



NEW BEATS REPORT

MASS REDUNDANCIES AND CAREER
CHANGE IN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISM





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project grant, LP140100341 (2014-2019) and our Linkage Project partners, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Library of Australia. Our project manager, Robin Harper, and her predecessor, Jay Denham, have been beacons of support throughout the life of the project. We also thank Brad Buller for his work as a research assistant, and Dr Steinar Ellingsen for designing the Redundancy Timeline as featured on our blog.

Design by LX9 Design
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ISBN-13: 978-0-9876395-0-9 (Print)
ISBN-13: 978-0-9876395-1-6 (PDF)

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Timeline

We would like to dedicate this report to all Australian journalists facing job loss or forced career change, and in particular the more than 200 respondents who shared their experiences over a four-year period for this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The New Beats study

recruited 225 participants in 2014 from an estimated 2,000 journalists whose positions became redundant between 2012 and 2014, and we surveyed them annually between 2014 and 2017.

Key Findings

- Most of the respondents had more than 25 years' experience as journalists at the time of their initial redundancy. More than half of them were over the age of 50 at the time of the 2014 survey.
- A majority of those who took part in the initial survey came from Fairfax Media (47.6%) or News Limited (now News Corp Australia) (34.2%), with the remainder from a wide range of Australian newspapers, magazines, TV and radio news outlets. From this cohort, the number of completed responses was 113 in 2015, 123 in 2016 and 120 in 2017.
- While most reported that they were continuing to work in some form of journalism for at least some of the time, only around 10% of respondents worked in full-time journalism roles at the time of each of the surveys. Before their positions were made redundant, 77% were in full-time journalism roles.
- Throughout the survey period, most who looked for employment found at least some work, but working life became more precarious for many.
- Respondents continued to experience changes in their work arrangements across the lifespan of the project, with many working for multiple employers, sometimes simultaneously. Only 10% of them in the 2017 survey indicated that they had been employed in the same organisation or role since their initial redundancy.
- Membership of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) declined significantly post-job loss, even for those re-employed in journalism work of some kind. Around 73% of respondents indicated they were union members at the time of their redundancy (2012-2014). By 2017, about 46% of those still working in journalism in some capacity had union membership.
- While the Union had some critics, many respondents, both union and non-union members, acknowledged the support MEAA provided to them post-job loss.
- Overall, there was a decline in professional identification with journalism among respondents, with more than twice the number of participants describing their identity as journalists as 'weak' or 'fading' compared with 'remaining intact'.
- Despite these changes to professional identity, nearly all former journalists who had moved into other forms of work told us that they found their journalism skills were useful.
- Income fell sharply in the immediate aftermath of redundancy, but gradually recovered, although those who worked in a combination of journalism and other roles, or outside of journalism, did better financially than those who remained solely in journalism.
- While redundancy was a traumatic experience for many respondents, a majority reported that they experienced an improved sense of well-being after leaving their jobs, which was often directly associated with having left stressful workplaces.
- For all the occupational challenges confronted by many of the respondents, by 2017 they were generally satisfied with their working arrangements by a margin of 73% to 11%.
- Gender and age were perceived issues for many respondents in finding work. Almost half of all women who completed the final survey felt that they had experienced some form of gender bias, and just over half of all respondents over the age of 50 said they had experienced ageism when seeking work.
- Nearly all respondents continued to keep in touch with former workmates, with many finding these ongoing relationships to be of benefit both socially and professionally.
- Overall, there was more pessimism than optimism about the future of journalism.

NEW BEATS PROJECT – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

JOB LOSS IN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISM

New Beats is a longitudinal study of the aftermath of mass job cuts in Australian journalism following the newspaper industry's shift to digital-first production from 2012. The five-year research project has been mapping job loss across journalism and surveying those who have experienced redundancy to develop new insights into the scope and scale of occupational change and its implications. It has followed the lived experiences of job loss and re-employment through four annual surveys of a cohort of 225 journalists who lost their jobs in the period 2012 to 2014, using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The annual surveys, undertaken from 2014 to 2017, asked whether and how those who left newsrooms are adapting their traditional skills and remaking their careers in digital media. We have been tracking and analysing the experiences of those who are re-employed in journalism, those having difficulty finding paid journalistic work, and those who now work in other industries or who have left the labour market.

The project is funded by the Australian Research Council through a Linkage Project grant, LP140100341 (2014-2019), and a Discovery Project grant, DP150102675 (2015-2019). Production of this report is supported by the Linkage grant. The research team consists of six Chief Investigators (CIs) from five universities. The Lead CI and one other CI are from La Trobe University, while the other CIs are employed at Deakin University, the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney and Swinburne University of Technology. There are also three industry partners in the Linkage project: the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the National Library of Australia (NLA), and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

This report is a summary and analysis of the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 survey results. Its aim is to provide stakeholders, journalism researchers, and the wider public with our main findings. In addition to this report, we have published a

number of other research outputs, including academic articles, conference presentations, and media pieces. Some of these are noted at the end of this report.

The surveys are complemented by 60 whole-of-life interviews with journalists talking about the broad arc of their careers before and after job loss. The National Library of Australia is curating the interviews through its Oral History and Folklore Collection. Material from these interviews will also be incorporated in podcasts and radio programs. These interviews are not mentioned in this report, which focuses on the surveys.

In response to a surge of journalism job losses in rural and regional Australia in 2015, we also conducted a one-off survey with journalists whose positions were made redundant in rural and regional news outlets (See Zion et al., 2016b). Through our ARC Discovery Project grant, we have also internationalised the project by partnering or engaging with researchers in The Netherlands, Indonesia, the US, Canada, South Africa, Finland and Brazil. In June 2018, we conducted an event discussing jobs after journalism with a number of these associates at the Melbourne Press Club (Melbourne Press Club, 2018). New Beats has also contributed to policy debates through submissions made to two Senate Inquiries: the Future of Public Interest Journalism Inquiry (Parliament of Australia, 2018a) and the Senate Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers (Parliament of Australia, 2018b).

Through this suite of research and dissemination and engagement activities, the New Beats project has aimed to create greater understanding of the process and aftermath of redundancy in journalism and of the human effects and societal ramifications for an industry and occupation undergoing profound change. In practical terms, the project has also sought to provide detailed information to journalists and their advocates in the union on topics such as the likelihood of finding work, labour market demand for journalistic expertise, possible new career directions, re-training, and the impact of redundancy on professional identity,

family life and well-being. More details of our research can be found on the project blog, www.newbeatsblog.com.

UNDERSTANDING JOB CUTS AND INDUSTRY CHANGE

In 2012, the Australian news media experienced the most serious contraction in its history. The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) has calculated that around 1,000 journalists were made redundant or lost their jobs in that year alone (Christensen, 2013). The majority of these redundancies were from Fairfax Media and News Limited (now News Corp Australia), with further losses continuing each year since then. By the end of 2014, when the first of the four annual surveys was conducted by this team, the number of jobs lost over the previous three years was estimated to be around 2000. In 2018 MEAA estimated that 3,000 journalism jobs have been lost from large media companies since 2011 (MEAA, 2017, p. 6). Australia's commercial media companies did not cut jobs to the same extent as their North American and British counterparts around the 2008 global financial crisis, but they were nevertheless contracting. An estimated 700 jobs were lost in Australia during 2008 and 2009 (Este, Warren, Murphy, & Alliance, 2010, p. 3), but hopes remained high that the extent of journalism layoffs by then experienced in the United States (Brownlee & Beam, 2012) and Britain might have been avoided. In 2010, Christopher Warren, the then head of MEAA, began his introduction to a report about the future of journalism with the observation that: 'For many of us, 2010 brought with it a degree of optimism that the "carnage" that had been forecast for the business of journalism has abated somewhat' (Este et al., 2010, p. 3).

But it hadn't. What changed in 2012 was the realisation that this was not just a correction; rather, numbers would not recover, and hopes for a new sustainable business model for newspapers, to replace the 'rivers of gold' provided by classified advertising, had been dashed. Despite efforts to build digital revenue streams through online advertising

and subscriptions, media companies have since faced a further contraction of revenue as Google and Facebook have forged what has been described as a duopoly in digital advertising, with brutal consequences for media company revenues (Letts, 2016). Significant job losses have also occurred at commercial broadcast companies. Network Ten, which made heavy cuts to its news operations in 2013, went into receivership in June 2017 before being bought by American broadcaster CBS later that year. Meanwhile, job losses at the ABC were blamed on government funding cuts.

MEAA's estimate of 3,000 journalist job losses notwithstanding, the precise number of job losses is impossible to determine for several reasons. These include corporate reticence about revealing details of job shedding, lack of data on newsroom employment across Australia, and lack of clarity around how many of the media job cuts specifically target journalism roles. And while most journalism job losses in Australia since 2012 have come from redundancies – voluntary or forced – this doesn't account for all additional jobs that were lost by not replacing those journalists who have resigned or retired.

That said, the scale of job loss within the print, television and radio industries, that are now classified as legacy media, has been enormous. By one reckoning, Fairfax had around 1,000 editorial staff in 2011. Half of these jobs were gone by mid-2017, when a further redundancy round cut 125 jobs, leaving only around 375 editorial staff, spread across *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *The Australian Financial Review*, and the Sunday papers, *The Sun Herald* and *The Sunday Age*. In November 2018, Australia's competition regulator approved the Nine takeover of Fairfax Media without placing any conditions, including on job protection. This has raised widespread concerns that a pooling of journalists from the two companies will lead to job cuts, and may jeopardise the continued operation of existing mastheads, especially in regional areas.

The impact of this scale of journalist job loss has been compounded by the decline in ancillary roles in newspapers, which in some cases have lost more than 75% of their total staff since 2012. As *Newcastle Herald* journalist Ian Kirkwood told ABC TV's *Media Watch* in 2015: 'We're going from 110 staff a few years ago to 24 and I just don't think you can expect the paper to realistically be the same ... Our fear is that it won't have the relevance to readers anymore' (*"Newcastle Herald cuts hit hard - ABC Media Watch,"* 2015). Such examples also highlight that it is not only absolute numbers of job losses that are significant, but also the relative proportions of job losses to jobs remaining.

While acknowledging the challenge of verifying precise numbers on a national scale, the New Beats project has attempted to capture reported job losses since 2012 through a timeline on our blog: <http://www.newbeatsblog.com/redundancy-timeline/>. Included on this timeline, a version of which can be found at the end of this report, are details of journalist job shedding at everything from metropolitan daily newspapers to regional radio newsrooms and specialist online publications.

RE-EMPLOYMENT AFTER JOB LOSS: DIFFERENT FIGURES TELL DIFFERENT STORIES

If it is difficult to monitor the number of job losses in journalism, it is even more challenging to identify and track the number of new journalism jobs. An array of news publications has been launched in Australia during the last five years, including, but not limited to, *The New Daily*, *Junkee*, *The Saturday Paper*, ANZ's *Blue Notes*, and the weekly print publication, *Newcastle Sunday*, as well as Australian editions of *Buzzfeed*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *HuffPost*. However, the numbers of journalists hired by these publications has been low when compared with the staffing of traditional print news rooms, and not all new ventures have survived. *Newcastle Sunday* closed after just 11 issues (Samios, 2017a), and the

aforementioned *HuffPost Australia* ceased operating in 2017 (Samios, 2017b).

Attempts to assess the availability of journalism work have been complicated by the new categories of journalistic tasks found in digital newsrooms, and their related new job descriptors (e.g. content manager, audience curator). Moreover, occupation tracking undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as part of its five-yearly national census, does not seem to have kept pace with change. The 2016 census data has so far not produced a detailed snapshot of the journalism workforce. This means there is a lack of data to support comparative analysis of job growth or decline over time.

The most recent relevant data available is from the 2011 census. It suggests a small decline in the number of print journalists in the five years to 2011, but an overall growth in the journalistic workforce from 15,573 to 16,125, due to increased numbers of bloggers, critics, editorial assistants and photojournalists (see Fuller, 2014). But researcher Folker Hanusch's close reading of the 2011 data, by industry, found the more likely tally of journalists from that census was 10,691. His count included self-identified journalists or editors in paid employment in newspaper publishing, magazine and other periodical publishing, internet publishing and broadcasting, radio and free-to-air television broadcasting, as well as cable and other subscription broadcasting (Hanusch, 2013, p. 32).

Union membership is another indicator of journalism workforce trends. A significant, if predictable, decline in the membership of MEAA's media section followed mass redundancies, particularly in the 2012-2014 period. In 2017, the union created a new category of membership called CommsPro to offset this decline and remain relevant to next-gen 'hybrid' media professionals working across journalism, digital content production, and public relations (MEAA, 2018, p. 4).

However defined, work and conditions of employment for journalists are changing and becoming more uncertain.



While most journalism job losses in Australia since 2012 have come from redundancies – voluntary or forced – this doesn't account for all additional jobs that are lost by not replacing those journalists who have resigned or retired.

The rise of the so-called 'gig economy', which is reconfiguring work in the 21st century, is being felt particularly strongly, and suddenly, in journalism, which is no longer the relatively secure, unionised and middle-class occupation of the past. In 2017, the share of full-time work in journalism had declined to just over 69% of the journalism workforce, below the national average across all occupations in 2016 of around 75% (O'Donnell & Zion, 2018). In Australia as elsewhere, precarious or irregular forms of employment such as casual contracts and freelancing, are on the rise. There is evidence of consequent downward pressure on freelance rates for journalists.

NEW BEATS PROJECT – SURVEY METHOD

The four New Beats surveys were conducted annually from 2014 to 2017 with the cohort consisting of participants whose positions were made redundant from Australian newsrooms in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The initial 2014 survey, which attracted 225

completed responses, provided insights into experiences of redundancy and its aftermath, many of which were detailed in our research article 'Working for less: the aftermath for journalists made redundant in Australia between 2012 and 2014' (Zion et al., 2016). The project then followed this cohort of respondents for three subsequent annual surveys (2015–2017) to provide longitudinal data on how journalists careers evolve over time following job loss.

The survey rationale and design drew directly on insights gained from an exploratory pilot study undertaken in 2013 (O'Donnell, Zion, & Sherwood, 2016). Three insights gleaned from the pilot study were particularly helpful. First, finding journalists affected by job loss proved difficult once they had left newsrooms. But we found the non-probability method of snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Ryan, 2009) provided an effective way of recruiting, especially through their formal and informal professional networks and through our partnership with MEAA,

which approached some members to see if they would be willing to be invited to be potential survey participants.

Second, we found that questions about potentially sensitive issues (e.g. income loss) needed specific measurable quantitative information rather than general descriptive answers to enable in-depth analysis of major post-redundancy trends drawn from detailed results.

Third, because we wanted the project to have practical benefits, we asked pilot study respondents to nominate topics of concern and included questions on themes they identified in the subsequent 2014 survey. These included the availability and requirements of journalism job openings, skills needed to remain competitive in the job market, and types of journalism required in current employment compared to previous jobs.

The group surveyed in 2014 were Australian journalists who left their jobs through a redundancy process between 2012 and 2014. Potential research respondents were identified using a call-out to interested parties via



Respondents continued to experience changes in their work arrangements across the lifespan of the project, with many working for multiple employers, sometimes simultaneously.

the New Beats website, the pilot survey database, industry contacts provided with permission by MEAA, published lists of journalists who had been made redundant in publications such as *Crikey* (see, for instance, Crikey, 2012), and personal contacts. These journalists were invited via email to participate in a survey about their individual job loss and post-redundancy experiences over a four-year period. Those who agreed were asked to share details of the survey with other colleagues who had lost their newsroom job between 2012 and 2014. In addition, Twitter and other social media platforms were used to recruit potential respondents. In this way, snowball sampling enabled us to identify and invite the participation of approximately 500 journalists, just under half of whom went on to complete the 2014 survey.

One limitation that this study acknowledges is that using snowball or respondent-driven sampling (Lee, 2009) runs the risk of over-representing those most invested in the topic

(e.g. dissatisfied ex-journalists). Given the lack of an authoritative and independent list of journalists whose positions had been made redundant, however, alternative methods such as random sampling were not possible with this particular professional group.

The data collection instrument was a self-administered online survey of questions that was developed by the research team, drawing on insights from the research literature and other survey instruments, and accessed using the cloud-based SurveyMonkey tool. Of the 52 questions in the 2014 survey, eight concerned the respondents' journalism career, there were nine questions about the redundancy experience, 20 questions on current work situations either in journalism or another field, five questions about making sense of change, five questions on demographic information and five questions about future involvement with the New Beats project. Seventeen of the questions were open-ended, in

order to collect qualitative data about the respondents' redundancy experiences.

Some of the questions were asked across all four surveys, while other themes that emerged from survey responses were followed up with new specific questions in subsequent surveys. These included a suite of questions in the final survey seeking details of career paths since redundancy. While the number of respondents declined after the first survey, sufficient numbers remained each year to allow for meaningful analysis of results across the four years of the survey. However, due to anonymity and ethics requirements, we were not able to track the specific individuals within the cohort who completed the surveys across the life of the project.

Having set out the background context for the New Beats project, we will now present and discuss some of the key results from the research.

WHO WERE THEY?

As shown in the demographic data in Figure 1, right, the cohort in 2014 was overwhelmingly aged 41 and above (85.3%) and was tertiary educated (70.7%). There were more male respondents than female (57.8% to 42.2%). Most respondents had undertaken some form of journalism education. For example, 48.9% had completed a journalism cadetship and 31.1% had completed a related undergraduate degree. The demographics of the cohort in each of the three subsequent years remained mostly similar. One difference which should be noted is that the population did trend older over time (beyond the fact that the whole cohort was three years older in the final survey), with a higher percentage of those aged 60 and over completing the survey in 2017 – compared to any other year.

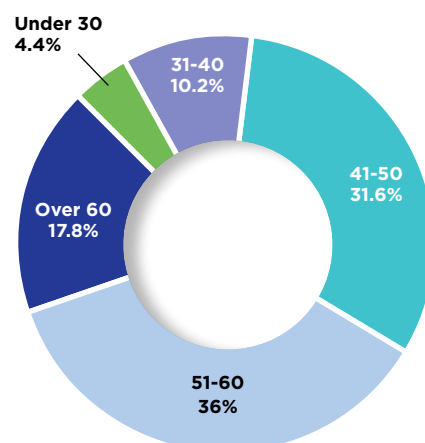
Figure 6 provides further contextual information for the research by showing the year of redundancy for respondents. Almost two-thirds of those who completed the 2014 survey experienced redundancy in 2012, following the newspaper industry's shift to digital-first production. Despite some variations from year to year, those who took redundancies in 2012 continued to be the largest group in all subsequent surveys.

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

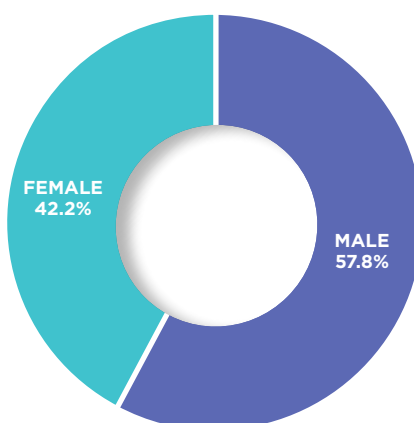
Most of the respondents to the 2014 survey had significant experience in print journalism. The two major Australian newspaper companies, Fairfax Media and News Limited (now News Corp Australia) accounted for more than 80% of the them (47.6% and 34.2% respectively). Overall, more than half of the cohort had worked for more than 25 years as journalists at the time of their redundancies. More than three quarters took a voluntary – as against forced – redundancy (76.9%). A similar proportion took redundancy from a full-time position (77.3%). This indicates that before redundancy, most of our respondents had relatively stable, full-time careers in legacy media newsrooms. Figure 7 provides a snapshot of the combined redundancy data of the cohort.

FIGURES 1 - 6. DEMOGRAPHICS

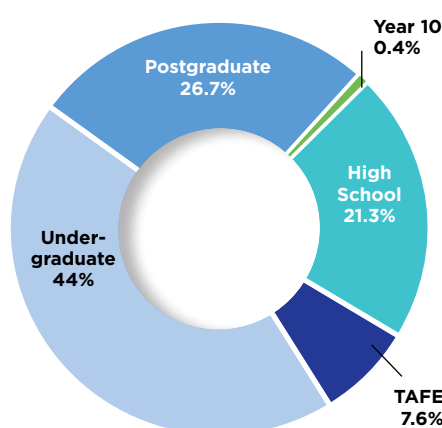
1. AGE 2014



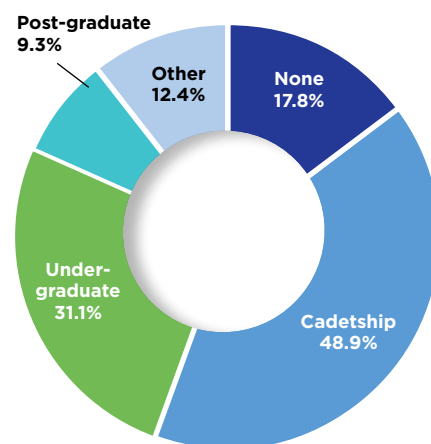
2. GENDER 2014



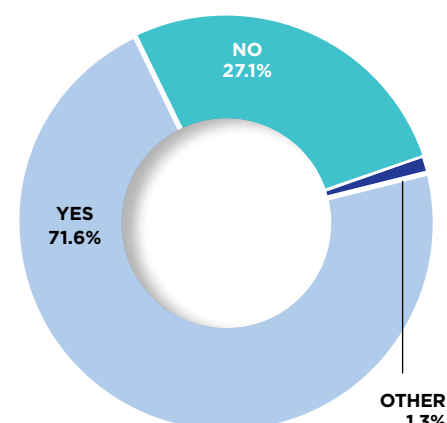
3. EDUCATION 2014



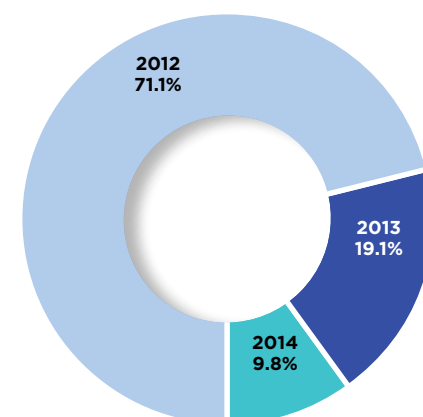
4. JOURNALISM EDUCATION 2014



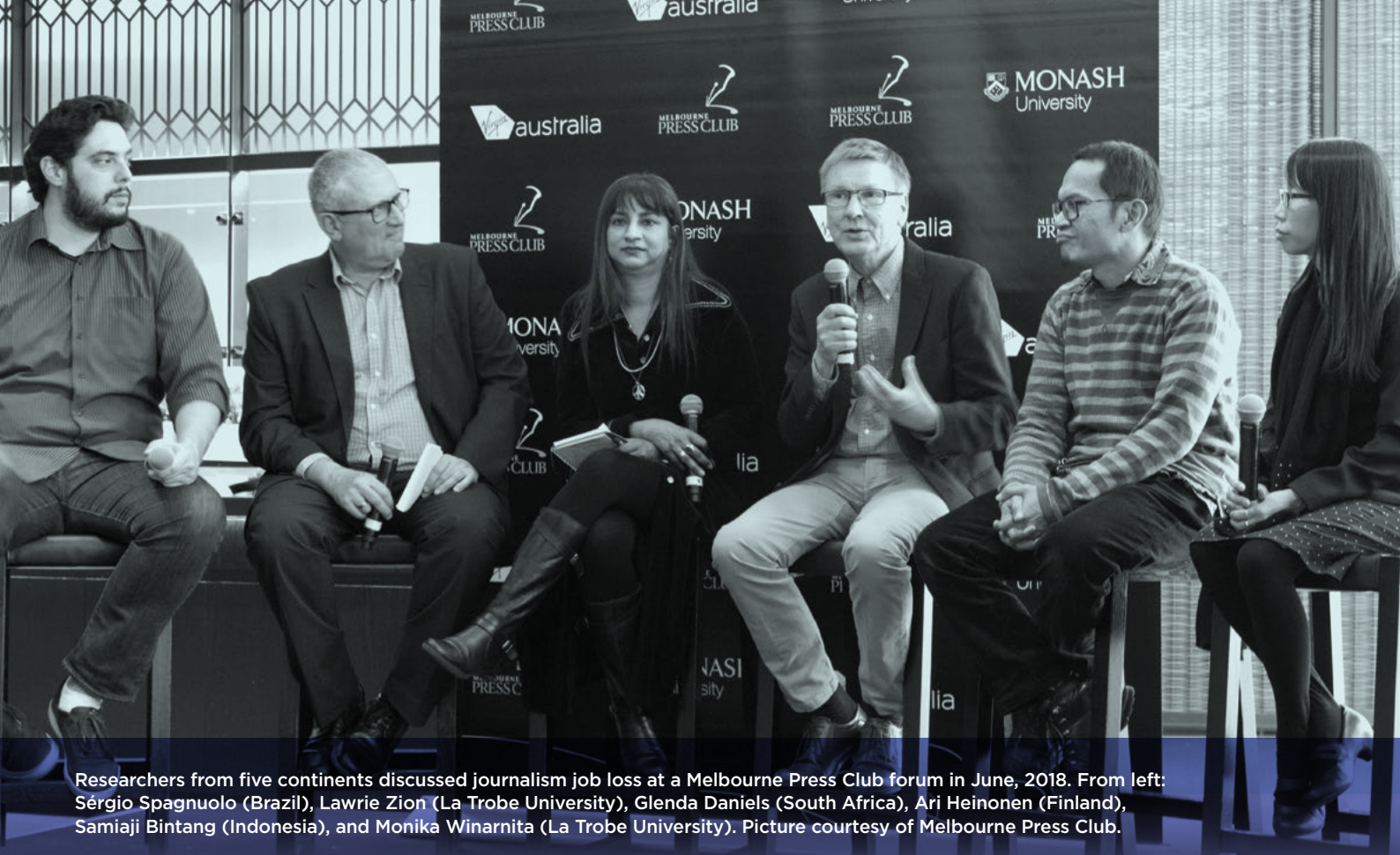
5. UNION MEMBERSHIP (MEAA) 2014



6. YEAR OF REDUNDANCY BY NUMBERS COMPLETING SURVEY



Source: New Beats survey, 2014. Percentages may not add up due to rounding.



Researchers from five continents discussed journalism job loss at a Melbourne Press Club forum in June, 2018. From left: Sérgio Spagnuolo (Brazil), Lawrie Zion (La Trobe University), Glenda Daniels (South Africa), Ari Heinonen (Finland), Samiaji Bintang (Indonesia), and Monika Winarnita (La Trobe University). Picture courtesy of Melbourne Press Club.

FIGURE 7: REDUNDANCY SNAPSHOT, 2014

VARIABLE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	%
Job status	Contract	2	0.9
	Part-time	49	21.8
	Full-time	174	77.3
Redundancy Type	Voluntary	173	76.9
	Involuntary	52	23.1
Previous employer	Fairfax	107	47.6
	News Corporation	77	34.2
	ABC	8	3.6
	Channel 10	6	2.7
	The West Australian	7	3.1
	Bauer Media	3	1.3
	AAP	2	0.9
	Channel 9	2	0.9
	Channel 7	1	0.4
	Commercial Radio	1	0.4
	Other	11	4.9
VARIABLE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	%
Journalism Experience (Years)	1-5	8	3.6
	6-10	15	6.7
	11-15	19	8.4
	16-20	30	13.3
	21-25	37	16.4
	26-30	38	16.9
	31-35	39	17.3
	36-40	15	6.7
	40+	24	10.7

Source: New Beats survey, 2014

n=225







STILL JOURNALISTS?

Across the four surveys, respondents were asked to nominate whether they were working within journalism, or in a combination of employment that included journalism and other work, or were working outside journalism. Through this period, the majority of our cohort identified as working in journalism, at least to some extent. In the 2014 survey around 30% said that they worked in journalism, another 30% worked in a mix of journalism and other work, while 22% had found work outside journalism and 11.6% were either looking for a job or taking a break. It is worth noting that the percentage of those aged 36-50 working outside of journalism increased over the lifetime of the survey. The overall findings about types of employment are presented in Figure 8.

We also asked respondents to describe their work status. In the 2014 survey, 77.3% of the cohort told us that they had been in full-time journalism roles prior to redundancy. Across all four surveys, those working in non-journalism were more likely to be in full-time roles. But irrespective of the kind of work they were doing, fewer respondents were employed full time than they were prior to redundancy. In 2017, 37% were in full-time work, with only around 10% of all respondents saying that they were in full-time journalism roles (including freelance) in each of the four surveys.

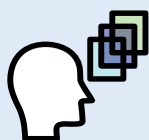
In response to survey questions from 2015 onwards, an increasing proportion of respondents said that they had opted to work in less than full-time roles, but for a range of reasons. Some nearing retirement age, for instance, saw pragmatic benefits to a change of pace, while others pointed to the advantages of more flexible arrangements, though in some cases with the caveat that of lower or less secure income.

FIGURE 8. TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
 Working in journalism (including freelance)	70	31.1%	33	29.2%	40	32.5%	33	27.5%
 Work includes a mix of journalism and other	67	29.8%	38	33.6%	38	30.9%	30	25.0%
 Working in a role that is not journalism	50	22.2%	37	32.7%	31	25.2%	39	32.5%
 Looking for work	17	7.6%	2	1.8%	1	0.8%	3	2.5%
 Taking a break	9	4.0%	0	0%	2	1.6%	5	4.2%
 Retired	12	5.3%	3	2.7%	8.9	11%	10	8.3%
	n=225		n=113		n=123		n=120	

Source: New Beats Survey, 2014 - 2017.

I find that now I am used to freelancing and the idea of going back to full-time work is not particularly attractive. I am 63, near retirement, and don't mind if I don't have work on some days.
(RESPONDENT 63, 2017)



I do prefer freelance and casual work as it allows me the freedom to work for multiple organisations at the same time. However the work is lumpy and insecure and I have yet to contribute to my superannuation account.
(RESPONDENT 55, 2017)



EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS SINCE REDUNDANCY

For those who said they were working in journalism, there was only a slight decrease in the proportion who worked in legacy media across the four years of surveys, from 37.2% in 2014 to 32.5% in 2017. Over the same period, the percentage of those who were self-employed or freelance edged

up from 12.4% (2014) to 14.2% (2017), while the percentage reporting working for multiple employers rose from 15.3% (2014) to 20.6% (2017).

While an overall majority of respondents still identified as working in journalism in some way across all surveys, many have taken roles outside of journalism that draw on their journalism skills, especially in strategic communications. In the 2017 survey, sixteen respondents - 41% of those who left journalism - said their role was in some form of public relations or strategic communications.

Descriptions of current roles provide just one dimension of the post-redundancy career pathway picture. In the 2017 survey, we asked respondents to list all of their employment since redundancy. The most common theme was that many had been working for multiple employers, either simultaneously or sequentially. Just 11 of the 118 respondents who responded in 2017 - around 10% - said that they had been employed in the same organisation or role since their initial redundancy. Some of these roles were in legacy media or in roles that supported legacy media, such as in sub-editing roles with the outsourced sub-editing and page layout business, Pagemasters.

Conversely, 80 of the 118 respondents (68%) said they had had multiple jobs either simultaneously or sequentially. Within this group, the most common story was that they had been working in a combination of journalism roles - often as a

freelancer - and other communication roles, as described in the following response:

Attempted to set up my own media business based on writing and editing. Couldn't sustain a full-time living from it so have taken a number of casual and part-time jobs and my own business as a sole trader supplements that. Mainly work for a public relations company that hires out my services. Have been back in newspapers for two years, two days a week, as a sub-editor.

(RESPONDENT 84, 2017)



Of those who weren't in either category, most said that they had retired or had been freelancing since redundancy.

Only a few (14) discussed retraining for new kinds of work. Some of these were PhD candidates who were aiming to develop academic careers, while others, such as this respondent, went in very different directions:

After redundancy, started freelance voiceover work as a second income stream for eventual full-time employment. I still do this today. Worked in public relations for just under four years after redundancy (two different organisations), then reentered journalism. Worked in print for a little under two years, then worked in radio up until June this year, when I resigned. I picked up some teaching work at the local university in the media and public relations field. In August 2016, I trained as a marriage celebrant and started my business. I now do this full time, after giving birth to my first child in July. I do not intend to ever work in media again.

(RESPONDENT 60, 2017)



UNION MEMBERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF MEAA IN THE REDUNDANCY PROCESS

The 2014 survey found 73% of the 225 respondents – that is, 164 journalists – had union membership at the time of redundancy, with 161 journalists in the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), two journalists in the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), and one in the UK-based Equity union.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the 2014 survey found union membership declined significantly post-job loss, especially for those re-employed outside journalism. Only eleven of these 50 respondents were still union members. However, membership decline was also significant amongst those 137 respondents still working in some type of journalism, with just 50% reporting they were still union members (66 in MEAA, two in the CPSU and one in Equity UK).

To probe perceptions of the role of MEAA in the redundancy process, the 2014 survey asked respondents if they received union support around job loss and, if so, what type of support. A total of 178 of the 225 respondents responded, including both union and non-union members, with 104 journalists indicating they received support, while 74 indicated they did not receive support. The fact that union members and non-members alike benefit from Australian industry awards and enterprise agreements achieved through collective bargaining, including redundancy provisions, may well explain this cohort's ready interest in the issue of union support.

A total of 104 respondents from the 2014 survey commented on forms of support from MEAA. The vast majority of these responses highlighted helpful support, ranging from collective negotiations at the company level aimed at minimising the number of job cuts, through to individualised advice/advocacy to obtain maximum redundancy entitlements. Moral support from the union was a recurring theme. Conversely, those dissatisfied with MEAA wanted more individualised help and support beyond 'maximising a payout'. At the same time, a few questioned the effectiveness of the union's response to industry change in 2012, suggesting it was slow to react, and therefore did too little, too late. One critic put it this way:

They said they would fight for my job but it was clear to me there wasn't a job available to me. I'd rate the union's support as fairly non-existent.'

(RESPONDENT
234, 2014)



Decline in union membership amongst our survey cohort continued across the four years of the New Beats study. The 2017 survey found only 13% of the 39 respondents re-employed outside journalism were unionised (all in MEAA), with the comparable figure for those re-employed in some type of journalism being 43%.

To probe perceptions of MEAA's role in the context of ongoing industry volatility, the 2017 survey asked respondents three questions about union support after the initial redundancy: What kind of assistance did MEAA offer, was it adequate, and were there other, preferred types of assistance?

A total of 127 of the 137 respondents in the 2017 survey responded, including both union and non-union members, with 35.4% of these respondents (45) indicating they received some level of assistance that was either adequate or good. The types of assistance that the respondents found most helpful included ongoing advice and advocacy on redundancy payouts, networking events, career information and advice, services and training courses for freelancers, and moral support as these two responses illustrate:

Advice, support, reassurance, legal help for a colleague. The union pushed for help to get our resumes up to scratch which was invaluable.

(RESPONDENT
89, 2017)



They did their best. The poor buggers are trying to look after the interests of all those who are in work as well as those taking redundancy – not an easy task.

(RESPONDENT
18, 2017)



Conversely, 64.6% of respondents (82) indicated they received inadequate or no assistance after the initial redundancy, although not everyone in this group was dissatisfied. A total of 29.1% of respondents (37), including six who stated 'non-applicable', indicated they did not seek assistance, for a variety of reasons. These included: rapid re-employment, satisfaction with voluntary redundancy, leaving journalism to work in another sector, retirement, or a perception that assistance was unnecessary, unwanted, or only available to union members.

Nonetheless, the remaining 35.4% of respondents (45) criticised the union for not offering the assistance they had hoped for and would have preferred, at both the individual and occupational levels. Their individual priorities included post-redundancy membership fee reductions, financial and legal advice, and counselling and emotional support. More general priorities included redeployment assistance, help with the transition to freelancing/contract-based work, information on job openings, digital classes, and networking.

The perceived inadequacy of union support at a time when some felt they needed it most triggered strong emotional responses from some of these respondents, including distress, anger, and disappointment. A common theme was that they had expected MEAA to reach out further to them than it had.

JOURNALISM SKILLS BEYOND JOURNALISM

With so many changes to their professional lives, it is not surprising that one finding from our 2014 survey was that more respondents described their identity as journalists as weak or fading (85 out of 122 respondents or 69.7%) rather than intact (37 out of 122 respondents or 30.3%). A corresponding loss of professional status was noted in a number of responses, including this one:

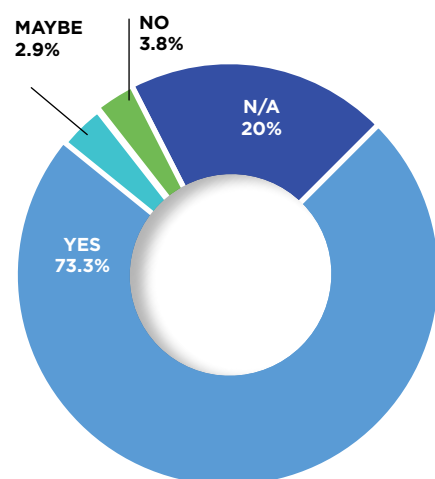
The most difficult part of the process was the loss of professional identity. I had always been proud to say that I was a journalist and I loved my job but, suddenly, at age 55, I was out on my ear and having to reinvent myself.

(RESPONDENT 200, 2014)



But despite such issues, the value of journalism skills for securing work remained strong over time. In response to a question in the 2017 survey, an overwhelming number of respondents moving into different forms of work post-redundancy said that they found their journalism skills were useful.

FIGURE 9. USING JOURNALISM SKILLS IN NEW CAREER, 2017



Source: New Beats Survey, 2017

I work in media liaison dealing with journalists, writing media releases etc. As I know what it is like to be on the receiving end, I know how to pitch my message and how to get coverage. Also, general skills like dealing with deadlines, pressures etc. have translated well.

(RESPONDENT 118, 2017)



My new career is totally different to journalism, so it doesn't really compare. I don't feel connected to my former industry anymore, however, I have found the communications skills of journalism is an advantage in my new industry when establishing client relationships.

(RESPONDENT 101, 2017)



One of the few comments reflecting a different view came from this respondent, who now works in community care:

When I left journalism that was it - I don't want to go back. In any case I feel journalism 'skills' don't count for much - they are really skills you cannot apply - or be recognised - for many jobs.

(RESPONDENT 88, 2017)



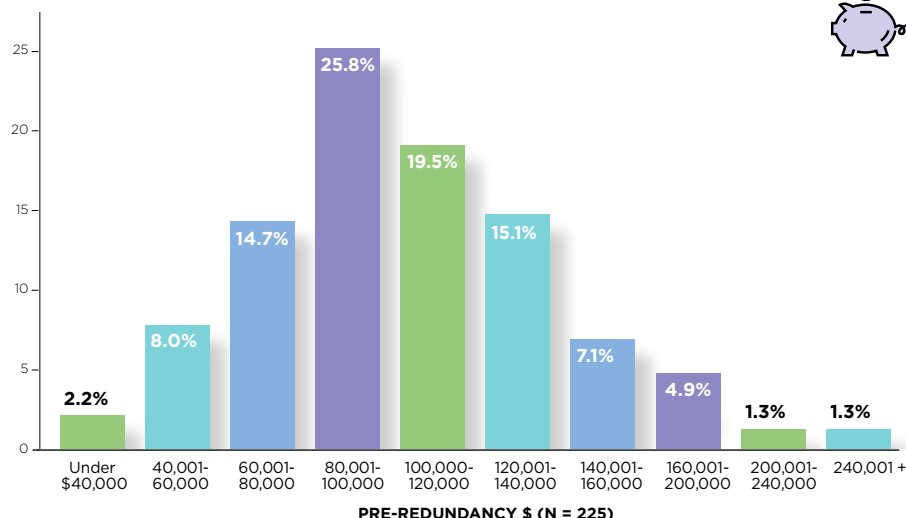
INCOME

Overall incomes dropped considerably in the immediate aftermath of redundancy, followed by a modest upward trend in subsequent years. As Figure 10 indicates, nearly half of the respondents in 2014 (111 people or 49.1%) earned more than \$100,000 before redundancy. But only 36 of the 187 people who were working after redundancy (19.3%) were earning over \$100,000 at the time of the 2014 survey. In 2017, respondents indicated that income had recovered slightly, with 34% (35 respondents) of those working earning over \$100,000.

The changes were also notable in the lower salary bands. Only five of the respondents (2.2%) told us they earned under \$40,000 before redundancy. In 2014, around 25% of the 187 respondents undertaking at least some work after redundancy reported incomes that were \$40,000 or below. In 2017 the corresponding percentage was 21.6%.

While incomes fell across the board, those who left journalism were more likely to be earning more. For example, in the 2014 survey only 11 of those (15.7%) who continued to work in journalism after redundancy earned more than \$100,000. Among those who worked in a combination of journalism and other work, the figure was around the same at 10 people (14.9%). But 15 (30%) of the 50 people who found work in other fields earned salaries above the same amount. Over the four years of surveys the incomes of those who remained in journalism fell behind those who worked in a combination of journalism and other work and those outside of journalism. In 2017 18.2% of those who worked as journalists earned \$100,000 and over, compared to 40% who worked in a combination of journalism and other work, and 43.6% of those who worked outside journalism.

This is not necessarily surprising, given that those who said they were not working in journalism were more likely to have full-time work across the life of the survey. But filtering the results to respondents who were working full time, the same trendline was even more pronounced across the four surveys: in 2017, full-timers earning over \$100,000 were in a small minority amongst those working in a combination of journalism and other roles and those working wholly outside of journalism.

FIGURE 10. PRE-REDUNDANCY INCOME


Source: New Beats Survey, 2014

Figures 11, 12 and 13, below, provide data on the income trends over time for those working in journalism, those working in a mix of journalism and other, and those working outside of journalism. What these tables show is that those who continued to work in journalism (including freelance) earned less than both those who worked in a mix of journalism and other occupations, and those who worked outside of journalism, and the gap became more pronounced over time.

FIGURE 11. INCOME FOR THOSE WORKING IN JOURNALISM (INCLUDING FREELANCE)

	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
\$100,000 and below	59	84.3	28	84.9	33	82.5	27	81.8
\$100,000 and above	11	15.7	5	15.1	7	17.5	6	18.2
	n=70		n=33		n=40		n=33	

FIGURE 12. INCOME FOR THOSE WORKING IN A MIX OF JOURNALISM AND OTHER

	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
\$100,000 and below	57	85.1	32	84.2	26	68.4	18	60
\$100,000 and above	10	14.9	6	15.8	12	31.6	12	40
	n=67		n=38		n=38		n=30	

FIGURE 13. INCOME FOR THOSE WORKING OUTSIDE OF JOURNALISM

	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%	2017	%
\$100,000 and below	35	70	21	56.8	21	67.7	22	56.4
\$100,000 and above	15	30	16	43.2	10	32.3	17	43.6
	n=50		n=37		n=31		n=39	

Source: New Beats Surveys, 2014 - 2017.

WELL-BEING POST REDUNDANCY

The initial survey in 2014 provided ample evidence that redundancy had been a traumatic experience for many respondents. But many also told us that after the initial redundancy period they experienced improved well-being associated with leaving stressful workplaces. Out of 217 respondents, 114 (52.5%) said their working conditions had improved. A number of these mentioned feeling healthier than before because they had more free time, and used it to exercise, cook healthy food, relax or just enjoy life.

I work a lot from home, I make my own rules and decisions, and I don't have a third of the stress I had in my last job. That was an impossible workload, with minimal or no support from a misogynistic management. My life now is creative, stimulating and purposeful. My health has no doubt improved due to reduced stress levels, my income is more or less the same, although less regular, and my well-being has skyrocketed. I can think of no negatives in my experience.

(RESPONDENT 38, 2014)



Three years on, we asked the cohort: 'Overall, how has your life and well-being changed, for better or worse, since the initial redundancy?' We analysed the responses to categorise them as indicating better, worse, or the same level of well-being than before redundancy. The majority of the respondents in the 2017 survey (65%, or 78 of 120 responses), slightly more than in 2014, told us that despite ongoing challenges, on balance their sense of personal well-being was better.

While some noted they would still prefer to be working in a newsroom, many mentioned the increasingly negative elements of the workplace culture that they had left behind.



Over the lifespan of the surveys, most who looked for employment found at least some work, but working life became more precarious for many.

Overall, despite the hell I've been through, life is better. I've learnt a lot of things about myself and my values, my own expectations about myself and other people, and my expectations about life. I don't feel as secure with work, and I don't have the same earning potential that I had while working in journalism, but one of the lessons I learnt was the old cliché that money doesn't buy happiness. I value other things in my life that bring me real happiness.

(RESPONDENT 38, 2017)



Comments from 27 out of 120 respondents in 2017 (22.5%) who said their well-being was the same pre- and post-redundancy placed greater emphasis on ongoing challenges, such as dealing with the financial implications of insecure work.

There have been huge changes both personally and professionally. Mixed picture. It's taken five years to exceed my salary. There's a lot less certainty, but also a lot more freedom to choose, and my skills have dramatically increased. So both good and bad.

(RESPONDENT 112, 2017)



It's hard to say - it has ups and downs that are hard to relate to the redundancy or otherwise. I feel like I am better able to cope with change - if the rug was pulled out from underneath me and I was forced to switch gears again, I guess I know that I would be able to deal with it. But it's tiring not really having any real job security sometimes.

(RESPONDENT 44, 2017)





Some also noted that the change in their professional identity post-redundancy had been difficult to deal with. A few used the phrase ‘invisible’ to describe how they now felt.

Only 15 of the 120 (12.5%) who completed the 2017 survey said things were worse, with almost all of these responses referring to financial instability and less secure work.

JOB SATISFACTION

In the 2017 survey we asked: ‘If you are currently employed in any capacity, taking everything into consideration, how do you feel about your current job as a whole?’ As Figure 14 illustrates, the responses were remarkably positive, with 73.3% satisfied, 15.8% neutral,

and just 10.8% dissatisfied. Those working in journalism in some form were more slightly more likely to be satisfied than those who were working in non-journalism roles.

Given the precariousness of many working arrangements and generally lower pay, this finding illustrates a surprising level of adaptability for a cohort previously used to relative stability in their careers. At least part of the explanation for this finding can be linked to the comments about the extent to which the newsrooms that they had left became pressure cookers as the impact of cost cutting took hold.

FIGURE 14. JOB SATISFACTION

	- ALL	
Extremely satisfied	35	29.2%
Moderately satisfied	36	30.0%
Slightly satisfied	17	14.2%
TOTAL OF SATISFIED	88	73.3%
NEUTRAL	19	15.8%
Slightly dissatisfied	5	4.2%
Moderately dissatisfied	4	3.3%
Extremely dissatisfied	4	3.3%
TOTAL OF DISSATISFIED	13	10.8%
	n=120	
Weighted Average	5.41	

GENDER, RE-EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

While there were more men than women respondents in all four surveys, when broken down in percentage terms, gender representation was quite similar in the categories 'working in journalism, including freelance', and 'working in a mix of journalism and other work'. The relative male/female percentages were more changeable in the 'working outside of journalism' category with women slightly more represented here, while overall, men were more likely to say that they had retired than women.

But did men and women experience the process of securing work differently? This question arose following comments in earlier surveys, and the finding from a 2016 survey by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) that there was a 23% pay gap between men and women in media (MEAA, 2016), an issue reflected in the experience of this respondent:

Gender was an issue at times with opportunities within the newsroom and is definitely a factor in certain roles outside it. Increasingly, though, cost-conscious employers are filling roles with women who, on average, are paid significantly less than their male peers in their profession. It is my experience that women are taken advantage of at times in such circumstances because they want to please and achieve and be treated fairly and equally.

(RESPONDENT 100, 2017)

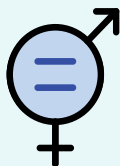


FIGURE 15. THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME POST-REDUNDANCY. Filtered the data to Female and Male respondents

VARIABLE	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Yes	15	30%	8	14.5%
Yes as a parent / with childcare duties	5	10%	0	0%
Yes as a senior age female / male	3	6%	0	0%
TOTAL YES	23	46%	8	14.5%
No	18	36%	36	65.5%
No experience counts more	1	2%	1	1.8%
N/A (those who answered as N/A)	8	16%	10	18.2%
TOTAL NO	27	54%	47	85.4%
Total	50		55	

Source: New Beats Survey, 2017.

Becoming a parent was a turning point in my career, and my momentum ground to a halt when I switched to a 3-day week - which was more necessity than indulgence, with so few flexible care options available. Very few creative solutions have been applied in newsrooms to help women maintain their place in the workforce - such as job-share roles or flexible working arrangements.

(RESPONDENT 39, 2017)



More than 1,000 people were surveyed for 'Mates over Merit: The Women in Media Report'. Only 2% of women surveyed said there was equal pay for equal work in their organisations. The vast majority – 81% of respondents – acknowledged the gender pay gap, which is 23.3% in the Information, Media and Telecommunications Industry sector, according to the WGEA. We asked respondents in 2017 to consider if gender may have had a negative influence on employment opportunities and income post-redundancy.

Of those who answered, 23 women (46% of those women who provided an answer) said that it was an issue, the comments shown on this page being typical of the responses. Conversely just eight men (14.5% of those who answered) said that it had been an issue

for them. Several respondents also indicated that they did not believe that the question applied to them.

AGE AND AGEISM

Ageism was a topic that came up in answers to several of our open-ended questions in all surveys. In the 2017 survey we also focused directly on age and ageism, pointing out to respondents that the results from previous surveys suggested that age may negatively influence employment status and income, and inviting them to share any relevant experiences with us. Not surprisingly, those over 50 were slightly more likely to have reported adverse experiences, or to suggest that age may be a factor when seeking work. The results are in Figure 16. Filtered by gender, the responses were broadly similar.

A common theme in the responses was a perception that employers tended to associate digital skills with younger job candidates. 'If I was across as many platforms as they usually require, I'd enter Australian Ninja', said one. And even actual experience in digital wasn't enough to shake the stigma that older workers were regarded as 'old news'.

There is massive discrimination in this industry against anyone over 50. It's all about diversity in terms of ethnic background etc but no diversity when it comes to age. Its demoralising and means that I no longer even bother to apply for news room jobs.

(RESPONDENT 5, 2017)



I am 48 and being older makes it harder because I think employers are looking for younger employees who generally are more adaptable to the digital world.

(RESPONDENT 101, 2017)



Shattered expectations initially - have very low expectation of ever working in a paid/ongoing role in the media again. Am perceived in my industry as too old (at 55), even though I am teaching social media, digital and mobile journalism. Ironical.

(RESPONDENT 96, 2017)

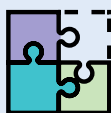


FIGURE 16. AGE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND INCOME

VARIABLE	ALL AGES	%	OVER 50 YRS. OLD ONLY	%	OVER 50 YRS. OLD AND HAVE NOT RETIRED	%
Yes	13	11.2%	11	13.6%	8	11.3%
Yes ageism in digital skills	14	12.1%	11	13.6%	11	15.5%
Yes in/to get job interviews	10	8.6%	10	12.3%	9	12.7%
Yes younger journalist competitor/preference	13	11.2%	11	12.6%	10	14.1%
TOTAL YES	50	43.1%	43	53.7%	38	53.5%
MAY INFLUENCE	15	12.9%	14	17.3%	12	16.9%
No influence	24	20.7%	16	19.7%	15	21.1%
No am young enough (still young)	19	16.4%	3	3.7%	3	4.2%
N/A	8	6.9%	5	6.2%	3	4.2%
TOTAL NO	51	44%	24	29.6%	21	29.6%
Total	116		81		71	

Source: New Beats Survey 2017

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Across the four years of the surveys, we asked respondents about the extent and nature of their contact with work colleagues after redundancy. The consistent picture was that nearly all of them kept in touch with their former colleagues, with many finding these ongoing relationships to be of benefit both socially and professionally, albeit for some, to a lesser extent over time. These response from the 2017 survey evokes some of the common themes that arose in all the surveys around the importance of maintaining contact.

These colleagues are commonly friends. Some have introduced me to editors and some are now editors themselves and have asked me to write for them.

RESPONDENT 87, 2017



Former colleagues have helped me find freelance work as I have helped them. Also, former colleagues working in, or operating media agencies have engaged me. Equally, I helped a former co-worker find full time work for six months. Mostly, however, contact is of a social nature in which among other things, we bemoan the poor state of journalism and the declining standards of sub-editor-free publications.

(RESPONDENT 95, 2017)



THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

Our final survey question in the final survey asked respondents to tell us how they felt about the future of journalism. A 'glass half full' reading of the responses is that the tally of those who were either optimistic or had mixed feelings was roughly the same as the total number of pessimists. But the same figures also tell us that pessimists outnumbered optimists by nearly two to one. The quotes on this page traverse the range of views.

FIGURE 17: FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

	Frequency	Percentage
Pessimistic	49	41.2%
Mixed feelings	42	35.3%
Optimistic	25	21%
N/A	3	2.5%
TOTAL	119	

Source: New Beats survey 2017

FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

PESSIMISTIC

Even less jobs as employers look to cut costs further. More pressure on journalists to deliver more. Ultimately journalism will go the way of dinosaurs - extinct.

(RESPONDENT 13, 2017)



MIXED

It will be a diversified future, with many voices and many sources of information, which means that, for better or worse, we will not have newspaper proprietors or other media magnates acting as gatekeepers to see what is best for the community to know.

(RESPONDENT 8, 2017)



OPTIMISTIC

Journalism has a great future but it may not be as many people alive today will remember. In a few short years we moved from having to process film (stills or video) and then physically move it to a processing point. Now a picture or video is instant from everyone. It happens. Suck it up and make it work for you.

(RESPONDENT 4, 2017)



CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of redundancy have been multi-dimensional and complex for the project's respondents. Yet while life post-redundancy has presented many common challenges, including an erosion of professional identity, instability in employment arrangements, and reduced income, many of those surveyed have shown considerable resilience in forging new kinds of working lives. The extent to which they have been successful in finding or creating new employment is a strong indication that journalism skills are highly transferrable across occupations. In particular, communication, research, and analytical skills are in high demand. At the same time, it is clear that discriminatory social attitudes around gender and age continue to have an adverse impact on employment opportunities post-redundancy.

The findings from the four New Beats surveys, taken together, contribute to our understanding of the impact of career transition on Australian journalists, and also shed light on the implications of the rapid growth of precarious work for individual journalists and the wider occupation. Career disruption, which is now commonplace for workers across many sectors, is increasingly both a research and policy theme. The New Beats surveys have enabled us to gain insights into the processes and impacts of such disruptions in a profession which many entered believing that they had secured a job for life. We thank everyone who participated by sharing their own experiences across the four years of the surveys.

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SUBMISSIONS

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- New Beats Submission #37 to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into Public Interest Journalism, June, 2017, see https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Future_of_Public_Interest_Journalism/PublicInterestJournalism/Submissions

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- 'Jobs after journalism', Video of forum held at the **Melbourne Press Club**, June 6, 2018.
- 'Beyond the newsroom', Mark Deuze lecture on ABC Radio National's **Big Ideas**, December 12, 2017.
- 'Life after redundancy: what happens next for journalists when they leave newsrooms', by Lawrie Zion in *The Conversation*, May 9, 2017.
- 'Regional journalism forum', ABC Radio National's **Big Ideas**, June 22, 2016.
- 'Redundant journalists update', ABC Radio National's **The Media Report**, December 3, 2015.
- "Beyond the Big R: Life after Redundancy", Video of forum held at **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*.
- What happens to journalists who lose their jobs? on ABC Radio National's **The Media Report**, July 11, 2013.
- 'Research project to examine impact of journalist redundancies', by Nic Christensen in *Mumbrella*, July 8, 2013.

REDUNDANCY TIMELINE

The following timeline is based on data accessed from media reports by the New Beats project as at November 2018. For more information, please contact Lawrie Zion at l.zion@latrobe.edu.au. An electronic version of this timeline can be found at www.newbeatsblog.com/redundancy-timeline/



2015

JUNE 16, 2014

Cuts to MMP, Sky News, and Ten

[Crikey reports](#) that the closure of seven suburban mastheads in Melbourne owned by Metro Media Publishing means an estimated 32 employees will lose their jobs. Meanwhile there have been journalist redundancies [at Sky](#) and [at Ten](#), including a [notable Canberra veteran](#).

NOVEMBER 25, 2014

400 jobs to go at ABC

Federal government cuts were blamed for ABC [plans to shed 400 jobs](#) – around 10 per cent of its workforce – including around 100 jobs from the news division. This includes the closure of some regional bureaux.

MARCH 12, 2015

Fairfax plans regional redundancies

[Fairfax Media has unveiled](#) a plan to seek 62 voluntary redundancies from newsroom roles as it tries to revitalise its regional Victorian outlets and set them up to deal with increasing demand for online content. MEAA condemns these cuts.

APRIL 2015

Radio jobs go following merger

Nearly 50 employees at 4BC, 2UE, Magic 1278 and Magic 882 were dismissed soon after their shifts as [Fairfax's merger with Macquarie Radio](#) started to take shape.

MAY 14, 2015

Fairfax to cut 50 jobs from Illawarra Mercury and South Coast papers

Fairfax Media [has announced](#) a proposal to axe more than 50 journalists, photographers and commercial staff from its Illawarra and South Coast newspapers.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

Three West Australian newspapers to be axed

Three regional Western Australian newspapers will close under a planned [Fairfax Media restructure](#). *The Wagin Argus*, the *Merredin – Wheat belt Mercury* and the *Central Midlands Advocate* will be culled under the proposal.

AUGUST 27, 2015

Fairfax cuts regional jobs

[Fairfax has announced](#) 69 jobs to be made redundant in the Hunter, including 37 full-time jobs at the *Newcastle Herald*.

JULY 2, 2015

Fairfax cuts jobs from country papers in regional SA

[Fairfax Media has announced](#) a shake-up of its South Australian country operations with the loss of about 35 jobs and the closure of one newspaper.

MAY 28, 2015

Commuters to journey without mX

An estimated 30 full-time journalists will be affected by [News Corp's decision](#) to stop publishing its free afternoon newspaper in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The paper had been a fixture during the afternoon peak hour since 2001. Staff were told redundancies were inevitable but management would try to redeploy some positions.

MAY 21, 2015

WIN-TV Pulls out of Mildura, Mackay

WIN-TV has [closed its Mildura and Mackay offices](#) with little or no warning to employees, drawing criticism from MEAA. Meanwhile, Seven [has confirmed the departure](#) of its executive producer of investigative news, Max Uechtritz, with at least two staffers being made redundant and another 12 staff set to be redeployed, some interstate.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

Prime Media axes jobs in regional NSW

[Prime Media Group confirms](#) it has made a number of senior editorial positions redundant in Wagga Wagga, Tamworth and Canberra.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

Glen Innes to lose its radio news service

Glen Innes will lose its local radio news service at the end of the month. Newsreader John Shaw was presented with his marching orders from [Northern Broadcasters](#) 2NZ and GEM FM on Monday, and will cease working for the radio stations on Friday, October 23.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

Southern Cross Austereo confirms journalist redundancies

Journalists in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane have been made redundant in the wake of a “streamlining” of [Southern Cross Austereo's news services](#).

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Launceston Examiner and Burnie Advocate could lose staff

Up to 13 full-time jobs could be cut at two Tasmanian newspapers, as [Fairfax undertakes](#) a major restructure.

OCTOBER 28, 2015

WIN television network announces plans to close its studios in Victoria

[WIN Network will relocate](#) its nightly half-hour Victorian news bulletins from Ballarat to its head office in Wollongong, New South Wales.

REDUNDANCY TIMELINE

2015

NOVEMBER 23, 2015

News Corp axing 55 journos from newspapers

News Corp Australia [will slash 55 journalism roles](#) across its newspapers, a move which has drawn condemnation from the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance. The publishing company met with the journalists' union to discuss the redundancy program, while editorial managers responsible for the cuts have also been briefed about the program, according to News Corp publication *The Australian*.

2016

NOVEMBER 23, 2015

Fairfax will axe 150 jobs at its Metro Media division by May 2016

[The Weekend Australian reports](#) that Fairfax will axe 150 jobs at its Metro Media division by May 2016 in a much bigger wave of cuts than was initially anticipated.

MARCH 17, 2016

Fairfax Media to cut 120 editorial jobs at the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age

[Fairfax Media is set to cut](#) the "equivalent of 120 full-time jobs" from news and business across newspapers *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*.

MARCH 31, 2016

The Canberra Times to adopt quality compact print format

Voluntary redundancies of [approximately 12 full time equivalent staff](#) are expected across Fairfax Media's ACT publishing operations and *The Canberra Times*.

APRIL 28, 2016

WA's Scoop Publishing ceases publication of its nine magazines

The independent publisher [Scoop Magazines closes down](#) after publishing niche magazines for 19 years.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2016

30 more redundancies have occurred

[Around 30 more redundancies](#) take place at Fairfax in Sydney and Melbourne, many of which are involuntary, according to an MEAA spokesperson.

AUGUST 2, 2016

The West Australian sheds senior journalists as profits, share price tumble

[The West Australian has shed senior journalists](#), as the newspaper confronts a significant fall in profit in the 12 months to the end of June.

JULY 28, 2016

Redundancies loom as prime set to outsource

[Prime7 is consulting](#) with presentation and ingest staff as it looks to outsource operations, to MediaHub in Ingelburn, NSW

MAY 18, 2016

More BBC on the ABC: full news division cuts revealed

More BBC material will be broadcast on News Radio following ABC news budget cuts. About 30 positions will be affected by changes, [the ABC says](#). And the number of job losses will be 14.

MAY 5, 2016

Farewell to a good friend

Former *Cooma-Monaro Express* editor Lee Evans [farewells the 134 year-old paper](#) as it publishes its final edition.

APRIL 28, 2016

Canberra Times changes confirmed

[Fairfax Media's restructure](#) of its ACT publishing operations, including *The Canberra Times*, will result in fewer job losses than originally proposed, the company has told staff.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

News Corp to axe 300 jobs in ARM acquisition, suggests report

The [News Corp acquisition](#) of ARM News & Media's Australian Regional Media (ARM) will see 300 jobs cut as News Corp looks to secure "backoffice synergies", according to a report in *The Australian*.

OCTOBER 14, 2016

Weekly Review slashes newsroom, with 16 journos to go

Big cuts at the suburban newspaper group [were announced](#) in Melbourne to the newsroom on Friday.

NOVEMBER 3, 2016

ABC Catalyst staff to be made redundant, new format announced

Staff on ABC science program *Catalyst* [have been told](#) they will be made redundant.

NOVEMBER 16, 2016

Radio National to lose eight staff as ABC cuts several programs from 2017 schedule

The ABC [is imposing a new round of cuts](#) at Radio National with eight staff and several programs to be slashed from the 2017 schedule.

DECEMBER 2, 2016

Seven West Media opens voluntary redundancy program

Seven West Media [has kicked off](#) a voluntary redundancy program as the media company struggles with a short advertising market.

2017

**DECEMBER 7, 2016
News Corp Australia announces redundancies and \$40M cost-cutting**

Company says it will use forced redundancies, if necessary, to reach goal of cutting [42 full-time positions](#).

**MARCH 8, 2017
Foreign Correspondent and 7.30 staff tapped for redundancy at ABC**

[Up to 85 staff](#) have already been told they will be made redundant after MD Michelle Guthrie announced new efficiency measures.

**APRIL 5, 2017
Fairfax Media announces further job losses, slashes 30 million from editorial budget**

Editorial staff at mastheads including *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* are again [facing redundancies](#), though it is not yet known how many jobs will go.

**APRIL 11, 2017
News Corp Australia makes most of its photographers and subeditors redundant to cut costs**

The Daily Telegraph, *Herald Sun* and *Courier-Mail* [will lose dozens of staff](#) and comes after News Corp posted a second-quarter loss of \$287m in February.

**MAY 3, 2017
Fairfax Media to cut a quarter of journalists at SMH, The Age and AFR**

Up to 125 newsroom staff [to be made redundant](#) in a \$30m cost-cutting drive that will see the three mastheads rely more on contributors.

**JUNE 20, 2017
Pacific Magazines reveals 11 redundancies as it looks to further reduce cost base before 30 June**

Pacific Magazines is set to reduce its cost base with [11 redundancies planned](#) for sub-editors across all brands to outsource their work to external sub copy business, Pagemasters.

**JUNE 7, 2017
Fairfax journo say goodbye to readers as redundancies finalized**

Alan Stokes, Rohan Connolly and Adam Morton are among big names [to be leaving Fairfax](#), with decades of experience walking out the door in the latest round of redundancies.

**JUNE 6, 2017
ABC's stunning axing of 30-year Adelaide veteran**

ABC staff in South Australia are shocked by interstate management's decision to [axe Leigh Radford](#), a highly respected 30-year veteran who headed up rural and national programs for ABC Regional.

**MAY 26, 2017
Radio jobs for the chop as ABC rolls out redundancies**

Staff in the ABC Radio division were told that [nine jobs would go](#) as part of the latest round of ABC redundancies.

**MAY 4, 2017
Cuts to arts journalism at Arts Hub and Fairfax**

[The Daily Review reports](#) that both *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* plan on cutting their arts editorial staff back to one single arts editor/journalist at each paper. Meanwhile, Deborah Stone, the editor of the online art magazine, ArtsHub, has taken a redundancy.

**JULY 11, 2017
Nine News Darwin set to lose local bulletin, a dozen jobs cut**

[Sweeping cuts](#) at Nine News Darwin mark the end of a standalone commercial news bulletin for the Northern Territory, and about a dozen staff will lose their jobs.

**JULY 28, 2017
When a Courier Mail pineapple story is not just a pineapple story**

Staff at the *Courier Mail* in Brisbane watch as [dozens of colleagues](#) walk out the door following continuing redundancies.

**JULY 28, 2017
Health Warning**

Bauer Media Chief executive Paul Dykzeul tells the [eight staff](#) of *Good Health* magazine that they will be made redundant as the magazine would now be produced in New Zealand.

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2017
Newcastle Sunday delivers its last newspaper**

Mumbrella reports that independent newspaper *Newcastle Sunday* is [ceasing publication](#), effective immediately.

**NOVEMBER 3, 2017
Seven West Media job cuts raise fears for The West Australian, Sunday Times journalists**

As Seven West Media employees [brace for big staff cuts](#) announced by the company, the media union has raised fears for the future of the *Sunday Times* newspaper.

REDUNDANCY TIMELINE

2017

NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Fairfax to launch new magazine for Sydney region

Fairfax Media [will close](#) six Australian Community Media mastheads: *Hills News*, *Rouse Hill Courier*, *Penrith City Gazette*, *St Marys/Mt Druitt Star*, *Blacktown Sun* and *Parramatta Holroyd Sun*. The six titles will be replaced by a single magazine to be launched early 2018 servicing north-west Sydney.

NOVEMBER 29, 2017

HuffPost and Fairfax joint venture ends

HuffPost Australia's joint venture with Fairfax Media has come to an end. Fairfax Media [will redeploy staff members](#) – of which there are more than 30 – into the metro business, while others will be left without jobs as the Huffington Post's local team is expected to be reduced to a handful of contractors.

DECEMBER 4, 2017

Bad week for Bourke

For more than 130 years, [The Western Herald](#) was the voice of the community in the far western NSW city of Bourke. But no more. Last week the independent newspaper's owner issued termination notices for three staff on the paper. It was once home to the writings of a young Henry Lawson and published the poems of Harry "Breaker" Morant.

DECEMBER 4, 2017

Women's Weekly cuts senior roles

Crikey reports that Bauer Media's *Australian Women's Weekly* took a hit with [up to 15 jobs cut](#), including the senior roles of chief sub-editor and art director. Bauer management told staff the previous Friday to be assembled for an "important" announcement first thing Monday morning, leaving staff to fret and wait nervously over the weekend.

2018

APRIL 6, 2018

Domain's GM Trent Casson departs in restructure as company makes a 'small number' of redundancies

Domain's national magazine publisher and general manager of Victorian operations, Trent Casson, [will leave the company](#) in the coming weeks as it looks for operational and business efficiencies in the wake of its separation from Fairfax.

APRIL 5, 2018

Blitz Publications goes into liquidation

Blitz Publications and Multimedia Group, which publishes *Women's Health* and *Multimedia Group*, *Nourish*, *Australian Natural Health*, *Muse*, *Gluten-Free Heaven*, *Natural Vegan* and *Blitz Martial Arts Magazine* [has gone into liquidation](#) on March 1. As a result all magazines have ceased publishing.

FEBRUARY 29, 2018

Seven cuts jobs at Broadcast Centre ahead of new plan with Nine – TV Tonight

[Around 150 staff](#) yesterday at Broadcast Centre Melbourne were told by Seven management that most of their jobs will be outsourced by 2019.

FEBRUARY 15, 2018

TV team, including head of TV Homaira Razi, exit in Yahoo7 cuts

Homaira Razi, head of TV at Yahoo7, and [up to eight full-time staff](#) in the TV team have lost their jobs off the back of Yahoo7's restructure last week.

DECEMBER 21, 2017

Bauer Media closes Men's Style magazine

Bauer Media has ended what Mumbrella has described as its nightmare year by [axing another publication](#) just days before Christmas, with the next edition of *Men's Style* to be the last.

APRIL 30, 2018

ABC to axe 20 metro newsroom jobs in restructure

The ABC will axe [approximately 20 jobs](#) in its eight capital city newsrooms to adapt to the 'modern media environment'.

JUNE 5, 2018

AAP to cut up to 25 positions as demand for services reduces

Australian Associated Press (AAP) has launched a voluntary redundancy program – with [between 20 and 25 positions](#) to be cut – as the wire service contends with reduced market demand.

JUNE 5, 2018

Pacific Magazines confirms six jobs to go in latest restructure

Pacific Magazines [has restructured](#) *Who* and *New Idea*'s editorial teams, with six positions – or three full-time roles – to be axed.

AUGUST 9, 2018

Five community newspapers shut in Perth

The Canberra Times reports that Perth's Community Newspaper Group [have announced the closure](#) of five of its 17 newspapers. *The Comment News*, *The Advocate*, *Hills and Avon Valley Gazette*, *Midland-Kalamunda Reporter* and the *North Coast Times* will be delivered for the last time during the week beginning September 3.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

News Corp axes more editorial roles as it continues to cut costs

News Corp [has axed](#) a number of editorial roles across mastheads *The Australian*, *Herald Sun* and *Daily Telegraph*.



