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Free TV a powerful force for social cohesion, major new report finds

New Deloitte Access Economics report finds commercial television is a ‘shared civic space’ in Australia — that can unite communities, underpin democracy, and contributes \$2.4 billion to the economy

- Almost four in five Australians (78 per cent) say commercial TV creates shared experiences across their communities
- Eight in ten Australians (80 per cent) say commercial TV delivers reliable, trustworthy information
- Commercial TV is trusted by 87 per cent of Australians — ahead of social media, generative AI news content, and most other news sources

In an era of increasing media fragmentation and digital disruption, a new report by Deloitte Access Economics confirms that commercial television continues to play an essential role in Australia’s social and economic fabric. The report is being launched at a Free TV event at Parliament House this morning, attended by network stars, CEOs and politicians.

The report, *Towards a More United Nation: The economic and social benefits of commercial television*, highlights that while Australia’s media landscape undergoes rapid change, commercial TV remains a cornerstone of the nation’s democratic health and social connection at a time when trust in information is under pressure.

These findings underscore commercial TV’s distinctive role in bringing Australians together and keeping them informed, at a time when trust in both traditional and digital media is under increasing scrutiny.

The report also confirms commercial TV’s economic contribution of \$2.4 billion to GDP and supporting 15,600 full-time equivalent jobs across the economy in 2024-25, alongside \$15.6 billion invested in Australian content over a decade.

Free TV Australia CEO Bridget Fair said the findings put hard numbers behind something the industry has always known.

“This report puts hard numbers behind something we’ve always known - free television is cultural infrastructure for this country,” Ms Fair said. “It gives Australians shared stories, shared facts and shared values. But commercial television cannot be taken for granted. Its continued availability depends on decisive action now - a policy framework that addresses competition failure in ad tech, protects Australian content from AI theft, and keeps free, universal access to the moments that matter for every Australian, no matter where they live or how they watch TV.”

Social cohesion researcher Dr Rebecca Huntley, who contributed to the report and spoke at today's launch, warned of what is lost as media consumption fragments.

"As audiences become more segmented, there's a real risk that people lose those shared points of reference, and with that, some of the informal glue that holds communities together," Dr Huntley said.

"Commercial television continues to provide a unique 'shared civic space.' By making Australian stories, local responses, and significant national events visible at scale, it provides common points of reference that connect Australians across communities, generations, and backgrounds."

Free TV services are under growing competitive pressure from global digital platforms and AI, a challenge felt most acutely in regional Australia, where commercial television remains for many communities the only source of local TV news and emergency information. Free TV Australia is calling on Government to act on the three-point policy agenda outlined above to secure the industry's future.

The full list of findings from the Deloitte report is attached, covering commercial TV's role in social cohesion and democracy, its economic contribution, its investment in Australian stories and sport, its distinctive place in the media market, and its role connecting regional Australia.

[View the full report here](#)

ENDS

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ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is the peak body representing Australia's commercial television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Southern Cross Media Group, Nine Entertainment Co, Paramount Network 10, WIN Network, and Imparja Television.

Attachment: Key Findings – Towards a More United Nation

Key findings



SUPPORTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND ADVERTISING

\$2.4 billion

to Australia's Gross Domestic
Product

15,600

Full-time equivalent (FTE)
roles supported in 2024-25

2.2

FTE jobs supported
across the economy
per network FTE job

46%

are more likely
to trust brands
advertised on
commercial TV

61%

growth in commercial TV's
BVOD revenue from 2021-25,
amid declines in broadcast
revenue



ENABLING SOCIAL COHESION & DEMOCRACY

78%

of Australians say commercial TV
creates shared experiences

7.6 million

Australians were reached by
election coverage

87%

consider commercial
TV very or moderately
trustworthy

70%

agree commercial TV
contributes positively to
community connection

69%

agree commercial TV
brings people from
different backgrounds
together



SUPPORTING AUSTRALIAN STORIES

\$15.6 billion

invested in Australian content over 10 years

25,300+ hours

of Australian content aired by metropolitan
broadcasters in 2024



DISTINCTIVE ROLE IN THE MARKET

91%

of Australians agree that commercial TV is
accessible and easy to use

78%

of Australians see value in an Australian-
owned and regulated broadcast sector



CONNECTING REGIONS

65%

of regional Australians agree commercial TV
spotlights regional communities

15%

of direct FTE roles in commercial TV live and
work in the regions