

THE CONVERSATION

Share knowledge. Inform decisions.



2026 | **IMPACT
REPORT**
April-June

Australia & New Zealand

Turning knowledge into impact

Our mission at The Conversation is simple, so simple it can be easy to miss the scale of our ambition. We exist to unlock the knowledge of academic experts and make that knowledge freely available to anyone who wants to access it. That's what we do every day when we contact academics and ask them to write articles on issues in the news. That's what our editors do when they take a technically sophisticated journal article and rewrite it into plain English.

Those are the simple tasks of our daily work, but the ambition behind them is huge. It is nothing less than to save the world from the disastrous fracturing of trust that comes with misinformation and disinformation disseminated on an industrial scale.

We know that the health of democracy rests on the quality of the information we use to make important decisions in our lives. Who we vote for is one important example, but there are countless others. How we look after our health is a good one. So are the decisions we make about education and transport, business, sport and our artistic pursuits. Better information matters in every sphere of our lives: sharing better information is about creating a better world.

In the age of AI, this could not be more important. As the New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger pointed out in a recent speech, AI companies are consolidating their control of our data and our attention. "At the same time they are failing to embrace a core responsibility that comes with this power - to ensure that the public has access to trustworthy news and information."

The key word here is trust. Without trusted sources, news becomes a choose-your-own-adventure. So does accessing health advice, or understanding science, arts, or business. Without trust, all the wisdom and knowledge that we have accumulated over centuries of science and civilisation comes to naught, drowned out by yesterday's misleading meme or tweet or bleat.

This report documents the impact achieved by academics who share their knowledge and expertise via The Conversation. It recounts many small contributions to the grand ambition of preserving trust and protecting democracy.

I hope you enjoy reading these stories, and that there are many more to come.



Misha Ketchell
Editor, The Conversation

Outputs & outcomes

April-June 2026
The Conversation Australia and New Zealand

10,400,000
average monthly pageviews

1,252
articles

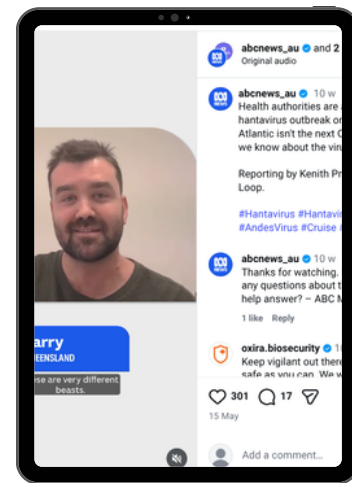
1,446
authors

Countering misinformation with evidence

Providing clarity during periods of public health concerns.

When concerns emerged about hantavirus following reports linked to the Ruby Princess, Rhys Parry (University of Queensland) helped separate fact from speculation in Hantavirus is very different to COVID. Here's why the 'Andes virus' won't cause the next pandemic.

The article was amplified through ABC News Loop and Yahoo News, ensuring accurate public health information reached large audiences during a period of heightened concern.

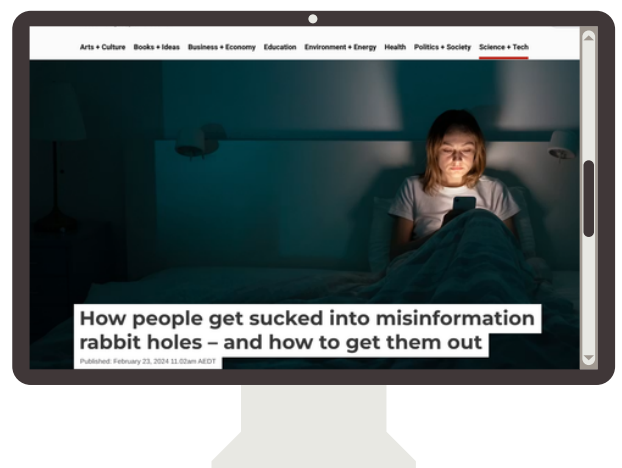


Equipping young people to better recognise misinformation.

Understanding why people fall for conspiracy theories is an important step towards building resilience against misinformation. Tylor Cosgrove (Adelaide University) helped translate complex psychological research into practical insights in his article, Why do educated people fall for conspiracy theories? It could be narcissism. Tylor explained his findings in an interview with ABC's **Behind the News (BTN)**, helping to bring evidence-based research on conspiracy thinking to primary and secondary school students across Australia.

Emily Booth and Marian-Andrei Rizoiu (UTS) explored pathways to radicalisation in How people get sucked into misinformation rabbit holes – and how to get them out. After publication, Emily was approached by **NSW Department of Education** to adapt her research paper for its statewide Respectful Relationships program. The material has since been incorporated into the Years 7-12 curriculum and rolled out to 150 schools.

Emily's expertise also informed the critically acclaimed **BBC documentary** *Men of the Manosphere*, where her research helped shape the direction of the production.

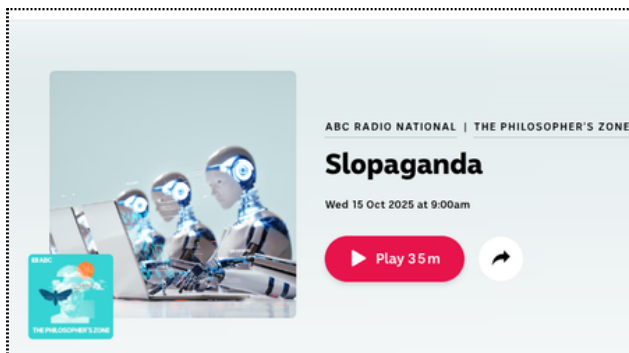


Understanding AI

Shedding light on AI-powered propaganda.

As AI-generated content becomes increasingly sophisticated, understanding how it is used to spread misinformation is critical. Mark Alfano (Macquarie University) collaborated with Michal Klincewicz from Tilburg University in the Netherlands to produce Slopaganda wars: how (and why) the US and Iran are flooding the zone with viral AI-generated noise.

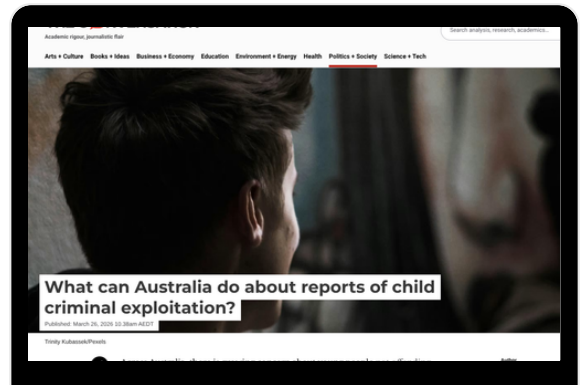
Drawing on the academics' research into AI-generated slop that serves propagandistic purposes, the article attracted domestic and international attention, leading to interviews with **The Guardian**, ABC TV and Radio, the BBC, CBC and NBC. An NBC video also prompted a public response from the **White House**.



Informing policy and public debate

Informing policy and prevention around child criminal exploitation.

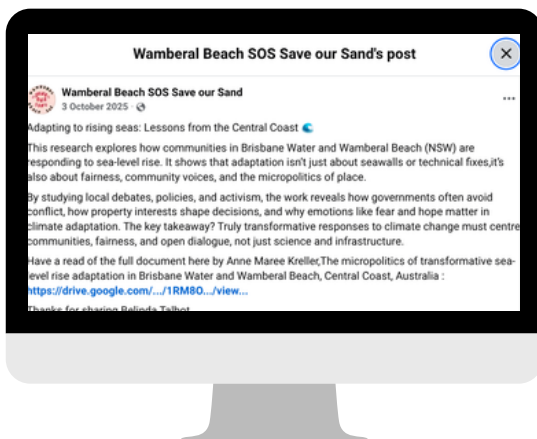
Susan Baidawi (Monash University) examined international approaches to child criminal exploitation and outlined practical actions Australian authorities could adopt in What can Australia do about reports of child criminal exploitation? The article subsequently led to an invitation to brief magistrates from the NSW Children's Court. She was also contacted by a Victorian NGO working to empower young people, their families and their communities to become a research partner on a Victorian Government-commissioned project to co-design a statewide campaign to prevent child criminal exploitation.



Supporting communities adapting to climate change.

The University of Wollongong's Anne Maree Kreller explored how we can better manage and support communities facing relocation due to extreme climate events in Backlash is often swift when authorities try to plan retreat from the coast. There's a better way.

Post-publication, Anne Maree was interviewed by SBS World News. The news report prompted a conversation with a climate consultant working with local governments across Australia on planned coastal retreat strategies. Following that discussion, her insights will be shared in a report distributed to 250 local governments around Australia.

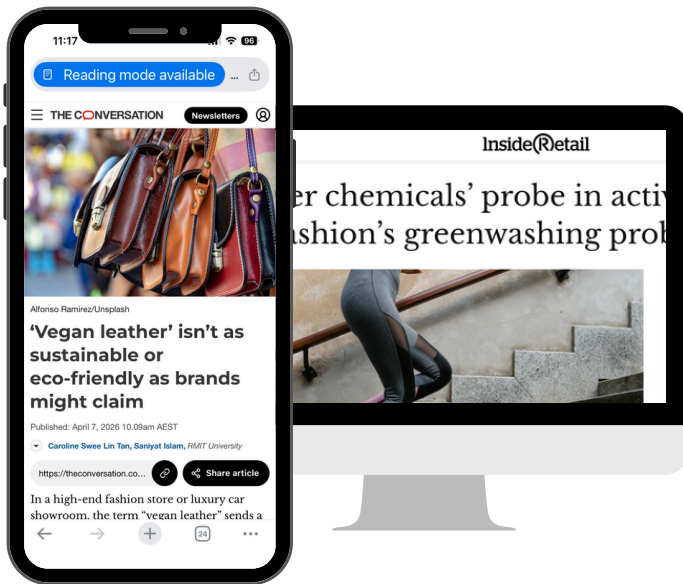


Helping consumers understand new laws.

In early July, the Government introduced new laws addressing supermarket price gouging. Ray Steinwell explained why the law was proposed and the challenges it will face in practice in his article The new price gouging law starts on July 1. Can it rein in Coles and Woolworths? Post-publication he was interviewed on ABC, 2GB, and Channels 7, 9 and 10. The article was also republished in the Law Society of NSW journal.



Supporting better climate discussions

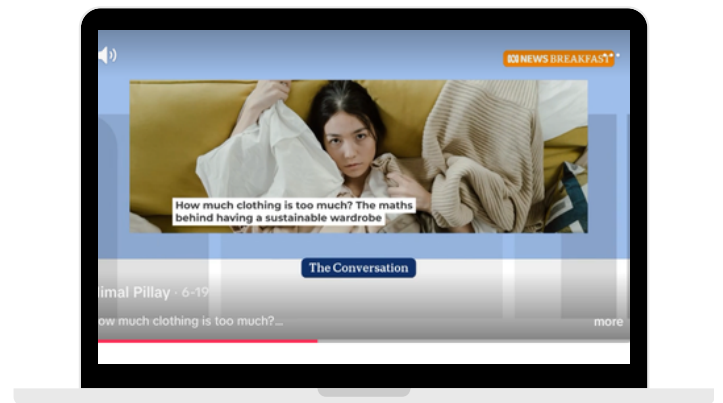


If you tuned into ABC radio in June (local or national), there is a good chance you heard Torren University's Alicja Kuzmycz discussing the research behind her article How much clothing is too much? The maths behind having a sustainable wardrobe. Her publications sparked a national conversation about this subject, including a feature on ABC TV News Breakfast and republication by Industry publications like Kyna Intel – the Sustainable Fashion Resource Centre and Viable Earth.

'Sustainable fashion' investigated.

Over the past few months, Swinburne Academic Caroline Swee Lin Tan's articles on sustainable fashion have been republished on **Inside Retail** and internationally, including **FastCompanyMexico** and **Newsweek Japan**.

Caroline was interviewed for a feature in Italy's leather industry trade portal **LaConceria** and France's **Science & Vie** magazine and by **Yahoo News**. She appeared on **ABC National's World Today** program and her co-author on the article Your 'recycled polyester' leggings are not as sustainable as you think, Saniyat Islam, was interviewed on **ABC Melbourne's Conversation** program.



Protecting Antarctic wildlife.

The beloved emperor penguin and Antarctic fur seal are now officially endangered. Here's what can be done written by academics from the University of Tasmania, was republished in **Australian Geographic** and on the **ARC Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science** website. Co-author Emily Booth was invited to share her research in three **primetime ABC radio** interviews and related social media channels, helping bring Antarctic conservation research to a wider public audience



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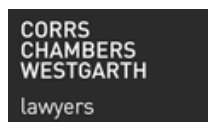
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Legacy Supporter

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