



# The Murdoch Press the Voice

**Australians for a Murdoch Royal Commission**

Dr Victoria Fielding, Lecturer in Strategic Communication

The University of Adelaide

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**I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE  
TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND.  
I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY RESPECT TO  
THEIR ELDERS BOTH PAST AND PRESENT AND  
EXTEND THAT RESPECT TO OTHER FIRST  
AUSTRALIANS WHO ARE PRESENT.**



# **PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

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## **MEDIA POWER**

- The media's role in democracy
- Holding media accountable

## **NEWS CORP**

- Why News Corp coverage matters

## **VOICE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

- Murdoch Referendum Accountability Project

## **DISCUSSION**

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

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- **Funded by Australians for a Murdoch Royal Commission.**
- **Dr Victoria Fielding leads project team. Team of four media experts from The University of Adelaide.**
- **Weekly content analysis of articles from The Australian, Daily Telegraph, Herald Sun and videos from Sky News.**
- **Sample of content up to 126 pieces per week for duration of referendum.**
- **Results so far from three weeks - 17 July to 6 August.**
- **Sample size so far: The Australian 141, Daily Tele 48, Herald Sun 35, Sky News 143.**
- **Quantitative coding per word:**
  - **Voices included.**
  - **Voice mentioned.**
  - **'Yes' or 'No' arguments used.**
  - **How voices and arguments are framed as heroes, villains or victims.**

# **MEDIA POWER**

## **Democracy and Accountability**



# NEWS MEDIA'S POWERFUL ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY

- Hold power to account - watchdogs.
- Facilitate a diverse marketplace of ideas.
- Inform citizens with useful, accurate information they can use in democracy.
- News media legitimises and normalises.





# NEWS MEDIA INFLUENCES WIDER PUBLIC DEBATES

**Stan Grant, on leaving the ABC:**  
“We in the media must ask if we are truly honouring a world worth living in. **Too often we are the poison in the bloodstream of our society.** I fear the media does not have the love or the language to speak to the gentle spirits of our land....”





# JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALISM



## JOURNALISM 101

**IF SOMEONE SAYS IT'S  
RAINING OUTSIDE &  
ANOTHER PERSON SAYS  
IT'S DRY, IT IS NOT YOUR  
JOB TO QUOTE THEM  
BOTH.**

**YOUR JOB IS TO LOOK  
OUT THE  
WINDOW AND FIND OUT  
WHICH IS TRUE.**

## Ideally, journalists aim to:

- Report accurately.
- Include diverse voices in fair balance without privileging certain groups, ideas and ideologies.
- Are objective, independent and neutral - do not intervene in public debates.



# WE WANT BALANCE - BUT WHERE?

- Within a news story?
- Within a news outlet?
- Across a news organisation?
- Across a news institution?



# ACCOUNTABILITY

- All power must be accountable.
- When news media power is being abused, what are the consequences?
- Existing regulatory bodies are not performing adequately to hold news media accountable to clear standards.
- The public feel disempowered and despondent about lack of media accountability.
- A Royal Commission is needed to understand the true extent of problems and the influence news media is having on Australian society.



# **NEWS CORP**

## **Why News Corp Coverage Matters**

# NEWS CORP TAKES A POSITION IN PUBLIC DEBATES

The Australian's editor-at-large Paul Kelly responds to Malcolm Turnbull on ABC Q&A television current affairs panel, November 2020:

"We have many publications that are dedicated to promoting the cause of climate change, and radical action on climate change, so that's OK is it? It's OK to be a propagandist for one side, but if one is a critic or sceptic about some of these issues, that's not OK."





# NEWS CORP BLURRING NEWS AND COMMENTARY

## News Corp Editorial Policy

"Comment, conjecture and opinion are acceptable in reports to provide perspective on an issue, or explain the significance of an issue, or to allow readers to recognise what the publication's standpoint is on the matter being reported."





# BEWARE OF NORMALISING DESTRUCTIVE NEWS MEDIA



- The ABC is not left wing.
- The Guardian advocate on issues like climate change.
- However, the Guardian are not equivalent to News Corp in scale and journalistic standards.
- Right wing media "anything goes" attitude to winning political debates has normalised weaponising of:
  - Hate and racial discrimination
  - Misinformation and disinformation



# **MEDIA POWER: SIZE AND CONCENTRATION MATTERS**



**News Corp is the unchallenged dominant player, owning a 59% share of the metropolitan and national print media markets by readership. Nine is the second-largest media owner, with a combined 23% readership share**

**University of Sydney - Benedetta Brevini and Michael Ward  
GetUp's Who Controls Our Media Report 2021**

# **VOICE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

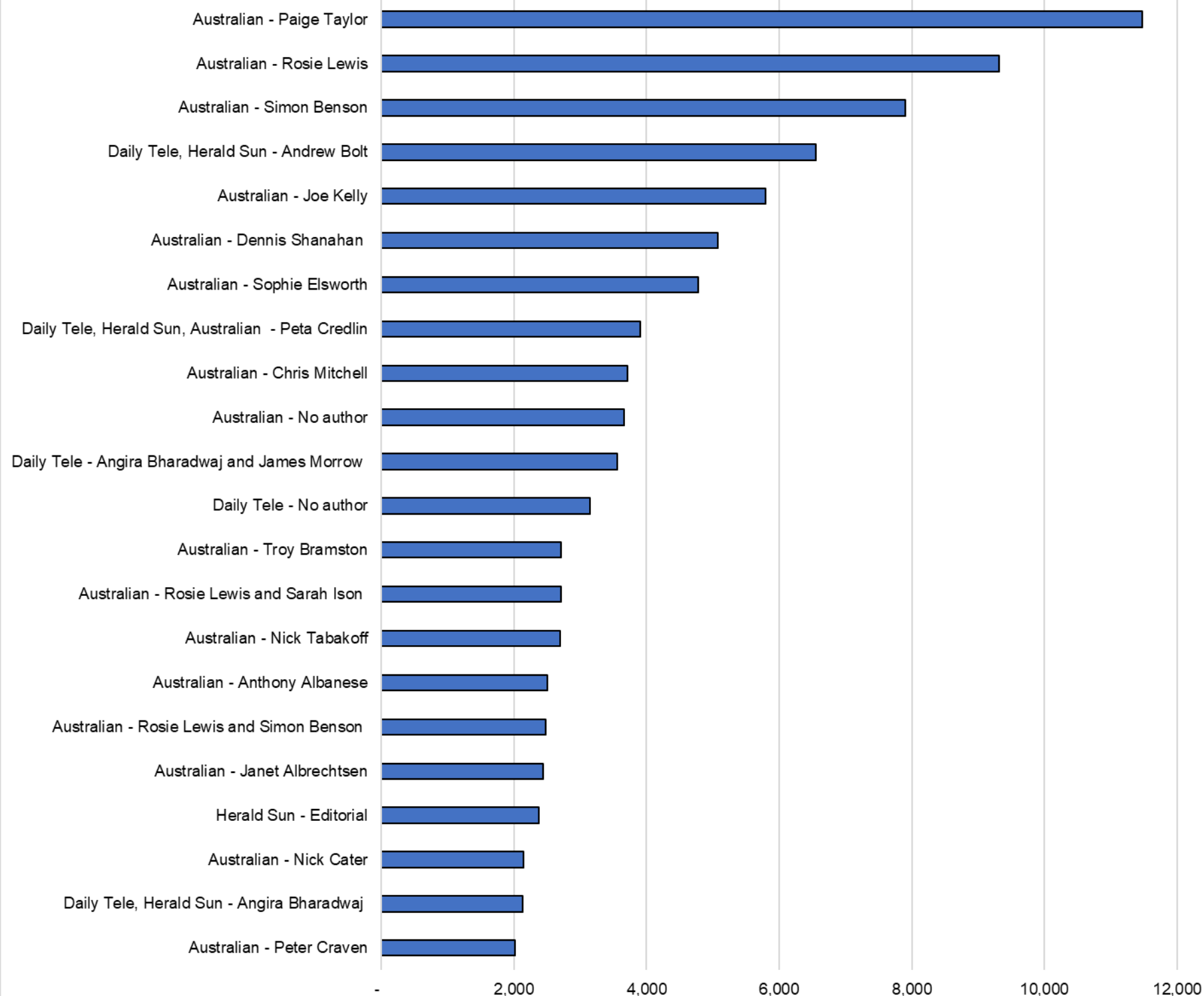
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## **Murdoch Referendum Accountability Project**

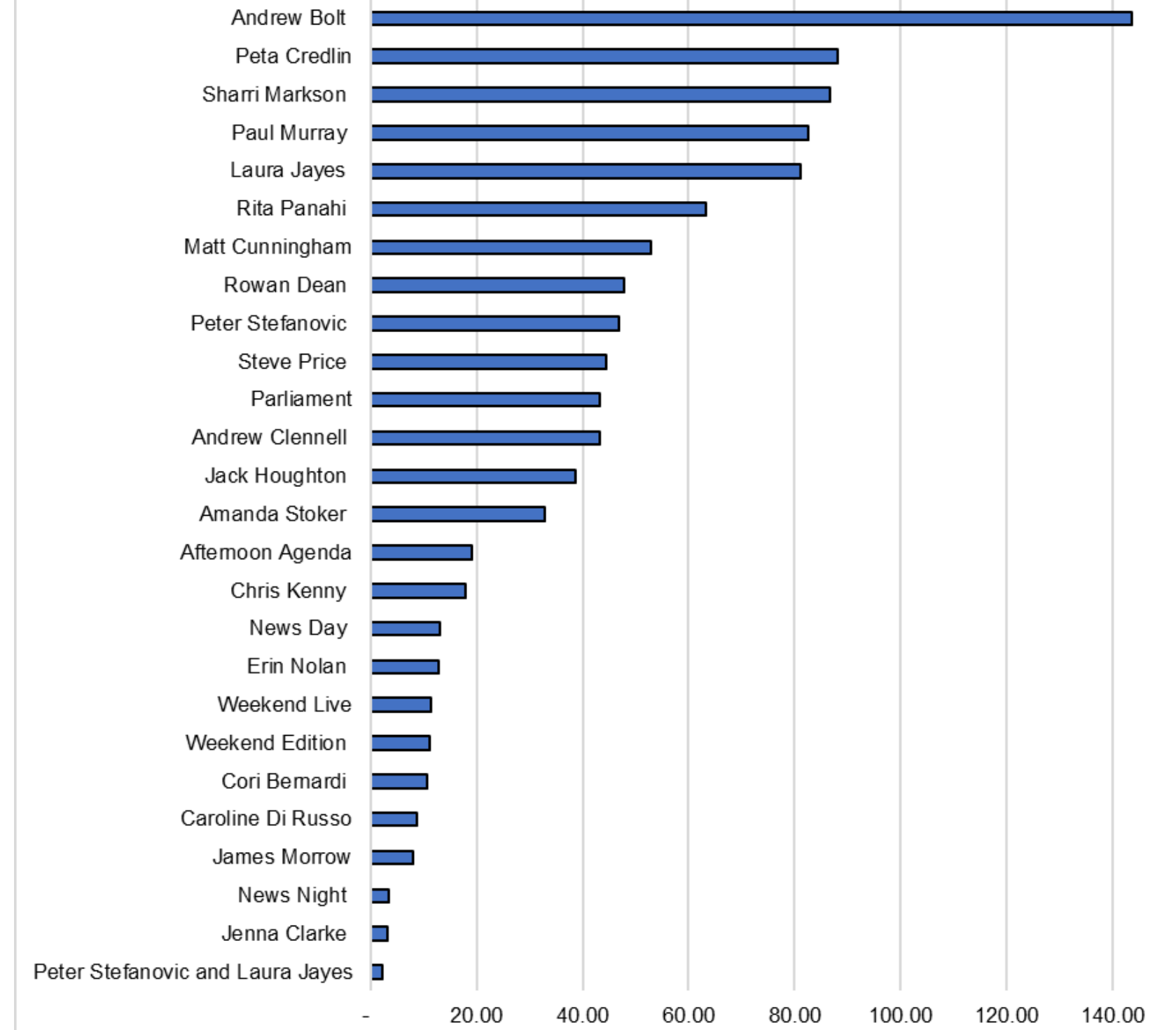


# MOST PROLIFIC AUTHORS AND HOSTS

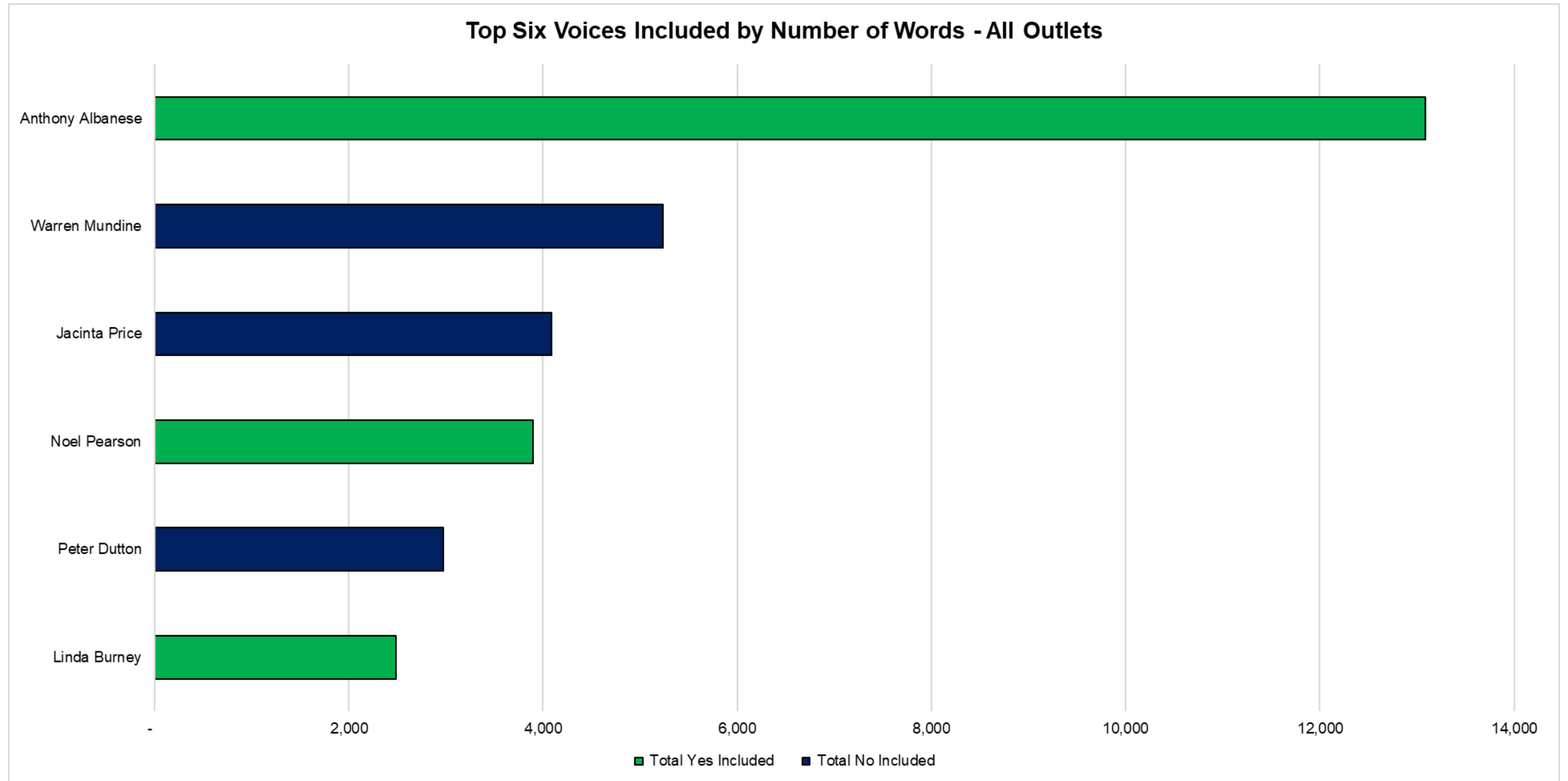
News Corp Authors by Words (over 2000 words)



Sky News Presenter/Show Voice Coverage YouTube in Minutes

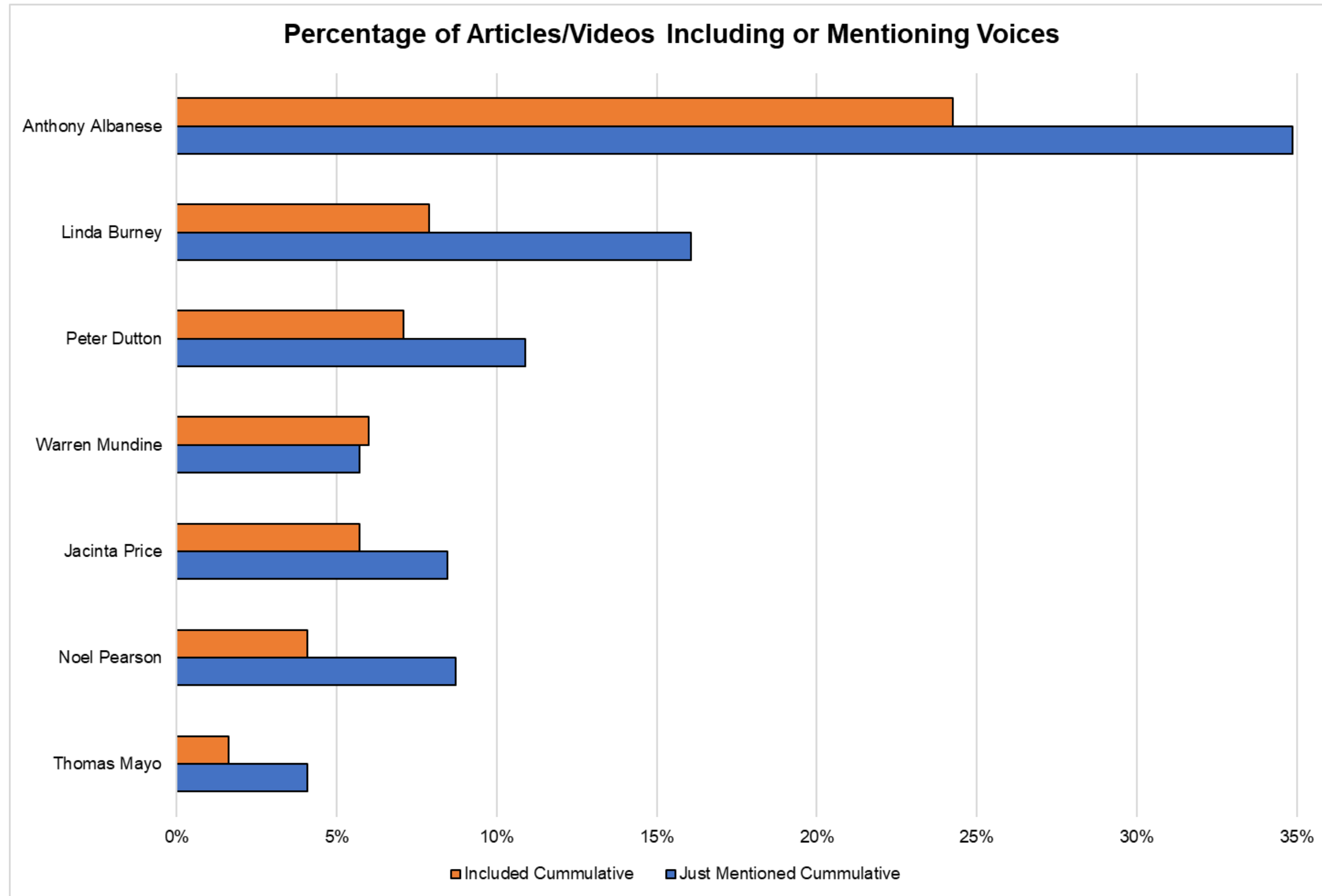


# TOP VOICES INCLUDED

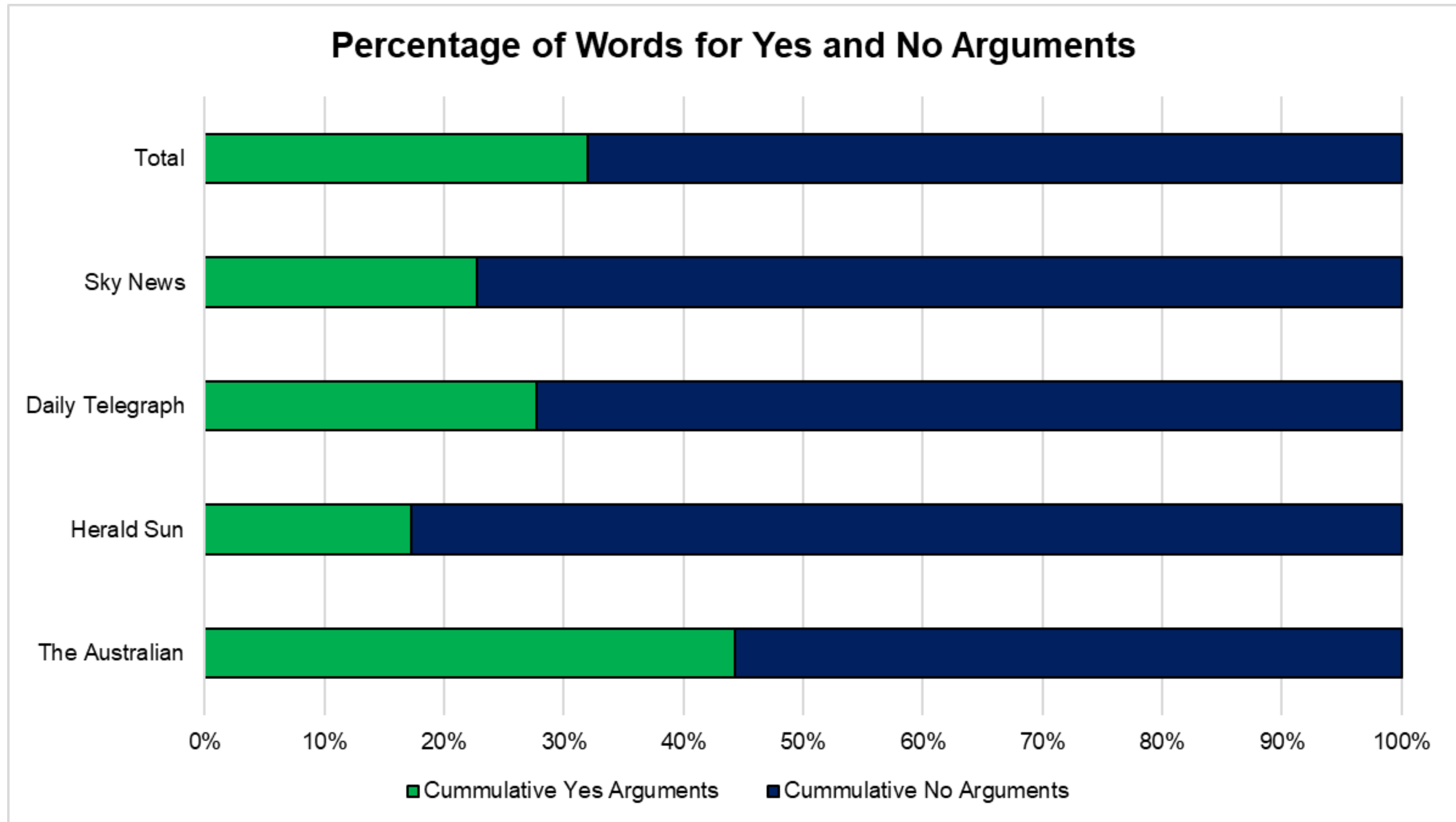




# VOICES INCLUDED/MENTIONED % OF ARTICLES/VIDEOS

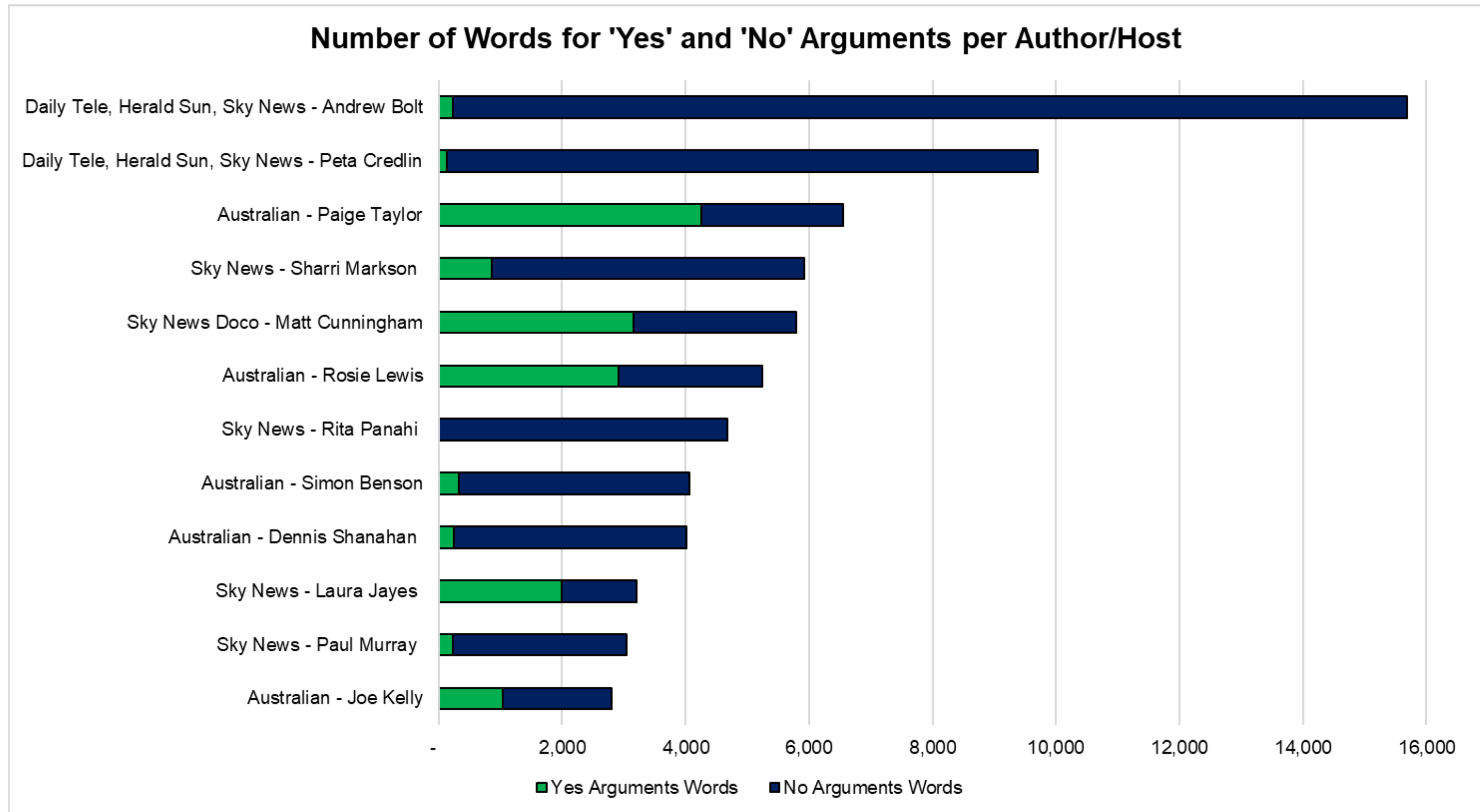


# 'YES' AND 'NO' ARGUMENTS BY OUTLET

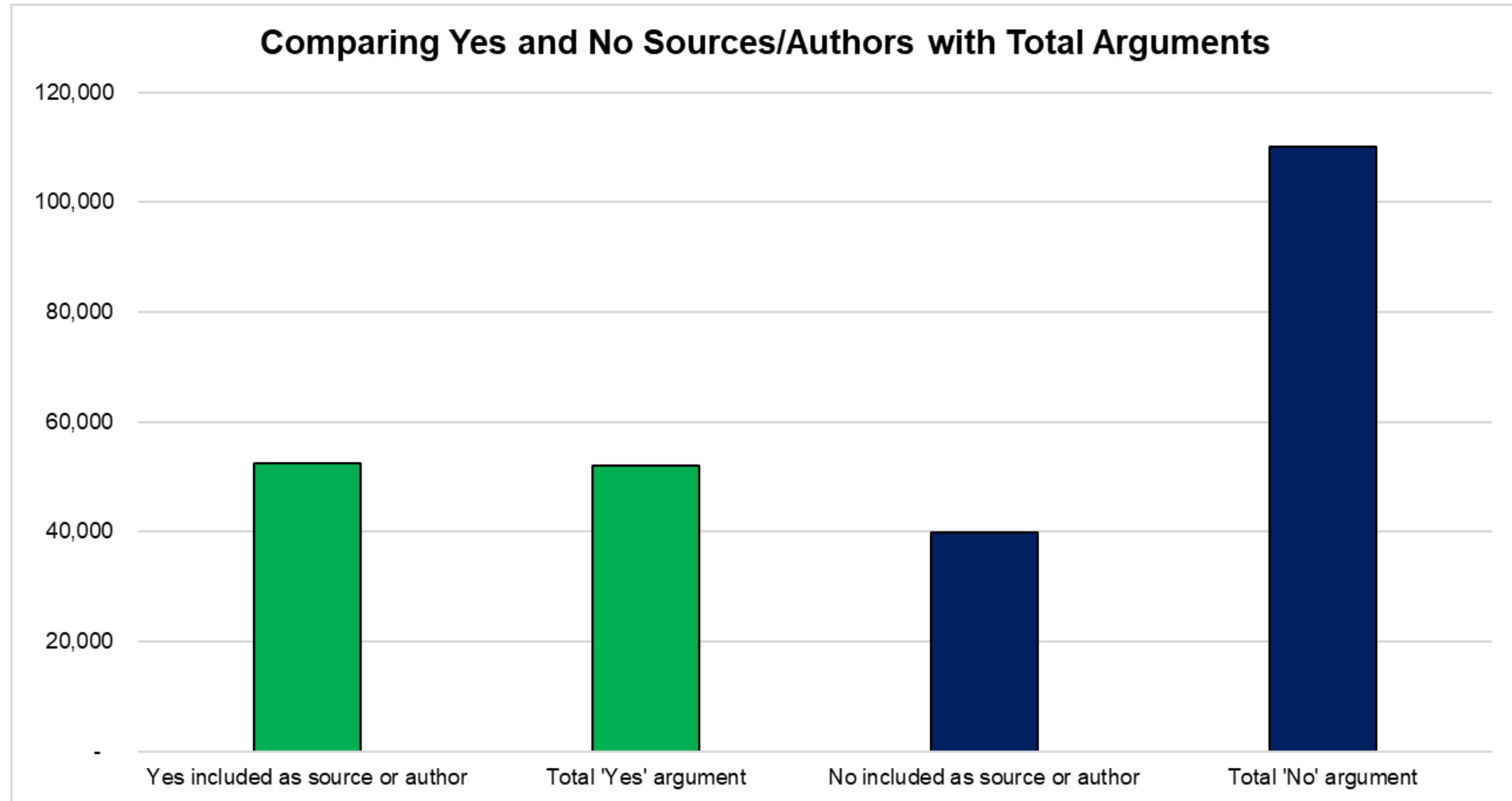




# 'YES' AND 'NO' BALANCE - PROLIFIC AUTHORS/HOSTS

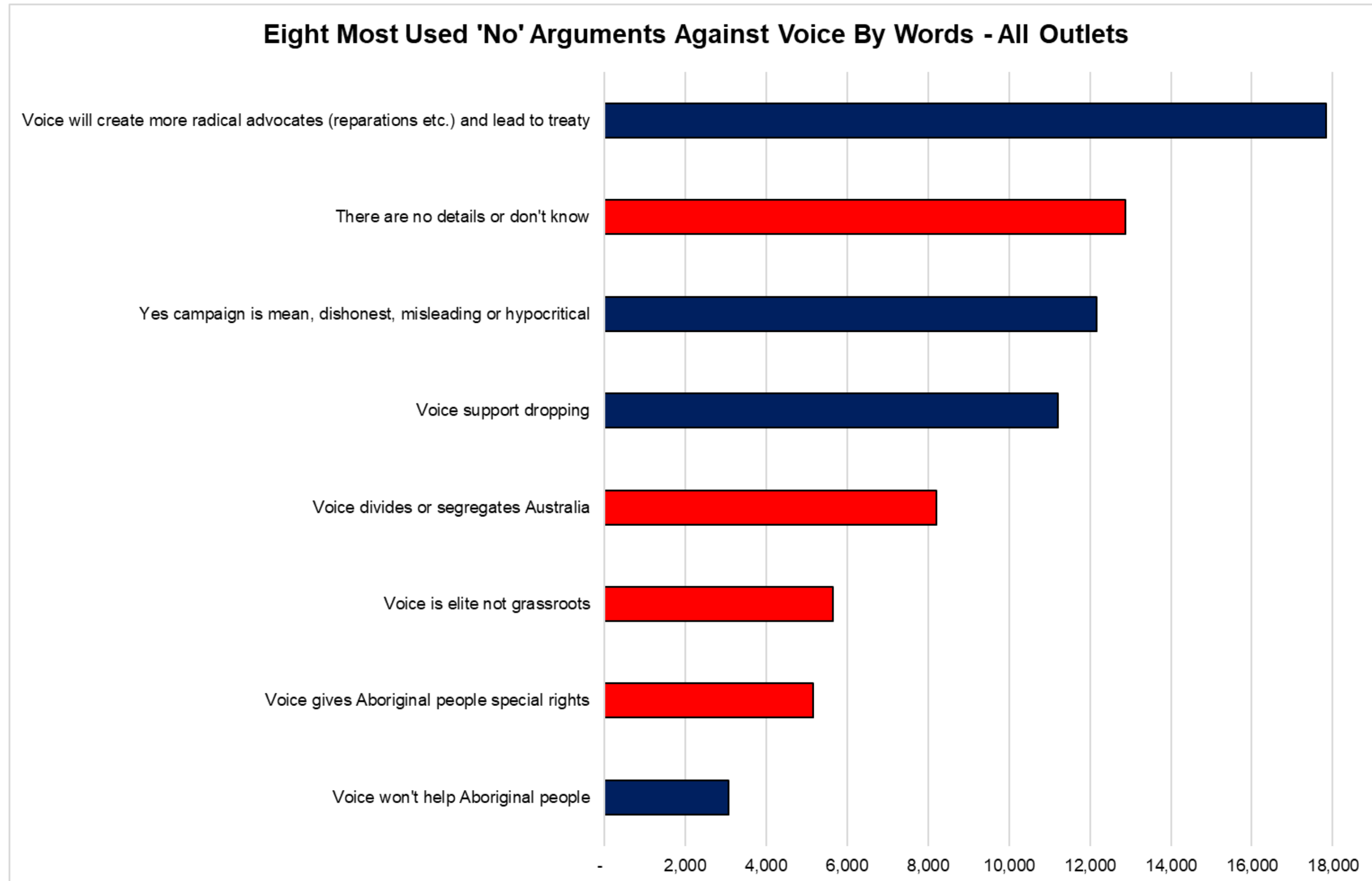


# HOW 'YES' AND 'NO' ARGUMENTS ARE INCLUDED

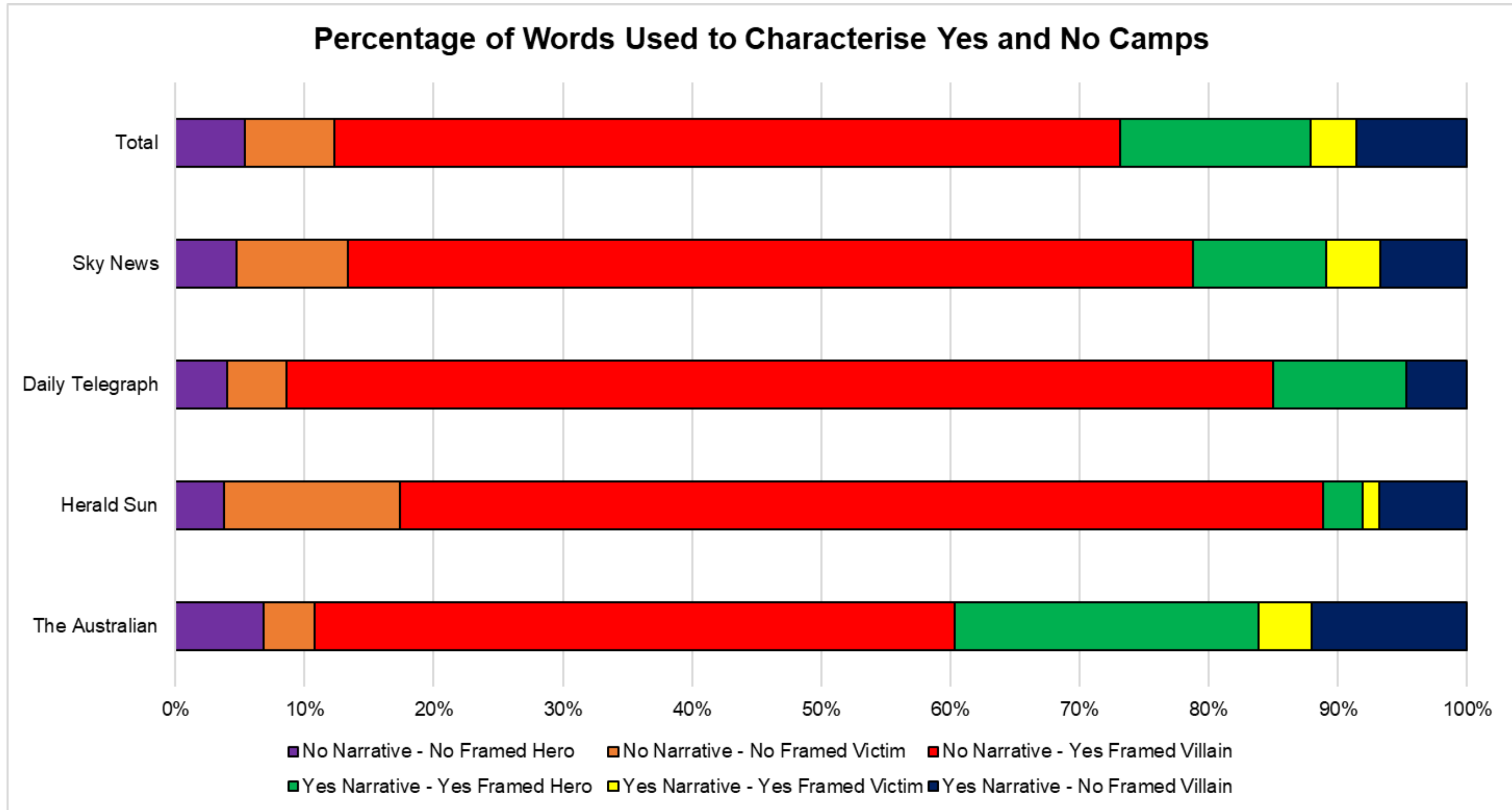




# MOST USED ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VOICE



# 'YES' AND 'NO' CAMP CHARACTERISATIONS





# MISINFORMATION - EXAMPLE

## ‘Poll politics’ can’t hide Uluru Statement from the Heart’s true agenda

PETA CREDLIN



Sky News host exposes Labor's 'lie' on the Uluru Statement from the Heart



Australians 'starting to understand' what is at stake if Voice succeeds



RACIAL DISCRIMINATION - EXAMPLE

Thursday August 10, 2023 | Herald Sun

Andrew Bolt



'Fake' Aborigines hurting their cause

H

ere we go yet again. Labor's Gordon Reid is one of the record 11 federal politicians who say they're Aboriginal.

Reid, from the New South Wales seat of Robertson, has often declared this Aboriginality that no stranger would guess from just looking at him.

For instance, in his maiden speech to parliament he introduced himself as "a proud Wiradjuri man", by way of his father's mother, "Aunty Robyn Reid, an incredible Aboriginal elder".

He's made the same claim on the ABC and Sky News, and was angry when Opposition Leader Peter Dutton asked whether the Voice — Labor's planned Aboriginal-only advisory parliament — would have rules about who actually qualified as Aboriginal.

"That's insulting," protested Reid. "This is an issue that is extremely close to home."

I'll say.

The problem is that Reid, like an astonishing number of prominent Australians making a public fuss about their Aboriginality, turns out to have not one Aboriginal ancestor in his family tree.

No, "Aunty" Robyn Reid is not Aboriginal, and so Reid isn't, either.

That's the finding of an exhaustive search by genealogists from the dark-emu-exposed.org website, which has exposed several fake Aborigines already, mostly academics such as Professor Bruce Pascoe and Professor "Aunty" Kerrie Doyle, winner of a scholarship to Oxford meant for Aboriginal students.

Of course, these experts could have made mistakes as they pieced together Reid's ancestry from records of births, deaths and marriages, and consulted newspaper clippings and family photographs.

So dark-emu-exposed.org wrote to Reid, asking him to point out the Aborigine they may have overlooked among his ancestors, who all seemed of Irish or English ancestry. Or was he the one mistaken?

No answer.

So on Saturday I wrote to Reid as well, asking him to name his Aboriginal "apical ancestor" — the first Aborigine to enter his family tree. And could the Robertson MP point to the evidence?

I didn't get an answer to those questions, but his staff have now told me to look at what he did on Monday.

Good heavens. Reid had his



Labor MP Gordon Reid, pictured with Anthony Albanese, has claimed Aboriginality through his paternal grandmother.

grandmother come to Parliament to watch him give a speech protesting he really was Aboriginal, and wondering how mean I was.

"My grandmother Aunty Robyn, of whom my community bears me speak so fondly and frequently, is a proud Aboriginal Mingaetta elder and a woman of Wiradjuri descent," he insisted, again without naming which of her parents, grandparents or great-grandparents was the family's apical Aboriginal ancestor.

On he ploughed with emotion, but no proof: "I am proud of my Aboriginal heritage, and the desire to strip someone of this pride is something that I will never understand."

"I am of Wiradjuri heritage. I am of the Mingaetta community. I am Aboriginal. My family is Aboriginal, and we are proud."

Fine, he's proud. I'm happy for him, and had he not turned his Aboriginality into a political calling card and qualification I'd have said nothing.

But let me explain to Reid why truth about Aboriginal ancestry — truth and proof — matters, despite his hurt pride.

Aboriginal groups are increasingly agitated that fake Aborigines are taking jobs, prizes, grants, medical access, handouts and power from real Aborigines, and are now calling it out.

For instance, Suzanne Ingram, of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, told SBS she thought 300,000 of our 800,000 Aborigines actually weren't, and if this wasn't sorted out "it is going to erase Aboriginal persons".

Activist Stephen Hagan accused fakes of "profiting from our misery", and Yvonne Weldon of NSW's Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council said fakes were holding jobs meant for Aborigines. Others resent fakes claiming to represent real Aborigines, distorting debate and public policies.

I'd thought 300,000 fakes was an exaggeration, and the real number closer to 130,000. That's the number of Australians claiming to be Aboriginal in the past two censuses who hadn't in the census before.

But now I wonder if I've been naive, after seeing how many prominent people have been exposed as fakes by dark-emu-exposed.org, despite the legal danger in getting it wrong.

They include a Victorian Labor candidate, and even South Australia's "Aboriginal" Attorney-General, Kyam Maher, who refuses point blank to explain why his family tree shows not one of the Aboriginal ancestors he's claimed to have.

If there's a mistake, he won't say where.

Now there's Gordon Reid, who last weekend was at the Gama Festival in Arnhem Land, doing an Aboriginal dance and helping the Albanese government push the Voice he says is good for Aborigines.

Aborigines like, er, him?

sky news .COM.AU



The Bolt Report

BOLT: THE EASY WAY TO FOOL OUR 'EXPERTS'

REAL NEWS, HONEST VIEWS.

0:01 / 7:37

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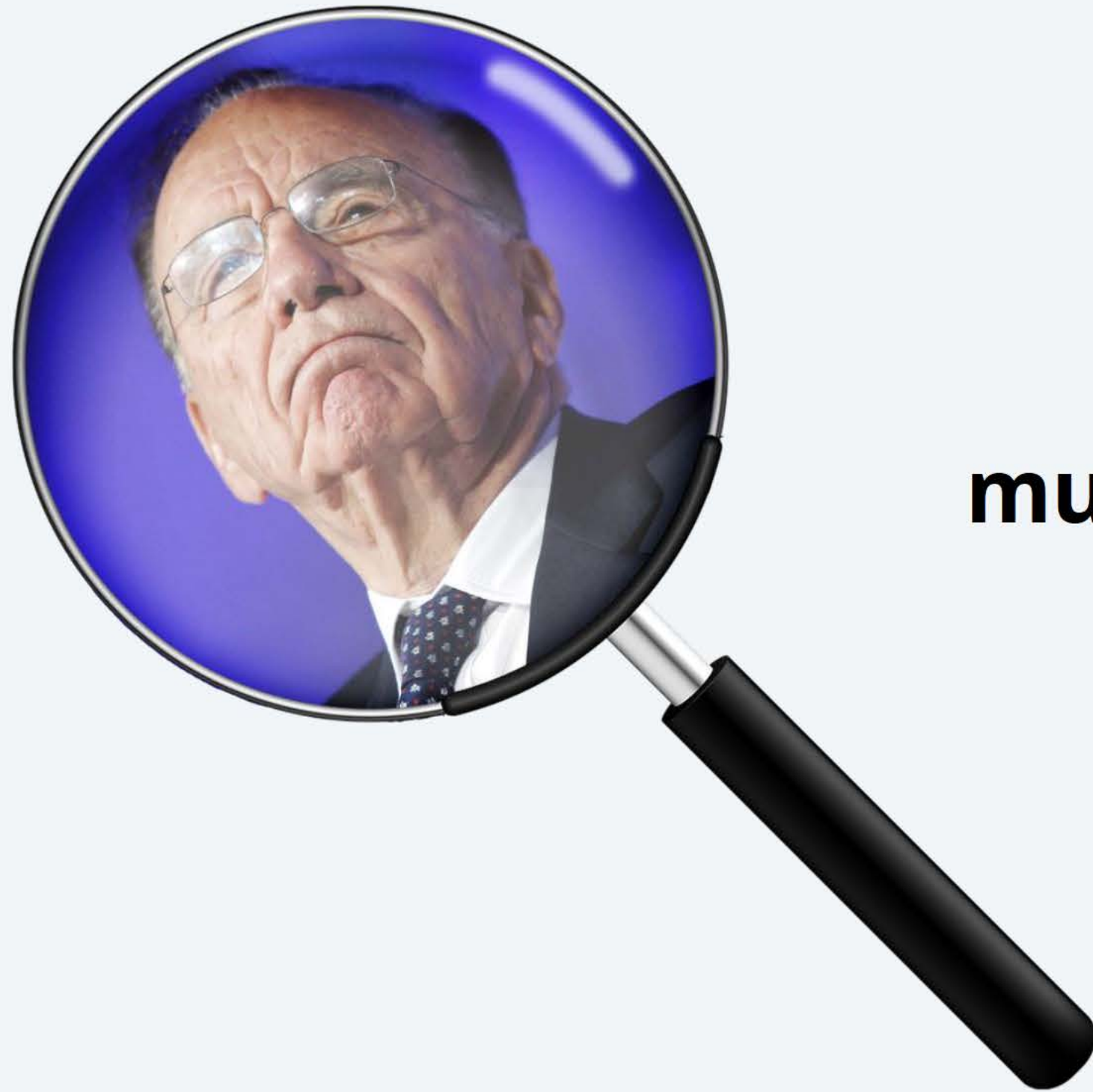
Fullscreen

'Almost no one checks': Claims nearly 'a third' of people claiming to be Aboriginal aren't



# **THANK YOU**

# **Questions**



# **Keep Updated**

**[murdochroyalcommission.org.au](https://murdochroyalcommission.org.au)**