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Jump in RadioApp and podcast listening

Consumers have increased their consumption of radio via smart phones, smart speakers and podcasts in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Commercial Radio Australia chief executive officer Joan Warner said early figures showed there had been a lift in the number of Australians listening to radio via the industry's RadioApp as well as a strong increase in podcast listening.

"We've seen a 20% increase in users and a 22% increase in time spent listening to radio on smartphones via RadioApp over the past week," she said.

"There has been a similar jump in the number of requests for radio streams using the Alexa voice assistant on Amazon smart devices. Streams were up 26% last week compared to a month ago."

The RadioApp smartphone app allows listeners to easily access more than 300 Australian radio stations in one place.

Meanwhile, data from The Australian Podcast Ranker shows podcast downloads increased by 15% overall in the week commencing March 16, with consumption of news podcasts up around 30%, compared to the same week in February.

"People are craving news, but are also looking for a sense of community and seeking new forms of entertainment that they can enjoy while isolated or working from home," Ms Warner said.

"Live radio is a trusted and familiar medium that allows audiences to feel connected, stay in touch with what people are talking about and find out what businesses are open or shut in their local area.

"We also expect more people will discover podcasts during the weeks and months ahead, either to seek information or to escape it for some light relief."

The Australian Podcast Ranker, launched by CRA and Triton Digital last October, provides information on the most popular podcasts from a range of major podcast publishers, including Southern Cross Austereo, News Corp Australia, NOVA Entertainment, Schwartz Media, TOFOP Productions, SEN/Crocmmedia, The Parent Brand, Australian Radio Network, Nine Radio, ARN/iHeartMedia and Stitcher.

GfK's Radio Insights research conducted over summer found that 74% of listeners said they would turn to radio for information in an emergency situation.

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