

NEW BEATS

2015 JERAA PANEL PRESENTATION

Lawrie Zion
Penny O'Donnell
Matthew Ricketson
Andrew Dodd
Tim Marjoribanks
Merryn Sherwood



PANEL THEMES

1. Project update & 2015 survey results.
2. Discussion of redundancy experiences in regional and rural Australia, with Carol Duncan.
3. Analysis of what severe employment contraction means for journalism.

CAROL DUNCAN

- A passionate and dedicated storyteller, her radio career has spanned over 25 years around Australia working for many years in commercial radio and from 2001 – 2015 presenting a daily programme on ABC Local Radio.
- A member of the 2007 Walkley Award-winning ABC Newcastle team, she was also the inaugural winner of the NSW Cancer Council Award for Excellence in Reporting and awarded the 2007 Premier's Public Sector Awards medal.



1. PROJECT UPDATE & 2015 SURVEY RESULTS

AUSTRAL
Daily Telegraph
THE
Sunday Telegraph

NEW BEATS – PROJECT BACKGROUND

- A project established to explore the aftermath of journalism redundancies.
- www.newbeatsblog.com @newbeatsproject
- What are the consequences of journalism job loss for journalists? (Where do they go?)
- What about for journalism itself?
- ARC grants
- Partnerships with NLA, MEAA and ABC
- Annual surveys of cohort – the second one of these is almost complete
- Internationalisation of the project underway with Canada and Netherlands
- 2015 Regional Survey

MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT

- Project grounded in journalism and media research, but also engaging with management, sociology, political science and other disciplines
- Theoretical, empirical and methodological interdisciplinary contribution
 - Institutional and regulatory contexts of redundancy
 - Lived experiences of redundancy
 - Implications for other employment contexts beyond journalism

MEDIA COVERAGE

- “Beyond the Big R: Life after Redundancy”, video of Melbourne Press Club panel on June 3, 2015.
- “Exiting journalists marching to a new beat, survey finds”, by Krati Garg, *The Citizen*, April 24, 2015. (A shorter version of this article also appeared in *Crikey* on the same day.)
- “Where do redundant journalists go?” by Lawrie Zion in *The Conversation*, December 2, 2013. This article was also republished in *mUmBRELLA* and *News International*
- “Less, pay, less stress for axed journos”, by Sally Jackson in *The Australian*, December 2, 2013
- “Study to track the progress of journalists riding the 2012 wave of redundancies”, by Lawrie Zion in the *Public Interest Journalism Foundation website*, July 16, 2013
- Interview with Lawrie Zion on ABC Radio National’s The Media Report, July 11, 2013
- “Study follows new beats in journalism”, by Lara Sinclair in *The Australian*, July 8, 2013
- “Research project to examine impact of journalist redundancies”, by Nic Christensen in *mUmBRELLA*, July 8, 2013

A NOTE ABOUT OUR DATA

- Please note all the data presented today is preliminary as the surveys are still open.
- Some of the figures we're about to show you will change before the survey is closed.

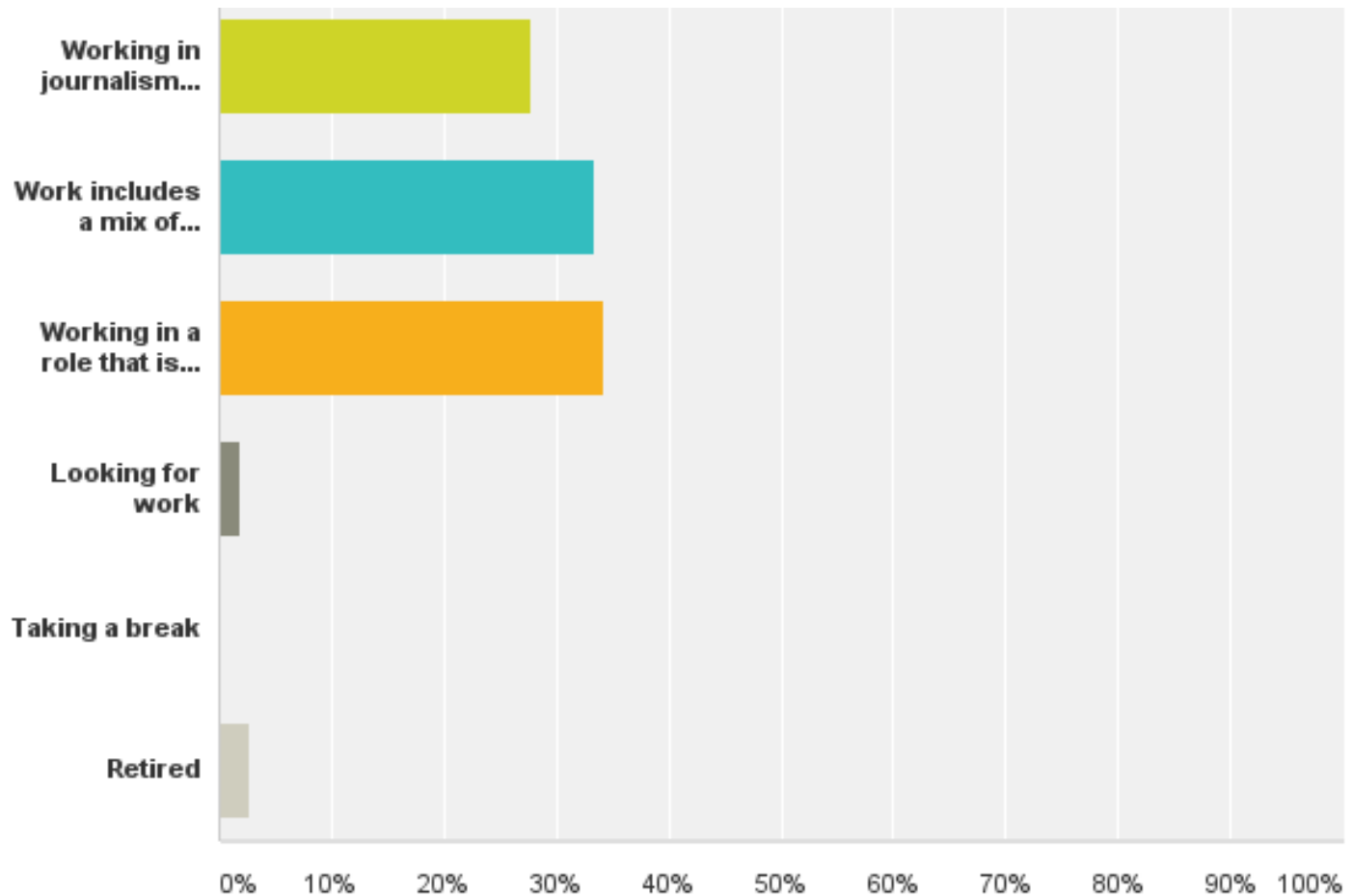
2015 SURVEY BACKGROUND - 2014 FINDINGS

- In 2014 we had 225 completed responses
- 85% aged 41 and over
- 57.8% male
- More than half had more than 25 years experience at time of redundancy
- 77% took VR
- Just over 60% of respondents continued to work wholly or partly in journalism.
- Income loss was significant across the board. Those who left journalism more likely to earning more than 80k.
- Precarity of work a big factor.
- But even those in full time journalism roles were working for less money.
- Biggest income drop in over 50s
- More of this in Communication Research and Practice 2016

2015 SURVEY RESULTS – PRELIMINARY

- **113 completed responses so far**
- **Some perceived improvement in income, as redundancy experience becomes more distant.**
- **But still a lot of job instability**

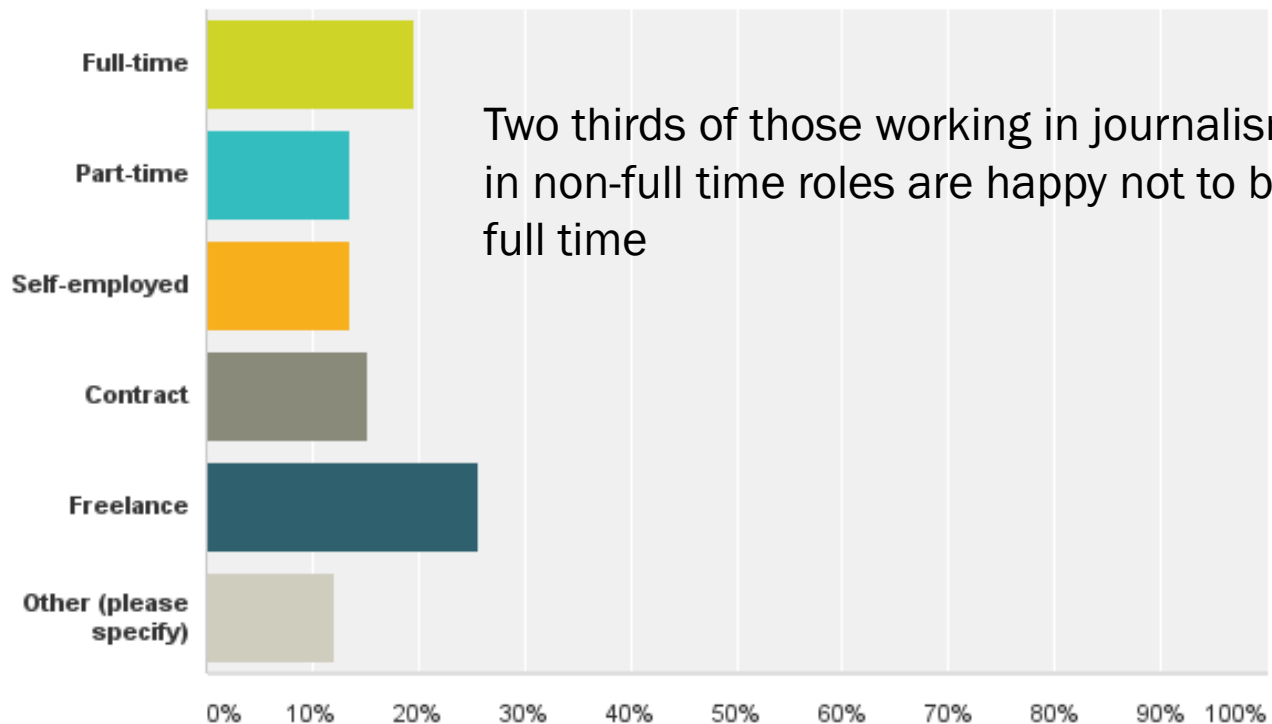
CURRENT TYPE OF WORK - OVERALL



WORKING IN JOURNALISM – EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Q6 What is your current employment status?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 42



PRECARIOUS LABOUR

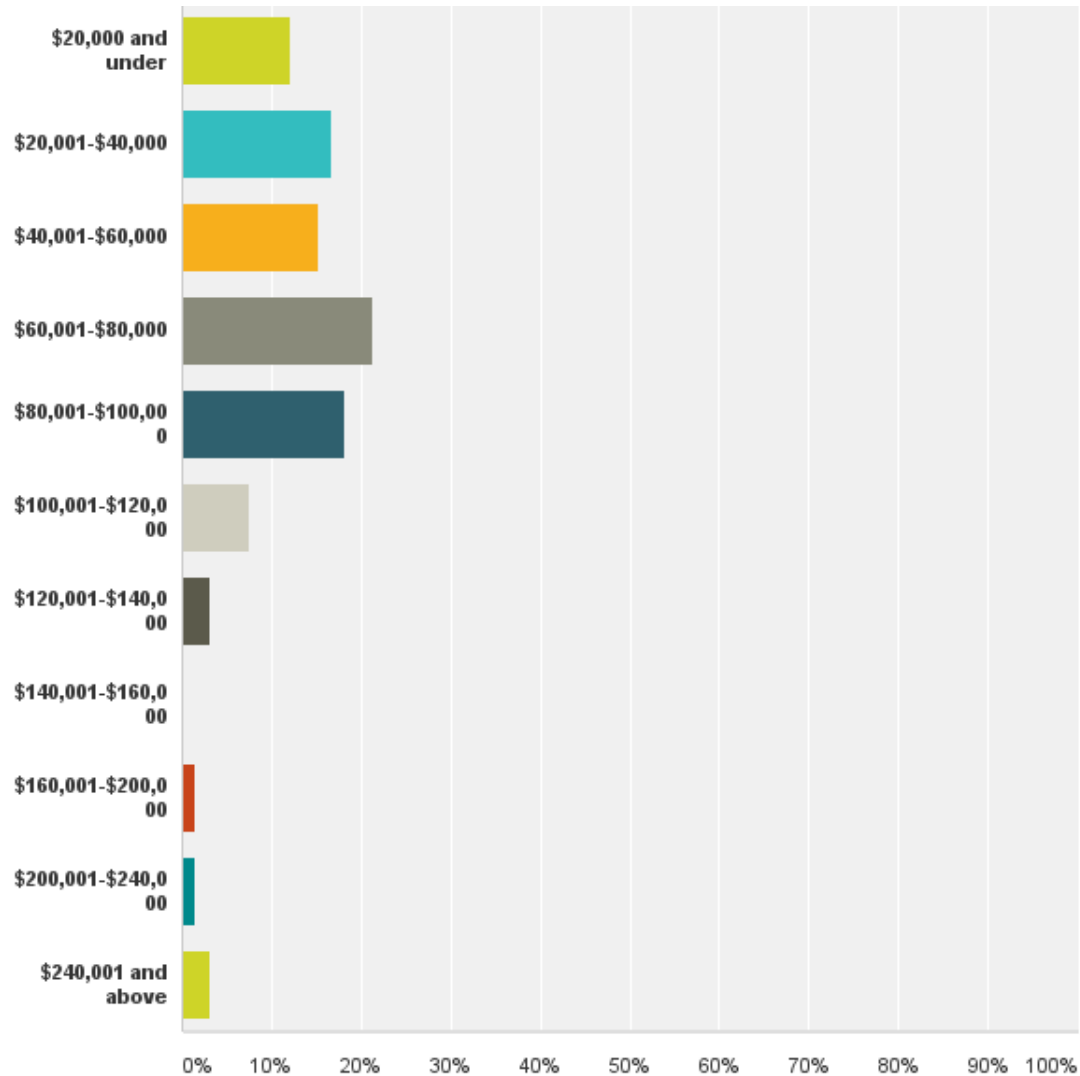
“I spent a year studying, then was employed as a casual at Pagemasters subbing SMH and Canberra Times copy across all sections. I worked on average four or five days a week. At the beginning of this year, when all stories apart from sport were sent to New Zealand for subbing. I was one of about five Sydney subs asked to work on the sports stories for the SMH, the Canberra Times and The Age. The shifts are mostly four hours and I work an average of three four-hour shifts a week. The arrangement is expected to end on December 31, 2015.”

FINDING THEIR FEET

“I now have three portfolio roles - one developing my own company which is a platform for women looking to reconnect with the workforce, one is as the part-time CEO of a NFP which is focused on mentoring and the other is working as a consultant, generally on content strategy.”

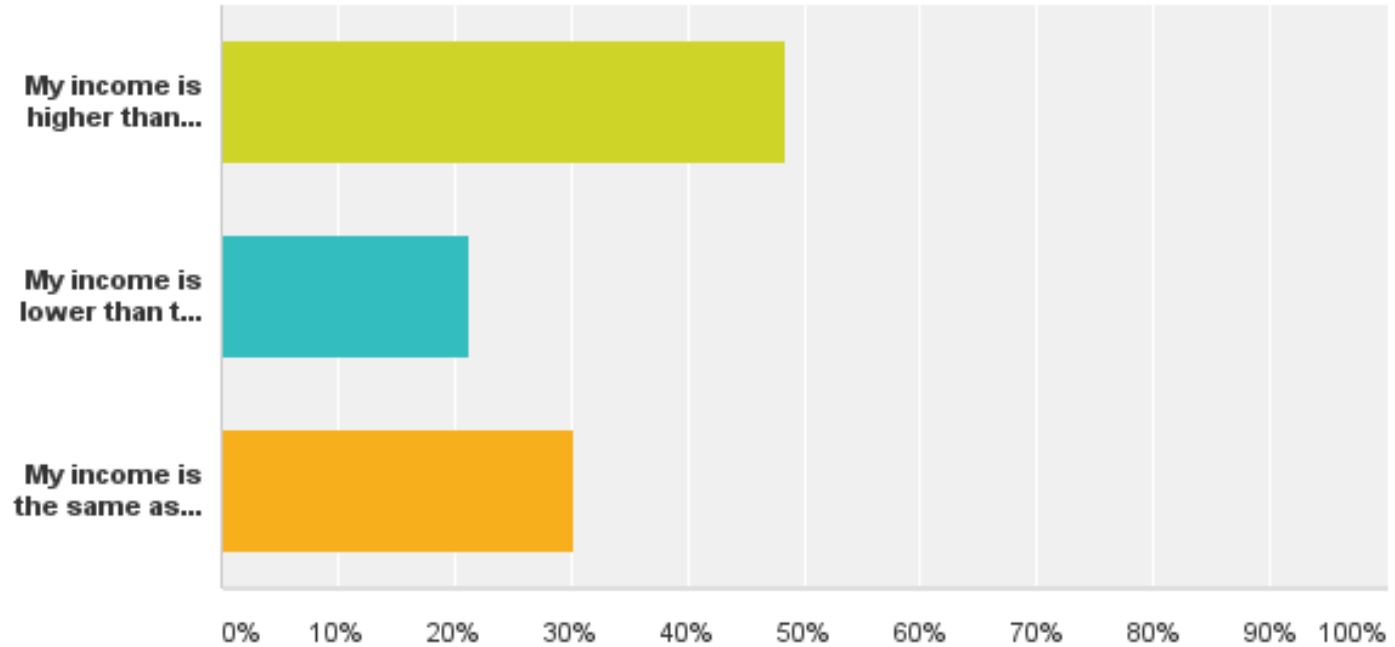
“I'm still a freelancer as I was in the last survey. But my freelance career has grown since then. There is more work available to me than I can handle, so I am able to be selective which jobs I choose and I've also started finding people to do some of the work for me. I've got regular work from a couple of large corporations, I also do some editing work and a few other jobs. In total I'm now paid more than I was pre-redundancy, with a lighter workload and better lifestyle. And my career is still progressing into higher paying and higher skilled jobs. I consider myself lucky to be living the life I am now.”

WORKING IN JOURNALISM - INCOME



WORKING IN JOURNALISM – INCOME COMPARISON WITH 2014

Answered: 66 Skipped: 42



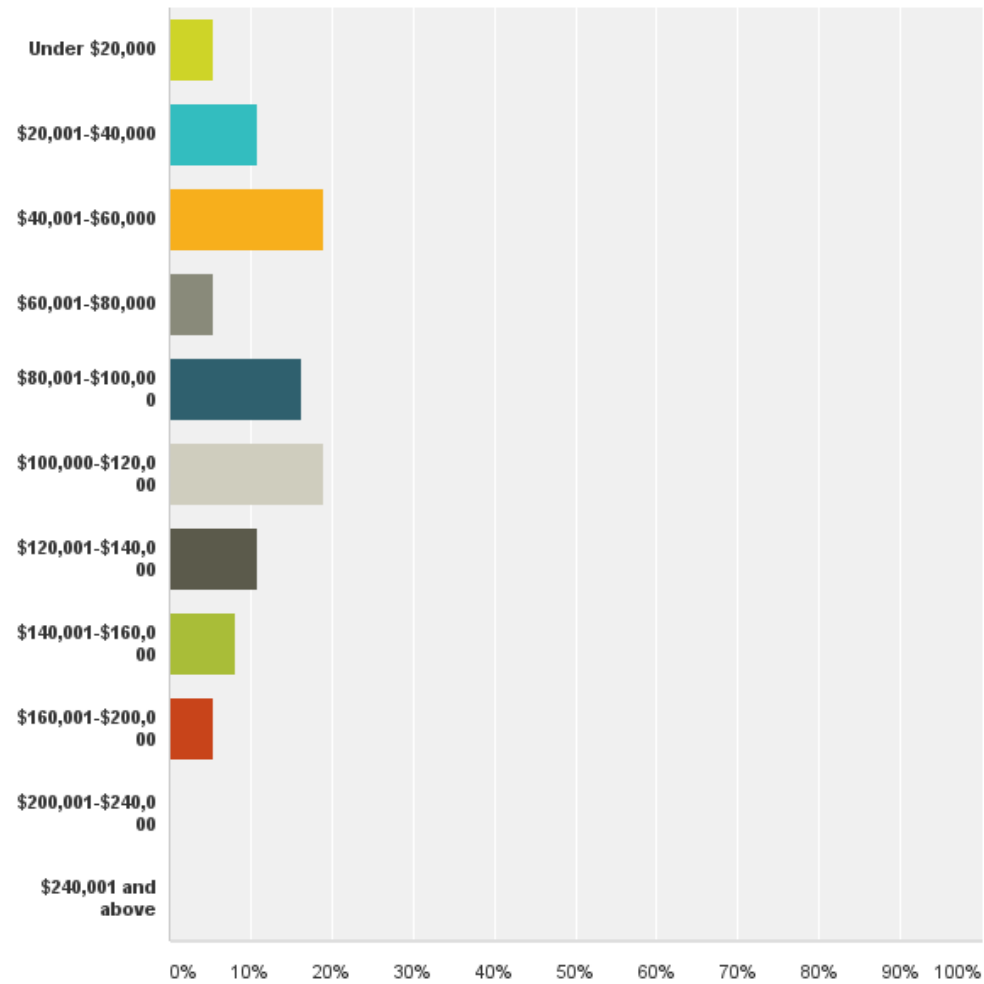
INCOME REFLECTIONS

“My first year out, I made half of what I made at FXJ, the 2nd year I made 80 per cent (before tax), the third year I made the same and this year it looks like I will (with bonuses and unexpected pay rise after three months), I will make about 10 per cent more.”

“I have suffered from severe income loss, but have continued down the pathway of freelancing and writing because I am committed to producing certain kinds of work. I now have to be careful with my money, but am lucky enough to have a full-time working spouse who helps to support my writing. The greatest impact will be on the pathetic contributions I have been able to make to superannuation, compared to before. I will feel this in retirement. I am resentful that media outlets and full-time workers on good pay expect so much quality for so little and may give it up earlier than I had planned to just write fiction (where the return is even lower, but the satisfaction high).”

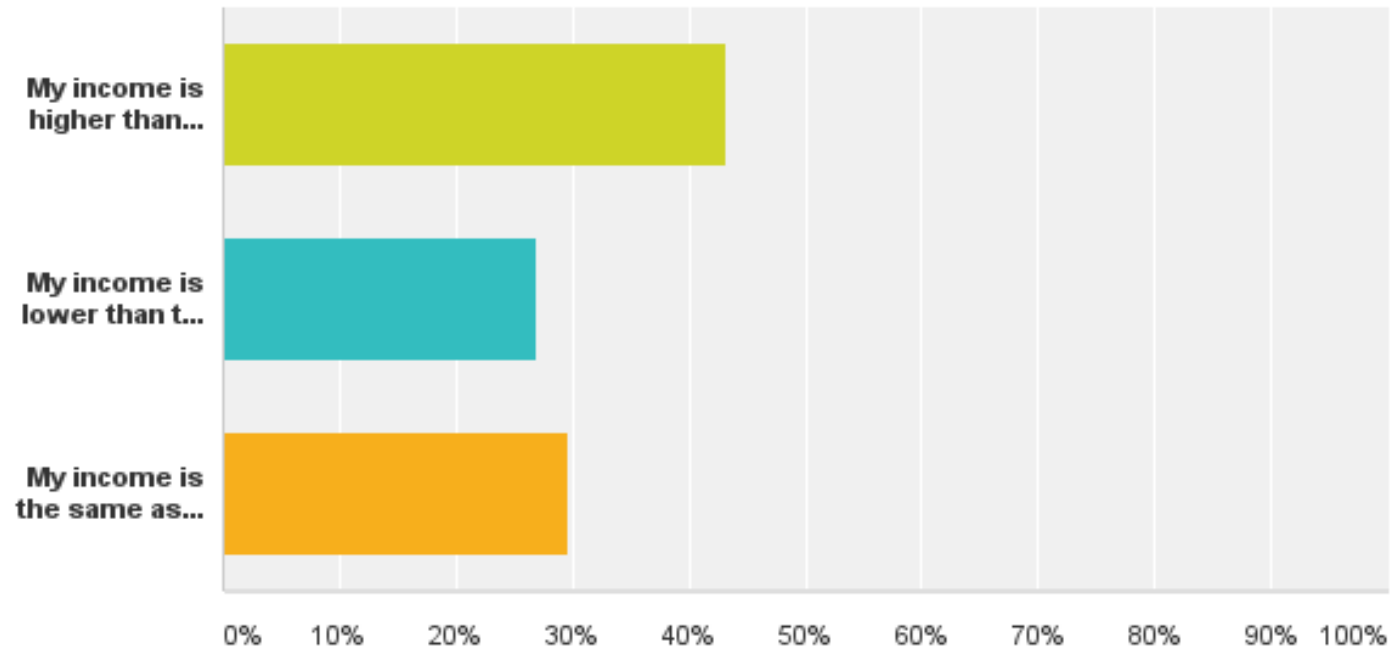
NOT IN JOURNALISM - INCOME

Answered: 37 Skipped: 71



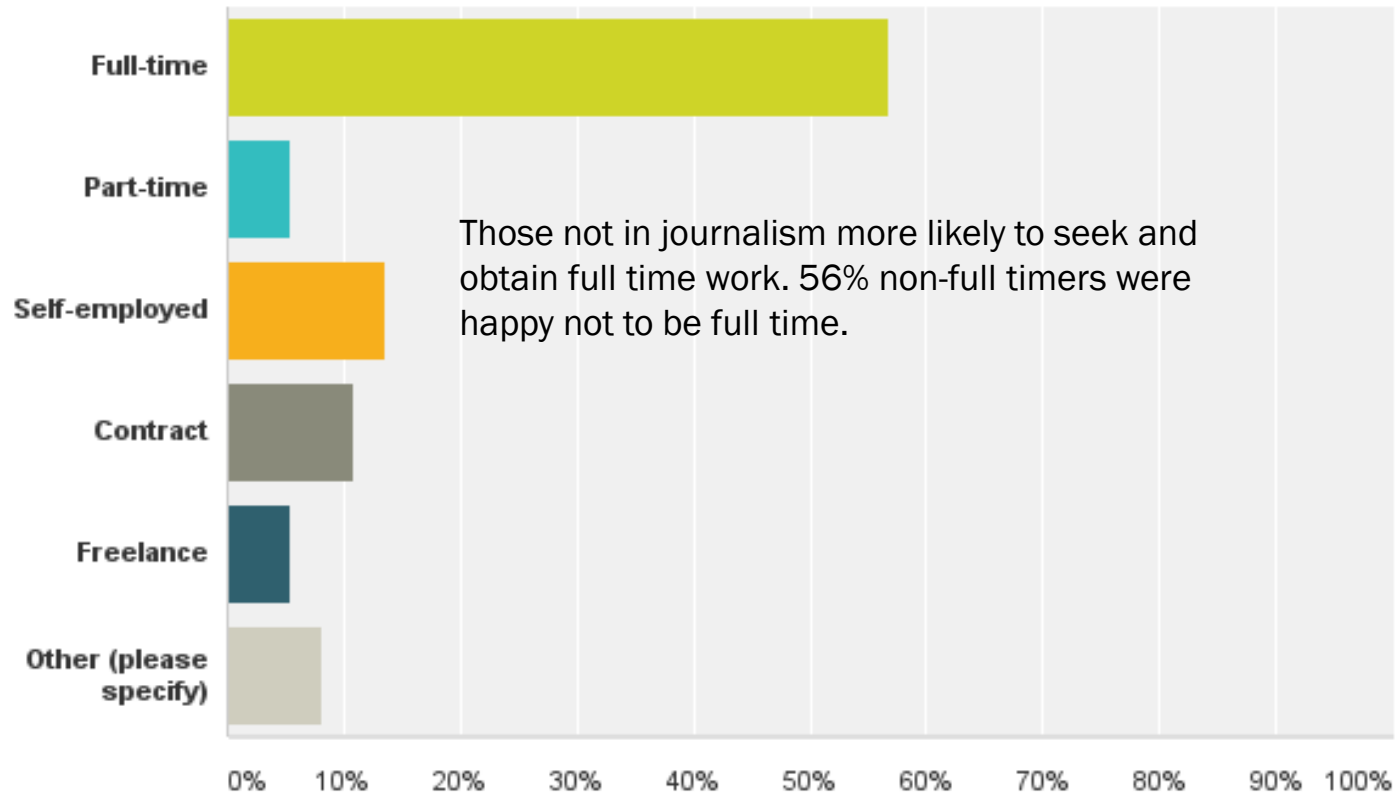
NOT IN JOURNALISM – PERCEIVED INCOME COMPARISON WITH 2014

Answered: 37 Skipped: 71



NOT IN JOURNALISM – EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Answered: 37 Skipped: 71




REFLECTIONS ON REDUNDANCY

“Redundancy was one of the best things that has ever happened to me. But that was mainly because it happened at exactly the right time for me. I was 59 and financially secure and the redundancy money meant I could have stopped working completely. If I had been younger it would have been a different story. It was a voluntary redundancy and I've never regretted making the decision particularly since I've been able to find paid work that I enjoy. Knowing I can walk away at any time is a great feeling. Also, newspapers are stuffed and I had always been a newspaper journalist.”

ANOTHER REDUNDANCY REFLECTION

“No change in recollection - it was dreadfully handled, pulled in to a small room with an envelope sitting on the desk with no explanation as to why we were being given redundancy. Given I produced an exclusive a week, it was pretty obvious they didn't want to pay more for seniors and didn't care about quality work. it was extremely upsetting. I don't think “make sense” is a good choice of phrase in this question - how can you make sense about idiot board members who lose the network money hand over fist through incompetence...then bring in temporary toe cutters in “acting director of news” positions to make the sackings. Yes I understand broadcast media is bleeding, digital platforms eat into audiences, so I understand the economic context in which redundancies have been made, but there is no sense in getting rid of so many good senior journos in print, radio and TV - leaving a huge hole in quality output, not to mention minimal opportunity for younger journalists to be mentored.”

OTHER REFLECTIONS

- “The overwhelming feeling is still sadness. I still feel like lost my dream job, and I'm still adrift despite finding new employment.”
 - “I am pleased I took the redundancy. It involved a substantial payout. And journalism was moving away from the industry I joined in the 1980s.”
 - “I still cannot make sense of it at all.”
- 

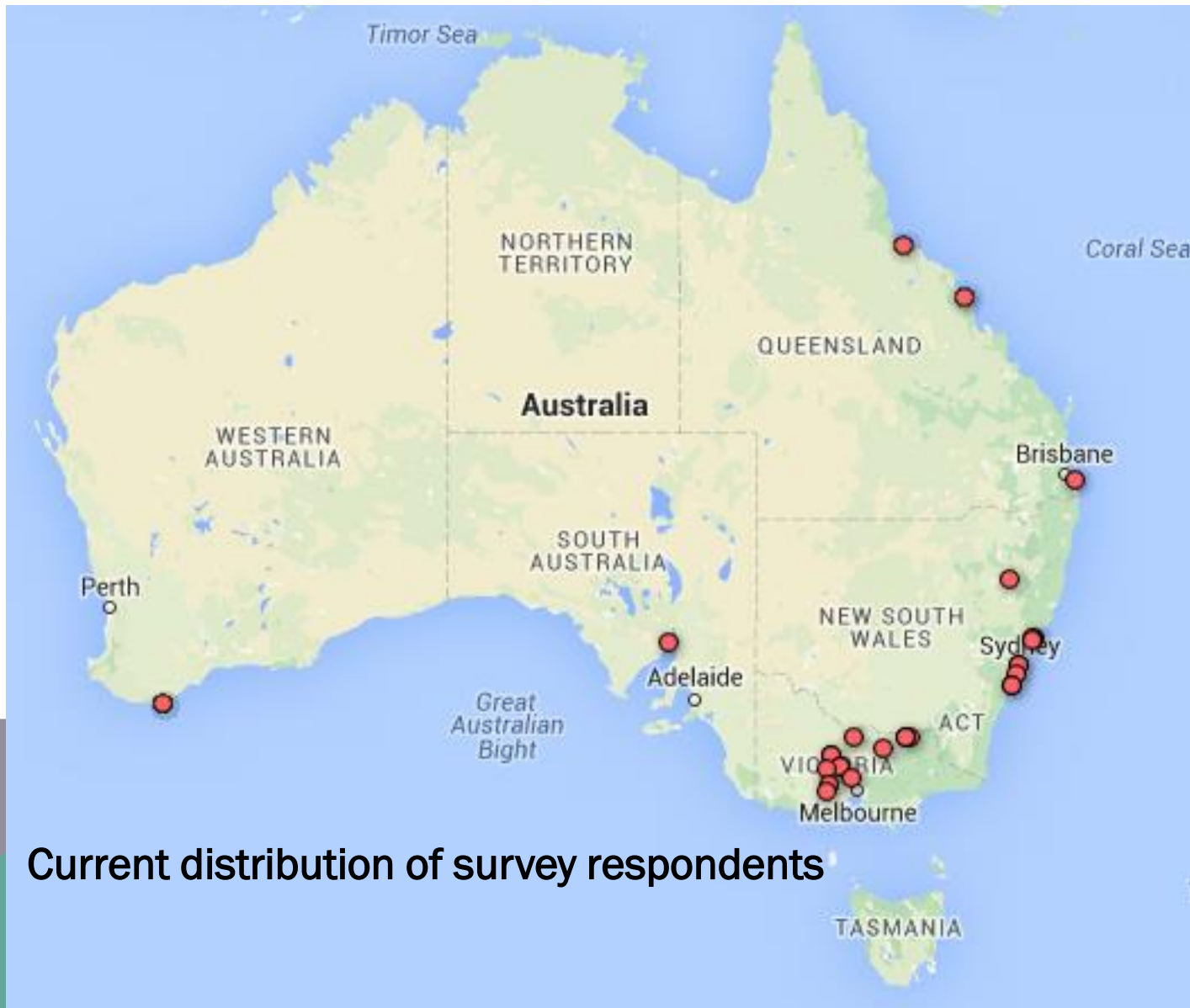
2. REGIONAL & RURAL EXPERIENCES



REGIONAL & RURAL JOB CUTS

- Does job loss in regional and rural centres have more adverse impact on j-careers?
 - Map
 - Involuntary redundancy
 - Re-employment in regional & rural areas: fewer opportunities, less choice
 - Relocation “option”?

REGIONAL & RURAL DISTRIBUTION

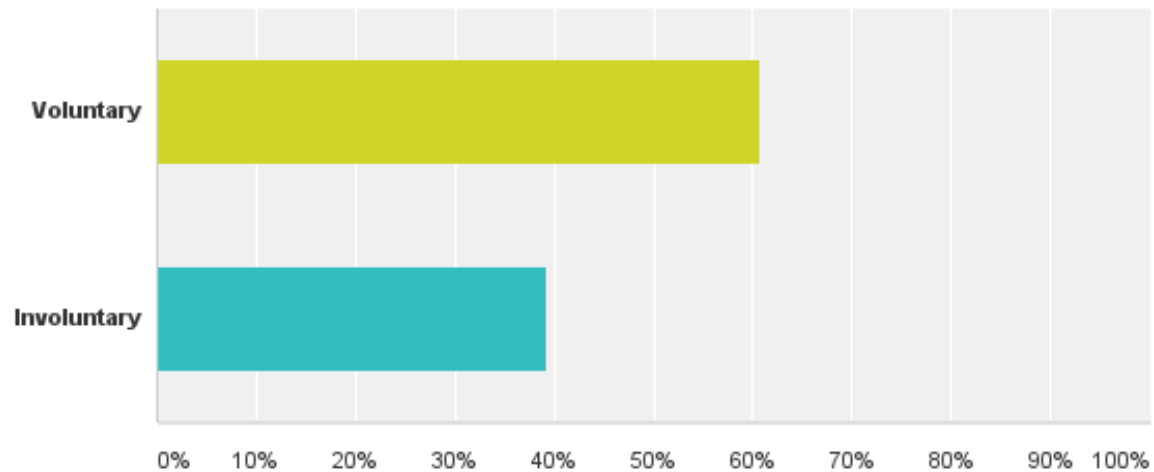


Current distribution of survey respondents

REGIONAL & RURAL - TYPE OF REDUNDANCY

Q12 What type of redundancy did you take?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



QUESTION 15

THE REDUNDANCY EXPERIENCE



POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- **“For me it was great - voluntary reducto and had a new job to go to straight away”**
- **“I was offered a full-time job with another company while the redundancy process was live, and I accepted. As a result I was afforded the Fairfax redundancy, and immediately started my new employment”**

UNEXPECTED & TREATED AS A WRONGDOER

- “Was given no warning, was called into the manager's office with an HR representative present, and told that my services were no longer required. Was given no reason other than my position was now redundant. I asked if there were any other positions within the company available, and was told a blunt no. Even though technically I was given a month's notice of the termination, I was asked to leave work immediately that day, and that the month would be paid out. As such, I was given no chance to farewell colleagues, nor was there any acknowledgement of my years of service such as others had received. The whole process made me feel completely devastated and unworthy, almost as if I had committed some wrongdoing or criminal act, and pretty well marched off the premises...”

SELF-WORTH AND THE RIPPLE EFFECT

- **“Worst time of my life. Felt cheated, worthless, discarded and useless. My poor kids couldn't understand it either and as a father and major breadwinner I was left feeling like I had let them down. Emotionally I was very fragile and in a fog.”**

SADNESS FOR THE PUBLICATION AND THOSE LEFT BEHIND

- **“There is a sense of guilt because of those who remain in the newsroom, particularly those who had sought redundancy and were denied. I know those who remain are working harder than ever in a particularly difficult environment. It is difficult, having been responsible for the welfare of my editorial staff, to set those concerns aside and focus on myself and what I do in the future.”**

ANGER AT MANAGEMENT

- **“I'm appalled that the ABC didn't offer voluntary redundancies. There were many people who'd have happily taken the chance to receive a payout and leave. I feel like my career has been brought to a premature end with no genuine consideration given to assisting me to retrain or redeploy. I feel the process was handled extremely badly by the ABC and I'm angry.”**

MORE ANGER AT MANAGEMENT

- **“I have often woken in the early hours and been unable to sleep as it's not nice facing the sack at 60 years old and then being rejected. I have got through it all by making sick jokes about unFairfax, the company that's on the nose more than a bag of prawns on a hot day and which couldn't even organise a good sacking...”**

AND RESENTMENT...

- **...It has been by far the worst year in my 43 years in journalism and I have come to hate Fairfax and indeed do not wish to engage again with it or any of the other mainstream publishers”**

QUESTION 16

LOOKING FOR WORK



UNDERQUALIFIED

- **“I have applied for several positions, ranging from casual library assistant to retail sales assistant, without even a callback. I have been told by several people that any applicant without a university degree is instantly removed from consideration. There are no formal qualifications attached to a three-year journalism cadetship, which is what the training was when I started in the industry.”**

AGEISM AND LACK OF DIGITAL SKILLS

- **“Terrible. No one wanted to know me because I had little or no digital skills. I applied for many, many media jobs but did not get one interview based on that fact - and I presume my age (42). I gave up looking. Eventually picked up work part time as a concreter and a landscape gardener.”**

HOPE AND HOPES DASHED

- **“I've applied for SO MANY jobs and I am yet to hear anything. I have two I just applied for that I'm hoping to hear back from soon. I suppose it's quite tough economically in Australia at the moment.”**

QUESTION 17

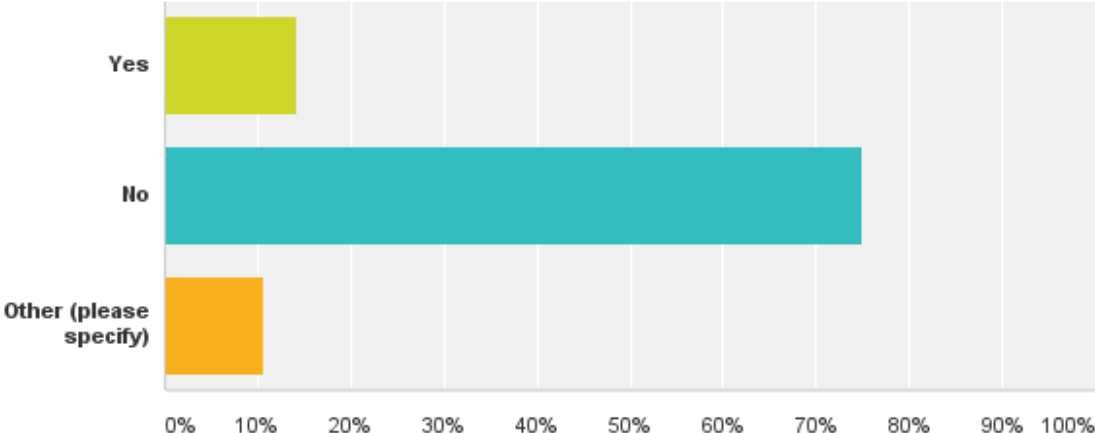
JOB AVAILABILITY



REGIONAL & RURAL – FORCED RELOCATION?

Q18 Have you moved location since your redundancy in search of work?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



SMALL MARKET & FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

- “NO JOURNALISM JOBS ARE AVAILABLE IN MY AREA. Zero! I've applied for one Comms job (fingers crossed) and others have mainly been administration roles as I can not move as my partner and his awesomely stable job is in this town.”

FORCED INTO PR

- **“None. More than 60 metro journo’s have lost jobs and another 40 to go in the next few months. This is a one paper town, ABC was also stripped of staff. So to stay anywhere near words people are going to the dark side of public relations.”**


THE NEW JOBS ARE ONLY FOR THE YOUNG

- “Very limited opportunities and only for people under 20 who waste away their lives staring into their iphones on twitter and facebook 24/7, and can deliver the "news" in 250 characters.”

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR JOURNALISM?



1. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY POST-REDUNDANCY

- Deuze (2005) categorises journalistic ideology as a set of five discursively constructed ideal-typical traits: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics.
 - How do concepts of professional identity – or the framework that journalists use to define their work – travel with them post redundancy?
 - Question: Respondents were asked to discuss their professional identity post-redundancy.
- 

LOSS OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

First category: Those who have redefined themselves (distant).

- “It's taken a while to stop thinking of myself as a journalist as it has defined my life for so long, but no particular issues.”
- “see myself more as a storyteller and communicator now, rather than a crusading journalist. It was a bit sad to lose the cachet that came with being a journalist.”

REDEFINING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Second category: who are in the process of redefining (somewhat).

- “I am working more in community development than journalism at the moment. I had an identity crisis when I first left, but now consider myself both a journalist and community development worker.”
- “People still regard me essentially as a journo, but I don't quite regard myself as one any more. Partly a journo, but partly something else too.”
- “I suppose most people still know me as a journalist and, given I do regular freelance work, I still am. When people ask me what I do, I still tell them I am a journalist... and then I have to explain that I now teach journalism and do some freelancing. It's strange in that sense, but I do wonder when I will start telling people I am a university lecturer.”

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY INTACT

Third category: those who clearly defined themselves by journalism (intact)

- “I can't say my professional identity has changed greatly. I am still - and will always be - a journalist to my core.”
- “I still consider myself a journalist. It's what I am, and always will be.”
- “I still call myself a journalist, even though I'm not.”

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY POST-REDUNDANCY

STILL IN JOURNALISM (122)

- Purely journalism (65)
- Intact – 24 (36.9%)
- Somewhat – 36 (55.3%)
- Distant – 2 (3%)

- Journalism & other work (57)
- Intact – 13 (22.8%)
- Somewhat – 31 (54.4%)
- Distant – 11 (19.3%)

NOT IN JOURNALISM (48)

- Intact – 16 (33.3%)
- Somewhat – 15 (31.2%)
- Distant – 14 (29.7%)

JOURNALISTIC VALUES PERSIST

Even if they have moved to other forms of work, they use journalistic values to drive this work.

- “Some journalists appeared to no longer count me as a journalist - though I had worked for more than three decades as one. There seems to be a feeling among many journalists that once you become a political media adviser, you have traded your journalistic spurs in - sold your soul, if you like. You have crossed to the dark side of "spin doctoring". At heart, I still consider myself a journalist, applying the same rigid ethics and the same skills - especially in writing exercises (speeches, media releases etc).”

BEING NOBODY VS. BEING A JOURNALIST

Other implications: the loss of status.

- “Having worked for a well known newspaper, it was a bit difficult being a "nobody" with no automatic outlet for stories.”

How losing a platform changes how journalists can act.

- “Sometimes I'm reluctant to call myself a journalist, maybe more a writer or content producer, because I still maintain an ideal of a journalist as someone who publishes important things that not everybody wants published. There are a lot of vested interests in the way in the freelance world. But I still call myself a journalist, the skills are there for anyone who wants to stand behind me as I use them.”

2. JOB LOSS & COLLECTIVE STRUCTURES

- MEAA estimates 2500 jobs lost from news industry since 2012 (Scott, 2015).
- Survey of 343 Canadian digital journalists found, “union representation has been an important if under-assessed means of resisting or adapting to changing technologies and working conditions” (Cohen et al., 2014).
- RQ: What does job loss mean for union membership and the collective structures of journalism?

MEAA & STRATEGIC UNIONISM

- **Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance is trade union that represents ~ 1/3 j-workforce.**
 - Main news industry union since 1992 merger with Australian Journalists' Association (AJA); Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) defunct by 1995.
 - Advocates 'strategic unionism' to save jobs and extend employee participation in workplace reorganisation.
 - Launched 'Future of Journalism' campaign in 2008 in bid to limit job cuts and pressure employers to invest in training.
 - In 2014, adopted 'professionalised structure", CEO appointed by elected Board, widely criticised as 'corporatisation'.

JOB CUTS & MEAA MEMBERSHIP 2008 - 2014

Year	MEAA Membership	Media Section	Annual Loss	Cumulative Loss	Cumulative Loss as %
2008	19,486	7902	~	~	
2009	19,237	7852	- 50	- 50	- 0.6 %
2010	17,979	7364	- 488	- 538	- 6.8 %
2011	17,235	7206	- 158	- 696	- 8.8 %
2012	16,739	7024	- 182	- 878	- 11.1 %
2013	16,027	6379	- 645	- 1523	- 19.3 %
2014	15,580	5913	- 466	- 1989	- 25.2 %

Source: MEAA Annual Reports 2008 - 2014

LOSS OF MEMBERS, LOSS OF BARGAINING POWER

- MEAA membership in sharp decline.
- Union has withdrawn from public debate about the future of journalism, “decent” jobs and sustainable newsroom change.
- Australian journalists still benefit from union representation through workplace agreements that give them a say in workplace change processes and “decent” redundancy payments.
- Journalists no longer control news work.

ADVERSE JOB TRENDS & NEWS QUALITY

- Job cuts linked to employment insecurity, work intensification, and loss of stable newsroom workflows and routines.
- In turn, these trends raise questions about declining news quality, digital newsroom training deficit, pressures of multi-media newsgathering/reporting/user engagement, and competition from aggregators, bloggers and CJs.
- Main concern: how to collectively develop digital journalism norms and standards in adverse circumstances? (O'Donnell et al., 2012, pp. 41-42).

ROLE OF WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS?

FAIRFAX METRO DAILIES AGREEMENT 2012-2014

NEWS LIMITED TRANSITIONAL AGREEMENT 2015-2016

Minimum weekly rates of pay for all companies before tax

Redundancy

Voluntary redundancies must first be offered across the business unit concerned.

Redundancy payments are two weeks' severance pay plus four weeks' pay per year of service.

Pro rata long service leave is paid for those with five years or more service.

If you went part-time for parental, study or other reasons, your redundancy will be calculated on the basis of your average over the last five years or 12 months (whichever is greater) before your last day at work. Periods of unpaid leave or parental leave will be excluded.

Grade	1/07/2015	Grade	1/07/2015
	Metros		Regionals
Cadet Yr 1	\$779.60	Cadet Yr 1	\$621.60
Cadet Yr 2	\$883.50	Cadet Yr 2	\$765.00
Cadet Yr 3	\$987.50	Cadet Yr 3	\$860.74
J1	\$1,039.50	J 1(a)	\$956.20
J2	\$1,176.00	J 1 (b)	\$997.60
J3	\$1,356.80	J 2 (a)	\$1,081.00
J4	\$1,447.40	J 2 (b)	\$1,164.50
J5	\$1,538.20	J 3	\$1,205.80
J6	\$1,673.40	J 4	\$1,288.80
J7	\$1,808.90	J 5 (a)	\$1,355.40
J8	\$1,877.20	J 5 (b)	\$1,413.50
J9	\$2,171.10	J 6	\$1,513.30
J10	\$2,487.70	J 7	\$1,596.50
EA 1	\$1,033.90	J 8	\$1,661.90
EA 2	\$1,129.60		

DOES PARTICIPATION IN WORKPLACE CHANGE MATTER?

NEWS CORP ADELAIDE
DIGITAL NEWSROOM 2010

FAIRFAX MEDIA
DIGITAL-FIRST MODEL 2012



Industry at a Glance

Newspaper Publishing in 2014-15

Key Statistics Snapshot

Revenue

\$4.1bn

Annual Growth 10-15

-8.5%

Annual Growth 15-20

-4.0%

Profit

\$530.8m

Wages

\$1.5bn

Businesses

400

- Outlook is “grim”; Internet blamed for decline of highly profitable newspaper industry (Little, 2015).
 - 2014-15 Revenue A\$4.1 billion, down from 2008-09 A\$6.7 billion.
 - 2014-15 Employment 18,305 jobs, down from 2008-09 24,803 jobs.

CONCLUSIONS

UNION STRENGTHS


- Wages/conditions maintained via collective bargaining. Work intensification monitored.
- Management must consult staff on workplace reorganisation.
- Voluntary redundancies must be offered before dismissals.


UNION WEAKNESSES

- Why 66% non-members? Has union lost relevance? What is the real rationale for new structure?
- Employers not persuaded to retain and re-train staff for digital.
- Irreversible trends = employment insecurity, contract/casual workforce.

New Beats Project

A STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISM REDUNDANCIES

 @NewBeatsProject

 www.newbeatsblog.com

THANK YOU!

l.zion@latrobe.edu.au

penny.odonnell@sydney.edu.au

matthew.ricketson@canberra.edu.au

adodd@swin.edu.au

t.marjoribanks@latrobe.edu.au

m.sherwood@latrobe.edu.au