

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12.01AM FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2025

ACM ANNOUNCES NEW COMMERCIAL STRATEGY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE; PROMOTES MAREE NEALE TO LEAD NEW DIVISION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025 – Australian Community Media (ACM), Australia's largest independent publisher, today announced the launch of its **Commercial Strategy Centre of Excellence** – a new commercial strategy and operations division, dedicated to growing partners' businesses in regional Australia.

The team, which will be overseen by ACM's new Chief Marketing Officer, **Jarrah Petzold**, brings together the publisher's top commercial strategy executives to drive commercial growth and successful outcomes for partners.

The team will be headed up by a powerhouse of ACM's female leaders, including **Maree Neale**, who has been appointed Director of Commercial Strategy and will lead the division, **Lisa Levesque**, who has taken on the role of Deputy Director of Commercial Strategy and **Lupe Prada**, who has been promoted to Marketing and Commercial Strategy Director, ACM Agri, along with **Chris Clarke** who moves into a Director of Business Intelligence role.

Neale, who is currently ACM's Commercial Operations Director, has more than 20 years' experience in commercial leadership and business management across government, agencies, SME and not-for-profit organisations. She has been with ACM for nearly a decade in senior leadership roles, and has also had senior roles at Nine and Fairfax Media.

Levesque is a highly accomplished strategic and communications specialist, with more than 20 years' experience across media, publishing and advertising in Australia and the UK. She has been with ACM since 2020 as National Strategy Director. Before this, she spent more than a decade at Southern Cross Austereo, heading up the strategy and insights function, and as Communications Director at global media agency, MEC (now Wavemaker), based in the UK.

Prada is a marketing, communications and commercial strategy professional, with more than 20 years' proven performance in media strategy, consumer insights and business growth. She has been with ACM since 2023, as Commercial Strategy Lead and most recently, as Head of Marketing – ACM Agri, working across the business' agricultural mastheads, marketplaces, joint venture businesses and agri events.

Clarke has been with ACM for nearly a decade, providing coaching and data driven sales training to media sales professionals. Originally, he was responsible for sales across the Border Mail's footprint, before he moved into an overarching Sales Director and Sales Data Analysis role. He has been ACM's Head of Business Improvement for the past 18 months.

The new division comes as ACM aligns its marketing and commercial efforts to support regional audiences and advertisers.

Commenting on her new role, **Maree Neale** said: "As a country girl at heart, with deep roots in regional Australia, I'm passionate about community connection and regional media. The Commercial Strategy Centre of Excellence will allow ACM to leverage its collective expertise across the whole portfolio. I'm

proud to be working with some of the brightest minds in media sales and strategy to help grow our partners' businesses in regional Australia."

Jarrah Petzold said: "Establishing this new team reflects ACM's commitment to driving growth and transformation of our business. I'm looking forward to working with Maree, Lisa, Lupe, Chris and the broader team, and I have every confidence that this will see us continue to deliver market leading opportunities to connect businesses with regional audiences in 2025.

ACM is Australia's largest independent publisher collectively reaching 2.3 million* in print and over 3.3 million^ online each month.

All four appointments are effective immediately.

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*Source: *Roy Morgan Single Source, Oct 23 - Sept 24, P14+. `IPSOS IRIS October 2024, Audience (Unique Audience).*

ACM is Australia's largest independent media company. We are passionate about keeping our communities strong, informed and connected. ConnectNow with ACM.