

Australian Newsroom  
Mapping Project Report :  
June 2022

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[Public  
Interest  
Journalism  
Initiative]

# [Public Interest Journalism Initiative]

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## 1. Introduction

The [Australian Newsroom Mapping Project](#) (ANMP) provides a birds-eye view of the health of public interest journalism in Australia. It compiles and analyses data on news production and availability at community, local, metropolitan, state and national levels.

Criteria for inclusion in the project is detailed in Section 6 of this report.

ANMP data is publicly available for the community, industry and government to engage with and to form an evidence base for media policy and reform.

We do not presume that this is a complete database, but we do believe that this is the most comprehensive record of its kind. Data is collected and updated continuously, beginning from January 2019, with new data released each month. We regularly find changes that were missed or unreported at the time, which then are added as backdated entries.

The ANMP is a multi-stage project which will continue to roll out new data and analytical tools across 2022, such as the upcoming addition of broadcast news and corporate data. To date, PIJI has released the following:

- [Tracking changes in news production](#) (April 2020)
- [Local news publishers](#) (December 2021)
- [Australian News Index](#) (May 2022)
- [Monthly reports](#) (February 2021 - present)

This June 2022 report contains monthly and quarterly results. The data that informs this report can be accessed [here](#).

This project benefits from contributions by the public and industry. To submit or correct data, or to discuss this report, please email: [gary.dickson@piji.com.au](mailto:gary.dickson@piji.com.au).

Gary Dickson  
30 June 2022

### 1.1 Suggested citations

This report: Dickson G. 2022. *Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: June 2022*. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/anmp-data/>>

Project: Dickson G. 2020. *Australian Newsroom Mapping Project*. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/>>

### 1.2 License

The Australian Newsroom Mapping Project, these reports and the associated data are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 \(CC BY-NC-SA\) International License](#).

## 2. Monthly report (June 2022)

As of 30 June 2022, the database lists 790 print and digital news outlets of community, local, metropolitan, state/territory or national primary coverage scale.

### 2.1 Outlet additions in June 2022

In June, one outlet was added to the database.

New masthead, station or website	Masthead, station or website closure

#	OUTLET	LOCATION	SCALE	FORMAT
1	The Lismore App	Lismore, NSW	Local	Digital

**Table 1:** New records in the database, June 2022.

The Lismore App was launched in 2018 by the NSW Local App Company. It has been added as a local scale digital app based in Lismore, NSW.

Three other apps operated by the same company – The Port App (Port Macquarie, NSW), The Orange App (Orange, NSW) and The Hunter App (Maitland, NSW) have been in the database since launch. The Lismore App was the first launched by the company and its exclusion from the data was an oversight.

Each of these apps operates on the Local Independent Media Application (LIMA) platform created by New Zealand-based iApp Network. At least three other LIMA news apps operate in Australia, unconnected to the NSW Local App Company: The Bugle (Kiama, NSW); the Western Plains App (Coonamble, NSW) and The Fleurieu App (Victor Harbor, SA). Six apps also operate in New Zealand.

## 2.2 Records changed in the database

The following changes were recorded in the database this month following new assessments or information.

RECORD	NEW CHANGE TYPE	PREVIOUS CHANGE TYPE	CHANGE DATE	#
2074, Turramurra, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2075, St Ives, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2066, Lane Cove, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2042, Newtown, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2037, Glebe, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2010, Surry Hills, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2099, Dee Why, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2230, Cronulla, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
2204, Marrickville, NSW	Outlet removed	New masthead, station or website	-	1
Campbelltown Macarthur Advertiser, Campbelltown, NSW	Change reversed	End of print edition	-	1
Camden Narellan Advertiser, Camden, NSW	Change reversed	End of print edition	-	1
Cooloola Coast Today, Gympie, QLD	Merger	New masthead, station or website	22/04/2022	1
Dolphins News, Redcliffe, QLD	Outlet removed	None	-	1
Fairfield City Champion, Fairfield, NSW	Change reversed	End of print edition	-	1
Liverpool City Champion, Liverpool, NSW	Change reversed	End of print edition	-	1
The Lockyer, Fernvale, QLD	Masthead or station closure	New masthead, station or website	23/02/2022	1
The Somerset, Toogoolawah, QLD	Masthead or station closure	None	30/03/2022	1
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHANGES</b>				<b>17</b>

*Table 2: Changed records, June 2022.*

17 changes were made to records in the database in June 2022: 12 outlets were removed, one merger, and four newspapers re-commenced their print editions.

The biggest change was the removal of Neighbourhood Media's outlets from the database. Neighbourhood Media is a hyperlocal magazine publisher in Sydney's suburbs which has launched multiple publications, particularly in 2020.

The removal of these titles from the data follows a review of their content and publishing frequency. In order to be eligible for inclusion in the Australian Newsroom Mapping Project, an outlet must primarily and regularly produce original core news content.

The content of the magazines appears to be primarily arts, food and cultural events coverage, which doesn't fit within our definition of core news. There was a profile of a state MP which appeared journalistic<sup>1</sup> and an op-ed from another state MP in a different magazine<sup>2</sup> but otherwise very little coverage of government.

We also noted that there were some articles which, though not declared as such, appeared to be advertorial in their content.<sup>3</sup> In some cases, profiles of local business owners were published in an issue where that local business is also listed as a sponsor.<sup>4</sup>

Separately, we noted that the publication frequency of these titles is very low: in the year to 30 June 2022, all of these publications have had either one (2074, 2066, 2037, 2010, 2230, 2204) or two (2075, 2042, 2099) issues.

The removal of these outlets should not be read as a value judgment on their content or on arts and food reporting more broadly. Our definition is intentionally narrow to align to research findings that journalism which scrutinises the exercise of power or contributes to the civic life of a community has the nature of a public good.

The other outlet which we removed from the database this month is *Dolphins News* in the Moreton Bay Region, Queensland. This outlet had been included as a community-scale newspaper. During June we were informed that the outlet is published by Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism,<sup>5</sup> and therefore faces potential conflict of interest issues in its coverage. The removal of *Dolphins News* is consistent with our eligibility requirements for the Australian Newsroom Mapping Project, and with our approach to other news outlets operated by chambers of commerce and tourism boards.

For further information about eligibility requirements, please see section 6.

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<sup>1</sup> Smart A. 2022. Jo Haylen MP: All aboard for progressive politics. 2204. February 2022.

<[https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood\\_media\\_marrickville\\_magazine\\_februa](https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood_media_marrickville_magazine_februa)>

<sup>2</sup> Leong J. 2022. The existential climate crisis needs action now! 2042. March 2022.

<[https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood\\_media\\_newtown\\_magazine\\_march\\_2022](https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood_media_newtown_magazine_march_2022)>

<sup>3</sup> See for example Port Stephens: Seaside Paradise. 2075. April 2022.

<[https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood\\_media\\_st\\_ives\\_magazine\\_april\\_2022](https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood_media_st_ives_magazine_april_2022)>;

My Sydney Boat: Sea the best of Sydney, from a private boat cruise. 2010. March 2022.

<[https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood\\_media\\_surry\\_hills\\_magazine\\_march\\_2](https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood_media_surry_hills_magazine_march_2)>.

<sup>4</sup> See for example the profiles of KX Pilates (p. 15) and Corretto Dee Why (p. 18) in 2099, June 2022. Both of these businesses are also listed as sponsors of the issue (p. 31).

<[https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood\\_media\\_dee\\_why\\_magazine\\_june\\_2022](https://issuu.com/neighbourhoodmedia/docs/neighbourhood_media_dee_why_magazine_june_2022)>

<sup>5</sup> Knight K. 2020. New era in community news. Moreton Daily. 17 September.

<<https://www.moretondaily.com.au/news/new-era-in-community-news>>.

Four Australian Community Media papers in suburban Sydney had changes reversed. The *Fairfield* and *Liverpool City Champions*, *Campbelltown-Macarthur* and *Camden-Narellan* Advertisers had their print editions suspended in July 2021 due to Sydney's lockdowns. As we noted when adding those records in October 2021, the company indicated that the print suspensions were temporary.<sup>6</sup> These papers have returned to print, though we were not able to confirm the date when they did, and an email to the former editor of these four titles was not returned.

*Cooloola Coast Today* was a print newspaper in Gympie, Queensland, which launched in 2021. In April it was merged into its sister paper *Gympie Today* and is now published as a weekly four-page feature, its manager confirmed on email.

Finally, DSX Publications is a newspaper company based in regional Queensland and has featured regularly in these reports. At its peak in late 2020 it was publishing four papers: its flagship *The Somerset* (Toogoolawah, QLD) and three papers launched that year: *The Lockyer* (Fernvale, QLD), *The Crossing* (Dalby, QLD) and *The Chin Wag* (Chinchilla, QLD). Two further papers, *The Maranoa* (Roma, QLD) and *The Burnett* (Kingaroy, QLD), were announced but do not appear to have launched and therefore were not added to the database.<sup>7</sup>

All four newspapers took an unannounced three-month break over summer 2020-21 and our emails to the editor at that time were not returned, and so were listed as closed.<sup>8</sup> *The Somerset* and *The Lockyer* returned to print in March 2021 and so those two changes were reversed.<sup>9</sup> In May 2021 those two papers were again suspended<sup>10</sup> before returning eight months later in January 2022.<sup>11</sup>

In June we have again listed these two papers, *The Somerset* and *The Lockyer* as closed, as neither have published an issue in at least three months and the editor has not responded to follow up emails. These latest changes are dated at the last issue.

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<sup>6</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: October 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/australian-newsroom-mapping-project>>. pp 2.

<sup>7</sup> See The Maranoa Newspaper 2020. <<https://www.facebook.com/The-Maranoa-Newspaper-107287561043629/>>; The Burnett Newspaper <<https://www.facebook.com/The-Burnett-Newspaper-112057607228425/>>

<sup>8</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: February 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/australian-newsroom-mapping-project>>. pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: March 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/australian-newsroom-mapping-project>>. p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: September 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/australian-newsroom-mapping-project>>. pp. 3-5.

<sup>11</sup> DSX Publications. 2020. Yumpu. <<https://www.yumpu.com/user/dsxpublications>>

### 3. Quarterly report: National trends

#### 3.1 Active local news producers

	COMMUNITY	LOCAL	METRO	STATE	NATIONAL	TOTAL
PRINT	55	497	8	3	8	571
DIGITAL	4	167	4	5	39	219
TOTAL	59	662	14	8	47	790

*Table 3: Count of active local news producers by scale and platform, 30 June 2022.*

Table 3 shows the total number of active community, local and metropolitan news producers in PIJI's database at the end of the current quarter.

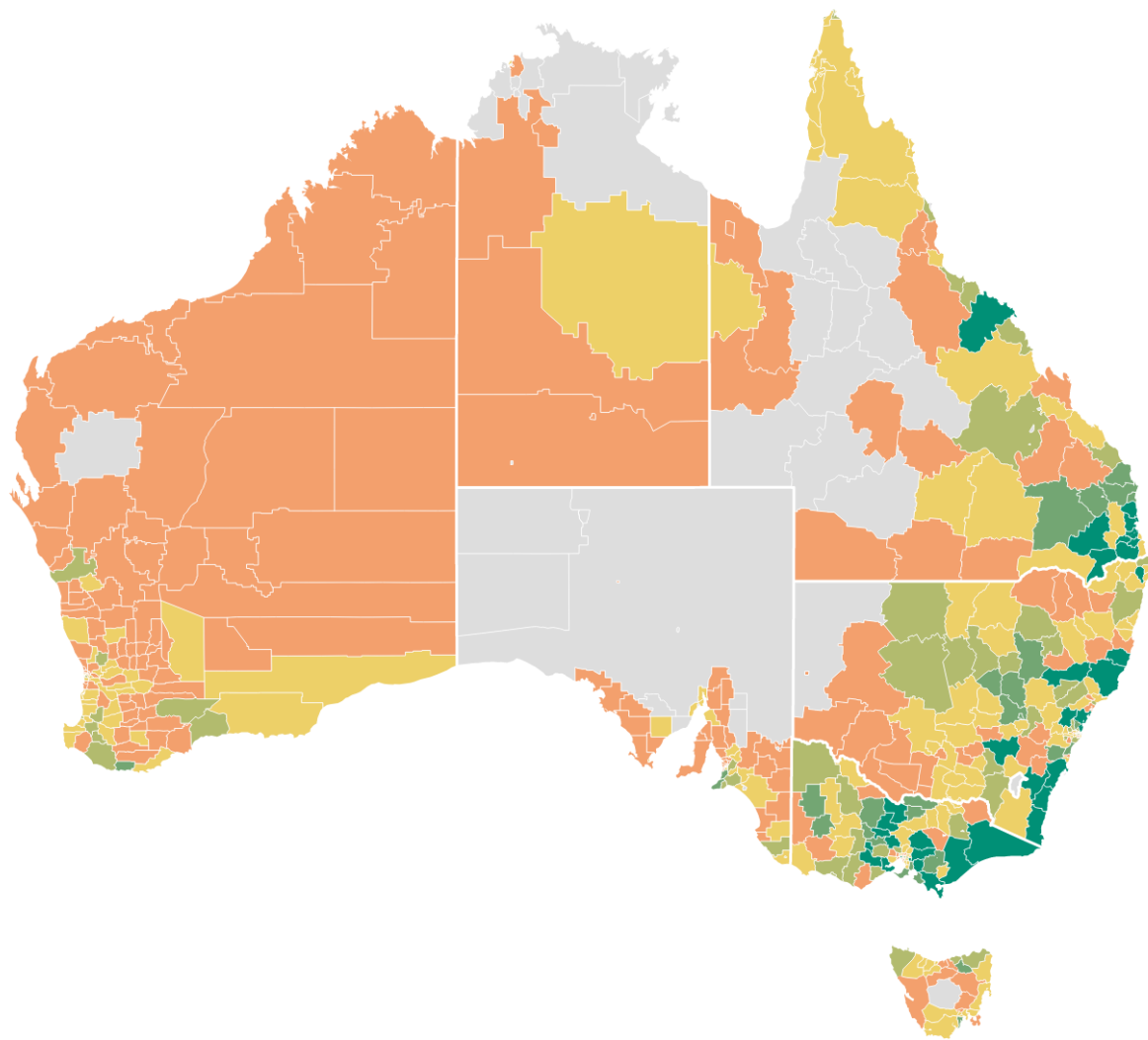
Outlets are also divided by their primary format (currently, print or digital). If a news outlet has a print edition, this is recorded as the primary format; otherwise, digital is recorded as primary. The overwhelming majority of print outlets also have a digital presence, however, each outlet is recorded here only once.

PIJI is developing radio and television broadcasters into data which we expect to release in August 2022.



Local print and digital news producers, by local government area. Grey areas signify zero local producers.

1 2 3 4 5+



**Figure 1:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

Figure 1 shows the coverage of local and community-scale print and digital news producers by local government area around Australia. Metropolitan scale outlets are not included in the count of outlets in each local government area as their news production does not routinely cover a specific local geography.

An outlet may be assigned to a local government area whether it is present in that area or covers it remotely. Where outlets are seen to be covering an area remotely, PIJI has conducted a limited assessment of the frequency and nature of that coverage. Meeting a low benchmark of an average of at least one story per month is necessary for an outlet to be included in a remote LGA. A comprehensive and regularly-maintained assessment of coverage areas for all outlets is beyond our capacity.

### 3.2 Local government areas without local print or digital news producers

An ongoing area of interest in PIJI's data is which local government areas do not appear to have a local print or digital news producer.

After receiving and verifying further information, we have removed one local government area from this list since the previous quarterly report: Berri Barmera Regional Council in South Australia. 30 local government areas remain on the list:

- Belyuen Shire, NT
- Coomalie Shire, NT
- East Arnhem Region, NT
- Roper Gulf Region, NT
- Tiwi Islands, NT
- West Arnhem Region, NT
- West Daly Region, NT
- Barcardine Regional Council, QLD
- Barcoo Shire, QLD
- Carpentaria Shire, QLD
- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire, QLD
- Croydon Shire, QLD
- Diamantina Shire, QLD
- Etheridge Shire, QLD
- Flinders Shire, QLD
- McKinlay Shire, QLD
- Mornington Shire, QLD
- Quilpie Shire, QLD
- Richmond Shire, QLD
- Winton Shire, QLD
- Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire, QLD
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire, QLD
- Franklin Harbour, District Council of, SA
- Goyder, Regional Council of, SA
- Kimba, District Council of, SA
- Peterborough, District Council of, SA
- Roxby Downs, Municipal Council of, SA
- Central Highlands Council, Tas
- Flinders Council, Tas
- Upper Gascoyne, Shire of, WA

We will continue to monitor these local government areas and update the list accordingly. If you have further information about a local print or digital news outlet that is missing and which covers one of these areas, please [let us know](#).

Please note that this data does not include radio and television outlets, including the ABC. We are currently preparing that data and expect that it will reduce the above list upon its release next month.

### 3.3 National changes in news production

Data changes recorded against outlets in the database have two attributes: the **change type**, which describes the nature of the change, and the **change category**, which list the changes as either expansions or contractions in news production and availability. The tables below show changes that took place over the current and previous quarter.

Table 4 provides the cumulative total of each change type observed since 1 January 2019, benchmarked at the end of the current and previous quarters. Table 5 groups those records according to their change category.

CHANGE TYPE	Q1/22	Q2/22	VARIANCE
New masthead, station or website	126	121	-5
Newsroom opened	14	14	-
Increase in service	9	9	-
New print edition	15	15	-
Merger	17	18	+1
End of print edition	106	102	-4
Decrease in service	39	47	+8
Newsroom closure	6	6	-
Masthead or station closure	87	92	+5
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF RECORDS</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>+5</b>

*Table 4: Count of records by change type, 31 March 2022 and 30 June 2022.*

CHANGE CATEGORY	Q1/22	Q2/22	VARIANCE
Expansions	164	159	-5
Contractions	255	265	+10
<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>(-91)</b>	<b>(-106)</b>	<b>(-15)</b>

*Table 5: Net change by change category, 31 March 2022 and 30 June 2022.*

PIJI's data is maintained and updated each month. New data changes are frequently identified as having occurred in past quarters. As such, the data presented in the tables above is our best estimate of the news market at the reported moment in time, but will adjust with any new information.

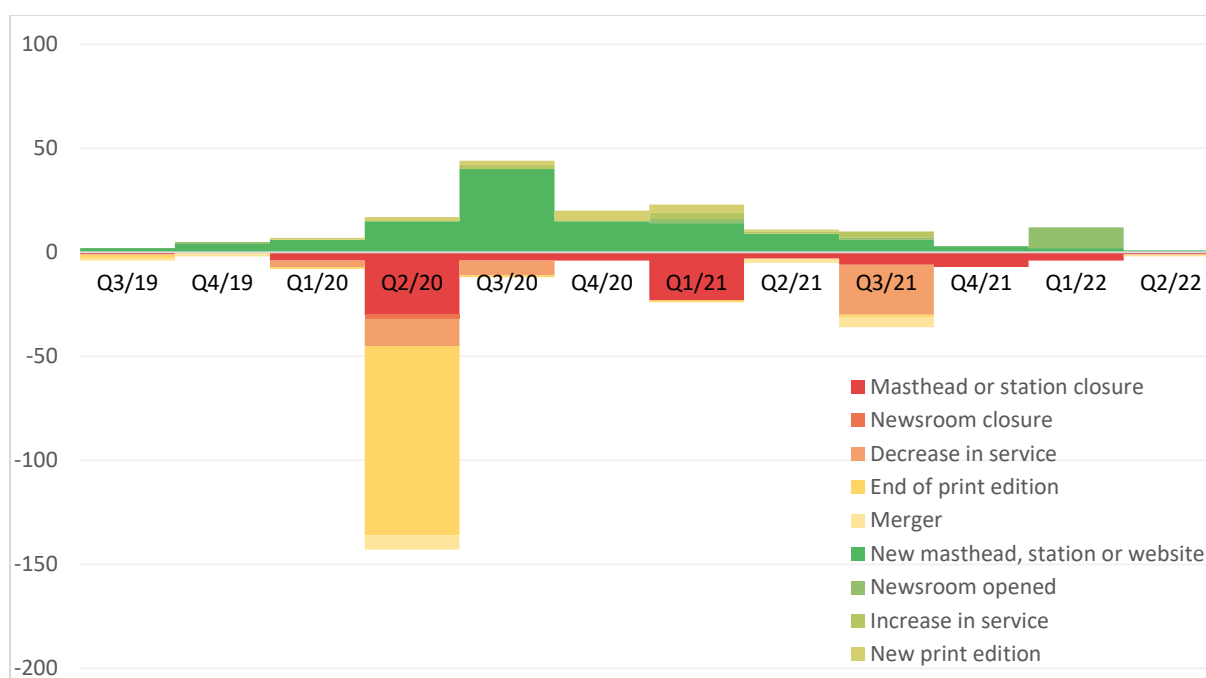


Figure 2: Change types by quarter, 30 June 2022.

Plotting quarterly data immediately highlights the impact of the onset of COVID-19 (Figure 2). We have recorded 25 March 2020 as the beginning of the economic impact of COVID-19, being the date that non-essential businesses were first ordered closed across the country. This project does not systematically collect information about the causal factors that lead to changes, but in the immediate aftermath of that order we observed significant decreases in news production and availability before the sector stabilised and began to rebound in June 2020, and more strongly in the following quarter (Q3/20).

There are some key events that group together large numbers of changes.

- In Q2/20, News Corp Australia significantly accelerated its shift to digital-only publishing by ending its print newspapers for 96 community and regional news titles across Victoria, New South Wales and particularly in Queensland, where it also closed more than a dozen papers.
- Also in Q2/20, Australian Community Media announced that it would temporarily suspend the majority of its regional non-daily newspapers. Many of those papers only partially returned; some without a print edition and many that no longer conduct original, local news production. Those titles are reflected in the 'Decrease in service' changes.
- Some Australian Community Media papers did not return from suspension at all, remaining online but relying on syndicated material for coverage. In Q1/21 we

observed that ACM seemed to retire nearly two dozen of its mastheads, closing their individual websites and social media presences.<sup>12</sup>

- Regional and metropolitan television reaffiliation came into effect in Q3/21, which resulted in the closure of a large number of WIN and Nine local news bulletins in Queensland and Victoria. A small expansion of news bulletins also occurred in New South Wales. These records are tagged as ‘Decrease in service’ and ‘Increase in service’ respectively.<sup>13</sup>
- Also in Q3/21, we listed further Australian Community Media newspapers as ‘Decrease in service’ following reductions to the publishing schedule.<sup>14</sup>
- In Q1/22 the large growth in ‘Newsroom opened’ changes is a result of the ABC’s significant expansion in regional areas, adding 55 new jobs, 10 new bureaux and 9 expanded bureaux.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 3:** Net changes in news production by quarter, 30 June 2022.

More than half of the changes from Q2/20 are the ‘End of print edition’ change type. While this change is recorded as a contraction event, it could reasonably be argued that the

<sup>12</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: April 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/anmp-data/>>. pp. 2-3.

<sup>13</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: July 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/anmp-data/>>. p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Dickson G. 2021. Australian Newsroom Mapping Project Report: September 2021. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/anmp-data/>>. p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> ABC 2022. Australia benefits from major expansion of regional and rural coverage. ABC. 10 March. <<https://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/australia-benefits-from-major-expansion-of-regional-and-rural-coverage/>>

transition from physical to online news distribution is a sign of positive change for an industry still in the process of digital transformation.

Acknowledging that ambiguity, Figure 3 removes both the 'End of print edition' and 'New print edition' change types so as to assess only those records that reflect changes in news production. This data subset suggests more stable news media market over the life of the project, with 144 expansions compared to 163 contractions since January 2019, a negative variance of -19.

Isolating the data further to only the outlets that have opened or closed over the period (that is, the 'New masthead, station or website'; 'Merger' and 'Masthead or station closure' change types) shows a positive variance of +19.

We strongly caution that this research does not take into account the productive capacity of news outlets that are gained and lost; only the fact of their opening or closing. A newspaper with deep community ties, strong editorial structures and half a dozen full-time journalists that closed would look identical in this data to a replacement website employing one volunteer. As close observers of the industry since 2019 we believe that more news productive capacity has been lost than gained, but demonstrating that is beyond the scope and resources of this project.

## 4. Quarterly report: States and territories

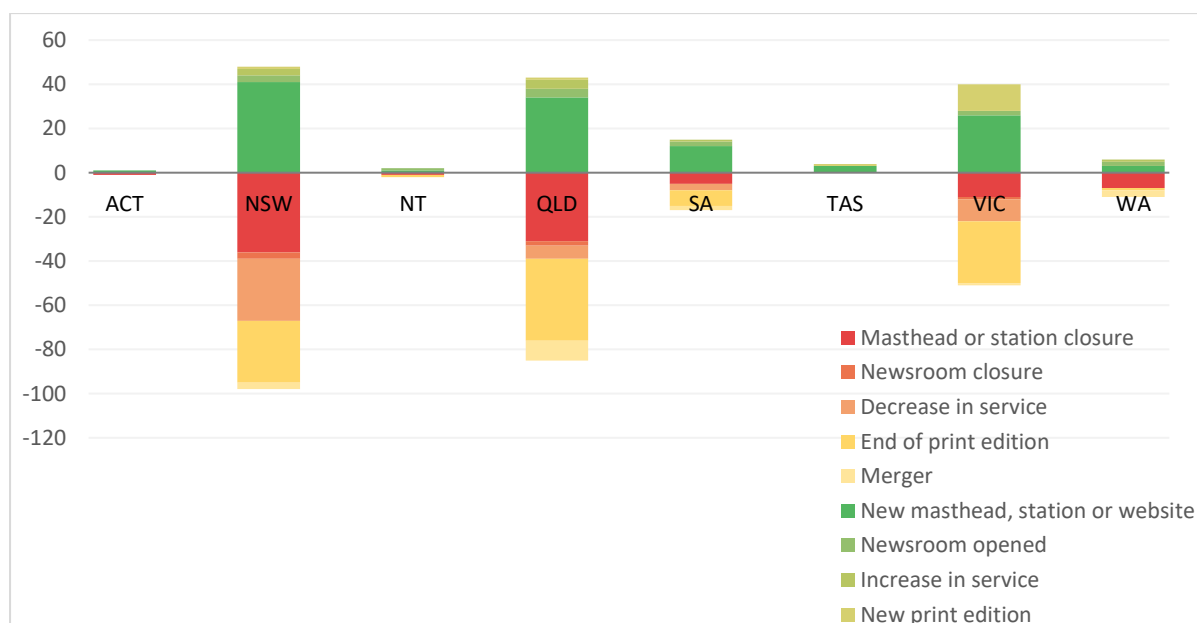
The following figures provide a total number of outlets in each state and territory at the end of the quarter and a breakdown of changes observed, both of the change types observed and of the overall change categories and net position, since 1 January 2019.

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
COMMUNITY	-	3	-	4	-	3	30	19	59
LOCAL	6	239	4	124	45	24	164	56	662
METROPOLITAN	-	3	1	2	1	1	3	3	14
STATE/TERRITORY	-	2	-	2	1	1	2	-	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>743</b>

*Table 6: Count of outlets by coverage scale and state/territory, 30 June 2022. National scale outlets are excluded as their coverage geography is larger than a state/territory.*

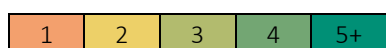
CHANGE CATEGORY	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
Expansions	1	48	2	43	15	4	40	6	159
Contractions	1	98	2	85	17	-	51	11	265
<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(-50)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(-42)</b>	<b>(-2)</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>(-11)</b>	<b>(-5)</b>	<b>(-106)</b>

*Table 7: Net change by change category and state/territory, 30 June 2022.*



*Figure 4: Change types by state or territory, 30 June 2022.*

## 4.1 Australian Capital Territory



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	-	3	-	3
DIGITAL	-	3	-	3
TOTAL	-	6	-	6

**Figure 5 / Table 8:** Count of local print/digital news producers in the Australian Capital Territory, 30 June 2022.

News production in the Australian Capital Territory has remained mostly unchanged over the project so far. We have recorded four print local and three digital local outlets for a total of seven. Two of these – the *District Bulletin* and the *Queanbeyan Age* – sit outside of the ACT in New South Wales but provide some coverage of the territory.

Assessing coverage of the ACT is complicated by the presence of the federal government. Most news outlets across the country will contain at least occasional coverage of federal government activities, however, for the purpose of this research we have only included news producers covering other issues of relevance for residents of the capital. This may

include the legislative assembly, local crime and court reporting, planning and development, business and community issues.

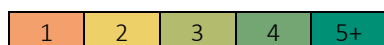
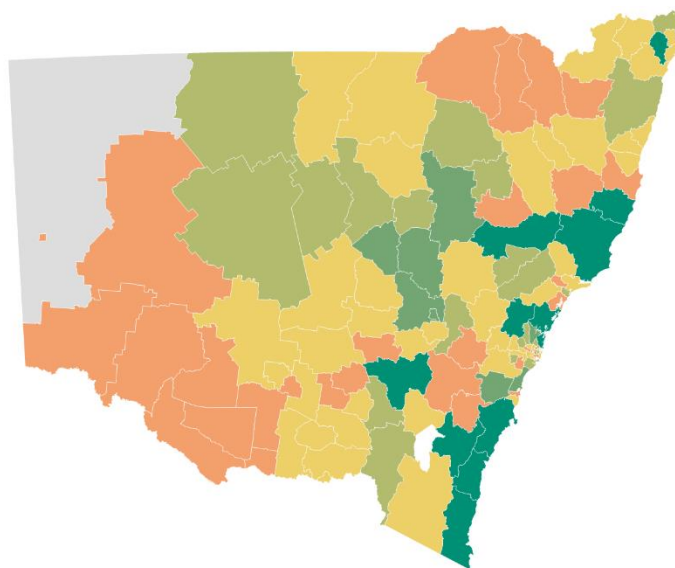
News producers in the capital range from the large media companies (*Canberra Star*, News Corp; *Canberra Times*, Australian Community Media) to small-medium news businesses focussed on the capital region like RiotACT, and independents such as the *Canberra City News*.

Only two changes in news production have been observed in the ACT since 2019: News Corp's launched of the *Canberra Star* in June 2019 and Australian Community Media's decision to merge the *Canberra Chronicle* into the *Queanbeyan Age* in early 2020

A note on the map: the Australian Capital Territory does not have local government areas and as such outlets in the ACT are coded to the entire territory. The map of the ACT provided as Figure 5 has postcode area subdivisions visible due to a technical constraint.



## 4.2 New South Wales



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	3	170	2	175
DIGITAL	-	69	1	70
TOTAL	3	239	3	245

**Figure 6 / Table 9:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

News production in New South Wales is heavily centred in coastal areas, particularly from Bega Valley on the Victorian border north through the Illawarra, Sydney and Central Coast to Port Macquarie-Hastings and the Hunter Valley. Smaller hubs of production exist particularly in Young and Lismore and around Dubbo.

The number of outlets in these areas has grown since 2019, while there has been a shift away from the Murray/Riverina, Central West, New England and the Northern Rivers areas.

Changes in New South Wales have been heavily impacted by Australian Community Media’s consolidation of its presence in the state. Since 2020, PIJI has recorded the closure

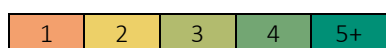
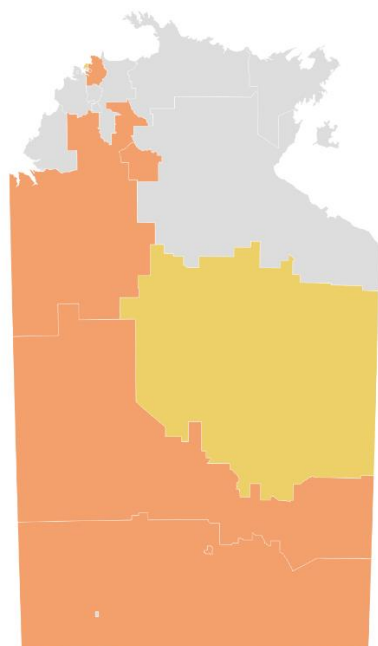
of at least 11 ACM newspapers in regional New South Wales, with a further 14 reducing their service in some way: either by a reduced publication frequency, or, in some cases, largely existing as digital shells that rerun network content produced at other papers.

News Corp also closed some papers in the north of the state in early 2020.

Both companies have also opened outlets in regional New South Wales. ACM opened two papers in the Northern Rivers area, while News Corp has launched digital hyperlocal verticals in Lismore, Bowral, Wagga Wagga, and Wollongong, among other places.

There has also been growth among independent news producers, particularly in the Hilltops Council and other regions following larger company closures and mergers.

### 4.3 Northern Territory



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	-	3	1	4
DIGITAL	-	1	-	1
TOTAL	-	4	1	5

**Figure 7 / Table 10:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

There are few digital/print news producers in the Northern Territory. News is produced out of Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek by News Corp, Australian Community Media and independents the *Tennant & District Times* and NT Independent.

Two outlets, both based in Alice Springs, have closed over the past year. Beginning in 2020 News Corp merged the *Centralian Advocate* into its statewide paper the *NT News*, first by suspending its print edition, then by redirecting traffic to the *News* website, and finally by removing any *Advocate* branding from

coverage of Alice Springs. The *NT News* does still cover Alice, but the local brand has been closed.

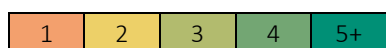
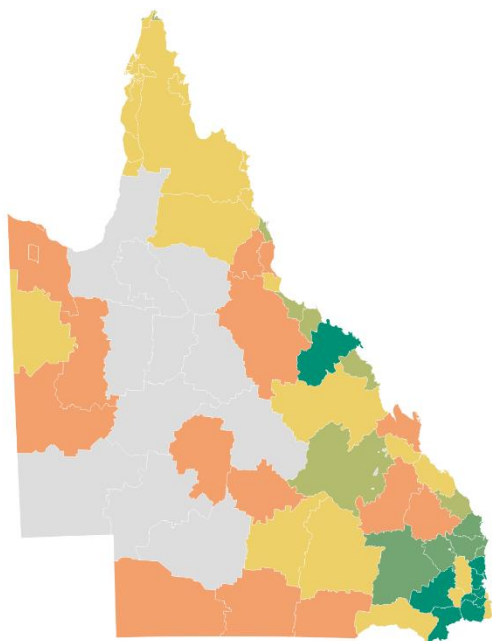
Separately, independent news website the Alice Springs News closed in November 2021 due to a declining financial position.

One news outlet has opened in territory since January 2019: the NT Independent is a Darwin-based news website which covers politics and business.

The geographically large local government areas give the impression that most of the territory receives broad coverage, however, coverage is overwhelmingly concentrated in those few population centres named above, with very little in the much smaller and more remote communities.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display the Tiwi Islands. PIJI has no record of news producers there.

#### 4.4 Queensland



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	3	75	1	79
DIGITAL	1	49	1	51
TOTAL	4	124	2	130

**Figure 8 / Table 11:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

There are many digital/print news producers in Queensland, spread across the state but with a particular concentration in the south-east and Whitsunday region, with smaller news production hubs around Cairns, Hervey Bay and Dalby.

Queensland has experienced significant changes since 2019. News Corp closed 15 papers in the state in May 2020 and merged another four into larger regional papers. 24 of their papers shifted to digital-only publishing in the same year.

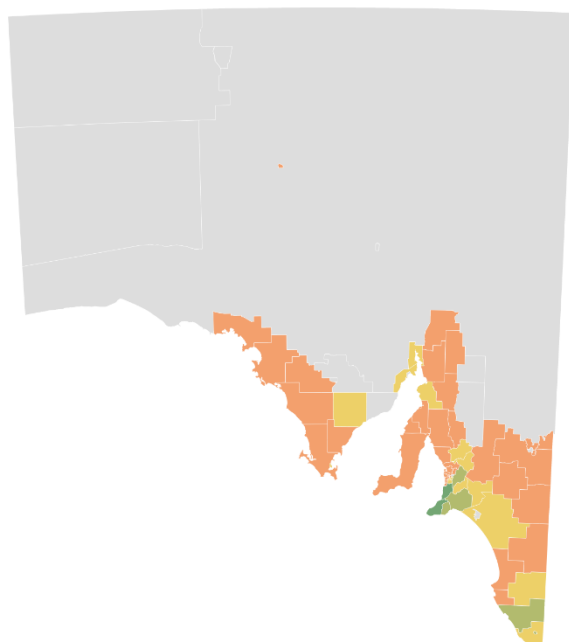
Independent outlets in Queensland have seen mixed success. In many regions where News

Corp retreated, multiple independent papers simultaneously opened to fill the void. This was particularly true in places like Dalby, Chinchilla, Cairns and Burnett. Over time, many of these startups have closed, leaving only one remaining in many markets.

Queensland has also been the site of sustained growth: the Today brand of newspapers has expanded from being a digital-only news outlet in Noosa to launching eight papers across different regions, buying distressed brands like the *Longreach Leader* and Mackay Local News and returning them to service, and small expansions interstate, particularly in South Australia.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display the Wellesley or Torres Strait Islands. PIJI has no record of any news producers in the former. There are three local print news producers covering Torres Shire and Torres Strait Island Regional Council: *Cape York Weekly*, *Koori Mail* and *Torres News*.

## 4.5 South Australia



	1	2	3	4	5+
COMM.					
LOCAL					
METRO					
TOTAL					
PRINT	-		29	1	30
DIGITAL	-		16	-	16
TOTAL	-		44	1	46

**Figure 9 / Table 12:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

News production in South Australia is centred around Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula, Murray Valley and Mount Gambier. News production in the south-east part of the state up to the capital appears to have improved since 2019, though with some fluctuations across that period.

The south-east of the state was hit hard by news closures in early COVID. Australian Community Media temporarily closed the *Naracoorte Herald*, *Murray Valley Standard*, *Flinders News* and others; while long-standing independents were forced to either merge multiple papers together (such as the *River News* and *Loxton News* into the *Murray*

*Pioneer*) or close completely (*The Border Watch*, *South-Eastern Times* and *Penola Pennant*). These latter three papers have since been revived under new ownership.

New independent papers emerged in Naracoorte, Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier to fill those temporary gaps and have remained in service even as the closed papers have been slowly revived.

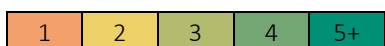
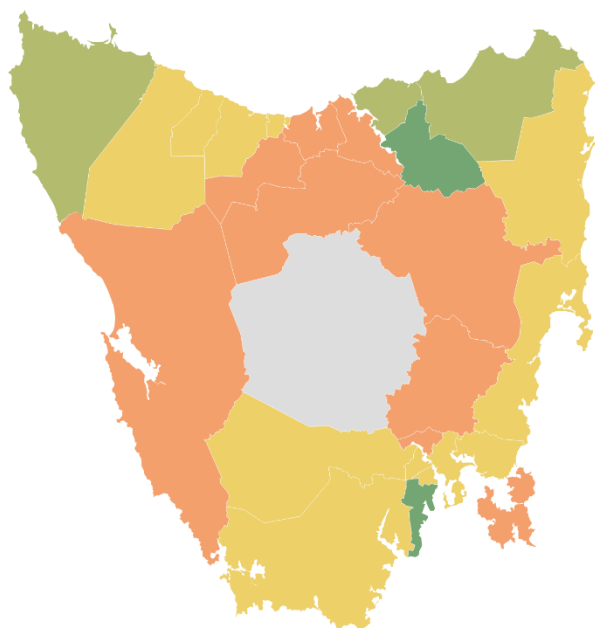
News Corp has expanded in the state, adding digital hyperlocal titles in the Barossa and Clare Valleys and Upper Spencer Gulf.

Along the Eyre Peninsula, however, there has been a reduction in the number of local news outlets. This is largely due to the retreat of ACM from the region: both the *West Coast Sentinel* and *Eyre Peninsula Tribune* were closed in 2020, leaving the *Port Lincoln Times* and new independent the *Eyre Peninsula Advocate* to cover the area.

The *Roxby Downs Chronicle* was a brief expansion paper produced by ACM in 2019 which has subsequently closed, leaving that LGA without any print or digital news outlets.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display Kangaroo Island, which is covered by Australian Community Media's *The Islander*.

#### 4.6 Tasmania



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	3	21	1	25
DIGITAL	-	3	-	3
TOTAL	3	24	1	28

Figure 10 / Table 13: Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

Tasmania has a higher proportion of independent news producers to large media companies compared to other states and territories, with News Corp and Australian Community Media present in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, and the island otherwise covered by small-medium companies.

A growing presence in Tasmanian news media is Font Publishing, which has purchased multiple local outlets over the past few years, including the *Tasmanian Country*, *Derwent Valley Gazette*, *Sorrell Times* and others.

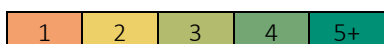
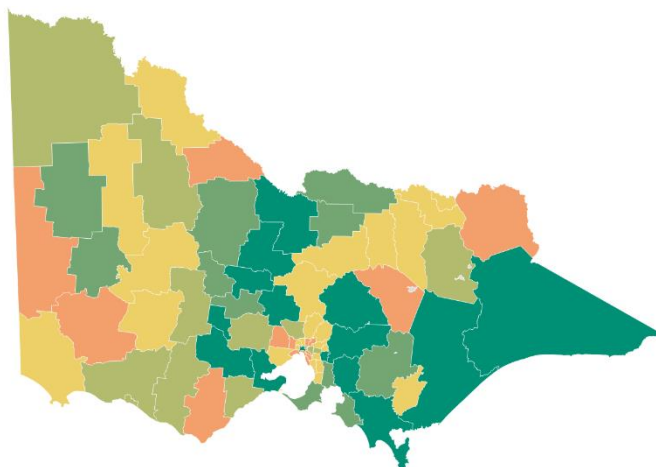
Yeates Media is a Victoria-based news company with local newspapers in Kingston, Huonville and Circular Head.

Independent outlets include the *Valley and East Coast Voice*, *North-Eastern Advertiser* and *BridREport*.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display King Island, which is covered by the *King Island Courier*, nor Flinders Island and others in the Furneaux Group. PIJI has no local news producers in this latter group, though coverage of the island sometimes occurs from ABC Gippsland in Victoria.

Bruny Island is also not present on this map, though the mainland Tasmania part of Kingborough Council is. Bruny News operates on the island, while the *Kingston Classifieds*, *The Mercury* and *Kingborough Chronicle* cover other parts of the local government area.

## 4.7 Victoria



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	28	140	3	171
DIGITAL	2	24	-	26
TOTAL	30	164	3	197

**Figure 11 / Table 14:** Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

Victoria has a dense and diverse media landscape, with a high number of independent local news outlets, small-medium news businesses, as well as large media companies, covering every part of the state but particularly the north, central and Gippsland. *The Age*, *Herald Sun* and others cover metropolitan Melbourne, with the latter's local coverage supported by a network of *Leader* community newspapers and digital hyperlocals around the state. *The Local Paper* and Star News Group also have extensive local news coverage around the capital.

Australian Community Media is present in most regional cities in Victoria, with papers in Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton, Warrnambool and others.

In the regions, small-medium news businesses include North East Media, McPherson Media, Yeates Media and Elliott Newspaper Group.

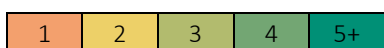
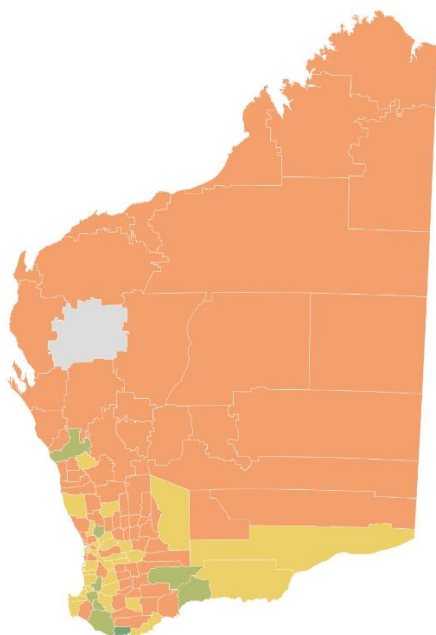
Independent newspapers exist in almost every local government area across the state.

Victoria also has a large number of community newspapers, particularly in Melbourne and in north/central local government areas like Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander, Bendigo and Loddon.

Despite multiple lockdowns, including in regional areas, Victoria lost comparatively few news outlets during COVID-19. Papers that did close include independent papers the *Kyneton Free Press*, *Yarram Standard* and *Great Southern Star*, Yeates Media's *East Gippsland News*, ACM's *Moyne Gazette* and *Hepburn Advocate*, and News Corp's *Bellarine and Surf Coast Echo*.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display Phillip Island, though the remainder of Bass Coast Shire is present. The island is covered by the *Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser*.

#### 4.8 Western Australia



	COMM.	LOCAL	METRO	TOTAL
PRINT	18	54	1	73
DIGITAL	1	2	2	5
TOTAL	19	56	3	78

Figure 12 / Table 15: Count of local print/digital news producers by local government area, 30 June 2022.

Western Australia’s media landscape is dominated by Seven West Media. Almost every local government area in the state is covered by a network of 19 SWM regional newspapers, including very remote areas. In Perth, the *West Australian* and *PerthNow* cover the whole metro and a network of *PerthNow* print papers exist across the suburbs.

The only local government area not included in SWM’s coverage is the Shire of Upper Gascoyne: PIJI could not identify regular coverage of Gascoyne Junction in a 2021 audit, though it is likely that the region does fall into

the footprint of at least one paper if a major event were to occur.

The other major feature of WA’s media landscape is a strong presence of community newspapers. WA has a network of community resource centres spread particularly across shires in the South West, Great Southern and Wheatbelt regions, and it is common for them to produce regular newspapers focussed on the social and business lives of their communities. Examples here include *The Windmill* (Shire of Corrigin), *Pingelly Times* (Shire of Pingelly) and *Crosswords* (Shire of Yilgarn).

Australian Community Media has reduced its presence in the state since 2019. It has closed three newspapers - the *Avon Valley Advocate*, *Donnybrook-Bridgetown-Manjimup Mail* and *Collie Mail* - and significantly reduced the publication output at the *Esperance Express*. PIJI has the *Express* listed as closed as we have not observed any original content published there from multiple audits through 2020-2021; however, the website does still exist, and it may re-emerge in the future.

As in other states, where ACM has retreated other local papers have emerged, including the *Esperance Weekender*, *Bridgetown Star* and *Collie River Valley Bulletin*.

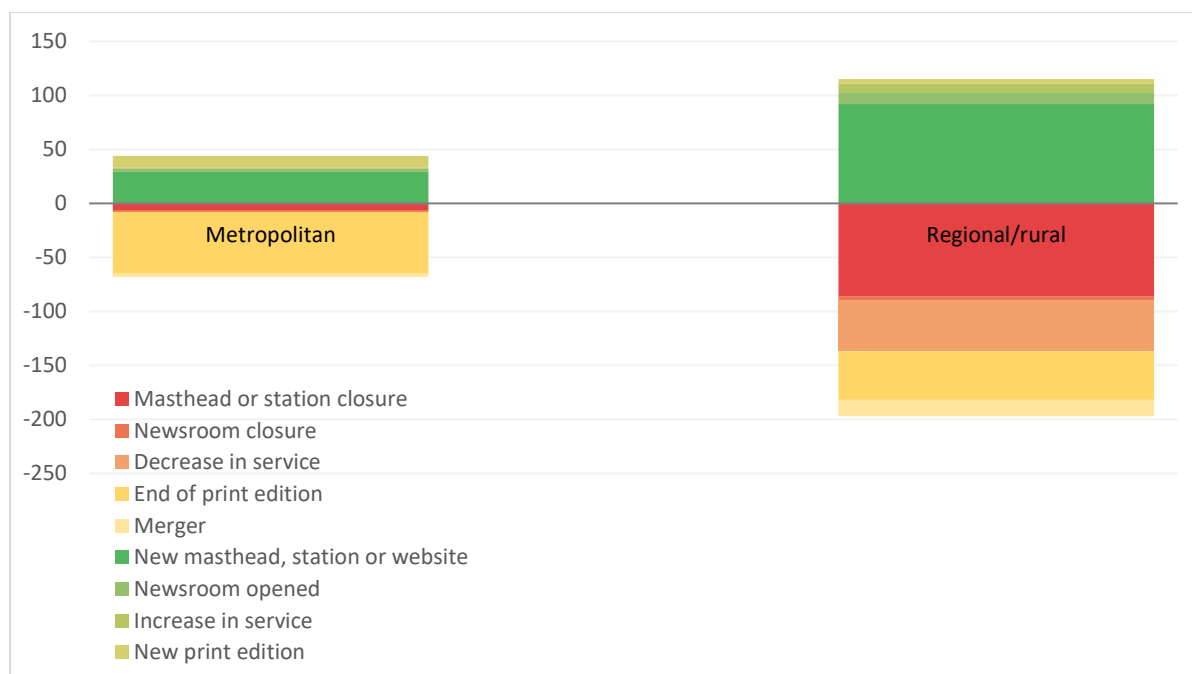
## 5. Metropolitan and regional areas

The following figures provide a total and quarterly breakdown of changes according to whether the affected outlet is located in metropolitan or regional / rural Australia.

CHANGE CATEGORY	Metropolitan		Regional / rural		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
Expansions	44	27	115	73	159
Contractions	68	25	197	75	265
<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>(-24)</b>		<b>(-82)</b>		<b>(-106)</b>

*Table 16: Absolute and percentage change by change category and region, 30 June 2022.*

Table 16 shows that regional and rural Australia has experienced the greatest change, accounting for 75 per cent of all contractions and 73 per cent of growth. The overwhelming majority of outlets that have either closed (94 per cent) or decreased their service (100 per cent) are from regional areas (Figure 13). Slightly more outlets have opened (92) to those that closed (86) in regional/rural areas, while the capital cities gained almost five times more outlets than we identified as having closed (29 compared to 6).



*Figure 13: Change types by region, 30 June 2022.*



Figure 14 isolates the data to changes in news production over the period (that is, all change categories except the 'End of print edition' or 'New print edition' types). It suggests that despite slight increases in the overall number of outlets in regional areas identified above, the impact other changes – decreases in service and newsroom closures – may negate that growth overall. On this measurement, metropolitan areas have a +23 variance in outlets and service, while regional areas end with a -41 variance since 1 January 2019.

As previously discussed, PIJI does not collect detailed information on the ongoing productive capacity of news outlets, including staffing levels, which may further affect these findings.

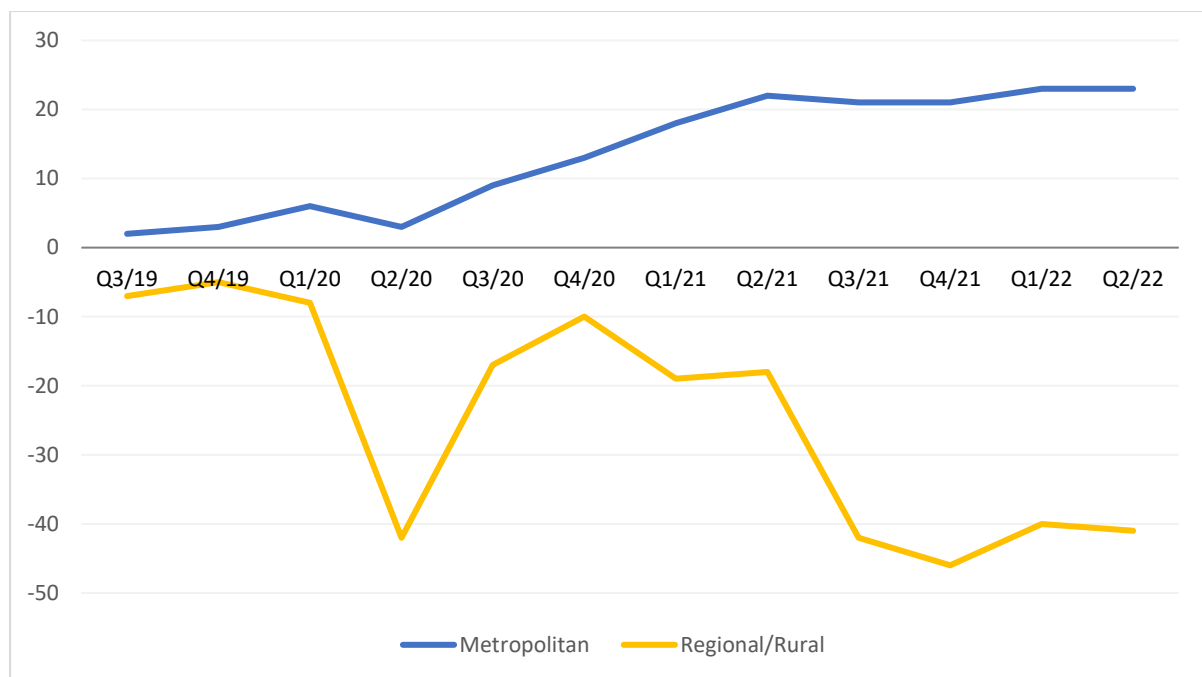


Figure 14: Net change in news production by region, 30 June 2022.

## 6. About the project

The Australian Newsroom Mapping Project is an ongoing effort to collect data about the Australian news media landscape. Data is actively maintained and reported on a monthly basis.

### Eligibility for the Australian Newsroom Mapping Project

For inclusion in this project, a news outlet should primarily and regularly produce:

(1) original core news content for (2) a local, metropolitan, state or national (3) public audience and (4) adhere to identifiable professional and ethical standards.

Each of these expectations are discussed below.

#### 1. Core news

The definition of core news which we have adopted for this project is:

original content that records, reports or investigates issues of public significance for Australians; issues relevant to engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making, or content which relates to community and local events.

These criteria align closely to earlier definitions of public interest journalism, such as that developed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in the [Digital Platforms Inquiry](#).

#### 2. Local, metropolitan, state or national

News outlets provide coverage for geographic areas of different sizes. Every news outlet is in this project assigned one of the below 'primary coverage scales':

- Local: primarily cover a small geographic area, from a single town or local government area up to a sub-state region.
- Metropolitan: have a coverage area which includes an entire capital city. News outlets in this category tend to cover news over a large geographic area and provide irregular attention to any single place, unlike local news outlets. Some companies have outlets in both this category and related outlets at the local scale, reflecting both the city-wide and dedicated local coverage produced by the relationship of these outlets to each other.
- State/territory: primarily cover news from across an entire state or territory. Any local news tends to be reactive or illustrative of a larger issue facing the state or territory.
- National: tend to focus on news which affects the entire country, such as federal politics or the economy.

Some outlets are recorded as having a community primary coverage scale. See below for more detail on the eligibility criteria of community news.

### 3. A public audience

To be eligible, news content should be published to a public audience, meaning that it is readily available to any person who wishes to access it. This does not preclude a company from charging a fee for access to the content, but it should not otherwise be limited through, for example, requiring a person to be a member of an association or industry.

### 4. Professional and ethical standards

Journalism is a process of finding out information, verifying it and applying editorial judgment. It is characterised by professional values including independence and fairness. News outlets must adhere to identifiable professional and ethical standards.

An outlet will satisfy this test if it is subject to the rules of the is subject to the rules of one of:

- The [Australian Press Council](#) or the [Independent Media Council](#)
- The [Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice](#)
- The [Commercial Radio Code of Practice](#)
- The [Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice](#) or,
- Is publicly committed to substantially equivalent editorial standards relating to the provision of quality journalism.

An important ethical standard is that news outlets have editorial independence from the subjects of their news coverage. This means that they are not owned or controlled by a political advocacy organisation (such as a political party, lobby group or a union); and not owned or controlled by a party that has a commercial interest in the coverage being produced (for example, a publication that covers a sport that is owned or controlled by the sport's governing body).

This does not include to the inherent commercial interests a news company may have in the production of content. It describes where such coverage may give rise to a conflict of interest which disadvantages or misleads the public audience.

### Note on community news organisations

Some outlets are tagged as community scale news producers, rather than local. These outlets have different characteristics to other news producers, but nevertheless can fill an important role in a local news ecosystem.

These outlets tend to be non-commercial and produced by volunteers, sometimes without journalistic training, and covering hyperlocal issues such as social events, profiles of individuals in town, and local history. They are often produced by a local institution such as community centre or civic organisation.

The community scale option is intended to reflect these outlets, which do not provide the depth, consistency or professionalism of local news outlets, but which are important parts of community news provision. We do not apply the requirement to adhere to professional and ethical standards to these outlets, though we do require that they be independent of local government or other interests like chambers of commerce or tourism boards.

### Data collection and maintenance

News outlet and business data is assembled by the Public Interest Journalism Initiative from public sources. Analysis of news outlets for compliance with eligibility standards for inclusion in the project is undertaken independently and relies on public access to relevant policies and content.

Data for the Australian Newsroom Mapping Project is actively maintained. It is updated monthly with new assessments and to reflect incoming information about changes to news outlets and their operations. However, due to the volume and complexity of the data being maintained, it is not possible to reverify every record every month. Therefore, there may be inconsistencies and errors in the data, particularly where things change over time.

### Tracking changes

Part of the project is to monitor a broader set of changes in the Australian news market beyond just the opening and closing of individual outlets. These changes are categorised as different 'change types'.

The change types that we collect, listed in terms of the hierarchy, are:

1. Masthead or station opening / closing; meaning an entire news outlet opening or closing.
2. Newsroom closure / opening; meaning a news company removing or adding a base from which to conduct news production, that having an impact on its coverage area. This change type only captures instances where there is an assumed change to the amount of localised news production (such as AAP opening a new bureau in Darwin); it does not include an outlet moving into new premises without a probable reduction in content (for example, when The Age's Melbourne CBD newsroom moved into Nine Entertainment's Melbourne CBD studios).
3. Decrease / increase in service; meaning changes in the amount of content that is produced, or, rarely, the availability of that content. Most often this category has captured observable changes in core news output, but it can also include the launch of a new access point for existing content. It can include changes to print publication frequency, but does not include print distribution area changes.
4. End / start of print edition; meaning changes in availability without a corresponding change in production. A newspaper that transitions to digital-only publication without reducing its coverage is an example.

5. Merger / demerger, meaning the coverage and/or content area of one news outlet being absorbed into another without a corresponding change in production. This change type is treated as a contraction but is the lowest level of concern.

### Limitations of the data

Some caveats around this project are necessary to avoid misinterpretation of the data.

The first caveat is to acknowledge that the changes captured are broader than 'closures' and 'openings' of news outlets. 'Contractions' is not a synonym for 'closures'; it is a broader category of negative changes to news production and availability. This report is updated regularly in order to demonstrate the difference.

The data is likely to be an undercount of the changes that have occurred. It is actively maintained by PIJI and contributions are received from news organisations, from civil society and academia, and from the public. Even then, we do not have visibility into all news production and availability around Australia, and we do not presume to have a complete log of all changes that have occurred over the past two years.

The way that data is recorded in the database also leads to undercounts in two subtly different ways: in changes that occur over time, and in multiple changes that occur simultaneously as part of one event. Each news publication is entered in the database only once, and only the most recent and most serious change type is represented. Where an event involves multiple change types it is logged as the highest ranked category to which it fits. This means that:

- If a news website was founded in January 2019; launched a print edition in April; closed that print edition in September and closed entirely by December, only the most serious (and, secondly, most recent) change – the 'Masthead or station closure' in December – would be recorded, despite the multiple other positive and negative changes to production and availability across the period.
- If the closure of a print news outlet was logged, the event would have necessarily involved the end of a print edition; a decrease in service and the closure of a newsroom, but it would be only logged as a 'Masthead or station closure', as that change type ranks highest on the hierarchy.

The data also flattens the complexity of what is being gained and lost by not having any assessment of the output, institutional characteristics or content of the news companies: the closure of a newspaper with ten working journalists would be presented as equivalent to the opening of a website of one. Clearly these two events would have very different impacts on the production and availability of news, but it is beyond this project's scope to make this assessment for every change that occurs.

For these reasons caution must be taken in drawing conclusions about the general health of the news media ecosystem from only this project data.

Two further hypotheticals provide reasons for caution:

1. A news media ecosystem in which many news entrepreneurs had the confidence and the capital to establish organisations and outlets, the majority of which might fail, could be a healthy environment of public interest journalism production and competition but might appear in our data like a failing system due to the high number of closures.
2. A news media ecosystem in which all journalism was produced by a single company could be an uncompetitive environment or be failing to meet community need for diverse and locally relevant content, but would look healthy in our data if that one company was stable or growing.

Due to limited resources and the significant methodological difficulty in ensuring rigour, the project does not record any information about journalism job gains and losses.

Despite these caveats we do believe that the Australian Newsroom Mapping Project offers information that, in combination with other research, can provide insight into the changing nature of journalism production and availability in Australia.

## About the Public Interest Journalism Initiative

The [Public Interest Journalism Initiative](#) (PIJI) is a specialist think tank advancing a sustainable future for public interest journalism in Australia.

Through our original research and advocacy work, we seek to stimulate public discussion and establish optimal market pre-conditions in investment and regulation that will sustain media diversity and plurality in the long term.

PIJI is a [registered charity](#) with tax concession charity (TCC) status. It is a philanthropically funded, non-profit company limited by guarantee (ABN 69 630 740 153) governed by a Board of independent directors, advised by an Expert Research Panel and Policy Working Group and regulated by the ACNC, ATO and ASIC. PIJI is a limited shelf-life initiative, due to cease operation in 2023 in line with achieving its intended impact.

Our evidence-based approach focuses on three key research themes into public interest journalism: assessment of diversity, community value and support, and investment and financial sustainability.

# [Public Interest Journalism Initiative]

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