



Hobart Mercury pressroom in 1902.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: No prizes for noticing that, with the advent of our 51st issue, we have changed format in a number of ways, including the insertion of a picture above the masthead, a new masthead, and new type faces. We hope you enjoy the new look. It is designed mainly for online readership because more than 90 per cent of our readership is online.

1 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: NATIONAL & METROPOLITAN

51.1.1 EDITORS (1): CRONIN TAKES HELM AT WEST AUSTRALIAN

Bob Cronin, 65, a Queenslander who was the editor-in-chief of the *West Australian* for about a decade until 1996, has returned to the position. The new managing director of WAN, Chris Wharton, announced the appointment on 15 December. This stripped editor Paul Armstrong of editorial control over the Perth daily. Cronin became the editor of Melbourne's *Sun News-Pictorial* before heading west in the mid-1980s to become the editor-in-chief of WAN. He resigned in 1996 after a period of sustained conflict with the WAN managing director, then Denis Thompson. Thompson made the position redundant. Cronin's appointment came on the first day of WAN chief executive Chris Wharton's one-year \$700,000 contract to stop falling circulation and sort out serious distribution problems throughout the state. Newsagents have been fighting WAN in the West Australian Supreme Court over a protracted pay dispute following a decision to split Saturday's massive edition of the *West Australian* in two. As a result, deliverers were forced to throw two sections of the newspaper over the fence – separately, and sometimes over two days – but were paid for delivering only one (*Australian*, Media section, 15 December 2008, pp.31-32, and *Australian*, 16 December 2008).

Armstrong dismissed: On 15 January Cronin dismissed Armstrong, who had been the editor of the *West Australian* since September 2003. Cronin said he would edit the paper until a new editor was appointed. The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance applauded the departure of Armstrong. MEAA WA president David Cohen said, "A big concern was reporters' copy and their stories being significantly changed after they had filed. We're not talking about the standard editing process – we're talking about changes to the meaning and thrust of a news story, and that is not on. One concern was the number of unfair dismissals, another was how he communicated with staff - sometimes it wasn't done appropriately or properly." (*Australian*, online, 16 and 17 January 2009).

Armstrong speaks: Paul Armstrong spoke to the media on 13 February for the first time since he was sacked. He said nobody liked to lose a job, especially one the person felt privileged to have. 'You've got to accept that in those jobs more often than not they end in sudden circumstances and more often than not you get on with it and do something else,' he told Fairfax Radio Network (PerthNow, 13 February 2009). Armstrong made no apologies for the hard line he took as editor and the criticism he received. "In my view if you are doing your job as the editor of a newspaper you will get that, you know the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; there was no shortage..." he said. "You've just got to cop it and move on and that's the price you pay for doing your job – the alternative is you sit limp and quiet under the tree, you do nothing and you hope that people will forget you are there. Well, they will forget you're there and they'll forget the newspaper's there. Being an editor was a subjective business and everyone had their own style.

Interim result: WAN's interim results have been dubbed unexciting by some analysts, while others say they modestly eclipsed expectations (*SMH* online, 4 February 2009; see also *Mediaweek*, 9 February 2009, p.9). Broker Hartleys said in a client note that WAN's 32.2 per cent jump in reported half year net profit was slightly ahead of its expectation. WAN's report for the six months to 31 December revealed little about its newly revamped board, led by Kerry Stokes, because it had only been in place for the final fortnight of the reporting period. However, there are signs the influence of Seven Network representatives within WAN's overhauled management line up is strong. An online union between WAN's **thewest.com.au** website and Yahoo!7, which is half owned by Seven Network, was announced along with the interim results on Tuesday.

51.1.2 EDITORS (2): CHANGES IN SYDNEY, CANBERRA AND NEWCASTLE

Sydney: Peter Fray is the new editor of Fairfax Media's *Sydney Morning Herald* (*Australian*, 23 December 2008). Fray, the former editor of the *Canberra Times*, has worked in various senior editorial positions with Fairfax Media for the past 15 years. He was the frontrunner among a list of internal candidates to replace Alan Oakley, who departed suddenly early in December after three years in the job. Fray was editor of the *Sunday Age* for two years before his appointment to the *Canberra Times* in February 2008. He is a former *SMH* journalist, having served as news editor, "Spectrum" editor, London correspondent and religion reporter. He is also a former deputy editor of the *Sun-Herald*. It is understood Oakley will not take up the offer of another senior position with Fairfax (*Australian*, 22 December 2008).

Canberra and Newcastle: Fairfax Media has since appointed new editors for the *Newcastle Herald* and the *Canberra Times*. *Newcastle Herald* editor Rod Quinn has been moved to Canberra to become editor of that paper and his place at Newcastle has been taken by his former deputy, Roger Brock (*Mediaweek online*, 3 February 2009).

51.1.3 EDITORS (3): JASPAN NOT SEEN AS COST-CUTTING EXPERT

Andrew Jaspán, who was dumped last year as editor of the *Melbourne Age*, has broken his silence to claim Fairfax management sacked him because it did not consider him the right person to steer the newspaper as the company looked at massive cost-cutting (*Australian*, 5 February 2009, p.2). "They thought I was not the guy to take it down what

they call the low-cost environment,” Jaspan said on ABC radio on 4 February. Although bound by a confidentiality agreement, Jaspan, who edited the *Age* for four years, said he was hamstrung for much of his tenure because he had no control over key sections of the newspaper’s business. “The problem I had at the *Age* was that I only had responsibility for the newspaper,” he said. “I had no responsibility for *Age online*, despite the fact all the content came from print and was paid for by print. No revenue came back from online,” he said. “The same thing goes for the magazines like the *Melbourne Magazine* and *Good Weekend* - despite the fact they trade under the *Age* name, all the revenue went north to Sydney.”

Plans to shrink the two broadsheets to a more reader-friendly, narrower size like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* had been killed off by Fairfax management, Jaspan said. “The entire management in Melbourne supported the move to narrow sheet, as we called it, and the decision was made to rework the presses so we could shave a bit of space off, and it would hardly have affected revenue,” he said. “But they didn’t go ahead because of the big costs – between \$20 million and \$40 million to do both the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* presses. I don’t think they ever will do it.” Jaspan denied rumours he was leaving Australia and moving back to Britain, from where he was originally poached by Fairfax after it conducted a global search to find a new editor for the *Age*. He is about to be appointed adjunct professor at RMIT’s Global Cities Institute, and has accepted an honorary position on its research advisory board. The institute conducts research on sustainable ways of living in urban environments.

51.1.4 BIGGEST AD OF THE AGE?

The eagle-eyed **Peter T. Gill**, of Melbourne, sent the ANHG a copy of a Toyota advertisement that appeared in the *Age* on 29 November 2008. It was for Toyota’s “biggest ever stock clearance”. The advertisement covered four broadsheet pages, front and back (and so eight pages in all), and Gill wonders whether it is the longest sheet of advertising that has appeared in an Australian newspaper.

51.1.5 GARDNER DEPORTED; FUSSELL TO MANAGE *FIJI TIMES*

News Limited CEO John Hartigan has appointed Anne Fussell as managing director of the *Fiji Times*. She takes over from Rex Gardner who was deported by Fiji’s interim government on 26 January. Gardner was the third foreign newspaper publisher deported by the interim Fiji Government within a year. Fussell has held a number of senior editorial and management roles within News Limited, most recently as Group Editorial Intellectual Property Manager. Fussell started her new role on 9 February (*Australian*, 5 February 2009, p.2; and ABC Online News, 27 January 2009).

51.1.6 RECENT CHRONOLOGY

51.1.6.1 EVENTS

2 February 2009: First issue of Media section of *Australian* for 2009. Previous section appeared 15 December 2008.

7 February 2009: Victoria experiences worst bushfires in history of white settlement in Australia (see 51.1.17 and 51.3.1).

8 February 2009: Dame Elisabeth Murdoch turns 100 (see 51.1.16; and 51.5.2 under Neustatter and Stewart).

51.1.6.2 DEATHS

Atchison, Michael: D. 16 February 2009 in Adelaide, aged 75; penned 13,000 cartoons for 10 different editors at Adelaide’s *Advertiser* over 40 years; born in Victoria but came to Adelaide at age six; graduated from Adelaide Teachers’ College; taught for some years before moving to London, where his cartoons appeared in publications such as *Punch* while he spent seven years as art director of an advertising agency; joined the *Advertiser* in 1967, on his return from England and, in 1968 he returned to teaching art at his old school, Kings College (became Pembroke); continued there until the mid-’90s; retired from

cartooning only early last year; awarded Medal of Order of Australia and Jim Russell Award from the Australian Cartoonists Association (*Advertiser*, 17 February 2009).

Campbell, Veronica: D. January 2009 at Cobram, Vic., aged 38; grew up on farm near Murray River town of Barooga; served cadetship on *Border Mail*, Albury; joined Australian Associated Press and later Dow Jones; died in Cobram Hospital from complications of an ectopic pregnancy (*Age*, 10 January 2009, p.8).

Cleaver, Allan: D. 23 February in Sydney, aged 81; respected reporter on *Macarthur Chronicle*, Campbelltown, he had a broad career including time as a journalist in the United Kingdom, about 10 years with the *Macarthur Chronicle* and time as the editor of the *Liverpool Leader* (*Macarthur Chronicle*, 24 February 2009).

Gillen, Kathleen Mollie (née Woolnough): D. 3 January 2009 in Toronto, Canada, aged 100; born in Sydney; married Orval Gillen, a Canadian, whom she met in London in 1939; wrote for newspapers and magazines in Ottawa, Canada, and later Toronto; wrote novels and historical books; best known for *The Founders of Australia*, her biographical dictionary of Australian First Fleeters – soldiers, sailors and convicts all (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 2009).

Green William Ellis: D. 29 December 2008, in Melbourne aged 85; cartoonist for Melbourne *Herald* for 40 years to 1986; his first cartoon was published in *Army News* during WW2; known to most by his initials, WEG; first Australian cartoonist to provide novelty “pocket cartoons” – a single column cartoon comment on a topical/current event daily; his iconic footy premierships posters became a Melbourne grand-final tradition; the posters began in 1954 when Footscray won their first and only premiership; his Herald & Weekly Times bosses forced him into retirement in 1986; not only did the editor repeatedly refuse to publish his work, “he would screw it up in front of me and throw it in the waste basket”; this did not stop the *Herald Sun* from running a full-page on Green’s death and a double-page liftout poster tribute, conveniently promoting that 1000 limited edition WEG posters would be available at \$25 each (*Herald Sun*, 30 December 2008, pp.9, and 26, 47; Vane Lindsay’s obit of WEG, *Age*, 1 January 2009, p.16; Lindsay Foyle’s obit of WEG, *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 55, February/March 2009, p.25).

Meade, Kevin: D. January in Bangkok, aged 57; began career as cadet journalist with the Brisbane *Telegraph*; career interrupted by national service in 1972, and he briefly worked on the army newspaper; returned to Brisbane before travelling to England overland via India; returned to Asia, where he worked as a subeditor on the *Bangkok Post*; worked at the *Australian* 18 years from 1990, mainly out of the Cairns and Brisbane offices, often with good friend, photographer David Sproule; Meade’s book, *Heroes before Gallipoli: Bita Paka and that One Day in September*, about Australia’s “forgotten war” and “our own September 11” in 1914, was published in 2005 (*Australian*, online, 17 January 2009).

Mills, Hunter Harold (Harry): D. February 2009 in Brisbane, aged 84; grew up at Bondi, Sydney; became a journalist for the different newspaper chains in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane; reporter, sports writer and press gallery correspondent; spent much of his working life as a high-quality sub-editor (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 February 2009).

Pryor, Dennis: D. 30 November 2008 in Melbourne, aged 83; teacher, academic, actor, author; contributed television column to the *Age* for more than 20 years to 2002 (*Age*, 19 December 2008, p.20).

Vickers-Willis, James John (Jim): D. 30 December 2008 in Melbourne, aged 90; worked as a reporter at the *Sun New-Pictorial* from 1937-57 interrupted by five years RAAF service in WW2; achieved widespread fame as guru of the square dancing craze of the 1950s; once called for 5000 square dance beginners in Adelaide and 8000 outside Parliament House in Melbourne; in 1954 he had 11 square dance radio programs a week before being struck down by polio and placed in a respirator; defying medical opinion, he rallied and, although confined to a wheelchair, continued to call for dancers in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane until the fad expired; later, he produced puppet shows for early TV and then embarked on an incredible career of activism in a wide number of fields; graduated at Deakin University at age 82 (*Age*, 8 January 2009, *Herald Sun*, 30 January 2009).

51.1.7 JOHN B. FAIRFAX AND HIS JOURNALISM BACKGROUND

John B. Fairfax, who holds a 14.8 per cent stake in Fairfax Media Ltd, wrote to the *Australian's* Media section to correct Mark Day's statement that he (Fairfax) did not have a background in journalism. Fairfax says he was in the reporters' room of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in the 1960s and had two stints writing in Canberra in the Press Gallery. He went to the UK in 1965 and spent almost two years in the Fairfax London bureau and several months on the *Birmingham Evening Mail*. He spent some time in the Fairfax New York bureau before returning via Tokyo and Saigon, writing articles for the *Herald* (*Australian*, Media sections, 8 and 15 December 2008).

51.1.8 WOLPÉ LEAVES FAIRFAX

Fairfax Media director of corporate affairs Bruce Wolpe has left the company to return to the United States to work for a congressman in Washington in the wake of the 2008 elections. He has accepted a senior position on the staff of Representative Henry Waxman, Democrat of California, who chairs the committee responsible for enacting significant parts of President Obama's legislative program (*SMH online*, 5 January 2009).

51.1.9 LEAK IS BACK CARTOONING

Bill Leak produced on 2 January his first cartoon since falling from a balcony 11 weeks earlier. The cartoon appeared in the *Weekend Australian* of 3-4 January, p.14. Leak heaved a sigh of relief when the idea for the cartoon came right on schedule – at 10.30am just before the paper's morning news conference. Leak lay in a coma in Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital after landing on his head after falling from a balcony during an afternoon party at the NSW central coast property of ad man John Singleton. His brain was badly swollen and there were concerns for his life. Even if he survived the two operations he underwent to remove a blood clot, no one knew whether Leak would ever be able to draw again. "Having the idea was such a relief, a moment of pure joy," he said on 2 January. After the idea came to him he followed what has become normal practice - bouncing the idea off someone he trusts. In this case it was a popular blogger for the *Weekend Australian*, Jack The Insider. Jack liked the idea: a brain-damaged cartoonist, in a Rip Van Winkle moment, complaining that the world no longer made sense. The cricket team regarded as the world's best only three months ago was in disarray, while, counter-intuitively, the Government was urging people to prepare for tough economic times by spending as much as they could.

51.1.10 PEOPLE

Mark Alexander, former *Cairns Post* editor, is now "head of news" (an expanded chief of staff role) at the *Herald Sun*. From 23 February he has been driving the daily news agenda, ensuring correct resource allocation across print and online products as head of the paper's new integrated newsroom (*Mediaweek*, 9 February 2009, p.9).

Brian Evans, once in line to head the Fairfax group, resigned as CEO of the troubled printing group PMP on 28 January. Only last September he agreed to a new contract to take him into 2011. Evans was chief operating officer at Fairfax, under Fred Hilmer, when he shifted to PMP (*Australian*, 29 January 2009, p.19). PMP has since announced it is shutting down a press at Salisbury South in Adelaide and another at Wacol in Brisbane, with the loss of 76 jobs.

John Brehmer Fairfax, a director of Fairfax Media Ltd and the former chairman of Rural Press Ltd, was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Days honours list (*Australian*, 26 January 2009; "Fairfax media mogul most at home in the country", *Canberra Times*, 2 February 2009, p.11). The award was for service to the print media industry, particularly the development of news services in rural and remote areas, and to the community through executive roles with agricultural, youth and charitable organisations (see 51.8).

Phil Gardner, the new editor-in-chief of the Herald & Weekly Times Ltd, is "Person of the Week" in *Mediaweek*, 9 February 2009, p.4.

Jon Kudelka, regular political cartoonist for Hobart's *Mercury*, occasional cartoonist for the *Australian* and winner of a Walkley Award in 2008, is interviewed in *Mediaweek*, 2 February 2009, p.9.

Michael Millet, former deputy editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, has joined the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as its director of communications (*Australian*, Media section, 2 February 2009, p.36).

Judith Whelan, editor of the *Good Weekend*, the Fairfax weekend magazine that appears in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, is profiled in the *Age Extra*, the quarterly newsletter for readers of the *Age* (Issue 3, December 2008, p.4).

51.1.11 ADVERTISING FLAT

The \$12 billion advertising industry is Australia expects to grow only 1.7 per cent during the year, but forecast inflation of 5.2 per cent means real advertising spending will fall 3.5 per cent, says Aegis Media (*Australian*, 28 January 2009, p.21).

51.1.12 NEWSPAPER SLAM-DUNKED

Sydney's *Western Weekender* has fallen into receivership amid allegations its owner Greg Evans, has disappeared and used funds to prop up Sydney's only remaining National Basketball League team (*Australian*, 22 January 2009). John Lord, a partner in accounting firm PKF's corporate recovery division, has been appointed joint receiver and manager of the *Western Weekender*, which Evans had owned along with the Sydney Spirit NBL basketball team, based in western Sydney. Lord is seeking a buyer for the newspaper, which has a circulation of 55,000 in Penrith and adjoining areas.

51.1.13 NEWS CORP (1): \$9.8bn LOSS

Rupert Murdoch's global empire has reported a \$US6.4 billion (\$9.8 billion) net loss for the second quarter as it was hit by the downturn in advertising demand and booked an \$US8.4 billion pre-tax write-down of the value of its television stations, newspapers and other businesses. The result, which compared to a profit of \$US832 million the year before, was a "direct reflection of the grim economic climate," Murdoch said. In Australia, operating earnings fell 18 per cent in local currency terms in the second quarter as advertising sales declined 4 per cent and the company incurred expenses for job cuts (*Canberra Times*, 6 February 2009).

51.1.14 NEWS CORP (2): CHERNIN TO LEAVE

Peter Chernin has decided to walk away from News Corporation as president and chief operating officer. Chernin, 57, has been with News for 20 years. He has decided not to renew his contract, due to expire in June, and plans to activate a film production deal worked out with News Corp some time ago. His decision means that in the short term at least chairman and chief executive Murdoch will take over his duties at the Los Angeles-based Fox business. Longer term, the change may mean sons James Murdoch, 35, or Lachlan Murdoch, 37, will seek the COO position alongside their father (*West Australian*, 24 February 2009).

51.1.15 WA NEWSPAPERS IN 2009

The wandering **Victor Isaacs** reports: At the end of 2008 the *West Australian* dropped its slogan claiming a history of 175 years. It was replaced with a slogan which may be equally contentious: "Giving a voice to the silent majority". But this lasted only a few days. The *Kalgoorlie Miner*, despite being a provincial newspaper, is often available in newsagencies in Perth and indeed sometimes elsewhere in south west WA. No doubt, as it is printed in Perth by the *West Australian*, distribution is easily piggybacked on distribution of the *West Australian*. On the other hand, the *Australian* is sometimes hard to find in WA. It is commonly missing from small outlets in small towns or convenience stores. The explanation is probably that in all other states, distribution of the *Australian* is easily added to distribution of the popular News Ltd titles, but this does not apply in WA.

51.1.16 COVERAGE OF A DAME

On Saturday 7 February 2009 the Melbourne *Herald Sun* celebrated the 100th birthday of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch in a very big way. The first 20 pages of the “Weekend” magazine were devoted to Dame Elisabeth. The Sydney *Daily Telegraph* also commemorated the event but not to the same large extent.

51.1.17 COVERAGE OF DISASTROUS BUSHFIRES

51.1.17.1 GENERAL

On Saturday, 7 February, the worst bushfires in Australia’s history devastated scores of Victorian communities. By 14 February the death toll stood at 181. **Victor Isaacs** studied the newspaper coverage of the fires on Monday, 9 February:

Title	Number of pages devoted to bushfire disaster, incl. bushfire-related ads	Main heading on Page 1
<i>Herald Sun</i>	36 (tabloid), including 16-page wraparound	Wraparound, p.1: 93 dead Main, p.1: We’ll help
<i>Age</i>	14 (broadsheet)	Our darkest day
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	5 (broadsheet)	‘Many good people now lie dead’ – Kevin Rudd
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	12 (tabloid)	Hell’s Fury
<i>Australian</i>	8 (broadsheet)	Hell and its fury
<i>Canberra Times</i>	3 (broadsheet)	Hell and its fury

The Bendigo *Advertiser* printed thousands of extra copies on 9 February and still could not meet demand. On Saturday 14 February the *Courier-Mail* published a 16-page (tabloid) Special Disaster Tribute Liftout, “Hell & High Water”, arising from the Victorian bushfires and the flood disaster in north Queensland (see 51.3.1 for impact on community newspapers).

51.1.17.2. SPECIFIC

One of the most compelling stories written during the coverage of the Victorian bushfires came from **Gary Hughes**, of the *Australian*, who told of his family’s “miracle survival”. His report appeared in the *Australian*, 9 February 2009, pp.1, 4, under the headline, “A plastic key ring saved all our lives”. In the Media section, 23 February 2009, p.32, he wrote about writing the story: “It was both the easiest and hardest story I’ve ever written. And two weeks later I still haven’t been able to bring myself to re-read it. Colleagues have expressed amazement that I had the presence of mind to sit down at a computer within hours of my wife and me almost dying and losing everything we had as the Black Saturday firestorms devastated Victoria. It is rare that journalists are at the centre of such a story. And as thoughts tumbled around my brain in the immediate aftermath, I fell back on trying to make sense of it through the medium I know best: words. It was journalistic therapy. We escaped from our exploding house just before 6pm. By about 7pm we had reached the relative safety of St Andrews, just south of Kinglake, after weaving our way down from our hilltop property through a maze of fallen and blackened trees. After some quick first aid at the local County Fire Authority station for some superficial burns and grit in the eyes, we retreated to a relative’s house for a shower. I was typing by about 11.30pm and finished about an hour later. It was a story that told itself.

51.1.18 FAIRFAX SIGNALS CUTS AND MERGERS

Fairfax Media has reported a 23 per cent fall in underlying profit to \$157.6 million, but a bottom-line net loss of \$365.3 million after writing down the value of a series of assets. The company will merge the business sections of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* and consider other such section mergers. There are expected to be more job cuts (*Australian*, 24 February 2009, p.2).

51.1.19 STATE OF THE PRINT MEDIA

Circulation of broadsheet newspapers in Australia is holding up, but tabloid newspaper sales are falling and magazine sales are falling further, according to the Australian Press Council's annual *State of the News Print Media in Australia*. For more details, visit the Press Council's website at www.presscouncil.org.au/

51.1.20 QUARTERLY CIRCULATION FIGURES

Aggregate sales of Australia's national, metropolitan and regional dailies for the October-December 2008 quarter were down by 1.7 per cent on the previous year, and the Sunday papers fell 3.8 per cent, according to the latest figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Among the dailies, the broadsheet *Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Australian* slightly improved circulation whereas the tabloid dailies were consistently down – for example, the *Herald Sun* lost 2.7 per cent on weekdays. Regional dailies were down 2.4 per cent on average, and several (including those based at Cairns, Hervey Bay Maroochydore, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Bendigo) lost more than 4 per cent.

	Oct-Dec 2008	Oct-Dec 2007	% variation
National			
<i>Australian</i>	137,000+	135,000+	+ 1.5
<i>Weekend Australian</i>	309,000+	300,000+	+ 3.0
<i>Aust Financial Review</i>	86,158	88,247	– 2.4
<i>Aust Financial Review</i> (Sat)	93,800	96,166	– 2.5
NSW			
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	369,000+	375,000+	– 1.6
<i>Daily Telegraph</i> (Sat)	325,000+	319,000+	+ 1.9
<i>Sunday Telegraph</i>	653,000+	670,000+	– 2.5
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	211,370	211,170	+ 0.1
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (Sat)	360,200+	360,000+	+ 0.1
<i>Sun-Herald</i>	473,469	500,000	– 5.3
Regionals			
<i>Border Mail</i> (Albury)	25,078	25,851	– 2.99
<i>Western Advocate</i> (Bathurst)	3,949	3,961	– 0.3
<i>Daily Liberal</i> (Dubbo)	5,276	5,096	+ 3.5
<i>Daily Examiner</i> (Grafton)	5,571	5,458	+ 2.1
<i>Northern Star</i> (Lismore)	14,737	15,384	– 4.2
<i>Maitland Mercury</i>	4,331	4,364	– 0.8
<i>Herald</i> (Newcastle)	49,500+	50,000+	– 1.0
<i>Central Western Daily</i> (Orange)	5,135	5,296	– 3.0
<i>Northern Daily Leader</i> (Tamworth)	7,652	7,988	– 4.2
<i>Daily News</i> (Tweed)	5,144	5,525	– 4.9
<i>Daily Advertiser</i> (Wagga Wagga)	12,851	13,492	– 4.8
<i>Illawarra Mercury</i> (Wollongong)	27,635	28,080	– 1.6
Victoria			
<i>Herald Sun</i>	515,000+	530,000+	– 2.7
<i>Herald Sun</i> (Sat)	502,000+	509,500+	– 1.5
<i>Sunday Herald Sun</i>	606,500+	623,500+	– 2.7
<i>Age</i>	204,200+	204,100+	Steady
<i>Age</i> (Sat)	296,750+	298,500+	+ 0.5
<i>Sunday Age</i>	227,100+	226,000+	+ 0.5
Regional			
<i>Courier</i> (Ballarat)	18,750	19,353	– 3.1
<i>Advertiser</i> (Bendigo)	13,821	14,462	– 4.4
<i>Geelong Advertiser</i>	29,192	30,354	– 3.8
<i>News</i> (Shepparton)	10,562	10,301	+ 2.5
<i>Standard</i> (Warrnambool)	12,586	12,788	– 1.6
Queensland			
<i>Courier-Mail</i>	215,383	220,850	– 2.5

<i>Courier-Mail</i> (Sat)	296,054	305,215	– 3.0
<i>Sunday Mail</i>	551,271	581,481	– 5.2
Regionals			
<i>NewsMail</i> (Bundaberg)	11,201	11,608	– 3.5
<i>Cairns Post</i>	28,850	30,268	– 4.7
<i>Gladstone Observer</i>	7,171	7,227	– 0.8
<i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i>	46,225	47,107	– 1.9
<i>Gympie Times</i>	5,644	5,868	– 3.8
<i>Queensland Times</i> (Ipswich)	10,804	11,017	– 1.9
<i>Daily Mercury</i> (Mackay)	16,045	16,180	– 0.8
<i>Sunshine Coast Daily</i>	21,170	22,529	– 5.2
<i>Fraser Coast Chronicle</i>	9,550	10,021	– 4.7
<i>Morning Bulletin</i> (Rockhampton)	18,207	18,106	+ 0.6
<i>Chronicle</i> (Toowoomba)	22,808	23,048	– 1.0
<i>Townsville Bulletin</i>	28,881	29,099	– 0.7
<i>Daily News</i> (Warwick)	3,218	3,125	+ 3.0
South Australia			
<i>Advertiser</i>	182,055	190,374	– 4.4
<i>Advertiser</i> (Sat)	254,499	262,591	– 3.1
<i>Sunday Mail</i>	304,096	320,684	– 5.2
Western Australia			
<i>West Australian</i>	192,964	198,316	– 2.7
<i>West Australian</i> (Sat)	336,387	344,432	– 2.4
<i>Sunday Times</i>	321,500+	341,500+	– 5.9
Tasmania			
<i>Mercury</i>	46,092	46,654	– 1.2
<i>Mercury</i> (Sat)	61,254	61,664	– 0.7
<i>Sunday Tasmanian</i>	59,526	60,225	– 1.2
Regionals			
<i>Advocate</i> (Burnie)	23,859	24,884	– 4.1
<i>Examiner</i> (Launceston)	33,103	33,946	– 2.5
<i>Sunday Examiner</i>	40,482	41,854	– 3.3
Northern Territory			
<i>Northern Territory News</i>	22,947	22,308	+ 2.9
<i>NT News</i> (Sat)	31,481	30,697	+ 2.6
<i>Sunday Territorian</i>	22,287	21,603	+ 3.2
ACT			
<i>Canberra Times</i>	34,629	35,701	– 3.0
<i>Canberra Times</i> (Sat)	58,735	61,976	– 5.2
<i>Canberra Times</i> (Sun)	34,855	35,564	– 2.0

51.1.21 NEW-LOOK SATURDAY CANBERRA TIMES

From 14 February, the Saturday *Canberra Times* has been redesigned with a re-arrangement of sections and where features appear. The most important change is that the “Forum” section of background article/editorials/letters, formerly a broadsheet section, is now tabloid. Below the masthead of the *Canberra Times* the following slogan now appears: YOUR WORLD, YOUR CITY, YOUR NEWSPAPER

2 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: ONLINE

51.2.1 THE READERS DIDN'T WANT IT ENOUGH

Employees of Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* turned to the worldwide web in a desperate bid to save the struggling Colorado newspaper (*SMH*, 23 December 2008). They launched a website called **iwantmyrocky.com/** to take the case for saving the 150-year-old newspaper directly to their readers. EW Scripps Co., which owns the *Rocky Mountain News*, announced early in December 2008 that it was putting it up for sale after losing \$US 11 million in the first nine months of the year. "Unless we can make something happen by the middle of January, our owners could close the *Rocky*," they wrote on the site. The paper closed on 27 February (*SMH Online*, 27 February 2009).

51.2.2 MORE THAN A LITTLE LIST

A New Year treat for the National Library of Australia's website of Australian Newspapers Online at <http://www.nla.gov.au/npapers/> was the offer of 28 new or amended newspaper websites provided by ANHG member **Barry Blair** from Tamworth. Claiming to have one of the most comprehensive lists of in-print and online newspaper websites in Australia, Barry is always on the lookout for information on the latest online news. Email him at barryblair@aapt.net.au

51.2.3 GOOGLE CANCELS PRINT AD PROGRAM

Google has announced that it is cancelling its print advertisement program in which it sought to bring its auction-like ad buying system to hundreds of newspapers (*SMH online*, 21 January 2009). The web search colossus said the program, which started in November 2006, had not created the hoped-for impact and that its cancellation would allow Google to focus on more successful ventures as it tries to cut spending. The closure of Google's print ads service followed the announcement that the company was undertaking its first-ever round of layoffs, by dismissing roughly 100 members of its recruiting organisation.

51.2.4 COURIER-MAIL AND ONLINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscribing to the *Courier-Mail* and the *Sunday Mail* became easier with the launch of the Subscriber Advantage website on 16 February. The website allows members to manage their subscription, access special offers and change their payment options at a time that is convenient for them. There is no more waiting in queues or on the phone, as users can quickly and easily manage their subscription on the website, including updating their details, putting a temporary stop on their newspaper delivery or upgrading their subscription. Visit **www.couriermail.com.au/subscriber** for more information.

51.2.5 SEVEN AND ADVERTISER PROVIDE MULTIMEDIA SERVICE

Advertiser Newspapers (publisher of the *Sunday Mail*, the *Advertiser* and **AdelaideNow**) and Channel 7 Adelaide have announced a new multimedia news and current affairs service. Using the combined strengths of press, television and the internet to cover local, national and international stories, the partnership brings different platforms together and promotes interaction with the media on news stories via **AdelaideNow** through polls, blogs and news alerts (*Mediaweek Online*, 23 February 2009).

3 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: COMMUNITY & PROVINCIAL

51.3.1 SMALL PAPERS AND THE VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE DISASTER

As journalists from the *Mountain Views Mail* fanned out to capture the devastation that struck their community on 7 February, they had no idea they were putting together a paper for a town that no longer existed (*Australian*, Media section, 16 February 2009). The family-owned publication takes in the communities of Marysville and the Kinglake district, which were hardest hit by the firestorm that ripped across the area north and

east of Melbourne, claiming more than 200 lives and destroying thousands of homes and businesses. While major news organisations descended on the area with resources ranging from helicopters to satellite vans, two dozen local journalists working for the Star News Group began the task of chronicling the disaster for the people who had endured it. Narelle Coulter, chief of staff for Star News, said the team of 23 journalists, editors and photographers – many of them young and still learning their trade – were forced to use nous and local knowledge. “We called all our ... staff out on Sunday,” she said. “Our most senior journalist was away so we did have to rely on quite a young team. All we could do was send the journos out and rely on their local knowledge.” It was knowledge that paid off, as national media needed the assistance of fire authorities to get around but the local journalists knew the back roads and shortcuts to get to the unfolding scene. As the scale of the disaster became apparent, they hired a light plane and editors added eight pages to the *Mail* and four extra pages to other papers in the group. Coulter said it took a mammoth effort by the small team to get the papers printed in Wodonga by Monday afternoon, but everyone considered it vital.

Once the news team had pulled together the editions, the publisher then faced the task of getting papers to survivors desperate for more localised information. It was a major challenge on Monday afternoon, with many areas still under threat and off-limits, while thousands of survivors gathered at relief centres. “We printed extra copies of the *Mail* and the (Whittlesea) *Star* and while we couldn’t deliver to many places due to the fires, we arranged bulk drops at the various relief centres,’ she said. Extra copies were also sent to newsagents and the Kilmore edition was even delivered in time for Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to pick up a copy when he visited the area that afternoon. But the drama was far from over for those journalists working in the company’s Healesville office. They were evacuated to Monbulk when the town came under threat on Friday morning, 13 February.

Jason Frenkel writes from Melbourne (23 February): The *Mirboo North Community Times* continued publication throughout the crisis. I saw editions for 4 and 11 February which covered the heatwave and small fires leading up to Black Saturday, and then the aftermath. That they were able to publish an edition just four days after Black Saturday is a real credit to the contributors. It’s just an A4 photocopied newsletter with reader contributions and advertising.

Les Harsant writes from Healesville, Vic. (23 February): We receive the *Mountain Views Mail* (published by Hartley Higgins for Yarra Valley Newspapers and printed at the *Border Mail*) and the *Lilydale and Yarra Valley Leader* (part of the huge Leader Associated Newspapers network). The *Leader* has given some coverage to the fires. The *Mountain Views Mail* has had a four-page and an eight-page wraparound for the two weeks so far (10 and 17 February) and no doubt another coming tomorrow – and more inside. They have worked very hard and have given excellent pictorial coverage, but the accuracy of the reporting has not been of the same standard.

Richard Morton writes from Warrandyte, Vic. (22 February): The fires have missed us this year, so far, but were close enough in the Yarra Valley to worry older residents who remember attacks in 1962, 1965 and 1969, as well as, of course, Black Friday (13 February) 1939 which devastated the village. The *Warrandyte Diary* of February 2009 reported on “the weekend that fire hung on the horizon”.

Lloyd Jenkins writes from Leopold, Vic. (26 February): As far as I can ascertain none of the Victorian newspapers serving the bushfire areas has had offices destroyed or other mishaps.

Barry Blair writes from Tamworth, NSW (21 February): Each edition of online provincial newspapers from virtually every state and territory throughout Australia has devoted considerable space to news related to the Victorian bushfires. Bushfire-related

news has primarily consisted of local fund-raising activities; firefighters either heading to, or returning from, Victoria; lessons learned from Victoria, and concerns about local fire risks; major concerns about government agencies and the Greens baulking attempts to undertake seasonal controlled burning.

Ian Willis reports from Camden, NSW: Our local newspapers treat the men and women who contributed to the Victorian Fire situation as local “heroes” in the finest tradition of the bushman and Anzac legends. The front page of the *Camden Advertiser* of 18 February reads “FACES OF GENEROSITY” with the story starting: “As bushfires wreaked destruction on lives in Victoria, Camden sprang into action. Our firefighters flew in to meet the flames, and thousands of dollars of donations have poured in to support relief.” The story ran through to pages 2 and 3 with photographs of RFS volunteers, school children holding fundraising events and other community fundraising events.

Our weekly independent, the *District Reporter* led on 16 February with a story “COMMUNITY SHOWS IT HAS A BIG HEART”, outlining the efforts of a local Catholic independent high school and its fundraising effort with photographs of the young people at the school. This was supported with a page 5 story about donations collected at a local shopping centre.

The Cumberland Newspaper Groups is represented in our local area by the Camden Edition of the *Macarthur Chronicle*. On 17 February it led with a story headed “OUR FINEST”. The story outlined the efforts of the Macarthur RFS unit and stated “the Macarthur region’s exhausted firefighters arrived home last week into the arms of loved ones after experiencing hell on earth”. The story outlined the efforts of our local heroes defending homes, electricity switching stations, and general fire fighting. Colin Spinks, the deputy group officer and member of the Camden West RFS brigade stated: ‘(the fire) would come down and the wind would turn back again. There was no saying where the wind was going to come from’. This was supported with extensive coverage of local fundraising events on pages 4, 5 and 6. David Campbell reported that “the heartbreaking plight of the bushfire victims in Victoria has prompted a generous response from the Macarthur region”.

51.3.2 LITHGOW: ATTEMPT TO DERAIL THE QUEEN’S TRAIN

On the night of 29 April 1970, an event occurred on the rail corridor through Lithgow that had the potential to change the course of world history (reports Orange’s *Central Western Daily*, 22 January 2009). “It was an incident on such a scale of international significance that an ironcast wall of secrecy was thrown up by Federal and State authorities when they responded to a curious media who had been ‘hearing whispers’ something was amiss,” writes Len Ashworth, editor of the *Lithgow Mercury*, a sister paper to the Orange paper. When Det Sgt Cliff McHardy received a phone call that night the implications were immediate; someone had made a serious attempt to derail the Royal Train that was conveying Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip to Orange.

Long retired after 11 years in charge of Lithgow detectives, McHardy – who left the Force with the rank of detective superintendent – has now recounted his memories of the frantic investigations and bemoaned the fact that the culprit was ‘one that got away’. On the night of the drama the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were travelling on what was known as the Commissioner’s Train. The security largely consisted of uniformed police who were ordered to man every railway station along the route and railway personnel on duty at every level crossing. On board were members of the Royal entourage and federal and special branch police. The schedule was for the train to spend the night under tighter security in a siding at Orange, ready for a two-and-a-half hour visit next day. The train almost did not make it.

As it passed at speed through a winding cutting at Bowenfels the locomotive struck a large log that had been placed across the tracks. The train continued under brakes for

about 200 metres with the log wedged under the front wheels before finally coming to a halt at the level crossing near Bowenfels station. When Det Sgt McHardy and Detectives Barry Antill and Doug Bentley arrived they found the hardwood log had not splintered under the heavy impact and had deep indentations from the locomotive wheels. But the locomotive had remained on track and largely unscathed. The attempt to derail the train was no spur-of-the-moment example of vandalism taken to the extreme.

Whoever was responsible had surveyed the area as marks indicated where the log had previously been resting at the top of the embankment in an area not often frequented by the public. It had been rolled from there onto the tracks and manoeuvred into place, possibly by more than one person. The offenders had also been aware of the time schedule for not only the Royal Train but a security 'sweeper' locomotive that had gone through a short time earlier to guard against just such an incident. The obstruction was placed on the tracks sometime between the passing of the sweep and the arrival in the cutting of the train carrying the British Monarch and her husband to Orange.

There were numerous suspects and theories but the perpetrators of the attempt to derail the Queen's train were never found. While the hunt for the culprit was underway Government officials were as much concerned about the embarrassment to Australia if the story leaked as they were with the incident itself. Government gags were placed on the release of any information to the public. "I was constantly reassuring my superiors that the local media would cooperate if we asked them to," McHardy said. "I told them that the editor of the *Lithgow Mercury*, Bede Leighton, was man of total integrity who would abide by his word when told anything in confidence. "They were used to dealing with the Sydney media and remained sceptical." But the official suppression order worked and there was never a mention of the incident, even though most Lithgow railwaymen knew of the incident. They obeyed from their department to say nothing.

51.3.3 GOULBURN: JOURNALIST RETIRES AFTER 44 YEARS

From Goulburn, **Leon Oberg** writes (for the *Town & Country Magazine*, 12 January 2009, which appears in the *Goulburn Post* and other southern NSW newspapers that are published by Fairfax Media and were in the Rural Press chain): Sadly, this is my last paper for after 44.2 years working in this busy industry, I intend to devote a little more time to the family and hobbies, hoping of course our financial markets are willing. It is worth mentioning how the newspaper and publishing business has moved forward in leaps and bounds since the day I first set a foot inside the door of the *Goulburn Post*. It was the era of hot metal (letter press) production when all type was cast in metal (alloy composition mainly of lead) by a battery of Linotypes on which the body copy was produced, and Ludlow machines which produced the larger type, spacing material and headlines up to 96 point. The lead was supplied to the above machines in 'pigs' - long ingots weighing about 22 pounds. The typeset 'slugs' were recovered after printing and tossed into a furnace for recycling - along with cigarette butts, waste paper, pieces of timber and other sundry rubbish.

Words such as "formes", in which the individual pages were literally bolted together and wheeled across steel floors on a "turtle" where "flongs" were pressed from that page from which a cast plate was moulded, were also used every day. Our photography section used an ancient Linhof plate camera - a cumbersome, heavy damn thing which, if I remember correctly, used to suffer badly from parallax error. Fascinatingly [picture] "blocks" were made using a 1950s Klischograph machine which etched plastic composition plates by electronic impulses through a stylus. Many advertisements used to arrive at the office as heavy pre-cast blocks.

I remember the great day around 1977 when the paper moved from hot metal to off-set production, when computers were introduced in the production room to set the type. Some keyboards were even specially configured to represent the larger ones several operators were used to under the discarded Linotype system which featured individual

capital letter keys! But journalists continued to use typewriters in our newsroom until mid 1985 and gradually, our papers were brought into the digital age where today, our reproduction, operation and computer programmes used in this and our publishing chain, technically equals – and in many ways exceeds – newspaper best practice anywhere.

Looking back, I seem also to be the only person today still using an em rule. Newspaper production now seems to be based on what I believe to be the less-exact centimetre ruler! And I can no longer find any reference to the word “flong” in modern dictionaries. And the distinction between “captions” and “blocklines” also seems lost on today’s journalists. The caption was the term to describe the heading across the top of a picture (rarely used today) while the blockline was the correct word to describe the prose beneath. The industry has certainly moved on during those 44 years.

[Oberg joined the *Post* on 19 October 1964 as a news photographer. He became both photographer and journalist. He is also the author of a number of highly regarded books on railway history (*Goulburn Post*, 9 January 2009, p.2).]

51.3.4 BROKEN HILL: BREAKDOWN IN PRESS

The first major failure of the *Barrier Daily Truth*’s printing press in three decades led to most of the city’s residents not receiving the paper on 12 January. A finger-like device on the paper folder, which delivers the printed papers to a conveyor belt for stacking and eventually delivery, crumpled causing a major paper jam and disruption to printing. About 300 papers were printed before the breakdown occurred. Production supervisor Rod Stenhouse said he had no idea what caused the problem. “This press has been here for 30 years and it’s the first major breakdown,” he said (*Barrier Daily Truth*, 13 January 2009, p.3).

51.3.5 MILDURA: MOVEMENT AT DAILY

The *Mildura Independent* (5 January 2009) has highlighted a number of departures at the *Sunraysia Daily*: editor Lyall Corless made “a silent departure the other day, leaving behind a much improved newspaper”. Others had left during his editorship, the paper reported. The two survivors are former editor Allan Murphy and former *Swan Hill Guardian* editor Chris McLennan, who had been “earmarked” for the editor’s job but then overlooked for Corless when the paper switched from broadsheet to tabloid.

The new editor (reports *Mediaweek*, 19-26 January 2009, p.9) is Kieran Iles, most recently the Star News group’s north-western division editor. He is a former editor of the four-day-a-week South Australian title, the *Border Watch*, Mount Gambier.

51.3.6 KATHERINE: FAIRFAX BUYS WEEKLY

Fairfax Media has bought the *Katherine Times*, NT, from Vince and Jill Fardone (*gxpess*, November 2008, p.35). The Fardones had been involved in the *Times* for 25 years. Vince Fardone and John McDonald launched the town’s first tabloid newspaper, the *Katherine Times*, on 16 June 1983 in a bid to give the locals a newspaper that would both inform and entertain. Suddenly, the town had three newspapers. Library records indicate the *Katherine Informer* began in 1974 and became the *Katherine Advertiser* in May 1979. The *Katherine Herald* was established, too, making the field a crowded one (all three papers were weeklies), but Fardone says the *Herald* survived only five issues. Fardone had a photographic mini-processing lab, which was expected to subsidise the *Katherine Times* as it set out to gain acceptance and credibility with local readers. Fardone and McDonald had 5,000 copies of the first issue printed and they used yellow mini-Moke to distribute complimentary copies. Both the mini-lab and the newspaper flourished and the paper was making a profit in “a very short time”. The tourist trade has made the photo lab sustainable. McDonald sold his interest to the Fardones in 1985 (see Rod Kirkpatrick, “Katherine Times: short life, huge success”, *PANPA Bulletin*, April 2006, pp.45-46).

51.3.7 THE OPTIONS FOR BRITISH LOCAL AND REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Enders Analysis believes 30 per cent of Britain's local and regional newspapers could be making losses within two years. Deloitte believes that this year one in 10 print titles could reduce their frequency of publication, go online or close (James Ashton, "Newspapers fold in a death of press barons", *Australian*, 26 January 2009, p.19, reprinted from the *Sunday Times*, London).

51.3.8 APN (1): NO BUYER STEPS FORWARD

Sir Anthony O'Reilly's Irish media group, Independent News & Media, will cut its dividend and seek other asset sales after failing to find a buyer for its majority stake in APN News & media Ltd. APN is one of Australia's largest media businesses, with 10 regional dailies in Queensland and four in NSW, half of the Australian Radio Network and a large outdoor media arm (*Australian*, 28 January 2009, p.21).

51.3.9 APN (2): LOSS OF \$24m

APN News & Media reported a net loss of \$24 million, which constituted a 114 per cent profit-fall for fiscal 2008. At the same time, APN forecast net profits of \$120 million for this financial year. Underlying profit fell 17.3 per cent to \$140.1 million, before impairments and other exceptional items. APN had said earlier this month that underlying profit would come within 5 per cent of its previous guidance for \$148 million. APN said the result covered exceptional items of \$164.1 million, including a non-cash impairment of \$146.8 million relating to New Zealand assets acquired as part of the Wilson & Horton takeover in 2001. Revenue at APN was \$1.26 billion, or an underlying \$1.23 billion, compared with \$1.3 billion a year ago (*Australian*, 25 February 2009).

51.3.10 ST GEORGE: HOME DELIVERY BY BOAT

Every Sunday morning residents along the Woronora River, in southern Sydney, are greeted by the smiling face of paper boy Alex Horwood. Alex, 10, has been doing the paper run since he was seven and enjoys the financial freedom his job gives him. "I took the job so I could buy bigger and better things and so I don't have to do extra jobs around the house for money," he said. Alex, who has recently bought a boat and is about to buy an engine, is a favourite with the river residents. He said it was because it made them feel connected with the community. "It's a community thing. Not many communities have a door-to-door delivery service," he said. Alex has kept the business in the family, recruited his sister Airlie, six, to cover half the river. "She does the first half of the river with mum and I do the bottom half," Alex said. "Dad comes with me and pulls the trolley and keeps me on track if I get caught up in a conversation." (*St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 11 February 2009, pp.1-2).

51.3.11 WINGHAM: FORMER EDITOR ORDAINED AS DEACON

A former editor of the *Wingham Chronicle* (NSW), Bill Green, was one of 17 people ordained as deacons of the Anglican Church on 20 February. Green has been involved with the church in Wingham, Taree and Forster for 40 years as a lay reader, parish councillor and choir member. He began his newspaper career as an apprentice in the production department of the *Wingham Chronicle* (*Wingham Chronicle*, 24 February 2009).

4 – NEWSPAPER HISTORY

51.4.1 LATEST ON DIGITISATION OF AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS

Rose Holley, manager of the Australian Newspaper Digitisation Program, reports: From August to December 2008 we received hundreds of comments and suggestions from users about what they think of the service and ideas for how it could be enhanced. All the feedback has now been collated, organised and made public. If you wish to review it the summary documents are available on the ANDP website under the project details tab: <http://www.nla.gov.au/ndp/index.html>

Overview of Feedback

www.nla.gov.au/ndp/project_details/documents/ANDP_OverviewofFeedbackDecember2008.pdf

Enhancement Suggestions

www.nla.gov.au/ndp/project_details/documents/ANDP_BetaEnhancementSuggestions.pdf

Positive Feedback Comments

www.nla.gov.au/ndp/project_details/documents/ANDP_PositiveFeedbackBetaDec2008.pdf

Beta Usage in first 3 months

www.nla.gov.au/ndp/project_details/documents/ANDP_BetaUsageNov2008_000.pdf

The next steps: The National Library will determine when in 2009 further development will take place, how long it will take, and when the beta system will be upgraded into Search and Delivery version 1 and officially launched. In the meantime the Australian Newspapers Beta System will remain available to the public and new content will be added in the first quarter of 2009 as the Library works with new scanning and OCR contractors.

Newspaper titles and progress

The newspaper title list has now been revised and expanded to include additional titles. We have also updated our progress charts and the scanning schedule. This information is available here: http://www.nla.gov.au/ndp/selected_newspapers/

Text correction

The ANDP team has been surprised and pleased by the number of users who have decided to participate in text correction and also by the amount of text that the user community is correcting. You have so far corrected over a million lines of text in nearly 100,000 articles and are doing an amazing job. It is really helping all users to better find things. Despite the text correction process being a bit clunky at present you are still hanging in there and doing it. We are aware that the text correction method needs improving and you have given us other useful ideas as well about it. Your activity has created international interest since this is the first time that a Library has given users the ability to interact and improve full-text data in this way. The NLA is the only library to have developed a system to enable it. We will be gathering more information about text correction activity in January and I will be contacting some of our top text correctors, asking them questions to further help us develop this innovative and very useful function.

51.4.2 AGGRESSIVELY IGNORING THE WEB

Into the teeth of a historic recession, a newspaper has just published the biggest issue in its history (reports David Carr, *International Herald Tribune*, 22 December 2008). The product is double-digit profitable, and it has been growing at a rate of about 10 percent a year since founded in 1999, about the time the Web was beginning to put its hands around print's neck. *TriCityNews*, of Monmouth County, New Jersey, is prospering because it aggressively ignores the Web. Its Web site has a little boilerplate about the product and lists ad rates, but nothing more. (The address is **trinews.com**) Dan Jacobson, publisher and owner, said, "I don't understand how putting content on the Web would do anything but help destroy our paper. Why should we give our readers any incentive whatsoever to not look at our content along with our advertisements, a large number of which are beautiful and cheap full-page ads?"

TriCityNews employs 3.5 people (the half-time employee handles circulation), has a print run of 10,000, and has a top line that can be written in six figures. Still, by setting rates low almost 10 years ago and never raising them or offering a Web option, Jacobson has built a reliable cadre of advertisers who call for ads, sign up for full pages, and pay in advance. Jacobson, 47, is a former lawyer and politician.

51.4.3 NEWSPAPER TRAINS IN PERTH

Victor Isaacs writes: Since publication of my book *How We Got the News* about newspaper distribution (available for \$30 from the ANHG), I have found some information about newspaper trains in the Perth suburban area. From 1895 a goods train departing Perth at 4.30am was designated to carry newspapers to Fremantle. From 1899

a goods train departing Perth at 4.50am for Chidlow Well (in the Darling Ranges) was designated to carry newspapers. The timetable for railway staff stated: "No. 5 carries the morning newspapers and is to have precedence over ordinary and special goods trains." From 1905 an empty passenger train from Perth to Cannington was designated "Conveys newspapers". By possibly 1917 and certainly 1918 this train was extended to Armadale.

51.4.4 CONSTANCE THE CONSTANT PUTS DOWN HER PEN

MODERN technology has made it impossible for me to write to the *Age*. How I miss it, although in my 90th year, it is time to look for other pastures. You would not believe the wild and wonderful world your newspaper has opened to me. Eyesight is a trouble. Thank you to all the "scribes" who have added to my quiet life! Love to all readers, even those who can't stand me! –

Constance E. Little, Kingsley, Eagle Point.

This was how one of the *Age*'s most prolific letter writers, Constance E. Little, announced she was putting down her pen (*Age*, letters page, 4 December 2008). The letters-page regulars were collectively aghast. For five decades, Little had shared her often quirky, insightful, sometimes provocative opinions on everything from politics and crime to feminist issues and global warming through her letters to the editor (*Age*, 10 December 2008). The 89-year-old had amassed quite a following, who continued to lament her departure from print on the letters page. "I'm amazed at the way people took to my writing career, I suppose you could call it," she said from her aged accommodation at Eagle Point, on the Gippsland Lakes. Little blames physical frailty caused by a series of strokes last year for slowing her down.

Little has never shied from a readers' kerfuffle, often championing the underdog or defending those under siege, such as John Elliott or Pauline Hanson. She was also warning of the dire effects of global warming long before it was fashionable and often went against the tide, defending *Age* cartoonists and columnists under attack. "Constance E. Little is the marathon matron of the newspaper letter-writing game, a veritable word machine who pumped out enough pithy prose to fill a small (or Little) library," Diary columnist Lawrence Money said. Born in Benalla, Constance Little started writing letters at the age of 14 for her school paper and later became a regular contributor to local, country and metropolitan newspapers. Most of her letters were sent from the sheep and beef farm she ran with her husband overlooking the Tambo River at Swan Reach in south-eastern Victoria.

51.4.5 AT THE NYT, ADS ARE NOW FIT TO PRINT ON PAGE 1

On 5 January the *New York Times* for the first time opened its editorial holy of holies, the front page, to advertising (*SMH* online, 6 January 2009).

51.4.6 A DEPARTING ALAN RAMSEY REVEALS SOURCE WAS A PEACOCK

Alan Ramsey (b. 3 January 1938), who retired in December as a political commentator on the *Sydney Morning Herald*, is famous for standing up in the Press Gallery of Federal Parliament on 8 March 1971 and shouting "You liar" at Prime Minister John Gorton. Gorton was telling the House about a meeting he had had with Ramsey. On interjecting from high in the press gallery, Ramsey bolted out the door and across the roof of Old Parliament House. Gorton had been answering a question arising from a story Ramsey had written in the *Australian* about Gorton's backing the top military officer Tom Daly against his Defence Minister Malcolm Fraser. (*Hansard* recorded the source of the interjection as "A Voice from Above.")

The story eventually led to a Liberal Party meeting where Gorton called on his colleagues to endorse his leadership. When the vote was tied, Gorton voted himself out of office and Billy McMahon became Prime Minister. Mystery had always surrounded the source of Ramsey's story. D.D. McNicoll reported (*Australian*, 8 December 2008, p.11) that at the press gallery Christmas dinner on Friday night [5 December], Ramsey, the guest speaker, said he had been given the tip by Susan Peacock (later Sangster, later Renouf), the wife

of Andrew Peacock, then the Minister for the Army and the Minister assisting the Prime Minister.

On Monday night, 1 December, the *Herald* held a farewell dinner for Ramsey, who finished 53 years as a journalist on 20 December. The *Herald* hosted a stack of invitee colleagues from across the years (as Ramsey put it, *SMH*, 6 December 2008). Somebody who wasn't there, wrote Ramsey, was Norman Macswan, who died in his sleep an hour before midnight the night of the dinner. Born on 27 May 1917 at Maclean, NSW, where the family lived on an island in the Clarence River, Norman Finlayson Macswan got his first pair of shoes at the age of 13. During the depression of the 1930s he worked as a cane cutter, door-to-door salesman and swimming instructor before joining a small country paper. He enlisted in the air force in July 1940 and after war service in the Pacific, returned to journalism in 1946. He later became a foreign correspondent in Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, London and New York. He covered the Korean War. He retired as associate editor of Australian Associated Press in 1980. Two years later Macswan's biography of the internationally celebrated Australian journalist Dick Hughes, *The Man Who Read the East Wind*, was published.

Ramsey said his debt to Macswan arose from the following. "In August 1965, as a correspondent with Australian troops based at Bien Hoa air base, north of Saigon, during the escalating Vietnam war, I was kicked out of the Australian camp as a 'security risk'. The military in Canberra had taken exception to my coverage. After a story involving the shooting of a female Viet Cong 'suspect' during a 'search-and-destroy' operation, for which I interviewed two Australian soldiers, the Army claimed I had jeopardised security by 'disclosing' the site of the joint Australian-American operation 'on the south bank of the Dong Nai River'. Asked by a Sydney Labor backbencher, Len Devine, why I had been barred and why 'the Army had placed a security barrier around all troops wounded in action to prevent them being interviewed', the Menzies Government's Army Minister, Jim Forbes, told Parliament I'd 'committed a breach of security' and I'd been banned with his 'full authority in the interests of the safety of the troops'. Australian Associated Press, owned by the major newspaper groups, flew Macswan to South Vietnam to investigate the matter. Macswan's written report convinced the AAP board to fight the ban. Three weeks later, after three senior executives had flown to Canberra to see Forbes and senior Defence figures to plead my case, the government lifted the ban. I – with my purple Jeep – was allowed back into the Australian camp at Bien Hoa, where the *Herald* photographer Stuart McGladrie and I were the only correspondents, living in a tent, on the base. Norman Macswan made it possible. He more than anyone got my name cleared. Forty-three years later, in the week of his death, and a fortnight before I end 56 years in journalism, my debt to him remains immense."

Rod Kirkpatrick writes: Alan Ramsey was the first cadet on the *Northern Territory News*, launched on 8 February 1952. Ramsey's first day in the Canberra press gallery was 21 February 1966 and his first Saturday column appeared in the *SMH* on 9 May 1987 (Alan Ramsey, lunchtime address at the Australian Media Traditions conference, Old Parliament House, Canberra, 24 November 2005).

51.4.7 SEMINAR ON NEWSPAPERS AS MEDIUM AND MESSAGE

The State Library User Organisations' Council (Victoria), with the help of the State Library of Victoria, will hold a seminar entitled "Newspapers as medium and message: A key to historical research" in the Conference Centre of the Library (entry 3 in La Trobe Street) on Saturday, 23 May 2009 from 1pm to 5.30pm. Six speakers, including Rod Kirkpatrick, Elizabeth Morrison, Eleanor Pugsley, Wallace Kirsop and representatives of the SLV and the Australian National Library, will look at present-day opportunities for deriving historical information from newspapers, notably via the digitisation projects now proceeding around the country, and at the need for more intensive study of the evolution and functions of the press itself since its Australian beginnings in 1803. Given the progress that has been made in the last decade in conserving, managing, indexing and

making accessible our newspapers, it is high time to extend and intensify study of the medium as such. To obtain additional information about the seminar and to register enrolments (free), contact **centre.forthe.book@arts.monash.edu.au**

51.4.8 MEDIAWEEK PUBLISHES 900TH ISSUE

Issue No. 900 of *Mediaweek* (23 February 2009, pp.1, 6-7) reminds its readers that No. 1 appeared on 12 June 1990 and No. 2 two weeks later. Since then the newsletter has appeared weekly, apart from taking breaks from publication for a few weeks each Christmas-New Year. The annual subscription in 1990 was \$290 and it rose over the next nine years to \$649. The price has remained static since.

5 – RECENTLY PUBLISHED

51.5.1 BOOK

Schwarz, Michelle, *A Question of Power*, Black Inc., 212pp, \$29.95.

Bruce Elder reviewed this book in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Spectrum section, 19-21 December 2008, p.25. Written by a former lawyer, the book examines the evidence for and against the rape accusations made against Geoff Clark when he was chairman of ATSIC.

51.5.2 ARTICLES

Bromley, Michael, is the guest editor of *Australian Journalism Review*, 30 (2), December 2008, for its themed edition, "Citizen Journalism".

Burkhardt, Geoffrey, "The Cuzco Chronicle: a Ship's Newspaper", *Ancestral Searcher*, 28 (3), September 2008, pp.131-133.

Coleman, Peter, "The tough get going", *gxpess*, November 2008, pp.16-18. A review of some of the major new newspaper print-centre projects under way in Australia (e.g. Ormiston, which gives Fairfax metro-daily print capacity in Brisbane; Townsville; Tamworth; Launceston; and Bairnsdale).

Coleman, Peter, "Shift happens", *gxpess*, November 2008, p.32. A visit to the publishing microcosm that is the Noosa district and history is found to be repeating itself. Interesting discussion of publishing ventures in Noosa, Cooroy, Pomona and other centres near Noosa.

Day, Mark, "Clamour for paid sites rises as newspapers struggle", *Australian*, Media section, 9 February 2009, p.44. Discussion of newspaper industry's problem of building revenue.

Day, Mark, "Wolff at Murdoch's door leaves empty-handed", *Australian Literary Review*, 4 February 2009, pp.12-13. A review of Michael Wolff's biography of Rupert Murdoch, Denis Cryle's 25-year study of the *Australian*, and another media book.

Lepore, Jill, "The day the newspaper died", *New Yorker*, 26 January 2009 (accessed online, 22 January 2009). Colonial American newspapers, burdened by a new tax, floridly staged their demise. Liberty, they warned, would perish with them.

Messenger, Robert, "Robert Messenger", *Canberra Times*, 16 January 2009. Peter Fray is the latest in a line of former bosses of Messenger's who have actively encouraged his passion for typewriters. A wonderfully nostalgic piece about old typewriters and not-so-old editors. Messenger, who has a collection of 600 vintage typewriters, appeared on *The Collectors* on ABC-TV on 16 November 2008.

Munro, Ian, "Murdoch and me", *Age*, 29 November 2008, Insight p.10. Michael Wolff, Rupert Murdoch's latest biographer, says he found a man short on reflection and without any grand strategy.

Murphy, Damien, "The world for a stage", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13-14 December 2008, p.24. Murray Sayle was the eyes and ears of history's rough drafts and this once prolific foreign correspondent has still got an opinion or two.

Neustatter, Angela, "Murdoch matriarch reveals a few home truths on family", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 2009, p.10. Children need to be treated firmly or they will disappoint, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch tells.

Sheridan, Greg, "A scribbler on the sly", *Weekend Australian*, 17-18 January 2009, Review p.36. A discussion of Alfred Deakin's "secret life as a journalist". From

1901 to 1914, Deakin was the special Australian correspondent for the London *Morning Post*, including all through his three stints as Prime Minister.

Stewart, Cameron, "What drives the Dame?", *Weekend Australian Magazine*, 17-18 January 2008, pp.8-11. She was the Melbourne deb who captivated one of the nation's most powerful men, Keith Murdoch, and secured a front-row seat for a century of history. Dame Elisabeth Murdoch is interviewed on the eve of her 100th birthday (8 February 2009).

Waterford, Jack, "Newspapers still click with the web's instant news users", *Canberra Times*, 27 December 2008.

ANHG publishes index to its first 50 issues

The ANHG has published an index to the first 50 issues of the *Australian Newspaper History Group Newsletter*, covering the period October 1999 to December 2008. The 50 newsletters contain about half a million words.

The new index is called: *Fifty ANHG Issues Indexed*. If you wish to buy a copy, you have four options.

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3. **The 50/50 Extras CD**: This includes all of No. 2 above **PLUS** *200 Years of Sydney Newspapers: A Short History* by Victor Isaacs and Rod Kirkpatrick (this is out of print). Price \$62 incl. p&p.
4. **The book**: *Fifty ANHG Issues Indexed* will be available in printed form in early March (182pp). Cost is \$37 incl. p&p. ISBN is I978-0-9803 128-3-6

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