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MEDIA RELEASE

Australian men's monthly magazine *Ralph* will produce its final print edition this month.

The July cover date will be the final monthly magazine, although the popular *Girls of Ralph* special issues will continue.

Ralph will focus on its digital future via its website www.ralph.ninemsn.com.au hosted on the ninemsn network, and via mobile.

Some 13 ACP editorial and advertising staff will be affected by the closure of the print edition.

ACP Magazines will transfer some employees but redundancies are expected.

"The history of the monthly men's market is that the No. 1 masthead tends to change every six or seven years, dating back to the *Penthouse* and *Playboy* era, followed by *Inside Sport* and then *Ralph* and more recently *ALPHA*," said ACP Magazines Group Publishing Director Phil Scott.

"The launch of *Zoo* as a weekly in 2006 and the subsequent arrival of cross category men's magazines such as *Top Gear* and *Men's Health* have steadily eroded the once dominant 'lads' monthlies," he said. "The trend is evident all over the world and is the reason ACP re positioned *FHM* in May of 2008."

Scott said ACP believed the men's market remained a significant magazine category, but just as it had for the past three decades, tastes have changed.

"This evolution happens in many magazine genres, particularly those aimed at young males. The growth of online is a factor but if history is any guide, it is not the key issue. Tastes continually shift among younger readers."

Mr Scott said ACP would continue to invest in new men's magazines that captured changing trends.

In the latest Roy Morgan readership results, *Ralph* increased 1.5 per cent period on period to 267,000.

While *Ralph* magazine was unable to match the rise of *Zoo Weekly* as the most read men's magazine in Australia (466,000 readers per month according to latest Roy Morgan figures), over the same period, the digital audience for *Ralph* had grown impressively.

ninemsn will continue to run the successful digital executions of the *Ralph* brand on both web and mobile.

Joe Pollard, CEO of ninemsn said: "Both platforms are delivering strong audience numbers to our network, with April data showing *Ralph* page view growth of 11% year on year."

ninemsn produces eight out of the top 10 magazine sites in Australia, according to Nielsen's April Market Intelligence rankings, with ralph.ninemsn.com.au ranked No 8 for both unique browsers and page views.

"This is an outstanding result for the *Ralph* site," said Ms Pollard. "With dedicated digital professionals in the Lifestyle team continuing to produce unique content for the site, ralph.ninemsn.com.au will remain as a key destination for the ninemsn audience," she said.

The men's magazine category has grown significantly since *Ralph's* launch 13 years ago.

In 1997, there were 910,470 copies of men's magazines sold in Australia, according to figures from the Australian Bureau of Circulation (ABC).

By 2005, following the launch of *Zoo Weekly*, this figure had leapt to 5.16 million magazines.

And by December 31, 2009, it had almost doubled again to 9.19 million copies sold.

FACT SHEET

Since its launch in 1997, *Ralph* has led the charge of the men's category, followed by *FHM* in 1998, a year which saw a combined 670,110 of the two premier "lads" magazines sold in Australia, according to Australian Bureau of Circulation (ABC) figures.

By 2005, this figure had leapt to 2.625 million combined copies of *Ralph* and *FHM* sold that year.

Then along came the new kid on the men's publishing block, *Zoo Weekly*, and the number of magazines sold here in 2006 soared to 7.354 million.

In the full year to December 31, 2009, there were 7.112 million copies of the three magazines sold.

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