

Friday, 14 February 2020

First full year since Nine purchase of Fairfax sees audience increases for SMH, The Age and Australian Financial Review

Roy Morgan today releases the latest readership results for Australian newspapers for the 12 months to December 2019. Now 15.5 million Australians aged 14+ (74.6%) read or access newspapers in an average 7 day period via print or online (website or app) platforms, and this audience increases to 16.4 million (78.7%) when one considers news portals such as news.com.au.

The good news for the Nine Entertainment owned mastheads is that there have been increases in cross-platform audiences for their three leading titles The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and the Australian Financial Review since the merger closed in December 2018.

Australia's most widely read masthead The Sydney Morning Herald has increased its cross-platform audience 4.1 per cent to 4,303,000 and Melbourne stablemate The Age is in second place with a cross-platform audience of 2,850,000, an increase of 1.2 per cent.

However the standout performer over the past year is again the Australian Financial Review (AFR) which increased its total cross-platform audience by a significant 14.1 per cent to 1,642,000 driven by a substantial increase in the AFR's digital audience – up by 19.9 per cent to 1,402,000.

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

The News Corp daily the Herald Sun is in third place overall with a cross-platform audience of 2,756,000 in front of its Sydney counterpart the Daily Telegraph which now has a cross-platform audience of 2,525,000 – although both have declined over the last year.

National broadsheet The Australian with a cross-platform audience of 2,372,000 fills out the top five.

These are the latest findings from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey of 50,422 Australians aged 14+ in the 12 months to December 2019.

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)		
	Dec 2018 '000s	Dec 2019 '000s	Dec 2018 '000s	Dec 2019 '000s	Dec 2018 '000s	Dec 2019 '000s	% Change
Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)	983	772	3,667	3,982	4,135	4,303	4.1%
The Age	817	713	2,458	2,566	2,816	2,850	1.2%
Herald Sun	1,342	1,067	2,032	2,037	2,984	2,756	-7.7%
Daily Telegraph	1,285	976	2,091	1,744	2,989	2,525	-15.5%
The Australian	862	797	1,866	1,802	2,480	2,372	-4.3%
Courier-Mail	894	774	1,095	1,176	1,779	1,753	-1.4%
Australian Financial Review (AFR)	364	391	1,169	1,402	1,439	1,642	14.1%

*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.](#)

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Print Newspapers now read by around 6 million Australians (29%)

Nearly 6 million Australians read the listed print newspapers, including around 4.2 million who read weekday issues, almost 3.5 million who read Saturday editions and more than 3 million who read Sunday titles. Although print readership has declined year-on-year, these figures show almost 3-in-10 Australians read print newspapers. In today's digitally-focused world print newspapers continue to be an important advertising medium to reach both mass and niche audiences.

Weekend Newspaper Readership down from a year ago

Australia's best read weekend newspaper is again Sydney's Sunday Telegraph with an average issue print readership of 618,000 – down 25.2 per cent over the past year – ahead of southern stablemate Melbourne's Sunday Herald Sun which has a print readership of 568,000 (down 22.9 per cent).

Other major titles to decline included the Saturday Herald Sun down 17.2 per cent to a readership of 552,000, The Weekend Australian down 8.6 per cent to 539,000, The Sunday Mail in Queensland down 14.2 per cent to 503,000, the Saturday Sydney Morning Herald down 23.8 per cent to 448,000 and Melbourne's Saturday Age down 16.3 per cent to 440,000 readers.

Top Weekend Newspapers – Ranked by Print Readership*

Publication	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
Sunday Telegraph	826	618	-25.2%
Sunday Herald Sun	737	568	-22.9%
Saturday Herald Sun	667	552	-17.2%
The Weekend Australian	590	539	-8.6%
The Sunday Mail (Qld)	586	503	-14.2%
Saturday SMH	588	448	-23.8%
Saturday Age	526	440	-16.3%

**Print readership is average issue readership.*

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

Newspaper Inserted Magazines: Readership of Boss, The Deal and SA Weekend increases

Three newspaper inserted magazines have managed to increase their readership over the last year despite broader industry trends led by the AFR's Boss Magazine which increased its readership by 17 per cent to 179,000.

Also increasing their readership was The Deal magazine for which readership increased 9.2 per cent to 71,000 and SA Weekend now with 239,000 readers, up 8.6 per cent.

However, although down 21.6 per cent, Good Weekend clearly remains Australia's most widely read newspaper inserted magazine with print readership of 819,000. Real estate focused magazine Domain is the second most widely read with a readership of 654,000, down 18.3 per cent.

The Weekend Australian magazine is again the third most widely read newspaper inserted magazine with a readership of 539,000, down 9.7 per cent on a year ago, ahead of Stellar magazine read by 476,000, down a significant 33.4 per cent on a year ago. Sunday Life is the fifth most widely read newspaper inserted magazine with a readership of 436,000, down 35.8 per cent.

Top Newspaper Inserted Magazines – Ranked by Print Readership*

Publication	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
Good Weekend (NSW/Vic)	1,045	819	-21.6%
Domain (NSW/Vic)	800	654	-18.3%
Weekend Australian Magazine	597	539	-9.7%
Stellar (NSW/Vic)	715	476	-33.4%
Sunday Life (NSW/Vic)	679	436	-35.8%
Sunday Telegraph TV Guide (NSW)	524	375	-28.4%
Financial Review Magazine	408	326	-20.1%

*Print readership is average issue readership.

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

The Examiner in Launceston stands out with a significant increase in print readership

The best performing regional newspaper over the past year has clearly been The Examiner based in the Tasmanian city of Launceston which increased its weekday readership by 25.9 per cent to 34,000.

However, the most widely read regional newspaper is its southern counterpart The Hobart Mercury with a readership of 47,000 (down 11.3 per cent) alongside the Gold Coast Bulletin on 47,000 (down 16.1 per cent).

The Newcastle Herald is in a clear third position with a readership of 43,000 (down 23.2 per cent).

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

Publication	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	% Change
	'000s	'000s	%
The Hobart Mercury	53	47	-11.3%
Gold Coast Bulletin	56	47	-16.1%
Newcastle Herald	56	43	-23.2%
Canberra Times	44	38	-13.6%
Townsville Bulletin	43	36	-16.3%
The Examiner	27	34	25.9%

*Print readership is average issue readership.

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

The total cross-platform audiences of Australia's leading regional titles have again declined over the last year. Despite this decline in its digital audience the Canberra Times remains Australia's most widely read regional masthead with a total cross-platform audience of 372,000 ahead of the Newcastle Herald with an audience of 198,000 and The Hobart Mercury with an audience of 186,000.



Total Cross-Platform Audience for available regional titles

Publication	Print		Digital (web or app)		Total Cross-Platform Audience (print, web or app)		
	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	Dec 2018	Dec 2019	% Change
	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	'000s	%
Canberra Times	90	73	375	332	433	372	-14.1%
Newcastle Herald	120	90	100	120	209	198	-5.3%
The Hobart Mercury	108	92	107	114	193	186	-3.5%

*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, Chief Executive Officer, Roy Morgan, says:

"Roy Morgan's latest readership results for 2019 show it has been a good year for the Nine Entertainment owned Fairfax newspapers. All three leading titles The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and the Australian Financial Review (AFR) saw increases in audience since the merger closed in December 2018.

"The Sydney Morning Herald has an audience of over 4.3 million ahead of southern stablemate The Age which is now read by 2.85 million in second place nationally. In addition The Australian Financial Review (AFR) now attracts an audience of 1.65 million representing an impressive increase of 14.1 per cent from a year ago. Impressively, the AFR is the only leading masthead to increase both its print readership (+7.4%) and digital audience (+19.9%) during 2019.

"Overall readership results show 15.5 million Australians 14+ now access newspapers either in print, or online via website or app in an average 7 day period – and including news portals such as news.com.au increases this audience to 16.4 million – almost four-in-five Australians.

"Although Nine Entertainment holds the edge for performance improvements in 2019 the News Corp owned titles continue to dominate the list of Australia's most widely read mastheads accounting for four out of the top six led by the Herald Sun (2.8 million), Daily Telegraph (2.5 million), The Australian (2.4 million) and the Courier-Mail in sixth on nearly 1.8 million."

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 Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience 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

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