LINA
Local & Independent News Association



Independent news publishers and journalists at the 2026 LINA Summit in Murray Bridge, SA.

Annual Membership **SURVEY**

2026

A snapshot of the Australian local and independent news landscape

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About the survey

LINA is a not-for-profit industry association providing capacity building support for Australian local and independent newsrooms. This survey of news organisations in the LINA membership was conducted in July 2026.

The findings from this survey are not intended to represent a comprehensive picture of Australia's independent media. LINA is sharing this report to provide a snapshot profile of a sample of the news media industry, and share insight into the unique challenges and wins experienced by the news organisations in the LINA membership.

Eighty-five publishers of a news organisation participated, which collectively publish 118 newsrooms.

Throughout this report, a **news organisation or business** is defined as the entity that owns and operates a newsroom or a number of newsrooms. Each **newsroom** is a unique masthead, news service or publication serving a defined audience and upholding the LINA eligibility criteria. Some news organisations operate more than one newsroom.

LINA

HALLMARKS OF MEMBERSHIP

All newsrooms represented in this survey must be meeting LINA's membership eligibility requirements:

- Publishing high-quality news content that meets the Australian Press Council's Principles and Standards of Practice and LINA Editorial Standards
- Publishing digitally (many also distribute with print, radio and/or podcast or other platforms)
- Independently owned, within the community they serve
- Engaging journalists and contributors who are based within the location or community they serve
- Producing content that is community-focused, delivering public interest journalism and information on a broad range of topics to the community, and responsive to the needs and priorities of their community.

LINA began accepting members in 2022, and conducted its first member survey in June 2023. Twenty-five news organisations have completed this annual survey every year since and we provide some comparative findings among this group across the report.



Delegates at LINA's 2026 Annual Summit

	National	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Newsrooms	40	2	58	2	35	7	4	31	7

Foreword

This year's survey presented a broadly encouraging picture of local and independent news publishing.

The findings reflected a membership at very different stages of development, from new community ventures to established news businesses. Many smaller publications continued to depend on significant contributions by their founders as they built the audiences and revenue needed to support paid employment, while more established news organisations operated across multiple newsrooms and drew from multiple sources of revenue.

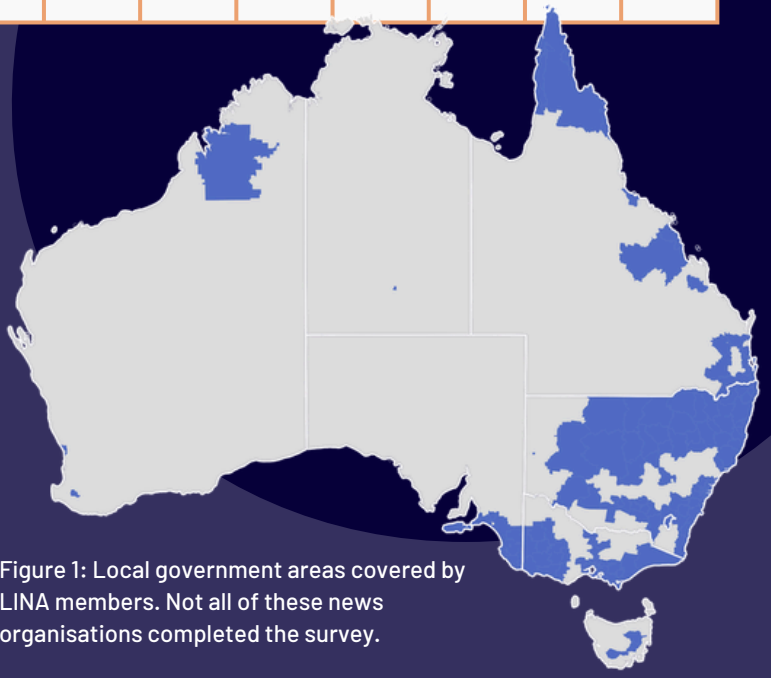


Figure 1: Local government areas covered by LINA members. Not all of these news organisations completed the survey.

A**mong the 25 news organisations that have completed every LINA survey since 2023, staffing capacity doubled and revenue continued to grow**. This longer-term view provides encouraging evidence of members developing their organisations over time, even as confidence in current and future sustainability remained understandably mixed across the broader membership.

Surveyed newsrooms produced a substantial amount of journalism. Respondents reported publishing approximately 13,000 stories a month, 83 per cent of which were originally produced by those newsrooms.

The examples shared throughout this report demonstrate the value of that work: providing urgent information during emergencies, addressing misinformation, strengthening community connections and prompting action by government. These are stories that give voice to the experience and perspectives of people and issues that are not amplified in broader media outlets. All news is local to somewhere, and thus the reporting of stories that would otherwise go untold is essential to the fabric of public dialogue.

The broader environment has remained challenging, with rising costs,a soft advertising market, and in particular, rapid developments in artificial intelligence all having an impact. AI use among news publishers has almost doubled from last year.

Reassuringly, it seems many publishers were saving time on operational and administrative tasks but AI use for editorial purposes remained minimal. AI cannot, and should not, replace the work of journalists spending time in communities, speaking with and interviewing people, analysing information with important cultural and locally relevant context, and fact-checking and verification.

Government support through the Journalism Assistance Fund provided welcome assistance during this period. We hope policy levers such as the News Innovation Fund, the News Bargaining Incentive and copyright royalties will provide meaningful, ongoing support to local and independent news organisations, and that its impact will be reflected in future surveys.

This report provides a picture of the many small newsrooms serving their communities around Australia. At LINA we will continue to support news publishers to produce high quality public interest journalism for the communities they serve. We need news to navigate our day to day lives, stay connected to one another, and for a functioning democracy.



Claire Stuchbery
LINA Executive Director

Key findings

What did a typical newsroom look like...

2017
Median year of founding

3
Median staff headcount per newsroom

1
Newsroom operated by each news publisher on average

2.0 FTE
Median staff capacity per newsroom

$220k
Median annual revenue per newsroom

39
Original news stories per month on average

2
Median number of volunteers supporting each newsroom

Newsrooms were just as likely to be led by women (49.4%) as men (50.6%)

16k
Median monthly website visitors per newsroom

2
Median number of freelancers contributing to each newsroom

4
Median number of channels that news is distributed through

Newsroom changes over time

A small comparative study of 25 news organisations

Where available, LINA compared responses among the **25 news organisations that had completed the survey every year** since LINA's founding (2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026).

$189,000 2026

Median annual revenue continued to grow...

$169,000 2025

...along with median full-time equivalent staffing:

2.0 FTE 2026

1.3 FTE 2025

The median number of freelancers (two) and volunteers (three) was unchanged from 2025.

Self-ranked business stage dropped slightly from 2025.

KEY FINDINGS CONT.

*Comparisons on this page refer to differences between ***all responses*** this year and previous years. This is why some findings contradict those on the 25 newsrooms surveyed year-on-year.

Organisation

< 10 years
Most news organisations were founded within the last decade

49.4%
Were led by women

REVENUE

The median annual revenue across **all respondents** was $220,000, an overall fall* from last year's $298,000.

Advertising remained the most common source of revenue, followed by sponsored content and government grants. Audience, Grants and Services all grew as revenue sources, while Goods fell.

BUSINESS STAGE & SUSTAINABILITY

54%
rated the future of their news organisation as secure

33%
said the future of their news organisation was uncertain or at risk

Artificial Intelligence

AI use within newsroom jumped from 51% last year to 73% in 2026

Research was the top use of AI, followed by administrative or operational work and for limited editorial support like transcription.

Image generation was used by 40% and content generation by 16% of AI users.

Content

13,000
stories collectively reported during June 2026

83%
original news content (not syndicated)

The median newsroom produced 39 original stories during June 2026, less than the 48 original stories reported in 2025.

Publishing channels

The median newsroom published through four channels, with **82% using at least three** and **36% using five or more.**

The median website received **16,000 unique visitors in June 2026,** with a median time on site of **1 minute and 14 seconds.**

Podcasting dropped as a distribution channel, from 26 per cent last year to only nine per cent in 2026.

64%
Published a newsletter, with a median of **3,460 subscribers.**

48%
printed a newspaper, with a median distribution of approx. **7,000 copies.**

Social media was used as a distribution channel by **80%of newsrooms**. The top platform was Facebook, followed by Instagram.

Organisation

A total of 85 members operating 118 newsrooms responded to the survey. Not every question was answered by every member, so totals may not always equal this overall number.

Respondents to the survey included members from across the LINA membership.

The oldest member publisher of LINA was founded in 1873, and three respondents were founded as recently as 2025. The median founding year was 2017.

Respondents mainly operated a single newsroom (77 per cent).

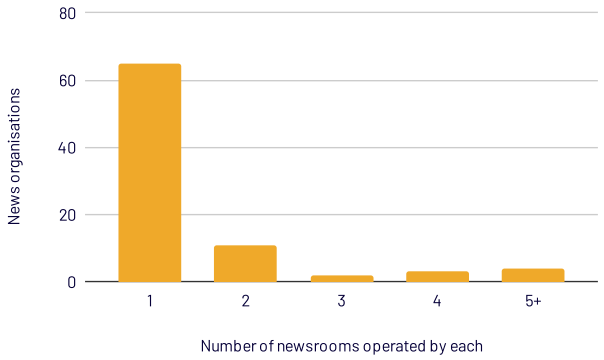


Figure 2: Number of newsrooms operated by each news organisation (n=85).

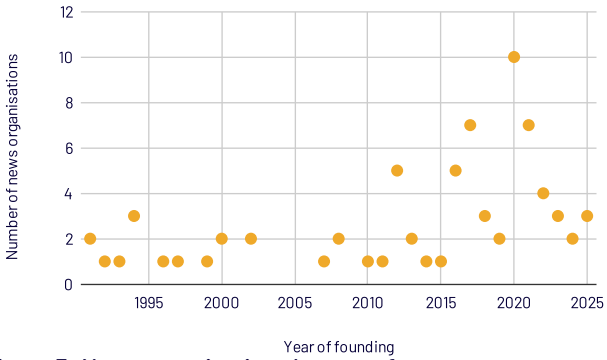


Figure 3: News organisations by year of company founding. Eleven news organisations were founded pre-1990 and are not represented on this chart (n=74)

Staff

Most LINA member news organisations are small, with only a few staff members and a low full-time equivalent. The median staff headcount among all survey respondents was three people working at a median 2.0 full-time equivalent. These staff members were then supported by a median of two freelancers and two volunteers.

Among those member news organisations which have responded to the survey each year since 2023 (n= 25), the median staff full-time equivalent was 2.0. These respondents also engaged a median of two freelancers and three volunteers. This was an increase of 0.7 FTE since the 2025 survey, and a doubling of staff capacity among this group since LINA began surveying. The median number of freelancers engaged by this group was stable since last year, but has increased from one to two since 2023.



Nataya Weaver reporting for the *Manly Observer* in LINA's *Know Your Neighbour* program



Bret Christian of The Post, honoured with the Kennedy Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award 2026

STAFF CONT.

COMPARISON

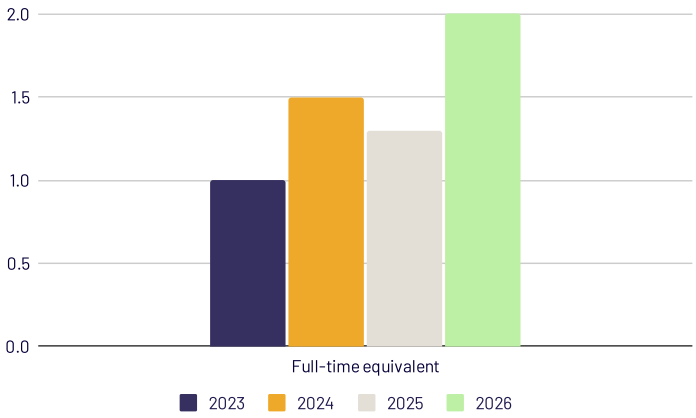


Figure 4: Median number of full-time equivalent staff among ongoing survey respondents, by year (n=25).

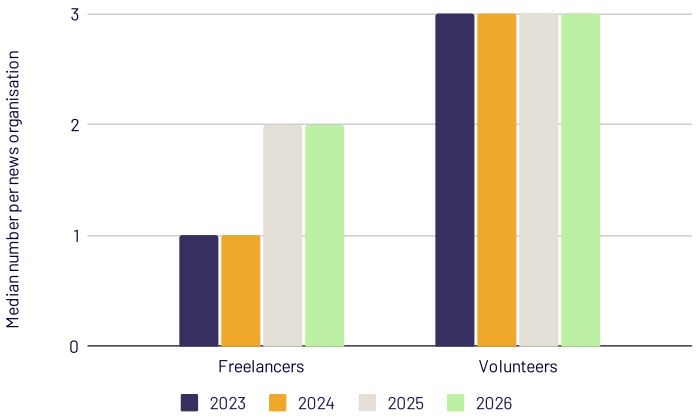


Figure 5: Median number of freelancers and volunteers among ongoing survey respondents, by year (n=25).

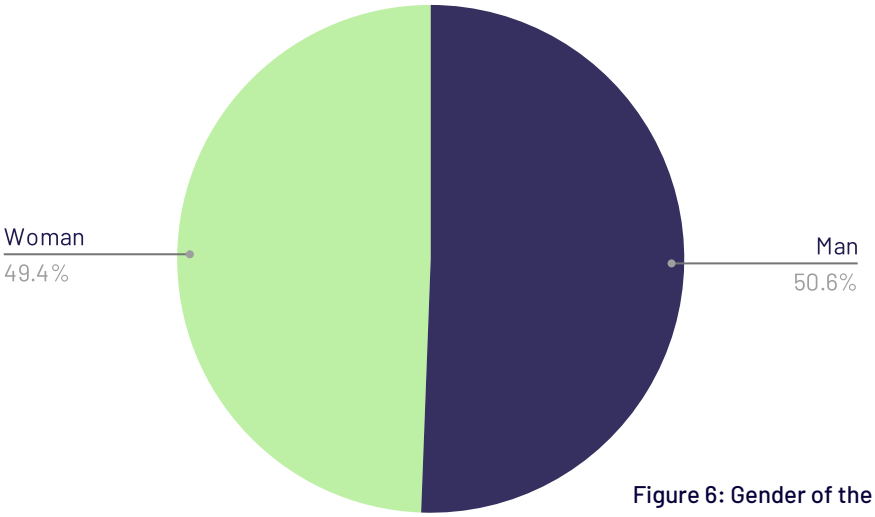


Figure 6: Gender of the senior-most leader within the company (n=84).



Publishers at the 2026 LINA Summit

LINA member news organisations were run by a near-even split of men and women (Figure 6). This is a meaningfully more even split than the sector as a whole: the 2026 Women in Media dataset reported that while women made up 49 per cent of the media workforce, they occupied only 30 per cent of media company leadership positions in Australia.

Revenue

> *"This financial year is pivotal for me. I am about to leave my day job and do this full time. Thanks to LINA I feel like I have support to keep going."*
>
> *The Point*

Survey respondents were asked about their news organisations' annual revenue (note: not profit). The median annual revenue for each news organisation was $220,000.

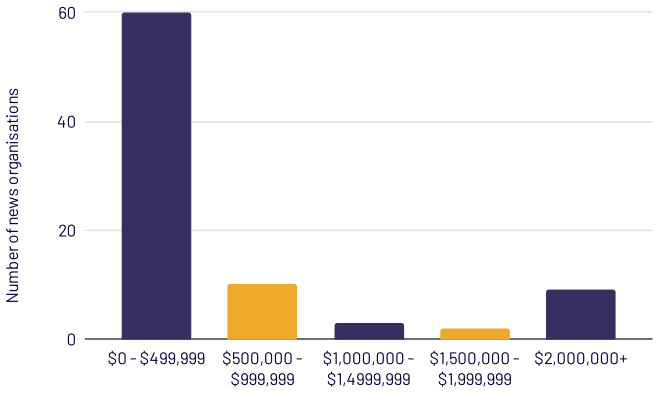


Figure 7: Annual revenue per news organisation (n=84).

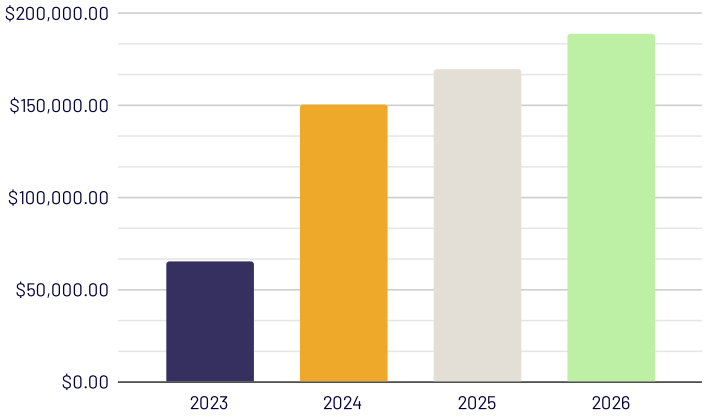


Figure 8: Median revenue among ongoing survey respondents (n=23)

Overall, this was a decrease from last year's median revenue of $298,000. This decrease could reflect a fall in revenue for some news organisations, but also likely reflects a different mix of responding publishers to this year's survey.

However, for the 23 news organisations that responded to LINA's survey on revenue each year since 2023, the median revenue continued to increase. FY23 to FY24 recorded the largest jump in median revenue (129 per cent), and revenue consistently grew by around 12 per cent each year since. The median revenue for this comparative group in FY26 was $189,000.

Revenue relative to staffing

To better understand the relationship between organisational income and staffing capacity, annual revenue was divided by the number of full-time equivalent staff reported by each organisation. This measure does not indicate profitability or the amount paid to staff, but provides an additional view of the different scales and operating models across LINA's membership.

The median organisation reported annual revenue was approximately $108,000 per full-time equivalent. Results varied considerably: the middle half of respondents ranged from approximately $55,000 to $174,000 per FTE.

At the lower end of this range, some news organisations were likely directing their revenue towards essential publishing and administrative costs while relying on significant contributions of founder labour. At the higher end, members had developed the revenue needed to support more conventional employment models. This reflected a membership encompassing publications at very different stages of development, from founder-led community ventures to established news businesses.

The results also highlight an important milestone for growth: companies converting the commitment and labour of their founders into sustainable paid employment as their audiences, revenue and operations develop.

"LINA has helped me realise that the Post has a commercial value as well as a social and community one. I have sought advertising for the first time, and been pleasantly surprised. I hope to expand this in future".

Bass Coast Post



Susie Williams (*Fleurieu App*), Anita McInnis (*Yanchep News*), Lawrence Gibbons (*CityHub Sydney*)

Sources of revenue

Respondents were asked about their news organisations' income streams. Advertising has long been the dominant source of revenue for the news industry, but the digital age brings both challenges to that model and opportunities to diversify news businesses.

Please note that these charts reflect whether an organisation reported receiving any revenue in the relevant category; they do not show the amount of revenue received or its overall proportion in the revenue mix.

The percentage of publishers drawing revenue from grants and services increased in 2026, while advertising, audience, goods and other income sources all fell.

Most LINA members draw income from several different sources. Eighty-four per cent reported revenue from at least two broad categories, while 54 per cent received revenue from three or more. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) reported income across four or all five categories measured. Three publishers reported no revenue at all.

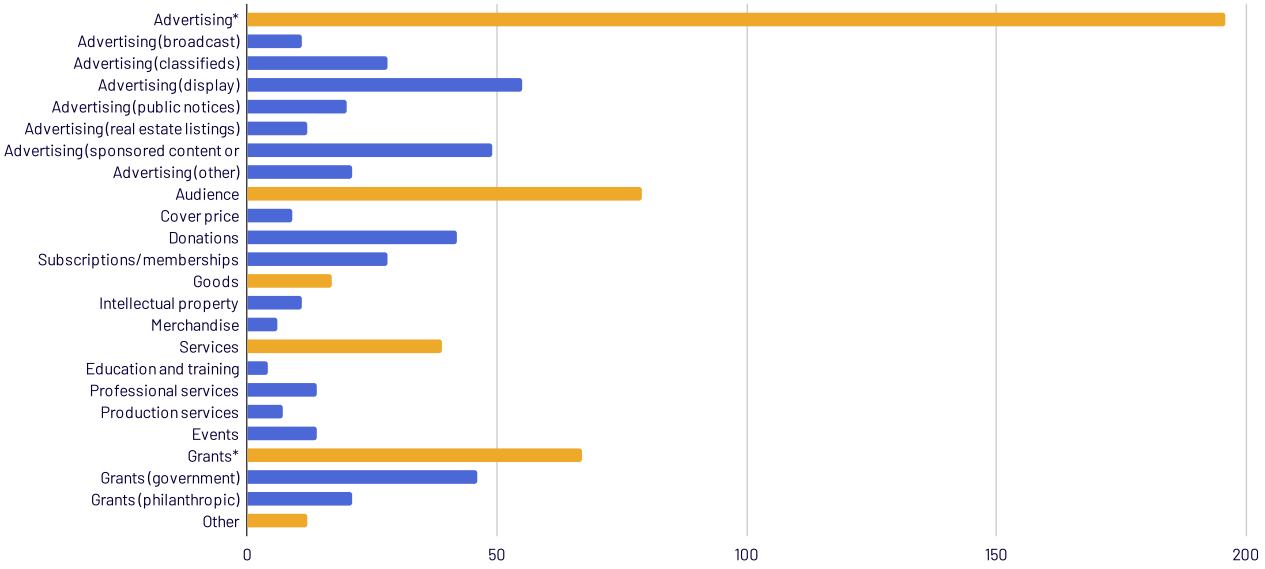


Figure 9: Percentage of respondents drawing revenue from each category (n=85)

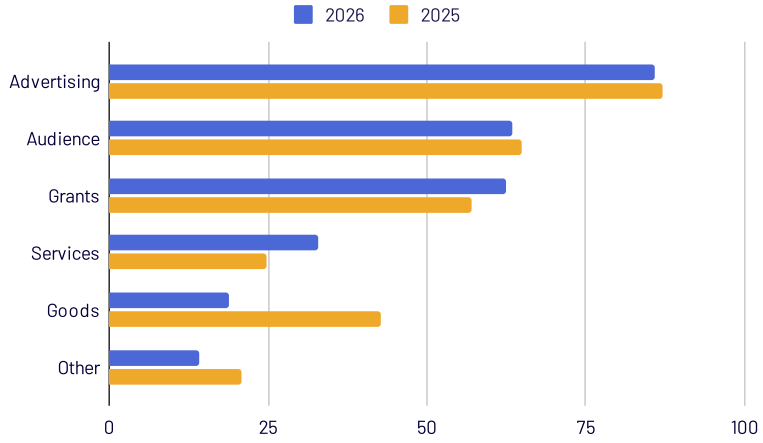


Figure 10: Reported advertising for news organisations (n=85).

Within these broader categories, display advertising and sponsored content stood out as the most common sources of revenue, with more than half of respondents reporting earning income from each of these. Just over half of respondents (53 per cent) reported receiving a government grant in 2025-26, likely reflecting the success of a large proportion of LINA's membership in accessing funding through the Journalism Assistance Fund.

Similarly, just under half of respondents (48 per cent) said that they received voluntary contributions from their audiences in FY26. Many of these publishers participated in LINA's Our News, Your Voice campaign, which raised $66,000 for local newsrooms in May 2026.

A few respondents also received display ad revenue through dedicated apps and physical screen media. Classified advertising remained relatively stable since last year, with 26 respondents (31 per cent) deriving revenue as compared to 25 (34 per cent) in FY25.

Broadcast ads fell as a reported revenue source in 2026, from 19 respondents (26 per cent) down to 11 (13 per cent). LINA's membership is predominantly text-based rather than broadcast; as such, this may reflect both a drop in the number of news organisations accessing broadcast advertising as well as an increase in the proportion of predominantly print- and digital-based newsrooms among the respondents.

More publishers reported services-related revenue in 2026 as compared to 2025 (33 per cent compared to 25 per cent). This is likely partially due to changes in data collection.

Events and training (17 per cent) and professional services were steady (13 per cent) while the introduction of production services as an option in the survey, reported by seven per cent of respondents, drove this growth.

There was also a fall in the number of publishers reporting revenue from sales of Goods in 2026, from 43 per cent down to 19 per cent. This may be partly due to a change in how the question was worded: in previous years LINA has asked about 'copyright royalties' and 'photograph sales' as separate categories; in 2026 these were aggregated as 'intellectual property'.

Only eleven news organisations (13 per cent) reported receiving revenue from intellectual property sales and licensing (under Goods).

Business success

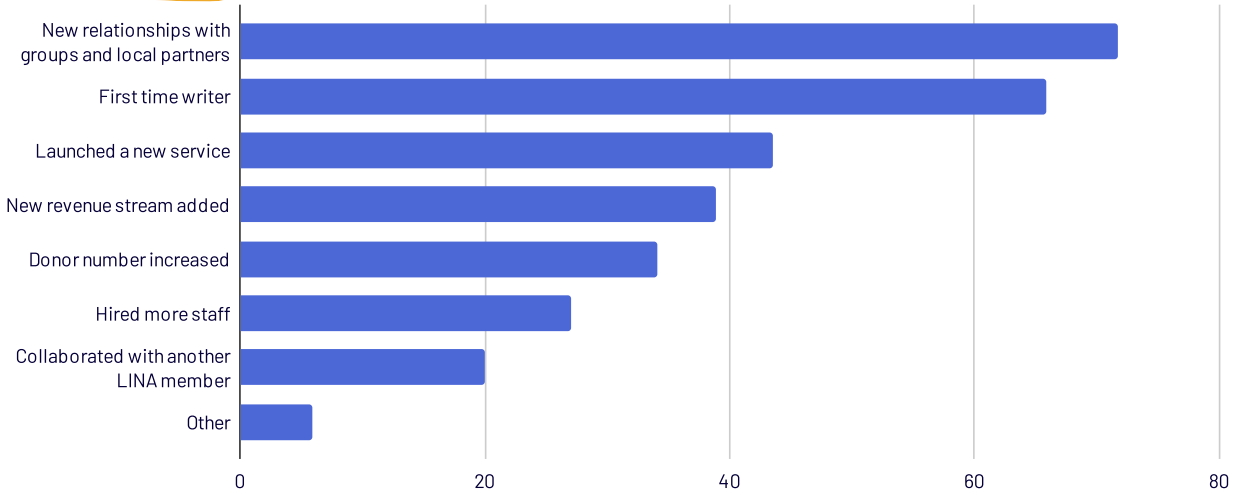
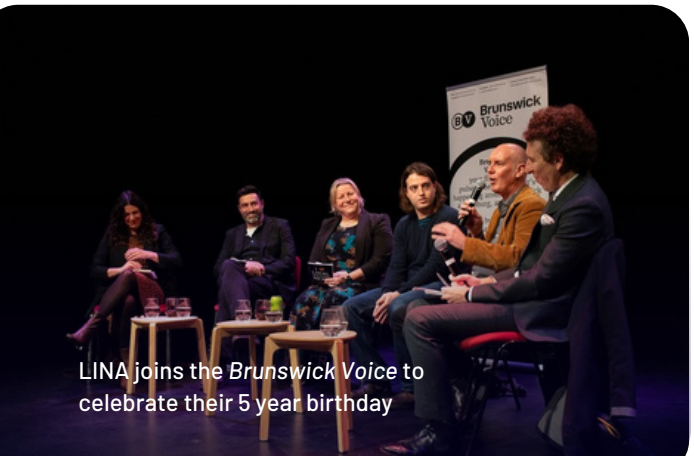


Figure 11: Business successes reported by news organisations, as a percentage (n=85).

Publishers were asked to identify the business successes that they had achieved in the previous twelve months. The responses highlighted the efforts that publishers were making to improve their business sustainability: by launching new services, adding new revenue streams, increasing the number of donors and building greater organisational resilience by hiring more staff.

The responses also reflected non-financial priorities. Publishers highlighted forming new relationships with local groups and partners, publishing a writer for the first time, and collaborating with other LINA members to jointly undertake reporting projects.

These results suggest that business success is not only a reflection of financial returns but also editorial outcomes and building stronger relationships with community.

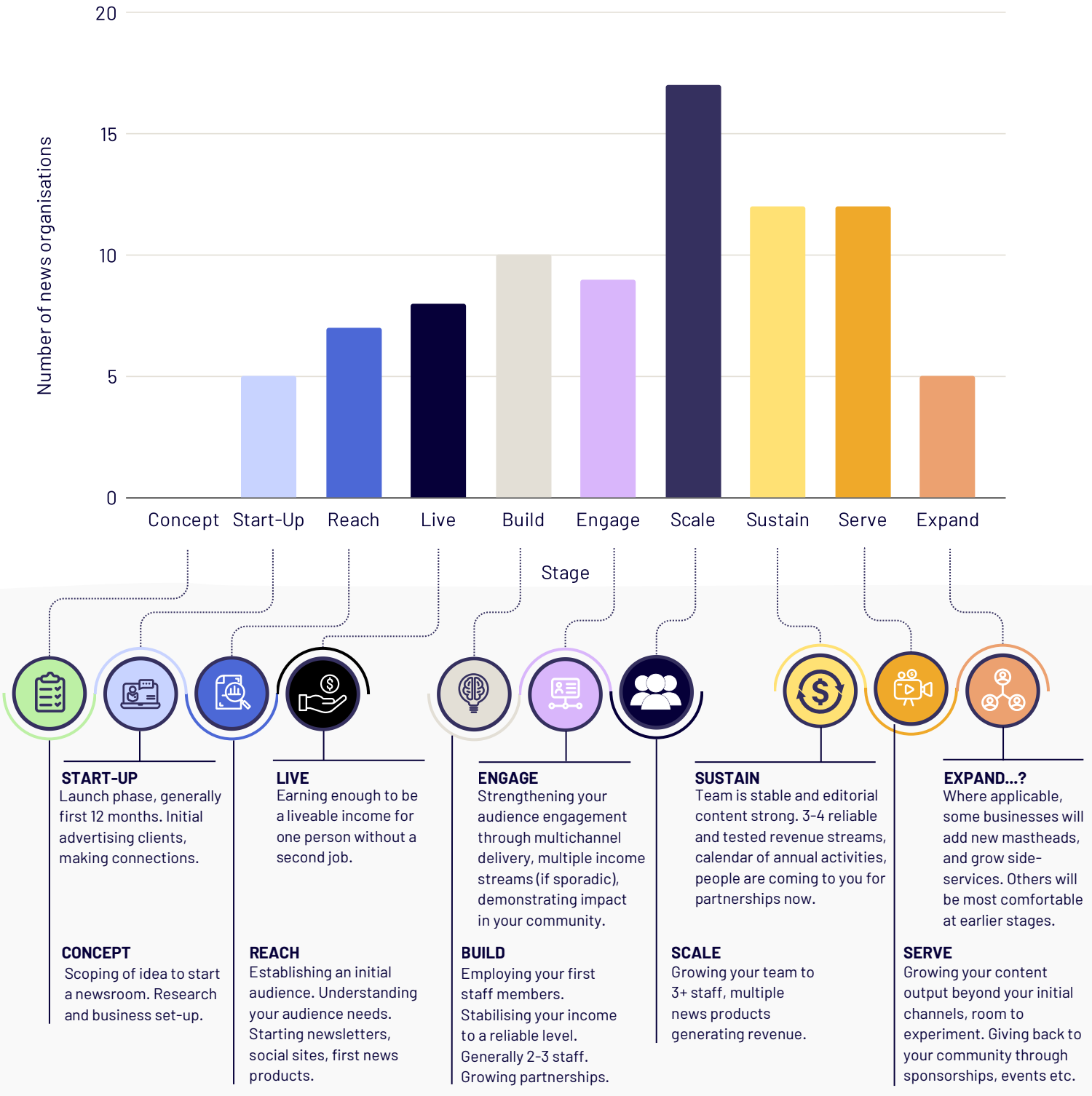


LINA joins the *Brunswick Voice* to celebrate their 5 year birthday

Business stage

Publishers provided a mixed view of their business sustainability in 2026. Respondents were asked to identify their 'business stage' from 10 different categories ranging from 'concept' to 'expand', that were then categorised into three groups; Emerging, Growing and Mature. No respondents reported being in the 'Concept' stage of development, a small change from the previous year.

Figure 12: Business stage among all survey respondents (n=85)



BUSINESS STAGE CONT.

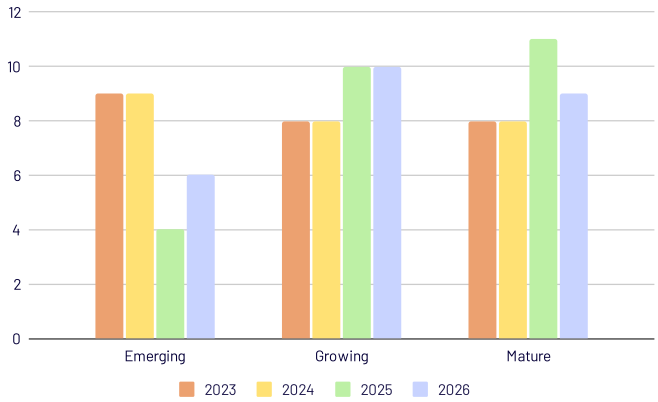


Figure 13: Business stage among ongoing survey respondents (n=25)

Among the group that had completed every survey since 2023 there appeared to be a small decline. Compared to 2025, one fewer respondent reported their business was in a 'Mature' stage and one respondent has dropped back to the 'Early' business stage. This appeared to be a blip after a particularly confident result in 2025: the overall trajectory since 2023 was still toward gradually maturing businesses.

"We're surviving and modestly growing our organisation in a very challenging news environment."

Publisher of *Coast Community News*

"I've published for 13 years without really thinking about admin. This year I made an effort and did a lot of things I should have done much earlier: I changed the masthead, adopted a new logo, learnt a bit more about Facebook and attracted an extra 700 followers. I also learnt how to share stories to other FB pages. I used FB to link to stories in the Post which attracted a lot of new readers.

"I finally put a subscriber button on the website and got 100 new subscribers in a month. I decided to seek advertising to cover costs. I have run my first three ads (all placed by council) and will seek more. I'll also very occasionally ask my loyal readers for donations."

Publisher of *Bass Coast Post*

Newsroom sustainability

Publishers were asked to assess the sustainability of their news organisations, both as a point-in-time assessment (Figure 14), and their outlook over the next three years (Figure 15).

Fifty-five per cent of respondents rated their current business sustainability positively in 2026, a slight increase from 52 per cent in 2025. Although the overall proportion of publishers who felt positively or negatively about their businesses was unchanged, there was a slight shift within each group. This question was asked for the first time in 2025 and so a four-year comparison is not available.

Publishers had stronger views about their business sustainability in the medium term at both ends of the scale: more respondents indicated that they are either 'At risk' (11 per cent in 2026 as compared to seven per cent in 2025) or 'Very secure' (seven per cent in 2026, four per cent in 2025) and slightly less in each of the middle bands.

On both measures the average response was more positive than not, and largely unchanged year-to-year. The current year average response slightly improved to 3.3 in 2026 from 3.2 in 2025, and the three-year outlook was stable at 3.2 in both years.

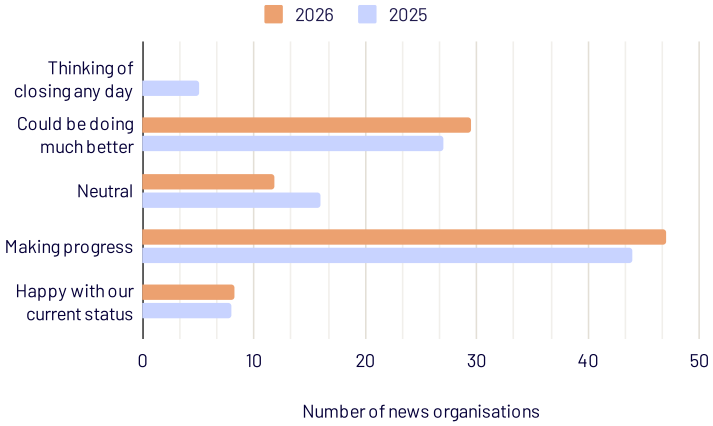


Figure 14: Respondents' assessment of their news organisation's status today (n=85)

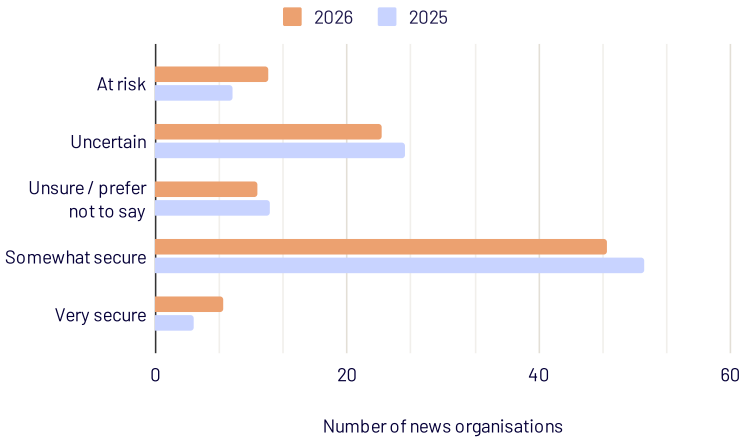


Figure 15: Respondents' assessment of their news organisation's three-year outlook (n=85)

Content

Stories

Publishers were asked how many stories their newsroom distributed in June 2026 and how many were originally produced by that newsroom rather than syndicated from elsewhere. Newsrooms that did not publish during June — such as those on a bimonthly schedule — reported figures for their most recent month of publication instead.
The median newsroom published 55 stories during its reference month. The middle half of respondents published between 25 and 120 stories.

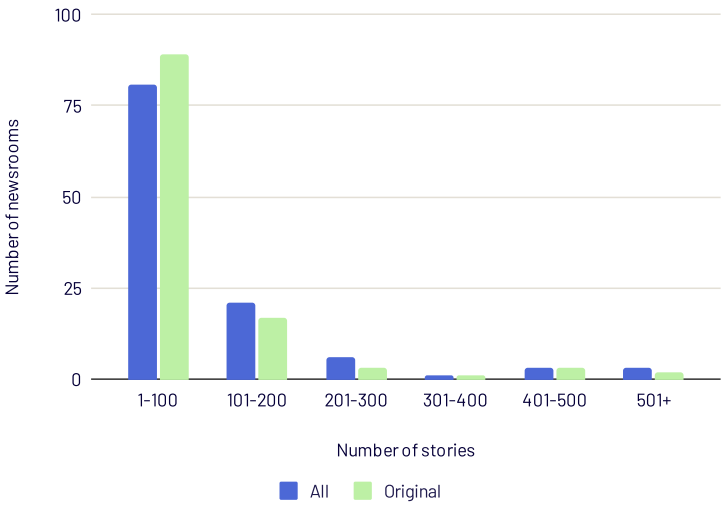


Figure 16: Number of stories published and number of original stories published in June 2026 (n=113)

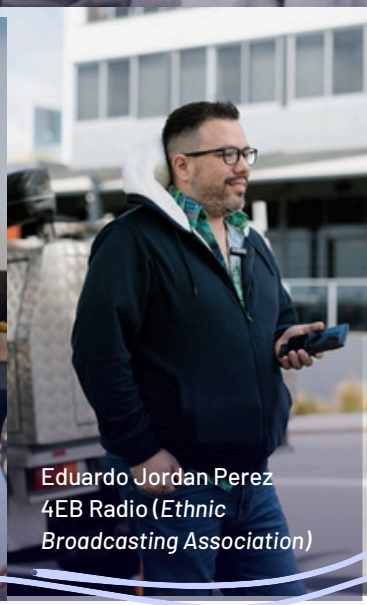
Most of the reported output was original to the newsroom publishing it. Collectively, respondents reported publishing approximately 13,000 stories across their respective reference months. Approximately 10,000 of these, or 83 per cent, were originally produced by the newsroom, not syndicated content taken from newswires, for example.

The median newsroom produced 39 original stories during its reference month, while the middle half produced between 18 and 100.

Although 13 per cent of newsrooms produced less than half of their reported content themselves, these newsrooms accounted for a relatively small share of overall publishing activity.


In the Cove journalists


Margy Vary
The Conversation


Eduardo Jordan Perez
4EB Radio (*Ethnic Broadcasting Association*)

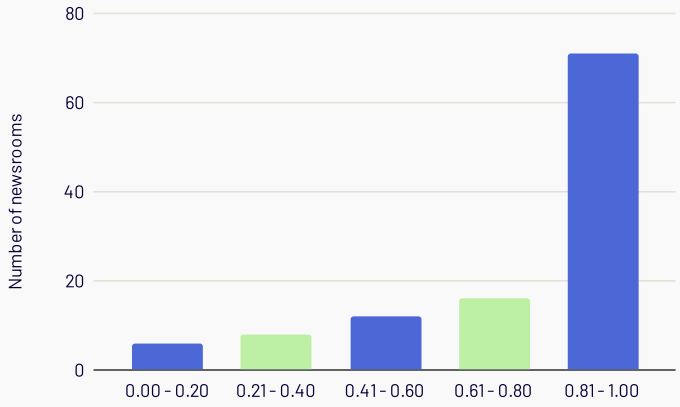


Figure 17: Original stories as a proportion of all stories published by each newsroom in June 2026 (n=125)

"We're proud to have taken on a couple of new and innovative new editorial series ... We're proud of our continued daily output, but we'd like to be making more progress on the editorial initiatives we're pursuing and the risks we can take."

Anonymous publisher

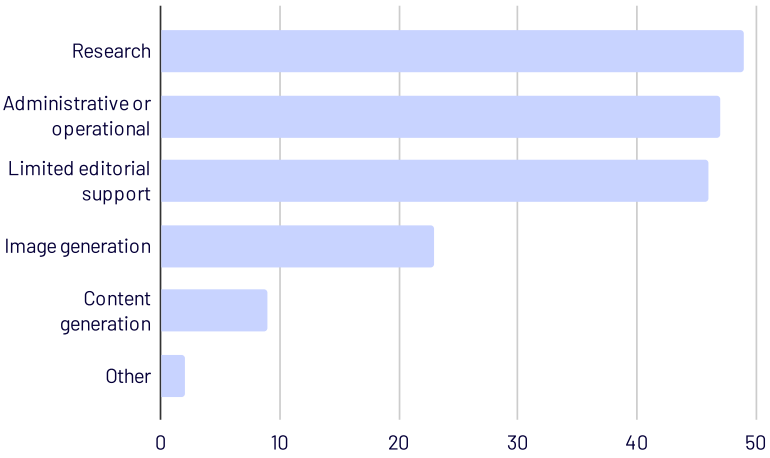


Figure 18: Purposes for which respondents use generative AI (n=55)

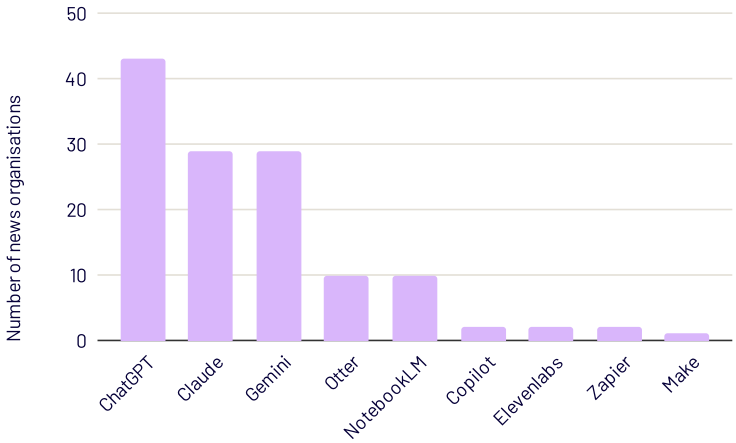


Figure 19: Generative AI tools being used (n=55)

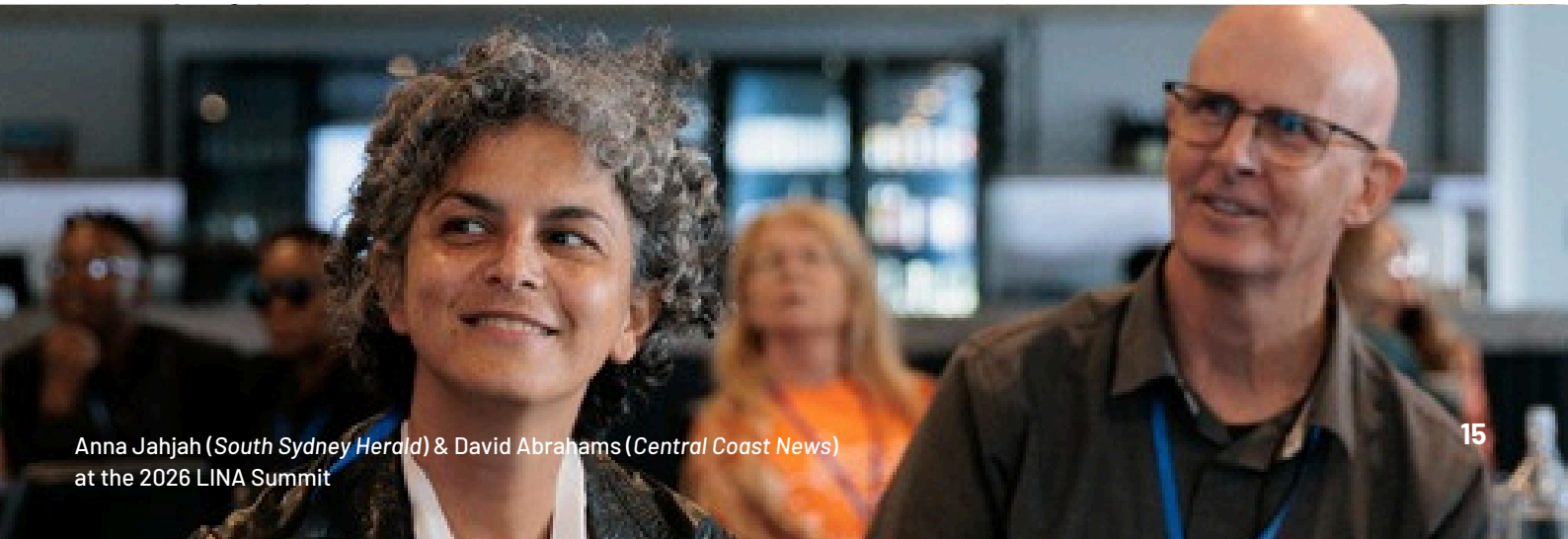
Artificial Intelligence

There was a notable increase in the number of respondents who reported using AI in their business, from 51 per cent in 2025 to 73 per cent in 2026.

There was also a shift in how publishers reported using AI. 'Research' jumped into the top spot, used by 86 per cent of respondents, followed closely by 'Administrative or operational tasks' (82 per cent) and 'Limited editorial support' (81 per cent). These were all increases from 2025, when 'Limited editorial support' was the top category with 74 per cent, followed by 'Administrative or operational tasks' (64 per cent) and 'Research' (56 per cent).

This year we introduced 'Image generation' as its own category. It was selected by 40 per cent of respondents who were using AI, while the broader 'Content generation' category fell from 23 per cent to 16 per cent of AI users.

Three quarters of respondents using AI said that they used ChatGPT, followed by Claude and Gemini with 51 per cent each. All of the top three services gained users in 2026 as compared to 2025, though the biggest growth was for Claude, which climbed from 24 per cent of respondents to 51 per cent. The total number of ChatGPT users among respondents grew from 26 to 42, however, as a percentage of all AI users it fell slightly, from 78 to 76 per cent, suggesting greater growth among other services. Other services included the AI transcription service Otter at 16 per cent and Google's research platform NotebookLM at 15 per cent. No other service recorded more than two users among the respondents.



Anna Jahjah (*South Sydney Herald*) & David Abrahams (*Central Coast News*) at the 2026 LINA Summit

Purpose and value

Publishers were asked to describe impacts that their newsrooms' reporting had achieved for their communities in the past year.

Most said that they had shared important stories that would not otherwise be told (85 per cent), mobilised their participation in their communities (64 per cent), saw a reference to their reporting in a public forum (55 per cent) and improved accountability or transparency (53 per cent). Around half of respondents (51 per cent) also responded that they published stories that were later picked up by national or international news media.

The stories that respondents highlighted as having the most impact were diverse: strengthening community, holding power to account and addressing misinformation were some of the themes that came through.

"One of the most impactful stories Bidesh Bangla published this year reported on the Australian Opposition's proposal to remove around 65,000 unlawful migrants and former international students who had remained in the country after their visas had expired. The story also covered the political debate surrounding proposals for stronger immigration enforcement ahead of the federal election.

"The report attracted significant attention because it directly affected thousands of Bangladeshi students, migrants, and their families living in Australia. It became one of our most widely shared and discussed stories on Facebook, with readers seeking reliable information about how potential policy changes could affect their legal status, future study, employment, and residency pathways.

"Beyond reporting the political announcement, Bidesh Bangla provided balanced, fact-based coverage that helped reduce confusion and misinformation within the community. The story encouraged informed discussion about Australia's immigration policies, visa compliance, and the importance of obtaining accurate legal advice rather than relying on rumours circulating on social media."

Bidesh Bangla

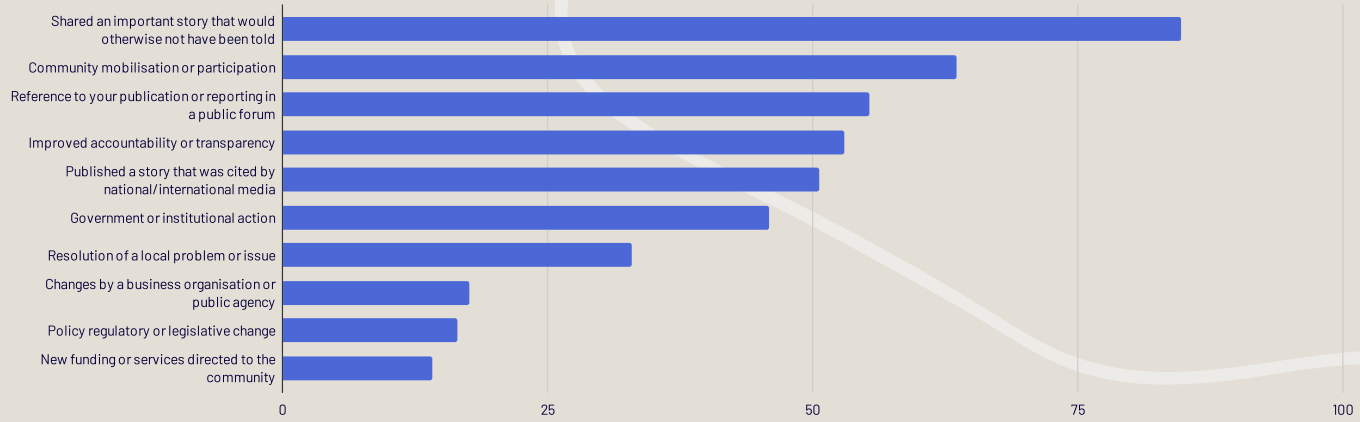


Figure 20: Community impact (n=85)



Moruya Mail awarded

"We published an expose detailing how the family trust of Antisemitism Envoy Jillian Segal and her husband was among the biggest funders of far-right group disinformation group Advance.

"The article was followed by every major news outlet in the country. It forced statements from the government, and Minister Tony Bourke was grilled about it on ABC's 7.30. Treasurer Jim Chalmers was also forced to respond."

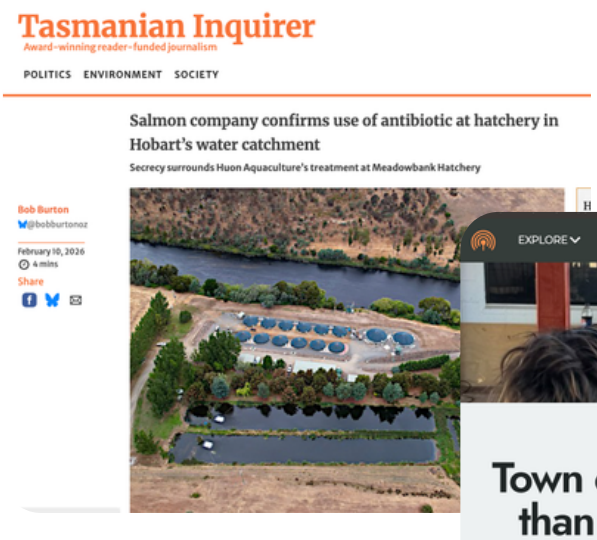
The Klaxon

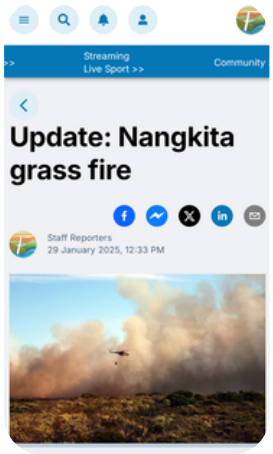


Anthony Klan (*The Klaxon*), Susanna Freymark (*IndyNR*)

"We broke the story on a salmon company using antibiotics at a salmon hatchery in Hobart's water catchment. This spurred follow on media coverage by the ABC Radio, TV and online, the Mercury, Derwent Valley Gazette, media releases by MPs and NGOs. [Tasmania] EPA committed to change all environmental licences for flow-through salmon hatcheries."

Tasmanian Inquirer



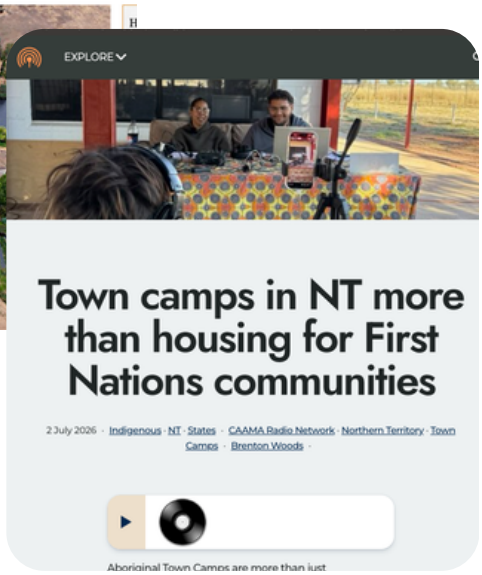


"One of the most impactful services we provided this year was our immediate push notifications during the Nangkita bushfire. As the emergency unfolded, we were able to alert our readers within minutes and continue providing timely local updates through the Fleurieu App. Many people later told us they first became aware of the fire through our notifications."

Fleurieu App

"A council plan would have seen a street closed causing major inconvenience for a Greek Orthodox Church and its mostly elderly congregation. The Greek community had felt ignored and isolated until our story was published and the council eventually decided not to go ahead with the street closure."

Anonymous publisher

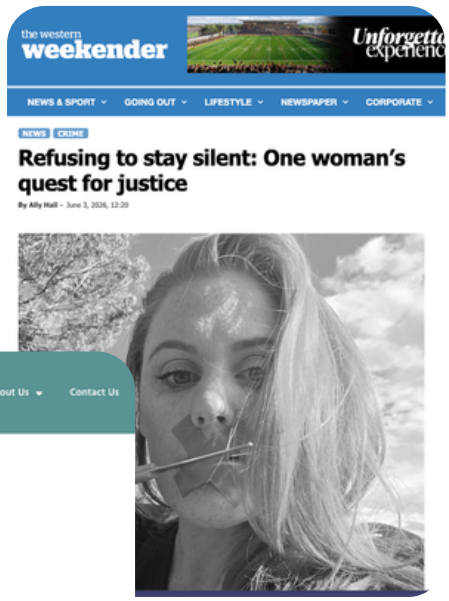


"One of the most impactful stories was to let our audience understand what a town camp was in the NT and why these settlements are important for First Nations communities in rural and remote areas."

The Wire

"We conducted a survey with local community organisations about volunteering - with great results; and highlighted the importance of The Western Echo for community groups and contributing to community engagement and facilitating community connections."

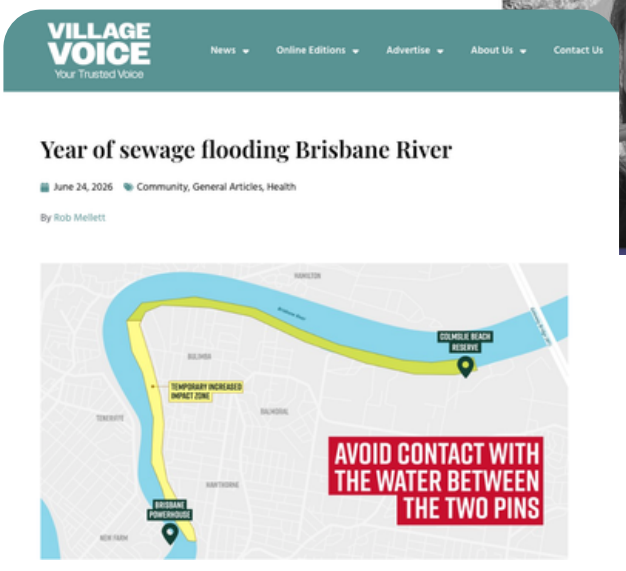
The Western Echo



"We have produced a series of articles about sewage overflows into the Brisbane River throughout the year. This has raised awareness in the community about contamination of the river water and Urban Utilities practices and concerns about adequate warnings.

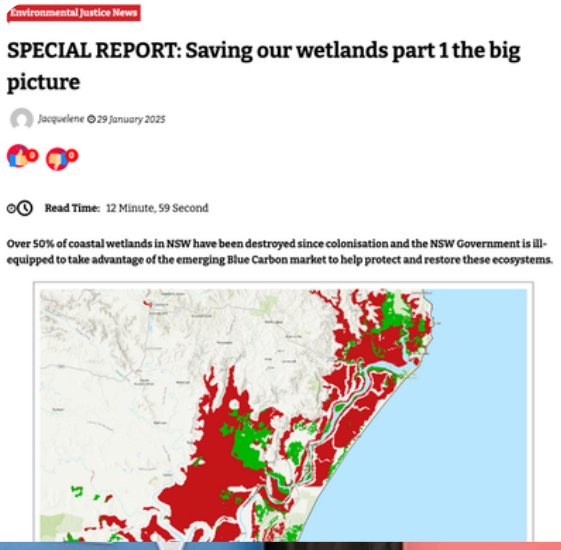
"Our latest article has looked at paddlers who have contracted infections from river water and we have had an engaged response from readers on the topic."

Village Voice



"The Saving Our Wetlands series, with LINA funding assistance, enabled The Point and Central Coast Daily to work with the NSW Nature Conservation Council and raise awareness of the plight of wetlands on the Central Coast. We reworked the content into an e-book. The story had four parts, plus the ebook plus video content."

The Point


Environmental Justice News

SPECIAL REPORT: Saving our wetlands part 1 the big picture

Jacquelene 29 January 2025

Read Time: 12 Minute, 59 Second

Over 50% of coastal wetlands in NSW have been destroyed since colonisation and the NSW Government is ill-equipped to take advantage of the emerging Blue Carbon market to help protect and restore these ecosystems.

"We were contacted by a local volunteer owned and operated wildlife organisation who was concerned the federal government had backflipped on a commitment to build a dedicated wild life hospital in the south west due to its diverse ecosystem.

"Turned out the funding they had allocated to our region, got reallocated to Kyabram - government owned facility - and now this volunteer organisation remains the only facility capable of providing wild life rescue, vet treatment and rehabilitation.

"This story led to local members of parliament speaking about the issue in state government. "

South West Local News



Staff and supporters of *The Westsider*

Publishers were asked to reflect on what they were most proud of. A mix of professional achievements and milestones, growing the business, its revenue and its products, serving the audience, and simply showing up every day and surviving were common responses.

"Celebrating our tenth anniversary and reaching well over 1 million readers/viewers regularly every month"

Michael West Media

"[I'm most proud of] our team, their skills and remarkable quality output and consistently that we see directly benefits the community that we serve. We're surviving and modestly growing our organisation in a very challenging news environment.

Cmbined Coast News

"This year we launched a second masthead."

New Norfolk and Derwent Valley News

Covering stories and perspectives that wouldn't otherwise have been seen, hyperlocal impact and meaningful feedback from individuals

8CCC Community Radio

"[I'm proud of] keeping the lights on."

Anonymous respondent

Audience

Publishing channels

For each newsroom that they operate, respondents were asked to identify which channels they published content through. Predictably among LINA members (who are required to be publishing digitally in some format), and consistent with previous years, the most common channels were a website, social media and a newsletter.

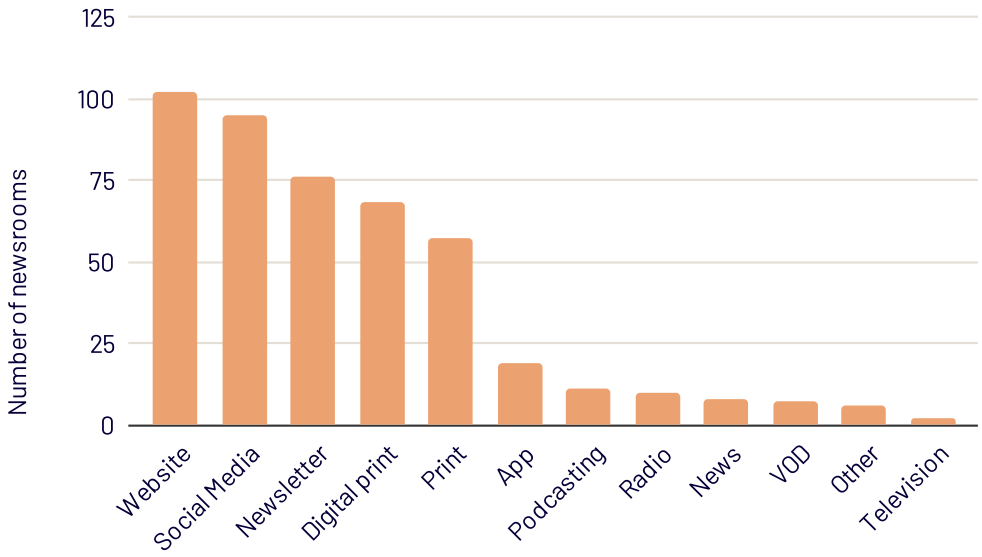


Figure 21: Number of newsrooms distributing through each channel (n=118)

Distribution among LINA members is typically multi-channel rather than centred on a single publishing format. The median newsroom distributed its journalism through four different channels, while more than three-quarters (82 per cent) used at least three and more than a third (36 per cent) use five or more.

This suggests that clean distinctions between print, digital and broadcast outlets do not fully capture how many independent newsrooms now operate. Instead, members commonly combine several forms of distribution to make their reporting available to audiences with different media habits. The number of channels does not indicate the size of the audience reached through each, but it demonstrates the breadth of the publishing activity undertaken by these newsrooms.

Respondents were asked about digital print editions (e.g. a flipbook or PDF available online which audiences can print for themselves) specifically for the first time in 2026, and more newsrooms were found to produce a digital print edition than a physical copy (58 per cent to 48 per cent). There was a small increase in print editions among the respondents, up from 42 per cent in 2025.

Podcasting fell as a distribution channel, from 26 per cent last year to only nine per cent in 2026. It was behind dedicated app-based distribution (16 per cent), which was asked about for the first time this year. Nine per cent of respondents were broadcasting on radio.

News aggregators, video-on-demand and television were used by a small number of news organisations.

Among the 118 newsrooms, three-quarters combined these with platform-mediated distribution through social media or news aggregators, while the remaining quarter used their own channels without also using external platforms.

"I am extremely proud of our website. This is something that started development this time last year, and was launched in March.

"In a few short months it's exceeded 1.8 million events, has attracted 192,000 active users, and the content on there has been viewed 760,000 times."

South West Local News

"We are most proud of the fact that we have increased the number of stories on our website which significantly increased the number of unique visitors to over 12,000 each month. This was such a monumental achievement."

Kwedu News

Website

Publishers reported an approximate median of 16,000 unique visitors (UVs) to their websites in June 2026, a fall from 2025's 20,180. As was the case last year, there was a high skew, with some members reporting fewer than 1,000 visitors, and a few of the largest publications reporting more than one million. Half of all respondents reported between approximately 4,900 and 51,000 UVs.

The median time on site was 1 minute 14 seconds, a small fall from 2025's 1 minute 23 seconds.

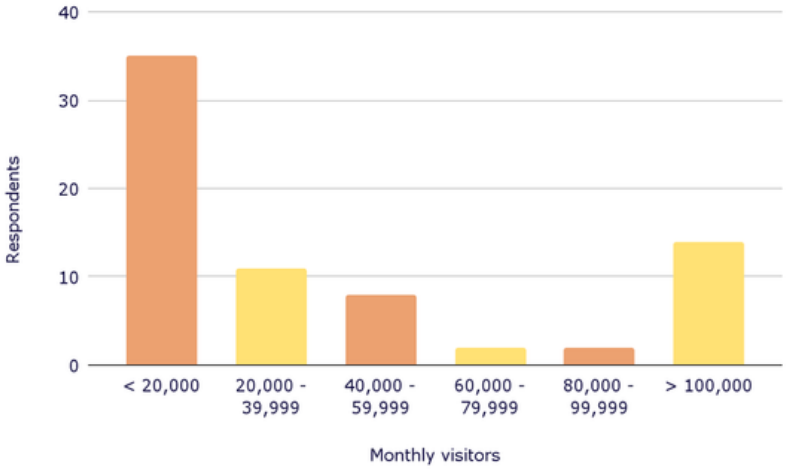


Figure 22: Number of unique website visitors (UVs) in June 2026 (n=104)

Print

The 48 per cent of newsrooms that indicated they distributed a physical printed edition were also asked how frequently they published, and how many copies they distributed each time.

Around 40 per cent of respondents published monthly and another third published every week. One newsroom published more frequently than weekly, while four published quarterly or at no set frequency.

The median print distribution was 7,000, with half of all respondents distributing between 2,000 and 13,850 copies per edition.

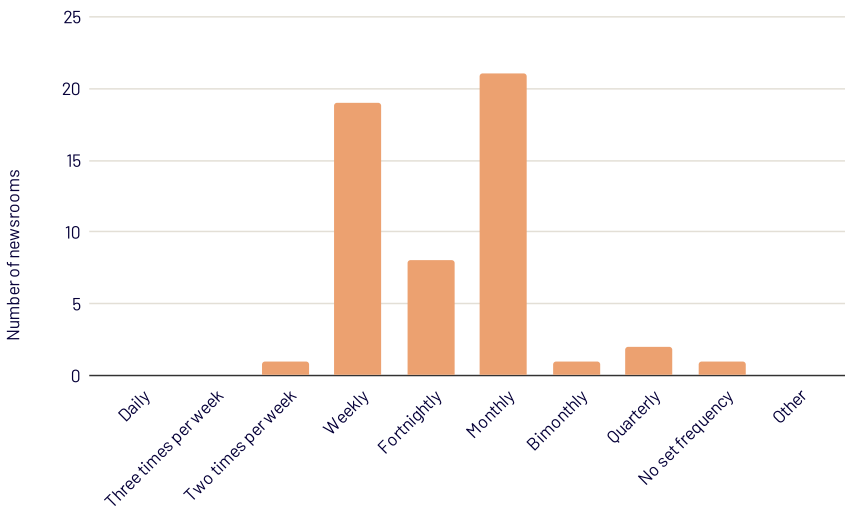


Figure 23: Print frequency among newsrooms with a printed edition (n=53)



Welcome to Country at the 2026 LINA Summit

"[I'm most proud of] relaunching the paper after its untimely closure, thanks to the Subiaco Post's purchase of a printing press that enabled independent papers to survive."

Bridgetown-Greenbushes Star

Newsletters

Sixty-four per cent of newsrooms responded that they published a newsletter. The middle half of respondents had between 742 and 7,250 subscribers, with a median of 3,460. This was less than the median of 4,828 reported in 2025.

Newsletters were not used as a standalone publishing format among respondents. Every newsroom that produced a newsletter also published through a website, a print edition, or both. This suggests that members generally used newsletters to supplement their broader publishing activity, delivering reporting directly to subscribers and providing another route into their principal news products.

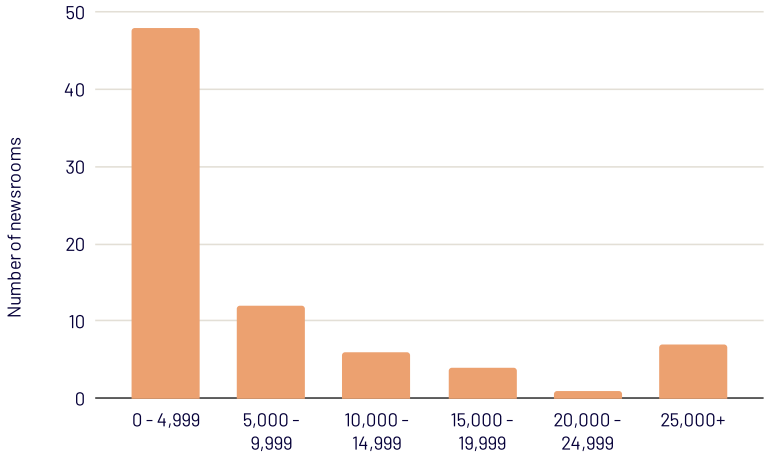


Figure 24: Number of subscribers among newsrooms with a newsletter (n=78)

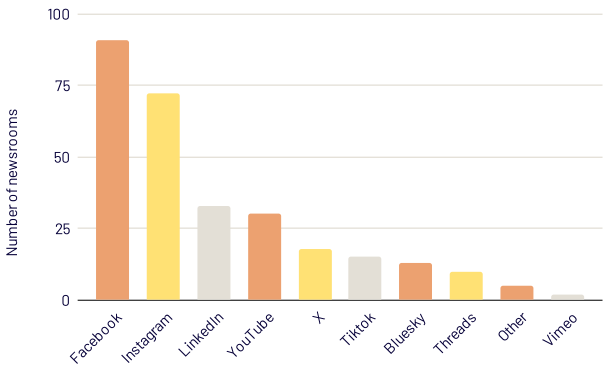


Figure 25: Number of newsrooms using each social media platform (n=100)

Social media

Eighty-one per cent of newsrooms distributed news to their audience via social media platforms. The most used site was Facebook with near universal use among this group, followed by Instagram, which was used by three-quarters of members using social media.

LinkedIn was used by just over a third of respondents, and YouTube just under. Every other platform was used by fewer than a fifth of respondents.

Publishers commonly distributed their journalism across several social-media platforms rather than limiting to only one. Among the 100 newsrooms reporting social-media use, eighty-two per cent used at least two, and almost half (51 per cent) maintained a presence on three or more. Eighteen per cent only used a single platform.

"We have been making changes on how we deliver content on social media ... we have been making an effort to get more content on the website so almost all social media posts have a link back to the site. We have seen a huge increase in our reach, especially to non-followers, and we believe it's because of this and continually trying to appease the algorithms."

In the Cove

Service	Bluesky	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Threads	TikTok	X	YouTube
Median Followers	2500	5745	2000	846	1430	1900	4032	637

Conclusion

Local and independent news organisations continue to face real challenges in building sustainable businesses while meeting the daily demands of serving their audiences.

The findings nevertheless provide good reason for optimism. Members of LINA are growing their capacity, developing more diverse businesses and adapting how they produce and distribute journalism. At a time when journalism production is increasingly centralised in large, city-based newsrooms, LINA members are place-based and embedded in their communities. They are adding new revenue products and experimenting with multi-platform distribution to ensure they meet readers and listeners wherever they are. They are innovative and adaptable.

Their progress shows a sector still finding its footing, but with the commitment, public value and momentum to build a strong future.



South West Local News' Liam Fitzgerald



Angela Priestly (*Women's Agenda*) and Susie Williams (*The Fleurieu App*)



Lisa McLean (ICTV), Anita McInnes, *Yanchep News*), Lekisha Lord (*ICTV*)



Young NSW storytellers were supported to share diverse voices and stories in LINA's *Know Your Neighbour* program



Southwest Local News interviews freelancer Jack Kelly



LINA staff at events throughout 2026





"I continue to say that LINA saved my business. It opened me up to a whole lot more opportunity I didn't really know existed."

South West Local News

"I genuinely don't believe I would still be operating without LINA's support. As we approach seven years in business this August, LINA has provided invaluable guidance, training, advocacy and practical support that has helped us navigate an increasingly challenging media landscape."

Fleurieu App

LINA
Local & Independent News Association

About Lina

The Local & Independent News Association (LINA) is a not-for-profit national industry association representing just under 200 digital, local, and independent newsrooms. These grassroots news organisations are the green shoots of the industry, expanding digital newsrooms in response to broader industry decline, and playing a vital role in combatting misinformation and disinformation, representing diverse and regional voices, and supporting social cohesion and community resilience.

LINA was founded in 2021 as an incorporated, ACNC registered industry body by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), a DGR1 charity running for over 40 years. LINA welcomed its first staff member and member newsroom in 2022, and is run by an independent board and a small team working from the Melbourne office and remotely across Australia.

Respondents reported an average satisfaction with LINA's performance of 4.2 out of 5.00, indicating 'Very Good' feedback. The average response on satisfaction with LINA's future direction was 4.4 out of 5.00, indicating 'Satisfied'. The average response for whether or not respondents would recommend LINA membership to others was 9.0 out of 10.00.

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