

ABC Q4 2023: Newspapers: Stable with marginal declines

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

21 Feb 2024

Newspaper circulation is stable despite a 5.7% year-on-year decline, and Q4 experiences a marginal drop of -1.5% compared to Q3, culminating in a combined circulation of 6,223,225.



Image: Bizcommunity, Lesley Svenson. Newspaper circulation is showing stability despite a 5.7% year-on-year decline, while Q4 experienced a marginal drop of -1.5% compared to Q3 says the ABC

This is according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) of South Africa, which released its audited circulation figures for the period October 2023 to December 2023 for the newspaper category today, Wednesday, February 21, 2024.

The ABC says this trend aligns with a five percent annual decrease in its membership. “The collective circulation of all members shows a year-on-year decline of 7.4%. This corresponds with ABC's membership, which decreased by 10%, dropping from 448 in 2022 to 403 by the fourth quarter of 2023,” says the ABC statement.

Quarter-on-quarter, ABC membership decreased slightly from 405 to 403 in total, while year-on-year total membership declined from 448 to 403. Newspaper membership saw a decrease of two members.



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Daily newspapers

As in Q3 this category again had slim pickings, exhibiting sharper declines, in this quarter.

Of the 20 Dailies, only two, *Die Daily Burger* and *The Witness* had an increase on the previous quarter. No Daily showed an increase on the prior year.

Daily Sun, last quarter’s biggest loser, has changed sector.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Daily Nation	MD, Mo-Sat	56,064		56,064	-8.3%	-11.3%
Burger, Die Daily	MD, Mo-Fr	25,460	650	26,110	0.7%	-6.2%
Bukedde	MD, Mo-Sat	19,009		19,009	-6.8%	-9.5%
Beeld, Daily	MD, Mo-Fr	18,473	541	19,014	-3.8%	-9.3%
Isolezwe	MD, Mo-Fr	17,994	1,028	19,022	-9.5%	-29.6%
New Vision	MD, Mo-Fr	15,553	50	15,603	-5.9%	-8.9%
Sowetan	Mo-Fr	15,017	2,856	17,873	-24.2%	-28.1%
Citizen, The (Daily)	MD, Mo-Fr	13,548	9,366	22,914	-4.3%	-6.3%
Daily Sun	Mo-Fr	12,424	192	12,616	-14.5%	-55.0%
Times of Swaziland	MD, Mo-Fr	11,840		11,840	0%	-14.3%
Business Day	MD, Mo-Fr	11,835	1,770	13,605	-3.7%	-5.6%
Daily Dispatch	MD, Mo-Fr	9,502	589	10,091	-7.4%	-7.3%
Herald, The	MD, Mo-Fr	9,188	833	10,021	-1.1%	-3.5%
Star, The	MD, Mo-Fr	8,934	8,900	17,834	-6.6%	-34.6%
Mercury, The	MD, Mo-Fr	5,984	3,085	9,069	-4.5%	-17.5%
Cape Times	MD, Mo-Fr	5,318	3,876	9,194	-9.4%	-18.7%
Witness, The	MD, Mo-Fr	5,103	1,210	6,313	0.2%	-1.4%
Cape Argus	MD, Mo-Fr	4,637	3,934	8,571	-14.0%	-18.1%
Daily News	MD, Mo-Fr	4,243	2,923	7,166	-2.9%	-19.6%
Son (Daily)	MD, Mo-Fr	Changed Sector				



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Weekly newspapers

Again, for this category in this quarter *Daily Maverick* is the only winner, continuing its increase gains from the previous three quarters to gains in Q4 on the previous quarter and the previous year.

All the other newspapers in the category show decreases with *Soccer Laduma* in double-figure decreases on the previous quarter and the prior year.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Soccer Laduma	Wkly, Wed	48,186	2	48,188	-19.8%	-27.3%
Ilanga	2xW, Mo&Th	24,591		24,591	-9.5%	-26.2%
SON Weekly	Wkly, Th	19,580	49	19,629	-3.7%	
Post, The	Wkly, Wed	12,418	3,348	15,766	-2.5%	-15.5%
Daily Maverick,	Wkly, Sat	9,093	1,236	10,329	2.9%	15.7%
Mail & Guardian	Wkly, Fr	7,667		7,667	-3.1%	-9.8%
Lesotho Times	Wkly, Th	6,629	283	6,912	-12.5%	7.9%

Voice, The	Wkly, Fr	6,406		6,406	-8.6%	-10.1%
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ABC Q3 2023: Newspaper category stabilises

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Weekend newspapers

There was not much weekend cheer in this category. While in Q3 there had been six newspapers show an increase on the previous quarter, in Q4 only *Burger, Die Saturday*, *Die Saturday* shows an increase on the previous quarter.

Ilanga Lempela Sonto and *Weekend Witness* are the only two newspapers to show an increase on the prior year.

Sunday Times is the biggest loser with double-figure decreases on the previous quarter and the prior year.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Sunday Times	Wknd	58,593	3,609	62,202	-27.9%	-42.9%
Sunday Nation	Wkly, Sun	58,580		58,580	-8.1%	-13.6%
Rapport	Wknd	57,333	139	57,472	-2.3%	-9.3%
Burger, Die Saturday	Wkly, Sat	33,945	639	34,584	1.2%	-6.5%
Beeld, Saturday	Wkly, Sat	22,796	222	23,018	-2.8%	-10.1%
Isolezwe ngeMpelaSonto	Wknd	20,808	2	20,810	-8.7%	-6.3%
Ilanga LempelaSonto	Wknd	16,064		16,064	-9.0%	3.2%
Sunday Tribune	Wkly, Sun	12,966	3,730	16,696	-3.2%	-14.0%
City Press	Wknd	12,358	332	12,690	-9.0%	-22.1%
Sunday World	Wknd	12,345	2,681	15,026	-17.8%	-36.6%
Sunday Vision	Wkly, Sun	10,250	50	10,300	-22.2%	-6.4%
Citizen, The (Saturday)	Wkly, Sat	7,985	62	8,047	-11.0%	-14.6%
Independent on Saturday	Wkly, Sat	7,638	3,482	11,120	-2.5%	-14.9%
Weekend Post	Wknd	6,877	377	7,254	-14.5%	-10.1%
Daily Dispatch Weekend Edition (formerly Saturday Dispatch)	Wknd	6,694	261	6,955	-10.8%	-18.4%
Weekend Argus	Wknd	5,272	3,951	9,223	-2.8%	-25.9%
Weekend Witness	Wkly, Sat	4,563	1,231	5,794	-1.0%	1.5%
Saturday Star, The	Wkly, Sat	3,470	3,400	6,870	-6.6%	-16.3%
Isolezwe ngeSonto	Wkly, Sun	Rebranded				

Local newspapers

As so often in past quarters, local newspapers are a highlight.

Five local newspapers show an increase on the previous quarter as well as on the previous year.

The best performer is the *Middelburg Observer, Fri* with an increase of over five percent on the previous quarter. It was also the best performer on the prior year with an increase of over six percent.

Publication	Frequency	Paid circulation	Free circulation	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Witbank News, Fri	Wkly, Fr	20,217		20,217	4.9%	2.9%
Middelburg Observer, Fri	Wkly, Fr	17,917		17,917	5.7%	6.1%
African Reporter	Wkly, Fr	13,472		13,472	-2.5%	5.8%
George Herald (Thursday)	Wkly, Th	8,426		8,426	-2.3%	-9.4%
Mpumalanga News	Wkly, Wed	7,347		7,347	1.7%	2.5%
Paarl Post	Wkly, Th	5,372	78	5,450	-10.3%	-21.2%

Zululand Observer Weekend (Formerly Friday)	Wkly, Fr	4,211	490	4,701	-6.1%	-12.3%
Weslander, The	Wkly, Th	4,112	194	4,306	-11.3%	-19.9%
Limpopo Mirror	Wkly, Fr	3,648		3,648	-6.4%	-21.6%
Mosselbay Advertiser	Wkly, Fr	3,608		3,608	-1.7%	-15.9%
Vaalweekblad	Wkly, Th	2,867		2,867	-2.9%	-7.7%
Zululand Observer Monday	Wkly, Mon	2,129	320	2,449	-9.4%	-11.3%
South Cape Forum/Suid Kaap Forum	Wkly, Th	1,381		1,381	-5.5%	-17.7%
Knysna Plett Herald	Wkly, Th	1,047		1,047	-6.0%	-10.7%
Talk of the Town	Wkly, Fr	1,031		1,031	3.8%	-24.5%
Oudtshoorn Courant	Wkly, Fr	849		849	-2.2%	1.7%
Streeknuus	Wkly, Fr	829		829	1.7%	-17.6%
Graaff Reinet Advertiser	Wkly, Th	676		676	-16.6%	-9.0%
Worcester Standard	Wkly, Th	Rebranded				
Bosvelder Review	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				
Daller, Die	Wkly, Fr	Changed Sector				

Free newspapers

The largest category, Free Newspapers distribution shows pockets of increases, the best of which is over three percent, for *Bosvelder Review* and *Weskus Nuus*.

The other increases on the previous quarter are incremental, but so are the decreases, with most newspapers holding steady.

The exception is *Diamond Fields Advertiser* which showed a big decline on the previous quarter and the prior year.

For the prior year, the picture looks much the same, with incremental increases and decreases in general. There are a few exceptions.

Soweto Urban News continued its good fortunes from Q3 with an increase of over nine percent on the prior year, as did *Tygerburger Durbanville* which had an increase of over eight percent.

North Coast Courier and *Express* had double figure increases.

On the flip side, *Peoples Post Mitchells Plain* had a double figure decrease. *Tygerburger Kraaifontein* had a decrease just under 10%

Publication	Frequency	Total circulation	%change quarter	%change year
Vuk'uzenzele	Mtly	849,950		
PE Express	Wkly, Wed	119,995		
Soweto Urban News	Wkly, Th	109,100		9.1%
Sedibeng Ster	Wkly, Th	90,980		
Plainsman	Wkly, Wed	89,536		
City Vision	Wkly, Th	85,000		
Rekord East/Oos	Wkly, Tue	78,955	0.5%	0.2%
Vukani	Wkly, Wed	78,056		
Mthatha Express	Wkly, Wed	69,995		
Tabletalk	Wkly, Wed	67,844		
Merebank & Chatsworth Tabloid	Wkly, Wed	64,980		
North Coast Rising Sun	Wkly, Wed	64,860		
Randburg Sun	Wkly, Th	60,104	-0.3%	0.2%
Rekord Centurion	Wkly, Wed	59,819	-0.3%	-0.2%
Phoenix Tabloid	Wkly, Tue	55,980		
Athlone News	Wkly, Wed	54,151		
Highway Mail	Wkly, Fr	54,013	0.1%	0.3%

Kathorus Mail	F	53,496	-0.9%	-1.0%
The Springfield Weekly Gazette	Wkly, Th	53,480		1.9%
Chatsworth Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	53,050		
Sandton Chronicle	Wkly, Wed	49,988	-0.1%	0.5%
Southern Mail	Wkly, Wed	48,853		
Thembisan	F	48,825	-1.3%	0.5%
Kempton Express	Wkly, Th	48,660	-0.2%	-0.7%
Southern Suburbs Tatler	Wkly, Wed	47,238		
Roodepoort Record	Wkly, Th	46,482		-0.4%
Bloemfontein Courant (formerly Krant)	Wkly, Th	44,890		
Overport Rising Sun	Wkly, Th	44,850		
Bedfordview & Edenvale News	Wkly, Wed	44,618	0.4%	-0.7%
Boksburg Advertiser	Wkly, Tue	43,130	-0.2%	0.2%
Ster, South	Wkly, Tue	41,460		
Bloemnuus	Wkly, Th	41,095	-0.2%	-2.3%
Rosebank Killamey Gazette	Wkly, Tue	41,095	0.2%	0.5%
Ethekwini Times	Wkly, Fr	40,980		
Umlazi Times	Wkly, Th	40,980		
People s Post Mitchells Plain	Wkly, Tue	40,000		-20.0%
Rekord North/Noord	Wkly, Th	39,973	0.1%	
Echo Eyethu	Wkly, Th	39,948		
Benoni City Times	Wkly, Th	38,756	1.7%	1.8%
Alberton Record	Wkly, Wed	37,616	0.1%	0.1%
Helderberg Gazette & District Mail	Wkly, Wed	36,926	0.3%	-0.6%
Fourways Review	Wkly, Wed	36,715	-0.1%	-0.2%
Go & Express	Wkly, Th	36,693	-1.6%	-1.6%
Noordkaap Bulletin	Wkly, Th	35,284		-0.1%
Vista	Wkly, Th	35,266	0.1%	
Tongaat & Verulam Tabloid (former Northern Star)	Wkly, Tue	34,980		
North Coast Courier	Wkly, Wed	34,940	4.9%	16.9%
South Coast Fever	Wkly, Th	34,500	-0.9%	-1.1%
Ridge Times	Wkly, Tue	34,400		
Rekord Moot	Wkly, Th	33,570		0.2%
Ster, North	Wkly, Tue	32,760		
Constantiaberg Bulletin	Wkly, Wed	31,316		
Tygerburger Elsies-, Eersterivier & Ravensmead	Wkly, Wed	31,021		
False Bay Echo	Wkly, Wed	30,879		
Northcliff & Melville Times	Wkly, Tue	30,799	-0.5%	0.7%
Atlantic Sun	Wkly, Wed	30,794		
Eyethu Bay Watch (Formerly Baywatch)	Wkly, Wed	30,470		1.3%
Bolander	Wkly, Wed	30,461		
Tygerburger Table View	Wkly, Wed	30,079	0.1%	
Express	Wkly, Wed	30,055	0.1%	-11.8%
Diamond Fields Advertiser	Wkly, Fr	30,000	-25.0%	-25.0%
Standard Breederivier Gazette	Wkly, Th	29,985		
Dolphin Coast Mail	Wkly, Wed	29,960		
East Coast Mail	Wkly, Wed	29,960		
Maritzburg Sun	Wkly, Wed	29,956		
Public Eye	Wkly, Th	29,952		
Rekord Mamelodi	Wkly, Fr	29,950	0.2%	0.8%
Rising Sun Lenasia	Wkly, Wed	29,925		
Issue Mangaung	Wkly, Wed	29,900		
Umlazi Eyethu	Wkly, Fr	29,881		
Germiston City News	Wkly, Tue	29,807	-0.3%	0.1%
Polokwane Observer.	Wkly, Th	29,760		3.0%
Rekord Noweto	F	28,950	1.1%	
Mdrand Reporter	Wkly, Th	28,329	-0.2%	0.5%
People s Post Athlone & Landsdowne	Wkly, Tue	28,000		
UD Express	Wkly, Wed	27,687	-7.7%	-7.7%

Northglen News	Wkly, Fr	27,450	-0.1%	0.3%
Berea Mail	Wkly, Fr	27,142		0.3%
Roodepoort Northsider (Formerly Northside Chronicle	Wkly, Th	26,528	-0.5%	-0.6%
Krugersdorp News	Wkly, Wed	26,471		0.5%
Springs Advertiser	Wkly, Th	25,954	-0.2%	0.1%
Southern Courier	Wkly, Tue	25,381	0.2%	
People s Post Woodstock & City	Wkly, Tue	25,000		
People s Post Grassy Park & Retreat	Wkly, Tue	25,000		
Eikestadnuus.	Wkly, Th	23,897	-0.2%	-0.3%
Intshonalanga Eyethu	Wkly, Fr	23,780		
Tygerburger Durbanville	Wkly, Wed	22,082	0.3%	8.8%
People s Post False Bay	Wkly, Tue	22,000		
Xpress Times	Wkly, Wed	21,980		
Issue, Eastern Free State	Wkly, Th	21,900		
Comaro Chronicle	Wkly, Wed	20,854	-0.4%	
Hermanus Times.	Wkly, Wed	20,834	0.2%	0.2%
Rekord West News/Wes Nuus	F	20,215	0.1%	0.1%
Isolezwe lesiXhosa	Wkly, Th	20,000		
People s Post Claremont/Rondebosch	Wkly, Tue	20,000		
People s Post Constantia/Wynberg	Wkly, Tue	20,000		
Kouga Express	Wkly, Th	19,995		
Heidelberg/Nigel Heraut	Wkly, Wed	19,980		1.9%
Bonus Review	Wkly, Wed	19,880		-0.1%
South Coast Sun	Wkly, Fr	19,866	0.1%	0.3%
Swartland Gazette (formerly Swartland Monitor).	Wkly, Tue	19,860	2.7%	2.5%
Merebank Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	19,850		
Mid South Coast Rising Sun	Wkly, Tue	19,850		
UGU Eyethu	Wkly, Wed	19,850		-0.3%
Tygerburger Bellville	Wkly, Wed	19,414	0.5%	0.6%
Brakpan Herald	Wkly, Fr	19,156	-0.4%	0.4%
Tygerburger Kuilsrivier	Wkly, Wed	19,077		
Representative	Wkly, Mon	18,684	-4.9%	-5.2%
Rekord Central/Sentraal	F	18,500	0.1%	
Randfontein / Westonaria Herald.	Wkly, Tue	18,256	0.1%	1.0%
Tygerburger Brackenfell	Wkly, Wed	18,238		-0.1%
TygerBurger De Grendel	Wkly, Wed	18,114		-0.1%
Southlands Sun	Wkly, Fr	17,752		0.1%
Steelburger	Wkly, Th	17,700		
TygerBurger Tyger Valley	Wkly, Wed	17,088		
Tygerburger Minerton	Wkly, Wed	17,068	0.1%	0.1%
Potchefstroom Herald.	Wkly, Fr	16,930		
Northern Eyethu	Mty	15,888		0.2%
Weskus Nuus	F	15,505	3.4%	3.4%
Tygerburger Kraaifontein	Wkly, Wed	15,393	0.2%	-9.9%
Alex News	F	14,782	-0.1%	-0.1%
Tygerburger Goodwood	Wkly, Wed	14,072	0.1%	
Tygerburger Parow	Wkly, Wed	14,070	0.1%	
Queensburgh News	F	13,002	0.5%	0.6%
Vrystaat Kroon	F	12,443	-0.3%	0.7%
Carletonville Herald.	Wkly, Fr	11,990		0.7%
Zululand Eyethu (formerly Eshowe Watch)	Mty	11,972		1.0%
Village Talk	Wkly, Wed	11,946		
Highvelder, The	Wkly, Fr	11,760		
Herrie	Wkly, Th	11,136	1.0%	-11.6%
Daily Sun On the GO - EC	Wkly, Th	10,995		
Uthukela Eyethu	Wkly, Th	9,985	0.2%	3.3%
Greytown Gazette	Wkly, Mon	9,980		
Hazyview Herald	F	9,795		
Corridor Gazette	F	9,710		

Daily Sun On the GO - FS	Wkly, Th	7,995		
Ystervark	Wkly, Th	7,925		
Parys Gazette	Wkly, Fr	7,480		
Sentinel News	Wkly, Wed	7,145		
Daily Sun On the GO - KZN	Wkly, Th	5,995		
Capricorn Voice ..	Q	5,883	0.1%	2.8%
Daily Sun On the GO - WC	Wkly, Th	4,995		
The Hilton	Mtly	4,960		
Free State Sun	Wkly, Th	4,937		3.9%
Northern Review Weekend	Wkly, Fr	4,836		2.0%
Standerton Advertiser.	Wkly, Tue	4,750		
Mpumalanga Mirror	F	3,000	0.3%	
Bosvelder Review	Wkly, Th	2,832	3.5%	
Estcourt	Wkly, Tue	2,420		
Maluti News	Wkly, Fr	1,595		-36.1%
IDISKI TIMES	Wkly, Tue	Terminated		
Inner City Gazette	Wkly, Th	Resigned		
YOUReThekwini	Mtly	Resigned		
Breederivier Gazette.	Wkly, Wed	Rebranded		
City Vision (Khayalitsha)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
City Vision (Langa/Gugulethu)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
City Vision (Lwandle / Nomzamo) former Kasi Vision Helderberg	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Maritzburg Echo	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Msunduzi Eyethu (former Edendale)	Wkly, Th	Rebranded		
Tygerburger Eersterivier/Blue Downs	Wkly, Wed	Rebranded		
Tygerburger Elsiesrivier & Ravensmead	Wkly, Wed	Rebranded		
Coastal Weekly	Wkly, Th	Ceased Publishing		
Stanger Weekly	Wkly, Wed	Ceased Publishing		
Umgungundlovu Eyethu (former Umngeni)	F	Ceased Publishing		

(Tables by Andre Rademan)

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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