Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission on its Issues Paper:
Copyright and the Digital Economy

The Victorian Country Press Association (VCPA) is the membership body for Victoria’s non-daily
country newspapers. VCPA represents approximately 90 papers across Victoria with members also
located in New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

The VCPA welcomes the opportunity to lodge a submission to the ALRC’s Issues Paper: Copyright
and the Digital Economy

The VCPA believes that proper maintenance of the Copyright Act is essential to ensure that original
materials continue to be created, that business models dependant on the protection of copyright
remain viable and proper recompense is made for the use of copyrighted materials. We believe that
the current Copyright Act provides these sureties.

The VCPA is concerned that the proposed amendments contained in the ALRC’s Issues Paper will
undo these sureties, create unnecessary confusion and water down the rights of copyright holders
and in turn unduly effect those organisations and individuals who rely upon protection of their
copyright for their economic livelihood.

Specifically, the VCPA does not support either of:

- The repeal of the current statutory licence regime; and
- The introduction of a new ‘fair use’ copyright exemption and the repeal of the current copyright
exemptions.

The current statutory licence regime is an efficient and fair method by which copyright holders
receive payment for use of their copyright by educational facilities and government agencies. The
VCPA does not see any reason for its proposed removal and thus does not support its removal.

The introduction of a new ‘fair use’ copyright exemption and the repeal of the current copyright
exemptions does nothing to support or protect copyright holders. ‘Fair use’ is a subjective term
which will lead to increased costs for the protection of copyright and in turn a softening of the rights
of all copyright holders. The VCPA does not see any reason for the introduction of a ‘fair use’
exemption nor the removal of the current copyright exemptions and thus does not support this
proposal.

Yours faithfully

The Victorian Country Press Association