



Delegates representing Australian provincial newspaper proprietors and the Australian Journalists Association are pictured during a conference held in Melbourne in June-July 1924. Discussion centred on salaries and working conditions. The conference finished on 5 July. This photograph appeared in *Table Talk*, a Melbourne weekly magazine, 10 July 1924, p.15, and the *Australasian Journalist*, 15 July 1924, p.111. [*Table Talk* was published 1885-1939.]

Standing (left to right): H. Jones (AJA, Bendigo), H.J. Curwen (AJA, Tasmania), W. Wright (*Advertiser*, Bendigo), G.S. Baxter (*Star*, Ballarat), P.J. Cherry (editor, *Advocate*, Burnie), W.E. Lingard (general manager, *Queensland Times*, Ipswich), A.E. Joseph (secretary, Queensland Country Press Association), N.L. Roberts (AJA, NSW), Gordon Rolph (proprietor, *Examiner*, Launceston), J. Ryan, MLC (*Lithgow Mercury*), A. Joseph (*Northern Daily Leader*, Tamworth). **Seated** (l to r): J. Smethurst (managing editor, *Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, also representing South Australian Provincial Press Association), G. Shelton (AJA, Newcastle), Sydney E. Pratt (general secretary, AJA), E.P.M. Sheedy (general manager, *Newcastle Morning Herald*), R.W. Kenderdine (general president, AJA), W.H. Waddell (secretary, Victorian Provincial Press Association), L.V. Armati (managing editor, *Newcastle Sun*), W.J. Mann (*South-Western News*, Busselton, WA, president of Australasian Provincial Press Association). See ANHG 108.4.1 below.

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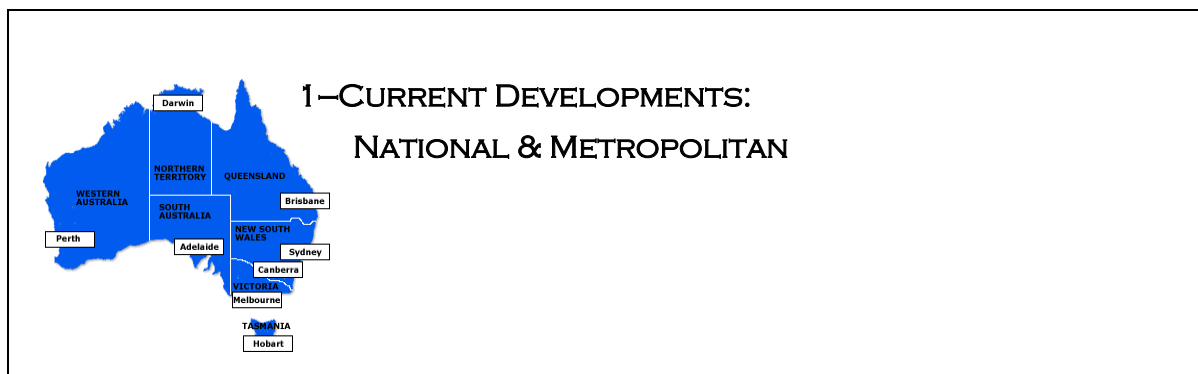
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Subscription details appear at end of *Newsletter*. [Number 1 appeared October 1999.]

Ten issues had appeared by December 2000; the *Newsletter* has appeared five times a year since 2001.



1—CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: NATIONAL & METROPOLITAN

PRINT PURGE — SEE 108.3.1–7

108.1.1 Editors (1): Gunn first female editor of the *Australian*

The *Australian* (estab. 1964) has appointed its first female editor of its weekday editions. She is Michelle Gunn, 50, who had been the editor of the *Weekend Australian* since 2012 (*Weekend Australian*, 16-17 May 2020). The previous editor of the weekday paper, John Lehmann, has become the commercial manager and managing editor of the paper. The editor-in-chief, Christopher Dore, made the announcement to staff at a video meeting on 15 May. The former managing editor, Helen Trinca, has been made an associate editor and will remain as the editor of the magazine, the *Deal*. Gunn, who continues as editor of the *Weekend Australian*, began her career 32 years ago as a cadet journalist at the News Corp publication based at Holt Street in Surry Hills, Sydney.



Michelle Gunn

Gunn said, “I am thrilled to be taking on the role of editor at such a critical time, as Australia remakes itself in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Australian* has an important role to play in this period of recovery and reconstruction, giving voice to the aspirations of people across the country and making the arguments for growth and prosperity.”

Gunn was a social affairs reporter and national chief of staff before taking over the *Weekend Australian* under the former editor-in-chief Chris Mitchell. Mitchell was replaced by Paul Whittaker five years ago when he retired. In 2018 Whittaker left to head Sky News Australia. Gunn is the first person to be in charge of both the weekday and weekend papers, and

all the digital platforms at the *Australian*.

Gunn’s appointment was featured in the Media section of the *Australian* on 18 May. She is quoted as saying: “...at its best, the *Australian* is the equal of any paper in the world... We’ve got the best newsroom in the country, with journalists who are both experienced and committed.” She says the role the *Australian* plays in national debate is often wilfully misunderstood. “The values of the paper are not conservative values, in that traditional cultural political sense. The *Australian* is more properly characterised as a radical in national debate—and I say that because what we’ve been about since 1964 is challenging orthodoxies, swimming upstream, questioning authority, and we can cite a lot of examples of that.” Also, see ANHG 108.2.1.

108.1.2 Editors (2): Lavelle leaves the *Age*

The editor of the Melbourne *Age*, Alex Lavelle, left the paper on 18 June after a 20-year career with it. Michelle Griffin, the paper’s world editor and former news director, has been appointed acting editor. Executive editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Age*, James Chessell, said “an extensive search” would be conducted for “a permanent editor”. The *Australian* reported (19 June 2020) Lavelle’s departure followed controversy “in recent days over the masthead’s coverage of the Black Deaths in Custody protest in Melbourne”. Seventy journalists were allegedly unhappy with the *Age*’s reporting and accompanying editorial. Chessell denied that the *Age*’s coverage had become politicised.

A Page 1 article, on 5 June, by Noel Towell and Tom Cowie, headed “Police ‘threatened’ ahead of protest”, is believed to have been at the centre of the journalists’ protest. The report was changed in late editions of the newspaper and moved from the “main” story on Page 1 to a lesser position. The *Age*, in correcting the story, noted it “fell short” of the paper’s “editorial values and standards”.

Age journalists demanded management hire more non-white staff and deliver key editorial changes (*Australian*, 15 June 2020). The 15 June report said more than 50 staff on the paper had signed a petition calling for improved racial diversity and the appointment of an indigenous affairs reporter.

108.1.3 A former High Court judge and allegations by associates

At 4.29pm on 22 June 2020, *Sydney Morning Herald* reporters Kate McClymont and Jacqueline Maley broke the story on the paper’s website of the allegations of sexual misconduct by a former High Court judge, Dyson Heydon. This is how their report began:

Former High Court Justice Dyson Heydon, one of the nation’s pre-eminent legal minds, sexually harassed six young female associates, an independent inquiry by the court has found. A *Herald* investigation has also uncovered further allegations from senior legal figures of predatory behaviour by Mr Heydon, including a judge who claims that he indecently assaulted her. The women claim that Mr Heydon’s status as one of the most powerful men in the country protected him from being held to account for his actions. The High Court inquiry was prompted by two of the judge’s former associates notifying the Chief Justice Susan Kiefel in March 2019 that they had been sexually harassed by Mr Heydon. “We are ashamed that this could have happened at the High Court of Australia,” said Chief Justice Kiefel in a statement. She confirmed that the lengthy investigation found that “the Honourable Dyson Heydon, AC, QC” harassed six former staff members.

The McClymont-Maley reports appeared in the print edition of the *Herald* on 23 June, filling Pages 6 and 7, following on from a half-page pictorial pointer on Page 1, headlined: “Herald Investigation: Former top judge ‘a sexual harasser’”. Bri Lee, a lawyer and author of *Eggshell Skull and Beauty* (an award-winning memoir exposing injustice in the Australian legal system), wrote about the Heydon matter in “A law of diminishing returns”, *Saturday Paper*, 27 June-3 July 2020, p.5.

108.1.4 Bauer (1): Moves on Pacific staff

4 May 2020: Bauer Media has sacked 60 staff at its newly acquired business, Pacific Magazines, and halted publishing magazines, including *InStyle*, *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health*. Bauer wanted to slash costs as advertising revenue dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic (*Australian*, 4 May 2020). The German-owned family business is understood to have laid off the entire team at women’s magazine *InStyle* and closed Pacific’s online beauty website, *Beauty Crew*. All beauty editors, including those on magazines, have also been made redundant, a magazine executive told the *Australian* on 4 May. *Marie Claire*, one of Pacific’s key magazines, has not been as heavily impacted but some staff were still believed to be heading out the door. Pacific’s *Home Beautiful* magazine was also believed to have lost staff, according to another magazine executive.

108.1.5 Bauer (2): Sells magazines to Mercury Capital

17 June 2020: Bauer Media has sold its Australian magazine business to private equity firm Mercury Capital, ending a disastrous and expensive eight-year foray in Australia (*Australian*, 17 June 2020). Bauer has not disclosed the sale price, but it is understood to be less than \$50 million a fraction of the \$500 million it paid when it entered by Australian media market in 2012 through the acquisition of the Packer family’s ACP Magazines business..

The family-owned company recently suspended eight Australian magazines — *NW*, *OK!*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Elle*, *InStyle*, *Men’s Health*, *Women’s Health* and *Good Health* — and axed staff in a bid to offset the double digital fall in advertising revenue across the local media sector.

In a brief statement on 17 June, Bauer said Mercury would acquire all of its local print and digital assets, including women’s entertainment and lifestyle; fashion, beauty & health; homes; food; motoring & trader lifestyle categories. The sale agreement also includes brands recently acquired by Bauer from Pacific, including *New Idea* and *Better Homes and Gardens*, plus Bauer’s NZ mastheads. See also: Christine Lacy, “Bauer buyer’s execs to outline mag plan”, *Australian*, 22 June 2020, p.19. See Tim Elliott article in ANHG 108.5.2.

108.1.6 People

- **Peter Blunden:** see 108.2.1 below for his new appointment and various other News Corp appointments.
- **Brendan Cormick**, turf writer for the *Australian*, wrote in his farewell column (*Weekend Australian*, 27-28 June 2020) about the day he received a hot tip that led to the paper beating its competition in reporting the downfall of Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq, 1979-2003. Cormick, who worked for the paper for 31 years, has taken a redundancy package.
- **Adele Ferguson**, of the *Age* and at times the ABC, is a new director of the Walkley Foundation. Ferguson, winner of eight Walkley Awards, is a journalist whose work has led to royal commissions on banking and aged care (*Telum Media Alert*, 8 May 2020).
- **Tony Gillies**, after 16 years as editor-in-chief of AAP, departs the company on 31 July when the company transitions to new leadership (*Telum Media Alert*, 19 June 2020).
- **Annabel Hennessy**, of the *West Australian*, has been named the 2020 Young Australian Journalist of the Year by the Walkley Foundation (*Telum Media Alert*, 19 June 2020). She also won the Public Service Journalism category of the awards known as the 2020 Mid-Year Celebration of Journalism. More at <https://www.walkleys.com/winners-unveiled-for-the-2020-mid-year-celebration-of-journalism/>
- **Andrew Jefferson**, a reporter, has left the *Geelong Advertiser* to become media adviser to Victorian senator Sarah Henderson, herself a former journalist (*Age*, 7 May 2020).
- **Bianca Hall** has been appointed city editor at the *Age*. She was previously a senior reporter and has covered federal, state and local politics (*Telum Media Alert*, 22 May 2020).
- **Greg Hywood**, former Fairfax Media CEO, has been hired by Seven West Media to review its West Australian newspaper division as part of further attempts to adapt the company to weak economic conditions and reduce its debt (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 June 2020).
- **Nick McKenzie (1)**, a journalist for the *Melbourne Age*, has broken *60 Minutes'* biggest story of the year—an investigation of the “grubby behaviour” in the Victorian branch of the Labor Party. It had claimed three Victorian ministerial scalps by 21 June (*Australian*, 22 June 2020). See excellent Wikipedia entry on McKenzie, which cites 60 sources.
- **Nick McKenzie (2)** has been appointed president of the Melbourne Press Club. The *7.30* reporter Ashlynn McGhee and 3AW's Heidi Murphy are the new vice-president (*Telum Media Alert*, 26 June 2020).
- **Sid Maher**, formerly news director of the *Australian*, has been promoted to deputy editor. Petra Rees is the other deputy editor (*Weekend Australian*, 11-12 July 2020).
- **Xavier Mardling**, the editor of the *Border Mail*, Albury, for four years, has begun duties as senior deputy editor of the *Newcastle Herald* (*Telum Media Alert*, 22 May 2020).
- **Sharri Markson**, former political editor-at-large at the *Daily Telegraph*, has rejoined the *Australian* and is now leading its investigations team (*Weekend Australian*, 11-12 July 2020).
- **Gretel Packer**, daughter of Kerry, is featured in a *Sydney Morning Herald* article (6-7 June 2020, p.20) as a quiet billionaire with a passion for the arts and philanthropy.
- **David Pope**, *Canberra Times* cartoonist, has created a series of images, “South Coast is Calling”, to support bushfire-affected communities in southern NSW (*Canberra Times*, 9 May 2020, p.7). The latest additions to the series are drawings of Rosedale and Batlow. They appeared as full-page posters in the *Canberra Times* on 10 and 11 May.
- **Andrew Reimer**, former academic and author, who reviewed books for the *Sydney Morning Herald* for nearly 30 years from 1987, has died, aged 84 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 June 2020, p.7; his obituary appeared, *SMH*, 23 June 2020, p. 30).
- **Jim Tucker**, a sports journalist for 42 years with News Corp and earlier, ACP, finished duties at the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* on 26 June (*Telum Media Alert*, 24 June 2020).

108.1.7 Culture critics and lack of diversity

Nine has re-opened applications for two freelance book critic roles for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* after Bec Kavanagh and Jack Callil tendered their resignations to allow space for non-white writers (Mumbrella, 24 June 2020). In May, Kavanagh and Callil were two of five white writers selected as critics for the two papers as part of a program funded by the Copyright Agency and Judith Nielsen Institute. But, in a joint statement, the pair said they sent a resignation letter

to their editors “in opposition to the lack of diversity in the selection”. The other critics selected were: Cassie Tongue, theatre critic, *Sydney Morning Herald*; Chloe Wolifson, visual arts critic, *Sydney Morning Herald*; and Tiarney Miekus, visual arts critic, *Age (Telum Media Alert*, 4 May 2020).

108.1.8 News Corp loses \$1.5bn for quarter

News Corp’s third-quarter earnings declined 2 per cent to \$A374 million, led by a drop in print advertising revenue and Foxtel subscribers (*Canberra Times*, 9 May 2020, p.47). The company posted a net loss for the March quarter of \$A1.5 billion, after taking a \$A1.7 billion non-cash impairment charge against its Foxtel and News America Marketing assets.

108.1.9 Recent chronology

108.1.9.1 Events

28 May: News Corp Australasia announces end of printing for 122 newspaper titles (regional, community and specialist). See 108.3.1.

28 May: The National Rugby League (NRL) competition resumes, without crowds. It had been suspended on 23 March after two rounds because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A shorter competition will ensue.

11 June: The Australian Football League (AFL) competition resumes, without crowds. AFL matches were suspended from 22 March.

27 June: Final print editions appear of 11 Queensland and NSW regional daily newspapers and many other country newspapers. See ANHG 108.3.1.

29 June (plus fortnight): More than 40 ACM newspapers resume printing. See ANHG 108.3.8.

8 July 2020: ACM flags the likelihood of closing four of its eight print centres nationally. See ANHG 108.3.9.

108.1.9.2 Deaths

Crook, Francis Robert (Frank): D. 8 May 2020 in Sydney, aged 81; educated in Sydney at Randwick Public School and Maroubra Junction Tech; joined the *Sydney Morning Herald* in the mid-1950s as a reader (fact checker); became a cadet journalist on the stablemate paper, the *Sun*; was a correspondent in Newcastle before working in London where he covered the trial of Christine Keeler; in late 1960s became editor of *TV Week*, published in Melbourne; returned to Sydney in early 1970s to join *Daily Mirror* as a reporter, columnist and feature writer; joined *Sun* in 1973 as cricket writer and toured with the Australian team for the Ashes series that year; posted to New York in mid-1970s as head of the Fairfax bureau; spent much of the post-1984 years of his working life presenting programs on radio—2UE, ABC and 2GB (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 2020).

Krause, Thomas Joseph: D. 26 May 2020 in Sydney, aged 76; born in West Philadelphia; first job in journalism was at United Press International; mainly remembered for his journalism (in a “producer” role) with the Australian Nine Network’s *Sunday* program; Janine Perrett said “his tireless research and fine writing helped lift the standard of Australian current affairs television”; worked on the *Australian* at end of 1970s as literary editor, TV critic and foreign editor; was involved with the Walkley Awards behind the scenes (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 2020, p.33).

McDonald, Ian James: D. 8 June 2020 at Gold Coast, aged 88; began journalism career as cadet on Melbourne *Argus* in 1950; after paper closed in 1957, he spent 18 years as a journalist and sports editor for publications including the *Argus*, *Sporting Globe* and *Sunday Press*; became the Victorian Football League’s first media manager in 1977; from 1983-98 was Australian Cricket Board’s first media manager and also long-time manager of the national team; led internal investigation that confirmed Mark Waugh and Shane Warne had been paid for their exchange of information with “John the bookie” during the 1994-95 season; (main source: contribution by Jim Usher and Bob Murray, cadets with “Macca”).

O’Hara, John Bernard: D. 7 March 2020 in Bathurst, aged 75; media academic and former presenter of “Media” program on ABC Radio; lecturer in arts and media studies at RMIT, 1975-82,

moving to a similar role at Swinburne Institute of Technology where he was later promoted to senior lecturer and principal lecturer; director of Australian Film, Radio and Television School, 1989-96; became professor and head of School of Communications (which included journalism) at Charles Sturt University, 1996-2002; dean, Dubai Women's College, 2002-07 (*Age*, 11 May 2020, p.33).

O'Meara, Maev Kathleen (née Holness): D. 4 April 2020 in Sydney, aged 92; born at North Sydney, but grew up in Orange, NSW; attended high school as a boarder at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay, during World War II; graduated with arts degree at Sydney University, with first class honours in Latin; returned to Orange to become a journalist at the *Central Western Daily*; in the mid 1950s worked at *Sydney Morning Herald*, joining a band of young women presided over by legendary editor Connie "Sweetheart" Robertson; "writing stories and being part of a big, bustling city were a joy, along with the occasional shopping expedition to David Jones' sixth floor and stunning European styles in glorious fabric with nipped-in waists; but driving home to Orange over the mountains in a stylish Morris Minor was also a wonderful part of her life" (says daughter Maeve, of TV food-show fame); after a European tour, returned to the *Herald* women's section and soon met *SMH*'s John O'Meara, a composer, whom she married; had two children, Matthew and Maeve, and returned to Fairfax to write the "Hello" section for the *Sun-Herald*; John was Fairfax composing room manager in 1975, leading the floor through the difficult metamorphosis from hot metal to computerisation and offset printing (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 April 2020, p.31).

Williamson, Caryl: D. 12 May 2020 in Sydney, aged 67; became first female to become a racing editor in Australia when appointed to that role at AAP in 1996; covered the Melbourne spring racing carnival each year for more than 20 years and every major Sydney race meeting since the early 1990s; helped train AAP cadets who would spend time in the racing department (*Age*, 1 June 2020).

108.1.10 When Pell remained silent

Australia's major newspapers reported on 8 May the previously redacted findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, for instance, carried a Page 1 story, "Pell knew of child abuse but kept silent" that continued at the foot of Page 6. The rest of Page 6 is devoted to two other "redaction" stories related to Cardinal George Pell. Here are the intros: (1) Cardinal George Pell knew nearly 40 years ago that notorious paedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale was being moved out of a small Victorian parish to protect the Catholic Church from scandal, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has found. (2) George Pell failed to act on and investigate complaints of sexual assault against two Melbourne priests, and was probably at meetings where allegations against another four clerics were published.

The story, on Pages 1 and 6, began: "Cardinal George Pell has refused to accept a royal commission's findings about his knowledge of paedophiles within the Catholic Church and failure to protect children under his care, saying they are not supported by evidence."

Editorials: The *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Melbourne Age* and the *Australian* each published on 8 May an editorial about Pell, the Catholic Church and the previously redacted sections of the royal commission report: "Pell findings show extent of Catholic Church's cover-up" (*SMH*, p.24); "Church must show it can further reform" (*Age*, p.20); and "Commission implicates Pell" (*Australian*, p.11). The *Australian's* editorial concluded by quoting what associate editor John Ferguson said in his comment piece that day (p.8): "George Pell has escaped jail but his reputation is on bail."

108.1.11 \$75m lifeline for Seven West Media

Debt-laden Seven West Media has been thrown a \$75 million lifeline. Western Australian property outfit Primewest is buying the Seven West Perth headquarters (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 May 2020). Seven West said on 13 May that Channel 7, the *West Australian* and the *Sunday Times* would remain as the major tenants of the Osborne Park property 5km north of the Perth CBD under a 15-year lease. Primewest said annual rent was set at \$4.3 million with 3 per cent a year rent reviews.

108.1.12 Mastheads most-read

In the 12 months to 31 March 2020, Australian newspaper titles—or “media brands”—recorded the highest readership numbers—18.2 million people—since the inception of **emma** (Enhanced Media Metrics Australia) in 2013. The reach encompasses 96 per cent of Australians aged over 14. Print audiences comprised 12.7 million. The top 10 most-read news mastheads in Australia in March 2020 were:

1. *Sydney Morning Herald* (11.033 million).
2. *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney (6.521 million).
3. *Australian* (6.23 million).
4. *Age*, Melbourne (5.321 million).
5. *Herald Sun*, Melbourne (4.736 million).
6. *Australian Financial Review* (3.726 million).
7. *West Australian* and *Sunday Times*, Perth (3.675 million).
8. *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane (3.366 million).
9. *Advertiser*, Adelaide (2.428 million).
10. *Canberra Times* (2.291 million).

The Reuters Institute’s Digital News Report for 2020 says the ABC and SBS have the most trusted news brands in Australia at 72 per cent and 71 per cent respectively and the *Australian* tops the newspaper brands with 56 per cent, ahead of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 54 per cent, and the *Age*, 53 per cent (*Australian*, 22 June 2020).

108.1.13 AFP (1): Decides not to charge Annika Smethurst

The Australian Federal Police has ruled out pursuing charges against News Corp journalist Annika Smethurst or her suspected source for a story revealing a secret government proposal to expand domestic intelligence activities (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 May 2020, p.17). News Corp said “common sense has prevailed” after police announced they would drop the investigation involving Smethurst, political editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, because investigators had been unable to gather sufficient evidence. The AFP also said an investigation involving ABC journalists Dan Oakes and Sam Clarke regarding a separate leak of documents known as the Afghan Files was ongoing and investigators were seeking to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. See ANHG 108.5.1 below.

108.1.14 AFP (2): Holds back in another inquiry

Australian Federal Police investigations into unauthorised leaks of government information have been hampered by fears that efforts to obtain telephone records and documents from political offices may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (29 May 2020, p.10) revealed AFP investigators did not access telephone records of Coalition ministerial staff as part of the probe into media tip-offs of a raid on the Australian Workers Union in October 2017. Documents released under FOI laws reveal potentially critical evidence was not sought because police command feared such a move could be regarded by politicians as a contempt of Parliament.

108.1.15 News Corp culls again

On the same day that the ABC announced more than 200 jobs would be axed, News Corp Australia employees were told about another round of redundancies (66 according to Samantha Hutchinson, *Age*, 15 June 2020). The latest cuts include editorial and production roles at Sydney’s *Daily Telegraph* and Melbourne’s *Herald Sun*, and a small number of roles at the *Australian*. The cuts were in addition to the jobs lost two weeks earlier when News Corp announced printing of 122 newspapers would cease (*Age*, 10 June 2020, p.23). Among the casualties are the soccer reporters at several of the News Corp metro mastheads.

108.1.16 AAP newswire sold

Australian Associated Press’s newswire has been sold to a consortium of investors and philanthropists for \$1, but the group will put millions into the loss-making newsagency to prop it up until it becomes profitable. At least 100 editorial redundancies were expected (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 2020).

108.1.17 Queen’s Birthday honours: 5 print media people named

Five Australians involved with the print media won awards in the Queen’s Birthday honours in June. They are:

Officer (AO) in the General Division: Graham Frederick RICHARDSON Dover Heights NSW. For distinguished service to the people and Parliament of Australia, to the media as a political commentator, and through philanthropic support for a range of community organisations.

Member (AM) in the General Division: Andrew JASPAN, Victoria. For significant service to the print and digital media, and to tertiary education. Michael James CARLTON, Avalon, NSW. For significant service to the print and broadcast media, and to naval history.

Medal (OAM) in the General Division: Michael Alan SMITH, Ivanhoe, Vic. For service to journalism and the public relations sector. Ekaterina (Katya) DANOVA, Victoria. For service to the broadcast and print media and to the Russian community.

108.1.18 *Daily Telegraph* loses Rush appeal

The Full Bench of the Federal Court has upheld the decision by a judge of that court to award actor Geoffrey Rush \$850,000 in general damages and almost \$2 million in special damages (to cover past and future economic loss) after Rush sued the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, for defamation (*Australian*, 3 July 2020). Justice Michael Wigney last year awarded Rush these amounts in the largest defamation payout to a single plaintiff.

108.1.19 *Big Issue* resumes

After a three-month hiatus because of COVID-19, the *Big Issue* resumed street selling on 29 June. The “Welcome Back” edition featured stories about vendors’ personal experiences during the pandemic, interviews with Spike Lee and author Rutger Bregman (*Telum Media Alert*, 6 July 2020).



108.2.1 News Corp as digital publisher: developing story

18 May: News Corp will seek to realign itself as a digital publisher of high-quality journalism across specialist teams. The team are led by Peter Blunden in a newly appointed role of national executive editor (*Australian*, 18 May 2020). News Corp Australia has announced a series of new appointments to reshape the company, including the establishment of specialist network teams to work across titles to produce quality content. The announcement came as the executive chairman of News Corp Australasia, Michael Miller, said the company was calling off talks with Antony Catalano’s Australian Community Media. News Corp had considered selling its regional and community portfolio of more than 100 newspapers to ACM. Rather than proceed with a sale, Miller said the company would retain its titles focused on digital mastheads.

In recent times News has launched 16 digital-only mastheads in locations such as Canberra and Wollongong, and many suspended community titles are likely to continue as digital-only. Miller said the new specialist editorial teams would mean that while previously News Corp had been “a network of newspapers, now we will be Australia’s leading journalism network” with the appointment of Blunden as national executive editor. Blunden is also chair of News Corp’s editorial board. “This quality journalism will be better resourced than anything we have done before and will be developed, published and shared on all formats to grow audiences and subscriptions,” Miller said. The leadership teams will comprise Matthew Kitchen, who has been appointed national

sports editor, and James Law, who will be the national editor of NewsWire, the new internal newswire service. Lillian Saleh will be the national editor of network news and Kathy Lipari has taken on an expanded role as national editor, News360 and commercial editorial. See ANHG 108.3.1 below.

10 June: News Corp Australia has announced changes to its metro and national newsrooms. It is “establishing a new specialist sports newsroom, a group of senior and specialist national news reporters, the *NewsWire* news service and a production centre of excellence”. As a result, the publisher says there will be some job role changes and some job losses (*Telum Media Alert*, 10 June 2020).

13 July: News Corp Australia plans to launch more than 50 digital-only mastheads over three years, with the first 15 to be operating by the end of September (*Australian*, 13 July 2020). The new titles will cover highly sought-after local crime and court stories, plus planning and development in the local areas, schools, health and lifestyle. Its subscribers will also have access to News Corp’s news content across its newly established newswire service and sports network, as well as newspapers such as the *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, and the *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane. News Corp’s national community masthead network editor John McGourty says the company has “identified 50-plus sites where we think there’s an opportunity to grow new audiences in the future”.

The company has set up 16 purely digital titles over the past 18 months, bring to 92 its tally of digital-only titles. At the end of June, News Corp launched NCA NewsWire, which will deliver stories to its digital sites. The newswire will have a team of 32 journalists across six cities, including two picture editors. Of the first 15 new digital titles, eight will be in Victoria, five in NSW and two in South Australia. Some will compete with Antony Catalano’s Australian Community Media and independent publishers for readers and advertisers. All but one of the 15 titles will be in regional areas, including Albury-Wodonga, Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland, Latrobe Valley, Mildura, Shepparton, Dubbo, Hawkesbury, Port Macquarie, Orange, Tamworth, Clare Valley and Port Lincoln.

McGourty expects the new titles to generate as much as 90 per cent of their revenue from subscription and the rest from advertising. They are expected to break even after about 12 months, and then grow. The first three titles will be in Clare Valley and Port Lincoln, South Australia, and Ballarat, Victoria.

108.2.2 The lawyer and Google and ‘publication’

A Victorian Supreme Court decision ordering Google to pay \$40,000 to a prominent criminal lawyer for defaming him by “publishing” a news story that appeared in its search results has led to calls from experts for a rethink of the legal definition of publishing (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2-3 May 2020). Melbourne lawyer George Defteros successfully sued the US-based search engine for linking to a June 2004 article in the *Age* which followed his arrest on charges of conspiring to murder underworld identity Carl Williams and others. The charges were dropped in 2005. In a decision in the final week of May, Justice Melinda Richards said Google became liable as a publisher of both a “snippet” of the article in search results and the full article, headlined “Underworld loses valued friend at court”, from 11 February 2016. This marked a “reasonable time” after Defteros’ law firm asked Google on 4 February to remove the article from search results.

108.2.3 Websites narrowing focus or shutting down

BuzzFeed has confirmed it is no longer planning to cover local news in the Australian and United Kingdom arms of its international operation because of economic and strategic reasons. The website will now move to focus more on US-based news. The change signals an end to *BuzzFeed*’s news operations outside of the US (*Telum Media Alert*, 15 May 2020).

10Daily, Network 10’s online news, lifestyle and entertainment site, closed on 22 May, two years after it was launched. Network 10 said it would give greater emphasis to its streaming services and social media (*Telum Media Alert*, 20 May 2020).

Whimn, News Corp Australia’s women’s news and entertainment website, has been axed as part of News’s latest round of cost-cutting (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 2020). It ceased publishing

on 30 June. The website was reaching one million Australians, according to Nielsen ratings from March this year.

108.2.6 Defamation case settled


An Australian-based Chinese news outlet has settled a defamation case brought against it by a former head of Macquarie Private Bank by paying \$350,000 and apologising for a now-withdrawn article it says contained false claims (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 2020, p.3). Guy Hedley, who now heads Sydney-based funds manager Atlas Advisors, sued online outlet Australian Financial News for defamation over a September 2019 article he said accused him of running a company that “takes advantage of unsophisticated Chinese investors”. The article was read widely on Chinese social media platform WeChat, the Federal Court heard.

108.2.7 Facebook, news media and libel

The NSW Court of Appeal ruled on 1 June that news outlets, including the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian*, were liable as publishers of readers’ Facebook posts because they “encouraged and facilitated” comments by setting up Facebook pages. The ruling has implications for other organisations and people with public social media accounts. Former Northern Territory youth detainee Dylan Voller launched defamation proceedings against Nine, News Corp and the Australian News Channel in 2017 over comments posted by readers on the Facebook pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Australian*, *Centralian Advocate*, Sky News Australia and *the Bolt Report* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 2020).

108.2.8 Google poised to pay publishers

Google has bowed to global pressure from regulators and agreed to pay some publishers for news content in a major strategic shift by the search advertising giant (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 June 2020, p.3). The company announced a new licensing program in a blog post on 25 June, revealing it had signed partnerships with publishers in Australia, Brazil and Germany. Industry sources said Google was in advanced talks with Australian Community Media, while Schwartz Media, publisher of the *Saturday Paper*, Private Media, publisher of *Crikey*, and Solstice Media’s *InDaily* and *InQueensland* have already signed deals.

	3—CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: COMMUNITY & PROVINCIAL
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108.3.1 Print purge (1): News Corp kills 122 titles

Rod Kirkpatrick writes: The death notices for 11 regional daily newspapers—one whose publication dated back to 1859 and six to the 1860s—effectively appeared on 28 May. News Corp Australasia executive chairman Michael Miller announced that day a massive shakeup of the company’s publishing businesses from the end of June (*Australian*, 29 May 2020, p.15). *Sydney Morning Herald* media reporter Zoe Samios had broken the story on the morning of 28 May (p.24).

As a result, 122 papers are no longer printed. Sixty of those are “community” (suburban) newspapers whose printing had been suspended in April. Eighty-six of the 122 papers that have ceased printing are continuing in digital form. Another 36 are defunct. News continues to print only eight regional and community newspapers. (News actually listed 10, not eight, because it counts the Hobart *Mercury* and the *NT News*, Darwin, as “regionals” and not as metro dailies.) Among the 36 titles that News has ceased to publish altogether are three “specialist” publications—*Big Rigs*, *Rural Weekly* and *Seniors*. Four North Queensland titles have been shut down but live on as regional sections of the *Cairns Post* and *Townsville Bulletin*.

The eight regional and community titles that News is continuing to print are:

- ❖ **NSW**—*Wentworth Courier*, *Mosman Daily*, *North Shore Times* (all appear weekly).
- ❖ **Victoria**—*Geelong Advertiser* (a daily).
- ❖ **Queensland**—*Cairns Post*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, *Toowoomba Chronicle* (all dailies).

Among the News Corp regional papers now available only digitally are the former dailies for Grafton (1859 start), Lismore (1876), Mackay (1866), Rockhampton (1861), Gladstone (1880), Bundaberg (1876), Hervey Bay-Maryborough (1860), Gympie (1868), Sunshine Coast (1980), Ipswich (1861) and Warwick (1864). Another is the *Daily News*, Tweed Heads (1914), which has been printed only weekly since 5 December 2011.

The final print runs rolled off the presses in between 22 and 27 June. The *Weekend Australian* of 27 June had no mention of the closure that day of the print editions of so many of News Corp Australia's newspapers.

The remainder of the breakdown, state by state, of News Corp regional and community newspapers affected by the announcement of 28 May follows:

NSW

Digital only: *Tweed Daily News* (which was published weekly), *Ballina Advocate*, *Byron Shire News*, *Coffs Coast Advocate*, *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), *Northern Star* (Lismore), *Fairfield Advance*, *Penrith Press*, *Macarthur Chronicle*, *Blacktown Advocate*, *Canterbury Bankstown Express*, *Central Coast Express*, *Hills Shire Times*, *Hornsby Advocate*, *Liverpool Leader*, *Manly Daily*, *Northern District Times*, *Parramatta Advertiser*, *Inner West Courier*, *Southern Courier*, *Illawarra Star*, *Wagga Wagga News*, *St George Shire Standard*, *Newcastle News*, *Blue Mountains News*, *Central Sydney*, *South Coast News*.

Ceased publication: *Coastal Views*, *Northern Rivers Echo*, *Richmond River Express Examiner*, *Rouse Hill Times*.

Victoria

Digital only: *Stonnington Leader*, *Mornington Peninsula Leader*, *Knox Leader*, *Whitehorse Leader*, *Monash Leader*, *Northern Leader*, *Whittlesea Leader*, *Maroondah Leader*, *Moorabbin Leader*, *Mordialloc Chelsea Leader*, *Moreland Leader*, *Lilydale and Yarra Valley Leader*, *Frankston Leader*, *Bayside Leader*, *Caulfield Port Phillip Leader*, *Cranbourne Leader*, *Greater Dandenong Leader*, *Moonee Valley Leader*, *Maribyrnong Leader*, *Wyndham Leader*.

Ceased publication: *Manningham Leader*, *Preston Leader*, *Diamond Valley Leader*, *Heidelberg Leader*, *Sunbury Macedon Leader*, *Northcote Leader*.

Queensland

Digital only: *Mackay Daily Mercury*, *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, *Gladstone Observer*, *Bundaberg NewsMail*, *Fraser Coast Chronicle*, *Gympie Times*, *Warwick Daily News*, *Central and North Burnett Times*, *Central Queensland News* (Emerald), *Chinchilla News*, *Dalby Herald*, *Gatton Star*, *Noosa News*, *South Burnett Times* (Kingaroy), *Stanthorpe Border Post*, *Western Star* (Roma), *Western Times* (Charleville), *Whitsunday Times*, *Whitsunday Coast Guardian*, *Bowen Independent*, *Albert and Logan News*, *Caboorture Herald*, *Westside News*, *Pine Rivers Press*, *Redcliffe and Bayside Herald*, *South-West News*, *Wynnum Herald*, *North Lakes Times*, *Redlands Community News*, *Springfield News*.

Ceased publication: *Northside Chronicle/Bayside Star*, *North-West News*, *South-East Advertiser*, *Southern Star*, *Bribie Weekly*, *Buderim Chronicle*, *Caloundra Weekly*, *Capricorn Coast Mirror*, *Coolum News*, *Nambour Weekly*, *Ipswich Advertiser*, *Kawana/Maroochy Weekly*, *Gold Coast Sun*, *Hervey Bay Independent*, *Maryborough Herald*, *Balonne Beacon*, *Surat Basin News*, *Herbert River Express*, *Innisfail Advocate*, *Central Telegraph*.

Continuing to appear in regional sections of the *Cairns Post* and *Townsville Bulletin*: *Atherton Tablelander*, *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers—started in 1872), *Port Douglas & Mossman Gazette*, *Burdekin Advocate*.

South Australia

Digital only: *Messenger South Plus*, *Messenger East Plus*, *Messenger North*, *Messenger West*, *Messenger City*, *Adelaide Hills* and *Upper Spencer Gulf*.

Ceased publication: *Messenger Coast Plus*.

Tasmania

Ceased publication: *Tasmanian Country*.

Northern Territory

Digital only: *Centralian Advocate*, Alice Springs.

Specialist

Ceased publication: *Big Rigs*, *Rural Weekly*, *Seniors*.

108.3.2 Print purge (2): End of road for old brigade

Rod Kirkpatrick writes: The oldest of the News Corp regional dailies for which printing has ceased is Grafton's *Daily Examiner* which began publication on 21 June 1859 as the weekly *Clarence & Richmond Examiner*. It became a daily on 1 July 1915 at the initiative of Earle Page, later the deputy prime minister. Today's *Fraser Coast Chronicle* began life as the *Maryborough Chronicle*, *Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* on 21 November 1860, and so the *Chronicle* part of the title is the oldest in country Queensland. Charles Hardie Buzacott was the founding proprietor/editor. The *Chronicle* became a daily on 15 May 1882. The *Queensland Times*, Ipswich, began on 8 October 1861 (not in 1859, as it declared in its final issue) with the plant used by the *Ipswich Herald*, which then closed. The *Herald*, established on 4 July 1859, sold its plant but not its goodwill to Hugh Parkinson, Joseph Bowring Sloman and Francis Kidner, three composing room workmates at the first Ipswich paper, the *North Australian*.

The other 1861 paper that has now ceased printing is the *Morning Bulletin*, which began publication on 9 July 1861 as the *Rockhampton Bulletin*. William Hitchcock Buzacott was the founding proprietor/editor, but his brother, Charles, mentioned above in relation to Maryborough, played an even bigger part in the paper's future. The paper became Queensland's first provincial daily on 2 January 1873 and changed its name to the *Morning Bulletin* on 1 January 1878. Warwick's *Daily News* traces its title back to 1 February 1919 when two tri-weeklies merged: the *Warwick Argus*, established on 2 November 1864, and the *Examiner & Times*, established on 15 February 1867. Mackay's *Daily Mercury* began life as the *Mackay Mercury* on 4 April 1866. It became the *Daily Mercury* on 1 January 1906 upon merging with the *Mackay Chronicle*. In its final printed issue, the *Daily Mercury* ran an eight-page wraparound of historical articles and photographs, especially of old front pages.

One of the longer articles was written by retired journalist Loris Wall who joined the paper in June 1970. Here's an extract from a reminiscence of when she started at the paper:

Journalists, mostly young men, sat at rows of wooden desks tapping away on manual typewriters. They pulled copy paper from small wooden trays and typed their stories one paragraph to each sheet of paper. The floor was littered with balls of crumpled paper—rejected for one reason or another by the authors. Some of the journalists were smoking, but there was no air-conditioning and the windows were open...

Close by, through a door to the right, lay a world inhabited by those at the real heart of newspaper production. It was here our carefully crafted stories were converted into print using manually operated typesetting machines. Banks of linotype machines lined the hot and noisy room, molten lead in small pots hung from the machines and operators tapped on a different type of keyboard. Beyond, the compositors plied their trade. Dozens of men were employed in the process. I quickly learned you did not argue with them.

A full-page article is devoted to an interview with Rodney Manning who was editor of the *Daily Mercury* from 1980-1997. He was not related to the Manning family which owned the newspaper

from 1910-1968 and was a major shareholder in Provincial Newspapers (Qld.) Ltd, the owners from 1968-88.



Final front pages of (1) the *South Burnett Times*, Kingaroy, and (2) the *Daily Mercury*, Mackay.

The final print edition of Kingaroy’s non-daily *South Burnett Times*, which appeared on 26 June, carried many history-related articles in its 56-page issue which included an 80-page *Rural Weekly* insert. It was the farewell edition of that title, too.

108.3.3 Print purge (3): ‘Greatest advocate’ of the regions

Michael Miller, executive chairman, News Corp Australasia, writes (*Australian*, 29 May 2020): “Let me be clear from the outset: News Corp is not turning its back on Australia’s regions and communities. Nothing could be further from the truth: we remain their greatest advocate—they are what makes our country great. News’s decision to transition the bulk of our regional and community newspapers to digital-only mastheads does mark a turning point, but it’s one that’s unavoidable to secure their future.

“These changes follow a comprehensive review of our portfolio, the fundamental consumer shift to reading and subscribing to news online, and the acceleration of businesses, large and small, using digital advertising. This review highlighted that many of our regional and community print titles had become challenged, and the double impact of COVID-19 and the tech platforms not remunerating us, as the local publishers whose content they profit from, had made them unsustainable publications.”

108.3.4 Print purge (4): Rationale for News’s change to digital

Damian Eales, chief operating officer, publishing, News Corp Australia, writes (*Australian*, 1 June 2020): “It is easy to characterise, as some have, the impending closure of the print editions of many of News Corp Australia’s regional and community mastheads as a disaster for journalism in Australia... It was a difficult decision, yes. But disastrous, by no means... 2020 marks a turning point that demonstrates a new, sustainable, profitable model for journalism in Australia. ... the essential value of a newspaper is in the news, not the paper it’s printed on.

“Although we have found a model that well might sustain local journalism for now, it will not be secured until society tames those tech titans who exert such extraordinary market power, and yet pay nothing for the privilege. In this market, Apple, through Apple News+, is the only digital platform that has recognised that premium journalism should be paid for, and for that it should be singled out and applauded. Google and Facebook on the other hand have not, and it seems will not, until the government and the ACCC force their hand through the impending deadline of a mandatory code of conduct.

“If that code is properly executed then, perhaps, we are at the end of a pivotal chapter, but not nearly near the end of the book. No doubt upcoming chapters will address what we already know: first, that journalism will increasingly be funded by a user-pays model and digital subscriptions will rapidly become the primary revenue source of publishers; and second, that the biggest corporate (ab)users of journalism will be required to pay like everyone else. Both factors, both necessary and sufficient.

“Ironically, those commentators that have been most critical of our strategy to sustain journalism in recent days are themselves largely digital media businesses, and beyond advocating that the First Estate ought to subsume the Fourth Estate, or insisting that journalism should be a philanthropic enterprise, they have no solution. In contrast, on 1 July we will have just under 100 regional and community titles through Australia that will be immediately profitable, wholly digital, and growth businesses.”

108.3.5 Print purge (5): Presses stopped on 26 June

Hundreds of News Corp staff around the country put their publications “to bed” for the last time on Friday night, 26 June 2020, marking the end of an era for local news in Australia (ABC online, 26 June 2020). They entrusted their final editions to the steady, ink-stained hands of printing press workers like Mark Crager, of Rockhampton. He had been at it for almost 30 years. “The hardest bit is ... we’re actually like a whole little family,” he said. “You work so many years here and next thing it’s coming to an end. It’s been pretty difficult.”

Newspapers had been a cornerstone in Crager’s life; his father, John, notched up close to 50 years in the same job, printing newspapers from 1963. Through cyclones, floods and bushfire emergencies, Crager said the tight-knit team at the company’s print site in Rockhampton never missed an edition. “When we had the flood ... it was hard to get to work; I actually ended up staying here [at the print site],” he said. “I had a boat, so I took all the newspapers to Gracemere, out to the Biloela area, stacked them all in my boat and drove them all the way out.”

Crager and the 34 other staff at the site have been laid off. Web printer Luke Hansen tried to remain positive despite being forced to leave behind a rich family history in the craft. “There’s been four generations of printing in my family; my great-grandfather was a printer in the Navy, so it goes back a bit,” he said. Hansen had worked alongside his father for nine years after following in his footsteps when he left high school. “It’s the end of an era but the start of new beginnings,” he said. “I found out two days before I got my redundancy that I’m going to be a father.”

Operations leader Vicki Atkinson said on 26 June there would be more than a few tears when the final editions of the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, Gladstone *Observer*, Mackay *Daily Mercury* and Bundaberg *News Mail* were printed at the site that night.

Kerry McCallum, director of the News and Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra, said technology had transformed the media landscape and the shift to digital publishing had not come out of the blue. “The impacts will be profound ... the print media industry has traditionally been the backbone of the news industry,” she said. “We’ve seen a gradual shift which has been absolutely accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis and the loss of advertising that has resulted. Large news media organisations are businesses and they’re looking after the bottom line.”

A report issued by the centre in June found 69 per cent of older people and 41 per cent of people living in regional areas relied on local newspapers. “One of the surprising findings is that older people are shifting to accessing online news despite the fact they’re still the highest printed newspaper readers,” Professor McCallum said.

There was possibly no more moving farewell than the articles by the editor, deputy editor and young journalists in the *Rural Weekly’s* final issue (26 June). One, Emily Bradfield, the Southwest Queensland journalist, who joined the paper at the beginning of this year, concluded her article: “I have loved every minute of this adventure and I hope to find a way to continue telling the stories of the bush well into the future.” There are so many articles worth reading, but, if you have printer’s ink in your veins, have a box of tissues handy.

108.3.6 Print purge (6): Collection of final editions

NSW Corp regional journalists Linda Brady and Kasun Ubayasiri have been linking with some Griffith University students on a project called “The Last Print Run”, a Queensland Regional Newspaper Legacy Project. The project will build a collection of final editions of News Corp papers, photographs from the last moments inside newsrooms and printing presses, and recollections from former staff. “There are losses that we need to document — the minutiae that keeps people in the loop like the kids' sport pages, the police briefs that explain what that siren was that people heard last night,” Brady said.

108.3.7 Print purge (7): Impact on death-notice website

One of the services affected dramatically by the end of printing of many regional and community newspapers is the Ryerson Index [www.ryersonindex.org], a free web-based index to death notices appearing in Australian newspapers. Ryerson had, in its 22-year existence, only indexed notices from printed newspapers because they were a research resource expected to be around for a very long time. But because many Australian newspapers (predominantly those published by News Corp) became digital-only from the end of June, Ryerson has taken the step now of including digital-only notices in its index.

Ryerson president John Graham said, “We have taken this step because the major Australian publishers (ACM, News Corp and Nine) now have extensive online databases of death and funeral notices freely available. News Corp, for instance, has 1.8 million notices available in its database. We expect that more papers will become digital-only in the future, so such a step was necessary to ensure Ryerson’s survival.” Notices now, rather than being shown in search results as coming from a specific paper, will be labelled digital-only notices according to the publisher; e.g. a News Corp digital notice will have its source given as “News Corp Digital Notices”.

108.3.8 More than 40 titles return to printing

More than 40 ACM regional papers resumed printing in the fortnight from 29 June. Production of many non-daily ACM papers had been suspended from mid-April because of the impact on advertising revenue of the coronavirus pandemic (see ANHG 107.3.1). ACM did not publish a complete list of the affected papers. Some of the papers that have returned to print have had their frequency of publication reduced. For example, the *Maitland Mercury* and the *North West Star*, *Mount Isa*, formerly tri-weeklies, are now weeklies. Both are former dailies; the *Mercury* was a daily for 122 years.

ACM did continue to print its 14 daily newspapers and a small number of non-dailies. Even some of those that continued printing were affected: e.g. the *Port Lincoln Times* was published bi-weekly (Tues., Thurs. pre-COVID) but is now a weekly (Thurs.). Its final Tuesday issue appeared on 23 June.

ACM regional titles which have resumed printing

Title	Date printing resumed	No. of issues a week	Title	Date printing resumed	No. of issues a week
NSW			<i>Nambucca Guardian</i>	1 July	1
<i>Armidale Express</i>	1 July	2	<i>Parkes Champion-Post</i>	30 June	2
<i>Area News, Griffith</i>	29 June	3	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	29 June	3
<i>Bay Post/Moruya Examiner</i>	1 July	2	<i>Port Macquarie Express</i>	1 July	1
<i>Bega District News</i>	17 April	2	<i>Singleton Argus</i>	3 July	1
<i>Bellinger Courier Sun</i>	1 July	1	<i>Southern Highlands News, Bowral</i>	29 June	3
<i>Boorowa News</i>	2 July	1	<i>Tenterfield Star</i>	1 July	1
<i>Camden Haven Courier, Laurieton</i>	1 July	1	Queensland		

<i>Canowindra News</i>	27 May	1	<i>Goondiwindi Argus</i>	1 July	1
<i>Canterbury-Bankstown Torch</i>	27 May	1	<i>North West Star, Mt Isa *</i>	9 July	1
<i>Cessnock Advertiser</i>	1 July	1	Victoria		
<i>Cootamundra Herald</i>	1 July	1	<i>Stawell Times</i>	2 July	1
<i>Eden Magnet</i>	2 July	1	<i>Ararat Advertiser</i>	2 July	1
<i>Fairfield Champion</i>	1 July	1	<i>Wimmera Mail-Times, Horsham</i>	29 June	3
<i>Forbes Advocate</i>	30 June	2	South Australia		
<i>Glen Innes Examiner</i>	30 June	2	<i>Border Chronicle, Bordertown</i>	1 July	1
<i>Gloucester Advocate</i>	1 July	1	<i>Coastal Leader, Kingston</i>	1 July	1
<i>Goulburn Post</i>	29 June	3	<i>Murray Valley Standard, Murray Bridge**</i>	2 July	1
<i>Great Lakes Advocate, Forster</i>	1 July	1	<i>Naracoorte Herald</i>	9 July	1
<i>Inverell Times</i>	30 June	2	<i>Port Pirie Recorder</i>	2 July	1
<i>Liverpool Champion</i>	1 July	1	<i>Transcontinental, Port Augusta</i>	1 July	1
<i>Maitland Mercury *</i>	3 July	1	<i>Whyalla News</i>	2 July	1

* Appeared tri-weekly pre-COVID.

** Appeared bi-weekly pre-COVID.

Following is a list of ACM papers whose printing was suspended but which have not yet returned to printing. ACM has not been prepared to supply such a list, so this is the result of many telephone calls to individual newspapers and may be incomplete: **NSW:** *Crookwell Gazette, Dungog Chronicle, Eastern Riverina Chronicle* (Henty), *Guyra Argus, Harden-Murrumburrah Express, Kiama Independent, Muswellbrook Chronicle, Newcastle Star, Lakes Mail, Scone Advocate, Wauchope Gazette, Wellington Times. Wollongong Advertiser, Yass Tribune. **South Australia:** *Barossa and Light Herald, Eyre Peninsula Tribune, Flinders News, On the Coast, Northern Argus, West Coast Sentinel.* [The *Victor Harbor Times, Port Lincoln Times* and the *Islander* did not cease printing.] **Western Australia:** *Avon Valley Advocate, Bunbury Mail, Collie Mail, Esperance Express.**

Resumption (Taylor Group): The Taylor Group resumed printing the *Bunyip*, Gawler, a weekly, on 22 April after closing it on 1 April. The *Bunyip* was established in 1863. See ANHG 107.3.1.

108.3.9 ACM flags closing four print centres

Australian Community Media (ACM) has indicated it is seriously considering closing permanently four printing centres—in Wodonga, Ballarat, Canberra and Murray Bridge—to “ensure the sustainable long-term future of our highly valued mastheads”. Two of the sites – Canberra and Murray Bridge – were closed temporarily from April to June, when the business suspended the printing of more than 150 non-daily titles and stood down employees working at both those newspapers and the printing facilities. ACM said in a media release on 8 July it was consulting with printing employees about a proposal to close four of its eight press sites. The four not involved in the consultations about possible closure are: North Richmond and Tamworth, NSW; Launceston, Tasmania; and Mandurah, Western Australia, says the general manager of printing for ACM, Jon Clarke.

108.3.10 Deaths lead to births

The death of old newspapers is leading to the birth of new newspapers in different states, but especially in those Queensland towns where News Corp has ceased printing. The first of the new papers to capture national in colourful fashion was the *Naracoorte Community News* which stepped into the gap left, at least briefly, by the suspension of printing of the 145-year-old *Naracoorte Herald*. A former Naracoorte resident, Michael Waite, stepped into the role of newspaper proprietor in May while on an enforced stay because of the COVID-19 pandemic after having been a businessman in the US for the past 20 years. His mother, Sue, sold advertising at the *Naracoorte*

Herald and managed it for 35 years. There's now head-to-head competition because the *Herald* resumed publication on 9 July.

Peter Coleman reports (*GXpress*, 1 July) new papers are emerging in Kingaroy, Gympie and Rockhampton (even as this issue of ANHG goes to press). A team of former employees of the now defunct print edition of the *South Burnett Times* is launching *Burnett Today*, back by Victorian newspaper publishers Paul Thomas (Star News Group) and Bruce Ellen (*Latrobe Valley Express*) and Queensland based media consultant Damian Morgan. Star, which has existing titles in Noosa and Warwick, is also understood to be involved in the new newspaper planned for Gympie. *Burnett Today* is to be printed at ACM's North Richmond (NSW) print centre, where the Star group's *Noosa Today* is printed.

Neil and Ann Lomas, proprietors of the *High Country Herald*, Crows Nest and Highfields, launched the *Western Downs Town & Country* for Dalby and district on 16 July, filling the print gap left by the closure of the print edition of the *Dalby Herald* (estab. 1865).

In Victoria, Craig Wilson, who publishes the *Pyrenees Advocate* for Beaufort and Avoca, began publishing the *Ararat Advocate* in the gap left by the closure for at least two months of the print edition of ACM's *Ararat Advertiser*. (ABC online news, 24 April 2020). The *Advertiser* returned to printing on 2 July.

In NSW, new regional papers have been launched in the Southern Highlands, Yass and around Casino. Sharon and Jeff Gibbs, magazine publishers in the Northern Rivers since 2017, have launched the *Northern Rivers Times*. Former television journalist Jasmin Jones and two "silent partners" have put their own money into the *Yass Valley Times*, launched in June after the suspension of the *Yass Tribune*. Cristian King, of King Media Group, has launched the *Southern Highlands Express* to serve the region around Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale. In Orange in the Central West, Bob Holland, who has published a weekly magazine, *Orange City Life*, since September 2007, launched a free weekly newspaper, *Newswatch*, on 23 May.

On Queensland's Sunshine Coast, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* has been producing two pages of regional news headed with the defunct mastheads of the *Sunshine Coast Daily* and *Gympie Times*.

108.3.11 Shepparton: *News* drops Saturday issue

The McPherson Media Group, based in Shepparton, Victoria, dropped the Saturday issue of its daily, the *News* after 11 April in response to the downturn of advertising resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive chairman Ross McPherson says the company is unlikely to reinstate the Saturday edition. "Friday has traditionally been our strongest day, a carry-over from our tri-weekly days and the Saturday issue always struggled with delivery obstacles in the hinterlands. All other mastheads continue to publish in print and online." Apart from the Shepparton daily, the group publishes weeklies at Benalla, Cobram, Corowa, Finley, Heathcote, Kyabram, Seymour, Rochester, Tatura and Yarrawonga, a bi-weekly at Deniliquin and a tri-weekly at Echuca. Most of the staff of 55 have been working a four-day week (Ross McPherson, 8 July 2020).

108.3.12 Council revenue blow

Suburban and country newspapers in NSW have been dealt another blow with local councils no longer legally required to advertise government business (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 2020, p.25). NSW Local Government Minister Shelley Hancock announced in late April she would permanently remove the requirement for local councils to advertise tenders, development approvals and other information in newspapers. This aimed to cut costs for councils during the COVID-19 pandemic.

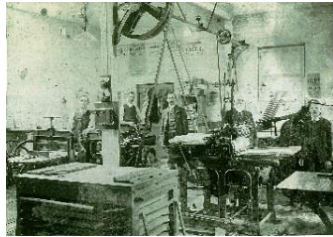
108.3.13 Regional news outlets receive \$50m boost

The Federal Government announced on 29 June that 107 regional publishers and broadcasters who applied to the Public Interest News Gathering (PING) Program will receive a share of \$50 million in funding committed to support regional news services in 2020-21. Through this program the Government is providing \$20 million for television, \$18 million for publishing and \$12 million for radio, with funds flowing from July. Of the 107 eligible applicants, there are 92 publishers, 13

for radio and five for television. Three applicants were successful across two streams. Consistent with the PING guidelines, grants are conditional on publishers of suspended mastheads returning them to operation and recommencing print distribution.

108.3.14 Cunnamulla: *Watchman* expands reach

The *Warrego Watchman*, Cunnamulla, services an area larger than the United Kingdom now that the Roma and Charleville newspapers are no longer printed. James Clark does everything at the paper which he has run since 2009. Clark was interviewed on ABC Radio National on 8 June by Fran Kelly. For previous items on the *Warrego Watchman*, see ANHG 54.3.2 and 68.4.1.



4—NEWSPAPER HISTORY

108.4.1 Newspaper proprietors, a *Star* and a Count, 1924

The cover picture, taken July 1924: One of those featured in the image was George Silverton (G.S.) Baxter, of the *Ballarat Star*. Little more than two months later, the *Star* was no more. It was acquired by its opposition, the *Ballarat Courier*, and closed on 24 September 1924. The two newspapers had competed as dailies for 57 years. The Melbourne *Herald* reported the *Courier's* acquisition of the *Star* on 8 August 1924, p.9. The report was incorrect in stating that, for the first few years, the *Star* was known as the *Ballarat Times*. The *Times* was the paper in which Henry Seekamp's editorials led to his being labelled one of the key propagandists in the campaign leading up to the Eureka uprising in December 1854. He was jailed for sedition. Seekamp's wife Clara said that if "Peter Lalor was the sword of the movement, my husband was the pen". The *Times* was published for five years after the *Ballarat Star* began publication on 22 September 1855 and so was definitely not an earlier version of the *Star*. The *Times* closed on 5 October 1860.

In the cover picture, second from the right in the seated row of men (all of whom wore hats) is Leo Vincent (L.V.) Armati, known as "The Count". Armati had been managing the *Newcastle Sun* since April that year. Here's what his son, John, said (in an unpublished manuscript) about this part of L.V.'s life:

My father's appointment as managing editor of the *Newcastle Sun* was the turning point of his career. Experience gained at the Bundaberg *Daily News*, Sydney's *Sun*, *Sunday Sun* and Melbourne's two *Suns* had prepared him to manage an entire publishing enterprise. When my father arrived in Newcastle on April Fools' Day 1924, his handsome Italian features and piercing blue eyes brought a certain elegance to that grimy coal and steel city of 100,000 souls. And although his initial appointment was intended to be for six months on a salary of £17 a week, he stayed nearly 11 years.

John Armati (1940-2017) said that at the end of June 1924 his father was one of a 19-man delegation of provincial press proprietors that assembled in Melbourne to negotiate salaries and conditions of journalists with the Australian Journalists' Association. William Edward Lingard, general manager of the *Queensland Times*, Ipswich, and also a delegate to the Melbourne conference, recalled:

Leo Armati was there for Newcastle. He affirmed there would not be agreement. When Leo Armati said "no", that was it. He was a top-class newspaperman from Sydney, managing director (*sic*) of the *Newcastle Sun*. It was metropolitan; a lively newspaper in modern style.

John Armati said the proprietors said "no" often and took a fortnight to agree to pay rises for provincial newspaper journalists throughout Australia. [Newcastle] *Sun* journalists were paid increased salaries ranging from £10/10/0 (\$21) for the senior sub-editor, £8/17/6 (\$17.75) for senior journalists and £1/5/0 (\$2.50) for first year cadets. Armati said, "This negotiation was the first of many my father had with the union, and his subsequent relationship with its officers was

frequently coloured by vehement disagreement and a mutual antagonism that lasted until he died in 1962. His confrontational manner earned resentment from the unions and his staff, although colleagues often spoke of him with a little awe and much admiration.”

108.4.2 Camden, NSW: The War-time Plan

Ian Willis writes from Camden, NSW: Something of interest in the time of COVID-19. In the Macarthur region—Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly (Picton) LGA—the only newspaper still in print in the COVID-19 crisis is the independent *District Reporter*, which can be found at: <http://www.tdr.com.au/images/issues/tdr2306.pdf/>

Editor-owner Lee Abrahams informs me she will continue to print the *Reporter* fortnightly as a free publication. To assist her to do this, Abrahams has introduced a subscription scheme asking readers to contribute \$5 a month or \$50 a year. I told her she was not the first local newspaper owner-editor to do this. During World War II the owner-editor of the *Camden Advertiser* ran a similar subscription scheme he called the War-time Plan. The *Advertiser* was a four-page free weekly. Arthur Gibson had been a compositor for George Sidman’s *Camden News* and started the *Advertiser* in 1935.

In 1940 the increase in the cost of newsprint created a financial crisis for Gibson at the *Advertiser*. To cover the increased costs and keep the newspaper free he invited each reader to contribute sixpence (5c) each month to the newspaper. Gibson promoted the scheme as an act of patriotism. He stated that after covering costs he would donate the remainder to the Camden Women’s Voluntary Services. In total Gibson donated £250 (\$500) to the WVS by 1945 through his subscription scheme.

108.4.3 School newspaper: Oh, no!

Mercury, Hobart, 30 March 1950, p.3: The first State school newspaper was printed in Tasmania about 1896 (wrote “Historian”, of Herrick). The head teacher of a small country school bought a very old-fashioned printing press, a pair of cases, and a font of second-hand “long primer” type for £5. One day the inspector paid a surprise visit, and saw a boy of about 12 setting type. “What printing is that going on over there?” he asked. “The teacher explained. “How much time is taken each week with the printing?” “About two hours.” “I fear the Director would think two hours too much to be devoted to that purpose,” was the inspector’s considered opinion.

The matter was referred to the department, and the teacher received instructions to this effect: (a) The publication of the school newspaper was a violation of the Newspaper Act put on the statute book in the time of Governor Arthur; (b) the teacher had better find another outlet for his energies.



5—RECENTLY PUBLISHED

108.5.1 Book

Smethurst, Annika, *On Secrets*, Hachette, 2020. \$16.99. When journalist Annika Smethurst answered her Canberra front door on 4 June 2019, she was expected a cleaner—instead it was the Australian Federal Police with a warrant to search her home. See ANHG 108.1.13.

108.5.2 Articles

Belshaw, Jim, “The weight of change: newspapers in a challenging time”, *Northern Daily Leader*, Tamworth, 4 July 2020, p.27. The author reflects on the changes of country newspaper ownership in coastal and inland northern NSW and the impacts.

Berg, Chris, “The death—and rebirth—of the newspaper?”, *Spectator Australia*, July 2020. Newspapers are undergoing a fundamental structural shift between two organisational types—from platforms to factories.

- Clarke, Patricia**, “Anna Blackwell, *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent in Paris, 1860-1890s”, *Journal Royal Australian Historical Society*, No. 106, Part 1, June 2020, pp.29-48.
- Elliott, Tim**, “Title fight”, *Good Weekend*, 4 July 2020. For decades, the ACP magazine empire soared as it helped teach Australians to cook, dress, talk royalty, flirt and supercharge their sex lives. Then came the internet, new owners—and a startling freefall.
- Garlick, Mia**, “Cross-industry collaboration is key”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 2020, p.27. Facebook’s public policy director, Australia and NZ, discusses need for news organisations to adapt business models to discover new audiences and digital revenue streams.
- Hess, Kristy**, “Paper cuts a wake-up call for a country of locals”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 2020, p.26. Regional newspaper closures and a little history.
- Kenny, Chris**, “Lifeblood of regions under threat with newspaper closures”, *Australian*, 15 June 2020, p.19. A senior journalist tells how he started his career at a country newspaper (the *Murray Pioneer*, Renmark) and how important country papers are.
- Kenny, Chris**, “Moral vanities of our time are stifling the essence of free expression”, *Australian*, 13 July 2020, p.19.
- Middleton, Karen**, “Under a CLOUD”, *Saturday Paper*, 6 June 2020, p.7. The government is being asked to ensure the right of the media to protect sources.
- Millar, Royce**, “Hold the front page, while you can”, *Age*, 1 June 2020, p.14. The closure of many regional and community newspapers, and the continuation of others.
- Mitchell, Chris**, “All black lives matter, including the Aboriginal victims of abuse and murder”, *Australian*, 15 June 2020, p.20. Intro: “Not all black lives matter equally to Australian protesters. A life lost in custody, even to natural causes, is apparently a more worthy cause than the thousands of lives lost to black-on-black violence in Aboriginal communities.”
- Mitchell, Chris**, “In battle to suppress a virus, suppressing information is a disturbing trend”, *Australian*, 13 July 2020, p.20. The media and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Morton, Rick**, “Age of discontent”, *Saturday Paper*, 27 June-3 July 2020, p.9. The departure of the editor of the *Age* was not, apparently, the goal of the journalists upset at the direction the Melbourne *Age* was taking.
- Packham, Ben, and Swan, David**, “Fighting fake news”, *Australian*, 29 June 2020, p.12. China’s political manipulation of social media sites has prompted a swift response.
- Penberthy, David**, “Media has right to work safely”, *Sunday Herald Sun*, 7 June 2020, p.51. News crews being attacked by US police.
- Penfold, Robert**, “If police attack media, freedom is fragile”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 2020, p.25. News crews being attacked by US police.
- Samios, Zoe**, “Broken news: how shutdowns will hurt communities across the country”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 2020, p.6. The regional newspaper closures.
- Strom, Marcus**, “Let’s reclaim our freedom: decriminalise journalism”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 2020, p.22. Discusses “right to know” issues, and AFP searches of ABC and Annika Smethurst’s home.
- Sunderland, Alan**, “Democracy dies a littler when local news is gagged”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 2020, p.22. This article makes particular mention of the probing of local affairs by a Lane Cove (Sydney) news outlet, *In the Cove*.

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