

What people are saying about Australia's proposed News Media Bargaining Code

Major media businesses in Australia want the News Media Bargaining Code, but over **60% of submissions to the Senate Committee** reviewing the law and over **80% of submissions to the competition regulator** oppose it.

Australians want a workable solution — rules that don't break Google or the principles of the web, and that enable media companies to get paid.

We want this too.

99 What others are saying*

"The Code risks breaching a fundamental principle of the web by requiring payment for linking between certain content online.... If this precedent were followed elsewhere it could make the web unworkable around the world."

[Inventor of the World Wide Web Sir Tim Berners Lee](#)

"Sadly, the current digital platforms bill rewards the large companies and their digital only syndicated content models, at the expense of smaller media businesses with true local news that is expensive to produce and will only lead to reduced diversity of media in Australia."

[Bruce Ellen, Chair, Country Press Australia](#)

"Australia's proposal may have helped to galvanise the debate but it is not the answer...the proposal is too blatant and arbitrary a manner of tipping the scales in favour of big media empires."

[FT Editorial Board](#)

"It will set poor policy precedents for government intervention and sends a bad message about Australia's position as an open economy that welcomes investment. Australia will not become a leading digital economy if policies are put in place running directly in conflict with this objective."

[Business Council of Australia represents Australia's largest employers](#)

"The media bargaining code is hopelessly flawed. It misunderstands the cause of the decline in media revenues, seeks to extract money from unrelated activities of technology companies like Google and Facebook, has requirements that threaten the core business of those companies, and has a bargaining system that could most politely be described as "rigged". It is the public policy equivalent of Stalinist show trial."

[Professor of Economics at UNSW Business School, University of New South Wales Richard Holden, and Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia](#)

*Quotes were collected from public submissions to the Australian government, opinion essays, social media posts and academic reviews.

99 What others are saying

*“The code is unlikely to do much to fix the crisis faced by journalism in the internet age. **It isn’t even a band-aid on the problem.** The traditional commercial news business model is broken beyond repair.”*

[Amanda Lotz, Professor of Media Studies, Queensland University of Technology](#)

*“Our concerns relate to the code itself which we see as **an extreme instance of regulatory overreach, full of potential unintended consequences** that sets a dangerous precedent that will detract from competition and consumer welfare.”*

[Australian Industry Group, a key industry body representing over 60,000 businesses](#)

*“Long term impacts of the Code could serve to protect dominant firms on both sides of the bargaining table rather than protecting the public interest and **detrimentally affect access to diverse and quality news content for Australian consumers.**”*

[Twitter](#)

*“Australia wants to force a transfer of money from American tech companies to domestic publishers. **This could set a bad global precedent.**”*

[Asheesh Agarwal Competition Counsel & Deputy General Counsel at @TechFreedom, non-profit, non-partisan US think tank](#)

*“This **will devastate the open internet** and hurt users everywhere.”*

[Chris Marchese, Counsel, Netchoice industry coalition](#)

*The Code in its current form is heavy-handed, reflects a worrying trend in Australian policy-making toward the tech sector, and will **harm future tech investments and the economy at large.***

[Mike Cannon-Brookes + Scott Farquhar Co-Founder and Co-CEO Atlassian, Australia’s most successful technology company](#)

*Star News Group supports a bargaining code, but is concerned that **the draft bill significantly benefits larger media organisations and will reduce the number of news media voices** and diversity. ”*

[Star News Group](#)

*“If you want to tax a company to subsidise another industry, you should **be honest and call it a tax, not invent a totally imaginary value exchange.**”*

[Benedict Evans, consultant, mobile analyst and writer who has worked in the media and tech industries for 15 years.](#)

“The truth is that there is no content stealing. There’s no breach of copyright. Those media companies actively provide snippets or their full journalism to the platform for one blindingly obvious reason — they gain huge benefit from the exposure, and clicks, their content attracts on Google and Facebook.

[Eric Beecher, Chairman, Private Media \(Australian publisher\)](#)

*“**Google has come up with a compromise proposal, and it’s worth a look.....Why sabotage the entire internet and create a precedent for other countries to follow suit with equally deranged laws?**”*

[Paul Wallis, Editor at large, Digital Journal, Australia](#)

99 What others are saying

*“The **victims would be small and medium sized businesses** who rely on Google and Facebook to connect them to national and international markets, rely on their tools to better understand their buyers, rely on their platform to ensure they’re accessible and visible to the nation.”*

[Ben Shepherd, General Manager of Australian advertising agency Thinkerell](#)

But I remain wary of Sims’ proposed news media bargaining code, which establishes an income stream for news outlets that would shrink and grow with the “shareability” of their articles.

The incentive for news outlets is clear: produce greater quantities of sensational, less reliable content in pursuit of social media clicks. This TikTokisation of news content risks the degradation of reliable journalism over time.

[Kevin Rudd, 26th Prime Minister of Australia](#)

*“This Bill in its current form would **undermine the basic framework upon which the Internet was built**, and on which the modern economy thrives.”*

[“Father of the internet”, Vint Cerf, Internet evangelist \(also works for Google\)](#)

“That the finest news organizations in the world (The Times, Guardian) continue to misreport this—to the benefit mainly of Rupert Murdoch—is so strange to me. Again, the question is whether Google/FB must pay for LINKS to news, not for the news itself.”

[Aaron Pilhoffer, James B. Steele Chair in Journalism Innovation at Klein College of Media and Communication. Formerly Exec editor, Digital The Guardian, Managing editor, New York Times](#)

*With local newspapers ailing, the Australian government has hit on a seemingly simple solution: force Google and Facebook to subsidize them. It’s the latest example of an increasingly global tactic. And **it’s hopelessly misguided.***

[Bloomberg Editorial Board](#)

*“Crucially, any moves by the two companies to abandon the Australian marketplace would have an **outsized impact on smaller digital publishers**, who for years have been encouraged to invest more in these platforms.”*

[Junkee Media, media company reaching over 2 million young Australians](#)

▶▶ What’s the way forward?

Our objections aren’t about complying with a code or the principle of paying to support journalists — but how we do that matters. We want to reach a workable code. We want to find a way that doesn’t break Google Search or the web — and [we’ve come to the table with a solution.](#)