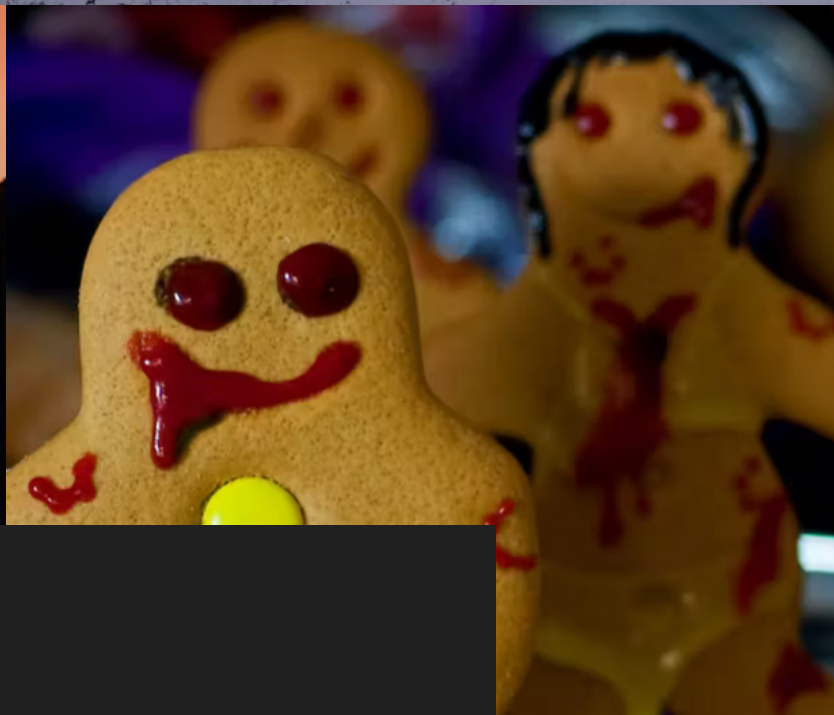




THE CONVERSATION

Share knowledge. Inform decisions.



January - March 2023

Impact Report

Australia and New Zealand



What's new at The Conversation?

It's been a busy three months at The Conversation.

We launched a new podcast, **Fear and Wonder**, which skyrocketed to #1 science show on Spotify and Apple podcasts in Australia. 4 episodes are now available with 3 more to come and an event will be streamed live on The Conversation's Facebook page on 1 May.

Speaking of science, we launched a new weekly newsletter, **Science Wrap** dedicated to a hand-picked selection of science news and analysis from across the science, technology, environment and health desks at The Conversation AU/NZ. We'll also include the occasional article from our network of sister sites around the globe. After only five weeks we've already amassed 13,000 subscribers.

We also partnered with the World Science Festival on an **event**, "Ask me anything (about the human body)", featuring The Conversation's Lee Constable and three leading experts: Christian Moro (Bond University), Lauren Ball (UQ) and Mike Todorovic (Griffith University). It was a great night with a weird and wonderful Q&A from the audience.

And we've won a swag of awards including:

- Asia Pacific Stevie Awards - GOLD WINNER, Award for Innovation in News Websites
- Asia Pacific Stevie Awards - SILVER, Innovative Achievement in Thought Leadership
- Titan Business Awards - GOLD WINNER, PR & Communications - Media, News & Newspapers
- Quill Awards Keith Dunstan Quill for Commentary - Highly commended: Peter Martin, The Conversation Australia, "Why unemployment is set to stay below 5% for years to come"

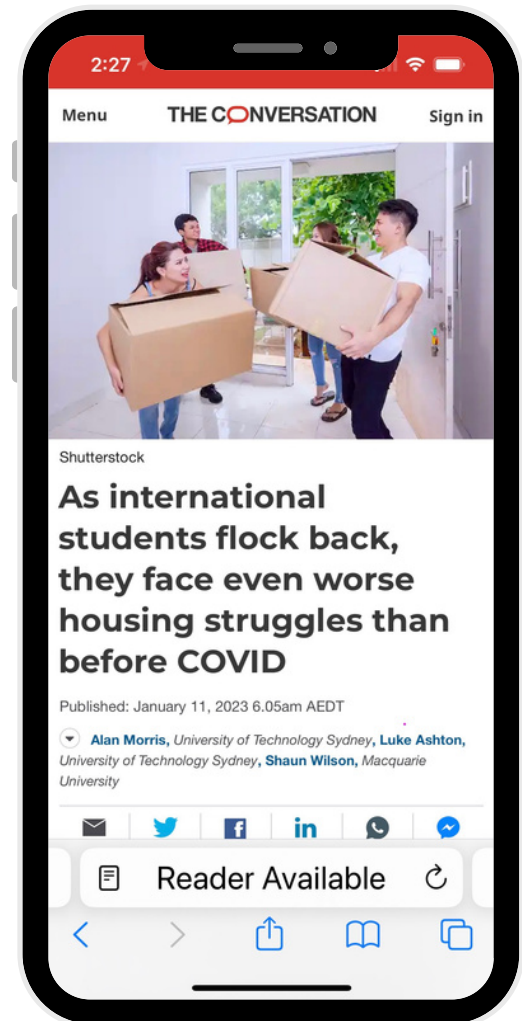
Importantly, we launched a new editorial series covering the issues around the **Voice to Parliament**. Firstly, we asked our audience what they wanted to know about - **9,000 people responded**. So far this year we've published 60 articles on the topic, reaching more than a million reads. Our articles have been republished by the ABC, The Guardian, SBS, Yahoo, The Canberra Times, Mandarin and many many other media outlets.

Engaging with Policymakers

The article "As international students flock back, they face even worse housing struggles than before COVID" by Alan Morris, Luke Ashton (UTS) and Shaun Wilson (Macquarie Uni) precipitated a meeting with the NSW government along with organisations and universities working with international students. The Redfern Legal Centre has organised another meeting with organisations involved with international students in May. Alan was interviewed for articles about the issue in the Sydney Morning Herald (twice) and the Guardian. He was also interviewed on ABC Radio and 2GB.

After Tim Harcourt (UTS) wrote "40 years on, does Australia need another Prices and Incomes Accord?" he got excellent feedback from senior policymakers, market economists and leading trade union and employer figures past and present.

After we published "How the push to end tobacco advertising in the 1970s could be used to curb gambling ads today" the office of Zoe Daniel MP invited the authors, Carolyn Holbrook (Deakin University) and Thomas Kehoe (Cancer Council Victoria), to brief her.



17%

of authors are contacted by government or policy makers



9%

are invited to contribute to briefing papers or submissions to parliament

Working with Industry

After Philip Laird (University of Wollongong) wrote "Why electric vehicles won't be enough to rein in transport emissions any time soon" he was invited to give a presentation at the Australian Electric Vehicle Association's conference.



14%

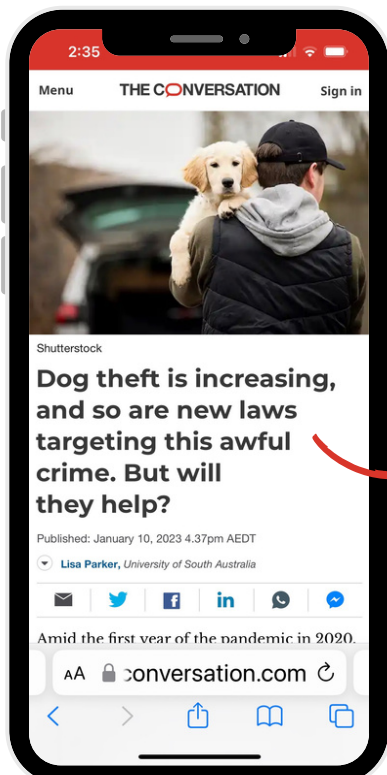
of authors are contacted by business or industry

After Lisa Parker (University of South Australia) wrote "Dog theft is increasing, and so are new laws targeting this awful crime. But will they help?" the Australian Veterinary Association republished the article in their magazine 'Companion' to raise awareness about dog theft and encourage vets to discuss the issue with dog owners. The article was also republished by the ABC and Lisa was interviewed on ABC Perth, ABC WA, 5AA Adelaide and ABC Adelaide.



13%

of authors are invited to speak at conferences



Amid the first year of the pandemic in 2020, crime statistics in Victoria showed an increase in the number of dogs reported stolen. Since then, media reports suggest there's been an increase in dog theft in Australia.

The price of dogs has increased during the pandemic given higher demand and decreased supply, particularly of purebred and designer dogs. Dog theft is said to be rising due to offenders exploiting this situation. Media reports suggest dogs are being targeted to be sold on the black market.

Dogs have reportedly been stolen from outside supermarkets and restaurants, from backyards, inside homes and even doggy day care. Therapy dogs have also allegedly been stolen.

However, because of limited reliable data outside media reports, the true nature and extent of dog theft across Australia aren't known. In December 2022, South Australia became the latest Australian jurisdiction to introduce a standalone criminal offence of dog theft. New South Wales and the Northern Territory both have similar offences, and there are calls for other jurisdictions to follow suit. But will specific dog theft laws actually help stop this awful crime? The practical effects are not clear cut, but such laws do have symbolic value, recognising dogs aren't merely property.

How does the law deal with people who steal dogs?

Stolen dogs aren't treated as cases of abduction or kidnapping in Australia. In other words, "dogsnapping" is not a specific crime. If someone is alleged to have stolen a dog, they are usually charged with larceny or theft.

The offence of theft captures the stealing of dogs because, in law, dogs are classified as property.

But when a dog is stolen, significant emotional distress is often caused to both the owner and the dog. Dogs are often recognised as members of the family, despite their legal status as property.

In both Australia and abroad, increasing attention is being paid to specific offences that seek to address the emotional impact caused when a dog is stolen.

New dog theft offences

Under the new South Australian law, the offence of dog theft carries a maximum penalty of \$50,000 or imprisonment for two years.

Until now, a person stealing a dog in South Australia had been charged under the general offence of theft, which has a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment.

The new offence of dog theft is targeted at people who seek to make financial gain from stealing and selling dogs. While the new offence has a much lower maximum term of imprisonment than general

theft, it's hoped the substantial financial penalty attached to the new offence acts as a strong deterrent to potential offenders motivated by profit. Despite the higher financial penalty, the new offence is unlikely to make it easier for police to prosecute people who steal dogs. People who steal dogs are already being prosecuted under the general offence of theft; the new offence doesn't fill a gap in the law.



Symbolic value

However, a standalone offence of dog theft does have symbolic value. It recognises dog theft is inherently different from other types of property theft.

As South Australia's deputy premier, Susan Close, said while reading the dog theft bill in parliament:

"A new summary offence sends a clear signal that anyone who steals a dog will face serious consequences. It also acknowledges that dogs are not simply property but are deeply loved members of the family which cannot easily be replaced."

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom looks set to take a different approach, with pet abduction to become a criminal offence. The Pet Theft Taskforce, established to investigate the reported increase



In pet theft in the UK, recommended an offence of pet abduction instead of pet theft.

According to the taskforce, this would better reflect the view that stolen pets are not mere property, but sentient beings.

There's an ongoing debate whether the legal classification of animals as property in Australia is keeping pace with community attitudes.

There's a shift towards recognising animals as sentient beings in the law. In 2019, the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to recognise sentence of animals in legislation.

In family law, when couples separate, dogs are treated as part of the asset pool in property settlements. But there are calls for a new pet custody model that moves away from viewing dogs as property.

In the criminal law, a pet abduction offence such as that proposed in the UK would better reflect the view that dogs aren't merely property.

However, beyond symbolism, in practical terms a change in the law may not reduce the frequency of the offence. The general offence of theft is already an adequate tool to prosecute those who steal dogs.



This story originally appeared on The Conversation at: <https://theconversation.com/dog-theft-is-increasing-and-so-are-new-laws-targeting-this-awful-crime-but-will-they-help-196875> and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author.

Lisa Parker is a lecturer in law at the University of South Australia and a PhD candidate at the university. She has a range of teaching and research interests, including criminal law and procedure, evidence, sentencing, appeals, miscarriages of justice, constitutional law, and statutory interpretation.

Lisa's doctoral research is focused on investigating the legitimacy of the early guilty plea in resolving criminal court matters, including the implications for principles of criminal procedure and sentencing.

She is admitted to practice as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia.

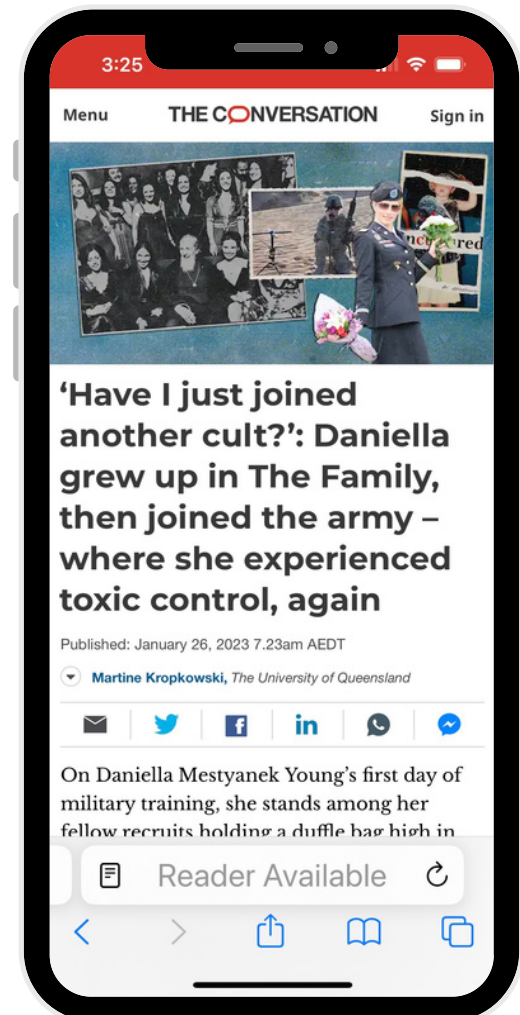
When not at work, Lisa enjoys spending time with her Cavoodle Rusty.

Photo of Lisa and Rusty courtesy of Lisa Parker

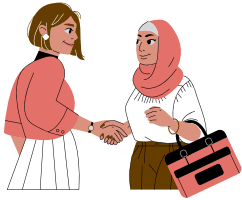
Working with Industry

After Martine Kropkowski (University of Queensland) wrote "Have I just joined another cult?': Daniella grew up in The Family, then joined the army – where she experienced toxic control, again" – an article about Daniella Mestyanek Young's memoir, "Uncultured" – she was contacted by Australasian Services Care Network (ASCN) International Program on Military, Veterans and Families Wellbeing and invited to meet with them and Daniella. Consequently, Daniella and Martine are going to present a session at ASCN's upcoming symposium on sexual assault in the military. The article was republished by a number of other media outlets, including the ABC.

"Ethnic community media can play a key role in a crisis – but it needs our support" by Wilfred Yang Wang and Shashini Gamage (The University of Melbourne) was published as part of The Conversation's series on cycles of disadvantage. Consequently, the LOTE Agency, which specialises in intercultural communication, contacted Wilfred regarding developing a ethnic media database, something they proposed in the article.



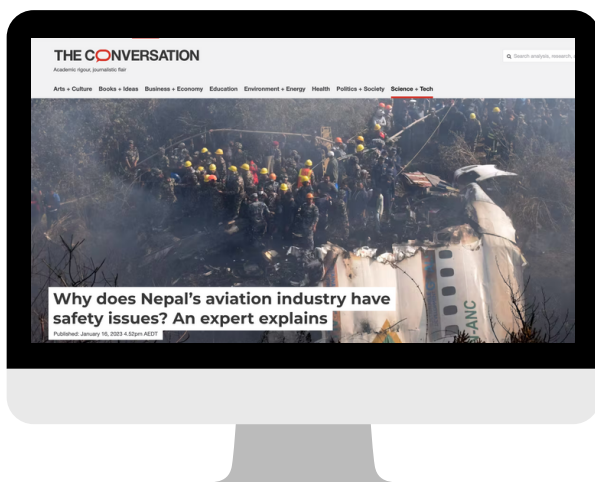
Academic collaboration



26%

of authors have opportunities for academic collaboration

After Lena Waizenegger and Angsana A. Techatassanasoontorn (Auckland University of Technology) wrote "What if your colleague is a bot? Harnessing the benefits of workplace automation without alienating staff" they were invited to speak about the findings of their research – in particular, the role of automation technologies – at the Universities Australia HES People & Culture Forum. The event hosts senior Australian university HR professionals who are responsible for transformative change in HR practices.



After Chrystal Zhang (RMIT) wrote "Why does Nepal's aviation industry have safety issues? An expert explains" she was contacted by a researcher from Monash University who was interested in pursuing collaboration on safety issues across industries of common concerns.

The article was republished by a number of media outlets including the ABC, Channel News Asia, Yahoo, Nepal Minute and multiple Indian newspapers. It was read more than 130,000 times with two-thirds of readers from countries outside Australia.

Chrystal was interviewed by print and broadcast media including Radio Adelaide, SMH Traveller, Radio Sydney, SBS World News, ABC News Digital, VICE World News, The Wire, 2CC Canberra Radio, The Briefing (podcast), Radio Adelaide, 3CR. She is now positioned as a go-to expert on aviation safety and was interviewed on ABC News Digital and Southern Cross Austereo/Triple M following the Qantas engine failure emergency landing.



"I would like to thank the Conversation for the opportunity to share and disseminate knowledge about aviation and safety, which ultimately will benefit society and its wellbeing."

Chrystal Zhang

Associate Professor
RMIT University

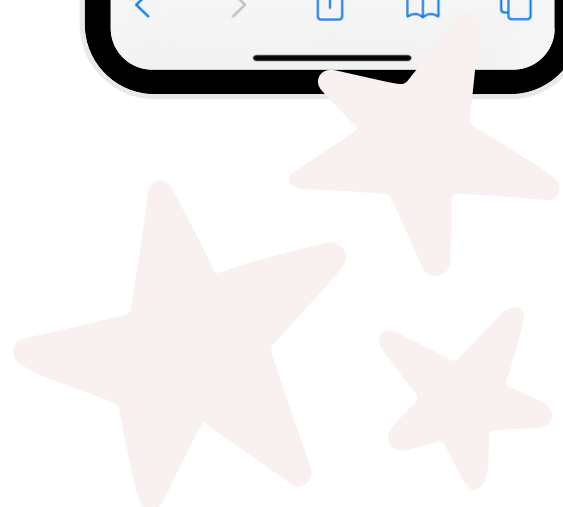
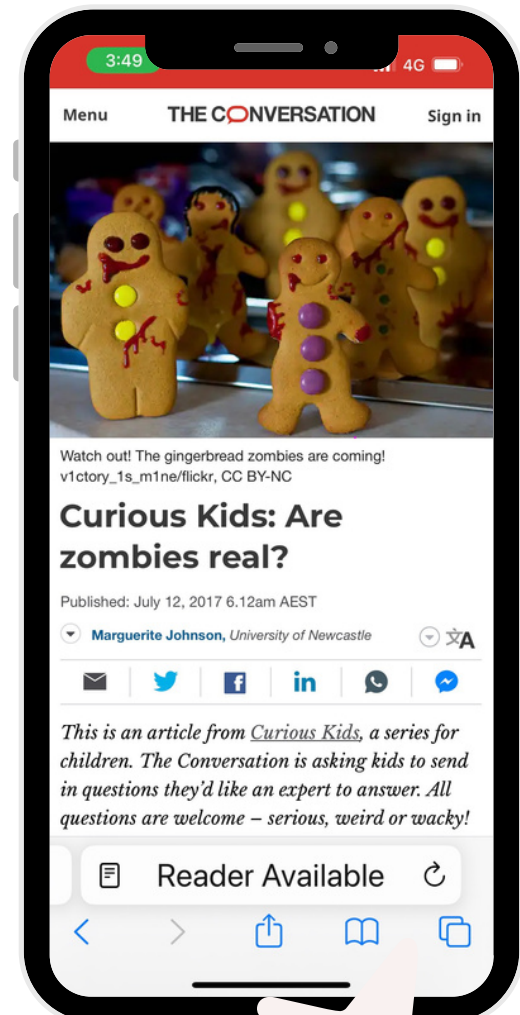
Educational resource

Newsela is an American educational publisher who, with the permission of TC authors, adapts articles for K-12 school use: they create versions at different reading levels, and add in discussion questions.

Newsela have deeply mined our Curious Kids articles across all Conversation global editions as well as an eclectic selection of other stories.

Thus far they have adapted 93 articles from The Conversation Australia / New Zealand reaching nearly 4 million page views.

The most popular adaptation has been, perhaps unsurprisingly, "Curious Kids: Are zombies real?" by Marguerite Johnson (University of Newcastle) with 234,906 page views. Encouragingly, the next most popular is "Understanding others' feelings: what is empathy and why do we need it?" by Pascal Molenberghs (Monash University) with 178,057 page views.



Broadcast by Media

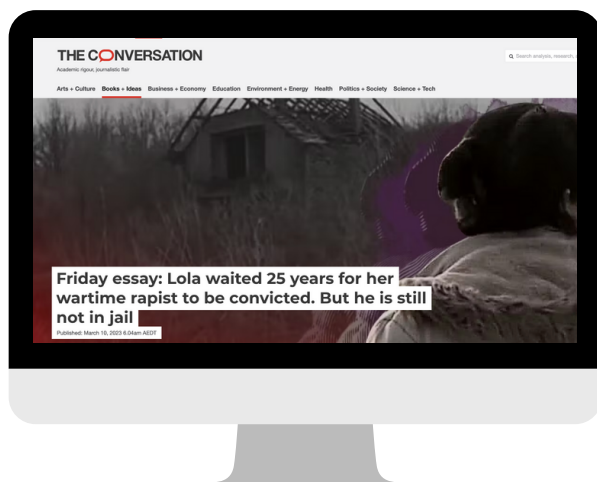
The world's media turns to The Conversation for credible expertise.



58%

of authors are contacted by media

After Olivera Simic (Griffith University) wrote her Friday essay, "Lola waited 25 years for her wartime rapist to be convicted. But he is still not in jail" she was invited to make a podcast about sexual violence in war. Olivera also received emails from around the world thanking her for exposing this injustice. She was even contacted by a Bosnian war criminal.



Xiujian Peng (Victoria University) was way ahead of the news cycle in writing about China's declining population last year with the article "China's population is about to shrink for the first time since the great famine struck 60 years ago. Here's what it means for the world". So when this issue became big news in mid-January, she received media requests from AFP (Agence France-Presse), Al Jazeera English, BBC World Service, ABC news radio, VICE World News, SBS Mandarin TV, Spanish newspaper El País. The New York Times also interviewed her in early January and National Geographic magazine interviewed her in October last year.

She wrote a follow-up article in January, "China's population is now inexorably shrinking, bringing forward the day the planet's population turns down" which was republished across the globe. The Canberra Times devoted a whole page to it.

The Conversation set the agenda on this story, and gave our audience insights ahead of the rest of the news media, rather than just following it.



"The Conversation provides an important channel for my research to reach a variety of audiences around the world in time."

Xiujian Peng

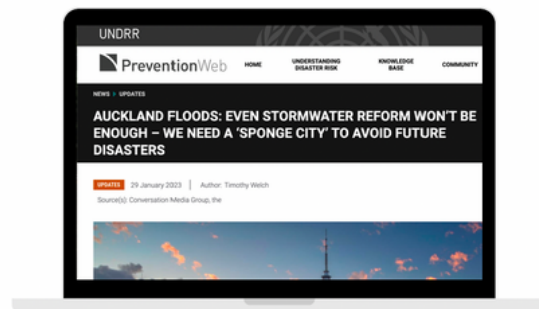
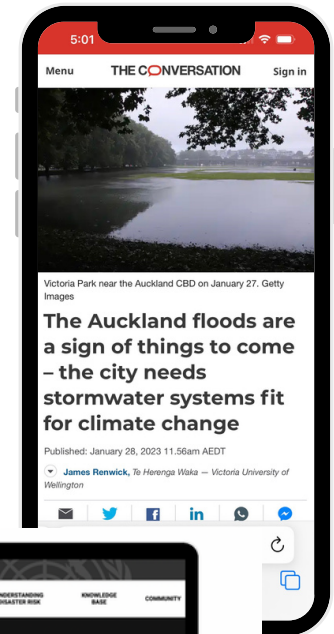
Senior Research Fellow, Centre of Policy Studies, Victoria University

Expert analysis of NZ's summer of climate extremes

The Conversation provides evidence-based information for policymakers, disaster workers and the general public when faced with natural disasters.

In the first month alone after devastating floods and cyclone hit Aotearoa New Zealand, expert analysis from our NZ experts and editors reached more than half a million views. A third of that readership came from overseas.

The United Nations' Office of Disaster Risk Reduction site, PreventionWeb, republished 16 out of our 23 recovery articles.



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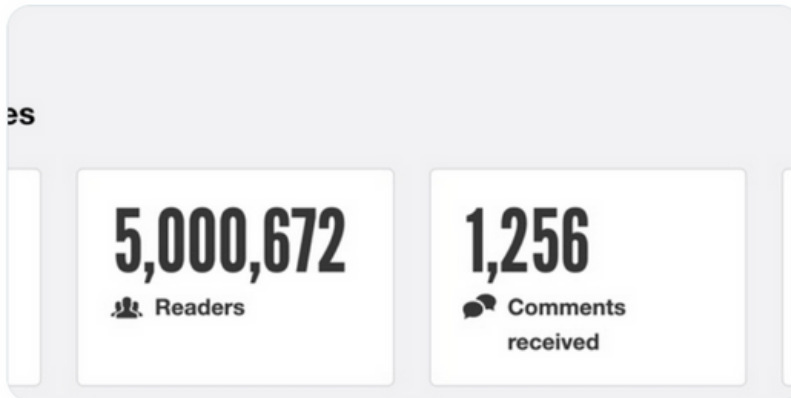
Above: RNZ's homepage on Thursday February 23, 2023 – all four of the top analysis pieces were republished from The Conversation. Top right: our first two articles, published within 48 hours of the floods, were both prominently republished by Stuff.



Jonti Horner
@JontiHorner

...

I can't help but feel strangely proud here - at some point over night, I just had my five millionth read for articles at [@ConversationEDU](#) :) I'm certain my academic papers will never be read five thousand times, never mind five million :)



10:17 AM · Mar 1, 2023 · 1,667 Views



Jonti Horner @JontiHorner · Mar 1

...

Replying to [@JontiHorner](#)

This illustrates why I'm always encouraging my friends & colleagues to write for [@ConversationEDU](#) - it is a fantastic way to get great exposure, both personally and for your work, whilst retaining control over the story you tell :)

2 1 85



Jonti Horner @JontiHorner · Mar 1

...

Plus being able to get metrics (like those I shared in the first tweet in the thread) is a really powerful way to get universities to pay attention and actually value the outreach/engagement you're doing. You can include those numbers in promotion apps, job apps, grant apps...

1 2 135



Jonti Horner @JontiHorner · Mar 1

...

In the past I've had colleagues and people in management at previous universities telling me I shouldn't do outreach, it's not valuable, not a good use of my time etc. It's amazing how those comments got far less frequent once I could show them numbers highlighting the reach :)

2 123

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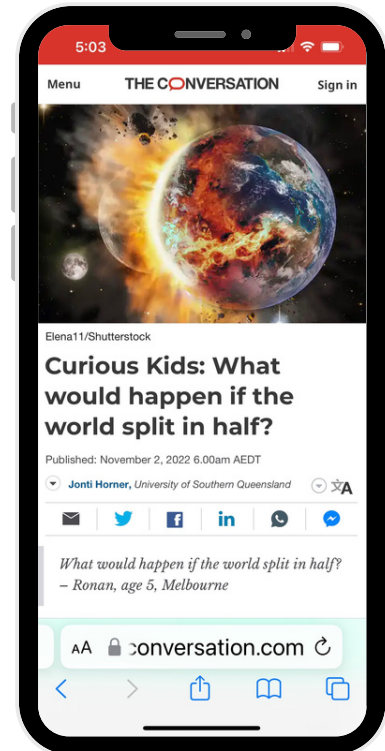
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