

Week 5 Update: 14 August - 20 August

Murdoch Referendum Accountability Project

Week 5 Media Reporting Narrative Summary

Week 5's coverage was again less balanced than week 3 and 4. The arguments against the Voice were complicated in week 5 because Lidia Thorpe's progressive 'no' arguments, as put forward in her National Press Club speech on Wednesday 16 August, were used to argue against the Voice, despite Thorpe's position representing a rejection of both the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns.

Another key topic of conversation was Qantas' involvement in the 'Yes' campaign, with Qantas and other organisations who support the 'Yes' campaign criticised for taking this position.

A further topic of discussion was Peta Credlin's continued defense of her misinformation conspiracy theory about the length of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Credlin continued to claim the statement is 26 pages long, and complained about being fact-checked by RMIT Factcheck and on Facebook. Credlin alleges she is being censored and tied this discussion to Labor's misinformation laws, suggesting these laws harm free speech.

Anthony Albanese continues to be the main protagonist of the Voice, with Aboriginal activists from the 'Yes' campaign almost entirely absent in terms of mentions and inclusions. During this week of analysis, the National Labor Conference was held, and Albanese was involved in a number of interviews which mentioned the Voice. This gave Albanese a chance to be included advocating for the Voice. Despite these inclusions, overall 'No' arguments were included in 81% of words where arguments were used throughout week 5.

Week 5 Sample

Outlet	Total Articles/Videos (excluding duplicates)	Articles/Videos Coded
The Australian	37	37
Daily Telegraph	14	14
Herald Sun	16	16
Sky News	88	59
Total	155	126

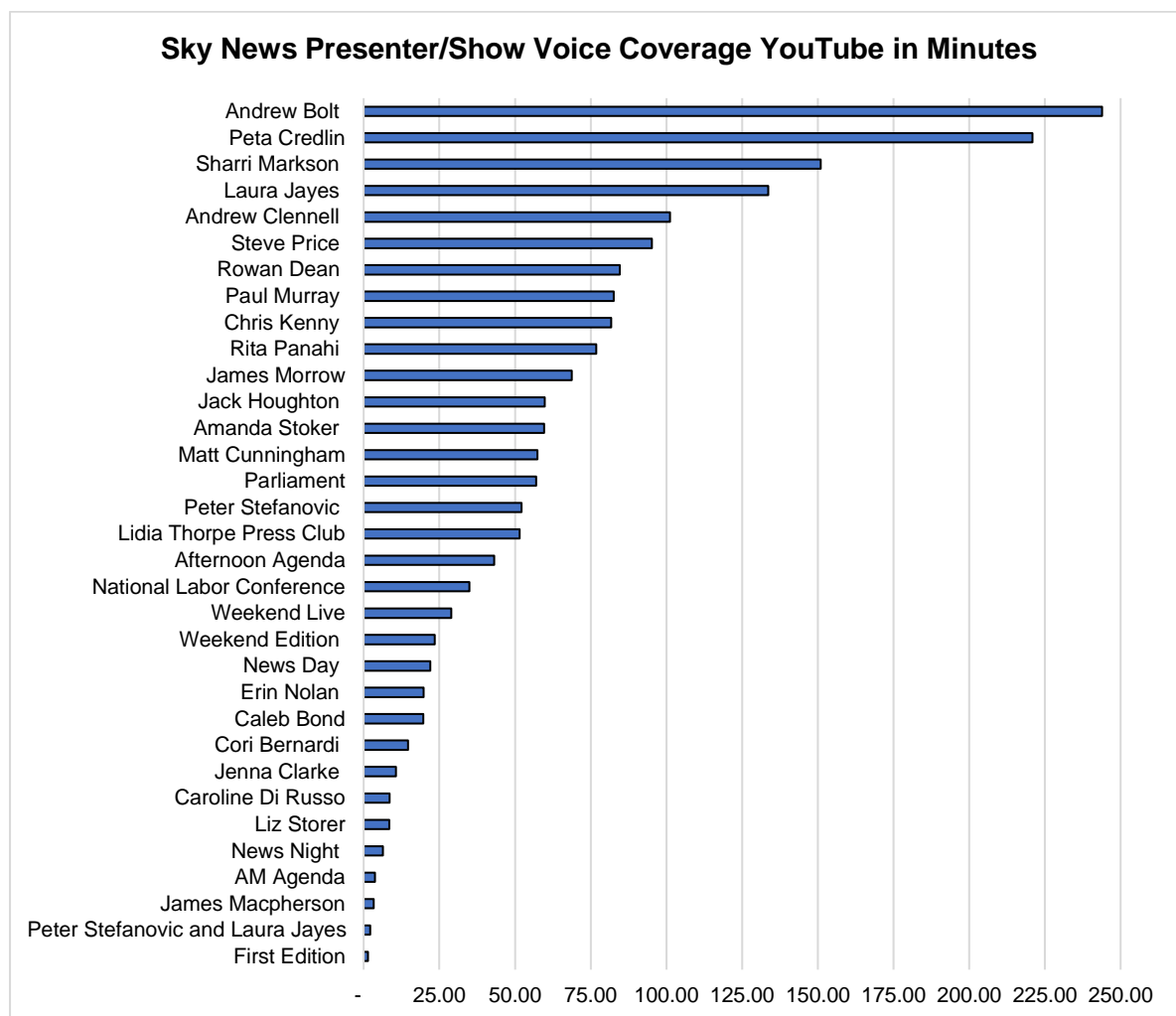
Sky News videos were prioritised by shortest length.

Sky News Hosts

The graph below reports the minutes each Sky News host has contributed in videos about the Voice in the first five weeks of monitoring.

Andrew Bolt continues to be the most prolific host talking about the Voice. Peta Credlin, however, had 22 more minutes of content than Andrew Bolt in Week 5, and is thus gaining on Bolt as the most prolific Sky News host talking about the Voice.

Chris Kenny also contributed over 30 minutes of content about the Voice in week 5, bringing him up the overall rankings to ninth.



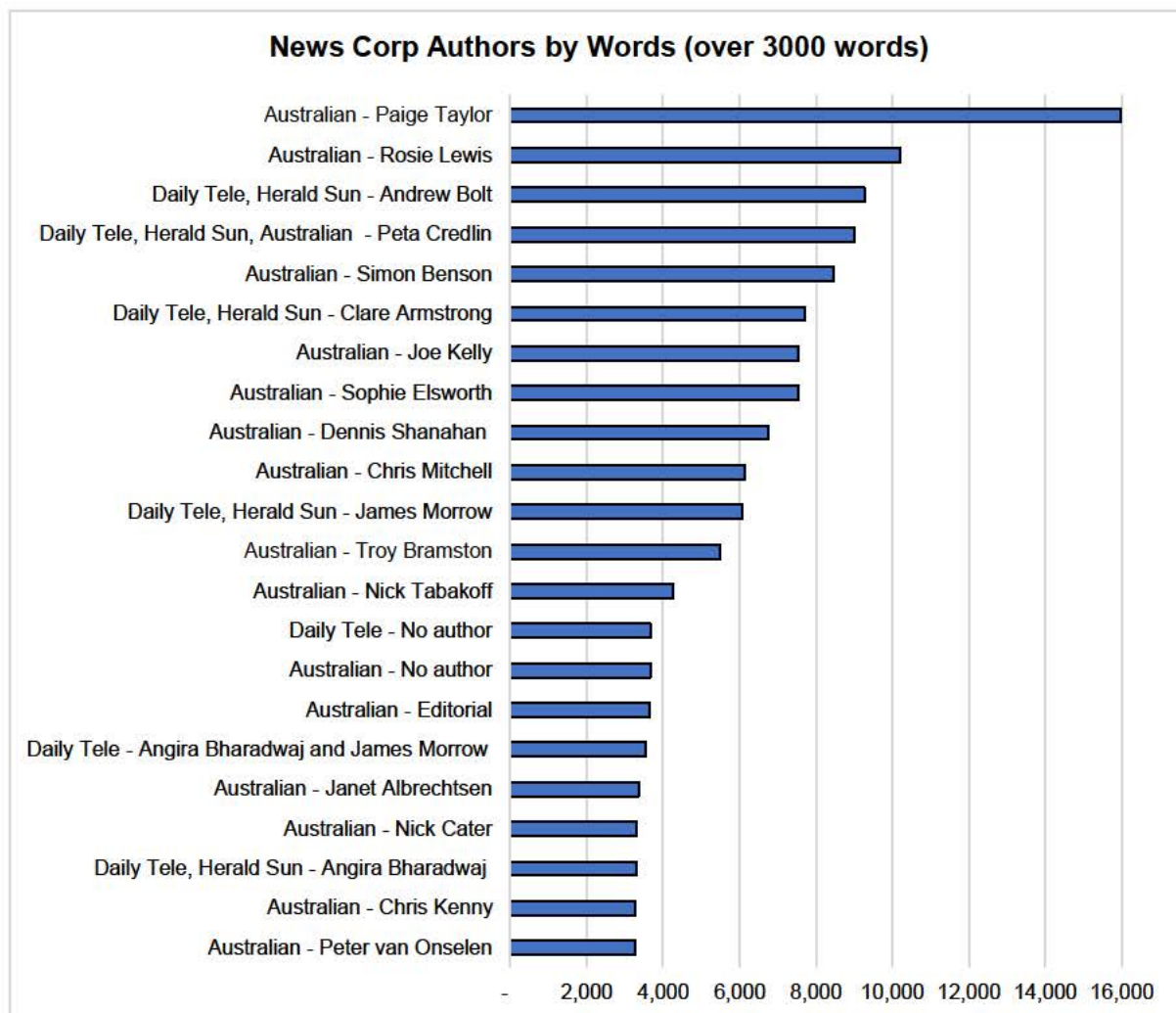
1Minutes per host across 370 videos published by Sky News YouTube channel, 17 July – 20 August 2023.

News Corp Authors

This graph shows the authors who have written more than 3000 words across five weeks.

The Australian’s Rosie Lewis and Paige Taylor continue to be the most prolific writers, and are offering balanced reporting about the Voice. Andrew Bolt is third, writing for both Herald Sun and Daily Telegraph. Peta Credlin is now fourth due to authoring a piece in the Herald Sun and The Australian in week 5.

In week 5, there were three op-eds by ‘Yes’ voices published, including NSW Liberal Matt Cross, George Williams, and Donna Ah Chee. Three ‘No’ voices authored op-eds, including Claire Lehmann, Jeff Kennett and Douglas Murray in The Australian who wrote a piece titled ‘Sorry, but can we please stop the guilt trips?’.



2 Authors by number of words for newspaper articles mentioning “The Voice” (for authors over 3000 words) in the Australian, Daily Telegraph and Herald Sun, July 17 – August 20 2023, sample size 369 articles.

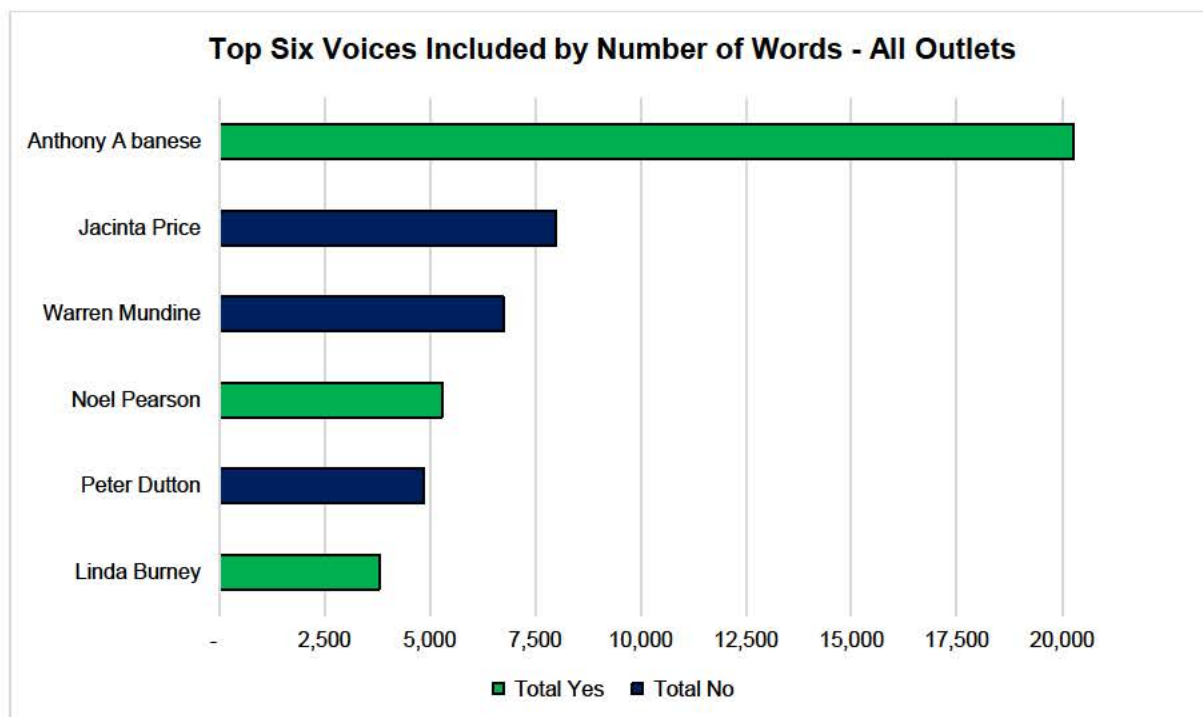
Voices Included Total

Throughout week 5, Anthony Albanese continues to be the most included voice by a large margin. Many of his inclusions were quotations or interviews at the National Labor Conference. As per the first four weeks, Albanese’s inclusion was regularly framed negatively. In week 5, of particular note was harsh criticism of Anthony Albanese, particularly on Sky News, for his admission on a radio show that he had not read the ‘extra pages’ of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, in line with Peta Credlin’s campaign of misinformation about these supposed extra hidden pages.

The most included voices for the ‘No’ camp continue to be Warren Mundine and Jacinta Price.

In week 5, ‘No’ voices were the dominant party, with 56% of inclusions by words. Overall across the five weeks, ‘Yes’ dominates inclusions with 54%, and 46% No.

Over the first five weeks, it is noteworthy that apart from the ‘No’ camp’s Warren Mundine and the ‘Yes’ camp’s Noel Pearson, non-politicians are gaining very little coverage. This is particularly true for the ‘Yes’ camp, with voices like Dean Parkin’s, Director of From the Heart, almost entirely absent across all outlets.



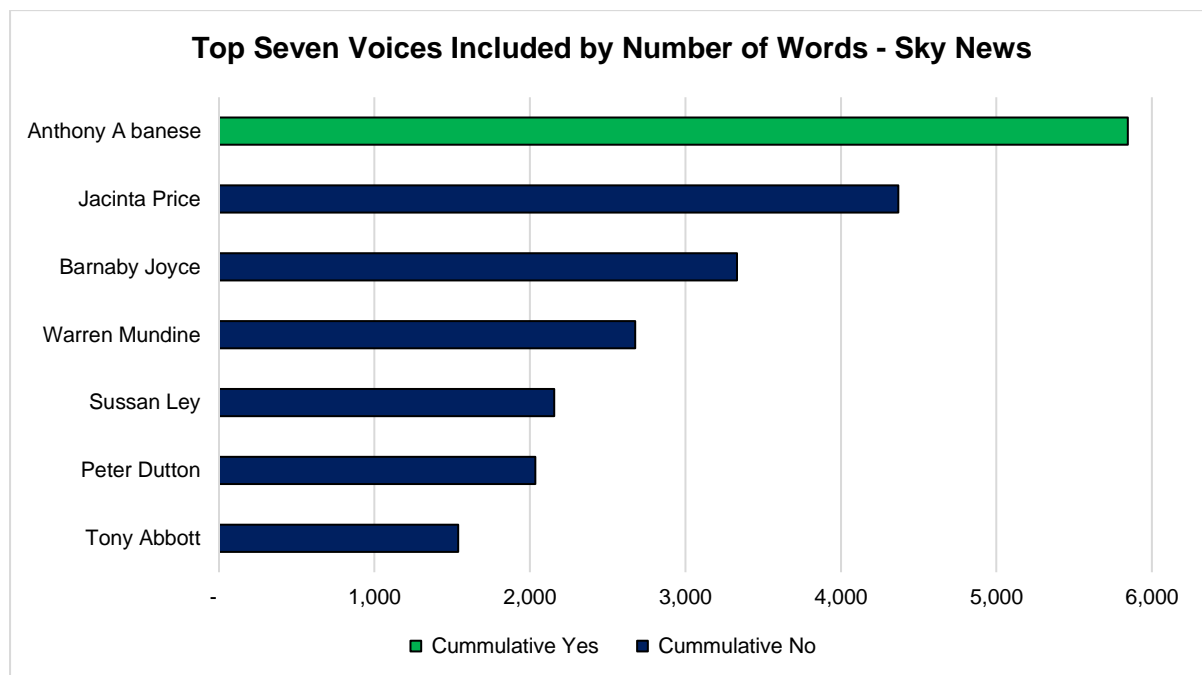
3 Top six voices from outside of News Corp included in quotes, paraphrases or speaking by number of words 17 July – 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

Voices Included Sky News

This graph cumulates Sky News Voices by words from outside of News Corp for the first five weeks of monitoring. Anthony Albanese continues to be the only 'Yes' voice included in the top seven voices.

Barnaby Joyce for the 'No' camp had a big week on Sky News in week 5. Joyce is now the second most included 'No' voice, overtaking Warren Mundine and Sussan Ley.

Week 5 reversed the trend of 'Yes' voices included in greater proportion than 'No' voices. In week 5, 'Yes' voices made up 31% of external Sky News voices by words, and 'No' made up 69%.



4 Top seven voices by words from outside of News Corp included as guests in 249 Sky News videos published on Sky News YouTube Channel between 17 July - 20 August 2023.

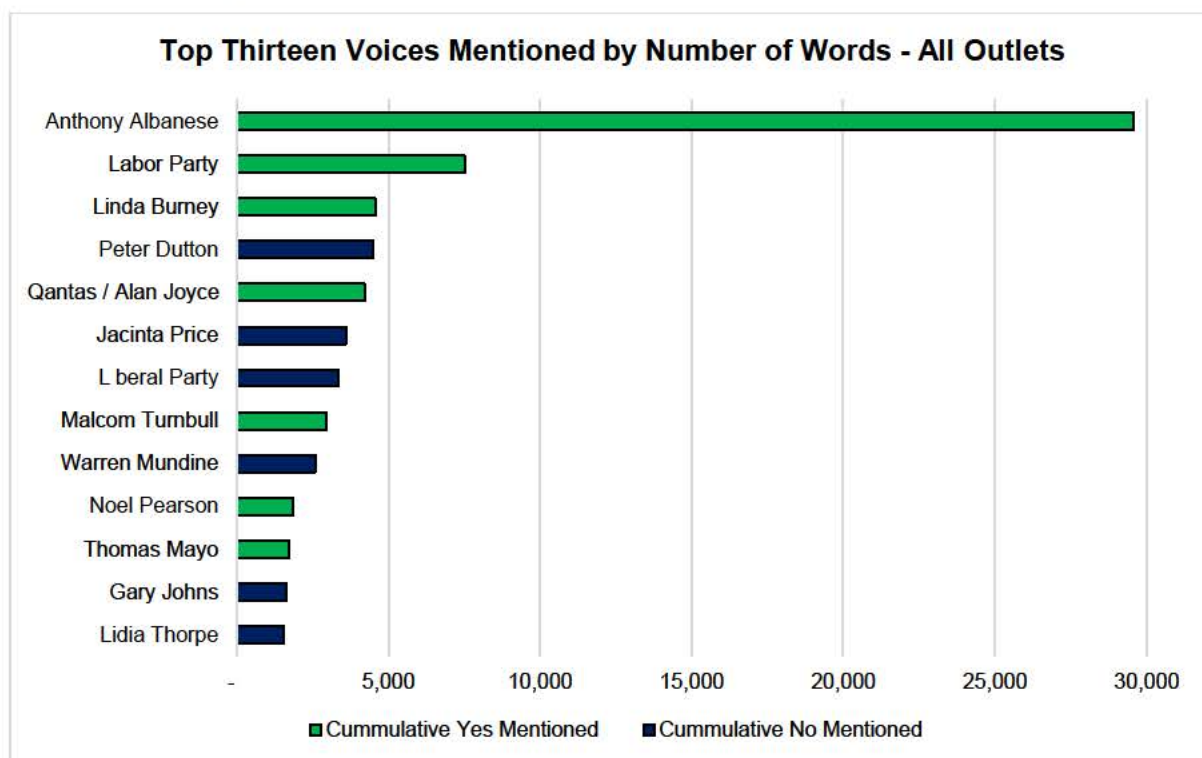
Voices Mentioned

This graph cumulates the top 13 voices mentioned across the five weeks of coverage, by number of words.

Anthony Albanese continued in week five to be the most talked about person in relation to the Voice by a long margin, followed by the Labor Party or Labor government generally. Albanese gained many mentions in relation to the National Labor Conference held during this period.

A voice which has gone into the top thirteen due to a large number of mentions in week 5 is Qantas or Alan Joyce in relation to criticism of Qantas supporting the 'Yes' campaign.

Lidia Thorpe also gained many mentions in week 5 due to her National Press Club speech, which was framed negatively and particularly emphasised in relation to Thorpe's criticism of the 'Yes' campaign.



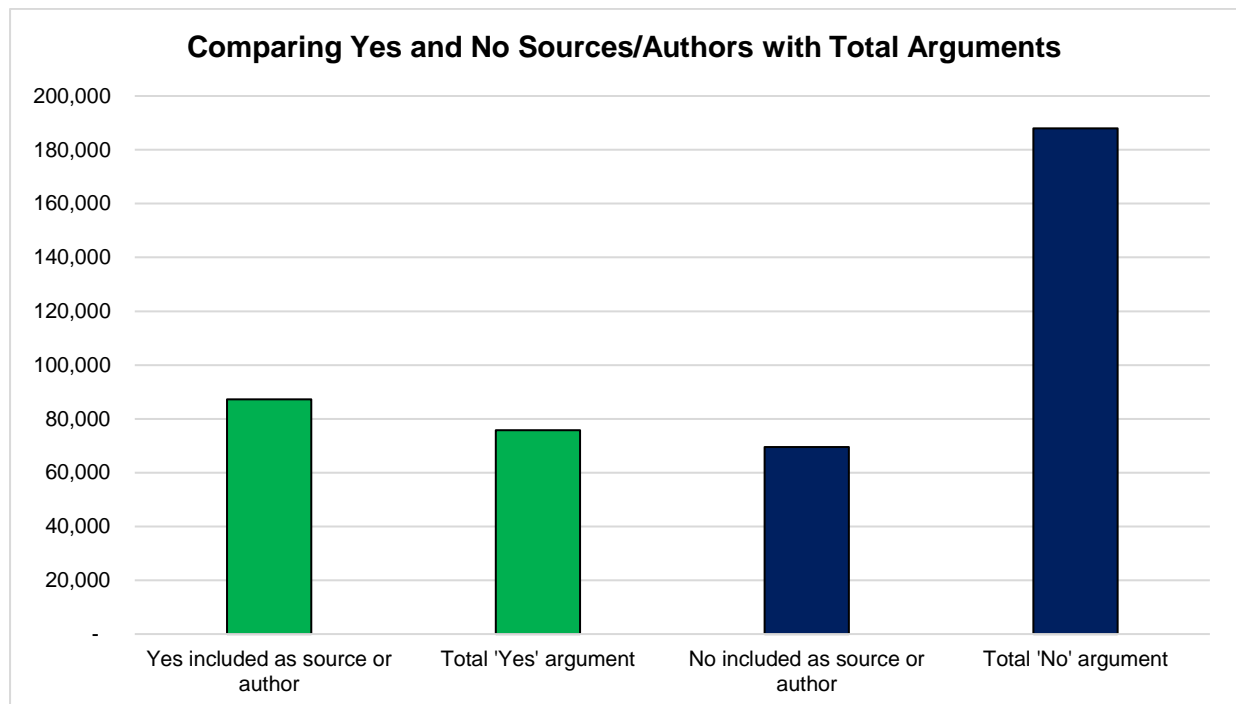
5 Top twelve voices from outside of News Corp mentioned by number of words 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

Number of Words for Outside Voices Compared to Yes and No Arguments

This graph compares the number of words used to argue 'Yes' and 'No' to a Voice by people from outside of News Corp, compared to the total number of words used to argue 'Yes' and 'No' across all coverage.

The words from outside sources are those who are included in newspaper reports or Sky News videos (quoted, paraphrased and speaking), as well as those who author op-eds who are external to News Corp.

From this graph, it is clear to see that 'Yes' voices from outside of News Corp are contributing almost all the 'Yes' arguments by number of words, whereas 'No' arguments are used by 'No' advocates external to News Corp, and by News Corp voices themselves.

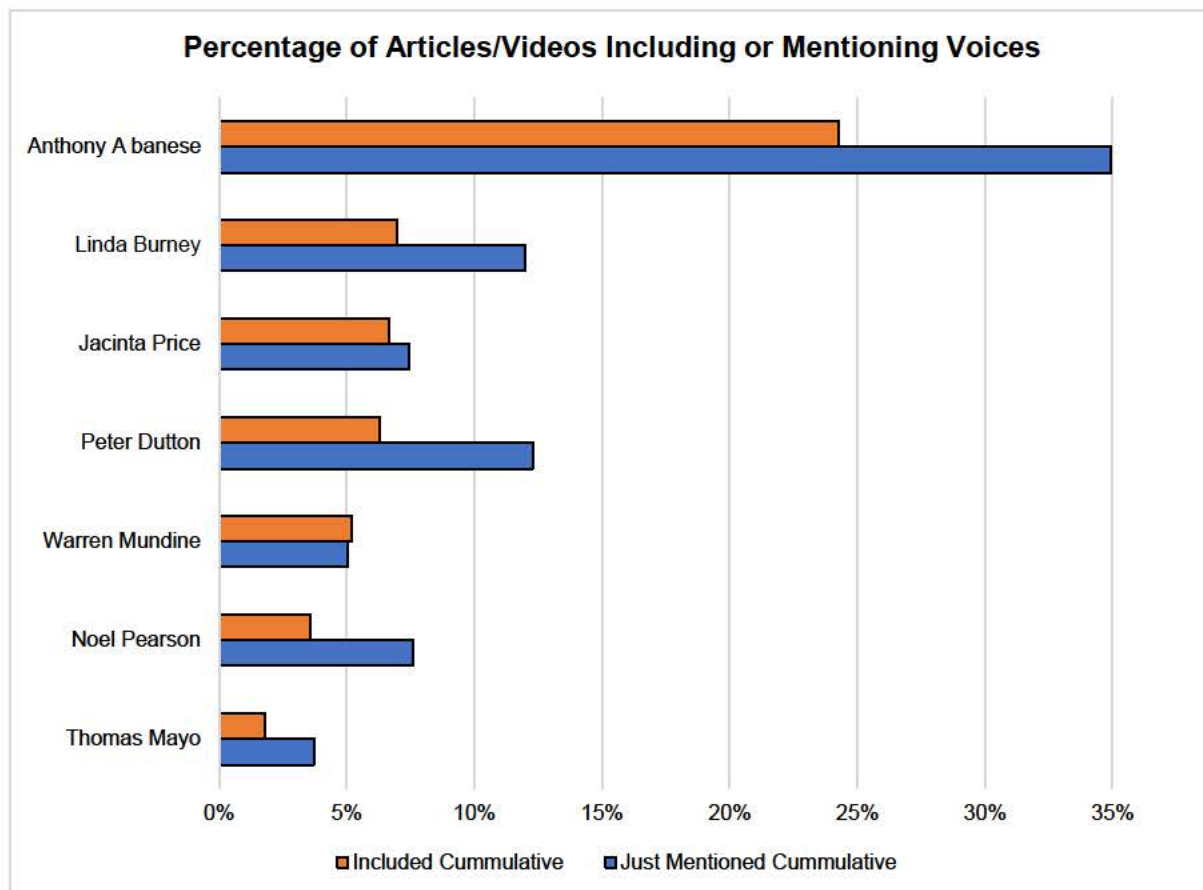


6 Compares words using 'yes' and 'no' arguments from outside News Corp (including sources and op-ed writers) to total number of words for 'yes' and 'no' arguments, 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

Percentage of Articles and Videos Including or Just Mentioning Voices

This graph shows the percentage of total articles which either include a voice, or just mention it without including it. Across the five weeks of analysis, Anthony Albanese is the most talked about and included Voice, continuing to demonstrate much of the content is framing the referendum as all about the Prime Minister.

Linda Burney, Jacinta Price, Peter Dutton and Warren Mundine are other voices regularly talked about or included, although not in the same proportion to the Prime Minister.



7 Percentage of articles and videos either including voices or just mentioning them, 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

Arguments by Outlet

This graph shows the balance between 'Yes' and 'No' arguments across all outlets, and by outlet by number of words across the five weeks of analysis.

When interpreting this graph, it's important to note that this is not a percentage of all content, but a percentage of any content that presents an argument for or against the Voice.

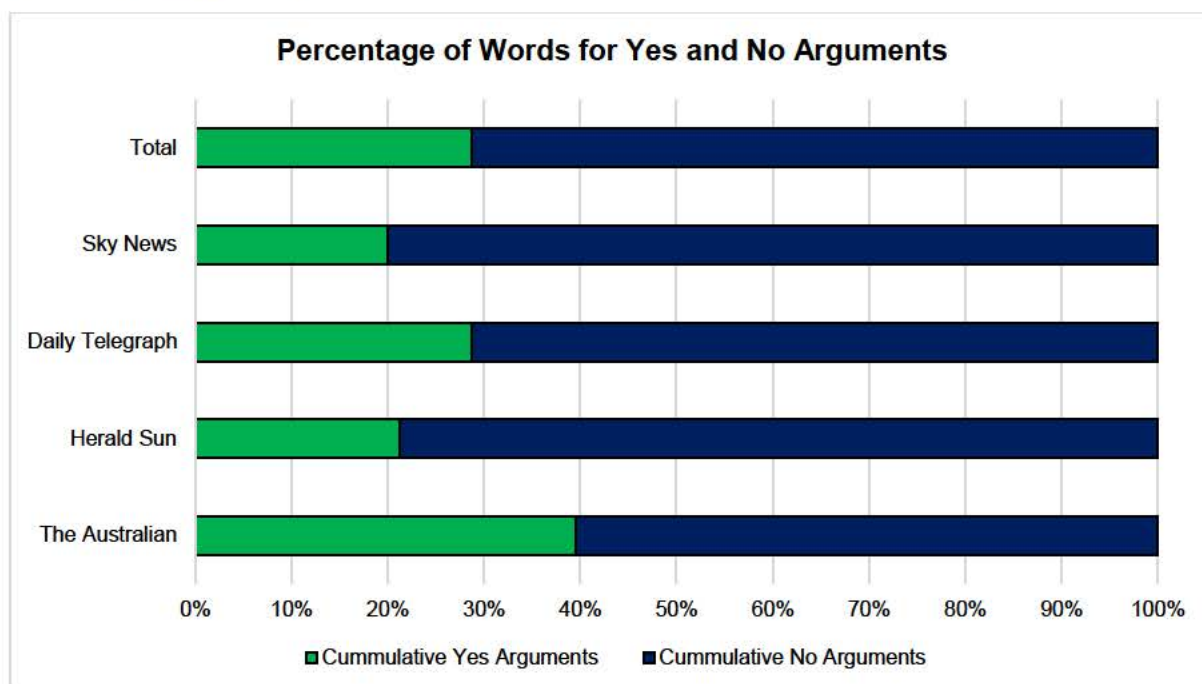
Overall, 71% of words using arguments are 'No' arguments, and 29% are 'Yes' arguments, showing coverage was slightly more one-sided in week 5 as compared to week 4.

Across the five weeks, The Australian is the most balanced with 60% 'No' and 40% 'Yes'. In week 5, The Australian's coverage was the most one-sided towards the 'No' campaign out of the first five weeks of analysis, with 72% 'Yes' and 28% 'No'.

Sky News continues the week 4 trend of being the least balanced of the four outlets, with 80% 'No' and 20% 'Yes'. Week 5 was a particularly imbalanced week at Sky News with 85% 'No' and 15% 'Yes'.

Herald Sun is the second least balanced, with 79% 'No' arguments and 21% 'Yes'. The Herald Sun was also very one-sided in week 5, with 94% 'No' and 6% 'Yes'.

Daily Telegraph is the second most balanced behind The Australian, with now 71% overall 'No' arguments across five weeks. Daily Telegraph also had a very one-sided week 5, with 81% 'No' and 19% 'Yes'.



8 Percentage of arguments aligning with 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns by number of words, 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

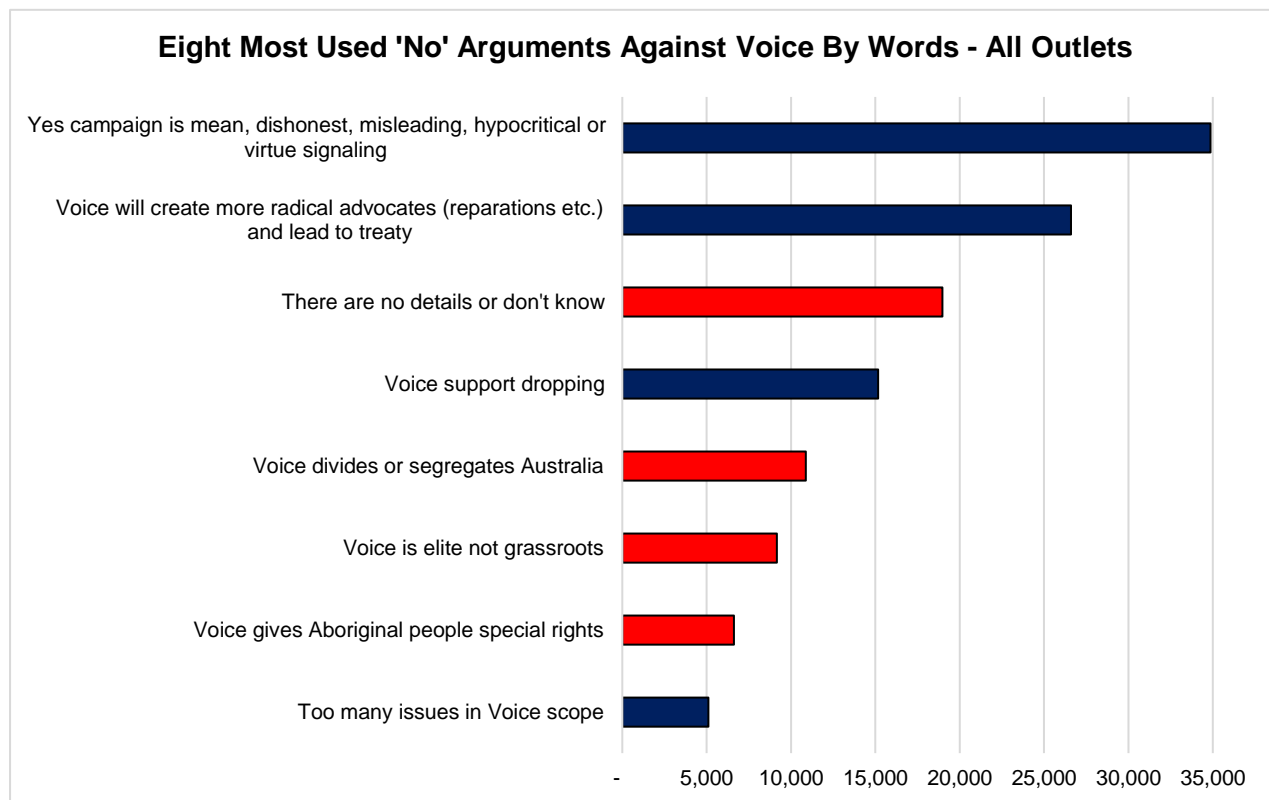
Top Arguments and Disinformation

The eight top 'No' arguments used across all outlets are included for five weeks by the number of words used.

The most used argument in week 5, bringing it up to number one overall for the first time, was that the 'Yes' campaign are acting badly, being hypocritical, being deceitful and hiding their true 'Voice' agenda, victimising the 'No' campaign, including by calling out misinformation and are "virtue signaling".

Although other 'No' arguments such as accusations the Voice will lead to more radical change such as reparations and treaties, and that there are 'no details', continue to regularly be used across the outlets, it is noteworthy that the most used 'No' argument is criticism of the 'Yes' campaign.

This criticism is mostly related to the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, but also the 'Yes' campaign generally who are framed as doing the wrong thing by Australia with the Voice referendum. These criticisms of the 'Yes' campaign are noteworthy because they tend not to relate to the substance of the debate, but are more related to criticisms of the people involved and their behaviour in the referendum campaign.



9 Eight most used 'No' arguments by number of words, 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos. Items in red contain elements or entirely made up of misinformation and disinformation.

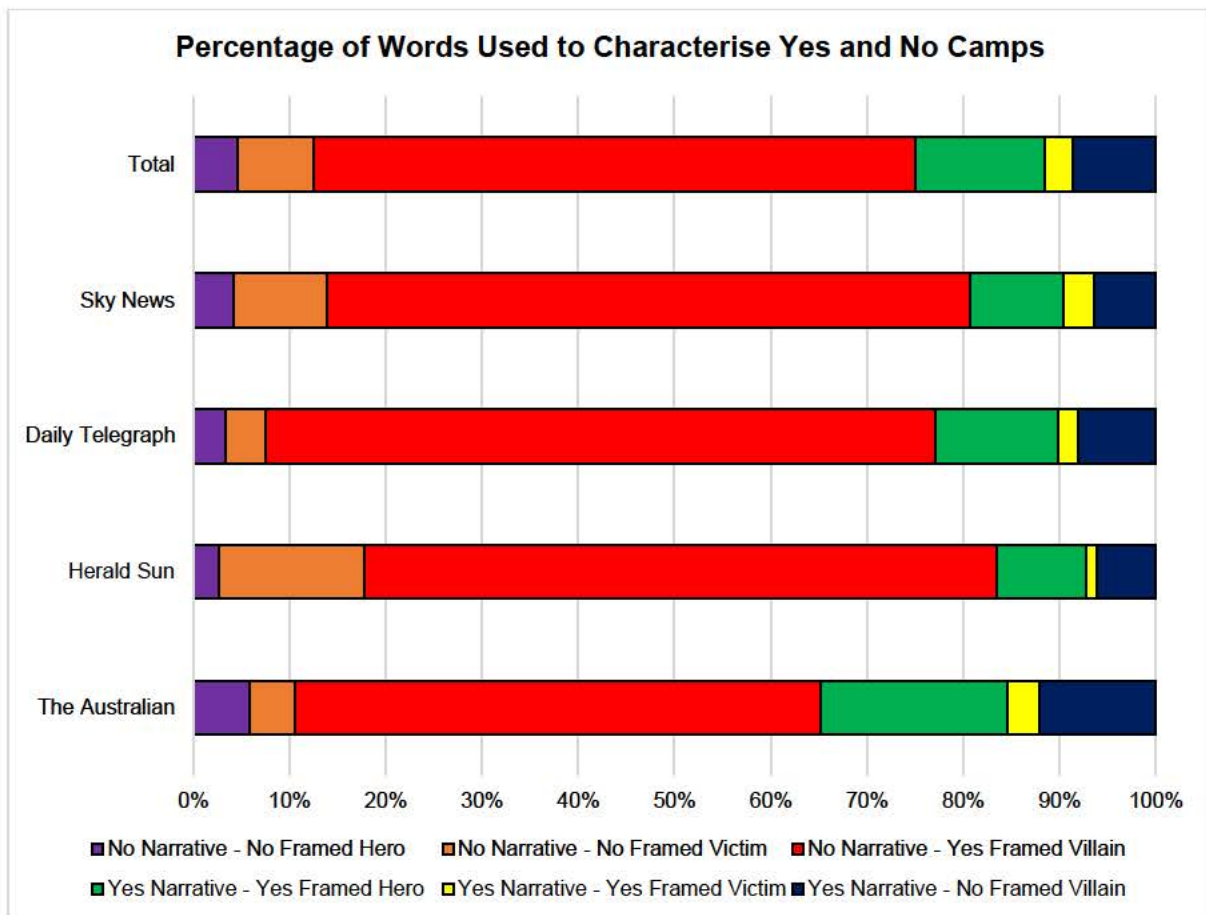
Characterisation Framing

This graph shows the percentage of characterisations of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ voices, as a total percentage of words where characterisations were used for the first three weeks.

As per the arguments graph, this is not a percentage of all content, but only the content where voices were characterised as either victims (something bad is happening to them), villains (they are doing something wrong), or heroes (they are doing something good).

The most used characterisation across the outlets continues to be the ‘Yes’ camp as villains for advocating for a Voice to parliament (63% of framed words). This characterisation in week 5 was again mainly focused on Anthony Albanese who continues to be blamed for dividing the country with the referendum and for not being honest about what the Voice really is. This included allegations that Albanese does not know what the Voice consequences will be, in line with criticism that he had not read the extra secret or hidden pages of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

When you group the characterisations by the narrative they fit into, the ‘No’ narrative is used in 75% of words where characterisations are included (No narrative includes ‘Yes’ as villain, ‘No’ as victim, and ‘No’ as hero).



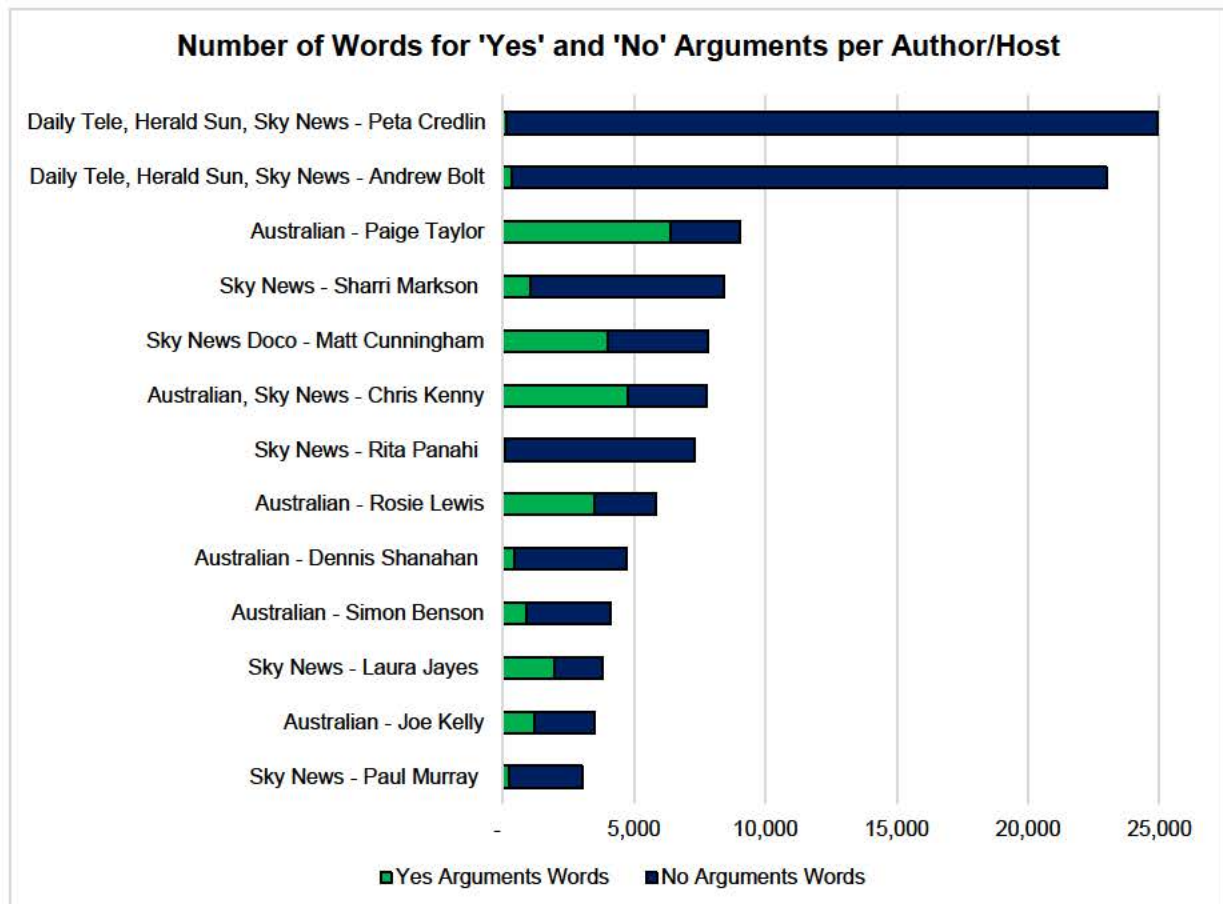
10 Percentage of words used to characterise Yes and No camps, 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.

Balance of prolific authors and hosts

This graph shows the balance between 'Yes' and 'No' argument by words by author/host, ranked from most prolific to least prolific. This shows that the most prolific Sky News hosts (who also write for newspapers) are Andrew Bolt and Peta Credlin. They are almost entirely presenting 'No' arguments.

Chris Kenny has contributed more content about the Voice in week 5 than he has previously, and this is in the majority representing 'Yes' arguments in line with Kenny's personal support of the 'Yes' campaign.

More balanced voices include Paige Taylor, Rosie Lewis, Matt Cunningham and Laura Jayes, who in some cases present more 'Yes' arguments than 'No' arguments.



11: Words reflecting 'yes' and 'no' arguments, per the most prolific authors and hosts from 17 July - 20 August 2023, across all outlets, newspaper articles from Australian (221), Herald Sun (68) and Daily Telegraph (80) and 249 Sky News videos.