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Media Release

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Sheed calls on Premier to support regional media through Coronavirus crisis

Independent Member for the Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed has made an urgent request to Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews to support regional media at this critical time.

“I was shocked to see The Great Southern Star, Yarram Standard and Sunraysia Daily closed this week at the very time when their respective communities need them,” Ms Sheed said.

“We’ve known for a long-time regional media is in trouble. The Premier and I both attended the Victorian Country Press Association conference late last year where we both heard of the dire state of the industry.”

Rural and regional newspapers, many of them locally owned, are vital in providing accurate and trustworthy information for their communities both in print and online, from court reporting and coverage of local politics to keeping corruption in check, according to Ms Sheed.

“I have contacted the Premier today and requested we find a way to keep regional media afloat as their traditional revenue streams are attacked by the Coronavirus crisis, just as many other businesses are suffering,” Ms Sheed said.

“While the ABC is a valuable source of information, it cannot breach the gap of the hundreds of journalists across the state employed in their respective communities that provide valuable and trusted information; information that is sorely needed during this unprecedented Coronavirus crisis.

“Victorian regional media has been suffering under the threat of digital disruption for more than a decade and many have taken significant steps to diversifying their business and move to their own digital platforms. However, I am extremely concerned this latest crisis will accelerate closures at the exact moment we are relying on them the most.”

ENDS

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