

EXHIBITION NOW OPEN

# TRUTH POWER AND A FREE PRESS



Old  
Parliament  
House



CAN YOU  
TELL THE  
TRUTH?

Principal Partner



Major Partners

Google News Initiative

ABC

Supporting Partners

Nine 7

## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 14 November 2019

# Truth, Power and a Free Press

**Today, MoAD (Museum of Australian Democracy) launched a compelling new exhibition that showcases the link between trustworthy media and a healthy democracy.**

*Truth, Power and a Free Press* helps visitors navigate filter bubbles, alternative facts and fake news. This exhibition is contemporary, emotional, impactful and critical to the future of our democracy.

Empowering visitors to unpack the importance of trusted media sources in a democracy, this exhibition brings together powerful stories and objects that span the history of media in Australia.

Daryl Karp, Director of MoAD said “This exhibition begins a twelve-month long conversation about media and the issues affecting our democracy.”

“MoAD is proud to facilitate this conversation, as the link between a robust, independent and trusted media and a healthy democracy is undeniable.” Ms Karp continued.

A driving factor behind the development of the exhibition is the declining trust in media.

Ms Karp notes that the spread of misinformation and the proliferation of news sources has contributed to this declining trust and created truth decay in the media landscape.

“Truth decay has blurred the lines between fact and opinion which has serious implications on democratic practices. Without an agreed set of evidence-based facts, we cannot have meaningful conversations about important issues.”

As part of this exhibition, MoAD partnered with SBS to develop an immersive 7-foot tall audio-visual display that explores the pressures journalists face in their line of work.

The installation, *Truth to Power*, allows visitors to hear the first-hand experiences of 12 of Australia’s most respected journalists and provides a unique perspective on why they do the work they do.

Journalists include:

- Adele Ferguson
- Annika Smethurst
- Chris Masters
- Ghassan Nakhoul
- Hamish Macdonald
- Hedley Thomas
- Jenny Brockie
- Joanne McCarthy
- Laura Murphy-Oates
- Mridula Amin
- Patrick Abboud
- Peter Greste



The *Truth to Power* installation at MoAD

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

Ms Karp notes “These journalists are on the front line in the battle for truth, responsible for reporting fairly and fearlessly. We want our visitors to hear their stories first hand because the work they do takes courage and commitment.”

The exhibition lays bare the technological evolution of Australia’s media history, with items ranging from a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century printing press used by Sir Henry Parkes to the modern-day iPhone.

*Truth, Power and a Free Press* is divided into four acts, each of which explores a different aspect of media in a democracy.

Holly Williams, the exhibition curator said “This exhibition was informed by the work of leading Australian journalists and academics. It aims to empower visitors to become active media citizens and engage more critically with the news they read and the news communicated to friends and family.”

Ms Williams added, “Visitors can get hands-on in the exhibition with a variety of interactive screens that test their ability to weed through fake news and bias to become media champions.”

This compelling exhibition is now on display at MoAD. For more information visit  
[www.moadoph.gov.au/truth](http://www.moadoph.gov.au/truth)

## About MoAD

The Museum of Australian Democracy celebrates Australia’s proud history as a democratic nation and actively promotes the participation of its citizens in determining its future.

MoAD is a museum not just of objects but of ideas, where stories, conversations and narratives from myriad perspectives can be heard and discussed. In our iconic heritage building, we tell the story of Australia’s journey to becoming one of the world’s most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations.

**ENDS**

---

For further information, please contact Annika Scott, [annika.scott@moadoph.gov.au](mailto:annika.scott@moadoph.gov.au), (02) 6270 8120 or 0400 946 608

**IMAGES:** [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/47ds2slaejbc6xs/AABRC7\\_fyudR6WFm\\_HX3y934a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/47ds2slaejbc6xs/AABRC7_fyudR6WFm_HX3y934a?dl=0)

## INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Daryl Karp, Director of MoAD
- Holly Williams, exhibition curator
- Adele Ferguson, featured journalist
- Chris Masters, featured journalist
- Ghassan Nakhoul, featured journalist
- Hamish MacDonald, featured journalist
- Laura Murphy-Oates, featured journalist
- Mridula Amin, featured journalist
- Patrick Abboud, featured journalist
- Peter Greste, featured journalist

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

## FACT SHEET

***Truth, Power and a Free Press*** is a new exhibition at MoAD (Museum of Australian Democracy). The exhibition provides a balanced representation of media in Australia and its link to democracy.

It begins a conversation on the issues of the media landscape that affect a healthy democracy.

In 2019, Australia dropped out of the top 20 of the *2019 World Press Freedom Index*, which assesses the level of press freedom afforded to journalists (*Reporters without Borders*, 2019).

### Links between trust in the media and democracy

*Truth, Power and a Free Press* was developed based on research conducted by *Democracy 2025*.

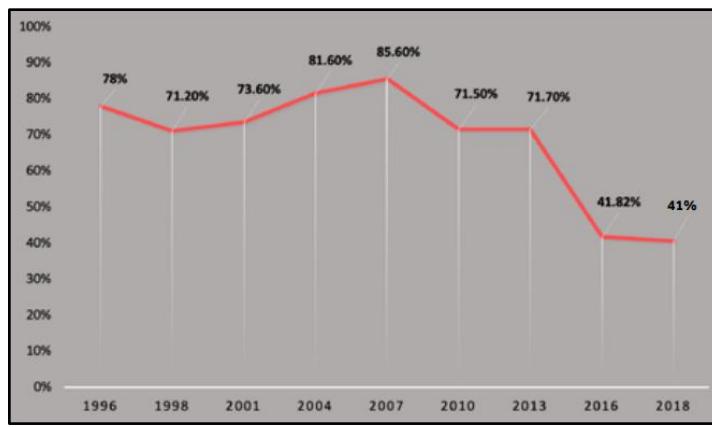
In 2018, *Democracy 2025*, a joint initiative of MoAD and the University of Canberra's Institute of Governance and Policy Analysis, released a report that explores trust and democracy.

The report, [\*Trust and Democracy in Australia\*](#), shows that since 2007, satisfaction with democracy in Australia has halved, from 85.6 per cent in 2007 to 41 per cent in 2018.

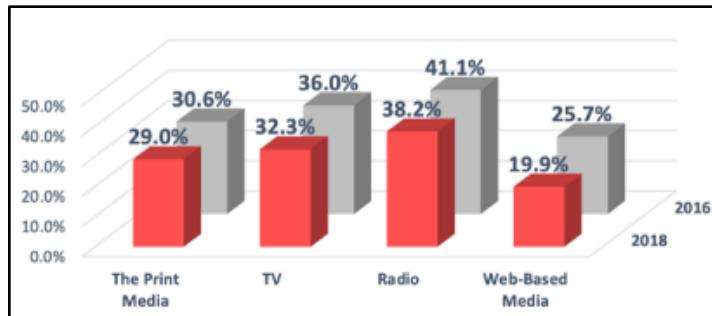
The report also shows that levels of trust in media have declined between 2016 and 2018.

Only 28 per cent of Australian's trust journalists and levels of trust across the board.

Trust in print, broadcast and online media have all declined since 2016, with trust level in web-based media dropping the most, from 25.7 per cent in 2016 to 19.9 per cent in 2018.



Satisfaction with democracy in Australia



Levels of trust in media in 2016 and 2018

According to Professor Mark Evans, the Director of [\*Democracy 2025\*](#), the global declining trust in media can be attributed to a multitude of factors including:

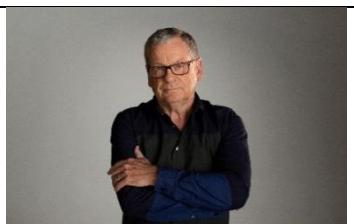
- **Truth decay** which describes the loss of trust in data, analysis and objective facts, leading to the blurring of the line between opinion and fact.
- **The proliferation of news sources**, which has decreased the ability for people to find trustworthy news sources.

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

## FEATURED JOURNALISTS BIOGRAPHIES

<b>Adele Ferguson</b>	<p>Adele Ferguson is a journalist and author who has exposed corruption and exploitation across the corporate sector. Her investigation into bad banking practice helped spark the Hayne Royal Commission and reporting into 7-Eleven wage fraud led to \$150 million in compensation being paid out. A multi-award winner for <i>The Age</i>, <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> and <i>Australian Financial Review</i>, she is also a guest reporter on television.</p>	
<b>Annika Smethurst</b>	<p>Annika Smethurst was until recently best known for her tenacious reporting into politicians' expenses. Her Walkley Award winning scoop on the 'Choppergate' scandal led to a review of the Parliamentary Entitlements System. Following a story for News Corp in mid-2019, Australian Federal Police raided Smethurst's Canberra home over her reporting of possible plans for surveillance of Australians by the government, triggering great media outcry.</p>	
<b>Chris Masters</b>	<p>Chris Masters broke many influential stories during his long career at ABC's <i>Four Corners</i>. His reports have exposed corruption, cover-ups and, in one instance, state-led terrorism. He is the author of several nonfiction books and likely holds the dubious distinction as one of the nation's most sued journalists.</p>	
<b>Ghassan Nakhoul</b>	<p>Ghassan Nakhoul has been a long-time Arabic language presenter on SBS radio. In 2002 he won a Walkley for <i>The Five Mysteries of SIEV X</i>, his documentary on the <i>SIEV X</i> tragedy in which 353 asylum seekers drowned at sea. Nakhoul later wrote <i>Overboard</i>, an account of asylum seekers and people smugglers. In 2013 he completed a Master's degree with a thesis on 'Media representations of Arabs and Muslims in post-multicultural Australia'.</p>	
<b>Hamish Macdonald</b>	<p>Hamish Macdonald has worked as a correspondent for Australian, British, American and Qatari networks. Currently working on <i>The Project</i> for Network 10 and ABC's Radio National, Macdonald won a Walkley in 2012 for his reporting on Indonesian children incorrectly jailed as adults. The Australian Human Rights Commission's inquiry into the scandal acknowledged the role his reporting played in bringing it to light.</p>	

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

<b>Hedley Thomas</b>	Hedley Thomas is a multiple Gold Walkley Award winning journalist for <i>The Australian</i> . His stories have challenged politicians and triggered police investigations. In 2007, he revealed grievous errors in the case of Dr Mohamed Haneef, who was incorrectly charged with aiding terrorists. Thomas' podcast <i>The Teacher's Pet</i> on the disappearance of Lynette Dawson led to widespread public interest and new witnesses and evidence in the previously cold case.	
<b>Jenny Brockie</b>	Jenny Brockie is a journalist, documentary filmmaker and presenter. She is a gifted interviewer and her skill has been widely recognised through her work on the SBS program <i>Insight</i> . She has received multiple United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace awards, AFI awards and Walkley awards. Brockie won a Gold Walkley and Human Rights Award for her documentary <i>Cop It Sweet</i> .	
<b>Joanne McCarthy</b>	Joanne McCarthy was born and raised on the New South Wales Central Coast, becoming the <i>Gosford Star</i> 's first cadet journalist in 1980. In 2002 she joined <i>The Newcastle Herald</i> , where she remains a lead journalist. In 2006 she began the work that has come to define her career — reporting on child sexual abuse in institutions. Her reporting has sparked major inquiries at state and federal levels.	
<b>Laura Murphy-Oates</b>	Laura Murphy-Oates is a Ngiyampaa Wailwan woman whose work examines racial discrimination and social justice. In 2018 she was named Walkley Young Australian Journalist of the Year winner for her piece <i>Kids of Kalgoorlie</i> . Sydney-based Murphy-Oates is a video journalist, reporter and documentary producer, currently working at the <i>Guardian Australia</i> .	
<b>Mridula Amin</b>	Mridula Amin is a Dhaka-born Australian reporter and photojournalist who covers global crises, migration and identity. In 2018 she was admitted to the NSW Supreme Court as a solicitor after completing her Bachelor of Media/Bachelor of Law. Amin flew to Nauru shortly afterwards and later filed a freelance photojournalism piece for <i>The New York Times</i> .	
<b>Patrick Abboud</b>	Patrick Abboud founded the ground-breaking SBS show <i>The Feed</i> . From exposing discrimination against transgender people in the military, homophobia in the NSW police force, to investigating unsolved gay hate crimes, Abboud is a fearless journalist working for LGBTQI equality around the globe. His documentary on school bullying sparked a campaign to change federal policy.	

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

<b>Peter Greste</b>	<p>Peter Greste spent much of his career as a foreign correspondent working for the BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, among others. In 2013 he was arrested with his fellow Al Jazeera journalists in Egypt and sentenced to seven years in prison. After his release and return to Australia in 2015, Greste became an outspoken advocate for journalists' freedom, co-founding the Alliance for Journalists' Freedom.</p>	A black and white portrait photograph of Peter Greste, a man with a shaved head wearing a dark button-down shirt, standing against a plain, light-colored wall.
---------------------	---	---

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

## QUOTES FROM MEDIA TALENT

### WHY IS THERE AN EXHIBITION ON PRESS FREEDOM AT MOAD?

**Daryl Karp:** Media and democracy are really strongly linked. We believe there is an urgent need for users of the media and visitors to the museum to understand what they can do to address some of the issues in the media landscape. There is a perfect storm: we've got technology changes, the business models of media are not working, and there is a breakdown of trust happening in all of our institutions. If we don't have a shared space to discuss those issues openly then it is hard to have a conversation about where we are headed.

One of the things we look at in this exhibition is the media landscape internationally and where Australia sits. Australia sits at Number 21 internationally in terms of press freedom, two less than last year, but still substantially better than other similar countries.

### WHY IS THE 7-FOOT TALL INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION CALLED TRUTH TO POWER?

**Holly Williams:** We've called the AV installation at the heart of the exhibition Truth to Power, because there can be failings in our institutions and we need strong media because they are society's eyes and they have the nose for a story. We've brought out stories that have such an impact, that have led to Royal Commissions, and our audience can walk through the exhibition and recognise how a tenacious journalist picked up and followed a particular story.

### WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE PART OF TRUTH TO POWER?

**Joanne McCarthy:** We're in the business of communication as journalists and sometimes we forgot that as journalists we have powerful voices. Overcoming people's fear of the media as an institution is so important, and one of the reasons I became involved with the exhibition was to show that journalists are people as well. You choose to tell a story because you can see the abuse of power and you want to do something about it.

I hope that when people come to this exhibition they can see that journalists have to do as much as governments and other institutions in power to reclaim that trust relationship. Being prepared to speak out is part of that.

**Hamish Macdonald:** Press freedom is an issue globally, journalism is under threat globally, freedom of speech is under threat globally. I think what shocks us all is that it is now an issue in Australia.

Right now there are journalists who don't know whether they are going to be charged with crimes, whether they will face prison sentences. They need answers and the Australian public needs answers about whether journalism here is something you can go to jail for. There are genuine questions in Australia right now about how free our press is.

That's why an exhibition like this is so important right now. It charts the long history of the relationship between the press and those with power. This tells us the story of Australian journalists who died covering conflicts globally. This isn't just about a single moment.

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A JOURNALIST?

**Joanne McCarthy:** I fell into journalism by mistake. I actually wanted to be a librarian, but I had a purist's view of what journalism was about—that it is an essential part of democracy.

**Hamish Macdonald:** My big brother and sisters are journalists and I always looked up to them. I don't really remember a time when I didn't want to become a journalist. I've always had a huge curiosity and for most journalists that is fundamental and that is often missed when we talk about our profession.

### HOW HAVE THE HERITAGE ASPECTS OF OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE EXHIBITION?

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

**Daryl Karp:** For this exhibition we have opened up and restored the old ABC studies, so if you go in there you can see it as it was in 1988.

The relationship between journalists and politicians was quite different in this building, Old Parliament House then, it was a much more intimate, and some journalists would write their stories in King's Hall, based on who was moving about, because everything was so open.

## ANY FINAL WORDS?

**Joanne McCarthy:** It's often said that there is opposition between the public and the media but I've always had tremendous support from the public, and people understand what the media is about. It can be about just one person saying 'I know what is right'. Sometimes it can be that clear cut.

**Hamish Macdonald:** To have trust in democracy you have to have trust in institutions—which means they have to be transparent.

# MEDIA KIT



Museum of  
Australian Democracy  
Old Parliament House

## WITH THANKS

### PRINCIPAL PARTNER



---

### MAJOR PARTNERS



---

### SUPPORTING PARTNERS



MoAD thanks the lenders, and the members of the *Truth, Power and a Free Press* Reference Group for their valuable contribution to this exhibition.

MoAD also thanks the following organisations for their assistance with this exhibition: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australian National University, Deakin University, Freedom House, Google News Initiative, Guardian Australia, Macquarie University, National Film and Sound Archive, National Press Club, Network Ten, News Corp, Nine Network, Queensland University of Technology, Reporters Without Borders, RAND Corporation, SBS and SBS Digital Creative Labs, Seven Network, The University of Queensland, The University of Sydney, University of Canberra, University of Technology, Sydney, The Walkley Foundation and Western Sydney University.