

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
GPO Box 2454
Brisbane Queensland 4001

Wednesday 10 June, 2026

To whom it may concern,

I write on behalf of the Local & Independent News Association (LINA) in response to the proposed legislative amendments to reduce litter and boost recycling.

LINA is Australia's industry association for local and independent digital newsrooms. LINA represents a diverse and growing network of newsrooms, including 26 in Queensland, that provide vital public interest journalism to the communities they serve.

The consultation paper proposes to repeal Chapter 5, Part 2 of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, which describes the situations under which material may become unsolicited advertising material (UAM).

This section contains the important recognition that newspapers delivered to a premises are not UAM unless the owner or occupier of that premises has advised the publisher or distributor of the newspaper that they do not wish to receive it. This includes material that is folded or inserted into a newspaper.

LINA does not have a view as to whether litter reduction is best served by repealing this section of the Act and instead managing these matters under local law. However, if it is repealed, it is essential that newspapers retain the default position that they are not UAM unless and until an owner advises otherwise.

This process appropriately balances the right of a homeowner to opt-out of receiving advertising material against the important role that local newspapers play in their communities, and the business model that enables that reporting. It is a good faith assumption that ensures that local news businesses that produce public interest journalism to inform people across Queensland are funded to do so by this important revenue stream.

Allowing for newspapers to be classed as UAM by default changes a community expectation that has been in place for decades. It is reasonable to assume that there are many Queenslanders who have placed 'No Junk Mail' or similar signs on their letterboxes, yet have elected not to opt-out of receiving the local paper, and would prefer to continue doing so. These people would be put in the position of either removing their 'No Junk Mail' sign in order to receive all advertising material, or keeping it and losing access to their local paper.

LINA is also concerned about giving local government the authority to determine whether or not local newspapers delivered to homes in their area are unauthorised advertising material. We are aware of local governments in Queensland that have used their budgets to reward or punish local newspapers in response to their coverage. This authority could similarly be used to 'punish'

unfavourable reporting. Even if never used, the threat of a local law update that could significantly impact a newspaper's distribution, and consequently its revenue, may have an effect.

We also note that many local governments are conflicted parties on this issue. It is very common for councils to produce and distribute a printed publication that has a resemblance to local news but is, in effect, public relations material. We are concerned that, given this authority, some councils may seek to prevent the distribution of independent journalism by classing newspapers distributed to homes as UAM, while exempting their own publications.

LINA strongly recommends that whichever level of government has responsibility for managing UAM complaints, the current position in the legislation, that newspapers distributed to homes are not inherently UAM, must be retained.

We also suggest that the Department consider ways to prevent local governments from misusing the authority to achieve a distribution advantage for their own publications.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,

Claire Stuchbery
Executive Director