

1. What impact does Facebook shutting down your news page have on you as the publisher and your readers? What percentage of your readers come to In the Cove via Facebook?
2. How did you feel when you woke up yesterday and found out your news page was affected?
3. Are you trying to move away from Facebook and if so how?

Response from Jacky Barker, Founder, In the Cove:

1. The Facebook shut down has a massive impact on my business. Hyperlocals like mine receive no funding from government and would not be eligible for any payment under the new Media Bargaining Code. Our revenue is from local businesses. If we can't advertise them on Facebook then our revenue will decline and we will not be able to provide Free local news. About 50% of our referrals come from Facebook and the rest from Google searches or our other social media platforms.
2. Yesterday I woke up early and was reading an article about how local news outlets were shutting down in the US and that the local news desert was having an impact on local democracy. No one was holding local government to account. I then went to my Facebook page and saw that we part of the news ban – it was devastating. For 12 years I have been growing a business in Lane Cove providing local and factual news.
3. I am very lucky in that I have always known that you can't put your eggs in the one social media basket. I was speaking at the annual Community Broadcasting Associations of Australia news conference and I urged them to grow their Email database as I told them it is the only thing they own (other than a website). I specifically said Facebook could take your page down tomorrow. I have a very healthy email database and will continue to push this as the way to get local news. I will also be reminding people that news can be obtained via our website. We will work around this but it does mean we will have to reeducate our audience on how to find us. We also just released the a podcast which is monthly and we will look to increase the frequency of the podcasts. The irony is that we pay Facebook to promote our page and then they take us down.