

MEDIA RELEASE

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MEDIA OWNERSHIP ENTWINED WITH BIG TECH; PODCASTS FILLING CURRENT AFFAIRS GAP

The 2025 Aotearoa New Zealand Media Ownership Report, produced by the Journalism, Media and Democracy (JMAD) Research Centre at AUT, lays bare the transnational influences shaping New Zealand's news media and entertainment landscape.

Co-director of JMAD, Professor Wayne Hope, says the fortunes of New Zealand's media companies are intricately entwined with that of big tech. "We cannot consider media ownership without acknowledging the size and influence of the big tech behemoths. They preside over a commercially contracting media-corporate sector. This further marginalises news media organisations and the journalism profession."

This year's report includes three new, inaugural chapters: Internet—media and telecom ownership, streaming channels and services and Podcasts.

Events and trends of note in 2025:

- In March Canadian billionaire Jim Grenon buys 9.3 % of NZME's shares. By September his stake lifts to 17.9%.
- During 2025 Netflix, Disney and Amazon Prime provide the most-watched subscription video on demand (SVOD) content.
- In June Sinead Boucher sells 50% of Stuff Digital—publisher of the stuff.co.nz news site —to market place portal Trade Me (their parent company is London based private equity firm Apax Partners).
- From April to June Quadrant Private Capital, through outdoor media company QMS, takes full ownership of Mediaworks.
- During 2025 One NZ (formerly Vodafone NZ) expands its direct—to-mobile text messaging service powered by SpaceX/Starlink satellites.
- In August Sky announces the acquisition of Discovery New Zealand, owner of free—to-air channels Three and Three Now for NZ\$1.

By late November 2025 the world's top seven corporates were all tech related, an unprecedented development. The combined market capitalisation of NVIDIA, Apple, Alphabet/Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Broadcom and Meta/Facebook exceeded US\$21.9 trillion. The equivalent figure for the top ten media

corporates was a mere US\$381.2 billion, down from US\$399.44 billion in 2024. Clearly, ICT-Corporate wealth dwarfs that of media corporations.

2025 has seen enormous partnership and funding deals throughout ICT sectors, which are beginning to shape media and news media ownership patterns.

Podcasts fill current affairs gap

One national trend stands out as a counterpoint to the transnational influencers, says Professor Hope. “Various public affairs podcasts are partly filling the gap left by previous closures of current affairs television programmes and long-form journalistic magazines.”

Legacy media organisations are using the podcast format to extend their coverage (as seen in RNZ’s *The Detail*), while independent political podcasts such as *1 of 200*, *BHN*, *Three Gals One Beehive*, *The Bradbury Group* and *The Platform* likewise contribute to this expanded space for discussion by regularly interviewing prominent New Zealanders, including former and sitting politicians, academics and activists.

At a symbolic level, it is also notable that the most substantial long-form interview completed by Prime Minister Christopher Luxon in 2025 to date was on *The Dom Harvey Podcast*, where he spoke for more than an hour. For comparison, the most recent long-form interview conducted within a traditional broadcast setting was Jack Tame’s *Q+A* interview in December 2024.

These appearances illustrate how visually oriented podcasts now sit alongside conventional journalistic formats as sites where political narratives are crafted and circulated. They are also heavily remediated through social media. For example, while the YouTube upload of Luxon’s interview on *The Dom Harvey Podcast* had approximately 14,000 views at the time of writing, short clips from the same conversation had accrued around 260,000 plays on TikTok.

Read the [full report](#) at JMAD’s website.

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