



Prime, WIN, Southern Cross and Imparja Launch Campaign to Save Regional Voices

Friday 7 August 2015

Today Australia's four independent regional television and radio broadcasters – Prime, WIN, Southern Cross Austereo and Imparja – launched a community awareness campaign to highlight the growing risk of cuts to regional television services, including news, information and community support.

The campaign "Save Our Voices" launched on all four networks this week with teaser announcements in prime time and the launch of a website www.saveourvoices.com.au to allow regional and rural communities to learn more and get involved.

The four regional networks want changes to outdated federal media laws that currently leave them chained to the past in a rapidly changing environment, while major metropolitan TV networks and international players like Google and Netflix stream services into regional broadcast areas unrestricted, with unregulated content.

"Make no mistake, local content in regional and rural Australia is at risk unless we get some regulatory change, as has already been demonstrated with the recent closures of local news services in Mildura and Mackay," said Ian Audsley, CEO of Prime.

"We need to get rid of the rules that prevent us from achieving the scale that's needed to maintain vital local services. We know many regional and rural MPs want local voices to be heard and it's time to help them take the message to Canberra that our voices matter, our voices will be heard and our voices want change," Audsley said.

Andrew Lancaster, CEO of WIN said: "Regional broadcasters provide a voice for 9 million Australians in regional and rural areas. We are a vital source of local news, information and current affairs and provide an essential community platform for regional Australia's biggest issues and our unique concerns and perspectives.

"Local news and current affairs are a major cost for regional broadcasters and the only way we can continue to invest in these news services is to be able to compete effectively. Our license areas are now open to anyone who wants to compete with us and we don't have an issue with that. But current media laws prevent us from expanding or from merging with others so we can grow and invest in regional communities," said Lancaster.

Southern Cross Austereo CEO Grant Blackley said: "Regional television and radio employs over 2500 people in regional areas and allows thousands of local businesses to reach their customers. It's also an essential platform for community organisations and sporting clubs.

"Regional broadcasters plough hundreds of millions of dollars into regional economies each year and provides valuable partnerships for local businesses, as well as sponsorships and donations including tens of millions of dollars in air time that we give away for local community initiatives, campaigns and issues.



MORE

“Regional voices are under threat. We’ve also seen cuts to Fairfax regional media operations and across the ABC’s rural network. We think our audiences should know what’s going on and help support their local MP’s to convince Canberra it’s time to change the rules,” said Blackley.

CEO of Imparja, Alistair Feehan said: “In remote areas of Australia we are an absolutely vital provider of local news and current affairs for over a million people living across 3.6 million square kilometres of the Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

“Whilst we have a broadcast area that encompasses some of the richest developing resource areas in the country, we also provide unique services to some of the most remote and disadvantaged communities in Australia who rely on Imparja for news, sport and entertainment,” Feehan said.

The teaser campaign starting tonight will expand into a fully integrated media campaign from August to December. As well as various television announcements, there will be radio and online dimensions as well as a concerted social media campaign.

Independent community research has been commissioned and will commence later this month in key marginal federal electorates.

“Regional television and radio gives regional and rural Australia a voice, and is an essential alternative to the ABC. These voices are at risk and it’s time they are heard in Canberra,” said Ian Audsley.

Visit: www.saveourvoices.com.au.

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About Prime

Prime Media Group is a regional television broadcaster with a viewing area that covers northern and southern New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, the Gold Coast area of south eastern Queensland and all of regional Western Australia. Prime produces and airs six different 30 minute news bulletins and more than 100 news and weather updates across 12 major regional areas every day.

About WIN

WIN Network - reaches more than 6 million viewers across six states of Australia and the nation’s capital. Broadcasting throughout 23 markets, WIN produces and airs 16 local news bulletins each day as well as WIN’s All Australian News which airs across the WIN network.

About Southern Cross Austereo

Southern Cross Austereo creates more hours of live content than any other broadcast media in Australia and can connect brands with 95% of Australians each week via our regional free-to-air TV networks, national radio networks, online, mobile and unique one off events and a strong social media presence. Our wide range of media offerings gives us the unique opportunity to provide inventive, interactive and cross platform campaigns.

About Imparja

Imparja is a free-to-air television broadcaster broadcasting to area of 3.6 million square kilometres, spanning six states and territories – Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria with an estimated over one million resident viewers. Our service is also watched by approximately 200,000 viewers in terrestrial black spots.

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