

OVERVIEW

September 2016

What are the proposed media reforms the Government has announced?

The Government has announced the most significant reforms to Australian media regulation in a generation, focusing on the control and ownership of Australia's traditional media outlets and the provision of local television content in regional Australia.



In September 2016 the Government re-introduced legislation to repeal two media control and ownership rules in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* that currently prevent a person from controlling:

- > commercial television licences that collectively reach in excess of 75 per cent of the Australian population (the '75 per cent audience reach rule'); and
- > more than two of the three regulated forms of media in the one commercial radio licence area (the '2 out of 3 rule').

The Government also introduced changes to support the continued provision of local television content in regional Australia and provide an incentive for local content to be filmed in the local area.



Why is the Government proposing these changes?

Much of the regulatory framework governing Australia's media was developed in the analogue era, when the industry was dominated by the three established media platforms: commercial television, commercial radio and printed newspapers. The current rules restrict traditional media companies from optimising the scale and scope of their operations and from accessing resources, capital and management expertise in other media sectors. While these laws have been adjusted over time in an attempt to accommodate changes in technology and media consumption patterns, more fundamental reform is needed to ensure the framework remains relevant.

The proposed changes will help traditional media businesses—which still play a significant role in Australian society—to better compete and adapt in the changing media landscape. The rest of the control and ownership framework (see fact sheet: *'Australia's Media Control and Ownership Rules'*) will be retained and play an important role in ensuring media diversity. The strengthened local content obligations for regional commercial television broadcasters will address concerns that the media reforms may have a negative impact on the provision of local content in regional Australia (see fact sheet: *'Protecting local content'*).

The proposed reforms will support the viability of our local organisations as they face increasing global competition in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

When will these changes happen?

Subject to the passage of amending legislation, the new measures would commence in 2016. Licensees would not be required to meet the new local content obligations until six months following a trigger event. This will allow affected licensees to undertake the necessary preparatory activity and investment in order to meet the obligations.

What is being maintained in the package?

The Government is maintaining other diversity rules including the '5/4' rule, the 'one-to-a-market' rule or the 'two-to-a-market' rule.

