

# Mag buyers stay at home base...

**LIFESTYLE**, leisure and motor vehicle topics dominated the interest and purchase habits of consumer magazine buyers according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations figures for the half to December 2002, reflecting the increasingly home-based culture of Australians, regularly noted by researchers and retailers last year.

In a relatively sales static market, categories to improve their position included **Health and Fitness**, **Living**, **Fashion**, **Car Enthusiast** and **Fishing**.

Biggest falls came in the **Business**, **Computer**, **Children**, **Teen** and **Sports** categories.

The number of titles auditing rose from 124 a year ago to 147 driving total market sales for the period up 1% to 111 million, an increase of just over 1.2 million. An additional 31 titles audited during the period. These new and re-entering titles contributed 3.4 million sales, offset by the 1.8 million sales taken with the eight titles that dropped out and leaving a net decrease of 0.4 million copies for the 116 titles which appeared in both audits.

There were some notably good and bad individual performers. **Burke's Backyard**, supported by the integrated, high-rating TV program lifted sales by an average 18,000 per issue, offsetting the combined average of 22,863 copies per issue shed by three of its competitors. **Gardening Australia**, also with its own TV show but with a more pure gardening focus, did best of the rest losing only 2,439 copies.

**Vogue Living**, up 6,465 year-on-year, the TV-supported

**Better Homes & Gardens**, plus 3,749 and the 5,199 increase of Australian **House & Garden** were the only three titles to significantly lift in the nine-magazine **Living** section.

The **RM Williams** Rural Lifestyle bi-monthly lifted 15,566 per issue to 60,275 but is still capturing only half the total sales of **Australian Country Style's** monthly 61,029.

**Car Enthusiast** category saw **Wheels** lift 9,931 and **Motor** 7,765 assisted by new Ford and Holden launches in the period. In the specialist area, **Street Machine** rose by 8,000 and **Fast Fours** by 3,917 while **Australian 4WD Monthly's** 5,464 and **Overlander 4WD's** 2,627 read in conjunction with the 28,000 combined average sales of **Caravan World** and **Caravans & Motorhomes** confirm the upsurge in local travel interest prompted by global uncertainty.

**B** magazine, despite a return to A4 format from its "handbag" experiment was the top overall loser in volume terms, down by 34,948 copies per issue year-on-year but steadied from June onwards. Its ACP competitors for the **Young Women's** market, **Cleo** and **Cosmopolitan** were also both down slightly on the year and sold neck-and-neck in the mid 204,000s.

Runaway **Children's** market leader **K-Zone** lost 17,427 per issue and audited at 117,573. **Winnie the Pooh** lost 3,455 and **Disney Adventures** 3,457. **K-Zone's** publisher Pacific increased competition in the category launching **Total Girl** and **Cartoon Network** late in the period and its non-auditing competitor **DMAG** is now in supermarkets.

The soft year in the worldwide computer market showed in the falls of **Australian PC World** (-9,565) and **Australian Personal Computer** (-9,188). **Australian Net Guide** lifted 2,258 and the major gaming titles did not audit.

**Inside Sport** lost 19,056 purchasers per month, **Australian Golf Digest**, **Fishing World** and **Modern Fishing** all registered increases, and in **Men's Lifestyle**, **FHM** with a 5,804 lift to 102,207 sneaked past the more down-market **Ralph** by 730 copies.

In the mass market, **Australian Women's Weekly** retained its mantle as top seller at 695,108 a month, despite a 12,625 year-on-year drop. Weekly rivals **Woman's Day** and **New Idea** were slightly up, **Who Weekly** lost 30,514 year-on-year to 141,019 and **NW** picked up 7,461, rising past **Who Weekly** to audit 151,063. **Take 5** at 247,809 continued to close on **That's Life's** 390,151.

**Food & Wine** remained strong with **delicious** (88,844) and **Donna Hay** (78,105) entering the audit year-on-year and bettering their June 2002 entry figures. **Australian Good Taste**, up 1,972, did best of the incumbents while **SuperFood Ideas** after extraordinary previous growth plateaued at 350,582, down 10,629.

Kerry Packer's ACP Publishing continued to dominate the market with a 48% per cent share of the market, followed by Kerry Stokes' Seven Network-owned Pacific on 20%, Time Inc South Pacific (bolstered by **English Woman's Weekly**) at 6.5% and the IPMG-owned FPC at 6 per cent.

New rules, limiting the inclusion of bulk sales were applied by the ABC for the first time in this audit. ▶

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