Aiding journalism: Australian journalism educators and their work in post-conflict states

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

August 2015
I am the author of the thesis entitled

Aiding journalism: Australian journalism educators and their work in post-conflict states

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Using Bourdieu’s field theory, this thesis describes journalism education from the perspective of Australians who specialise in teaching outside Australia. It uses three data sources: a content analysis of media in Solomon Islands; a survey and in-depth interviews with Australian journalism educators; and a case study of Solomon Islands. It is significant in that for the first time this thesis describes a group of Australian journalism educators (as opposed to journalists) in depth. In the case study, the thesis describes the work done in rebuilding the media in a post-conflict situation (Solomon Islands), paying attention to the characteristics and influences of Australian educators and contrasting the educators’ views with those of Solomon Island journalists and civil society leaders. This thesis features in-depth interviews and surveys of 44 Australian educators as well as 25 people connected to the media in Solomon Islands.

Keywords

Journalism education; educational roles; journalism; Bourdieu; democracy communication theory; critical communication studies; political economy of journalism; Australia
Dedication

This is for every Australian journalism educator/trainer and trainee who has worked to see a story published or broadcast in the face of corruption, standover tactics, tsunamis, guns, mosquitos and dead batteries.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC International</td>
<td>International division of ABC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australia’s foreign aid agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>Auckland University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Criteria developed by the OECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEAA</td>
<td>Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSB</td>
<td>Public Sector Broadcaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMSI</td>
<td>Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Small Island Developing States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIBC</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICHE</td>
<td>Solomon Islands College of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDT</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Development Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLMAS</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>The United Nations organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
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Chapter One: Introduction

In a radio studio in Solomon Islands, an old classroom in Cambodia, a brand-new broadcast office in Afghanistan, journalism students are being taught the fundamentals of the craft by international trainers. Their teachers are often highly skilled and well-known journalists from the best news organisations, including ABC International, the BBC Media Action (formerly the BBC World Service Trust), the Knight Foundation and the Thompson Foundation in Cardiff. Some programs have been funded by foreign governments; others by non-government organisations. Highly qualified and experienced journalists and journalism educators from New Zealand to Norway take part, providing a range of skills-based courses to try to turn out journalists prepared for their role as the so-called Fourth Estate.

Journalism education is often linked to aid projects aimed at advancing the cause of democracy, and billions of dollars have been spent by liberal democratic nation states, keen to support journalism as a key part of democracy: USAid, for example, proudly declares on its website that it ‘works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential’ (USAid 2014). A particular emphasis on media development aid (and international journalism training) grew out of the implosion of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Berlin Wall (Carothers 1999, 2003, pp. 20-48; Ristow 2014, p. 9; Voltmer 2012, p. 226). Since then, experienced journalists and educators funded by liberal democratic nation state governments, private media-aid groups and non-government organisations have travelled to Eastern and Central Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, teaching journalism skills. This work had a strong emphasis on assisting countries towards a normative view of ‘democracy’ [representative, accountable and transparent government] by helping to create strong media voices:

Initially these programs were focused on the core political institutions, such as the implementation of electoral systems, the reconstruction of parliaments and the judiciary, and the strengthening of political parties. However international donors and policy makers have become
increasingly aware of the crucial role played by the media in the transition process. (Voltmer 2012, p. 232)

As will be expanded upon later, journalism and democracy, as we understand them in liberal democratic nation states, formed side-by-side over hundreds of years in the United Kingdom and many parts of Western Europe. The invention of the printing press and the industrial revolution in Europe resulted, eventually, in the production of the earliest forms of newspapers and the first incarnation of journalists (Stephens 2007, pp. 209-264) who were encouraged to scrutinise society and its institutions in a role dubbed the Fourth Estate. Politicians and journalists in the United States, Australia, France and Germany—among the biggest providers of international media assistance—see their roles as complementary, each performing a vital part in the preservation of democracy (Hooper 1998; Schultz, J 1998, pp. 232-238).

In contrast, many of the countries that have received media aid from Australians have not had a recent history of free and fair elections, and many have had a limited educated middle class capable of maintaining a mandate to govern in a manner comparable with the West. Some of the countries where Australians provide journalism training, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, have had a form of democracy imposed on them externally and therefore had no opportunity to evolve their own forms of governance and a place for journalism within them.

This thesis acknowledges that journalism practised in any country is deeply embedded in national culture and history. It has thus narrowed the examination of journalism education to that conducted by Australians, acknowledging that these people have been educated in a representative democracy with a number of key values: freedom of elections and being elected, freedom of assembly and political participation, freedom of speech, expression and religious belief, rule of law, and other basic human rights. In Australia the media play an important—and yet not always legally mandated—part in the monitoring of government activities. This model of government, often called the Westminster System, has its foundations in the United Kingdom Parliament.
Australia’s Constitution does not guarantee free expression, and it is not legally obligated to do so under any Bill of Rights or human rights charter; however, the Parliament of Australia acknowledges the importance of media activity. The Australian press has right of access to Parliament and assistance in the fair and accurate reporting of proceedings. The rules of Parliament also outline the responsibility of the press to respect the privacy of those who work and visit Parliament and not to interfere in their duties.

This examination of the work and views of Australian journalism educators should not suggest that the author disapproves of international media aid projects. This thesis however casts a sceptical eye upon the work that is being done, because, as new journalism students are often told, it is ‘important to question the angels’. Even something that appears to be good can benefit from constructive critical inquiry. To that end, using the work of Hallin, Mancini, Voltmer and Bourdieu’s work as a theoretical frame, this thesis sets out to describe journalism education from the Australian perspective, and to use a case study of Solomon Islands to look at the impact of significant Australian journalism education. Acknowledging Yin’s (1981) point about the validity of some case studies, this thesis draws on three data sources: a content analysis of radio current affairs in Solomon Islands, a survey of and semi-structured interviews with Australian educators, and a case study of Solomon Islands’ media landscape. It works on the assumption/belief outlined by Becker and Tudor (2007) that the professional education and training of journalism students will give students not only the craft skills needed for the job but also a set of attitudes about their work and its value to society. It also accepts Errington and Miragliotta’s (2007, p. 10) description of three major roles of the media: as watchdog, as provider of information, and as facilitator of the public sphere.

Australian journalism educators are broadly defined to include all who self-nominate as Australian and as a journalism educator, be they industry trainers or academic educators, terms similar in some ways but with divergent definitions. Frank Morgan told the annual conference of the Journalism Educators Association of New Zealand in 2003 that the difference between a trainer and an educator was
rather like that between a visiting star athlete and a coach. Training passes on skills that are known, while education prepares the mind for new challenges:

Training replicates existing knowledge and that is necessary when it comes to learning how to use equipment and computer software and so on, but it is never sufficient. It is also insufficient for dealing with the unknown. Education, on the other hand, enables people to create new knowledge with which to address new and unknown situations. It is what enables people to go where none has gone before and do what none has ever done before. (Morgan, F, 2003)

Journalism educators interviewed and surveyed for this thesis included those working as academics outside their home universities, professional trainers employed to conduct short courses, journalists working on aid projects, and working journalists seconded to projects (such as ABC/AusAID projects). Some were working as volunteers but saw themselves in the professional role of educator.

No organisation currently collects data about Australian journalism educators working overseas, so there is no way of systematically determining a population size for this work from which to gauge sample sizes. The educators were approached personally by the researcher or via requests published by the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA) and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (Journalists’ code of ethics).

Although ABC International Development is the leading provider of media aid projects for the Australian Government, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation did not endorse this research work and only one staff member in Solomon Islands agreed to be interviewed on the record. As a result, large sections of this thesis were drawn from documents obtained under a Freedom of Information application which took three years to be approved. There was one significant benefit in ABC International Development’s lack of endorsement of the project: those who have taken part in the interviews have done so on their own terms, without needing to pay homage to their paymaster.

Some of the interviewees approached said they felt conflicted about participating in this study. Many stated they wanted to help, but felt they could not because of
fears they would no longer receive consultancies or training opportunities. ABC International Development was not the only agency that discouraged staff from talking. Some of the interviewees stated the Australian Government had included ‘gag clauses’ in their contracts which prevented them from talking about their experiences without prior approval. Australian media law academic Mark Pearson in a keynote address to the 2014 Pacific Journalism Review conference noted that Australia’s role as an exemplar in transparency and freedom to other nations must be questioned when journalism staff working on projects for the Australian Government agency responsible for managing AusAID were required to agree to ‘discuss any matters relating to publicity or media relations before any publication or media release’ (Pearson 2014). He argued that Australia was sending a mixed message to the region on free expression, transparency and the media’s role in good governance.

Watchdogs and the Fourth Estate

Australian journalists and journalism educators overwhelmingly acknowledge they hold a privileged position in society, which involves both power and responsibility, linked to the way the country is governed. The professional association for Australian journalists, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, aligns itself with this thinking, stating the role of journalism is to inform citizens and ‘animate democracy’ (Journalists’ code of ethics).

As watchdogs Australian journalists occupy a privileged space. As Australian journalism academic Julianne Schultz explains:

The ideal that the press was entitled to its own independent standing in the political system, as the Fourth Estate, has become an ideal which continues to influence the attitudes for those working in the late twentieth century news media, as well as politicians and citizens. (Schultz, J 1998, p. 15)

The idea that journalists hold this special function gained traction after the publication of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm’s Four Theories of the Press in 1956, which outlined the relationship of the media to systems of political power, or the way in which the press takes on the form of the social and political structures within which it operates (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm 1973, 1956,
Although other theorists added more categories to the original four, the two that still resonate with journalists are the ‘libertarian’ and ‘social responsibility’ theories, because these underpin the thinking and behaviour of a journalist as a ‘watchdog’ on those in power.¹

In this idealised construct, media organisations work for the public good, highlighting social abuses and wrong-doing by officials. The ‘muzzled watchdog’ is characterised by a media willing to be a watchdog but hampered by external factors such as defamation laws or lack of media diversity. ‘Lapdog’ media outlets are easily manipulated by those in power, and the journalists are considered mediocre and lacking in initiative and determination. The fourth dog, the ‘wolf’, defines the media as sloppy and frequently unfair. The ‘yapping pack’ refers to journalists who chase small prey when others sound the hunt (Tiffen 1999a).

In a 2005 paper ‘What Is Journalism’, Mark Deuze discussed how the public service ideal (including the journalist as watchdog) was a powerful part of journalism ideology among liberal democratic nation states, used to legitimise aggressive and interpretive styles of reporting (p. 447). He drew on Golding and Elliott (1979), Merritt (1995), and Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) to describe the five traits of a journalist and put the watchdog on the top of the list. The five are:

1. Public service: journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or ‘news-hounds’, active collectors and disseminators of information);
2. Objectivity: journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;
3. Autonomy: journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work;
4. Immediacy: journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of ‘news’);

¹ The most revered kind of journalism in the Fourth Estate model, the watchdog, is an unfortunate name as the dog is a shunned beast in many cultures. Other more brutal names include ‘jackals, sharks, reptiles, liars, whores and rat bags’ (Tiffen 1999a)
² Despite Cronin’s disparaging comments The West Australian stopped taking in school-age cadets in the late 1980s and has since recruited only graduates (with the exception of Matilda Price).
³ This changed with the change of government in 2013.
5. Ethics: have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy. (Deuze 2005, p. 447).

So entrenched is journalism’s identity with the watchdog and democracy that US theorist Barbie Zelizer (2012) argues it has dominated journalism scholarship almost to the exclusion of other aspects of the practice.

**Journalism education and training**

Journalism education in Australia is controversial in a way not seen in other countries. Those in the academy who consider the history of journalism and its interconnectedness with political, corporate, economic and social power are routinely pilloried in some sections of the Australian media (Markson 2014a, 2014b; McNair 2014). There has been ongoing debate about whether an understanding of the political theory of journalism is a necessary part of journalism education. Chris Mitchell, the proudly right-wing editor of Rupert Murdoch’s flagship national newspaper *The Australian*, is among those who are openly disdainful of journalism education (Knott 2012), although his paper struggles to define the difference between journalism education and media studies. When talking about journalism education in Australia Mitchell was quoted talking about media studies:

> The media studies academic class is far removed from the concerns of viewers and readers and is engaged in a sociological project to change the world in its image. That is, to infect people with progressive left ideology. (Stewart 2012)

Mitchell is not alone in his views. *The West Australian*’s editor Bob Cronin is also on record rejecting theoretic learning over practical skills, and he has claimed that shorthand is the most desirable learning outcome of a journalism degree (McAllister 2012).² Mitchell’s and Cronin’s views about the value, or lack of value, of journalism education is no doubt formed from their own experiences in a difficult climate for journalism. Australia’s newspapers, like others globally, are

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² Despite Cronin’s disparaging comments *The West Australian* stopped taking in school-age cadets in the late 1980s and has since recruited only graduates (with the exception of Matilda Price).
suffering from a broken business model that has seen newspapers struggling to turn a profit from more recently established digital platforms (Rottwilm 2014).

But the move away from print newspapers into the digital age is not reflected in many of the countries where media aid work is occurring. While globalisation is certain to make an impact eventually, in these countries issues for the media are low literacy levels, difficult economics, poor infrastructure, and press censorship. In some countries, what is now called legacy journalism in Australia (print newspapers) is flourishing:

 Legacy journalism is actually rising in quite a lot of the world, and the demand for information is rising in a lot of the world. So the big challenge is to create a market for journalism, not for digital. (Klatell in Ristow 2014, p. 15)

The World Journalism Education Congress in 2007 heard from Becker and Tudor (quoting Froehlich & Holtz-Bacha 2003; Weaver 1998; Gaunt 1992) that little had been done to examine empirically the consequences of the variations in journalism both between and within countries around the world. Professor Emeritus Jerome Aumente, from the State University of New Jersey, Rutgers, wrote in the Nieman Reports of Summer (2005) there was much more research that needed to be done on what works and what fails in international training efforts, and this information needs to be shared with interested parties. There have been more recent calls from people in the field to embed research in what they do. Research specialist Tara Susman-Pena argued:

 We need better embedding of research into everything we do. And that can be hard—after all, we’re implementers; what we’re really good at is implementation, so people want to charge off into the field. (in Ristow 2014, p. 23)

Another trainer, Anne Nelson, agreed that universities and think tanks were failing in their duty to do appropriate research:

 Media-development aid is much newer than traditional areas such as agriculture or general economic development that have been studied extensively, so ‘it’s early days to compare.’ (Nelson, A. in Ristow 2014, p. 23)
The Pacific

New Zealand-based academic David Robie has done much work on recording the history of journalism education and training across the Pacific, including Solomon Islands. He records the criticism of the news media as coming from a variety of factors including ‘a lack of professional training for journalists, poor educational standards, a lack of knowledge of the political and social institutions, cultural insensitivities and a questionable grasp of ethical issues’ (2008a, p. 59). Robie has long noted the argument that journalism in the Pacific needs to be done more in a ‘Pacific’ way than a ‘Western’ way. Significantly he has recorded the dominant roles of several international organisations in media training in the Pacific, including AusAID, NZAid, French government aid, and UNESCO, although he has acknowledged the difficulty in obtaining comprehensive and transparent statistics on exactly how much money is provided in aid to media.

Robie divides the past forty years of journalism education in the Pacific into three eras, ending with AusAID becoming the dominant media donor from 1996 (Robie 2008a, p. 68).3 He details ongoing frustration with journalism education and training in the Australian-dominated era. Among the issues targeted are the legacy of ‘train-the-trainer’ courses which he suggests are not suited to the region, specifically noting the words of Hooper that ‘few indigenous Pacific Islanders serve as trainers anywhere in the Pacific’ (Hooper 1998, p. 17; Robie 2008a, p. 71). He also draws on the work of former SUP media educator Ingrid Leary who argues there needs to be greater transparency over media training. Other issues specifically raised by Robie are the need to raise educational standards of recruits and to establish certificate-level journalism courses, including one in Solomon Island. He quotes Kuamin that there has been little journalistic or research work on foreign aid:

The PNG press is biased in its coverage of different aid donors to the country. AusAID receives better representation and coverage compared to other aid donors. Most of what the media reports is agenda-driven and dictated by the aid donor. (Kuamin in Robie 2008a, p. 73)

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3 This changed with the change of government in 2013.
Robie (2008a, p. 75) concludes there are three major issues with the provision of media aid in the Pacific: the reluctance of major aid donors to support university-based courses despite current problems with teaching staff, standards and wastage of funds; a duplication of courses in the area; and a lack of media research:

> It is critical for governance that future media training aid should have more transparency with funds being spread more evenly across several agencies so that no single industry group effectively holds too much power over journalism training policy. And the media should become proactive over reportage and debate over media aid issues and challenge conflicts of interest. (Robie 2008a, p. 77)

He argues that more than two decades of short-course training funded by donor agencies has done little to improve journalism standards in the region, and suggests that university education has made a greater contribution.

In the years since this thesis was conceived, some research has been done internationally, notably by Beate Josephi and Folker Hanusch, into journalism education internationally. Josephi’s (2010) examination of countries with limited media freedom found five main areas of concern for journalism educators working outside Australia: that journalism education works outside the realities of newsroom practice; that the type of education delivered is dependent on its funding master (World Bank, non-government organisations); that the affluence and stability of a country does not necessarily mean media freedom (for example, the UAE); that news organisations are often left with few skilled hands as experienced journalists are employed by NGOs; and that journalists are not always welcomed as agents of change.

Other researchers, notably Freedman and Shafer (2010), have also uncovered problems with ‘Western-centric’ curricula including: lack of qualified faculty, inadequate equipment, instructional materials and support to conduct practical courses; students without high enough education and language abilities to succeed; corrupt administrative structures that cannot recruit, compensate, or retain qualified faculty; and few profitable media organisations to pay graduates well and use their new skills.
In 2014 the Centre for International Media Assistance also made a number of recommendations to improve media development, including that media development organisations should take into account the level and nature of local demand for the work being proposed. They need to determine if trainees will be able to use their new skills and if management supports the training; to individualise training projects based on the specific ‘media ecosystem’; to focus on core journalism skills and on support for media business sustainability; to use more transparent, periodic reporting; to encourage universities to invest in greater research on effective training methods; and rigorously to evaluate projects so that lessons learned would benefit future projects.

No one, however, has taken a detailed look at those who staff the training projects and the attitudes and beliefs they take with them into the training environment.

**What this thesis does**

This thesis looks to the work of Hallin and Mancini, Voltmer, and Bourdieu for conceptual tools to examine journalism education from the perspective of internationally experienced Australian educators and those on the receiving end of that education. It is the first major attempt to examine the stated beliefs of this group about journalism practice and how these are challenged when transplanted outside Australia. The field of journalism education is different to the field of journalism practice in Australia, although the two are interconnected.

The thesis also presents a case study of Solomon Islands where there has been substantial funding and programs through the Australian Government aid agency, AusAID. AusAID has been the dominant media donor in the Pacific since 1996 (Ristow 2014, pp. 26-7). Solomon Islands has what Bourdieu would call a proto-field of journalism practice which again is connected, but not the same as, the barely emergent field of journalism education in the Islands.

This thesis presents insights from three sets of data: a content analysis of radio current affairs programming in Solomon Islands; interviews and a survey of Australian journalism educators who work outside Australia; and a case study of the media environment in Solomon Islands which draws on engaged stakeholders. It draws a little from my Master’s thesis *Measuring the Success of ABC Training*
This thesis accepted that the production of responsible, informative, analytic and intelligent news was critical to the survival and nurturing of a democratic culture, arguing that the criteria by which news was produced could make a fundamental impact on a nation (Wake 2002). However this thesis will go further, asking Australian journalism educators working away from their home countries about their ability to define the role of journalism in a national culture outside their own. It asks those Australians working in the field of journalism education outside Australia:

*What do Australian journalism educators believe is the job of a journalist? How does that change when they work in countries outside Australia?*

This thesis will then use a case study of Solomon Islands to ask:

*Has Australian media training and education been effective in Solomon Islands?*

To this end, this thesis will look at the Australian educators understandings about journalism’s role (watchdog, facilitator of public sphere and provider of information), when it is exported by educators to another country, and how these roles are translated into action in Solomon Islands, as seen by those living and working in the country.

**Significance and limitations**

This research describes for the first time the field of journalism education from the perspective of Australians specialising in working outside Australia. While there has been a significant increase in the scholarship of those teaching journalism within their own countries and cultures, to date there has been little exploration of the characteristics and influences that Australian journalism educators take with them into the training arena.

This research also provides an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of journalism training in Solomon Islands from the viewpoint of those who have been the recipients of training or directly impacted by the provision of the training (civil society and government). Solomon Islands was chosen as the location of the case study because an estimated $3 billion has been invested by Australia on
assistance to the country in the past ten years. Media assistance followed military intervention in the country, called the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI); part of RAMSI’s work, after stabilising the country, was to develop the media.

This thesis does not seek to draw a direct link between the Australian trainers and the effectiveness of Solomon Islands media; rather it will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of Solomon Islands media after the RASMI intervention. Effectiveness in this context is defined as producing a desired or the intended result.

While Australia has been a significant contributor to Solomon Islands it has not been the only provider of funds or training. Further the study is country-specific and a snapshot in time. While efforts have been made to provide up-to-date information, it is inevitable the situation in Solomon Islands has changed since the fieldwork was completed in 2011.

It may be tempting to apply the findings of this thesis to journalism educators from other countries, but this would work against its basic argument that journalism educators from other countries do not have the same training (what Bourdieu would call the secondary habitus) in journalism practice, principles and ethics. The core understandings of an Australian journalism educator, while similar, will not be the same as of one from, say, Norway or China.

This thesis was conceived before the digital revolution that sparked a change in emphasis in the funding of aid projects from journalism education focused on the craft skills of journalism (interviewing, ethics, accuracy, editing, TV and radio, photography, newsroom management) and investigative reporting, to the new tools of digital and social media. Digital media was not studied for this thesis as internet penetration in Solomon Islands was only seven per cent in 2013 when the digital revolution had not yet found its way to all parts of the world (Keane 2013).

Importantly, progress on this thesis was slower than anticipated because of resistance by the Australia Broadcasting Corporation’s International Development
arm to scrutiny. Documentation required for this thesis was only revealed through a timely Freedom of Information request.

While the thesis has taken longer than desirable, the data remains valid because Pacific political configurations are slow-moving. While elections may have changed which parties hold power, other dynamics such as the influence wielded by family networks and ‘big men’, and factors that limit the ability of the media to create political change remain in place. This study highlights deeper trends and mismatches between Western expectations and Pacific realities that explain the failure of Western attempts to create lasting change. Cognisance of these trends and mismatches may be useful in developing future strategies.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Two outlines the philosophical ideas underpinning this thesis using the work of Hallin and Mancini (1977, 1984, 1990, 1993, 1998, 2005) and Voltmer (2004) to discuss the difficulties in importing a field of journalism education to another country and context where the nation state is contested as a unit of governance. The idea of a field of journalism comes from the conceptual work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Chapter Three outlines the types of data collected and how they were thematically analysed. It explains why the various methodologies were used and why they were chosen: surveys for journalism educators, semi-structured interviews for journalism educators and people in Solomon Islands, thematic analysis for the interviews and surveys, content analysis of two weeks of current affairs radio programming in Solomon Islands and archival research. Significantly this chapter reports on the battle to get documentation from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s International Development division.

Chapter Four outlines the fairly poor understanding most Australians have of the working of their democracy. It discusses some of the failures of the Australian political system and looks to John Kean’s idea of monitory democracy: that the watchdog is a role not only for journalists but for other monitory organisations within societies. It describes why foreign governments have sought to fund media programs as part of their aid projects and why ‘democracy promoters’ need to
come to their roles with greater scepticism about the so-called liberal rights of democracies. It looks at the media assistance being provided to Solomon Islands and describes how the media education program funded by the Australian Government through ABC International Development follows the classic democracy promotion program favoured by those in the United States.

**Chapter Five** describes the history and societal conditions of journalism in Australia (its *habitus*) as a backdrop to discussing the views that are internalised and constructed by Australian journalists. It outlines the journalist’s identity in the three traditions—subjective, public sector and commercial—and talks about the roles of a journalist as a watchdog of society, a provider of information, and a facilitator of the public sphere. It also considers how Australian beliefs compare to those of other countries.

**Chapter Six** describes the field of journalism education in Australia and notes areas of contention in Australia and elsewhere. To apply Bourdieu’s field theory to journalism education outside Australia, it is necessary to understand how it works in Australia. These roles may be wide enough to encompass some other countries, but they have been formed out of the specific Australian experience.

**Chapter Seven** begins a three-chapter examination of the field of journalism education from the perspective of those with experience teaching internationally. This chapter specifically looks at a survey of the Australian educators, with questions drawn from earlier work by Schultz (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006) and Robie (1994, 1998). It notes the countries in which the Australian educators have worked, how they measure their own effectiveness, and questions the normative ideas of journalism in these chosen countries.

**Chapter Eight** reports in greater depth on the field of journalism education on the issues raised in the earlier survey. This chapter specifically asks journalism educators about their motivations for doing international journalism aid work, their pre-departure preparation, and the kinds of educational experiences they conduct and favour when overseas.
Chapter Nine continues the in-depth discussion of the field of journalism education by focusing on what the journalism educators say about journalism practice in the countries in which they have taught. It also discusses the impact of the media environment on the ability of educators to transfer skills effectively.

Chapter Ten provides a baseline for comparison by detailing the results of a content analysis of two weeks of current affairs programs in Solomon Islands in March 2011. This describes the type of journalism work being done at the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) in 2011 as a result of the Australian journalism intervention. This chapter discusses the history of the country and the media environment before and after the tensions that led to the arrival of the Australian-led intervention force, drawing from the work of an indigenous Solomon Island academic, Kabutaulaka (2012).

Chapter Eleven returns the focus to Solomon Islands with a two-chapter examination of the fields of journalism education and journalism practice in Solomon Islands. These chapters feature independent in-depth interviews with engaged stakeholders including journalists, civilians and government leaders. They draw on original documents to discuss the Australian Government-funded media aid programs, including the Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme (SOLMAS) and its unnamed predecessors.

Chapter Twelve continues the focus on engaged stakeholders in Solomon Islands to discuss a range of issues that mirror those asked of the Australian journalism educators. This chapter looks at the views of Solomon Island journalists and how views of journalism from an Australian view are re-interpreted. It looks specifically at cultural practices specific to Solomon Islands.

Chapter Thirteen concludes the thesis, arguing that journalism education by Australians in other countries shows the complex and changing scenario outlined in Bourdieu’s field theory. It suggests that if the people of Solomon Islands do not conceive of themselves as part of nation, but rather part of a particular wontok (one talk language) tribal group, then media assistance measures predicated upon nation-state capacity-building are set to fail.
Chapter Two: Philosophical Underpinning

This chapter outlines the philosophical ideas underpinning this thesis, drawing firstly on Hallin and Mancini (2004) and Voltmer (2012) as the main framework for comparative media analysis (Australian journalism educators working in non-Western media systems), and using the conceptual work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990, 1993, 1998, 2005) to elucidate specificities of the Australian journalism/journalism education fields. It pays particular attention to the accumulation of economic, cultural and social capital by the agents in each field, noting their *habitus* and *doxa*.

Hallin and Mancini

In *Comparing Media Systems*, Hallin and Mancini argue it is impossible to understand the news media without understanding ‘the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern or relations between economic and political interest and the development of civil society, among other elements of social structure’ (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 8). They argue that media models are rooted in differences far broader than the political and economic structures outlined in the *Four Theories of the Press*, which they find riddled with ethnocentric assumptions. Hallin and Mancini suggest a new theory is needed because the *Four Theories of the Press* (1973, 1956) has for too long dominated journalism scholarship and too little attention has been paid to other comparative analyses:

> Media scholars—following the tradition of McLuhan—often tend to have a professional bias towards overstressing the independent influence of media. (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 9)

Drawing on scholarship from Nerone (1995), Hallin and Mancini note that *the Four Theories of the Press* draws from only three countries— the United States, Britain and the USSR—and are ‘defined … from within one of the four theories—classical liberalism’ (1995, p. 21); as a result, they offer little to other parts of the world, particularly Europe. They note its appeal among scholars, drawn to the idea that the world’s media can be classified into a small number of models.

In their 2004 book they argue the dominance of the West in global academia means the main reference points for comparative analysis of media systems are
not appropriate, and by looking at 18 countries which meet a minimum standard of democracy, they set out to ‘demystify’ the Western media model by creating a conceptual framework to show there is not just one Western model. They argue that media systems need to be understood in the context of social and political institutions, and organise their 18 countries into three models: polarised pluralist (in the Mediterranean), democratic corporatists (North and Central Europe), or liberal (Anglo-Saxon countries in the North Atlantic); they then discuss the four supporting elements or dimensions of those systems: media markets, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and the degree and nature of state intervention.

This thesis does not intend to use Hallin and Mancini’s theories to classify a country outside their area of study, but rather to argue they have demonstrated the need for Australian journalism educators to acknowledge fundamental differences in each country’s media. This fits with Hallin and Mancini’s stated aim, to ‘suggest that the three models might be useful as points of comparison, for noting similarities and differences, and for beginning the process of asking why these similarities and differences existed’ (Hallin & Mancini 2012, p. 4).

**Voltmer**

Voltmer (2012, pp. 227-9) is among the scholars who have acknowledged difficulties in applying Hallin and Mancini’s 2004 conceptual framework in non-Western contexts, concluding that neither the political nor media systems of new democracies fits easily into the models developed for the West:

> The de-Westernisation of democracy has brought about new forms of democratic practice that differ from, often even contradict, the expectations of Western observers. In spite of the forces of globalisation, the transitions from authoritarian rule have not resulted in a homogenisation of democratic practice. (Voltmer 2012, p. 244)

She considers a number of issues that fall outside Hallin and Mancini’s framework when looking at countries outside advanced Western democracies. She acknowledges that ‘the ideological distinction of left and right’ makes little sense outside the Western world:
Instead, religious, ethnic and regional identifies, but also clientelistic loyalties play a much more important role. (Voltmer 2012, p. 229)

Because religion, ethnic and regional identities are more important outside non-Western countries there needs to be greater emphasis on the nature and degree of political conflict as ‘polarization along religious or ethnic lines bears the risk of spinning out of control and turning into hatred or even civil war’ (Voltmer 2012, p. 229). She argues that a different pattern arises when the political contest is split among many groups, and none has control over a long period; this can result in an inability of governments to make lasting decisions. Similarly, if a dominant group emerges then elections rarely result in an alternation of power; the role of the media is therefore incredibly important:

The media can reflect the strength of conflicting parties in a fairly one-to-one fashion, thereby paralleling the conflict. Or they can disproportionally ally with a particular group, resulting in a distorted pluralism of the system. (Voltmer 2012, p. 230)

Political parallelism of the media can help create a lively public sphere but will not work unless there are effective mechanisms of moderation in place. In Australia, for example, public service broadcasting has long fulfilled the role of a ‘forum medium’:

However, in recently emerging democracies the attempt to establish public service broadcasting has been largely unsuccessful. Unlike in Western democracies, the frequent political parallelism of the media—be it polarised, fragmented, or hegemonic—is not complemented by a public forum, making these countries’ attempt to develop a new political identity with shared values and norms an extremely difficult endeavour. (Voltmer 2012, p. 230)

Voltmer joins Hallin and Mancini in questioning if globalisation is leading a homogenisation of all media systems in the world towards a liberal model. They argue that existing traditions and values create a strengthened demand for local media products that are unique to each country (Rantanen 2004; Thussun 2009 in Voltmer 2012, p. 231). Voltmer argues that democracy is like the media in that it takes on local traditions and becomes unique to a place:
At the peak of the democratisation wave in the mid-1990s political observers and scholars alike were convinced that … newcomers would soon adopt the institutions and practices of liberal democracy as known from the West. (Voltmer 2012, p. 232)

Hallin and Mancini’s later work acknowledges that scholars who have used their model outside the original countries have consistently rejected the idea that global media systems are converging towards a Liberal model:

Journalism is not the same thing in Italy as in the United States, and it is different still in Russia or South Africa. Even if journalists perceive there exists a ‘dominant’ model of journalism whose practices and principles are spreading around the world, even if they may claim to follow that normative model, nevertheless in their everyday activity they perform in substantially different ways. (Hallin & Mancini 2012, p. 287)

Danish scholar Ida Schultz (2007a, p. 4), acknowledges many international studies of journalistic practices have added to knowledge of journalism cultures, but none has provided what she sees as an entirely satisfying theoretical framework for looking at journalism culture. Drawing on Benson (1998) and Cottle (2000), Schultz argues most news production studies are done at an organisational level ‘which does not take into account the political–economic, cultural or social structures, and does not have a sufficient link between structure and agency’ (Schultz, I 2007a, p. 4). Tuchman (2002) makes a similar argument, suggesting the political-economical, the cultural, and the textual aspects of journalism are usually treated as three separate research questions (Schultz, I 2007a, p. 4). Schultz is therefore among those who suggest that using Bourdieu’s ideas of the journalistic field is useful. Bourdieu himself suggests the virtue in using field theory for journalism:

to understand what happens in journalism, it is not sufficient to know who finances the publications, who the advertisers are, who pays for the advertising, where the subsidies come from, and so on. Part of what is produced in the world of journalism cannot be understood unless one conceptualizes this microcosm as such and endeavours to understand the effects that the people engaged in this microcosm exert on one another. (Bourdieu 2005, p. 33)
Hallin, Mancini,Voltmer and Schultz all make the argument that journalism practices and principles are different in each country, even if journalists believe there is one dominant model of journalism. Schultz further suggests that Bourdieu’s field theory is a useful tool for looking at the interrelationship of agency and a country’s political-economic, cultural or social structures.

**Bourdieu**

Bourdieu’s work has become increasingly popular among scholars interested in journalism practice, including (Benson 2008; Benson & Neveu 2005; Champagne 2005; Murrell 2011; Nash 2014; Oakham 2004; Schudson 2005; Schultz, I 2007a, 2007b). Bourdieu sees power as a result of the relations between subjects, in that power functions through a multiplicity of relations such as are found in the education system, the family, and the workplace (Everett 2002). His field theory is particularly useful for this thesis as it allows an examination of the fields of journalism practice and journalism education with reference to economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. This inter-organisational examination can reveal the influences that shape the practice of journalists and educators, as individuals and as groups struggling to find a professional identity (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 11).

Field theory positions itself between political economy and cultural approaches that suggest that news production is linked directly to broad classes of the national society.

Bourdieu (1993, 1998, 2005) does not rely on an over-extended conceptual apparatus or theoretical terminology. He argues it is best to think about fields (of education, arts, politics, law, journalism) relationally. All are interconnected and immersed in social and material systems that change and transform in relation to each other:

> While each field has its own unique ‘rules of the game’, they are all, at least according to Bourdieu, structured around the same basic opposition between cultural and economic power. (Benson 2004, p. 281)

**Field and Capital**

To understand Bourdieu it is necessary to understand some of the terms he uses, in particular field, capital, habitus, doxa and symbolic violence. Bourdieu’s
(1990) concept of fields is more an analytical construct than the naming of an objective reality, so boundaries can be blurry. He argues that a field is a network of social relations in which there is an ongoing struggle over resources. In liberal democratic nation state societies these fields include art, music, science, education, politics, law, economy and journalism. Each is distinguished by its agents and institution, their specific logics and their objective relations. Journalist educators can locate themselves in multiple fields, some nestled within each other, some of them cross-linking. The vast majority of journalism educators would fit within the field of journalism practice, although it could be argued they are in a cross-linking field, journalism education. There are hierarchical degrees of power in which some fields sustain relative autonomy while others are compelled to yield to the heteronomy of colonisation by more powerful fields.

The struggle for power within each of fields is not, however, between equal competitors. To understand this it is unnecessary to understand that to Bourdieu ‘capital’ always refers to something that can be accumulated, be it economic, cultural, social or symbolic capital. Bourdieu argues that while economic capital is important, other types of capital are also significant, and posits that the more cultural capital a person has, for example, the more power they hold within their field.

Economic capital needs little explanation: it refers to the accumulation of wealth. Cultural capital is more interesting in that it can be embodied, objectified and institutionalised. For journalists cultural capital might be embodied in how they dress, the books they read and the phones they use, and institutionalised in the their membership of the journalists union or a university degree. Cultural capital can be a major source of social inequality. If some forms of cultural capital are valued over others, these could hinder a person’s social mobility as much as wealth. It is easy to see how a student with high economic capital might be able to do multiple unpaid internships, which could lead to a valued and rarely advertised job in the industry, while a student with less economic capital cannot afford multiple internships. Indigenous students even with the high economic capital may find that their lack of cultural capital means that they are not offered unpaid internships and are therefore denied access to rarely advertised journalism jobs.
A key part of a journalist’s success can come from linguistic capital, which is a subset of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977/1990). Linguistic capital usually comes from the family, and this is significant in this thesis because many of the countries where media training takes place has English as a second or third language. The ability to show one’s ability in journalistic writing, or in scholarly writing for students, is an embodied form of linguistic capital.

Social capital is also significant for this thesis, in that it refers to power that comes from networks of relationships. It is not just the networks, but what one brings to them, that determines an individual’s social capital. A journalist who has had an international education, for example, can bring not only a wider network of people to their position but also the advantage of being able to produce journalistic work to an international standard. Political capital is seen as a subset of social capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 119).

These economic, cultural and social forms of capital combine to create symbolic capital that ultimately is the basis of power. Symbolic capital also gives the power to ‘consecrate’ and impose a vision of a field and the way it is hierarchically organised. In relation to this thesis, journalism educators from another country may be seen to have high symbolic capital because they bring a combination of economic, cultural and social capital to their roles. Similarly a high profile television academic has higher social capital than a low profile radio academic, and will have greater autonomy.

Some agents within the field of journalism practice, such as editors, may be seen as elite agents through the weight of their significant resources (economic capital), access to ruling classes (social capital), mass of qualifications, academic skills and literary heritage (cultural capital). Junior reporters do not have such strong symbolic capital. Similarly in the field of journalism education, professors are seen to have higher symbolic capital than junior lecturers.

Some individuals enter a field with higher sources of social capital, such as those granted to them by positions they have held within an institution (i.e. political reporter or foreign correspondent/ professor or tutor) or the place where they obtained their degree (i.e. RMIT University or an online college). Bourdieu argues
that each field is dynamic and, although each has its own rules, knowledges and forms of capital, individuals jostled for position within the field to advance their own interests, views and interpretations of the world. In developing societies such as Solomon Islands, where fields have not yet developed, Bourdieu argues that social relations, rules, accumulation of capital and production of *habitus* are taken from the larger social field.

Journalism is defined in relation to the field of cultural production, in that it produces principles of vision and division (Schultz, 1 2007b). This third point is of particular interest to this thesis. Bourdieu explains it in this way:

> Those who deal professionally in making things explicit and producing discourses—sociologists, historians, politicians, journalists, etc.—have two things in common. On the one hand, they strive to set out explicitly practical principles of vision and division. On the other hand, they struggle, each in their own universe, to impose these principles of vision and division, and to have them recognised as legitimate categories of construction of the social world. (Bourdieu 2005, p. 37)

Bourdieu suggests that the field framework helps explain how different forms of power are crucial in the ‘ongoing struggle’ that is society. Each of his fields is said to be structured by the battle of external forces (usually economic ones) and what he calls the ‘autonomous’ skills of the field, in this case of journalism practice (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 4) and journalism education. The specific form of economic, social and cultural capital varies within each field, although there is overlap between the practice and education fields.

He compares a field to a football game where players struggle for position and play to win. In the field of journalism practice this may be seen in the struggle to be appointed chief reporter, political correspondent or—the highest of honour—a foreign correspondent. In the field of journalism education it may be seen in the struggle to secure less teaching time and more research time, or promotion through the ranks to professor. The struggle for supremacy in Bourdieu’s model

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4 Bourdieu spent time in the armed forces during the Algerian war, and returned with an ethnographic research of the Kayble Peoples which he detailed in his first book, *The Sociology of Algeria*. 

does not necessarily lead to economic advantage, but can simply mean a better position within a field.

Bourdieu (1985) argues there are two types of fields: those that produce work for others in the same field (restricted field); those that produce work for others outside the field (large scale). The field of journalism practice may be viewed as producing both. In one sense it is littered with references to its agents producing work for the edification or praise of other journalists, although the field is designed to produce work for the wider community. The larger-scale field can influence or colonise the restricted field a significant issue when journalism is produced within a restricted field (Everett 2002, p. 61).

Autonomy is an interesting issue for the fields of journalism practice and journalism education. Zipin and Brennan (2003, p. 359) argue that Australian academics have declining autonomy in academic fields because of the changing balance between academia and the political and economic sectors of the broader social space. It could also be argued that Australian journalism academics have even lower autonomy than other academics because the status and nature of journalism is such that they must fight to have a discrete research practice recognised within the academy (Nash 2014). Similarly in the field of journalism practice, it could be argued that journalists have reducing autonomy because of changing business models which put political and economic interests ahead of public interest. Proprietors such as News Corporation’s Rupert Murdoch who sell newspapers can be seen to inhabit another field, business, where he holds high autonomy.

**Habitus**

Bourdieu talks about *habitus* as the historical and societal conditions under which views are internalised or constructed by an individual or group (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu calls the *habitus* the physical embodiment of cultural capital, and considers it the result of one’s experiences through socialised learning:

> Individuals’ predispositions, assumptions, judgments, and behaviours are the result of the long-term process of socialisation, most importantly in the
family, and secondarily, via primary, secondary, and professional education. Habitus is not unchangeable. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, p. 133 in Benson & Neveu 2005)

Although it is not static, *habitus* is so deeply embedded that people are usually unconscious of it. The primary *habitus* emerges from early internalisation, and the secondarily *habitus* interweaves with and overlays this as people move across social settings, institutions and life. Bourdieu suggests that *habitus* works at a subconscious level of ‘practical logic’ or ‘practical sense’ that is neither rational nor logical. This leads to ‘second natures’ to be misrecognised as natural or within common-sense norms. *Habitus* is so ingrained that people may believe they are naturally disposed to some things, rather than these being culturally developed. The decision to read *The Australian* or *The Telegraph*, for example, could be determined by our professional or educational *habitus*, and the family we grew up in can help determine *habitus* and whether we choose fish and chips and beer, or sushi and a pinot, on Friday night.

In arguing for the use of Bourdieu’s theories, Schultz notes that journalists develop their *habitus* by mastering a professional game in a specific professional field (2007b, p. 97). Considering the nature and placement of the press in Australian society, it is understandable that Australian journalists and journalist educators may be influenced by political-economic and cultural factors to have a strong sense of allegiance to Western liberal news values.

Power relations are said to reproduce themselves by uncritical aspects of *habitus*. For example, students from a working class *habitus* may consider themselves unsuited to university study of journalism, while those from an upper middle class *habitus* might consider this an honourable ambition.

**Doxa and Symbolic Violence**

To Bourdieu, the *doxa* represents the beliefs and values (or the rules) that inform a person’s actions and thoughts within fields. Those who work as journalists in Australia share a *doxa*, for example, that journalism is valuable to the community, that journalists hold a privileged role in society as the watchdogs of the Fourth Estate, providers of information and facilitators of the public sphere. Those within the field of journalism practice and journalism education are able to recognise a
good story immediately by reading the positions in the field, which a student journalist or a cadet journalists will need to learn do, specifically with regard to the news values that underpin the weighting of a good story. As Bourdieu writes, ‘Doxa is a particular point of view, the point of view of the dominant, which presents and imposes itself as a universal point’ (1998, p. 57).

For Bourdieu the classification of news into the categories of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ is one not just of organisation but of power. Berkowitz (2011, p. 88) draws on ethnographic observations by Tuchman (1978) to suggest that hard stories in the traditional areas of foreign news, political journalism, economy and business journalism are mostly created by men, while softer and less prestigious areas of human interest, family, and lifestyle are typically written by female reporters. While changes to the gender balance in newsrooms in recent times has likely changed the female–male hard news–soft news dynamic, Berkowitz notes that most editorial conversation in newsrooms is still about hard news. However, in Bourdieu’s version of the field journalists will not always agree on the common-sense rules of the field. Some people aim to conserve the relations of forces in a field; others will try to change the rules to their own benefit; and others struggle against those who want the rules to remain constant. In other words, the doxa favour the social arrangements of the field, privilege the dominant, and take a position of dominance as self-evident and universally favourable.

An important result of the interaction of capital, doxa and the field is that it results in what is called symbolic violence, or the self-interested capacity to ensure that the social order is either ignored, or made to seeming common sense so that existing social structures are justified. The resulting symbolic violence is considered more effective than police violence, for example, because it work an act of cognition beneath the control of consciousness (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 166). By adapting Everett’s (2002, p. 67) examples from the field of education to the field of journalism education, it is possible to illustrate the struggle over doxa that results in symbolic violence. This could be seen when considering trainee journalists working with English as a second language. Although it is unlikely they will become as confident in journalism using English,
they will believe it is in their best interests to mimic their English-speaking teachers and the way they produce their journalism.

![Diagram of journalism education fields](image)

**Figure 1 Visual representation of the field of journalism education**

**Economic, Cultural and Social Capital and the Field of Journalism Practice**

Bourdieu’s field theory explicitly rejects Noam Chomsky’s idea that the news media’s behaviour is explained solely by its capitalist ownership and control (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 10); however, the fields of journalism practice and education in Australia have always been strongly influenced by economic conditions as well as political and social conditions (Champagne 2005, pp. 50-1). Writing from the perspective of the French media, Champagne detailed how the economic control of journalistic production could be seen in the way a brand new news outlets morphed from having ‘pure’ purposes to producing news to suit the economic circumstances it found itself operating in:

> The newspaper’s operation no longer involves only those who created it, but a growing number of people … who are attached to the economic success of the business. (Champagne 2005, p. 53)

Others have noted that money could be better made from journalistic outputs aimed at the ‘right’ economic pole rather than the ‘left’ cultural pole:

> At its ‘left’ cultural pole, journalism is part of the field of ‘restricted’ cultural production (produced for other producers—small literary journals,
avant-garde art and music, etc.), while at its ‘right’ economic pole, it belongs to the field of large-scale cultural production (produced for general audiences—mass entertainment, etc.). (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 5)

Champagne notes the irony of journalists’ ethics that encourage codes that are not profitable:

> The journalist ideally wants to be the stalwart servant of the truth at any price, but he belongs to a paper that bears a price and is situated with an economic enterprise with its own exigencies, which are not all of the mind. The popular press, or ‘gutter press’ as they say in England, thrives while the ‘serious’ press barely survives. (Champagne 2005, p. 51)

Schudson argues that the market is in fact an ‘imperfect proxy’ for the general public, although ‘there are different markets and market segments and accordingly different publics and elements of the public so represented’ (2005, p. 221). The public nature of their work means that journalists are exposed to the criticism of people in the political realm and readers in the economic one; Schudson suggests that journalists are kept ‘nimble’ by their vulnerability to sources and the market:

> What can be good for journalism can also be disastrous—pandering in the one direction and propagandizing in the other. But absent these powerful outside pressures, journalism can end up communicating only to itself and for itself. (2005, p. 219)

Australian scholar Colleen Murrell argues that the high cost of creating journalism content is increasingly affecting the ability of journalists to do their job, but that journalists still believe they are the only game in town that matters:

> Reporting is an expensive game and media companies need to make their money from either courting the commercial dollar or the government’s purse. Therefore, for journalism to be a powerful field, it must please its paymasters and fulfil its remit. (Murrell 2011, p. 89)

Benson and Neveu note that within the field of journalism economic capital is a result of the business end of the press, but the reportage is linked to cultural capital:
Economic capital is expressed via circulation, or advertising revenues, or audience ratings, whereas the ‘specific’ cultural capital of the field takes the form of intelligent commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like—the kind of journalistic practices rewarded each year by the US Pulitzer Prizes. (2005, p. 4)

The field of journalism practice is strongly dominated by economic interests although political and social conditions do come into play, and in countries where there are public service broadcasters such as Australia the economic domination is somewhat downplayed. In the field of journalism education economic interests are strong, but cultural and social interests are also significant in a county where journalism is valued as a watchdog, and some journalists (particularly investigative journalists and foreign correspondents) are lauded for their work.

**Politics and the Field of Journalism**

> They mix with agents of power, but their ability to wield it is constrained.  
> *(Murrell 2011)*

US journalism scholar Michael Schudson and his Australian Colleen Murrell agree the idea the journalistic field has weak autonomy from society’s political, economic, and social currents goes against the thinking of most journalists:

The assumption is strong inside journalism and in most academic discussions of journalism that the press should be fully autonomous, pursing truth without constraint and without ‘fear or favour’ as the founder of the modern *New York Times* wrote in 1896. (2005, p. 215)

Schudson (2005, p. 217) suggests that American journalists believe they have autonomy from the commercial as well as the political, and are likely to be morally outraged at ‘the possibility of acquiescence to political power’. Darras (2005) illustrates the same point of news coming out of France, drawing on television news interview shows which select guests based on their ranking within the political elite.

Schudson draws on Daniel Hallin’s study of US coverage of the Vietnam conflict to discuss the complexity of journalistic autonomy in the political sphere. Hallin argues the press did not live up to their watchdog reputation in the United States because the media was too integrated into the political field.
Nevertheless, he finds that while the press was subservient to government officials during the Vietnam conflict the journalists did not acquiesce completely:

Criticism was muted—but not silenced. The television networks were more submissive than print. Print was more acquiescent in its headlines than in its news stories. Print news was more docile in front-page stories than in stories on the inside pages. Front-page stories were more cautious in their leads, and opening paragraphs than in the closing paragraphs. (2005, p. 215)

The autonomy of journalism was also shown in the way reporters structured their stories. Schudson draws attention to Hallin’s discovery that news stories during the Vietnam War tended to use the most recent and authoritative views of highly placed officials, with one New York Times story leading with ‘the statement least revealing of the actual course of the policy debate, to information that progressively undermined the lead—and moved closer to the truth’ (Hallin in Schudson 2005, p. 215). Interestingly Schudson notes Bourdieu’s observation that autonomy in the journalism field could ‘lead to an “egoistic” closing-in on the specific interests of the people engaged in the field’ (2005, p. 45). Schudson agrees that conservative critics in the United States repeatedly make this claim:

They object specifically to journalistic autonomy. They see journalists as a liberal elite that imposes its values on everybody else. (Schudson 2005, p. 218)

Claims that journalists are too ‘left’ are rejected by Schudson, who suggests that such calls by conservatives are different from the rest of the US public:

Journalists, they say, are ‘politically correct’ and are almost uniformly secular in a country with the strongest church-going tradition in any Western democracy. Journalists are feminists and pro-choice advocates when a very large and politically powerful segment of the population is deeply distressed by laws permitting abortion. (2005, p. 218)

Australian journalists (particularly those who work for the government-funded Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and those at Fairfax newspapers) and Australian journalism educators are similarly criticised by conservatives for being socially liberal. In late 2014 there was again a campaign against Australian journalism educators for holding progressive ideology (Markson 2014a) after a
A study found a high number of left and green voters in the ranks of journalists, particularly at the ABC and Fairfax (Hanusch 2013).

Schudson suggests professionalisation of journalism with adherence to professional codes could help maintain the autonomy of journalists in the field. He suggests that ‘honest’ reporters and editors want autonomy, to be free from pressure from government officials, media owners, advertisers and market competition, and argues they could attain this by employing their own best ‘news judgement’—while conceding that news judgement may create a stench of sameness to an issue:

> journalists all breathe the same air of their occupation and develop habits of judgement of great, sometimes stultifying, uniformity. In this respect, when journalists gain autonomy from state and market they do not individually gain free expression. (2005, p. 218)

However, Schudson also raises the point that talk of autonomy may not help democracy if ‘news judgement’ creates a climate in which important stories are not told:

> Journalists are right that commerce and government control are the corruptions they should most strenuously avoid, but the corruption of conformity to a climate of opinion in a group can be serious and damaging in its own right. (2005, p. 219)

Schudson notes that journalists do very little collectively to challenge their own governing assumptions; and that in any case journalism is not supposed to be a set of individual thinkers trying to find the truth but rather a ‘set of energetic and thoughtful communicators who try to keep a society attuned to itself’ (2005, p. 220). He suggests that journalists should be ‘attuned to the state—and dependent on the state to a degree—for the sake of democracy’ (2005, p. 221), and goes further to question the validity of journalists determining what information and context are appropriate for citizens wanting to know about politics.
Schudson suggests that in a representative democracy journalists could concentrate on reporting to citizens what their elective representatives said and did, allowing the people as voters to assess the leaders:

> Journalists can and should give disproportionate space and attention to the people’s elected representatives. They can and should seek to articulate a place for journalism in democracy that calls on journalists to be serious and valiant but appropriately modest. (Schudson 2005, p. 221)

He further argues for a wider variety of journalists to be employed to improve the autonomy of journalists or at least the variety of stories and he notes that journalistic autonomy should not be a value for its own sake:

> one thing it is obliged to do by its history, its traditions, its highest values, and sometimes its legal licence, is to serve democracy. When the autonomy of journalism conflicts with the best practices of democratic government, journalistic autonomy has to be challenged. (2005, p. 222).

Using Bourdieu’s theory it is possible to argue that journalists have autonomy and can maintain distance from the political realm, but may run the risk of getting too close to the government and the powerbrokers. If, as Bourdieu says, ‘the endgame’ is to be autonomous, then journalists have that power to produce serious work. Leading journalists in the field who have accumulated the greatest ‘cultural worth’ are able to take on this role in the political realm.

**Culture and Social Structure and the Field of Journalism**

To use Bourdieu effectively it is necessary to consider the social structure of journalists and journalism educators, and the culture in which they operate. How someone arrives at their *habitus*, and their position in relation to the political and economic fields, must be considered at the same time as any analysis of their attitudes, behaviour and discourses (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 3). This thesis will look at the various characteristics of journalism educators—their social/economic origins, where they were educated and received professional:

> journalists from high cultural or economic capital backgrounds are most likely to have the motivation and capacity to change the field based on the experience of their ‘deviant trajectories’. (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 6)
Education is considered vital to the journalists’ *habitus*. Talking about France in particular, Champagne discusses efforts to professionalise journalistic activities by the development of schools of journalism, and suggests that this has not helped journalism’s search for autonomy:

> On the one hand, [there are] strictly political requirements of press outlets which have been, in France at least, deeply implicated in broader political struggles; on the other, the increasingly strong relations which connect them to the real or imagined expectations of the public, from which, in the last instance, they earn their living. In other words, journalists are structurally condemned to produce … under political and/or economic constraints (Champagne 2005, p. 50).

Bourdieu argues that journalism tends to reproduce itself because of its inherent dynamism and conflict, unless there are pressures or shocks from neighbouring fields. These include:

> New political orders brought about by democratic processes, dramatic changes in the overall legal and economic policy environment, as well as specific media regulations, social and cultural movements, and economic crises (Benson & Neveu 2005, p. 6).

**The March Towards Liberal Democracy**

Underlying this work is the idea that international media aid is most often provided in a spirit of helping another country towards democratisation, through a transition into what Voltmer calls ‘a march towards liberal democracy’. This assumes that media in ‘emerging democracies’ will adopt Western models with an emphasis on ‘minimal state regulation and neutral reporting’ (Voltmer 2012, p. 232), despite the fact there is overwhelming evidence from Chalaby (1996), Deuze (2008), Hanitzsch (2008), Josephi (2010); (Josephi 2011, 2012), Schultz, I (2007a), Voltmer (2012), Weaver and Willnat (2012), and Zelizer (2012) that journalistic cultures vary significantly from country to country.

Voltmer notes that international donors and policy makers who are concerned about the crucial role the media plays in countries transitioning to democracy believe that flaws in their functioning of ‘could be put down to inefficient and unfree media’ and therefore begin programs of media development aimed at ‘strengthening civil society, fighting corruption and fostering development’
(2012, p. 232). She acknowledges that one reason emerging democracies develop new media systems rather than copying Western models is because they are building on what is already in place. Often the media are not new, but rather transformations of what was already in operation (Voltmer 2012, p. 235). Adam and Pfetsch (2009) and Dobreva (2011) note that political elites—and even opposition activists who have sought media freedom—struggle with new ways of doing things.

The reason some countries have not been successful in effectively transforming their institutions is that ‘representative democracy’ and ‘media pluralism’ are not concepts accepted by all people outside the West:

Neither democracy nor the notion of a democratic media—nor that of related ideas such as press freedom, objectivity, and the watchdog role—has a fixed meaning that could claim validity outside time and space. In fact, the meaning of these notions is far more elastic than textbook knowledge usually implies and therefore has to be renegotiated in the context in which they are implemented (Voltmer 2012, p. 233).

She notes that the policy documents from a World Bank media development program,5 for example, show that although the authors were aware of local contexts, they reflected a ‘preference of private media, factual reporting and adversarial journalism’ which were key to Hallin and Mancini’s Liberal framework:

Evidence from the new democracies of the third wave indicate that neither the export of political institutions nor of journalism and the media has resulted in uniformity, let alone convergence towards the Liberal model of media systems. (2012, p. 233).

Voltmer draws on Whitehead (2002) who suggests that the words ‘democracy’ and ‘democratic media’ needed to be ‘anchored’ in key values but open to interpretation and debate (Voltmer 2012, p. 234). She draws on the work of Wassermann and De Beer (2006) to warn that political groups in new democracies

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5 World Bank’s CommGAP program (communication for Governance and Accountability Program)
could use the definition of press freedom and press responsibility for their own means in determining a country’s media policy (Voltmer 2012, p. 235).

Using Voltmer, Mancini and Hallin, and Schudson’s work alongside Bourdieu it is possible to examine the political, cultural and social structures of the field of journalism education from the perspective of Australians and consider it alongside the proto-field of journalism practice and the barely emergent field of journalism education in Solomon Islands.
Chapter Three: Methodology

The mix of methods was engaged for this exploratory research because different types of data were needed to answer the different aspects of the research questions. The following data were gathered: a survey of journalism educators; semi-structure interviews with Australian journalism educators; interviews with journalists, government officials and civil society leaders in Solomon Islands; a content analysis; and a reflexive log.

Survey

Data about the views held by Australian journalism educators was collected in a survey distributed in 2011. The majority of surveys of journalism educators were completed in February and March 2011, and the last in June 2012.

The quantitative data in the survey were analysed using mean mode and median, and described as percentages, as the sample size was too small for meaningful inferential statistical analysis. The surveys included open-ended questions and respondents were asked to volunteer for an interview at the completion of the survey. Three senior journalism educators were asked to complete the survey in its pilot stage, and a number of changes to the composition and order of the questions was made in response to their feedback. The views of these senior educators were considered important, and their responses were added to the main survey results.

No organisation tracks the number of academics working on international journalism education and training projects, so it was impossible to define the number for a statistically valid survey. However, as Bromley et al. (2011, p. 59) argue in relation to the Australian journalism academic population, if there are consistent and focused answers to the answers, a high degree of reliability can be anticipated.

Although 44 results were analysed, the majority of the questions were answered by 33 people (those who were not involved directly in journalism training did not
answer all the questions). The figures generated in this thesis refer to the total number of responses to each question, not to the overall number of survey participants. There were no technical issues with the survey reported to the researcher, although one of the respondents who attempted to do the survey via smart phone (iPhone) in Papua New Guinea expressed worry about its length.

The survey prepared for people in Solomon Islands was based on the one prepared for Australian journalism educators; however, during field research in 2011 it became clear that on-line surveys were not an appropriate or efficient way of gathering data in that country. Instead, in-depth interviewers were conducted with 21 people there, and the survey questions were read to those who agreed to take part in the research. Their responses to both the survey questions and other open-ended questions were examined for commonality and difference.

When surveying the journalists, careful attention was paid to the working of the questions to reduce ambiguity. Weaver warns that surveying journalists is more difficult than surveying the general public—that journalists who are in the habit of asking rather than answering questions often find fault with surveys:

Many are quite sceptical or crucial of surveys in general, and many are suspicious of survey researchers’ guarantees of anonymity and underlying motivations for conducting surveys. (2008, p. 106)

He also notes that surveys are not good measures of actual journalistic behaviour, as people generally answer questions about behaviour in ‘socially desirable ways’. For this reason the surveys included in this work concentrated on asking questions which assessed opinions and attitudes, rather than attempting to measure behaviour or professional practice. The radio current affairs content analysis was designed to look at the result of the professional practice.

**Survey Distribution**

The survey was distributed electronically via the journalism education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA) online list that includes members and

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6 It could be argued that journalism educators are even more difficult to survey than journalists.
other interested individuals; the link was also distributed to the 7,000 members of
the journalist’s section of the union, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance,
and to five journalism educators/trainers known to the researcher. In 2011 the
Australian academic membership of the Journalism Education and Research
Association of Australia was 74; not all people working overseas were members
(Bromley & Regan 2011, p. 59).

The respondents were self-selecting (Self-selection sampling 2012). No
background checks were conducted to confirm eligibility to respond to the survey,
but it was apparent from their answers that all had international training
experience. The survey was anonymous until the last question, where respondents
were asked if they would like to be interviewed further; if they were, they were
asked to give contact details.

**Australian Educators Semi-structured Interviews**

The surveys were followed by semi-structured interviews with 15 international
educators who volunteered to speak to the researcher. Face-to-face and video-
phone interviews were favoured because of the ability of the researcher to take
into account body language, intonation, and visual clues, and to delve further into
areas raised in the surveys. The interviews began with broad open-ended
questions about key issues under investigation, but wandered to areas the
interviewees believed were important (Bryman 1989, p 147). In this study most of
the one-on-one interviews took about 45 minutes, with some as long as two hours.
The one-on-one interview eliminated the potential problem of group pressure and
allowed participants to provide specific information (Wimmer & Dominick 1983).

Thirteen in-depth interviews were conducted and recorded in person or via a video
Skype call; two were conducted by telephone. All were done in 2011. Each
interviewee volunteered for an in-depth interview after completing an online
survey of their views and opinions. The Australian journalism educators
interviewed were Barbara Adams, Clare Arthur, Jock Cheetham, Sean Dorney,
Mike Dobbie, Lee Duffield, Jemima Garrett, Bob Howarth, Eric Loo, Cait
McMahon, Mark Pearson, Kanaha Sabapathy and Amanda Watson; and two
others who asked not to be named.
The Australian educators interviewed represented a range of ages and experiences. Duffield, Watson, Pearson and Loo were full-time academics; Sabapathy, Howarth, Arthur, Dorney, Garrett, Cheetham and Dobbie were working journalists who had conducted multiple training courses. McMahon differed from the rest in that she was not a trained journalist, but provided specific psychology training for journalists in coping with trauma. The two un-named educators were consultants who specialised in providing journalism education and training across the Asia–Pacific region.

The educators included in this thesis have worked for a variety of organisations including AusAID, USAid, the International Federation of Journalists, European Union, United Nations Development Program, Sri Lanka Press Institute, International News Safety Institute, Deutsche Welle Training Institute, international trade unions, and affiliated bodies such as IMPACS (the Canadian Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society).

**Solomon Islands Field Research**

Solomon Islands was selected as the focus for this thesis a number of reasons, not the least of which was its proximity to Australia and because at the time of the field research up to 50 per cent of Solomon Island’s Gross Domestic Product was provided by Australia. Consideration was given to incorporating case studies from Africa and Asia, but replicating the process in two addition settings was beyond the scope of the project’s funding and timescale.

The field research allowed the researcher to spend three weeks immersed in Solomon Islands life. While she stayed in what would be considered a ‘Western’ style hotel, she travelled on local buses, ate local food, and socialised only with Solomon Islanders. Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993, pp. 316-7) suggest that this kind of approach is far more than participant observation because it provides first-hand information on those being studied, from direct experience.

The researcher accepted that the field observations relied heavily on her perceptions and judgements, as well as on preconceived notions about the material under study. It was acknowledged that researcher bias might unavoidably favour specific preconceptions of results, while observations to the contrary might
be ignored or distorted (Wimmer & Dominick 1983, pp. 146-7). To aid her memory, during the field work stage of the thesis process in Solomon Islands, the researcher kept a daily log of thoughts and ideas which she was able to revisit long after the field work was completed (Wake 2011b).

**Solomon Islands Semi-structured Interviews**

Twenty-four people were interviewed in Solomon Islands, including journalists, owners, trainees, trainers, government officials and civil society leaders. Those who agreed to be named were Mary-Louise O’Callaghan, Ashley Wickham, (the late) John Lamani, Alfred Sasako, George Herming, Bob Pollard, Father Ambrose Pereira, Charles Sennett, Priestly Harbu, (the late) Walter Nalangu, Ednal Palmer, Evan Wasaka, Koroi Hawkins, Joel Lamani, Owen Talo, and one unnamed Solomon Island journalist. The head of ABC international’s Solomon Island training program, Coralie Ferguson, was interviewed but declined to be recorded.

The Solomon Island interviewees represented a range of ages and experiences including journalists, government and civil society. Mary-Louise O’Callaghan was a former Australian journalist who married a Solomon Islander and was working in a public relations capacity for the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), Ashley Wickham was a former general manager of Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation; John Lamani owned *The Solomon Star*, Alfred Sasako was a former journalist turned politician, George Herming was a former journalist turned government media advisor, Bob Pollard was an Australian educated Solomon Islander and head of Transparency International, Father Ambrose was a Catholic priest who ran media training programs particularly for community radio. The others were all journalists of varying levels of experience, from Walter Nalangu, editor of Solomon Islands Broadcasting Commission (SIBC), to junior news reporters.

**Thematic Analysis**

After all the interviews were completed the researcher read each transcript and placed what the interviewees said into thematic groups. This thesis looks at what the educators said, rather than interpreting why they said it. Because they were all experienced journalism educators, this approach respected their expertise and accepted their words as rational and worthy of inclusion alongside the
contribution of scholarly theorists. By bringing the journalism educators’ thoughts and scholarly theories together, it was hoped to identify issues associated with the phenomenon of transplanting Australian journalism education to another country.

The same process of ordering into thematic groups was followed for those interviewed in Solomon Islands; however those interviewed in Solomon Islands had a much broader set of experiences and could not all be considered to be experts in their fields, although they all held valid experiences of journalism and had valid views about its importance to Solomon Islands society. For the sake of transparency, some information about the backgrounds of each of these interviewees has been included.

The broad themes for analysis from the surveys and semi-structured interviewees of Australian journalism educators were drawn from the surveys. The survey looked at:

- measuring effectiveness;
- styles of journalism;
- barriers to effective journalism;
- the Fourth Estate:
- good reporting, media freedom and governance;
- and the impact of trainers.

These issues were further examined in the semi-structured interviews where respondents were asked to talk about motivations for doing international training, what kinds of journalism education they preferred, evaluating their success, styles of journalism, journalism practices, what they taught, and media environments.

The broad themes for analysis from the interviewees of people in Solomon Islands were about journalism in Solomon Islands, holding power to account, the Fourth Estate, cultural practices, respect for journalists, good reporting, and journalists’ values.
Content Analysis

Two weeks of Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) English-language radio news current affairs were recorded during the field research, and copies of the main newspaper, *The Solomon Star*, were collected each day. At the beginning of the project the researcher believed that a comparative analysis of local print and radio news would be useful in attempting to understand the social and ideological conditions that influenced news coverage in Solomon Islands. Although *The Solomon Star* kept copies of its newspapers, the proprietor (Wake 2011a) complained that his files had been destroyed by previous researchers who ripped out articles for their purposes. The researcher took photographic records of newspapers. These cannot be considered an appropriate or full record for study, but a content analysis of the English current affairs radio bulletins was completed, adapted from the Northwestern University guide (Lynch, S & Peer 2002).

The items were coded using an adaptation of ‘Newspaper Content: A How-To Guide’, distributed by the Media Management Centre at Northwestern University (Lynch, S & Peer 2002). Some of the codes included recording the gender of the reporter (where known) and the type of radio current affairs report (voice report, insert, etc.). The researcher applied her 20 years’ experience as a broadcast journalist to make notes about editorial and technical issues in the newscasts. (Appendix 2.)

A content and discourse analysis of 42 stories broadcast on the daily 7 a.m. current affairs bulletin on SIBC was conducted during a two-week study period from 7 March 2011. Each bulletin was taped off-air at the hotel directly opposite SIBC headquarters in Honiara. The SIBC could not provide copies of its broadcasts during the period of the tensions, so it was not possible to compare and contrast the work with previous broadcasts. To ensure the news was not misinterpreted from the viewpoint of a Western outsider, a Solomon Islander who had worked as a translator and advisor for several non-government organisations was asked to assist. This was particularly important because of unease that the

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7 It was not a simple case of having the newspaper delivered each day. The researcher had to pay a domestic worker to specifically get the paper each day as an added part of her duties. On the days the worker did not work, the paper did not arrive.
mixture of English and pidgin used in the programs could result in misinterpretation.

Lynch and Peer (2002) suggest using trained coders for content analysis, but the researcher worked alone, with the assistance only of the interpreter. The content analysis categories suggested were changed to reflect the fact that it was radio being analysed, and that the work was located in Solomon Islands. Specifically, the researcher drew on work from the Pacific Islands Secretariat (Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment (SANA) Reference Group Workshop which developed a list of governance news categories in 2004 specifically for Pacific Island countries (*Informing citizens: opportunities for media and communications in the Pacific* 2005). The SANA categories included in this analysis are political governance, economic governance, natural resources, development and community, law, conflict and security, and human rights. The other elements noted and compared in the analysis were adapted from Lynch and Peer:

- the main source of the report, as identified in the story (government, private/corporate, NGO, community representative, private individual, local media, regional media, international media, none of these and source unknown)
- whether the story had a single or multiple sources
- whether the story was accredited (reporter named)
- whether the story was a lead story or not (*Informing citizens: opportunities for media and communications in the Pacific* 2005).

**Documents**

Some documents and reports on training in the Pacific were provided by AusAID for use in the preparation of this thesis. Others had to be accessed through Australia’s Freedom of Information processes. When using documents as part of research it is also important to consider their cultural context, and, as part of this, how they were obtained. English academic and anthropologist Ian Hodder argues that it is important to look not just at the individual (in his case the Alpine Ice Man), but at the situation in which he is found. It is important to know if
documents are from ‘firsthand experience or from secondary sources, whether … solicited or unsolicited, edited or unedited, anonymous or signed, and so on’ (Hodder 2012, p. 172), as a text could ‘say’ many things in different contexts (p. 174). To that end it was significant that some documents were not given to the researcher with an air of openness and transparency. ABC International was approached in 2010 to ask if they would support this project, and if the researcher could operate as a hands-on trainer and researcher. Although this was initially welcomed, ABC International later declined any involvement or cooperation when they read the words ‘evaluate’ and ‘watchdog’ in the researcher’s initial plans, stating that the project was under negotiation (Fruguiletti 2010). Requests for information were also rejected. The documents later became the subject of a Freedom of Information request for material about SOLMAS, including reports on the program’s overall effectiveness, the number of consultants used, the number of people trained, and evaluation of its effectiveness.

One particularly worrying part of the ABC’s attitude to the delivery of documents was its determination to use Section 33 of the FOI Act to refuse access to 11 documents:

Under s. 33 of the FOI Act, documents are exempt if disclosure would, or could reasonably be expected to, cause damage to the Commonwealth’s international relations. The exemption is not limited to Australia’s diplomatic activities and includes relations between government agencies.

Further, the ABC was not ‘contracted by the Australian Government to run journalism education courses’; and ‘while this assistance may include training components, there are no specific policy documents relating to the evaluation of any such training’ (Maude 2011b).

The Freedom of Information Commissioner was asked by the ABC to consider that Solomon Islands Government was a key stakeholder in SOLMAS and that public disclosure of the documents could adversely affect its relations with

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8 After the researcher visited Solomon Islands in 2011 three documents were provided by ABC International Development outside of the FOI process, and another three were provided via the process: SOLMAS Inception Report, SOLMAS Phase 2 Operational Plan, and SOLMAS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Phase 2.
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation and the Ministry of Communication and Aviation. Acting Commissioner Pirani did not agree:

I have read the twelve documents subject to this IC review. I do not consider that disclosure of these documents would, or could reasonably be expected to, damage the relationship between Australia and Solomon Islands. The documents report on the activities and effectiveness of SOLMAS in strengthening the media sector in Solomon Islands and cover the period from October 2008 until December 2010. The documents contain candid assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and media organisations in Solomon Islands. Given the nature of the material, the aims of SOLMAS, and the collaborative nature of RAMSI, I do not consider that release of these documents would, or could, reasonably be expected to damage Australia’s relationship with Solomon Islands Government.

The Acting Commissioner agreed that some of the documents contained comments critical of identified individuals, and recommended that these portions be edited before release9.

The slow delivery of the majority of the documents about the project, and the resulting delay in the finalisation of this thesis, is documented in Appendix 4 of this thesis. Importantly the delay illustrated a view by ABC International that it operated with the same standing as the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and that its internal processes did not require external scrutiny other than those that it commissioned or endorsed.

**Reflexivity—The Researcher’s insider Perspective**

Reflexivity is critically important to this thesis in that, as a journalist of almost 30 years’ experience and a journalism trainer and academic with more than 15 years’ experience across several countries, the researcher could bring her own insights and critical self-awareness to journalism training in Australia and in other countries. As ‘personal accounts of held experiences are a recognizable

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9 This ruling by the FOI Commissioner has significance for other researchers. It was cited by Peter Timmins, a lawyer, former diplomat, long time FOI specialist and advocate for more open transparent and accountable government (2013).
anthropological subgenre’ (Pratt 1986, p. 31), as a journalism researcher she also brought peculiarly journalistic skills, including adopting ‘an inside perspective on arcane activity’ (Duffield 2009, p. 4).

She already had some professional understanding of Solomon Islands, having covered the Pacific for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s international broadcaster Radio Australia since 2006; and she had spent three weeks interviewing people in Solomon Islands in March 2012.

To explain her own habitus, she has taught and worked in Australia, Ireland, South Africa, Solomon Islands and the United Arab Emirates. Her background in two fields—journalism and education—has given her the familiarity to study phenomena ‘intelligently’:

No theorizing, however ingenious, and no observance of scientific protocol, however meticulous, are substitutes for developing familiarity with what is actually going on in the sphere of life under study. (Blumer 1998, p. 39)

However, problems emerge when one uses reflexivity. It can be difficult to avoid bringing one’s own assumptions and beliefs into the research, and it is generally accepted that one way of dealing with potential issues is to acknowledge the impact that these may have had. Indeed, Hertz warns that a reflexive ethnographer actively constructs interpretations of their experiences in the field. (1997, p. viii)

As an academic, a journalist, a mother, a woman in her late 40s, who is white, tertiary educated and in secure employment, the researcher recognises that she sits in a privileged space. She has experience working and teaching across most journalism platforms (radio, television, print and online), and while she has never worked for Australia’s best known mastheads, NewsCorp and Fairfax, she has worked for a tabloid newspaper in the Republic of Ireland and provincial newspapers in Australia. She worked for three years as a senior media advisor to the Queensland Education Minister in the Beattie Labor Government, but was never a member of a political party. It is, perhaps, her experience as a media advisor working with politicians that has sharpened her interest in examining a journalist’s (and journalism educators’) understanding of their place as the Fourth
Almost ashamedly, she falls into the group that is what the ‘Right’ call elite cultural producers,

university-educated in humanities, social sciences or the arts, and a proportion of them … children of an earlier generation of cultural producers—baby boomers who had risen with the Whitlam wave … inherently global and boundary-crossing in their outlook. (Rundle 2005, p. 40)

Her interest in international media assistance was sparked by work as a journalism educator during South African’s transition to democracy, an experience organised by the ABC and funded by AusAID. She questioned the effectiveness of the training she was providing, both in South Africa, in her master’s thesis (Wake 2002), and again after three years as a journalism academic at Dubai Women’s College in the United Arab Emirates. She came to wonder if all Australian journalism educators who worked internationally questioned the effectiveness of the skills that they were teaching, and found that her experience was shared by a number of other journalism trainers, particularly those working in less developed nations.

The discovery that there were two different views about journalism gave her an opportunity for genuine reflection. It shifted her focus from an investigation of the effectiveness of journalism education in cultures outside her own, to examining the key characteristics of journalism training when it occurs in a country outside Australia.

**Ethics**

Ethics approval was sought and gained for this project from Deakin University (HEAG 11-07). For the semi-structured interviews, all interviewees were given an information sheet about the project and a consent form that required a signature. The journalism educators approached to do longer semi-structured interviews were asked to go ‘on the record’. Considering the public nature of journalism, putting educators ‘on the record’ was not considered to be extraordinary; nevertheless, a small number of participants asked not to be identified. To respect their wishes all identifiable information about them was removed from their transcripts. For the surveys, some demographic information was gathered because
previous surveys of journalists had uncovered interesting differences in views, based on the gender, education level and income of respondents. Those who completed the online survey were asked to provide their name at the end if they wished to be interviewed further.

One ethical issue arose with the death of two interviewees in Solomon Islands before this thesis was finalised. This caused some anxiety because it was impossible to check back about various issues. There were concerns about comments made about one of these respondents by others. Although someone who has died cannot sue for defamation, it was still a difficult decision to include unflattering comments in the interests of transparency. There were enough people making similar comments for them to be deemed to be accurate.

Solomon Islands has a population of 560,000 scattered across 1000 islands and 63 language groups, but just over 100 media workers in the country, almost all in the capital, Honiara. It was therefore difficult to maintain the anonymity of those who requested it, while discussing what they said. To address this problem the researcher used careful word selection to obscure the gender and workplaces of some of the anonymous recipients and to decrease the chance that they could be identified.

**Changes to Research Environment**
A number of changes in the context of this research affected the final thesis. AusAID was taken into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with the change of government in 2013. Any of the documents used from AusAID are still called that, although they now sit on the DFAT website.

When this project began ABC International Development did not give support to the research and actively fought the release of documents from Solomon Islands. After restructuring of ABC International, documentation about the Solomon project was released as soon as it was asked for in 2014.
Chapter Four: Democracy

At the heart of the Australian journalist’s *habitus* is the almost unquestioned role of journalism as vital to ‘democracy’, although there is little, if any, discussion about what democracy is or how it is central to the functioning of society.

This chapter seeks to describe Australian understandings of democracy, drawing on international experts in the area, and to describe why the promotion of democracy has long been a stated aim of foreign-government funded media assistance programs. It discusses apparent disillusionment with Australian democracy by many sections of society, although it is a system of government that we seek to export. It outlines John Kean’s ideas of the benefit of a monitory democracy in which institutions beyond the media play an important role in keeping watch on those in power.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the work of Thomas Carothers (1999, 2003), the vice-president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who has written extensively about the ‘democracy promoters’ from a US viewpoint. Carothers, like Kingsbury, notes that democracy is like motherhood in that ‘almost no-one argues against the positive value of democracy, and those few who do invariably either do not enjoy popular support or, if they have political power, base it upon a capacity for patronage or imposition’ (Kingsbury 2007, p. 96). The chapter then looks at media assistance being provided to Solomon Islands and describes how the media education program funded by the Australian Government follows the democracy promotion programs favoured by those in the United States.

‘Journalism is a large subject, but democracy is even larger’ (Adam, GS & Clark 2006 p xv); others have noted that ‘defining democracy is a difficult and perhaps ultimately futile exercise’ (Isakhan in Isakhan & Stockwell 2012, p. 5 ). But the reason for looking at ‘democracy’ seems simple to a journalism educator with no
formal schooling in the art of political science: the word ‘democracy’ means ‘our kind of government’ and in Western liberal democracies is seen as a good thing to export when offering aid to other countries.

‘Democracy’ or ‘furthering democracy’ are terms that explicitly or implicitly state that the offer of international aid, particularly to ‘post-conflict states’, is part of an exercise in ‘furthering’ democracy’. The United States has been clear about its aim to assist in the establishment of democracies and to denounce regimes that do not allow free, fair and transparent elections for their citizens:

Supporting democracy not only promotes such fundamental American values as religious freedom and worker rights, but also helps create a more secure, stable, and prosperous global arena in which the United States can advance its national interests. In addition, democracy is the one national interest that helps to secure all the others. Democratically governed nations are more likely to secure the peace, deter aggression, expand open markets, promote economic development, protect American citizens, combat international terrorism and crime, uphold human and worker rights, avoid humanitarian crises and refugee flows, improve the global environment, and protect human health. (Democracy 2010)

Australia has historically been among those Western countries eager to ‘promote democracy’ in other nations, particularly though soft-power diplomatic efforts such as the broadcasting of news into the Asia–Pacific by ABC’s Radio Australia. However, current Prime Minister Tony Abbott does not like to use the word. In fact, in relation to the 2014 Iraq ‘crisis’, Mr Abbott has tried to distance himself from establishing ‘democracy’ (Wroe 2014). Abbott’s distancing of himself and his government from furthering ‘democracy’ is likely to be a reaction first to a recurring debate in Australia that suggests that ‘democracy’ is letting the nation, and the people, down; and second to building public disquiet about the

Acknowledgement of this fact might seem shocking to some readers, but a lack of civics education among Australians has been a concern for Australian governments for some time. Labor prime minister Paul Keating’s government set up a Civics Expert Group and the Liberal Howard government established a Civics Education Group; both aimed to increase the knowledge of civics by Australians.

failure of the US-led invasions into Afghanistan and Iraq which have ‘sought to implant obedient models of democracy as part of an aggressive democracy promotion agenda’ (Isakhan in Isakhan & Stockwell 2012, p. 2).

A Lowy Institute poll released in June 2014 found that only 60 per cent of Australians, and 42 per cent of Australians aged between 18 and 29, believed that ‘democracy is preferable to any other kind of government’. When asked to choose between ‘a good democracy and a strong economy’, only 53 per cent chose a ‘good democracy’. When asked why, the majority responded that democracy was ‘not working because there is no real difference between the policies of the major parties’, and that ‘democracy only serves the interests of a few and not the majority’.

Some of the current Australian discussion of democracy and perceived problems with it as seen through the media can be read in Jonathan Green’s The Year My Politics Broke (2013), Lindsay Tanner’s Sideshow: Dumbing Down Democracy (2012) and Moira Rayner’s Rooting for Democracy (Rayner & Lee 1997); British academic Colin Hay’s book Why We Hate Politics (2013) gives a more global view, pointing out that participation in political processes is at low levels in many places:

Nowhere, it seems, does politics animate electorates consistently and en masse to enthusiastic participation in the democratic process. It should come as no surprise, then, that membership of political parties and most other indices of participation in formal politics are down—in established democracies to unprecedented levels (Hay 2013, p. 1).

All these books, and Nick Davies’s Flat Earth News (2008), put much of the blame for the disillusionment with politics on the media’s over-reliance on public relations materials.¹² Green (2013) suggests, for example, that the death roll of politicians and media cannot be stopped, and will take with it any respect for institutions, or basic respect for the dignity of national office. The relationship

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¹² Schudson notes that this was also a concern in the USA in the 1920s where figures suggested that half the stories, if not more, were inspired by press agents. John Dewey noted that press agents were ‘the most significant symbol of our present social life’ (Schudson 2012, p. 34).
between politics and the media will be discussed later; suffice it to say here that although Australia has compulsory voting, the informal vote in the national election in 2013 was at an all-time high (Brent 2013).

It is important to recognise that politics, and politicians, have never really been popular, and not because of ‘contemporary political personnel, their conduct and motivations’ (Hay 2013, p. 7). Hays points to Machiavelli’s descriptions of The Prince and Shakespeare’s references to ‘this vile politician Bolingbroke’ (Henry IV, I: 3) to indicate an historic dislike for politicians, claiming that current disillusionment with politics has come because ‘neo-liberalism has fostered a suspicious, sceptical and anti-political culture, and globalization has raised new questions about the capacity of politics to shape societal trajectories’ (2013, p. 5).

Australian political scientist John Kean agrees there has been a loss of respect for politicians in Australia and other Western liberal democracies, but for him the answer is in the way democracies work: he argues the disillusionment comes from the fact that key decisions are made outside Parliament and the political system (in Funnell 2013).

**What is democracy?**

One of the biggest problems in discussing what a ‘democracy’ is, is that its definition is hotly disputed. To some a democracy means a country only needs to have regular elections, while others argue that a more complex set of conditions is required. This thesis does not seek to capture the entire body of literature about democracy, but to note some of the core ideas. Bernhagen (2009) probably has the simplest view of democracy in that it is a ‘political system in which the government is held accountable to citizens by means of free and fair elections’, but that it also needs to encompass basic liberties including freedom of association, expression and the press.

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13 Hays notes the striking parallels between late 16th century Italy (when The Prince was written) and today: ‘The motivational assumptions we project on to political actors and public officials largely determine whether we see politics as a good, a necessary evil or an innately malevolent force’ (2013, p. 9).
Australia’s democracy is far removed from that of Plato and Aristotle’s ‘noble art of preserving the state’, but as Moira Rayner notes, many Australians still draw their democratic inspiration from this time:

Those Aussies who hail the Athenian assemblies rarely, if ever, also mention that while the ‘citizens’ were debating the business of state, that society was actually being kept going by non-citizens (women, slaves and alien residents). (Rayner & Lee 1997, p. 45)

Kingsbury suggests the basic elements of democracy may generally be said to ‘include the capacity for political participation, representation and accountability. The extent to which these are available—and all are compromised in all systems to some degree—is a prime marker of the level of political development’. The problem is the word ‘democracy’. Kingsbury argues that individuals who are given a free choice will choose a political system where they are equal participants: ‘The difficulty arises, however, in that the use and often abuse of the term ‘democracy’ has meant that, for many purposes, it has been rendered almost meaningless’ (p. 96).

Australians are likely to use a Macquarie dictionary definition of democracy such as ‘government by the people’, or perhaps they might even recite the Gettysburg address: ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’—heard so often in the American movies which fill our television and cinema screens. It is not that simple. As Hirst (1990) points out, direct democracy can only occur with a few (thousand) citizens, when the tasks of government are fairly simple and do not require training and monitoring, and when the political body in question recognises no higher authority. This type of direct democracy, Hirst argues, died out in the 4th century BC.

**Liberal Representative Democracy**

The British brought the Westminster traditions of government and a constitutional monarchy to Australia after they settled the country in 1788 (Walter & MacLeod 2002), although the basic tenets of democracy have changed considerably over the years. Australia now boasts a ‘liberal representative democracy’ that operates in a highly developed market economy where the language of the private markets sector is pervasive. In Australia ‘democracy’ refers to the manner in which
government takes place and the way in which it should be accountable to and serve the people; the ‘liberal’ part refers to the way limits are put on the government. They can at times be seen as contradictory, but Parkin (2010) argues the tensions between the two create the dynamics of politics, as liberal democracies respond to both classical liberal and democratic arguments.

Australia’s representative democracy gives ‘the people’ the opportunity to vote for representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament (and state and territory parliaments) to carry out the business of governing by creating and changing laws. In this system the elected body (Parliament) is supposed to hold the executive government (the bureaucracy) to account. The executive, the ministers and their departments, are responsible for running the machinery of state. The judiciary is the third power, which has responsibility to make judgements about Australian law. To ensure these all work appropriately and have proper scrutiny, the Australian media claims that it has a special role.

Democracy, of course, does not need to be liberal, but as outlined earlier, the key aspect of being a liberal democracy is respect for individual rights.14 As Australian historian John Hirst (2003) reminds us, Australians not only have the right to vote for their representatives in Parliament: they also have a number of rights including the freedom to criticise the government, freedom from arbitrary arrest, freedom of worship, the right to a fair trial, the right of assembly, and freedom of movement.

Australia’s representative liberal democracy occurs alongside a very strong market economy where business interests are able to influence government policy (Parkin 2010, p. 18). Australian academic, political philosopher, and now Race Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane suggests that Australians are complacent about democracy because they have had more than 20 years of economic prosperity. He argues that people now identify more as consumers than as citizens and use the language of the economic market to talk about politics (Funnell 2013).

14 At this point it should be noted what Keane calls an awkward truth for Western scholars, that ‘Christian theological justifications of liberty of the press do not square with the views on the same subject by Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, as well as non-religious others’ Keane (2013, p. 218).
British sociologist and political theorist Paul Hirst argues that most people accept the most basic idea of representative government as giving genuine effect to the will of the people, even though it involves ‘grave contradictions and grossly implausible assumptions’ when compared with modern politics (Hirst, PQ 1990, p. 24).

As journalists (and journalism educators) are not trained political scientists, it is important to clarify some of the contradictions in most people’s understandings of representative government. Hirst finds three contradictions which need to be considered. Firstly, it is parliaments, not people, who make laws. The electors may reject those who represent them in parliament, but once people are in parliament it is they who make the decisions. Hirst notes research that finds that voters usually know little about party policies and leave the details to the politicians. Secondly, there is another contradiction around the idea that laws are not supposed to infringe on people’s individuals rights. He notes that while the parliament may make the laws, it is actually other agencies (the bureaucracy) that often propose those laws and then enforce them, and that they are carried through parliament on the weight of party rule (Hirst, PQ 1990, p. 26). This also means governments often make rules and take decisions which are targeted at specific groups, either to help or hinder them. The third contradiction is with the idea that ‘representation’ is in some way a circular process, when there is no pure form of representation, only ‘packages of political mechanisms’. The bottom line is, that although we now live in the age of focus groups, ‘The electors will never be able to choose decisions or policies, only personnel and parties’ (Hirst, PQ 1990, p. 26).

Hirst notes that the standard response to criticisms of representational democracies is that the threat of an election and a change of government will keep them honest; but this, he argues, again suggests that democracy is the end game (Hirst, PQ 1990, p. 27) as political processes simply mean a change in the top management of a large organisation:

Policies may change, but the basic structure of authority remains. The real issue is to change the regime of business-as-usual in big government,
without imagining that we can simply turn it into small government.
(Hirst, PQ 1990, p. 28)

Hirst believes there are four major problems with British democracy which could also be said of the Australian Government: a tendency for politicians to drive through a limited number of their own objectives; party leaders and ministers taking direct control of only a small number of decisions, leaving the rest to unelected officials; a tendency towards secrecy so the true role of officials and dissent is not known; and the large size of government making it impossible to coordinate policy change. Australian political scientist John Keane adds another worry:

Whole areas of power (the banking and credit system in the Atlantic region is a recent example) that are not subject to any public monitoring at all. The growth of cross-border chains of power that are publicly unaccountable. Many key decisions are being decided at a great distance from parliaments. (Keane in Funnell 2013)

To make governments more accountable and responsive to public debate they need to make better policy outcomes, argues Hirst (1990, p. 31); as does Jonathan Green in The Year My Politics Broke, in which he details how a few marginal electorates in Western Sydney were ‘bought off’ in the 2013 election at the expense of the rest of Australia (pp. 163-6). Australian academic Greg Melleuish describes Australia currently as ‘democratic Caesarism’ (Funnell 2013), based upon popularism, where strong and dominant leaders do things to get themselves elected:

Large sections of the population … put their faith in a leader as someone who will do things for them, protect them and make sure that their standard of comfort and lifestyle is protected. I would contrast this with what I could call Democratic Republicanism, which is based on civic virtue in which people participate, take on roles for themselves, are much more active. So Democratic Caesarism is based on a passive population that just looks to the leader, I think, to do things for them. (Funnell 2013)

**Those ‘Liberal’ Rights**

Journalists in Australia are generally described as champions of the liberal rights that are seen as the bedrock of a market economy and a functioning democracy, particularly freedom of speech and freedom of the press. These freedoms form the
foundations of individual freedom and are part of the suite of traditional human rights in Australia, which also include self-determination, property rights, and freedom of association, worship and movement. However, individual liberty is not without limitations and pressures from state institutions, legislation and regulations. The interactions between liberal democratic governments and individuals in society have not always been smooth.

Australian journalists are supportive of these freedoms, particularly freedom of speech and the press, because they are after all generally educated in the canon of liberal thought where ‘narratives of heroic publicists and propagandists struggling against censorship became themselves part of the public discourse surrounding contests over forms of government’ (Peters in Barnhurst & Nerone 2009, p. 19) and they see their main job as providing information which can be used for a free and proper debate on important issues and for keeping a check on those who have power, political or otherwise. This is the ideal of a free press, where the newspapers can print the stories that should matter to the people:

The media is … a key accountability mechanism for keeping the institutions of power in check. These institutions include the political power of executive government, the social and cultural power of institutions as diverse as churches and sporting groups, and the economic power of the business sector. (Lavarch 2012, p. 25)

In taking on the role of providers of information and a watch on power, journalists, editors and owners of news organisations in turn garner power to themselves. Lavarch argues that the media have a range of motivations for deciding what they will communicate, which can mean economic self-interest and political ideology. However, media plurality and ownership policies are not the focus of this thesis; it is accepted by the author that the media must be accountable:

A failure of the media to be accountable is a serious deficiency in democracy, as is the failure to hold other sources of power to account. (Lavarch 2012, p. 26)

Australian academic Robert Manne (2011) argues that to understand power in Australia it is important to look at the role of Rupert Murdoch’s *The Australian*
newspaper. In a stinging critique of The Australia’s political bias (which resulted in him being threatened with defamation by the paper’s editor Chris Mitchell), Manne argues that the paper uses ‘power without responsibility’ and has an ‘unhealthy influence’ on the nation.

**On Liberty**

Since the ancient Greeks, there have been many Western proponents of individual freedom of speech and of the press. John Milton was among the early advocates, writing a speech to Parliament (1644, 2006) in which, he famously argued, ‘He who destroys a good book, kills reason itself’; and John Locke opined in a Letter Concerning Toleration (1689, 2013) that the liberty of the press evolved from the rights of the individual. The thinking of the time focused on the belief that people are born equal and are inherently free; civilisation, therefore, can function only when all people are given, on an equitable basis, the chance to use their innate reason to make decisions about power and how it is exercised. Freedom of the press was recognised by Enlightenment thinkers as vital to the political, social and economic reform required of a liberal democracy. The English works most often cited in the discussion of freedom of speech and the press include James Mill in *Liberty of the Press* (1825), Jeremy Bentham *Liberty of the Press and Public Discussion* (1843) and John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* (1859).

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill (son of James) argues that information needs to flow freely to the public via the free press, so they will be informed and protected against bad or corrupt governments. Democracy needs ‘protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them’ (Mill, JS (1859)1999, p. 7). Further, ‘If any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility’ (Mill, JS (1859)1999, p. 35). By the end of the eighteenth century liberalism in the United Kingdom and many parts of Europe had seen an end to many of the individual privileges (or liberties) of birth and religion, and a rise in the power of the press. Journalists in the United Kingdom began reporting on the proceedings of the House of Commons in a manner consistent with what we understand now as the
Fourth Estate. The United States followed, with its Bill of Rights enshrining freedom of speech, drafted in 1791 (Hampton 2010). Throughout the so-called West and many parts of Europe, Enlightenment thinking meant that laissez-faire attitudes prevailed in business while press theory was bolstered by a so-called free marketplace of ideas.

By 1948 the freedoms expected in Western liberal democracies were seen as universal rights. Freedom of expression was recognised as a universal human right and unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948)

The Article does not indicate whether this right applies to all information and ideas, or if there may be some exceptions; Article 3 of the same declaration states that ‘Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person’ (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948). These two Articles, read together, provide journalists with a dilemma: does this mean that freedom of expression should be given to those who might threaten the security of others? Or should we curb our freedom of expression for some people to protect others? It is not a simple question. In 1992 US professor Noam Chomsky told the interviewer in Manufacturing Consent that:

Goebbels was in favour of free speech for views he liked. So was Stalin. If you’re in favour of free speech, then you’re in favour of freedom of speech precisely for views you despise. (Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media 1992)

Monitory Democracy
Australian political scientist John Keane argues that Australia, and some other parts of the world such as India, Taiwan, Indonesia and South Africa, are now in what he calls the third stage of democratic development (as opposed to Fukuyama’s post-1945 period), which he considers the most complex form of democracy yet found: monitory democracy. The idea of monitory democracy has
been expanded in a number of his works, including *The Life and Death of Democracy* (2009a), *Monitory Democracy and Media-saturated Societies* (2009b) and *Democracy and Media Decadence* (2013). He argues that a new form of words is needed to describe the type of government we have in Australia because of the way millions of people now describe democracy:

In the name of ‘people’, ‘the public’, ‘public accountability’, ‘the people’ or ‘citizens’—the terms are normally used interchangeably in the age of monitory democracy power-scrutinising institutions spring up all over the place. Elections, political parties and legislatures neither disappear, nor necessarily decline in importance, but they most definitely lose their pivotal position in politics. (2009b, p. 2)

Monitory democracy is as it sounds—where there is a great deal of monitoring of democracy going on, ideally by the media but increasingly by other institutions. To Keane, democracy has come to mean much more than free and fair election, and involves independent monitors of power putting politicians, parties and elected governments on notice that their authority will be questioned and in some cases they will be forced to change their plans (2009b, pp. 1-2). Keane notes a growing number of monitory institutions (far beyond newspapers) committed to providing publics with better information about the performance of government and non-government organisations (NGOs) across international borders. These include large and small bodies working locally, internationally and both such as Human Rights Watch, Greenpeace, the Democratic Audit Network and Amnesty International. Public scrutiny also comes from truth commissions, citizen assemblies, and other mechanisms of public scrutiny which put pressure on parties, governments and parliaments to act not just domestically but internationally. In this thinking, individual citizens are also represented by more than just one vote, as they are members of groups which can have a monitoring role, such as a school community, church community, sporting club or other formal or informal civil grouping.

With so many involved in the role of monitoring governments there tends to be a heightened sense that more people are doing the wrong thing:

It means that rough and tumble politics becomes normal in democracies. Scandals become normal. Things are discovered, whistles are blown. It is
an age of many watchdogs and barking dog institutions. (Keane in Funnell 2013)

While hailing the virtues of a monitory democracy, Keane acknowledges that it is not a panacea for the world’s ills:

The combination of monitory democracy and communicative abundance … produces permanent flux, an unending restlessness driven by complex combinations of different interacting players and institutions, permanently pushing and pulling, heaving and straining, sometimes working together, at other times in opposition to one another (Keane 2009b, p. 18).

**Aiding democracy abroad**

The people who promote the liberal views held by Australians and others in liberal democratic nation states, to people in other countries are sometimes called ‘democracy promoters’. Thomas Carothers, the vice-president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, suggests that democracy promoters are unlike ‘developmentalists’, whom he describes as ‘calculator-wielding economists, muddy-shoed former Peace Corps localists, or grizzled technical experts on fertilizers, irrigation systems, and rural road-building’ (2010, p. 14), but are ‘political types—party activists, political consultants, legislative staffers, civic organizers, or lawyers’. He complains that many have ‘little on-the-ground foreign experience, foreign-language expertise, or first-hand knowledge of other political cultures’, but his chief criticism is their unquestioning belief in democracy, and that they feel:

qualified to promote democracy abroad because of their ardent belief in the value of democracy and their direct experience with it at home. (2010, p. 14)

There is apprehension that their aid might be seen as illegitimate intervention in the internal affairs of another country. Often when a country is not democratic the focus of the assistance changes:

Most democracy assistance is carried out openly, with the permission of the host government, and in pursuit of broad goals, such as a more efficient judiciary or a more competent parliament, that are not usually very controversial within the societies in question. When such aid is clearly oppositional and carried out against the wishes or without the
favour of the government in question—which is usually the case in countries with non-democratic governments—it focuses on fostering basic political and civil rights such as freedom of association, or expression and has some or even much of the same legitimacy as traditional human rights advocacy. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 62)

Carothers acknowledges the validity of scepticism about the use of democracy assistance, but suggest that a nuanced critical stance is needed rather than dismissing such programs as ‘delusion or a fraud’:

Democracy aid is only a small part of the foreign aid budget but it is substantial body of activity carried out by serious people … Democracy cannot be exported wholesale but external factors—including democracy promotion efforts—do affect the political evolution of other countries. (1999, 2003, p. 64)

He argues that many American ‘democracy promoters’ are unconscious of the weaknesses of their own parliamentary system and believed the US system was not only fundamentally sound, but also desired by transitional states (1999, 2003, p. 63). Instead, democracy promoters need to be more conscious of the problems of American democracy, including the low level of regard that Congress is held in, and credibility problems with the campaign finance system:

These issues should be built into the training programs just as much as the strengths of the system so that others can anticipate the problems that arise in democracy systems and learn from American efforts, successful or not, to address them. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 64)

**Change in Rhetoric**

There has been a change in the rhetoric around ‘democracy’ in the past 20 years. While there are some powerful examples of the appeal of democracy in states such as Indonesia, India, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey, many states are reluctant to ‘embrace a democracy and human rights agenda’:

Most of them are exponents of the pro-sovereignty, anti-interventionist approach to international politics. They emphasize inclusive cooperation among developing countries and are disinclined to confront autocratic leaders. They are also habitually wary of Western, especially U.S., intentions in the developing world and thus frequently suspicious of Western democracy promotion (Carothers & Youngs 2011).
Carothers and Youngs suggest that Western powers need to moderate their expectations of democracies (Carothers & Youngs 2011). They also note that 20 years after what they call the ‘heyday of democracy’s global spread in the 1980s and 1990s, more attention was now being paid to social, economic and historical conditions in countries receiving democracy aid, and that five things need to be considered to ensure democratic success:

1) the level of economic development; 2) the degree of concentration of sources of national wealth; 3) the coherence and capability of the state; 4) the presence of identity-based divisions, such as along ethnic, religious, tribal, or clan lines; and 5) the amount of historical experience with political pluralism. (Carothers 2011)

Despite the past 25 years of democratic transitions, a ‘transition tool kit’ should be available for the Arab world, and a common set of lessons that ‘travelling transition veterans’ use:

Opposition unity is crucial. Constitutional reform should be inclusive. Elections should not be hurried, but also not put off indefinitely. Banning large swaths of the former ruling elite from political life is a mistake. Putting a politically grasping military back in the box should be approached step by step, rather than in one big swoop. Given likely public disenchantment with the fruits of democracy, finding rapid ways to deliver tangible economic benefits is critical. (Carothers 2011)

**Democracy Promotion**

Democracy promoters believe that fostering the media will result in better socio-economic outcomes for a country. The Australian-led intervention into Solomon Islands that features in this thesis is almost a textbook example of how democracy promoters build or rebuild a society from the bottom up. There is a specific emphasis on civil society, where civic groups work towards building governments that are responsive to people’s needs and free from corruption. In *Aiding Democracy, the Learning Curve*, Carothers outlines how the United States conducts ‘democracy’ aid, with particular attention to media assistance as part of building civil society; much of what he says about US aid projects in the 1990s has been mirrored in Australian programs. Carothers notes that the term ‘civil society’ was rarely heard before the 1990s but has become a ‘fashionable concept’ in any discussion about democratisation (1999, 2003, p. 207). He feels that
serious questions could be raised about what he calls the ‘benevolent Tocquevillean vision underlying US assistance to civil society’ (1999, 2003, p. 222) While he believes that the structure of civil society in the United States is fundamentally different from that of other countries, he argues that in societies where most people are living in poverty ‘powerful socio-political forces work to keep them marginalized’ (1999, 2003, p. 223), and that there is no assurance that training people as advocates or lobbyists will ensure that governments are held to account:

US aid providers hold out truth around the world that advocacy by citizens will help correct government’s deficiencies in accountability and representation. Yet in the United States, the distortions wreaked by lobbyists … provoke calls for deep-reaching reforms. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 223)

Carothers suggests there is a romantic view held by democracy promoters of the benefits of civil groups, and that Americans generally oversimplify ‘the makeup and roles of civil society in other countries around the world’ (1999, 2003, p. 249) with little effort made to understand or identify how civil society operates in complex traditional societies:

They basically ignore the many layers of clans, tribes, castes, village associations, peasant groups, local religious organizations, ethnic associations, and the like as essentially unfathomable complexities that do not directly bear on democratic advocacy work. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 249)

Significantly, he argues that democracy promoters fail to give enough consideration to the relationship between local forms of civil society and the socioeconomic conditions of the target countries.

Civic education is another common element of US aid projects, including in Solomon Islands. In these programs the citizens are introduced to basic values, knowledge and skills relating to democracy with ‘the objective of those citizens understanding how democracy works, embracing democracy as a political ideal, and becoming participatory citizens’ (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 231). Civic education programs generally focus on information on human rights, constitutions, procedures and civic values, but in many transitional countries this
is negated by the actual practice of politics. Carothers draws on research from scholars in Zambia which finds that except for wealthy, well educated people, ‘civic education’s effects are marginal, partly contradictory, and socially selective’ (Bratton & Alderfer 1999).

**Media Assistance**

Media assistance has become an important part of democracy assistance, and is one of the key features of any suite of democracy aid projects. Americans like media assistance programs because they come from an unusually media-oriented society, and US democracy promoters tend to be certain that media development is critical to democratization and that the United States has much to offer in this domain. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 236)

Australian promoters of democracy also believe in the critical role of the media. Not long after the establishment of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, media educators began to arrive in the country and Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme (SOLMAS) was established with its declared aim to ‘contribute to a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous Solomon Islands through improving the reach and quality of Solomon Islands’ media’ (O’Keeffe 2012a, p. 29).

Carothers makes particular note of the kind of people brought in to work on these kinds of schemes:

American print journalists brought in as program consultants often believe they are a special breed—the most aggressive, skilled and influential anywhere—and that they are therefore natural models for journalists in other countries. As for electronic media, Americans tend to see their country as the leading global force in television and film, and to assume that they have a natural authority for working with television and radio in other countries. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 236)

The ‘attitudes’ brought in by trainers means that American models are used, even across extremely different cultural and political contexts. The ‘American’ models that he identifies are the importance of non-partisanship and objectivity, the value
of investigative reporting, and a preference for privately-owned to publicly-owned media:

These are cardinal features of the American media world … and ones that Americans instinctively feel media in all countries should pursue. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 237)

The same could be said of Australian trainers, although here the history of strong public service broadcasting by the ABC, and their strength in winning international training consultancies on behalf of the Australian Government, has fostered a belief in the effectiveness of publicly-owned media.

In many countries a media assistance package works with existing press institutions, emphasising the ‘professionalism of journalists and the improving the quality of news coverage’:

The core of most aid in these countries is training of journalists. That usually revolves around basic tradecraft—fact collection, story writing or show production, editing and the like—stressing the importance of accuracy, objectivity, ethics and investigative reporting. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 238)

The SOLMAS project emphasises training in these skills, with a particular emphasis on spelling and grammar.

Media strengthening programs put effort into supporting or establishing journalists’ associations:

Aid providers hope journalists’ associations will push to advance the professional interests of journalist and to foster the exchanges of ideas and information among journalists. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 238)

This is true in Solomon Islands where the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) is supported for those very reasons.

Another part of supporting media development revolves around organisation development in helping new media begin their work and become successful businesses, or to survive as independent news outlets:
A frequent starting place is material aid—either donations of equipment, from a few fax machines to an entire printing plant, or grants or loans of money. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 238)

Once companies or people have the equipment, training and technical assistance is usually required on a range of issues such as ‘how to attract advertisers, manage accounts, analyse markets, and development business plans’ (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 238). All of these skills are taught as part of the SOLMAS project.

While successful media interventions do occur in many settings, there are sometimes complaints that the aid has done less than expected. Carothers suggests a number of reasons for failures, which include training courses that are too basic, trainers with little knowledge of the trainees’ society, emphasising models of journalism that don’t fit, and inappropriate lectures about investigative reporting in countries where merely writing a story can have a person killed.

Carothers notes the need for officials to speak out when governments threaten the work of journalists by putting them in jail or closing a publication, particularly noting that media aid is different when it is undertaken in semi-authoritarian or post-conflict societies:

> Media aid in such a context is not merely the task of public and private donors, it is also the work of human rights groups, international journalists’ associations, and other organizations working to promote press freedom. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 238)

Carothers draws on the work of other American scholars (Janus & Rockwell 1998) to suggest that while training courses may make journalists more ‘knowledgeable and skilful’ they cannot ameliorate the factors causing a country’s woes. He does, however, suggest that democracy promoters are learning from their experiences:

> a central element is realizing just how inflated their expectations have been and how limited their capabilities to produce broad-scale change really are. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 251)

He concludes that democracy promoters should not count on the training of journalists as a solution to media reform and suggests that more needs to be done
to find a ‘workable middle ground on evaluations between over-elaborate, mock scientific schemes and cursory, in-house reviews’ (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 342). Democracy promoters need to move away from a ‘dreamy’ view of politics:

Democracy promoters frequently seem surprised by the most banal realities of politics—that power is rarely given away cost-free, that principles trump interests only occasionally, that zero-sum instincts are as common as cooperative attitudes, that political violence erupts easily when power shifts are occurring, and that historical legacies, whether helpful or harmful for democratization, are extraordinarily persistent. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 343)

Democracy promoters, he suggests, should push for better relationships between aid and social and economic development, more attention to the role of women in democratisation, and helping recipient countries better understand and use aid. This third point is important for this research: as Carothers notes, many governments in transitional societies accept aid out of a reluctance to displease donors but rarely know how to use it:

Typically, a small group of privileged people and groups in the recipient country manage to insinuate themselves into the donors’ circle and to absorb some of the aid. For most citizens of transitional countries, however, democracy aid from abroad, like most of the political life in their societies, is a matter of obscure, powerful forces operating well beyond their reach. (Carothers 1999, 2003, p. 346)

It will be demonstrated later in this thesis that the media assistance provided to Solomon Islands and the media education program funded by the Australian Government through ABC International Development follows the classic democracy promotion program favoured by those in the United States, and are therefore based upon the idea that journalism ensures the validity of the nation state.
Chapter Five: Journalism

Before we look at what Australian journalism educators teach, and how they do it, it is necessary to consider what views they have internalised through Australian society, their families and their education. Australian journalists, like those in other liberal democratic nation states, give themselves a privileged position as the so-called Fourth Estate—both as reporters on, and players within, government.

An Australian journalist asked what his or her role is, is likely to describe a special role in society as a watchdog on those with power, a provider of information, and facilitator of the public sphere. It is unquestionably considered work that is part of democracy. This special role is reflected in the journalist’s union code of conduct:

> Journalists describe society to itself. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. *(Journalists’ code of ethics)*

This is a message repeatedly expressed by Australian journalists. Veteran Australian current affairs journalist Peter Lloyd\(^\text{15}\) articulated this deeply held belief in response to the murder of journalists in the Syrian dispute:

> I’ve spent too many years living in, working in and reporting on broken and rorted countries not to learn this: the common denominator is a weak media sector. All of us keep the bastards honest, and beware the politician. Every one of them benefits when we lose a second on air, or a soldier in the trench. This is not (a) career. It is a vocation. (Lloyd in 2014).

For many, the political ethical role of ‘animating citizenship’ is at the heart of journalism as a profession and as a discipline (educator in Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 124).

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\(^{15}\) Lloyd was jailed in 2008 for breaking Singapore’s drug laws, after becoming addicted as result of post traumatic stress disorder (Meade 2010).
**Donsbach’s Journalist’s Identity**

It is perhaps easiest to think about the role of a journalist by looking at the three parts of a journalist’s identity as outlined by Donsbach (2010, p. 39). He describes three traditions of journalism: subjective, public service, and commercial; and links them to a journalist’s identity as a writer, a professional or employee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Public Service</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Pursing individual goals</td>
<td>Supplying valid information</td>
<td>Giving the people what they want</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-actualisation</td>
<td>Adaption of individual to reality and functioning of society</td>
<td>Economic interest of owners</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dominant relationship</th>
<th>Journalist</th>
<th>Media-Society</th>
<th>Media-Markets/Shareholders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prototype</td>
<td>John Milton</td>
<td>Joseph Pulitzer</td>
<td>Rupert Murdoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Value</td>
<td>Subjectivity/Freedom of Expression</td>
<td>Objectivity/Plurality</td>
<td>Economic success/Shareholder value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Opinions before facts</td>
<td>Facts before opinions</td>
<td>Whatever sells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist’s Role</td>
<td>Individual writer</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Employee</td>
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Donsbach argues that a journalist has a unique professional role given that what they really sell is the responsible ‘validation’ of assertions; this role grew out of a historical context in which freedom of speech was not immediately forthcoming, and this shaped the thinking of journalists:

> The finding of truth is seen as a collective cumulative process in which journalists as public communicators play a most crucial role. However these ideas had their origin in a political context in which this freedom of speech and of the press were still absent, and therefore many journalists saw themselves (and rightly so) as freedom fighters. And this is in varying degrees still the case today. (Donsbach 2010, p. 39)

The professional element of journalism is strongest in countries where democracy has been more recently won:

> the later a country turned to a democracy and thus gained its civic rights the stronger the persistence of this professional element in the journalistic tradition. (Donsbach 2010, p. 39)
Understanding the three traditions of journalism is significant when looking at journalism in another country as the traditions of journalism educators can have a significant impact on what and how they teach in another country.

**History of Australian Journalism**

Australian society was built on the back of the nation’s colonial past, where many in the first immigrants were criminals who had forfeited many rights and freedoms. Most of the ‘news’ printed in the first few years of settlement consisted of government orders printed on a press brought to Australia with the First Fleet (Winston 2012). In 1803 the first newspaper, *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, was put together by convict George Howe. The first editions of the *Gazette* were described as ‘moral to the point of priggishness, patriotic to the point of servility, pompous in a stiff, eighteenth century fashion’ (Ferguson, Foster and Green in Winston 2012, p. 93). More oppositional titles became available after 1824; however, there is a legacy in Australia of greater media regulation than in other liberal democracies, so that ‘The subjugation of thought in Australia through stringent censorship and draconian defamation laws has existed throughout the 200 years of white settlement’ (Pollak 1990, p. 7). These constraints have not always hindered Australian journalists, but rather inspired them:

> The press in a remote place of exile now had somewhat more freedom than in Mother England, thanks to a deep desire for journalistic independence underpinned by a larrikin spirit of anti-authoritarianism and nonconformity. (Vine 2010, p. 16)

The ideas of freedom of speech were embodied in the founding principles of many newspapers published in the Australian colonies, and ‘A review of inaugural editorials reveals that many colonial newspapers adopted an explicit fourth estate framework (Schultz, J 2014, p. 182). However, freedom of speech was never enshrined in the Australian Constitution as it was, for example, in the United States’. Australia is a federation, and each state and territory has had the power to make its own laws with regard to media regulation, a position upheld by Australian High Court In 1992. The professional body representing Australian journalists continues to advocate for greater freedom of the press and the
relaxation or removal of laws that impede good journalism, understanding that a free media ‘never emerges as a gift’ from those in authority:

It needs to be fought for. It never attains a state of perfection, but rather sits on that uneasy fault line of power between government’s desire for control and continuing pressure from society. Above all, it depends on the preparedness of the media, itself, to push back that line away from governmental regulation and towards a freer media. (Warren et al. 2005, p. 3)

The MEAA’s work mirrors that of the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists—an organisation set up to fight for freedom of the press and the safety of journalists. It states clearly its belief in freedom of expression within a democratic framework (International Federation of Journalists 2013).

Australian journalists and European-based bodies representing journalists clearly put freedom of speech and democracy at the centre of the field of journalism and do not consider other forms of governance. The industrial body for Australian journalists, MEAA, continues to keep these issues in the public spotlight because freedom of speech is not enshrined in Australian law.

**The Fourth Estate**

Just as the printing press was imported to Australia from the United Kingdom, so was the ideal of the Fourth Estate. At its most basic, those in the Fourth Estate keep check on those in power, political or corporate. There is some confusion over the origin of the term. The principal interpreter of Montesquieu’s ideas, Edmund Burke (Carlyle 1840), was reported to be the first to use the phrase ‘the Fourth Estate’ when he said, ‘there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all’. However, Splichal (2002, p. 44) argues that the term was first used by Thomas Macaulay, who was enthralled by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham while at Cambridge in the early 1800s. He quotes Macaulay:

The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a Fourth Estate of the realm. The publication of the debates, a practice which seemed to the most liberal statements of the old school full of danger to the great safeguards of public liberty, is now regarded by many persons as a safeguard
tantamount, and more than tantamount, to all the rest together. (in Splichal 2002, p. 44)

Whatever the origin of the phrase, Hampton (2010, p. 10) argues that the independence required of journalists working to a Fourth Estate ideal in modern times is undermined significantly by the commercial, corporate and professional pressures on them, suggests that commercial pressure provides an unreliable platform for the critical independence required by journalists, and claims that ‘journalism’s independence from the state has been exaggerated’. He specifically points to an increased dependence by journalists on official information provided to them by politicians and their staff (Hampton 2010, p. 9).

It is important to understand the Australian media’s admiration for the role of watchdog to better understand how journalism can differ in other places. McNair (2011, pp. 18-20) observes that the watchdog function (or critical scrutiny) is one the lesser functions of the media in liberal democracies. Others are informing citizens of what is occurring in their society and in the world, educating them about the meaning and significance of facts and events, providing a platform for competing and dissenting opinions so that an informed public opinion can emerge, and serving as a channel for the advocacy of competing political viewpoints.

Eminent Australian scholar Rod Tiffen (1991, p. 178) notes a number of features of Australian journalism that distinguish ‘quality’ investigative reporting from straight news reporting: its depth of research, journalist’s demonstrated initiative and enterprise to produce a story, the amount of resistance from vested interests, secrecy surrounding a topic, and a topic’s importance and associated moral value to society. Tiffen (1999b, p. 33) suggests exposure of corruption, one of the hallmarks of watchdog journalism, is the cutting edge of democratic accountability, but argues that the Australian media are institutionally under-equipped for the role because of economic factors of news production. He notes deadlines and production factors, economics and marketing, and employment and managerial decisions as all reducing professionalism to technical competence and productivity. There will always be concern about the effectiveness of the media in
evaluating democratic processes, and it is ‘silly to lay the evils of the political system at the feet of the media’:

They [journalists] are the pivot between the rulers and the ruled. They will continue to disappoint reformers, to be the target for many legitimate grievances, to be dominated by pedestrian mediocrity. Despite their tame connivance in the charades and feints or dominant sources, and despite the prejudices of proprietors, reporters and audiences, the news media occasionally and erratically expand the quality of social choice and enhance the accountability of the governors to the governed. (Tiffen 1991, p. 198)

Australia’s Fourth Estate, he argues, should be seen at work in the press gallery in Canberra. Although political reporting was once the most sought-after job in journalism, tough economic times have forced changes to news operations and fewer and fewer print journalists are located in Canberra while more and more produce entertainment and entertaining news rather than incisive reports on those in power.

Hartley (2010, p. 16) argues that there were in essence two kinds of press imported to Australia from the United Kingdom: those that served the political class and those that served the working class; he argues (pp. 16-7) that the pauper press in the United Kingdom saw itself as part of the struggle against current economic and political arrangements, and that early papers were produced by radicals who used political dissent and popular culture to build mass circulation, but as time went by this radical popular press made way for the commercially popular press:

What really differentiated the two types of journalism … was their readership, divided into ‘two nations’, and still now not fully integrated (Hartley 2010, p. 21)

This differentiation of the press between those in the commercial and those in the public service tradition can be seen in Australian context in a joke that was distributed to young journalists in the 1970s and 1980s. Although many of the newspapers listed have since closed and the joke mirrors the British and US newspaper systems, the argument is clear: different newspapers serve different purposes, even if the stories they run are the same in substance:
The Melbourne *Age* is read by the people who run the country.
The *Canberra Times* is read by the people who think they run the country.
The *Sydney Morning Herald* is read by the people who think they ought to run the country.
The Melbourne *Herald* is read by the wives of the people who run the country.
The *Australian* is read by the people who realise that no one’s running the country.
The *Financial Review* is read by the people who own the country.
The *West Australian* is read by the people who think the eastern states run the country.
The Hobart *Mercury* and the Melbourne *Sun* are read by the people who think the country ought to be run the way it used to be run.
The *Adelaide Advertiser* and the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* are read by the people who think it still is.
The Sydney *Daily Mirror* is read by people who don’t give a stuff who runs the country as long as she has big tits. (‘Advertising’ 1977)

While that may no longer be true, the prestigious media outlets for Australian journalists remain *The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian* and *The Financial Review*, as well as the ABC. These newspapers and ABC’s current affairs programs, particularly the breakfast program with Fran Kelly, have greater weight in the production of news because their reports are picked up and followed by other news outlets, even though mass circulation newspapers such as *The Telegraph* and the *Herald Sun* have far higher numbers of readers and listeners. Champagne (2005, p. 61) argues that prestigious media exert a true power of consecration on other papers by running stories that other news outlets pick up, noting that journalists working in the prestigious news organisations have great power.

**Australian Journalistic Culture**

To understand Australian journalistic culture, it is prudent to look at research conducted by the MEAA and by Australian academics. The MEAA claims its ‘special status’ clearly in its 2014 promotional material for the Walkley awards,
where it trumpets that ‘great Australian journalism does a lot of the heavy lifting for a healthy democracy’. In 2012 the MEAA reported that nearly all the Australian journalists interviewed for the report *Journalism at the Speed of Bytes* (*O’Donnell, McKnight & Este 2012, p. 24*) spoke in terms of journalism’s role ‘as a mechanism for accountability and a means to scrutinise the powerful’. It is not, as they say, just another business16.

Maintaining a professional distance between media owners and editorial content was recognised as a significant issue in Australia, as it was in the United Kingdom and the United States where media moguls like Australia’s own Rupert Murdoch have found that that ownership of august publications such as *The Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* are accompanied by requirements to have an independent board or independent committee responsible for the appointment of editors. Australia’s Fairfax Media has fought attempts by Gina Rinehart, who for a time was the majority shareholder in the company, to interfere with its charter of editorial independence. Fairfax Media’s CEO, Greg Hywood, has described the 1992 charter of editorial independence as ‘part of the culture of the place’ (*O’Donnell, McKnight & Este 2012, p. 25*). The charter stops board members from telling individual journalists what they should or should not write, promises readers that they will get fair-minded representation, and pledges to advertisers that they will be treated fairly. O’Donnell et al. point out that successive Australian governments have treated the purchase of news media differently from other commercial transactions: there have been restrictions on a concentration of media ownership, and on foreign ownership.

Journalism researcher Beate Josephi’s (2011) 10-country study of media performance compares Australia to European countries on freedom indicators and equality, considering three functions of the media considered by Trappel, Nord and Nieminen (2001) that must be met for democracy to be promoted:

16 It should be noted that the MEAA report was written as Australian journalists and news proprietors were reconsidering the traditional provision of news in the wake of a decline in print sales. O’Donnell et al. argue that journalists are ‘trying to renew their authority and the relevance of their work in an information environment that no longer accords them a central place’ (2006, pp. 26-7).
safeguarding the flow of information, providing a forum for public debate, and acting as a public watchdog. Josephi, (2011, p. 9) notes that ‘performance criteria alone cannot capture the nature of a nation’s journalism’ and that ‘elements of Australian journalistic culture’ need to be taken into account, and looks at ideas of freedom, equality, and control to draw conclusions about the Australian news media’s fulfilment of their democratic obligation. Using definitions set by Trappel and Manigolio (2009, pp. 177-9), freedom is seen in in terms of ‘communication rights to opinions and to receive and convey information’. Equality means that no one opinion should dominate and that ‘access to the media should be provided on a fair basis to oppositional or divergent opinions, perspectives, or claims’. Control is paired with the media’s watchdog function, and Josephi questions the degree to which the media are guardians of the flow of information, how well they provide a public forum for discussion of diverse and often conflicting ideas, and to what degree they function as watchdog over abuses of power.

She finds that Australia’s media environment is similar to Europe’s in regard to the diversity of news sources and media usage; however, Australia does not have a good record in regard to the diversity of media owners (Josephi 2011, p. 36). She notes that the commitment by Australian journalists and institutions to supporting democracy is all the more remarkable given Australia’s lack of a constitutional right to free speech, or a legal framework for the news media:

> The study of the Australian media shows that legal frameworks and media ownership structures are the two most significant factors impeding strong democratic functioning. (Josephi 2011, p. 37)

Like other liberal democratic nation states, Australian journalists hold a firm belief in the centrality of the democratic function, above money making. To that end the press considers itself to have an independent standing in the political system in order to pursue a role as democracy’s watchdog, and also as a provider of information to allow citizens to make informed decisions about the political process (Josephi 2011, p. 37). Australian journalists, like journalists in the United States and the United Kingdom, struggle to retain independence over editorial control, although they acknowledge that they work in a political economy.
Journalism Culture Outside Australia

Journalistic culture outside liberal democratic nation states has begun to emerge as a strong field of study by a small but growing field of international scholars, with a strong membership by Australian journalism and cultural studies academics (Deuze 2002, 2008; Hanitzsch 2007, 2008; Hanusch 2009; Josephi 2011, 2012; Zelizer 2005, 2012). Zelizer (2005, p. 200) suggests that it useful to look at journalism through the lens of one culture to observe ‘journalism through the journalists’ own eyes, tracking how being part of the community comes to have meaning for them, and queries the self-perceptions that journalists provide’; Deuze acknowledges that:

> Journalism is not and never should be disconnected from (the idea of) community - which concretely means that any conceptualization of journalism must always be framed in terms of journalism and society, as it then can be situated in particular technological, economical, political and social contexts. (2006, p. 30)

Deuze (2006, pp. 26-7) notes that the ‘occupational ideology’ of journalism means that journalists agree on shared values such as ‘working fast on deadline, being ethical, championing editorial autonomy, and so on’; but there are values embedded in a journalism culture, such as the US ideal of ‘objectivity’, that does not translate to all cultures. These differences in occupational ideology, of what Bourdieu calls doxa, become much clearer when journalists work in other countries.

While the ‘rules’ of journalism can appear the same in countries outside Australia, they can also be also frustratingly different. Foreign correspondents recognise that if their reports displease a particular country’s leadership, they may quickly find themselves deported and banned from future entry. This means that journalists often enter a country without the necessary visas, often posing as tourists, to do their work; and it is a decision that can quickly see them out of the country again.

Australian journalists working overseas who do not adapt their journalism to local cultural conditions can find themselves falling foul of governments and in some cases have found themselves banned, deported or jailed. The ABC’s Pacific Correspondent Sean Downey has, for example, been banned from Fiji more than once (FIJI: MIDA plans new political monitoring of election reporting 2014).
Australian-born *Al Jazeera* journalist Peter Greste found himself behind bars in Egypt for broadcasting articles critical of the Egyptian government (Pollard 2014). Local journalists who cannot usually leave their country after writing a report often anticipate being jailed or beaten.

Sometimes local journalists relay information to foreign colleagues who can safety publish the information when they are in another country. As *Al Jazeera*’s Egypt correspondent Sue Turton explains, it is often only the foreign media who are in a position to tell the full story:

> The government’s stranglehold on the domestic media had become almost absolute, meaning the only channel still broadcasting opinion to Egyptians that differed to that of the military-backed interim government were our sister channel Al Jazeera Arabic and Mubashr Misr, the Egyptian affiliate. (Turton 2014)

One of the key issues for Western journalists is that media laws not only differ, but may not be enacted on the ground as they appear in print. Egypt, for example,

> The constitution addresses freedom of the press in contradictory terms. While enshrining press freedoms in its articles, it also leaves media professionals exposed to excessive punishments under the law, including prison sentences for ‘malpractice’. (*Egypt Freedom of the Press* 2013)

Other countries, such as Thailand, have clear laws about not insulting royalty, but less clear laws about insulting the Thai navy, as Australian journalist Alan Morrison discovered: he and Thai reporter Chutima Sidasathian face jail terms on charges of criminal defamation and breaches of the Thai Computer Crimes Act brought by the navy (‘Thailand Trafficking Downgrade Likely to be Maintained, Says Phuketwan Editor’ 2014). The charges relate to a report that included excerpts of a Reuters report accusing Thai naval forces of involvement in the trafficking of Muslim Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Morison, like other journalists in Thailand, has found that his work permits and visa renewals are being used as leverage in the case (*Thailand Freedom of the Press* 2006).
Development, Peace, Inclusive, and Critical Development Journalism

Journalism is, and can be, done in other ways to the model used in Australia. Development journalism (Waisbord 2012) became popular after World War II as part of efforts to theorise the role of media and communication in development. Named by Philippine journalists in the 1960s (Shah 2008), it was originally seen as a way of reporting social issues that impacted on the lives of non-elites, usually rural people. Many of these stories revolved around rural education, health and economic issues. It was later redefined as journalism that promotes ‘citizen participation’ and ‘human emancipation’:

The emphasis is put on the idea that journalists should be part of broad political and social efforts towards development, national integration, and internal cooperation. This includes supporting government policies and programs designed to build integrated, stable, and economically ‘developed’ societies. (Waisbord 2012, p. 149)

Development journalism was therefore seen as being particularly useful in countries where there were problems with religion, ethnicity, language and tribal identities. While development journalism garnered support in many countries for its social responsibility tradition it was criticised by liberals and conservatives who suggested that it was anti-democratic (Waisbord 2012, p. 151). Waisbord argues that development journalism still lacks a unified set of theoretical principles but notes that it has been institutionalised in university programs in the global south. He suggests that the core ideals of development journalism overlap with other forms of journalism which support participatory democracy and social justice, including watchdog journalism (Waisbord 2000) and peace journalism (Galtung 2002).

Peace journalism is advocated in many post-conflict states by those who believe that objectivity can mean that journalism becomes propaganda. It is described as allowing journalists to make choices about what stories to report, and how to report them to create opportunities for society to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict (Lynch, J & McGoldrick 2005, p. 5) Peace journalism has been popular in some of Australia’s neighbouring countries, particularly East Timor and Indonesia. It is seen as offering a way to allow analysis and research on media’s roles in conflict, as a toolbox for journalists, and as a campaign for
change against dominant global news discourses (Lynch, J & McGoldrick 2005, p. 270)

Inclusive journalism is a newer form, advocated by New Zealand-based academic Verica Rupar. She argues that inclusive journalism centres on the idea that a plurality of voices lies at the heart of democracy:

Societies based on exclusion have a tendency to fail as states, as Mubarak’s regime demonstrated. However, the existence of democratic institutions does not necessarily bring diversity of voices in media. (Rupar & Pesic 2012)

Inclusive journalism puts its focus on community networks, to ‘reconnect journalism with its democratic roots and take advantage of new forms of news creation, production, editing, and distribution’ (Mensing 2011, p. 16). Rupar and Pesic draw on academics from a variety of transitional and post-conflict states to suggest that the promotion of freedom and democracy should be at the core of education of future journalists (Rupar & Pesic 2012).

Critical development journalism is advocated by long time Pacific journalist and educator David Robie, who argues that it is appropriate for the Pacific because it holds power to account but is focused not just on criticising developing nations but on reporting stories with the aim of improving governance. Robie considers that a different style of journalism and journalism education is needed in the Pacific (2014, p. 348).

Robie argues that journalism in the Pacific is different to that in Australia. He suggests that Pacific journalists need to go beyond the staple diet of Western notions of journalism and include sections on how to report blasphemy, sedition and treason, and how to deal with physical threats and bribery (Robie 2014, p. 344).
Chapter Six: Journalism Education

When research for this thesis began, little was available about the scholarship of journalism education internationally. Deuze complained in 2006 (pp. 19-20) that most of the international literature was either too normative, or overtly descriptive. Most was either extremely specific, featuring case studies about journalism curriculum, courses or classrooms, or overly generic, where often senior scholars offered historicised accounts of their experiences in ‘doing’ journalism education. Since then a number of scholars have published significant works, including Hanitzsch (2008), Hanusch (2009), Josephi (2010, 2012) and Zelizer (2012), and adding to earlier work by de Beer (1995), Dickson (2000) Herbert (2000), Morgan (2003), and Reese and Cohen (2000).

As far back as 1992 Gaunt (p. 2) wrote of international journalism training that ‘whatever the geographic area or sociopolitical context, journalism educators and media professionals have had to come to terms with the same problems’. Ida Schultz (2007a) used Gaunt’s work to deduce what she calls a model of ideal types of journalism education based on the relationship between theory and practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>theory</th>
<th>academic degree</th>
<th>professional training</th>
<th>apprenticeship</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>university</td>
<td>trade school</td>
<td>newsroom</td>
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Schultz (2007a, p. 17) suggests that the ideal type of journalism education in the US would be placed to the left on this continuum, whereas the ideal type of journalism education in Europe would be placed on the right. In Australia it would sit in the middle, with some taking the academic degree and others the cadetship. Schultz notes of the US and Europe (and it is argued of Australia) that journalism education will always involve a mix of theory and practice.

Background

The *habitus* of Australia journalists is difficult to describe because, unlike in parts of Europe, there is no licensing system, so people who have had no academic or
technical training can set themselves up as a freelance journalist or even get a job without any formal journalism education. A number are employed and receive on-the-job training with no formal structure; some join the journalists’ professional organisation, MEAA, which provides industrial assistance, training programs and of conduct, but there is no legal or other compulsion on any journalist to become a member. Anyone who claims to be a journalist in Australia can call themselves one\textsuperscript{17}. It is therefore vital to consider Australian history and societal conditions to fully understand the \textit{habitus} of Australian journalists.

Like journalists, Australian journalism academics come to the academy with a variety of educational backgrounds (Cervini 2014). Although the Australian Government is now encouraging academics to have a research degree higher than their students’ (\textit{Proposed higher education standards framework: consultation draft April 2014}, p. 12), many of the first journalism teachers were long-standing journalists who liked to teach, and many were also committed to their own further education. There has long been a view in some parts of the industry that Australia’s university programs are a refuge for failed practitioners or people who had never worked as journalists, and there has been significant criticism by the print media, particularly \textit{The Australian}, that university journalism education programs fail to produce ‘graduates with the skill-set employers expect of entry-level journalists’ (Patching 2014).

Cadetships and on-the-job training were once the favoured way for Australians seeking to become journalists, and this route remains popular among those who see journalism as a craft or a trade, as Oakham indicates (2004). However, there are other ways of viewing journalism: John Hartley (2008) claims that it lacks the attributes of a profession, Anne Dunn (2004) claims that it is at best a semi-professional or quasi-professional occupation, and John Henningham (1995) argues that it is indeed a profession.

\textsuperscript{17}The so-called Cash for Comment scandal involving prominent radio personalities who were paid to endorse products on air highlighted problems with the lack of definition of a journalist. Both broadcasters, Alan Jones and John Laws, claimed that they were not journalists and therefore were not required to follow the laws and codes which bind journalists.
Formal education, which is often seen as an indicator of professionalism, has become increasingly popular among aspiring journalists in Australia. At the beginning of 2014 there were 38 universities in Australia and New Zealand offering journalism degrees or diplomas (Journalism courses 2014) and internationally there were 2,324 programs registered with the World Journalism Education Census (WJEC 2014). The provision of journalism education at university level has significantly increased the education level of Australian journalists in the past 20 years: while 80 per cent of Australian journalists held a degree in 2010 (up from 35 per cent in 1992), the percentage of those whose degree was in journalism (as opposed to some other subject) had hardly changed (Josephi 2011, p. 32).

In 2014 two major reports on Australian journalism education came from the Office for Learning and Teaching: one on curriculum renewal (Tanner, S et al. 2014) and one still to be finalised on journalism education standards (Journalism Media Communication Network 2014). The curriculum renewal report was seen as a response by Australian journalism educators to a number of challenges to journalism and the industry, including the need for graduates to see journalism beyond Anglo-American models, the need for new models of journalism that go beyond traditional journalism, and the need to embed multiculturalism and diversity in the curriculum (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 12).

**Why Give University Education to Journalists?**

James Carey wrote much about journalism education in the United States, suggesting that journalism education should really rest with sociologists, who look at the ‘complex relations among humans struggling to create a common life within conflict and division, a science deeply democratic, pluralistic, humanistic, and imaginative in its impulses’ (2000, p. 23). He draws on work of Feldhaus to suggest that journalism education needs to sit among the humanities and humanistic sciences, borrowing strengths from political theory, literature, philosophy, art and history (Feldhaus in Kopper 1993 p 27). Carey argues that there has always been ‘another agenda’ to journalism education—the desire of newspaper proprietors have to have a workforce that is ‘moral, orderly, habitual,
and conservative’ (Carey 2000, p. 23) In the United States in olden days, however,

Reporters were not educated individuals and most assuredly they were not literary people. They were an unlikely collection of itinerant scribblers, aspiring or more often failed novelists, ne’er-do-well children of established families and, most importantly, the upwardly mobile children of immigrants with an inherited rather than an educated gift of language, without much education and certainly without much refinement. They were often radical in their politics and unpredictable in their conduct. In fact, their behavior forms much of the folklore of the craft. They lived in and romanced the low life of the city and had no aversion to socialism or trade unions and little illusion about the motives of those for whom they worked. Pulitzer was probably not alone in believing that a university education might domesticate this unruly class, turn them into disciplined workers and end their flirtation with socialism and trade unions. (Carey 2000, p. 16)

Carey considers that to think about journalism education as a way of transforming ‘irresponsible writers into responsible journalists’ and to situate their study within the field of communications is to miss the point that journalism is about more than media and communication: ‘It is a particular kind of democratic practice’ (Carey 2000, p. 22).

**Tensions between industry and the academy**

There has long between a tension between the industry and the academy in Australia and internationally, although its strength in Australia is such that a leading UK academic who migrated to Australia said he was struck on his arrival in Australia by the ‘near open warfare’ between the industry and academics (McNair 2014). Deuze (2006, p. 21) finds that the heart of the tension lies in universities believing there is only one way of doing things—the academic way—while the industry argue that there is little validity in adding theory to vocational training:

> Journalism educators and scholars face similar struggles all over the world, having to defend their curriculum, methods and theories against industry-wide shared notions that the academy is not the place to teach students how to get a job in the media, and that journalism is not the place
to thoroughly reflect on the roles and functions of news media in society.
(Deuze 2006, p. 22)

Much of the tension lies in the teaching of theory, and in Australia in the lack of understanding in the industry of the differences between journalism, media and cultural studies degrees. Oakham (2004) gives a thorough review of journalism education as opposed to training in Australia during the so-called Media Wars from 1995, when a number of academics launched an attack on journalism education within universities. In 2003 John Henningham wrote in *The Australian* that ‘journalism has been taught on and off at Australian and New Zealand universities for more than 80 years. One would think that by now they’d be getting it right, but I’ve concluded that they’re getting it more wrong’ (in Oakham 2004, p. 73). More than a decade later, in 2014, Henningham had softened little, still claiming that universities were not getting it right and that people enrolling in his own privately run J-school were looking for ‘an education in the basics, free from bias or incomprehensible theory’ (Henningham 2014b). *The Australian* went one step further in 2014, suggesting in an editorial there was value in a university education but that it could be ‘untaught’ in two years in a newsroom. To *The Australian*’s editorial writers the socialisation of reporters was more important than being able to reflect on theory:

> Editors have long questioned the value of journalism courses but have still opted for the raw talent that has come their way. A few years in the real world puts Noam Chomsky in perspective for young hires. (*Better training for journalists*’ 2014)

Deuze (2006) draws on Canadian educator Raudsepp (1989, p. 3) to make the point that since the beginning of the 20th century that there has been a disconnect between theory and practice: ‘journalism education … has ended up as neither fish nor fowl; it feels itself unloved by the industry and tolerated, barely, by the academy’. Since the Australian *Asia Pacific Media Educator* was launched in 1996 it has been among those who have considered these issues. Australian academics Loo and Lau wrote in a special edition of the *Educator* that there was a need to ‘reflect and capitulate on opportunities arising from the industry criticisms’ which they said were ‘in many cases unwarranted and contradictory’ (Loo & Lau 2000, p. 3).
Oakham describes two different approaches as ‘training’ and ‘education’ and comes down on the side of education, quoting Tapsall and Varley:

> It’s no longer enough (if indeed it ever was) to simply do journalism or be a journalist … research and discussion is moving journalism theory and practice beyond an unhealthy polarization that has developed between some journalism and media/cultural studies theorists. (in Oakham 2004, p. 73)

**Significance of How Journalists Are Taught**

Sheridan Burns (2002), Frohlich and Holtz-Bacha (cited in Robie 2004, p. 18), and Deuze (2006, p. 31) argue that how people are taught journalism is important because it has an impact on their self-perception as journalists and therefore on the way journalism is practised. Drawing on the work of Rorty (1999, 1989, p. 117), Deuze acknowledges that education has two distinct but important processes: socialisation and individualisation, and argues that people can be ‘socialised’ into journalism by doing more vocational work, supported by the media industry. However, to learn ‘individualisation’ they must be trained to be reflective practitioners by using both theory and practice. Deuze acknowledges that teaching can help aspiring journalists develop their voice and understandings of individual freedom and responsibility:

> Where does the socialization into media sequences (each with their own historically grown and carefully cultivated formulas and legends) stop, and does the individualization of the ‘free minds’ that journalists are supposed to be (in their self-image and shared definitions of legitimacy) begin? It could be argued that much of the decision-making on such issues is determined by cultural and historical factors /and thus should become a prime venue of careful and considered journalism education research. (Deuze 2006, pp. 27-8)

There has been at least one other study which links the occupational commitment and professional values of journalists, based on the type of training they receive. Donsbach, Becker and Kosicki (1992 cited in Becker & Tudor 2007) compare German and American journalists and that American journalists without a journalism degree are less committed to their occupation and take a less aggressive stance to news coverage; in comparison, German journalists with a university degree are less likely to take an activist approach to newsgathering.
(Becker & Tudor 2007 p 6). While caution should be taken in directly translating the US/German approach with Australian journalists, it is interesting that other scholars have linked commitment and professional values in academics studies.

**International comparisons**

Journalism education happens in many different ways in different countries. The first lectures in journalism are said to have been delivered at Leipzig University in 1672 (Gaunt 1992; Katzen 1975; Stuart 1996). This blossoming of journalism in German universities was short-lived, and it was not until the early 20th century that it was reintroduced (Katzen 1975, p. 72).

Journalism education in the United States can be linked back to the late 18th century, although the first independent school of journalism is said to have opened at the University of Missouri in 1908 (Gaunt 1992). Columbia University’s journalism school was started with the help of funds provided by the estate of newspaper proprietor Joseph Pulitzer, and the owners of the *Chicago Tribune* funded the establishment of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University (Stuart 1996, p. 19). Stuart argues that the training at these universities was of such quality that it stopped the emergence of a journalism training system in America, so there was never the need to develop the system that transpired in Australia (Stuart 1996, p. 20 vol. II).

In the United Kingdom the first university-based journalism courses appeared in the early 20th century, with one course at the University of London supported by the British government, which was trying to find opportunities for former soldiers (Stuart 1996, p. 20 vol. II). The British program was supported by both the journalists’ union and media owners; it was very similar to the system operating in Australia. After World War II, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) was established, with a common syllabus providing on-the-job training supplemented by a series of courses provided by polytechnics and technical colleges (Stuart 1996, p. 23 vol. II). As in the US, a newspaper owner (Roy Thomson) gave a significant donation to establish a foundation to promote journalism education, particularly to journalists from developing countries (Stuart 1996, p. 24 vol. II); the Thomson Foundation at Cardiff University remains one of the world’s leading schools for international journalism education. The NCTJ
programme built upon the idea of journalism as a craft. The organisation had close relations with the journalists union (NUJ), and dominated both journalism education and recruitment to the profession until the middle of the 1980s (Esser 1998).

In New Zealand, journalism education began at Canterbury College around 1910 and continued until the mid-1930s; it contained little practical training in journalism skills (Stuart 1996, p. 28 vol. II). Today training is managed through the Journalism Training Organisation, funded by industry subscriptions (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 26).

Australia and New Zealand have had a significant impact on journalism education in the Pacific as these countries have provided donor funding and staffing to help establish journalism schools in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (Robie 2004); the French system has been highly influential in New Caledonia and French Polynesia (Robie 2004 p 17), and was the catalyst for establishing the degree course at the University of the South Pacific (Robie 2004 p 32). Papua New Guinea has had a university journalism degree for a generation; there are also degree-level programs in Fiji and in the independent nations of Polynesia (Robie 2004 p 2).

As a point of comparison, the Danish journalism education model is unlike the US, UK, Australian or New Zealand models. Danish degrees in journalism are unusual in that more time is spent on practical skill training than on academic work, and students must complete a 12- to 18-month internship (Schultz, I 2007a, p. 24).

**The Australian Way: Cadetships and On-the-job Training**

Although Australia and New Zealand have offered a university education for journalists since the 1920s, only in the 1970s did it become the norm for aspiring journalists to attend at tertiary level.\(^{\text{18}}\) Until that time, journalism education was generally based on an apprenticeship model called the cadetship, designed for high school leavers:

\(^{\text{18}}\) That is the same decade that journalism education started at the University of Papua New Guinea (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 103)
Training was conducted in-house, with would-be journalists starting at the bottom as copy boys or girls before commencing a three or four-year cadetship. Under the auspices of senior colleagues, they would be taught the skills required to produce news and feature stories. Their training included interview skills, note-taking (with shorthand often a compulsory requirement), how to structure stories using the inverted pyramid and 5Ws and H (asking the fundamental questions who, what, why, where, when and how) approaches, spelling, grammar and layout. They would also receive training in ethics and media law. This training would take place on-the-job. That is, the cadets would not only be learning the skills of journalism, they would also be producing copy as journalists, initially simple stories, gradually progressing to more complex assignments as they moved through the cadet ranks and showed they were capable of tackling more difficult assignments. Having successfully completed their cadetship, they would become graded journalists. It was an era in which journalists and journalistic hopefuls were expected to sink or swim—those who succeeded were guaranteed careers, while those who floundered would be cast adrift (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 23).

Sheridan Burns (2002, p. 8) considers that the culture of a newsroom is as influential on the work of a journalist as the broader social culture. She stresses that that in the cadetship system journalists picked up their skills by observing more experienced colleagues. Such in-house training programs had weaknesses: they did not give young people the chance to appropriately reflect upon their practice, which Deuze refers to as the process of ‘individualisation’. Referring to the MEAA Journalists’ Code of Conduct, Sheridan Burns argues that journalists needed more than professional codes drafted by industrial unions to regulate their practices, because such codes did not give journalists the full reflective skills required to make decisions on behalf of their readers/audiences that were at once professional, commercial and ethical (Sheridan Burns 2002, p. 27).

Cadetships and traineeships remain popular with some Australian news outlets. One of the biggest employers of Australian journalists, News Ltd, reverted to in-house training for new staff in the 2000s, taking on a broader pool of graduates who had not completed journalism degrees. News Ltd’s training was not just in basic craft skills (writing and interviewing) but covered media law, social media,
hostile environment reporting, and bushfire and natural disaster training (Josephi
2011, p. 32)\textsuperscript{19}.

There has always been a strong relationship between the Australian industrial
organisation for journalists and journalism training and education, and the union
has been instrumental in the establishment of the cadetship and grading program
for journalists. Specific areas of cadet journalist training are written into official
industrial awards, including the requirement of employers to provide training in
traditional shorthand and typing skills and later to provide time release for
university studies (in Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 14)\textsuperscript{20}. The Australian Journalists
Association (now MEAA) continues to provide training courses for journalists,
aimed at ensuring the relevance of the industrial union in a changing era but also
helping journalists maintain professionalism by retraining in the newer skills of
online journalism and in updated ethics and law programs.

\textbf{Australian University Education}

Journalism education at a university level in Australia began in the 1920s and has
grown exponentially since the mid-1970s. Stuart, Mayer and Wallace (in Tanner,
S et al. 2014) list a range of reasons why early university courses offered at the
universities of Western Australia, Melbourne, Sydney, and Queensland did not
ultimately survive. The reasons include clashes between classes and rostered work
hours, little spare time to study or attend classes, little incentive to continue
studies after being graded, recognition that the academic work was not a pre-
requisite for entry into the job, and resentment of education by some journalists
and management.\textsuperscript{21} In 1968, Roderick and Revil, who co-authored a cadet
textbook \textit{The Journalists’ Craft—a guide to Modern Practice} (1965), argued that

\textsuperscript{19} Journalism educator and former News Ltd staff member Trina McLellan notes that a national
training manager was based in Sydney and all ‘training’ was delivered by desktop, ‘but the
days of someone having the time to sit with a journo to go over their copy have almost
disappeared’ (McLellan 2014).

\textsuperscript{20} The researcher began working as a 17 cadet journalist in 1986 and was subject to the award
conditions to obtain shorthand and typing skills, but was ‘graded’ as a fully fledged reporter
before attaining the necessary shorthand skills.

\textsuperscript{21} All of these reasons still ring true for journalism academics running classes with students in their
final year, juggling media work and studies.
‘If the university wishes to have a well-informed and truly critical press—as I believe it does—it must hold out a hand to the journalists’ (Stuart 1996, p. 49).

The Australian Association for Tertiary Education in Journalism (AATEJ) was formed in 1975 with the aim of raising the standards of scholars and teachers; this association later became what is now called the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA). The association began as a ‘kind of fraternal grouping’ of former journalists adjusting to their new role as teachers, but they were collectively interested in raising the standard of journalism teaching (Henningham 2014a; Wallace 2014). Of the original 12 members of AATEJ, Charles Stokes was the only one reported to have had a qualification higher than a bachelor’s degree (Henningham 1999, p. 181). Henningham wrote about the culture among journalism educators after the 1976 AATEJ conference when a new lecturer, Dr Shelton Gunaratne, surprised fellow j-educators by reading an academic paper at what had been, until that point, a three-day annual general meeting of members (Henningham 1999, p. 189). Journalism educators were usually veteran journalists who held a Bachelor of Arts but had little or no teaching experience, no academic publications and no academic-style research. By 2014, however, Australian journalism educators believed they were offering a quality education within university settings. When asked about the quality of the university-based experience, Australian journalism academics acknowledged that journalism education was becoming more a part of university culture, developing its own research and teaching ethos (in Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 94). However, when Australia’s journalism educators were asked if a university education was the best place to train journalists, the answer received a mixed response. While many found strengths with the university training system, there was still a strong preference for hands-on training (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 97).

Nevertheless, Tanner et al.’s study acknowledged that university education for journalists had improved in recent years, without stressing the timeline. Industry
often attributed the quality of the program to the individual teaching staff\textsuperscript{22} rather than the programs, with a particular emphasis on the strength of industry practitioners (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 98). Industry concern about weakness in program strength ranged across issues about grammar, spelling and syntax, monitoring of news, and the ability of graduates to interview people on a phone (Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 102); however, industry representatives generally acknowledged that universities had an important role to play in the training of journalists, although they still supported the need for in-house training:

I think that universities do play an important role, particularly now. Whether that means we end up with the best journalists, I’m not really sure. You know, you may get as good a result out of a kid who comes to us at 17 straight from school and we train them from there, as happened in the dim dark past. (unnamed Head of Program in Tanner, S et al. 2014, p. 94)

**New Australian University Standards**

From 2014 the Australian Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) has required that universities, including those offering journalism and media studies, have learning outcomes suitable for the qualifications offered, and that they could show evidence their graduates meet those outcomes. JERAA has been working with the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA) on a standards project for the Australia Government’s Office for Learning and Teaching to prepare a set of minimum learning outcomes for journalism graduates (and others) in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The Journalism, Public Relations, Media and Communication Network (JoMeC) has proposed minimum learning standards for Australian journalism students to be ‘supplemented by the unique elements/specialties of individual programs at each institution’ (Journalism-Media-Communication Network 2014). The six key learning outcomes being proposed are knowledge; thinking skills; communication

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\textsuperscript{22} Concern about the quality of some of the academic staff in some universities was acknowledged. ‘We used to have a bit of a joke... that a lot of the tutors at uni we probably wouldn’t have given a job to’.
and technology skills; self-management, relationship-building and self-development skills; integrity, ethics and responsibility; and application of knowledge and skills (Journalism-Media-Communication Network 2014). Several of these outcomes are significant in the context of this thesis because they signal what Australian journalism educators consider important. Australian journalism graduates are, for example, expected to understand history and theories relating to the social, political, cultural and economic contexts of journalism practice, products and audiences, the working routines, organisational environments and production processes of journalists, the legal, ethical, civic and social responsibilities of journalists, and international, intercultural and Indigenous perspectives on journalistic practice and community engagement. They are expected to recognise and reflect on social, cultural, legal, ethical and professional standards, practise work in an ethical, collaborative, professional and accountable manner, demonstrate respect for social and cultural diversity, and act within the laws, policies and regulations governing the news media and journalistic practice, unless contrary to a justifiable public interest.

The recommended new standards for journalism education acknowledge that the training in journalism cannot be disconnected with developments in society at large, because journalism cannot exist independent of a community. They also acknowledge that for journalism education to be successful it must not be limited by a purely domestic agenda. There is a strong argument for global teaching, including but not limited to a distinctly international teaching agenda. Students would be confronted in all matters by the cross-cultural or transnational nature of what they are learning. (Deuze 2006)

Importantly, JoMeC states that the skills of journalism are not unique but are required more generally by citizens, which means that they are suited to graduates who do not aim to be working journalists. This fits with Deuze’s suggestion that journalists need to be educated to become ‘super citizens’ (2006, pp. 24-5).

**International standards**

Just as there is no one system of training or educating journalists in Australia, there is no one way of training or educating journalists in an international setting. There is no licensing system or even a register of international journalism trainers.
Often a donor country such as Australia, Norway or the United States sends journalism educators to a country to teach specific craft skills at an individual news organisation or at a variety of news outlets. Sometimes educators take part in exchanges and work alongside local staff. Sometimes working journalists are taken to the host country for hands-on training in a Western newsroom. Many countries have their own universities and invite help from Western academics to rewrite or reinvigorate curriculum. Deuze, using cross-national comparative work of Gaunt (1992) and Frohlich and Holtz-Bacha (2003), has defined five distinct types of journalism education worldwide, which can be compressed into three types of journalism education and two blends: stand-alone university education, technical college training, or the job training, and the other two are a mixture of the three.

The World Journalism Education Council, a coalition representing 32 academic associations worldwide involved in journalism and mass communication at the university level, has issued a set of 11 principles for journalism education, in which they state that ‘at the heart of journalism education is a balance of conceptual, philosophical and skills-based content’ (Deuze 2006, p. 22). Central to the principles, co-signed by the Australian and New Zealand journalism educators’ associations, is the idea that journalism graduates ‘should be prepared to work as highly informed, strongly committed practitioners who have high ethical principles and are able to fulfil the public interest obligations that are central to their work’ (WJEC 2007). To do this, the WJEC considers it necessary that they are taught by a blend of academics and practitioners so that they do not just get skills courses but

the study of journalism ethics, history, media structures/institutions at national and international level, critical analysis of media content and journalism as a profession. It includes coursework on the social, political and cultural role of media in society and sometimes includes coursework dealing with media management and economics. (WJEC 2007)

One of the 11 principles agreed by the World Journalism Education Congress in 2007 is that
Journalism students should learn that despite political and cultural differences, they share important values and professional goals with peers in other nations. Where practical, journalism education provides students with first-hand experience of the way that journalism is practised in other nations. (WJEC 2007)

Although the World Journalism Education Congress has acknowledged cultural and political differences in journalism in different countries, The United Nations has developed a model curriculum for journalism education to be translated from English and French into Spanish, Arabic, Russian (UNESCO 2007). UNESCO’s assistant director-general for Communication and Information Abdul Waheed Khan links the journalism skills in the curriculum to ‘the underpinning of key democratic principles that are fundamental to the development of every country’:

The basic goal of most journalists … is to serve society by informing the public, scrutinizing the way power is exercised, stimulating democratic debate, and in those ways aiding political, economic, social and cultural development. (UNESCO 2007, p. 6)

Although UNESCO acknowledges that journalism training can occur in many others ways, and with different educational traditions and resources, it does suggest that study in university disciplines should be seen as a component of professional training in journalism.

**Australians Working Outside Australia**

There is little academic scholarship by Australian journalism educators about their work in training or educating journalism students outside Australia. There are a number of reasons for this, but chief among them appears to be contractual arrangements that preclude educators from writing about their experiences, as the work is often considered to be commercial-in-confidence. Even government-funded reports can be difficult to obtain if those in charge of a project decide they do not want their work scrutinised by outsiders.

The United States has a body responsible for the evaluation of journalism programs, but this does not extend to international training projects. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications evaluates journalism programs in the States and requires its members to ‘regularly
assesses student learning’ as one of its nine accrediting standards (ACEJMC 2010). There is no similar body in Australia, nor does there appear to be an international equivalent. Many parts of Europe (France, Belgium and Portugal, and Spain) have passed laws which demand journalists fulfil certain minimum requirements (Feldhaus in Kopper 1993 p 27). In France and Britain, unions and employers have a contractual basis for the training of journalists recognised officially at certain institutions. In France, a stamp of quality has been given to some institutions to assure those who complete the courses of access to the profession (Kopper 1993 p 27).

Journalism education is not welcomed in all countries, and it can be as dangerous for the educators as it is for their students. In one rare public insight into this, Patrick Butler, the Vice President-Programs, International Center for Journalists, told a hearing of the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa in July 2014 that he and 42 other NGO workers were convicted in an Egyptian court for working on programs designed to build democracy, monitor elections and train political parties and journalists (Butler 2014). Butler notes that the convictions ruined the lives of many of the non-government workers, who had been trying to help Egyptian journalists do a ‘better job of reporting on issues that matter to their audiences’:

The greatest tragedy is what this case has meant to the people of Egypt. The country’s authoritarian government learned the consequences of its prosecution of Americans and Egyptians working together to improve their society: Nothing. There were no consequences. (Butler 2014)
Chapter Seven: Results from Australian Journalism Educators (A)

Unlike Australian journalists (Hanusch 2013), Australian journalism educators have not been widely surveyed about their characteristics and influences, and yet the relevance and quality of what they teach has been repeatedly questioned in the Australian media and within the academic community. Parts of the Australian media industry have criticised journalism educators for failing to provide students with the skills they need to be immediately employable, and parts of the academe have questioned the ability of journalism educators to add to knowledge, in the long tradition of the academy.

Journalism Teachers

The survey conducted for this study was open to all journalism educators who had worked on at least one or more projects outside Australia, but was particularly targeted at Australians (demographic information in Appendix 1). A total of 86.5% of respondents (32 people) said they were Australia citizens, 2.7% (1 person) said they were from New Zealand and 10.8% (four people) said they were Australian residents originally from the United Kingdom. Seven other respondents said they were not Australia citizens, but Australian residents from: Singapore, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Greece, Iceland, Malaysia, and Canada.

Of the 44 people who took part in the survey, slightly more were men (54.5%) than women; in raw numbers 24 men and 20 women. They ranged in age from the youngest woman between 20 to 29 to the oldest man at over 70. The majority of the trainers (40.9% representing 18 people) were aged 50 to 59.
Figure 3 What is your age?

There was an over-representation of educators who said their professional experience was mostly as a public service broadcaster (radio and television combined), followed by newspaper professionals then commercial (radio and television broadcasters combined). Five said they had never worked as a journalist. Of these, one said that they were completing the survey because they were a development communication specialist and their next project would include the training of journalism students in development journalism practices.
Figure 4 Type of journalism practiced by educators.

The majority of the educators (60.5% or 23 people) had worked in journalism for more than 20 years and another 21.1% (8) had worked in the area for more than 10 years, making a total of more than 81% with more than a decade of experience teaching outside Australia. Just 5.3% (2 people) had less than three years’ experience in the field.
Figure 5 Educator’s experience as a journalist.

More than 71% (30) of the trainers held a postgraduate degree or diploma; 19% (8) held an undergraduate degree. Another 11.9% (5) had done on-the-job training (such as a cadetship); the same number that said they had done professional short courses and 9.5% said they had a polytechnic or media industry certificate. Just 2.4% (1 person) claimed to have no qualification and 2.4% (1) had an undergraduate diploma. Of two of those who answered ‘other’, one held a PhD, and the other a PhD in Medicine using media studies theory and method. Overwhelmingly the cohort was highly educated.
The trainers were asked about their grounding in journalism (i.e. where they were given their initial training). Seven did not respond to the question, but 23 said Australia, 3 New Zealand, 1 Malaysia, 1 Myanmar (Burma), 1 Canada, 1 Singapore, 1 Fiji, 3 United Kingdom, 1 England (specifically stating the difference between England and Wales).
Figure 7 How many years in journalism education.

Around a third of the trainers had no formal teacher training, with 32.4% (12 people) stating that they had no teacher training at all. Of the 37 who answered the question 2.7% (1 person) had a Master of Education, 10.8% (4) had a teaching degree, and 5.4% (2) had a teaching diploma; 37.8% had completed a Train-the-Trainer-course. Of those who answered ‘other’, 10.8% (4) held a graduate certificate in tertiary teaching and 2.7% (1) held a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. Although some had worked in journalism education for more than 20 years (19.5%), the largest number had only done so for between five and ten years (24.45). More than half had been in journalism education for less than ten years.

English was the first language for all but one of the respondents (one had Greek as the first language); however, the trainers spoke a wide variety of languages with various levels of proficiency. Of those who claimed to speak languages well,
French was the most common language with nine people claiming to speak it, followed by seven people speaking pidgin or *tok pisin* (the language of Melanesians in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea), and three Bahasa Indonesian, followed by Bahasa Malaysia, Maori, Mandarin, Tamil Malay, Hindi, Afrikaans, German, and Chichewa (a Bantu language widely spoken in Malawi). Others claimed limited knowledge of Arabic (2 people), Italian (3), Spanish (3), Cantonese (2), German, Russian and Vietnamese.

The trainers had worked in journalism education in a variety of countries: Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Hong Kong, France, Indonesia, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Austria, Germany, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Indonesia, Laos, East Timor, Fiji, Thailand, Romania, China, Iran, Ireland, Cambodia, Cook Islands, The Gambia, West Africa, South Africa, Oman, Netherlands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) Mongolia Georgia Armenia, Thailand, American Samoa, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Iceland, India, Malawi and Brunei. Of the trainers 19 had been involved in more than five international training opportunities, seven had been involved in between five and ten, and 19 had had fewer than four training experiences.
How many training opportunities?

Where the trainers work

The question ‘Name ONE country where you have the most experience as a journalism trainer?’ was unclear to survey respondents. One wrote in response ‘I presume you mean, name one country outside of your home country’. Most of the survey respondents wrote the country that they considered home, rather than the country where they had done the most training (outside their own national borders).

The major of the training projects undertaken by the educators was part of a larger project (63.9%) rather than a one-off (36.1%). They had been involved in a variety of courses and programs: one-week to two-week intensives, a one-month visiting academic program, university training courses, guest university lectures, curriculum development at international universities, ongoing in-house training, two-year secondment to international broadcasters, volunteer news positions, two-
hour seminars, half-day workshops, in-house training, launching a newspaper from scratch, and developing a five-year media development plan.

A large number of these projects (31.8%) were funded by the Australian Government; however in the ‘other’ section five people said a university funded their work, and one said the work was self-funded. Other funding came from charities, USaid and AusAID, the European Union, AIDB, Department of Development (UK), Commonwealth Press Union, News Limited, commercial television organisations, commercial companies, and Pacific Island recipient countries.

Figure 9 Funding bodies.

The majority of the journalism educators said, in response to an open-ended question, that they were recruited for the work via their professional contacts: 11
were approached/asked to provide assistance by professional contacts; 11 won the role after applying via a competitive process; five were sent because of university links; four offered themselves/skills/programs to organisations directly; and one was recruited internally within a commercial news organisation.

The main focus of the training work varied enormously but included multimedia skills (content management; digital pagination—CyberPage software convergent skills—new portable equipment such as laptops, cameras, audio recorders, modems, email, ftp), newspaper layout, radio news reporting and presenting, radio production skills, broadcast presentation skills, public sector broadcasting and ethics, newsroom management, management, media strengthening (print, radio, TV), chairing public forums, general journalism skills, journalism studies, journalism ethics, practical interviewing techniques, voice training for news presenters, news and feature reporting, lectures on development journalism practice, environmental news reporting and field work, media law and ethics, video journalism, investigative journalism, self-care and ethical reporting of trauma survivors, communications skills (including journalism writing and writing press releases), and journalism curriculum design.
Figure 10 The kinds of training done.

The journalism educators said they favoured programs taught as professional short courses (58.8%; 21 responses), followed by on-the-job training (40.5%; 15 respondents), capacity building (29.7%; 11) mentoring (27%; 10), university degrees (24.3%; 9), postgraduate programs (13.5%; 5), undergraduate diplomas (10.8%; 4), and media industry certificates (2.7%; 1).

More than half the trainers who responded to the question (16 did not answer) said they received no training for their international role; almost 40% said they were given some cultural introduction and one in five got some language training. Five said they did not need any pre-departure training as they already had experience in the field, and three received briefings from professors.
The trainers prepared themselves for their roles in a variety of ways including learning the language, reading material about the country and culture, meeting people from the country, asking for material from the news organisation/hosts, visiting the country previously, working previously in the country, doing online research, and doing ‘worst case scenarios’ (safety) journalist training. At least four said they had done no pre-arrival training, with one writing that they did ‘absolutely nothing, none. You learn as you go along’.
Figure 12 Who prepared the materials for training?

All but two (5.6%) prepared their own materials to use in the host country. More than half used a mixture of pre-existing materials from another country and new country-specific materials. Only one used a curriculum from another country. One wrote that they used ‘mostly material from countries with similar socio-economic and cultural background’.
The trainers were asked what kind of journalism training they believed worked best. Mentoring received the strongest response (56.7%), while on-the-job training was a close second at 53.3%. Professional short courses were chosen by 46.7%, and in-house training received 40%. Tertiary journalism skills was chosen by 26.7%, tertiary education by 16.7% and polytechnics were favoured least with just 10%, presumably because few (9.5%) had worked in such a training environment. In the comments one trainer wrote that the best training was ‘in-house training based on prior research of training needs & organisational culture’, while another was quite clear that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to training as ‘this depends entirely on the country, the state of its industry, the level of English, etc. etc. etc. You cannot generalise’.

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**Figure 13 Tailor-made teaching materials.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New country specific</td>
<td>17.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailored from pre-existing material</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum from another country</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These journalism educators were mostly recruited because of whom they knew or whom they worked for. They were given little assistance in preparing for the role, had few language skills, and preferred short professional courses to longer-term engagements. They were highly educated but did not hold many formal teaching qualifications. They used materials they prepared themselves, often from their home countries or ‘borrowed’ from countries similar to the one they would be working in.

**Measuring effectiveness**

The respondents were asked a range of questions about what pre-evaluation was done before they started their training programs. A total of 60% (18 people) said...
that a survey of the media landscape was conducted before they were involved in the training.
Figure 15 What kind of evaluation of the country’s media needs was done?

In the comments on pre-evaluation one trainer wrote, ‘surveys and studies were done in drbs and drabs’; and another, ‘various people have over many years; most results available in some form’. For some, such as those who were doing exchanges in foreign universities, the trainers noted that such pre-evaluation was not necessary.

A quarter of the trainers were responsible for pre-program evaluations (8 people); 41.9% (13) said someone else did the evaluations and they were told the results. Almost 10% (3) knew that someone had done a pre-program evaluation but they were not told the results. Almost 20% (6) did not know if this had been done, and almost 13% (4) said no pre-program evaluation was undertaken.
Changes to output by trainees was most often used as the measure of the effectiveness of the training by 72% (18 people), although 24% (6) said no changes were measured and 4% (1) said that the effectiveness of journalism training could not be measured:

Compared to so many other fields, I believe it is not such a simple task of measuring effectiveness within. I am only half way through my position, but already I can see the areas that some of the journalists have improved in. While I am not able to put a percentage, or number rating in the effectiveness of the training I am providing, I can describe the ways in which some journalists have improved. In my very challenging position—I take pleasure in the small victories. (Survey Response from volunteer working in the Pacific)

The educators made a range of comments about evaluating effectiveness such as stating that such work was ‘beyond my brief’. Others suggested they measured effectiveness from ‘feedback from attendees’ or post-course surveys/evaluations of trainees at the end of training, or ‘the response that we got from listeners and
government officials’ and ‘discussion and interaction’. One reported that a university academic was commissioned to evaluate the program, and another ‘introduced a ‘knowledge mapping’ system to try [to] chart what was known at the outset, and what level of understanding was present after the training sessions’.

Figure 17 How was effectiveness measured?

As asked if the journalism educators were aware of any outside agencies evaluating the effectiveness of the work, 36.4% (12 people) said they were evaluated by external bodies and told the results. Another 3% (1) was told that it was done but was not told the results; 39.4% (13) reported that no outside agency evaluated the effectiveness of the work. A total of 21.2% (7) were not sure.
Figure 18 Were external evaluations done?

Asked if the evaluation reports were available to people outside the program, only 26 people answered. Of these, 15 said the reports were not available. Several were unsure but thought they might be. Several made comments about permission needing to be sought from bodies such as AusAID, ABC International, European Commission. One said the report would no longer be available as the commissioning body, the Commonwealth Press Union, was defunct.

The trainers were asked what factors, if any, impacted on the ability to provide a quality training experience for students (infrastructure, education level, management, government). A total of 32 people answered the open-ended question. The three top areas of concern were the English level of trainees, not just in the classroom but in their ability to produce English-language news content. The second was the general educational levels of trainees, and third the lack of infrastructure, resources and facilities. Fewer respondents were upset about managers not supporting the training work, people of various levels put into the same training room, issues of cultural understanding, and the motivations and
enthusiasm for training. Other issues were the climate (heat), religious and ethnic tensions, and a lack of staff in general. Also mentioned were a lack of knowledge and understanding of ‘in-house needs’ before arrival, a lack of preparation time, animosity of local staff worried for their job security, a need for greater teaching experience, professional qualifications in training, inappropriate curriculum (i.e. you cannot teach layout without photography skills), the availability of other qualified local trainees and translators, and the need for government approval.

One trainer wrote of the range of frustrations:

Training needs money and that was difficult to find. Managed to source some … but the rest of the training was given on the job. i.e. once money was received for certain projects I provided on hand training. Corruption and government control and cultural values all impact on training. Cambodians are not willing to challenge leaders or elders, fear for their jobs and subsistence means that they will not investigate or do balanced reporting and because they are so badly paid they are prepared to accept bribes and be influenced in their reporting. Because training is a rare opportunity there is a tendency to lump people of various levels and abilities into one class making it difficult to deliver the best results.

(Survey Response in answer to the question ‘what factors, if any, impacted on your ability to provide a quality training experience for your students?)

The trainers were asked if they felt their training efforts were useful to the students. Only 32 answered the question, but all said that their work had been useful, although two expressed some doubt about the long-term effectiveness of the work. The trainers said their effectiveness could be seen in an improved level of reporting or from the positive responses from students at the end of the program. One felt that the impact of the work would have little long-term impact, and another said that the resumption of ethnic tensions at the end of the training period meant that ‘it gave them an introduction to what might have been’. One felt that the work was useful to trainees who had higher levels of English and were aiming to excel in their field, but ‘the rest either couldn’t fully follow the material or had no interest in changing their current practices’.

Apart from a quarter of the trainers who evaluated their own programs, most were not involved in evaluation of programs and were not told the results of any evaluation of their work. There was also a lack of transparency over the reporting
of training programs, with few reports publicly available. Those who were involved in evaluation processes ‘felt’ that the students improved. The three major areas for disquiet in the effectiveness of training were English language skills of participants, general education standards, and infrastructure and facilities in the newsrooms.

**One country in focus**

Although the educators had noted earlier in the survey that they were rarely well prepared for their teaching assignments, the trainers all felt there were advantages in knowing one country well when working as a journalism educator, and 63% (19 people) said that it was not possible to be an effective trainer without knowing the country and its culture well. However, another 36.7% (11 people) said it was possible.

![Figure 19 Effectiveness of training without knowing country well?](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>63.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked to explain their answers, the educators wrote about the advantages of knowing the local political structure and nature of the media in each country, and
how the two intersect. One wrote about the need to ensure that they were responding to the changing media environment:

Fiji is currently run by a coup-installed military government which has imposed official censorship on the media. If I did not take that into account, and address it during my lectures, my credibility and effectiveness would have been zero. (Survey response in answer to the question: is it possible to work effectively without knowing a country well?)

Operating in ignorance of a culture or the socio economic environment is almost certain to result in failure of training initiatives. (Survey response)

Several trainers noted that in most developing countries the development goals and cultural issues were generally similar. One wrote, ‘by knowing one country well, one can then use it as a base to adapt and implement training tools or methods’. Another wrote, ‘part of my skill set is engaging the in-country participants to have them help me understand their country’. Not all the trainers agreed, with one writing: ‘the cultural aspect in communication comprehension is vastly different in a developing Pacific nation, as compared to Australia’. Other comments included:

While there may be cultural and language barriers and different rules about what may and may not be investigated and reported, the underlying principles are the same. The public does have a right to know what is going on in their country (and elsewhere) and journalists need to learn to find things out and report them. (Survey response)

It takes time to understand the communication practices of each country and accept the challenges journalists face so that you can help them in a more constructive and realistic way instead of arriving on a high horse dispersing advice on ideal journalism practices that are not relevant to this country’s particular context. (Survey response)

The subtleties and nuances of culture MUST be understood as much as possible. If you don’t understand the politics (micro and macro) there will be dynamics going on in the training you just don’t get and could sabotage the training. Basic things as knowing how were the students chosen; by whom, and why will give you a vast understanding of the group, let alone the larger cultural issues. (Survey response)
There was some distain about fly-in fly-out educators who did not know much about local conditions:

I sat in on various training courses conducted by ‘experts’ flown in from the U.S. and Europe. A lot of the material presented was irrelevant for journalists working at state-controlled media. The trainers were asking for material that was not able to be published/provided in Vietnam or they were assuming that the newspapers operated as a sales-driven business. (Survey response)

Although the majority of the educators had earlier said that they had gone to their countries with little preparation and language skills, they believed that this kind of preparation was necessary to provide effective training.

**Lapdogs, Watchdogs and Entertainers**

The journalism educators were asked to think about one country and consider the role of its media. Some caution was required with analysing this survey answer, because of the earlier confusion about which country respondents were considering; several wrote that they had to revise their answers later in the survey. The educators mostly saw the media’s role as that of a watchdog of democracy 59.1% (18 people), a nation builder 51.6% (16), a critic of abuses 41.9% (13) and an educator 32.4% (10). Being an entertainer and uninvolved reporter of the facts were also favoured by 38.7% (12) Being an agent of empowerment was the least chosen role for the media 22.6% (7).
In answer to the question, ‘would you use these words to describe the journalism taking place in your country’, 57.6% (19 people) suggested that it was ‘lapdog—acting as loyal spokespeople for state authorities’. The response ‘agenda’

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23 One trainer raised concern about the use of the expression: ‘it’s unfortunate to use the term lapdog’.
setters—raising awareness of pervasive social problems’ was accepted by 36.4% (12) followed by ‘watchdogs—guardian of the public interest, ensuring accountability of decision makers: 33.3% (11). Last was ‘gatekeepers—reflecting and incorporating the plurality of viewpoints and political persuasions in reporting’ at 27.3% (9 people).

![Figure 21 Describe the journalism in your chosen country.](image)

The journalism educators were asked if the media in their chosen country were failing to act as watchdogs. The largest number responded that the media failed when it came to political considerations:

> During my period of teaching, the media watchdog role was limited by dominance of English-language press, weak & ineffectual civil society, inactive professional media bodies (national & regional) and sub-standard professional training outcomes. (Survey response)
The journalism educators were aiming to create liberal democratic nation journalism, but believed that most of their trainees were operating as lapdogs instead of watchdogs. While clearly there are limitations, journalists in some countries are trying to ‘work for change’, and there was a strong belief among educators in the need for journalists to work as ‘nation builders’. Two trainers wished they had been able to choose multiple answers, and listed danger to staff as an important issue.

**Barriers to Effective Journalism**

The biggest barrier to effective journalism in the chosen country was seen as ‘the role of the state, the constitutional and legal framework’, by 50% (16 people), followed by ‘role of the markets: economic structure, regulation, and media ownership’ 43.8% (14), the ‘role of the profession: education, training and
accreditation bodies’ 31.3% (10), and lastly ‘the role of media systems: watchdog, agenda setters, gatekeepers’ 28.1% (9).

Figure 23 Barriers to effective journalism.

The journalism educators expanded on their views in answering the open-ended question, raising the issue of official censorship (which was grouped with the role of the state) and the effectiveness of professional bodies:

East Timor suffers from having too many bickering journalist groups and political splinters and a lack of professional standards. The tertiary training is sub-standard. (Survey response)

Another wrote about the role of media systems:

reporters usually use only one source for a story. There is a lack of follow-up of stories e.g. they cover the grand opening of a new project or building etc., but don’t go back later to check that it is working. Investigative journalism does not happen much due to the workload expected of journalists and the lack of money organisations have for staff to travel
around the country and take time out to make in-depth enquiries. (Survey response)

Another raised disquiet about cultural traditions, and institutional corruption extending into upper levels of governance, while others thought the problems occurred because of a lack of simple structures within government:

It is not as simple as calling a press sec, telling them you have questions and emailing them across with a deadline. There does not seem to be a well functioning relationship where questions are answered. (Survey response)

There were a number of comments about the safety of journalists:

The state has muzzled opposition and dissent; intimidated journalists to the point of assault, murder and exile; encouraged ethnic hatred ... etc. (Survey response)

The journalism educators were asked ‘what skills do you think journalists in your country need to undertake reporting properly?’ The largest number of respondents believed general journalistic skills was required (77.4%; 24 people), followed closely by critical thinking skills (74.2%; 23 people). In the open-ended questions the trainers listed the need to learn about collective action in the face of intimidation, a knowledge of the country outside the capital city, greater support for journalism education, and more support and time for investigative journalism.
Figure 24 What skills are needed by trainees.

Asked ‘are journalists respected by the public in your chosen country?’ a total of 41.2% (14 people) said they were respected; the same number said they were tolerated. Another 11.8% (4) said they were not liked. Only 5.9% (2) said they were very well respected. None said journalists were hated.
Figure 25 Are journalists respected in your chosen country?

Journalism educators believed they were working where freedom of speech was allowed 62.5% (20 respondents) but 40.6% (13) said they were not. Another four chose ‘other’, with comments indicating that most journalists practiced self-censorship and that free speech was ‘easier for people writing blogs’.
The educators believed they faced range of barriers to creating effective journalism. The role of the state and the constitutional and legal framework, were the biggest problems, followed by economic markets; however a range of other issues came into play.

**Barriers to Investigative Journalism**

Investigative journalism was considered by journalism educators to be very important in the host countries by 41.2% (14 people) and important by another 26.5% (9). The trainers reported that journalists were generally not encouraged to do investigative journalism 38.3% (13), and in fact they were more often discouraged from doing investigative journalism 26.5% (9 people). Only 23.5% (8 people) considered that journalists were encouraged to do such work. Most investigative journalism concentrated on the errors of individuals with the fewest looking at the failures of economics or business.

**Figure 26 Is free expression available?**
Culture or cultural practices were sometimes considered to be an obstacle to investigative journalism 51.5% (17 people), and all of the time to a significant number 33.3% (11). Many of journalism educators were asked to explain their answers, many talking about deference to those in authority.

Figure 27 What is the focus of investigative journalism?
Figure 28 Cultural barriers to investigations.

One respondent stated:

In an ethnically polarised society like Fiji, many abuses are cloaked as ‘custom’ or ‘tradition’, up to and including not being permitted to ask questions of those with power, and accepting the idea that a journalist ought to send a written list of questions in advance to someone they want to interview, and that interview subject has the right to reject any or all of the proposed questions. (Survey response)

However, it was not just about deference. Cultural issues were significant in some areas, particularly in countries were local traditions were significantly different from the trainers’ backgrounds:

Superstition is a problem, e.g. ritual murder of a baby while I was there; shamanism bothers many journalists in different ways. Likewise cultural blockages occur, like distortion of landholder demands against infrastructure work, and distortion of pay-back rules for disputes. (Survey response)

Another wrote about the different philosophical underpinnings of each country, with one suggesting, ‘People have the belief of karma and are therefore very accepting of wrongs that are done—even the evil of Pol Pot’. The most mentioned
cultural problem was the issue of *wontok* in the Pacific, where the needs of family and tribal groups are a priority:

It’s a culture of *wontok*/tribal/extended family networks and also a culture of the Big Man who is not supposed to be questioned. Everyone is connected to someone by a system of reciprocity which discourages challenging bad practices. (Survey response)

Religion was seen as a barrier to investigative journalism sometimes (41.2%; 14 people), seldom (23.5%; 8), and never (14.7%; 5). For 8.8% (3 people), religion or religious practices were an obstacle all the time.

![Figure 29 Religion as a barrier to investigative journalism.](image)

Gender was acknowledged as an issue by some trainers, who noted that it was culturally inappropriate for women to ask some questions:

Asking direct questions is not tolerated. It is regarded as culturally inappropriate particularly for women to ask male politicians direct questions. The young women challenge this orthodoxy. Gender politics. (Survey response)
Newsroom practices caused barriers to reporting in the host countries, with the culture of deference to those in authority seen as the biggest problem by 60% (18 people), followed by a lack of skills by 56.7% (17), a lack of interest from editors by 50% (15), pressure from government by 46.7% (14), and concern for personal safety by 40% (12). Pressure from advertisers was 30% (9) but from other reporters just 10% (3).

Figure 30 Barriers to reporting.

A total of 57.1% (20 people) reported that their students had been put under pressure to stop practising investigative journalism. The pressure was political 35% (7 people), physical 30% (6), internal (threat to budget, staff numbers) 20% (4 people), commercial 10% (2), and legal 5% (1).
If yes, what was the pressure?

One educator said there was some self-censorship, but most told stories of pressure in action:

The government would regularly send out notices informing media organisations that there was to be no ‘negative’ news reported because it was a ‘sensitive’ time. One of the ‘sensitive’ periods was during an international scandal over corruption, where several Japanese business people were jailed. Another was the lead up to the Communist Party national conference. (Survey response)

Sometimes the trainee journalists were physically attacked or threatened, or paid to leave a story alone:

Intimidation of a journalist after attending a court hearing; gave her A$150 and said she’d get whacked if she kept hanging around. (Survey response)

Cultural issues including religion were said to play a significant role in stopping investigative journalism. These, combined with a culture of deference to people in authority, often stopped investigative reporting. The trainers reported that the trainees were often put under pressure, physical or financial, not to undertake investigative reports. While the journalism educators predominately did not
consider religion a significant part of their own lives, it was for many of those that they were teaching.

**What is the Fourth Estate?**

The trainers were asked a range of questions about journalists taking on the role of the Fourth Estate, monitoring government. The majority agreed (38.7%; 12 people) or strongly agreed (51.6%; 16) with the statement ‘do you favour the notion of the media as the Fourth Estate (the notion that journalists wield influence in the politics of a country)?’ One strongly disagreed (3.1%), two disagreed (6.5%), and one had no opinion. They disagreed by 48.4% (15 people) or strongly disagreed by 29% (9 people) with the statement that the media should be thought of as ‘just another business’. One strongly agreed (3.2%), two agreed (6.5%) and 4 had no opinion (12.9%).

![Figure 32 Do you favour the notion of the Fourth Estate as just another business?](image)

When asked about the role of the Fourth Estate in host countries, the journalism educators had a lot to say. Many responded that journalists were ‘little better than PRs’ and that ‘mainstream journalists are perceived as government lapdogs’; or ‘journalists are not able to hold the government to account’. Some lamented that journalists were not able to fulfil their role as the Fourth Estate:

> They are not seen as fulfilling an important function in relation to strengthening democracy—neither journalists, owners or the government perceive that the media has a special function to perform. (Survey response)
They do wield some influence in the politics of the country, but not as much as in other countries—there needs to be more deeper thinking on what is happening and what statements and actions of politicians could mean and more questioning. (Survey response)

They function independently like a 4th estate except that reportage is not very effectual in terms of power or influence. Some investigative and court reporting hinders corruption, and the independence of news organisations is important in defending the journalists doing such work. (Survey response)

The educators overwhelmingly supported the role of the media as the Fourth Estate and lamented the fact that their students could not perform this task to a level that they thought appropriate.

**Political Reform**

Most of the journalism educators 50% (15) believed their students wanted gradual reform to the country’s political system, while 16.7% (5) said they believed their students wanted radical change. Only 3.13% (1 person) said it was not in need of change.

Some commented that the system of government of the host country was structurally fine but traditional modes of governance, corruption, cronyism and patronage and complacency hindered it. One called for a change to policy and practice. Those who reported the need for radical reform pointed to issues of safety and corruption:
Currently a dictatorship that threatens the personal safety of journalists who try to report without fear or favour. It has caused a number of journalists to leave the industry in droves as they were unable to do what they regarded as their job due to the censorship imposed on them. (Survey response)

I believe that the change must be radical because the wealth gap is widening and the wealth of the country is being plundered by a few. On the other hand though, given Cambodia’s history and culture, change in all probability will happen gradually. (Survey response)

Reforms are necessary to create a more stable political landscape, but changes must be implemented slowly because that’s how things work here, people need to understand the benefit of changes and understand fully how any changes would work. (Survey response)

The educators were asked the most important issues facing their host country. Poverty was the biggest issue, getting an average rating out of 8.43 on a ten-point scale (31 responses), followed by education with 8.26 (31 people). The issues of least concern were terrorism at 3.9 or and globalisation at 5.85.

![Figure 34 What are the most important issues facing your country?](image)

When asked to order from one to 10 the most significant challenges to journalism in the host country, the journalism educators gave the highest rating averages to professionalism at 7.87, corruption at 7.75, government control at 7.35 and ethics at 7.31. Threats from other governments/countries scored 3.48 and religious groups 4.67; these were the least challenging.
Figure 35 What are the most significant challenges to journalism in your chosen country?

The trainers were asked if they agreed with the use of development journalism in post-conflict countries. A total of 32.3% (10 people) strongly agreed and 19.4% (6) agreed; 9.7% (3 people) said they did not agree or disagree and 16.1% (5 people) did not know. Seven people disagreed (12.9%) or strongly disagreed (9.7%) with this style of journalism.
Good Reporting

The journalism educators were united in stating that good reporting expresses fairly the position of each side in a political dispute (53% strongly agreed and 46.7% agreed) and that there was a requirement for an equally thorough questioning of the position of each side in a political dispute (57.1% strongly agreed and 42.8% agreed). They predominately agreed that good reporting does not allow the journalist’s own political beliefs to affect the presentation of the subject, with 44.8% strongly agreeing and 37.9% agreeing; however, 10.3% said neither, 3.4% disagreed and 34% strongly disagreed. When asked if good reporting makes clear which side in a political dispute has the better position 41.4% disagreed and a further 13.85% strongly disagreed, 24.1% had no view, another 13.8% agreed and 6.9% strongly agreed.
All but two (6.6%) of the journalism educators agreed that journalists should ‘make sure they are not perceived as trying to influence the outcome of conflicts between political parties over issues’, but there was some disagreement (10.3%) with the statement that journalists should ‘make sure that they report the main issue positions of the political parties, more or less as each presents the issues’. Similarly, when asked if journalists should ‘make sure that conflict between the parties over issues is presented in interesting ways’ 3.4% (1 person) strongly disagreed and 13.4% (4) disagreed. When asked if ‘journalists should do all the usual things to make the news interesting’, 3.4% (1 person) strongly disagreed, 14.3% (4 people) disagreed and 28.6% (8 people) had no view. Most strongly agreed (51.7%) or agreed (44.8%) to the statement that journalists should ‘try to explain political conflict for the public by revealing where each party actually stands on the issues’.

The journalism educators felt that their students had too little objectivity when preparing news 43.3% (13), although 36.7% (11 people) thought they had the right amount, and only 3.3% (1 person) that they had too much objectivity.
Figure 38 Objectivity of trainees.

The journalism educators were asked what, if anything, stopped trainees from using the right amount of objectivity. They answered that inexperience, culture and tradition caused problems, as did self-censorship, owners’ business interests, advertisers’ interests, government pressure and overt intimidation. Common responses were:

They know about balance, but present it as a dichotomy, not as a nuanced range of ideas. Their understanding of the range of ideas possible is very limited. (Survey response)

Reporting methods and lack of guidance, lack of a press watchdog or a common code of ethics. (Survey response)

if they report something the government doesn’t like, they might suffer serious personal consequences, up to and including physical ill treatment. (Survey response)

The journalism educators held normative views about journalism in advanced Western countries.
Media Freedom and Governance

The educators were asked about the kind of government operating in their chosen country, but were forced by the survey to choose from a list of options: two of the trainers were working in countries best described as dictatorships and this was not specifically listed. Of those who were in working democracies, the largest number considered that they were working in a parliamentary democracy 37.5% (10 people), followed by totalitarian (28.6%; 8), constitutional (28.6%, 18), Westminster (14.3%; 4), emergency (10.7%; 3 people), and one each (3.6%) in a deliberative and liberal democracy.

The educators were asked if their work assisted with strengthening the institutional capacity-building in their host country (through bodies such as the press council, press freedom advocacy NGOs, organisations concerned with training and accreditation). A total of 70.8%, 17 people, believed it did. Another 45.8% believed that they had helped with the protection of constitutional principles of freedom of the press, speech and expression, while 2.8% believed that they had helped overcome market failures (developing a regulatory legal framework for media systems to ensure pluralism of ownership and diversity of contents) and assisted with ‘policies to address the role of the state including de-regulation to shift state-run broadcasting to public service broadcasting’.

The journalism educators were asked 13 questions about the rights and responsibilities of journalists within the host countries, and asked to strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree or strongly disagree to a range of ideas. They strongly agreed 66.7% and agreed 30% to the statement ‘journalists in the country you are working in should have, upon request, immediate and full access to any government document that is not restricted for bona fide reasons of national security or personal privacy’. They also strongly agreed 43.3% and agreed 36.7% that ‘journalists should be editorially independent of management’; 13.3% disagreed and 6.7% had no view.

There was support for the view that ‘private citizens who are falsely accused by the media should have a legal right to reply through the news organisations that led the criticism’, with 40% strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing. Just 3.3% (1 person) disagreed with the idea that private citizens should have a legal right of
reply. There was also strong support for the idea that ‘a news source who is promised confidentiality should be able to sue for breach of promise if the journalist breaks the promise’ with 20% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing; 26.7% had no view and 13.3% disagreed.

When it came to asking if ‘the media have an obligation to downplay the activities of political extremists whose ideas are a threat to the democratic way of life’ a total of 30% (9 people) had no view, with 26.7% (8 people) agreeing and the same number disagreeing. One person (3.3%) strongly agreed, and 13.3% (4 people) who strongly disagreed.

When asked if ‘the courts should make it reasonably easy for public officials who have been seriously harmed by false and careless reporting to win libel suits’ a total of 33.3% (10 people) had no view, with 33.3% (10 people) disagreeing and 6.7% (2 people) strongly disagreeing. Only 3.3% (1 person) strongly agreed and 26.7% (8 people) agreed.

When asked if ‘government officials should have the authority to stop the publication or broadcast of a news story they believe is a grave threat to national security’ a total of 43.3% (13 people) expressed no view, with more disagreeing 23.3% (7 people) and strongly disagreeing 16.7% (5 people) than agreeing 13.3% (4 people) or strongly agreeing 3.3% (1 person).

When asked if ‘journalists should not promote ideas and values that have been rejected by the broad public’ 30% (9 people) had no view, 30% (9 people) disagreed and 16.7% (5 people) strongly disagreed; another 16.7% (5 people) did agree and 6.7% (2 people) strongly agreed.

The educators were asked if they believed that ‘journalists should not delve into the personal lives of public officials’. This statement was strongly disagreed with by 10% (3 people) and disagreed with by 43.3% (11 people), while 26.7% (8 people) had no view. Only 3.3% (1 person) strongly agreed and 16.7% (5 people) agreed.

There was disagreement 63.3% (19 people) with the view that ‘journalists should not cover issues on which they have strong convictions’ while another 13.3% (4
people) had no view, 6.7% (2 people) strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed (5 people).

When asked if ‘media companies have the right to exclude stories about their organisations which may damage their commercial interests’ no one strongly agreed, 10% agreed (3 people), 10% (3 people) had no view, 53.3% (16 people) disagreed and 26.7% (8 people) strongly disagreed. Asked if they would ‘pursue a story that was potentially damaging to my employer’s commercial interests as actively as a story about an unrelated company’ 3.4% (1 person) strongly agreed, 20.7% (6 people) agreed, 24.1% (7 people) had no view, 34.5% (10 people) disagreed, and 17.2% (5 people) strongly disagreed.

**Impact of Trainers**

The journalism trainers were asked if their particular views impacted on the way they taught in the classroom; 77.8% (21 people) said it did, 7.45% (2) that it did not and 14.8% or 4 people were not sure. When asked to explain their answers, some said they adjusted their courses so they could still raise ethical issues but without causing the trainees problems:

> These are values I hold dear as a journalist in Australia ... but the environment in Cambodia is different and while there may be values and principles that we all aspire to at the end of the day a Cambodian journalist has to work within his environment and keep his rice bowl too!!! So while he may aspire for these values, he may not totally achieve them, but if he can slowly make gains then that itself is a win-win position. (Survey response)

> Because of the severe limitations of reporting in Vietnam, I would outline how things were handled in Western countries. Usually the student-reporters were quite interested in these practices but they would tell me they couldn’t adopt the practices in Vietnam. (Survey response)

> One aspect that I focused on was the need for charters of editorial independence to enable the editors and their staff to operate without interference from owners and others, plus a recognition that media assets are unlike any other assets in that they also have a moral responsibility in terms of their function as the Fourth Estate. (Survey response)

> In the face of direct challenges to the basic principles of journalism, disguised as an appeal to ‘support nation building’, I responded by
presenting Western journalistic standards as a very desirable model for Fiji. A free media is a significant contributor to the stable, open and prosperous Western system present in Australia and New Zealand, and I suggested that an un free media would in fact retard rather than enhance any nation building effort. (Survey response)

The journalism educators were asked more about their values. Most of them strongly agreed (51.7%) or agreed (37.9%) that ‘democracy, while it may be flawed, is the best form of government’; However when asked if ‘Western liberal journalism education Is an essential part of a country’s democratic process’ only 27.6% (8 people) strongly agreed and 44.8% (13 people) agreed; another 13.8% (4 people) neither agreed or disagreed and four disagreed (13.8%). When asked if ‘problems of third world countries are largely the result of exploitation by industrialised countries’ the majority had no view (37.9%) while 17.2% agreed (5 people) and 41.4% (12) disagreed. The journalism educators strongly agreed 20.7% (6 people) and agreed 44.8% (13 people) that ‘Western governments have an important role to play in providing journalism training in other countries’; 17.2% (5 people) disagreed and another 17.2% (five people) had no view. When asked if the ‘training in the rights and responsibilities democracy is more important than training in journalism skills for emerging democracies’ 23.3% (7 people) strongly agreed and 56.7% (17 people) agreed 13.3% (4 people) had no view, and 6.7% (2 people) disagreed.

The journalism educators held the ideals of democracy and liberal democratic nation state journalism highly but recognised the fact that local conditions often did not support such work.

More about the trainers

Of those who completed the survey 32.1% (9 people) said they had worked in government or politics and 67.9% that they had not (19 people). Of those who worked in government, five had worked as government press secretaries/media advisers and four had worked in government corporate communications.
The largest number 43.3% (13 people) considered their political thinking left wing, and 3.3% (1 person) right wing. Another 23.3% (7 people) were neutral, 13.3% swinging (4), and another 16.7% (5) did not wish to reveal their political thinking.
The trainers mostly felt that they were appropriately paid for their work 37.9% (11 people), while 10.3% (3 people) thought they had been well paid. Another 26.6% (8 people) said their costs were met, and 20.7% (6 people) that they received low wages. Another 10.3% (3 people) said it cost them money to conduct the training. These responses were vastly at odds with the sometimes quoted belief that all people working abroad are paid huge sums of money:

There is an imbalance between well paid ‘agents of change’ employed under a scheme to satisfy policy, and actual practitioners who are at the ‘coal-face’ of training. (Survey response)

I paid for about six trips to East Timor myself. My last one was funded by AusAID. (Survey response)

Despite a narrative that talks about ‘highly paid consultants’ the reality is that journalism educators do not believe they generally fall into this category, with only 10 per cent considering themselves well paid.

Figure 40 Educators’ pay.
Chapter Eight: Journalism Educators and (Normative) Views

Of the Australian journalism educators who have offered journalism education programs outside their national borders and who responded to this survey, 14 took part in a further in-depth interview to tease out the issues in the survey, detailed in the previous chapter. The educators were asked about their theoretical and practical understanding of democracy and journalism’s role within countries which do not share similar democratic structures—and asked what, if any, changes they have made to their journalism teaching, courses and curricula, and how they evaluate the effectiveness of their training work.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in March and April 2011. Those interviewed were Barbara Adam, Clare Arthur, Jock Cheetham, Sean Dorney, Mike Dobbie, Lee Duffield, Jemima Garrett, Bob Howarth, Eric Loo, Cait McMahon, Mark Pearson, Amanda Watson and two unnamed educators. They represented a range of ages and experiences: some were full time academics (Duffield, Watson, Pearson, Loo) while some were working journalists who had conducted multiple training courses (Howarth, Arthur, Dorney, Garrett, Cheetham, Dobbie). McMahon differed from the rest in that she was not a journalist but a psychologist who provided specific training for journalists in coping with trauma. The two unnamed educators were consultants specialising in providing journalism education and training across the Asia-Pacific region.

The educators were asked a variety of questions about their experiences in training from preparation to evaluation, and specifically about their views of journalism and democracy.

Motivations: Missionaries, Mercenaries, Misfits and Madmen

The motivation to become a journalism educator in foreign climes was wide and varied, but often came to a belief in the benefit to societies of spreading liberal democratic nation state journalistic practice. In that sense, Pearson argued that he and other educators were missionaries for press freedom and liberal journalism, and asked, ‘Which one are you?’ (Pearson)
Some people have made international training their livelihoods and gain considerable income from the work, but as the survey found they were few in number. Most journalism educators believed the number of mercenaries among their number were few:

I wouldn’t say many … some trainers are pure mercenaries, because that’s their source of income. I think we have the luxury of being academics and then providing training on the side during our breaks. But there are trainers who [get] their main income from providing these training workshops. And they do charge. They do charge exorbitantly. (Loo)

The size of the paycheque provided to some journalism educators caused some consternation among the ranks of international trainers, co-trainers and trainees. Academics who were already getting an income from their home universities were particularly insistent that they should not be treated any better than local trainers when working in another country:

I don’t think I should be paid any more than what a local trainer should be paid. Maybe perhaps a little bit more for my experience, but not three or four times. I know that some trainers have a pay training workshop with local trainers, and these foreign trainers are paid so much more. I think maybe that they morally may not be right. (Loo)

In some cases there was an almost holier-than-thou attitude from journalism educators who worked for the not-for-profit sector and drew little from the work:

The development workers are driving around in their flash cars, the volunteers are walking around in thongs and they think they’re fitting in, and the (genuine religious) missionaries with their really highly conservative clothing and are looking very poor and bedraggled. (Watson)

Those who worked in volunteer roles also felt they had a better relationship with their trainees:

They can see that you’re living a similar life to them, and that’s part of the volunteer ethos, and I think that certainly has its advantages in terms of building up relationships with your co-workers. (Watson)

Despite claims of exorbitantly high consultant fees for trainers, some trainers found that they struggled to earn a sustainable living specialising in journalism
education. Those from outside academia complained that it was not glamorous and that conditions (such as accommodation) were often not conducive to delivering quality training:

I’ve tried a couple of times to set myself up as a trainer, and it’s not viable. It’s not viable. It’s really important, if we are to be serious about media development that there be … a network or unit, a union … of international trainers. (Arthur)

There was some angst about those trainers who flew to countries on short-term consultancies and were paid extremely well, but left behind others, earning far less, to implement changes:

After the foreign consultants left, the editor came to me and asked me to do a weekly training course. I started doing that, but it tailed off because they were so busy, and when they were at the course they weren’t earning money. (Adam)

There was some worry about important funding being wasted on government officials overseeing and evaluating projects, but no one wanted to put their name to such accusations:

Much of this money spent on flying an AusAID person over (to PNG) has been, to an extent, abused … To an extent it’s quite sad to see Australians in a way abusing the system, enjoying the perk … At least that is the feeling that I get, and that is rather sad. (Name redacted at educator’s request)

There was an impression by some trainers that there was money to be made by organisations who provided individuals to work as consultants on aid projects, but again they were wary of putting their name to allegations: ‘I’m very aware of the wastage of aid funds—not just in media but in a lot of different areas’. (Trainer A)

Some questioned the value of using an expatriate in Pacific countries where the cost of accommodation could be extremely high:

It does cost a hell of a lot of money, to have an expatriate person, especially in Moresby at the moment where the accommodation is just astronomical. Weighing up, would that money be better spent somewhere else? (Dorney)
The amount of money being spent on individual trainers or consultants was not necessarily the cause of most consternation about wasted aid funds. Some trainers were more upset about how training contracts were awarded:

The criticism that I’ve seen has been to do with the way government training contracts are awarded and the organisation, the profit-making organisations that are benefitting from the training funding. So, in other words, it’s kind of like the criticism of many other aid operations, it’s been a criticism of how much value from the dollar allocated actually gets to the people need it. (Pearson)

The journalism educators believed they were overwhelmingly missionaries to the cause of press freedom and liberal journalism values; they generally rejected notions that they were mercenaries, although acknowledged that money was being made by some people; none of the educators put themselves into the misfit category, although all acknowledged that some among their number would be called ‘misfits’ by others:

When you’re in Pacific Island countries you do see these individuals who clearly fit in much better there than they would back in their own culture. (Pearson)

*Danger For Trainers*

It follows then to discuss the difficulties faced by journalism educators. Those interviewed reported dealing with earthquakes, tsunamis, life-threatening tropical diseases and mental health issues. On one training assignment in Afghanistan the translator of one the trainers was killed:

My translator on my first trip to Kabul was killed on the Friday I was there. It was his day off, it was Friday. I was still working, doing other things, and I heard that night he’d been killed in a grenade blast, which was very sad. He died trying to protect two Westerners … It was my first trip to Kabul. (Dobbie)

Sometimes post-conflict tensions crept into the training rooms. People who found themselves on opposite sides of a conflict could find themselves side by side in a training room. Dobbie described a very unfortunate situation in which a man found himself in the same training room as another man who had tortured him. Dobbie said the situation left him flummoxed:
He said, ‘There’s a man in there who used to torture me, and I will not be in the same room as him.’ And I said, stupidly, ‘OK, but please stay. I’d really like you to stay, because it’s really important, especially if that’s what’s happened to you. I need you, and as many people that this has happened to, to participate in this union.’ He said, ‘I just can’t do it.’ He hung around for 20 minutes, and then he walked away. (Dobbie)

There is also the problem of upsetting people within the country. Dobbie explained how he was delivered a hand-written death threat by a smiling courier:

I opened it up, and read, ‘If you don’t stop doing this right now, we’re going to kill you. And I just sort of looked at him and said, ‘What?’ And he goes, ‘Oh no, don’t worry about it. I mean, just, you know. We’re not really happy.’ … It was bizarre. (Dobbie)

As training programs were often conducted in countries coming out of, or still experiencing, civil disturbances, trainers often found that they had classrooms filled with trainees wanting to share traumatic stories:

It’s heavy stuff we’re hearing. You know all the gory details and often seeing the pictures and all that sort of stuff. But we’re always very, very clear that what we’re doing is training and not therapy, and we talk about the difference, so that people don’t move into looking at us, for, therapy. (McMahon)

Although most trainers used the normally prescribed method of self-care in the Australian journalism profession (alcohol), others found they benefited from the support of different professionals after their training courses:

Journalism education could be a physically dangerous occupation where issues of trauma were often raised. Journalism educators needed to be aware of the need to apply self-care strategies during and after training programs.

**Bravery of Trainees**

Danger may not have been anticipated by all of the trainers before they got to the country, and few had thought about the bravery of their trainees. Many of the journalism educators walked came from their training experiences believing that they had taught the bravest people in the world. Potential death was a working reality for many of the trainees, in a variety of countries. Often those being trained
had been working under incredibly difficult circumstances, unthinkable to the average Australian journalism trainer:

I think we have it really easy here in Australia. We have a pretty fantastic media industry … We don’t face anywhere near the threats that journalists in other countries face. We do enjoy all the benefits of having a strong, vibrant media industry and journalism community, because we have a strong functioning democracy. (Dobbie)

Many of the trainers voiced unease that they had under-estimated the mental and physical bravery of those in their training rooms before they had started their training:

I hadn’t really known or experienced or understood a situation in which journalists could be in danger as was potentially the case in Papua New Guinea, so that was something I had to learn about as well. (Watson)

One of the most disturbing problems for educators was that it was not always known why local journalists were being targeted for intimidation and murder, so it was not always possible in the training room to pinpoint what might cause a problem. Journalists in some countries such as the Philippines are killed with impunity because they are working on a story, or because they unwittingly ask a question at the wrong time:

We don’t even know the stories have even started, they haven’t necessarily been printed. It’s just that a journalist asks a question so therefore, before they go any further, they’ll be killed. (Dobbie)

There was great respect among the journalism educators for the bravery of the trainees in their classrooms, and many recognised that the journalists they were ‘training’ had far greater experience in defending press freedom and truth-telling than their teachers:

They really do believe that all the things that journalism can bring to a democratic society is what they want for their country. It’s not that they’re political people, far from it. They are people who are passionate about improving things in their country. (Dobbie)
**Teacher Training**

Many journalism educators had never been formally trained as educators. They had come from professional backgrounds and had completed short courses such as a train-the-trainer certification. The journalism educators did not believe that academic qualifications were necessary to be effective trainers: experience and a true appreciation of journalism in other cultures were required:

> They didn’t care if I had a PhD or I was a professor. It was my experience working in Hong Kong, in Papua New Guinea, in East Timor and relating to the conditions that the local journalists work at, and the fact that I taught during half Ramadan, because half my class were wearing hijabs. (Howarth)

The educators, particularly those from the academy, noted that their style of teaching often had to be adapted. While Australian students could endure a lecture accompanied by note slides, in other cultures a more personal approach was required:

> Sitting around in a room (in East Timor) with a power point just isn’t going to work, but sitting around outside someone’s house and having a cup of coffee and just chatting, which we found in Samoa, as well, works much better. (McMahon)

Understanding the educational system from which the trainees came was considered vital to understanding how they had previously learned and how they might learn in the future:

> They [PNG students] come from a background of a lot of rote learning and the teacher is someone who you don’t asked questions, they’re the all-knowing sage who gives you the information you need to regurgitate in the exam. (Watson)

Other trainers noted the need to modify their teaching techniques to encourage group participation and conversation among trainees who had mostly been rote learners. Watson had developed the habit of stopping and waiting for responses:

> I had to make really conscious efforts to allow a very long time, standing, counting the seconds, to smile and wait patiently and glance around the classroom and give them time to think and try and be encouraging. (Watson)
Australian journalism educators had some uncomfortable moments in the training room because of a lack of awareness or training in culture. In one instance, Arthur cited a case where she was asked by a senior project officer to reprimand trainees for being late to class. She soon realised that there were bigger problems than punctuality:

It turned out that some of those journalists didn’t have access to computers, and had had a nightmare trying to get their work done … If I’d been left to deal with it myself, I wouldn’t have done it the way that I’d been asked to do it. (Arthur)

Sometimes the journalism educators reported issues as cultural problems when they appeared to be more bad educational experiences:

Some of the practices which I found appalling, for example at the end of semester, they’d line the students up in front of the other students to tell them what their results were, to say, ‘you fail’. And the kids would stand there and burst out crying. I thought, ‘this was bloody awful’. (Howarth)

The journalism educators recognised the need to adapt their teaching skills to various places, but most had not been formally trained in how to do this. They all intuitively recognised that the culture of any group varied enormously, just as an inner-city Melbourne university contains various sub-groups.

**Pre-arrival training for trainers**

The preparation for training in different countries varied significantly. Some programs had intensive culture and language training; others simply asked trainers to jump on a plane at short notice. AusAID-funded programs and Australian Volunteers Abroad tended to provide significant background material on the country, including current hot issues. The internet overwhelmingly replaced libraries for researching countries and their media systems. Much information was available online from organisations such as Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders and Pacific Media Watch. Some of the news organisations where the trainers would be working had a web presence that could be accessed in Australia. It was, however, acknowledged that it was more difficult to use the internet for research on countries where there were current government clampdowns on media.
Despite Australia’s physical proximity to many of the countries where journalism education was occurring, very little about these countries appears regularly in the Australian press. There is no Pacific correspondent based outside Australia for the major commercial news organisations, and less than a handful with any real knowledge of the area. During the final months of this dissertation the ABC made redundant its radio and television Pacific correspondents, expanding the role of the correspondent in Papua New Guinea to cover the rest of the Pacific.

Few Australian journalists in Australia’s mainstream commercial media had any depth of knowledge about the Pacific, although there were individuals in various newsrooms who were seen as ‘the’ international experts. This was particularly noticeable to Dorney when he covered major stories in the region; he noted his horror when an Australian journalist working for Al Jazeera asked an Indo-Fijian taxi driver rather than a local Fijian about the popularity of the then self-proclaimed prime minister Frank Bainimarama:

> The reality is that at that stage, Bainimarama did not have the support of the indigenous people. But, y’know, people who talk to taxi drivers think they know everything. (Dorney)

Dorney argued that Australian journalism educators need to have a better understanding of Australia’s colonial history and relationship within the region before they leave home, so they can better understand what was going on in various countries.

The journalism educators all wanted more time to prepare for their training courses, and opportunities to see the workplaces in action. It was particularly important to view the interaction between reporters and editors and understand the working environment, so material brought to the country could be appropriately adapted:

> get a feel for the local environment, visit the newsroom, observe how the local reporters work, sit in on editorial meetings, and see the communication patterns between the editor, who is an authority figure in the newsroom anyway in some developing countries. (Loo)
You only really know what it’s about when you arrive. I arrived on the Friday night, and I was teaching on the Monday morning. (Trainer A)

Watson said she prepared by meeting veteran journalism educator Tom Hogan before she began her first assignment as a journalism volunteer in Micronesia. Through Australian News Ambassadors for Development, she was given general information in a 10-day pre-departure briefing on general issues such as development and cross cultural awareness and cross cultural communication, but because she was the only one going to Micronesia she had to rely on the internet:

[Hogan] explained to me, what to expect, a bit about how the culture works, and his experiences there. Talking with him and understanding what he’s been through, and reading what he’s written, that helped me understand what to expect. (Watson)

When she prepared for a role in Papua New Guinea with Australian Volunteers International (AVI), she received a three-day live-in pre-departure briefing in Melbourne:

Before you go to a place, they insist you talk to return volunteers, so I was able to speak to people who lived and worked in PNG, and at least two people who lived and worked at the Divine Word University. So that was part of the process before I left Australia, and then when I got to PNG, we had a five-day long orientation program in Port Moresby and that talked about PNG and the culture, and also included language training. (Watson)

Adam, on the other hand, used the old-fashioned research method: books:

I went to the National Library in Canberra and read every book they had about Vietnam. I think there were four and one was published in 1980! It was learn as you go. (Adam)

Adam’s old-fashioned research was echoed by other journalism trainers, including McMahon, who prepared by reading political histories and the history of conflicts in the country in which she was teaching. Because of the nature of her specialist courses she also tried to find information about cultural expressions of trauma:

Most of it is from Western perspectives … but then anything I can get on cultural expressions of trauma, or manifestations of trauma responses, or how they even understand. Is it spirit culture like in Vietnam or
Cambodia? People have the belief that any expressions of depression or trauma responses are basically spirits coming back. So what does that mean, in terms of me working with those people, about raising those issues, even, and are they going to admit to those issues? So, it can get very, very complex. (McMahon)

The trainers who believed they did best in the training room were those who embraced the local culture and language:

The best experience I had was in Bandung, I was invited into their homes, I was invited into prayers, to sit with them when they had prayers … they were open, and opened me up to everything, because they could see I wanted to learn as much as I could about Islam while I was there. (Howarth)

The Australian educators routinely recorded the students’ delight at any attempt to engage with language, food and culture:

They knew I was, I guess, I was really genuinely interested. (Howarth)

Learning the local language was seen as an important part of training success for many of the trainers. A number suggested it was impossible to teach effectively without understanding or being able to read at least some of the local language. Howarth encouraged journalism educators to at least attempt to use the language, even if mistakes were made:

I went to a funeral in the (PNG) highlands … they asked me to speak at the funeral, and I spoke in pidgin, and then I started to get lost, and they’re all listening intently, and at the end I said … ‘bugger it’, which the whole congregation burst out laughing, which I though, God, you shouldn’t be doing this at a funeral, making people laugh. But they reacted positively, that I was trying, not successfully, to use the language. (Howarth)

Those who did not have language skills argued that it was possible to be effective without learning the local language. They spoke about the benefits of working alongside translators who could then re-deliver workshops to other groups:

One of the capacity building things is work with journalist translators and local journalists who want to be trainers. So you’re building a pool of local people who are confident to train in their local circumstances. (Arthur)
Sometimes the inability of the trainer to speak the local language hampered communication. Often trainees would include the trainer in break-time conversations by continuing conversations in English. However, McMahon found that in the Philippines, which had recently witnessed the largest massacre of journalists in the world, trainees spent breaks discussing issues in Filipino:

They all spoke really good English but, for the first time ever, I was excluded at lunch times and morning teas. I did discuss it with an NUJP [National Union of Journalists of the Philippines] journo and a local psychiatrist, and they thought it was something to do with the topic, of trauma, and the fact that they were all so recently traumatised, and so it was a safety thing, of them moving straight back into their local language.  
(McMahon)

Sometimes even when the students spoke and understood English, Australian English proved impenetrable:

In the Philippines they all spoke perfect English, American English, I made the assumption that people were just understanding my English. It was the accent, they didn’t get.  
(McMahon)

The journalism educators believed they could prepare themselves to a certain extent before arriving in a foreign country, but they wanted more time in each country to learn about workplaces and their cultures. Many believed there were benefits to learning the local language, although those without language skills felt they still could be effective. There was a call from at least one of the educators for Australian journalism trainers to have a better understanding of Australia’s colonial past and current links before beginning training in any country.

How trainees were chosen
One of the major issues for the Australian journalism educators was how and why people ended up in their training rooms or newsrooms How participants were selected, who selected them, and why they were being selected were considered vitally important to the eventual success of the training provided. The educators all raised issue about educating junior staff when many of the problems stemmed from senior management:
we don’t teach the editors. So we teach the journalists to fish, and they go back to the newsrooms and the editor takes the fishing line off them. (Arthur)

As most of the educators had little control over who was in the training room or whom they were working with, they did the best they could. The more experienced trainers tended to contact participants before training started, if possible, to learn who would be there and why:

I usually then send out the participants an introductory email saying, who I am, and then ask them a little bit about themselves. I usually don’t get political sort of stuff of course. (McMahon)

The journalism educators sometimes feared that the content of their courses could put them in conflict with the government of the hosting nation. Often the people in the training room were not ‘real’ journalists but government informants:

[My colleague working in Sri Lanka] deliberately didn’t get into those sorts of [political] discussions that we sometimes are more open to having … Even though the people coming to the course had been chosen by those people who had invited us in, you still never knew what informants, what government informants, were actually sitting in the room. (McMahon)

Because many trainees were extremely polite, educators feared that they were often not told when something they were suggesting could not work in the society in which they are working. In many cultures, trainees would say ‘yes I understand’ when they meant ‘no, it won’t work here’.

Some trainers felt uncomfortable when cast into the role as the all-knowledgeable journalism trainer, while others were confident in their mastery of the profession. One of the younger trainers, Watson, was shocked by how students sometimes took off-the-cuff statements extremely seriously:

Quite a lot of the students were quite prepared to accept something I said, even if I said something controversial for the purpose of stimulate classroom discussion. They’d sometimes be seeming to take me at my word because they thought I was an expert. (Watson)

Some of the trainers found it best to ask students for help in ensuring the course was a success. To do this they encouraged them to ask appropriate questions and
stop the trainer when they did not understand or believed a technique would not work. Other trainers, however, accepted that not all students would seek clarifications on parts of the classes they did not understand but they would endeavour to encourage the trainees to make their own decisions on how to use the information.

The journalism educators all agreed they tried to do their best with the trainees they found in their training rooms or newsrooms, but acknowledged that they might have had students who were not genuine participants, planted by governments to ‘spy’ on the course. Of the genuine participants, trainers were not always sure they were being given honest feedback about what would or would not work in a particular place.

**Interference in sovereign governments**

The journalism educators all agreed that it was appropriate, and incumbent upon the Australian Government and other liberal democratic nation states, to provide journalism education and training in other countries, particularly where there was no or little opportunity for journalists to receive training from local journalism educators. Most considered it vital that Australia (and New Zealand) play a leadership role in the Asia–Pacific region:

> If you want these countries to be functioning democracies, then the media is a huge element in that, so I think it’s massively important for us to be helping out the media in the Pacific, I mean, it’s not popular with some of the governments, to be helping the media. (Dorney)

They acknowledged that some governments resented the presence of Australian or any foreign trainers in the country, particularly when they were working in newsrooms. Questions about the strategic importance of putting journalism educators into the newsrooms of foreign countries raised a few eyebrows:

> Australia does it [journalism aid provision] not just through good will but also for strategic reasons. I really don’t know enough about that balance, or that mix of motivations. (Pearson)

Some noted a recent case where an Australian trainer was asked to leave Solomon Islands by the Sogavare government’s because of disquiet that she was
influencing reporting on government matters; but some of the experienced educators believed that governments who claimed to be upset by the presence of foreigner trainers were simply trying to avoid accountability:

There are lots of people who don’t want ‘interference’, but my view is that, the money couldn’t be better spent than empowering the media to go and dig out the news and keep those in power accountable, and of course those in power don’t want to be accountable. (Dorney)

There was uneasiness among other trainers about the appropriateness of Australian educators providing journalism training to fragile near-neighbours, with suggestions that provision of such programs was tantamount to influencing the affairs of a sovereign nation:

I was very disappointed in my young years by the way decolonization went with coup d’états and corruption it comes down to bullying of the media and so on. The question is what is appropriate? (Duffield)

Some felt that there were advantages to bringing in foreigners to provide training courses. In many countries, such as Papua New Guinea, there were few people with post-graduate journalism or teaching qualifications. As Watson noted, she was one of the few qualified to teach: ‘They didn’t have staff members in PNG or available people in PNG with my qualifications and experience’. Others suggested that journalism education needed to be provided by countries with the appropriate skills and resources as part of a properly funded media strategy:

I can’t think of any argument why we shouldn’t be providing funds for this purpose, but it’s to do with the way the funds are deployed. All these unfortunate bad habits have become entrenched. Mechanisms of accountability and oversight are largely ineffective. (Trainer A)

While they were aware that they were not always welcome within a country because of the nature of journalism, the journalism educators believed in the Australian Government supporting such work and acknowledged that there were often no local people available to do the training, even if that was considered a more appropriate option.
**Funding Matters**

A large and increasing number of countries and organisations provide funds for journalism education, including AusAID, USAid, the International Federation of Journalists, European Union, United Nation Development Program, Sri Lanka Press Institute, International News Safety Institute, Deutsche Welle Training Institute, international trade unions and affiliated bodies such as the Canadian Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society. Often aid organisations had similar motivations for funding the work but went about achieving them in a different manner. Countries and organisations that funded journalism training, particularly government organisations such as AusAID, sometimes put special contractual obligations on trainers not to speak or write about their programs without prior permission. This kind of arrangement was difficult for many journalism educators, who argued they found the restriction contradicted the very nature of journalism and its dedication to truth-speaking:

> AusAID are very funny about those things. I never took any notice of those forms they wanted us to, sign up, y’know, committed you to silence forever. (Dorney)

Despite this restriction, all the educators were asked about suggestions that funds were misspent on some courses. There was no suggestion from the Australian trainers that any trainers were party to corruption, although they did have worries about how some of programs they worked in were implemented. They expressed greater agitation about how particular Australian organisations were selected to provide journalism education and training. ABC International, the provider of the media development program in Solomon Islands that is a case study for this work, was among the organisations that drew criticism:

> I’m not a big fan of a lot of the aid-funded training in Pacific and elsewhere because it tends to be very ad hoc and the agenda is very dictated by the donor and not by the recipients. More specifically, the people who are chosen to do the training, as far as I can gather, all you need to have done, is spend a few years in some editorial position in the ABC. To me it’s a complete misfit. (Trainer A)

Some of the journalism educators felt they might be duplicating the work of agencies because they rarely knew what other organisations were doing in any
given country. Some worked in countries such as Afghanistan where it felt like every donor-capable nation on earth was providing aid. Dobbie claimed that some journalism aid workers were embarrassed when they discovered they were in the country and essentially doing the same work:

In Kabul, when I was there, it was an alphabet soup of aid organizations all over the shop, all doing the same thing. You’d get awfully frustrated because you’d go, shouldn’t we all be doing this together, rather than doing exactly identical programs to, in our case, train journalists, when I can spot five other aid organizations all doing the same thing? (Dobbie)

Howarth and Pearson also raised issues with the duplication and overlapping of many courses by donors because of lack of communication between organisations and countries. There was also a difference of opinion among journalism educators about how programs should run:

There’s now a trend amongst some of the AusAID programs to employ some people as mentors or coaches. I don’t know what the agenda is, but I suspect it is to allow people to come into the system without any experience, training or track record in any kind of educational institutions…. Indigenous training institutes have a whole bunch of students but no equipment and no internet … and these coaches and mentors can sit around and talk about leadership and be paid quite handsomely. (Trainer A)

They did not question the need to provide journalism training, but were more interested in who was chosen to do the training, and why. There was some concern about Australia’s aid agency AusAID outsourcing consultancy work to third parties in a bid to minimise potential political embarrassment if programs did not work effectively:

They’re not taking responsibility for the spending of taxpayer’s money. They’re outsourcing it to these bodies and I don’t think are making very good use of it. If there’s some problem with the program, they can blame the managing contractor. If they were taking responsibility, and getting real expertise into AusAID, those people would be responsible, and there would be a direct line of responsibility to AusAID, and that would put pressure on AusAID. They’ve structured themselves very cleverly to avoid responsibility for failed programs. (Trainer A)
Some organisations were considered to be easier for journalism educators to work for than others. There was high respect for those that demanded a high level of accountability and honesty about the effectiveness of any project. Howarth said he was particularly keen to ensure that 5 per cent of any training budget was spent on assessments and reviews of training projects:

I’ve seen so many projects that have been an absolute waste of money, you know, it’s been a tea party junket where everyone only goes for the daily allowance and the free meals. (Howarth)

A few journalism trainers who offered their services through programs like Australian Business Volunteers argued that they could be much more honest in their evaluation of the effectiveness of the training:

I don’t get paid, so I can be dead honest … Alarm bells ring with people who aren’t game to say that such and such a project was a total waste of time and money. And I’ve seen too many glowing reports written and my reaction was ‘this is complete bullshit’. (Howarth)

Other educators who relied on repeated contracts reported that they were reluctant to write in their evaluation reports that particular courses or programs had not worked as well as they should. Arthur noted, ‘It’s people self-censoring, aren’t they?’

Many of the trainers spoke about the difficulties of getting strong media operating in developing countries, but some said they did not wish to document failures or to report difficulties to funding organisations. Australian journalism trainers had some frustration with public debate about the effectiveness of journalism education programs offered abroad:

I think it comes from public ignorance, and very poor journalism, where people don’t understand the difference between the aid budget and other aspects of fiscal/political planning. (Arthur)

A few donor organisations indicated to the trainers that their programs might not bring much immediate benefit but they continued to fund them regardless:

In Sri Lanka … there were five partners that we were dealing with, all of which were members of the IFJ (International Federation of Journalists). I
think generally there was an understanding that the training was valuable and was needed. If anything, there may have been a degree of uncertainty as to whether the training would achieve much based on the socio-political environment in Sri Lanka at the time. (Dobbie)

The journalism educators reported that they felt they could not be honest in reporting problems to some funding organisations but when they worked as volunteers they could be more open. Almost all commented on the lack of coordination among aid providers in the countries they worked in. The educators varied about how training should be done and who should do it: those employed by large training organisations overwhelmingly praised the effectiveness of their systems, but those who worked for smaller or not-for-profit organisations thought their systems were best. It was a matter of ideology, with neither side pointing to hard evidence to support their position.

**Journalism Education and Training**

As outlined earlier, journalism education can happen in a variety of ways. The journalism educators interviewed for this thesis worked on every type of training opportunity, and often on several different kinds. These included short courses, on-the-job training, mentoring, event-focused skills training, or a college or university education. There was no overwhelming preference for one kind of training over another; and all acknowledged that training in another country meant added complexities in that the priorities of the host country, the funding organisations, and the trainees might not be in alignment. Australian journalism educators reported that they were often faced with difficult in-class decisions: Arthur spoke about the need to build courses that met multiple demands, for example, a media skills workshop refocused to include reportage about governance. In one case she changed a course billed as ‘training in reporting biodiversity’ to basic craft skills. Dobbie too noted the need to be a flexible to meet the desires of trainees, funders and news organisations:

> Sometimes it’s part of a broader focus, such as the European Union might have a global campaign to improve functioning democracy in developing nations. If you drill down through that, there may be funds available to encourage journalists to report on democratic issues in developing nations. (Dobbie)
Educators complained that despite the grand plans of donors they often did not have the resources to deliver on training promises. For example, regional universities or newsrooms did not have what some trainers would consider basic tools, such as internet access, or if they did, it was not for journalists but managers:

In Timor, their mobile network is hopeless, but most of the journalists do have Internet access which is provided for under the media training schemes there. So, we can use Facebook for ongoing training, but the university campus doesn’t have any. I couldn’t believe it when I went onto the campus, that there’s no Internet on campus for the journalism students. I said, this is ridiculous, this is now an essential reporter’s tool. (Howarth)

**Short courses**

Among journalism educators one of the most popular kinds of training program was the short course. Several journalism academics called this kind of training a junket, in that the trainer benefited from being out of the office, having a chance to travel and meeting other journalists. These kinds of training travel opportunity were becoming rare as they were not seen as tremendously effective by government donors:

Ideally, I would like to see training programs being followed up and it’s not only a one-shot program, one week. There should be a post-training workshop where trainers get back to the place, meet the same journalists, and then talk about what they have done over the past year or so. (Loo)

There was genuine unease among the educators about the potential waste of resources, particularly when one-off courses were offered without follow-up:

We are not using resources wisely by training small groups without any follow-up. Would we be better off working at a higher level with people in organisations and institutions and saying ‘what is the real change you want to see, and how can we help you get there’? (Arthur)

There was acknowledgement that parachute courses, where trainers dropped in to provide the skills but without mentoring or follow-up visits, had faults, but living as a local was not always better:
If you do a Margaret Mead and go and live in the huts, that’s not always successful either. (Duffield)

A number pointed to the success of short training projects which were lead-ups to major events, be they a conference or an election; this training could specifically focus on a particular set of skills or issues. Dorney worked on several such programs, preparing journalists to cover major events such as a meeting of Pacific finance ministers. The nominated journalists would do an intensive three days of preparation on what issues they should be covering before meeting the delegates. Dorney argued this approach had advantages:

There’s a lot of criticism of these one-off operations, and I think that if they’re to work they’ve got to be based around something that’s actually happening. Those occasions were perfect. It wasn’t a matter of these Pacific journalists getting their *per diems* [daily travel allowance] and sitting around drinking all night, after they’ve been to a workshop where they didn’t produce anything. These workshops are very intensive, aimed at getting material back to their own organisations for use immediately. (Dorney)

However, Dorney also discovered what other journalism educators complained about—that people sent on training programs were not always there for the training:

I had a lot of frustrations in one particular training operation … the person, was a station manager who didn’t actually believe that he had to work. And uh… we had quite a difference of opinion. (Dorney)

The educators agreed that unwilling participants were rare on short-term courses. There was a lot of sharing of experiences, and understandings of their particular countries:

Most of the journalists are terribly enthusiastic and really want to learn how they should cover meetings like that, and the good thing about it too was that you had a mix of some experienced and less experienced journalists and so a lot of the lead-in was involved in everyone sharing experiences and talking about how they covered issues in their home countries, and how they went about their job. I always found those sessions to be really, interesting and energising, because a lot of these
people all of a sudden found that other people had exactly the same problems they did. (Dorney)

Several of the journalism educators were aware of the desire of their students to travel internationally to experience other media systems and adapt them to local conditions. This was favoured by some training organisations such as the Asia Pacific Journalism Centre in Melbourne and the Malaysian Press Institute.

The journalism educators enjoyed teaching short courses and believed well-targeted courses with active participants could get immediate results for news organisations. They also believed that students could benefit from being sent to other countries for targeted short courses.

**Local and foreign trainers**

Many countries and donor organisations insisted on the Australian trainers helping to develop training skills with local people so they could deliver future training courses. The International Federation of Journalists, for example, said that they preferred to prepare a cadre of trainers first so they could roll out a training program across any country. Some of the Australian educators, however, noted that there was benefit in having both a foreigner and a local in a training environment, to bring a different perspective to each situation.

Many of the trainers were delighted to discover that their former trainees had gone on to produce their own training packages. In the Philippines, for example, those who had completed a train-the-trainer program were busy writing their own training models.

**In situ training**

Many trainers argued that the most effective training was when they were situated within newsrooms, working alongside trainee journalists on real stories; this was seen as working best for journalists who had no formal qualifications. This kind of ongoing professional development was valued for creating a culture of success instead of a training junket:

I think they learned more when you’ve got someone sitting beside them, they’re actually writing for real, firing life shots, you know, than all the
assignments in the world and getting the result back a week later. (Howarth)

As outlined earlier there were difficulties in some countries when journalism educators were placed in newsrooms. This could, and did, lead to allegations that the educators were interfering with the news process and helping develop angles that were not appreciated by people in power.

**University education**

As a large number of the journalism educators being interviewed were academics it is not surprising that great value was placed on a university education at diploma or bachelor level. For journalism students in the Pacific there were only a few options: the Auckland University of Technology boasted a special Pacific journalism program, the University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea previously had good reputations, but the Divine Word University was seen by most journalism educators at the time the interviews took place as the best regional university for a Pacific journalist:

> they’ve got that … combination of missionary zeal and enthusiasm and dedication, and discipline. (Dorney)

However, no university was without its critics, and Divine Word caused some consternation about how the course operated:

> In Divine Word, they’re stuck in this course for four years, and they get bugger all professional experience. The course is not set up to give them professional experience, so it’s all basically campus based, they’re locked within this campus environment, supposedly to become journalists … not the ideal environment. (Trainer A)

How each university was funded and staffed appeared to make difference to the success or otherwise of the students. Sometimes courses were built around particular personalities and fell apart when those staff departed.

Some trainers, particularly those from an academic background, favoured journalism training for postgraduate rather than undergraduate students. Some complained that the 19–20-year-olds coming straight from school into journalism courses did not really understand what they were signing up for:
I don’t think that we should be training journalists by putting them into undergraduate journalism courses at age 19 … you’re basically blowing into a vacuum. It’s very difficult because … you’re piling them up with all this material that they have nothing to relate to. They don’t have any professional experience, so it’s all very abstract, and that’s true in Madang, it’s true in Australia. (Trainer A)

There was, however, a dearth of funding opportunities for journalists to study journalism in the Pacific, Asia or elsewhere. At the time of writing this thesis there was a new focus from the Australian Government on sending students to international universities via the New Colombo Plan, rather than bringing students to Australia. This meant there were few opportunities for journalism students from poor Pacific and Asian countries to come to Australia, and

When they compete with the local students or with students from the United States, for example, students from several countries just do not have the academic background. So when it comes to selection of scholarships, they just fall by the wayside. (Loo)

Loo argued that even the trainees thought it would be better value for money for them to attend a university course in Australia than to take part in a short course conducted by a fly-in trainer:

Because the trainers live in very expensive hotels, and training is about two or three days, … it’s such a waste of money … it would be better for (the trainees) to go to Australia, than to get a foreign trainer to come to train us who do not know the conditions in Papua New Guinea. (Loo)

Both journalism educators and students valued education, but there were limited places and funding opportunities for students.

**Evaluating Success**

No international standard for evaluating the success of any journalism training done in-country exists, though a range of models have been suggested by media development workers. Institutions and individuals use a variety of different systems based on the type of program being offered, how it is funded, and its longevity. Among those interviewed, the most often used evaluation tool was the post-course evaluation sheet, handed out to participants and collected on the spot:
we wanted to be absolutely certain that what we delivered was practical …

Journalists are very honest in their evaluations, because they’ll just tell you if they think it’s crap. (Dobbie)

This quick audit of a course’s results was often seen as enough to be able to report on the success of a project to those who funded the program, even though there might be some bias due to an inclination in some trainees not to write any criticism, or a lack of confidentiality.

Many of the trainers reported that they had received positive feedback from the training sessions, although occasionally participants would identify issues that required a change of emphasis:

There were some comments that a couple of times it’s OK to have this Western point of view of journalism, it’s just not going to work here, which I think is fair and reasonable because we were trying to change what was a very engrained divisiveness that reflected what was happening in Sri Lankan society. (Dobbie)

Although feedback from the students was considered an important tool for the evaluation of any course, the journalism educators acknowledged that trainees did not always feel that they should speak up when there was a problem with the training:

Their English wasn’t good enough to sit through an hour of listening and they were too polite to say that they didn’t understand, to ask questions. After [the training], one of the girls said there was nothing new in what I’d said, as she had learnt it in university … Everyone else was confused: inverted pyramids? (Adam)

This issue was echoed by other journalism educators who noted that in particular cultures trainees were reluctant to report back that the course or the skills taught had not been useful; although, as McMahon said, ‘There’s been one or two, but I’ve never had that back from, you know, from a whole training session’: this was not a universal problem. Dobbie said that he got very frank feedback in his post-evaluation forms:

If you’ve got 20 people on a course, there’ll be two guys who will just say that was horrendous bullshit. You’re going, ‘Well, that’s blunt. That’s
good.’ Occasionally you get that. I actually welcome the negative stuff because I’ll think, well why didn’t I get through to you? What is it that we were doing that didn’t apply to you that you felt you’d just wasted two days, or four days or whatever? I always found the negatives really good to hear. (Dobbie)

Journalism trainers often looked at the final product to determine if the skills training had been successful, but recognised that looking at the output of a journalists’ work did not uncover the amount of editing or changing that had been done in the post-writing stage:

I look at the work that’s been published ... whether they’ve done their homework before they go out ... whether they just blandly reproduce as I’ve seen everywhere, press releases without even, untouched. (Howarth)

Pearson spoke about the rarity of having an empirical measure of success for a legal course which ran in Samoa in 1999–2000. The course, on contempt law, was designed to ensure local journalists did not cause a mistrial of some senior political leaders. He invited the presiding judge to talk to the journalists in advance of the trial. To his delight the trial went ahead and no one committed contempt:

normally there isn’t a test like that one … you can’t account for every circumstance … it was heartening that nothing happened as a result of it. (Pearson)

Watson used as one measure of her effectiveness the external validation of an international award, and pointed to the success of one student in an Australian student journalism competition:

One of the students won the Ossie [Journalism Educators Association of Australia] award that year for a radio news story, and has gone on to be a well-known and prominent radio journalist in PNG, so I think that I could tell that I had done well there. (Watson)

She further cited examples of repeated requests for new training programs from the same news organisation:

When I went back the second time, I did a knowledge retention survey, so I was asking the staff questions based on what I’d covered in the training
Many of the educators claimed to do their own two-tiered system of evaluating their training impact. Firstly by asking the students formally at the end of a course, then contacting them again later, when they had returned to normal activities. This process, however, was only possible when there was a long-term relationship with news organisations and personnel.

Several of the educators spoke of the value of repeating exercises to measure the trainees’ understanding overtime:

I do two things: I do a formal evaluation process, and then I do, within the course, exercises, so that people are putting what they’re being taught into practice, and we can actually measure whether they understand, what they’re being taught. (Arthur)

The trainers were united in stating that the training of more junior journalists was wasted without the support and cooperation of more senior journalists, editors and management:

By its nature, the training had to be done with journalists and senior journalists, but trying to get the editors and the owners to also embrace that change was going to be nigh on impossible, especially with so much of the Sri Lankan media either owned by the government or by political parties. It was always going to be difficult. (Dobbie)

One of the difficulties with evaluating the success of journalism training was that the journalism educators were not always teaching around skills issues. For example, McMahon, whose work would normally fall into the category of ethics education in Australian journalism classes, worked with journalists on a range of skills including the ability to interview victims of trauma without causing further harm:

I do a pre-evaluation beforehand, how much do you know, and I ask them very specific questions, you know, ‘how much do you know about why people cry when they’re being interviewed,’ … that sort of stuff. It’s a very, very loose evaluation, and we’re always trying to tighten it up, but
it’s very hard, to evaluate our stuff because it’s not that skill-measured stuff, and you can’t display it on a computer screen. (McMahon)

The journalism educators repeatedly argued that the most effective journalism training programs are those where the training is built into a real journalism experience. The students in this kind of program are required to produce journalism that is ready for print or broadcast, as in the courses conducted by Dorney in the Pacific. Arthur also favoured it:

It’s real. They can make money, because often journalists in poor countries are paid piecemeal, so their time away from work isn’t disadvantaging them. They’re still getting a story, and we can evaluate the story against their criteria. And we can also get independent evaluation of their stories against set criteria. (Arthur)

An empirical element could be built into this kind of real-life training, as the number and type of stories printed as a result of the training could be counted and evaluated. A variation on the real-life journalism training project was conducted by Arthur for the World Service Trust in India, where the work was evaluated by analysing the number and quality of stories printed and broadcast. For a week, staff from environment-based non-government organisations were trained in communication and presentation skills ahead of a one-day conference, attended by journalists. The Trust then worked with the journalists as they listened to the presentations and were trained in production skills to turn the conference into a television or print-based production.

Conclusion

Australian journalism educators hold normative views of journalism, common in liberal democratic nation state societies. The educators see themselves, mostly, in the role of a missionary for liberal journalism values and generally do not agree with the idea that they are mercenaries, misfits or madmen. They acknowledge that journalism training is dangerous, not only for them and their teaching assistants but for the trainees. The respondents in this survey had mostly not been trained in teaching and came from practitioner backgrounds, they overwhelmingly had little formal pre-arrival preparation for their roles, and were worried about who was chosen to take part in their classes. They acknowledged that there was great sensitivity about journalism education among some recipient governments,
and noted that whoever funded the programs had a strong influence on the curriculum. Although the educators provided a range of different training opportunities from university courses to short courses, there was an overwhelming feeling that fly-in fly-out short courses were not effective. The educators preferred to work with local trainers within newsrooms.

While the educators all valued the importance of seeking feedback and evaluations from their students, they overwhelmingly argued that evaluation of their own work was excessive and often not useful or appropriate:

There’s a constant evaluation program going on in Dili, run by the International Centre for Journalism, which has two full-time researchers, but they don’t look at the largest newspaper in town, because it’s pro-Indonesian. When a major player in the media scene is left out of any evaluation, it’s a waste of time. (Howarth)
Chapter Nine: Journalism Educators and Adaptive Ways

The Australian journalism educators interviewed all supported freedom of information and open information cultures, but there were variations in how they believed journalism should be practised in countries outside Australia. Some were proponents of democracy, considering that without it ‘you’re going to finish up with a dictatorship’ (Howarth); however, they did not all believe that issues of press freedom and democracy needed to be central in every training program: ‘I’m sure, the participants have already heard this many times from other trainers’ (Loo).

Some educators found they had altered their views about how journalism should operate in practice, based on their experiences in-country. Adam said that as a foreigner in Vietnam she was obliged to ‘set my journalistic principles aside and say to them, if that’s the way it’s done here, that’s how we’ll do it’. She felt that this attitude was not good for democratic principles, but acknowledged journalists in Vietnam were not working within a democracy, so journalism there could therefore not occur as in Australia.

Adam was not the only journalism educator who argued that it was their job to educate the local journalists in such a way that they could adapt journalism practices to the realities of their newsrooms, because journalism was a mirror of the political and cultural environment in which it operated but Loo argued it was more important to discuss constraints on a journalist’s ability to report than to discuss democracy. When he was training he talked about how trainee journalists could achieve, or come close to, writing the story that they wanted to write:

*We talk about story technique, interviewing, how to write between the lines. These are the things that I try to communicate to reporters, like from Malaysia. I’ve always been drumming to Malaysian journalists that you cannot use the local media regulations, expectations from editors, and government regulations and pressures, to be an excuse of not making an effort to report differently.* (Loo)

Many of the educators noted that the presence of a democratic form of government did not always result in ‘good journalism’: ‘Even advanced liberal
democracies such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States had differences in the way their journalism operated with constitutional protections, bills of rights, others do not’ (Pearson). Other trainers noted that places such as Russia had ‘good journalism’ (Trainer A) without democracy and without a range of constitutional protections.

Even journalists who had studied in liberal democratic nation states, such as Australia or the United States, did not necessarily fully understand the role of journalists within a democracy, with many confused between the roles of entertainer, educator and exposor of wrongdoings:

In the West, it’s infotainment, to suck the reader in. Put the most sensationalist story on the front. You need readers to support the business which is selling ads and making money. It’s kind of implicit. When you pick up a paper, you read the headlines, you buy or don’t buy depending on how interested you are. (Adam)

The educators generally believed that their trainees aspired to the role of the Fourth Estate and to democratic rule, even if they did not currently have it or fully understand it. The educators felt that when they were training they needed to be cognisant of the realities of the local political and cultural environment and to adapt their teaching to try to get ‘best practice’ from the students within that environment.

**Development, Peace, Conflict-sensitive and Hope Journalism**

Development journalism and peace journalism were two ‘styles’ often cited as good practice by educators working in the Pacific, although a range of other styles including conflict-sensitive reporting and ‘hope journalism’. The definitions of each of these can be debated; however, few of the educators held any of them in high regard unless they were attached to classical ideals of journalism in a liberal democratic nation state.

Development journalism was named in the 1960s after Filipino journalists Alan Chalkley and Juan Mercado (Shah 2008) became troubled that news organisations were not covering socioeconomic development and focused on reporting government press releases. Chalkley and Mercado called for more detailed
analysis, interpretation or evaluation of development projects, policies or problems. Interestingly, a one-time Australian academic, Shelton Gunaratne, (1996) has argued recently that development journalism is like public journalism approaches to reporting developed in the United States in the 1990s by academics and journalists anxious with a crisis of media and democracy.

Peace journalism, another form often mentioned in the Pacific, comes out of a rich history of international peace movements (Roberts 2008). It is seen as the opposite of war journalism insofar as it is considered a remedial strategy orientated towards peace, people, truth and solutions (Lynch, J & McGoldrick 2005).

Developmental styles of journalism were roundly criticised for focusing too much on positive reportage instead of exposing issues of genuine concern for communities. Ward (2010), for example, claims that journalism in liberal democratic nation states concentrates too much on conflict and that more could be done to help communities ‘get along’. Peace journalism and development journalism are often touted as alternatives by journalism scholars (Aslam 2011). However, veteran journalists believe that concentrating on development journalism ultimately does a disservice to the communities being served:

They call it the ‘journalism of hope’ in Fiji at the moment. [Laugh] Which is quite an ironic and bizarre description of censorship … if you’re going to do pleasant journalism, you’re not going to be tackling the issues that are the real problem. (Dorney)

While ‘journalism of hope’ is a term used by the Fijian military regime it is not a sub-topic of journalism studies or practice that has received any scholarly attention.

A growing number of journalism educators in Asia and the Pacific have promoted the advantages of an indigenous form of journalism, such as a Pacific journalism rather than the more often touted developmental journalism. Robie has examined what he calls the ‘fifth estate’, an Indigenous traditional cultural pillar, which he suggests provides a ‘counterbalance to all other forms of power, including the news media’ (Robie 2013). Robie’s five-legged ‘talanoa’ model of journalism,
allows for more contextualised reporting in the Pacific by adding a fifth arm to the Fourth Estate that is championed by many Australian journalists and educators. Drawing on the work of East-West Centre academic Dr Sitiveni Halapua, Robie defines talano as ‘a frank discussion face-to-face with no hidden agenda’ (Robie 2013, p. 51). Robie provides a long list of the characteristics of talanoa journalism including: community ethics with recognition of indigenous, diversity, cultural values; a focus on socio-economic development, community needs, wellbeing and progress; focus on positive outcomes for the wider community; and a free media, but balanced with social responsibility (Robie 2013, p. 52).

Robie’s thinking about journalism in the Pacific continues to evolve. He has also advocated what he calls ‘critical development’ journalism. Robie suggests there is value in more critical development journalism, the kind of journalism that holds power to account but it focuses on not just criticising developing nations but reporting on stories with an aim of improving governance.

Deliberative and critical development journalism have an essential role to play in the future of the South Pacific region. So does peace journalism, or conflict-sensitive journalism – another form of investigative and deliberative journalism – and human rights journalism. And a new generation of educated journalists has a responsibility to provide this for the people. (Robie 2014, p. 348)

Support for journalism which has grown out of development theory is strongly favoured by educators because it looks not only at economic but also at cultural development. A Papua New Guinea style of journalism, for example, is said to take elements from developmental and liberal journalism to come up with a style uniquely suited to the country’s systems. Dorney believed those working in the Pacific needed a range of skills not often present in the average Australian journalist:

They’ve got to have extraordinary patience, and then they’ve got to have terrific stamina, and thirdly and most important of all, they’ve got to have a sense of humour and be able to laugh at themselves. Because nothing ever happens on time, and things you’ve got lined up never eventuate and people who said they’re going to meet you at a certain time never do and, so there’s that frustration. (Dorney)
Watson said her experiences teaching at Divine Word University in Papua New Guinea had encouraged her to be more open-minded about alternative journalism styles:

I can see why some people argue for development journalism, but there are clear problems with it, and there are some clear advantages of the objective and balanced style of journalism that they were being taught at the university. (Watson)

Some of the educators who had advocated developmental journalism acknowledged problems with it and were now promoting more community-oriented, grassroots journalism, reporting for the people. Among those who had changed their minds was Loo: ‘There is only good journalism and bad journalism’.

Some local journalists have a foot in both camps, and feed questions to visiting foreign journalists so they can ask sensitive questions in the style of journalism dominant in liberal democratic nation states:

I was on a trip with [former Australian foreign minister Alexander] Downer at one stage when he was foreign minister through the Pacific and one of the local journalists asked me to ask him about such and such … This local journalist didn’t feel he could raise (a sensitive issue) but he knew I wouldn’t have any compunction bringing this particular issue up, so everyone got the story. (Dorney)

There was a warning from many of the educators that local journalists should not be judged ‘dumb’ because they had a reluctance to use techniques common to journalism in liberal democratic nation states, such as aggressive interviewing. The recognised that foreign trainers could not understand the nuances of a country and would often misinterpret stories:

It’s not like the Australian trainer going to another country is bringing new knowledge and ideas to, what might have been in previous centuries deemed primitive people who were totally ignorant of these things. Most of the trainees that I encountered were fully abreast of all of these tensions and issues, and certainly more articulate about their dynamics and their culture than I could ever claim to be. (Pearson)

Journalism educators supported the concepts of journalism in liberal democratic nation states and recognised that they needed to be adapted for local
circumstances, but there was no one agreed kind of journalism that would work in all countries.

**Journalism in a Global Context**

Regardless of what kind of journalism the educators favoured, it was clear that globalisation had exposed most countries to journalism in liberal democratic nation states, either via cable TV news programs, a colonial education tradition, or international schooling. There are few places in the world that have not been exposed to a form of journalism in liberal democratic nation states, even if it has been ‘dormant or has disappeared’ (Dobbie). Sometimes post-conflict countries are looking to return to an earlier style of journalism: in Sri Lanka, for example, there was a strong newspaper tradition before the government imposed changes in the wake of the civil war.

Economics also played a part:

> It is very hard to pretend that you can have protected value systems in a small Pacific Island country when their major income is through remittances of money from Australia or New Zealand, and that is the case for most of these small countries, their major income comes from remittances. And it’s naïve to expect that the money would arrive in these countries, from their relatives or whatever, without other cultural pollutants attached. (Pearson)

Few countries have not been exposed to the ideas of liberal journalism. That said, Adam noted that she was surprised by how little her Vietnamese colleagues knew about Western media and how it operated, even though they had access to the internet and to travel:

> When I showed them political cartoons, they’d be so shocked, they’d get the giggles. They didn’t really believe me that these things would be published in the newspaper and that politicians didn’t mind, that nothing happened to the newspaper or cartoonist. They couldn’t grasp the concept. (Adam)
Journalism Practices

Aggressive stereotypes in liberal democratic nation states

Some Australian trainers said they were aware that some colleagues insisted on a combative style of interviewing from their trainees:

There’s always going to be trainers coming in from overseas saying ‘you’ve got to nail this person, ask hard questions in a way you expect to get an answer’. I think that’s a knee-jerk way of approaching—you’re basically teaching what you know, but it’s not an effective way of going about it. You need to understand all the baggage that they bring to the relationship before you work out what might be an effective strategy.

(Trainer A)

Those trainers who spent considerable time embedded in a country, rather than doing short-term courses, were those who questioned programs which focused on the stereotypical version of aggressive watchdog journalism, dismissing this in favour of what Trainer A called ‘accuracy … balance and fairness—all those ethical issues and professional standards.’

Educators often decided to ‘workshop’ reporting situations to ensure that trainees had the skills and confidence to do an interview effectively while remaining true to their culture. One trainer used the example of preparing a young female reporter to interview a senior man in the community. The reporter needed a non aggressive strategy to extract useful information from the man without his talking down to her, or treating her as a daughter figure: ‘The journalist needs to maintain control of situation rather than have it turned against her, as it often is, by people in positions of power’ (Trainer A).

Some educators noted that the aggressive interviewing often linked with journalism in liberal democratic nation states was not considered particularly effective in many countries, regardless of the cultural factors:

[If] people are aggressive in their approach, it’s more likely to result in an ineffective interview, and it won’t win over the audience. Sometimes the audience will take the side of the interviewee if the interviewer is being pushy. That’s not very good journalism. (Trainer A)
A belief that aggressive interviewing was necessary to be effective as a journalist was pervasive among Australian journalists. Dorney said he had on occasion been berated by senior Australian journalists for not being aggressive enough with interviewees in the Pacific:

[My boss said] I hadn’t been hard enough in my interview, I hadn’t been aggressive enough in questioning, and I said, ‘How many Melanesians have you interviewed?’ And I said, ‘I’ve found that aggressive interviewing is not very productive in the Pacific. You really need to encourage people to speak, not beat them into silence’. (Dorney)

The journalism educators believed it was necessary to prepare their students to achieve effective interviewing rather than insisting on a combative stance in the predominant style of journalism in liberal democratic nation states.

**Investigative Journalism**

The journalism educators universally saw investigative journalism as the pinnacle of good reporting in the journalistic model common in liberal democratic nation states. Investigative journalism implies that journalists will dig hard and long for stories, usually using documents that have previously been hidden, perhaps to expose corruption at the highest levels of government and business. Investigative journalism also often relies on governments themselves having effective and efficient record-keeping, document trails, and databases that can be accessed. Tackling corruption is considered a major issue in most post-conflict states, and there was a great quantity of dedicated training funds specifically for investigative journalism programs. Some trainers felt that such programs were wasted, particularly in countries where corruption was occurring:

You don’t really need the sophistication of our investigative journalism methods. I’m not being cynical about this, but it’s just that in Australia you do need those methods because it’s fairly well-hidden, whereas it doesn’t take much scratching beneath the surface to find corruption and wrong-doing in some of these countries. (Pearson)

A number of educators suggested that reporters in post-conflict countries were not ready for these more sophisticated reporting tasks, although they were interested in doing them. A greater emphasis on basic craft skills was considered more relevant:
Investigative journalism is actually more in the realm of senior editors … in Pacific Island countries … if we can get Pacific Island journalists conducting a reasonable interview and taking accurate notes and just developing basic contacts then we’ll be doing their journalism a great favour. (Pearson)

Two trainers raised consternation about how few journalists had the time and resources to do investigative work on top of their day-to-day reporting duties:

There are no funds for journalists to go out and spend a couple of weeks on a story. There are no funds to fly a person around the country. If someone in Port Moresby tells them that that’s what’s happening in another province, they don’t have the funds, the time or the facilities to go. (Watson)

Civil society groups and citizen journalists were assisting time-poor journalist in some countries, but not all newsrooms had the time and resources to allow a journalist to spend hours surfing the internet—if they had access to a computer with the internet and could afford to access it.

The journalism educators overwhelmingly believed that investigative reporting training was not required in the countries where they taught in the same way it was in Australia. Although investigative reporting was considered important, locally journalists lacked resources and time for it.

**Accuracy, honesty and integrity—and news values**

The journalism educators considered certain processes of reporting universal, regardless of which country they were working in. These included accuracy, honesty, and integrity, but not the aggressive style of questioning discussed earlier:

The universal principle is accuracy. That’s a no-brainer. It’s accuracy and getting quotes correctly, not distorting what your source said, that’s universal … I don’t think the confrontational approach used in places like the United States, or even like in Australia, is workable in places like Laos or Malaysia or even Thailand. (Loo)

Some of the Australian educators acknowledged that journalism as it was practised in each country was quite different from Australian journalism, because
it was defined by the local environment. A small number of trainers, including Loo, recognised this:

I can understand trainers from the United States, or trainers from even the UK, who have been to Malaysia and some developing countries, coming in with a lot of concepts and practices that they are still familiar with. It’s good for discussion’s sake. But when these journalists from developing countries, when they’ve gone through one week of training workshop and they take it back to their newsroom, many of them, I found out, will not be able to apply those principles and concepts that were taught to them. (Loo)

In the liberal democratic model of journalism in nation states a range of factors determine the news value of a story: impact, timeliness, the prominence of those involved, the proximity of the audience to the story, conflict in all its forms, human interest, the unusual, and currency (when something takes on a life of its own). In each Australian newsroom these values are used to determine the worth of a story or its placement within a newspaper or broadcast. The journalism educators noted that it was not so much the practice of journalism that needed to be adapted by educators working overseas, but the news values:

There is no difference between reporting for community-oriented issues, reporting in the development journalism genre, or reporting in the financial journalism genre. The process of reporting is similar. You go out, you talk to sources, you do your research, you make sure it’s accurate. But it is the entirety of the story that is likely different, the narrative, the way that you approach the story. (Loo)

In predominantly poor countries such as India, the Philippines and Laos, the topics of interest to the people were vastly different to topics that were of interest to Australian audiences. The different priorities of people in different countries leads to different types of stories chosen for publication.

The Australian journalism academics agreed that there were a number of characteristics in the process of reporting that worked across countries such as accuracy, honesty and integrity, but accepted to varying degrees the idea that journalism is defined by the local environment and news values vary from country to country.
Objectivity and balance

The ideas of ‘balance’ in Australia journalism (and other liberal democratic nation states) can cause difficulties for journalists in post-conflict states. Being objective is considered a desirable and achievable goal in Australia, and most Australian journalists aim to be accurate and truthful in their reporting in a bid to provide the information citizens need to make informed judgements about public affairs. However, this is not as simple as it sounds, because objectivity is not a fixed idea. Neither is the concept of balance. Australian journalism culture, particularly in public sector broadcasters, teaches the institutional ideology that news reports should be balanced in that ‘both sides’ of a story need to be reported and the journalist should not privilege one over the other.

Hackett (2008) argues that objectivity (including the idea of balance) has come to dominate North American journalism because it provides political legitimacy for the monopoly press and helps to define and manage the relationship between news media and politicians. It also gives weight to journalists’ claims to professionalism.

Balance is sought in a number of ways. Student journalists in Australia are constantly reminded that one person’s freedom fighter is another’s person’s terrorist; in post-conflict states, these are real labels, not abstracts. In a training context this can be problematic, with people in the room sometimes bitterly divided on racial or religious grounds. Dobbie discovered this first-hand in the wake of the Tamil deaths in the Asian tsunami in Sri Lanka:

When the tsunami hit there would be some sections of the media celebrating the fact that so many Tamils had been killed in the disaster. Because isn’t it great, we’ve gotten rid of all these potential Tamil Tigers through a natural disaster. (Dobbie)

Encouraging groups who have been bitterly divided to seek the other side’s view can be a particularly difficult task. Dobbie advocated pushing journalists to present fair, balanced, honest and truthful reporting even in difficult post-conflict areas, but cited real difficulties that Sri Lankan journalists during a 2005 ceasefire had in seeing their own bias in their reporting: ‘Balance wasn’t always taking a place … Openness wasn’t, transparency wasn’t and truth wasn’t.’ He suggested
that class discussion about quality journalism, and the need to speak to all sides in a story, could assist journalists ‘rather than assuming that those people over there are bad, and we’re good, and we’ve suffered more than they have, or if they suffered they deserved to’.

The practice of balancing news articles with at least two or more voices is seen as one way of encouraging objectivity in reporting, but has an added level of complexity in countries which have been bitterly divided by ethnic or religious tensions.

**Inverted pyramid**

Another area of difference between the standard Australian way of writing a news story may be found in several countries where the idea of the so-called inverted pyramid does not fit with the way people in a particular culture understand storytelling. The standard way of writing a journalistic story in the liberal democratic journalistic model, the inverted pyramid, was developed to allow the most important parts of the story (the most newsworthy) to appear in the first paragraph, and for the article to work from there to the least important. In some places this ordering cannot work. Adam argued that Vietnamese stories could not be translated straight into English because their structure needed to be altered to aid understanding:

> You can’t just turn [a Vietnamese story] into a Western story that starts with the most interesting stuff. You can only write the Vietnamese side of the argument. It’s very difficult. We’d have to try to negotiate a way to present it that didn’t look too ridiculous, that didn’t quite outline what the criticism was, or if there had been any. (Adam)

Australians would see Vietnamese story telling as being upside-down, although it simply the way the Vietnamese readers understand it:

> I’ll give you an example. It’s a feature story. It starts with ‘this man was born in 1975 and spent his time wondering through the hills then he found a job as a shoe salesman. He fought in the war and now he has a shoe business, and he just got the Medal of Honour’. And it’s like 2000 words, you can hardly get to the end, it’s so boring! The place names are like scientific names—you have to name the place, then the district … It has no meaning to Western readers. Place names are very important in
Vietnam, you have to know where everyone has been. I suggest they could start with ‘this guy won the medal of honour’ and then say why he won it. But they would say ‘but people won’t understand it if they don’t know where he’s from’. (Adam)

Writing in an inverted pyramid does not work in all countries.

**Respect**

Deciding whom to interview or to include in a story is a difficult decision even for journalists in liberal democratic nation states. It is even more difficult in post-conflict states where power elites demand to be included, or excluded, and often expect to be respected. Cultural attitudes can be vastly different in various places and cultures, as the different Melanesian and Polynesian cultures show. Long-time Pacific journalist Sean Dorney noted the wide variations in the Pacific region:

> In Melanesia, generally, the journalists tend to be less intimidated than in Polynesia. In some places in Polynesia you’ve almost got to have a chiefly title before you can ask anyone in authority a question. Which isn’t the case in PNG because it’s such a polyglot collection of thousands of different tribes and customs and whatever, so there isn’t that same reverence for authority that you sometimes get in Polynesia and which can inhibit some of the Polynesian journalists from asking the tough questions.

Respect influenced all parts of journalism because it impacted on who was approached for an interview and what stories were covered, and could mean threats against those who went against the set social order. Educators noted that this issue was present internationally, but in the context of this thesis it was conspicuous in Melanesia and the Pacific.

Respect (and deference) for people in power was a problem for journalists in many post-conflict states, compared with Australia.

**Ethics: tea money and envelope journalism**

Australian journalism educators were often surprised to find that on occasion it cost more for their trainees to report a story than they earned from employers for producing it. This sometimes put journalists in a position where they needed to accept envelopes of money (referred to as tea money) from organisations which
wanted positive media coverage. Australian journalists consider such cash-for-reportage practice akin to bribery, but it is not understood in the same way in other countries. Across parts of Asia, Africa and the Pacific, payments are often made to journalists at press conferences in countries where journalists are poorly paid:

When I was in Hong Kong, there was always ‘tea money,’ the lucky red envelope for journalists, and they expected that. And the Indonesians said the same, and I’ve seen it happen in Papua New Guinea. (Howarth)

Australian’s journalism code of conduct (Journalists’ code of ethics) insists that accepting money for a story represents corruption; this was an issue educators needed to consider within the wider economic environment, including the fact that their trainees were not getting paid properly:

There was an understanding that we don’t believe in corrupt journalism and that everyone was going to try and stamp it out and everyone believed it was wrong. It’s pretty hard to get a very poorly paid journalist in those countries to say no to money. (Dobbie)

Several acknowledged the ethical dilemmas posed by poorly paid journalists accepting money. Dobbie, who had a role with the Australian journalists’ professional organisation, MEAA, believed that there was a role for educating trainee journalists about wages and conditions and how to work collectively to improve industrial work and pay and conditions:

At the time we were just saying obviously at some point you need to campaign for better wages and conditions where you work because otherwise this is going to keep happening, isn’t it? They’d agree yes.

Australian journalism educators found their ethical frameworks challenged in some countries where the low pay of journalists encouraged journalists to accept money for stories.

**What to Teach: Journalism curricula**

Australian journalism educators overwhelmingly used their own training materials and resources, which they supplemented with local examples to illustrate points. Many of the international training agencies did not provide trainers with even the
most basic of training documents, despite long years of running programs. A number said they recycled materials they had used previously, or downloaded training materials available over the internet from international training bodies such as the BBC, Poynter Institute, etc.:

It surprised me when I started at how employers wouldn’t have any material to give you even though they’d been running courses for some time. Some do, but for example, you’d think that there’d be really good handouts on basic journalism skills, that people would say, oh, here’s our handout stash. That doesn’t seem to be standard. (Arthur)

There was some camaraderie among trainers, and many shared materials when asked. Few of the Australian journalism educators had heard of the journalism curriculum developed by the United Nations/UNESCO, and none had used it.

**Unintended Consequences**

The Australian journalism educators agreed that attitudes and opinions were unwittingly passed between trainer and trainee, although this was difficult to quantify. It was not always clear if, or how, significant issues and values become part of trainees’ thinking. Dobbie was clear that he did not attempt to impose Australian thinking about journalism on the participants that he trained, but rather encouraged them to aspire to an international standard:

It wasn’t an Australian veneer or an Australian viewpoint that we were trying to impose. It was what we believe was international best practice. We often got the comment, ‘Well, that won’t work here.’ And we would argue, ‘Well, it should’. (Dobbie)

When I do my training, I am guided by the participants. I don’t give them a right or wrong answer. We explore issues together. (Loo)

Some journalism educators felt that that they sometimes unintentionally passed on attitudes about journalism that were not necessarily helpful. Loo noted that he was aware that some trainees would feel despondent after courses because they could not implement what they had learned, and argued that it was incumbent on journalism educators to be realistic in what they were sharing with their students, and to have a clear idea of what was achievable. Student journalists should be
given alternative solutions in any training situation where it might not be possible to implement a planned outcome:

If that is not achievable, what are we, as trainers, providing them as a plan B, as an alternative? Are there any other ways that they can work on to at least elevate the standards of their work, the quality of their work? (Loo)

Others suggested that it was important in all classes for educators to outline the background and framework from which they were operating, and to answer questions in a spirit of transparency. Using a local journalism trainer in class with the foreign journalism trainer was seen as one way of ensuring that the training program was both culturally and educationally appropriate for the participants:

I don’t recall any sort of any huge cultural faux pas or situations … or (trainers) who were trying to ram Western values down the throats of the delegates. (Pearson)

However a number had seen or heard stories of inappropriate cultural exchanges, from trainers from other countries. They noted some issues in including local trainers in conversations about sensitive topics, such as transitions to democracy:

It may compromise the local trainer trying to do the same thing, in other words, it’s expected of the foreign trainers that they bring their own values to these countries where perhaps the local trainer, knowing that, can be seen in a different light by the incumbent government. (Pearson)

Journalism educators were aware that their views and attitudes on various matters could be passed to trainees without their knowledge, but they could not verify the process. It was suggested that educators could overcome any issues with this by being transparent and open about their own work. Using a local trainer could assist in ensuring what was passed on was appropriate; however, there was some reluctance to involve local trainers if that might place them in a difficult position.

**Whom to teach with: Local partnerships**

Partnering with local media associations to achieve changes to the media environment and improvements in journalistic standards is a long-established practice of AusAID. Journalism educators also valued partnering with professional organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
which could provide important support, particularly when they worked with pre-existing professional associations. Journalism professional organisations were regularly funded by foreign governments as part of their program to help develop media and freedom of expression. This kind of local partnership was considered vital to the success of programs:

I would presume if we could not find a partner to work with, and we would tend not to work with someone who wasn’t an affiliate member (of the International Federation of Journalists), we probably wouldn’t go in. (Dobbie)

However, partnering with a local organisation was not without problems in the way they operated or were staffed. Some local professional associations were donor dependent, so that donors effectively dictated what services, and in particular what training, was offered:

It’s tied up with vested interest … These programs in PNG which are partnerships between ABC and NBC, no guesses for who’ll get the jobs. (Trainer A)

Partnering with local professional organisations was seen to have benefits for journalism training because it could help ensure the training was appropriate to the environment, but there was disquiet that poorly led or heavily donor-funded bodies could end up serving vested interests.

**Media Environments**

The Australian journalism educators all accepted that a vibrant and effective journalism environment was as important as well-trained journalists, and to that end each training environment needed supportive government legislation and regulations, a successful business model, and supportive professional bodies. These requirements were often not in place, or not operating successfully, in the nations where aid programs operated. This was keenly felt, particularly in countries where news proprietors had established media outlets to leverage political influence.

While individual trainers on small projects could do little in such situations, large training institutions such as the ABC and BBC often had the capacity to build
institutions at all levels within a country; however often the most senior people within the recipient institutions caused the greatest difficulties because they were committed to economic rather than journalistic ideals:

we’re talking about people who are in business. They’re not in media because they believe in a Fourth Estate. And that’s just one issue. (Arthur)

There was also consternation that government-funded organisations such as the ABC did not have the experience within the organisation to work in media systems where an understanding of the commercial environment is important:

I don’t think the ABC is a good model for NBC National Radio in PNG—there are all these assumptions about public broadcasts—we’ll just transfer it like some kind of template—without thinking if these particular ways of doing things are appropriate in the local context …These stations are like poorly resourced community radio stations. They resemble that more than anything that the ABC would have. (Trainer A)

Sometimes the training organisation needed more than a strong sense of management. Media can be extremely expensive and difficult to produce and distribute or broadcast. Some of the journalism educators acknowledged the work of development workers, not necessarily those working with media, who could bring a multi-layered approach and eventually get a system working:

It’s very expensive to produce media there [in PNG]—whether it’s radio towers, transporting newspapers by air to remote areas, communications are difficult. Given these difficulties, it functions very like Australian media, very similar but with local understandings. It’s very clear that the media is not for everybody there. (Duffield)

Australian journalism educators accepted that they did not always have an in-depth understanding of the different regulatory environments for the journalism profession in another country. In some countries in the Asia–Pacific region journalists were required to be licensed or to have a permit, as in Vietnam:

You only get the permit after going through some sort of propaganda school, so you understand the government’s vision. You always keep the government’s priorities in mind while you do your job. (Adam)
There was acknowledgement that strong media environments and understanding of media regulations were required for effective journalism, but many of the journalism educators felt that they and their organisations were not always best placed to lead such changes, and suggested that development workers rather than media educators would perform better in some of these areas.

**Difficult work conditions**

The journalism educators all acknowledged that reporting in many developing countries is much more difficult than in Australia, not just because of cultural and safety issues. A lack of telecommunications, computers, and transport are just some of the issues which working journalists face. Working in a variety of languages also slows reporters down. The educators appreciated that local reporting conditions are often a far cry from an Australian newsroom with the comfort of press freedom and easy access to technology and public officials:

A journalist in India does not have that luxury. A journalist in Laos does not have that luxury. So those are conditions that journalists must be very, very aware of. (Loo)

Journalism educators were overwhelmingly in awe of the bravery of the journalists who faced threats of physical violence and liberty to produce their stories. Adam, for one, noted her horror at the jailing of two journalists who simply reported in Vietnam on the successful appeal of a government minister in a corruption scandal:

The two journalists who broke the story were jailed. They worked for the two main media organisations who, the day after they were jailed, reported the story. Three days later, they wrote ‘ex-journalists’ which I found offensive. Why don’t the employers stick up for these people? It doesn’t seem like they did anything wrong? But the other journalists said ‘if they’re in jail, they get their journalist cards taken off them, so they’re not journalists any more’. (Adam)

The journalism educators recounted multiple cases of trainee journalists being threatened with physical violence for going against a country’s cultural confines:

One of my smarter reporters (in PNG) would do some sort of interview, they were asking some really hard questions of a politician, and his goons
would turn up outside the office asking for him to come out so they could beat him up. And that happened, and I think it’s still happening. (Howarth)

Another trainer in Papua New Guinea noted that one of his young students had been intimidated and offered cash while on a reporting assignment: ²⁴

One of the students … was doing a project on some matter that got before courts and she was leaving the court room one day when a couple of strong men walked her down the street, gave her 300 kina—quite a lot of money—and said ‘piss off out of it and don’t cover the story any more’. (Duffield)

Keeping the trainees safe was a priority for the educators, but sometimes they worried that they had inadvertently encouraged students to do things that were culturally inappropriate, in the name of journalism. Trainers said they tried to work within cultural sensitivities to get a journalistic outcome. One trainer used the example of a 19-year-old Fijian woman assigned to ask pointed questions of a government minister who happened to also be a Chief. This would be seen as a major imbalance in terms of the power relationship and authority:

You might argue that merely going there (do to the interview) is against their culture. We would try to work around that by acting ethically and drawing on the person’s own personal and professional repertoire so you get smooth communication going. (Trainer A)

The trainer suggested that it was the job of the young trainee journalists to ‘educate’ those they interviewed about the nature of journalism and thereby produce a smoother communication outcome: ‘If the source doesn’t accept a 19-year-old firing these tricky questions, clearly that’s improper.’

 Threats to journalists were not always of a physical or a legal nature; sometimes the threats would be to a journalist’s ongoing employment. While working on an English-language paper in Vietnam, Adam said, compromises often had to be made to appease the editors, proprietors and government:

²⁴ The student reported the matter to her lecturers and another student took up the inquiry.
I would say, this is what a Western reader wants, and it would be difficult to work out a compromise. Often I would say ‘don’t run it’, and it would be difficult to drop a story once the higher-ups had selected it. That was very difficult. But I had a low level job, it was their newspaper. If they felt strongly about it, I’d say this is the best we can do. Put it on page 18.

Adam argued that some of the readers in Vietnam understood a story from what was not included. It was almost like a hidden message in stories, clearly did not involve the style of journalism seen in liberal democratic nation states:

Vietnamese readers can read the subtext. If it says the government says the UN is wrong, the readers know that the UN has criticised the Vietnamese government in some way, and we’re just hearing the response. The Vietnamese stories won’t have the full article that makes sense: the UN says this, the Vietnamese government says this. They just have this one-sided response that doesn’t make any sense. If you translate it to English, and stick it in an English newspaper, it makes even less sense. It’s not newsworthy, it doesn’t make any sense. (Adam)

**Trainees’ pay and work conditions**

The Australian journalism educators were united in their concern about the pay and work conditions of the journalists they trained. Often the conditions were so bad, and the status of the profession so low, that talented journalists completed their training and quickly moved into related professions such as government jobs and public relations positions, and sometimes even to another country, to advance their economic prospects. Savvy young journalists often found that once their skills were developed they were offered jobs in the government, corporate sector, or a non-government organisation, leaving a depleted newsroom with a new batch of young trainees. Howard, Watson, Loo and Pearson all related stories about young journalists taking better-paid jobs in other sectors, in East Timor, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific:

There’s a huge economic challenge, in that the media organisations really can’t afford to pay their journalists very much in these Pacific Island countries, and unless they’re working for a government media organisation, they’re not going to have the security attached to it. (Pearson)
Such was the demand for journalists in the non-government sector that Watson wrote a course in Papua New Guinea called ‘Communication skills for NGO workers’, covering skills such as how to write a press release, write a funding proposal, and communicate with journalists: ‘We saw more and more students going into those roles, so we introduced this course to try and address that need.’

The issue of losing good young journalists to the communications industry, whether NGOs, the corporate sector or government public relations, was not confined to post-conflict countries:

There are more journalists employed by government in Australia than there are in independent media outlets, so it’s, it’s a problem here too … I can’t think of a solution. I think we need to continue what we’re doing in Australia and keep training young journalists and … train the next wave when they arrive. (Pearson)

The educators believed that one of the problems for journalism training (in terms of attracting good recruits) was that many people in Asia–Pacific consider journalism a low-paid, low-status profession, with some people knowing very little about it:

People often had a negative view of the media generally, certainly in PNG, there was an opportunity there to say that our job was to improve professional standards and our work invaluable, and we should be recognised for what we’re doing—we’re meeting a demand, responding to public opinion. (Trainer A)

In Papua New Guinea, one journalism educator said, he had attempted to intervene with the multi-national employer to get a better deal for the local journalists:

[News Ltd] decided that this would be the average percentage pay-rise, which was going to be something like 4%, and that was going to apply to Fiji and Papua New Guinea. And I argued violently with the bean counters, saying, there’s 22% inflation, I can’t do that. My staff will starve. And I managed to argue a higher rate, which wasn’t enough, but, I think they’re still underpaid in all these places. (Howarth)

Another in-house trainer noted that she did not like to spike badly written stories because of the economic impact on the reporter who had filed the copy:
Our journalist translators were paid by the word. They would write hugely long, boring stories. If you cut it down to 300 words, they come to you with tears in their eyes, saying ‘but I have to feed my children this week’. Part of it was semi-joking, but if they spent two days writing something, and if nobody had told them it’s rubbish, and at the final stage I say it’s rubbish, they would be losing two days’ pay. (Adam)

**Advice for new trainers**

Many of the Australian journalism educators had advice for those beginning international training work. One common theme was articulated by Dobbie: ‘They have to live with it after you’ve caught the plane back home.’ Experienced journalism educators wanted their colleagues to behave with humility, be culturally literate, and listen to local people:

> If you don’t deliver what they want and what works for them, then it’s just a wasted exercise, and it’s patronizing paternalism to impose ideas that they don’t want. (Dobbie)

Loo noted the need for trainers to be hopeful but realistic about what they could achieve in one or two or three workshops:

> It has to be an ongoing process. It’s not fly in, do the training, enjoy yourself, and off you go. In essence, it has to be part of your personal cause, if I can use that term.

Trainers noted an arrogance among some educators that journalism in Australia was in some way superior to that in the countries in which they were training. The educators were aware that their mere presence in a foreign country gave them the advantage of authority, whether they came from the United States, the United Kingdom or Australia:

> I think the colonial mentality is still quite rampant among some journalists in developing countries. You put a white Anglo-Saxon trainer with another equally qualified trainer from a non-white Anglo-Saxon background, I think the perception of authority and experience is laden on the white trainer. (Loo)

Good trainers were those who could quickly adapt or adjust their material to the local environment. Loo suggested, ‘I think teaching participants from their strength and from their existing knowledge is a more effective way to train’.

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Conclusion
Australian journalism educators overwhelmingly set out to teach journalism as it is done in liberal democratic nation states, but were often exposed to the reality of different journalism styles in the field, such development, peace, inclusive and critical development journalism. Many found that they were interested in the various ‘styles’ but could not fully embrace any of them. The stereotype of journalism in liberal democratic nation states as aggressive was very alive in the training rooms, but most educators felt that they were teaching students to ask important questions, rather than to ask them in a rude way. All the educators expressed a desire for their students to conduct watchdog or investigative journalism, but felt that the basics of journalism practice were usually in greater demand. These included the need to ensure the news was honest, accurate and written with integrity. There was sometimes difficulty getting journalists to apply notions of balance and objectivity, particularly in countries where there had been a sudden cessation of hostilities. One educator noted that writing in the inverted pyramid style of journalistic writing, a staple of most journalism classes in liberal democratic nation states, was not appropriate in Vietnam. Similarly, issues of respect played out differently in different countries; long-time Pacific correspondent Sean Dorney was among those who noted huge differences in the way respect was required in Melanesian and Polynesian countries. Ethically there were also differences between accepted behaviour in the Australian context and what occurred in other countries in relation to the acceptance of gifts and money in exchange for reports in the media.

Australian journalism educators overwhelmingly used their own teaching materials in their international classrooms, sometimes adapted from Australia but using local examples. Many recognised that there could be unintended consequences of their own attitudes and opinions being passed on to trainees, but most struggled to articulate in what situation this would prove problematic. Overwhelming they enjoyed working in local partnerships and teaching with local teachers, but were acutely aware that the media environment in which they were
providing the training or education would ultimately determine the success of their efforts.

Contrary to a popular view that they spent their time drinking daiquiris on Pacific beaches, many of the educators noted the difficulties of doing their work and were acutely concerned not only for their own safety but for the safety of their trainees. They were overwhelming concerned about trainees’ pay and work conditions, and wanted to ensure that any further training efforts would benefit their former students.
Chapter Ten: Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is the poorest country in the Pacific (Pacific Islands 2014) and in recent years has gained more than 50 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) from foreign aid (Feeny & McGillivray 2010, p. 38). It has about 550,000 citizens spread over 1,000 islands and atolls, with more than 83 per cent of its people living in rural areas where economic activity is largely subsistence or on a micro-scale.

Solomon Islands is part of Melanesia, which also includes Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji; across the islands there is still a strong focus on traditional customs (kastom) and ‘the Melanesian way’. Forty per cent of the population of Solomon Islands are below the age of 14. The literacy rate is unmeasured, but it is widely accepted to be one of the lowest in the Pacific. The 2010 UNDP Human Development Report recorded that most Solomon Islanders attended school for 4.5 years although there were nine years of schooling available in some parts of the country (Klugman 2010 p. 145). In 2002, Solomon Island had the dubious honour of being labelled the Pacific’s first failed state (Roughan 2002).

Solomon Islands (Laracy 2014) was named by a Spanish explorer Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira in 1568; he believed he had found the source of King Solomon’s wealth when he saw alluvial gold on the main island, Guadalcanal. The islands became a British protectorate in 1893 and colonial rule began three years later. The islands have had a turbulent history and witnessed some of the fiercest fighting in World War II. They are well known in the United States because future president John F Kennedy’s patrol boat was patrolling in the area when it was rammed by the Japanese destroyer Amagiri in 1943 and Kennedy helped save the lives of several of his crew (John F. Kennedy and PT-109).

The British colonial administration and its policies have had long-term impacts on the country, including the concentration of economic and educational development in Honiara at the expense of rural areas, a European school curriculum which divorces the educational elite from their local backgrounds, large-scale gold mining at the expense of local panning, and an overcentralisation of administration rather than a federal system maximising local autonomy (Tedder...
Solomon Islanders had no say in the administration of the British Protectorate until 1951, when the first nominated Solomon Islanders took seats in the High Commissioner’s Advisory Council. Those nominated, from the indigenous male colonial elite, were thought to provide a fair representation of the administrative districts of the Protectorate: they included ordained religious ministers, ex- or present district headmen, an ex-policeman, a war hero, and a leader representing the Malaita Council (Moore 2010, p. 8).

Before becoming a British protectorate, Solomon Islanders shared no common language and had no common ideology or leaders (Moore 2010). Communication between the islands was poor and very few Islanders had had a Western education. Guided by the British, the Protectorate adopted a local version of the Westminster system of government. Democracy was always seen as central to Solomon Islands, as High Commissioner Sir David Trench explained in 1961:

> Democratic political systems all vary slightly in their superficial forms, but not in their essentials: which have been tried over many centuries and proved to be in the best long term interests of the people who live under them.

Solomon Islands currently has a unicameral National Parliament of 50 members. The prime minister is elected by secret ballot and is responsible for choosing the cabinet. The speaker, elected by members of the house, is from outside the house, but the deputy speaker is a member of the national parliament. The attorney-general is a public servant with no vote. The governor-general is elected by the national parliament by open vote. This is a very different style of governance to that of Melanesian tradition and custom, as has been captured by a number of writers including Moore, who noted that the idea of including a customary council of chiefs was rejected in the 1970s and quoted the official press release:

> The idea of a method of government or constitution unique to the Solomons has been lost mainly through the inability to adapt customary ways to the needs of modern government. Speed in decisions is essential so often, and wide consultation makes this very difficult or impossible. (Moore 2010)
Customary law has, however, been recognised in Solomon Islands Constitution in a way that is unique to other countries. Although it is difficult to define as Corrin (2012) points out, the customary and written law of Solomon Islands is not easily accessible. Some legislation and case law is available in hard copy or online. Under the 1978 Constitution, customary land and interests in customary land are inalienable and can only be transferred to other Solomon Islanders in very limited circumstances. It is acknowledged that the people who are entitled to be treated as owners of the land and its resources are not readily identifiable.

It is significant in terms of this thesis that the idea of Solomon Islands as a nation state is relatively new. Francis Saemala, special secretary to the first prime minister, acknowledges this issue when looking at the country in the 1960s and 70s:

The identity of being a Solomon Islander becomes more real outside Solomon Islands. At home it is more common for our people to identify themselves with the particular islands, districts or provinces from which we originated. There are certain symbols which represent our national identity, such our Constitution and national government, flag, anthem and the national capital of Honiara. But all these, except Honiara, came into being only since independence.

Under the leadership of Sir Peter Kenilorea, Solomon Islands achieved self-government in 1976 and independence from the United Kingdom two years later. However, ethnic violence, government malfeasance and endemic crime undermined stability and civil society after independence. The cause of the islands’ problems are complex, but include an inequitable distribution of wealth from mining, illegal felling of trees without compensation to landowners, bad weather conditions for the production of subsistence crops, and tensions among different ethnic groups (Social impact assessment of peace restoration initiatives in Solomon Islands 2004; DFAT 2004; Hou, Johnson & Price 2013).

**Heart of the Tensions**

Several excellent texts set out the source of the political, economic and social tensions that caused the crisis that ended with Australian-led military intervention in 2003: Bennett (1995), Dinnen (2008), Dinnen and Stewart (2008), Hou,

Between 1998 and 2003, 200 people are said to have been killed and another 20,000 to 30,000 displaced (Husband 2013; Kabutaulaka 2005a, p. 285) over disputes centred on land: it was not only a source of food and a place of residence and identity, but a potential source of income from loggers, mostly from Asia (Kabutaulaka 2005b). The nation’s economic dependence on logging and the sudden decline in log production, due mainly to the Asian economic crisis and the collapse of Asian timber markets, exacerbated problems in the communities. The civil war that prompted the Australian-led intervention erupted as a result of friction between the landholders on Guadalcanal and immigrant groups from Malaita, and the government’s inability to cope. However, many other factors fed into to the crisis and instabilities, which continued into 2006. Morgan and McLeod (2006) list some of these as poor policies from successive governments, poor leadership and political system, disparities between capabilities and income, a misfit between Melanesia and institutional structures, land exploitation, tensions between the central government and the regions, and criminalisation and corruption.

There was widespread and pervasive corruption in Solomon Islands politics, and the country’s two largest export industries, logging and fishing, were the most corrupt. Dinnen is particularly scathing of the Kemakeza administration:

> many of its members (including the prime minister himself) were widely believed to have been involved in corruption and tension-related wrongdoing. Had all the allegations been acted on, there would have been few leaders left to run the government. Interveners such as RAMSI run the unavoidable risk of becoming tainted in the public eye through their association with discredited governments and leaders. This was evident in respect of the mission’s relationship with Kemakeza and his short-lived successor, Rini. (Dinnen 2008, p. 15)

To make sense of the media environment it is necessary to acknowledge the country’s colonial history and understand the economics that underpin the country. Solomon Islands, like many other Melanesian countries, is economically dependent on natural resources; however, access to these resources for large-scale
commercial development is complicated by the fact that land (and inshore fisheries) are communally owned:

In Solomon Islands, more than 80 per cent of land is ‘customarily’ owned. This means that potential investors have to deal with not only the State and individual owners, but with entire communities before any natural-resource development initiative can take place. (Kabutaulaka 2005b)

Although this means local land owning communities can influence how their resources are exploited, they do not all exist in harmony; Kabutaulaka points out that members often have ‘varying interests and degrees of exposure to the world. There are women, children, elders, those with formal education, government officials, aspiring big-men, con-artists, etc’ (Kabutaulaka 2005b). Importantly most of the logging companies are not Western but Asian, which means that the Asian economic crisis of 1997 had a flow-on effect on Solomon Islands and most of the country’s major industries were affected from late 1998. Solomon Islands Plantation Limited (SIPL) oil palm plantation halted work, and the Gold Ridge mine on Central Guadalcanal stopped operations after militants took over the site. Revenue collected from log exports declined and substantial amounts of potential revenue were also lost as a result of inefficient government policies.

It would be incorrect to suggest that customary landowners in Solomon Islands are passive victims of transnational logging companies. Logging had given customary landowners resource rents far higher than what could be made from producing copra or cocoa:

For people who struggle daily to find money to pay for basic needs such as clothes, kerosene, salt, sugar, soap and school fees, the decision to allow logging on their land is a rational one. It allows them to have access to and enjoy the goods and services that the global economy has to offer. (Kabutaulaka 2005b)

In a number of cases the land-owning groups formed themselves into companies to resemble the corporate industries that they were working with, which caused issues within communities. Such structures favoured ‘big men’ in the community who had formal education, and excluded certain other people, particularly women.
and youth. They also influenced the way in which the community related to the land and to each other (Kabutaulaka 2005b).

Significantly for the former British colony, the arrival of logging companies was not attached to the expansion of Western ideas:

> We often equate globalisation with the expansion of Western ideas, cultures, values, lifestyles, technology, people and capital. Increasingly for many Pacific Island countries, however, globalisation also involves the flow of people, ideas, cultures, values, technology and capital from Asia. It is, for example, Asian people, capital and markets that dominate Solomon Islands forestry industry. (Kabutaulaka 2005b)

**RAMSI Intervention**

In the late 1990s tensions over land brought the country to the brink of economic disaster, and in March 2003 Australia finally answered a call for help from the prime minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza—the third such to plead for assistance (Kabutaulaka 2005a). Australia’s foreign minister had, only months earlier, argued there was no place for Australia in the affairs of the country:

> Sending in Australian troops to occupy Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme. It would be widely resented in the Pacific region. It would be difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers. And for how many years would such an occupation have to continue? And what would be the exit strategy? The real show-stopper, however, is that it would not work … foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting Solomon Islands. Ultimately the answers have to come from within … At best our intervention would only delay the inevitable, which is that Solomon Islanders themselves have to come to grips with the challenges they face. (Downer 2003)

On July 24, 2003, Australia led a multi-national intervention force to the country to restore peace and disarm ethnic militias. This intervention, named the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), remained in the country until 2013. RAMSI called itself a partnership between the people and government of Solomon Islands and drew members from 15 Pacific Island countries, including Australia. Its mandate covered law and order, the justice and prison systems, rebuilding Solomon Islands institutions and establishing conditions under which Solomon Islands could achieve social and economic recovery.
There was always a plan for RAMSI to leave Solomon Islands, and many argued that its mission must ‘cultivate a capacity of positive change’ rather than encouraging a culture of dependence:

The role of the intervening force must be one of facilitating positive development rather than dictating it. In Solomon Islands, Australian interests and discourses must not be privileged over those of Solomon Islanders. If that happens Solomon Islanders will continue to say ‘letem olketa ramsi kam stretem’—wait for RAMSI to come and fix it. (Kabutaulaka 2005a, p. 330)

Although RAMSI started making public statements about an exit strategy, only one of the people interviewed in Solomon Islands in 2011 for this research wanted RAMSI to leave. There was however a desire for RAMSI to change its focus:

While it’s good that RAMSI has restored law and order to ensure that the environment is peaceful, there are other areas that RAMSI needs to focus much more on in terms of social issues and development issues that the people are struggling with … If RAMSI can change its focus to be more on the developmental side, then I don’t have any problem with it. (Herming)

This desire to keep some kind of RAMSI presence correlated with other research in Solomon Islands (Paligaru 2011) and the view of the United States government as stated in US embassy cables released by WikiLeaks:

Describing Solomon Islands as ‘fragile’ if not ‘broken’, US diplomats have suggested that external assistance may be required for another 10 or 15 years, though it is thought ‘highly doubtful that the [Solomon Islands government] or the majority of Solomon Islanders envision RAMSI’s presence for that long. (Dorling 2011)

The World Bank acknowledged that Solomon Islands, like its Pacific neighbours, continued to struggle economically because it had few natural resources, narrowly based economies, large distances to major markets, and vulnerability to exogenous shocks (Pacific Islands 2014) such as the flooding that devastated much of the country, including the capital, in 2014. The CIA, however, considered that RAMSI had been generally effective in restoring law and order and rebuilding government institutions (Central Intelligence Agency 2010).
Flare-ups

RAMSI’s intervention was not immediately effective. There were three significant periods of a renewal of tensions after their arrival. A United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) report identified in 2005 a range of risk factors for further conflict and found that corruption in government was the highest risk, followed by women’s participation in government processes, satisfaction with the provision of government services, and the ability to participate in government decision making (Engendering conflict early warning: lessons from UNIFEM’s Solomon Islands gendered conflict early warning project 2006, p. 9). The same report listed a number of economic warning indicators worthy of mention here: economic inequality within the population, inability of families to meet basic food needs, male unemployment, female unemployment, labour migration among men, labour migration among women, and female prostitution. Among the methods used in the UNIFEM research was a media scan of local newspaper reports on peace and conflict.

After riots in Honiara in 2006, RAMSI was accused of not fully appreciating the ‘pent-up fury’ of locals caused by ‘years of political instability (fostered, for example, by corrupt politicians) that almost ruined the economy, causing a decline in living standards’ (Singh & Prakash 2006, p. 78). Hameiri (2006) argued that RAMSI was successful at disarming and prosecuting former militants but not at reform, although they ‘identified poor governance as the root cause of conflict in the islands’. (Hameiri 2006). University of Hawaii academic and Solomon Islander Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka suggested the social unrest in 2006 was the result of what ‘people perceived as the corruption of the democratic process’ (Kabutaulaka 2006) because of the way business was seen to have influenced the selection of a prime minister. Two academics at the University of the South Pacific also argued the 2006 riots in Honiara were the result of RAMSI not understanding local disquiet:

in its fervent pursuit of politicians and militants charged with offences during the civil unrest, RAMSI overlooked, or at least underestimated, the level of discontent among the general population. Many of those who rioted were ordinary people fed up with the state of affairs in the country,
Kabutaulaka (2006a) suggested at that time that RAMSI had much to learn in its approach to accelerating economic growth in Solomon Island and fostering a functioning and effective state:

Building and strengthening state institutions is in itself not a bad thing. However, it becomes problematic when it assumes that institutions should be built in a particular way, or (should be a) particular kind of institution … There is often no questioning whether or not they will work in the Solomons or East Timor. In the case of the Solomons, Australia refuses to support (and indeed proactively opposes) a proposal for federalism, which had been discussed even before independence. Australia wants to build institutions of government that work in Canberra and expect them to work equally well in the Solomons. (Kabutaulaka in Singh & Prakash 2006, p. 79)

In another article printed in 2006, Kabutaulaka went on to point to weaknesses in the Westminster parliamentary system:

In the absence of a strong party system, voters tend to vote for individuals rather than political parties. These individuals, after being elected into Parliament, form political alliances and then compete to capture the prime minister position and subsequently form government. (Kabutaulaka 2006)

Solomon Islands scholars have questioned the effectiveness of governance reforms in the country, particularly those that mirror neo-liberal processes, and suggest that a lack of recognition of customary law with the Westminster system introduced by the British to Solomon Islands was part of the cause of the continuing and underlying tensions in the country. Significantly the UNDFW report found that corruption in the government was the major risk factor for a renewal of tensions.

**Media During the Tensions**

At the time of the tensions that lead to RAMSI arriving there were limited media operating in Solomon Islands. The most prominent news organisations were the Honiara-based Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) and the
independently owned *Solomon Star*. During the tensions both the SIBC and *Solomon Star* continued to broadcast and print, under very difficult circumstances.

Solomon Islands government provides a percentage of the money required to operate the SIBC but had to cut expenditure because of reduced revenue during the crisis (*Social impact assessment of peace restoration initiatives in Solomon Islands* 2004, p. 36). Most companies could not afford to advertise and left the broadcaster with unpaid bills. The government also failed to provide any funds from 2001. The SIBC cut its staff from 50 to 17 and reduced its broadcast hours by two. Operations at *Solomon Star* were also affected severely by the crisis, and its print run was reduced because of a lack of advertising revenue (*Social impact assessment of peace restoration initiatives in Solomon Islands* 2004, p. 36).

One of those who remained in Solomon Islands during the tensions was Father Ambrose Periera. He saw the strain that the local media were under:

> In the years of the tension, that was from at least from ‘99 until 2003 when RAMSI came in, you were afraid to first of all go out. So the journalists were concentrated here (in Honiara). They would not even go outside past Henderson … To get the stories out, even simple stories, there was always the fear of people coming and breaking things down. (Periera)

**Balanced reporting**

A key difficulty for working journalists was that the tensions were ethnic in origin, which meant that some people, including journalists, were targeted because of where they came from. Reporters were unable to go to some areas to get a ‘balanced’ story because of their ethnicity. Herming remembered the difficulties:

> Because I’m from Malaita, and people from my province are fighting against people from … It’s really difficult to strike a balance when your own people are being chased from Guadalcanal. (Herming)

Nalangu also remembered the difficulty in reporting fairly:

> We could only have access to one side of the group. When we report things that aren’t really favourable to the side that is in town, we get
people coming in, people harassing us, demanding stories be pulled from our bulletins and manhandling, in some instances, of reporters. (Nalangu)

Claims of journalistic bias, based on the ethnicity of the owners and editors, were also made. Robert Iroga, who wrote extensively of the difficulties in covering the ethnic conflict, noted he was among those accused of taking sides:

Because I was a Malaitan and the raid was carried out by MEF (Malaita Eagle Force), I was then accused of glorifying MEF by a Solomon Islands’ academic, Dr John Roughan, and fleeing journalists(Iroga 2008, p. 157).

Self-censorship

The tendency to self-censor rather than to provide balanced reporting was seen to carry through into reporting in 2011 and 2012. This key indicator of basic journalism quality was seen as a problem by all stakeholders in the media(Thomas et al. 2012, pp. 24-5). During the troubles the reporting staff at the SIBC, to ensure that their stories would not cause themselves greater problems, started practising self-censorship:

We tried as much as possible not to write stories that made people feel like hating us. In some instances, I think we played down some stories that could have probably made big headlines in the international media—had the situation here been normal. (Nalangu)

There were unresolved issues for some of the journalists because of this self-censorship. Herming noted he had not run a story in Solomon Star for security reasons at the time of the tensions and wished he still had the proof to tell the story later; it had been lost on an old computer:

It had to do with abuse. Militants abused some girls, raped them at gunpoint. It’s a terrible story. I’ve got information on that. I’ve got some pictures and images on their activities. I wrote the story, discussed it with my editor, and he said ‘Man, don’t dig our graves with this story.’. (Herming)

Praise for persistence

Although the work was difficult and frightening, the journalists in Solomon Islands were praised for their efforts. The Committee to Protect Journalists in
New York reported in 2002 that the Solomon Island media had been doing a good job in difficult circumstances:

Despite a hostile political and economic atmosphere, Solomon Islands’ small but tenacious media have managed to pursue controversial stories, including exposés of official misconduct and links between the government and ethnic militias. (*Attacks on press 2002: Solomon Islands 2002*)

The Committee to Project Journalists in 2002 (*Attacks on press 2002: Solomon Islands 2002*) noted the financial difficulties facing the SIBC, which had not received government funding for some time, and the decline in advertising revenue at *Solomon Star*. The prime minister in 2001, Sir Allan Kemakeza, and others were reported as blaming the media for not helping the security situation or the economy and for damaging the government’s international reputation with ‘inaccurate’ reporting. In 2002, the Pacific Island News Association’s coordinator, Peter Lomas, wrote he was impressed by the Solomon Island journalists for their ‘professionalism, courage, fairness, and dedication’, which helped inform Solomon Islanders of ‘real dangers and circumstances’ that outsiders could not understand. (Iroga 2008, p. 158)

*Media artefacts from the tensions*

At the time of the field research the editor of SIBC, Walter Nalangu, said he would provide copies of audio from the times of the tension for this research; but despite repeated requests this did not happen. Some back copies of *Solomon Star* were available, although they were incomplete; the researcher photographed a range of articles from the time of the tensions.

Solomon Islands journalists before, during and after the tensions articulated the values of journalism in liberal democratic nation states: truth telling and accuracy. They knew the rhetoric of the power of the press, its rights and responsibilities, many of them having learned it from an education in Australia or New Zealand. Before and during the tensions *Solomon Star* ran many articles about the need for freedom of the press. The words ‘corruption’ and ‘watchdog’ appeared commonly, particularly in quotes from representatives of the Media Association of Solomon Islands and from the Pacific Island News Association.
By the time RAMSI restored order to Solomon Islands the country’s media had been reduced in capacity and capability. Many senior journalists had left the country and taken on other roles (such as working in communications for the government, NGOs, or the Pacific Islands Secretariat). Some of those who had stayed were traumatised by events of the civil unrest and had been acculturated into a system of self-censorship and lack of balance because of threats of physical intimidation. They were all, however, fully aware of the responsibilities of journalists according to the Fourth Estate model of watchdog journalism. This left the nation’s newsrooms with few senior hands and many junior reporters who had not had the benefit of a strong education or mentorship in the methods of liberal journalism.

*Freedom of Expression in Solomon Islands*

Freedom of expression and freedom of information are guaranteed in Article 12 of Solomon Islands’ constitution, but there was no current freedom of information law in the country (Freedom House 2013). As in other constitutional multi-party parliamentary democracies, defamation is a criminal offence, and authorities had in the past filed or threatened civil suits against the press. Civil society groups all concurred that the press was free. As Pollard noted, ‘In one sense, we do have a good, we have a free press and I’m thankful for what we have.’

This did not mean, however, that the press was free to report whatever it liked. Freedom House (Freedom House 2013) reported that in 2011 *Island Sun* newspaper was threatened with a compensation demand after a report about a politician’s alleged purchase and private registration of his government vehicle. No defamation cases against journalists were reported in 2012.

Other factors impacted on press freedom. In 2012 it was reported that a former parliamentarian Jimmy Lusibaea had banned his wife Vika from speaking to the foreign news media: she had been elected to Lusibaea’s former North Malaita seat in August 2012 and was the only woman in the National Parliament (Radio NZ International 2012).

Freedom House reported that the political and news media environment was stable and diverse in Solomon Islands, although pressure from politicians trying to
limit public debate was still a problem, especially for new news outlets attempting to contribute to a plurality of voices. Freedom House noted that due to the country’s volatile history, some journalists were prone to self-censorship, but journalists had generally been able to cover the news more freely, and without harassment. Attacks against media workers were rare, and none were reported in 2012 (Freedom House 2013).

Solomon Island journalists had power under the law to report freely, but defamation laws, a culture of self-censorship, and a history of violence against journalists impeded some reporting.

**Colonial Legacies in Education and Practice in Solomon Islands**

University education for journalists in Solomon Islands has never been an in-country option, and most of the journalistic training received has been on the job, in the form of short courses, or more formally at universities and colleges in other countries such as Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand or Vanuatu. Australian academic Steve Sharp draws on the work of Solomon Islander Ashley Wickham in complaining there was little space for local input into media practices:

> The sentiment that ‘others know better’ is often reinforced by donor preferences to send in their own instructors to conduct training. When there is a crisis, the local journalists are often blamed. However, they rarely create the conditions, perceptions and the climate within which the media work (Sharp 2008, p. 83).

He also echoes Robie’s complaints that media in many Pacific countries are too ‘Western’ and not attuned to what is often called ‘the Pacific way’ (Layton 1993; Wakavonovono 1981). Sharp suggests that the media in most of the South Pacific countries is ‘elite-oriented and urban-based’ and tends to give little space to those at the grassroots. He is among the academics who note that the development of journalism as a profession under the British in Colonial times has created an almost blind adherence to styles of reporting which reflect Western journalism.

Robie’s worry, like other Pacific scholars, is that the regionally dominant states of Australia and New Zealand have a disproportionately influential role in Pacific
journalism (2008b, pp. 103, 7); although he rejects suggestions that Pacific journalism is an identikit of Australia and New Zealand he has called for a rethink of the approach to journalism education and training in the South Pacific. Robie suggested the Pacific media has more in common with India, Indonesia and the Philippines. In 2008 Robie proffered what he called a Four Worlds News Model (2008b, p. 105) in which he creates a matrix of news values and media roles. In Australia, a First World nation, Robie argues, the goal of journalism is to be objective and the news values are timeliness (news is now), proximity (news is near), personality (news is prominent or interesting people), unusual odd events, human interest, conflict and disaster. In Robie’s model Solomon Islands’ media falls into a Third World profile where the goal is not objectivity but nation-building. News values differ, and in Solomon Islands are more likely to be development news (news is progress, growth, new dams, new buildings), national integration (news is positive achievement, pride and unity), social responsibility (news is responsible), education (news teaches, passes on knowledge) and other values (news similar to first world human interest, people etc.) Robie suggests that development journalism is not well understood in the South Pacific even though most of the media adopt this approach to their work:

   It means a form of journalism contributing to the progress of a country—economic and social development, education and cultural. It means a lot more community reporting in the villages—far from the faxed and e-mailed press releases of the Pacific urban newsrooms. University education has the capacity to provide the analytical skills to successfully report real development. (Robie 2008b, p. 113)

**A Snapshot of Solomon Islands Radio Current Affairs**

At the time the field work for this thesis was conducted Australian trainers had been working with Solomon Islands journalists for two and a half years. Research by Tebbutt found that SIBC was regarded as a quality radio news service; its strongest aspects were seen to be the national news, its good newsreaders and its fresh and up-to-date quality news (Tebbutt 2010, p. 144).

In a bid to get an independent view of the standard of the journalistic work being produced in the Solomon Islands a content analysis of two weeks of current
affairs programming broadcast on SIBC was conducted during the field research in March 2011.

The SOLMAS project focused on training staff at SIBC News and Current Affairs from its arrival in 2008; the general manager in 2009 was quoted as saying that SOLMAS had provided professional advice never previously available (Ferguson & List 2009). The Quarterly Report for September–November 2009 noted that all the news and current affairs staff now knew ‘how to decide the Newsroom agenda’ (2009, p. 11). The report recorded improved confidence in all journalism and news presenting skills:

The program presentation and news training has helped our presentation staff a lot … For the Honiara in Focus programs, (Elizabeth Slade) interviewed a Big man businessman—she would never have done that before. (Moddie Nanau, SIBC programs supervisor, in Ferguson & List 2009, p. 12)

The operating environment at SIBC was difficult. In one of the first progress reports compiled by SOLMAS, staff noted that the 2009 financial plan for the organisation was ‘extremely ambitious with revenue projections showing an increase of 50% and no justifications to achieve this figure’, and described the HR Management Plan as a ‘wish list’: SIBC ‘has no real policy, procedures or guidelines’ (Ferguson 2009a, p. 13).

The 7 a.m. English-language current affairs program was listed as being prepared by the news and current affairs division of the SIBC, and sponsored by Solomon Islands Tobacco Company. Each program was punctuated by announcements that people under 18 should not smoke and that no one should sell cigarettes to people under the age of 18. The programs were presented in a mixture of pidgin and English, with questions asked in English but often answered in pidgin. Each program was allocated up to 30 minutes of airtime, but ranged between 26 and 30 minutes. On most days the current affairs program featured three major stories, although sometimes it was dedicated to just one issue. Every story was produced or presented by an SIBC staff member.
The researcher looked specifically at journalism issues (topic and substance) and technical issues such as wind noise. A significant issue was the constant switching between English and pidgin. Although all media in Solomon Islands work in English, many of their interviewees do not speak English or do not speak it well. This required the reporters to dance between languages. In the two-week period under study reporters only used pidgin and English and did not use any of the other languages of Solomon Islands.

Technical issues ranged from sound bytes sounding ‘hollow’, inaudible sound and wind noise. ‘Hollowness’ of recordings was heard many times and in particular interfered with a voice report on a bail application for a witness in the trial of Mark Kemakeza. Many of the interviews conducted over phone lines were of noticeably lower quality, at times so bad that it made the item impossible to understand. Technical issues dogged many of the in-field reports in particular.

One story, on a training course for the counselling of victims of sexual assault, had such loud background noise it was almost impossible to decipher; but the manner in which the interview was conducted also caused issues, with the female reporter’s question to a female participant sounding rude: ‘I understand the gender based violence committee hasn’t been active for quite a while … what is your opinion on this?’ The reporter did use follow up questions.

There were, however, some examples of well-structured reports, where a mixture of scripting by the journalist and careful editing of sound bytes resulted in a technically strong radio report. Among these was a report about the Guadalcanal Provincial finance minister claiming that the province was going to miss out on the Provincial Capacity Development Fund. Many of the pieces carried long audio grabs from officials. Current affairs programs on Australian public service broadcasters would seldom run a grab of speakers longer than a minute as an insert into a packaged piece of audio. In question-and-answer style interviews, a question would be expected at least every 20 to 45 seconds, but many Solomon Island reporters allowed officials to speak for several minutes, with six and seven minutes not being unusual.
There was some strong reporting on provincial public accounts committee meetings held during the research period, with a reporter from the SIBC filing from the provincial capital of Tolungi. The first was a scene-setter with no inserts or grabs, and was on a bad line, but it had the style and feel of the kind of report normally filed for Australian current affairs programs. The reporter later filed a second time, again successfully, using the same style of voice report without sound bytes.

Most of the pieces prepared for the current affairs program relied heavily on recorded speeches from officials, with relatively few stakeholders interviewed. When stakeholders were interviewed, they were occasionally ‘coached’ into answers by eager reporters. For example, on the first day the program featured a long report about new police housing, featuring lengthy sound bytes from speeches given by the housing minister, police commander, premier of the province, local member of parliament, and minister for police. Apart from cheering from the crowd, the only person outside the official party interviewed was a local tourism worker who spoke in pidgin. He was asked by the reporter, ‘how important is it to have police housing’? In contrast to Western-style interview protocol, the reporter suggested to the interviewee that it would be good for security and, therefore for tourism, for such housing to be provided. The interviewee agreed. The reporter then suggested, in a statement posing as a question, that tourists had not come to the region because of a lack of police, and perhaps the visibility of the police would bring social income to the government, and asked the interviewee if he would like to thank the government for providing the houses. The interviewee, not unsurprisingly, did so.

Another issue that arose was the failure of reporters to provide all the information necessary for listeners to act upon the information heard in the reports. For example, in a report on the launch of a database listing all donor-funded projects in Solomon Islands, the reporter failed to provide any information about where or how to access the database. While telling the audience about the database was one of the three roles of the media (as provider of information) outlined by Errington and Mirgliotta, (2007) without the extra information the story could not be considered a facilitator of the public sphere. This story heavily featured sound
bytes from the acting prime minister, including a lengthy two-minute grab Some hard, straight questions were directed towards the acting head of the aid division in the development of planning. The reporter asked: ‘Can you give me any examples?’ and in follow-up asked how the information could be accessed; however, when the response was that the information was ‘online’ there was no follow-up question about where it could be found; nowhere in the report was this information provided.

Some reporters tried to get away from official speeches. On International Women’s Day the program highlighted government-sponsored events but also focused on how Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited marked the day. One reporter told the story of the country’s first woman pilot in Solomon Island, who got her aviation degree from Australia; much of the six-minute long sound byte was unintelligible for technical reasons. The report showed some basic errors of radio journalism practice, including the reporter repeating exactly the introduction read by the presenter.

The power imbalance between young female reporters and older men was evident on air several times. In one interview, about election observers in Uganda, a female reporter allowed an older man to speak uninterrupted for more than five minutes. Only when he finally paused was she able to ask a strong follow up question: ‘What now are the main lessons for SI learning from Uganda, as a democratic state, their election system?’ On another day, in an interview with the chairman of the public accounts committee, the reporter showed great deference to the man’s age. The reporter’s question was garbled and the chairman responded with clarity, telling the reporter that the question was incorrect in its intent. He made it clear in his answer that he believed the reporter had not understood the situation. While it may be true that she did not have a sophisticated understanding of the issue, she was correct in her attempt to get an answer.

When the interviewee was not a Solomon Islander, reporters appeared less deferential, but in an interview with the telecommunications commissioner some answers ran to more than three minutes—much longer than in most Australian radio current affairs programs. While longer answers have their advantages, the telecommunications commissioner in this case was given what Australian
journalists would generally describe as ‘an easy ride’ in that he was allowed to
say what he wanted without clarification or challenge from the reporter.

The program attempted to cover issues of corruption, but appeared to struggle
with contextualising these, and getting appropriate questions to the appropriate
people. The programs featured one on-going story about allegations of an abuse of
power and misuse of funds in a province. The reporter conducted an interview
with the assembly’s speaker, asking some solid questions: ‘Has the minister been
told about the disqualification yet?’ The report included a sound byte from the
premier regarding the allegations against him, saying that he was appointed by the
people, but no questions from the reporter were included.

In the two-week period only two press conferences were reported upon. The
prime minister was away for the first week of the study period, but returned with
the environment minister to face the media at the airport. With aircraft noise in the
background as audio actuality to frame the story, journalists grilled him on his
visit to Vanuatu. In a manner similar to Australian politicians, he started with an
opening statement about the reason for the trip; after four minutes the reporters
asked about tourism in Solomon Islands. The second press conference was with
the environment minister talking about a 3.8 million euro allocation for the
relocation of climate refugees. The assembled media asked questions of both the
minister and permanent secretary, although not all could be heard. One reporter
asked, ‘where are you going to relocate people with no land?’ When the
Minister’s answer suggested that he had not thought through the issues, the
reporter replied: ‘it is the people’s choice’.

The report on the Prime Minister’s visit was followed later in that morning’s
program by a related story on freedom of the press in Vanuatu: during the
research period there had been an attack on a media proprietor there. The
president of MASI was interviewed about the importance of freedom of the press.
The reporter showed active listening skills after George Herming described his
unease, with a question: ‘Now in your statement, you were talking of other ways
of taking up grievances with the media, now with this attack, how would you
describe it?’ This was followed by another question to localise the issue: ‘do you
see SI in that situation in the future?’
The reporters attempted to bring in ‘ordinary’ people to their program, with one piece featuring a copra farmer who could not understand an increase in the price of freight. The reporter led the farmer through a series of questions made almost inaudible by crackling telephone line pointing, out that if fuel prices increase, then so do freight prices. The report could be seen more as a piece of development journalism than as current affairs.

At times the current affairs program ran pieces that sounded as if they were straight ‘reads’ from a press release. This was the case when the parliamentary secretary for Australia, David Feeney, visited Solomon Islands and met with the acting prime minister.

Some issues of genuine concern to Solomon Islanders were covered. An ongoing story about university students in Papua New Guinea being left without their allowances provided an opportunity for journalists to ask questions of the high commissioner. The reporter tried to determine where the delay had originated: ‘Is this three-week delay normal or is it because you were in PNG and you have to come to Honiara to verify the list, or is it from a delay from NTU (National Training Unit)?’ The reporter followed up, saying he had spoken to the president of the students and that they wanted a representative of the NTU to be in Papua New Guinea to ensure it would not happen again. The interview ended with it being unclear why the delay had occurred; the High Commissioner appeared uncomfortable in being asked the questions. Another ongoing story in Solomon Islands was a demand by Solomon Islands teachers for wages, as a result of the government stopping payments to those ‘not on the books’.

During the second week of the research period, the SIBC reported at length on the public accounts committee, including who was going to appear each day. Sometimes the SIBC reporters cut the audio from the accounts committee to include telling questions of public officials—questions that perhaps otherwise might not be asked. However, this meant they needed to broadcast long-winded audio responses from politicians and public servants. In one report the finance permanent secretary spoke for almost five minutes at a parliamentary hearing. This was followed by a question from the member for Maliata, and another four-minute answer from the permanent secretary. As the questions involved the rural
development ministry and ongoing AusAID funding, it seems appropriate that such time was allocated to government officials.

The program was not afraid to air issues about the politicisation of the government process. One report from the public accounts committee revealed that 42 students who were given scholarships to study abroad did not go through proper processes and were hand-picked by government ministers and MPs. The government officials said clearly, ‘that decision was political. The minister was acting on cabinet’s directive’. The story continued that rural students had been discriminated against for education scholarships because parents from rural areas could not afford cost-sharing policies.

One of the most interesting stories broadcast during the period was a report about the non-government organisation the American Flying Doctors, and its plan to visit East Maliata following an invitation from prime ministerial press secretary and former member for parliament, Alfred Sasako, for the group to provide health services in East Maliata. The reporter dealt with the story as a straight question-and-answer interview which provided full details of the doctors’ plans. A man referred to variously as Dr and John was never formally introduced; In this and two other stories in the survey period, not all speakers were introduced.

**Conclusion**

This research does not mean to gloss over the considerable difficulties caused by distribution and transmission in Solomon Islands, including reporters’ access to appropriate resources to do the job (paper, pens, computers and transport) and the lack of a code of conduct for working journalists. However, the content analysis of the SIBC current affair program reveals attempts to return to watchdog journalism. Despite technical problems, the SIBC’s current affairs programs showed in some reports, on some days, that it aspired to be a watchdog but also a provider of information and a facilitator of the public sphere. The current affairs program demonstrated its commitment to the Fourth Estate in its airing of the public accounts committee, and in particular in the report from the education permanent secretary about ministerial interference in the scholarship process. The permanent secretary readily admitted that there has been ministerial interference in the selection of the students and spoke of her desire for this to stop in the
future. This story also ran on page one of Island Sun and on page two of Solomon Star. In coverage of claims of financial impropriety in a provincial government, the reporter broadcast both allegations and gave the politician an opportunity to respond to them.

In the two-week period under analysis, no cases of stories were broadcast by the SIBC in which reporters had independently investigated or uncovered an issue of corruption or official wrongdoing. There were certainly occasions where in the cut and thrust of political reporting the opposition parties made such claims, and these were reported, and countered by the government; however, there were no stories where it was clear that the journalist had come up with the idea or was following an independent lead. A scan of the interviewees used on the program showed that most stories came from the government in various forms, and that issues were raised by a third party (usually the opposition), not the journalists themselves.

It is not clear what, if any, role traditional kastom or wontok had in influencing decisions on what was—or more importantly what was not—put to air. Most of the stories fell into the category of lapdog journalism, where powerful officials were able to tell their stories to the media with little serious questioning. Hard questioning, of course, was not always warranted. The choice of stories often required little in the way of difficult questions. It would be hard to ask difficult, probing questions of guest speakers at a women’s day event, and it is important to cover these events, particularly those which are part of the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations Development Programme 2000).

One of the most worrying trends that inhibited watchdog journalism was the behaviour of the journalists themselves. It was noted that female reporters in particular appeared to be stifled in the public sphere by limitations imposed by the patriarchy. This was characterised by reporters allowing extremely long answers which often rambled off topic. The deferential attitude to older men may be culturally determined: to say that a young female reporter should not show respect to an older man in her culture could deny her place in society. While this situation is not unique to Solomon Islands, women in Melanesia appear to have a more difficult time of being accepted as journalists than do Australian women, who make up 55.5% of Australian journalists (Hanusch 2013).
The analysis of the current affairs bulletins shows that the main problem for Solomon Island journalists is a lack of knowledge or education about many of the issues being discussed. The data shows that issues relating to poor journalism in Solomon Islands are in some ways no different to those found among time-strapped and overworked junior journalists in country areas of Australia. However, the current affairs bulletins examined were transmitted on the national broadcaster of Solomon Islands, the SIBC, which had had considerable media assistance from Australia. After almost 10 years of media assistance to the country’s national broadcasters it was expected that the radio reportage would be closer to that seen in liberal democratic nation states.
Chapter Eleven: Journalism Aid in Solomon Islands

This chapter continues the focus on Solomon Islands with a two-chapter examination of the field of journalism education and journalism practice in Solomon Islands. These chapters feature independent in-depth interviews with engaged stakeholders including journalists, civil society and government leaders. These chapters also draw on original documents to discuss the Australian Government-funded media aid programs including Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme (SOLMAS) and its unnamed predecessors.

Although all interviewees were offered the opportunity to be anonymous, most wanted to be named. As O’Callaghan noted: ‘I’m a great one for nailing your colours to your mast … too much discretion in the end doesn’t help anyone.’

![Diagram showing Solomon Islands Interviewees]

Figure 41 Interviewees were drawn from media, government, education and civil society.

A full list of interviewees is in Appendix 3.

International aid to Solomon Islands has been significant, with Australia providing about three-quarters of the country’s aid funds in 2014 (DFAT 2014). In 2009–2010 the Australian Government, through AusAID, provided the country with an estimated $45.7 million. Other Australian assistance provided through RAMSI, AusAID’s regional and global programs and other Australian Government agencies such as the Australian Federal Police, Treasury and Customs, brought the total estimated expenditure in 2009–2010 to $246.2 million. In 2013–2014 the estimate dropped to $164.4 million, with $168.1 million
estimated for 2014–1015 (DFAT). With other countries such as New Zealand also making substantial contributions, it was estimated that $3 billion dollars was spent on aid to Solomon Islands in the ten years that RAMSI was in the country (Husband 2013). So many aid agencies from so many countries were working in Solomon Islands that during the period of the field research in March 2011 the United Nations launched a register of agencies and their projects to ensure the various organisations knew what each other was working on (AusAID 2007, p. 12).²⁵

Although Solomon Islands asked for assistance from Australia, the provision of aid was diplomatically difficult. The strength of relations between the countries seemed to depend on who was currently leading each. In 2007 the then Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer thought it prudent to write to Solomon Islanders stating that ‘there seems to be deliberate push to undermine RAMSI, to tarnish its reputation, and make it hard for it to continue its work’ (Lenga 2008, p. 469). The prime minister at the time, Manasseh Sogavare, responded stating that Downer was acting undiplomatically, and cancelled appointments with the Australian high commissioner (Lenga 2008).

Like many governments around the world, the Australian Government had long recognised that if Australia wants to support better governance in fragile states, it needs to support the media alongside other state-building initiatives which put emphasis on the building of effective institutions of government, strengthening governance practices, targeting corruption and providing a stable framework for economic growth (AusAID 2006, pp. 43, 61). AusAID specifically recognised the role of the media in ensuring that helping nation building was conducted with transparency. In another position paper the Australian Government drew on the 2002 work of British academics Timothy Besley, Robin Burgess and Andrea Pratt: ‘The media can help address corruption, government performance and quality of service delivery’ (AusAID 2007).

²⁵ This is in line with the Paris Declaration on Donor Harmonisation, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the OECD principles for engagement in fragile states.
The media aid provided to Solomon Islands was considered by civil society groups, journalists, and officials as a vital element of the aid provided to the country:

Media has a really important part to play in keeping people well-informed … It’s important. If you try to build a society without it, a society that has very poor media is always going to be a much poorer society. (Pollard)

There has been much criticism of the professional and ethical standards of journalists in the Pacific. Solomon Islands media was praised for contributing to the establishment of peace in the post-conflict Solomon Islands (Molnar 2008, p. 164), but there was some consternation within the country on the way aid funds were spent, and specific criticism about what was called ‘boomerang aid’ where money was paid to Australian firms and consultants, so that benefit were realised predominately by people in Australia. Boomerang aid (AIDWATCH 2009) was of particular concern during the capacity-building phase after the intervention. One senior journalist noted:

A lot of money’s been given, and then a lot of money has also been taken back by the advisers. There has been a lot of debate about that. (Habru)

Nalangu noted the Sogavare government, in particular, had disquiet about the way aid money returned to Australia:

I think that’s one part of his [Sogavare’s] argument against RASMI: that a lot of aid money that they talk about as coming for the Solomons, a lot of that goes back to Australia. It’s paid to provide very highly paid consultants, so nothing much goes to the real development of the people of Solomon Islands. (Nalangu)

There has also been some criticism of the development model used by RAMSI. Hameiri argued in 2006 that the ‘trickle-down’ effect of private sector-led economic growth had not had the desired impact, and that measures to increase investment in the country had the consequence of increasing poverty in the short to medium term because it meant cuts in government spending, public sector redundancies, and pressure on customary land ownership:
Consequently we have seen wealth disparities increase in Solomon Islands in tandem with the rise of a small mostly Chinese business class that has benefited from RAMSI contracts and the presence of aid workers and other personnel. (Hameiri 2006)

Transparency International’s Bob Pollard noted that an aid mentality had pervaded the society so badly that it had undercut initiative and hard work. There was also acknowledgement that some aid money had been misspent:

Has all aid been well spent? Of course not. Has any of the aid been well spent? Absolutely, some of it has been. Is aid a problem for the country? Absolutely. In some ways, the aid thing actually links into our public service mentality here. To people, there’s no connection between what you spend and where the money comes from.

Transparency International suggested that aid funds worked best where there was donor support for organisations which already had strong Solomon leadership and knew what they wanted to achieve:

When the donors are here and are very well intended but without the strong Solomon leadership the donors end up having to lead the process, and then that raises questions about ownership, effectiveness and appropriateness. (Pollard)

There were constant reminders that the country was still developing. For all its surface sophistication in the capital Honiara, the country was still dealing with some basic issues of development. Father Periera was quick to note that elements of the modern market economy were subsuming and changing the traditional subsistence economy:

The traditional systems of exchange, reconciliation, with shell money and with local food and pigs is always there, but today it is gradually changing to cash. You cannot use traditional forms of money to go and survive in the capital of Honiara. Maybe you may still manage in the village but that, too, is changing there. Today, what matters is the dollar. It’s becoming more commercial. (Periera)

While aid funding was welcomed in Solomon Islands, there was underlying resentment in some parts that much of it was returning to Australia in remuneration for highly paid consultants. There was also disquiet that the money
was going to organisations that did not have sufficiently strong leadership to follow through on plans, and in some cases that the model of aid provision did not filter through the economy appropriately. Aid money was also seen to be subsuming traditional monetary systems.

Media aid
RAMSI personnel recognised immediately that one of its most significant jobs was to help develop an appropriate media environment which could play a role in getting information, and therefore better governance, for the people of Solomon Islands (Social impact assessment of peace restoration initiatives in Solomon Islands 2004, p. 36). In 2005 senior Solomon Islands journalist Johnson Honimae (Solomon Islands rapped for weak role 2005) was reported by the Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation as saying ‘Solomon Islands experienced social unrest because the media had not played its role as a watchdog on the leadership of the country since independence’ and that ‘the country’s resources were virtually stolen because the media did not speak out’. He also suggested the media was failing to report the views of all people:

the media only picked on national leaders but did not touch tribal leaders or Solomon Islands middlemen who abused the trust of landowners for the sake of filling up their pockets and their foreign bosses’… some of these middlemen continue to flood the lobbies (i.e. seek out politicians and influence them) at some of the hotels in Honiara and the media is doing nothing about them. (Solomon Islands rapped for weak role 2005)

Early mistakes
Assistance with the training and education of journalists was one of the immediate priorities of RAMSI. The UNIFEM report was among those that recommended capacity building for journalists. Assistance to the media was part of the initial program of recovery in 2003, but little was reported about it. Singh and Prakash, for example, suggested that the initial work by RAMSI was not appropriate:

In the midst of these tumultuous changes, powerful nations in the region such as Australia need to get proper assessments of the situation on the ground rather than rush in with short-term, ill-conceived and narrowly focused interventionist policies(Singh & Prakash 2006, p. 82).
**Political tensions**

On a number of occasions during their time at the SIBC, the Australian staff found themselves in strife with political leaders for their work as journalists and trainers for their work which was within the model of journalism in a liberal democratic nation state (‘Solomons broadcast chief condemns action against Australian reporter’ 2005). In 2005, through a contract managed by the ABC International, three senior Australian journalists arrived in the country: Sue Ahearn, Charmaine Anderson and Alan Thornhill. Ahearn and Anderson worked on SIBC/ABC Project Solomons, and Thornhill with Solomon Star. There are few publicly available documents about their work, but it is known that at least Ahearn, who was employed as news adviser/trainer with the SIBC News and Current Affairs Division arrived in January 2005 was asked to leave the country, without notice, in December 2006 for apparently upsetting the government.

Around this time, according to US documents provided to WikiLeaks, the prime minister Mannaseh Sogavare also declared the Australian High Commissioner Patrick Cole ‘persona non grata for alleged interference in Solomon Islands domestic politics’ (Dorling 2011). The US documents noted that there were ‘concerns about the conduct of some officials/contractors have been heavy handed, not sensitive to cultural issues and at times patronising in their treatment of Solomon Islanders,’ but there was no evidence in the documents that these statements referred to Australian media training staff.

Several journalists and officials interviewed in and outside Solomon Islands confirmed that the presence of an Australian within the SIBC newsroom did not sit well with the government of the day and there was uneasiness about the types of stories the journalists were being encouraged to write. Herming remembered that Ahearn had found herself on the outer with the then Prime Minister:

> He [Sogavare] seemed to believe the Australian media is very influential in the Pacific, even Asia, some parts of Asia. That’s why he had this feeling that it’s not fair to have Australian journalists or media workers positioned in some key media organizations here. He’s got the fear that they might influence local reporters to report unfairly on the government, especially on his side. Which is also, I think, in some ways true.
Another senior journalist felt Ahearn’s departure had more to do with management inadequacies at the SIBC, as the owner and staff were happy with the work of Thornhill at *Solomon Star*:

It really didn’t have anything to do with whether [Ahearn] was an Australian or not. I think it was just the SIBC itself. Because SIBC is an organization that needs to be revamped, basically. So many people are sitting in it too comfortable and not doing anything, and when you get somebody coming in to try and bring some changes that would make the place move, you get antagonism. Everybody’s out to protect their jobs, and I think that’s basically what happened to [Anderson and Ahearn]. (senior journalist)

Ahearn was approached but did not agree to participate in an interview for this thesis.

There was also a feeling from Solomon Island journalists that the Australian Government through AusAID had failed to set clear boundaries for the work:

I think a lot of it was based on no clear communication from AusAID about how this project would run, and what were the roles of the advisers. I think they also came in at a pretty bad period for the media at that time. We were waiting for a lot of help, and what we got at that time wasn’t what we expected. (senior journalist)

Another issue was centred on the consultants having access to vehicles when the newsroom had none:

It’s typical Melanesian kind of problems with administration, and I think these two came in, and they were just the right scapegoats for the staff to think they -- you know, ‘What are these two doing here in fancy cars? Why aren’t they giving the money for these cars to us?’ (senior journalist)

However, there was also a suggestion that the presence of the Australians in the newsrooms, and the closeness they had with the RAMSI public affairs staff, meant that they did not give balanced reporting on RAMSI:

the RAMSI public affairs media relations is very effective at that time. It’s got this influence on journalists when … their reports are not critical on government. It’s mainly to do with promoting RAMSI’s work and achievements. When they kept on doing this, at that time, it really changes
the focus of journalists. They seem to think that RAMSI is perfect in everything they do. They tend to forget about some aspects of our cultural values that influence local journalists here, in terms of issues like respect for elders. (Herming)

The first media intervention in Solomon Islands, then, had mixed results. An AusAID report from 2007–2008 described the RAMSI: Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme as needing some work to improve, although the implementation of SOLMAS and its own evaluation were seen as very good quality (AusAID 2008, p. 30). While the owner of Solomon Star was very happy with the assistance provided in his newsroom by Thornhill, there were tensions over the presence of journalists in the national broadcaster which led to their dismissal from the country by the prime minister. There was some feeling that the Australian trainers were unfairly targeted for criticism that was better directed at the ineffectual management of the broadcaster.

**Media operating in 2011**

Solomon Islands media market grew after the end of ethnic tensions in 2004, with more newspapers for people living in Honiara although none for those living in the outer islands. An all-media audience survey and qualitative report conducted in 2010 by Tebbutt Research concluded that the media were doing a good job in Solomon Islands but struggling with ‘poor infrastructure, access, affordability, rapidly changing cultural values, Westernisation, and a leapfrogging of technologies’ (Tebbutt 2010, p. 5):

> Everyone seems to want more. People are seeking more debate and stimulation. They want more balance and so coverage of more sides of the same story. They want more variety in content and greater topic coverage. (Tebbutt 2010, p. 6)

This view was echoed by Molnar, who found in a 14-country news content analysis that there was an over-reliance on government-sourced news and stories from single sources:

> A principal [sic] of good journalism is that stories contain multiple sources. This is necessary if news is to be well researched, fair and balanced. This finding raises questions about cadet recruitment and training; journalism training and development beyond cadet level; the
capacity of senior journalists to train or mentor less experienced journalists, and an unquestioning journalism culture that can exist in some media organisations (Molnar 2008, p. 48).

Radio was by far the most important medium for Solomon Islanders, followed by newspapers, with television a distant third. The internet was still a dream in 2010 (Tebbutt 2010, p. 17). The scattering of the population over nine provinces across 1000 islands had an impact on the media’s ability to service the population effectively:

You need to have another supported news source for the people in the provinces. I guess the radio is still more effective. People still have access to radio, but then when you say newspaper and TVs, they’re trying their best to get the story out there, but just the difficulties that we have, especially in the scattered islands. While we’re doing our best, people are not getting what they should be getting. (Habru)

It was estimated that about ten per cent of the 150 people working in the media (radio, TV, NGOs, and newspapers) in Solomon Islands at the time of the field research held degrees or diplomas in journalism. Most of the news outlets, except for One Television, were staffed by new journalists. It was not clear how many of the 150 counted as working in the media were actually journalists, or were employed in other areas of such as advertising and distribution. Molnar (2008), for one, counted only 16 journalists employed at five news-producing media in Solomon Islands.

Radio

In March 2011, when the researcher visited Solomon Islands, the national public service radio broadcaster SIBC wontok was described as the grandfather position in the market, and there was a perception that other media depended on it for their news and information (Tebbutt 2010, p. 27). The SIBC news was seen as being a critical provider for disaster reports and their news services included the most comprehensive weather and shipping news. Listeners were aware that it was government owned, and it was perceived to have full government support. Its news was considered the ‘leading commentator’ on everything in Solomon Islands:
SIBC has superior news and information gathering and reporting services, and their news service is prompt, reliable and detailed. SIBC has the comprehensive news service in the nation, thereby providing depth as well as breadth. Offering both pidgin and English language news services profiles SIBC as ‘fair’ and ensures that all understand their news reports. (Tebbutt 2010, p. 27)

However, the SIBC was facing commercial competitors in the radio market from Paoa Radio,26 ZFM100 and Gud Nius Redio (a semi-commercial Christian FM).

Newspapers
The newspaper market had expanded to include a weekly private newspaper National Express and Island Sun, direct competitors to Solomon Star, owned by John Lamani and Associates. Newspapers were seen as an important part of the media market, but as all were published in English they required readers to be literate in that language. Coverage centred around Honiara, with a desire for more news from the provinces. Solomon Star was considered the standout market leader and was always the point of comparison for other newspapers. Tebbutt (2010, p. 46) found issues about cultural sensitivity in Solomon Star, including both political and cultural issues. There was particular concern that details of sexual crimes should be withheld because these were confrontational to the culture.

Television
The most significant change from the period before the tensions was the introduction of television, with a strong appetite for television among those who did not yet have it. Distribution was limited; affordability was another barrier.

The combination of the visual and aural experience results in high impact, and this drives involvement. On TV one can see with their own eyes, in real time, as something is happening. This conveys meaning easily and aids understanding(Tebbutt 2010, p. 47).

TV, I believe, is the most powerful medium for Solomon Islanders because the illiteracy rate is 80 per cent here. (senior journalist)

26 The news on Paoa Radio was written and provided by staff at Solomon Star.
One News was launched by local investors in the middle of the soccer World Cup, so by the time the World Cup was over the audience was used to seeing them on air. At the time of this research One News claimed to have 100 per cent coverage in Honiara (100 per cent of those with a television and electricity to power it), and was beginning to reach into the provinces. An independent television company run by former SIBC and Solomon Island staffers, Dorothy Wickham and Evan Wasaka, was producing a nightly news program, but had taken their much lauded current affairs program off air.

Management at One Television had high standards, with one of the owners notorious for ‘picking up the phone two, three in the morning and blasting the living daylights out of them’ if a One News story was not to a certain standard. The audience was squarely focused on Solomon Islanders, not expatriates. The Tebbutt research found a perception that the journalists at One Television needed more training, mostly because they were compared with ABC and BBC programs being broadcast on the same channel.

Websites and Phones

News websites were also operating for Solomon Star, Island Sun, and One Television, although the internet was expensive and not widely available, particularly in rural locations. Mobile phones were increasingly common in Honiara, and some listened to the radio through their mobile phone. None of the media outlets were using social media to distribute stories at the time.

The extra media outlets appeared to be widely welcomed:

It keeps it fair. Everyone makes money … But the problem now, what it has caused now is that they are completing so much now that they are not worried about quality. (senior journalist)

Not all were pleased with the increase in the number of media outlets in Honiara. Sasako, once a journalist, found himself on the receiving end of critical media coverage as a politician. He was critical of the new players, referring to a golden time of journalism when he was reporting in Papua New Guinea 30 year earlier. He remembered a time when politicians would provide background briefings for
journalists because they trusted them. He believed the new media players were suspicious of people in government:

    Here, the trust has been replaced by suspicion. I think a lot has to do with a misunderstanding on the part of journalists not knowing how to cultivate that trust between government people, industry people. (Sasako)

**Traditional news sources**

Traditional methods of distributing news and information were still a part of Solomon Islands life, particularly in remote areas. The chief and village elders, especially those with relatives in Honiara, were often entrusted with delivering news. Church announcements were also important, as were more traditional methods:

    The conch shell, fire and drum beating are still used in more remote areas or less important announcements. Modern media and communications have almost completely replaced these methods. When they are used, they are often simulated by media(Tebbutt 2010, p. 19).

Some places like Telpone still heard news via short-wave or two-way radio broadcasts from people in Gizo or Munda.

**Overall**

Tebbutt’s audience research found that Solomon Islands media was perceived as being Honiara-centric, even by those who lived in the capital. There were three particular sensitivities: political, provincial and cultural, classified by Tebbutt as apprehension about independence, accuracy and balance.

There was anxiety about ‘false news’ on FM radio, particularly when a story was thought to be either fabricated or not balanced in its reporting (Tebbutt 2010). The audience wanted information handled properly:

    The public need to understand what they see, read and listen to where news and information are concerned, and seek simplicity; simple words, clear diction and straightforward sentences. They also wanted more pidgin(Tebbutt 2010, p. 59)

Audiences expected that Solomon Islands media would improve their standards and suggested that while journalists were doing their best, they fell short of global
standards (Tebbutt 2010, p. 60). Most people welcomed the increase in media outlets, partly because they provided a dissenting voice from government officials.

**SOLMAS**

A more formal media-strengthening scheme, Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme was launched in 2008. SOLMAS was an AusAID-funded medium for development projects delivered through partnership between the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands and the ABC (*Research in Solomon Islands Qualitative and Quantitative Research Report* 2010). SOLMAS provided media training and consultancy help to the country develop the resources and skills necessary for journalists to publish accurate, well researched and in-depth coverage of their own country—a vital aspect of a well-functioning parliamentary democracy. SOLMAS states its aim as ‘improving the reach and quality of Solomon Islands media’ (ABC 2009 p. 1). SOLMAS was funded by RAMSI and managed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, through the self-funding consultancy ABC International Development.

An ABC International Development-commissioned report (Thomas et al. 2012) conducted a survey of 106 people in the media in Solomon Islands, of whom around a third were women. Three in five were under the age of 29. Most of the staff had been in the industry for fewer than four years, and 84% for fewer than nine. Only 11% had more than 15 years’ experience.

Many of the questions asked for this thesis were very similar to those asked by Thomas (2012); although this field research was conducted a year earlier, there is a high correlation between the thesis survey and Thomas’ findings, and this is noted where appropriate.

SOLMAS was not the only organisation in town offering media training and assistance, but it also had a coordinating role. Volunteers came to the country to work with the community radio and newspapers though programs such as Australian Volunteers Abroad and Australian Business Volunteers. At the time of the field research, an Australian woman who did not have a journalism degree was helping with the editing process at *Solomon Star*. 
In 2011, the year of the field research, Solomon Islands government was vocally supportive of media training. The deputy prime minister told a four-day regional training session that the government saw the media as ‘important development partners’, and described violations of media freedom and expression as ‘undemocratic’ (‘Solomon Islands government condemned media freedom violation’ 2011).

**ABC International Development**

ABC International Development is the international branch of Australia’s national public broadcaster. In 2014 it stated its aim as supporting, connecting and empowering people in the Asia–Pacific region to have a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their lives (*The Media Development Initiative* 2014).

It is not surprising in light of earlier problems with journalism training in the country that ABC International Development denied the researcher’s request in 2010 for information about the SOLMAS program. Staff in Solomon Islands stated they preferred to work behind the scenes (Ferguson 2011b) and staff in the Melbourne-based headquarters said there was no need for academic enquiry. At the time the field research was undertaken in 2011, without the endorsement or support of ABC International, there were few formal documents available for academic review, although Australian academics had been commissioned by ABC International to do various reports from audience surveys to scoping documents (Tebbutt 2010; Thomas et al. 2012). Reports were also written for the Australian Government, but access to these was denied by ABC International and were the subject of a successful Freedom of Information application by the researcher.

In 2010 ABC International insisted that the work in Solomon Islands had been repeatedly evaluated and needed no further inquiry from academics who had not been commissioned by the organisation (Maude 2011a) and vigorously fought access to documents, arguing the release of documents on the SOLMAS project could pose a significant danger to individuals working on the project:

Given that Solomon Islands is considered a post-conflict environment, uninformed assessments of project documents could have the unintended consequence of creating significant personal risks for individuals and could adversely affect the operations of organisations involved in the
initiative. Consequently, any misinterpretation and/or misuse of the content in those documents carries the real risk of potentially damaging Australia’s relationship with Solomon Islands and other Pacific entities. (Maude 2011a)

Despite the sensitivity of ABC International, there was much about the SOLMAS project and the way it operated that could be exported to other countries needing to boost their media in a post-conflict situation. The SOLMAS project was almost a text-book example of Public Sentinel: News Governance Reform (Norris 2010) where various authors outline the need for a strengthening of news media institutions alongside work with the public sector. In the foreword to Norris’ book, Sina Odugbemi wrote, ‘officials in donor agencies point out the sensitivity of many governments when it comes to any attempt to make the news media independent of government and better able to hold the government to account’, and added that ‘political economic realities will always determine what can be achieved’ (Norris 2010, p. ix).

A year after the researcher approached ABC International Development to work with them on the SOLMAS project, and while the organisation was still fighting access to documents about the project, the broadcaster commissioned research by academics at the University of Goroka, the University of Technology Sydney, and Solomon Islands College of Higher Education to make a report on the questions asked a year earlier for this thesis (Thomas et al. 2012). That report also looked at media training and capacity building, the quality of media, strengthening the media, development issues, and SOLMAS and its partners. However, the ABC study did not ask about the effectiveness of SOLMAS staff, about their cultural sensitivity, or about cultural issues specific to Solomon Islands media. It was independently written, but the brief for the research did not encompass the period before the arrival of SOLMAS, and did not systematically look at issues that arose because of wontok. These issues were addressed to some extent in the independent progress reports done on SOLMAS, which do not appear to have been accessed by Thomas’ research team, and were obtained for this thesis under Freedom of Information laws.
Program goals

This thesis focuses on the media landscape as of March 2011, and particularly at those organisations targeted by SOLMAS. SOLMAS’s work started with a documented acknowledgement of underlying ethnic tensions and an acknowledgement that the country was poor and fragile, and faced every possible disaster, with an active volcano and seasonal cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis. The political system was first-past-the-post voting. There were no women in parliament. The media was centred on the capital Honiara with little reportage from the provinces and faced major technological issues; and communications were both unreliable and expensive.

SOLMAS’ stated goal was to contribute ‘to a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous Solomon Islands by improving the reach and quality of the country’s media’ (ABC n.d). SOLMAS did not set out to work only with media organisations, but targeted civil society groups so they could go to provinces and develop media capacity, by writing stories or by being aware of the gatekeepers who stop women’s voices from being heard. To that end they worked with all the members of the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI), including television and radio broadcasters, print media and the People First Network (radio network).

Like other countries which have experienced civil unrest, Solomon Islands media has a lack of resources, limited media diversity, small revenue structures and low educational standards, which combine to impact on the ability of journalists to provide Western journalism, in its ideal role of watchdog. While in its purest form it is seen as the watchdog over governments and powerful people, in many countries it can take be an agenda setter, or draw attention to marginalised groups, act as gatekeepers or gate openers, or perhaps foster diversity, plurality and balance.

SOLMAS had five key components: strengthening Solomon Islands Government and industry-based regulatory policy framework; strengthening the capacity of the commercial and community-based media and improving internal and external recognition of their roles; strengthening SIBC effectiveness and appropriately differentiating its roles as a public broadcaster and emergency service provider;
maintaining a flexible support fund; and managing programs (Ferguson 2011c). Of these, the first three were considered most significant for this research. However, the flexible support fund should not be overlooked as it provided the funding for the manager in Solomon Islands to support initiatives necessary for strengthening the media. Although SOLMAS was not primarily there to provide equipment to Solomon Islands media it could use its flexible fund to provide recorders to reporters from the three newspapers, and SIBC, and a camera to One Television, before the election. Island Sun had only two working computers although there were ten in the building. Those working with them believed that what they produced with what they had was nothing short of a miracle.

Those working on the SOLMAS project knew there were serious risks to its potential success, and these were given detailed consideration in the inception plan (Ferguson 2009b). Certainly the natural environment can be harsh: during her three-week study period the researcher was evacuated from a hotel because of a tsunami alert, and was interrupted in the middle of a research interview by a small but powerful earthquake. Other risks identified by SOLMAS were a decline in political stability or the security situation, which might render some or all aspects of the project unfeasible; political interference undermining media independence; the economic situation declining, placing pressure on revenues; and natural disasters preventing implementation. Several risks related specifically to the media environment and training of journalists.

There was apprehension from the outset that the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) might be unwilling or not completely transparent in providing access to its existing plans; that its members might not be willing to allow access to staff for skills analysis or to contribute to shared training, or to allow their staff to participate in training opportunities. Further potential risks identified with work at SIBC included a legislative framework which impeded the SIBC’s financial sustainability, the corporation’s level of willingness to be transparent in providing access to existing plans and in revising plans and strategies. For both MASI and the SIBC there was generally concern about the ability to cope with the required changes. Of all the risks identified, the ones which raised the most worry for SOLMAS were the likelihood of changes to key staff among their partner
organisations and key stakeholders, security problems delaying access to sites, the possibility SIBC becoming insolvent or failing to implement new strategies, and an inability to identify sustainable sources of revenue.

Although there was criticism of some parts of the SOLMAS project, everyone interviewed agreed that although the project was only at its midway point in 2011, it was achieving its goal of building capacity among the media. Journalism classes had begun at Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, weekly training sessions for election coverage on a Saturday morning had turned into bi-weekly sessions on a Tuesday, and senior reporters and editors were agitating for more international experience to develop their skills. The overall standard of the media, since the tensions, was considered to be improving:

we’ve got to a critical mass of media organizations now, which is much healthier. We’re in the process of developing a sense of a culture of journalism that is much healthier... this young generation… are getting a lot more stories, they’re going after stuff. They’re gaining in confidence, and they’re playing a much more significant role in shaping the debate in this country. (O’Callaghan)

Project staff
The SOLMAS project staff included a manager based in Honiara, Corallie Ferguson, appointed in September 2008, two craft trainers based in Honiara, journalist Wendy Everett and broadcaster David Barrow, and a project manager based in Melbourne. Everett was a senior journalist from the ABC, Barrow a former ABC rural reporter turned senior documentary maker. A range of other trainers were brought in from time to time. Although Ferguson spent almost five years in Solomon Islands, at the time of the field research she had been in the Solomons just over two years. She came with an impressive curriculum vitae from commercial television as general manager operations of Jak TV and general manager of Seven Queensland. Interestingly, she had been the CEO of the indigenous station Impaja Television for almost six years. Her background impressed O’Callaghan, a long time Pacific journalist and communications specialist, who quipped,
My question to her was ‘what the fuck are you doing here’, when I first met her. I was delighted, because I felt like she had a CV and a good attitude too, that would be useful here.

SOLMAS liked to claim that it was using ‘best practice’ for post-conflict fragile states; as Ferguson noted, ‘we are doing a lot of talking with the stakeholders. We are doing more listening than talking’. Ferguson saw SOLMAS’s role as ‘behind the scenes’:

My first six months here was building relationships. We work behind the journalists. We don’t need to do the publicity for SOLMAS.

This careful attention to listening instead of talking was echoed by many of the Solomon Island journalists:

This is where I think SOLMAS has been more successful, because they’ve actually consulted with us, and asked us what we want to out of assistance that they can provide. (senior journalist)

There was praise for SOLMAS’s decision to keep a low profile with their work. O’Callaghan agreed that SOLMAS did not need to be well publicised.

A key feature of the SOLMAS approach was to use local trainers wherever possible instead of Australians. They were confident that in taking time to build skills among trainers that they would get a better results.

We’ve only been here for 2.5 years. Much of (our work) takes time. We haven’t changed the team [in 2.5 years] but have added local staff. SOLMAS uses local trainers, particularly for journalism. We involve them in the train-the-trainer courses and then they do the training. There is very strong emerging leadership. (Ferguson)

A decision to use Solomon Islanders more frequently than international trainers was welcomed by senior journalists:

Local people … talk less about theses, and are more into practicalities. They talk about what they’ve gone through and the practical things that they’ve seen. The situation might be different to Australia or other countries than the actual ones which the local people are going through, day-to-day in their work. (Sennett)
Wasaka was among those anxious that trainers on any training program, not just SOLMAS, be appropriately prepared to work in Melanesia. Not all of them were:

Depends on their experience. What they have done, and where they have been. Have they been in the Pacific before? Maybe not the Pacific, but Melanesia, because the situation is much different from, say Samoa, Tonga. (Wasaka)

Difficulties would only arise if trainers had a high-handed manner. One senior journalist recalled a particular trainer from another program who had put people offside:

They just came in and started pulling everybody down like, ‘We’re going to change this and change that,’ and then that didn’t work. With SOLMAS, they came in, they had consultations. They said, ‘What do you want out of us?’ All that we had to do is put in our applications and apply. (senior journalist)

Other senior staff suggested that they did not care about the nationality of the trainers as long as they knew the information:

it doesn’t matter if they are from New Zealand or from the Solomons or wherever. I know what I want to get from this course. (Palmer)

As long as they have the background knowledge, and they know what is … There are certain things that may be to do with politics that could be quite sensitive. (Wasaka)

There remained some lingering anxiety about the presence of Australians in the newsroom:

The other month, we had a political crisis and we had the issue with the Australians … That could get quite sensitive … Any foreign advisers in the newsrooms … it can be perceived … as being biased. (Wasaka)

There was also some ongoing envy about the pay and work conditions of the foreign trainers:

There is always complaints about advisors, and their pay, and salary, and how effective they are. It’s probably just natural. (Wasaka)
There was unease from some journalists that as soon as the on-site trainers left the SIBC’s standards would slip, as they did when the first trainers (Ahearn and Anderson) left:

They got (Wendy Everett) there now, and she’s going to go and start implementing what she thinks needs to be done. Then when she leaves, you’ll see it slide again (senior journalist)

There was general support for the SOLMAS staff among the journalist in Solomon Islands because of the way they approached their task, in asking the locals what they wanted and using local trainers as much as possible, but tempered by concern that once the team left the country standards would fall.

Expats’ limitations
The SOLMAS staff clearly articulated the need to be sensitive to the local culture and said they did not want to be, as one unnamed trainer said, ‘just some white person trying to impose another culture upon them’. The Solomon Islanders employed as trainers included David Tuhanuku, Dorothy Wickham, Roselyn Maneipuri, Evan Wasaka and Ronald Talasasa (Ferguson & List 2010a, p. 5). SOLMAS also formed a focus group to organise training strategy which involved senior staff at One Television, National Express, Catholic Communications, Island Sun, Solomon Star and SIBC. SOLMAS specifically used Tuhanuku, a veteran journalist, to ensure the training maintained ‘a high cultural relevance to Solomon Islands’ (Ferguson & List 2010a, p. 9).

Several people who were not linked to the SOLMAS training suggested that expatriate trainers they could never truly understand Solomon Islanders, their attitudes and behaviour. Pollard noted that much meaning was conveyed that could only be understood by Solomon Islanders: it could simply be in the choice of a particular word. Periera told an anecdote of someone who had been in the country for 17 years and yet claimed to know the people less and less.

There was general insistence that it was best, where possible, to use trainers from Solomon Islands, then Melanesia, then the Pacific, before an Australian or New Zealander, because locals and people from the region better understood the environment and culture:
Several of the journalists suggested that teachers from the Pacific, or specifically Melanesia, had different expectations of journalists in Solomon Islands. Australian and New Zealanders were thought to insist on ‘higher’ standards than Melanesian teachers, who better understood the difficulties of local journalism:

things like getting out of your way to talk to somebody, to interview somebody it’s not so much in the culture of especially Melanesia, Solomon Islands … getting the story in time … it’s something that the lecturers from outside, they expect you to know and keep up with that standard, which is, I think the normal standard of teaching journalism, but then to us students from Melanesia it’s like a new concept that we have to keep up to. (Harbu)

Hawkins also noted that international trainers were ‘fine’ to teach the basics of journalism, but they could not understand the stories. Local journalists were required to explain the background and culture to stories:

To tell us how to write about our own society, I think it would be going a bit overboard. Because sometimes you listen to the reports from overseas journalists who come through (the country) and we just laugh. They have no idea what’s happening and it’s not even close to what the real issues are. (Hawkins)

Some of the newer journalists were dubious that expatriate staff understood a ‘Solomon Islands’ perspective:

Sometimes she doesn’t understand our writing. We know what we mean, but she doesn’t understand. (Junior Solomon Journalist)

Former SIBC manager Ashley Wickham was among the few who had criticism of the trainers, both local and international. He was qualified to be teaching and preparing journalists for the SIBC but was not asked:

I used to manage the SIBC but nobody asks me about it anymore. They know all about it. The result is what you see. Even the government they could pay me a pittance or even put me on the board of directors … but they don’t ask me. (Wickham)
Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI)

One of the ways SOLMAS saw that it could strengthen the media without being seen to be controlling it was to work with MASI. At the time of the field research, MASI officially had 14 members, although one new newspaper was not yet a member and dues had not been paid by a number of organisations. MASI was affiliated with other organisations, including Pacific Islands News Association, and had received some support from UNESCO. As a result of the efforts by the SOLMAS staff, at the time of the field research MASI had hosted training sessions for the country’s journalists every two weeks for two years.

Working with MASI, SOLMAS organised a series of workshops where journalists and political leaders were prepared for the 2010 elections. SOLMAS also organised classes in journalism craft skills, mostly taught by members of MASI. One training session attended by the researcher at the SIBC in March attracted six people to learn the intricacies of the English language. The experienced teacher, a Solomon Islander who was employed by Solomon Islands College of Higher Education, led a three-hour session in the darkened production room.

This attendance was in sharp contrast to the number of trainees who reportedly attended the sessions in the lead-up to the election. SOLMAS advised there have been more than 44 courses including grammar (from basic to advanced); news writing for radio, print and television; story structure; electoral awareness; voter awareness and voter education with Solomon Islands electoral commission; analysing election manifestos; and the role of women in maintaining political balance (Ferguson 2011a). Another area where SOLMAS worked with MASI was in the establishment of a code of conduct for Solomon Islands journalists that retained its cultural significance and was not based on Australian or NZ law. While SOLMAS said it was trying to work towards an appropriate code of ethics and constitution for MASI, little was being done by the executive.

Many of the country’s journalists acknowledged the value of SOLMAS consulting with the group on what the media required in terms of training and support:
The content [of the SOLMAS courses] is based on the discussions that we had before, in terms of the training needs that Solomon Islands media workers need. The training is still going on … That focuses mainly on working journalists, and there’s also this journalism training program at the college of higher education, the SICHE (Solomon Island College of Higher Education). That idea was brought about by discussions with SOLMAS and other media stakeholders in the region. (Herming)

Senior journalists, however, wondered at the sustainability of the weekly training model, and favoured the support of more senior Solomon Islands staff within the newsrooms:

I think especially we need to understand that SOLMAS will not be here for long. The capacity building of especially MASI will be vital. It has to live and it has to strengthen MASI, so that whatever training needs arise, it would be MASI who would be doing that … like training the younger ones. I think building the capacity of MASI is really important. (Habru)

SOLMAS’s decision to support MASI as the umbrella body for training brought some criticism. At the time the chair of MASI, George Herming, was criticised because of his dual role as head of MASI and of the government communications unit. Although Herming was a veteran journalist who had worked during the tensions, many in Solomon Islands media said they did not believe that the MASI chair should be held by someone in a government position, arguing it was a clear conflict of interest.

The counter argument was that Herming was the only one who had ‘put up his hand’ for the role. O’Callaghan was among those who cast aside criticisms of MASI, suggesting that those who had problems with its operations should step up into organisational roles:

It’s not hard to get elected to MASI … It’s so easy to complain, I’ve heard years of that … whoever wasn’t running MASI complained about it … (O’Callaghan)

Although SOLMAS staff and its executive heralded the importance of the partnership with MASI, many complained about the way it operated. Most believed the SOLMAS staff, instead of the local staff, were the ones doing the work behind the scenes:
It’s up to the Solomon Islanders themselves to take ownership of what Australia is doing for Solomon Islands. (Harbu)

The ABC International commissioned report noted, a year after the field research, that 60% of the MASI members surveyed did not know about the draft code of conduct. Overall there were little regard for the MASI administration, with members stating that they would like to see it ‘strengthened in order to facilitate the building of networks, and a support system for industry professionals’ (Thomas et al. 2012, pp. 48-9).

**The SOLMAS brief**

At the time it was established SOLMAS was different from other development projects run by ABC International. It had a far wider brief than just journalism training and incorporated training for all the media in town, not just the state broadcaster, although the journalism trainer was predominately seen as being based at the SIBC.27

SOLMAS began its work with a skills analysis and developed what Ferguson called a flexible training program:

> We send in local staff (the project officer) for a different view after we have been in …With the local staff they feel they can say things like ‘perhaps the junior staff should be trained at a different time to the seniors’. (Ferguson)

O’Callaghan echoed the value of working across all the media outlets, based on a media skills analysis done by the trainers that included conversations with the junior journalists about their needs:

> One of the advantages I think was [ABC trainer] David Barrow not being a journalist. Because he didn’t try to get in and do it, or talk about how he did it. He actually truly facilitated a process of training where there was a lot of discussion amongst the journalists themselves about the issues and the challenges they face. (O’Callaghan)

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27 She however worked within other news organisations including One Television.
The SOLMAS project was not just about journalism: it included other issues that impacted on the media, with a strong focus on the state-owned SIBC. Ferguson looked at transmission issues for the SIBC, overseeing the installation of additional air-conditioned facilities at Henderson to extend the life of the transmitters. Ferguson also worked with the government on the broadcast spectrum, which she described as ‘a mess’; as was the legislative environment for the media in Solomon Islands:

There are gaps in the law everywhere … the defamation laws are in the penal code … There is no copyright act … There is no radio law. There is only self-regulation within the MASI Code of Conduct.

Ferguson took on a role assisting the SIBC in its sales and accounts because she had worked in a commercial environment. She was acutely aware that the government did not pay its bills on time and nor did other businesses. There were added difficulties in that some parts of the country serviced by the SIBC did not bring in revenue but still needed to receive a service.

Link to elections

Much of the early training organised by SOLMAS was focused on three areas: craft skills, technical skills and knowledge/awareness raising. The craft skills courses were on writing for print/radio/television, getting grammar right, presentation TV/radio, editorial and newsroom management, and an analysis of political information. The knowledge- and awareness-raising courses included reporting on corruption and following the law; code of ethics and freedom of press and responsibilities; court and police reporting and understanding policing issues; and the role of women in maintaining political balance (Dinh & Heriot 2010, p. 17).

For the 2010 election in-house training assistance was offered, plus small courses that could be attended by any journalist regardless of employer. Although training was centred in Honiara, some training was done in the provinces by Solomon Islanders who had been through train-the-trainer courses. Apart from the election forums, many of the training sessions were billed as ‘craft skills’ for practitioners. The election focus to training was welcomed by everyone interviewed. Using the 2006 election coverage in Solomon Star and SIBC as a basis, SOLMAS worked
with MASI on how to provide better coverage. They organised pre-election forums for the candidates and prepared the journalists in advance. Only a few international trainers were brought in, including an election specialist from the ABC, Andrew Fisher, in 2010. Ferguson said Fisher’s work was welcomed: ‘The National Express wrote an article on him. He was hero worshiped.’ Considerable effort was put into educating the journalists about the election processes and issues of governance, as many of the younger ones had never been though a formal election process:

We saw it as our responsibility to educate the people out there on the issues of governance before the elections and I think a lot of people really appreciated that. And this was possible because of the environment that we are getting from SOLMAS. (Nalangu)

The pre-election forums organised with the candidates and senior journalists helped the local journalists feel part of the project:

We had a list. When we started off, we had a list of people we thought represented different interests. We thought it’d be good to get them to talk. People we thought would be key players in the election. We got Danny Phillip,28 which is … This is quite a coup. He was a surprise. (Wasaka)

SOLMAS also assisted those being interviewed:

We trained the CEOs in media skills. [One] started off fearful of the media, but is now relaxed in front of journalists. (Ferguson)

All those interviewed in Solomon Islands agreed there was a noticeable shift in camaraderie among journalists at the end of the 2010 election. The weekly training sessions had helped build a collective pride among them that became useful: for instance, when budgets were tight journalists pooled resources. The pre-election training also helped journalists workshop issues involving often complex family and cultural issues. Solomon Islands journalists could work together to figure out how to solve cultural and professional contradictions:

28 Phillips was later elected prime minister.
Your uncle’s running, how do you manage that? All those sorts of things.

(O’Callaghan)

At the time of the research interview O’Callaghan had seen six elections in Solomon Islands and said the latest one was the most impressive, particularly in terms of delivering real-time information to the audience:

For the first time, we saw images of voting in provinces … The SIBC has done crosses before, before, but they had a really comprehensive network set up this time … It was really quite exciting to be hearing from all over the country, both in terms of the campaign, then the actual polling day, and then the counting of the results, the reaction to the results in the different places. (O’Callaghan)

O’Callaghan praised the result of the election preparation saying that it was clearly evident in the resulting coverage:

I think that the journalists did a bloody good job on the election coverage. It was great to see some of these young ones like SIBC doing live crosses all over the countryside, for days, because you got this build up to the polls, the actual polling day and then the counting. It was just really exciting actually, especially as a journalist. (O’Callaghan)

Her praise was countered by Lamani, who gave little credit to SOLMAS for the election training that was organised via MASI, stating they already had the skills at the newspaper to cover elections:

We had been covering elections before. We had been doing it ourselves. We had been watching elections in Australia too, and the UK and NZ.

(Lamani)

Despite Lamani’s feeling, there was broad support for SOLMAS’s decision to focus early training on the 2010 Solomon Island elections, and there were indications that there had been skills developed which would be able to be maintained.

The SOLMAS staff were also proud of their efforts in organising pre-election forums, claiming that that the media had become more cohesive and self-actualising as a result:
SOLMAS training has generated a ‘kindred spirit’ among MASI members that is evident throughout the organisation of journalism awards, agreement to share resources and contacts, regular meetings of senior journalists and improved levels of communication (Ferguson & List 2010b, p. 12).

In-house training
Although the Sogavare government had been fiercely against placing trainers within newsrooms, owners and journalists all preferred in-house training. It was seen as a benefit by employers who did not need to free staff from their production work for training, and by the journalists who got immediate feedback on the work they were doing. One Television staff had had difficulties attending the weekly training sessions, and were pleased to have someone helping out in the newsroom:

We have one with us now, Wendy Everett, actually with us at the moment. She actually comes in for a few hours once a week. We go through stories. We go through, how we visualized stories, time management, if there’s any problems we face, how we can improve them and what we’re doing. She gives us honest feedback on what she thinks isn’t going right. We can argue our point. (Hawkins)

SIBC
SOLMAS concentrated much of its efforts on the SIBC, but the media stakeholders had little faith in the organisations’ leadership, and there were financial and logistical issues (Thomas et al. 2012, p. 51). SIBC staff no longer considered themselves a public sector broadcaster but instead a state-owned enterprise:

I think we’re more of a public broadcaster than a commercial radio station. We do have obligations like, for example, in terms of natural disaster we are obligated or the government will, the board of directors, will just stay on the air full time. Like what happened last Friday, we stayed up the whole night (during a tsunami alert), last week. We had the obligation to keep the public informed of what’s happening, what’s coming in, and if there really was a danger to evacuate and find a hill. I think that aspect is public sector broadcasting. (Nalangu)
The 6 p.m. news was the main news bulletin for the day, repeated at 10 p.m. and followed later in the evening by a current affairs program, *The World*, which shared content with the next morning’s program.

At the time of the field research there were eight journalists in the SIBC newsroom; Nalangu had recruited every one of them. Nalangu acknowledged that while SIBC attempted to cover all the country, the main focus was on Honiara. Unlike other broadcasters who used correspondents in far-flung places, the SIBC had no such people:

> During the elections last August, we tried to get people engaged, people out there, to report for us what’s happening and we did that successfully. Besides sending out our reporters, we just engaged some in the provinces. That’s something I’m working on. Trying to revive this network of, a string of correspondents, with obviously at least one in each providential centre. (Nalangu)

**Effectiveness of SOLMAS**

There was wide appreciation from Solomon Islands officials, civil society and journalists for the work of SOLMAS, although at the time of the field research it was only halfway through its planned tenure. Senior journalists were already hailing the project as having built capacity among journalists for the future:

> I think the capacity has improved. SOLMAS has played a really big part in getting everybody up on the same level. When you went into the 2006 elections, people didn’t know that much about national elections. It’s the basic background information. The knowledge wasn’t that much. (Wasaka)

Those Solomon Island media outlets which had received support, and in particular in-newsroom support, were grateful for the assistance, as the news editor at the SIBC said:

> I wouldn’t speak for the other media organizations here, but (SOLMAS) has helped us in certain areas, not only in the newsroom … with SOLMAS we worked extensively. (Nalangu)

Despite this, the Thomas report on SOLMAS in 2012 stated that there was a degree of confusion among stakeholders about SOLMAS’s role and as a ‘desire
for SOLMAS to take training to the ‘next level’ and incorporate formal advancement and long-term training in some way’ (Thomas et al. 2012). A footnote added that the country’s oldest and most read newspaper, Solomon Star, was still not participating in SOLMAS training, a full year after this researcher was told of the newspaper’s withdrawal from the program because of concerns about how it was run (Thomas et al. 2012).

All sectors agreed that support of the media sector in Solomon Islands was likely to be needed for quite some time:

> I don’t think people would like to see them left on their own. We, as in those who care about media, hope we continue to see a continuation of the approach … where the Solomon Island journalists are the source of identifying what it is they need the most support with. (O’Callaghan)

O’Callaghan suggested that the SOLMAS training structure was a useful model for other countries, but warned about any direct export of the SOLMAS model to other places, even in the Pacific, because there was no one-size-fits-all result:

> There’s an elegant simplicity to this structure, that is probably pretty transferable, because it is not complicated. The ownership thing with the local media, and the project’s taking guidance from that, and working then very closely and collegially on an ongoing basis. That’s one thing that’s impressed me with SOLMAS. Like they didn’t come in and go, ‘Tell me. Tell me what you want?’ then just go and design and come back … It’s an ongoing, organic process if you like. (O’Callaghan)

**Big men**

Those who had powerful positions within the country were often referred to as Big Men. A constant pressure in the training provided by SOLMAS was to train journalists to overcome the fear of interviewing Big Men and to ask ‘higher’ questions (Dinh & Heriot 2010, p. 50):

> SOLMAS training to date has considerably improved the ability of journalists to overcome fears of intimidation and confront the ‘big men’ of Solomon Islands over matters such as corruption. This training must continue through exercises that challenge beliefs and through the involvement of authority figures in training so that journalists can ask meaningful and sometimes confronting questions without fear. (Ferguson & List 2010b, pp. 8-9)
**Critics of SOLMAS**

While there was much praise from the journalists and civil society for the results of the weekly training sessions, many of the senior journalists believed that there was greater value in having in-house training from senior staff who had experience doing difficult stories in Solomon Islands. At the time of the research, the then proprietor of *Solomon Star*, John Lamani, had told his staff not to attend any more training sessions: this was one of the risks outlined by SOLMAS in its inception plan. There was agreement among media practitioners in that the owner of *Solomon Star* was concerned about more training emphasis being given by SOLMAS to his competitors. There were also claims by media workers that Lamani was upset that SOLMAS had provided assistance for the establishment of the *Island Sun*’s website—a venture that would have been seen as providing opposition to *Solomon Star* (*MASI congratulates Island Sun* 2010). However, Lamani said he welcomed new players in the Solomon Island market:

> In fact it’s an encouragement because it makes people work harder. There’s no monopoly here in the media.

Lamani did acknowledge that the SIBC required assistance with its election coverage, and with its news gathering more generally, but said he had little regard for SOLMAS training, which incorporated all the different news mediums. He wanted newspaper-specific training for his staff and felt that SOLMAS was favouring the state broadcaster. He had made his views clear to his staff and to SOLMAS.

At the time of the field research, *Solomon Star* was using an Australian Youth volunteer in the office as a sub-editor rather than SOLMAS staff. The paper had previously received assistance from Alan Thornhill as part of a media initiative in the country. Lamani was filled with praise for Thornhill’s work but funding for his role was not continued:

> [He was here] one year. We wanted to extend him but RAMSI said no. He was an elderly man. An excellent teacher. He was good at sitting side by side. He was quiet with people … He was very good, very very good. (Lamani)
Lamani was particularly full of praise for people who had come from the Australian Business Volunteers program:

They had all the advice possible. They did a lot of criticisms and they wanted us to answer those criticisms. But that’s how interested they are—in my business. They are semi-retired or retired people but they are very good. (Lamani)

**Formal evaluation of SOLMAS**

ABC International undertook three ‘Independent Progress Reviews’ of SOLMAS over the life of the project, with the final one completed in November 2012 (O’Keeffe 2012b). The final progress review used the OECD DAC criteria to assess the projects’ relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, gender equality, monitoring and evaluation, and analysis and learning (*Development Assistance Committee Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* 1991). O’Keeffe concluded her report by recommending that media support continue in Solomon Islands but that a new program be designed to succeed SOLMAS with an emphasis on communication for development (C4D). She noted an effective media in Solomon Islands would remain essential as an enabler of informative, accurate and balanced communication:

> It is important to stress that the ratings on sustainability reflect the fragile and still underdeveloped state of Solomon Islands rather than an inadequacy or inappropriateness on the part of SOLMAS. It is too early to be realistically confident of sustainability. (O’Keeffe 2012b)

O’Keeffe (2012b, p. 4) concluded that SOLMAS 3 remained highly relevant to the RAMSI goal and objectives: SOLMAS had embarked on ‘an ambitious but successful program’ of engagement with the broad range of the country’s media. She argued that while the program was effective in meeting most of its component objectives, this could be enhanced by focusing more sharply on the program’s core activities. She also found that the program was achieving value for money, but had taken on too many activities and diffused focus across a broad range of tasks.

Several points in O’Keeffe’s evaluation are interesting for this thesis. Significantly she found that feedback from the key stakeholders pointed to a real
and positive impact, supporting improvements in the country’s mainstream media. However she gave a mixed report of the sustainability of the project in a range of subcategories: training, strengthening the role of MASI, support for SIBC, C4D and flexible support grants.

Training
O’Keeffe reported positively on the feedback from stakeholders about the training provided by SOLMAS. She concluded that it clearly met an outstanding need in Solomon Islands’ media sector. She dismissed disquiet by RAMSI about a high turnover among journalists, noting that journalists left for other positions within the community, and as such the products of SOLMAS training continued to benefit the industry.

O’Keeffe also reported that without SOLMAS, there would be a major gap in the provision of training for journalists. SOLMAS had been working with SICHE on a journalism certificate course, and with MASI, but feedback was mixed about the quality of the SICHE course:

SICHE appears to be committed to continuing the course and in terms of Solomon Islands context, it will need to be accepted that improvements will be an ongoing process requiring some external support. (O’Keeffe 2012b, p. 20)

MASI
O’Keeffe noted that despite efforts by SOLMAS to support MASI’s revitalisation, it attracted largely negative views from a wide range of stakeholders including those who were members of MASI. For stakeholders, the problems associated with MASI included the fact that the president was a government employee, there was no paid secretariat, members were too busy with their work lives to devote unpaid time to MASI, and membership subscriptions remain unpaid, which meant there were no operating funds. She felt that SOLMAS was doing too much to fill a gap that should be filled by MASI:

It will probably need to be accepted that until there is a potential for MASI to find the funds necessary to make it a viable and responsive organisation, it will remain vulnerable and unlikely to succeed. (O’Keeffe 2012b, p. 20)
O’Keeffe noted the SOLMAS project had to meet the many critical gaps existing because of government inadequacies and the dire financial situation under which most media organisations operated. She warned that there was a danger that SOLMAS’s reliability was

creating a degree of dependence and displacing or even replacing the growth of local solutions. This is particularly important given the overly crowded nature of the media industry in a very small market. (O’Keeffe 2012b, p. 10)

**Journalism Training and Professional Development**

The number of journalists employed, the way they are recruited and the way they are trained and educated all have an impact on how they go about their duties as reporters. There had been a generational change in Solomon Islands newsrooms, which some hailed as refreshing and others suggested had resulted in a lowering of standards. The exodus of senior staff moving into government and NGO roles had left many newsrooms short of seniors to provide mentoring and guidance for the younger journalists; wages and working conditions were blamed for a large part of the turnover. O’Callaghan noted, ‘They got burned out and they can’t survive on their salary, with no proper housing.’

There was however some advantage in some of the older staff leave. Many had faced shocking situations during the ethnic tensions and were suffering not only from burnout but had developed some unfortunate habits of self-censorship as a result of trauma.

Sennett, who had 27 years’ experience as a journalist but no longer worked as one, suggested the older journalists who remained behind needed to play a greater role in mentoring the young:

> The longer they work in a paper, the more confident, and the more links you develop. It’s up to the journalists in these papers to mentor, or develop their young ones to establish filler links.

One of the most significant changes was an increase in the number of women reporters, and of reporters from the provinces. The SIBC had three female reporters, all provincial. *Island Sun* also had more people from the provinces.
There were specific issues for female journalists working Solomon Islands. Not only was it difficult to recruit them: some subjects were considered inappropriate for them to deal with, and they could find it difficult to ask questions of senior people in the community—although some had learned to use this discomfort to their advantage:

   It’s a cultural respect and all, a woman stands her ground, you’ve got to step back, or you’ll make a fool of yourself by showing force against woman. (senior journalist)

Further Education

One of the biggest impediments to the quality of the Solomon Island media was the educational level of those selected for employment. Wickham was among those who were scathing of the schooling system, stating that it struggled to prepare students for most careers, including a journalism career :

   The education was awful. We had a poor education system which produced about 2,000 or 3,000 at the top end of the pyramid and a whole lot of students through the years who leave at form 5. It’s not anything like the Australian system, or New Zealand. I sent my kids to New Zealand. (Wickham)

Apart from on-the-job-training there were few educational opportunities available. Journalism was not considered an occupation for the top students as it did not pay well and the hours were considered difficult, particularly for women; this meant that the pool of potential employees was fairly small. Some were employed simply because their English skills were excellent. Hawkins said his language skills helped him win a job with a relative at the local television station:

   My English is very good for Solomon Islands, so I was chosen, hand-picked by my aunt who started this television station in 2006 to come and read the news, present the bulletin in the evenings. (Hawkins)

There was disagreement about whether journalists should receive hands-on training, certificate training or an undergraduate degree, but agreement that training and education were generally required. Only one suggested that journalists were ‘born not made’:
You know you’re a journalist, you know you’re going to have certain something inside you to be a good journalist … even if it half kills you. (senior journalist)

SICHE (since renamed Solomon Island National University)

At the time of the field research in 2011 SICHE had started an accredited basic journalism certificate, led by a Solomon Islander with assistance from part-time Solomon Island journalists. Prior to the establishment of this course, students seeking a career in the media needed to train in other South Pacific countries including Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand or Australia. The 15-unit certificate course was considered to be of a slightly higher level than a similar one offered in Vanuatu, in that it was just two subjects short of a diploma. At the time John Lamani, past president of MASI and proprietor of Solomon Star, said trained professionals were vital to analyse issues deeply in all aspects of Solomon Islands society and to provide the community with information that accurately reflected events at every level of government and business:

They want to know how their lives will be affected by new policies or decisions and only a strong media staffed by well educated professionals can ask the right questions to deliver this sort of information. (‘PM supports new media school here’ 2009)

SOLMAS did not take responsibility for the course and suggested that their role was mostly in helping MASI lobby the government to start the program. The curriculum was written by Pacific academics. It was part of an aid funded program called PACMAS, and had some support from the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA). The course included grammar, news writing, print, radio, television, civics and ethics, regional issues and research. It started with 25 students, but at the time of the field research only 14 students were still studying. The lecturer in charge was criticised for not having enough experience:

It is so underfunded that nobody wanted to apply for that job when it came out. [The lecturer] just graduated from USP it was I think, and by default became the lecturer. It’s sad that there was no one experienced that could have taken that course up. (Wasaka)

One of the problems was that some of those who signed up for the course already had experience and had particular views about what they wanted to learn:
Some had to withdraw. They thought it was just writing news. They didn’t realize it would involve grammar and regional issues. News is all of those things. (Talo)

The program was not well resourced. There was no internet, one photocopier for the entire college, and few facilities to help in the production of assignments. The handouts were not specific to Solomon Islands but were Australian or from other parts of the Pacific. The staff and assistant tutors all complained about the lack of equipment:

We should have hands on experience. We need more equipment. The theory part is okay but we need more practical skills. We need to go to television stations and newspapers … that is an important part of training. (Talo)

Despite its deficiencies there were some in the media who were very happy to have a practical course available:

It’s a very good course especially for young journalists who prefer discussing Solomon Islands, and I think Fiji is also doing the same, as well as Tonga and Vanuatu. (Habru)

Those who believed that journalists are ‘born not made’ were scathing:

I think that it is the most hopeless one I’ve ever come across. Not only because it’s been under SICHE just the whole idea of it. You have to get people in this field to do it, and when they put out a call for people to go and tutor and lecture, they were asking for people who had degrees. (senior journalist)

There was, however, a genuine desire for more media training in Solomon Islands and this was captured in Thomas’s report (2012, pp. 15-6) which found that Solomon Islanders wanted to see more opportunities for formal education of local journalists that was both locally owned and locally focused.

**Undergraduate degrees**

Before SICHE opened the only option for journalism education for Solomon Islanders was to travel overseas, usually to Papua New Guinea or Fiji. There were few government-funded scholarships, and fewer still for journalists:
We’ve been given scholarships to go to do our degrees, and then the government doesn’t give much priority on journalism … less than five, one or two … have been given scholarships to do journalism, and that’s about it, it’s just an undergraduate scholarship. (Habru)

Those who received government scholarships were grateful. In 2010 several won academic prizes from the University of the South Pacific. Solomon Star reported:

Giving credit to where it is due, the four locals said, we acknowledge God for His blessings without which we are nothing, the government for facilitating our studies, our families for standing beside us all the way but, we would especially want to dedicate our awards to the grassroots of Solomon Islands and the tax payers who had to meet the cost of our training. (‘Success at last for Solomon Islands Government sponsored Journalism student at USP’ 2010)

Hawkins argued that any formal training in journalism in another country would bring with it a degree of indoctrination, and he was careful to note he had not done any such training:

I’ve heard from people I’ve worked with and some of the training that even came through them coming from journalism schools there’s a spin on it that comes with you whenever, that’s normal. (Hawkins)

Journalism education in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia or New Zealand was not always considered a positive move. One senior journalist complained that graduates lacked practical experience. The course at the University of the South Pacific was criticised for not providing enough practical training:

That’s why I always say start work first, and go study later … when they train in Fiji with PhDs they tend to come back and expect that they will be operating the way that these others operate. I keep telling them, I said, ‘No, we operate in a very different way. Not only that, in terms of technology, we’re slightly different too from Fiji and New Zealand’.

(senior journalist)

More training options
Just as journalists in Australia come to the profession in a variety of ways and enjoy a variety of educational experiences, so do many Solomon Islands journalists. Most of the senior journalists were keen to do further training overseas. While the SOLMAS training was considered vital for the juniors, the
more senior journalists wanted assistance with postgraduate studies overseas, and visits to international media outlets. One senior journalist felt that there was more value in visiting the media in other countries than in local training by Australians or others:

There’s always this fool idea by Aussies that they should bring trainers here … But I still stand on exposure. It is our policy to go out there and see the real works. Good ones, big ones, small ones, and comparing it and trying to understand it. Where do we fit in to that picture? Where should we be heading, is what they need to learn. I think that’s where I’ve been very lucky in my career. I’ve travelled far and wide. (senior journalist)

This journalist felt that SOLMAS’s efforts were mostly focused on younger staff and that more senior staff needed international training experiences. More senior journalists were looking for experiences beyond Solomon Islands, and several to do postgraduate studies overseas, while others wanted to visit international broadcasters to see how they worked:

I personally would think a little bit of overseas exposure is good, just to get people thinking outside of the box, but maybe too much would leave them in a dream world where they’re trying to write for an audience that doesn’t exist here in the Solomons. (Hawkins)

More senior staff wished that the government would provide support for postgraduate training in an international environment. Those who had already been overseas valued what they could bring back:

I’ve been lucky. I’ve had a little of the two worlds [New Zealand and Australia]. That is two different medias. The differences between them, and how that relates to us. It has also helped me understand where we are at in journalism. (senior journalist)

Journalism education was seen by many as the biggest problem facing the media in Solomon Islands. Journalists needed a better understanding of general reporting skills, a better understanding of business, personal courage, and critical thinking skills.
Other training opportunities

Senior and junior journalists welcomed all training opportunities. There was a genuine desire from everyone involved in the media to learn more, although many of the trainees tended to ‘pick and choose’ from each course:

We’re really appreciative of any training that we can get but not all of it we can use. What we can use we keep. (Hawkins)

Australian academic Helen Molnar (2008, p. 48) notes that short courses are by their very nature ad hoc and unable to provide the appropriate foundation for journalism practice that more formalised courses offer.

There was an acknowledgment from journalists at all levels, and from civil society leaders, that more training was required, even in the basics of how to write a story. Pollard noted that many of the journalists in the country did not have the experience required to take on big stories.

It was acknowledged that many of the media’s problems could not be easily fixed. Many of the journalists had a low educational base to begin with, resources in the newsroom were few, and pay and conditions were not good, particularly for the junior staff:

It’s a big struggle and it’s going to take a long time, perhaps years. It’s not going to change overnight. It has to start here and hopefully does, but all this will change with education. Education is not an easy process. (Periera)

Hawkins suggested the increased emphasis on journalism education would improve the confidence of journalists in Solomon Islands and bring them greater respect from people in power:

Every time that someone makes a mistake, that’s pretty damning, that looks really bad on us, what kind of accuracy we have, what kind of specialism we have. Also, the public also respects us less if someone is constantly reporting in an idiotic way. (Hawkins)

There were suggestions that leadership and management were lacking in media organisations and that the upper echelons needed training in business skills for both the public and private sector(Thomas et al. 2012, p. 18).
There was a lot of support for the way SOLMAS had operated in the way it asked local people what they wanted, and used local trainers:

It’s a model for how to do it, where you’re not spending a lot of money flying in a whole lot of experts to tell the people here what they don’t need to know. Instead they’ve said ‘what do you think you’d want to discuss? What are the issues for you?’ And then that has created a forum where essentially most of that discussion has been within the journalists themselves. (O’Callaghan)

By building the confidence and skills of local trainers, they hoped that the skills would be able to passed on. Ferguson said she was motivated to help emerging leaders:

I get energized watching emerging leaders organise events … These are people who (haven’t previously been) good at planning, and they’re planning … We are planting little seeds. (Ferguson)

However, the low level of education among the journalists made it difficult for them to fulfil their role as the Fourth Estate. According to Wickham many simply did not have the educational background in economics and history to ask decent questions of Solomon Island politicians and other powerful figures about forestry and fisheries:

The journalists [need to] go up with some vocabulary about the general topic, and some understanding of what has been happening, the ongoing trend, and then they can ask intelligent questions. Right now, they don’t have any at all. (Wickham)

While not perfect, SOLMAS staff believed they had come up with a transportable model for media assistance in other places. More needed to be done to improve relations with the Solomon Star, to build capacity with the media association MASI, and to address the needs of more senior journalists, particularly those who were scheduled to step into editorial leadership roles.

**Conclusion**

Despite some early mistakes in the way media assistance was provided to the country, the later program, SOLMAS, performed some important work with key parts of the country’s media. Much work had been done with Solomon Islands
Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC), the newspapers *National Express* and *Island Sun*, and the new television program One News. The majority of the work appeared to be with the SIBC, but there was also in-house training done with the other media outlets. ABC International Development, the organisation contracted to run SOLMAS, was not transparent in its work outside Solomon Islands, but its goals were in line with international best practice (as outlined earlier in this thesis). The project staff appeared well suited to their work, with appropriate skill levels and dedication to improving outcomes for Solomon Islanders. The SOLMAS staff were acutely aware that there were limitations to the work of expatriate trainers, and did their best to use local trainers. They did attempt to link with the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) but were seen to be the real organisers behind the association, which was at the time headed by the head of government communications, a contradiction that was noted by many in Solomon Islands. The SOLMAS brief was wide-ranging and gave staff the opportunity to influence the media environment through both technical advice and financial assistance. The SOLMAS staff linked their work practically to election reporting, which meant they had tangible outcomes to be show for their efforts and were able to track improvements over time.

Measuring the effectiveness of the SOLMAS project is not the aim of this thesis, but it would be churlish not to mention that there was much praise from the journalists and civil society for the efforts of the staff. There was not universal praise for the work: the owner of *Solomon Star* was unimpressed by the training, which he felt was more focused on public service broadcasting that commercial newspapers, and he stopped his staff from attending training sessions as a result. Formal evaluations of the SOLMAS project appeared to gloss over Lamani’s boycott, even though he operated the longest-established media outlet in town. Other evaluations of the project noted that MASI was not particularly effective, but did not lay the blame for this on SOLMAS but on the make-up of the organisation.

Solomon Island journalists and civil society requested more training and education for the country’s journalists both in-house and in formal academic settings. The Solomon Island College of Higher Education (SICHE) had started a
journalism certificate, but at the time of the field work there was little respect for the program despite efforts of the staff and professional journalists who worked as tutors for the college. Senior journalists wanted opportunities to study abroad, either in Papua New Guinea, Australia or New Zealand. At the end of the field work the researcher was approached several times from Solomon Islanders enquiring about any scholarships that might be available for them to study in Australia.
Chapter Twelve: The Media’s Role in Solomon Islands

This chapter continues the focus on engaged stakeholders (listed in Appendix 3) in Solomon Islands to discuss a range of issues that mirror those asked of the Australian journalism educators. The researcher had planned to do an online or paper survey of the journalists in Solomon Islands that mirrored the questions asked of journalism educators; however, when she arrived in Solomon Islands it became clear that the country had limited internet access for journalists, which meant that access to the online survey was difficult. A number of the surveys were photocopied to be handed to journalists, but it was more practical in the end for the researcher to read the questions to the recipients and record their answers. This had a number of advantages, including allowing the researcher and the journalists to discuss any words or phrases that were unfamiliar and to explore some of their statements. There were also disadvantages, in that many of the journalists did not have the time for both formal questions and a more general discussion about journalism in the country.

The questions related to journalism, and journalism training and education generally, and were not focused specifically on the SOLMAS project. The journalists were asked what skills they needed to work in Solomon Islands. They all agreed that in general they needed a better knowledge of the country’s government, better journalism skills generally, a sense of responsibility, and to be critical and or independent. There was some support for a better understanding of business, and for developing greater personal courage. They did not think a political commitment was necessary.

There was a bias in the interviews towards more senior journalists. A number of the newer journalists said they did not feel comfortable taking part in the research. The more senior journalists were happy to answer questions, and, for the most part, happy to answer on the record.

Many of the journalists were related to each other in ways that were not immediately obvious. While some shared surnames, others did not: Koroi Hawkins, for example, is the nephew of Dorothy Wickham, with whom he ran One Television. That meant he was also related to Ashley Wickham, a senior
journalist and former SIBC general manager. Joel Lamani was the son of John Lamani, the owner of Solomon Star. Other family relationships may have existed that were not obvious to the researcher.

**The Media’s Role in Solomon Islands**

The journalists held views of journalism practice that were overwhelmingly in line with notions of journalism in liberal democratic nation states. They agreed with the statement that the media’s role in Solomon Islands was to act as an agent of empowerment; nation builder; defender of truth; a neutral, uninvolved reporter of facts; an entertainer; a critic of abuses; an educator; a communicator of new ideas; the people’s voice/mouthpiece; and the watchdog of democracy. The only question mark was over the role of the media as watchdog, which a junior journalist said she did not understand. After a brief explanation of the idea by the researcher she agreed that was what Solomon journalists were aiming for.

The interviewees agreed that journalism in Solomon Islands was best described as a guardian of the public interest, reflecting many viewpoints and political persuasions in reporting. They agreed that journalistic inadequacies were responsible for failures of the media to ensure politicians were accountable, but they also agreed that national interest, personal privacy, and political considerations played a part in this.

**Respect for Journalists**

All but one of the journalists believed that they were respected by the wider community but got little respect from political leaders.

Those interviewed believed Solomon Islands media were free, and cited the ability of the general public to write letters to the editor that criticised politicians. Sometimes journalists noted there were ways of stopping the media from doing their job. One recounted a situation where journalists were refused permission to attend events if they had displeased someone:

The Island Sun newspaper wrote about corruption in Solomon Islands Football Federation and they were banned from covering a major tournament for a week. (Talo)
At the time MASI called on Solomon Islands Football Federation to ‘appreciate the role of media’ in the country, with one member suggesting that the action showed a lack of maturity and leadership (‘SIFF urged to respect media’ 2009).

**Value of Investigative Reporting**

All those interviewed agreed on the importance and value of investigative journalism, but said it was not much done because the newsrooms did not have the time, resources or skills. Harbu noted:

> Just not encouraged, partly for us to be blamed. [laughter] We’re not really encouraging them and we’re not here to push them along.

They acknowledged that religious beliefs did have an impact on reporting, including on what days of the week some journalists could work; many noted the inability of Seventh Day Adventists to work on a Friday. Others spoke about issues of faith stopping the reporting of some stories: several mentioned issues covering the Anglican Church of Melanesia:

> I remember back in when I was with Solomon Star, the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the Archbishop, then, had been implicated in corruption for receiving some money. It’s the biggest church in Solomon Islands, and the Solomon Star … the owner is an Anglican, I think he’s a board member within the church, and when one of the reporters had a story prepared because of the corruption, the owner said, ‘Stop the story’. (Habru)

When the corrupt Archbishop was replaced, anti-Church stories were then run.

Talo remembered a case where journalists did their job even when it offended the church: ‘The Solomon Star investigated a drunk priest. There was four weeks of news, and the owner of the paper John Lamani ran the news about his own churchman.’

There were mixed views about whether cultural practices interfered with investigative reporting. Most agreed that investigative reporting mostly did not occur because of a lack of skill on the part of journalists rather than for cultural reasons, but many had stories where family relationships had interfered with press coverage. One of the most infamous involved a relative of the owner of the Solomon Star:
There’s a story about the former PNG high commissioner had a sexual relationship with the niece of the owner of the paper. They wanted to settle it out of … you know, to settle it. Then, the wife of John Lamani, she really hated the niece. But the niece is related to John. What John’s wife did was to leak the story out in the media. That resulted in the termination of the high commissioner. That was the former high commissioner … so that’s both cultural and family. (Harbu)

Journalists had a range of ways of managing family conflicts, including in some cases giving the story to a journalist at another news outlet, sometimes in Australia, New Zealand or Papua New Guinea.

The Fourth Estate

Although the term Fourth Estate was not immediately recognised by all Solomon Island journalists, all but the most junior understood the concept. Each of the news outlets were proud to claim a Fourth Estate role, stating that their role was in ‘keeping the politicians honest’ by reporting the facts without bias:

We give them (the public) the facts, and we tell them what is illegal, and what is legal, and then let them make up their minds. They are not stupid. We didn’t edit to make [politicians] look good. We didn’t edit to tone it down. We just gave it them as it was. In the end, public were like, isn’t that sick. (senior journalist)

The journalists gave many examples of this Fourth Estate role at work, pointing to an infamous case of an MP pay rise:

You can see the impact of it, especially Solomon Star when it (prints) information that is not public. When the Parliamentary Committee increased the (Members’) pay, the uproar it created was so great that they ended up reversing it because the level of increases was just massive. (Wasaka)

Most journalists agreed that the media was a business with special rights and responsibilities because of its role as the Fourth Estate, but some were wary because of the power of individual media owners to make a large profit from the news. Habru thought the media should do more to improve the visibility of the media among the general public as the Fourth Estate:
I want people to see that media is really important. It’s really doing its job, expose corruption, pushing for the interests of people so that you see people reacting to what you wrote, that sort of thing, but at the moment I don’t think … The people just see the media like this now I know. It’s just a newspaper. I want people to really see that media is actually practising that Fourth Estate notion, you know? (Harbu)

All agreed that there needed to be reform of Solomon Islands’ government. This was a direct result (at the time of the field research) of months of instability within the government. A number of members of parliament had changed allegiances, some often, which caused the government to be destabilised. There was a feeling that the political system, with its roots in Westminster, was not suited to local conditions:

The system which we are running on is originally from the British and doesn’t really suit what we should be adopting. Not that we should change it altogether, but change in a way that it would suit us. There are some parts that I think didn’t really go down well with what we should be doing globally. (Palmer)

**Issues and challenges facing Solomon Islands**

The journalist al had views on the most pressing issues facing Solomon Islands including political reform, human rights, poverty, education, economy, health, environment and gender. All greed that terrorism and globalisation were relatively minor concerns for the country. While all of these issues had some impact on their work, they placed professionalism as the most significant challenge to journalism in Solomon Islands. They also spoke about government control, ethics, corruption, media ownership, physical violence, religious groups, corporate pressure, and threats from other governments or countries.

Corruption was not seen by the journalists as a significant challenge to journalism although it was to the country; however Thomas’s report (2012, p. 32) found that there was unease that corruption or vested interests within media organisations, as well as society, stopped or discouraged journalists from doing their duties ethically. Religion was seen as a middling trouble by all journalists.

Of all of the challenges to journalism, professionalism and ethics were considered the most important. There had recently been a case where a new journalist
working on a story about prostitutes serving fishing boats claimed to be from Papua New Guinea, not Solomon Islands:

I wouldn’t have approved … He was quite new at the time … We have to be open about what you do and who you are. It just protects your credibility, and I think that’s what we stuck to, and that’s why we haven’t been burnt, especially by the politicians. You have to be open all the time. (Wasaka)

Physical violence, or the threat of it, was still an issue among the journalists, who all ranked it as a middling issue:

I wouldn’t say I’ve had any threats of physical violence … Just as being present in a, what you call it, a highly charged situation, anything can happen. Not in the sense they’re calling me up personally and threatening me or anything. (Hawkins)

Media ownership was not seen as a major issue, with more people taking on ownership roles in recent years; however, pressure from advertisers and the corporate sector on parts of the news organisations was seen as an issue by all the journalists. Government control was not seen as a major issue at the time by the senior journalists: they were more concerned about the potential of the government to do something.

At the time of the field research there was no worries at all from the journalists about threats to journalism from other governments or countries. This question was specifically, asked in light of earlier complaints from the Sogavare government about Australian trainers in the SIBC newsroom.

**Good Reporting**

The Solomon Island journalists, civil society and officials all held views of good reporting that mirrored normative ideas of journalism in liberal democratic nation states such as Australia and New Zealand. They all agreed with the statement that good reporting expresses fairly the position of each side in a political dispute, and that it requires an equally thorough questioning of each position of a side. They all agreed that good reporting does not allow the journalist’s own political views to affect the presentation of the subject, and that journalists should make sure that they are not trying to influence the outcome of conflict between political parties.
They agreed journalists should make sure that they report the main issues of the political party and do all the usual things to make news interesting, and try to explain political conflicts for the public by revealing where each party actually stands on an issue.

There was a mixed response to the statement that good reporting makes it clear which side in a political dispute has the better position. Wasaka noted, ‘When you explain it, it naturally comes out’. There was also mixed response to the statement that journalists should make sure that the conflict between the parties over issues is presented in interesting ways. Half agreed and half disagreed.

Each journalist was asked about their journalistic practice, limitations to their work and resources. Each agreed that it was seldom that their work was changed to increase its appeal to the audience, and apart from the most junior journalist they all believed their work was seldom changed to improve its factual accuracy. There was disagreement about any rewriting of work to include a political slant: Some claimed that their work was changed ‘never’, others said ‘quite often’.

The most difficult or limiting factor for the journalists’ work was by far resources. News organisations not only had limited staff: those that were employed often shared computers, recorders, cameras and transport. There were few archives or archive systems. The journalists reported that the lack of professional resources impacted on their motivation because it hampered their work:

   Everyone is stretched pretty thin, right to the limit … For us, it’s transport. Transport is a major one, getting people from place to place before our deadlines. Paying staff on time, that’s a big one as well. (Wasaka)

There were no problems reported because of limited news space or air time.

The journalists did not feel pressure from management or editors not to offend the government, but most laughed at suggestions that they have sufficient access to government documents. The notable exception to this was George Herming, who was working in a government role at the time. Most acknowledged that the government itself had few documents:
We can still access them. I think the problem for us is not really going in and accessing the information. There are ways to go around them I think we are just not doing enough to get the information. (Habru)

Another significant issue for working journalists, and also for other government officials, was their ability to get access to public figures:

(They are) very difficult to get to, a lot of times. They’re continually on their mobile phones, especially in the House. If we need to ask them something and they talk to (administration staff) you’re told to call back at this time. You call back, they’re not in the office. You try their mobile, it’s turned off. A lot of times they’re hard to get a hold of. Especially when they only want to talk to the media if they know they have something very good, that will excite the electorate. (Nalangu)

Only one, Habru, felt this was not a problem. There was similarly an issue in getting responses from powerful people such as corporate executives.

Pressure from advertisers was significant. It was mentioned repeatedly that the government was one of the largest advertisers, and one of the least reliable in terms of on-time payments. Many media outlets were following the example of other businesses and demanding payment up front from the government:

Our biggest client is the government. Right now, the government, the budget has been passed but government hasn’t released payment to a lot of people, including us. That really affects our operations. We’ve had to reduce. Last year, the staff had to have their pay reduced because of that. It created problems, some staff have left. It’s a big problem. (Wasaka)

Several of the journalists spoke about using self-censorship with stories, or with the placement of stories, to ensure that advertisers were not upset:

It’s not so much the advertisers, but it’s just us … that we don’t want to hate our advertisers. If say a certain organization advertises a lot with us, we don’t want to put their image … you know, badly in the paper. (Habru)

Habru used the example of a tobacco firm that was a large advertiser. He said the newspaper would still run anti-smoking stories, but not on the same page as the firm’s advertisements.
Pressure was sometimes put on news editors not to run stories about the government, but most of these were ignored, although sometimes they had an impact for a few months:

The government told Solomon Star, I think two, three months ago, ‘If you don’t report fairly, we will stop all this.’ But then they just don’t listen to what we said, from government. Then because Solomon Star is delivering newspapers, then we realize that we are losing publicity, and then we just finally give in and give them the advertisement. That’s how it works. (Herming)

**Journalists’ Rights and Responsibilities**

The journalists were asked a range of questions about the rights and responsibilities of journalists in Solomon Islands which fitted with normative views of liberal journalism.

Considering the importance of religion to Solomon Islands communities it was unsurprising that there was broad agreement that journalists should not promote ideas and values that had been rejected by the broad public. Several asked for clarification on what was meant by the words ‘values that have been rejected by the broad public’: the researcher offered the example of homosexual marriage being something that might be considered rejected by the broad public.

They all agreed journalists in Solomon Islands should, upon request, have immediate and full access to any government document that is not restricted for bona fide reasons of national security or personal privacy. All but one agreed that a news source who was promised confidentiality should be able to sue if the journalist breaks the promise.

There was a mixed reaction to the statement that journalists should be required to reveal confidential sources if a court determines the information will provide important evidence in a trial. While half agreed, the other half did not. Palmer quipped, ‘I’m going to jail’, and laughed.

Two disagreed with the statement that the media has an obligation to downplay the activities of political extremists whose ideas are a threat to the democratic way of life.
Everyone agreed that the courts should make it reasonably easy for public officials who have been seriously harmed by false and careless reporting to win libel suits. They also agreed that private citizens who are falsely accused by the media should have a legal right of replying through the news organisations that led the criticism.

There was a mixed response to the suggestion that government officials should have the authority to stop the publication or broadcast of a news story they believe is a grave threat to national security. Transparency Solomon Island’s Bob Pollard joined half the journalists in suggesting that it was not appropriate:

A grave threat to national security? No. The problem is when do they decide what is and isn’t a grave threat to national security. Have the right to stop it, that’s what you’re saying isn’t it? No, I don’t think they should have the right to stop it. (Pollard)

There was also a mixed response to suggestions that journalists should not delve into the personal lives of public officials. Transparency Solomon Island’s Bob Pollard again joined the majority of journalists in arguing that there is no clear line on this issue:

I think there’s not a clear, in this society here, there’s not a clear boundary between a person’s private life and public life. I don’t think they need to be … I would say my view is they don’t need to go hunting the person’s private life. But if a person’s private life is impinging their public role then I think there’s a right for them to speak on it. (Pollard)

There was much laughter at the suggestion that journalists should not cover issues on which they have strong convictions or beliefs. Most replied they often covered issues in which they held strong beliefs:

That’s a hard one. Yeah. Don’t know. There are some things where you have information you’re interested in, and you have information about. Then, there are some things where you are just too involved, and you shouldn’t be. (Wasaka)

All but Nalangu agreed that journalists should be editorially independent of management. It is not always possible:
I think journalists do need to have some freedom there. I think in many cases Solomon Star’s (owner is) put at arm’s length distance from the editorial staff. I don’t know exactly how they work to what extent it’s being managed, how separate the media is from them. I think there’s a degree of separation there. (Pollard)

Most agreed that media companies have the right to exclude stories about their organisations which may damage their commercial interests.

Thomas (2012, p. 31) found that most of the comments about the responsibility of the press were made by government and NGO sources rather than journalists. She noted that there was genuine distress about irresponsible reporting.

**Journalists’ Values**

The group was asked a range of questions about their values, political leanings, work and pay conditions, and future plans. At the heart of this thesis is a question about the intersection of democracy and journalism. Most of those surveyed agreed that democracy, while it may be flawed, is the best form of government. The junior journalists said, ‘don’t know’ and Wasaka said he ‘did not know’. All but the youngest journalist also agreed that Western liberal journalism education was an essential part of a country’s democratic process; the young journalist again said, ‘don’t know’.

All agreed that Western governments have an importable role in providing journalism training in other countries, but there was an interesting response to the question if training in democracy or training in journalism is more important. Many saw that the two are linked and cannot be taught separately:

> They go together. Journalism, as I understand it, is certainly a style of democracy. I think training in journalism is important for first-rate journalists. Training in journalism is also part of democracy training. (Nalangu)

They all agreed that the problems of Third World countries are largely the result of exploitation by industrialised countries.

Each of the journalists was asked to describe their political thinking, although it was acknowledged in the asking that the terms alternative, right-wing and left-
wing are not used in Solomon Islands; they were also offered the choices of swinging and neutral political thinkers. They were invited not to answer the question if they felt it was ‘none of my business’. All but the junior journalist who answered, ‘none of your business’, said they were neutral because, here, there’s really no left wing or right wing. It’s all pretty much the same. It’s just the people’s personalities are different. There’s really not much difference politically between the opposition and the government. (Wasaka)

**Pay and Conditions**

Each of the journalists was asked if they considered themselves well paid, appropriately paid, or if their costs were met. There was acknowledgement that no one was going to become wealthy working as a journalist in the country: it was hard work and there were few opportunities. Many felt that the poor pay and conditions of journalists were the contributing factors to the failure of news outlets to retain staff. There was a particular attack on the pay offered by *Solomon Star*, the longest-running newspaper and the one where most of the country’s journalists (including those who had left to work overseas) had first started work as a journalist:

> [Solomon Star] pays them crap and treats them like crap. [laughs] That’s the truth. They treat them like shit and they pay them like shit. Who’s going to stay around and sweep for the bastard? (senior journalist)

The owner of *Solomon Star* did not disclose how much he paid his staff but pointed out that retaining journalists was a problem from his perspective too:

> Journalism isn’t something that many people want to do. They work and they leave. It’s just as a stepping stone to go find jobs somewhere else. They don’t want to work late … We train women, we employ them, but after a year they left because their husbands won’t understand, they don’t want to work the hours … news comes at any time. Day or night… women don’t want to go out at night. (Lamani)

Most of the working journalists believed they were not paid well enough. None of the owners would volunteer what they paid their staff, but One Television claimed to pay the most and to offer sick pay:
We lose them all the time because of that. They hear [NGOs] pay people very well. They get good housing. They get picked up and dropped off from work, and they get paid much, much more than what SIBC senior staff are getting … Housing issues are difficult now here. It’s just virtually impossible to get a house here. If you’re on a $488 fortnight salary, $200 is a bag of rice. How far can you get? It doesn’t work. (senior journalist)

There was still humour about the pay conditions. One journalist suggested that he would do it for the love of it:

I would do it for no money [researcher asked: Would your wife like that?] No, she wouldn’t, but she knows I would. At our worst times I think we continued working. When we didn’t have the money, whatever. (Hawkins)

Most of the senior journalists said they planned to be retired or still working in the profession in five years’ time, although several said that they would need to do more to make extra money and that might mean opening a business or moving to an NGO.

**Journalism in Solomon Islands**

Solomon Islander journalists, civil society leaders, owners and officials discussed journalism and how it was or should operate in Solomon Islands. Cultural issues specific to Solomon Islands, including the *wontok* system, came under scrutiny:

We are still at the point that we still need exposure and understanding of what a true journalist is, here. A lot of people think they just come write a story and walk away. Journalism is much more than that. You have to actually personally feel very strongly about these things to do this work. (senior journalist)

Understanding the audience was vital:

I keep saying to them, ‘Don’t give them crap, they’re not stupid’. They may be uninformed, but they’re not stupid, so don’t treat the audience like they’re stupid. (senior journalist)

**Investigative journalism**

Solomon Islands journalists, civil society and officials all considered investigative journalism the holy grail of journalism, and sought more of it for the country:
Oh, it’s really important, especially in a developing countries, like Solomon Islands where corruption is widespread. (Palmer)

This attitude was not surprising as most of the owners and editors in the newsrooms had done some training in Australia or New Zealand, or had trained under those who had been educated in Australia and New Zealand. However, there was an overwhelming acknowledgement that Solomon Islands newsrooms lacked not only the expertise but also the resources to undertake much investigative reporting. Valiant attempts at training journalists in investigative journalism techniques were made by various groups. During the time of this research the Melbourne-based NGO Live and Learn was funding a training course on investigative journalism based on forestry, run by Solomon Island journalist Charles Sennett. He called his course a step-by-step guide based on stories related to illegal logging:

It’s basically the normal step by step which any journalist in Australia and other international organizations will have to do, but the forestry guide is a more targeted new guide to the Solomon Island situation, Papua New Guinea, and the problems we are trying to address, like illegal logging, bribes, all this stuff. (Sennett)

Sennett noted there were many aspects of illegal logging that needed to be reported, such as under-pricing or under-reporting of logging species, price transfer, sexual exploitation of girls, and the victims of logging. Sennett believed the major news outlets in Solomon Islands would run the investigative pieces if they had them:

I think they’d love to have the stories, but maybe they don’t have the reporters who have the guts to get in there … I think those are the real stories, those are the news. (Sennett)

Lamani claimed that many people contacted the newspaper about stories but would not put their names to their allegations:

They don’t want their names to be published. There are others who ring us, and we’ll say, tell us your name or we won’t publish your article. There’s some high up in government doing these things. (Lamani)

Some were dismissive of any attempts to do investigative reporting:
I’ve yet to see an investigative story out of this country. It’s totally impossible to get something in here. I think information and access to records, government records, research for what you would need in this story is the most difficult part here. We’re not very good with records. Just go down to the library, and you find out it’s really bad here. (senior journalist)

Hawkins, who won a RAMSI award for investigative journalism, acknowledged that investigative journalism was difficult because of the resources needed:

For us it takes time and resources which we don’t have a lot of … We only have one team, so putting together news and at the same time trying to do something on that, is almost impossible for us. When we got that award we were in the situation where we had a full news team. Myself and my colleague were able to work on it full-time, which was much, much easier and much more effective, I should say. (Hawkins)

Hawkins pointed to a huge audience for investigative reporting in Solomon Islands:

Just judging from the reaction we got from people when we did a little bit of it, I think there’s a huge, huge, huge audience out there and also a huge need for it, because our politicians are getting away with murder basically and a lot of other things that you just can’t cover in a normal, everyday newspaper. And with having the numbers, and facts, in a report just gives more credibility to what you’re saying and actually moves things. I found it very effective that within a few months after we’d written about something or produced a program on an issue, it would start getting addressed if something has been moving. So, I think it’s pretty effective for us here in the Solomons. (Hawkins)

Hawkins was particularly proud of an investigative report on the services and limitations of the staff at the Honiara Hospital, which received a strong response from the public and eventually from the government:

That’s one case where we actually got in and managed to get doctors and people who work in the hospital to talk about it. I think certain doctors were pretty outspoken about their condition and weren’t happy with it, but are willing to talk about it. (Hawkins)
Sensational journalism

There was a suggestion that Solomon Islands media favours sensational journalism because it is seen as being easier than investigative journalism. Bad behaviour by political leaders is one area of ‘sensational’ reporting that is preferred over stories of corruption. Reference was made by a number of people to then prime minister Dr Derek Sikua drinking too much at an event attended by journalists. This was one story that the journalists seemed to have no trouble covering:

If it’s put in front of them, they expose it. (Pollard)

However, it was not always clear how, or if, to report on such things. Talo told the story of the unfortunate airing of some pornographic material by a permanent secretary at a widely covered media event:

The permanent secretary was getting ready for a public presentation and he put in his flash drive and pornography was put on the screen. The cameraman shooting the scene saw it, closed his eyes and turned the camera off (there were women present). I told him that that was the story. I told him to turn the camera back on and get the reaction from the room. For the next 30 minutes there was chaos in the room, all the media there had seen it. The SIBC had filmed it. People were walking out. Someone from the government came to us to advise us how to make the news properly. It was very challenging. All the fares (to the location) for the story were covered by the government. We had to think hard about what we were going to do about it, but within hours the story was out. (Talo)

Agenda setting, following through

A number of the interviewees noted that Solomon Island journalists did not have the ability to persist with a story, even if they found one. They were happy to report what other organisations such as Transparency Solomon Islands gave them, but not to start the process. This is what John Keane describes as monitoring democracy, where civil groups take on the role of monitoring government. Transparency International is one of the organisations in Solomon Islands that raises issues for the media to report on:

The media is in a sense waiting for somebody else to make the story and they’ll report it. You may have the case of a minister, some scoundrel, doing something or other, it may be reported once, and the minister makes
a reply which is just nonsense. But they’ll report that, and they’ll wait for somebody else to reply to it. It is not as if they are able to critique their stuff. But it’s an interesting thing. Is that newspaper, is that their role, or what is their role? Do they only pursue stuff if people are agitated enough about it? (Pollock)

O’Callaghan suggested that Solomon Islands media is slowly changing. She used as evidence the coverage of a story about the cost of the prime minister’s house, which was being rented at a hugely inflated cost. The government claimed to have cancelled the rental cheque after the story broke, but another story then revealed that the cheque had already been cashed:

Some of them are getting better at it and some of them are less likely to accept the government’s line, or anyone’s line—it’s not just the government. I’m finding that at press conferences … they are chafing at the bit. (O’Callaghan)

Journalism basics

Some people noted that the young journalists had the ‘language of the profession’, but their practice did not always match their words. Herming felt that many of the journalists at the news organisations were straight from high school and did not have education to do the kinds of investigative journalism that was often called for:

Most journalists are not really trained and most of them are very young, from the high school into the newsroom. Those basics of (investigative) journalism are not really taught on journalists who are straight from the high school and into the newsroom. At MASI we’ve emphasized a lot of training on news values to emphasize the importance of journalists making themselves aware of the real needs of Solomon Islanders and the real issues that we need to talk about.

Access to Documents

One of the necessities of investigative reporting in liberal democratic nation states is access to government records to provide the ‘evidence’ that editors want to see, but in Solomon Islands this was considered impossible because even the government itself did not always have documents. Senior journalists believed the lack of documentary evidence could be overcome if journalists had access to senior government officials; but building relationships between senior officials
and journalists was difficult in a small community where meetings between people would be seen by others and therefore not private:

That’s one of the constraints that some of the journalists that would like to develop relationships with the more senior public servants. The public servants themselves are feeling very vulnerable about being seen. (O’Callaghan)

Many in the media claimed that some stories would be well known among Solomon Islands elite but would not be reported because the ‘evidence’ could not be produced. Lamani said that he often knew stories that he could not report. Others commented on his longevity in the country’s media that he:

survived in the media industry running a newspaper. It was a very cozy relationship for a very long time. But he didn’t push, it would be uncomfortable for everyone … I think there is some of that creeping back. Just thinking back in some of the relationships at the moment, because some of the characters that are in this current government. (O’Callaghan)

Sennett was teaching his students in his forestry investigative reporting course that if they could not get documents from the government they should ask question of others:

If you cannot get it through documentation, you can either get it through human approaches, go and talk directly to the company managers. If they can’t, you can either go to the land owners and see what sort of trees they are cutting … If you can’t get documents, maybe go back to the local people, but the problem the journalists are having is having to travel out to the provinces and get the information. That’s a handicap.

Sennett agreed that younger staff did not have the connections to do some of the more difficult investigative pieces:

You have to have a good rapport and a link between people before they start to give you good information. But with young journalists coming up, it would take them maybe four to five years to establish good links to allow people whom they want to interview to give information which is not normally given out. (Sennett)
Pollard questioned the ability of journalists to critique what the politicians were doing rather than just report upon it in a classic ‘he said, she said’ style of journalism:

They’ll report anything. It could be a completely bizarre. But it’s seen that their commitment is to the reporting, as opposed to the filtering of stuff. My concern is that the MPs, for example, are doing all this stuff and they’ll report that. But there’s not the ability to critique it very well … We get the press releases, media stuff by the people, and very little really good questioning, interrogative questions, so MPs are able to get away with murder.

Pollard pointed to the lack of journalistic inquiry around a nickel mine announcement that was made during the research period:

Someone announced this company has won the contract to do all the nickel mining. This is a major event for the country. Somebody else pointed out to me they had doubts as to whether the company is actually a mining company. [laughs] They’ve been around for a while. They weren’t a mining company for long. Unless they’ve become a mining company just in recent times, they’re just a middle man … Obviously mining is fraught with potential for corruption.

Wasaka agreed that many of the big stories were broken by organisations such as Transparency International or by visiting journalists; however, this was slowly getting better:

The Solomon media is good at breaking big stories. I think we are good at following it through. I think it has to do with the level of journalism here. For events and things would happen then they were really good with those, but not with coming up with issues and following through on it. (Wasaka)

Herming and Habru also agreed that Solomon Islands journalists were happier to follow the lead of monitory groups and other organisations:

Sometimes journalists just don’t do on their own way to raise the issue, so they wait until people like Transparency International, or their ombudsman, or the leadership commission raise it before the media take it on, so I think that’s very true and a part of the local media here. (Habru)
Alkai noted that often the best investigative pieces of journalism are done by foreign journalists visiting the country.

Several of the journalists praised the efforts of reporters to do solid reporting. Talo and Alkai felt that Solomon Island journalists are trying their best:

One of our reporters did a story on the prostitution happening on the fishing boats—salt fish they call them—the One TV reporter interviewed these ladies. They refused to talk to him, but then he said he was from PNG and they thought the story wouldn’t be shown in Honiara, so they agreed. After that story went to air they had to leave the place. Sometimes you have to be unethical to be ethical. (Talo)

**Flipside of watchdog journalism**

Investigative journalism was seen to have its limitations. O’Callaghan and Sasako noted that asking questions of people in power did not always achieve the desired response:

Effective journalism is a double-edged sword here because other systems aren’t keeping up with the exposure of corporate malpractice. You would expect greater frustration to develop, but also greater demand for good governance. (O’Callaghan)

Sasako felt that journalists sometimes needed to do a different kind of journalism:

Young people these days—because their level of education in my view, is not up to what I expect—unfortunately once you teach them to be a watchdog on government, they take no other line. (Sasako)

**Holding Power to Account**

While holding power to account is a key part of the Fourth Estate role, the complicated interrelationships between journalists, media owners and politicians made this particularly difficult. The Solomon Island media is dominated by a couple of families who also have a variety of business interests. Many journalists go on to become public relations officers, government officials or politicians. Just before this field research the then government official and former journalist and former politician Alfred Sasako asked *Solomon Star* to run an article he had written, without a by-line saying who had written it. The newspaper decided to add in his by-line. Sasako was not impressed. He had previously been the public
affairs manager for a gold mine, and while in this role had sold the articles as a freelance journalist for the newspaper. O’Callaghan, noting her own role as a publicist for RAMSI, said she had previously raised the issue of non-journalists putting work in the paper without a by-line:

I write propaganda, but we put ‘RAMSI public affairs’ at the bottom of that … but my propaganda is much closer to the truth than theirs, in the case of this stuff that he (Sasako) was doing. (O’Callaghan)

O’Callaghan confirmed that those who had been journalists but later worked as politicians or public affairs officers often still considered themselves journalists. Many did not see the conflict

Because they have been able to do that in the past. I have ranted, not ranted, but raved, I have raved constantly on this issue in my current role. (O’Callaghan)

This issue was not peculiar to the local papers. Reuters newsagency distributed an article from ‘a special correspondent’ on the elections which was written by George Herming, the government’s media officer and the head of MASI:

His employer (the prime minister) gave him permission, but he cannot possibly be an independent journalist if he’s being paid by the government. No one can, he can’t have access to both things. (senior journalist)

**Politicians**

Holding power to account was a serious ambition of Solomon Island journalists, and one that they were increasingly taking up. Ferguson noted, for example, that journalist are now more inclined to follow up on issues:

We still have a relationship with the political journalists. They keep an eye on what is happening in parliament. There are a number of petitions on corrupt practices … there was one case where an MP got thousands of votes, but there weren’t that many people in his electorate. (Ferguson)

Strong questioning of politicians was valued. Wasaka cited an example of an interview by Koroi Hawkins of a number of politicians who were swapping and changing allegiances repeatedly; this was well received by the public:
He just kept on going at them for a good five minutes, questioning …
there were four people he questioned, and that story, I got a lot of good
feedback from the public, like people were coming up and saying, that’s
such a good story, having them on camera, showing the public how these
ministers were extremely superficial. They weren’t sincere at all in their
reasons for moving, for switching sides.

Palmer and Talo acknowledged all journalists should hold politicians accountable,
but it did not always happen:

Some journalists do ask good questions, but maybe because there hasn’t
been good training, sometimes they just say what the politicians say.
(Talo)

Lamani said that many people in positions of power did not understand that
journalists were required to ask difficult questions:

A lot of people don’t understand. Politicians like you, and then they hate
you.

Powerful People
It was not just politicians whom the reporters had troublesome investigating:
powerful people in business were also . Palmer related how he was once pressured
by the advertising department not to run a story about an airline:

Our boss, then, was a New Zealander, and decided that we not do the story
because this company was a very good client and they put out good money
in the company.... I did the story, it was a good story. I thought it would be
blown out. But it was squeezed in the corner. [laughs]

Powerful politicians and people in business were feared by journalists, and so
were ‘big’ men in the community:

It’s also cultural, the cultural fear. They won’t talk. All these are
limitations to expressing things. It’s also the educational level of people, to
express themselves. (Periera)

Journalism sub-types
There are many different names for journalism in post-conflict states:
development journalism, conflict-sensitive journalism, peace journalism,
deliberative journalism, critical development journalism. Of these, peace
journalism and development journalist were referenced by the interviewees in Solomon Islands. O’Callaghan noted that in the early days of RAMSI peace journalism was encouraged because it was important to ensure that media reportage of court cases arising from the tensions did not inflame people:

They did a very straight up and down, that whole point of not having a commentary within it. Your narrative really has to be exactly what is said in court, and you balance it with whatever else is said in court. But you don’t balance it with others, and you don’t include too much background that isn’t part of the court case.

Several of the journalists understood that there were two audiences in Solomon Islands, one in Honiara that required standard journalism and one in the provinces that was more interested in developmental journalism:

I always say, ‘We are not only here to make money and to write stories. We’re also here to educate someone out of this, and that’s our role.’ I said, ‘Unfortunately, we cannot be like American news media. We can’t just come in and break, break, break stories all the time. We have a much more wider responsibility’. (senior journalist)

Herming valued development journalism for getting information out to people in the provinces:

A traditional event like a good harvest crop or raising animals or a fishing technique. Those are some of the issues that elders would really like people to know, so they transfer their message through other means, like word of mouth.

Wasaka also liked the idea of development journalism for some parts of the country:

You need to think of the audience, if you are looking for that in the provinces, you need to be more geared towards education, rather than if it’s for a Honiara audience. Their level of understanding is totally different.

Some of the journalists had a strong paternalistic feeling towards their audiences in the provinces and argued that they needed to show greater restraint with stories because people might not understand:
I said, ‘Our people believe everything you tell them. It’s very dangerous for us to play with that.’ I would rather have an educated audience that’ll fall asleep on me, than having a really stupid audience following me blindly. You know? I can’t stand that. Just the thought of it really makes me not sleep at night. I always say to them, ‘If our relatives in the village can listen to our news and understand exactly what you’re talking about, and understand the issue by the end of your story, that’s my satisfaction.’ I said, ‘It has to be yours. You have to talk down to that level and make them understand. You’ve got to lift them up to where you are, and make them see, and very clearly see where we are.’ (senior journalist)

Hawkins said he thought it was good to focus on communities that need development, and this was important for Solomon Islands:

Things actually move if people are being reminded constantly that these people need something or the other. Yeah. I think it works. It may take a while and it may take a lot of repeating, but it works. Especially in a heavily donor funded country like ours.

**Solomon style of journalism**

A number of the journalists suggested that Solomon Islands required a style of journalism that incorporated local beliefs and the *wontok* system. Herming suggested a Solomon Style of journalism should give respect to ‘senior people’ in Solomon Islands, whom he identified as statesmen and former ministers:

The value of journalism to a government of, let’s say modern Solomon Islands, is valuable in terms of trying to inform people or expose wrongdoings. But the approach is different. We use the radio, the television, the newspaper. It makes the approach in journalism of communications different from the cultural approach that we have. See for example, in Malaita when something happens, say for example a crime, the only people within the area are allowed to talk about it, attend the court case to hear what’s happening, and they categorize it according to the level of sensitivity of the issues. (Herming)

Herming suggested that there were some news stories in the Solomon Island that were only appropriate only for senior men (elders) to hear. He explained that this was, in their thinking, a way of stopping further victimisation of those who had been hurt:
For example murder or things to do with adultery, in those instances only the chiefs or the elders can attend that hearing because they are talking about some sensitivities. Not everybody’s allowed to go there because they fear that people might talk about the victim … The stigma attached to the victim. Those are the kinds of things that we weigh against certain situations. When we communicate the message it’s translated only to the elders. Not the kids or the women, small children because we believe it’s not good for them to know what’s happening. (Herming)

Some issues were considered too difficult to talk about in front of women:

It’s culturally sensitive to really talk about this thing in a family when you’re sitting together to eat, or with your sister, with your mom. It’s culturally not good. Putting things in the paper, I think it depends on the magnitude of what happened. For instance, you have some issues with rape cases in court. When some of our reporters are explaining things that are a bit too sensitive, culturally, then we’ll get calls in the morning. People will call and say ‘Look, this is ridiculous. Why did your people want to put this in the paper where children will see?’ (Palmer)

Hawkins suggested that Solomon-style journalism needed to take into account that actions in the past could be treated as being in the past. He related the story of a Solomon Islands MP Jimmy Lusiba’ea (Prestidge-King 2010), also known as Jimmy Rasta, who was sentenced to jail by Solomon Islands High Court for unlawful wounding and assaulting a police officer during his time as the commander of Malaita Eagle Force during ethnic tensions between 1998 and 2003. Hawkins suggested that journalists from outside Solomon Islands did not understand Lusiba’ea’s change of heart and continually referred to his past crimes:

He is one of the ones that has actually come out of detention, and has something good that he wants to do with his life … For us, if more of the ex-militants did that, we’d be in a better place right now. He would be what we’d want other militants to get into, rehabilitating themselves, getting themselves doing things more positive. (Hawkins)

Hawkins considered that he would have a different reaction to a Solomon Islander who had done the wrong thing but had not served an appropriate sentence. Referring to the case of a senior politician accused of rape and aggressive
behaviour towards women, Hawkins felt that his past should only be mentioned if it was relevant:

If he were to stand up and talk about violence against women or something, then yeah, of course we’d bring it up. In his normal duties, I don’t think we would raise it.

There had been a change in thinking about journalism over a period of 20 to 30 years:

People want to be modernized. Most people really see journalism now as an important tool for sharing information. Now, we are moving towards this exposing of corrupt fields within governments or organizations. People are really excited about that area in journalism. (Herming)

**Aggressive interviewing**

Everyone who was interviewed raised the point that younger Solomon Islanders had interpreted good journalism to mean ‘aggressive’ interviewing techniques. This back-and-forth interviewing is a staple of journalism, particularly broadcast journalism in advanced liberal nation states; it is readily seen on CNN, BBC and ABC. Despite a violent past, Solomon Islanders are considered a non-confrontational society:

We look at overseas television, how journalists push to get interviews from maybe the prime minister or the president. We don’t normally do that, we’re not there yet. (Nalangu)

Some of the journalists were trying to find their own way through the problem, using gentle but determined questioning:

I can see how it makes it difficult for them to become aggressive, that Western style, aggressive in your face journalism. Culturally it’s really hard. (Pollard)

The younger journalists were reminded that they needed to have respect:

In the country, we sort of have that respect for big people, which is a nice thing. And we’re not that aggressive like outside reporters. So, if trainers are coming here and push us, push reporters, sometimes there are reservations on the part of local journalists to do that. I think there is sort of a cultural understanding. (Nalangu)
Pollard suggested that using humour could cut through issues in a way aggressive interviewing could not:

It is the way we are culturally here. The way humour is used. It is much easier to make fun of somebody. Like, with staff, I can make a joke about something, and then people get the point, everyone has a good laugh, and it’s not really so offensive.

Cultural practices

Wontok

Many of those interviewed suggested a Solomon style of journalism which acknowledged the impact of wontok or ‘one talk’, the pidgin word used in Melanesia for those who share strong social bonds and usually a shared language (there are about 100 language groups in Solomon Islands). Wontok is seen to have both positive and negative connotations. From a Western viewpoint wontok could be seen to blur the lines between family obligations and nepotism, and so might be seen as corruption. A greater emphasis on ‘professionalism’ is thought to be one way of overcoming the negative parts of wontok:

Some prefer to interview their own, others don’t. Sometimes it’s an issue, especially with MPs. (Talo)

For journalists wontok connections could be valuable. On one hand, wontok relationships could give them access to people in power, but it could also put pressure on journalists not to cover particular stories:

Journalism, it comes with its own principles and rules. Things like balance, fairness and even you don’t have to report on your brother, or your sister. But in here, some of those issues are very important, that culturally you don’t have to talk about your uncle. Like if he is a minister or he’s a member of a political party, you have to respect that party. Those are some of the areas that I can see affected by influence from journalism. (Herming)

Father Periera was among those who noted that wontok was totally encompassing of a person, even if they were a journalist. To illustrate the point, he relayed the story of an escaped prisoner:
Where did he go? He went and stayed in the market with his people. And when they went home in the evening, he went home. Did the people know that he was in prison? Yes. Did they want to reveal him? No. It’s a system that is there and they will protect their own people. Now, the journalist is in that system and, so he or she is going to protect his people. Otherwise, they are traitors to their own culture and their own people.

Herming echoed the point that wontok influenced every part a journalist’s life, not just the professional side:

…when we talk issues of sex for example, it’s against our cultural values and religion, to write stories about rape, and explaining how things happen. Talking about the private parts of victims or things like this, it’s very sensitive. But in journalism as we know, you have to write it as you see it, or as it happened. It sometimes places us in a difficult position to really talk.

Not everyone believed that wontok was as powerful as some proposed. Pollard suggested that it was a changing dynamic:

There are cases of people who had a degree of freedom to speak out for what was right and weren’t inhibited by that (wontok). It’s part of the equation here. I don’t think it’s necessarily as problematic as some people make it out. Some people make it out as a major blight on society here, and I don’t think so. From a media angle, I don’t think it’s necessarily a really major constraint.

**Working with wontok**

At the SIBC the news editor Walter Nalangu suggested that he tried to send people who were not related to the ‘talent’ to do the story; sometimes that was not possible. He used as an example where he found himself unexpectedly covering the trial of a member of parliament who was related to him:

I found out that it was a relative, so … I just went up to him and spoke nicely to him. ‘Please don’t take me wrong, I’m doing my job. This is what I do every day.’ He understands, he tried to understand, but, yeah, I think that situation, it does happen, people who are related to another person would not feel comfortable to cover their stories.

It was the same at the television station One News:
Usually when stories are related to one that’s your relative, we usually give it to somebody else, that’s not related … It’s very hard. The family links are close, for you to do your job properly. (Hawkins)

Sennett suggested journalists could use wontok to their advantage:

I think the wontok system could be a good investigative tool for journalists to use, even if they can assign some of the wontoks to go to and talk to people who they know … they can get some information. (Sennett)

**Wontok blindness**

Wontok was said to blind some journalists to stories. Family members were often asked not to report on each other:

If you know that politician or someone high up in the government who did something wrong, and it’s your Uncle or Aunty or someone that you first related with, sometimes it normally stands in the way. You wouldn’t want to investigate the story. And just leave that story. Make sure I don’t let others know about it. They might report the story. (Pollock)

Harbu recalled a story about corruption that was not run in *Island Sun* because the reporter knew the people involved, but he believed the story was passed on to another newspaper:

My (motivation) was to try to settle on the facts before we publish it, but then later I found out that my other reporter was saying that he really knew the people who were implicated. Unfortunately we didn’t run the story and then *Solomon Star* took it up. I think my colleague, must have called *Solomon Star* to get them to do the story rather than not him doing it.

Journalism teacher at SICHE, Alex Alkai, acknowledged the complexity of the wontok system:

If a wontok sends a non wontok to do the story there is still some influence from the wontok. The wontok isn’t just the reporter. The wontok could extend to the fellow reporter. So I might put it in this way so that not to upset the uncle of my best friend. (Alkai)
Wontok rejection

One senior journalist suggested that it was important to always be honest with people about the stories they were covering. It was better to tell wontok that it was a necessary part of their job:

I had a lot of (wontok) charged as part of MEF, and I had to cover their court cases. There was a lot of anger during that period. I found being honest with them worked. I would go up to them and say, ‘Look, I need to do my job. It’s not because I’m here to blow whatever you’re going through. I’m just doing what I need to do.’ It worked. (senior journalist)

Hawkins acknowledged that wontok connections had helped him into his job as a reporter, particularly in high-charged conflict situations:

Having wontoks in there would be a strength not a hindrance because you would be able to talk to both sides. In a really charged situation we prefer to send people who are related to the group rather than those that aren’t, especially language-wise, speaking the language, whatever it is. (Hawkins)

Talo said wontok would not affect this reportage:

If it is in the interest of the country I am going to write the story. It is a little bit critical. (Talo)

Conclusion

Journalists and civil society in Solomon Islands hold with notions of journalism common in liberal democratic nation states: their answers to a verbal survey mirrored those of the Australian journalism educators. The doxa of those in the field of journalism in Solomon Islands values investigative reporting but acknowledges that religious beliefs, and the beliefs of others, sometimes interfere with an individual’s ability to report.

Although the words ‘Fourth Estate’ are not immediately recognised in Solomon Islands, the journalists have a good idea of the concept. They do not believe that journalism is just another business, and while they do not believe that they should have a role in reforming the government, they believe that reform is necessary. Several issues and challenges face Solomon Islands, and chart what is ‘good reporting’. A lack of resources is considered their biggest problem in daily
journalism practice, although journalists are also troubled about lack of access to documents, public figures and powerful leaders. Advertising pressure is felt by those working in the commercial media.

Solomon Island journalists have a good sense of their rights and responsibilities, which mirror those of Australian journalism educators. They agree that Western governments have an important role in providing journalism training in other countries, have an interesting attitude to whether training in democracy or training in journalism is the more important for them.

Solomon Islands journalists are worried about their relatively low pay and conditions (compared with others working in public relations or government roles). This is seen as a contributing factor to people moving out of the industry.

There is a push for more investigative journalism to be produced, and less sensational journalism. Civil society leaders want more agenda setting and greater follow-through on stories rather than straight description of facts. There is a call for greater attention to journalism’s basics skills (writing, grammar, spelling and accuracy); and there is an understanding that without access to documents the skills of watchdog journalism are difficult to use.

While Solomon Islands journalists and civil society all want politicians and powerful people to be held to account, there is a feeling among some that a different style of journalism might sometimes be necessary. A number of people advocate a Solomon style of journalism that avoids aggressive interviewing, forgives those who have been punished for transgressions, and works more like in a developmental style of journalism.

The influence of wontok on local journalists cannot be overlooked. Solomon Islanders do not consider themselves Solomon Islanders, but members of language groups. Although wontok connections can be valuable to journalists, they can also hamper reporting on particular stories. Although there is caution from some that wontok is a convenient cover for corrupt practices, repeatedly referenced problems with covering stories involving wontok suggest this is too simple a view.
Chapter Thirteen: Not what we expected

This thesis set out to examine the professional understandings of Australian journalism educators who specialise in teaching in other countries, and to determine how those educators adapt their work when they teach outside Australia. By using a case study of the Solomon Islands, this thesis sought to determine if Australian media training and education were effective when translated into another country.

This thesis began with an examination of the literature surrounding the evolution of democracy (Chapter Four), the history of journalism in advanced liberal states (Chapter Five) and the development of journalism education in Australia and elsewhere (Chapter Six). At the end of these literature-rich chapters it was possible to conclude that Australian journalists were generally unquestioning of their role in liberal democratic nation states and believed they held a special place in society, the Fourth Estate, and that within this estate they had idealised a special role for themselves as a watchdog on those in power. Similarly, the majority of Australian journalism educators believe that central to the role of journalism was a need to bolster democracy, and that most educators could not envisage journalism operating efficiently or effectively outside a democratic system. The literature did, however, note that a rising number of theorists predominately outside Australia have questioned the barriers associated with journalism practice in the so-called march towards liberal democracy. Hallin and Mancini have outlined obstacles in comparing media systems and Voltmer, Zelizer and Josephi have also recorded some of the limitations of media systems operating outside the West.

This thesis then tested the literature against the lived experience of Australian journalism educators, by surveying them about their experiences and beliefs about journalism and journalism education (Chapter Seven). These experiences were then drawn out with longer semi-structured interviews (Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine). The majority of the journalism educators reported they did not adapt their teaching of journalism in other countries, but rather taught their normal journalism skills and in some cases even used the same materials they would in an
Australian classroom. This project’s extensive online survey and in-depth interviews gave the Australian journalism educators the opportunity to describe themselves, their beliefs in the effectiveness of their training work, the barriers to effective journalism training, their views on good journalism and reporting, and their opinions about good governance, including the role of the Fourth Estate. Their responses indicate strong support for the argument that journalism education and training provide skills that make ‘super citizens’, and thus are skills that could benefit all in society.

In Chapter Nine the educators discussed the pride in their work but noted difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of their efforts. The data gathered from the educators suggested while much of the world aspired to the kind of journalism seen on the BBC and CNN, this style of journalism struggled to find acceptance in countries with different forms of government where the nation state is subservient to other forces. Australia, and other liberal democratic nation states such as the United States, have been keen to promote liberal representative democracy, even though this is seen by increasing numbers of people within such democracies as fundamentally flawed. Many of the educators complained the evaluation and reporting requirements of their work was often excessive, and not useful or appropriate for the types of activities they were undertaking.

The next three chapters of this thesis looked specifically at the Solomon Islands, a country which has received a great deal of foreign aid funding. Chapter Ten discussed the history of Solomon Islands and the colonial legacies of education and journalism practice acknowledging competing influences from a range of other countries and from family/language groups. It acknowledged the tensions over land which resulted in a multi-nation military intervention in the country and the subsequent media aid programs.

A content analysis of Solomon Islands’ current affairs radio within Chapter Ten indicated the country’s journalists had adopted the doxa of journalists in Australia and other liberal democratic nation states, including the country’s old colonial master the United Kingdom.
Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve reported on the experiences of Solomon Islanders who had taken part in the media training programs or were potential beneficiaries of it (civil society, government). These chapters recorded the breadth of the journalism taking place in Solomon Islands in 2011, paying particular attention to the Australian Government-funded Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme (SOLMAS) run by ABC International. While SOLMAS was the dominant media education program in Solomon Islands it was not the only one, and the data demonstrated that while the media in the Islands had adopted the practices and values of journalists in liberal democratic nation states, it was not possible to draw a direct link to this being entirely the result of the ABC work in Solomon Islands.

These final Solomon Islands chapters concluded the media training and education offered by Australians (and others) in Solomon Islands had however been effective to the extent that normative journalism values promoted by the journalism trainers could be produced and discussed in the country.

It is in the final chapters of the case study that the groundwork of the previous chapters culminated. This thesis found that the cultural specificity of the Melanesia system of kinship in Solomon Islands, which put family and language groupings far ahead of the nation state, had specific implications for journalism educators who were themselves trained in a system with democratic practice rather than family connections at its heart.

While those working in Solomon Islands media articulated the need to take a Fourth Estate role, they acknowledged their role as a watchdog on people in power was an ideal that was rarely if ever attained. Those working in the media, and scholars in the region, suggested that at the heart of the failure of the media to take on this role was the cultural and economic system known as wontok that places privileged family and tribal responsibilities above the nation state.

With all the effort the Australian Government put into improving media capacity building it was disappointing to hear in early 2015 that corruption was ‘out of control’ in the country (Corruption 'out of control' in Solomon Islands: High Court Judge 2014). The outgoing high court judge, Justice Stephen Pallaras,
called for an independent commission against corruption, stating it was needed in Solomon Islands more than any other country ‘on the planet’. While he did not refer to failings of the local media, in an exit interview with the ABC’s Radio Australia’s Pacific Beat program, he said corruption was endemic to politics, business and even parts of the judiciary.

This thesis shows that the *habitus* of Solomon Islanders and the embeddedness of *wontok* was such that the Melanesians who inhabited the islands could not place the nation state (and the good of all it citizens) at the centre of their thinking above their family and tribal groups. To Australians, this was simply corruption. Pallaras made this observation:

If you ask a Solomon Islander about his country he first of all asks you, ‘Well, what’s in it for me?’ Then, ‘What’s in it for my *wontoks,*’ or my relatives. Then maybe, ‘What’s in it for my village?’ Perhaps then, ‘What’s in it for my island?’ Never will he ask you, ‘Is it good for my country?’ And so long as a national institution like the police force, as long as the members of that institution have loyalties to their *wontoks,* to their village, to their island, ahead of a national loyalty, then there will always be openings for corruption to work, and that needs to be addressed urgently. (Pallaras in Carrick 2014)

Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, a Solomon Islander and academic at the University of Hawaii, told Radio New Zealand that corruption remained an institutional weakness in Solomon Islands:

Stability does not always mean better governance. Stability sometimes provides for certain powerful people to capture the machinery of government, to build cliental relationships, and to be able to maintain it, because they do not have the threat of violence from outside forces … Some people have become quite powerful whereas the institutions that are supposed to keep them in check … do not have the capacity to be able to keep them in check in the same way they could in Australia and NZ. We have quite powerful people who have become rich overnight as a result of building cliental relationships with people in government and also people outside government. (Husband 2013)

Australian academic Clive Moore has also argued that a change to the Solomon Islands constitution was necessary to overcome issues of corruption, although he
argued against the merits of an upper house of kastom chiefs. In a report in 2010, Moore concluded:

Given that election after election of politicians have delivered corruption and disappointment, and led the nation into chaos between 1998 and 2003, why not allow the ordinary people to have a say in re-constructing their own constitutional future? It is also crucial to give women a voice, and if necessary to create several seats dedicated for women, to at least begin to widen the extremely male pattern of representation. (Moore 2010)

The ABC of aid secrets

One disappointing aspect to this thesis, which ultimately led to the delay in its timely delivery was the way in which the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s international division ABC International Development actively fought access to documents about its Solomon Islands training program, which was required for this research. Using Australia’s Freedom of Information provisions, the ABC denied access to documentation on the SOLMAS project and made claims that were later proved to be at best a stretch, at worst false.29 The lack of transparency about SOLMAS by a public sector broadcaster that demands transparency by others sets a dangerous example to those who look to the ABC as a regional leader in the provision of open, fair and objective journalism. It is also against the Australian Government’s stated desire ‘to have a higher level transparency around aid spending’ ('Foreign Aid').

The documentation that was eventually provided to the researcher (via a fiercely fought FOI request) through Australia’s now defunct Office of the Freedom of Information Commissioner showed nothing particularly headline-making about the project that required protection from scrutiny. The project staff had clear plans that were reviewed and evaluated, and substantial progress was made during the period Australians were in the country. There was no sign in the documentation that Australian aid money had been misspent; no suggestion that staff had behaved inappropriately or without care and due diligence. Indeed, there could

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29 ABC International Development repeatedly said it was not involved in education or training of people in Solomon Islands and yet the project documentation clearly outlines this role, including negotiation for the establishment of a journalism course at SICH (Ferguson 2009a, p. 9).
have been great public benefit in sharing the documentation about their work more fully. The final report on SOLMAS, for example, pointed to many of the program’s challenges and lessons, which could be taken into other training situations.

Because the reasons for blocking access to the documentation about the media aid package to Solomon Islands were not clear, the researcher was left to speculate upon the Freedom of Information (FOI) provision that was used to block the original application for access to materials: interference with sovereign relations. The use of this clause indicated to the researcher that while the educators provided by the ABC may have entered the country with noble intentions, those who sent them, and those who hosted them, saw the role of educating journalists as predominately political rather than educational.

It is important, given these concerns about the independence and methodology of previous ‘independent’ assessments, that this research confirm their findings that the media environment has improved as a result of the provision of Australian aid to the media sector.

**Remember trauma**

There appears to be, from the interviews with Solomon Island journalists, only one major oversight in the provision of aid assistance to the media sector in Solomon Islands. None of the programs covered the issue of the journalists’ exposure to trauma during the ethnic tensions. While this is considered part and parcel of training programs in liberal democratic nation states, it was not included despite clear evidence that many of the journalists were traumatised. Although Solomon Islands had a truth and reconciliation commission modelled on the one in South Africa, it appeared little was being done to help individual journalists, many of whom were so shocked by what they had witnessed and experienced that they broke down and cried while recounting their stories for this thesis. While the people of Solomon Islands have not healed, neither have the journalists who were supposed to help lead the country through the healing process by reporting on the commission. Resources are available from a range of international bodies including the Committee for the Safety of Journalists, the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, the Rory Peck Trust, Reporters Instructed in Saving
Colleagues (RISC), and London’s Frontline Club In future it would be strongly recommended that journalism educators planning to work in post-conflict situations access the many resources now available to ensure that local journalists are given appropriate skills to deal with what has passed, and what may yet come, in terms of post-traumatic stress.

There was one other major problem with the way the training program in Solomon Islands operated. The program’s focus on skilling-up key leaders within the industry was shaken by the death of two of the country’s most prominent journalists. The on-going sustainability of the improvements in news provision seen under the administration of the SOLMAS staff was undermined by the premature death of SIBC news editor Walter Nalangu. Similarly the death of long-time journalist and owner of the Solomon Star, John Lamani, was also felt by the industry more generally. The departure of journalists trained by SOLMAS staff to government and non-government organisations was also disappointing for news outlets, but not an uncommon problem in a developing nation, and their training did still provide overall benefits to the country. Those who moved into public relations roles were able to better facilitate the access of journalists to public figures and were better able to produce coherent information for public release.
Appendixes

Appendix 1: Demographic profile survey response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Highest Qual.</th>
<th>Language/s spoken (other than English)</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
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<td>Postgrad.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tech/Prof Cert.</td>
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<td>70+</td>
<td>Postgrad.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Solomon Island CAFF Analysis Form

**Origin**

____ 1. Staff  
____ 2. PacNews  
____ 4. Other wire services  
____ 3. Reader  
____ 4. Unknown

**Geographic focus**

____ 1. Honiara  
____ 2. National  
____ 3. Province  
____ 4. Pacific  
____ 5 Australia/NZ  
____ 6 International

**Type of report**

1. packaged reports with inserts;  
2. packaged reports with only the reporters voice;  
3. question and answer interviews (including press conferences);  
4 edited speeches (including long statements where there is no evidence of reporter’s questions).  
5 word report

**Major theme**

1 political governance;  
2 economic governance;  
3. foreign aid  
4 natural resources (including land reform);  
5 development  
6 community/public services;  
7 law,  
8 conflict and security;  
9 human rights;  
10 gender issues;  
11 education;  
12 journalism;  
13. sport  
14 environment
15. Business
16 other.

The number of sources

Types of sources
officials/celebrities;
ordinary people;
identifiably male;
identifiably female and gender unidentifiable.

The main sources were further identified as

government;
private/corporate;
NGO;
community representative;
private individual;
local media;
regional media;
international media,
none of these;
and source unknown.

Technical issues

wind noise;
inaudible sound;
hollowness;
other.
Appendix 3: List of Solomon Island Interviewees

**Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme**

- Corallie Ferguson—SOLMAS project manager

**Solomon Islands College of Higher Education**

- Alex Alkai—Journalism lecturer at SICH. Gained a Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology from the USP in 2009 (two years prior to the field research).
- Owen Talo—Although he was 38 at the time of the interview, Talo had returned to study at SICH. He had previously worked as a journalist for 10 years. He held a diploma of youth studies.
- Unnamed journalism trainer

**Other Educators**

- Charles Stennet—Journalism trainer and experienced SI journalist contracted by Melbourne-based NGO Live and Learn to conduct an ‘investigative journalism’ program on natural resources during the field research period.
- Unnamed educator

**SIBC**

- Walter Nalangu (the late)—SIBC News Editor. Worked as a journalist from 1991 and was at the SIBC when the ethnic tensions began. He had also worked for a time as a teacher and within a bank. He held a diploma in education and a certificate for completing a six month investigative journalism program at the University of Papua New Guinea run at the time by (now Professor) David Robie and Sorariba Nash. Member of MASI
- Ashley Wickham—although no longer directly connected to SI media, Wickham was a former general manager of Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. He was trained in radio in Australia and
worked for some time at the ABC’s Radio Australia. He had English heritage and grew up speaking English and a local Solomon Island dialect. Attended the University of the South Pacific where he obtained a postgraduate diploma in education. At the time of the field research he was a PhD candidate at the Australian National University.

**Media Association of Solomon Islands**

- George Herming—although he was head of Government Communications Unit and former journalist, he had been president of the Media Association of Solomon Islands for two years. He graduated from USP in 2004.

**Solomon Star**

- John Lamani (the late)—*Solomon Star* proprietor. He established the paper in 1982 with four other people. He said the circulation at the time of the field research was 6,000 copies, but each had multiple readers. Lamani who was Malaitan, had done some journalism training in Wellington, New Zealand.

**PaoFM**

- Joel Lamani—general manager of Pao FM. Son of the newspaper owner John Lamani. Studied computing at UniTech in New Zealand.

**Island Sun**

- Priestly Habru—senior journalist and co-owner *Islands Sun* which opened as a daily newspaper in 2006. At the time of the field research it had 18 members of staff, including 12 reporters. He claimed a circulation of 3,000 papers daily. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from the
USP, graduating in 2002 with a major in journalism and literature. He originally started his degree in PNG, but transferred to Fiji after student protests closed the PNG university. He was also taught by David Robie and Sorariba Nash. Member of MASI. He was a part time lecturer at SICHE.

**One News**

- Koroi Hawkins—journalist/owner One Television. He completed high school, and did two years of primary schooling in the Australian town of Mackay. He had no formal training in journalism or education but had done some foundational studies in science.
- Evan Wasaka—journalist and Editor One Television. Attended the University of the South Pacific. Member of MASI. Part Time lecturer at SICHE.

**Monitory Groups**

- Bob Pollard—Transparency Solomon Islands chair. Born in Solomon Islands, married to a local woman, and educated in New Zealand.
- Unnamed NGO spokesperson 1
- Unnamed NGO spokesperson 2

**Church**

- Father Ambrose Periera—Don Bosco Technical College (ran radio station). Born in Kuwait but raised in Mumbai and did his religious training in India. Had been in Solomon Islands for 12 years at the time of the research.

**Government**

- Alfred Sasako—Prime Ministers press secretary, former journalist and politician. At the time of the field interview he was moving to work as Deputy Inspector General of the National Bureau of Social and
Economic Reforms. He claimed 40 years’ experience as a journalist, including 5 with the Australian Associated Press (AAP).

**RAMSI**

- Mary Louise O’Callaghan—RASMI public affairs officers, award winning journalist, and married to a Solomon Islander. First came to Solomon Islands in 1988.

**Not categorised**

- Senior Solomon Journalist. Did some journalism education at an Australian university.
- Senior Solomon Journalist 1. No name or biographical details at their request.
- Senior Solomon Journalist 2. No name or biographical details at their request.
- Junior Solomon Journalist 1. This journalist had worked less than a year in the media. She had completed school to Form 7.
Appendix 4: Freedom of Information Timeline

23 August, 2010

A letter was sent via email to the manager of the SOLMAS project in Honiara seeking general support for the research project.

October 2010

An email was sent to a number of training organisations around the world, including ABC, BBC, Thomson Foundation, World Bank, International Federation of Journalists, Center for International Media Assistance at the National Endowment for Democracy, requesting information about the way they evaluate journalism training projects.

19 October, 2010

An email was sent by the head of ABC International explaining that no support would be forthcoming as: ‘The future of the SOLMAS project is currently under negotiation and we have yet to resolve its future direction’.

February, 2011

Freedom of Information applications were sent to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and AusAID seeking information about: 1/ Documentation about the SOLMAS project, specifically policy documents, reports, etc. about its aims, its place within RAMSI, and what is has done and; 2/ Access to all policy documents, which explain how the ABC evaluates the effectiveness of these courses and how this is reported to AusAID.

April 5, 2011

ABC International provided three documents, but refused access to 11 stating: ‘Under s. 33 of the FOI Act, documents are exempt if disclosure would, or could reasonably be expected to, cause damage to the Commonwealth’s international relations. The exemption is not limited to Australia’s diplomatic activities and includes relations between government agencies.’ And that further, the ABC was
not: ‘contracted by the Australian Government to run journalism education courses’ and ‘while this assistance may include training components, there are no specific policy documents relating to the evaluation of any such training’ (Maude 2011b).

May, 2011

The researcher formally applied to the Freedom of Information Commissioner, arguing from the second reading speech from new FOI legislation:

‘1. The bill is intended to deliver more effective and efficient access to government information and promote a culture of disclosure across government. 2. Certain factors which are not conducive to open and accountable government, including arguments solely concerned with political sensitivity, will not be able to be argued as factors supporting non-disclosure of documents. 3. This government recognises that transparent and open government is a key component of a healthy and vibrant democracy’ (Freedom of Information Amendment (Reform) Bill 2009 - Second Reading and Debate 2010).

In her letter seeking support from the Information Commissioner, the researcher argued that: ‘The decision not to release these documents constitutes an attempt to stop public scrutiny of the effectiveness of the funds provided by the Australian taxpayer to the ABC via ABC International for this work. The decision … states that these documents may cause embarrassment between the Australian Government and the Solomon Island government. ‘Embarrassment’ was not, as Rob Oakshott noted, speaking to the motion for the FOI law, a reason for the documents to be withheld’ (Wake 2011c).

The researcher further highlighted parts of the legislation including (Freedom of Information Amendment (Reform) Bill 2009 - Second Reading and Debate 2010):

• The mere allegation or mere possibility of damage to international relations is insufficient to meet the reasonable expectation requirement
• A mere allegation or assumption of damage to international relations or the fact that a government has expressed concern about disclosure is not sufficient to satisfy the exemption.
• There must be a higher degree of certainty than a mere risk.

July, 2011

ABC International rejected suggestions from the researcher that the corporation was attempting to avoid scrutiny. The researcher had written that: ‘the decision not to release these documents constitutes an attempt to stop public scrutiny of the effectiveness of the funds provided by the Australian taxpayer to the ABC … for this work’. However, the ABC countered that: ‘‘The SOLMAS Project is scrutinised by an Independent Project Assessment Team, as well as by AusAID and RAMSI (the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands) directly. The evaluations are conducted by individuals who have appropriate qualifications and experience. Internally, the Project is reviewed on an ongoing basis using an approved monitoring and evaluation matrix. The nature and extent of the existing evaluation processes is both effective and appropriate. The ABC is not attempting to avoid scrutiny of its use of funds or the effectiveness of its programs’ (Maude 2011a).

The ABC also rejected the researcher’s argument that it was not within the organisation’s competence to determine if the release of the documents would cause difficulties between the governments of Australian and Solomon Islands. ‘ABC International works closely with the Australian Government via AusAID to implement development programs in the Asia–Pacific region. Further, the ABC International Projects team work closely with Solomon Island’s government officials in country. Accordingly, it is well within the competence of the ABC to make assessments regarding the status and susceptibilities of inter-governmental relations in the region’ (Maude 2011a).

August, 2011

The researcher responded to the Information Commissioner pointing out that: ‘If the program is being reviewed by appropriate people with appropriate
qualifications and experience, then why not provide details of who they are and how they were appointed and how they are doing/have done their job and what they have found? I cannot understand why the ABC would deny access to these documents unless there is a matter of public concern’ (Wake 2011c).

Further the researcher stated that the ABC’s acknowledgement that there were no policy documents about the evaluation of journalism training was interesting in itself: ‘I am further interested to discover that despite the fact that ABC International does now concede that it does journalistic ‘craft’ training, it has no policy documents around how this it is done … Is it possible to evaluate a program, if there are no policy documents around how it is or should be done? The mere fact they don’t exist is incredibly interesting’ (Wake 2011c).

**December 2011**

The Information Commissioner asked the ABC to make more detailed submissions with respect to the exemptions claimed under s 33 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the FOI Act) (international relations). After considering their submissions the FOI Commissioner issued a formal notice requiring the ABC to produce these documents for him to inspect (Harlock 2012). These were given to the Information Commissioner in December 2011 and are currently with the FOI Commissioner. Because of their confidential nature only the FOI Commissioner has clearance to view them.

**May 2012**

The Information Commissioner invited the researcher to make further submissions in relation to s 33 of the Act.

**15 April 2013**

The Acting Freedom of Information Commissioner made the following decision in favour of the researcher.

I do not consider that disclosure of these documents would, or could reasonably be expected to, damage the relationship between Australian and Solomon Islands. The documents report on the activities and
effectiveness of SOLMAS in strengthening the media sector in Solomon Islands and cover the period from October 2008 until December 2010. The documents contain candid assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and media organisations in Solomon Islands. Given the nature of the material, the aims of SOLMAS, and the collaborative nature of RAMSI, I do not consider that release of these documents would, or could, reasonably be expected to damage Australia’s relationship with Solomon Islands Government. (Pirani 2013)

The Acting Commissioner did however note that some of the documents contained comments critical of identified individuals.

To the extent that these documents contain personal information which would be unreasonable to disclose and the release of which would be contrary to the public interest, I consider it is appropriate for this material to be edited before the documents are released to Ms Wake. (Pirani 2013)

ABC acknowledged the ruling and said that the process of redaction of personal information from the documents would take time because it involved hundreds of pages.

August, September and October 2013

Emails were sent to the ABC’s Head of Corporate Governance asking when the documents might arrive. Finally a letter was sent to the Information Commissioner asking for them to ask the ABC when the documents might arrive.

14 October 2013

The Information Commissioner acknowledged that they had spoken to the ABC and the documents had been delayed because of ‘resourcing’ issues at the ABC. (Burnley 2013).

28 October 2013

More than three years after the first request for information was made to the ABC, the ABC’s Head of Corporate Governance emailed the documents to the researcher (Maude 2013).
November 2014

An email was sent to the ABC asking for a copy of the final report from SOLMAS, redacted in line with the earlier FOI decision. The email provided the final report immediately, in full, without any redactions. The project, however, had been finalised.
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