

29 July 2013

**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