

# Pitching to The Conversation

The world's leading free, fact-based news source  
written by academics and edited by journalists.

**Presented by Jane Howard**

**Deputy Editor: Arts & Culture, The Conversation**

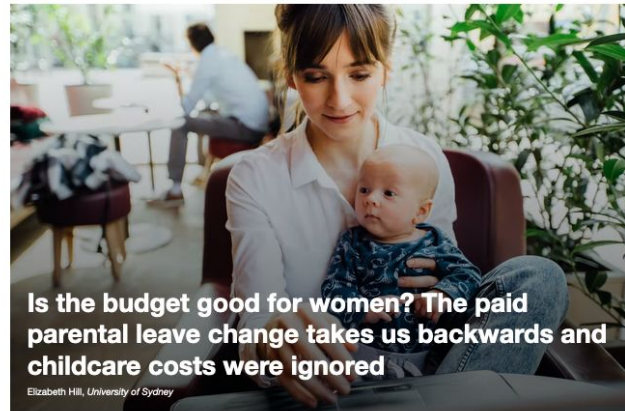


I'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land we're meeting on today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Conversation also acknowledges the expertise of Indigenous researchers and [Indigenous knowledge](#) holders who have written for us. *(More on this later...)*

# What we do

- Independent, not-for-profit source of news, analysis and expert opinion, written by academics working with professional journalists.
- Academics get sign-off on all edits, including headlines written by editors, so we accurately portray your research.



# Benefits of publishing in The Conversation

- Connects your research directly with the public, practitioners and key decision-makers and extends its influence beyond academia.
- Experienced editors help translate research so it engages and connects with a general audience.
- Faster publication than journals: communicate current research on topical issues in a timely fashion.
- Authors can use Conversation readership metrics to support funding bids etc.
- Writing skills you gain translate to writing in other forums: journal articles are clearer and grant writing more compelling.

*Adapted from Osman, K. & Cunningham, S. (2020). 'Amplifier' platforms and impact: Australian scholars' use of The Conversation. Australian Universities' Review, 62(1), pp. 41-50.*

# Reach a global audience through our network of 20,000 republishers

- All our stories are free to read or republish – which is how we reach millions more readers through global media outlets.



 **Kurt Sengul** @Kurt\_Sengul

In 24 hours my piece in The Conversation has had more views than all of my academic papers combined will ever have 🥲

 Twitter | Jun 23rd

Kurt Sengul, Doctoral Researcher, University of Newcastle

# Reach an international audience

THE CONVERSATION Analytics

Dashboards /  
University of Adelaide



Summary Articles Authors Publishers Global Compare

24 March 2011 - 31 March 2022



More than half our readers are from outside Australia and New Zealand, with USA, India, UK and Canada the top four countries of origin.

# Reach an international audience

- We have separate editions of The Conversation, in multiple languages, in sub-Saharan Africa, Canada, France, Indonesia, Spain, the UK and the US.
- Numerous articles are translated and republished by our international editions.





Susan Hazel

Senior Lecturer, School of Animal and Veterinary Science, University of Adelaide



107,870 reads →



Translated and republished  
by TC Indonesia →

↓  
An additional  
81,720 reads



Translated and republished  
by TC France

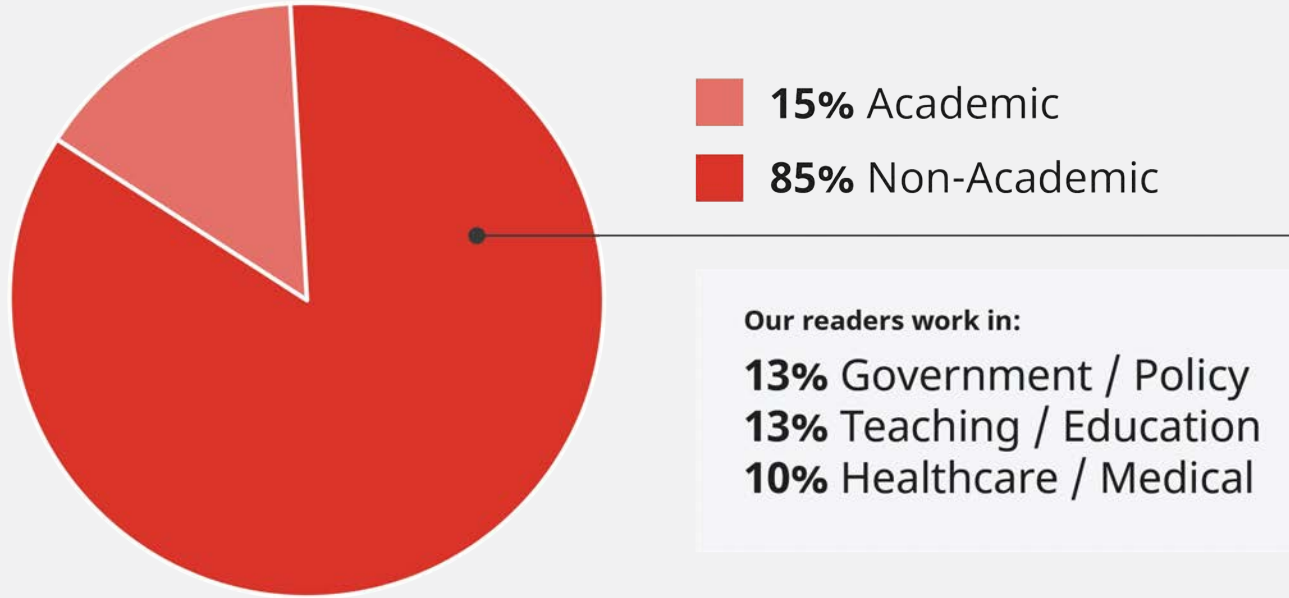
↓  
An additional  
50,379 reads



# Reach a large and diverse audience



# Reach a large and diverse audience



# We play a vital role in sharing research



After publishing with The Conversation our authors also:

- Are invited to speak at conferences (13%).
- Discuss the article with students (32%), colleagues and the public (76%).

“I publish a lot of op-ed and The Conversation is unrivalled in the amount of media engagement it generates.”

– Steven Hamilton, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

# A University of Adelaide expert wrote about the contribution of older workers. Policy-makers listened.

Author



**Andreas Cebulla**

Senior Research Fellow, South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, University of Adelaide



"The impact of my Conversation article was pretty astonishing.

I was invited to meet with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (SA) to discuss the implications of my research findings for the SA public sector.

I was also invited to discuss lessons from my research with COTA Australia.

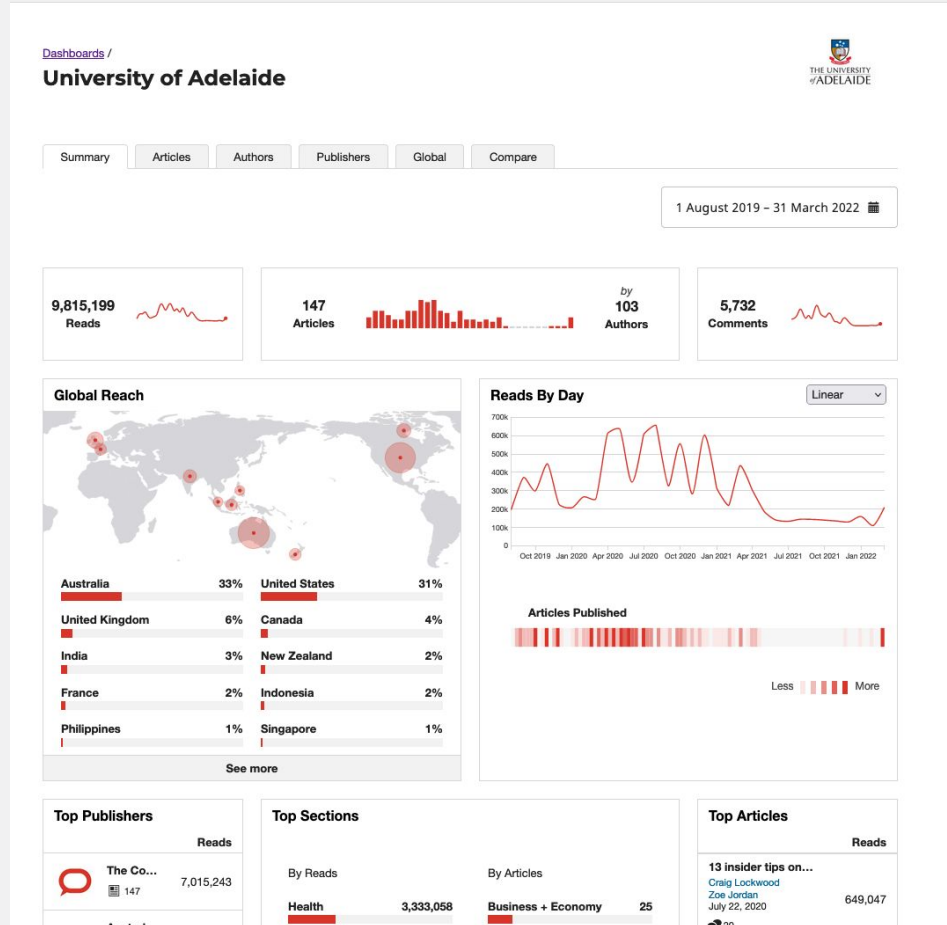
The article was republished on the front page of ABC News website, and I did interviews with ABC Radio Sydney, ABC Radio Central West NSW and FIVEaa radio.

The research described was European. So the impact that The Conversation article had in Australia made its way to the UK (core funder of this study), where it has counted towards our research project's impact assessment."

(140,553 reads)

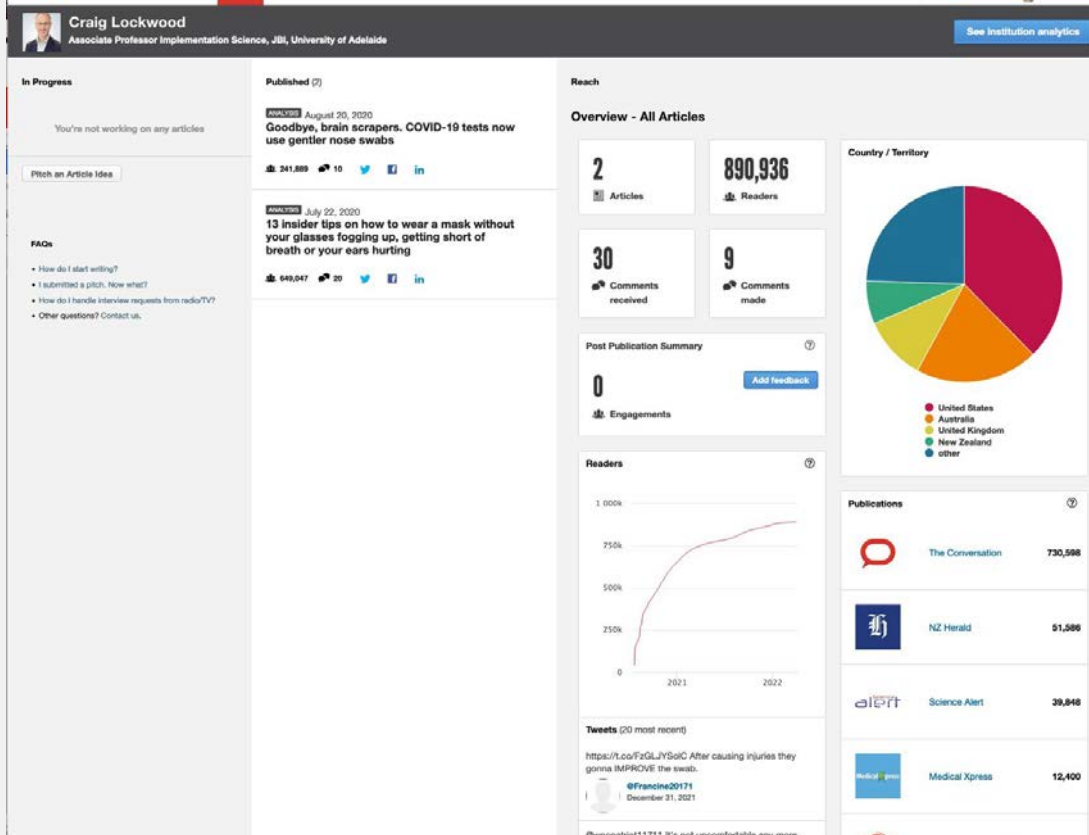
# Use our metrics

- Anyone at your institution can access real-time analytics on request.
- To gain access, email [partnerships@theconversation.edu.au](mailto:partnerships@theconversation.edu.au)



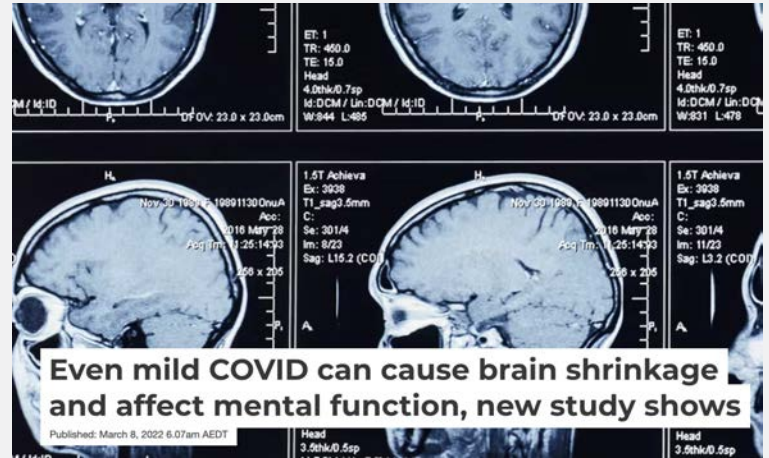
# Use our metrics

As an author, you'll also get your very own author dashboard.



## 4 key types of stories we publish

# Timely: New research, often tied to a journal article



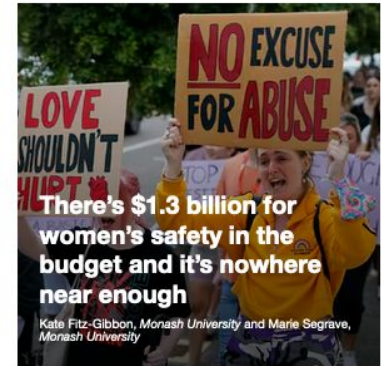
## 4 key types of stories we publish

# Timely: Rapid analysis of issues in the news/current affairs



## Concerned about your risk of a heart attack? Here are 5 ways to improve your heart health

Shane Warne's untimely death from a suspected heart attack has prompted some people to consider their own heart health and what improvements they can make.





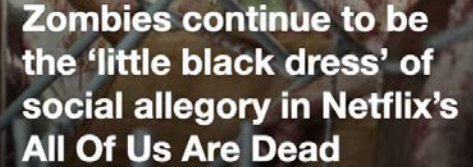
## 4 key types of stories we publish

**Timeless: tell an interesting story, answer an interesting question**



**You can thaw and refreeze meat: five food safety myths busted**

December 28, 2015 8:38am AEST



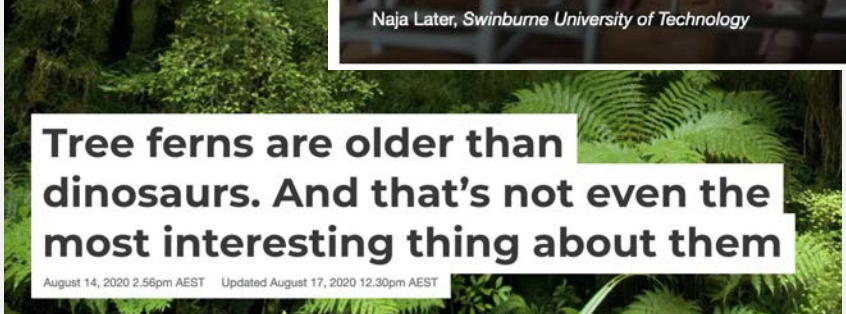
**Zombies continue to be the 'little black dress' of social allegory in Netflix's All Of Us Are Dead**

Naja Later, Swinburne University of Technology



**We composted 'biodegradable' balloons. Here's what we found after 16 weeks**

August 17, 2020 11:04am AEST



**Tree ferns are older than dinosaurs. And that's not even the most interesting thing about them**

August 14, 2020 2:56pm AEST Updated August 17, 2020 12:30pm AEST



**Curious Kids: how does the Sun help your body make vitamin D?**

July 28, 2020 1:37pm AEST



**Why are young people drinking less than their parents' generation did?**

Published: December 24, 2021 7:51am AEST

4 key types of stories we publish

# Arts and book reviews/analysis



How do we find authors?

## Editors send daily expert requests to member unis' media teams

Does your media team know your work? Do they have your mobile?

## Expert request

6th December 2021

1. **Science + Technology** Looking for a volcanologist to write a short, quick turnaround piece explaining the Mt Semeru eruption in Indonesia over the weekend. Why was it so deadly, and were there any unusual conditions behind this disaster? Contact Michael Hopkin.
2. **Health + Medicine** How effective are rapid antigen tests at detecting COVID if you have symptoms? Is it OK to use a rapid tests rather than a PCR? Are rapid antigen tests likely to detect variants? Contact [Fron Jackson-Webb](#).
3. **Politics + Society** Is it just us or does the pre-election campaign seem to be getting earlier each time? Looking for a political scientist/historian to write on why the campaign season starts so early and if it makes any difference to voters (other than irritating them). Contact [Judith Ireland](#).
4. **Politics + Society** What impact might independents have on the federal election? As yet more high profile local independents step up to challenge sitting Coalition MPs - how serious a threat do they pose?

**Seeking female academics:** After an internal review of the gender split of published authors, The Conversation is making a renewed effort toward showcasing a more even balance of male and female voices.

We are seeking pitches from female academics with expertise on all areas of business, finance and economics, science, technology, cybersecurity, energy policy, robotics, archaeology, palaeontology, IT and artificial intelligence. Pitches can be submitted [via our pitch portal](#).

**Who can write for us? And how do we find authors?**

**[theconversation.com/au/pitches](https://theconversation.com/au/pitches)**

## **Pitch an idea**

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Got a news tip or article  
idea for The Conversation?

**Tell us**

## **Can you write for The Conversation?**

You must be a researcher or academic working at a member university or affiliated research institution, publishing original work. PhD candidates can write for us but we don't publish articles from Masters students or undergraduates. Contributors are not paid.

Please be aware that we are only able to accept a fraction of the pitches we receive. However, we do respond to all pitches submitted through this channel within 72 hours.

**Yes — and I'm ready to submit a new pitch**

## How to pitch a new article idea

### Be ready to answer these questions:

#### Story

In one sentence, what will your article say? \*

50 word limit

Why do our readers need to know about this? \*

100 word limit

What key points and examples will you use to support your argument?

150 word limit

#### Section \*

- Arts + Culture
- Books and Ideas
- Business + Economy
- Education
- Environment + Energy
- Health + Medicine
- Indigenous policy
- New Zealand based authors
- Politics + Society
- Science + Technology

## Who else can write for us?

# Indigenous Knowledge lead or co-authors

The Conversation's main point of difference is that our authors are academics and researchers (inc. PhD candidates) from [partner](#) institutions, writing in their area of expertise.

But the lead or co-author of a story can be from outside academia if they're an [Indigenous knowledge](#) holder. It's another way to recognise deep expertise.

## Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge has been set up as an institution on The Conversation's platform so we can feature Indigenous knowledge that exists outside formal university settings.



Displaying 1 - 20 of 36 articles



December 7, 2021

### A history of destruction: why the WA Aboriginal cultural heritage bill will not prevent another Juukan Gorge-like disaster

Joe Dortch, *The University of Western Australia*; Anne Poelina, *University of Notre Dame Australia*; Jo Thomson, *The University of Western Australia*, and Kado Muir, *Indigenous Knowledge*

Western Australia's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 is set to become law. But the new legislation states one elected official will decide whether heritage sites are destroyed for development.



December 3, 2021

### Safe, respected and free from violence: preventing violence against women in the Northern Territory

Chay Brown, *Australian National University*; Carmel Simpson, *Indigenous Knowledge*, and Shirleen

## Authors



**Carmel Simpson**  
Co-coordinator of Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group, Indigenous Knowledge



**Desmond Campbell**  
First Nations Practice Lead: Social Ventures Australia, Indigenous Knowledge



**Eleanor Bourke**  
Professor and Chair of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission, Indigenous Knowledge



**Graham Moore**  
Yuin Elder, Indigenous Knowledge



**John Singer**  
CEO of Nganampa Health Council, Indigenous Knowledge



**Joshua Gorringe**  
General Manager Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation, Indigenous Knowledge



**Kado Muir**  
Chair of National Native Title Council and Ngala Cultural Leader, Indigenous Knowledge



**Ross Mitchell**  
Common Law holder and director of Kooma Aboriginal Corporation Native Title PBC, Indigenous Knowledge

# Follow these pitching tips

- **What's the story?** In a nutshell, what are your conclusions or findings, or the takeaway for the reader? Be clear and succinct
- **Why should the reader care?** Why is it interesting or significant to an audience who *aren't* specialists in your field?
- **Why now?** What is it relevant to? Breaking news, or a topic of current interest? A new paper? A future event? Or is it an 'explainer' of a topic of general interest?
- **Do I have good examples** to explain what I'm writing about?
- **Why are you the person to write this?** What expertise informs your view? What can you bring to the story that others can't?

Read more on how to pitch from our Chief of Staff: <https://bit.ly/TCPitchTips>  
(which ends with a link to our two page Author Guide)

# Which pitch is better?

Tick paralysis is one of the most common preventable causes of death of dogs and cats along the east coast of Australia.

It results from a cystine knot neurotoxin secreted in the saliva of the paralysis tick *Ixodes holocyclus*. This ectoparasite normally lives on native Australian marsupials such as bandicoots, macropods and possums, where it causes few adverse effects...

**or**

Tick paralysis is one of the most common preventable causes of death in dogs and cats along the east coast of Australia.

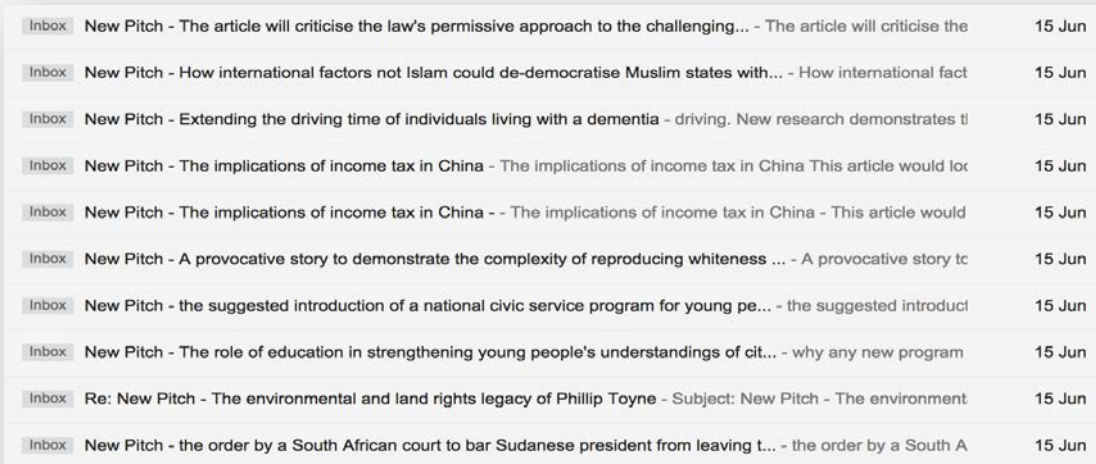
Some 10,000 dogs are affected each year, 5% of them fatally. That means 500 dogs will die from ticks each year, with the remainder undergoing discomfort and suffering.



# We get far more pitches than we can publish

The Conversation Australia & New Zealand has 30 commissioning editors (just 26 full-time equivalent). Each section has only 1-3 editors.

We publish around 4,000 articles a year — but receive many thousands more pitches. So rejection of pitches is common, even for experienced authors.



A screenshot of an email inbox with 10 entries. Each entry starts with 'Inbox' in a grey box, followed by the subject line of the email, and ends with the date '15 Jun' on the right. The subject lines are truncated and represent various pitch topics.

Inbox	New Pitch - The article will criticise the law's permissive approach to the challenging... - The article will criticise the	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - How international factors not Islam could de-democratise Muslim states with... - How international fact	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - Extending the driving time of individuals living with a dementia - driving. New research demonstrates tl	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - The implications of income tax in China This article would lox	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - - The implications of income tax in China - This article would	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - A provocative story to demonstrate the complexity of reproducing whiteness ... - A provocative story tc	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - the suggested introduction of a national civic service program for young pe... - the suggested introduct	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The role of education in strengthening young people's understandings of cit... - why any new program	15 Jun
Inbox	Re: New Pitch - The environmental and land rights legacy of Phillip Toyne - Subject: New Pitch - The environment	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - the order by a South African court to bar Sudanese president from leaving t... - the order by a South A	15 Jun

**DO:** Use The Conversation's standard pitch process (rather than emailing editors)

**DO:** Pitch as soon as possible. If it's tied to a journal article, try to let us know a rough publication date.

**DON'T:** Draft entire articles before pitching.

**DON'T:** Give up if you get a no on your first go.

# Life cycle of a story

1. You 'pitch' an idea or we contact you.
2. If accepted, we agree on a brief and word count (usually 800 words).
3. You write and file your draft.
4. Your editor edits, finds extra images, and writes a carefully crafted headline.
5. We hand it back for checks, changes, and your approval.
6. Once approved, we publish on our site.
7. We try to get other media to republish it, reaching as many people as possible.



## Key points of difference

# Collaborative editing & shared final approval

The screenshot displays a collaborative editing interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'History', 'Edit', 'Preview', and 'Mobile'. On the right side of the top bar, there are buttons for 'Approvals' (with a dropdown arrow) and 'Finish' (with a right arrow). Below the top bar, the main editing area is divided into two sections. The left section is the document editor, which includes a 'Headline' field containing the text 'The best article you've ever read!'. Below the headline is a rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, link, and other formatting options. The text in the editor includes: 'This is text - hooray!', '## This is a heading!', '\*\*I AM TYPING ALL THE WORDS\*\*', 'This is an \*\*outreach\*\* article. It is \*\*FANTASTIC\*\*.', 'Type anything you want', and 'BEFORE WRITING PLEASE COMPLETE THIS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT ----->>>>'. The right section is a sidebar containing 'Requirements' and 'Collaborators'. The 'Requirements' section lists two items: '1. All authors must complete a disclosure statement' and '2. Jonti Horner must approve the piece'. The 'Collaborators' section lists five users: Liz Minchin (Editor), Michael Lund (Editor), Molly Glassey (Editor), Veronika Meduna (Editor), and Jonti Horner (Lead Author). A red arrow points to the 'Request approval' button in the top right corner of the interface.

History Edit Preview Mobile

Approvals Finish

Verbal approval Request approval

Headline

## The best article you've ever read!

H B I [Link] [Image] + [Table] [Quote] Saved. 100 words Readability

This is text - hooray!

## This is a heading!

**\*\*I AM TYPING ALL THE WORDS\*\***

This is an **\*\*outreach\*\*** article. It is **\*\*FANTASTIC\*\***.

Type anything you want

BEFORE WRITING PLEASE COMPLETE THIS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT ----->>>>

Requirements

1. All authors must complete a disclosure statement
2. Jonti Horner must approve the piece

Collaborators

- Liz Minchin (Editor)
- Michael Lund (Editor)
- Molly Glassey (Editor)
- Veronika Meduna (Editor)
- Jonti Horner (Lead Author)

# Our editors spend a lot of time crafting headlines

The Conversation editors use their knowledge of what's trending on the internet and social media to use the right keywords in headlines.

The right headline can help you reach a huge global audience.



Philip C. Almond

Emeritus Professor in the History of Religious Thought, The University of Queensland

20

Articles

2,236,357

Readers

Profile

Articles

Activity



July 16, 2021

## Friday essay: Satan is back (again) — the Devil in 5 dark details

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

By the end of the 19th century, the Devil had become a figure of myth. Ironically, that helped his image proliferate in popular culture.



April 16, 2021

## Friday essay: what do the 5 great religions say about the existence of the soul?

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

Many Australians believe in the existence of the soul. Here is a brief guide to how the five major world religions imagine the soul's origin and journey.



April 2, 2021

## How will our bodies be put back together? What about those eaten by cannibals? A brief history of Christian resurrection beliefs

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

Easter celebrates the Christian belief that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And for centuries, this resurrection was seen as a guarantee that our own bodies would do the same.



October 20, 2020

## Five things to know about the Antichrist

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

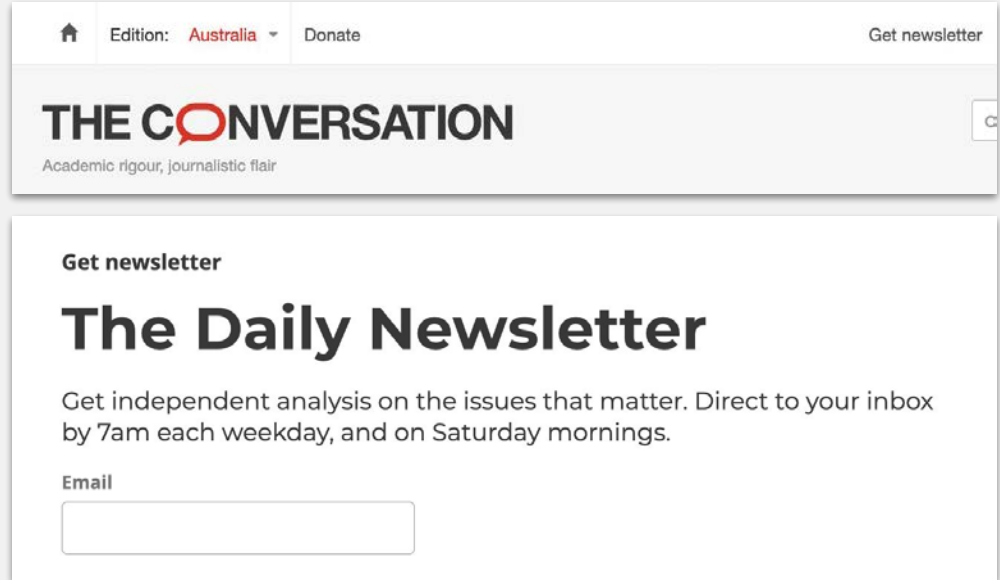
The Christian tradition says the Antichrist will come before the end of the world as we know it. So it's good to know some background on him ... or her ... or them.

# A last tip: read before you pitch or write!

Reading our site and the morning newsletter are the fastest ways to see what we do – and don't – publish.

It also makes a huge difference to help your pitch stand out from the crowd.

On social media? Follow us @ConversationEDU



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the website with a home icon, 'Edition: Australia' dropdown, and 'Donate' link. A 'Get newsletter' link is in the top right. Below is the site logo 'THE CONVERSATION' with the tagline 'Academic rigour, journalistic flair'. The main content area features a 'Get newsletter' heading, the title 'The Daily Newsletter', and a description: 'Get independent analysis on the issues that matter. Direct to your inbox by 7am each weekday, and on Saturday mornings.' Below this is an 'Email' label and an empty text input field.



# What to do if your pitch is accepted?

- Be responsive.
- Be available on the day of publication for media interviews.

# What to do if your pitch is rejected?

- Don't be disheartened.
- Try again.
- Get advice from your media team.

# In-depth training options

In our [Pitching & Writing masterclasses](#), two senior editors offer individualised feedback on pitches and stories for small groups of individuals.

Contact [masterclass@theconversation.edu.au](mailto:masterclass@theconversation.edu.au) for more details.

*“Outstanding workshop...It was very helpful! Honestly, one of the most useful workshops I have ever attended.”*

– Dr Kelly Bertolaccini, Griffith University



## Any questions?

“Writing for the Conversation has opened up a whole new world of research translation and public engagement for me.

“It has provided the structure to hone key messaging and clearly articulate key translational points of research into policy and practice.

“Unlike my experience with many scholarly journals, The Conversation editors actively engage with writers on pitching, writing and editing contributions, adding real value and reach.”

– Sean Ulm, Deputy Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage, JCU