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Four out of five Australians continue to read newspapers

Roy Morgan today releases the latest readership results for Australian newspapers for the 12 months to June 2018 – before the announcement of the proposed merger between the Nine Entertainment Company and Fairfax Media in late July.

Over 16 million, or 79.3%, of Australians aged 14+ now read or access newspapers in an average 7 day period via print or online (website or app) platforms, an increase of 3.3 per cent from a year ago.

Four of Australia's top five leading mastheads have grown their cross-platform audiences, with Melbourne's The Age experiencing the strongest growth of nearly 10 per cent during the past year.

These are the latest findings from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey of 50,035 Australians aged 14+ in the 12 months to June 2018.

[For full details of all mastheads surveyed click here.](#)

Australia's most widely read masthead continues to be the Sydney Morning Herald – with a cross-platform audience of 4,279,000, up 1 per cent from a year ago. This increases its lead over Sydney rival the Daily Telegraph which has a cross-platform audience of 3,245,000, down 5.1 per cent in a year.

Nothing separates the total cross-platform audiences of Melbourne dailies The Age and Herald Sun although The Age has demonstrated stronger growth over the last year. The Age's year-on-year growth of 10 per cent has given it a cross-platform audience of 3,085,000 equal to that of its long-time competitor the Herald Sun (up 1 per cent).

Australia's leading national masthead The Australian grew its cross-platform audience by 6.3 per cent to 2,564,000 while the business-focused Australian Financial Review's cross-platform audience is unchanged on a year ago at 1,370,000.

Top State-wide & National Mastheads by Total 7 Day Cross-Platform Audience (Print & Online)

Publication	Print		Digital (web or app)		Total Cross-Platform Audience* (print, web or app)		
	June 2017	June 2018	June 2017	June 2018	June 2017	June 2018	% Change
	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	%
Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)	1,094	1,036	3,691	3,787	4,235	4,279	1.0%
Daily Telegraph	1,395	1,306	2,394	2,330	3,418	3,245	-5.1%
The Age	950	881	2,395	2,634	2,805	3,085	10.0%
Herald Sun	1,569	1,465	1,960	2,082	3,055	3,085	1.0%
The Australian	922	831	1,709	1,965	2,412	2,564	6.3%
Courier-Mail	1,032	911	1,295	1,267	2,049	1,961	-4.3%
Australian Financial Review (AFR)	405	374	1,076	1,083	1,370	1,370	0.0%

*Total cross-platform audience comprises print which is net readership in an average 7 days and digital which is net website visitation and app usage in an average 7 days.

[Total Cross-Platform Audience results available to view here.](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Print Readership

Overall 7.2 million Australians read the listed print newspapers, including 5.1 million who read weekday issues, more than 4.3 million who read Saturday editions and nearly 3.9 million who read Sunday titles. Although print readership has declined year-on-year, the latest figures show more than 1 in 3 Australians (35.6 per cent) are reading print newspapers. In today's digitally-focused world they continue to be an important advertising medium to reach both mass and niche audiences.

Weekend Newspaper Readership down, but Saturday Daily Telegraph is up

Australia's best read weekend newspaper is again Sydney's Sunday Telegraph with an average issue print readership of 864,000 – down 4 per cent over the past year – ahead of southern stablemate Melbourne's Sunday Herald Sun which has a print readership of 814,000 (down 6.8 per cent).

Other major titles that declined include the Saturday Herald Sun down 11 per cent to a readership of 734,000, the Saturday Sydney Morning Herald down 1.7 per cent to 633,000 readers, the Sunday Mail in Queensland down 9.8 per cent to a readership of 618,000 and the Saturday Age which was down 11.5 per cent to 576,000 readers.

The Saturday Daily Telegraph managed to defy the overall trend by increasing its readership by 2.2 per cent to 550,000 and was Australia's eighth most widely read weekend newspaper.

Readership of national broadsheet The Weekend Australian was down 9.9 per cent to 576,000 while Schwarz Media's The Saturday Paper's readership was virtually unchanged at 111,000.

Top Weekend Newspapers – Ranked by Print Readership*

Publication	June 2017	June 2018	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
Sunday Telegraph	900	864	-4.0%
Sunday Herald Sun	873	814	-6.8%
Saturday Herald Sun	825	734	-11.0%
Saturday SMH	644	633	-1.7%
The Sunday Mail (Qld)	685	618	-9.8%
The Weekend Australian	639	576	-9.9%
Saturday Age	651	576	-11.5%
Saturday Daily Telegraph	538	550	2.2%

*Print readership is average issue readership.

[Full Newspaper Readership Results available to view here.](#)

Newspaper Inserted Magazines: Stellar, Fin Review Magazine & Boss all up

Stellar increased its print readership by an impressive 7.6 per cent to 1,045,000 in the year to June 2018, continuing its solid growth since it launched. However, although down 10.3 per cent, Good Weekend remains Australia's most widely read newspaper inserted magazine with print readership of 1,139,000.

Also performing strongly over the past year were the Financial Review Magazine which increased its readership 9.4 per cent to 406,000, stablemate Boss magazine now with a readership of 153,000 and the Sunday Times TV Guide which was up 0.4 per cent to 240,000.

Other leading newspaper inserted magazines did not match these performances with Sunday Life on 701,000 readers (down 8.4 per cent) and the Weekend Australian Magazine on 622,000 (down 13.9 per cent).

Top Newspaper Inserted Magazines – Ranked by Print Readership*

Publication	June 2017	June 2018	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
Good Weekend	1,270	1,139	-10.3%
Stellar	971	1,045	7.6%
Sunday Life	765	701	-8.4%
Weekend Australian Magazine	722	622	-13.9%
Sunday Telegraph TV Guide	606	554	-8.6%
Sunday Herald Sun TV Guide	503	478	-5.0%
Financial Review Magazine	371	406	9.4%

*Print readership is average issue readership.

[Full Newspaper Inserted Magazine Readership Results available to view here.](#)

Regional newspapers lose readership over the year

A number of Australia's leading regional weekday mastheads lost readership in the year to June 2018. Despite a decline the Newcastle Herald remains Australia's leading regional weekday masthead down 15.8 per cent to 64,000 ahead of the Gold Coast Bulletin down 16.4 per cent to 51,000 over the past year. Bucking the trend of its peers was the Illawarra Mercury which grew its readership 11.8 per cent to 38,000.

Top Regional Newspapers – Ranked by Print Readership (Monday – Friday)*

Publication	June 2017	June 2018	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
Newcastle Herald	76	64	-15.8%
Gold Coast Bulletin	61	51	-16.4%
Cairns Post	50	48	-4.0%
Canberra Times	48	47	-2.1%
The Hobart Mercury	52	47	-9.6%
Geelong Advertiser	55	40	-27.3%

*Print readership is average issue readership.

[Full Newspaper Readership Results available to view here.](#)

Total cross-platform readership of Australia's leading regional titles has declined over the last year. Despite a decline in its digital audience the Canberra Times remains Australia's most widely read regional masthead with a total cross-platform audience of 468,000. Although dropping in print readership The Newcastle Herald retained its digital audience resulting in a total cross-platform audience of 245,000.

Total Cross-Platform Audience for available regional titles

Publication	Print		Digital (web or app)		Total Cross-Platform Audience (print, web or app)		
	June 2017 '000s	June 2018 '000s	June 2017 '000s	June 2018 '000s	June 2017 '000s	June 2018 '000s	% Change
Canberra Times	101	99	470	401	544	468	-14.0%
Newcastle Herald	160	135	133	136	268	245	-8.6%
The Hobart Mercury	109	105	131	116	220	203	-7.7%

**Total cross-platform audience comprises print which is net readership in an average 7 days and digital which is net website visitation and app usage in an average 7 days.*

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan, says:

“Over 16 million Australians 14+ access newspapers in an average 7 day period either in print, or online via website or app. This represents an extra 500,000 Australians now consuming newspaper content via one format or another compared to a year ago, an increase of 3.3% in total cross-platform audience size.

“It’s easy to see why Nine Entertainment Company regarded Fairfax Media as a valuable merger partner when one considers the eyeballs Fairfax Media’s leading mastheads already attract.

“The Sydney Morning Herald is Australia’s leading masthead with a total audience of over 4.2 million and southern stablemate The Age attracts an audience of over 3 million. The Australian Financial Review (AFR) is Australia’s top business-focused publication and attracts a highly valuable audience of over 1.3 million.

“Combining the leading Fairfax mastheads with the Nine Network’s broadcasting channels including Nine, Gem and Go! will give the new merged entity a significant reach around Australia to challenge both Australia’s largest media company News Corp Australia and an influx of digital competitors represented by the likes of Netflix, Facebook and Amazon.

“The proposed merger will also bring the Stan Streaming Video On Demand (SVOD) service under the control of the new company. [Roy Morgan’s recent research into the growth of SVOD in Australia](#) showed Stan growing viewership at nearly 40% over the past year, a faster rate than even the market leader Netflix.

“There was also good news for rival News Corp Australia over the past year with national masthead The Australian growing its total cross-platform audience by 6.3 per cent to over 2.5 million and the Saturday Daily Telegraph increasing its print readership by 2.2 per cent to 550,000.

“The take out from today’s readership figures is that the edge of trust and reliability carried by Australia’s leading newspaper mastheads represents valuable marketing territory in a world of diverse and sometimes questionable content.

“By building on their existing reputations for trustworthiness there is definitely room to grow audiences for Australian media companies despite the challenges posed by cashed-up international competitors.”

To learn more about Roy Morgan’s Readership research, call (+61) (3) 9224 5309 or email askroymorgan@roymorgan.com.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2