



Zoe Daniel MP

Independent Federal Member for Goldstein

16 March 2023

Zoe Daniel MP
R297
Parliament House

To: The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for Communications
M141
Parliament House

Dear Minister,

We write to express our collective concern about the future of AAP, Australia's only independent fact-based news service.

Several of us have raised this issue in the upcoming Budget context with you and other ministers.

In an era of decreasing media diversity, where we are seeing increasing numbers of local and community news outlets closing their doors, especially in rural and regional Australia, but also in the suburbs of our big cities, AAP fills gaps in local reporting in these "news deserts".

AAP's newswire is used by more than 450 media outlets, including 300 in regional Australia where local journalism is particularly at risk.

The newswire supports hundreds of regional journalism jobs, as well as AAP directly employing 160 professionals and support 138 freelancers.

AAP also tackles misinformation from spreading on social media through its admired FactCheck service.

AAP is a not-for-profit, so every dollar goes back into journalism and into supporting the news ecosystem.

At a time of geopolitical fragility in the Indo-Pacific, AAP aspires to extend its newswire to outlets in the Pacific, to put correspondents back into the region and support the upskilling of reporters in these nations of critical importance to Australia's national security interests.

We understand this is being considered by DFAT.



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Long-term and adequate funding is essential to ensure the independence of AAP and that it remains a significant contributor to the health, reliability and diversity of Australian media.

AAP received \$20m in PING funding from the previous government over two and a half years, but that support is starting to run out. AAP has had to pull out of the Prime Minister's current overseas trip because its travel budget is exhausted.

We understand consideration for ongoing funding for the AAP is "in the Budget". We seek assurances that the budget will provide the financial support needed for AAP to maintain and expand these essential public services, keeping our geographically-isolated communities better informed and protected from mis- and disinformation and improving the health of Australia's media ecosystem.

We await your response and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Zoe Daniel'.

Zoe Daniel MP

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On behalf of: Senator Jacqui Lambie | Senator David Pocock | Senator Tammy Tyrrell | Kate Chaney MP | Dr Helen Haines MP | The Hon Bob Katter MP | Dr Monique Ryan MP | Dr Sophie Scamps MP | Rebekha Sharkie MP | Allegra Spender MP | Zali Steggall OAM, MP | Kylea Tink MP



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CC:

The Hon Jim Chalmers MP
Treasurer
MG47
Parliament House

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Finance, Women and the Public Service
MG64
Parliament House

Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
MG68
Parliament House

The Hon Pat Conroy MP
Minister for International Development and the Pacific
M122
Parliament House