

AUT research center for Journalism, Media and Democracy ([JMAD](#))

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Print newspaper market shrinks alarmingly, local news gaps widen

The 2018 JMAD New Zealand media ownership report finds that the New Zealand print newspaper market has shrunk considerably. The combined circulation of the four largest newspapers plus 15 regional ones declined almost nine percent from September 2017 to September 2018. Since 2012, circulation of the *NZ Herald* has dropped 36 percent.

During 2018, Stuff contributed to the shrinkage of overall print market by closing 35 percent of its newspapers, and more cuts are expected. Stuff gained a new owner as its parent company Fairfax Media was taken over by Australian Nine Entertainment. This leaves the future of Stuff's ownership and structures unknown.

“Local news gaps are widening. Only three of Stuff's former local newspapers have found a new owner. This is naturally a worry,” says the report's author Dr Merja Myllylahti.

However, she notes that print still brings most of the revenue for the large news publishers. Print contributes almost 80% percent of Stuff's total revenue, and 56% of NZME's total revenue.



Global mergers in the media and entertainment sectors flourished during 2018. In New Zealand, a proposed NZME and Stuff merger failed to gain regulatory approval. MediaWorks announced late in November plans to merge with Australian owned outdoor advertising company QMS in New Zealand.

“There is no doubt that we will see more consolidation in the media sector in New Zealand. New kinds of partnerships are being formed and the broadcasting sector is being reshaped. Spark, for example, is rapidly growing its muscle in sports broadcasting.”

AUT research center for Journalism, Media and Democracy, has published New Zealand media ownership reports since 2011. These are publicly available at AUT online: [Reports](#)

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To find out more or to interview Dr Merja Myllylahti, contact her on mmyllyla@aut.ac.nz or @MyllyMe or 021-0665902.