

[Public  
Interest  
Journalism  
Initiative]

# Australian News Data Report

Monthly issue  
November 2024

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

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

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

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# AUSTRALIAN NEWS DATA REPORT

Monthly issue | November 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 3: 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 results as at 30 November 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](mailto:research@piji.com.au).

# [ Australian News Data Report ]

Monthly results: November 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: November 2024

As of 30 November 2024, the Australian News Index lists 1,228 print, digital, radio and television news outlets of community, local, metropolitan, state/territory or national primary coverage. Table 1 provides the breakdown of outlets according to their primary format and scale.

	Community	Local	Metro	State	National	Total
<b>Print</b>	74	456	7	5	12	<b>553</b>
<b>Digital</b>	8	154	5	3	48	<b>218</b>
<b>Radio</b>	0	404	0	0	1	<b>405</b>
<b>Television</b>	0	50	0	0	2	<b>52</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1228</b>

Table 1: Active news outlets, 30 November 2024.

### 2.1.1 Market changes, November 2024

Three changes were observed in the reporting month.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	Circular Head Chronicle	TAS	● Outlet closed	12/11/2024
2	Hinchinbrook Life	QLD	● New outlet	26/11/2024
3	The North Shore Lorikeet	NSW	● New outlet	27/11/2024

Table 2: Market changes, November 2024.

The Circular Head Chronicle was a weekly newspaper covering Circular Head Council in Tasmania’s north-west. Its closure was announced in November 2024 after 118 years in operation<sup>1</sup>.

Hinchinbrook Life is a new weekly newspaper operating in North Queensland, launched in November 2024<sup>2</sup>. The outlet’s operating entity, Core Publishing and Events Pty Ltd, also publishes Mackay and Whitsunday Life.

The North Shore Lorikeet<sup>3</sup> is a new local news website launched in November 2024. It covers local news from across the Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Hunters Hill, Willoughby, and North Sydney local government areas in Sydney’s North Shore. It is the second outlet from new publisher Gazette News, after The Eastern Melburnian was launched in October 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> Yeates, R D. 2024. *Thank you and goodbye*. Circular Head Chronicle. November 12. <<https://www.chchronicle.com.au/news/local-news/671-thank-you-and-goodbye>>

<sup>2</sup> Hinchinbrook Life. 2024. November 26. <<https://www.hinchinbrooklife.com/current-issue/hinchinbrook-life-news>>

<sup>3</sup> The North Shore Lorikeet. <<https://www.northshorelorikeet.com.au>>

### 2.1.2 Other changes to news outlet records

Nineteen 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	Boorowa Times	NSW	● New outlet	08/08/2024
2	The Eastern Melburnian	VIC	● New outlet	15/10/2024
3	Landsborough and District News	VIC	○ Various corrections	31/12/2018
4	Manilla Express	NSW	● Outlet reopened	04/09/2024
5	Mary Valley Voice	QLD	○ Corrected LGA coverage	31/12/2018
6	Meredith & District News	VIC	○ Corrected LGA coverage	31/12/2018
7	Mulga Mail	WA	● Outlet closed	21/06/2024
8	Pemberton Community News	WA	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
9	Peninsula Community Access News	NSW	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
10	Pittwater Online News	NSW	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
11	Pyramid Press	VIC	○ Name change	03/03/2022
12	Queenscliffe Herald	VIC	● Outlet closed	30/06/2023
13	Riddell Roundup	VIC	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
14	The Rural	NSW	○ Various corrections	31/12/2018
15	Tarrangower Times	VIC	○ Corrected primary format	31/12/2018
16	Torres News	NT	○ Corrected LGA coverage	31/12/2018
17	Triple M 94.1 Port Hedland	WA	○ Corrected name	31/12/2018
18	Valley and East Coast Voice	TAS	○ Corrected scale	31/12/2018
19	Young News	NSW	● New outlet	15/08/2024

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

Boorowa Times<sup>4</sup> and Young News<sup>5</sup> are local newspapers launched in August 2024, covering Boorowa and Young respectively, both in Hilltops Council. These outlets are both operated by Merino Media Pty Ltd.

The Eastern Melburnian<sup>6</sup> is a new local news website which began publishing in October 2024, covering the Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, and Whitehorse local government areas in Melbourne's east. It is

<sup>4</sup> Boorowa Times. 2024. August 10. Facebook.

<<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=473179552141827&set=pb.100083493585966.-2207520000>>

<sup>5</sup> Young News. 2024. August 15. Facebook. <<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=888896863274119&set=pb.100064614405081.-2207520000>>

<sup>6</sup> The Eastern Melburnian. <<https://www.easternmelburnian.com.au>>



the first outlet from Gazette News, a new publisher which also launched The North Shore Lorikeet in November 2024.

Manilla Express reopened in September 2024<sup>7</sup>, almost a year after closing in October 2023, under new owner/editor Monica Nash.

Mulga Mail was a monthly newspaper published in Geraldton, and the only Aboriginal newspaper in Western Australia. Mulga Mail's closure was announced in June 2024<sup>8</sup>.

Pyramid Hill Press changed its name to Pyramid Press in March 2022<sup>9</sup>.

Queenscliffe Herald<sup>10</sup> has not published since June 2023 and did not respond to PIJ's emails and has been marked as closed.

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

- Landsborough and District News' primary format was changed from digital to print, with newspaper publication format added and monthly publication schedule. Northern Grampians Shire was also added to LGA coverage.
- Added Gympie Regional Council to Mary Valley Voice's LGA coverage.
- Added Golden Plains Shire to and removed City of Greater Geelong from Meredith & District News' LGA coverage.
- Scale corrected from local to community for Pemberton Community News, Peninsula Community Access News, Pittwater Online News, Riddell Roundup, and Valley and East Coast Voice.
- The Rural's primary format changed from digital to print, added newspaper and digital print publication format, and added weekly publication schedule.
- Tarrangower Times' primary format was changed from digital to print.
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional added to Torres News' LGA coverage.
- Triple M 94.1 Port Hedland's name corrected from Triple M 91.7 Port Hedland.

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<sup>7</sup> Manilla Express. 2024. August 16. Facebook.

<<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1008050911329483&set=pb.100063737495646.-2207520000>>

<sup>8</sup> Ihanimo, P. 2024. *Final message ...from CEO Paul Ihanimo of Mulga Mail*. June 20. Mulga Mail.

<<https://www.facebook.com/mulgamailnewspaper/posts/pfbid02Fkubs6d2RwTWi9YYJ5HRFW7zpLHXS2wafK2YBmXKfWnNyiiZDqQFR RqCs5pPtFU4l>>

<sup>9</sup> Pyramid Press. 2024. March 3. <[https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1LTWV5\\_mox\\_p7ez2RE9fwjf1s\\_Pz5u1xu](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1LTWV5_mox_p7ez2RE9fwjf1s_Pz5u1xu)>

<sup>10</sup> Queencliffe Herald. 2024. June 1. <<https://www.queenscliffeherald.com.au/latest-editions/>>

### 2.1.3 Changes to news entity records

Seven entity records were updated in November.

#	Outlet		Description of change	Effective date
1	Core Publishing and Events Pty Ltd	QLD	○ Linked outlet	26/11/2024
2	Gazette News Operating Company Pty Limited	NSW	○ Added to the database	15/10/2024
3	Merino Media Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	08/08/2024
4	Simply Stronger Pty Ltd	NSW	○ Added to the database	04/09/2024
5	The Trustee for Swan Song Trust	VIC	○ Deleted entity	30/06/2023
6	University of Melbourne	VIC	○ Added to the database	31/12/2018
7	Yamaji Languages Aboriginal Corporation	WA	○ Deleted entity	21/06/2024

Table 4: Changes to news entity records, November 2024

Core Publishing and Events Pty Ltd is the operating entity of Hinchinbrook Life, a new newspaper in North Queensland. Core Publishing and Events also publishes Mackay and Whitsunday Life in Queensland.

Gazette News Operating Company Pty Limited launched its first outlet, The Eastern Melburnian, in October, followed by The North Shore Lorikeet in November 2024.

Merino Media Pty Ltd is the operating entity of local newspapers Boorowa Times and Young News, which both began publishing in August 2024.

Simply Stronger Pty Ltd is the new publisher of Manilla Express since it reopened in September 2024. Manilla Express was formerly owned and operated by John and Jane Martin (The Trustee for Martin Family Trust) until its closure in October 2023.

The Trustee for Swan Song Trust has been removed from the data following the closure of its outlet, Queenscliffe Herald.

University of Melbourne has been added to PIJ's database as the operating entity of national-scale news website The Citizen.

Yamaji Languages Aboriginal Corporation was the entity operating Mulga Mail and has been deleted following the outlet's closure.

### 3 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 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.

## 4 About the Public Interest Journalism Initiative

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

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

PIJI is a registered charity with tax concession charity (TCC) status. It is a philanthropically funded, non-profit company limited by guarantee (ABN 69 630 740 153) governed by a Board of independent directors, advised by an Expert Research Panel and Policy Working Group and regulated by the ACNC, ATO and ASIC.

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# [Public Interest Journalism Initiative]

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