After the killing fields
Post-pandemic changes in journalism employment in Australia and Aotearoa/ New Zealand

Abstract: This article continues a longitudinal national study of journalism employment in Australia and contributes to new understandings of journalism employment in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Results suggest a shift in the organisational landscape of the media in Australia, with an expansion of large organisations at the 'top,' and a considerable loss of small micro-ventures (largely based online) at the 'bottom.' Implications include stronger centralised editorial control at the corporate level, urbanisation and homogenisation of media producers and product, and reduced opportunities for creative entry-level roles.

Keywords: Australia, employment, journalism; journalism education, labour, media companies, New Zealand, regionalism

JOHN COKLEY
Griffith University, Queensland
PETER JOHN CHEN
University of Sydney
JOANNA BERESFORD
Central Queensland University
ALEXIS BUNDY
University of Sydney

Introduction

THIS RESEARCH extends studies undertaken in 2007 and 2013 that explored the number and concentration of journalism jobs in Australia. Written during the peak of a transition to digital production and distribution, they identified alterations for employment and the development of a long tail (Anderson, 2006) in the media landscape, tracing the rise of small and micro-media organisations employing a majority of reporters, producers and editors. This challenged a focus on big media organisations as the primary employment destination for journalism students, highlighting a break with an identity associated with a singular and ongoing employer. Under this new entrepreneurial mode, journalists have been encouraged to adopt a market-oriented identity and expected to act like a ‘company of one’ (Cohen, 2015, p. 527).

This study provides a breakdown of journalism employment in Australia and introduces Aotearoa/New Zealand data from 2021. While considerable attention in recent years has focused on the loss of newspaper mastheads and employment, this analysis suggests that, in addition to these losses, other sectors have had considerably deeper contractions.

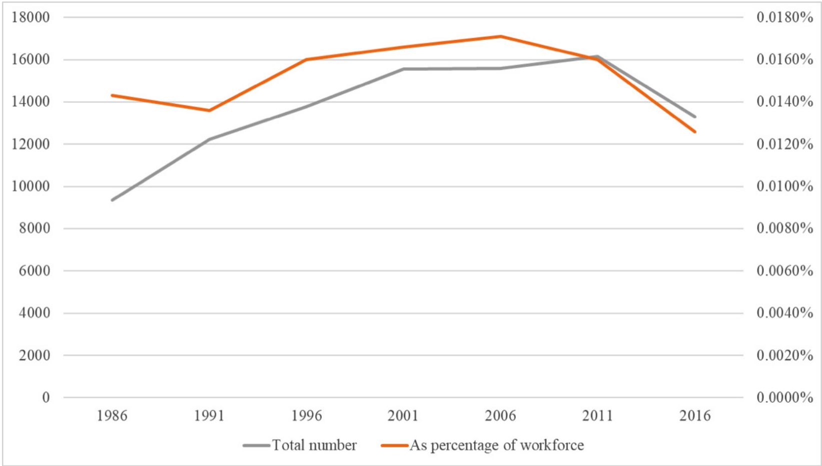
This article begins with an overview of literature about journalism employment in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, and reflections on their implications for media workers, consumers and educators. Following a review of method, we provide an overview of the state of editorial jobs in the media marketplaces. This includes a review of media organisations and employment of editorial workers, as well as spatial, organisational, and sub-sector comparisons. The study introduces comparative figures for the Aotearoa/New Zealand market for the first time, establishing a baseline for that country.

Changes in journalism employment

There has been considerable interest in changes in journalism employment over the past 15 years. Our 2007 study identified 2,770 journalism enterprises in Australia employing 7,969 editorial staff (Cokley & Ranke, 2011) while O’Regan and Young reported the number of editorial and journalism jobs in Australia five years later, in 2011, at about 16,000 (2019). The Department of Employment projected employment growth through to 2018 (in 2014, cited in O’Donnell, 2017b) and this was partly supported by our second longitudinal study in 2013, which reported 3,346 enterprises and 11,635 editorial jobs (Cokley et al., 2015). The O’Regan and Young study included self-identified journalists or editors in paid employment in newspapers and periodicals, as well as those publishing online and in broadcasting. However, that growth seems to have generated mainly hot-house flowers. The Australian journalists’ union reported that the number of journalism jobs in print and broadcasting reportedly dropped by 3,000 places between 2012 and 2017 (Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, 2018, p. 4), with around 30 percent estimated to be employed part-time, a figure mirrored globally (O’Donnell, 2017a).

O’Regan and Young produced their estimate of Australians employed in journalism through an analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, adjusting to exclude people working in related areas not involved in the direct creation of journalistic content. Their analysis (Figure 1), which includes total employment and employment as a percentage of the overall labour market, suggests that while there was an expansionist tendency late in the 20th century, there was a flattening and decline early in the 21st. Since that study, the Public Interest Journalism Initiative identified a spike in newspaper rationalisation in 2020 with the loss of print editions, closures of newsrooms and considerable service reductions, followed by another set of closures

Figure 1: Australian census data —journalism employment



Note: Adjusted figures compiled from (O'Regan & Young, 2019)

amid the pandemic in 2021 (Dickson, 2021).

Importantly, this contains a shift in the type of work done in media organisations. O'Regan and Young conclude that the 2011-2016 loss of print journalists has not seen a direct transfer to similar types of roles in electronic media, but a shift from journalism activities into professions that employ similar skills, but which are not involved in the direct creation of news content (2019, p. 31).

The Aotearoa/New Zealand experience has similarities and differences to that of Australia. While Aotearoa/New Zealand experienced an influx of some editorial jobs with the relocation of Australian production activities in 2014 (Knight, 2013), the country followed general trends towards consolidation in the face of revenue losses associated with internet-enabled competition and the introduction of digital intermediators.

Further, trans-Tasman ownership of media organisations facilitated rationalisation through syndication. Myllylahti and Baker (2019) identified 2019 as a key year for the Aotearoa/New Zealand media landscape, with changes in ownership of commercial television and within public broadcasting, reporting in 2020 the loss of 637 media jobs (Myllylahti, 2020, p. 23). The pandemic placed considerable pressure on Aotearoa/New Zealand media organisations, including considerable rationalisations of employment in newspapers and the withdrawal of Bauer Media NZ from the magazine market (Treadwell, 2020, p. 34). This marked a low point for editorial employment in that country, presenting the loss of many hundreds of workers in the print sector at a time when public interest journalism was critical. During the pandemic the national government introduced a NZ$50 million temporary direct industry support package, as well as providing media workers access to the generalised employment subsidy scheme (Hope, 2020). These temporary interventions led to some employment creation in 2021 (Hope et al., 2021). Further, a number of Bauer titles were acquired by an Australian investment company and spared the axe, and Stuff (the publisher of both significant online and paper news) was acquired by its CEO from its Australian owner Nine, returning the company to domestic ownership (Robie, 2024).

Trends in employment and practice

An important trend has been the creation of a youthful workforce that increasingly works freelance (O'Donnell, 2017a). According to Molloy and Bromley (2009, p. 79) this has been associated with digital industry restructuring. As 'digital first' has now become the standard production process for most media organisations, this reflects a change in the logic of production and the type of skillset valued by employers (O'Donnell, 2017b).

While this talks of a vibrant workforce with new opportunities, O'Donnell describes many of these jobs as 'less than ideal,' noting Australian industry surveys 'identify recurring concerns about lower-paid, non-union younger journalists displacing older, higher-paid journalists' (2017a). A 2015 Aotearoa/New Zealand study associated the digital transition with positive impacts on skilling, but also increased time pressures and long hours, with concerns about professional standards (Hollings et al., 2016). This shift in employment affects informal power over editorial processes (Neilson, 2020, pp. 126-7). The loss of continuing and full-time employment in journalism has seen a corresponding shift to insecure and freelance work, which O'Donnell sees as associated with 'little bargaining power to negotiate with employers on working conditions or workplace change' (2018, p. 26; see also Brady, 2022).

Yet optimism continues. Following the 2013 study, Cokley et al. identified the persistence of a long tail in Australian media production organisations: a head comprised of a small number of quite large organisations and a big group of quite small organisations (under ten editorial staff) representing most media organisations and employment. These were mainly magazines and regional newspapers in 2007, but the 2013 study showed a considerable rationalisation of magazines and a ten-fold expansion of online-only publications.

This reflects the development of 'entrepreneurial journalism' (Cohen, 2015) that has relied on low-cost distribution, aimed at producing sustainable, focused ventures. On one hand, this type of 'venture labour' (Neff, 2012) permits a greater diversity of voices, news agendas and market segments to be serviced (Kailahi, 2009), but alternatively increases the exposure of editorial practices to market demands and spreads precarity (Cokley, 2019).

Implications for democratic practices

The nature of the media industry in a political jurisdiction gives rise to functionalist considerations of the degree of public service the sector provides. Ownership presents a variety of implications for media diversity and representativeness, including the potential share of voice that individual media proprietors may have (either their agenda setting influence or the role that content syndication plays in message homogenisation), what parts of the community are employed and represented through the media, and concerns about foreign ownership.

In some ways, the two nations have a considerably different pattern of ownership of media organisations. Australia has maintained a media policy which notionally aims to keep the industry 'distinctly Australian' (O'Donnell, 2017b), with new transparency requirements developed in 2018 including a register of foreign ownership. This policy preference aside, the dominance of News Corporation in the Australian market illustrates how powerful media actors can work around these types of rules (Papandrea & Tiffen, 2016). Both nations have seen deregulation policies that have been associated with industry consolidation. While Australia is remarkable for the degree of ownership concentration that has developed, Aotearoa/New Zealand retains considerable independent media. However, the practical impact of this is modest in areas of key media policy interest, such as news and current affairs distribution. Australia is dominated by News Corporation and the Nine group (with the public broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, significant in the share of voice online and in radio). Aotearoa New Zealand is dominated by two companies (Stuff and NZME; Loan et al., 2021), with the public broadcasters (Radio NZ and TVNZ) similarly significant in news and current affairs in that country (with the 2020 proposed merger of these organisations called off in early 2023). As Loan et al. observe, Aotearoa/New Zealand has three overlapping 'near duopolies' in print, radio and television, with a paid television monopoly (p. 65). Overall, this produces a type of ownership concentration that Gaber and Tiffen identify as extreme, describing Australia's media system as more like China or Egypt than most democratic nations (2018, p. 34).

Agenda concentration is not simply an ownership issue, but can be found in concerns about lack of descriptive representation of the extent to which the population of journalists and editors looks like the markets they service—and the loss of context relevant to the two nations' comparatively sparsely populated regional areas. The physically large landmass of Australia means ownership concentration is also associated with geographical concentration. As a result, 'Sydney is the undisputed "news capital" of Australia.' (O'Donnell, 2017b). Wholesale closure of local newspapers, and increased syndication of content feeds concerns about the urbanisation of production, however the city focus of journalism might begin before this, with journalism training dominated by urban institutions.

Empirically, this loss of local news directly fails to meet the preferences of Australian news consumers, who rate local news as one of the most important (Watkins et al., 2017, p.9). As Park et al. found in their 2020 survey of Australian media consumers, local news sources are preferred for information about local events (p. 10) —a finding that recognises the importance of local knowledge and engagement in accurately reporting local stories. In Aotearoa New Zealand, de Bonnaire et al. report strong public support for local reporting (2019, pp. 64-5). Further, Bowd has argued that local media organisations are important in fostering social capital—valuable community connection that builds resilience—and regional identity (2011). Writing about hyperlocal journalism in Aotearoa New Zealand, Downman and Murray identify the importance of local journalism in bonding rural and urban communities (2020, p. 255).

Locality is not the only representation issue facing journalism. *The Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* report provides a stark picture of the under-representation of cultural diversity in television news and current affairs in Australia today. Examining presenters, commentators and reporters on free-to-air television, the researchers note that only six per cent had either an Indigenous or non-European background, lagging considerably behind the social diversity of the society for which they speak. This problem is accentuated when looking at editorial decision makers in these institutions, with the report identifying no women or people from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds in these roles in free-to-air television national news (Arvanitakis et al., 2020). After the publication of the report, in 2020 the public broadcaster SBS appointed a woman as director news and current affairs.

Similar issues have been identified in the New Zealand context, with writers like Kailahi (2009), Robie (2009) and Rahman (2022) highlighting the needs of emerging communities to fund representation and presence in the New Zealand media ecosystem. On this front, Loan et al. (2021) have stated that ‘There is a lack of diversity within newsrooms, particularly with respect to Māori, Pasifika and Asian journalists’ (p.8).

Research method

We employed content analysis. Content analysis represents a range of approaches, with our application focused on the ‘objective, systematic and quantitative description of manifest content’ (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). The 2007 data set was produced from entries contained within that year’s edition of the Margaret Gee’s *Australian Media Guide*. The 2013 data set was drawn from the then last quarter edition of that year’s guide. The current dataset, representing 2021, was drawn from the 118th print edition of the guide, produced in April, with the unit of analysis being media enterprises.

Margaret Gee’s is produced in print and online. In production for over 33 years, it is a popular reference used by advertising and public relations practitioners (Sullivan, 2011, p. 22). As such, it remains the best indicator of the media business in Australia, listing virtually all newspapers, magazines, broadcasters, agencies, speciality publications and online media in Australia (Baverstock & Bowen, 2019, p. 252). In most cases it provides a list of journalists, producers and other staff at each enterprise, making it a very useful tool in tracking changes in employment within the media sector. Significantly, it subclassifies organisations into a range of industry segments divided by media form and genre, which permits a level of analysis that is denied us in census-based studies of individuals. Recently, the Guide included Aotearoa/New Zealand, providing an opportunity for comparative analysis for the first time.

A weakness of the use of the Guide compared with census-based studies, however, is its focus on formal employment, with freelancers and unlisted micro ventures generally not included. These limitations aside, it remains a useful object of study, being recently employed in studies of medical and health journalists (Furlan, 2016) and sports journalists (English, 2019).

To capture data from the Guide, two coders worked to systematically digitise all entries. Each entry included the publication name, website address, frequency of publication, classification category, head office location, as well as the names, titles and contact information for editorial and other staff, such as management and advertising contacts. This process extended beyond simply the digitisation of information contained within the *Guide*, as individual staff entries were assessed to determine whether they could be classified as content producers. This was defined in the study codebook, but expansively included all those staff engaged in the production of content, such as conventional journalists, but also other writers, photographers and videographers, and editorial workers. These are referred to using the nomenclature of 'editorial staff'. Thus, while a degree of interpretation was required, the approach remains strongly within the basic content analysis approach (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Each organisation was assigned, at minimum, one editorial staff member.

Following data entry, four coders cross-coded 238 entries to ascertain Intercoder Reliability Measures. 95.8 percent of categorical data was entered correctly. The editorial staff interval data demonstrated a 0.929 Krippendorff's alpha, a high degree of agreement in the coding of the primary unit of interest: editorial staff engaged in non-advertising content production.

Findings

The analysis provides overall figures for the number of media organisations and their editorial employees in Australia (2,299 organisations with 13,356 editorial staff) and Aotearoa/New Zealand (326 and 1,703). There has been a considerable rationalisation in Australia which has seen the number of unique organisations (rising 20 percent during 2007-2013) contracting considerably during the period 2013-2021 (contracting by 31 percent) with almost one in three media organisations closing or consolidated. While total employment grew in our analysis during this period, it is likely that the gap in data collection excludes an actual peak between 2013-2016, given the analysis of O'Regan and Young. In 2013-2021, the areas of major organisational contraction have been multicultural press (see below), news agencies (contracting 40 percent) and magazines (contracting 39 percent). Organisations that survived this period have become larger employers on average, indicating a mix of consolidation and market expansion. To provide an estimate of total employment, factoring in that freelancers represent 25 percent of jobs, editorial workers are approximately 16,695 in Australia at the end of 2021 (2,129 for Aotearoa/New Zealand). Note that table results are presented against the data captured from the Guide only.

Geographical distribution of media jobs

Given concerns about urbanisation because of consolidation, the disproportionate loss of regional newspapers and descriptive representation of content producers in the media, location data contained within the Guide permits an understanding of the spatial distribution of media organisations and editorial workers.

Using a spatial analysis focusing on 'remoteness' (Table 1, Australia) and 'urban accessibility' (Table 2, Aotearoa/New Zealand) we provide a breakdown of both organisational and editorial staff numbers against the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) five remoteness bands and Statistics New Zealand Urban Accessibility Indicator. These concepts reflect access to services and the lived experiences of residents. In the tables, we can see how organisations and editorial staff are disproportionately located in dense urban areas, while smaller urban and rural hinterlands are underrepresented by media organisations and workers

Table 1: Number of unique organisation entries in Australia

	Organisations	Orgs. %	Editorial staff	Editorial staff %	Population %	Orgs. diff.	Editorial staff diff.
Major Cities	1,566	68.414	10,964	82.263	72.035	-3.621	10.228
Inner Regional	286	12.495	994	7.458	17.787	-5.292	-10.329
Outer Regional	308	13.456	991	7.435	8.212	5.244	-0.776
Remote	68	2.971	176	1.321	1.165	1.806	0.155
Very Remote	61	2.665	203	1.523	0.802	1.863	0.721
Total	2,289	100	13,328	100	100		

Note: By ABS measure of remoteness.

Table 2: Number of unique organisation entries in Aotearoa NZ							
	Organi-sations	Orgs. %	Editorial staff	Editorial staff %	Popula-tion %	Orgs. diff.	Editorial staff diff.
Major urban area	175	55.031	995	59.121	51.393	3.638	7.727
Large urban area	88	27.673	492	29.234	13.996	13.677	15.238
Medium urban area	4	1.258	12	0.713	8.520	-7.262	-7.807
High urban accessibility	0	0.000	0	0.000	4.172	-4.172	-4.172
Medium urban accessibility	8	2.516	22	1.307	7.881	-5.365	-6.574
Low urban accessibility	36	11.321	138	8.200	9.519	1.801	-1.320
Remote	3	0.943	11	0.654	3.776	-2.833	-3.123
Very remote	1	0.314	1	0.059	0.732	-0.417	-0.672
Inland water	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Inlet	3	0.943	12	0.713	0.009	0.934	0.704
Oceanic	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.001	-0.001	-0.001
Total	318	100	1683	100	100		

Note: By Statistics NZ Urban.

on a per capita basis. This might reflect the way that media organisations see inner rural and urban hinterlands as 'accessible' to larger city-based journalists.

In Australia, newspaper and radio organisations run counter to the tendency towards urbanisation when looking at mastheads. Again, however, regional organisations in this category are smaller in terms of employees comparatively. Other media forms are concentrated in major Australian cities. Focusing on newspapers, their low employee numbers likely reflect the retention of online only regional mastheads during the considerable rationalisation by News Limited in 2020.

Organisational characteristics

The dataset allows the comparative size of organisations to be identified where we can see that the larger country has larger media organisations overall (maximum size 330 editorial staff compared with 172 in Aotearoa New Zealand), but that the average size of media organisations in both nations is comparatively the same (mean of 5.8 in Australia compared with 5.2 in Aotearoa New Zealand). This talks to the established 'long tail' effect with about 90 percent of organisations in both

Table 3: Australian edditorial staff						
	2007 study	2013 study	2007-2013 growth %	2021 study	2021 total %	2012-2021 growth%
Total media outlets	2,770	3,346	20.794	2299	100.000	-31.291
Outlets employing >/=10 editorial staff	99	175	76.767	245	10.657	40.000
Outlets employing <10 editorial staff	2,357	3,171	34.535	2054	89.343	-35.225
Outlets classed as micro (1 or 2)	N.R.	2,454	NA	1127	49.021	-54.075
Smaller excluding micro	N.R.	717	NA	927	40.322	29.289
Staff in larger newsrooms (>10)	3,407	5,531	62.342	8869	66.405	60.351
Staff in smaller newsroom (<10)	4,560	6,104	33.859	4487	33.595	-26.491
Staff in micro newsrooms	N.R.	2,981	NA	1127	8.438	-62.194
Smaller excluding micro	N.R.	3123	NA	3360	25.157	7.589
Total editorial staff	7,967	11,635	46.039	13356	100.000	14.792

Note: By organisational size (with comparisons) N.R. = not recorded.

jurisdictions having fewer than 10 editorial workers. In Australia, between 2013 and 2021, the number of organisations with 10 or more editorial workers doubled. As illustrated in Table 3, this area of the media sector is the only one that has demonstrated growth, with small and micro organisations (those with only one or two employees) in decline. Significantly given the interest in entrepreneurial journalism, the loss of micro-ventures is a significant finding and shows where the considerable loss of employment has occurred amidst the general reporting focus that has tended to emphasise cuts within the largest media organisations. Table 4 provides an Aotearoa/New Zealand comparator with the 2021 Australian figures, lacking data from previous years, but the distribution of organisation size is remarkably similar in the two nations.

Big media

Media organisations in Australia that have 50 or more editorial staff have grown considerably over the past eight years, with 41 of these, up from 25. Notable entries are Australian Associated Press news bureau service (relaunched with a new ownership structure in 2020), *The Guardian Australia* (established in 2013), and the *Daily Mail Australia* (2013). Demonstrating consolidation among

Table 4: Aotearoa/New Zealand edditorial staff 2021			
	2021 Study	Total %	Comparison with Australia
Total media outlets	326	100.000	
Outlets employing >10 editorial staff	33	10.123	-0.534
Outlets employing <10 editorial staff	293	89.877	0.534
Outlets classed as micro (1 or 2)	163	50.000	0.979
Smaller excluding micro	130	39.877	-0.445
Staff in larger newsrooms (>10)	1140	66.941	0.536
Staff in smaller newsrooms (<10)	563	33.059	-0.536
Staff in micro newsrooms	163	9.571	1.133
Smaller excluding micro	400	23.488	-1.669
Total editorial staff	1703	100.000	

Note: By organisational size.

domestic organisations (Table 5), those that were also listed in 2013 have grown by 30 editorial staff on average over the preceding analysis.

Aotearoa/New Zealand has comparatively fewer big media organisations with 50 or more editorial staff (five, in descending order: *New Zealand Herald,* RNZ National, TVNZ, Stuff and Newshub), with the public broadcasters making up most employment.

Multicultural media

Since the last study there has been a considerable loss of media organisations that service multi-cultural communities in Australia. Of those identified in 2013, only half the number remained in 2021. Only Arabic reading communities saw an increase during the past eight years. Aotearoa New Zealand lacks an Arabic press, which might have helped with representation of Muslim communities in the Aotearoa/New Zealand media, both before and after the Christchurch Mosque terror attack in 2019 (Rahman, 2022).

In 2016, 1.4 percent of the Australian population used a language other than English at home. Consolidation has occurred in the Chinese newspaper marketplace, and has lost longstanding mastheads, such as the *Sing Tao Daily* in 2020 (established 1982). The Chinese newspaper industry in Australia is particularly interesting, given concerns about influence from the Chinese Government over local media outlets, and reports that Australian Chinese-language outlets critical of

Table 5: Australian big media workplaces 2013 & 2021						
Rank	2013 Rank	Movement	Organisation	2013 staff	New in list	2021 staff
1	5	4	The Sydney Morning Herald	167		330
2	4	2	The Australian	191		259
3	1	-2	The Age	292		247
4	13	9	Channel 9	77		239
5			ABC News		Yes	230
6			ABC TV		Yes	220
7			Channel 7		Yes	211
8			ABC		Yes	180
9	12	3	ABC Radio National	87		179
10	7	-3	Australian Financial Review	135		154
11	3	-8	Herald Sun	194		136
12			Channel 10		Yes	129
13	9	-4	The Daily Telegraph	112		121
14	25	11	The Advertiser	50		113
15	10	-5	The West Australian	105		109
16			Sky News Australia		Yes	106
17			The Guardian Australia		Yes	93
18	6	-12	The Courier-Mail	136		91
19	15	-4	SBS TV	67		90
			2GB		Yes	90
20			news.com.au		Yes	84
21	16	-6	3AW	64		83
22			ABC Radio Sydney		Yes	78
23			Channel 9 - Sydney News		Yes	78
24			ABC Radio Melbourne		Yes	76
25			Fox Sports		Yes	71
26			The Sun-Herald		Yes	67
27			SBS Radio Sydney		Yes	65
28	23	-6	The Canberra Times	52		64
29			Australian Associated Press		Yes	63
30			ABC News Melbourne		Yes	61
31			Channel 9 - Brisbane News		Yes	60
32			triple j		Yes	59
33			The Sunday Age		Yes	58
34			Daily Mail Australia		Yes	57
35			ABC News Brisbane		Yes	54
36			Newcastle Herald		Yes	53
			SBS Radio Melbourne		Yes	53
37	22	-16	Channel 9 - Melbourne News	52		52
38			ABC Regional Radio Network		Yes	51
39	17	-23	Channel 7 - Brisbane News	58		50

Note: With 50 or more editorial employees.

the Chinese Communist Party have been starved of advertising revenue. (Joske et al., 2020, p. 19). As Chinese dialects are the most spoken non-English community languages, a larger Chinese language market could be expected in Australia. While diasporic communities are increasingly able to access media from their country of origin online (Goirizelaia & Berriochoa, 2019, pp. 109-15), these sources do not provide information of relevance to migrant communities such as local political news or emergency information.

Discussion

Since the previous iteration of this study, the media sector in Australia appears to have expanded to a peak and now begun a process of contraction. This is felt at the organisational level, with fewer organisations recorded compared with employment. This demonstrates both consolidation among larger media ventures, but also the loss of micro-ventures. As comparative data for Aotearoa/ New Zealand is not available, it is uncertain whether this specific tendency has occurred there, but that market has seen consolidation over the past decade to some degree and some of the structural drivers around revenue are the same.

The loss of large numbers of micro-ventures since 2013 is of particular importance, not only in the loss of absolute numbers of workers, but also in the way the finding informs public policy. During 2020-2021 debates about the Australian News Media Bargaining Code—a set of laws that facilitated news organisations gaining compensation for the loss of revenue to digital platforms—focused on questions about sustainability and the relative power of media organisations in relation to media platform providers. The aftermath of the temporary refusal to supply by Facebook saw major news organisations striking profit-sharing arrangements with the technology companies; however, small ventures have been excluded. Policy makers will need to consider how mechanisms such as the bargaining code can be practically refined to ensure the sustainability of these ventures, given they tend to be purely online-only and lack capacity for direct negotiations with platform providers.

To some extent, this might also address issues associated with the under-supply of media servicing ethnic and linguistic minorities. On the one hand, the contraction of multi-cultural presses appears to be a function of the accessibility of home-nation media to diaspora communities, and this appears to be disproportionally affecting established communities who are likely to have better access to English language news than religious, national and linguistic communities that are now more highly represented in migration numbers and likely to benefit from specialised local language media in the processes of acclimatisation and adjustment. The loss of established multicultural media organisations present concerns, however, in terms of descriptive representational characteristics of the media system overall.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, considerable concerns have been expressed for the state of journalism in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, with interrelated pressures from online media, as well as rationalisation and consolidation within media organisations seen as having a considerable downward pressure on employment opportunities.

Since the previous study, the journalism employment market in Australia has contracted, with the loss of many mastheads and media organisations. Where employment in major outlets has risen over the previous study, we estimate a decline of a peak between studies. Further, there are questions about the quality of personnel and skills, and trends have been uneven across the sector. Small operations remain under pressure; magazines and multicultural presses are the most likely to have shut. Centrally, this article reports that there has been a shift in the organisational landscape of the media in Australia, with the expansion of large organisations at the top and a considerable loss of micro-ventures. This has exacerbated tendencies in the media landscape: strong centralised editorial control at the corporate level; urbanisation and homogenisation of media producers and product; and reduced opportunities for creative entry-level roles, worker autonomy, and the industrial capacity of media workers. Thus, while a long tail continues to exist, it is shortening. The analysis concludes that the long-predicted consolidation in the media sector has continued. It would require new interventions by policy makers and tertiary educators to make a change by supporting innovative, smaller media ventures and equipping their employees and graduates better to exploit all opportunities.

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Dr John Cokley is an adjunct associate professor in the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, Griffith University, and in the Griffith Business School. His latest work, published in 2024 in the Handbook of Applied Journalism: Theory and Practice *from Spring* Nature*, proposes a radical new theory of journalism.*
j.cokley@griffith.edu.au

Dr Peter John Chen is a senior lecturer in the Discipline of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney.
peter.chen@sydney.edu.au

Joanna Beresford is currently a PhD candidate and research assistant at Central Queensland University School of Education and The Arts.
joanna.beresford@cqumail.com

Alexis Bundy is a prize-winning graduate of the University of Sydney, holding a Bachelor of Arts with majors in Politics and American Studies. She has participated in journalism programmes such as the School of the New York Times.
abun7694@uni.sydney.edu.au