, ongoing strategic engagement with several federal policy initiatives critical to industry sustainability. LINA also engaged with a number of other inquiries and reviews, and State governments in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland. Throughout this period, LINA maintained constructive relationships with all political parties, along with independents, and continued to provide support and briefings during the federal election period and subsequent transition to a new Minister for Communications.



LINA's key policy priorities included:

- Deductible Gift Recipient eligibility for not-for-profits news organisations producing public interest journalism
- Legislated set-asides for government advertising in news
- Updated Local Government Acts
- Eligibility for grant programs

Work towards these objectives includes submissions to inquiries and other government consultation, direct engagement with local and federal representatives, media releases, and public hearing appearances.

## SECTOR FUNDING AND MEDIA POLICY REFORM

Following the announcement of the **News Media Assistance Program (News MAP)** in December 2024, LINA welcomed the commitment of \$153.5 million. LINA is continuing to engage extensively with government to ensure the interests of local and independent publishers are represented during the design and implementation of programs rolled out under the News MAP framework.



LINA's **Pre-Budget Submission 2025** to the Treasury outlined funding requests for the next four years. These funds are intended to support LINA's current work and the implementation of a range of additional resources and programs for newsrooms. The submission summarised policy support requirements and included details regarding LINA's impact, goals, and alignment with the News MAP.

LINA welcomed the announcement of the **News Media Relief Fund**, and provided direct support to member newsrooms to apply for funding through the grant program.

## SOCIAL MEDIA, BIG TECH AND NEWS

LINA focused heavily on the operation of the News Media Bargaining Code (NMBC) and the subsequent **News Bargaining Incentive (NBI)**, which was announced in December 2024 with no further formal consultation. LINA advocated that the original NMBC eligibility criteria excluded many newsrooms that provide vital public interest journalism, and future policy should avoid this mistake.

LINA had previously responded to the **Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society's 2024 social media inquiry**. The submission, provided at the invitation of the Committee, outlined actions the government could take to mitigate the negative impacts social media platforms can have on society and individuals. These suggestions and the contextual information supplied by LINA were quoted extensively within the Committee's second interim report released in October 2024.

## MEDIA DIVERSITY

LINA continued engagement with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to support the development of the **Media Diversity and Measurement Framework**. The first report under the framework was released in March.



LINA's submissions to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee were quoted in their recommendations regarding the proposed **Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023**, which was not passed.

**All submissions are available on the LINA website.**

## COMMUNITY BROADCASTING SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY AND COLLABORATION

### LINA's response to **Community Broadcasting Sector Sustainability Review**

Offered contextual information, including mechanisms designed to address the ongoing sustainability of community-based media. The response outlined ways that collaboration between community radio stations and digital newsrooms can create efficiencies, particularly in the areas of content, management, and infrastructure. The submission also described key projects planned to support the sustainability of independent and local newsrooms.

## MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

LINA represented local and independent newsrooms during consultation on the **Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill**, appearing at the public hearing for the inquiry into the Communications Legislation Amendment in November.

## Representation

In addition, LINA continued to facilitate and support the participation of members directly with Department of Communications consultation processes, research groups, and other industry consultation processes. LINA represented its members by presenting and/or attending the following events:

- LION Summit, USA
- CBA annual conference
- Communications and Public Relations Australia Agency Leaders Forum
- Google News Summit
- FWD+Organise conference
- Legalwise 2024 Media and Entertainment Law Conference
- Two Disinformation Initiative events
- Women in Media Melbourne event
- Journalism Australia meetings
- Bastion Agency AI event
- Croakey climate and health workshop
- JERAAC conference at the University of Melbourne
- IAB Australia leadership summit

## Local and State Government Policy

LINA engaged with both state and local government consultation processes on advertising policy and community engagement. During this period, LINA focused its proactive efforts on New South Wales, where the highest proportion of its members operate, while also engaging in South Australia and Queensland in response to emerging opportunities in those states.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

LINA provided feedback to the SA Office of Local Government regarding the **draft Community Engagement Charter**. LINA expressed support for the Charter and its principles, noting that it represents a significant positive step forward from the outdated Local Governments Act. To further improve community engagement and support the sustainability of local newsrooms, LINA suggested requiring that public notices concerning elections also be published in news publications, and including a legislated minimum government advertising spend in local news publications.

### QUEENSLAND

In QLD, LINA responded to the **new government advertising policy**. LINA recommended including digital newsrooms alongside print in the mandatory regional advertising percentage, aligning this approach with the News Media Assistance Program (News MAP) framework. LINA argued that this platform agnostic policy would avoid privileging legacy formats, strengthen local journalism sustainability, and ensure effective communication, especially during emergencies.

### NEW SOUTH WALES

LINA met with MPs and Ministers in the NSW government in November, and subsequently began engaging with the **NSW Office of Local Government** to raise awareness of collaborative or mutually beneficial programs for newsrooms, communities and local governments.

LINA consulted with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as they developed grant guidelines for the recently announced **NSW Regional News Fund**.

LINA **secured funding through the NSW Premier's Office** to develop and implement the Know Your Neighbour program to support emerging journalists.



Nell O'Shea Carre and Claire Stuchbery



With then Shadow Minister for Communications, David Coleman



# Amplifying news stories

LINA raises awareness of the work local and independent news publishers undertake in communities across media and social media platforms.

This year LINA re-designed its website, making it easier for publishers to access resources, and sharing information with the general public that had previously required password access.

Social media spotlighting includes video content with newsrooms discussing the importance of their work, sharing achievements and milestones, and improving LINA's credibility as a thought leader within the wider independent media industry.

Social media is also an opportunity for the LINA team to communicate directly with newsrooms via comments, reactions and mentions.



## Meet the Newsrooms podcast

LINA launched its monthly podcast in September 2024. Communications Officer Evie Dinkelmeyer interviews a LINA newsroom founder or editor about the most notable stories they've published - both positive and difficult, and invites them to share innovative ways they are engaging their audience or sustaining their news business. Each episode is under ten minutes and is available via Apple and Spotify. The aim is to connect LINA members with one another and provide a space for them to share advice in a quick and digestible format.

Nine episodes were published as at 30 June 2025, profiling member newsrooms *The Westsider*, *National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS)*, *Murray Bridge News*, *Tasmanian Inquirer*, *SE Voice*, *Newsport*, *Western Weekender*, *The Riverine Grazier* and *The Conversation*.

Meet the Newsrooms was featured on the [Great Australian Podcasts podcast directory home page](#) in October.



## New LINA website and Instagram

LINA launched an updated and refreshed website in April 2025, allowing for easier user navigation. The 'for newsrooms' menu tab in particular created a specific, broken down view all LINA services available for member news outlets.

LINA launched an Instagram page in May 2025 to operate alongside existing platforms LinkedIn and Facebook. The account places LINA as a thought leader within the wider local media industry, sharing relevant industry updates, powerful quotes and continues to spotlight LINA member newsroom work.



# Amplifying news stories

LINA's position as a thought leader within the local news industry has been furthered through its publishing of industry news and press releases, opinion articles and media commentary. Key topics covered include:

- Welcoming the Albanese Government's News Media Assistance Program
- The annual LINA Summit and Our News Your Voice collective fundraising campaign
- LINA's position on social media inquiry: urgent action needed
- Welcoming recommendations of philanthropy inquiry including access to Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status to include public interest journalism
- LINA's other policy engagement including with the News Bargaining Incentive

LINA was featured in 68 media pieces across articles, radio features and podcast episodes. These included mentions and interviews via the ABC, AAP, *The Guardian*, Crikey, Mumbrella, *The Squiz*, Pro Bono Australia, and many more.



## 'Behind the headlines: Women are leading local, independent media', an article by The Illawarra Flame

Stella Yee (*Manningham Life*), Vivienne Wynter (*The Pineapple*) and Genevieve Swart (*The Illawarra Flame*) are three local news journalists who met through LINA. They interviewed LINA's Claire Stuchbery about news avoidance, sustainability and how LINA has supported them.

Aus ▾

Sport Culture Lifestyle

Environment Climate crisis Indigenous Australia Immigration Media Business Health Science Tech Podcasts Newsletters

This article is more than 6 months old

## Indie and local news publishers to unite in Melbourne for Lina Summit

April 2, 2025 9:56

[Play 8m](#)

**MEDIA LAND** → As regional newspapers lose print editions, what comes next for local news? Fri 14 Feb 2025 at 5:30pm

Brought to you by ABC Radio National Presented by Tim Burrows and Vivienne Kelly

[Play 25m](#)

**OVERNIGHTS** → Our News, Your Voice with LINA Sun 4 May 2025 at 2:00am

Brought to you by ABC Radio National Presented by Tim Burrows and Vivienne Kelly

### A selection of media featuring LINA

**What does it take to start a community newspaper? Passionate, frustrated individuals and a gin distillery**

## Government pledges \$180m to map out a future for 'vital' local news

A federal funding initiative will help local news outlets bolster public-interest journalism.



## Newsmakers podcast by The Squiz: The big challenges for local news with Claire Stuchbery

Hosts Claire Kimball and Kate Watson asked LINA's Claire Stuchbery "what does an Australia without local news look like?". This episode from July 31 explores real examples of where local reporting has been able to combat misinformation and surface stories that would not have been told otherwise.

## Member engagement and consultation

LINA staff are in regular contact with members, providing opportunity for input to our policies, processes and services through:

- Direct phone calls and emails
- Discussion at our annual Summit
- Discussion at online forums such as the regular meetings/shop-talk sessions and an annual update session providing members with direct access to the LINA Board for questions and comments
- Monthly newsletters to members and stakeholders
- Bi-monthly member-only newsletters, including upcoming policy issues of note
- Social media: LinkedIn and Facebook
- An active Slack channel monitored by staff daily



*"LINA is fantastic. It is the best and fairest way to financially support independent news in Australia. Plus it provides invaluable moral support for good journalism"*

Genevieve Swart, *The Illawarra Flame*



Susanna Freymark, Claire & 2COW FM



Barbara Heggen, *The Westsider*  
presenting at LINA Summit 2025



Claire Stuchbery at 2024 LION  
Summit in the US



Brad Esposito, *Gazette News*

## Brunswick Voice

Brunswick Voice was launched in 2021 after the closure of the local News Corp Leader newspaper, with editor Mark Phillips wanting to represent his eccentric suburb in Melbourne through breaking news and community storytelling. The paper still operates in print to maintain credibility and visibility amongst locals.

In November 2024 the paper profiled local 'Irene Warehouse', an ex textile factory turned artists studio.

The local council warned the warehouse fire safety protocols were outdated, and needed to be updated with a cost of \$10,000.

Residents were struggling to raise money and were threatened with eviction before *Brunswick Voice* profiled the warehouse.

Editor Mark Phillips wrote about the history of the building, met with current artists in their studios, and ultimately helped raise enough money to keep the Irene Warehouse going.



Image credit: Greg Barnes  
Image: Mark Phillips at 2025 LINA Summit

# Meet the LINA newsrooms

## the western **weekender** **Western Weekender**

The *Western Weekender*, the voice of Penrith in western Sydney, has been operating since 1991. Managing Editor Troy Dodds is proud of the newsrooms open door policy, allowing for ongoing interactions with the community. He says people come in every day with story ideas. *Western Weekender* aims to be accessible to the public, hosting mobile offices in local shopping centres and at events, as well as managing a text line for locals to send tips anonymously.



Troy Dodds, *Western Weekender*

## OUR VISION

A vibrant and diverse local news landscape providing news services to communities across Australia.

## OUR MISSION

Supporting local and independent public interest news publishers to distribute news content via digital media.

## OUR ACTIONS

Providing practical, hands-on support for publishers for capacity building in newsrooms.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

#### STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM

#### BUILDING CAPACITY OF NEWSROOMS

#### GROWING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MEMBER PUBLISHERS

#### REPRESENTATION AND RECOGNITION

### ORGANISATION

#### BUILDING LINA'S SUSTAINABILITY AND CAPABILITY

## ACTIVITIES

Increasing capability for public interest news reporting and growing audience engagement with local and diverse news sources

- Pre-publication pro-bono legal support
- Strategic partnerships for content collaboration (where relevant) and content sharing partnerships
- Grant programs to expand content production capability
- Content calendar
- Up skilling and training on sensitive issues
- Centralised sub-editing services
- Group membership of Australian Press Council
- Journalism pathways program development

Expanding skillsets, capacity and shared services to generate economies of scale for small businesses

- Development of resources and tools on emerging journalism trends and best practice
- Regular 'shop talk' sessions and meetings for networking and learning
- Access to resources and templates
- Centralised HR support
- Upskilling programs, coaching and mentoring
- Audience engagement support (eg. SEO, digital design, survey tools)
- Facilitated Slack channel discussion group
- Annual Summit event
- Centralised IT and technical support
- Data suite and audience analysis tools

Building news publishers' financial sustainability – including revenue generating actions

- Discount partners on a range of relevant products and services, including negotiated discounts on software, equipment, design and printing
- Support to engage in News Media Bargaining Code
- Business development programs such as revenue growth programs
- Collective fundraising campaign
- Collective advertising sales representation
- Training subsidies

Championing the work done by local independent publishers

- Representation in policy forums, including government liaison and submissions on relevant policy topics
- Providing support to members for award and recognition opportunities
- Impact tracking services
- Centralised research repository resource

Ensuring the association is well placed to support news publishers

- Seeking funding for both the industry and LINA's operations
- Building self-generated income streams
- Membership retention and growth



## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- LINA members are trusted sources of news for their communities
- The work of LINA members is recognised and rewarded for its quality
- LINA members are having a positive impact in their communities

- Audience numbers and engagement growing for member publications
- Workforce growth among LINA membership
- LINA members benefitting from shared communication and collaboration
- Increased access to shared and/or cost effective third party services

- Member publishers income levels growing as a result of LINA's activities
- Diversification of income streams
- Collective fundraising activities are bringing new income to publishers

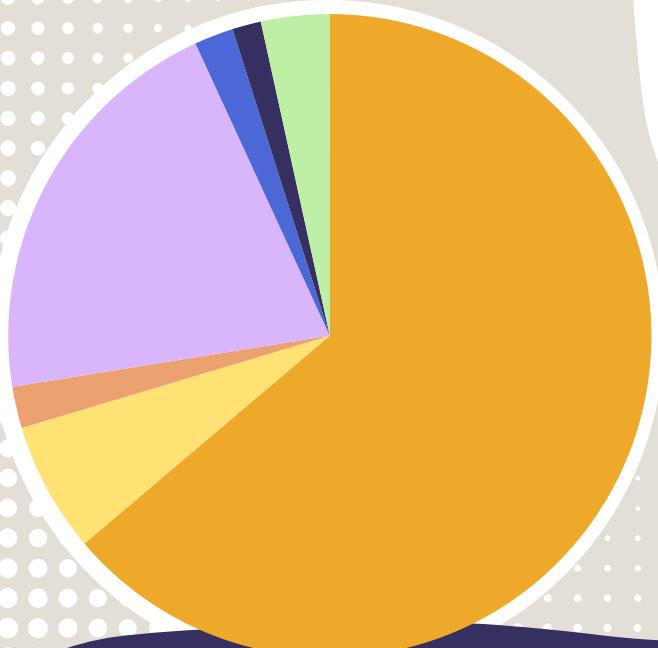
- LINA members have a voice on industry-wide issues
- LINA is influencing policy change
- LINA is referenced in media and industry research publications

- Membership satisfied
- number of members strong and growing
- LINA is financially stable
- LINA staff retention

# Financials 2024-25

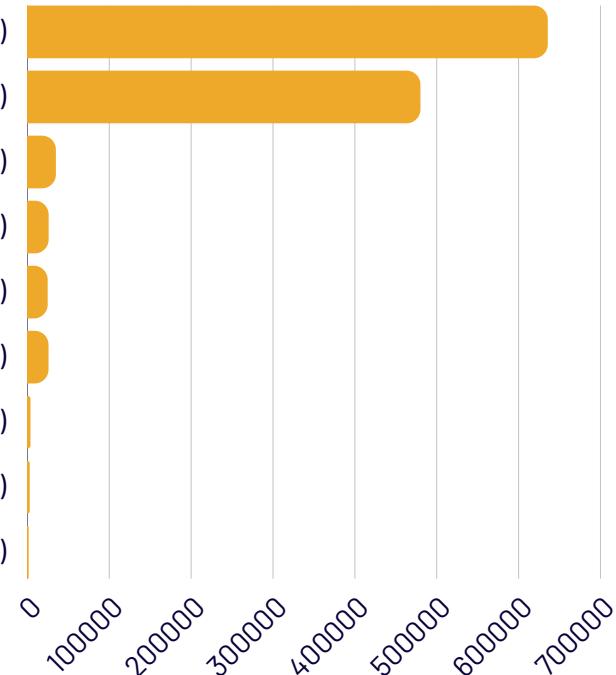
## Revenue

- Government grants (\$734,000)
- Sponsorships (\$75,404)
- Interest received (\$24,030)
- Philanthropic grants (\$237,932)
- Membership (\$22,652)
- Summit registrations (\$16,635)
- Other income (\$39,618)



## Expenses

- Employment costs (\$635,664)
- Programs, services & projects (\$480,085)
- Management services (\$34,800)
- Office & administrative (\$25,958)
- Travel (\$24,791)
- Subscriptions & memberships (\$25,818)
- Insurance (\$3,753)
- Legal (\$2,818)
- Training & professional development (\$1,560)



*“Democracy requires information and engaged citizens, and news organisations need to reflect the increasingly diverse communities they serve.”*



# Thank you

LINA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), along with the event sponsors of the 2025 LINA Summit.



## Contact

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