

[Public
Interest
Journalism
Initiative]

Australian News Data Report

Monthly issue |
May 2023

Australian News Data Report: May 2023

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Published by the Public Interest Journalism Initiative Limited, Melbourne, Australia.

For the data which informs this report, please visit:

<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/anmp-data/>

For more information about the Australian News Data Project, please visit:

<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/>

ISBN: 978-0-6456290-8-8

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Suggested citation

Dickson G. and Germano M. 2023. *Australian News Data Report: May 2023*. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/>>

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AUSTRALIAN NEWS DATA REPORT

Monthly issue | May 2023

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Overview

The [Australian News Data Report](#) is a monthly analysis of information about news production in Australia drawn from three ongoing projects:

- **Australian News Index (ANI)** is the national database of newsrooms and changes to news production. The ANI supplies the data for the ANMP visualisations.
- **Australian News Mapping Project (ANMP)** plots news producers according to their locations, coverage geographies and the characteristics of each business;
- **Australian News Sampling Project (ANSP)** assesses news output by specific geographic location/s to understand the local character and quantity of public interest journalism production and produces each as a case study; and,

This report is part of PIJI's continued commitment to ensuring an evidence-based approach to building sustainable public interest journalism production in Australia.

Every month we provide an exported version of the Australian News Index data. The catalogue of PIJI's previous reports and data is available [on our website](#).

New data: publication schedule

In this report PIJI has released publication schedule data of print news outlets into the Australian News Index. This data is briefly discussed in Section 1.2.

In this issue, we also present monthly results as at 31 May 2023 and content sampling in eleven local government areas of Western Australia: the City of Albany and shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet and Woodanilling.

Feedback

As always, our research is made more rigorous with contributions from industry and the public. We welcome your feedback. To submit or correct data in this report, please [complete this online form](#) or email research@piji.com.au.

[Australian News Mapping Project]

Monthly results: May 2023

1 Australian News Mapping Project

The [Australian News Mapping Project](#) (ANMP) provides a geographic view of the health of public interest journalism in Australia.

The project was first launched in April 2020 to [track changes](#) in news production during COVID-19. This mapping has since expanded to include public interest journalism production by distribution format - print, digital, radio and television - and by scale: community, local, metropolitan, state/territory and national levels.

Baseline data is [visualised by local government areas](#).

Further detail about the project, including eligibility, definitions and a methodology for categorising changes, can be found in Section 3: Data eligibility.

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 complete data, but we do believe that this is the most comprehensive record of its kind.

1.1 Monthly results: May 2023

As of 31 May 2023, the Australian News Index lists 1200 print, digital, radio and television news outlets of community, local, metropolitan, state/territory or national primary coverage. Table 1 provides the breakdown of outlets according to their primary format and scale.

	Community	Local	Metro	State	National	Total
Print	64	458	8	5	9	544
Digital	6	167	3	6	42	224
Radio	107	269	2	0	1	379
Television	0	51	0	0	2	53
Total	177	945	13	11	54	1200

Table 1: Active news outlets, 31 May 2023.

1.1.1 Changes to outlet records in the database

139 changes were made in the database in May 2023. This very high volume of changes can be attributed to three ongoing reviews that PIJl is undertaking: testing news entity data released last month; gathering publication frequency data; and reviewing radio broadcast outlets.

Due to this high number of changes, they are being reported in four groups: changes to news outlet records, changes to news ownership made, changes to radio news outlets, and changes to news entity records.

1.1.1.1 Changes to news outlet records

34 changes were made to news outlet records, all of which are backdated. As noted, this table does not include changes made to radio entity records. These are reported separately in section 1.1.1.3.

Many changes to print publications were identified through collecting data on publication frequency. This process revealed 11 outlets that had closed in previous months and which have previously been unreported.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	Barham Bridge	VIC	○ Updated name and coverage area	31/12/2018
2	Bayside Beacon	NSW	● Outlet opened	01/03/2023
3	The Border Watch	SA	○ Updated coverage area	30/09/2020
4	Brimbank & North West Star Weekly	VIC	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
5	Buninyong and District Community News	VIC	● Outlet closed	28/02/2022
6	Coast Community Chronicle	NSW	● Outlet closed due to merger	24/05/2022
7	Coastal Leader	SA	● Outlet closed	31/12/2021
8	Cooroora Connect	QLD	● Outlet closed	31/12/2021
9	East Gippsland News Now	VIC	○ Removed from the database	31/12/2018
10	Emerald Messenger	VIC	● Outlet closed	31/08/2022
11	Flinders News	SA	● Outlet closed	30/06/2021
12	Griffith Phoenix	NSW	● End of print edition	30/04/2020
13	The Leader	SA	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
14	The Local	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
15	Lorne Independent	VIC	● Outlet closed	31/12/2022
16	Macarthur Advocate	NSW	● Outlet opened	01/01/2023
17	Melton & Moorabool Star Weekly	VIC	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
18	Mountain Views Star Mail	VIC	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018

19	Newcastle Weekly	NSW	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
20	Norseman Today	WA	○ Outlet temporarily closed	30/04/2022
21	Northern Star Weekly	VIC	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
22	Pelican Post	NSW	● Outlet closed due to merger	06/04/2022
23	People's News	QLD	● Outlet closed	31/12/2022
24	Port Albert Tattler	VIC	● Outlet closed	30/11/2022
25	The Southern Argus	SA	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
26	Tasmanian Country	TAS	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
27	Tatura Bulletin	VIC	● Outlet closed	31/05/2022
28	Traf News	VIC	● Outlet closed	30/04/2023
29	Wandering Echo	WA	○ Removed from the database	31/12/2018
30	Warrnambool Weekly	VIC	● Outlet opened	31/03/2023
31	Western Sydney Business Access	NSW	○ Updated name	03/04/2023
32	The Wombat Post	VIC	○ Updated primary format	03/04/2020
33	Yarrawonga Chronicle	VIC	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018
34	Yorke Peninsula Country Times	SA	○ Updated coverage area	31/12/2018

Table 2: Changed outlet records, May 2023.

The Buninyong and District Community News was a community newspaper in Buninyong, Victoria, a town near Ballarat. The News opened in 1975, was suspended in 2012 and was reopened by a group of volunteers in 2015. In February 2022 the title closed. In the final edition, editor Barry Fitzgerald wrote that

the role played by this community newspaper as part of the wonderful fabric of life in Buninyong is of great importance, and must be continued in some format.¹

The title was not continued, and has been listed as closed, backdated to February 2022.

Two former Australian Community Media titles, the Coastal Leader and Flinders News, have been listed as closed, backdated to their final print editions in December 2021 and June 2021, respectively. These titles were recently sold alongside other ACM newspapers in South Australia to SA Today Pty Ltd, and were reviewed in light of that sale. The titles had previously been listed as only ending their print editions at those 2021 dates, however, on review it became clear that news production had effectively also ceased at that time. SA Today has not reopened these titles.

¹ Fitzgerald B. 2022. After seven years, final edition from the News team. Buninyong and District Community News. February. <<https://www.buninyong.vic.au/images/news/2022-feb.pdf>>

The Emerald Messenger was a community newspaper produced in Emerald, Victoria, on the eastern outskirts of Melbourne. Emerald Community House closed the title in August 2022, but confirmed in an email that a new title with a similar focus and coverage area will be relaunched in July 2023.

Jo Vondra, editor of the Lorne Independent for more than 20 years, stepped down from the title in November 2022, and passed away a month later.² In a Facebook tribute, the editorial team wrote that Jo

wrote passionately about the things that mattered to Lorne and through the Lorne Independent, has chronicled the stories of the town for over twenty years of its history.

One further issue was published for January 2023, and there has been no activity since then. An email to the editorial team was not responded to. The title has been listed as closed following its final edition, published 31 December 2022.

Norseman Today is a small, print-only community newspaper published in Norseman, Western Australia, a remote town in the Goldfields region. Two emails sent to the title, in March and April, have not been responded to. We have temporarily listed this title as closed, but will continue to attempt to confirm over coming months.

People's News launched as a print newspaper in Mackay in February 2021 and rapidly increased its coverage area over the subsequent 12 months, expanding to cover the coast from Townsville in the north to the Isaac Region to the south. As of April 2023, the website is down and emails cannot be delivered, and the publisher did not respond to a tweet asking about the status of the paper. Archive.org has the website still available as of October 2022; without any better information the outlet has been listed as closed from the end of that year.

The Port Albert Tattler was a community newspaper in eastern Victoria. It closed in November 2022, a former editor of the title confirmed in an email.

Tatura Bulletin was a community newspaper published in Tatura, a small town on the outskirts of Shepparton in central Victoria. Its final edition was May 2022.

Traf News, a community newspaper covering Trafalgar, Victoria, announced a 'temporary pause' in April 2023. In announcing the suspension, John Freyne, President of Traf News, wrote that³

Despite successfully adapting to the pandemic, we have faced a reduction in advertising revenue which has greatly impacted the paper's viability. Additionally, a few volunteers have had to step away for personal reasons.

We have listed the title as closed in April, and will monitor to see if it returns.

Two titles were listed as closed due to mergers: the Coast Community Chronicle and Pelican Post were both merged into sister publication the Coast Community News in May and April 2022, respectively. Previously the publisher, Central Coast Newspapers Pty Ltd, operated all three titles within the Central Coast local government area. This consolidation means only the News remains.

Two titles were removed from the database:

² Lorne Independent. 2022. Vale Jo Vondra. Facebook. 23 December. <<https://www.facebook.com/LorneIndependent/posts/pfbid02Pu4R8Un7N9QgLqGWtzCDbwYNiQ96BES4Hhk6YkNe72wEt1Fhrhz3wEtNhwjJd5HZI>>

³ Freyne J. 2023. Temporary pause: Trafnews operations halted. Traf News. nd. <<https://trafnews.com/temporary-pause-trafnews-operations-halted/>>

- East Gippsland News Now was not found to publish public interest journalism, instead being focussed on tourism news.
- Wandering Echo was removed from the database as it is not an independent title, instead being published by the Shire of Wandering local government area.

We also added five outlets to the database, three of which have opened in 2023.

The Bayside Beacon⁴ is a digital news site in Bayside Council, New South Wales. It launched in March 2023.

The Local⁵ is a print magazine in Glenlyon, Victoria, in the Hepburn Shire. It was added to the database in May after the editor brought the title to PIJI's attention.

The Macarthur Advocate⁶ is a new newspaper from Community Broadcast Network Pty Ltd, which operates multiple titles around Sydney. It launched in January to cover the local government areas of Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly. Separately, the company renamed newspaper Western Sydney Business Access to the Western Sydney Express⁷ as of April 2023.

Tasmanian Country⁸ was added to the database. A former News Corp title, it was sold to Font Publishing in July 2020,⁹ and is one of seven public interest journalism outlets that Font operates in the state. It had not been included in the database as PIJI had previously excluded outlets that focus on primary industries news. That position has shifted where the title additionally covers social and political issues that are relevant to rural communities and Tasmanian Country has been added to the data based on this new standard.

The Warrnambool Weekly¹⁰ is a new title from Western District Newspapers, publisher of the Camperdown Chronicle, Terang Express and Mortlake Dispatch in Western Victoria. It launched in March 2023.

One title, the Griffith Phoenix, was listed as ending its print edition. The editor confirmed that the title shifted to digital only due to the onset of COVID-19.

Eleven outlets had their coverage areas updated following reviews of feedback from industry:

- Barham Bridge had Gannawarra Shire added to its coverage area. The name of this outlet was also corrected to 'The Koondrook and Barham Bridge Newspaper'.
- The Border Watch had Wattle Range Council added to its coverage area.
- Brimbank & North West Star Weekly had the City of Melton added to its coverage area.
- The Leader had Mid Murray Council, Town of Gawler and Regional Council of Goyder added to its coverage area.
- Melton & Moorabool Star Weekly had Moorabool Shire added to its coverage area.
- Mountain Views Star Mail had Yarra Ranges Council added to its coverage area.
- Newcastle Weekly had the City of Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens Council and the City of Maitland added to its coverage area.
- Northern Star Weekly had Whittlesea Shire added to its coverage area.
- The Southern Argus had Mount Barker District Council added to its coverage area.

⁴ Bayside Beacon. <<https://www.baysidebeacon.com.au/>>

⁵ The Local. <<https://tlnews.com.au/>>

⁶ Macarthur Advocate. <<https://www.macarthuradvocate.au/>>

⁷ Western Sydney Express. <<https://www.accessnews.com.au/>>

⁸ Tasmanian Country <<https://tasmaniancountry.com/>>

⁹ Rigby B. 2020. News Corp sells Tasmanian Country to PR agency. Mumbrella. 15 July. <<https://mumbrella.com.au/news-corp-sells-tasmanian-country-to-pr-agency-634711>>

¹⁰ Warrnambool Weekly. <<https://www.warrnamboolweekly.com.au/>>

- Yarrawonga Chronicle had Federation Council added to its coverage area.
- Yorke Peninsula Country Times had Copper Coast Council and Barunga West Council added to its coverage area.

Finally, The Wombat Post,¹¹ a news outlet in Daylesford, Victoria, was changed from primary format 'Print' to primary format 'Digital'. Staff at the Post confirmed that though it launched with a print edition, this was a one-off to commemorate the commencement of the title, and it is primarily published online.

1.1.1.2 Changes to news ownership

30 changes have been made to news ownership as PIJI continues to refine data released in April.¹²

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
35	Barham Bridge	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Shiloh Media	31/12/2018
36	Berwick Star News	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
37	Brimbank & North West Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
38	Canungra Times	QLD	○ Ownership changed to Scenic Rim Media	31/12/2018
39	Cranbourne Star News	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
40	Dandenong Star Journal	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
41	Endeavour Hills Hallam Doveton Star Journal	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
42	Eyre Peninsula Advocate	SA	○ Ownership changed to SA Today Pty Ltd	01/04/2023
43	Ferntree Gully Belgrave Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
44	Fleurieu Sun	SA	○ Ownership changed to SA Today Pty Ltd	01/04/2023
45	Geelong Independent	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Geelong Independent Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
46	LG Focus	N/A	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
47	Lilydale Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
48	Maribyrnong & Hobsons Bay Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
49	Melton & Moorabool Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
50	Mount Evelyn Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
51	Mountain Views Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
52	Noosa Today	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018

¹¹ The Wombat Post. <<https://thewombatpost.com.au/>>

¹² See Dickson G. and Costa J. 2023. Australian News Data Report: April 2023. Melbourne: Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/news-mapping/reports-analysis/report-library/>>

53	Northern Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
54	Ocean Grove Voice	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Geelong Independent Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
55	Pakenham Berwick Gazette	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
56	Pakenham Officer Star News	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
57	Plains Producer	SA	○ Ownership changed to SA Today Pty Ltd	01/04/2023
58	Ranges Trader Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
59	Stanthorpe Today	QLD	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
60	Sunbury & Macedon Ranges Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
61	Two Wells & Districts Echo	SA	○ Ownership changed to SA Today Pty Ltd	01/04/2023
62	Upper Yarra Star Mail	VIC	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
63	Warwick Today	QLD	○ Ownership changed to Star News Group Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
64	Wyndham Star Weekly	VIC	○ Ownership changed to MMP Star Pty Ltd	31/12/2018
65	Yorke Peninsula Country Times	SA	○ Ownership changed to J.D Ellis & M.C Ellis & Y P Country Times Pty Ltd	31/12/2018

Table 3: Changes to news ownership, May 2023.

Most of the changes recorded were to Star News Group titles, after feedback from the publisher. Previously the Ian Thomas Family Trust was listed as the entity which operated all Star News Group titles; however, this has been corrected:

- Two titles, Geelong Independent and Ocean Grove Voice, are operated by the entity Geelong Independent Pty Ltd.
- Star Weekly mastheads are operated by MMP Pty Ltd.
- Star News Group Pty Ltd operates 12 other Star titles, as well as some Today titles in Queensland.

These entities together form Star News Group.

Separately, four titles in South Australia were changed to SA Today Pty Ltd, following the completion of a purchase: the Eyre Peninsula Advocate, Fleurieu Sun, Plains Producer and Two Wells & Districts Echo. These titles were previously operated by Papers & Publications Pty Ltd and have been operated by SA Today since April 2023.

The Koondrook and Barham Bridge Newspaper owner was changed from the sole trader Littleton, Helen Jayne to the Trustee for Shiloh Media.

The Canungra Times was previously listed to the sole trader Moriarty, Keer; this has been changed to Scenic Rim Media Pty Ltd.

The Yorke Peninsula Country Times was listed to the Trustee for the Tabloid Trust. This has been changed to J.D Ellis & M.C Ellis & Y P Country Times Pty Ltd.

1.1.1.3 Broadcast outlet changes

PIJI is undertaking an extensive review of broadcast outlets, particularly radio, across May and June 2023 as part of our ongoing data maintenance process and as we prepare to launch new data in the [Australian News Index](#). In all, we added 32 radio outlets to the data in May, removed one, and updated four.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
66	2SER (2SER)	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
67	3KND Kool 'N' Deadly (3KND)	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
68	6RTR (6RTR)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
69	89.9 TheLight (3TSC)	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
70	92.9 Triple M Perth (6MMM/6PM)	WA	○ Updated name	31/12/2018
71	98.1 Triple M Geraldton (6BAY)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
72	Bamaga 106.7 (4ACR)	QLD	○ Removed from the database	31/12/2018
73	Bay FM 99.9 (2BAY)	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
74	Community Radio 102.1 FM (8CCC)	NT	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
75	Fresh FM (5FBI)	SA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
76	hit106.5 Albany (6AAY)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
77	hit105.5 Coffs Coast (2CSF)	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
78	hit100.5 Great Southern	WA	○ Updated name, callsign	31/12/2018
79	hit94.9 Great Southern (6KAN)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
80	hit106.5 Karratha (6RED)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
81	hit99.7 Riverina MIA (2RGF)	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
82	hit95.7 Southwest (6BUN)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
83	hit97.9 Tablelands (4AMM)	QLD	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
84	hit B105 FM (4BBB)	QLD	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
85	hit SAFM Adelaide (5SSA)	SA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
86	Hope 103.2 (2CBA)	NSW	○ Added to the database	02/07/2020
87	KIIS 97.3 FM Brisbane (4BFM)	QLD	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
88	Mix 102.3 Adelaide (5ADD)	SA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
89	National Indigenous Radio Service (6ACR)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018

90	Ngaarda Radio	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
91	RTR FM	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
92	Triple M Adelaide 104.7 (5MMM)	SA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
93	Triple M Carnarvon 666 (6LN)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
94	Triple M 103.5 Fraser Coast (4MBB)	QLD	○ Updated name	31/12/2018
95	Triple M Great Southern (6WB)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
96	Triple M Goldfields 981 (6KG)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
97	Triple M Riverina MIA 963 (2RGF)	NSW	○ Updated name	31/12/2018
98	Triple M Riverina MIA 963 (2WG)	NSW	○ Updated name	31/12/2018
99	Triple R (3RRR)	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
100	TSIMA Radio (4MW)	QLD	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
101	Vision Australia Radio Adelaide 119.7AM (5RPH)	SA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
102	Vision Australia Radio Darwin (8RPH)	NT	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
103	Vision Australia Radio Perth 990AM (6RPH)	WA	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
104	Zed Digital (4ZZZ)	QLD	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018

Table 4: Changes to broadcast outlet records, May 2023.

The large number of radio outlets added this month reflects two focusses for review during May: the community radio sector, and ensuring that national radio brands are properly represented in the data.

Changes to the community radio sector have been informed by the [Community Radio Broadcasting Association of Australia](#), which has undertaken to identify which of its member stations have journalists on staff. This work, which was shared with PIJI, has been invaluable guidance in identifying the public interest journalism producers from the sector which have not been included in our data. Some, such as Hope Media or Ngaarda Radio, have been included in previous iterations of the data but were nevertheless identified as missing through this review process.

PIJI is actively assessing how we represent remote Indigenous media organisations in our data, and how the structure of our data might need to change to reflect the unique characteristics of the sector. As an example, the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) provides radio news bulletins to dozens of community radio stations around Australia. Many, but not all, of these stations are assigned one of four similar callsigns (4ACR, 5ACR, 6ACR and 8ACR). It is not currently clear to us how many of these community stations engage in news production beyond broadcasting the NIRS bulletins, or how the individual stations are or are not related to each other.

As a temporary measure, the four callsigns with multiple licenses assigned to them have been consolidated as entries for the National Indigenous Radio Service, including a new record for 6ACR, which was missing from the database. Bamaga 106.7 has been removed as a separate outlet record as we continue to review our data on this sector. Assessment and consultation on how to represent remote Indigenous media organisations will continue throughout June and July.

Reviewing national news brands also provided many opportunities for additions from the commercial radio sector. In all, we found 16 missing from Southern Cross Austereo (nine hit stations, seven Triple M stations), and two missing from ARN's KIIS/Mix network.

As well as these additions, the names of five outlets were corrected:

- The callsign for 92.9 Triple M Perth was incorrectly listed as 6MMM/6PM. This has been corrected to 6MMM.
- The callsign was missing for hit100.5, and the on-air brand was listed as 'Great Southern'. hit100.5 broadcasts from Narrogin, Western Australia, which is not in the Great Southern region. We have added the callsign 6NAN and updated the on-air brand to 'Wheatbelt'.
- The callsign for Triple M 103.5 Fraser Coast has been corrected from 3MBB to 4MBB.
- The callsign for Triple M Riverina MIA 963 was incorrectly listed as 2RGF. This has been corrected to 2RG.
- The name for 2WG, a radio service broadcasting to the Riverina from Wagga Wagga, has been corrected to Triple M Riverina 1152. Previously it incorrectly included the MIA acronym in the name of the station, which only applies to 2RG.

1.1.2 Changes to entity records in the database

The following table lists changes made to entity records during May. This section has heavy overlap with previous sections: in many cases, adding a new radio station record additionally means adding a new entity record as the operator of that radio station. This table also includes the creation of entity records reported in section 1.1.1.2, which discussed changes made to the ownership of certain outlets during May.

#	Entity		Description of change	Associated outlet(s)
105	5AD Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd	SA	○ Added to the database	Mix 102.3 Adelaide (5ADD)
106	8CCC Community Radio Incorporated	NT	○ Added to the database	Community Radio 102.1FM (8CCC)
107	Bay FM Community Radio Inc	NSW	○ Added to the database	Bay FM 99.9 (2BAY)
108	Belcap Investments Pty Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	hit106.5 Albany (6AAY)
109	Brisbane FM Radio Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Added to the database	KIIS 97.3 Brisbane (4BFM)
110	Commercial Radio Coffs Harbour Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	hit105.5 Coffs Coast (2CSF)
111	Creative Broadcasters Ltd	QLD	○ Added to the database	Zed Digital
112	Elldale Pty Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	hit94.9 Great Southern (6KAN), Triple M Great Southern (6WB)
113	First Australians Media Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation	VIC	○ Added to the database	3KND Kool 'N' Deadly (3KND)
114	Fresh Broadcasters Inc	SA	○ Added to the database	Fresh FM
115	Geelong Independent Pty Ltd	VIC	○ Added to the database	Geelong Independent, Ocean Grove Voice
116	Geraldton FM Pty Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	98.1 Triple M Geraldton (6BAY)

117	Hope Media Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	Hope 103.2 (2CBA)
118	Ian Thomas Family Trust	SA	○ Updated name	Multiple, see Section 1.1.1.2.
119	J.D Ellis & M.C Ellis & Y P Country Times Pty Ltd	SA	○ Added to the database	Yorke Peninsula Country Times
120	Littleton, Helen Jayne	VIC	○ Removed from the database	The Koondrook and Barham Bridge Newspaper (former)
121	The Local Publishing Group Pty Ltd	VIC	○ Added to the database	The Local
123	MMP Star Pty Ltd	VIC	○ Added to the database	Multiple, see Section 1.1.1.2.
124	Moriarty, Keer	QLD	○ Removed from the database	Canungra Times (former)
125	North West Radio Pty Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	hit106.5 Karratha (6RED),
126	Papers & Publications Pty Ltd	SA	○ Removed from the database	Multiple (former), see Section 1.1.1.2.
127	Positive Media Inc	VIC	○ Added to the database	89.9 TheLight (3TSC)
128	Radio 2RG Pty Limited	NSW	○ Added to the database	hit99.7 Riverina MIA (2RGF), Triple M Riverina MIA 963 (2RG)
129	Radio West Broadcasters Pty Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	hit95.7 Southwest (6BUN), hit100.5 Great Southern (6NAN)
130	Regional Broadcasters Australia Pty Limited	WA	○ Added to the database	Triple M Goldfields 981 (6KG), Triple M Carnarvon 666 (6LN)
131	RTRFM 92.1 Ltd	WA	○ Added to the database	RTR FM
132	Scenic Rim Media	QLD	○ Added to the database	Canungra Times
133	The Trustee for Shiloh Media Trust	VIC	○ Added to the database	The Koondrook and Barham Bridge Newspaper
134	Sydney Educational Broadcasting Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	2SER (2SER)
135	Tablelands Broadcasting Pty Limited	QLD	○ Added to the database	hit97.9 Tablelands (4AMM)
136	Today FM Brisbane Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Added to the database	hit B105FM (4BBB)
137	Triple M Adelaide Pty Ltd	SA	○ Added to the database	Triple M Adelaide 104.7 (5MMM)
138	Triple R Broadcasters Ltd	VIC	○ Added to the database	Triple R (3RRR)
139	Trustee for the Tabloid Trust	SA	○ Removed from the database	Yorke Peninsula Country Times (former)

Table 5: Changes to entity records, May 2023.

Most of these changes have previously been discussed. Four entity records were removed from the database, as they no longer have any outlet associated with them: Littleton, Helen Jayne; Moriarty, Keer; Papers & Publications Pty Ltd; and the Trustee for the Tabloid Trust.

1.2 Publication schedule

In May PIJI has added publication schedule information into the Australian News Index. This data has been gathered according to publicly available information and, where necessary, in consultation with the news entities. This data only applies to primary format print news outlets; it does not include digital news publishers, even those that may produce a print edition for web only.

PIJI has avoided using the word ‘frequency’ to describe this data due to its specific meaning in the context of broadcast news.

Publication frequency	Subtotal	%
Daily (M-Su)	10	2
Daily (M-Sa)	18	3
Daily (M-F)	1	< 1
4 per week	1	< 1
3 per week	5	1
2 per week	16	3
Weekly	310	57
Every two weeks	39	7
Every three weeks	1	< 1
Monthly	106	20
Every two months	10	2
Quarterly	9	2
Infrequent	2	< 1
Undetermined	16	3
Total	544	100

We found that the majority of all print news outlets in our data publish weekly (310, 57 per cent), followed by monthly (106, 20 per cent).

There are few daily newspapers, and these tended to be from major news companies: News Corporation, Nine Entertainment, Seven West Media and Australian Community Media together operate 28 of the 29 daily titles. In some cases, a separate Saturday and/or Sunday edition has been included alongside the weekday masthead as filling out the schedule (the Sunday Age to The Age, for example).

The only independent daily title is Shepparton News, operated by the McPherson Media Group, which is published Monday – Friday.

Table 6: Publication schedule, May 2023

where we could not identify a consistent pattern of publication, typically with a lag of several months between each. These are the Flowerdale Flyer and The Rotunda.

PIJI has not been able to identify the publication schedule of 16 titles and has reached out to the publishers of each of these. We will continue to update our data if and when we hear back.

1.3 Visualisation changes

The [Australian News Index](#) now displays publication schedule information on the dedicated pages of print news outlets. See, for example, the [Alpine Observer](#).

[Australian News Sampling Project]

Case study, May 2023:

Great Southern region, Western Australia

2 Australian News Sampling Project

The results presented here are from a May 2023 survey of eleven local government areas in Western Australia's Great Southern region: the City of Albany and the shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling.

In this project we analyse samples of news coverage in a given month against two benchmarks:

- the amount of public interest journalism produced, and
- the relative localism of the stories to the audience.

For this project, public interest journalism is defined as:

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.

In practice, this means news relating to the functioning of government at all levels, including their agencies, foreign policy, the economy and significant public expenditure; crime and the courts; social services such as health and education; emergency services including police and fire; and community individuals and events, including local sport.

The localism of a story is both whether the story is local in nature – that is, affects a small and identifiable geographic community, such as a single town or local government area – and whether it is local specifically to the local government area being sampled, to a nearby LGA, or to a distant LGA. An article about a community event in Brisbane that is published in a newspaper in Adelaide might be a local story in its content, but it is not local to a South Australian audience.

The target sample size for each outlet is a minimum of 200 news articles. Where that can't be met, the entire month is coded.

With this work, we seek to expand the amount of information about local news around Australia. This project fills a data gap in the existing ANMP work through its focus on the content output, testing the underlying assumption that newspapers and websites are providing public interest journalism for their local communities.

Radio and television are not surveyed in this project. We can remotely audit print and digital news content, but it is much more difficult to reliably access radio or television news programming from outside of its broadcast area. In almost all cases that we have found, there are no public digital archives of broadcast news content available, meaning that assessments must be done by live stream which is extremely resource intensive. This is a significant barrier to independent scrutiny, and not one that PIJI is resourced to overcome.

The ABC's digital local content is included in samples in this project, but not radio and television journalism. Digital local content may be different from that which is broadcast on ABC Local Radio or on television, and digital news results presented here may not be consistent with radio and television content.

2.1 Great Southern region, Western Australia

The Great Southern region of Western Australian comprises 11 local government areas (Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling). The large population centre in the region is Albany, around 420km south east of Perth.



Region

Land area	3 893 951.3 ha
Residents	64 430

Population centres

Albany	Mount Barker
Denmark	Katanning
Kojonup	Gnowangerup
Cranbrook	Jerramungup
Tambellup	Nyabing
Woodanilling	Broomehill

News outlets (May 2023)

Print	5
Digital	0
Radio	5
Television	3

2.1.1 Local news producers

Outlet	Format	Operating entity	Scale	Total
7 News Regional WA (SSW, VEW, GTW, WAW)	Television	Seven West Media	Local	0
10 West Digital Television (SDW, VDW, GDW, WDW)	Television	Seven West Media / WIN Corporation	Local	0
ABC Great Southern	Radio	Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Local	35
Albany Advertiser	Print	Seven West Media	Local	251
Albany Extra	Print	Seven West Media	Local	135
Denmark Bulletin	Print	Gill Family Trust	Local	35
Great Southern Herald	Print	Seven West Media	Local	52
hit94.9 Great Southern (KAN)	Radio	Southern Cross Austereo	Local	0
hit95.3 Albany (6AAY)	Radio	Southern Cross Austereo	Local	0
Nine Regional Western Australia (WOW)	Television	WIN Corporation	Local	0
Topics	Print	Tambellup Community Resource Centre	Community	19
Triple M Albany 783 (6VA)	Radio	Southern Cross Austereo	Local	0
Triple M 918 AM Great Southern (6NA)	Radio	Southern Cross Austereo	Local	0
Total				517

Table 7: News producers in Great Southern and the total number of articles assessed.

Three Seven West Media newspapers serve the area: the Albany Advertiser and Albany Extra in the south, and the Great Southern Herald, based in Katanning in the north part of the region. The independent Denmark Bulletin publishes fortnightly, and a community newspaper, Topics, is produced by the Tambellup Community Resource Centre.

The area is additionally well-served by radio outlets, with both hit and Triple M stations broadcasting from Albany and Katanning. The ABC’s local newsroom is also in Albany.

Date	Change observed
04/10/2021	● 99.7 Denmark FM opened
30/12/2021	● The Great Southern Weekender closed.

Table 8: Changes observed in the region since 1 January 2019.

There are no known primarily digital news outlets in the region.

Few changes have been observed in this region since PIJ began monitoring. In October 2021 community radio station Denmark FM opened in Denmark, offering local news in its morning broadcast. Later that year, the Albany-based independent newspaper the Great Southern Weekender closed.

2.1.2 Sample

Of the 13 outlets across the region, the digital output of the five publishers and the ABC newsroom were assessed between 1 – 31 May 2023. For all outlets this represented the total of their digital output across that period.

A total of 517 articles are in the sample.

The ABC sample only includes articles published to the ABC Local website and may not be representative of news content on local radio.

Due to the unavailability of content for analysis, radio and television were not assessed.

Overall, we found high levels of public interest journalism production, focussed particularly on community stories at most outlets, and government stories at the public broadcaster. Local sport was a strong focus, followed by community events, state and local government, and education. Crime reporting was rare. Though many stories were identified as being primarily local in scale, most were local to the City of Albany or Shire of Denmark, and far fewer stories were identified from elsewhere in the region. A minority of stories were internally syndicated.

2.1.3 Public interest journalism results

Stories are defined as containing public interest journalism if they are, on balance, focussed on an issue relating to government, crime and courts, community individuals, events and sport, or other public services such as health and education.

Outlet	Reported stories					Excluded	Total
	PIJ		Other		Subtotal		
	n	%	n	%	n	n	n
ABC Great Southern	33	97	1	3	34	1	35
Albany Advertiser	157	82	35	18	192	49	241
Albany Extra	57	77	17	23	74	61	135
Denmark Bulletin	28	97	1	3	29	6	35
Great Southern Herald	44	92	4	8	48	4	52
Topics	0	0	0	0	0	19	19
Total	319	85	58	15	377	140	517

Table 9: Stories by whether they are public interest journalism, other journalism, or excluded from the sample.

Table 9 provides detail of how the total sample breaks down into public interest journalism, other journalism and exclusions. We found high to very high levels of public interest journalism output at most outlets.

Articles are generally included if they appear to have broad news value, appear to be reported, and are not promotional. They may be excluded if they are opinion or analysis pieces or if they are advertising or press releases. Stories contributed by people who have an interest in the content – such as an elected official about their achievements – will also be excluded. Excluded stories are removed from further analysis.

Topics has been entirely excluded from the analysis, as it was not found to publish news. The outlet will be removed from the database in June as a result of this finding, and is not included in subsequent tables or discussion.

Outlet	Public interest journalism											
	Government			Courts and crime			Community			Public services		
	All	U	% U	All	U	% U	All	U	% U	All	U	% U
ABC Great Southern	43	22	65	4	2	6	13	9	27	11	9	27
Albany Advertiser	72	50	26	19	12	6	166	104	54	13	13	7
Albany Extra	14	11	15	0	0	0	79	49	66	10	10	14
Denmark Bulletin	15	9	31	0	0	0	44	24	83	1	1	3
Great Southern Herald	28	14	29	7	4	8	38	27	56	10	10	21
Total	172	106	28	30	18	5	340	213	57	45	43	11

Table 10: Breakdown of public interest journalism.

Stories can be allocated up to four subjects each. As such, Table 10 provides both the total number of subjects coded within each category (All) and the number of unique stories identified within each group (U), as well as the number of unique stories coded to that category as a percentage of all reported stories sampled from that outlet (% U).

Community stories were the majority focus at all outlets except the ABC, which concentrated on government reporting. Court and crime coverage was limited at all outlets, and entirely absent in some cases.

Within community stories, local sport (91 stories across all outlets) received the most coverage, followed by events (64), half of which was due to the Advertiser (32) and a quarter at the Extra (16 stories).

Almost half of all community stories at the Seven West Media papers the Albany Advertiser (49 of 104), Albany Extra (22 of 49) and Great Southern Herald (12 of 27) were about community sport. This coverage was robust, with dedicated sections each edition featuring a mix of local and regional league results, individuals' achievements in higher leagues, and awards nights for local clubs.

The Denmark Bulletin provided only minimal coverage of local sport, frequently only publishing results tables, while the ABC Great Southern did not cover local sport at all.

The Advertiser covered multiple community fundraisers, including for the local men's shed and a bike ride to raise money for a local not-for-profit assisting people with neurological conditions. There were also commemorations for both the ANZACs and the Ukraine War in Albany and Denmark. The paper provided extensive photojournalism of these and other community events alongside its narrative reporting. The Bulletin covered a Country Women's Association fundraiser for Mother's Day and students and staff at the Kwoorabup Community School eating the same rations as Syrian refugees in Jordan to raise money.

The ABC published only one event story: the town of Denmark was part of a tourism campaign with the WA government to entice Danes visiting Australia for the FIFA Women's World Cup to travel to the region. The town will be painted "red and white for the colours of the flag" during the event.

Stories about community individuals were also common at the Advertiser (28 stories) and Bulletin (9). The Advertiser profiled Somaya O'Donnell, an Albany-raised competitor for Miss Universe, and a local man who it reports is among the few remaining scrimshawers, or artistic ivory carvers. There were also multiple profiles across the month of local sportspeople given opportunities to play in national football and cricket teams.

The Bulletin profiled four local ambulance members who were awarded for their service with the Order of St John, as well as a local woman who has been the convenor of the WA Forest Alliance for more than a decade.

The public broadcaster published six stories about individuals across the month, including a long profile of Garry Ryder, an Indigenous elder who discussed his experiences of abuse as a member of the Stolen Generations removed to the Marribank Mission in Kojonup Shire 1957.

Both the Advertiser and ABC covered a local man whose house was destroyed in a 2021 landslide. Two years on, the man is still waiting to hear from a state government inquiry into whether he will be compensated and how the risk will be mitigated for the future.

Government was the biggest focus of the ABC and was second at all other outlets. Overall this coverage tended towards state (23 stories) and local (21) governments, with fewer stories about the federal government (12). The split was different across outlets, however: the ABC covered state (nine stories) and federal governments (three), but did not cover any of the 11 local governments in the region across the month. The Advertiser, meanwhile, was far more local in its focus: 13 stories about councils, seven about state government, and only three about federal government.

Local government stories included planning issues such as a proposed caravan park in Denmark and the introduction of body cameras for City of Albany rangers. The Advertiser covered multiple staffing

issues within local governments, including a wage dispute and a reduction in the number of elected representatives in Albany and the resignation of Denmark Shire's Chief Executive Officer.

The major state government issue across the month was the release of the state budget, with 16 stories published across the ABC, Advertiser and Great Southern Herald. Coverage included issues such as investment in electrical infrastructure at Albany Port and in regional health, as well as criticism from the Opposition for insufficient detail in a housing construction program.

The Herald reported that the WA Government is funding mobile telecommunications upgrades in the region, while the ABC carried a piece about WA drone laws in anticipation of increasing tourists and photographers in the region ahead of whale migration season.

A live export ban proposed by the Federal Government received in coverage the Advertiser, ABC and Herald, with ten stories across the month both addressing the ban itself, its possible impact on regional communities, and reporting on the positions of federal and state government representatives, including the WA Premier.

Public services is a broad category that includes emergency services such as police, health and fire, disaster relief like the state emergency services, aged, disability and child care, as well as education. Services stories were relatively evenly spread across the month, with education (11 stories) and health (nine) receiving the most coverage, followed by care (six), fire (five) and police (four).

The Herald covered the development of inclusive learning facilities for children with disabilities and a new state government program for early years education across the Broomehill-Tambellup, Kojonup, Gnowangerup, and Katanning shires. In a story across the government, health and education categories, the ABC covered a state budget announcement that Western Australia will pay up to \$12,000 of the study fees for nursing and midwifery students.

The only services story published by the Bulletin was about ambulance members being awarded for their commitment to the health of the region.

In February 2023, a Boeing 737 firebombing aircraft crashed while fighting a fire in Ravensthorpe, WA. A report into the incident was released during May and was covered by both the ABC and Advertiser. The Advertiser also covered planned industrial action by fire services over stalled enterprise bargaining with the state government, and the ABC reported that a controlled burn in Walpole, near Denmark, broke containment lines in November 2022.

At the intersection of care services and crime, the ABC and Advertiser reported on an aged care worker who pleaded guilty to murdering a resident at an Albany home. The Advertiser covered a woman given a suspended sentence for trespassing at Albany Police Station, a man charged after allegedly attacking his neighbour with a fork in Denmark, and a man found guilty of attacking another man in an Albany nightclub bathroom.

The Great Southern Herald reported that a Katanning man was charged for growing cannabis, and an ongoing investigation into a car crash in Mt Cooke that left a woman in hospital.

2.1.4 Local news results

Every article is coded against up to three of the available story scales depending on whether it significantly concerns local issues, issues relevant to a wider region, an entire state or territory, or the country as a whole. International and not applicable options are also available, but very few stories fall into these categories and they have been excluded from this table and commentary.

Outlet	Local		Regional		State		National	
	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %
ABC Great Southern	16	47	6	18	12	35	16	47
Albany Advertiser	144	75	48	25	37	19	18	9
Albany Extra	44	60	9	12	10	14	24	32
Denmark Bulletin	27	93	0	0	3	10	4	14
Great Southern Herald	28	58	16	33	9	19	15	31
Total	259	69	79	21	71	19	77	20

Table 11: Scale of coverage of reported stories.

We found that the majority of coverage at most outlets was local, ranging from just below a majority at the ABC (47 per cent) to almost all stories at the Denmark Bulletin (93 per cent). Among the three Seven West Media papers in the sample, three quarters of stories at the Advertiser were local; but this dropped to around 60 per cent at both the Extra and Herald. The ABC published an equal number of national-scale stories to local-scale stories.

Stories were also coded for their localism – not only whether they concerned a local issue, but whether the issue was local to the sampled community, or local to somewhere else, whether nearby or in another part of the state or country.

LGA	ABC		AA		AE		DB		GSH	
	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %
Albany	8	24	114	59	26	35	1	3	6	13
Broomehill-Tambellup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Cranbrook	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Denmark	1	3	9	5	2	3	26	90	0	0
Gnowangerup	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	0	2	4
Jerramungup	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Katanning	2	6	0	0	2	3	0	0	17	35
Kent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Kojonup	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10
Plantagenet	0	0	2	1	4	5	0	0	0	0
Woodanilling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 12: Localism of coverage of reported stories.

The localism of each story is presented in Table 12.

We found that the City of Albany was by far the most-covered local government area by the ABC, Albany Advertiser and Albany Extra; the Shire of Denmark was highest for the Denmark Bulletin, and the Shire of Katanning for the Great Southern Herald.

These results suggest that few outlets cover the entire region, with only minimal attention outside of these three population centres. The Great Southern Herald and Albany Extra each provided the broadest coverage, with at least one story from six of the 11 LGAs; followed by the Advertiser and ABC reporting from five LGAs across the month. The Bulletin was focussed on Denmark, but did publish a single story from Albany.

No coverage across the month was found in the Shire of Woodanilling, and only a single story in the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup, Shire of Cranbrook and Shire of Kent.

The sample obtained for the ABC may be affecting its localism results. Given we are only coding stories which are published in text on the website, rather than the content broadcast on local radio, it could be that stories published online are inherently less localised than what is broadcast in the limited geographic area of the radio license. That is, for a story to be worth putting online to a much larger and more nationalised audience, the editorial incentive is that it should be appealing to a wider audience.

2.1.5 Syndication

Content was assessed for whether it is syndicated from another source. Sources of syndication can be internal from another outlet at the same news business, from a wire service such as Australian Associated Press, News Corp’s NCA Newswire or another agency, creative commons material from The Conversation, 360Info or another, or content from other news websites.

This may underestimate the amount of syndicated content appearing in each publication, as it is not always clear when content has originated from somewhere else. This is particularly true for internally syndicated content, where a company may not disclose the fact of republishing.

The ABC declares the origin of content published online, making it very easy to identify whether a story has been internally syndicated. Other news outlets are not all similarly transparent. This difference in transparency means that syndication data at the ABC is more robust than at other outlets. The ABC may appear to syndicate more frequently – and may do, given the incomparable scale of the public broadcaster’s news production and geographic reach – but caution should be taken with comparisons to other outlets should be limited due to this difference in data quality. Separately, where the ABC lists the news team as the generic ‘ABC News’ rather than the name of the local newsroom, it is not marked as internally syndicated.

Outlet	Syndication						Original	
	Internal		Wire		Other		n	All %
	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %		
ABC Great Southern	9	32	0	0	0	0	23	68
Albany Advertiser	8	4	0	0	8	4	176	92
Albany Extra	17	23	1	1	13	18	43	58
Denmark Bulletin	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	100
Great Southern Herald	1	2	0	0	1	< 1	46	96
Total	37	10	1	< 1	22	6	317	84

Table 13: Syndication of reported stories.

Internal syndication was highest at the ABC and Albany Extra, with only around three-fifths of stories at the Extra original. The ABC syndicated from ABC Rural (three stories), South West WA (two), Kimberley, Mildura-Swan Hill, Goldfields and Gold Coast (one each).

In May we also found the first example across all samples so far of a non-News Corp outlet syndicated from the NCA Newswire: the Albany Extra republished a story about medical experts responding to the Federal Government’s proposal to ban single-use disposable vapes and the importation of non-prescription vaping products.

Most syndication at the three Seven West Media papers was from the West Australian and group content like a Car Expert guide.

3 Data eligibility

The *Australian News Data Report* is an ongoing effort to collect, generate and provide information on the Australian news media landscape. Data is actively maintained and reported on a monthly basis.

Eligibility criteria

For inclusion in these projects, a news outlet should primarily and regularly produce: (i) original public interest journalism for (ii) a local, metropolitan, state or national (iii) public audience, and (iv) adhere to identifiable professional and ethical standards. Each of these expectations are discussed below.

i. Public interest journalism

The definition of public interest journalism which we have adopted for these projects 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](#). It reflects the importance of community news as reflected in the definition of core news legislated through the [News Media Bargaining Code](#).

ii. Local, metropolitan, state or national

News outlets provide coverage for geographic areas of different sizes. Every news outlet 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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 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 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.

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.

Local coverage geographies

News outlet geographies are determined differently depending on the type of outlet.

Print and digital outlets are represented according to the local government areas that they report on. Upon adding each outlet, PIJI undertakes a basic assessment of the content output in order to determine this.

Radio and television outlets are represented according to the local government areas where they are licensed to broadcast. ACMA publishes a public registry of callsigns, their operators, and the broadcast licence areas in which they transmit, including maps of these areas. Using this information, PIJI has added each radio and television station to those local government areas that overlap with their broadcast licence areas.

Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses.

For publishers, assessing content output is a resource-intensive process, as is maintaining this data. Errors in coverage geographies may be introduced where the initial assessment is not representative of longer-term production, or where changes occur in the output over time.

A strength of the approach to mapping broadcasters is that the geographies are likely to remain comparatively stable. On the other hand, broadcast licence areas and local government areas rarely align, leading to situations where an LGA may have two or more overlapping broadcast areas within it. This would cause that LGA to be misrepresented as having a very high news density. This approach also creates a false equivalency between a news station being licensed to broadcast in an area, and actually transmitting in that area. Transmitting in a place also does not inherently suggest that local news is produced about that place.

The research reason for this distinction in how we map publishers and broadcasters is that we are not able to independently verify news production for the latter group. While we can remotely audit print and digital news content relatively easily, it is much more difficult for us to reliably access radio or television news programming from outside of their broadcast areas. In almost all cases that we have found, there are no public digital archives of news content available, meaning that assessments must also be done on live streams. This is a significant barrier to independent scrutiny, and not one that PIJI is resourced to overcome.

Determining local geographies by the content produced by an outlet is a strongly preferred approach, despite the challenges. The founding purpose of PIJI is to support public interest journalism in part by identifying where there may be undersupply. Content assessments are stronger evidence of this than availability.

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 News 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:

- i. Masthead or station opening / closing; meaning an entire news outlet opening or closing.
- ii. 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).

- iii. 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 public interest journalism 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. 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.

Some further 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 since 1 January 2019.

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 this data alone.

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, these projects do not record any information about journalism job gains and losses.

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

4 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.

This research is supported with funding from the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, and [PIJI's funders](#), including the Susan McKinnon Foundation, Jibb Foundation, Ruffin Falkiner Foundation and H&L Hecht Trust.

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