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More Australians are reading magazines – they just don't need to own a copy

Roy Morgan today releases the latest Australian Magazine Readership results for the 12 months to March 2017, showing an overall increase in magazine readership despite recent downward trends in circulation.

Australians are spending more on experiences and less on physical things, and this includes magazines. Many industries—from retail to automotive to media—are witnessing a move away from traditional forms of 'ownership'.

For magazines, the decline in circulation reflects the decrease in physical ownership of issues. Readership, however, has not followed the same downward trend. Instead, magazine readership overall—as well as engagement with a number of categories—has been comparatively stable, demonstrating that although Australians are showing less of a need to *own* magazines, they remain highly engaged with magazine content.

12.6 million Australians aged 14+ (63.4 percent) read print magazines, the latest data for the 12 months to March 2017 shows—up 2.4 percent compared with the year before.

Looking at the longer term trends across categories, Food and Entertainment titles together now reach 5,848,000 Australians, more than twice the number reading magazines in this category in the 12 months to March 2013. Total print readership also increased for the categories of General Interest (up 11 percent to 4,465,000) and Sports (up two percent to 371,000).

Three other categories are holding steady, each with less than six percent fewer readers compared with four years ago: Home and Garden (now reaching 3,016,000 readers overall), Women's Fashion (1,190,000), and Business, Financial and Airline (1,788,000).

Two categories worth highlighting are Food & Entertainment and Women's Fashion. In large part thanks to the continuing growth for Coles Magazine (up 17.6 percent year-on-year to 3,783,000) and Woolworth's Fresh (up 18.2 percent to 3,400,000), almost 5.9 million Australians are reading magazines dedicated to Food & Entertainment. However, also driving total category growth are Taste.com.au Magazine (up 12.6 percent to 597,000), Recipes+ (up 7.9 percent to 424,000), and Delicious (up 1.1 percent to 356,000).

Total readership of Women's Fashion magazines in print had been on a downward trend since 2013, falling from 1,270,000 to 1,082,000 in the 12 months to March 2016. Since then, however, the category has performed a distinct turnaround, rising 10 percent now back up close to 1.2 million.

But even more exceptional than the renewed appetite for the category's glossy printed pages overall is that *every* title (excluding the niche wedding magazines) contributed to the growth. That's right—they all gained readers over the past year: Harper's Bazaar (up 21.8 percent to 134,000), Elle (up 18.2 percent to 156,000), Marie Claire (up 17.1 percent to 301,000), Frankie (up 14.4 percent to 365,000), InStyle (up 10.9 percent to 143,000) and Vogue Australia (up 7.3 percent to 338,000).

Total Print Readership Trend for Food & Entertainment and Women's Fashion Magazine Categories



[View the full Magazine Readership Results](#)

Cross-Platform Audiences

The print gains amongst the fashion titles are also reflected online for some (Elle and Harper's Bazaar) but not others (Marie Claire and Vogue). New entrant in our cross-platform measure, Frankie sees its total audience reach 399,000 Australians, up 9.3 percent from its print readership.

Since our last readership release, many of Bauer's magazine brands have consolidated their online presence under category banners such as Now to Love. The results in the cross platform table below reflect this new positioning and therefore year on year comparisons are not made.

Print, Digital, and Cross-Platform Audiences

Publication	Platforms	Print		Digital		Total Cross-Platform Audience		
		Mar 2016 (000's)	Mar 2017 (000's)	Mar 2016 (000's)	Mar 2017 (000's)	Mar 2016 (000's)	Mar 2017 (000's)	% change in Total Cross-Platform Audience
4X4 Australia	4X4 print, 4X4 app, 4X4 web	160	149		122		251	
Australian Geographic	Aust Geo print, AG app, AG web	496	585	283	259	749	786	4.9%
Australian Gourmet Traveller	Gourmet Traveller print, GT app, GT web	225	200	238	187	449	366	-18.5%
Belle	Belle print, Homes to Love web	104	97		118		215	
Better Homes & Gardens	BH&G print, BH&G app, BH&G web	1818	1790	318	362	2054	2031	-1.1%
Cosmopolitan	Cosmo print, Cosmo app, Cosmo web	285	278	231	254	503	507	0.8%
Donna Hay	Donna Hay print, DH app, DH web	310	295	160	197	428	457	6.8%
Elle	Elle print, Elle app, Elle web	132	156	84	148	211	297	40.8%
Frankie	Frankie print, Frankie web	319	365		67		399	
Girlfriend	Girlfriend print, Girlfriend web	186	185	66	143	239	308	28.9%
Harper's Bazaar	Harper's print, Harper's web	110	134	67	101	173	228	31.8%
Healthy Food Guide	Healthy Food Guide print, HFG web	170	140	119	123	280	252	-10.0%
Home Beautiful	Home Beaut. print, HB. app, HB web	374	314		71		371	
Homes+	Homes+ print, Homes to Love web	109	112		118		229	
House & Garden	H&G print, Homes to Love web	563	577		118		689	
Marie Claire	Marie Claire print, MC app, MC web	257	301	229	149	479	432	-9.8%
Men's Fitness	Men's Fitness print, Men's Fit web	132	147		145		293	
Men's Health	Men's Health print, MH app, MH web	365	355	221	164	568	503	-11.4%
Motor	Motor print, Motor app, Motor web	117	145		79		213	
National Geographic	NatGeo print, Nat G. app, Nat G. web	1058	1082	334	362	1326	1370	3.3%
New Idea*	New Idea print, NI app, NI web	1127	1148	276	224	1374	1325	-3.6%
NW*	NW print, NW app, Now to Love web	139	152		343		481	
OK*	OK print, Now to Love web	222	187		343		519	
Open Road	Open Road print, O.R app, O.R web	1088	1082	60	77	1112	1118	0.5%
Reader's Digest	Reader's Digest print, Reader's D. web	480	504	470	338	925	816	-11.8%
Real Living	Real Living print, Homes to Love web	155	96		118		214	
Recipes+	Recipes+ print, Rec app, Food to Love web	393	424		360		757	
Street Machine	Street M. print, SM app, SM web	243	231		86		298	
Super Food Ideas	Super Food Ideas print, SFI app, SFI web	555	460	85	113	625	535	-14.4%
Take 5*	Take 5 print, Now to Love web	537	505		343		808	
Taste.com.au	Taste print, Taste app, Taste web	530	597		3009		3408	
That's Life*	That's Life print, That's Life web	710	686		107		743	
The Monthly	The Monthly print, TM app, TM web	154	156	161	148	282	270	-4.3%
Time Magazine*	Time print, Time web	325	340	281	328	590	648	9.8%
Unique Cars	UC print, UC app, TradeUniqueCars web	209	183		82		251	
Vogue	Vogue print, Vog. app, Vog. web	315	338	406	311	705	624	-11.5%
Wheels	Wheels print, Whl. app, Whl. web	244	240		113		329	
Who *	Who print, Who app, Who web	334	323	77	41	408	360	-11.8%
Woman's Day*	WD print, WD app, Now to Love web	1380	1304		352		1591	
Women's Health	Women's H. print, WH app, WH web	336	320	133	164	454	469	3.3%
Women's Health & Fitness	Women's Health & F. print, WH&F web	187	138	75	107	260	239	-8.1%
Women's Weekly	AWW print, AWW app, Now to Love web	1713	1555		934		2369	

Print is average issue readership; digital is website visitation and app usage in an average 4 weeks, except for weekly titles which are in an average 7 days (denoted by *)

[View the full Magazine Cross-Platform Readership Results](#)

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Across a range of industries, Roy Morgan has highlighted a move away from consumers' need for 'ownership'. Whether it is the move away from car ownership to sharing and even driverless cars as highlighted in our recent State of the Nation on the Automotive Industry or consumers buying less 'stuff' though interested in more 'experiences' as seen in our State of the Nation on Retail, we see parallels in the media industry—for instance, consumers are happy paying to access music and video content but don't need to 'own' it.

"The magazine industry faces similar disruption of 'consumer ownership'. While there is no more visibility of magazine sales, it was clear that magazine circulation or 'ownership' of magazines was under pressure; but the 'experience' of reading magazines is still strong. Of course there are individual winners and losers in terms of readership in this March 2017 release, but the long term readership trend for most magazine categories is notably stable compared to the corresponding

change in circulations. The challenge for the magazine industry, of course, is how best to monetise consumers' desire for this engagement with publishers' content.

"Since the cessation of magazine circulation audits, Roy Morgan's readership currency—across both print and digital—remains the industry's only independent measure of the appetite that Australians have for magazines' content across all the available platforms."

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research Readership, please call: (+61) (3) 9224 5309 or email askroymorgan@roymorgan.com

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