

[Public
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Initiative]

Australian News Data Report

Quarterly issue
September 2024

Australian News Data Report: September 2024

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<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 | September 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 6: Methodology. 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 September 2024.

Feedback

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

[Australian News Data Report]

Monthly results: September 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 **Error! Reference source not found.**: 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: September 2024

As of 30 September 2024, the Australian News Index lists 1,226 print, digital, radio and television news outlets of community, local, metropolitan, state/territory or national primary coverage. Table 1 provides the breakdown of outlets according to their primary format and scale.

	Community	Local	Metro	State	National	Total
Print	62	461	7	4	12	546
Digital	7	157	5	4	49	22
Radio	0	405	0	0	1	406
Television	0	50	0	0	2	52
Total	69	1073	12	8	64	1226

Table 1: Active news outlets, 30 September 2024.

2.1.1 Market changes, September 2024

Eleven changes were observed in the reporting month.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	Back Country Bulletin	NSW	● New outlet	01/09/2024
2	The Barcoo Independent	QLD	● Outlet closed	06/09/2024
3	Dungog Chronicle	NSW	● Outlet closed	18/09/2024
4	Glen Innes Examiner	NSW	● Outlet closed	19/09/2024
5	Gloucester Advocate	NSW	● Outlet closed	18/09/2024
6	Harden Murrumburrah Express	NSW	● New print edition	19/09/2024
7	Hobart Weekend	TAS	○ Name change	27/09/2024
8	The Inverell Times	NSW	● Outlet closed	19/09/2024
9	Milton Ulladulla Times	NSW	● Outlet closed	18/09/2024
10	Moree Champion	NSW	● Outlet closed	19/09/2024
11	Tenterfield Star	NSW	● Outlet closed	19/09/2024

Table 2: Market changes, September 2024.

Back Country Bulletin¹ is a new website and dedicated app from the publisher of the Riverine Grazier, covering news in Western NSW.

The Barcoo Independent was a local newspaper covering Blackall, Queensland. It closed in September 2024, citing increasing operational costs, among other financial pressures, as their reason for closing².

In September, Australian Community Media announced the closure of a range of mastheads from across NSW. These included the Glenn Innes Examiner, Inverell Times, Moree Champion, and Tenterfield Star in northern NSW, Dungog Chronicle and Gloucester Advocate between Hunter Valley and the Barrington Coast, and Milton Ulladulla Times on the South Coast³.

The Harden Murrumburrah Express began printing a physical edition in September after being purchased from Australian Community Media by Midwest Media⁴. The Harden Murrumburrah Express has operated as a digital-first masthead since its print edition ended in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hobart Weekly News, a local newspaper which launched in January 2024, rebranded to Hobart Weekend⁵ in late September.

¹ Back Country Bulletin. <<https://backcountrybulletin.app/news-sport/news/page-1/665e9406d69e9a002936de57>>

² The Barcoo Independent. 2024. *Thank You, Blackall*. September 6. <<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1038436681622767&set=a.379014550898320>>

³ Fernandez, T & Sander, P. 2024. *Australian Community Media cuts dozens of editorial jobs from newspaper including the Canberra Times and Illawarra Mercury*. ABC News. September 4. <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-04/dozens-of-job-losses-at-regional-acm-newspapers/104309904>>

⁴ Harden Murrumburrah Express. *Your express is back*. Facebook. September 18. <<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1077228964406725&set=pb.100063588939650.-2207520000>>

⁵ Hobart Weekend. <<https://hobartweekend.com.au>>

2.1.2 Other changes to news outlet records

Seventeen 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 Adelaide Hills & Murraylands News	SA	● Increase in service and name change	22/11/2022
2	Berry Town Crier	NSW	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
3	The Blackwood Times	SA	● Outlet closed	30/06/2024
4	The Blackwood Times	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
5	Bondi View	NSW	● Outlet closed	03/01/2024
6	East Gippsland News Weekend	VIC	● New outlet	04/08/2023
7	Eastsider News	VIC	○ Corrected publication format	31/12/2018
8	Glasshouse Country & Maleny News	QLD	○ Corrected publication schedule	31/12/2018
9	The Hunter River Times	NSW	○ Corrected LGA coverage	31/12/2018
10	Melville City Herald	WA	● New outlet	01/02/2020
11	Melville City Herald North	WA	● Outlet closed	01/02/2020
12	Melville City Herald South	WA	● Outlet closed	01/02/2020
13	Moree Online News	NSW	● New outlet	22/08/2024
14	The Post (Hornsby-Kuring-gai)	NSW	● Decrease in service	01/10/2023
15	Village Voice (Inner North)	QLD	● New outlet	01/10/2020
16	Village Voice (Peninsula)	QLD	○ Name change	01/07/2023
17	Wet Tropic Times	QLD	● Decrease in service	31/01/2024

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

The Adelaide Hills News expanded its coverage area in November 2022 to include the Murraylands. The name of the masthead has also been updated to reflect this change.

Two changes this month relate to unrelated titles with the same name. The Blackwood Times (SA) was a community newspaper covering local news in Blackwood, South Australia. This title announced its closure in its final edition, published June 2024. The Blackwood Times (Vic)⁶ is a bimonthly community newspaper servicing Blackwood, Victoria. This title was added to the database.

No articles have been posted to Bondi View on the City Hub website since January 2024⁷ and the section has since been removed from the website's navigation header. Due to this Bondi View has removed from PIJ's database.

⁶ The Blackwood Times. <<https://theblackwoodtimes.com.au>>

⁷ Bondi View. City Hub. <<https://cityhub.com.au/category/bondi-view/>>

East Gippsland News Weekend⁸ is a new weekly newspaper operated by James Yeates and Sons Pty Ltd, which publishes several other newspapers in Victoria and Tasmania.

In February 2020 the Melville City Herald North and Melville City Herald South combined to become Melville City Herald.⁹

Moree Online News¹⁰ is a new local news website launched in August 2024, covering news from Moree Plains Shire.

The Post (Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai) reduced its publication schedule from fortnightly to monthly in October 2023.

My Village News became My Village News (Peninsula) in October 2020, coinciding with the launch of My Village News (Inner North). Both mastheads changed their name in July 2023 to Village Voice (Peninsula) and Village Voice (Inner North) respectively.

Wet Tropic Times reduced its publication schedule from weekly to fortnightly in January 2024.

Various corrections were also made as part of PIJ's ongoing data review:

- The Berry Town Crier's scale has been changed from local to community.
- Though Eastsider News produces a digital print edition, it appears to not produce a physical print edition. Its primary format has been corrected from Print to Digital.
- The publication schedule of Glasshouse Country & Maleny News has been corrected from monthly to weekly.
- The Hunter River Times' local government area coverage has been updated to include Muswellbrook Shire Council.

⁸ East Gippsland News Weekend. <<https://www.egnweekend.com.au>>

⁹ Fremantle Herald. <<https://www.fremantleherald.com>>

¹⁰ Moree Online News. <<https://moreeonlinenews.com.au>>

2.1.3 Changes to news entity records

Twelve entity records were updated in September.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	Altmedia Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	01/07/2024
2	Badcock, Miles	SA	○ Deleted entity	30/06/2024
3	Blackall Newspaper Group Inc	QLD	○ Deleted entity	06/09/2024
4	Blackwood Progress Association	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
5	Inner West Co Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Deleted entity	01/07/2024
6	Ipswich Media Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Linked outlet	06/03/2024
7	James Yeates and Sons Proprietary Limited	VIC	○ Linked outlet	04/08/2024
8	Regional Media Corp Pty Ltd	VIC	○ Linked outlet	18/09/2024
9	Riverine Grazier Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Linked outlet	01/09/2024
10	T.M Lynas & N.G Thwaites & Y.Z Tomanek	SA	○ Deleted entity	01/07/2024
11	Valetta Media Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Deleted entity	06/03/2024
12	Z Ouyang & W Poulos	NSW	○ Added to the database	22/08/2024

Table 4: Changes to news entity records, September 2024

Altmedia Pty Ltd is the new operating entity of City Hub Sydney and Inner West Independent following the cancellation of their former entities, T.M Lynas & N.G Thwaites & Y.Z Tomanek for City Hub Sydney and Inner West Co Pty Ltd for Inner West Independent. These cancelled entities have been removed from the database.

Badcock, Miles was the sole trader entity operating The Blackwood Times and has been removed following its outlet's closure.

Blackall Newspaper Group Inc was the entity operating The Barcoo Independent and has been deleted due to the outlet's closure.

Ipswich Media Pty Ltd, part of the Today Group, took over operations of the Lockyer & Somerset Independent from Valetta Media Pty Ltd in March 2024. Valetta Media has also been removed from the data as it no longer has any linked outlets.

James Yeates and Sons Pty Ltd has been linked to the new outlet East Gippsland News Weekend.

Regional Media Corp Pty Ltd, part of Provincial Press Group, is now the operating entity of the Harden Murrumburrah Express after it was purchased from Australian Community Media.

Riverine Grazier Pty Ltd has been linked as the entity operating the newly launched website and app Back Country Bulletin in addition to its existing outlet The Riverine Grazier.

Z Ouyang & W Poulos has been added to PIJI's data as the entity operating Moree Online News.

[Australian News Data Report]

Quarterly results: Q3 2024

3 ANDR Quarterly: News outlets

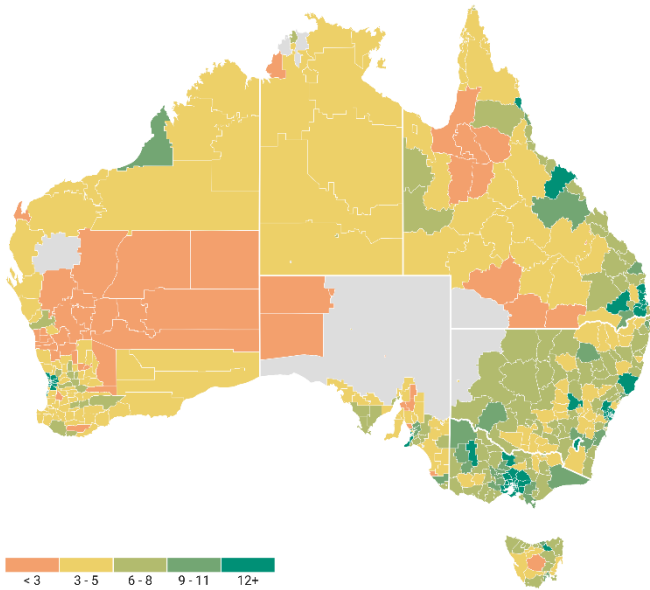


Figure 1: Count of local news producers, excluding television, by local government area, 30 September 2024.

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

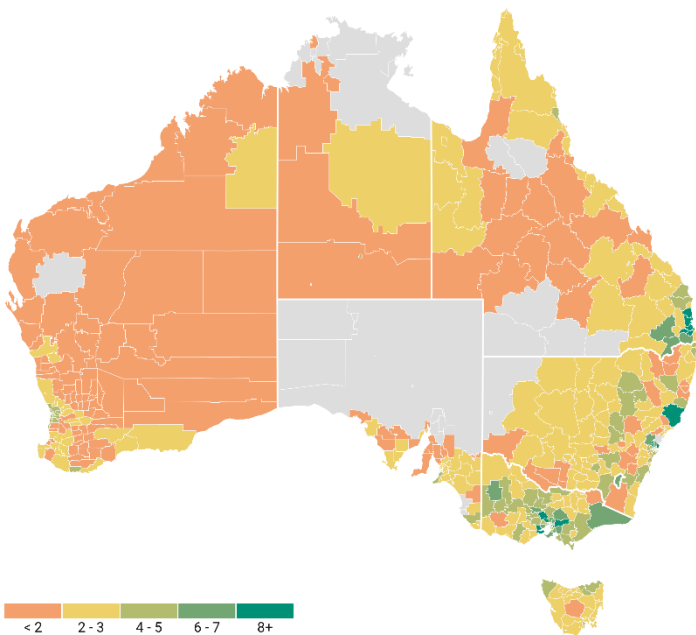


Figure 1 shows the distribution of metropolitan, local, and community-scale news producers by local government area around Australia. It includes publishers (print and digital) and radio broadcasters.

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.

The most notable changes since June 2024 relate to regional Queensland: the north west has gained the presence of the North West Weekly, while the south west lost the Warrego Watchman.

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 five areas:

- Belyuen Shire, NT
- Bulloo Shire, QLD
- Palm Island Aboriginal 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 27 areas:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, SA
- Balonne Shire, QLD
- Belyuen Shire, NT
- Broken Hill City Council, NSW
- Bulloo Shire, QLD
- Coomalie Shire, NT
- Croydon Shire, QLD
- East Arnhem Region, NT
- Etheridge Shire, QLD
- Flinders Ranges Council, SA
- Kingston, District Council of, SA
- Maralinga Tjarutja, SA
- Mount Remarkable, District Council of, SA
- Northern Areas Council, SA
- Orroroo Carrieton, District Council of, SA
- Paroo Shire, QLD
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire, QLD
- Peterborough, District Council of, SA
- Quilpie Shire, QLD
- Roxby Downs, Municipal Council of, SA
- 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

Thirteen changes have been made since this list was last reported in June 2024.

Bulloo Shire in south west Queensland has been added to both lists following the closure of the Warrego Watchman. Balonne Shire and Paroo Shire were added to the publisher list for the same reason.

Central Highlands Council and Flinders Council, both in Tasmania, have been removed from both lists following the addition of Pulse Tasmania to the data.

Mornington Shire, Carpentaria Shire, Flinders Shire, McKinlay Shire and Richmond Shire, all in Queensland, have been removed from the local publisher list following the opening of the North West Weekly.

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		Q3/24	Q3/23	Variance	Q2/24	Variance
	Outlet opened	159	139	+20	152	+7
	Newsroom opened	4	4	-	4	-
	Increase in service	6	4	+2	6	-
	New print edition	5	4	+1	4	+1
	Merger	40	35	+5	40	0
	End of print edition	98	97	+1	98	0
	Decrease in service	33	27	+6	29	+4
	Newsroom closed	4	4	-	4	0
	Outlet closed	183	156	+27	171	+12
Total number of records		532	470	+62	508	+24

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		Q3/24	Q3/23	Variance	Q2/24	Variance
	Expansions	174	151	+23	166	+8
	Contractions	358	319	+39	342	+16
Net change		(-184)	(-168)	(-16)	(-176)	(-8)

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.

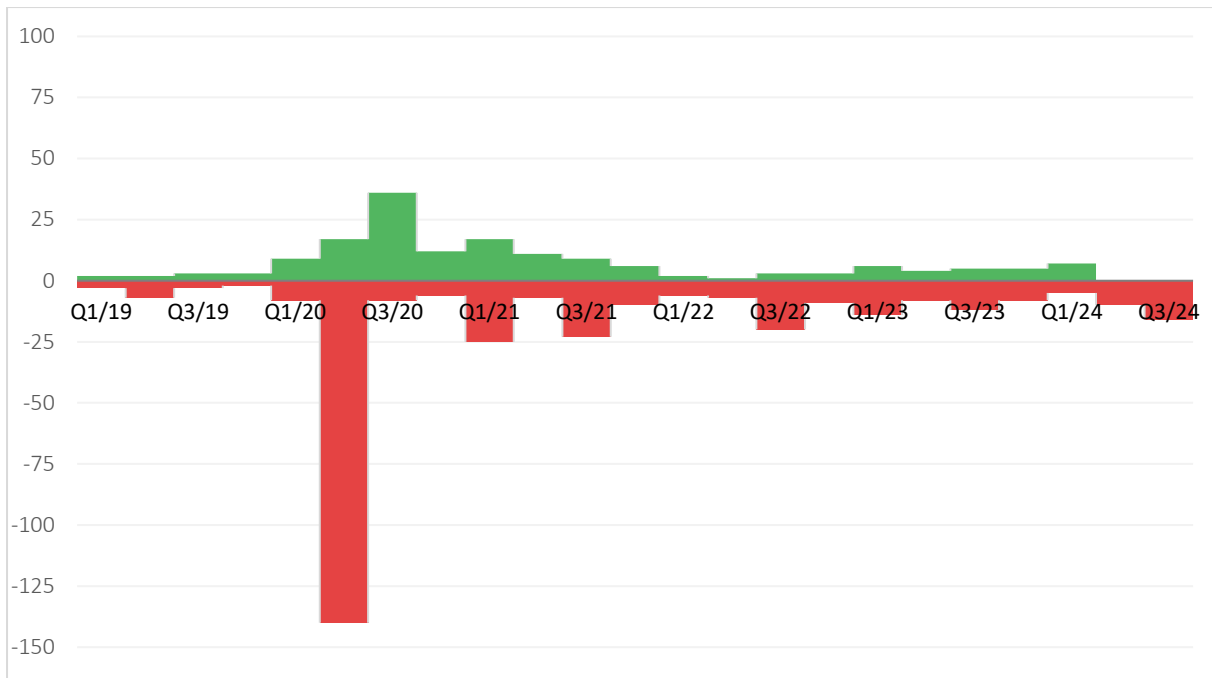


Figure 3: Change types by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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.

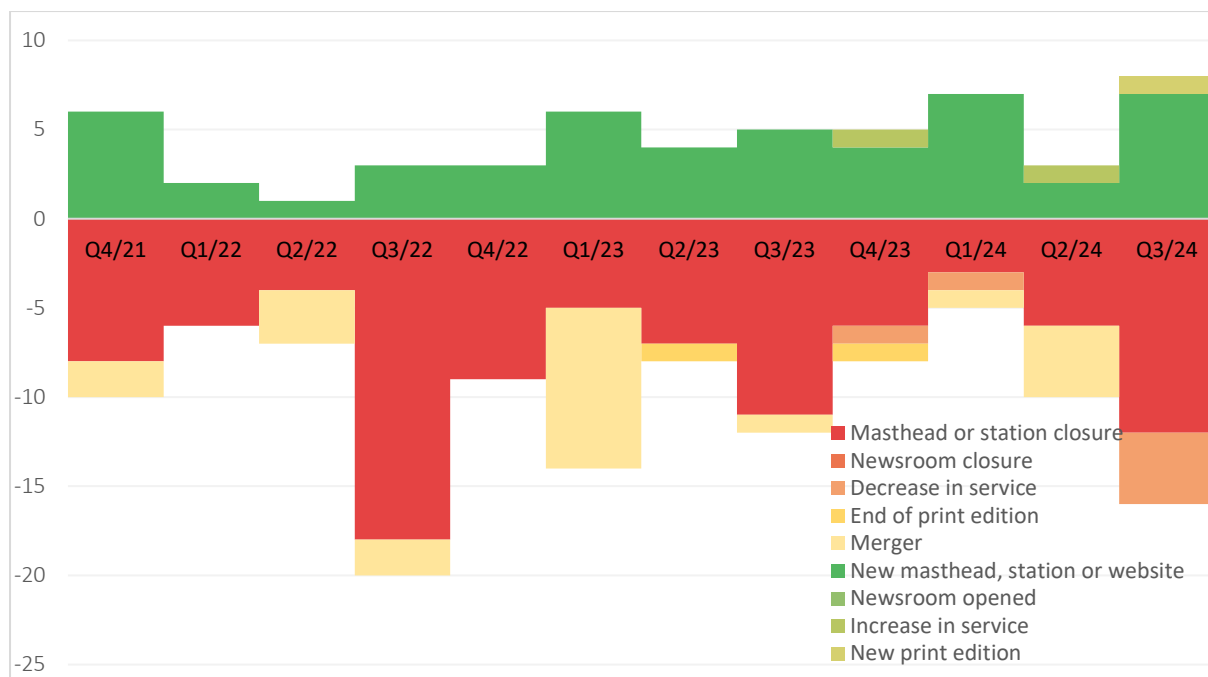


Figure 4: Change types by quarter, three years ending 30 September 2024.

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.¹¹
- Also in Q3/21, further Australian Community Media newspapers were recorded as ‘Decrease in service’ following reductions to their publishing schedules.¹²
- 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.¹³
- 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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 since 1 January 2019.

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 157 expansions compared to 229 contractions since January 2019, a negative variance of -72. This position has worsened significantly since the previous quarter, where the negative variance was -47.

Isolating the data further to only the outlets that have opened or closed since 1 January 2019 shows a negative variance of -23. This is a decline over the previous quarter, where the negative variance was -18.

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 Structure¹⁴ to make this determination, which allocates local government areas to one of five categories¹⁵ 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’.

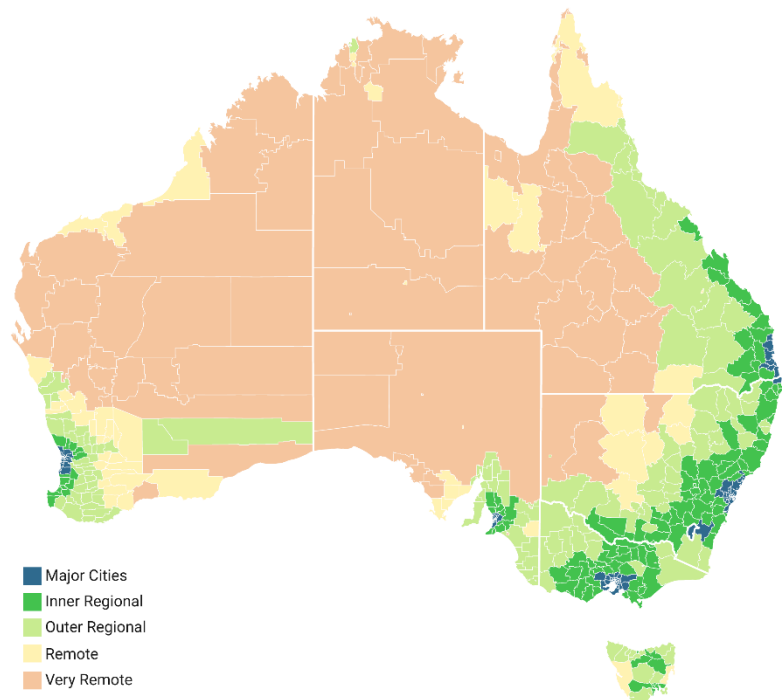


Figure 6: Distribution of remoteness areas by local government area.

¹⁴ 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>>

¹⁵ ‘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	63	69	29	7	5	110	173
Contractions	151	123	67	10	7	207	358
Total change	214	192	96	17	12	317	531
Net change	(-88)	(-54)	(-38)	(-3)	(-2)	(-97)	(-185)

Table 8: Net change by remoteness and region since 1 January 2019.

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, 58 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 (98 outlets, 62 per cent); though this is outweighed by the number of closures (122 outlets).

The nature of changes experienced in metropolitan and regional areas is also different. Of contractions in 'Major Cities', 45 per cent (69) 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 (59 per cent of regional contractions) or decrease their level of service by cutting frequencies or output (14 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	60	63	26	6	3	98	158
Newsroom opened	2	0	2	0	0	2	4
Increase in service	0	3	1	1	1	6	6
New print edition	1	3	0	0	1	4	5
Merger	17	9	12	1	1	23	40
End of print edition	69	18	7	2	2	29	98
Decrease in service	3	19	10	1	0	30	33
Newsroom closure	1	3	0	0	0	3	4
Masthead or station closure	61	74	38	6	4	122	183
Total number of records	214	192	96	17	12	317	531

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



Figure 7: Change types by remoteness and region since 1 January 2019.

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 -17 variance in outlets and service, while regional areas end the current quarter with a -56 variance since 1 January 2019. The position in Major Cities remains the same since the end of the previous quarter, while in the regions it has declined from -48.

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.

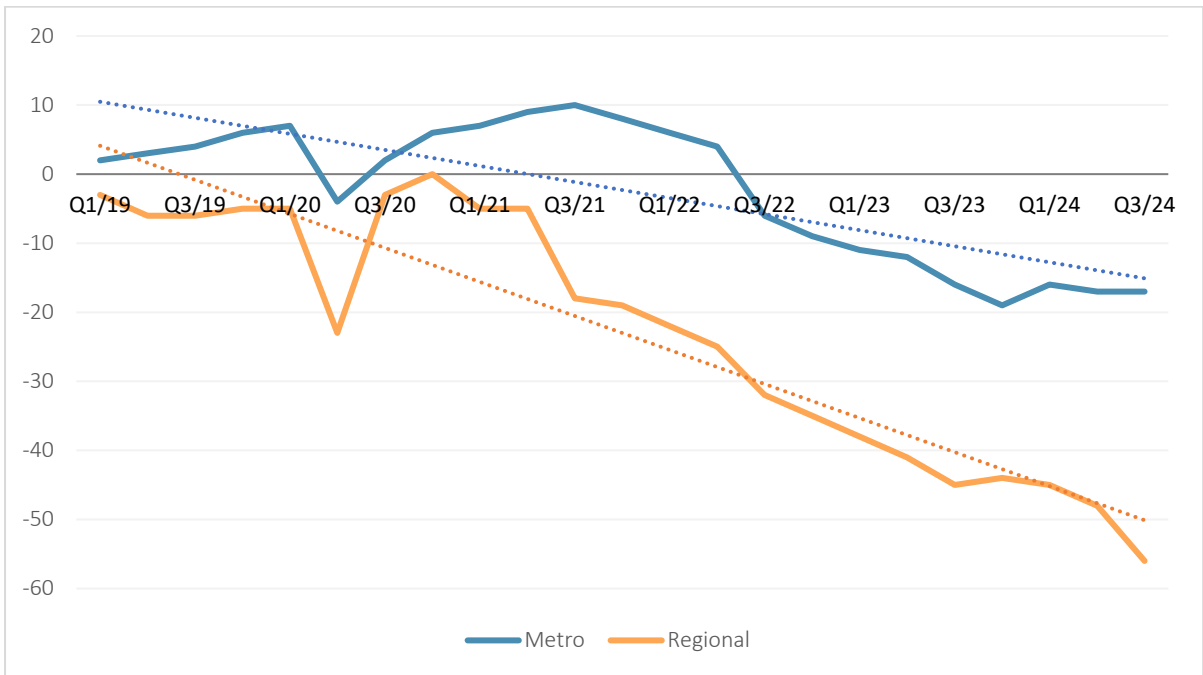


Figure 8: Net change in news production by region since 1 January 2019.

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, PIJ 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 **Error! Reference source not found.**: Data eligibility.

4.1.2 Results

As of 30 September 2024, the Australian News Index lists 679 news entities which operate 1,226 print, digital, radio and television news outlets. This is a decrease in the number of recorded news entities, down from 681 in June 2024, a negative variance of two. 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 PIJ’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 (530, 78 per cent) only operate a single news outlet.

News outlet holdings	Subtotal	%
One outlet holding	530	78
Two outlet holdings	82	12
Three outlet holdings	25	4
Four outlet holdings	11	2
Five outlet holdings	10	2
Six outlet holdings	4	1
Seven or more outlet holdings	17	3
Total	679	100

The changes to news outlet holdings since June 2024 were relatively minor. There was a decrease of five entities with one outlet holding, two with four holdings, and an increase of two entities with two holdings and one with five and six holdings.

There are 17 business entities that are linked to seven or more outlets, up one from June 2024. The number of outlets operated by this category has a very large range: between seven and 53 per news entity. This range has narrowed in prior quarterly reports (June, March 2024, December 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 **Error! Reference source not found.**: Data eligibility.

Entity Type	Subtotal	%
Australian private company	375	55
Other incorporated entity	172	25
Australian public company	28	4
Individual/sole trader	26	4
Discretionary trading trust	24	4
Other unincorporated entity	19	3
Co-operative	13	2
Other	22	3
Total	679	100

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

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 no change since June 2024, and by far the largest category within the data. Since June 2024 there was a decrease of one entity in the 'Other

incorporated entity' type and four in the 'Individual/sole trader' entity type, falling below the 'Australian public company' which increased by one entity alongside the 'Other incorporated entity' and 'Other unincorporated entity' types which also increased by one since June 2024.

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 (ABC) 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*	116	9
Southern Cross Austereo*	99	8
Australian Radio Network*	54	4
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	53	4
Australian Community Media*	49	4
Seven West Media*	45	4
Today News Group*	33	3
Star News Group*	24	2
Provincial Press Group*	20	2
Broadcast Operations Group*	18	1
Nine Entertainment Co.*	18	1
Ace Radio Broadcasters*	18	1
WIN Network*	16	1
Times News Group*	14	1
McPherson Media Group*	11	1
Nova Entertainment*	10	1
Vision Australia	9	1
Joint Venture duplicate entities ¹⁶	-6	-0
Subtotal for entities with > 8 holdings	601	49
Outlets held by all other entities	625	51
Total	1226	100

Table 12: Parent entities according to their outlet holdings, 30 September 2024

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 because PIJl 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 601, or 49 per cent, of the total outlets in Australia at 30 September 2024. This has decreased from June 2024 (608 outlets, 50 per cent).

The top five news entities collectively operate 371 outlets, or 30 per cent of the total outlets. This is down 14 outlets since June 2024.

The biggest change this quarter is the decreased Australian Community Media outlet holdings, down 15 outlets from 64 in June 2024. ACM has seen a range of closures and mergers in the last three months and has fallen from third to fifth most outlet holdings.

Other changes to Table 12 since June 2024 include one additional outlet linked to News Corp Australia

due to PIJl's data review; Today News Group's holding up one after their acquisition of The Lockyer and Somerset Independent; Provincial Press Group up one after acquiring the Harden Murrumburrah Express; and Times News Group up five outlet holdings due to multiple outlets being linked in PIJl's data, including The Moorabool News after its purchase from Ballan News Pty Ltd.

PIJl 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 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.

¹⁶ 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, PIJl has deducted them from the total number of outlets in this table.

Table 12 shows joint venture entities (see footnote 16 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, PIJI has not included the percentage of interest that each parent entity holds within these joint ventures.

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

News Corp Australia operates the largest number of outlets, with 116, around nine per cent of outlets in the database.

ABC Local radio newsrooms appear individually in PIJI'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 PIJI'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 (64), only about five per cent of the total outlets. Five entities are listed as operating more than one national scale outlet, while a further 50 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	22
Outlets held by all other entities	50	78
Total	64	100

The total number of national outlet holdings has increased from 62 in June 2024 due to the inclusion of About Time and The National Indigenous Business News.

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.

5 ANDR Quarterly: states and territories

The following tables show outlets and entities by state or territory at the end of the September 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	5	0	4	0	4	42	14	69
Local	15	349	25	209	81	47	234	113	1073
Metropolitan	0	2	0	3	2	0	2	3	12
State/territory	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	0	8
Subtotal	15	358	25	217	83	53	281	130	1162
National									64
Total									1226

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

Change category	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
Expansions	1	57	3	46	14	5	40	7	173
Contractions	1	147	1	97	23	2	71	16	358
Total change	2	204	4	143	37	7	111	23	531
Net change	0	(-90)	2	(-51)	(-9)	3	(-31)	(-9)	(-185)

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

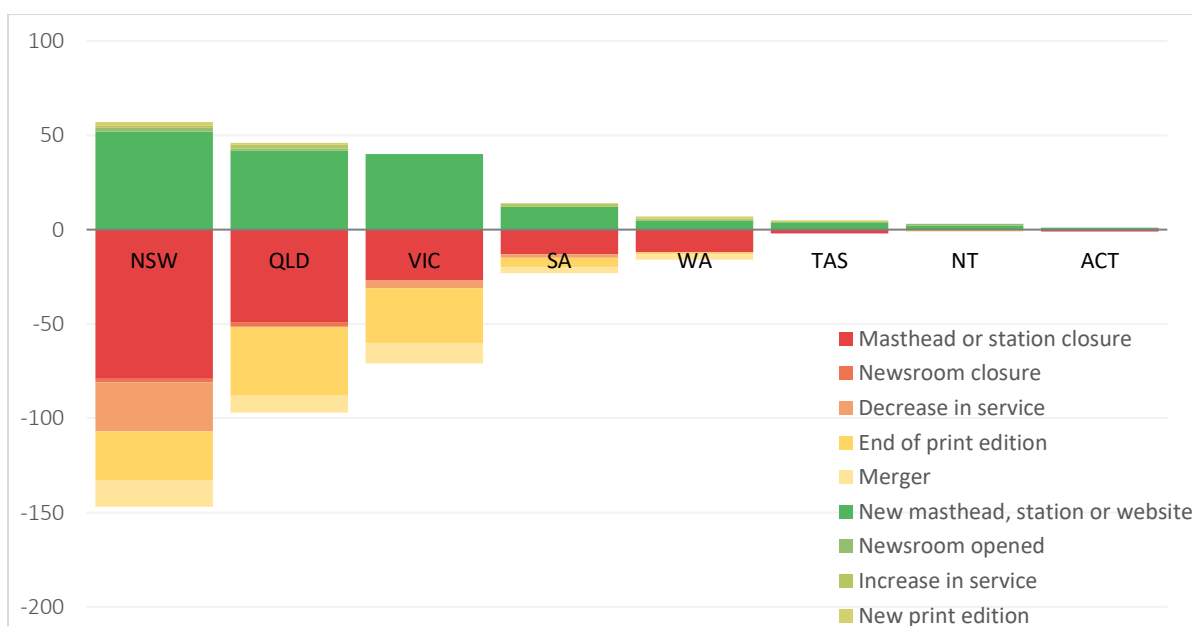


Figure 9: Change types by state or territory since 1 January 2019.

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	7	0	0	7
Television	0	1	0	0	1
Total	0	15	0	0	16

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

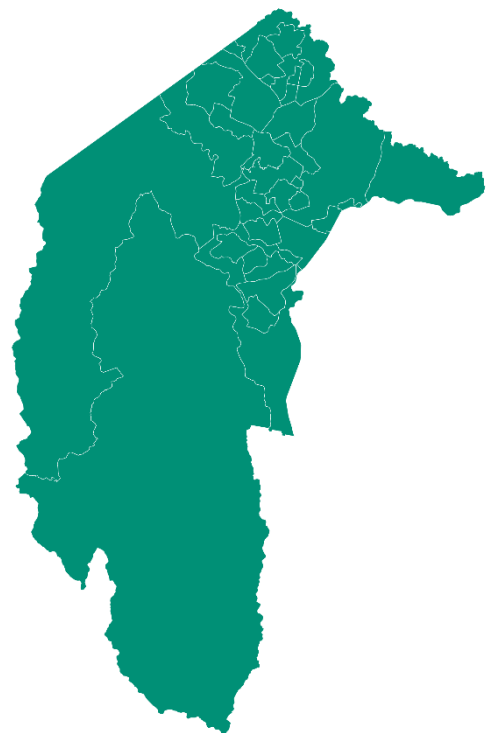
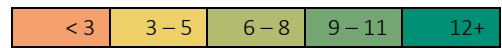
▼ Figure 10: Count of local news producers in the Australian Capital Territory, excluding television, 30 September 2024.

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

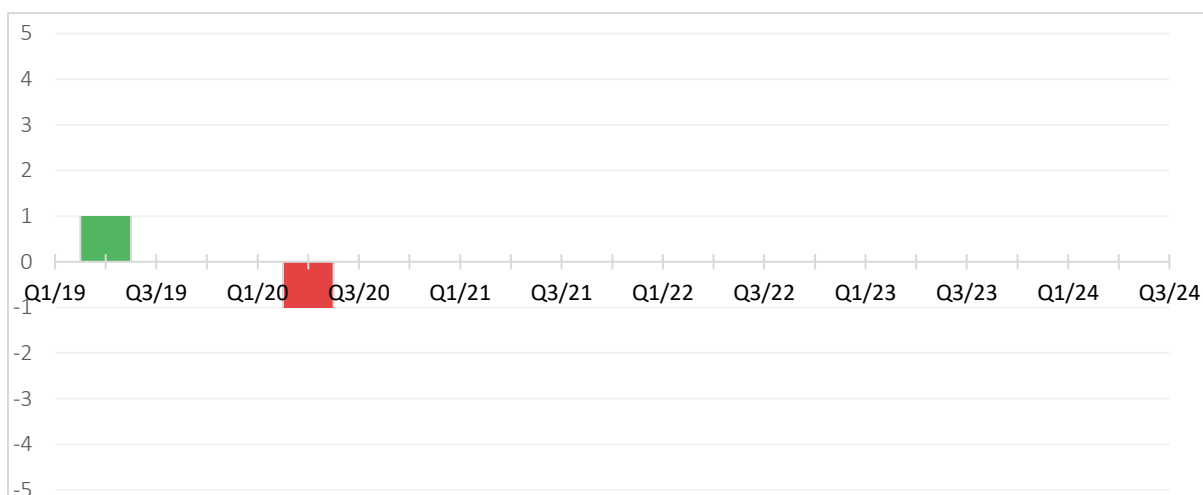


Figure 11: Change categories in the Australian Capital Territory by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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
Southern Cross Austereo*	3	20
Australian Radio Network*	2	13
Capital Radio Network*	2	13
Region Group	2	13
Joint Ventures	-2	-13
Subtotal for entities with > 1 news outlet	7	47
Outlets held by all other entities	8	53
Total	15	100

Table 17: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in the Australian Capital Territory, 30 September 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 15 local outlets, or around one per cent of the total outlets across the country. This is down one from June 2024 due to one radio outlet being incorrectly recorded as operating in the ACT.

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 seven radio news outlets in the ACT, or two per cent of the national total. Southern Cross Austereo has the largest holdings, with Capital Radio Network and Australian Radio Network each operating two stations. Both outlets held by Australian Radio Network are operated as a joint venture with Southern Cross Austereo.

5.1.2 New South Wales

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	5	145	2	1	153
Digital	0	64	0	1	65
Radio	0	128	0	0	128
Television	0	12	0	0	12
Total	5	349	2	2	358

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

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

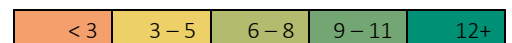
News production in New South Wales is heavily centred in coastal areas, particularly from Bega Valley on the Victorian border north through the Illawarra, Sydney and Central Coast to Port Macquarie-Hastings and the Hunter Valley. Smaller hubs of production exist particularly in Young and Lismore and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

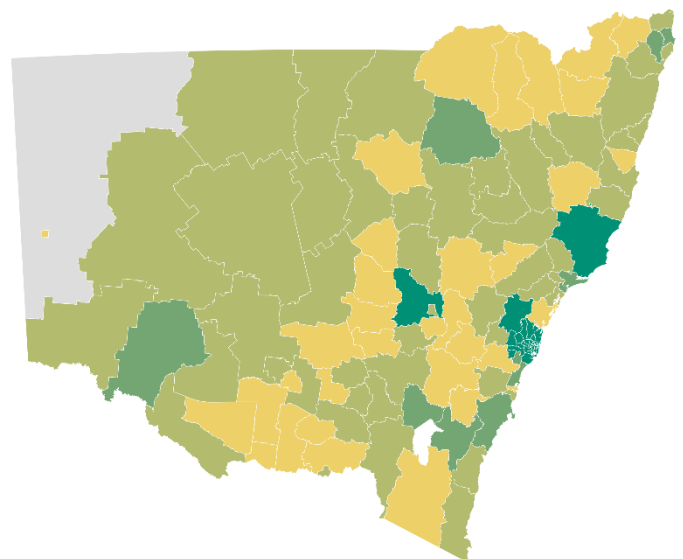
News outlet presence is thinner in the Snowy Monaro, parts of the Central West and the Riverina, and northern parts of the state.



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.



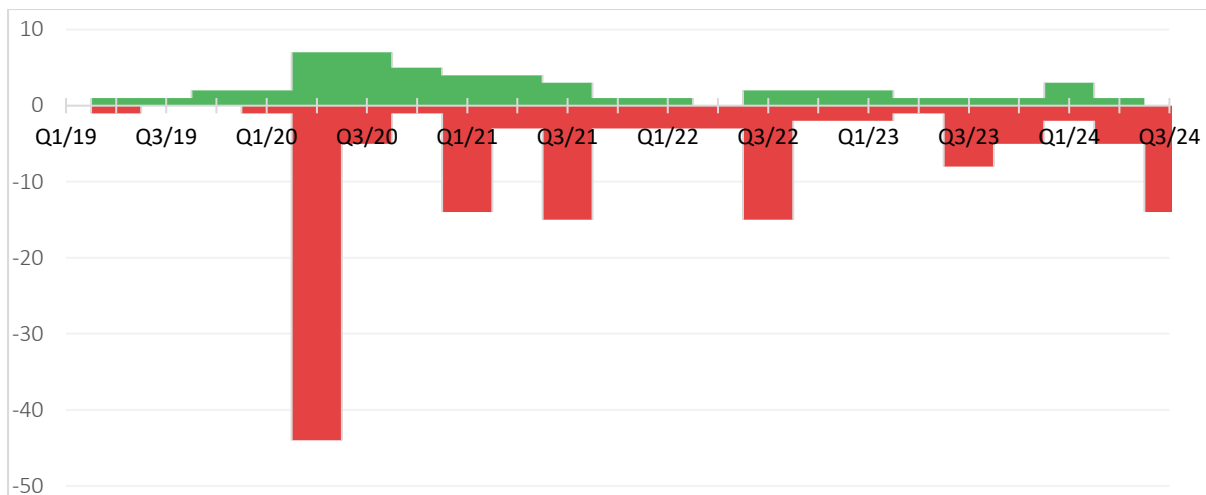


Figure 13: Changes in New South Wales by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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*	36	10
News Corp Australia*	36	10
Southern Cross Austereo*	20	6
Broadcast Operations Group*	17	5
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	14	4
Provincial Press Group*	14	4
Subtotal for entities with > 12 news outlets	137	38
Outlets held by all other entities	221	62
Total	358	100

Table 19: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in New South Wales, 30 September 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 358 or about 29 per cent of the total national outlets. New South Wales outlet holdings were down eight this quarter from 366 in June 2024.

Six news entities collectively operate 137 outlets, or 38 per cent of all outlets in NSW. The most significant change since June 2024 is the decrease in Australian Community Media's outlet holdings, down 15 from 51. Since June ACM has seen 12 outlet

closures, four mergers, and sold one NSW masthead, the Harden Murrumburrah Express, to Provincial Press Group. Due to this Provincial Press Group's holdings have increased by one outlet.

Combined, Australian Community Media and News Corp Australia collectively operate 20 per cent of total NSW outlets, or 72 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 September 2024.

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

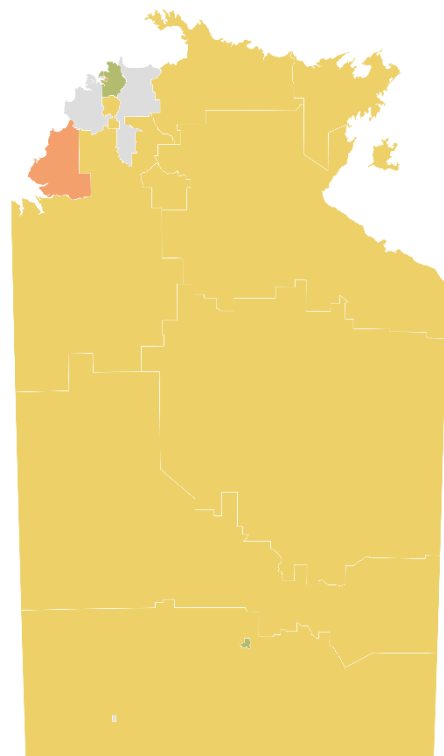
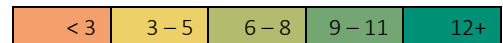
There are few digital/print news producers in the Northern Territory. News is produced out of Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek by News Corp, Australian Community Media, Today Group and independents the Tennant & District Times and NT Independent.

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.

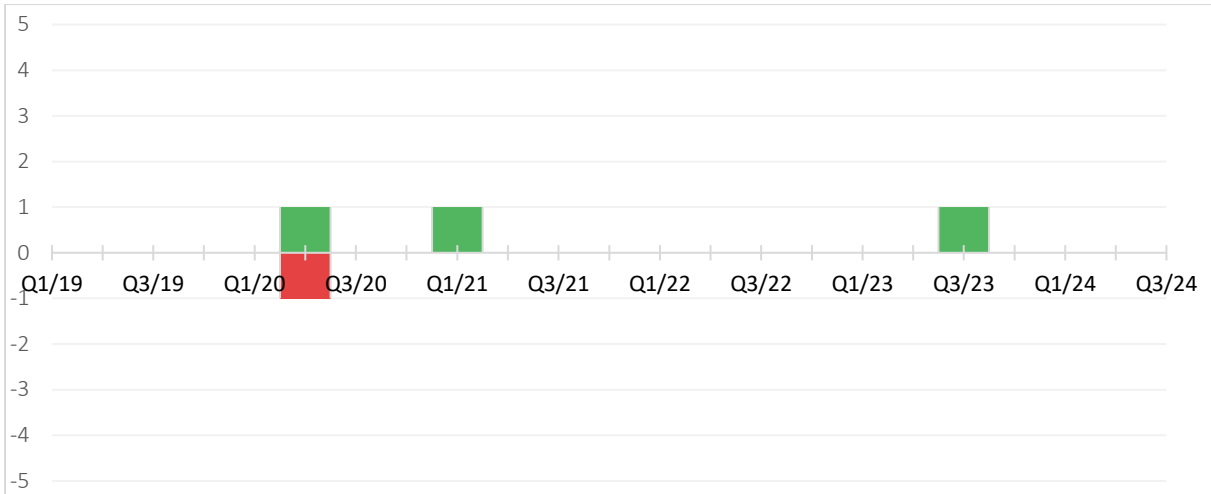


Figure 15: Change categories in the Northern Territory by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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
Subtotal for entities with > 1 news outlet	9	36
Outlets held by all other entities	16	64
Total	25	100

Table 21: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in the Northern Territory, 30 September 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 national outlets, unchanged since June 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	81	1	1	86
Digital	1	42	2	0	45
Radio	0	80	0	0	80
Television	0	6	0	0	6
Total	4	209	3	1	217

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

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

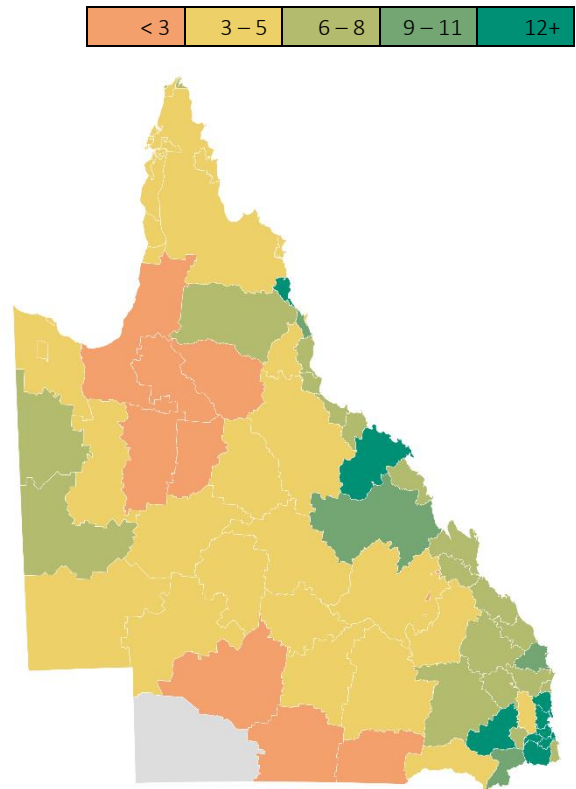
Independent outlets in Brisbane include the Bayside Weekly News, The Local Bulletin in the western suburbs, and the Everton Echo. There are particular concentrations in the south-east and Whitsunday Region, with smaller news production hubs around Cairns, Hervey Bay and Dalby.

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

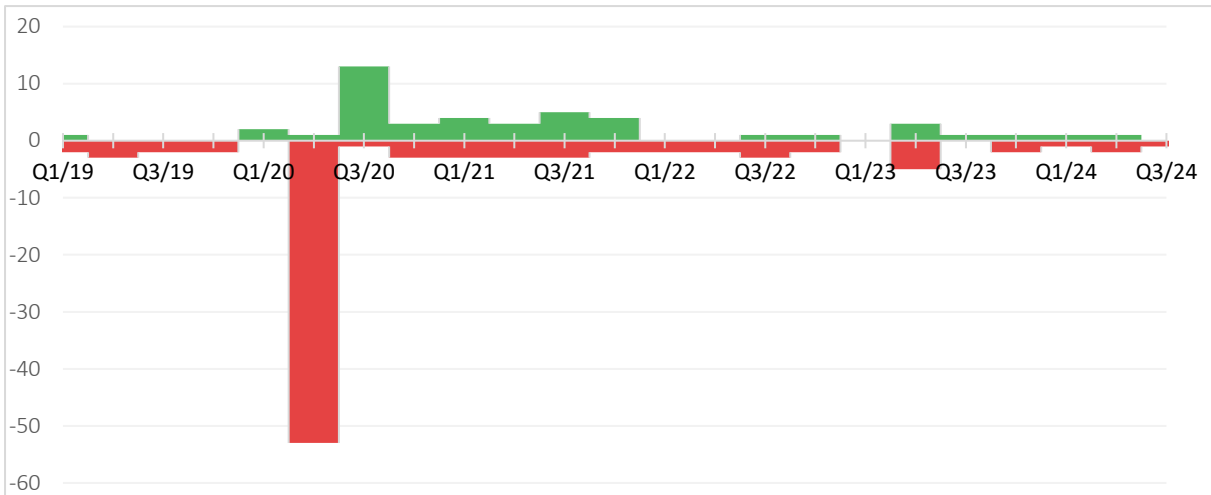


Figure 17: Change categories in Queensland by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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 Caller has since also closed.

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. Independent local newspaper the North West Weekly also operates out of Mount Isa, following the owner's sale of the Cape York Weekly to Canberra-based Region Group in 2023.

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
Subtotal for entities with > 7 news outlets	107	49
Outlets held by all other entities	110	51
Total	217	100

Table 23: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in Queensland, 30 September 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 (15 per cent of total national outlets), unchanged from June 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	0	26	1	0	27
Digital	0	13	1	0	14
Radio	0	33	0	0	33
Television	0	9	0	0	9
Total	0	81	2	0	83

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

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

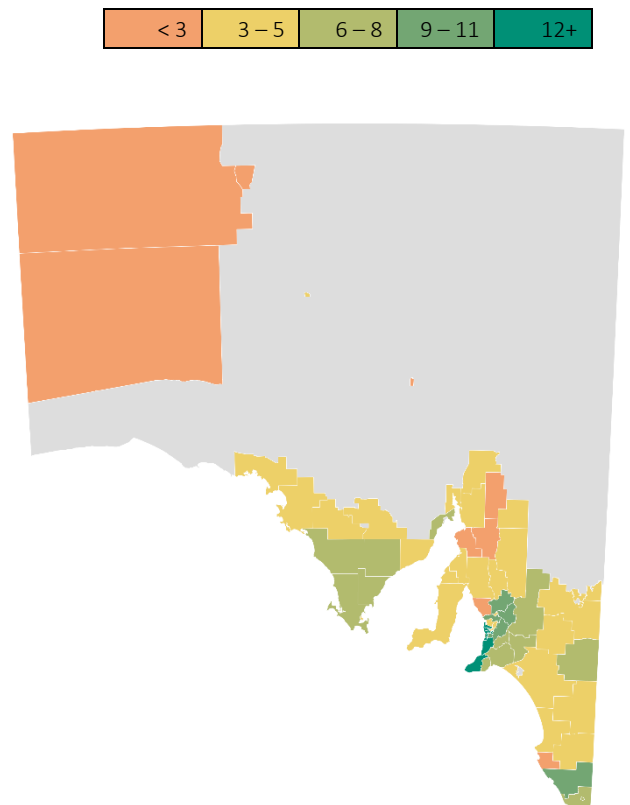
The Today News Group has emerged as a major player in the state in the June 2023 quarter. It revived the Border Watch, South-Eastern Times and Penola Pennant in 2020, and subsequently purchased 11 titles from Australian Community Media in April 2023. It also purchased four titles from Papers and Publications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

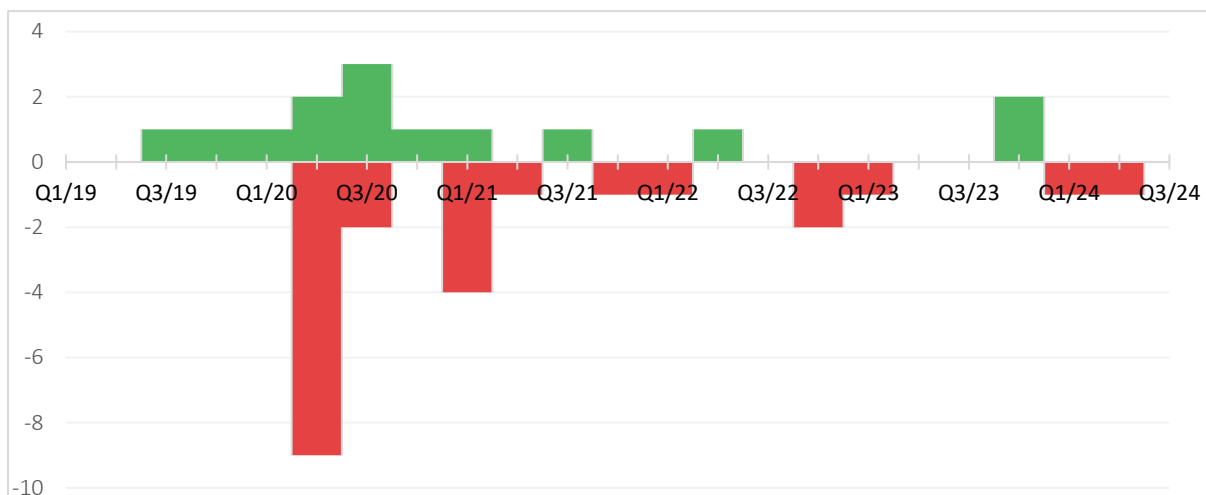


Figure 18: Change categories in South Australia by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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*	4	5
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	4	5
Subtotal for entities with > 3 news outlets	43	52
Outlets held by all other entities	40	48
Total	83	100

Table 25: Parent entities with the largest number of outlet holdings in South Australia, 30 September 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 83 outlets, or seven per cent of the total outlets across the country. News entities listed in this table hold 43 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 June 2024.

News Corp Australia holds the second highest number of outlets

5.1.6 Tasmania

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	4	21	0	1	26
Digital	0	5	0	1	6
Radio	0	18	0	0	18
Television	0	3	0	0	3
Total	4	47	0	2	53

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

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

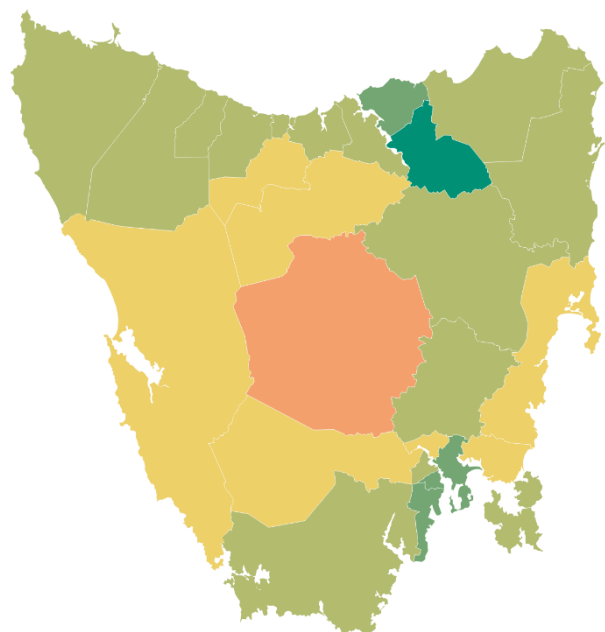
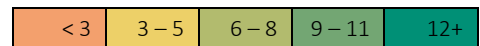
A significant presence in Tasmanian news media is Font Publishing, which has purchased multiple local outlets over the past few years, including Tasmanian Country, Derwent Valley Gazette, Sorrell Times and others.

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 BridREport.

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.

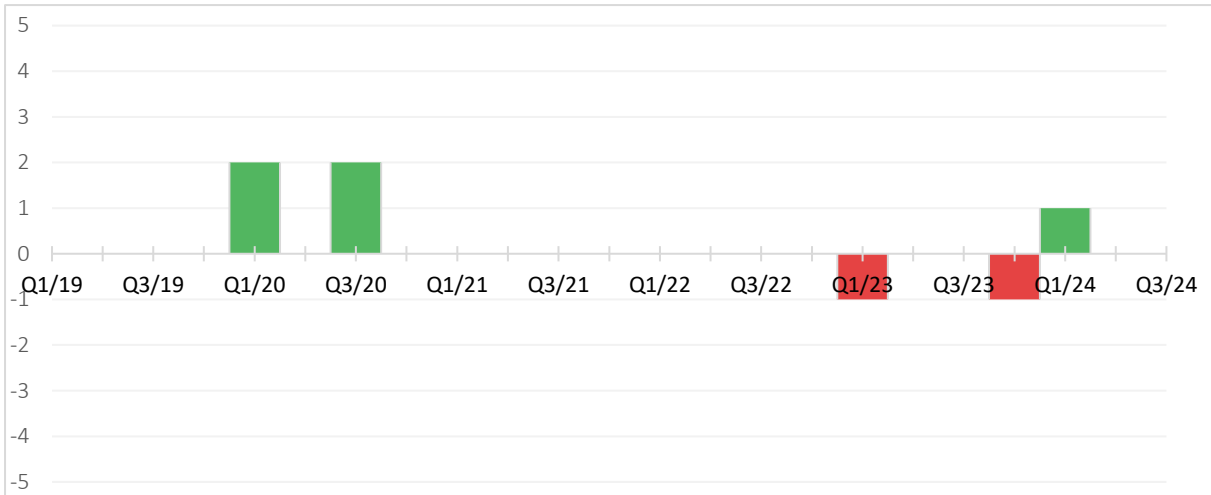


Figure 20: Change categories in Tasmania by quarter since 1 January 2019.

5.1.6.2 Entities in Tasmania

News entity	Outlet holdings in TAS	% total outlets in TAS
Australian Radio Network*	10	19
Font Publishing	7	13
Southern Cross Austereo*	4	8
News Corp Australia*	3	6
Corporate Communications (Tas.)	3	6
Huon Newspaper Company	3	6
Subtotal for entities with > 2 news outlets	30	57
Outlets held by all other entities	23	43
Total	53	100

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

Table 27 shows the entities in Tasmania which operate more than two outlets.

There are 53 outlets in Tasmania, or four per cent of the total outlets across the country, up two from June 2024. News entities listed in this table hold 30 outlets or 57 per cent of total outlets in Tasmania.

Australian Radio Network operates the largest number of news outlets in the state, with 10 outlets or 19 per cent of the total in Tasmania. Font Publishing continues to have a significant presence in Tasmania, operating seven outlets, or 13 per cent.

Tasmania, or four per cent of the national total. Australian Radio Network alone operates 10 radio news outlets, or 56 per cent of the total in Tasmania.

There are 18 radio news outlets in

5.1.7 Victoria

	Community	Local	Metro	State	Total
Print	37	129	2	1	169
Digital	5	24	0	2	31
Radio	0	73	0	0	73
Television	0	8	0	0	8
Total	42	234	2	3	281

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

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

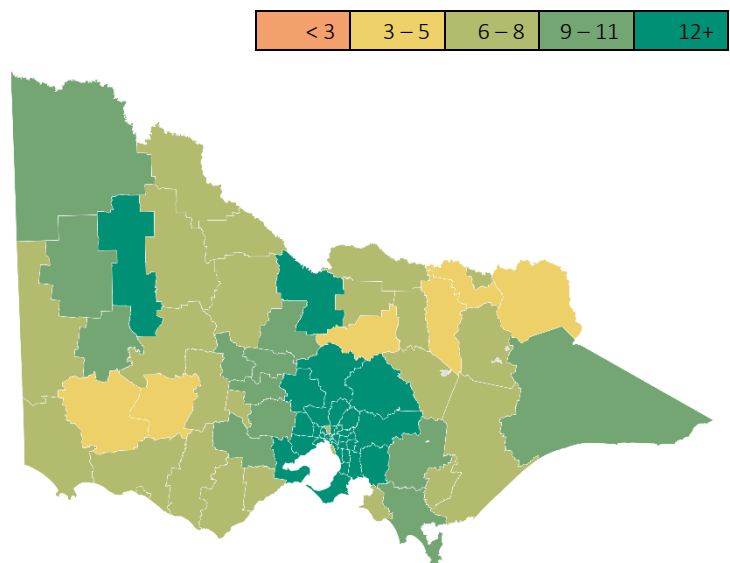
Star News Group publishes 18 papers in Melbourne’s suburbs and surrounds, and two in Geelong. The Local Paper also exists across Melbourne city, though with a smaller reporting footprint. Hyperlocal News publishes five titles within the City of Melbourne.

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

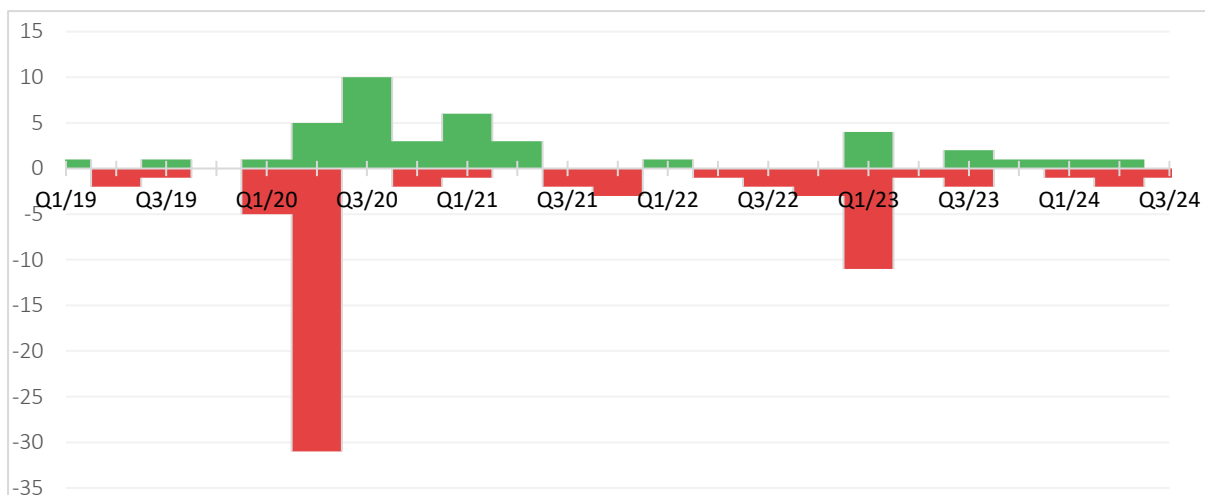


Figure 22: Change categories in Victoria by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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*	18	6
Ace Radio Broadcasters*	15	5
Southern Cross Austereo*	10	4
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	9	3
Times News Group*	9	3
McPherson Newspapers*	8	3
Subtotal for entities with > 7 news outlets	89	32
Outlets held by all other entities	192	68
Total	281	100

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

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

Victoria has 281 associated outlets or 23 per cent of the total national outlets, up 12 from June 2024, the largest change of any state or territory this quarter. The listed seven news entities operate 89 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.

Times News Group's outlet holdings increased by one since June 2024, the only change among the listed entities.

Star News Group, which has the highest outlet holding in Victoria with 20 outlets or seven per cent of total Victorian 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	51	1	0	65
Digital	1	3	2	0	6
Radio	0	53	0	0	53
Television	0	6	0	0	6
Total	14	113	3	0	130

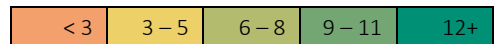
◀ Table 30: News producers in Western Australia, 30 September 2024.

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

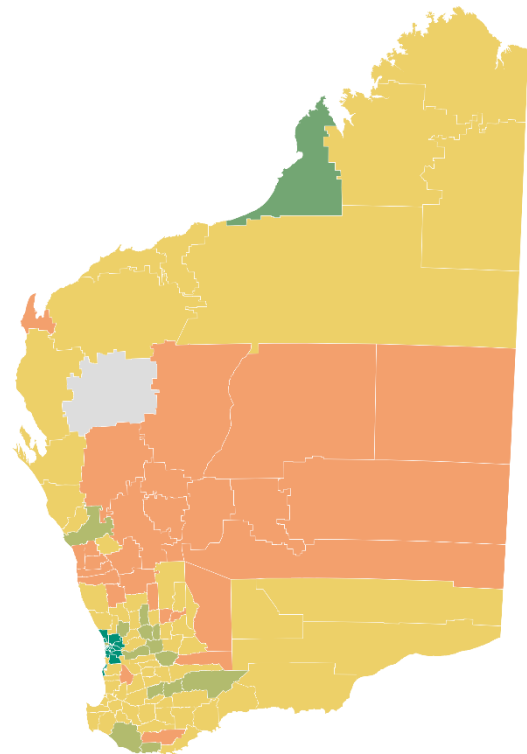
The only local government area not included in SWM’s coverage is the Shire of Upper Gascoyne. PIJ could not identify regular coverage of Gascoyne Junction in a 2024 audit. The Midwest Times, based in Geraldton, appears to publish an average of one story each year, while ABC Pilbara also provides a small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

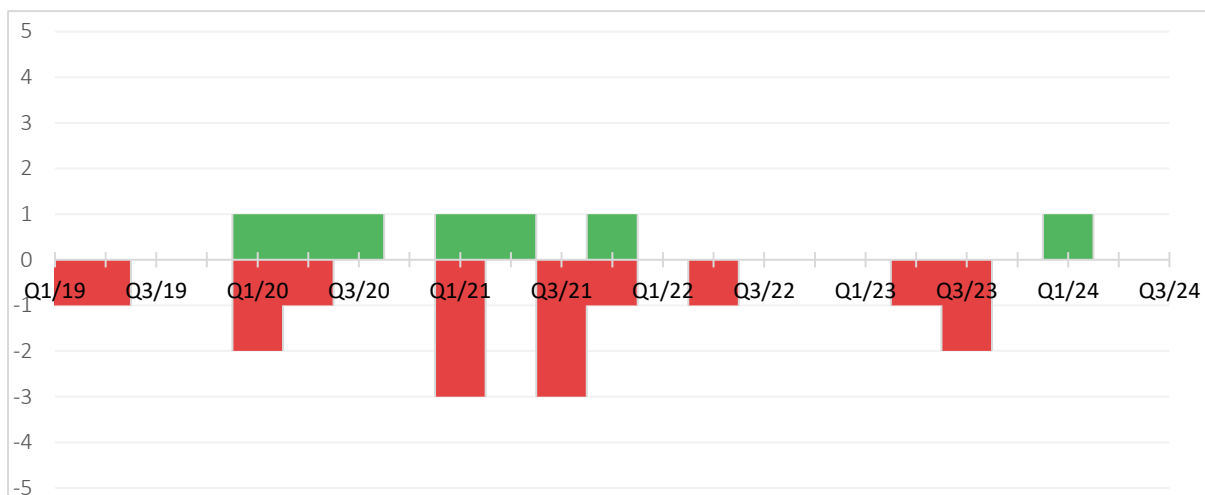


Figure 24: Change categories in Western Australia by quarter since 1 January 2019.

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-focused 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	4	3
Subtotal for entities with > 4 news outlets	75	58
Outlets held by all other entities	55	42
Total	130	100

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

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

Western Australia has 130 associated outlets or 11 per cent of total outlets across Australia, down one outlet from June 2024. The four listed news entities operate 75 outlets or 58 per cent of total outlets in WA.

The Herald Publishing Company is down one outlet holding since June 2024 after PIJ recorded the merger of its Melville City Herald North and Melville City Herald South

mastheads into the single Melville City Herald outlet.

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

6 Methodology

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.

7 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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