

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of glowing blue and red lines and particles, resembling a network or data flow. The lines are thin and curved, with small white and blue dots scattered throughout, creating a sense of dynamic movement and connectivity.

THE CONVERSATION

2018
Stakeholder Report

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Founded in 2011, The Conversation is a big success. Today, it is produced in four languages and ten countries and over 38 million people read it every month.

The idea is simple: articles are written by academic experts, commissioned and edited by professional journalists, and distributed for free online. Articles are free to republish by any media outlet that credits The Conversation.



Universities support The Conversation because it helps them meet their community engagement objectives – we give them rich analytics and metrics. Academics like The Conversation because it gives them a large and diverse audience.

Readership grows rapidly because the articles are trustworthy, informative and entertaining. Friends of democracy value The Conversation because fact-based journalism enables better public discourse.

The Conversation serves and is supported by a range of stakeholders – including universities and individual scholars, foundations, government and individual donors, and the talented journalists and technologists who come to work every day determined to see facts inform public discourse. Our CEO Lisa Watts, Editor Misha Ketchell and the Board join me in thanking all of you.

Harrison Young, Chairman

OUR FOUNDING PARTNERS



MONASH
University



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS



CommonwealthBank



THANK YOU

Support from the **AMP Foundation** enables The Conversation to shine a light on employment-related issues, barriers and research-based solutions.

With a commitment to innovation, the **Commonwealth Bank of Australia** is a long-time strategic partner of The Conversation.

The Conversation is grateful for the legal services provided by **Corrs Chambers Westgarth**.

The Ian Potter Foundation supports The Conversation's science coverage and our work with early and mid-career researchers.

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation partners with The Conversation to promote informed discussion of cities in the face of pressures such as continued urbanisation and growth.

The State Government of Victoria is a valued partner of The Conversation. Working with the Department of Education & Training helps us advance civic discussion about education and develop resources linked to the school curriculum.

Foundations looking to partner with us and support public interest journalism can contact Damian Thompson on (03) 9988 1973.

OUR UNIVERSITY + RESEARCH MEMBERS

Auckland University of Technology

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource
Economics and Sciences

Australian Catholic University

Australian National University

Australia New Zealand School of Government

Bond University

CQUniversity Australia

Charles Darwin University

Charles Sturt University

CSIRO

Curtin University

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Deakin University

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La Trobe University

Macquarie University

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Monash University

Murdoch University

Queensland University of Technology

RMIT University

Southern Cross University

Swinburne University of Technology

University of Adelaide

University of Canberra

University of Melbourne

University of Newcastle

University of New England

University of Notre Dame Australia

University of Queensland

University of South Australia

University of Southern Queensland

University of Sunshine Coast

University of Sydney

University of Tasmania

University of Technology Sydney

University of Waikato

University of Western Australia

University of Wollongong

UNSW Australia

Victoria University

Victoria University of Wellington

Western Sydney University

FROM THE EDITOR AND CEO

Trust is in steady decline across the world. Trust in experts, trust in institutions, trust in democracy, trust in the media. You don't have to look hard to find thoughtful disquisitions on the nature of the problem. We live in an age of disinformation and spin, in which platforms like Facebook and Google have made it way too easy to publish information likely to muddy the waters on matters of public interest.

The Conversation is a project ahead of its time in fighting back. By only working with academics and researchers who are drawing on their expertise we rebuild trust and inform the public.

The idea is so simple and compelling it has spread across the world. Teams of Conversation editors are now working in Australia, UK, France, Spain, Canada, Africa, the US, Indonesia and New Zealand. Others are lining up to become part of this global movement of sharing expertise more widely.

The magic of the project lies in the fact it is built on a relationship of trust and respect. Public debate is increasingly partisan and shrill, with people retreating to their corners and listening only to ideas that confirm their pre-existing views.

The Conversation takes the opposite approach. It is based on collaboration between people from somewhat different worlds: journalists and academics.

The analysis we deliver is made possible by a relationship between academics with deep expertise and the experienced journalists in our team: academic rigour, journalistic flair.

This is mirrored in the way we work with our university members. Supporting The Conversation is just one of many

ways our member universities enrich our society, and we would not be here without that commitment.

Similarly we have found wonderful support from philanthropists such as the AMP Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. The Commonwealth Bank is another supporter that has been quietly generous and public-spirited.

As you read through this report you will find numbers that give you a sense of the magnitude of our success: a rapidly growing audience at a time when most media companies are struggling.

We are extremely proud of these achievements, of course, but we are most proud of the fact that it is all built on strong relationships with our stakeholders and partners, as well as an unabashed idealism and a shared commitment to public service.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in our success, in particular Harrison Young and the Board, our Editorial Board, our generous donors and our discerning readers.

Misha Ketchell, Editor

Lisa Watts, CEO



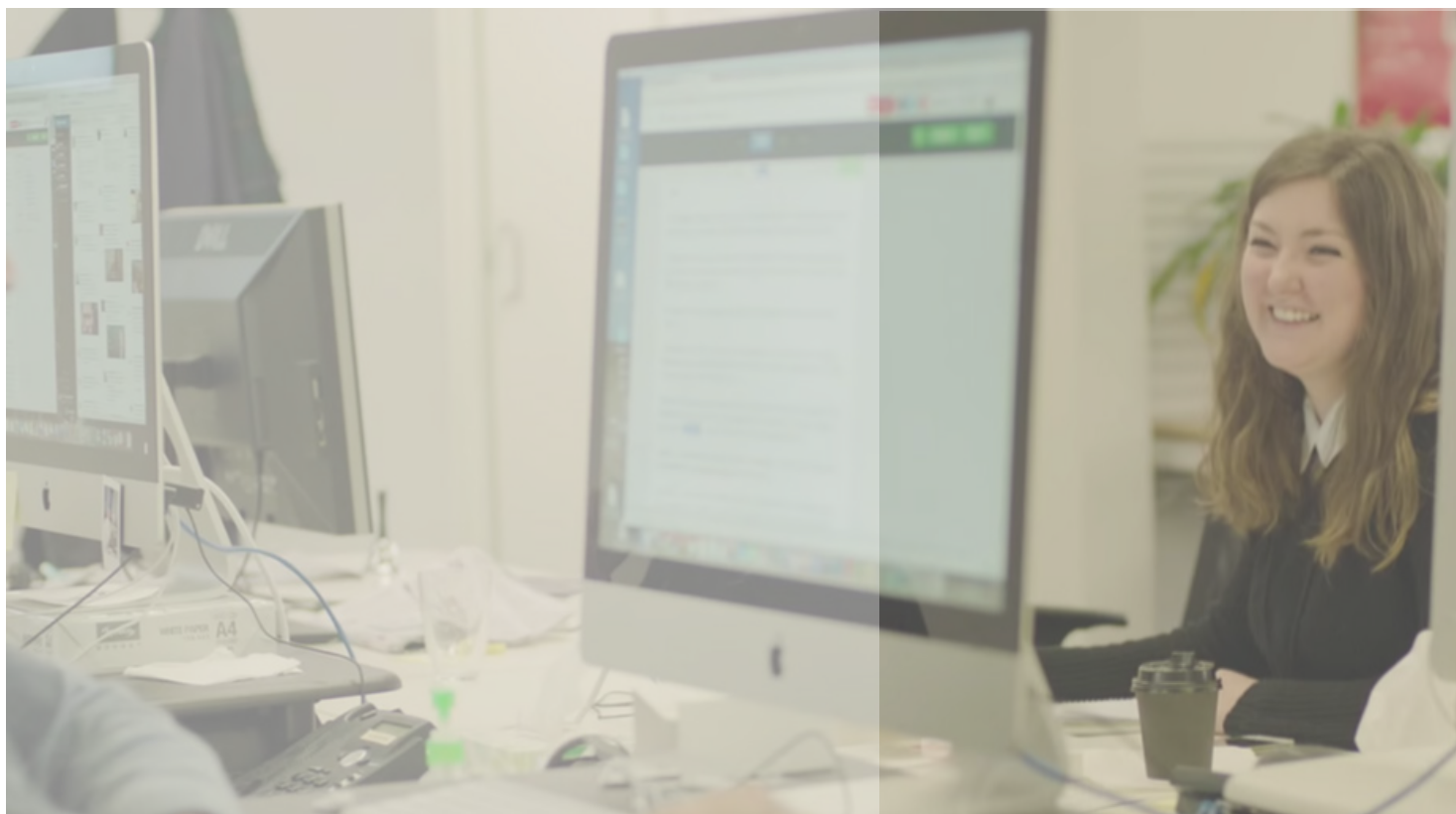
OUR JOURNALISM

Misha Ketchell, Editor

What kind of journalism do we do? When most people think about journalism they tend to focus on the role of journalists in holding power to account. Big investigations into corruption like Moonlight State in Queensland or Watergate. This work is vital, but there is another role for journalism that is even more fundamental: journalists provide quality information that helps people understand the world around them and make informed decisions. The aim of The Conversation's journalism is to inform our readers by providing quality information from academic experts.

This type of journalism is essentially explanatory. We explain new research findings, or provide the background and context to big policy debates that are in the news. The key is being engaged with the news cycle and giving readers what they need when they need it. How a black box flight recorder works is a pressing topic after a plane crash, maybe less so at other times.

Editors know which academics to turn to for background and "explainer" pieces – sometimes published within a few hours. Our award-winning fact-checking team examines claims made during election campaigns using academic expertise and



a blind peer reviewer. We also answer questions from children for our Curious Kids articles. We aim to serve the needs of readers, widely defined.

This type of information is essential for democracy but it does so much more than help us take part in public debate. It also helps us decide

what to eat to stay healthy, or how to keep our children safe online, or how to avoid the risks of problem gambling. It helps people make sense of a confusing barrage of information. Quality information makes markets more efficient. It provides essential insights that help us understand our environment, our culture, our history.

OUR CHARTER

The other essential element is trust. Our journalism has to be trustworthy and our readers have to know it is trustworthy. Our charter of independence protects us from commercial or other influence. Authors must be academics or researchers writing in their field of expertise. They are required to disclose conflicts of interest.

To ensure errors are not introduced in the editing process, we require authors to sign off on all articles before publication. Our editorial process is overseen by an editorial board of senior academics. Errors are corrected quickly and prominently.

Most importantly we ensure our work is widely accessible. Our publishing system has an inbuilt readability index with a traffic light system which turns green when the article is pitched at the reading level of an educated 16 year old. As a result of this commitment to accessibility our content is increasingly being used by high school students and teachers as a classroom resource.

- **Inform** public debate with knowledge-based journalism that is responsible, ethical and supported by evidence
- **Unlock the knowledge** of researchers and academics to provide the public with clarity and insight into society's biggest problems
- Create an **open site for people around the world** to share best practices and collaborate on developing smart, sustainable solutions
- Provide a **fact-based and editorially independent forum**, free of commercial or political bias
- Support and foster **academic freedom** to conduct research, teach, write and publish
- Ensure the site's **integrity** by obtaining only non-partisan sponsorship from education, government and private partners. Any advertising will be relevant and non-obtrusive
- Ensure **quality, diverse and intelligible content** reaches the widest possible audience by employing experienced editors to curate the site
- Set the standard in journalism best practice. Be **open, transparent and accountable**. Where errors occur correct them expeditiously
- Work with our academic, business and government partners and our advisory board to ensure we are operating for the **public good**

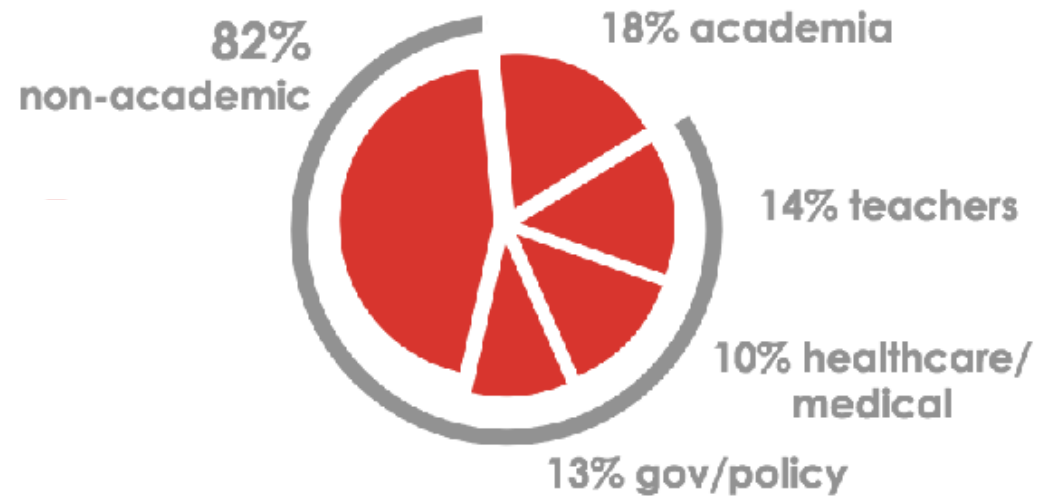
AUDIENCE

Across the global network, our audience is 11.8 million on theconversation.com and 38 million through republication. For TC Australia, our audience is 3.8 million onsite, and 12 million through creative commons republication.

There are many ways readers get to our articles: direct to our website, via social media or a free subscription to our daily newsletters. We now offer topic-focused newsletters like Thrive (health and wellbeing), GetFacts (FactCheck) or Hold That Thought (long reads), and Beating Around The Bush (native plants).

Each month, several million people read our articles on another website or newspaper that has republished our content. The Conversation publishes everything under Creative Commons licence, meaning anyone, anywhere can republish articles, provided they credit The Conversation and do not alter the copy without permission.

We give our content away because it unlocks academic knowledge; gives our authors a wider audience than us publishing it exclusively; and puts quality information into the media ecosystem – an antidote to the thinned-out newsrooms, infotainment, celebrity gossip, and dreaded fake news.



OUR READERS

- Analysts
- CEOs
- Consultants
- Directors
- Editors
- Engineers
- Executives
- Journalists
- Lecturers
- Managers
- Nurses
- Policy Officers
- Politicians
- Professors
- Project Officers
- Researchers
- Teachers
- Scientists
- Writers



OVER **22,000**
SITES REPUBLISH
THE **C**ONVERSATION

GLOBAL NETWORK

The Conversation operates around the world, with contributions from 75,000 authors from 2,500 institutions in 126 countries.



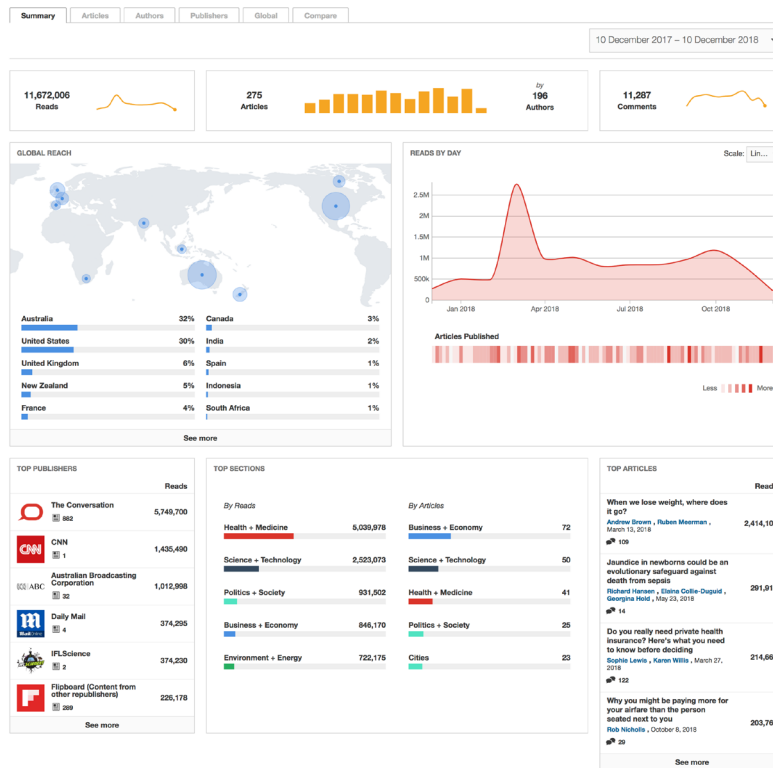
METRICS + AUTHOR IMPACT

We give all authors and member institutes a dashboard and metrics that track their post-article engagement and impact.

Metrics include audience size, location of readers, sites republishing, social media reach, and more.

Authors now have the option to record post-publication impact – such as media follow-up, invitations for industry collaboration and others – into their dashboards.

Dashboard
UNSW [Feedback](#)



”

Writing for The Conversation has been a game changer in the way I communicate public health messages.”

CAMERON WEBB
University of Sydney

”

Bill Shorten, Leader of the ALP, called me in response to reading my article and asked for further information on my research.”

RAE DUFTY-JONES
Western Sydney University

”

...the morning my article appeared, I had five requests for national radio interviews, I subsequently had over 16,000 reads of the article and I received almost 1,000 emails in response.”

SUE DEAN
University of Technology
Sydney





“ ... millions of people get access to my articles with thanks to The Conversation’s republication policy, and that is a mark of public impact.”

CLARE COLLINS
University of Newcastle

“ I was contacted by the Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee to present at public hearings on its MyHealth Record Inquiry.”

JIM GILLESPIE
University of Sydney

“ I’ve had the privilege of writing for The Conversation for four years. I contribute because it enables me, as a publicly-funded researcher, to engage in public discussion in my fields of research.”

AMY MAGUIRE
University of Newcastle




MASTERCLASSES


This year we delivered our Pitching and Writing Masterclass to more than 50 researchers. Masterclasses were held at Monash, Flinders, Edith Cowan and Deakin Universities.

Designed in collaboration with the University of Melbourne's Centre for the Study of Higher Education, the full-day workshop teaches participants how to persuade influential people outside their field – including funding assessors, politicians, the media, industry and the public – that their work matters.

After learning the basic principles of clear, concise communication, participants workshop their 'pitches' – summaries of their research that can be pitched to editors for broader media coverage or used to distil findings in grant applications.



“ I really liked the process of going from pitch to writing across the day - it helped to demonstrate the process and makes it clearer what the process and expectations are.”



“ ... a truly thought-provoking and inspiring workshop.”

“ ... I now feel I have a story that could be told and ideas about how to go about it.”

For more information on bookings and pricing, visit masterclass.theconversation.com

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This year 35 interns from 10 universities went through our popular internship program. We offer internships in editorial, multimedia, audience engagement and data journalism.

The program is well established and gives prospective journalists the opportunity to gain practical experience and actively contribute to our newsroom.

Interns join part-time for 12 weeks and complete a structured program of recruitment, induction, and mentoring. The opportunity for interns to be exposed to the full range of editorial activities, including pitching ideas, research, commissioning, fact checking, editing, publication, and social media, means they leave The Conversation with rich, real-world experience in a fast-paced digital newsroom.

Seven full-time staff in our newsroom were interns with us – something we are very proud of.

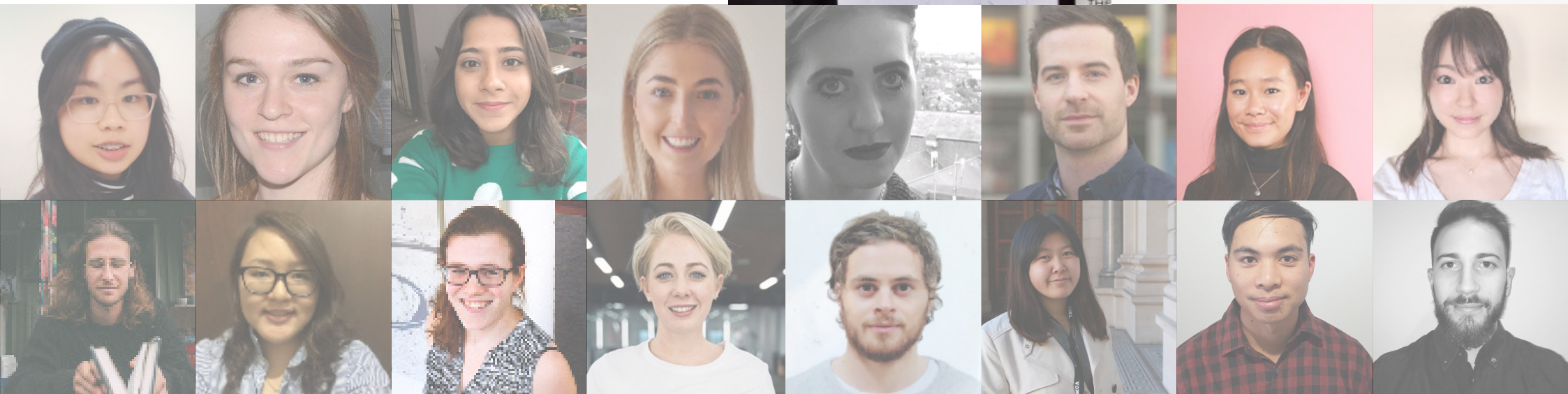


" My internship was fantastic and extremely supportive. I edited articles, podcasts and video content, produced graphics, and wrote scripts.

Since my internship I have completed placements at the ABC, The Age, completed my Masters of Journalism at the University of Melbourne and been awarded The Walkley-Jacoby scholarship.

I recently started a job as a senior producer at nine.com.au.

—BEN AMSTELL, EDITORIAL INTERN 2018



FRIENDS OF THE CONVERSATION

The generosity of readers has helped us continue our service. Sincere thanks to the over 6,700 readers who kindly donated and became a Friend of The Conversation this year.

Most of our funding comes from university members, government and philanthropic supporters. But that only covers part of our operating costs, so we ask readers who value our service to show their support and make a tax-deductible donation. Next year we hope to secure more reader donations to help bridge the gap left by project funding.

Public interest journalism needs public support.

All donations are tax-deductible.



To make a donation or for more information, including bequests, visit donate.theconversation.com, or speak with Kate Higgins on (03) 9988 1943.





This year, we were delighted to meet several Friends at dedicated open mornings at our newsroom, and at invite-only drinks receptions in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

Our thanks to event sponsors the AMP Foundation and Club Melbourne Ambassador Program at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre for donating their spectacular venues and catering.



UNIVERSITY MEMBERS

Universities and research institutes support The Conversation by joining as financial members to safeguard the current service and help us improve our coverage and features.

University members are the backbone of our funding, providing almost half our revenue.

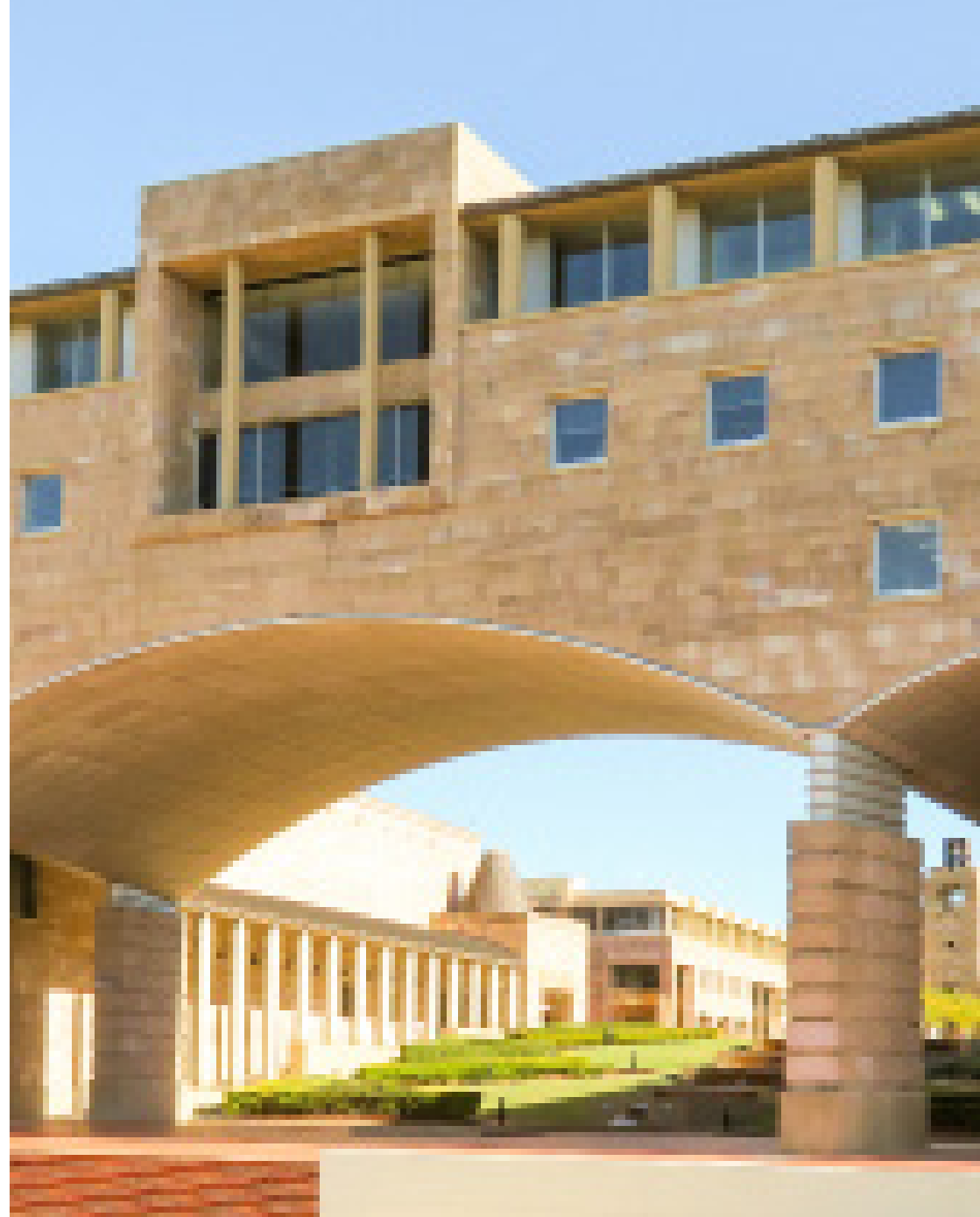
The Conversation helps university and research institutes to:

- Unlock academic expertise and deliver it to a large, general public audience
- Reach influential audiences via a national and international republication network, and via social media
- Access credible, real-time engagement and readership metrics

We are delighted to welcome new members in 2018: Bond University and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences.

Member benefits

- Access to live metrics and monthly reports
- Opportunity to pitch to editors
- Opportunity to join morning news conference
- Editor seminars and lectures
- Logos and branding on website
- Articles pitched to republication network
- Internships for students and recent alumni



SPONSORSHIP

Newsletters

We invite universities, non-profits, public sector and like-minded organisations to sponsor our newsletter and reach our educated and engaged audience.

Our daily newsletter (each weekday and on Saturdays) has over 110,000 subscribers in Australia. Sponsoring our newsletter means your listing contains:

- Your organisation's banner or graphic listed in two ad spots
- Linking directly to your organisation's website, event or campaign

Event listings

The Conversation lists events on our newsletter and our website. Event listings for member institutions of The Conversation are free.

Job Board

The Conversation Job Board offers premium knowledge-sector jobs. The Conversation readers are educated and engaged. Job listings appear for 30 days.

On each job listing, we include:

- Your organisation's logo to maximise branding
- Links to your organisation's recruitment site to give applicants the most seamless experience
- Unlimited text fields to give you control in communicating with candidates
- A monthly report of performance - the potential reach of your job ad, including views and click-throughs

THE CONVERSATION JOB BOARD \$390 AUD for 30 days [+ Post job](#)
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Keyword e.g. 'engineering' or 'professor'

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Today's newsletter sponsored by
State Library of Queensland

Editor's note

What does it take to keep a drink container out of the ocean? About 10 cents. That's according to researchers at CSIRO, who have found that deposit schemes in Australia and the US reduce drink containers on the coast by 40%.

The schemes are particularly effective in poorer areas, which are also the places with the most plastic litter. This proof of success is great news for Australia, considering that within 18 months, Tasmania and Victoria will be the only states without container deposit programs.

Madeleine De Gabriele
Deputy Editor: Energy + Environment



Top story



Uncountable numbers of drink containers end up in the ocean every year. Shutterstock

Deposit schemes reduce drink containers in the ocean by 40%

For more information please contact Felicity Burke on (03) 9988 1943.



2018

Editorial Highlights

The biggest news this year was continuing policy chaos and the dumping of yet another prime minister. Throughout these developments The Conversation has been the place to go for expert commentary, thanks of course to Australia's academic talent in the field, but also our Chief Political Correspondent Michelle Grattan. Michelle joined The Conversation in 2013 and her insights into this tumultuous year proved yet again that she is an acute observer and voice of reason in Australian politics (if only more of the pollies followed her advice).



And in news of our own, we were thrilled this year to welcome economics commentator Peter Martin to our team as Business and Economy Editor, and to accept a UN Day Media Award for an article edited by Cities Editor John Watson on casual sports. Our flagship podcast program Trust Me, I'm an Expert continued to grow its audience, as did our many new and continuing editorial products such as Curious Kids and We Asked Five Experts.

With an ever-increasing readership, we look forward to finding new and creative ways to surprise and delight our readers in 2019.

—ALEXANDRA HANSEN, CHIEF OF STAFF



Arts + Culture

388 authors, 457 articles, 9,685,489 reads

In 2018 a series on sexual histories proved a hit with readers, covering topics ranging from the brothels of Pompeii to the treatment of lesbians in the armed forces.

Stand-outs in our Friday Essays series looked at the politics of curry, the 'great Australian silence' 50 years on, the truth about Mary Magdalene and the hunt for thylacine specimens in British museums.

In 2018 we published more than 200 new authors and sharpened the focus of our reviews coverage: aiming to be first, when we can, with major reviews. Issues in the news covered included Simon Birmingham's intervention in research funding for the humanities, the theatrical fallout from #MeToo and perennial debates around funding the arts.

—SUZY FREEMAN-GREENE + JAMES WHITMORE



Business + Economics

474 authors, 520 articles, 10,412,641 reads

The Royal Commission into Financial Services is shaping up to be one of the most enduring legacies of the Turnbull/Morrison government, which is quite an irony given its initial opposition.

As the reputation of banks, insurers, financial planners and retail super funds was shredded, The Conversation published more than 90 articles adding insight and context; explaining what the revelations told us about the industry's approach to indigenous Australians, rural communities, corporate governance and the pursuit of profit, and sketching roadmaps for the future.

We also devoted attention to the future of superannuation and the pressing decision facing the next government - whether to lift the compulsory contributions from 9.5% to 12% as recently legislated, notwithstanding the hit it will deliver to wages.

—PETER MARTIN + TIM WALLACE



Top articles

1. **Ten photos that changed how we see human rights**, Jane Lydon, University of Western Australia
2. **Why AFL commentary works the same way as Iron Age epic poetry**, Erin Sebo and Patrick Allington, Flinders University
3. **Friday essay: a fresh perspective on Leonard Cohen and the island that inspired him**, Tanya Daiziell, University of Western Australia, and Paul Genoni, Curtin University

Top articles

1. **Why coaching, not gadgets, is key to getting the most out of employees**, Grace McCarthy, University of Wollongong
2. **Eight charts on our growing tax problem: what abandoning tax reform means for taxpayer**, Rebecca Cassells, Curtin University, Alan Duncan, Curtin University
3. **The new and more efficient payments system means new and more efficient payments fraud. Here's how to prepare**, Steve Worthington, Swinburne University of Technology

Cities

359 authors, 254 articles, 3,929,497 reads

In its second year, the Cities section continues to roam freely across the many policies and issues that affect daily urban life. Urban areas are home to nine out of ten Australians, who are feeling the pressures of growth.

Many popular articles were about adjusting to higher-density living and issues of congestion, affordable housing and urban planning. The best-read article, *With apartment living on the rise, how do families and their noisy children fit in?*, has attracted more than 400,000 readers. Successful series included *Moving the Masses*, about getting around in crowded cities, and *Australian Cities in the Asian Century*, which looked at impacts of Asian migration.

An article in our Cities for Everyone series, *Pushing casual sport to the margins threatens cities' social cohesion*, won a UN Day Media Award for the promotion of sustainable cities and communities.

—JOHN WATSON



Top articles

1. **With apartment living on the rise, how do families and their noisy children fit in?** Sophie-May Kerr, University of Wollongong
2. **'Just a piece of meat': how homeless women have little choice but to use sex for survival**, Juliet Watson, RMIT
3. **Why trackless trams are ready to replace light rail**, Peter Newman, Curtin University

Education

295 authors, 229 articles, 6,407,643 reads

Our major series in education included a look at new ideas that could reform higher education, one on the future of NAPLAN, and one on the current issues within the VET sector. A new editorial product that features five experts on a contentious topic looked at whether mobile phones should be banned in the class. One article, *How your birth date influences how well you do in school, and later in life*, made the front page of *The Age*.

This year we launched a private Education Matters Facebook group, which has several hundred members and is a vibrant community of discussion.

Every day, we hear of school teachers and leaders using our articles as a classroom resource. Selected topics have been mapped to the Australian Curriculum, and we invite teachers to pitch ideas for content.

—SOPHIE HEIZER



Top articles

1. **How to overcome exam anxiety**, Christine Grove, Monash University
2. **Five things parents can do every day to help develop STEM skills from a young age**, Kym Simoncini, University of Canberra
3. **There's a reason your child wants to read the same book over and over again**, Jane Herbert and Elizabeth Duursma University of Wollongong



Environment + Energy

675 authors, 476 articles, 12,731,056 reads

The year's news agenda was dominated by chaos in two policy areas: waste and electricity. April's recycling crisis prompted a series of articles on what to do with the nation's waste after China refused to keep accepting it.



In August the federal government's proposed National Energy Guarantee met its end (and took with it Malcolm Turnbull's prime ministership). We stayed abreast of developments, provided historical context, and kept a close watch on the cost curves for renewable energy.

We also launched our Beating Around the Bush newsletter, which has 4,500 subscribers keen to read about Australia's unique trees and flora, and continued our Sustainable Shopping series, helping consumers make environmentally friendly purchases.

—MICHAEL HOPKIN + MADELEINE DE GABRIELE

Top articles

1. **The too hard basket: a short history of Australia's aborted climate policies**, Marc Hudson, University of Manchester
2. **The recycling crisis in Australia: easy solutions to a hard problem**, Ian McacKenzie, University of Queensland
3. **Not so fast: why the electric vehicle revolution will bring problems of its own**, Martin Brueckner, Murdoch University

Health + Medicine

703 authors, 519 articles, 43,834,941 reads

This year we continued our focus on medical research, health policy and consumer information – with some important new products to increase readership and broaden opportunities for our authors to contribute.

We launched Thrive, a weekly consumer health newsletter covering topics such as catching up on sleep, loneliness, overcoming parenting challenges, weight loss traps, and more. We also launched a new editorial product, We asked five experts, where we put a common health question about diet, exercise, parenting and the body to five researchers with varied areas of expertise.

Our policy focus this year was on aged care policy, following the announcement of a royal commission. And two years into the National Disability Insurance Scheme, we investigated how the system was faring.

—FRON JACKSON-WEBB + SASHA PETROVA



Top articles

1. **What is listeria and how does it spread in rockmelons?** Vincent Ho, Western Sydney University
2. **You don't need to quit sugar to improve your health**, Tara Leong, University of Sunshine Coast
3. **Do you really need private health insurance? Here's what you need to know before deciding**, Sophie Lewis, UNSW, and Karen Willis, La Trobe University



Science + Technology

604 authors, 565 articles, 18,336,368 reads

In early 2018 Elon Musk launched a red sports car towards Mars, heralding a big year ahead in science and technology. Our high-impact pieces this year focused on space, indigenous science and history, social media, privacy and the social implications of technology.



Technology is now part of the way we holiday, view our own DNA and vote – as revealed in our popular series Tourism and Technology, When DNA Talks and Hacking #auspol. We also covered the incredible tale of 12 boys and their coach rescued from a Thai cave, a rare blood moon, a crashing space station and water on Mars.



We unpacked the geology behind devastating earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis, but also the science of our favourite gemstones. Our series This Is Research explained key concepts in science.

—SARAH KEENIHAN, SHELLEY HEPWORTH
+ MICHAEL LUND

Top articles

1. **Travelling overseas? What to do if a border agent demands access to your digital device**, Katina Michael, Arizona State University
2. **Five in a row - the planets align in the night sky**, Tanya Hill, Museums Victoria
3. **The origin of ‘us’: what we know so far about where we humans come from**, Bernard Wood, George Washington University, Michael Westaway, Griffith University

FactCheck

38 authors, 50 articles, 713,792 reads

In 2018, FactCheck checked claims at the heart of key federal and state policy debates and social issues; from corporate tax cuts, population and immigration, to energy policy, aged care, crime, employment and the economy.



These included claims made by the Coalition, Labor, the Greens and One Nation; groups including GetUp, the Australian Banking Association, Australian Hotels Association, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia; and Q&A panellists, in response to viewer requests. FactCheck received accreditation from the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) for a second year, a reflection of our commitment to non-partisanship, fairness, and transparency.

As guests of the IFCN at the Global Fact 5 summit in Rome, we discussed best practice and developments in fact-checking with specialists from 56 countries.

—LUCINDA BEAMAN

Top articles

1. **Does South Australia have the ‘highest energy prices’ in the nation and ‘the least reliable grid’?** Dylan McConnell, University of Melbourne, David Blowers, Grattan Institute
2. **Are ‘around 5,000 jobs’ at risk if pokies are removed from pubs and clubs in Tasmania?** Fabrizio Carmignani, Griffith University, Saul Eslake, University of Tasmania
3. **Is Australia’s population the ‘highest-growing in the world’?** Liz Allen, Australian National University, Tom Wilson, Charles Darwin University



Politics + Society

558 authors, 1,023 articles, 18,571,084 reads

For sheer (ongoing) drama, it's hard to go past the leadership spill in August that saw yet another prime minister deposed before the end of their term, in what has become rather an embarrassing Australian habit. Our coverage featured prominent authors such as Judith Brett, Chris Wallace and Frank Bongiorno.



When Scott Morrison became the new prime minister, we were able to post a profile piece by Rob Manwaring within minutes, and it gathered more than 282,000 reads.

Many of our authors were asked to comment in other media as a result of their Conversation pieces, both in Australia and around the world.

—AMANDA DUNN + JUSTIN BERGMAN

Top articles

1. **Jesus wasn't white: he was a brown-skinned, Middle Eastern Jew. Here's why that matters**, Robyn J. Whitaker, University of Divinity
2. **Sexist abuse has a long history in Australian politics – and takes us all to a dark place**, Denis Muller, University of Melbourne
3. **View from The Hill: Morrison's authority deficit on show at home and abroad**, Michelle Grattan, University of Canberra

New Zealand



Politics has dominated the news agenda in New Zealand, with a new coalition government led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern beginning to implement significant changes in climate and economic policy. In May and June, the focus was on the government's first budget and a major Productivity Commission report that lays out New Zealand's transition to a low-emissions economy and zero-carbon legislation.

Apart from politics, New Zealand authors wrote articles on a broad range of topics, including a proposal to do away with sex segregation in sports, building tensions between the US and China in the Pacific, hazardous drinking in older people and the 125th anniversary of New Zealand women becoming the first to win the right to vote.

Four New Zealand universities have now joined The Conversation, with a significant increase in the number of new authors.

—VERONIKA MEDUNA

Top articles

1. **One year on for Ardern's coalition government in New Zealand**, Richard Shaw, Massey University
2. **How to tackle NZ's teacher shortage and better reflect student diversity**, Ruth Boyask, Auckland University of Technology
3. **Why it might be time to eradicate sex segregation in sports**, Roslyn Kerr, Lincoln University, New Zealand

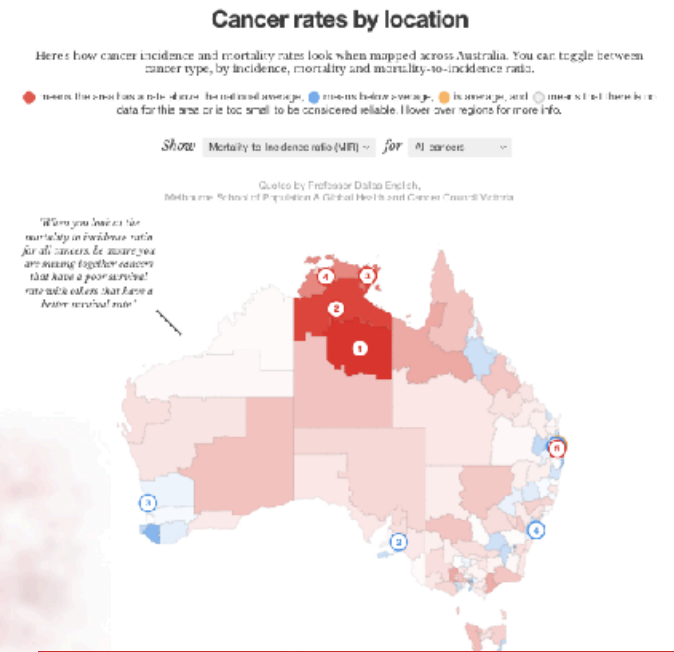
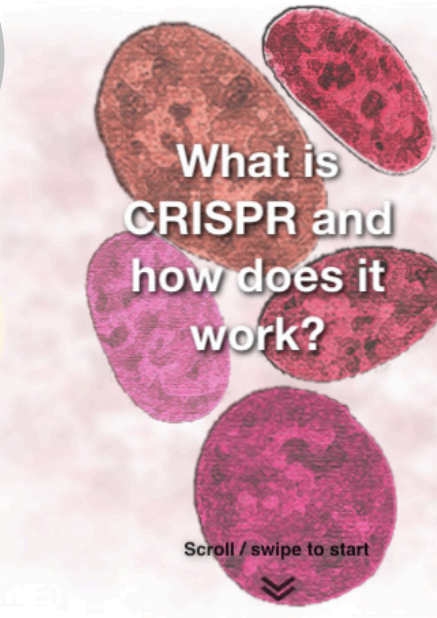
Multimedia

This year, the Digital Storytelling team produced several major data interactives. One was a drag-and-drop game that allowed users to 'build' their household and see what the huge Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey revealed. A huge interactive map of cancer incidence and mortality rates across Australia garnered over 50,000 reads, mostly on site. Another popular infographic was an explanation of CRISPR gene editing to go with Merlin Crossley's (Professor of Molecular Biology at UNSW) excellent explanation of CRISPR.

In 2018 we also continued to produce our monthly podcast, Trust Me, I'm An Expert, which has grown its audience and was selected to be added to the Spotify streaming service. We launched a new podcast, Media Files, about the major issues and themes in the media which has been drawing in new audiences and continued our Speaking With podcast.

Early in the year we had a season-run of Essays On Air, a weekly podcast featuring highly-produced immersive audio essays. We've also continued to produce an average of two Curious Kids articles per week, collaborated with the ABC on the kids podcast Imagine This (based on Curious Kids) on two seasons of that program. Our "Drink, Drank, Drunk" series of four animated videos explaining alcohol's effect on the body were picked up by the Red Cross, Hong Kong's Department of Health and other health bodies, as well as doing exceedingly well onsite.

—EMIL JEYARATNAM, WES MOUNTAIN + SUNANDA CREAGH



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