

*Communications and media in  
Australia series:*

**How we access news**  
Executive summary and key findings

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# Executive summary

## Using this report

This report contains the executive summary and key findings from our *How we access news* report, which is part of our [Communications and media in Australia](#) series.

An [interactive version](#) of the full report can be accessed on our website. We recommend this document is read in conjunction with the entire report as the key findings reference charts in the report. The website also has links to the methodology used, a data quality statement and a glossary of terms for the report. The data for all tables in the report can be directly exported from the interactive version.

## How we access news

Nearly all Australians consume news, with most of us having accessed news from at least one source in the past week and 79% accessing from at least one online source in that week.

In 2023, we saw a consolidation in sources. While the number of Australian adults accessing news was unchanged in 2023 (95%), we used fewer sources of news in a given week, averaging 3.1 in 2023 down from 3.5 in 2022. The 2 news sources most accessed, online news websites or apps and free-to-air (FTA) television (TV), both saw declines from 58% and 59% respectively in 2022 to 53% in 2023.

FTA TV remains the most common main source of news, used by a quarter of Australian adults (26% – stable compared to 2022), followed by online news websites or apps (23%).

The only news source to see more adults choosing it as their main news source in 2023 was social media (20% compared to 17% in 2022). This rise is being driven by younger Australians. For those aged 18–24 years, nearly half (46%) nominate social media as their main source of news.

This was the first year we asked Australians to tell us specifically which sources they use when accessing news, and ABC dominates the market. ABC took out the top spot in different formats across several categories, including online news websites, FTA TV, FTA catch-up, radio and podcasts.

## Demographic differences

Online news sources continue to dominate the sector, with more of us (79%) accessing news through these sources than more traditional sources such as television (58%), audio (42%) and print newspapers (18%). This differs by age. For example, more than half of Australians aged 75+ (52%) read a print newspaper in the previous week, this compares to 7% of 18–24-year-olds. Similarly, older Australians were more likely to watch news on the TV, with 90% of those aged 75+ using a TV source in the past week, compared to 30% of 18–24-year-olds.

For our main news source, although older Australians were more likely to use FTA TV, those aged over 45 are shifting from FTA TV towards online news websites and apps. The decline from FTA TV as the main source of news is most pronounced in the 45–54-year age group (27%, down from 34% in 2022). While the move towards online news websites as a main news source is greatest for those aged 65–74 (25% up from 19% in 2022).

Younger Australians are shifting away from online news websites and towards social media websites and apps, with just 12% of 18–24-year-olds using online news websites as their main source, down from 28% in 2022. Social media websites or apps were more likely to be the main source of news for those aged 18–24 (46%) and 25–34 (38% up from 28% in 2022), higher than all other age groups.

### **Social media**

Although down from last year, professionally produced news media outlets (69% down from 78%) and official/reputable sources (43% down from 51%) remained the most popular social media news sources. However, compared to 2022, more adults used community and special interest groups (38% up from 29%) for news via social media. Younger Australians (aged 18–24) are not only bigger users of social media but more likely to turn to celebrities and social media influencers (31%) for their news content, significantly more so than all older age groups.

### **News sources**

Australian adults use a variety of news sources, but ABC is a key provider of news across multiple online, audio and TV sources. Of those who accessed news via a specific channel, ABC was the prominent provider for online news websites (55%), FTA TV (56%), FTA catch-up (54%), radio (25%) and podcasts (31%). Meta (Facebook) is the key provider for social media (70%), and Alphabet (Google) dominates the online space, being the top provider for both online search engine (94%) and news aggregator (62%).

## **About the research**

This report is based on an ACMA-commissioned nationally representative tracking survey seeking to understand consumer take-up, views and attitudes around communications and media services. Information about the sample and the ACMA annual consumer survey is in the [methodology](#).

# Key findings

## 1. Sources of news accessed

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2023.

- > Nearly all Australians accessed the news from at least one source (95%), but the average number of different types of sources used has fallen to 3.1 from 3.5 in 2022.
- > Overall, those accessing news through online (79%) or audio (42%) sources remained steady.
- > Online news sources continued to be more popular (79%) than traditional news sources, such as TV (58%), audio (42%) and print newspapers (18%). Even so, fewer Australians accessed news through an online news website or app (53% from 58% in 2022) and online search engines (31% from 38% in 2022). Despite this decline, online news websites were the most accessed individual news source, tied for first place with FTA TV (53%).
- > Overall, fewer Australians watched news on any TV source (58%, down from 67% in 2022).
- > Fewer Australians watched news on FTA TV (53%, down from 59% in 2022), FTA catch-up or streaming services (10%, down from 18% in 2022) and subscription or pay TV services (9%, down from 13% in 2022).
- > Fewer of us read news in print newspapers (18%, down from 23% in 2022).
- > Older Australians (75+) were more likely to access news through FTA TV (88%) and print newspapers (52%) but less likely through social media websites or apps (22%), compared to all other age groups.
- > Younger Australians were the least likely to watch news through FTA TV. Those aged 18–24 (24%) and 25–34 (28%) were less likely to watch the news on FTA TV than all older groups.
- > Younger Australians accessed news via social media. Those aged 18–24 (70%) and 25–34 (64%) accessed news through social media in greater numbers than all older age groups.
- > Males were more likely than females to access news from online news websites or apps (57% compared to 49%), subscription or pay TV (11% compared to 7%), print newspaper (20% compared to 16%) and radio (41% compared to 34%).
- > Females were more likely than males to access news on social media websites or apps – 53% compared to 44% of males.
- > Australians living in metropolitan areas were more likely to use an online search engine for news (32%) than those living in regional areas (28%).
- > Regional Australians were more likely than those in metropolitan areas to access news through FTA TV (60% compared to 49%), print newspaper (20% compared to 16%) and radio (41% compared to 35%).

## 2. Main source of news

*Base:* Australian adults, previous 7 days to June 2023.

- > FTA TV was our main source of news (26%), followed by online news websites or apps (23%).
- > More Australians turned to social media websites or apps as their main news source (20% up from 17% in 2022).

- > Fewer Australians used print newspapers (3% down from 4% in 2022) or subscription or pay TV (2% down from 3% in 2022) as their main source of news.
- > Younger Australians were more likely to use social media or communications websites or apps as their main news source – 18–24 (46%) and 25–34 (38%), higher than all older age groups.
- > Those aged 75+ were most likely to have FTA TV (50%) or print newspapers (12%) as their main source of news, higher than all younger age groups.
- > Males were more likely to use an online news website or app (26%), or online news aggregator (7%) as their main source of news compared to females (20% and 5% respectively).
- > Females were more likely to report social media or communications websites (23%) as their main source of news, compared to 16% of males.
- > Those living in metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to use an online news website or app (24% compared to 20%) or social media website or app (22% compared to 16%) as their main source of news.
- > More Australians in regional areas used FTA TV (32%) or radio (10%) as their main source of news, compared to those living in metropolitan areas (23% and 7% respectively).

### 3. Sources of news on social media or communication websites or apps

*Base:* Australian adults who accessed news via social media, in the previous 7 days to June 2023.

- > Although down from last year, professionally produced news media was the most common social media news source (69%, down from 78% in 2022), followed by official or reputable sources (43%, down from 51% in 2022).
- > More used a community or special interest groups as a source of news on social media than last year (38%, up from 29% in 2022).
- > Those aged 18–24 were more likely to use celebrities and influencers (31%) as a source of news on social media than all other age groups, this group was also more likely to report their news on social media came from ‘people they don’t know’ (33%), higher than all age groups over 35.
- > When accessing news through social media, females were more likely to use professionally produced news media (72% compared to 63% of males) and family or friends (32% compared to 22% of males).
- > Males were more likely to use trusted professionals (28% compared to 20% of females), and people they don’t know (23% compared to 16% of females) as sources of news on social media.

### 4. Specific sources of news: Online

*Base:* Australian adults who accessed news, in the previous 7 days to June 2023.

- > ABC News was the most popular online news website, with 55% of those using online news websites visiting ABC News. ABC News was also the most relied on news website or app (33%).
- > Facebook was the main provider of news on social media. Seven in ten (70%) had accessed Facebook for news, and almost half (47%) reported it was their most relied on social media website for news.
- > Google was the most popular online search engine (94%) and Google News was the most popular news aggregator (62%).



## 5. Specific sources of news: Television

*Base:* Australian adults who accessed news, in the previous 7 days to June 2023

- > ABC was the most watched news channel on FTA. More than half (56%) watched ABC news on FTA TV and 54% watched ABC iView on FTA catch-up.
- > ABC (34%) and ABC iView (48%) were also the most relied upon TV channels for news, on FTA and FTA catch-up respectively.
- > Seven Network was also popular, with 54% of those watching news on FTA TV watching via Seven Network, and 30% of those watching news on FTA catch-up watching via 7Plus.
- > Foxtel dominates as a news provider, with 80% relying on Foxtel the most for news when watching subscription of pay TV.

## 6. Specific sources of news: Audio and print

*Base:* Australian adults who accessed news, in the previous 7 days to June 2023

- > ABC was the leading news provider for radio, including online streaming. ABC programs took out the top 4 spots, with ABC News Radio (25%), ABC Local Radio (19%), ABC Radio National (17%) and Triple J (13%).
- > ABC News Daily (23%) was the most relied on podcast for news.
- > Sydney Morning Herald (13%) and The Australian (13%) were the leading print newspapers.