

## **ACCC CONCEPTS PAPER FOR MANDATORY BARGAINING CODE**

### **RESPONSE FROM SOLTICE MEDIA – InDaily and InQueensland**

#### **About Solstice Media**

Solstice Media is the publisher of InDaily in South Australia and InQueensland in Queensland. Both sites are trusted online source of public interest journalism, provided free for their city and state communities. Solstice Media is an independently owned media company with direct relationships with the platforms.

Both sites deliver relevant news – national, state, world, finance, sport, entertainment, lifestyle, weather – in text, pictures, audio and video. Written and edited by media professionals, working to industry standards to provide objective coverage of each state.

#### **General Background**

Solstice Media is happy to contribute to this concept paper so as to provide our perspective on the challenges we regularly face as an independent publisher seeking to provide a high-quality and independent digital news offering to its community free of charge in an unbalanced media landscape.

We believe that our perspectives and inputs are as valuable as those of the larger incumbent Australian media entities and are hopeful of equal treatment and consideration by the ACCC.

Solstice Media has chosen to form part of a combined separate submission from Australian Small News Publishers of public interest journalism. However, we have responded to a selected number of issues here in our own right, here:

#### **Responses**

1. Solstice Media understands the role its content plays in the value exchange by supporting the platforms delivery of a credible news position. It does not believe it to be a copyright issue but more so a traffic/audience referral issue. Any value exchange should be to support the publisher's ability to produce public interest journalism content which in turn supports the credible news position for the platforms.
2. Solstice Media believes the definition of news should be focussed, in this instance, on public interest journalism rather than general news – which is too broad for this purpose and more open to interpretation.

3. Solstice Media prefers collective bargaining as it believes that similar sized publishers need to combine to have a voice and appreciation of the role they collectively play in media diversity in Australia.
4. We believe news publishers should be viewed in two tiers
  - Tier 1:** Large news publishers with annual revenues above \$30m
  - Tier 2:** Independent news publishers with annual revenues below \$30m
5. Cognisant of the value exchange and the role the platforms play in the business model of smaller publishers, we believe a higher than proportionate share of the funds should be allocated to smaller news media organisations as this is a significant opportunity to support media diversity for the future in Australia.
6. We do not believe in a collective boycott.
7. Solstice Media requests a two month notice period for an algorithm change.
8. Solstice Media believes news companies should have the ability to identify original content on the platforms and that this original content should be given ranking priority by the platforms.

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June 5, 2020