

# Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of *Public Communication Review*. Although our journal is still in its infancy, we are delighted to be able to bring together an edition that reflects the breadth and diversity of research and practical work that falls under the banner of public communication.

Our theme for this edition revolves around the notion of conversations. Public communication cannot exist without a relationship between the communicator and its audience. However, as the articles in this edition clearly demonstrate, this relationship does not flow in a single direction. Effective public communication requires two-way interaction and engagement.

Jim Macnamara's article, "'Emergent' media and public communication", sets the tone for this edition. In this overview of the literature on new forms of interactive *social media*, Macnamara notes that attitudes towards 'new media' continue to be informed by the past and that focus should be on practices rather than only technologies. His call for public communication practitioners and scholars to recognise the fundamental centrality of conversations within these 'new media' is taken up by the other contributors in this edition of *PCR*.

The first of these critical accounts of public communication is Mark Pearson and Hamish McLean's examination of the recent attempts by the Queensland government to engage in a dialogue with its publics. Examining the blurry line between public information and political persuasion, Pearson and McLean demonstrate that government media relations should not be analysed as a simple one-way conversation, but rather a series of conversations.

In his discussion of anti-smoking campaigns and its impact on young smokers, Jim Mahoney investigates what appears to be a one-way conversation. Finding that the current approach is not working, Mahoney urges the creators of anti-smoking campaigns to listen to their audience and engage with them, rather than simply preaching to them and hoping that they will simply absorb anti-smoking messages.

Erik Trosby's article analyses a conversation that is yet to happen (and one that few of his respondents hope to engage in) – crisis communication within sport. His focus is Australia's A-League football competition which has managed to avoid the crises that have dogged the NRL and the AFL in recent times. Exploring some of the reasons for this difference, Trosby reveals that A-League teams nevertheless remain vulnerable to such crises and, more worryingly, are not well poised to meet them.

Our inaugural 'Talking Practically' section features a speech delivered by John Bevins to the Australian Centre for Public Communication. Having recently retired from a long and illustrious career in Australia's advertising industry, Bevins reflected on some of the lessons he learned during his time in advertising. In this informative and entertaining piece, Bevins keeps with the theme of this edition by highlighting the fundamental importance of empathy

and engagement in advertising. Without this conversation, advertising, like all public communication, will fail.

And finally, our inaugural reviewer, Rodney Gray, looks at *Viral Change* by Leandro Herrero. Here, we can see how conversations also form an important component of managing change within organisations.

We thank you for your support and would like to remind you that contributions on any issue related to public communication are heartily encouraged.

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