

Finding No. 4195  
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## **LARGE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS THINK THE MEDIA IS “OFTEN BIASED”**

A large majority of Australians believe that most forms of media in Australia are ‘often biased’, a special Roy Morgan telephone survey finds.

The survey also finds a majority of Australians believe newspaper and TV journalists and talk-back radio announcers ‘often get their facts wrong’. Large majorities believe that newspaper and TV journalists ‘invade people’s privacy unnecessarily’.

However, they are divided on whether the media are ‘too left-wing leaning’ or ‘too right-wing leaning’.

### **Media Bias**

A large 85% (down 1% since September 2004) of Australians believe that Newspaper journalists are often biased, 74% (up 1%) believe TV reporters are often biased and 69% (down 6%) believe that Talk-back radio announcers are often biased.

The only form of mainstream media to escape the condemnation of the majority (and only just) is the Internet – 49% (up 8%) of Australians believe Internet sites are often biased.

Of all journalists, it is the Talk-back hosts who are most likely to be regarded as often biased. Almost a quarter of Australians (23.5%, down 5%) think John Laws is often biased (29.5% in NSW, down 7.5%) and more than one-in-five (20.5%, down 5.5%) believe that Alan Jones is often biased (29.5% in NSW, down 12%).

Elsewhere, 4.5% (up 1%) of Australians identify Neil Mitchell (17.5% in Victoria, up 5.5%), and 2.5% (up 1%) identify Derryn Hinch (6% in Victoria, down 4.5%) as often biased.

Andrew Bolt is the Newspaper journalist most likely to be identified as often biased with 3.5% (unchanged) of Australians identifying him thus. In his home state of Victoria, 11.5% (up 1%) regard Bolt as often biased.

Sydney-based journalist Piers Akerman is regarded as often biased by 2% (down 1%) of all Australians and by 3.5% (down 5%) of those living in New South Wales and the ACT. One percent of Australians believe Gerard Henderson is often biased, while 1% also believes that the *Daily Telegraph* is often biased (3% in NSW).

On television the *Today Tonight* team have the greatest integrity dilemma with 3.5% of Australians identifying them as often biased, just ahead of the *A Current Affair* team (3%, up 2%).

Overall, Channel 9 (1%) is more likely to be seen as often biased when compared to Channel 7 (0.5%). The ABC’s Kerry O’Brien is regarded as often biased by 3% (down 1.5%) of Australians.

### **Media Accuracy**

When it comes to the perceived accuracy of Australia’s journalists, Newspaper journalists are considered by 62% (down 1%) of Australians to often get facts wrong, while more than half of Australians said TV reporters and journalists (55%, up 1%) and Talk-back radio announcers (51%, down 4%) often get facts wrong.

Across all media John Laws, whom 10.5% (down 2.5%) of Australians regard as often getting his facts wrong (16.5% in NSW, down 4.5%), and Alan Jones (10%, down 3.5%; 16.5% in NSW, down 6.5%) are the most likely to be regarded as often getting their facts wrong.

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## **Invading Privacy**

Television reporters and journalists (77%, up 3%) took top place in regards to invading people's privacy unnecessarily. Newspaper journalists (69%, unchanged) were the next highest, while only 22% (down 4%) of Australians believed Talk-back radio announcers invaded people's privacy unnecessarily.

TV current affairs programs and reporters were mentioned most often as unnecessarily invading people's privacy, with the *Today Tonight* team mentioned by 6.5% (up 5%) of Australians and *A Current Affair* mentioned by 4% (up 2%).

## **Right-wing or Left-wing?**

Strangely, 2.5% (unchanged) of Australians think John Laws is too left-leaning and 7% (down 2%) believe he is too right-leaning. Similarly, 1.5% (down 1%) believe Alan Jones is too left-leaning and 9% (down 4.5%) believe he is too right-leaning.

## **Gary Morgan says:**

*"Being provocative is a mandatory characteristic for journalists, so it would not disappoint John Laws (23.5%) and Alan Jones (20.5%) that a significant number of Australians believe they are 'often biased'. In their home state of New South Wales an even larger proportion (both 29.5%) believe they are 'often biased'. Laws and Jones will be hoping for an even higher result in the next Roy Morgan image of the media survey!"*

*"Talkback radio announcers are the most provocative among all types of journalists, although television reporters and journalists (77%) took top place in regards to 'invading people's privacy unnecessarily'.*

*"The Today Tonight (3.5%) team came out on top amongst television reporters and journalists who are 'often biased', while 3% said Today Tonight 'often getting their facts wrong', however, many more (6.5%) said they 'invade people's privacy unnecessarily'. Its closest competitor – A Current Affair – was second of all the shows in the category.*

*"The Herald-Sun's Andrew Bolt (3.5%; 11.5% in Victoria) is the 'top' Australian newspaper journalist viewed as 'often biased', followed by Piers Akerman (2%; 3.5% in NSW) – no doubt Akerman would be disappointed Andrew Bolt has increased his lead!"*

*"Journalists who received high results in this Roy Morgan survey will undoubtedly be pleased as Australians must be taking notice – that is listening to or reading what they're saying – regardless of whether they agree with it or not."*

These are the findings of a special telephone Morgan Poll conducted July 25/26, 2007, with an Australia-wide cross-section of 663 people aged 14 and over.

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**Table 1 – Bias**

Respondents were asked: “Do you believe Newspaper Journalists/ TV Reporters or Journalists / Talk-back Radio Announcers/ Internet Sites are often biased?”

	Newspaper Journalists		TV Reporters or Journalists		Talk-back Radio Announcers		Internet Sites	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, are often biased	86	85	73	74	75	69	41	49
No, not often biased	11	11	23	19	16	20	14	17
Can't say	3	4	4	7	9	11	45	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 2**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Newspaper Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Newspaper Journalists		
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	
	%	%	
Andrew Bolt	3.5	3.5	11.5% in Victoria (up 1% since 2004)
Piers Akerman	3	2	3.5% in NSW (down 5% since 2004)
Gerard Henderson	-	1	
Daily Telegraph	-	1	3% in NSW
All / Most	-	1	
Miranda Devine	1.5	0.5	
Dennis Shanahan	-	0.5	
Phillip Adams	1	^	
Alan Jones	1	-	
Someone else mentioned	10.5	20	
Can't say	69	68	
Total Yes, often biased*	86	85	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 3**

Respondents were then asked: “Which TV Reporters or Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned TV Reporters or Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
Today Tonight / Anna Coren / Naomi Robson / Leigh McClusky	^	3.5
Kerry O'Brien	4.5	3
A Current Affair / Tracy Grimshaw	1	3
All / Most	-	1.5
Current Affairs programs (unspecified)	-	1
Tony Jones (ABC)	-	1
Channel 9	^	1
Ray Martin	6	0.5
Laurie Oakes	2	0.5
60 Minutes	-	0.5
Channel 7	-	0.5
Someone else mentioned	9.5	13
Can't say	53.5	56.5
Total Yes, often biased*	73	74

\*Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 1%

**Table 4**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Talk-back Radio Announcers specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Talk-back Radio Announcers		
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>	
	%	%	
John Laws	28.5	23.5	29.5% in NSW (down 7.5%)
Alan Jones	26	20.5	29.5% in NSW (down 12%)
Neil Mitchell	3.5	4.5	17.5% in Victoria (up 5.5%)
Derryn Hinch	3.5	2.5	6% in Victoria (up 4.5%)
Ray Hadley	-	1.5	5% in NSW
Stan Zemanek	3.5	1	
Mike Carlton	-	1	
Howard Sattler	-	1	
All / Most	-	1	
Jon Faine	-	0.5	
Bob Francis	-	0.5	
Someone else mentioned	13	6	
Can't say	28.5	29.5	
<b>Total Yes, often biased*</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>69</b>	

\*Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 5**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Internet Sites specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Internet Sites	
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>
	%	%
Ninemsn	3	4
Yahoo.com.au	0.5	2.5
All / Most	-	2
Google	-	1.5
ABC.net.au	1	1
YouTube	-	1
Advertising Sites / Pop-ups / Any Site Promoting Themselves	0.5	0.5
Fairfax Digital (F2)	1.5	0.5
MySpace	-	0.5
News.com.au	-	0.5
Foxnews.com	-	0.5
Someone else mentioned	4.5	7.5
Can't say	32.5	33.5
<b>Total Yes, often biased*</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>49</b>

\*Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 6 – Often Get Facts Wrong**

Respondents were asked: “Do you believe Newspaper Journalists/ TV Reporters or Journalists/ Talk-back Radio Announcers/ Internet Sites often get their facts wrong?”

	Newspaper Journalists		TV Reporters or Journalists		Talk-back Radio Announcers		Internet Sites	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, often get facts wrong	63	62	54	55	55	51	38	45
No, don't often get facts wrong	30	30	38	37	30	34	16	21
Can't say	7	8	8	8	15	15	46	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 7**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Newspaper Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Newspaper Journalists		
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	
	%	%	
All / Most	-	2	
Andrew Bolt	-	1	2.5% in Victoria
Daily Telegraph	-	1	3% in NSW
Sydney Morning Herald	0.5	0.5	
The Australian	-	0.5	
Courier Mail	0.5	^	
Local newspaper writers	0.5	^	
Piers Akerman	0.5	^	
Jill Singer	0.5	-	
Someone else mentioned	3.5	3.5	
Can't say	57.5	55.5	
Total Yes, often get facts wrong*	63	62	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 8**

Respondents were then asked: “Which TV Reporters or Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned TV Reporters or Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
Today Tonight / Anna Coren / Naomi Robson / Leigh McClusky	-	3
A Current Affair / Tracy Grimshaw	0.5	2.5
Current Affairs programs (unspecified)	-	1.5
All / Most	-	1
Commercial TV channels	0.5	0.5
Ray Martin	2.5	-
Mike Munro	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	4.5	3
Can't say	46.5	47.5
Total Yes, often get facts wrong*	54	55

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 9**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Talk-back Radio Announcers specifically?”

	<b>Most often mentioned</b>		
	<b>Talk-back Radio Announcers</b>		
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>	
	%	%	
John Laws	13	10.5	16.5% in NSW (down 4.5%)
Alan Jones	13.5	10	16.5% in NSW (down 6.5%)
Neil Mitchell	1.5	2	6.5% in Victoria (up 1%)
Derryn Hinch	0.5	1	
All / Most	-	1	
Howard Sattler	-	0.5	
Mike Carlton	-	0.5	
Steve Price	-	0.5	
Kyle and Jackie O	-	0.5	
Bob Francis	-	0.5	
Jon Faine	-	0.5	
Stan Zemanek	2	^	
Someone else mentioned	5	3	
Can't say	33.5	31.5	
<b>Total Yes, often get facts wrong*</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>51</b>	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 10**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Internet Sites specifically?”

	<b>Most often mentioned</b>	
	<b>Internet Sites</b>	
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>
	%	%
Wikipedia	-	3.5
Ninemsn	2	1.5
Yahoo.com.au	0.5	1
Fairfax Digital (F2)	0.5	0.5
ABC.net.au	0.5	0.5
Google	-	0.5
BBC	-	0.5
YouTube	-	0.5
Foxnews.com	-	0.5
All / Most	-	0.5
News sites (unspecified)	-	0.5
Medical Sites	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	4	4
Can't say	31.5	33
<b>Total Yes, often get facts wrong*</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>45</b>

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 11 – Invade People’s Privacy Unnecessarily**

Respondents were asked: “Do you believe Newspaper Journalists/ TV Reporters or Journalists/ Talk-back Radio Announcers/ Internet Sites invade people’s privacy unnecessarily?”

	Newspaper Journalists		TV Reporters or Journalists		Talk-back Radio Announcers		Internet Sites	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, invade unnecessarily	69	69	74	77	26	22	21	28
No, do not invade unnecessarily	25	24	23	19	62	66	38	42
Can't say	6	7	3	4	12	12	41	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 12**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Newspaper Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Newspaper Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
All / Most	-	2.5
Daily Telegraph	-	1
Celebrity reporters	0.5	0.5
Herald Sun	0.5	0.5
The Age	-	0.5
A Current Affair	-	0.5
Current Affairs programs (unspecified)	-	0.5
Piers Akerman	0.5	-
Local newspaper writers	0.5	-
Sydney Morning Herald	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	2.5	3
Can't say	65	61.5
Total Yes, invade people’s privacy unnecessarily*	69	69

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 13**

Respondents were then asked: “Which TV Reporters or Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned TV Reporters or Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
Today Tonight / Naomi Robson	2.5	6.5
A Current Affair	2	4.5
Current affairs programs (unspecified)	1	2.5
Channel 9	-	1.5
Channel 7	-	1.5
Ray Martin	4	0.5
60 Minutes	-	0.5
Celebrity reporters	-	0.5
Someone else mentioned	7	15
Can't say	62.5	60.5
Total Yes, invade people’s privacy unnecessarily*	74	77

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 14**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Talk-back Radio Announcers specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Talk-back Radio Announcers		
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>	
	%	%	
Alan Jones	5	4.5	7.5% in NSW (down 0.5%)
John Laws	5	4	5% in NSW (down 2.5%)
Derryn Hinch	1	1	1.5% in Victoria (down 2%)
Neil Mitchell	1	0.5	
Mike Carlton	-	0.5	
Stan Zemanek	1	^	
Someone else mentioned	1.5	1	
Can't say	17	15.5	
<b>Total Yes, invade people's privacy unnecessarily*</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 15**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Internet Sites specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Internet Sites	
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>
	%	%
YouTube	-	1.5
Ninemsn	0.5	1
Yahoo.com.au	-	1
MySpace	-	1
Google	-	0.5
Facebook	-	0.5
Pornographic Sites	1	^
Advertising Sites / Pop-ups / Any Site Promoting Themselves	0.5	^
SPAM	0.5	-
Hotmail	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	2	2.5
Can't say	17	21.5
<b>Total Yes, invade people's privacy unnecessarily*</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%



**Table 16 –Left-wing leaning**

Respondents were asked: “Do you believe Newspaper Journalists/ TV Reporters or Journalists/ Talk-back Radio Announcers/ Internet Sites are too left-wing leaning?”

	Newspaper Journalists		TV Reporters or Journalists		Talk-back Radio Announcers		Internet Sites	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, too left-wing leaning	22	24	20	20	17	15	5	7
No, not too left-wing leaning	55	48	58	53	57	57	43	46
Can't say	23	28	22	27	26	28	52	47
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 17**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Newspaper Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Newspaper Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
All / Most	-	0.5
Named journalists including Andrew Bolt, Bridget Sheridan & Cameron England	^	0.5
The Age	0.5	0.5
Jill Singer	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	1.5	8.5
Can't say	18.5	20.5
Total Yes, are too left-wing leaning*	22	24

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 18**

Respondents were then asked: “Which TV Reporters or Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned TV Reporters or Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
Kerry O'Brien	1.5	1.5
ABC TV	0.5	0.5
Tony Jones (ABC)	-	0.5
A Current Affair	-	0.5
60 Minutes	-	0.5
Ray Martin	1	-
Laurie Oakes	0.5	-
Steve Lieberman	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	1.5	4
Can't say	15	16
Total Yes, are too left-wing leaning*	20	20

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 19**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Talk-back Radio Announcers specifically?”

	<b>Most often mentioned Talk-back Radio Announcers</b>		
	<b><u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u></b>	<b><u>July 25/26, 2007</u></b>	
	%	%	
John Laws	2.5	2.5	4.5% in NSW
Alan Jones	2.5	1.5	2.5% in NSW (down 1.5%)
Mike Carlton	0.5	0.5	
Neil Mitchell	-	0.5	
Jon Faine	-	0.5	
Derryn Hinch	0.5	-	
Liam Bartlett	0.5	-	
Someone else mentioned	2	1	
Can't say	10.5	10	
<b>Total Yes, are too left-wing leaning*</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 20**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Internet Sites specifically?”

	<b>Most often mentioned Internet Sites</b>	
	<b><u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u></b>	<b><u>July 25/26, 2007</u></b>
	%	%
Ninemsn	-	1
Yahoo.com.au	-	0.5
Mentioned another site	0.5	1
Can't say	4	5
<b>Total Yes, are too left-wing leaning*</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>7</b>

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 21 – Right-wing leaning**

Respondents were asked: “Do you believe Newspaper Journalists/ TV Reporters or Journalists/ Talk-back Radio Announcers/ Internet Sites are too right-wing leaning?”

	Newspaper Journalists		TV Reporters or Journalists		Talk-back Radio Announcers		Internet Sites	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, too right-wing leaning	22	19	17	15	26	24	5	5
No, not too right-wing leaning	54	50	59	54	47	45	41	46
Can't say	24	31	24	31	27	31	54	49
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Table 22**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Newspaper Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Newspaper Journalists		
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007	
	%	%	
Piers Akerman	1.5	1	2.5% in NSW (down 1.5%)
Andrew Bolt	1.5	1	3% in Victoria (down 1.5%)
Gerard Henderson	0.5	1	2.5% in NSW
Dennis Shanahan	-	0.5	
Miranda Devine	-	0.5	
Herald Sun	0.5	^	
Telegraph	1	-	
Someone else mentioned	2	5.5	
Can't say	16	15.5	
Total Yes, are too right-wing leaning*	22	19	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 23**

Respondents were then asked: “Which TV Reporters or Journalists specifically?”

	Most often mentioned TV Reporters or Journalists	
	Sep 1/2, 2004	July 25/26, 2007
	%	%
Naomi Robson	0.5	0.5
Channel 9	0.5	0.5
Channel 7	-	0.5
Ray Martin	1.5	^
Steve Lieberman	0.5	-
Someone else mentioned	2	7
Can't say	13	13
Total Yes, are too right-wing leaning*	17	15

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

^ Less than 0.5%

**Table 24**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Talk-back Radio Announcers specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Talk-back Radio Announcers		
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>	
	%	%	
Alan Jones	13.5	9.5	16% in NSW (down 5.5%)
John Laws	9	7	10.5% in NSW (down 2%)
Neil Mitchell	1	1	4% in Victoria
Stan Zemanek	2	0.5	
Ray Hadley	-	0.5	
Mike Carlton	-	0.5	
Howard Sattler	-	0.5	
Derryn Hinch	0.5	-	
Someone else mentioned	3	1.5	
Can't say	9.5	10.5	
<b>Total Yes, are too right-wing leaning*</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	

\* Note: Some people gave more than one response

**Table 25**

Respondents were then asked: “Which Internet Sites specifically?”

	Most often mentioned Internet Sites	
	<u>Sep 1/2, 2004</u>	<u>July 25/26, 2007</u>
	%	%
News site (unspecified)	-	0.5
Ninemsn	0.5	^
Yahoo.com.au	^	^
Foxnews.com	^	-
News.com.au	^	-
ABC.net.au	^	-
Someone else mentioned	^	1
Can't say	4	3.5
<b>Total Yes, are too right-wing leaning</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

^ Less than 0.5%