



## Introduction

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As this issue of the Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal is published online the world is coming to terms with what has come to be known as #Brexit. The financial markets are experiencing a degree of turmoil and the implications for the Asia Pacific region, indeed all regions, remain unclear.

Asia Pacific regional countries including Australia, India, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore have important ties to the United Kingdom (UK), many of these historical. However, according to the [East Asia Forum at the Australian National University](#), for decades these countries have primarily seen their UK links as a useful conduit to Europe.

Other Asian countries have various levels of financial and other interests in the UK and with uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the United States election late in 2016, it may well be Asia to which the world turns for stability and leadership, especially China. There is little doubt that the fallout and rebuilding of structures following #Brexit will be a long and messy affair that will extend over years, not months.

The role of communication management and public relations will play a critical role in how information is shared and meaning constructed around the events. For scholarly researchers, it will provide rich ground for analysis. It is my hope, as incoming editor of the Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal, that this region's scholars will address this important aspect of the #Brexit events, and that we will see such work submitted for publication to this journal.

This is the first issue to formally be published from its new home at the University of Newcastle under its new editorial team, myself as editor and Dr Marianne Sison as Deputy Editor. I would like to acknowledge the excellent work undertaken by the 2016 assistant editor, Dr Clare Lloyd. Clare is undertaking this role in 2016 while I am taking on the additional duties of Head of the School of Design, Communication and Information Technology until the end of the year. I would also like to acknowledge the extensive work

performed by the staff of the University of Newcastle library in transferring the journal to its new home, and to again thank past editor Mark Sheehan and the staff of the Deakin University for their assistance in this process.

I'd also like to thank those who have served as part of the past editorial board of the Asian Pacific Public Relations Journal and welcome in our new editorial board. We have what I think is an optimal mix of those who have been part of our previous board and some new members.

Dr Jamilah Ahmad	University Sains Malaysia
Prof Mark Balnaves	The University of Newcastle
Dr Leanne Glenny	University of South Australia
Ass Prof Angela Mak	Hong Kong Baptist University
Ass Prof Karen Miller Russell	University of Georgia
Ass Prof Augustine Pang	Nanyang Technological University
Dr Kamala Vainy Pillai	Curtin University, Sarawak Malaysia
Ass Prof Pavel Slutskiy	Chulalongkorn University
Dr Natalie Tindall	Georgia State University
Prof C Kay Weaver	University of Waikato
Dr Katherine Woolf	Curtin University
Dr Pia Wulundari	University of Brawijaya

Together I feel confident that this board brings to our journal the enthusiasm, experience and academic rigour to continue to grow this publication both in reputation and output.

This year, 2016, is an interesting time to be taking over the editorship of an academic journal. It is an open access on-line journal. It is not funded by any organisation specifically, with the host university absorbing the cost of any labour and hosting involved in its production. Nor is it a journal charging authors a fee for publishing. Such models are emerging increasingly and such author-charges are being called anything from 'handling fees' and are even used to pay peer reviewers in some instances. Is this a model that this journal should move to? I think not. It seems to somehow cheapen the work of academics if one has to pay someone to publish the work. However, is the current model economically sustainable?

When all academics are under increased pressure to do more teaching and more research with less resources, where does the wherewithal to edit and publish a quality journal come from? We also need to ask the question: is the academic peer reviewed journal the best way to share our research findings and contribute to the measurement of the impact of our work.

The MIT Media Lab has launched a new kind of academic journal that embodies its antidisciplinary ethos but also has a new approach to getting out research and ideas much more quickly to interested academic and industry audiences. Instead of double blind peer review, their new process involves a process that is anything but anonymous and is called 'peer-to-peer'. An [article in Wired magazine explains more about this idea](#) and links through to the journal. Is this somewhere that the Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal should go? It is certainly food for thought.

In several countries across the world, the value of academic publishing as a measure of the worth of academic research is being questioned. In the 2016 Australian Research Council publication, "The Engagement and Impact Assessment Consultation Paper", there

have been calls for input into what defines impact and engagement with academic research. It states that;

a narrow focus on limited engagement measures could create perverse outcomes where, for example, researchers and universities focus on boosting their reportable performance instead of pursuing genuine research engagement that translates into economic, social or other benefits. In addition, the use of a very limited range of metrics may not meet the parameters of the assessment—such as ensuring no discipline is disadvantaged by the assessment (p. 8).

The impact factor of many public relations academic journals is quite low, with this journal's being one of the lowest. Does this mean that the research published in this journal since its inception has had no or little impact? How would we know? My [article](#) published in Issue 8 of this journal is my most cited to date but what does that really mean in terms of impact and engagement? What would be a better way to present our research and assess its impact? As editor I hope to see more work being submitted that examines these issues in our field but to also have such mechanisms for increased engagement with the work published in this and other journals in our field.

One such mechanism is the newly re-convened [Asia Pacific Public Relations Research and Education Network](#) headed by Dr Marianne Sison from RMIT University. Its uses may include calls for papers, chapter contributions, calls for research partners, conference announcements, suggestions or inquiries related to teaching materials and references and the like. I commend Marianne for this initiative and in our discussions we have agreed that this journal will work very closely with the Network.

Perhaps such a network could also evolve into a sharing of research impact or engagement news, for example, has some organisation decided to give someone's new model for crisis preparation a trial in practice? It would be fascinating to see some further ideas come forward for further utilising this valuable network. I'll certainly be using the network to share news about this journal, including future calls for papers and announcements of when our new issues are published.

That being said, I'd like to commend this issue's articles to you as we again cover a wider range of territory both topically and geographically, as well as bringing you a book review from Maree Keating of *'The Routledge Handbook of Critical Public Relations'* (Routledge, 2016), edited by Jacquie L'Etang, David McKie, Nancy Snow and Jordi Xifra. The journal has an Asian Pacific focus but as always, welcomes and presents scholarly articles from across the globe.

Melanie James

## References:

Australian Research Council. (2016). *The Engagement and Impact Assessment Consultation Paper*.  
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