

Nine, NewsCorp and Seven West on the ACCC preliminary report into digital platforms

The ACCC has released its [preliminary report](#) into digital platforms and their impacts on news media, advertising, industry competition, user privacy and other areas.

The report includes 11 preliminary recommendations by the ACCC to the Australian Government.

“With Google and Facebook transforming the way consumers communicate, access news and view advertising online, it is critical that governments and regulators consider the potential issues created by the concentration of market power and the broader impacts of digital platforms,” the ACCC said in a [press release](#) on 10 December.

Indeed, Google and Facebook are a focus of the report. ACCC Chair Rod Sims has raised concerns over the lack of regulation that digital platforms encounter in Australia. “Organisations like Google and Facebook are more than mere distributors or pure intermediaries in the supply of news in Australia; they increasingly perform similar functions as media businesses like selecting, curating and ranking content. Yet, digital platforms face less regulation than many media businesses,” he said.

How Australia’s news media landscape reacted

A spokesperson for Nine stated that the organisation welcomed the ACCC’s report into digital platforms. “We are pleased the ACCC has taken this issue raised by Nine and other media organisations very seriously. The report suggests some promising and real solutions that are encouraging. We will now review the report in detail with a view to a more detailed response.”

Nine’s response comes just days after its [merger with Fairfax Media](#) in a historical shift in the Australian media landscape.

NewsCorp's *The Australian* published a [front-page story](#) on the report on Monday, focusing on the implications for tech giants Facebook and Google in the wake of the ACCC crackdown. [The Financial Review](#) and [The Guardian](#) also provided coverage of the report.

Executive chairman of News Corp Michael Miller said in a statement that the organisation welcomed the interim report.

"The report highlights the impact the digital platforms have as unavoidable business partners and gateways between news media businesses and both consumers and advertisers," Miller said.

"As global campaigners against the dominance and lack of transparency of the digital platforms, we are encouraged by the ACCC preliminary recommendation that Google and Facebook's strong market position justifies a greater level of regulatory oversight."

Tim Worner, CEO of Seven West Media said they were encouraged by the preliminary finding of the report. "We particularly welcome the ACCC's recognition of the need to address regulatory imbalance between digital platforms and other Australian content and local media businesses," he said in a statement to NewsMediaWorks.

"While the Preliminary Report is focused on news and journalistic content, we note that Google and Facebook also have a massive impact on producers of all Australian content and we hope this Preliminary Report is a first step towards taking real action to address the effect they have on all Australian businesses and consumers."

"This won't be the last time these companies are looked at, and that's the way it should be."

NewsMediaWorks' Peter Miller said that the report "has been very thorough."

"There has been a lack of transparency around viewability and real audience delivery. The ACCC have been able to burrow deeper into the issues and formed

the same view as we have. A more transparent marketplace provides opportunities for media owners to compete on a more even playing field," he said.

The ACCC will release its final report in June 2019.

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