

Australian Newsroom
Mapping Project Report :
May 2022

[Public
Interest
Journalism
Initiative]

1. About this project

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

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

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

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

- [Tracking changes in news production](#) (April 2020)
- [Local news publishers](#) (December 2021)
- [Australian News Index](#) (May 2022)
- Monthly reports (beginning February 2021, which capture updates to the data and provide quarterly analysis).

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

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

Gary Dickson
31 May 2022

1.1 Suggested citations

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

1.2 License

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2. Monthly report (May 2022)

As of 31 May 2022, the database contains 792 active print and digital news outlets.

This is a large increase from April 2022 (+58, from 734) and is due to both the changes described in this report and the addition of national and state/territory scale outlets into the data through the release of the [Australian News Index](#).

	COMMUNITY	LOCAL	METRO	STATE	NATIONAL	TOTAL
PRINT	55	498	8	3	8	572
DIGITAL	5	166	4	5	40	220
TOTAL	60	664	12	8	48	792

2.1 Outlet additions

	New masthead, station or website		Masthead, station or website closure
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#	OUTLET	LOCATION	SCALE	FORMAT
1	6 News Australia	Hawthorn, Vic	National	Digital
2	ABC News	Ultimo, NSW	National	Digital
3	The Australian	Surry Hills, NSW	National	Print
4	Australian Associated Press	Paddington, NSW	National	Digital
5	Australian Financial Review	Sydney, NSW	National	Print
6	Australian Jewish News	Elsternwick, Vic	National	Digital
7	Business Insider Australia	Surry Hills, NSW	National	Digital
8	Business News Australia	Isle of Capri, QLD	National	Digital
9	Campus Morning Mail	Bondi, NSW	National	Digital
10	Campus Review	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
11	Catalyst	Melbourne, Vic	National	Print
12	Central News	Ultimo, NSW	National	Digital
13	The Citizen	Parkville, Vic	National	Digital
14	The City Journal	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
15	The Conversation	Carlton, Vic	National	Digital
16	Crikey	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
17	Croakey	Cygnets, Tas	National	Digital

#	OUTLET	LOCATION	SCALE	FORMAT
18	Curieux	Canberra, ACT	National	Digital
19	Daily Mail Australia	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
20	Farm Online	<i>To be confirmed.</i>	National	Digital
21	Guardian Australia	Surry Hills, NSW	National	Digital
22	Independent Australia	Isle of Capri, QLD	National	Digital
23	The Junction	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
24	Junkee	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
25	The Klaxon	Byron Bay, NSW	National	Digital
26	Mamamia	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
27	The Mandarin	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
28	The Monthly	Collingwood, Vic	National	Print
29	The New Daily	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
30	New Matilda	Point Lookout, QLD	National	Digital
31	news.com.au	Surry Hills, NSW	National	Digital
32	nine.com.au	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
33	On Dit	Adelaide, SA	National	Print
34	On the Record	Adelaide, SA	National	Digital
35	Pro Bono News	Melbourne, Vic	National	Digital
36	The Saturday Paper	Collingwood, Vic	National	Print
37	SBS News Australia	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
38	The Spectator	<i>To be confirmed.</i>	National	Print
39	Star Observer	Ultimo, NSW	National	Print
40	Tharunka	Kensington, NSW	National	Digital
41	Tribune International	Silverwater, NSW	National	Digital
42	upstart	Bundoora, Vic	National	Digital
43	W'SUP	Bankstown, NSW	National	Digital
44	The Weekly Times	Southbank, Vic	National	Print
45	Women's Agenda	Sydney, NSW	National	Digital
46	Woroni	Canberra, ACT	National	Digital
47	Yahoo! News	Eveleigh, NSW	National	Digital
48	Farrago	Parkville, Vic	State	Print
49	Honi Soit	Camperdown, NSW	State	Print

#	OUTLET	LOCATION	SCALE	FORMAT
50	InDaily	Adelaide, SA	State	Digital
51	InQueensland	Brisbane, QLD	State	Digital
52	Mojo News	Caulfield, Vic	State	Digital
53	North Queensland Register	Townsville, QLD	State	Print
54	The Rural	Wagga Wagga, NSW	State	Print
55	Togatus	Hobart, Tas	State	Digital
56	Sydney Sentinel	Katoomba, NSW	Metropolitan	Digital
57	Fleurieu Sun	Victor Harbor, SA	Local	Print
58	The Wombat Post	Daylesford, Vic	Local	Print

Table 1: Outlet additions, May 2022.

2.2 Data changes

CHANGE TYPE	RECORD	#
New masthead, station or website	Fleurieu Sun, Victor Harbor, SA	3
	Sydney Sentinel, Katoomba, NSW	
	The Wombat Post, Daylesford, Vic	
Masthead or station closure	New Matilda, Point Lookout, QLD	1
TOTAL		4

Table 2: Data changes, May 2022.

Four changes were recorded in the database in May 2022.

As previewed in the April report, the *Fleurieu Sun* was launched by *Plains Producer* owner Paper & Publications on 12 May, covering the Fleurieu Peninsula and McLaren Vale, South Australia, from a newsroom in Victor Harbor.¹

Other changes are backdated to previous months.

The *Sydney Sentinel* launched in September 2020. It has a major focus on news about the arts, social policy, and health sectors; with dedicated verticals for queer, vegan and youth perspectives and issues. It was launched and is edited by Peter Hackney, former *Star*

¹ Manuel A. 2022. New dawn for Fleurieu Peninsula. *Plains Producer*. 27 April.
<<https://www.plainsproducer.com.au/news/new-dawn-for-fleurieu-peninsula>>

Observer editor² and Australian Business Register records suggest that the company is registered to Hackney and based in Katoomba.³

The Wombat Post launched in April 2020 after the suspension of *The Advocate* by Australian Community Media.⁴ Published by the Daylesford Community News Association, it covers local news in Daylesford, Victoria.⁵

We have also listed the independent news website New Matilda as closed. It has published reporting, investigations and commentary on social and political issues since it was founded in 2004. Reviewing it this month, however, it appears to be inactive: only two posts have gone up on the site in 2022, one of which is a cartoon⁶; the other an opinion piece.⁷ The most recent reported piece appears to be from September 2021⁸ and the site's social media accounts have been mostly silent this year, though owner and editor Chris Graham has publicly shared that he has been having health problems on the site's Facebook page.⁹

Where very low levels of publishing are sustained over a long term, PIJI lists a publication as closed even if the site is still accessible and there is a possibility that it may return. In our experience, it is common that an outlet will cease activity without announcing its closure; and even if it does return in to publishing in the future, in the interim the site is not meeting the news needs of its audience. We will continue to monitor and will update the outlet's record in the database if this changes.

² Sydney Sentinel 2022. About.

<<https://sydneysentinel.com.au/about/>>

³ Australian Business Register 2022. Current details for ABN 97 415 245 278.

<<https://www.abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=97415215278>>

⁴ Rubbo L. and Jambor C. 2020. Australian Community Media to suspend multiple country newspapers. ABC News. 14 April.

<<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-14/australian-community-media-announces-printing-halt/12147674>>

⁵ The Wombat Post 2021. The Wombat Post turns one. *The Wombat Post*. 2 April.

<<https://thewombatpost.com.au/2021/04/02/the-wombat-post-turns-one/>>

⁶ Foyle L. 2022. Potato peeler. New Matilda. 31 May. <<https://newmatilda.com/2022/05/31/potato-peeler/>>

⁷ New Matilda 2022. News Corp tips 'certain, near-certain, virtually certain, dangerous but ambiguous, distinct possibility' of Russian invasion of Ukraine. 5 February. <<https://newmatilda.com/2022/02/05/news-corp-tips-certain-near-certain-virtually-certain-dangerous-but-ambiguous-distinct-possibility-of-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/>>

⁸ Graham C. 2021. #MeanwhileInWilcannia: leaked minutes from emergency meetings reveal govt officials blocked Wilcannia pleas for COVID help. New Matilda. 29 September. <<https://newmatilda.com/2021/09/29/leaked-minutes-from-emergency-meetings-reveal-govt-officials-blocked-wilcannia-pleas-for-covid-help/>>

⁹ Graham C. 2021. From NM editor Chris Graham, whose rumours of death have been somewhat exaggerated... more or less. New Matilda. 13 November. <<https://www.facebook.com/newmatildadotcom/posts/10161463756918835>>

3. Using this project data

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. **Masthead or station closure / opening**; meaning an entire news outlet closing or opening. In most cases this means a publication within a larger organisation, but rarely it can mean a whole news company.
2. **Newsroom closure / opening**; meaning a news company removing or adding a base from which to conduct news production, that having an impact on its coverage area. This change type only captures instances where there is an assumed change to the amount of localised news production (such as AAP opening a new bureau in Darwin); it does not include an outlet moving into new premises without a probable reduction in content (for example, when The Age’s Melbourne CBD newsroom moved into Nine Entertainment’s Melbourne CBD studios).
3. **Decrease / increase in service**; meaning changes in the amount of content that is produced, or, rarely, the availability of that content. Most often this category has captured observable reductions in locally-relevant, original content, but it can also include the launch of a new access point for existing content (such as a new radio bulletin produced in partnership with the local newspaper, as in Harvey WA). It can

include changes to print publication frequency, but does not include print distribution area changes.

4. **End / start of print edition**; meaning changes in availability without a corresponding change in production. A newspaper that transitions to digital-only publication without reducing its coverage is an example.
5. **Merger**, 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.

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

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

Two further hypotheticals provide reasons for caution:

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

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

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

About the Public Interest Journalism Initiative

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

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

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

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

[Public Interest Journalism Initiative]


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