

## MEDIA STATEMENT

14 August 2014

## Building a modern, stronger rural and regional media network

Employees of Fairfax Media's Australian Community Media (ACM) publishing business were today briefed on a plan to transform ACM's hundreds of newspapers, websites and events across Australia into a modern, stronger rural and regional media network.

Director of ACM, John Angilley, said: "We are committed to ensuring our newspapers and websites remain the most trusted source for news and information in the communities we serve. Fairfax has a long and proud history of delivering news to regional Australia. We will not waver in that commitment.

"New technology is changing the way we all consume information and media companies are making major changes to their businesses in response. The changes we have announced today will allow us to deliver a better news service to our regional and rural communities and will put our publications on a sustainable footing for the future.

"The plan we announced today will see Australian Community Media move from its current operation to a more centralised but still regionally-run, locally-focused business.

"ACM will operate across six newly defined market areas (ACT & NSW South; NSW Central; Newcastle & Hunter; North Coast NSW, Queensland & Northern Territory; Victoria & Tasmania; South Australia & Western Australia), bringing together the operations of Fairfax Regional Media, Agricultural Media, Fairfax Community Media, Newcastle, Canberra and Illawarra.

"Local news and content and sales capability remain at the heart of our business and will remain well resourced. We will have a smaller management layer and there will be other staffing changes as we implement over the next 12-18 months.

"No decisions have been made yet about changes to any of our newspapers or websites - it remains business as usual.

"Our focus isn't on closing newspapers or leaving markets. It's more likely that we will see limited consolidation of papers - as we have already successfully done in a number of markets - where there is significant overlap of readership or where it makes business sense.

“We will be working with staff and communities as we introduce the changes - changes that we believe will allow us to serve our rural and regional communities better than ever before,” Mr Angilley said.

Australian Community Media connects with local communities via hundreds of newspaper titles across Australia, including 16 dailies, and a digital network of more than 140 websites.

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