



Australian  
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# NEWS RELEASE

## ACCC WILL NOT OPPOSE NEWS CORPORATION'S PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF APN'S AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL MEDIA DIVISION – ARM

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will not oppose the proposed acquisition by News Corporation (ASX: NWS) of Australian Regional Media (ARM) from APN News and Media (ASX: APN).

The ACCC invited feedback from readers and advertisers after releasing a [Statement of Issues](#) in October. The ACCC's focus was on how ARM's paid regional newspapers and News' *The Courier Mail* compete for readers, and the extent of competition between overlapping News and ARM community newspapers in south-east Queensland.

"The ACCC reviewed the acquisition very closely, as News and ARM are the two largest newspaper publishers in Queensland. However, feedback from readers raised very few concerns and suggested that there is not close competition between the paid daily Queensland papers published by News and ARM," ACCC Chairman Rod Sims said.

"ARM's paid daily regional newspapers focus mostly on regional and local news and there is limited overlap with *The Courier Mail* which focuses on greater-Brisbane, state, and national news. Furthermore, readers are increasingly reading online sources of news, where there are alternatives to News and ARM."

The ACCC also contacted over 600 small businesses and advertising agencies which advertise in News and ARM publications in Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

"The ACCC was pro-active in contacting advertisers and in raising awareness of the transaction with consumers and seeking comments from them," Mr Sims said.

In relation to local community newspapers, the ACCC investigated competition between News and ARM in Caboolture/Bribie Island, south west Brisbane, Brisbane northern bayside, Logan, Tweed Heads, and the southern Gold Coast. The competitive overlap between News and ARM in these areas relates to papers that are generally weekly, delivered for free, and have a strong local focus.

"This transaction will mean that readers in those areas who still value a community newspaper format are likely to face reduced choice. However, the ACCC concluded that, overall, a sufficient range of local news choices and advertising options would remain available in these areas, with Fairfax and independent local newspapers in some local areas, competing online options, as well as local radio news," Mr Sims said.

"Although some concerns were raised by small businesses and ad agencies in these local areas, most acknowledged that print advertising was of declining importance and identified other advertising options if News attempted to increase rates."

"Declining readership and reduced advertising revenues for hard-copy publications were important factors in the ACCC's assessment, as it was with the investigation of Seven West Media's acquisition of *The Sunday Times*. Advertisers and readers are increasingly turning to other sources of news and advertising opportunities, particularly digital, which is having a significant impact on the print industry," Mr Sims said.

Further information is available on the ACCC's public register:

## **Background**

The ACCC commenced a review of the transaction on 1 August 2016, and published a [Statement of Issues in relation to the proposed acquisition](#) on 6 October 2016.

News is a global media company with subscription television, magazines, newspapers and publishing operations and interests. In Australia, News publishes a number of state, regional and community newspapers as well as its national publication *The Australian*. It also publishes websites associated with many of its newspapers as well as news.com.au.

APN is an ASX-listed Australian company with media, radio, publishing and digital assets in Australia, and outdoor advertising assets in Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. The ARM division of APN, which is proposed to be sold to News, includes a large number of mostly regional publications in Queensland and northern NSW, including 12 paid daily, 14 paid non-daily and 32 free non-daily community newspapers, as well as associated websites.

APN's radio and outdoor assets are not part of the proposed acquisition and will be retained by APN.

### **Notes to Editors**

A full list of ARM's print publications is set out below:

#### ***North Queensland (Mackay region)***

Daily Mercury, The Midweek, Whitsunday Times, and Whitsunday Coast Guardian.

#### ***Central Queensland***

The Morning Bulletin, The Observer, Capricorn Coast Mirror, Central Telegraph, and Central Queensland News.

#### ***Wide Bay Burnett***

NewsMail, Fraser Coast Chronicle, The Gympie Times, Guardian, Isis Town & Country, Central & North Burnett Times, Hervey Bay Observer, The Maryborough Herald, Cooloola Advertiser, and Hervey Bay Independent.

#### ***South-East Queensland - Sunshine Coast***

Sunshine Coast Daily, Sunshine Coast Sunday, Noosa News, Coolum & North Shore News, Maroochy Weekly, Kawana Weekly, Caloundra Weekly, Nambour Weekly, and Buderim Chronicle.

#### ***South-East Queensland (Greater Brisbane and Ipswich)***

Caboolture News, Bribie Weekly, The Logan Reporter, The Satellite, Bayside Northern Suburbs Star, The Queensland Times, and The Ipswich Advertiser.

#### ***South-West Queensland***

Warwick Daily News, The Chronicle, Stanthorpe Border Post, Dalby Herald, Gatton, Lockyer and Brisbane Valley Star, Laidley Plainland Leader, South Burnett Times, Southern Downs Weekly, Balonne Beacon, The Western Star, Western Times, Chinchilla News and Murilla Advertiser.

#### ***Northern NSW (Gold Coast, Tweed and northern NSW)***

Tweed Daily News, Tweed Daily News – Community Edition, The Northern Star, The Daily Examiner, The Woolgoolga Advertiser, Byron Shire News, Ballina Shire Advocate, Lismore Echo, The Richmond River Express Examiner, Coastal Views, and The Coffs Coast Advocate.

### ***Specialist publications***

Surat Basin News, Rural Weekly (five editions, including a Northern Territory edition), Big Rigs, CQ Industry, Style Magazine, Seniors Newspaper (eight different editions distributed in South-East Queensland and NSW), and APN Educational Media publications (business-to-business publisher of Education Review, Nursing Review, Aged Care Insite and Campus Review).

### **Media enquiries**

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**MR 232/16**

**8 December 2016**