
Media Release

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Sheed sounds warning on threats to regional media

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed has warned her parliamentary colleagues over the threat to democracy posed by ongoing declines in regional media resources, highlighted by the impending closure of Australian Associated Press.

"We are seeing terrible threats in relation to regional media. We have seen the closure of AAP, which employed something like 180 journalists nationwide, who supported not only our major print and online media organisations but many of the smaller ones," Ms Sheed said.

"The impact of that will be really very hard-felt, and people are feeling very sad about that loss in the face of other losses and in the face of what has happened with the ABC."

The loss of AAP will have a critical impact on rural and regional media reporting making the role of the ABC more important than ever, according to Ms Sheed. Just last year we saw WIN newsrooms shut down in Orange, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Queensland's Wide Bay.

"A reported annual budget cut of \$105.9 million to the ABC is putting the National Broadcaster under enormous pressure," Ms Sheed said.

"Vital coverage of the devastating bushfires before and during last summer cost an additional \$3 million ABC Managing Director David Anderson has said and combined that organisation is facing cuts to content and jobs."

Currently, the Victorian Government Regional Communication Policy requires that government departments and agencies place 15 per cent of their annual campaign media expenditure with regional and rural media.

"To ensure that what's left of our precious regional media survives the transition to digital, I call on the government to raise that level 20 per cent," Ms Sheed said.

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