Journalism Education in Australia: Educating Journalists for Convergent, Cosmopolitan, and Uncertain News Environments

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In 1919, university-level classes for Australian journalists were first offered at the University of Western Australia with the support of the Australian Journalists’ Association (AJA) (Coleman, 1992). Thereafter, journalism diploma programs were introduced to the following universities: Melbourne (1921), Queensland (1921), Sydney (1926), and Western Australia (1928) (Lloyd, 1999; Coleman, 1992) (see Table 1.1 for major journalism associations and journalist-related organizations). For the AJA—a non-manual trade union formed in 1910 and amalgamated into the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) in 1992—higher education meant raising the social respectability of journalism. In the early 1900s, journalism was considered a low-status occupation populated by “hard-living” and “barely respectable” bohemians (Coleman, 1992, p. 9). By 1940, however, most of these pioneering programs were discontinued since their experimental and inadequately funded curricula proved unpopular. Another significant disincentive was the prevailing industry belief that “real journalists were born not made” (Coleman, 1992, p. 10).

Beginning in 1969, higher education reform set the stage for journalism diploma programs to re-emerge in 10 newly established Colleges of Advanced Education (Stuart, 1996). In 1988, journalism degree programs began proliferating throughout the country, and today 32 of Australia’s 40 universities offer them (Tanner, M. O’Donnell, Cullen, & Green, 2013). Even so, Australian journalists and academics continue to disagree, sometimes sharply, over the best preparation for professional journalism (P. O’Donnell, 2014, p. 226). For example, Australian newspapers routinely criticize journalism educators for teaching too much
theory and ideology (Green, 2005). And in a recent high-profile incident, the sector’s professional association, the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA), was forced to defend academic independence against press criticism of journalism educators “indoctrinating” rather than educating students (Ricketson, 2014).

**Journalism in the Media Landscape**

A wide range of traditional and digital news media populate Australia’s journalism landscape, providing employment to an estimated 22,500 journalists (Department of Employment, 2014). These media also give news consumers much choice and flexibility in how they get their news. The major newspapers moved to digital-first production in 2012 and now have a strong online and mobile media presence. These outlets exist alongside digital-only news sites, such as *The Conversation*, *Crikey*, *The Daily Mail Australia*, *The Guardian Australia*, *Independent Australia*, *Buzzfeed*, *Junkee*, *Birdee*, *Hijacked*, and *City Journal*.

Three decisive socio-historical factors have shaped the role of journalism in Australia’s media system: colonialism, demography, and national media policy. First, the British penal colony, established in 1788, initially had an authoritarian press system. The first Australian newspapers, *The Sydney Gazette* (1803-1842) and *The Hobart Town Gazette* (1816-1882), were published “by authority” of the governor. These publications were heavily censored, and, imitating *The London Times*’ business model, funded through “saturation” advertising and subscriptions (Lloyd, 1999). The British strictly controlled the flow of information in the six colonial settlements dispersed across Australia’s vast continent. Officials believed “unchecked political discussion was unthinkable in a colony where public safety depended on the disunity of the convict population” (Cryle, 1997, p. 26). However, by the mid-1820s, independent newspapers, such as *The Australian* (1824-1848), were circulating without authorization and demanding an end to the penal colony and its cruelties (Cryle, 1997). When anti-press taxes failed to silence these critics, officials turned to more draconian measures, using defamation and sedition laws to prosecute and imprison outspoken editors and to constrain public speech (Lloyd, 1999). Australia has since developed into a strong liberal democracy with a pluralist media system. Yet, there is

Second, ever since the Commonwealth of Australia achieved independence in 1901, demographic factors have shaped media development and the journalism landscape. These factors have ranged from intense post-colonial urbanization and low population density to high levels of migration, beginning in the 1950s. The press has a decentralized structure, with the most important daily newspapers circulating in state capitals (Tiffen, 2014). These newspapers cover territory containing over one half of Australia’s 24 million people and the most lucrative media advertising markets. By contrast, people in the vast, sparsely populated regional and remote parts of the country depend on two national public service broadcasters, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC, created in 1932) and the multicultural, multilingual Special Broadcasting Service (SBS, created in 1980). The Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 and the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 restrict government interference in the internal operations of these state-owned media and guarantee their editorial independence (Cunningham & Turnbull, 2014). In addition, a not-for-profit community media sector emerged in the mid-1970s, following persistent campaigns by indigenous and migrant communities for access to their own forms of media and opportunities for self-representation. Some 400 community media projects, operated by 22,000 volunteers, now give voice to a plethora of community perspectives. Such perspectives would otherwise go unheard in a national media system plagued by one of the highest concentrations of commercial media ownership in the world (Jolly, 2014).

Third, despite the growing pressures of globalization and convergence, national media policy is trying to keep the media distinctly Australian (Cunningham & Flew, 2000; Jones & Pusey, 2010). Controls on foreign investment in Australia’s media, designated a “sensitive sector” of the national economy, aim to protect domestic ownership and control. Mandatory Australian content quotas for commercial television and radio support local media jobs and production of media content that tells Australian stories. Industry guidelines for media portrayal of
indigenous people and minority ethnic communities foster social inclusion and tolerance (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2015). Media diversity, an important public interest policy objective, argues that audience access to a wide variety of news and opinion sources enhances democracy (Department of Communications and the Arts, 2014). In part to foster media diversity, government controls in place since 1987 restrict cross-media ownership to two of the three traditional news platforms (television, radio, and newspapers). The government also limits the audience reach of any one commercial television license to 75% of the population. Finally, it specifies a minimum of five independent radio license holders or “media voices” in each of the state capitals (Department of Communications and the Arts, 2014, p. 5). These rules, administered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), do not apply to online media.

High levels of print media concentration, dominated by News Corp Australia and Fairfax Media, are unintended by-products of media policy. News Corp, the nation’s biggest newspaper company, owns seven of the 12 major national and metropolitan daily newspapers. This includes successful tabloids in major capital cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, and Darwin. Fairfax Media owns four of the five other major dailies, while Seven West Media owns the remaining masthead, The West Australian, along with Australia’s largest commercial television network. News Corp Australia and Fairfax newspapers are, on average, read each week by around 60% and 36% respectively of Australia’s newspaper-reading public (Department of Communications and the Arts, 2014, p. 21). For journalists, the ultimate impact of this oligopolistic media ownership pattern is limited employer options. A related problem is that those who take principled stands on issues such as commercial interference in news content risk both dismissal and career loss (Nash, 2003; Aedy, 2013).

Professional Characteristics

Journalism is a medium-sized occupation in Australia. It has experienced strong employment growth over the past decade and has a predicted positive job outlook up until at least 2018 (Department of Employment, 2014). Almost 75% of journalists are employed full time.
They work an average of 40 hours per week and earn an above-average weekly income (approximately U.S. $1,100). The median age of journalists is 39 years (around 14% are less than 24 years old, while around 5% are 65 years or older). The majority of workers in this occupation have a bachelor’s degree (48.8%) or higher degree (32.6%) (Department of Employment, 2014).

Information media and telecommunications is the main industry sector employing journalists, with most jobs in the eastern states of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. Sydney is the undisputed “news capital” of Australia. Employment levels have remained steady over the past decade, and job prospects for journalists are considered “average.” Job vacancies mainly result from journalists changing jobs or leaving the occupation. Only 2.1% of job vacancies are the result of employment growth (Department of Employment, 2014).

While men (53.4%) outnumber women (46.6%) in this occupation (Department of Employment, 2014), greater gender parity exists today than in the early 1970s. At that time, only one in 10 journalists were female (Henningham, 1998). Men also dominate executive and managerial positions. In the 1990s, only 3% of female journalists were working as editors or news directors, compared to 12% of male journalists (Henningham, 1998).

Monoculturalism in mainstream newsrooms is a long-standing problem because it contrasts sharply with the multiculturalism and multilingualism of the wider society. About 20% of Australia’s 24 million people are first-generation immigrants with a native language other than English (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). However, as Jakubowicz (2010) has argued, “Australian news media typically have Anglo-Australian editors and senior staff, directing more junior staff (who may be from non-Anglo backgrounds) in the framing of news stories, choice of sources, and journalistic perspectives.” The problem even attracts media commentary, with headlines such as “At the ABC, diversity means British journos” (Cleary, 2015) and “Whitewash? That’s not the colour of the SBS charter” (Vatsikopoulos, 2015). Research suggests newsrooms need diversity to ensure social inclusion and improve coverage of immigration and citizenship issues (Jakubowicz, 2010; Deuze, 2005; Forde, 2005).
Cross-national comparative research indicates Australian journalists’ perceptions of the function and role of journalism in society imitate those found in other Western democratic countries. An 18-nation study (Hanitzsch et al., 2013) classified Australia with Austria, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States as “western-oriented journalism cultures” that value “non-involvement, detachment, monitoring the government, as well as providing political and interesting information to motivate the people to participate in civic activity” (p. 281). Interestingly, journalists from Australia and the United States are more committed to an interpretative but factual mode of reporting than those in Austria, Germany, and Spain (Hanitzsch et al., 2013, p. 283). Conversely, when compared to their U.S. counterparts, Australian journalists are less inclined to follow universal ethical rules and are more willing to accept harmful consequences of reporting for the sake of a greater public good (Hanitzsch et al., 2013, p. 285).

According to the latest study of Australia’s journalistic workforce (Hanusch, 2013a), the typical Australian journalist today is more likely to be female, older, better educated, more experienced, and with more left-leaning political views than 20 years ago. However, despite growing numbers of women in journalism, gender parity in terms of positions of power or salaries remains elusive. And journalists’ ethnic backgrounds have changed little in 20 years, with minority groups still “drastically under-represented” (Hanusch, 2013a, p. 39).

**Journalism Education, Professional Training, and Research**

There is a high national demand for entry into journalism programs and student interest in journalism careers is impressive. Journalism program enrollments rose by 42% in the 2001-2008 period, compared to an increase of 27% in overall enrollments in higher education programs (Scanlon, 2009). This demand is linked to optimism about employment opportunities for graduates who have information and communication technology skill sets and fascination with the news media (Putnis, Axford, Watson, & Blood, 2002). Research indicates that unrealistic perceptions of the high profile work opportunities, glamor, and wealth supposedly found in journalistic careers are also a factor (Alysen & Oakham, 1996). Many journalism graduates aspire to work
in metropolitan daily newspapers. A 2011 survey found 57% of final-year journalism students would look for work “reporting at a newspaper” (Callaghan, 2011). Yet, these newsrooms offer very few entry-level job opportunities (Cokley, Edstrom, McBride, & Ranke, 2011; Cokley, Gilbert, Jovic, & Hanrick, 2015). As a consequence, most of the journalism graduates entering the labor market each year (Hirst, 2010) have to settle for other types of media or non-media work (e.g., niche magazines, public relations).

**Teaching and Training Future Newsmakers**

Thirty-two of Australia’s 40 universities, as well as private colleges, offer journalism degree programs at either undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels (Tanner et al., 2013; see Table 1.2 for major academic journalism programs and non-academic training). In 2008, the most recent year for which detailed figures are available, 4,288 students studied journalism—3,624 undergraduates, 664 postgraduates (Scanlon, 2009).

The most comprehensive recent study of Australian university-based undergraduate journalism programs (Adams & Duffield, 2006) found many divergent pathways to a journalism degree. All 25 programs surveyed were career-oriented and journalism educators recruited from the industry (also known as “journalist-academics”) taught in tenure track positions in these programs (Bromley, 2013, p. 5). The exact number of journalism faculty is unknown. However, JERAA reports a stable national membership of 120 journalism educators, including over 60 with doctoral qualifications (P. O’Donnell & Van Heekeren, 2015).

Journalism programs commonly require full-time students to complete 24 units (six credit points per unit) of study over three years and to engage in a three-part structure known as the “bachelor of arts” curriculum model (Adams & Duffield, 2006). This model consists of up to eight university-designated liberal arts units of study, a compulsory journalism major of 8-12 units of study focused on journalism skills and technologies (Nielsen, 2015), and minor options of 4-8 units of study from cognate disciplines. However, educational offerings within this structure vary widely according to the distinct institutional history and disciplinary orientation of each program. For example, journalism programs are found
in colleges of Business, Communications and Multimedia, Creative
Industries, and Informatics, as well as the more traditional Colleges of
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (Adams & Duffield, 2006).

Journalism majors also vary in the curricular mix of career skills
and knowledge. According to Adams and Duffield (2006), the most
common compulsory journalism units of study are news writing, print
editing and publishing, and introductory media/journalism studies.
Online journalism is a compulsory subject in 14 of the 25 journalism
programs they surveyed. Journalism law and/or ethics are also common
subjects in this group. Irrespective of the mix, all journalism graduates
are expected to know about news values, journalistic ethics, media law,
politics, and Australian press history (Adams & Duffield, 2006).

In 2015, a study of 19 Australian journalism programs explored the
question of graduate employability, asking whether journalism gradu-
ates have the “job-ready” skills and knowledge that news organizations
are looking for in new recruits (Nielsen, 2015). It found no consen-
sus across programs on what makes a person job-ready for journalism
work. Moreover, it found constant change in journalism platforms and
practices made the task of reaching consensus difficult and, therefore,
improbable (Nielsen, 2015, pp. 56-59).

Professional education aims to initiate students into the existing
knowledge and practices of a specific occupation and provide them with
the qualifications necessary to begin work (McGuire, 1992). Building
on the scholarship of teaching and learning, Australian journalism edu-
cators have adopted five main approaches to professional journalism
The first, most common, model focuses on training for entry-level jobs
in the news industry and relies on mass communication as the cognate
disciplinary field. The J-School, Macleay College, and the Australian
College of Journalism, all privately owned journalism education provid-
ers, adopt this approach. The second model focuses on problem-solving
journalism and develops a journalistic modus operandi based on teamwork and social inclusion. The third model develops reflective practice,
or critical reflection about workplace experience, as a core competency
(Sheridan Burns, 2002). It focuses on ethical journalistic decision-mak-
ing in dynamic news environments. The fourth model focuses on the
public intellectual role of journalists in connecting news to debates about public policy. It emphasizes investigative reporting skills and journalistic principles, such as the public’s right to know (P. O’Donnell, 2002). The final model focuses on the challenge of new technologies. For example, University of Wollongong journalism researchers have been addressing demands for curriculum renewal, involving digital news platforms and user engagement, through a best practice convergent model (M. O’Donnell, Tanner, Cullen, & Green, 2013).

Overall, such curricular diversity represents a healthy field of study. However, it can also be confusing for prospective journalism students, and further research is needed to assess the “fit” between their aspirations and program offerings (Putnis et al., 2002).

**Journalism Research**

Journalism research in Australia usually receives more criticism than accolades from the broader scholarly community. This is because historically journalism educators, as a group, have struggled to build a conventional academic research culture (Bromley, 2013; Turner, 2011). Turner (2011) claims the quality and quantity of journalism research in Australia is “poor” when compared to the United States or the United Kingdom. Turner (2011) adds this is the case because Australian journalism education maintains “a particularly compliant relationship” to the news industry, is overly nervous about developing critical research perspectives on news media performance, and, as a result, has failed to make the transition from a training discipline to a research field (p. 6). Bromley (2013) confirms the Australian journalism field’s lack of maturation but attributes the problem to both internal and external problems, including “a maelstrom of change” (p. 4) in universities since the 1980s, recent government policy mandating increased auditing of research productivity and quality, and resulting pressures on journalism faculty to adopt more “science like” (p. 13) research. Bromley (2013) found Australian journalism faculty members, many of them practitioners, struggle to meet institutionalized research targets.

JERAA is currently leading a change of direction in journalism research, which for the past four decades has evolved in an *ad hoc* manner through annual conferences, collaborative partnerships with
industry, and publications. One such publication, *Australian Journalism Review*, is the sector’s leading peer-reviewed journal (established in 1978). Other scholarly journals edited by Australian journalism academics include *Asia Pacific Media Educator, eJournalist, and Global Media Journal: Australian Edition and Pacific Journalism Review*. In mid-2015, the association decided to take more decisive leadership of journalism’s disciplinary development by publishing, for the first time, a Journalism Research Australia National Statement (P. O’Donnell & Van Heekeren, 2015).

According to the statement, “Journalism as an academic research discipline contributes to the body of scholarly knowledge about the contexts, tools, creation, distribution, consumption, impacts and social relations of journalism via journalism studies and journalism practice” (JERAA, 2015). It includes journalism practice as a research paradigm. Since 2011, the Australian Research Council—Australia’s main national research-funding body—has accepted quality newspaper portfolios as non-traditional research outputs (NTROs). This has been a seemingly favorable decision for an area of study staffed by many former journalists. Even so, the idea that journalism practice should count as research remains a controversial issue, with little agreement on how to measure the quality and impact of NTROs (Turner, 2011). JERAA’s research statement can be seen as a significant attempt to articulate a clear starting point for further debate on this “unconventional particularity” of the Australian journalism research field (P. O’Donnell & Van Heekeren, 2015, p. 15).

There is evidence that many Australian journalism educators tend to have industry-oriented research priorities, preferring to bypass critical, less practical scholarship in favor of research that supports their teaching, contributes to improving professional practice, and, thereby, raises standards of journalism (Bromley, 2013; Richards, 1997). The journalism education sector, in collaboration with industry, has developed various high-impact initiatives designed to provide solutions to community concerns about journalism’s shortcomings. Such initiatives include those dealing with improving suicide, mental health, and minority reporting.

The *Reporting Diversity* project (www.reportingdiversity.org.au) offers an extensive suite of journalism education resources, including
anti-racist reporting guidelines and protocols, aimed at redressing the problem of media demonization of indigenous Australians and Muslims from the Middle East (Phillips, 2011; Jakubowicz, 2010; McCallum & Posetti, 2008). Likewise, the Mindframe project (www.mindframe-media.info), which continues to address the problem of copycat behavior arising from media coverage of suicide, has significantly changed journalists’ suicide-reporting practices over the past 10 years. Research has found news reports now use more accurate language, are less sensational, and routinely include links to suicide prevention services (Skehan & Laybutt, 2009).

Furthermore, news criticism and the quest for better journalism are the driving themes in a range of recent monographs on Australian journalism practices and politics. These include the following:

- Lawrie Zion and David Craig’s *Ethics for digital journalists: Emerging best practices* (2014);
- Shelton Gunaratne, Mark Pearson, and Sugarth Senarath’s *Mindful journalism and news ethics in the digital era* (2015);
- Matthew Ricketson’s *Australian journalism today* (2012);
- David McKnight’s *Rupert Murdoch: An investigation of political power* (2012);
- Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and Mohamad Abdalla’s *Islam and the Australian news media* (2010);
- Louise North’s *The gendered newsroom: how journalists experience the changing world of media* (2009); and
- Libby Lester’s *Giving ground: Media and environmental conflict in Tasmania* (2007).

**Professional Connections in Journalism Education**

Australian universities are interacting with industry mostly through workplace internship programs, industry reference groups, and the employment of professional journalists as part-time tutors. In addition, there are numerous collaborative activities, such as industry-judged awards for student work, guest lectures, and public seminars on key issues such as press freedom, media coverage of climate change, and workforce futures.

No formal links currently exist between journalism programs
and news organizations (Green & Sykes, 2004). The Australian media industry is notoriously disinterested in journalism education, a problem that has roots in workplace history (Ricketson, 2001). Many news executives, senior journalists, and industry recruiters began their careers in journalism at a time when newsroom entry required a three-year cadetship (before the 1990s boom in university-level journalism programs). As a result, older generations of journalists tend to believe workplace training, or what is euphemistically termed “the school of hard knocks—the university of life” (Ricketson, 2001, p. 95), is the only real way to learn the business. Furthermore, the journalists’ union, the MEAA, has always fixed journalists’ pay rates and promotion criteria on the basis of professional experience and journalistic achievements rather than educational qualifications. As a result, journalism graduates recruited into newsroom jobs typically earn the same trainee-level wages during their first year as all other qualified or unqualified new recruits and get no particular workplace recognition for their journalism education (Green & Sykes, 2004). In 2004, JERAA tried, without success, to develop a more productive relationship with industry and the union through talks on a national accreditation scheme, similar to what the American Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) has established (Green, 2005). However, key journalism education providers opposed the move, fearing industry oversight of programs would do little to elevate journalism standards while giving media corporations unwarranted power to reshape the curriculum to their needs. As a result, accreditation of journalism programs remains controversial, despite two decades of debate (Green, 2005; Henningham, 1989; Herbert, 2002; Patching, 1996).

At the same time, journalism academics frequently call for stronger professional links with important industry employers, particularly metropolitan newspaper editors (Cullen, 2014; Green, 2005; Oliver, Bethell, Fernandez, Harrison, & Breit, 2011; Ricketson, 2001, 2014). For example, Green (2005) proposed using existing mechanisms, such as industry reference groups, to develop more frequent and effective academy-industry interactions. And Ricketson (2001, 2014) argued a closer working relationship requires industry respect for the independence of journalism programs. Ricketson (2001) also emphasized that
journalism programs need to “stand apart from the industry, to study it, question it and offer new and different ways of doing journalism” (p. 98). More recently, Cullen (2014) reported some success in opening up new dialogue between journalism academics and news editors on graduate employability.

Journalism Education’s Professional Impact

While employment is only one outcome of university study, journalism academics and graduates alike judge the success and impact of journalism education by the number of graduates who get newsroom jobs each year. The success rate, however, is difficult to quantify. Universities do not track their graduates’ employment destinations, so there are no institution-based statistics on journalism graduate outcomes. National longitudinal data on graduate employment trends, collected by Graduate Careers Australia, the leading national authority, does not detail journalism graduate outcomes as a separate category. Therefore, journalism academics rely on informal student and employer feedback to monitor their impact on the industry. One drawback with this kind of anecdotal information, as Putnis et al. (2002) noted, is that it does not necessarily reflect outcomes for the majority of students. After all, it tends to focus on high profile students and job destinations. Research indicates, for example, that only about one percent of graduates will find work at a metropolitan daily newspaper (Alysen, 2007; Cokley et al., 2015). Further, employers are known to be fickle and journalism graduates sometimes compete with graduates in economics, law, sports, politics, or science for specialist beats or publications. Regional newspapers, radio and television, and magazines and other special interest publications are the most reliable source of entry-level job opportunities for journalism graduates (Green & Sykes, 2004).

However, journalism academics have collected survey data on graduate employment destinations from some specific undergraduate journalism programs, such as Charles Sturt University, the University of Technology, Sydney, and the University of Queensland (Green, 2005; P. O’Donnell, 1999; Patching, 1996). These surveys consistently find that about one third of journalism graduates obtain a newsroom job within one year of graduation, while the remaining two thirds find
employment either in the public relations and advertising sectors or in non-media industries. The good news is that journalism graduates have excellent employment prospects even outside their chosen occupation. After all, their skill sets and expertise are attractive to a wide range of employers. Further, as Green (2005) notes, journalism graduates can be unusually tenacious. His research has found evidence that unsatisfying first jobs did not always dampen graduates’ aspirations, with many showing “dogged determination” (p. 186) to move on and make it in the news media industry.

Much ongoing debate focuses on the imbalance between the supply of journalism graduates and newsroom demand for new recruits (Callaghan, 2011). While some critics blame structural constraints, such as the volatility of ICT-based industries or changing occupational profiles (Putnis et al., 2002), others suggest Australian universities may be “deceiving” prospective students by overstating the chances of careers in journalism when promoting their journalism programs (Cullen & Callaghan, 2010, p. 117). However, journalism graduates are seen to have better overall job prospects than generalist media graduates because their distinct expertise applies to a wide range of occupational roles (Putnis et al., 2002).

Future Possibilities

“Learning outcomes” and “graduate employability” are two catchphrases shaping the future direction of Australian journalism education, as government moves to guarantee measurable results from journalism education and training. The Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency, a government regulatory body, now requires all universities to provide evidence of graduate learning outcomes that comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). For undergraduates, the AQF specifies three outcomes: familiarity with a broad and coherent body of knowledge, capacity to apply that knowledge in a range of contexts, and readiness for professional practice and/or further learning (AQF Council, 2013, p. 16).

The journalism education sector is proactively responding to these accountability demands. In 2011, with funding from the national Office of Learning and Teaching, it created a trans-disciplinary network of
scholars to develop a suite of model learning outcomes for undergraduate journalism programs across the country. This Journalism, Media and Communication (JoMeC) Network, initiated by former JERAAP President Anne Dunn, acts as a national forum for debate on learning and teaching issues, including learning standards, curriculum reform, and graduate destinations. At a time of volatility in the news industry and uncertainty about the future of the profession, a key discussion point is curriculum renewal to prepare graduates for work in convergent journalism (Tanner et al., 2013). A 2013 study of convergent journalism curriculum models found Australian journalism academics struggling to find the right balance between education and training in traditional core skills and digital capabilities (M. O’Donnell et al., 2013). This problem is exacerbated by contradictory pressures to produce graduates who are not only job-ready, according to current industry needs, but also prepared to work in this industry given its unknown future.

**Journalism Education Issues, Challenges, and Innovations**

The lack of research on Australian journalism students is a pressing issue in Australian journalism education (Hanusch, 2013b). It means curriculum renewal takes place without the benefit of systematic data on what motivates young Australians to enroll in a journalism program and/or how they perceive journalism’s roles, values, and practices. It also lacks data on why they aspire to enter the profession or where they end up working. This situation is repeated in public debate over the best preparation for journalistic work, which routinely features industry and university stakeholders but ignores journalism students’ perspectives—as if the views of these younger, less powerful stakeholders are of no consequence. Also, through media research, more is known about the online news practices of mainstream news organizations and professional journalists (P. O’Donnell, McKnight, & Este, 2012) than about how younger people consume and interact with the digital news environment (Flew, Daniel, Spurgeon, & Swift, 2011, p. 100). Similarly, little is known about whether younger people’s online experiences encourage or discourage them from pursuing careers in journalism. Yet, research in the cognate field of youth studies clearly indicates that opportunities for interactivity and participation drive younger people’s
engagement in the public sphere, with social media use emerging as a driver of new types of “micro-political engagement and everyday political talk” (Vromen, Xenos, & Loader, 2015, p. 95).

When it comes to students, journalism educators’ real challenge is both practical and professional. First, in practical terms, a curriculum that positions journalism students as passive learners rather than engaged online users runs the risk of alienating students. Secondly, in professional terms, journalists and academics who fail to directly seek out students’ views on the best preparation for journalistic work face the prospect of being left behind to argue over how to adapt to the changing news environment. In the meanwhile, students will simply create their own diverse, new ways of practicing journalism online. This proved to be the case in a fairly recent media controversy sparked by claims published in a national newspaper, alleging that some of Australia’s “most prestigious universities” were “indoctrinating students, not educating them” (Markson, 2014). While journalism academics contested the claims by writing op-ed pieces for major online news sites (e.g., Guardian Australia, The Australian, The Conversation, and Crikey), journalism students adopted a more critical role and published a range of news stories, opinion pieces, tweets, memes, and comments on alternative news sites, using humor and wit to ridicule suggestions that they had been “brainwashed” and showcase their impressive convergent journalism skills (P. O’Donnell & Hutchinson, 2015).

Intergenerational change in journalism thus appears to be a potential force for innovation in both journalism and journalism education. The prospects of success will look brighter if the journalism academy is able to extend its successful track record in developing research-based, innovative curricular materials aimed at raising professional standards to include convergent journalism practices. These would include news reporting of complex issues such as suicide and mental health or community conflicts arising from cultural diversity issues.

**Conclusion: Educating Tomorrow’s Journalists—The Big Picture**

Journalism educators, when training tomorrow’s journalists, must increasingly take into account the influence of global trends on one’s society and journalism education alike (Josephi, 2007; Deuze, 2006; Loo,
2006). For example, the internationalization of higher education and the consequent internationalization of journalism student cohorts are factors driving a more cosmopolitan outlook in Australian journalism education. So are the Australian media’s growing cultural and linguistic diversity, the emergence of significant non-Western journalism practices, and the expanding global media employment market. The World Journalism Education Council (WJEC) has, since 2007, led global debate on the need to “internationalize” journalism curricula around the world. However, in Australia, as elsewhere, this is proving to be a more difficult curriculum renewal challenge than convergent journalism.

Journalism educators conceptualize global journalism education in different terms (Deuze, 2006). In Australia, the most common approaches focus on the contexts in which journalism is practiced, ranging from Australia’s Indigenous and multicultural communities to Australia as part of the international community (McCallum & Posetti, 2008; Josephi, 2007; Loo, 2006). Ongoing concerns about Australian journalism’s monoculturalism—and related problems of racist reporting—drive the focus on making journalism education more “multicultural” (McCallum & Posetti, 2008). Indigenous and ethnic minority media guidelines are used in classrooms to improve minority coverage. Yet, such guidelines are inherently global since they require a cross-cultural approach to journalism teaching, which fosters cross-cultural understanding and interactions (Loo, 2006). Also, key curricular renewal strategies include using Web-based learning opportunities and assignments to encourage cosmopolitan outlooks based on “looking at issues and affairs beyond the boundaries of [our] immediate community” (Loo, 2006). Josephi’s (2007) framework for reconceptualizing an international approach to journalism education remains the most far-reaching and productive renewal proposal. She argues that the teaching of freedom of expression and journalistic independence must include research and discussion about their normative value in diverse journalistic contexts. Case studies of such concepts could include analysis of China’s transitional media system and transnational, pan-Arab news networks, such as Al-Jazeera.

Deuze (2006, p. 31) suggests how we educate students and engage them in meaningful dialogue about the future of journalism influences
the ways we do journalism. The Australian experience confirms this view. Journalism education that prioritizes student engagement, curriculum renewal, and collaborative industry-university links is the best preparation for journalistic work.

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<th>Organization</th>
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<td>Australian Centre for Independent Journalism</td>
<td>Activities include investigative journalism, continuing education and research, and debate on areas of concern to journalists.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/australian-centre-independent-journalism">http://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/australian-centre-independent-journalism</a></td>
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<td>Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)</td>
<td>Commonwealth regulatory authority responsible for broadcasting, radio communications, telecommunications, and online content since July 1, 2005.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acma.gov.au">http://www.acma.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Indigenous Communication Association</td>
<td>Represents indigenous media, including 150 remote community radio and television facilities, 25 urban and regional radio stations, and a commercial television service.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aicaine.org.au">http://www.aicaine.org.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA)</td>
<td>Professional association for Australian and South Pacific journalism educators that aims to improve journalism teaching, research, and professional links.</td>
<td><a href="http://jeaa.org.au">http://jeaa.org.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)</td>
<td>Trade union and professional organization created in 1992 by amalgamation of the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) and related unions.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.alliance.org.au">http://www.alliance.org.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Watch</td>
<td>A weekly program on national, non-commercial television, set up in 1989, to critique journalist practices.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/">http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walkley Foundation</td>
<td>Responsible for the leading national media industry prizes.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.walkleys.com">http://www.walkleys.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program</td>
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<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>Australia’s first journalism school, set up in 1921, and now preparing graduates for a global information society.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uq.edu.au/sjc">http://www.uq.edu.au/sjc</a></td>
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<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>Provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to become qualified journalists in the broadcast and print media.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/study-at-deakin/find-a-course/journalism">http://www.deakin.edu.au/study-at-deakin/find-a-course/journalism</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>A national leader in journalism education for over three decades, graduating many of Australia’s acclaimed journalists.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uts.edu.au/future-students/communication/study-areas/journalism">http://www.uts.edu.au/future-students/communication/study-areas/journalism</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Techno-</td>
<td>Offers a comprehensive program, including cutting-edge online journalism options such as reporting, editing, and production.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.qut.edu.au/study/study-areas/study-journalism">https://www.qut.edu.au/study/study-areas/study-journalism</a></td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>J-School</td>
<td>The one-year J-School diploma gives students the knowledge and skills to apply for an entry-level position in journalism.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jschool.com.au">http://www.jschool.com.au</a></td>
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