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# Australian News Data Report

Quarterly issue  
June 2024

## **Australian News Data Report: June 2024**

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For the data which informs this report, please visit:  
<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp-data/>

For more information about the Australian News Data Project, please visit:  
<https://piji.com.au/research-and-inquiries/our-research/anmp/>

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# AUSTRALIAN NEWS DATA REPORT

Quarterly issue | June 2024

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## 1 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
- **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

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

The catalogue of PIJI's previous reports and data is available [on our website](#).

Further detail about the project, including eligibility, definitions and a methodology for categorising changes, can be found in Section 7: Data eligibility. We do not presume that this is complete data, but we do believe that this is the most comprehensive record of its kind.

This issue presents monthly and quarterly results as at 30 June 2024. News sampling was conducted across East Gippsland, Victoria.

## 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](mailto:research@piji.com.au).

# [ Australian News Data Report ]

Monthly results: June 2024

## 2 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 \(LGA\)](#).

Further detail about the project, including eligibility, definitions and a methodology for categorising changes, can be found in Section 7: Data eligibility.

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.

### 2.1 Monthly results: June 2024

As of 30 June 2024, the Australian News Index lists 1,221 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
<b>Print</b>	62	453	8	4	11	<b>538</b>
<b>Digital</b>	6	162	5	4	48	<b>225</b>
<b>Radio</b>	0	405	0	0	1	<b>406</b>
<b>Television</b>	0	50	0	0	2	<b>52</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1221</b>

Table 1: Active news outlets, 30 June 2024.

### 2.1.1 Market changes, June 2024

Three changes were observed in the reporting month.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	10 Mildura	VIC	● Outlet closed	30/06/2024
2	Camden Haven News of the Area	NSW	● Outlet opened	07/06/2024
3	Foster Mirror	VIC	● Outlet closed	26/06/2024

Table 2: Market changes, June 2024.

The Channel 10 signal broadcast in the Mildura licence area, 10 Mildura, closed on June 30 reportedly due to being unprofitable since its launch in 2006.<sup>1</sup> 10 Mildura was operated as a joint venture between Seven West Media and WIN Corporation, under the entity Mildura Digital Television Pty Ltd.

Camden Haven News of the Area is a new local newspaper and website in the Mid North Coast region of New South Wales, which began publishing in June 2024.<sup>2</sup> The outlet is published by Myall Coast Communications Pty Ltd, which publishes four other local mastheads in Coffs Coast, Myall Coast, Nambucca Valley, and Port Stephens, all under the News of the Area banner.<sup>3</sup>

The Foster Mirror, a local newspaper covering the town of Foster in South Gippsland Shire, announced its closure in May 2024<sup>4</sup>. Its final edition was published on June 26 2024.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WIN Network. *Mildura 10 Closure*. 2024. <<https://www.wintv.com.au/page/mildura-10-closure#:~:text=Q%3A%20When%20will%20the%20signal,June%2030%2C%202024%20at%20midnight>>

<sup>2</sup> Camden Haven News of the Area. 2024. *Free independent newspaper launches in Camden Haven*. June 7. <<https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/free-independent-newspaper-launches-in-camden-haven>>

<sup>3</sup> News of the Area. <<https://www.newsofthearea.com.au/>>

<sup>4</sup> Foster Mirror. 2024. *The Mirror's last editions*. May 22. <<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1072951517595987&set=pb.100046434463384.-2207520000>>

<sup>5</sup> Foster Mirror. 2024. *The end of an era*. June 26. <<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1096125938611878&set=pb.100046434463384.-2207520000>>

### 2.1.2 Other changes to news outlet records

Eight changes were made to outlet records. This table does not include changes made to news entity records, which are reported separately in section 2.1.3.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	The Daily Aus	N/A	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
2	Dooral Roundup	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
3	The Examiner	TAS	○ LGA coverage update	31/12/2018
4	Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator	VIC	○ Publication schedule update	31/12/2018
5	The Jewish Independent	N/A	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
6	The Politics	N/A	○ New outlet	06/02/2024
7	Tamborine Mountain News	QLD	○ Name and operating entity change	11/04/2024
8	Topics	WA	○ Removed from the database	31/12/2018

Table 3: Other changes to outlet records, June 2024.

The Daily Aus is a social media-first, national-scale news outlet, which has been operating since 2018. The Daily Aus also publishes original reporting on their standalone news website.<sup>6</sup>

Dooral Roundup is a monthly local news magazine covering the Sydney suburb of Dural, in both The Hills and Hornsby Shire. Dooral Roundup is the official publication of the Dural & District Chamber of Commerce,<sup>7</sup> but was confirmed to have editorial independence via correspondence with the publisher.

PIJI undertook a coverage assessment of the Meader Valley local government area in Tasmania following the closure of the Gazette. We found that the Launceston-based The Examiner covers the area and its record has been updated to reflect this. This was not a service expansion, it was a correction to PIJI's records.

When sampling Gippsland outlets for this report we found that the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator was incorrectly recorded as publishing twice weekly. Similar to The Examiner, as The Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator has always been a weekly newspaper this change is not a decrease in service but a correction to PIJI's data.

The Jewish Independent<sup>8</sup> is a national-scale news website providing Jewish community news since 2015. Formerly operating as Plus61J Media, the public interest journalism produced by The Jewish Independent is largely divided between Australian and international news, with a particular focus on Israel and the Israeli government.

The Politics is a national-scale news website covering Australian politics and is the first masthead of General Publishing Pty Ltd.<sup>9</sup> The Politics began as a daily newsletter operated by The Monthly publisher Schwartz

<sup>6</sup> The Daily Aus. <<https://thedailyaus.com.au>>

<sup>7</sup> Dooral Roundup. *About us*. <<https://dooralroundup.com.au/about-us/>>

<sup>8</sup> The Jewish Independent. <<https://thejewishindependent.com.au>>

<sup>9</sup> Mediaweek. *General Publishing appoints Olivia McDonnell as managing director*. <<https://www.mediaweek.com.au/general-publishing-appoints-olivia-mcdonnell-as-managing-director/>>



Media,<sup>10</sup> before being purchased by General Publishing in November 2023<sup>11</sup>. In February 2024 The Politics began operating under its new owners as a daily newsletter and on social media, and has since launched a standalone website.<sup>12</sup>

In March 2024 ownership of Scenic News was transferred from The Trustee for Local News Trust to Scenic Rim Media Pty Ltd,<sup>13</sup> and restarted publication in April 2024 under the name Tamborine Mountain News.<sup>14</sup>

In sampling for PIJI's May 2023 report<sup>15</sup> we found that Topics, a community newspaper in Tambellup, Western Australia, did not appear to be publishing news and intended to remove it from our data in June 2023. It was not removed at that time, but upon review has found to still not be producing news, and so has been removed from the data this month.

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<sup>10</sup> The Monthly. *The Politics*. <<https://www.themonthly.com.au/the-politics>>

<sup>11</sup> Saeed D. 2024. *Schwartz Media sells The Politics to former Junkee boss*. Crikey. 10 January. <<https://www.crikey.com.au/2024/01/10/schwartz-media-sale-the-politics-piers-grove/>>

<sup>12</sup> The Politics. <<https://thepolitics.com.au>>

<sup>13</sup> Tamborine Mountain News. About. <<https://tmnews.com.au/about/>>

<sup>14</sup> Tamborine Mountain News. 2024. Edition no 1689, 11 April. <<https://tmnews.com.au/latest-edition/edition-no-1689-11-april-2024/>>

<sup>15</sup> Dickson G. and Germano M. 2023. *Australian News Data Report: May 2023*. Public Interest Journalism Initiative. <<https://piji.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2305-AND-Report-May-2023.pdf>>

### 2.1.3 Changes to news entity records

Ten entity records were updated in June.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	The Daily Aus Holdings Pty. Limited	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
2	General Publishing Pty Ltd	NSW	○ New entity	06/02/2024
3	Mildura Digital Television Pty. Ltd.	VIC	○ Removed from the database	30/06/2024
4	Myall Coast Communications Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Linked outlet	07/06/2024
5	Plus61J Media Pty Limited	NSW	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
6	R. & J. Best Pty. Ltd.	VIC	○ Removed from the database	26/06/2024
7	Scenic Rim Media Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Linked outlet	11/04/2024
8	Tambellup Community Resource Centre Inc	WA	○ Removed from the database	31/12/2018
9	The Trustee for Local News Trust	QLD	○ Removed from the database	11/04/2024
10	The Trustee for the Paton Family Trust	NSW	○ Linked outlet	31/12/2018

Table 4: Changes to news entity records, June 2024

The Daily Aus Holdings Pty Limited has been added to the data as the operating entity of The Daily Aus.

General Publishing Pty Ltd is a new entity, operating The Politics as its first masthead since February 2024, after acquiring it from Schwartz Media in November 2023.

Mildura Digital Television Pty Ltd was a joint venture between Seven West Media and WIN Corporation and has been removed from the data following the closure of its only outlet, 10 Mildura.

Myall Coast Communications Pty Ltd has been linked to its newest outlet, Camden Haven News of the Area, after it launched in June 2024.

Plus61J Media Pty Limited is the operating entity of The Jewish Independent, which formerly published under the title Plus61J Media.

R. & J. Best Pty Ltd has been removed from the data following the closure of the Foster Mirror in June 2024.

Tamborine Mountain News has been linked to Scenic Rim Media Pty Ltd after ownership was transferred from The Trustee for Local News Trust in March 2024. Scenic Rim Media Pty Ltd publishes two other outlets in PIJJ's data; Beaudesert Bulletin and Canungra Times. The Local News Trust has also been removed from the data as it no longer had any associated outlets.

Tambellup Community Resource Centre has been removed from the data after PIJJ found that its outlet, Topics, was not producing news.

Dooral Roundup has been linked to The Trustee for the Paton Family Trust. The Paton Family Trust operates two other outlets in PIJJ's data; Galston Glenorie & Hills Rural News and Hills to Hawksbury Community News.

# [ Australian News Data Report ]

Quarterly results: Q2 2024

### 3 ANDR Quarterly: News outlets

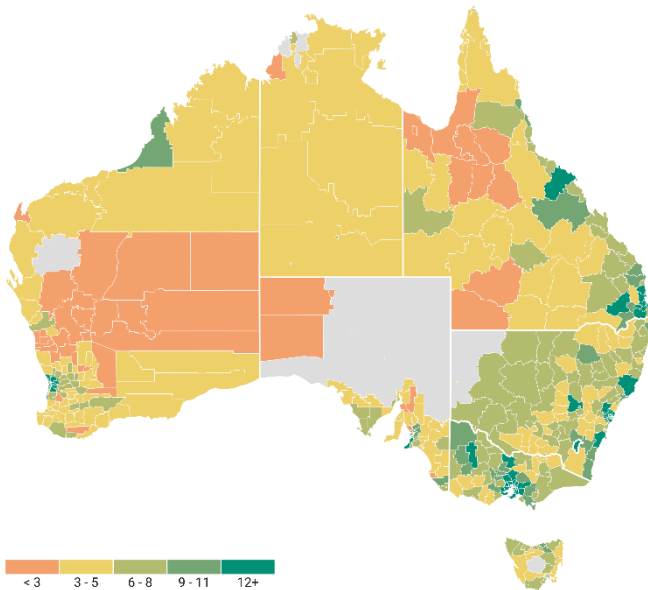


Figure 1: Count of local news producers, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

Figure 2: Count of local news producers, excluding radio and television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

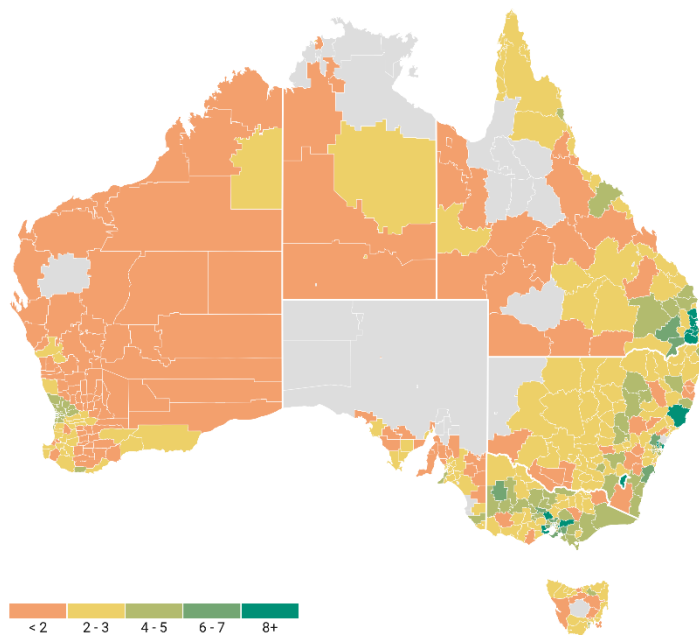


Figure 1 shows the distribution of metropolitan, local, and community-scale news producers by local government area around Australia. It includes publishers (print and digital) and radio broadcasters.

This baseline map of news availability around Australia suggests very high levels of news availability in the capital cities and the broader east coast, with higher density in Central Victoria and Sunraysia, South and Mid-North Coast New South Wales, South East Queensland. Other hubs of news availability include the Whitsundays Region (QLD), Cabonne (NSW), Shoalhaven (NSW) and Campaspe (VIC).

Regional and remote areas, particularly in Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia have lower news density.

Figure 2 provides a similar map of the density of news producers by local government areas, but excludes radio so as to only reflect the publishing sector. This exclusion removes 33 per cent of all outlets from the count; and the key has been adjusted down accordingly. Even with this adjustment, news outlet density drops considerably, with large parts of regional Australia shifting into the lowest band. Some areas, particularly in regional Queensland and the Northern Territory, appear to have no print or digital news producers present in them at all.

Metropolitan areas lose some of their density relative to others in Figure 2. This is particularly true in middle-ring suburban local government areas in Melbourne and Sydney.

### 3.1.1 Local government areas without local news producers

An ongoing area of interest in PIJI's data is which local government areas do not appear to have a local news producer and, by implication, which may not be the subject of any consistent news coverage. There is a distinction between these two questions: it is entirely possible that an area may not have a local news producer, but may be covered from outside; conversely, an outlet which appears to be a local news producer may not actually be contributing to original news production.

It is very resource intensive to assess and maintain data on the content coverage of news producers. PIJI undertakes this work on a small scale, assessing a select number of local government areas each month through the Australian News Sampling Project.

As noted earlier, television is broadly available across the entire country, either through terrestrial or satellite transmission. As such, it is excluded here.

#### Local government areas without local publisher or radio news outlets

PIJI has not identified any publisher or radio local news producers in the following six local government areas:

- Belyuen Shire, NT
- Central Highlands Council, TAS
- Flinders Council, TAS
- Mornington Shire, QLD
- Upper Gascoyne, Shire of, WA
- Wagait Shire, NT

#### Local government areas without local publisher news outlets

Isolating to only print and digital publishers, we have not identified any news outlets in 31 areas:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, SA
- Belyuen Shire, NT
- Broken Hill City Council, NSW
- Carpentaria Shire, QLD
- Central Highlands Council, TAS
- Coomalie Shire, NT
- Croydon Shire, QLD
- East Arnhem Region, NT
- Etheridge Shire, QLD
- Flinders Council, TAS
- Flinders Ranges Council, SA
- Flinders Shire, QLD
- Kingston, District Council of, SA
- Maralinga Tjarutja, SA
- McKinlay Shire, QLD
- Mornington Shire, QLD
- Mount Remarkable, District Council of, SA
- Northern Areas Council, SA
- Orroroo Carrieton, District Council of, SA
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire, QLD
- Peterborough, District Council of, SA
- Quilpie Shire, QLD
- Roxby Downs, Municipal Council of, SA
- Richmond Shire, QLD
- Robe, District Council of, SA
- Roper Gulf Region, NT
- Upper Gascoyne, Shire of, WA
- Wagait Shire, NT
- West Arnhem Region, NT
- West Daly Region, NT
- Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire, QLD

Three changes have been made since this list was last reported in March 2024.

PIJI sampled Darwin and surrounding LGAs in July 2023, finding that Wagait Shire and Coomalie Shire were subject to intermittent coverage at that time that may have been dependent on significant events. After 12 months of monitoring, PIJI has confirmed its findings that neither is subject to significant coverage.

The City of Broken Hill, New South Wales, has been added to the list of local government areas without print coverage. The city's newspaper, the Barrier Truth, closed in April 2024.

If you have further information about a local news outlet that is missing and that covers one of these areas, please [let us know](#).

### 3.1.2 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 lists the changes as either expansions or contractions in news production and availability.

Table 5 provides the cumulative total of each change type observed since 1 January 2019 at two benchmarks: the current quarter and same quarter last year. Table 6 groups those records according to their change category.

	This quarter	Year-on-year		Quarter-on-quarter	
Change type	Q2/24	Q2/23	Variance	Q1/24	Variance
Outlet opened	145	129	+16	143	+2
Newsroom opened	14	14	0	14	0
Increase in service	9	8	+1	9	0
New print edition	16	16	0	16	0
Merger	26	24	+2	26	0
End of print edition	99	98	+1	99	0
Decrease in service	43	43	0	43	0
Newsroom closed	6	6	0	6	0
Outlet closed	166	143	+23	163	+3
<b>Total number of records</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>+43</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>+5</b>

Table 5: Count of records by change type since 1 January 2019, this quarter, year-on-year and quarter-on-quarter.

	This quarter	Year-on-year		Quarter-on-quarter	
Change category	Q2/24	Q2/23	Variance	Q1/24	Variance
Expansions	184	167	17	182	2
Contractions	340	314	26	337	3
<b>Net change</b>	<b>(-156)</b>	<b>(-147)</b>	<b>(-9)</b>	<b>(-155)</b>	<b>(-1)</b>

Table 6: Net change by change category since 1 January 2019, this quarter, year-on-year and quarter-on-quarter.

PIJJ'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 quarter, but will be adjusted with any new information.

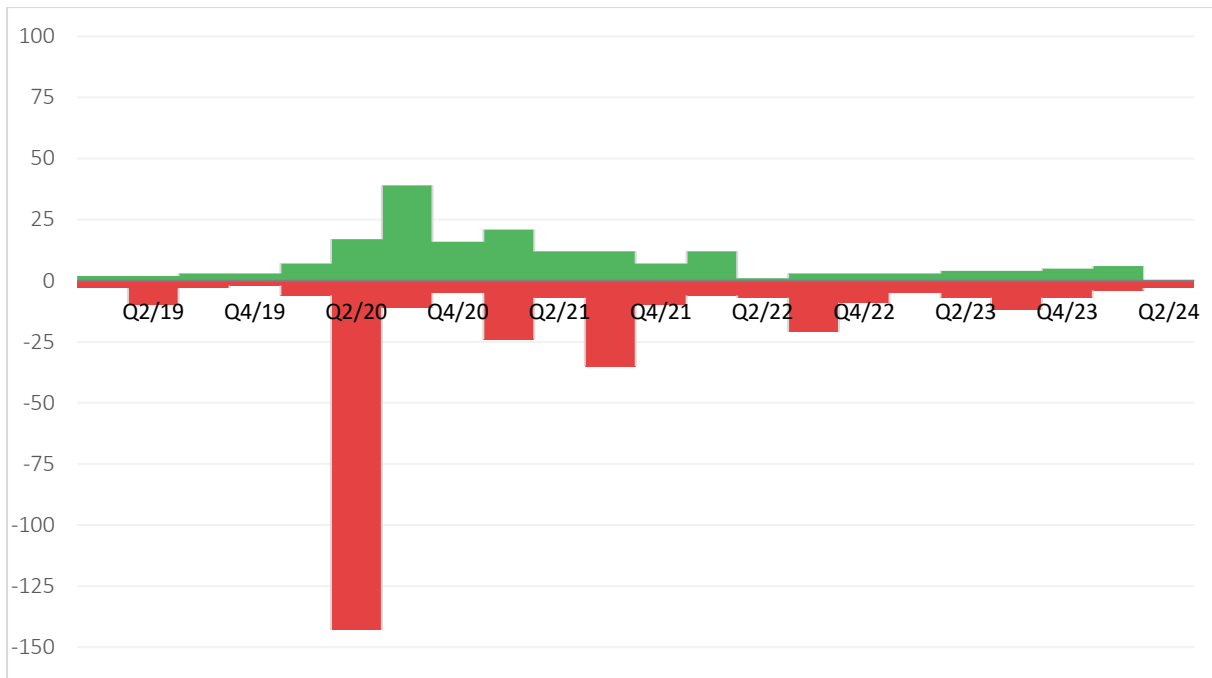


Figure 3: Change types by quarter, three years ending 30 June 2024.

Plotting change types by quarter immediately highlights the impact of the onset of COVID-19 (Figure 3). PIJL marks 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 account for many of the changes in the early COVID-19 period:

- 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 (ACM) 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. In the period since, many of these titles have been closed or sold to other news entities.
- In Q3/20, we observed that many independent news publishers emerged, particularly in markets in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia where large media companies had exited in the previous quarter. In some cases, furloughed or sacked journalists in these regions continued their reporting through new local business ventures; in others, existing media companies expanded into neighbouring regions.
- Over the subsequent quarters, many of those independent news outlets have failed.

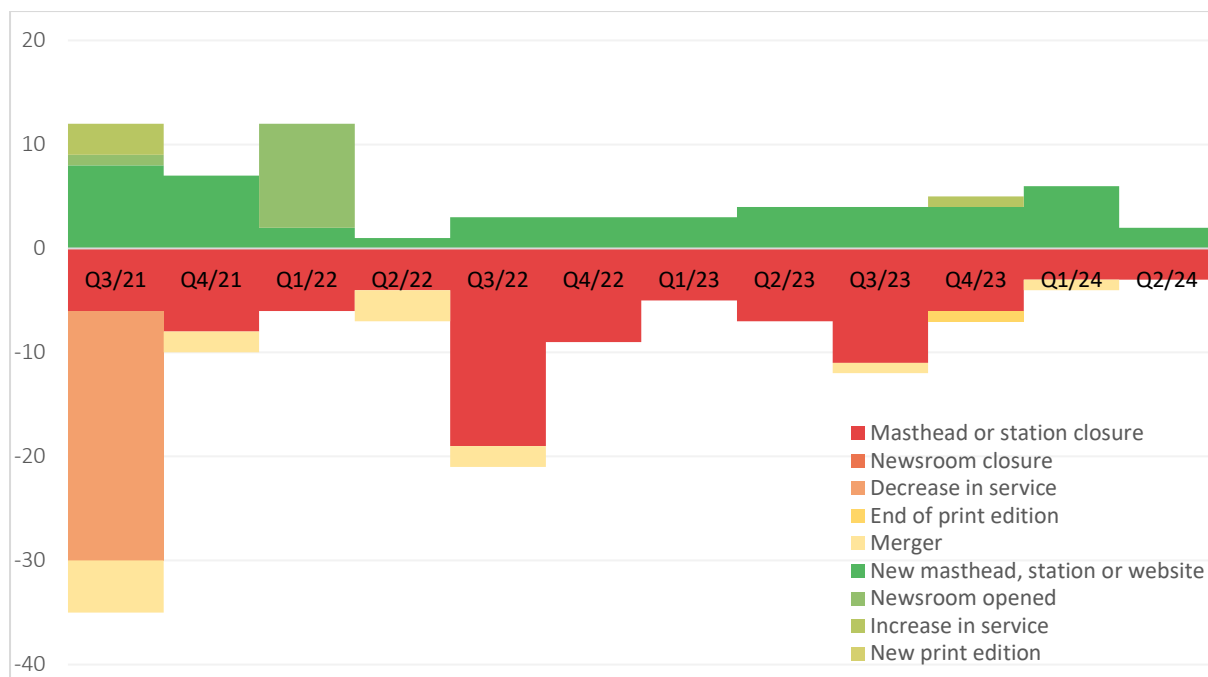


Figure 4: Change types by quarter, three years ending 30 June 2024.

Figure 4 provides deeper detail about the types of changes observed over the three years to the current quarter.

Other major changes across the reporting period include:

- Regional and metropolitan television reaffiliation came into effect in Q3/21, which led to significant changes in news provision in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>16</sup>
- Also in Q3/21, further Australian Community Media newspapers were recorded as ‘Decrease in service’ following reductions to their publishing schedules.<sup>17</sup>
- In Q1/22 the large growth in ‘Newsroom opened’ was a result of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s (ABC) significant expansion in regional areas, adding 55 new jobs, 10 new bureaux and nine expanded bureaux.<sup>18</sup>
- An increase in the cost of newsprint in July 2022, reportedly up to 80 per cent for some publishers, seemed to account for the large number of closures in Q3/22: of 19 closed mastheads in this period, at least 11 were explicitly or implicitly due to this price increase.

<sup>16</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>17</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>18</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/>>





Figure 5: Net changes in news production by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

While the ‘End of print edition’ change is recorded as a contraction event, it could reasonably be argued that the 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 5 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 confirms ongoing volatility, with 168 expansions compared to 215 contractions since January 2019, a negative variance of -47. This position has improved significantly since the previous quarter, where the negative variance was -60.

Isolating the data further to only the outlets that have opened or closed since 1 January 2019 shows a negative variance of -21. This is a small improvement over the previous quarter, where the negative variance was -22.

### 3.1.3 Metropolitan, regional and remote areas

The following figures provide a quarterly breakdown of changes according to whether the affected outlet is located in metropolitan, regional or remote Australia. It uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics Remoteness Structure<sup>19</sup> to make this determination, which allocates local government areas to one of five categories<sup>20</sup> based on their relative access to services.

Remoteness area	Metro	Regional				Total
	Major Cities	Inner	Outer	Remote	Very Remote	
Designated LGAs, n	133	133	144	58	78	546
Designated LGAs, %	24.4	24.4	26.4	10.6	14.3	100
Population (2021), n	18,571,710	4,608,023	2,066,689	290,931	200,789	25,738,142
Population (2021), %	72	18	8	1	1	100

Table 7: Local government area designations and population of remoteness areas.

There is a near even allocation of LGAs between the first three categories, but the populations of each are significantly different: almost three quarters of Australians live in ‘Major Cities’, and almost a fifth in ‘Inner Regional’ areas. Though more than a quarter of all LGAs are ‘Outer Regional’, fewer than ten per cent of Australians live in them.

The ‘Major Cities’ category does not line up with the state and territory capitals. Hobart (TAS) is classified as an ‘Inner Regional’ area and Darwin (NT) as ‘Outer Regional’, while regional cities like Geelong (VIC), and Wollongong (NSW) and regional areas Tweed (NSW) and the entire Australian Capital Territory are ‘Major Cities’.

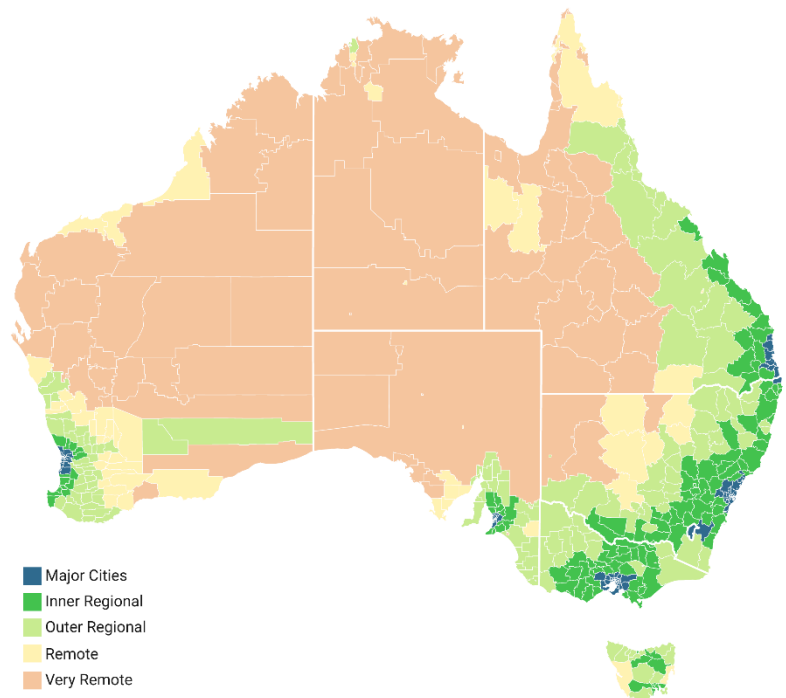


Figure 6: Distribution of remoteness areas by local government area.

<sup>19</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. Remoteness Structure. 1270.0.55.005. Australian Statistical Geography Standard: Volume 5. <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/remoteness-structure>>

<sup>20</sup> ‘Major Cities’, ‘Inner Regional’, ‘Outer Regional’, ‘Remote’, ‘Very Remote’.

### 3.1.3.1 Changes in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia

	Metro	Regional				Total	
Remoteness area	Cities	Inner	Outer	Remote	V. Remote	Subtotal	
Expansions	66	75	29	6	8	118	184
Contractions	138	123	64	11	5	203	341
<b>Total change</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Net change</b>	<b>(-72)</b>	<b>(-48)</b>	<b>(-35)</b>	<b>(-5)</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>(-85)</b>	<b>(-157)</b>

Table 8: Net change by remoteness and region since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

Table 8 shows that regional Australia has experienced the greatest change since 1 January 2019. Sixty-one per cent of changes recorded have been in regional Australia, and 39 per cent in 'Major Cities' – a ratio very disproportionate to their relative populations, where 72 per cent of Australians live in metropolitan areas and 28 per cent outside of them. Of these overall changes, 59 per cent of all contractions and 64 per cent of expansions occurred in regional Australia.

Most outlets that have either closed (67 per cent) or decreased their service (91 per cent) have been in regional areas (Table 9, Figure 7). On the other hand, two thirds of the new outlets that have opened anywhere in Australia are in regional Australia (93 outlets, 64 per cent); though this is outweighed by the number of closures (112 outlets).

The nature of changes experienced in metropolitan and regional areas is also different. Of contractions in 'Major Cities', 51 per cent (70) are of the end of print edition type, as local suburban newspapers, particularly those owned by News Corp, have shifted to digital-only delivery. Over a third of city contractions are closed titles (40 per cent), a share of the total that has been steadily increasing. In regional areas, more substantial changes to news provision occur as outlets close (55 per cent of regional contractions) or decrease their level of service by cutting frequencies or output (19 per cent). Cuts to print editions are only 14 per cent of changes in the regions.

Remoteness area	Metro	Regional					Total
	Cities	Inner	Outer	Remote	V Remote	Subtotal	
New masthead, station or website	52	61	23	6	3	93	145
Newsroom opened	2	6	4	0	2	12	14
Increase in service	0	5	2	0	2	9	9
New print edition	12	3	0	0	1	4	16
Merger	7	7	10	1	1	19	26
End of print edition	70	17	8	2	2	29	99
Decrease in service	4	24	14	1	0	39	43
Newsroom closure	2	4	0	0	0	4	6
Masthead or station closure	55	71	32	7	2	112	167
<b>Total number of records</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>525</b>

Table 9: Count of records by change types and remoteness since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

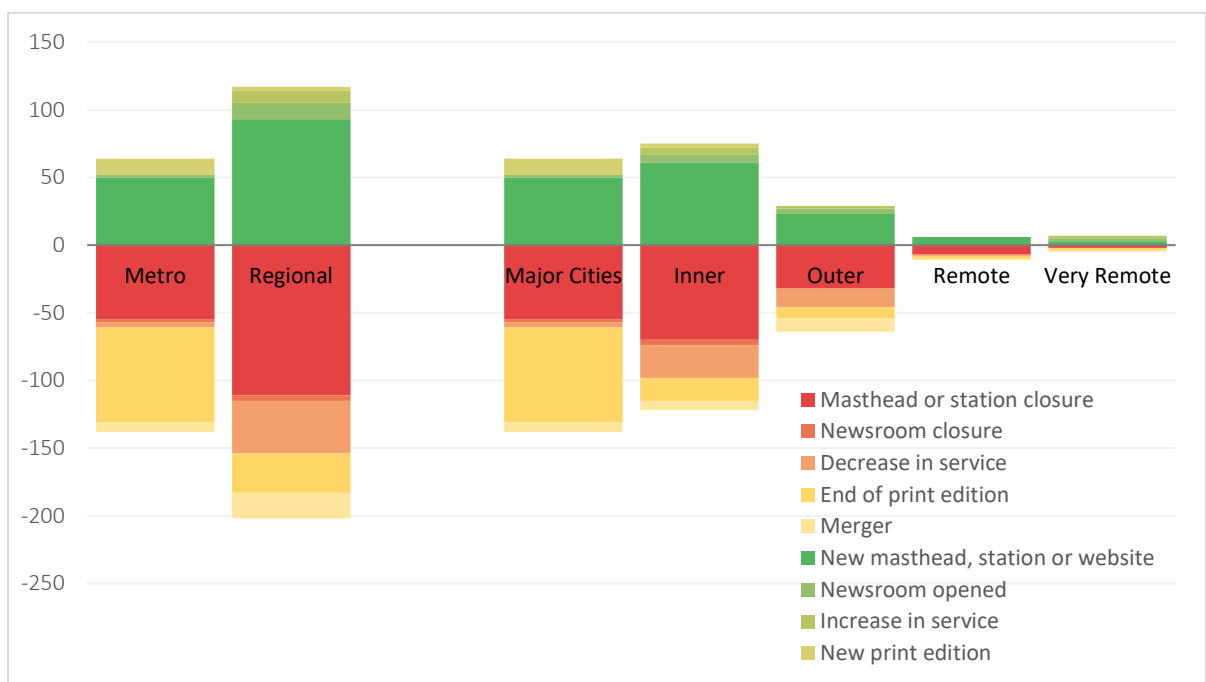


Figure 7: Change types by remoteness and region since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

Figure 8 isolates the data to changes in news production over the period (that is, all change categories except the 'End of print edition', 'New print edition' and 'Merger' types). It suggests that despite the opening of new outlets in regional areas, the impact of other market contractions – outlet and newsroom closures and decreases in service – negates that growth overall. On this measurement, metropolitan areas have a -7 variance in outlets and service, while regional areas end the current quarter with a -40 variance since 1 January 2019. Both of these positions have improved since the previous quarter (-11 and -49, respectively).

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

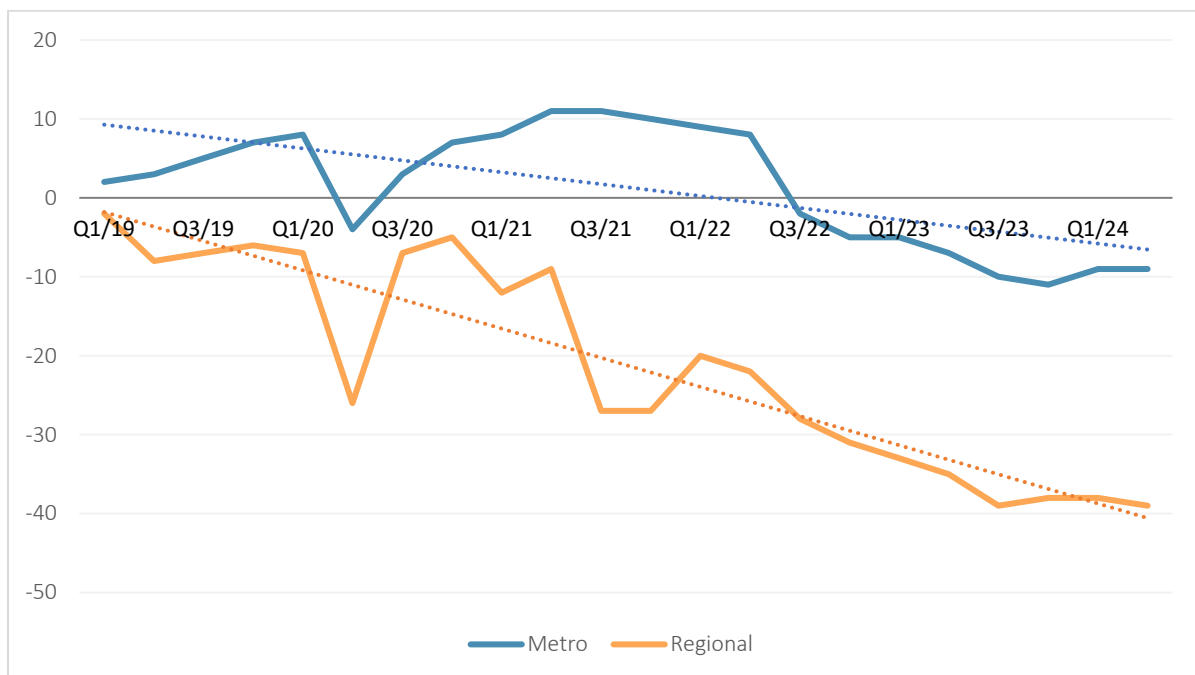


Figure 8: Net change in news production by region since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

## 4 ANDR Quarterly: News entities

PIJ provides quarterly updates on Australian news business entity and outlet ownership data, which draw on the [Australian Business Register](#) and the Australian Communications & Media Authority’s (ACMA) [Register of Radiocommunications Licences](#) as well as engagement with industry.

This entity data reflects geographic ownership but does not consider other key market metrics such as total audience reach of a business entity or news outlet. For example, an entity that owns a single local newspaper with a readership of 200 is not comparable in reach to an entity operating one metropolitan television station, though each represent one outlet in this data.

Most news entities are private companies, and therefore, offer limited information publicly.

### 4.1.1 Definitions

To provide a better understanding of the nature of media ownership, PIJ makes a distinction between a ‘news entity’ and a ‘news outlet’:

- A news entity is the business responsible for the operation of a news outlet.
- A news outlet is defined as a business which produces public interest journalism.

For example, Inner City News is a Melbourne-based newspaper (a news outlet) that produces public interest journalism and is operated by the private news entity, Hyperlocal News Pty Ltd.

The Australian News Index links news entities to the news outlets they operate but does not provide full shareholdings or corporate structure.

In the broadcast sector, PIJJ has identified the news entity as the business that holds the broadcast licence according to ACMA’s Register of Radiocommunications Licences (RRL). It is generally the case that the entity which holds a broadcast licence is also a subsidiary of a parent news entity. For example, the broadcast licence for the television news outlet 10 Adelaide is assigned to Network Ten (Adelaide) Pty Limited, a subsidiary entity of Ten Network Holdings.

To reflect this ambiguity, we have used the term ‘holdings’ to denote news outlets which are operated by news entities and have refrained from using terms such as ‘owns’ or ‘controls’.

Some news entities might also have significant activities beyond public interest journalism: Nine Entertainment Co. operates the news outlet the Sydney Morning Herald, as well as having interests in other media and streaming properties, such as Domain and Stan.

Further discussion of the definitions that inform this section can be found in Section 7: Data eligibility.

#### 4.1.2 Results

As of 30 June 2024, the Australian News Index lists 681 news entities which operate 1,221 print, digital, radio and television news outlets. This is an increase in the number of recorded news entities, up from 677 in March 2024, a positive variance of four. This does not entirely reflect a trend in the number of news outlets operating in Australia, however, and is at least partially a result of PIJJ’s ongoing effort to reflect parent-subsidiary relationships between news entities.

Table 10 shows a breakdown of news outlets holdings per news entity.

Note that in this section subsidiary news entities have not been consolidated into their parent entities.

The overwhelming majority of business entities (535, 79 per cent) only operate a single news outlet.

The changes to news outlet holdings since March 2024 were relatively minor. There was an increase of three entities with one outlet holding, two with two and three outlet holdings, and one with five holdings.

News outlet holdings	Subtotal	%
One outlet holding	535	79
Two outlet holdings	80	12
Three outlet holdings	25	4
Four outlet holdings	13	2
Five outlet holdings	9	1
Six outlet holdings	3	0
Seven or more outlet holdings	16	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>100</b>

There are 16 business entities that are linked to seven or more outlets, unchanged from March 2024. The number of outlets operated by this category has a very large range: between seven and 53 per news entity. This range has continued to narrow from prior quarterly reports (March 2024, December, September 2023) due to ongoing work identifying subsidiary companies and updating the data to reflect this.

Table 10: Number of entities by outlet holdings

### 4.1.3 Types of news entities

The business structures of news entities are provided in Table 11 using the entity types as defined by the Australia Business Register, found [here](#), and described in Section 7: Data eligibility.

Entity Type	Subtotal	%
Australian private company	375	55
Other incorporated entity	173	25
Individual/sole trader	29	4
Australian public company	27	4
Discretionary trading trust	24	4
Other unincorporated entity	18	3
Co-operative	13	2
Other	22	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>100</b>

There is scope to analyse entity types and provide insight regarding the different structures that fall within each category. For example, 'Other incorporated entity' and 'Other unincorporated entity' entity types were the most common business structure for news entities operating community news outlets. However, these entity types included different organisational structures, such as clubs, community resource organisations or unions.

Fifty-five per cent of news entities operate as private companies, with four more entities since March 2024, and by far the largest category within the data. Since March 2024 there was an increase of one entity in the 'Individual/sole trader' entity

Table 11: Number of news business entities by company structure, 30 June 2024

type and decrease of one entity in the 'Discretionary trading trust' type.

There are several entity types which fall under the 'Other' category, including family partnerships, other partnerships, fixed unit trusts, discretionary investment trusts, hybrid trusts, and commonwealth government entities, of which there are two: the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS).

### 4.1.4 News entities with the largest number of outlet holdings

Some news entities partially or wholly own another news entity. In these cases, it is common for the parent company's branding to be publicly understood across the entire network. For example, News Pty Limited, a news entity, owns Nationwide News Pty Ltd, another news entity and the operator of news outlet the Daily Telegraph.

This is particularly true in broadcast, where each individual radio and television broadcast licence in a network tends to be assigned to different incorporated entities, some of which are wholly owned, while others are joint ventures.

In Table 12 below, for simplicity of understanding, where applicable we have presented news entities by their parent entity, consolidating any subsidiary entities. Consolidated holdings are marked in the table with an asterisk (\*).

Parent entity	Outlet holdings	% total outlets
News Corp Australia*	115	9
Southern Cross Austereo*	99	8
Australian Community Media*	64	5
Australian Radio Network*	54	4
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	53	4
Seven West Media*	45	4
Today News Group*	32	3
Star News Group*	24	2
Provincial Press Group*	19	2
Broadcast Operations Group*	18	1
Nine Entertainment Co.*	18	1
Ace Radio Broadcasters*	18	1
WIN Network*	16	1
McPherson Media Group*	11	1
Nova Entertainment*	10	1
Vision Australia	9	1
Times News Group*	9	1
Joint Venture duplicate entities <sup>21</sup>	-6	-0
Subtotal for entities with > 8 holdings	608	50
Outlets held by all other entities	613	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1221</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 12 shows 17 news entities that operate more than eight news outlets. This does not reconcile with the number of news entities with seven or more outlets displayed in Table 10. **Error! Reference source not found.** because PIJ has consolidated subsidiary news entities under their parent entity. For example, McPherson Media Group is included in this table, despite each of its subsidiary entities holding two or fewer outlets.

These entities combined operate 622, or 51 per cent, of the total outlets in Australia at 30 June 2024. This has increased from March 2024 (614 outlets, 51 per cent).

The top five news entities collectively operate 385 outlets, or 31 per cent of the total outlets. This is down two outlets since March 2024.

The biggest change this quarter is the inclusion of Nova Entertainment, after PIJ assessed their radio outlets for PIJ in May. Nova Entertainment operates ten outlets across Australia, including Nova Entertainment (Perth) Pty Ltd, which is a joint venture with Australian Radio Network.

Other changes to Table 12 since December 2023 include Australian

Community Media's outlet holdings (64 outlets, or 5 per cent), down two outlets from 66 due to the closure of its remaining Western Australian mastheads, Bunbury Mail and Mandurah Mail; Seven West Media and WIN Network's outlet holdings both down one outlet after the closure of their joint venture 10 Mildura. Vision Australia's has increased by one with the inclusion of their Mildura radio station.

PIJ notes again that these 19 news entities are listed by their outlet holdings, and that Table 12 does not take into account other metrics such as affiliation, audience reach, or productive capacity. This means that 10

<sup>21</sup> Table 12 includes entities classified as 'Joint Ventures' that operate outlets for which more than one parent entity holds an interest. To eliminate any duplicate outlets held by these joint ventures, PIJ has deducted them from the total number of outlets in this table.



Network, with five outlet holdings, does not appear in Table 12, but that it would be considered large in terms of its audience reach or productive capacity relative to other news entities.

Table 12 shows joint venture entities (see footnote 21 above). There are currently six entities which operate news outlets as joint ventures included in the table, all of which are in the broadcasting sector. While some parent entities hold an equal 50 per cent interest in these joint ventures, there are some cases where interests may not be equally split. Due to a lack of publicly available data, PIJ has not included the percentage of interest that each parent entity holds within these joint ventures.

PIJ has listed these joint ventures against both of the parent entities that hold an interest in them. In order to eliminate any duplicate outlets, PIJ has deducted these joint ventures from the total number of outlets in this table.

News Corp Australia operates the largest number of outlets, with 115, around nine per cent of outlets in the database.

ABC Local radio newsrooms appear individually in PIJ's data, which accounts for the high number of operated outlets (53) and allows for better understanding of the distribution of ABC locations and assessment of its local news coverage.

There are 406 radio newsrooms in PIJ's data. Southern Cross Austereo and Australian Radio Network have, by far, the largest radio news outlet holdings in Australia, with 85 and 51 outlets respectively. Additionally, they operate two outlets in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) as a joint venture. The two entities collectively operate 34 per cent of all public interest journalism-producing radio news outlets nationwide.

#### 4.1.5 News entities operating outlets with national scale

News outlets provide coverage for geographic areas of different sizes. Every news outlet is assigned a ‘primary coverage scale’: community, local, metropolitan, state/territory or national.

Table 13 provides a breakdown of news entities that are associated with outlets of a national scale, meaning they have a geography larger than any single state or territory. There are relatively few outlets that operate with national scale (62), only about five per cent of the total outlets. Five entities are listed as operating more than one national scale outlet, while a further 48 operate one national scale outlet each.

Parent entity	Outlet holdings of national scale	% total outlets of national scale
News Corp Australia*	4	6
Special Broadcasting Service	4	6
Nine Entertainment Co.*	2	3
Private Media*	2	3
Schwartz Media*	2	3
Subtotal for entities with > 1 news outlet	14	23
Outlets held by all other entities	48	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

The total number of national outlet holdings has increased from 59 in March 2024 due to the inclusion of The Daily Aus, The Jewish Independent, and The Politics in June.

SBS Radio and ABC Radio National are the only radio news outlets operating at a national scale.

Table 13: Parent entities with more than one outlet holding operating at a national scale, 30 June 2024

## 5 ANDR Quarterly: states and territories

The following tables show outlets and entities by state or territory at the end of the June 2024 quarter and a breakdown of changes observed, both of the change types observed and of the overall change categories and net change, since 1 January 2019.

Scale	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Community	0	4	0	4	1	3	42	14	68
Local	16	358	25	209	81	46	221	114	1070
Metropolitan	0	2	0	3	2	0	3	3	13
State/territory	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	0	8
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>1159</b>
<b>National</b>									<b>62</b>
<b>Total</b>									<b>1221</b>

Table 14: Count of outlets by coverage scale and state/territory, 30 June 2024.

Change category	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Expansions	1	55	3	49	16	5	47	8	184
Contractions	1	135	1	101	22	2	65	14	341
<b>Total change</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Net change</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(-80)</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>(-52)</b>	<b>(-6)</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>(-18)</b>	<b>(-6)</b>	<b>(-157)</b>

Table 15: Net change by change category and state/territory since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

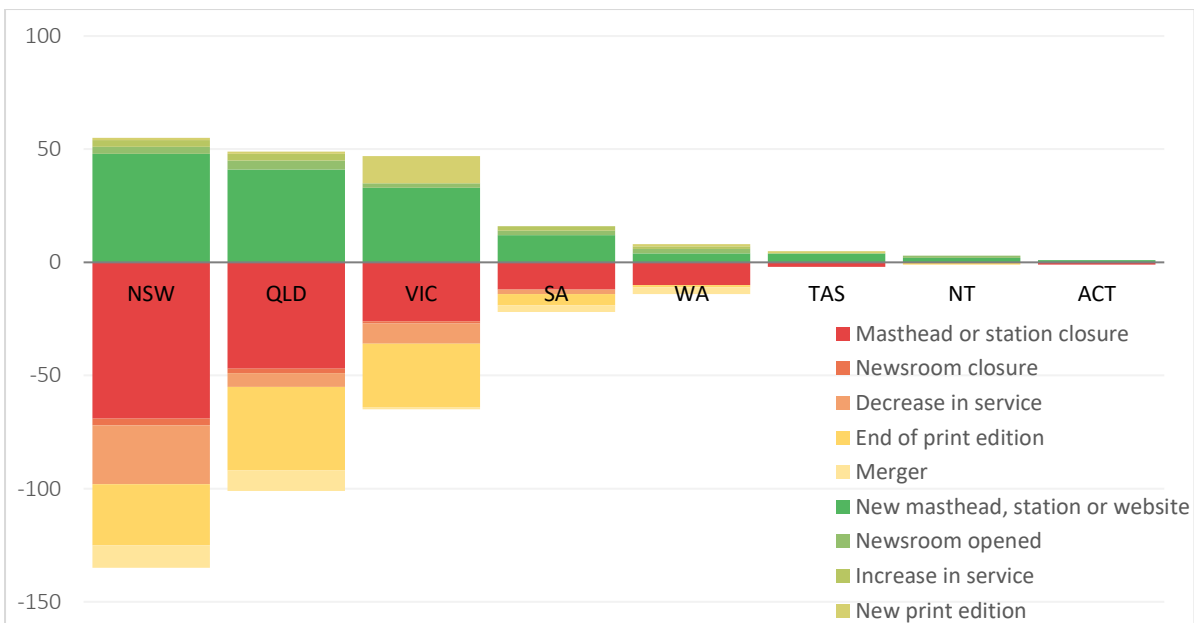


Figure 9: Change types by state or territory since 1 January 2019, 30 June 2024.

### 5.1.1 Australian Capital Territory

	Community	Local	Metro	Territory	Total
Print	0	3	0	0	3
Digital	0	4	0	0	4
Radio	0	8	0	0	8
Television	0	1	0	0	1
Total	0	16	0	0	16

◀ Table 16: Count of local news producers in the Australian Capital Territory, 30 June 2024.

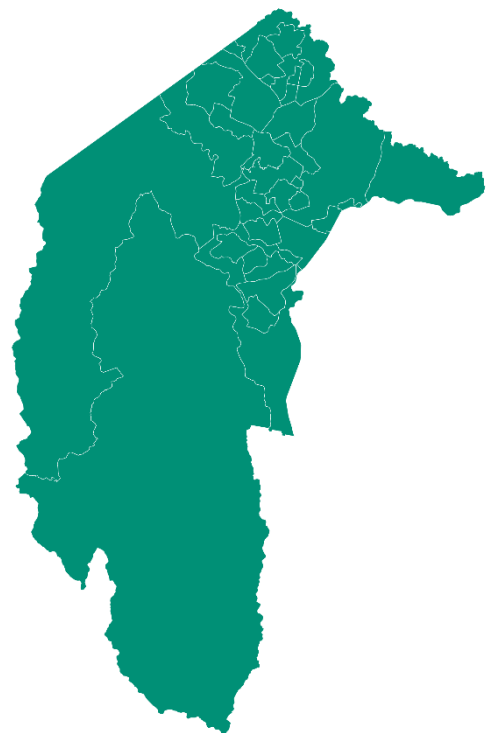
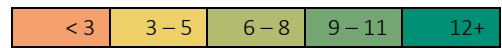
▼ Figure 10: Count of local news producers in the Australian Capital Territory, excluding television, 30 June 2024.

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. Independents include the Canberra City News and the Canberra Weekly. The Queanbeyan Age sits outside of the ACT in New South Wales but provides some coverage of the territory.

The ACT also has a dense radio environment. Southern Cross Austereo operates hit104.7 (2ROC) and Australian Radio Network operates Mixx 106.3 (1CBR). Capital Radio Network is a smaller radio company based in the capital and operating a local station (2CC Talking Canberra (2CC)), and others within the broader Capital and Monaro regions. ABC Canberra (2CN) is the public broadcaster’s local radio newsroom.

The territory does not have its own commercial television licence area and sits entirely within Southern New South Wales TV1. It is covered by 10 Southern NSW & ACT (CTC), 7 News Southern NSW and ACT (CBN) and Nine Southern NSW & ACT (WIN).

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 PIJI only includes 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 or community issues.



### 5.1.1.1 Changes in the Australian Capital Territory

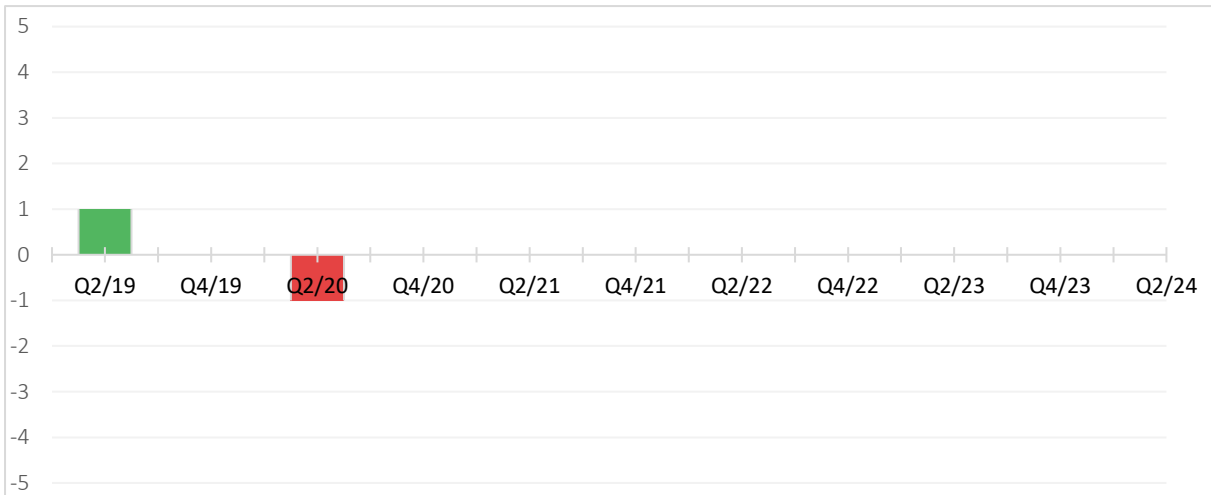


Figure 11: Change categories in the Australian Capital Territory by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

Few changes have been observed in the ACT. News Corp launched the Canberra Star, a digital news title, in Q2/19. The Canberra Chronicle, a newspaper published by Australian Community Media, closed in Q2/20.

### 5.1.1.2 Entities in the Australian Capital Territory

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in ACT	% total outlets in ACT
Australian Radio Network*	3	19
Southern Cross Austereo*	3	19
Capital Radio Network*	2	13
Region Group	2	13
Joint Ventures	-2	-13
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 1 news outlet</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>50</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	8	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 17: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in the Australian Capital Territory, 30 June 2024

Table 17 shows the entities in the Australian Capital Territory which operate more than one outlet.

Though many outlets have a presence in Canberra to cover the federal government, PIJI’s data focusses on outlets which cover local issues such as the ACT Legislative Assembly and other issues.

The ACT has 16 local outlets, or around one per cent of the total outlets across the country. Four news entities, Australian Radio Network, Southern Cross Austereo, Capital Radio Network, and Region

Group hold more than one outlet in the ACT.

There are eight radio news outlets in the ACT, or two per cent of the national total. Australian Radio Network and Southern Cross Austereo have the largest holdings, with Capital Radio Network operating two stations. Two of the three outlets held by Australian Radio Network and Southern Cross Austereo are operated as a joint venture by the two companies.

### 5.1.2 New South Wales

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	4	153	2	1	160
Digital	0	65	0	1	66
Radio	0	128	0	0	128
Television	0	12	0	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>366</b>

◀ Table 18: News producers in New South Wales, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 12: Count of local news producers in New South Wales, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

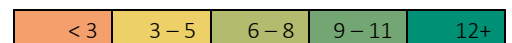
News production in New South Wales is heavily centred in coastal areas, particularly from Bega Valley on the Victorian border north through the Illawarra, Sydney and Central Coast to Port Macquarie-Hastings and the Hunter Valley. Smaller hubs of production exist particularly in Young and Lismore and around Dubbo. Cabonne Shire in the Central West is listed with a high density of outlets due to its proximity to Orange, Forbes and Parkes, which border and overlap in the Shire.

Greater Sydney has a very high level of news density. Similar to Melbourne, it features both daily print newspapers, a strong presence of commercial city-wide radio, three commercial TV networks, the public broadcasters, and many independent local outlets. These are spread across the city, with independent print and radio outlets in the Northern Beaches, Blacktown, Parramatta, Lane Cove and Inner West areas, among others.

Most parts of the state have a heavy density of radio stations, including local newsrooms for major nationwide brands Triple M, hit and Mixx FM as well as local and community radio.

The state is covered by four television licence areas: Sydney TV1, Northern New South Wales TV1, Southern New South Wales TV1 and Remote Central and Eastern Australia TV1/TV2.

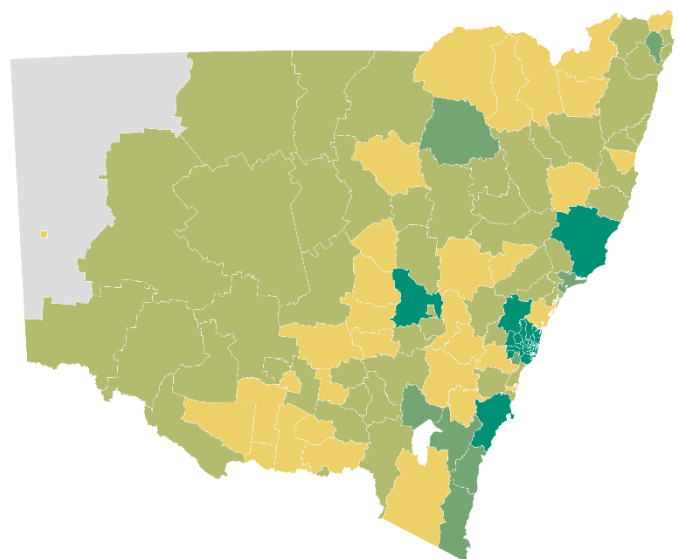
News outlet presence is thinner in the Snowy Monaro, parts of the Central West and the Riverina, and northern parts of the state.



#### 5.1.2.1 Changes in New South Wales

PIJ has recorded the greatest number of changes events in New South Wales of any state. There has been a net reduction in titles in New South Wales since 2019.

Australian Community Media’s consolidation of its presence in the state has, since 2020, seen the closure of at least 36 newspapers. A further 25 have reduced their service in some way: either through reduced publication frequency, or largely existing as digital shells that rerun network content produced at other papers without any original local production. ACM sold seven titles to Provincial Press Group in April 2023.



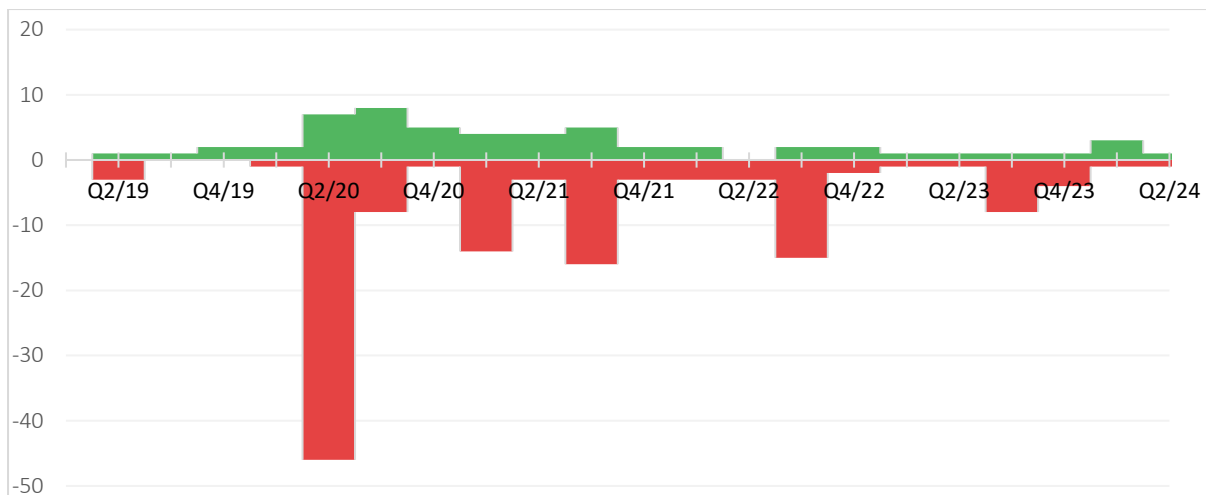


Figure 13: Changes in New South Wales by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

News Corp also closed papers in the north of the state in early 2020: Coastal Views in Grafton, and the Northern Rivers Echo and Richmond River Express Examiner, both in Casino.

Both companies have also opened outlets in regional New South Wales. ACM opened two papers in the Northern Rivers area, one of which has since closed, while News Corp has launched digital hyperlocal verticals in Lismore, Bowral, Wagga Wagga, and Wollongong, among other places. In total, News Corp’s geographic footprint has increased since 2019, while ACM’s has reduced.

There has been change among independent news producers. Titles have launched where major titles have closed, such as The Hunter River Times and IndyNR, both the state’s north. Regionally-focused titles have also launched, such as the New England Times and Region Riverina.

Conversely, there have also been contractions. Long-standing newspapers such as Warren Weekly and the Don Dorrigo Gazette closed. In the case of the former, a new title, the Warren Star, was founded to fill the gap left by the closure of the Weekly.

Some outlets that opened within the data period have also subsequently closed – Orange City Life NEWSWATCH, for example, launched as a free weekly newspaper in May 2020 and closed in March 2021. The NSW Local App Company both launched and then closed multiple local news sites across the state, including in the Hunter Valley, Orange and Port Macquarie. It currently retains a presence only in Lismore.

Sydney has seen some changes among nationally-focused outlets, such as Capital Brief, which opened in 2023. The presence of international media companies in Sydney has also changed: The Washington Post opened a local bureau in 2021 and Forbes Australia in 2022, while local editions of Huffington Post and BuzzFeed News closed in 2020.

### 5.1.2.2 Entities in New South Wales

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in NSW	% total outlets in NSW
Australian Community Media*	51	14
News Corp Australia*	36	10
Southern Cross Austereo*	20	5
Broadcast Operations Group*	17	5
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	14	4
Provincial Press Group*	13	4
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 12 news outlets</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>41</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	215	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 19: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in New South Wales, 30 June 2024

Table 19 shows the entities in New South Wales which operate more than 12 outlets.

New South Wales has the highest number of outlets in the country, with 366 or about 30 per cent of the total outlets. New South Wales outlet holdings also increased the most outlets this quarter, up six from 360 in March 2024.

Six news entities collectively operate 151 outlets, or 41 per cent of all outlets in NSW. These holdings are unchanged since March 2024, with Australian Community Media operating the most outlets at 51.

Combined, Australian Community Media and News Corp Australia collectively operate 24 per cent of total NSW outlets, or 87 outlets.

There are 128 radio news outlets in NSW, or 32 per cent of all radio outlets. The news entities with the largest radio outlet holdings are Southern Cross Austereo (19), Broadcast Operations Group (17), and Australian Radio Network (nine). These three entities collectively operate 35 per cent of all NSW radio news outlets.

Entities not listed but with considerable outlet holdings include Australian Radio Network (nine), WIN Network (six), and Community Broadcast Network (five).



### 5.1.3 Northern Territory

	Community	Local	Metro	Territory	Total
Print	0	5	0	0	5
Digital	0	2	0	0	2
Radio	0	13	0	0	13
Television	0	5	0	0	5
Total	0	25	0	0	25

◀ Table 20: News producers in the Northern Territory, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 14: Count of local news producers in the Northern Territory, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

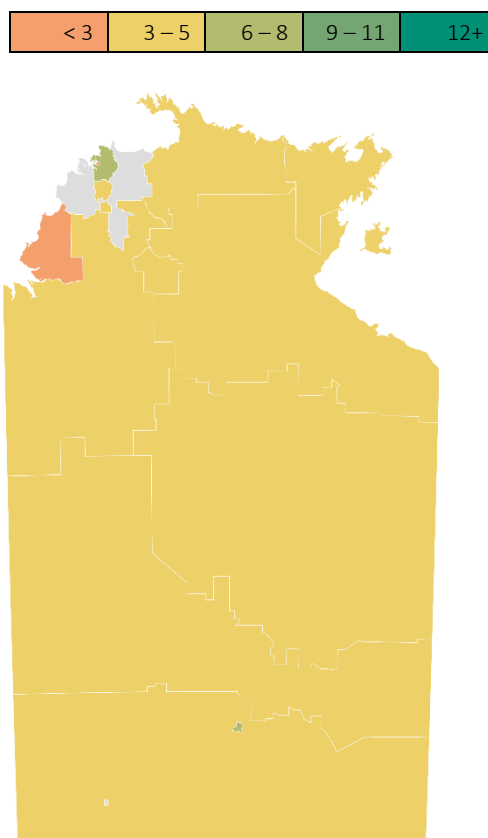
There are few digital/print news producers in the Northern Territory. News is produced out of Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek by News Corp, Australian Community Media, Today Group and independents the Tennant & District Times and NT Independent.

Remote parts of the territory are reached by two main radio sources. The ABC’s Alice Springs and Darwin bureaux are retransmitted in Jabiru, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Mataranka, Borroloola and others. FlowFM (8SAT) is a commercial radio station which broadcasts into remote areas across the country, including Jabiru and Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory.

Community radio is a significant contributor of news, particularly in remote areas.

The geographically large local government areas give the impression that most of the territory receives broad coverage. This is not the case: 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 print publications on the Islands, but they do fall within the broadcast area of both ABC Darwin and CAAMA Radio.



#### 5.1.3.1 Changes in the Northern Territory

Few changes have been observed in the Northern Territory. The Centralian Advocate was folded into The NT News in Q2/20. In the same quarter, the NT Independent launched. Australian Associated Press opened a Darwin newsroom in Q1/21, and Centralian Today, published by the Today Group, opened in Alice Springs in Q3/23.

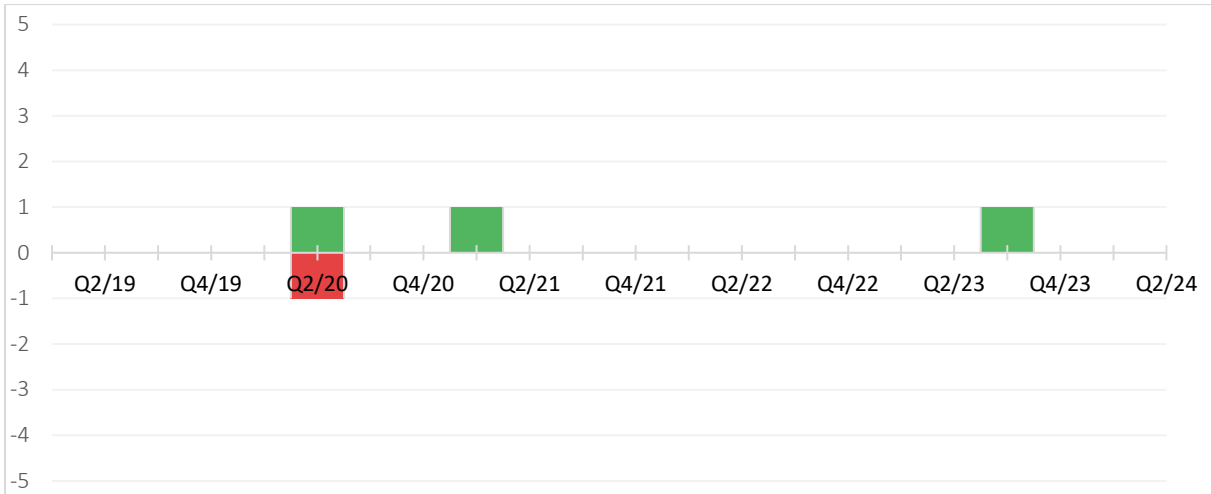


Figure 15: Change categories in the Northern Territory by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

### 5.1.3.2 Entities in the Northern Territory

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in NT	% total outlets in NT
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	3	12
Southern Cross Austereo*	3	12
Australian Radio Network*	2	8
Nine Entertainment Co*	2	8
Joint Ventures	-1	-4
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 1 news outlet</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	16	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 21: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in the Northern Territory, 30 June 2024

Table 21 shows the entities in the Northern Territory which operate more than one outlet.

The Northern Territory has 25 outlets, or two per cent of total outlets, unchanged since March 2024.

Four entities in the Northern Territory operate more than one outlet, with the ABC and Southern Cross Austereo holding three outlets each, or a combined 24 per cent of total outlets in the NT.

There are 13 radio news outlets in the Northern Territory, or three per cent of total radio outlets. Only two news entities have more than one holding, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (three) and Australian Radio Network (two).

Nine Entertainment Co and Southern Cross Austereo operate one radio news entity under a joint venture agreement, and therefore one outlet has been deducted from the total number of outlets in the Northern Territory.

### 5.1.4 Queensland

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	3	75	1	1	80
Digital	1	48	2	0	51
Radio	0	80	0	0	80
Television	0	6	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>217</b>

◀ Table 22: News producers in Queensland, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 16: Count of local news producers in Queensland, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

Local government areas in Queensland have a wide spread of news density, with more than 20 outlets in Brisbane and as few as three in parts of North West Queensland.

The capital and its surrounding cities are home to a diverse mix of major publishers, News Corp and Nine, medium-sized businesses such as Solstice Media and the Today Group, as well as local independents. News Corp operates both the Courier Mail, a major daily newspaper, as well as the Quest community newspaper brand across the city’s suburbs.

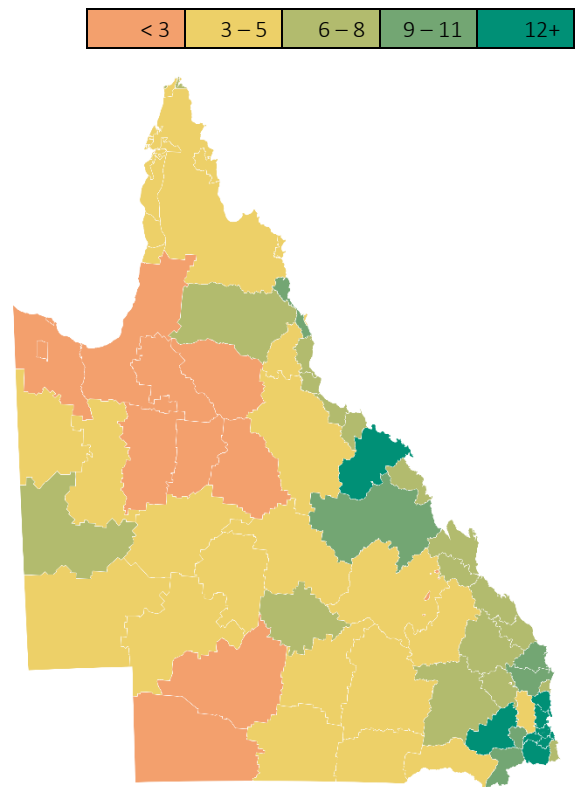
Independent outlets in Brisbane include the Bayside Weekly News, The Local Bulletin in the western suburbs, and the Everton Echo. There are particular concentrations in the south-east and Whitsunday Region, with smaller news production hubs around Cairns, Hervey Bay and Dalby.

Radio in Brisbane includes national brands such as hit FM and Triple M, Nine’s 4BC, ABC Brisbane and community radio such as 4ZZZ Radio Brisbane.

Independent news companies dominate in regional Queensland, particularly the Today Group, which operates 19 outlets across the state, 16 of them in regional areas.

Three television licence areas cover the state: Brisbane TV1 in the capital and surrounds, Regional Queensland TV1 runs along the coast from Cairns to Sunshine Coast and inland to capture Toowoomba, Warwick and Emerald. Remote Central and Eastern Australia TV1/TV2 covers the remainder of the state, including Far North Queensland and the interior.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display the Wellesley or Torres Strait Islands. Torres Shire and Torres Strait Island Regional Council are covered by the Cape York Weekly but we have no record of a news outlet covering Mornington Shire since the North West Weekly closed. Indigenous Australian publications The Koori Mail and Torres News also cover Far North Queensland, and the National Indigenous Radio Service (4ACR) transmits in the Torres Strait.



### 5.1.4.1 Changes in Queensland

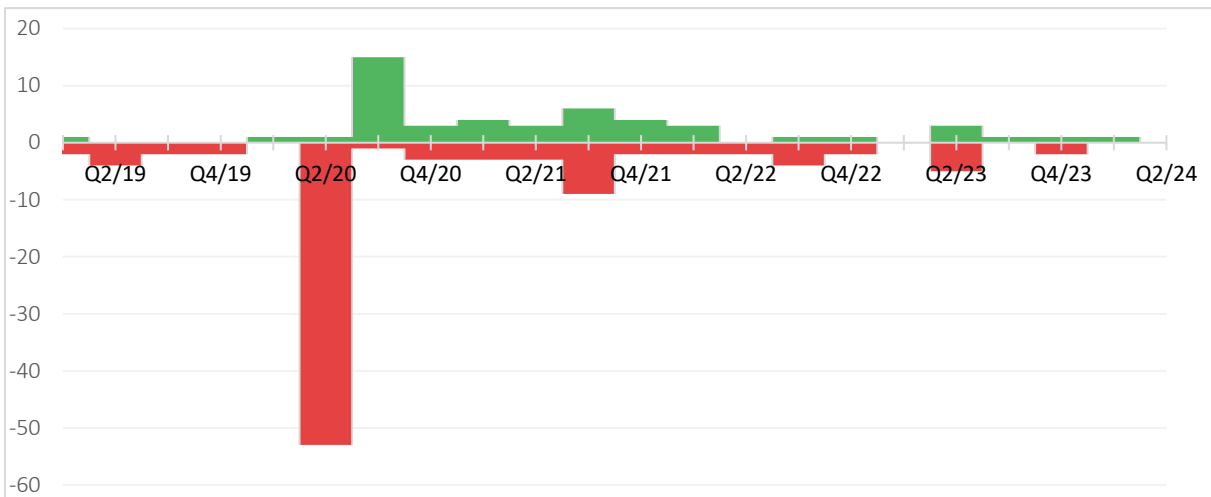


Figure 17: Change categories in Queensland by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

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. In the same year, 24 of their papers shifted to digital-only publishing.

Independent outlets in regional 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, Cairns and Burnett. Over time, many of these start-ups have closed, leaving only one remaining in many markets. In Chinchilla, for example, after News Corp closed the Chinchilla News in April 2020, three new titles were launched: the West QLD Echo, the Chin Wag and Country Caller. By the end of that same year, only the Caller remained.

The Today Group has expanded into many of these same regional markets. Prior to COVID-19 it was a single digital-only news outlet in Noosa, published by Melbourne-based Star News Group. In the period since, it has launched 13 titles across regions including Gympie, Bundaberg, and Maranoa and purchased three titles: two Australian Community Media newspapers in Beaudesert and Goondiwindi, as well as the Longreach Leader.

Australian Community Media closed its newspaper in Jimboomba and now only maintains a presence in Mount Isa.

Queensland is also one of the few states to have seen reductions in TV presence, with Nine newsrooms in Toowoomba and Mackay and WIN a newsroom in Hervey Bay all closing in 2019. In 2021, after affiliation agreements changed, WIN ended its local news bulletins in Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Townsville.

### 5.1.4.2 Entities in Queensland

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in QLD	% of total outlets in QLD
News Corp Australia*	42	19
Southern Cross Austereo*	23	11
Today News Group*	16	7
Australian Radio Network*	15	7
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	11	5
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 7 news outlets</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>49</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	110	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 23: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in Queensland, 30 June 2024

Queensland, up one from March 2024, or 20 per cent of the total. The news entities with the largest holdings are Southern Cross Austereo (22) and Australian Radio Network (14), with one of Australian Radio Network's outlets being a joint venture with Nova Entertainment. Southern Cross Austereo and Australian Radio Network collectively operate 45 per cent of all radio news outlets in Queensland.

Table 23 shows the entities in Queensland which operate more than seven outlets.

In Queensland, there were a total of 217 associated outlets (18 per cent of total national outlets), up one outlet from March 2024.

Five news entities collectively operate 107 outlets or 49 per cent of Queensland outlets. News Corp Australia operates 42, or 19 per cent, of Queensland outlets, almost double the holdings of the next news entity.

There are 80 radio news outlets in

### 5.1.5 South Australia

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	1	25	1	0	27
Digital	0	14	1	0	15
Radio	0	33	0	0	33
Television	0	9	0	0	9
Total	1	81	2	0	84

◀ Table 24: News producers in South Australia, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 16: Count of local news producers in South Australia, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

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.

News Corp’s metropolitan daily The Advertiser and its local Messenger network are major producers in Adelaide. Solstice Media’s InDaily also covers the capital.

The south-east of the state was hit hard by news closures in early COVID-19. 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).

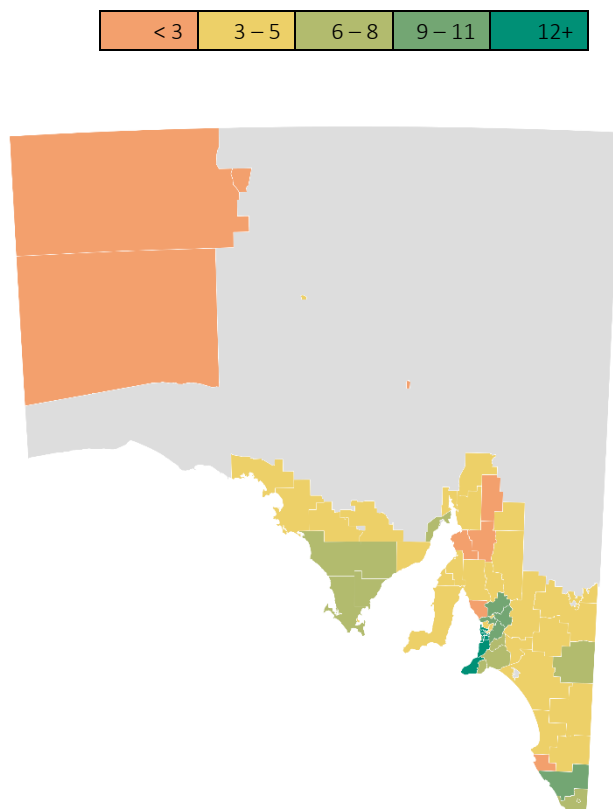
The Today News Group has emerged as a major player in the state in the June 2023 quarter. It revived the Border Watch, South-Eastern Times and Penola Pennant in 2020, and subsequently purchased 11 titles from Australian Community Media in April 2023. It also purchased four titles from Papers and Publications in the same month.

New independent papers emerged in Naracoorte, Murray Bridge and Mount Gambier to fill temporary gaps and have remained in service even as the previously 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. Both of these titles are now operated by SA Today.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display Kangaroo Island, which is covered by SA Today’s The Islander and remote radio service Flow FM (8SAT).



### 5.1.5.1 Changes in South Australia

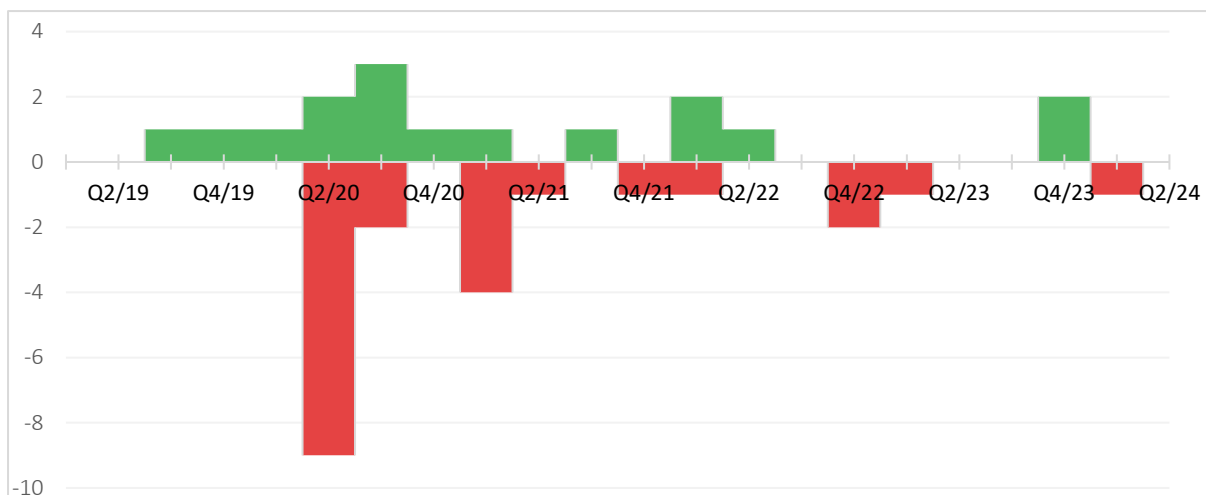


Figure 18: Change categories in South Australia by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

South Australia has been moderately affected by changes in its news market.

With the onset of COVID-19 in Q2/20, News Corp ended the print editions of its Messenger community titles in Adelaide. Across the data period, News Corp has also opened digital local outlets in Whyalla (Q4/19), Port Lincoln and the Barossa Valley (Q3/20), and Adelaide Hills and Mount Gambier (Q4/20).

Australian Community Media temporarily suspended and then permanently closed a number of titles, including the West Coast Sentinel, Flinders News, Coastal Leader and Eyre Peninsula Tribune. During the suspension of the Murray Valley Standard, local digital outlet Murray Bridge News launched (Q2/20). The Eyre Peninsula Advocate launched (Q3/21) to fill the gaps left by the Tribune and Sentinel.

The ABC opened new bureaux in Whyalla and Victor Harbor in Q1/22.

There has also been fluctuation among independent titles:

- Within metropolitan Adelaide, both the Adelaide East Herald (Q4/22) and Adelaide Hills Herald (Q1/23) were closed by Taylor Group after being purchased in 2022.
- Along the Grapevine, an independent local news website in Adelaide Hills, closed in Q4/22.
- The Whippet launched in Q3/21 in the City of Onkaparinga and closed by Q1/22.

### 5.1.5.2 Entities in South Australia

Table 25 below shows the entities in South Australia which operate more than three outlets.

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in SA	% total outlets in SA
Today News Group*	15	18
News Corp Australia*	11	13
Australian Radio Network *	9	11
Southern Cross Austereo*	5	6
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	4	5
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 3 news outlets</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	40	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 25: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in South Australia, 30 June 2024

(11 outlets, 13 per cent), predominantly in and around Adelaide, including The Advertiser, digital community titles in the suburbs, and hyperlocals in surrounding regional areas.

There are 33 radio news outlets in South Australia, or eight per cent of the national total. The news entities with the largest holdings are Australian Radio Network (nine) and Southern Cross Austereo (four), which collectively operate 39 per cent of all radio news outlets in South Australia.

Table 25 shows the entities in South Australia which operate more than three outlets.

In South Australia, there are 84 outlets, or seven per cent of the total outlets across the country. News entities listed in this table hold 44 outlets or 52 per cent of total outlets in South Australia.

Today News Group holds 15 outlets, or 18 per cent of South Australian outlets, unchanged since March 2024.

News Corp Australia holds the second highest number of outlets



### 5.1.6 Tasmania

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	3	22	0	1	26
Digital	0	4	0	1	5
Radio	0	17	0	0	17
Television	0	3	0	0	3
Total	3	46	0	2	51

◀ Table 26: News producers in Tasmania, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 19: Count of local news producers in Tasmania, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

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.

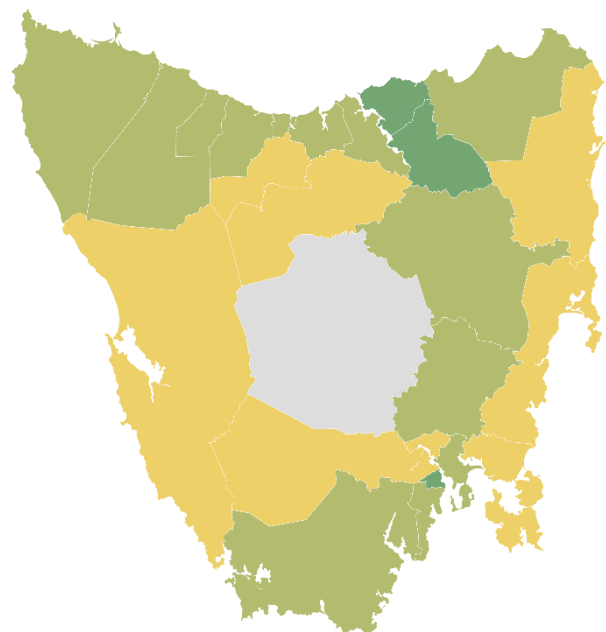
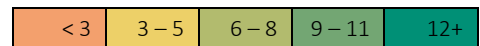
A significant presence in Tasmanian news media is Font Publishing, which has purchased multiple local outlets over the past few years, including Tasmanian Country, Derwent Valley Gazette, Sorrell Times and others.

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 BridgReport.

Most of Tasmania, including the capital, are within the Tasmania TV1 licence area, which includes Seven Tasmania (TNT), WIN Tasmania (TVT) and 10 Tasmania (TDT). Parts of the West Coast, Huon Valley, Waratah-Wynyard and Central Highlands local governments are within the Remote Central and Eastern Australia TV1/TV2 broadcast area.

Due to a technical limitation this map does not display some islands, including:

- King Island, which is covered by the King Island Courier, ABC Northern Tasmania and Tasmania TV1 networks.
- Flinders Island, for which PIJI has no record of print, digital or radio news producers. It is included the Tasmania TV1 licence area.
- Bruny Island is also not present on this map, though the mainland 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.



#### 5.1.6.1 Changes in Tasmania

Few changes have been observed in Tasmania. Tasmanian Inquirer, a digital investigative journalism site, launched in Q1/20. News Corp has launched two digital local news sites in the state: The Launceston News (Q1/20) and The North West Coast News (Q3/20), based in Burnie. The New Norfolk and Derwent Valley News, a local news website, launched a print edition in Q3/20. In Q1/24, the Hobart Weekly News opened in the state capital.

Two contractions have been observed: the Tasmanian Browser closed in Q1/23, and the Meander Valley Gazette in Q4/23.

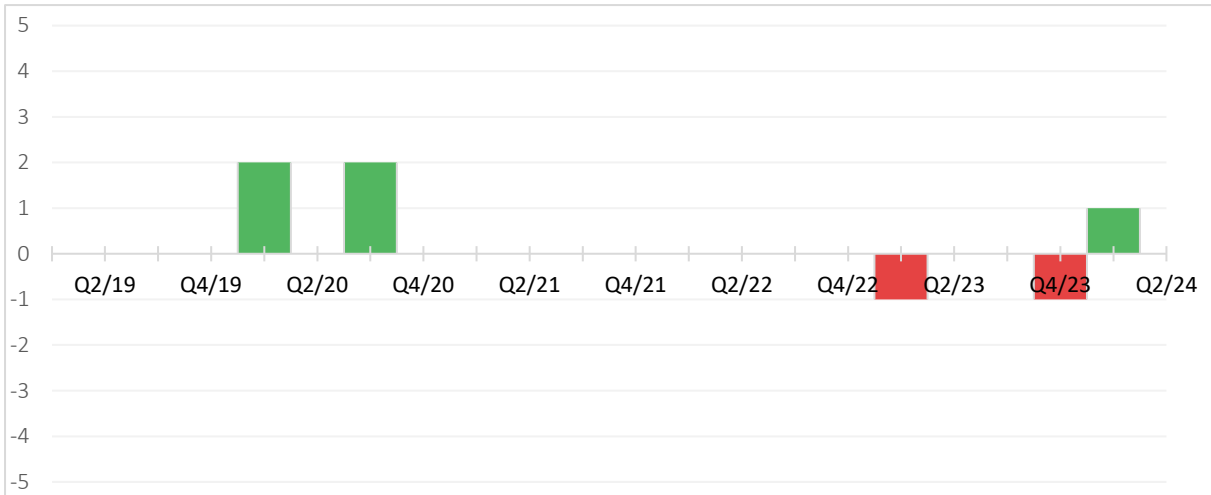


Figure 20: Change categories in Tasmania by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

### 5.1.6.2 Entities in Tasmania

News entity	Outlet holdings in TAS	% total outlets in TAS
Australian Radio Network	9	18
Font Publishing	7	14
Southern Cross Austereo*	4	8
News Corp Australia*	3	6
Corporate Communications (Tas.)	3	6
Huon Newspaper Company	3	6
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 2 news outlets</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>57</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	22	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 27: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in Tasmania, 30 June 2024

Table 27Error! Reference source not found. shows the entities in Tasmania which operate more than two outlets.

There are 51 outlets in Tasmania, or four per cent of the total outlets across the country, unchanged from March 2024. News entities listed in this table hold 29 outlets or 57 per cent of total outlets in South Australia.

Six entities operate 29 outlets or 57 per cent of the total Tasmania outlets. Australian Radio Network operates the largest number of news outlets in the state, with nine outlets or 18 per cent of the total in Tasmanian. Font Publishing

continues to have a significant presence in Tasmania, operating seven outlets, or 14 per cent.

There are 17 radio news outlets in Tasmania, or four per cent of the national total. Australian Radio Network alone operates nine radio news outlets, or 53 per cent of the total in Tasmania.

### 5.1.7 Victoria

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	38	118	3	1	160
Digital	4	22	0	2	28
Radio	0	73	0	0	73
Television	0	8	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>269</b>

◀ Table 28: News producers in Victoria, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 21: Count of local news producers in Victoria, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

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 and Herald Sun cover metropolitan Melbourne, with the latter’s local coverage supported by a network of Leader community newspapers and digital hyperlocals around the state.

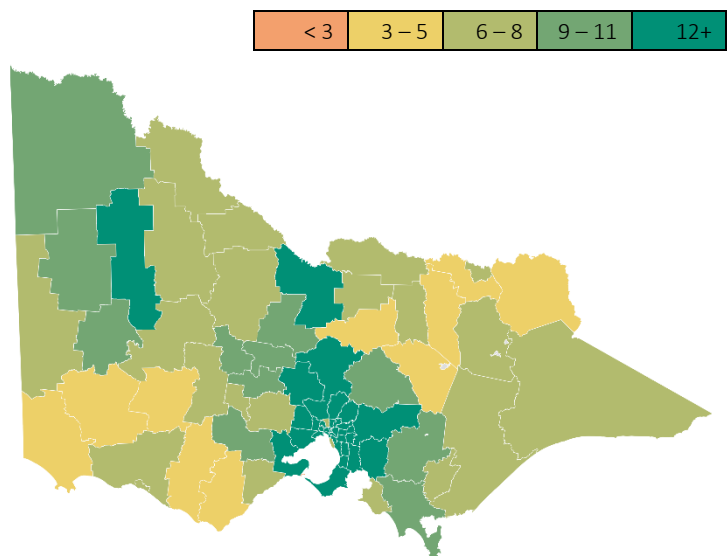
Star News Group publishes 18 papers in Melbourne’s suburbs and surrounds, and two in Geelong. The Local Paper also exists across Melbourne city, though with a smaller reporting footprint. Hyperlocal News publishes five titles within the City of Melbourne.

Australian Community Media is present in larger regional cities in Victoria, with daily papers in Bendigo, Wodonga, Ballarat and Warrnambool. 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’s suburbs and in north/central local government areas like Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander, Bendigo and Loddon.

Regional Victoria TV1, Eastern Victoria TV1, Western Victoria TV1 and Melbourne TV1 are the main television licence areas. Mildura and the Sunraysia have a separate television region.

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.



### 5.1.7.1 Changes in Victoria

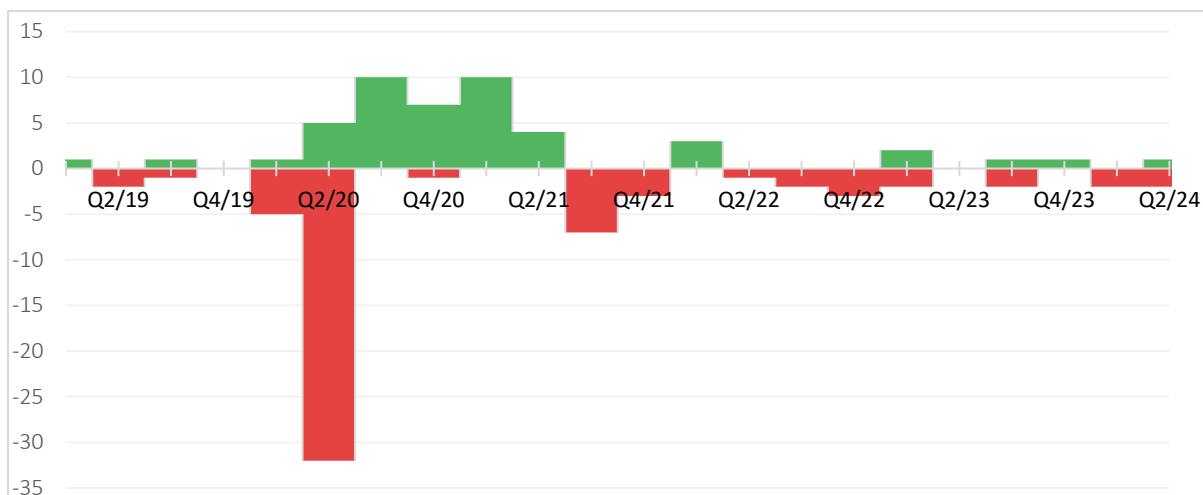


Figure 22: Change categories in Victoria by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

The third-largest number of changes in Australia have been recorded in Victoria. Despite multiple and longer lockdowns than other parts of the country, including in regional areas, Victoria lost fewer news outlets during COVID-19 than either New South Wales or Queensland.

Within metropolitan Melbourne, News Corp ended the print editions of its Leader community titles, shifting all of these to digital-only publication. The existing Leader brands have also been consolidated, with multiple titles merged into regional digital editions. For example, the Moorabbin Leader, Dandenong Leader, Cranbourne Leader and Berwick Leader were aggregated into a South East category on the Herald Sun website.

Australian Community Media separately launched the Inner East Review in East Melbourne and Richmond in 2022, which has since closed.

The Local Paper has significantly expanded its geographic footprint, launching 14 localised editions in local government areas across the city and immediate surrounding area.

Star News Group launched the Lilydale Star Mail in May 2021.

In regional Victoria news production remains robust. Newspapers that have closed across the period include independent papers, such as the Kyneton Free Press or Yeates Media’s East Gippsland News, as well as Australian Community Media’s Hepburn Advocate, and News Corp’s Bellarine and Surf Coast Echo.

The Paper, which launched as a digital title in Leongatha following the 2020 closure of the Great Southern Star, subsequently closed by the end of the year. The Bridge, which opened after the closure of the Yarram Standard, continues to operate.

In the Wimmera-Mallee in the state’s west, titles have closed in Edenhope (Kowree Advocate) and Mildura (both the Independent and the Weekly) and have opened in Horsham (Horsham Times, Wimmera-Mallee Sport), Ararat (Ararat Advocate) and Mildura (The Mildura News).

In the south west, the Moyne Gazette closed in Port Fairy and Warrnambool-based investigative news site The Terrier has taken extended breaks and is currently closed. The Warrnambool Weekly launched in March 2023.

New community titles across the state include The Wombat Post and Traf District News, which opened in a new iteration in December 2023 after previously closing in April 2023. The Woody Yaloak Herald, Buninyong & District Community News and Port Albert Tattler all closed across the period.

### 5.1.7.2 Entities in Victoria

News entity	Outlet holdings in VIC	% total outlets in VIC
Star News Group	20	7
News Corp Australia*	17	6
Ace Radio Broadcasters*	15	6
Southern Cross Austereo*	10	4
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	9	3
McPherson Newspapers*	8	3
Times News Group*	8	3
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 7 news outlets</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>32</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	182	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 29: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in Victoria, 30 June 2024

Table 29 shows the entities in Victoria which operate more than seven outlets.

Victoria has 269 associated outlets or 22 per cent of the total national outlets, unchanged from March 2024. The listed seven news entities operate 87 outlets or 32 per cent of the total Victorian outlets, considerably less than in other states, indicating a more even spread of outlet holdings across Victorian news entities.

Star News Group, which had the highest outlet holding in Victoria with 20 outlets or seven per cent of total VIC outlets, is the sister company of Today News Group and operates outlets predominately

within Melbourne’s suburbs and surrounding areas such as the Yarra Ranges.

McPherson Newspapers, also known as McPherson Media Group, operates the majority (eight out of 11) of its outlets in Victoria, mostly in the Hume region.

There are 73 radio news outlets in Victoria, or 18 per cent of the national total, up two from March 2024 with the inclusion of an additional station from Nova Entertainment and Vision Australia. Ace Radio Broadcasters has the largest holdings (14), followed by Southern Cross Austereo (nine), and Australian Radio Network (seven). Together these entities operate 42 per cent of the radio news outlets in Victoria.

Australian Community Media (six outlets), Provincial Press Group (six outlets), Hyperlocal News (five outlets) and the McCullough Family Trust (five outlets) are not included in this table but have notable outlet holdings in Victoria.

### 5.1.8 Western Australia

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	13	52	1	0	66
Digital	1	3	2	0	6
Radio	0	53	0	0	53
Television	0	6	0	0	6
Total	14	114	3	0	131

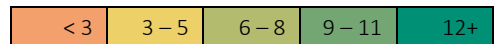
◀ Table 30: News producers in Western Australia, 30 June 2024.

▼ Figure 23: Count of local news producers in Western Australia, excluding television, by local government area, 30 June 2024.

Western Australia’s media landscape is dominated by Seven West Media (SWM). Almost every local government area in the state is covered by one of SWM’s 19 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.

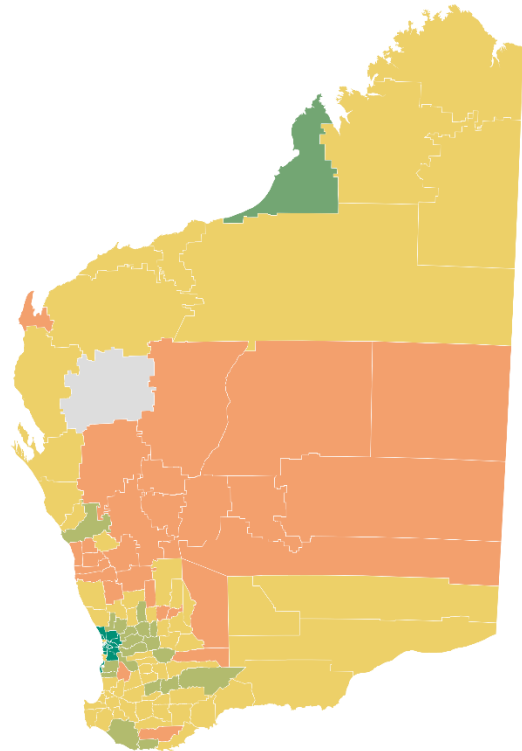
The only local government area not included in SWM’s coverage is the Shire of Upper Gascoyne. PIJ could not identify regular coverage of Gascoyne Junction in a 2024 audit. The Midwest Times, based in Geraldton, appears to publish an average of one story each year, while ABC Pilbara also provides a small amount of coverage of the shire. At the 2021 census, this local government area had a population below 200 people.

Within Perth there are two other small news companies: the Herald Publishing Company, which has papers in Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and Perth; and Examiner Newspapers, which operates in Armadale, Canning, Gosnells and Serpentine Jarrahdale.



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 include The Windmill (Shire of Corrigin), Pingelly Times (Shire of Pingelly) and Crosswords (Shire of Yilgarn).

The ABC operates out of its Perth station and seven local stations around the state: Esperance, Goldfields, Great Southern, Kimberley, Midwest & Wheatbelt, Pilbara and South West.



### 5.1.8.1 Changes in Western Australia

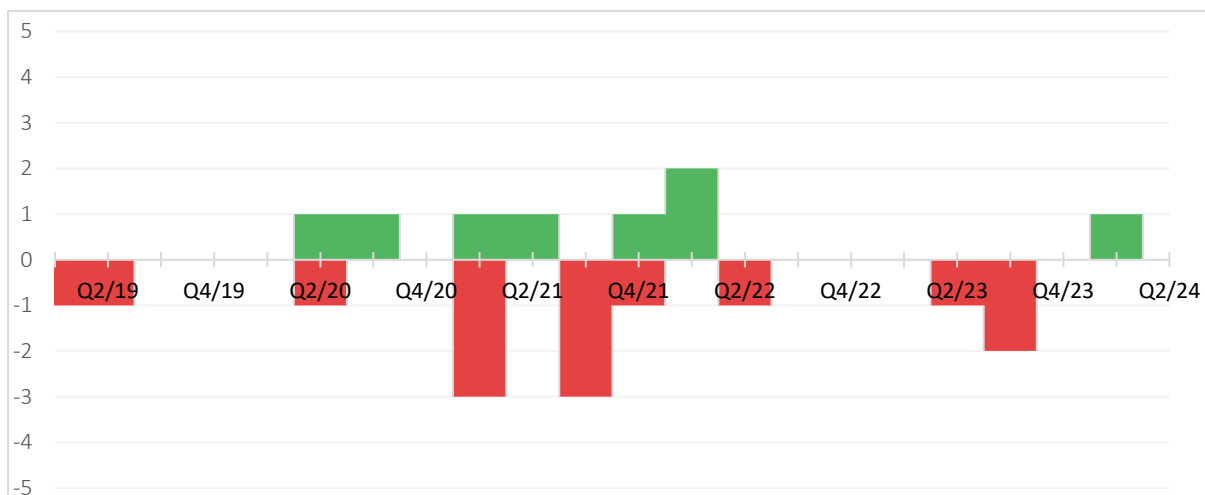


Figure 24: Change categories in Western Australia by quarter, 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2024.

The market in Western Australia has been remarkably stable over the data period, though consistent with most of the rest of the country it has tended toward decline.

Within Perth, Seven West Media reorganised its community newspaper titles in 2021 into the PerthNow brand. As part of this process, the net number of titles was reduced: separate editions of the Western Suburbs Weekly were merged into the single PerthNow Western Suburbs, and separate editions of the Eastern Reporter were merged into the single PerthNow Central, a net reduction of two titles. South of the city in Rockingham, Seven West Media closed local newspaper The Weekend Courier in June 2019. In 2024 Seven West Media launched The Nightly, a national news-focussed digital site headquartered in Perth.

Australian Community Media has reduced its presence in the state since 2019. It has closed four newspapers: the Avon Valley Advocate, Donnybrook-Bridgetown-Manjimup Mail, Collie Mail and Esperance Express. In 2023 it sold two further papers – the Augusta-Margaret River Mail and Busselton-Dunsborough Mail – to Sports Entertainment Network (SEN). Its final two titles in the state, the Bunbury Mail and Mandurah Mail, were audited as part of March 2024 sampling and were not found to publish any original material. PIJI will list these titles as closed in its April 2024 data update.

The Bridgetown Star opened after the closure of the Donnybrook-Bridgetown-Manjimup Mail in 2020. Initially an online title, it launched a print publication, was forced back online after the closure of ACM’s printing facilities in 2023, and subsequently closed in September of that year.

As in other states, where major publishers have retreated other local papers have emerged, including the Esperance Weekender and Collie River Valley Bulletin.

The ABC opened a new bureau in Carnarvon and increased its presence in Northam in 2022.

PIJI is aware of two radio stations commencing news services across the period: Harvey Community Radio 96.5 FM partnered with the Harvey Waroona Reporter to produce a radio news bulletin in 2021, and Denmark 99.7 FM commenced broadcasting in the same year.

### 5.1.8.2 Entities in Western Australia

Parent entity	Outlet holdings in WA	% total outlets in WA
Seven West Media*	35	27
Southern Cross Austereo*	29	22
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	7	5
The Herald Publishing Company	5	4
<b>Subtotal for entities with &gt; 4 news outlets</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>58</b>
Outlets held by all other entities	55	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 31: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in Western Australia, 30 June 2024*

Table 31 shows the entities in Western Australia which operate more than four outlets.

Western Australia has 131 associated outlets or 11 per cent of total outlets across Australia, down one outlet from March 2024. The four listed news entities operate 76 outlets or 58 per cent of total outlets in WA.

Just two entities combined, Seven West Media and Southern Cross Austereo, operate 49 per cent (64 outlets) of the total outlets in Western Australia.

Though not included in this table, a notable change this quarter was the closure of Australian Community Media's last two mastheads operating in Western Australia. PIJ now records no active Australian Community Media titles operating in Western Australia.

There are 53 radio news outlets in Western Australia, or 13 per cent of the national total. Southern Cross Austereo has by far the largest radio holdings in Western Australia. It operates 29 radio news outlets, 56 per cent of the total in Western Australia.

Not included in the table, The Trustee for the Mayne Family Trust operates four Examiner Newspapers titles in Perth's outer suburbs.



# [ Australian News Sampling Project ]

Case study, June 2024:

**East Gippsland and Wellington, VIC**

## 6 Australian News Sampling Project

The results presented here are from a June survey of neighbouring local government areas of East Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire.

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

- the amount of public interest journalism produced
- 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 articles or four editions of a print newspaper. Where the minimum cannot be met, we review the entire month of content. Where resources permit, we expand the number of articles sampled.

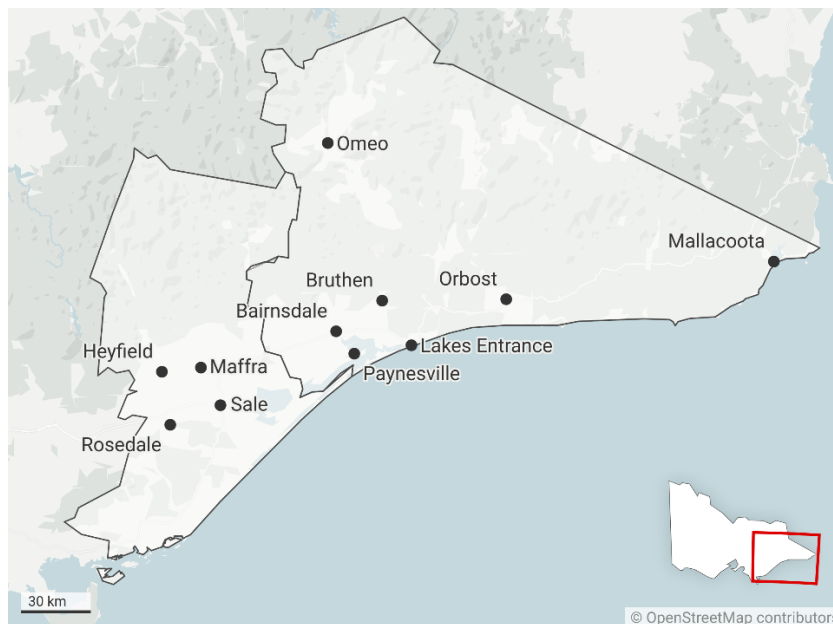
With this work, we seek to expand the amount of information about local news around Australia. This project fills a data gap in the existing ANMP work through its focus on the content output, testing the underlying assumption that newspapers and websites are providing public interest journalism for their 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 is included in samples in this project, however, only the journalism that is published to ABC Local websites are assessed. This content may be different from that which is broadcast on ABC Local Radio or on television.

## 6.1 East Gippsland and Wellington, Victoria

East Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire are neighbouring local government areas in eastern Victoria.



### Region

Land area	3 175 693 ha
Residents	95 303

### Population centres

Bairnsdale	Omeo
Maffra	Mallacoota
Sale	Orbost
Paynesville	Lakes Entrance
Heyfield	Bruthen
Rosedale	

### News outlets (June 2024)

Print	8
Digital	0
Radio	5
Television	3

### 6.1.1 Local news producers

Outlet	Format	Ownership	Scale	Total
3MGB Wilderness Radio Mallacoota	Radio	Mallacoota & Genoa Broadcasting Association Incorporated	Local	0
10 Regional Victoria	Television	Southern Cross Communications Pty Limited	Local	0
ABC Gippsland	Radio	Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Local	44
Bairnsdale Advertiser	Print	James Yeates and Sons Pty Ltd	Local	167
Dargo Bush Bulletin	Print	Dargo and District Community Group	Community	0
Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator	Print	Latrobe Valley Express Partnership	Local	137
Gold 1242 Gippsland	Radio	Ace Radio Broadcasters Pty Limited	Local	0
Heyfield News	Print	Heyfield Community Resource Centre	Community	0
Lakes Post	Print	James Yeates and Sons Pty Ltd	Local	99
Loch Sport Link	Print	Loch Sport Community House Inc	Community	0
Prime7 Regional Victoria	Television	Prime Television (Victoria) Pty Ltd	Local	0
REG GM	Radio	Radio East Gippsland Incorporated	Local	0
Snowy River Mail	Print	James Yeates and Sons Pty Ltd	Local	97
Stratford Town Crier	Print	Stratford Town Crier Inc	Community	0
TRFM	Radio	Ace Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd	Local	0
WIN Regional Victoria	Television	WIN Television VIC Pty Ltd	Local	0
<b>Total</b>				<b>544</b>

Table 32: News producers in Great Southern and the total number of articles assessed.

Three Yeates Media weekly newspapers serve the area: the Bairnsdale Advertiser, the Lakes Post, based in Lakes Entrance, and the Snowy River Mail, based in Orbost.

The Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator publishes once per week.

Additionally, four community-scale publications serve the area: Loch Sport Link in East Gippsland Shire, and Dargo Bush Bulletin, Heyfield News and Stratford Town Crier in Wellington Shire.

Ace Radio operates Gold 1242 Gippsland and TRFM. Community radio stations 3MGB Wilderness Radio Mallacoota and REG GM also cover the area.

Each of the three major commercial television networks, Nine, Seven and 10, have a presence in the region.

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

### 6.1.2 Changes observed in the Great Southern region

Date	Change observed
24/03/2020	● Yarram Standard closed
18/08/2021	● East Gippsland News closed
30/11/2022	● Port Albert Tattler closed

One change has been observed in East Gippsland Shire since PIJI began monitoring. The East Gippsland News was closed by Yeates Media, which continues to publish the Bairnsdale Advertiser, Lakes Post and Snowy River Mail.

Table 33: Changes observed in the region since 1 January 2019.

Two changes have been observed in Wellington Shire. The Yarram Standard closed on March 24,

2020, prompted by the economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Port Albert Tattler was a community publication that closed in November 2022.

### 6.1.3 Sample

The digital output of the public broadcaster and four publishers was assessed between 1 – 30 June 2024. For all outlets, this represented the total of their output across that period.

A total of 544 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 very high levels of public interest journalism at all outlets. Community was the biggest focus overall, largely due to the coverage provided by local print newspapers. Government was the largest focus at three of the local print outlets – the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, the Lakes Post, and the Snowy River Mail – and the public broadcaster, while it was the third biggest focus at the Bairnsdale Advertiser, which focused more heavily on public services.

### 6.1.4 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		
ABC Gippsland	41	100	0	0	41	3	44
Bairnsdale Advertiser	136	92	12	8	148	19	167
Gippsland Times	104	88	14	12	118	19	137
Lakes Post	72	90	8	10	80	19	99
Snowy River Mail	72	91	7	9	79	18	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>544</b>

Table 34: Stories by whether they are public interest journalism, other journalism, or excluded from the sample.

Table 34 provides detail of how the total sample breaks down into public interest journalism, other journalism and exclusions. We found very high levels of public interest journalism at all outlets sampled.

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.

Outlet	Public interest journalism											
	Government			Courts and crime			Community			Public services		
	All	U	% U	All	U	% U	All	U	% U	All	U	% U
ABC Gippsland	31	19	46	32	16	39	15	10	24	15	14	34
Bairnsdale Advertiser	42	27	18	1	1	1	144	103	70	36	31	21
Gippsland Times	93	46	39	7	5	4	104	62	53	27	23	20
Lakes Post	24	16	20	0	0	0	86	55	69	10	9	11
Snowy River Mail	31	21	27	1	1	1	69	51	64	12	12	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>19</b>

Table 35: Breakdown of public interest journalism.

Stories can be allocated to up to four subjects each. As such,

Table 35 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.

We found that three local print outlets – the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, the Lakes Post, and the Snowy River Mail – focused heavily on ‘Community’, followed by ‘Government’, ‘Public services’ and ‘Courts and crime’. The Bairnsdale Advertiser follows a slightly different pattern, providing heavy ‘Community’ coverage, followed by ‘Public services’, ‘Government’, and ‘Courts and crime’. Overall, the largest focus of public interest journalism coverage was ‘Community’, except for the public broadcaster, which mainly focused on ‘Government’ stories and gave almost equal coverage to ‘Courts and crimes’ and ‘Public services’.

The high-profile trial of Greg Lynn who was accused of the murder of two campers in Victoria’s high country received ongoing coverage this month, and may be affecting the results, particularly concerning ‘Courts and crime’ stories.

‘Community’ stories sampled across the month were found to mostly be about local and community sport. This was led by the Bairnsdale Advertiser (45), the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator (24), and the Lakes Post (23). The ABC was found to have very little local and community sport coverage (2). Community events had the second biggest focus overall (65), followed by community organisations (56) and community individuals (32).

‘Community’ stories covered events such as discussions on affordable housing options and ‘forever chemicals’ pollution, as well as the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Men’s Health Week. The East Gippsland Winter Festival received coverage throughout the month. Other events include art exhibitions such as South East NOW 2024, showcasing Koorie artists, as well as community workshops.

Local industry organisations such as the Bairnsdale and the Orbost and District Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as local branches of larger organisations such as the Rotary Club, Country Women’s Association, Men’s Shed and the Blue Tree Project are examples of community organisations that received coverage for their activities. Other local organisations, such as the Orbost Neighbourhood House, was also reported on.

All outlets featured profiles of individuals who had served the community, and also artists and celebrities from the local area such as international cricketer Cameron White.

‘Government’ was the second biggest focus overall. This coverage focussed mostly on state government (48), local government (31), and federal government stories (19).

The Bairnsdale Advertiser, the Snowy River Mail, the public broadcaster and the Lakes Post mostly covered state government, followed by some local government stories and few federal government stories. The Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, had a slightly different pattern, mostly covering local government (17), followed by state (13) and federal government stories (8).

State government stories often had strong crossover with stories about government policy and other government agencies, and included concerns over the potential amalgamation of Gippsland hospitals. Extra funding for the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies in the 2024/2025 state budget was also reported on.

Local government stories included East Gippsland Shire Council’s public consultation on its coastal, lake and marine sustainable management plan, as well as dissatisfaction with the delays to the Gippsland train line upgrades.

Federal government stories also addressed V/Line delays and included criticism by Nationals leader David Littleproud MP of the federal government’s climate disclosure policy. Many stories included interventions from Federal Member for Gippsland Darren Chester MP.

‘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 childcare, as well as education. Services stories were heavily focused on education (45), health (19) and police (12).

Education stories were mostly published by the Bairnsdale Advertiser and the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator (14).

Education stories included a visit from Cann River students to Parliament House, and celebrating the completion of an inhouse leadership and training program by Gippsland Lakes Complete Health staff. Each of the four local publishers published a story about National Reconciliation Week.

Health stories included past Bairnsdale nurses donating money to Make-A-Wish East Gippsland following the dissolution of the Bairnsdale and District Past Trained Nurses and Associates group, concerns over hospital mergers, and a reminder to get flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. The Bairnsdale Advertiser also published a series of articles with relates to Men’s Health Week.

‘Courts and crime’ coverage was low across all outlets, except ABC Gippsland where this category was its second-biggest focus. No ‘Courts and Crime’ coverage was found at the Lakes Post. ABC Gippsland and the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator provided ongoing coverage of a high-profile murder trial of two campers in Victoria’s high country. The Snowy River Mail published only one ‘Courts and crime’ story, which was related to hunting offences.

Overall, most coverage focused on violent crimes (17), 94 per cent of which was on the Greg Lynn case (16) and crossed over with superior court stories (17). In comparison, only four non-violent crime stories were published, and only one story covered a lower court. There was no coverage of intermediate courts.

### 6.1.5 Local news results

Every article is coded against up to three story scales: whether a story 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 Gippsland	29	71	13	32	22	54	5	12
Bairnsdale Advertiser	132	89	5	3	14	10	3	2
Gippsland Times	99	84	5	4	21	18	5	4
Lakes Post	71	89	3	4	9	11	3	4
Snowy River Mail	65	82	1	4	13	17	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>

Table 36: Scale of coverage of reported stories.

Stories concerning local issues had the highest overall focus at all outlets. 85 per cent of stories were local in scale, led by the newspapers, followed by 17 per cent state, six per cent regional and four per cent national.

The four newspapers provided the highest levels of local coverage, with the Bairnsdale Advertiser and the Lakes Post providing the most local coverage (89 per cent each).

Local-scale stories were also the highest focus at the ABC, however, this outlet also provided coverage of state-scale stories, with just over half of its published articles covering this scale. Local-scale coverage was

high at ABC Gippsland (71 per cent) compared with previous samples, where the ABC tends to focus more on state and national scale stories.

Around a third of the stories published by the public broadcaster were regional in scale. The four local print outlets provided similar regional levels of coverage (between three and four per cent), mostly of the Gippsland region.

There was a low level of national coverage across all outlets (four per cent overall), with the public broadcaster providing the most national-scale coverage relative to other outlets (12 per cent)

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. The localism of each story is presented in Table 36, and each story may be simultaneously in multiple categories.

LGAs	ABC		BA		GT & MS		LP		SRM	
	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %	n	All %
East Gippsland	7	17	131	89	20	17	70	88	65	82
Wellington	1	2	2	1	66	56	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>82</b>

Table 37: Localism of coverage of reported stories.

East Gippsland Shire received the greatest coverage by far at all outlets except Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, which provided more than half of its coverage to Wellington Shire.

Lakes Post and Snowy River Mail demonstrated strong localism for East Gippsland Shire, covering neither Wellington Shire, nor any other nearby local government area. Bairnsdale Advertiser also demonstrated strong localism for East Gippsland Shire.

Only 20 per cent of ABC Gippsland’s output covered the local government areas sampled. This outlet provided some coverage to nearby areas across the Gippsland region, including Alpine Shire (8), South Gippsland Shire (5), and Latrobe City (2).

Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator additionally published 20 stories covering East Gippsland Shire. Given these results, PIJI will update the coverage areas of the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator to include East Gippsland Shire.

The ABC sample may be affecting these localism results. As we are 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.

### 6.1.6 Syndication

Content has been 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 (AAP), News Corp’s NCA Newswire or another agency, creative commons material from The Conversation or 360Info, or content from other news websites.

This may underestimate the amount of syndicated content appearing in each publication, as it is not always clear where content has originated 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 it publishes, 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 scale of the public broadcaster's news production and geographic reach - but caution should be taken with comparisons to other outlets 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 Gippsland	16	39	0	0	0	0	25	61
Bairnsdale Advertiser	15	10	0	0	0	0	133	90
Gippsland Times	0	0	0	0	0	0	118	100
Lakes Post	14	18	0	0	0	0	66	82
Snowy River Mail	14	18	0	0	0	0	65	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>87</b>

Table 38: Syndication of reported stories.

We found a mix of internal syndication results across different outlets, with moderate internal syndication at the public broadcaster, some content-sharing across the Yeates Media-owned newspapers (Bairnsdale Advertiser, Lakes Post and Snowy River Mail), and no syndication at the Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator.

Around 39 per cent of stories at ABC Gippsland originated from other ABC newsrooms from a broad mix including ABC Rural, ABC Investigation and local newsrooms both within Victoria (ABC Ballarat, ABC Goulburn Murray, ABC Radio Melbourne, ABC Shepparton, ABC Wimmera) and other states (ABC Western QLD).

At the Lakes Post and the Snowy River Mail, 18 per cent of the content was internally syndicated, with stories originating from lift-out magazines. We found syndicated content in sections such as the 'Men's Health Week' and 'The Primary Producer'. The same content was also internally syndicated at the Bairnsdale Advertiser.

On the other hand, we found no syndication at Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator, with 100 per cent of output from this outlet being original content.

No syndication from wire services or other news sources was found at any outlet sampled.

## 7 Data eligibility

The Australian News Data Project (ANDP) 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 the ANDP, 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 is 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 one of the following:

- 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](#)
- 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.

Despite sharing a common term, the community radio sector is categorised as local scale as it is regulated through its broadcast licence agreements with the Australian Communications and Media Authority and adheres to a set of professional standards.

#### 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 to reliably access radio or television news programming from outside of their broadcast areas. In almost all cases there are no public digital archives of news content available, meaning that assessments must 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, in part because it helps to identify where there may be undersupply. Content assessments are stronger evidence of this than availability alone.

### Data collection and maintenance

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

Data 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 as things change over time.

### Market changes

This project also monitors 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 collected, 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 caveats around this project are necessary to avoid misinterpretation of the data.

The first caveat is to acknowledge that the market 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 changes that have occurred. It is actively maintained by PIJ 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 do not presume to have a complete log of all changes that have occurred 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 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 appears 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 assess for every change.

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, this project does not record any information about journalism job gains and losses.

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



## 8 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.

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# [Public Interest Journalism Initiative]

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