

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - FRIDAY, March 1, 2024**

## **META ANNOUNCEMENT AN ASSAULT ON PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM**

Australia's leading publisher of news for regional Australians, ACM, has labelled as outrageous Meta's decision to abandon its support for news on Facebook.

"This is a hugely disappointing decision and a sad day for news and journalism in Australia, in particular the trusted local news from ACM that keeps regional Australians informed and connected," ACM Managing Director Tony Kendall said.

"That the world's largest social media company is no longer willing to pay its fair share for the quality Australian news and trusted information that lends its Facebook platform what is left of its credibility is, frankly, outrageous.

"Meta's move will significantly affect our business. It will also, sadly, fuel the explosion of fake news and other junk proliferating on social media. We hope that Australians who want actual news in their so-called "newsfeed" will seriously consider boycotting Facebook."

As strong supporters of the News Media Bargaining Code, ACM endorses the Albanese government's criticism of Meta, which Assistant Treasurer Stephen Jones and Communications Minister Michelle Rowland have today accused of "a dereliction of its commitment to the sustainability of Australian news media".

Mr Kendall: "It is to be hoped the government is prepared to use the code to force Meta to negotiate with Australian media companies like ACM over the valuable content our journalists, photographers and editors provide.

"The government must also take immediate steps to cease all advertising on any of Meta's platforms by government departments and agencies as well as individual MPs and senators. And it should be urging all other Australian advertisers who care about public interest journalism's vital role in our democracy to do the same."

Mr Kendall said Meta's suggestion that Facebook's Australian users don't want actual, real, trusted Australian news was absurd. "As we saw in 2021 when news for Australians on Facebook was blocked overnight in a major dummy spit over introduction of the code, today's decision makes clear Meta's contempt for its Australian users and their trust in news from their local newspaper," he said.

Mr Kendall told ACM staff on Friday that ACM remained committed to reaching audiences with the trusted journalism that keeps regional communities strong, informed and connected.

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**ACM** is Australia's largest independent media company. With more than 100 brands, including leading regional news brands, agricultural specialist brands, marketplaces. ACM connects 4.1 million\* Australians each month.