

From: Matthew Chesher [mailto:matthew.chesher@meaa.org]
Sent: Thursday, 20 June 2019 10:04 AM
To: AMOD; Chambers - Hatcher VP
Subject: Journalists Published Media Award - Modern Award Review

Dear Associate,

Please find **attached** two witness statements in support of MEAA's submissions dated 2 May 2019.

The statements are dated 10 May 2019 and 4 June 2019.

I apologise for not having provided these statements to the Commission at an earlier time.

Regards,

Matthew Chesher



Matthew Chesher

Director, Legal and Policy

02 9333 0936

AM2018/24 - Variation of Modern Award

Journalists Published media Award 2010

Statement of Samantha Camarri

1. My name is Samantha Camarri. I live at [REDACTED], Victoria, 3400
2. My role is photographer/journalist with the Wimmera Mail Times. The paper is based in Horsham in regional Victoria. It is published three days each week
3. I have worked with the paper since September, 2011.
4. I have been the union delegate since 2017.
5. In 2015, when Australian Community Media (ACM) management introduced the NewsNow system and our newsroom numbers were reduced by 5 full-time equivalent positions (two of seven journalists, an editor and an editorial production employee) we also moved to a "digital first" model. This means stories and photographs are filed to our website for rolling deadlines throughout the day. As such, all ACM non-daily newsrooms previously filing to longer deadlines became daily newsrooms filing to multiple deadlines throughout the day. While we were not printing a newspaper more frequently, we were publishing news stories at a far faster and intense pace throughout the day.
6. Staff at *Wimmera Mail Times* fought hard at the time to keep 2 photographers due to the size of the regional area we cover and the seven-days a week demand on photographers in our newsroom. Given our photographers were rostered on to cover most weekends in a year and to cover after hours jobs, there needed to be two of us on to cover the seven (7) day week roster to meet the workload demands.
7. However 18 months after NewsNow started, the other full-time photographer position was cut back to a part-time position and covered by one of our journalists coming back from maternity. There has been no one else hired to fill the role full-time.
8. This workload intensified for a period after the loss of the full-time photographer, and the result was I did not have a weekend rostered off for long stretches of the

year. I worked the majority of weekends during the busy winter sport season, and took my rostered days off during the week.

9. I continue to work the majority of weekends throughout the year. I am mostly rostered off on weekends if I request the time off in advance.
10. In summer, I usually work a 12-8pm shift on Saturday, and I usually go overtime on a Saturday as after a full day of shooting sport, community and news events, I generally head into the office to process my photographs, file them to the website, then to the print edition, create galleries to share on our website and social media, and then push my photographs out across our social media channels.
11. In winter I generally work a 1pm-10pm Saturday shift. I may also then, depending on staff levels, be rostered on to work on a Sunday if another journalist is on leave (which happens frequently)
12. The distances I have to travel on the job (up to an hour between each story location) often means I don't get a break on the weekends.
13. Because I am classified as a country non-daily employee under the Journalist Published Media Award I have worked all these weekends for no additional money. I receive no compensation for the unsociable hours I work or having to give up weekend time to meet the demands of our readers – neither do my colleagues.
14. Our newsroom has recently had to shift to a seven (7) day rotating rosters, and the majority of editorial staff will work weekends now at some point. Sports journalists now work a roster that is 7 days and news staff are rostered on periodically to cover weekend work as well – but we do not receive any additional compensation for this. This year we also introduced a journalist late shift 12-8.30pm to the roster to ensure news coverage and to cover special events, community events, awards, council meetings, arts events and the like.
15. This work pattern means we are missing out on time socialising with family and friends at a time when they have time off work.
16. I have missed many milestones in my family and friend's lives as a result of my work patterns.
17. I am originally from Brisbane and much of my family is still there so this means it is almost impossible for me to see them during the year when I am rostered on to work weekends.

18. I have not had a full weekend rostered off since my last lot of annual leave. The beginning of winter sports season will mean I will be working most weekends until September/October.
19. We also work all public holidays other than Christmas Day and Good Friday, and the small size of our newsroom means a number of us are likely to be rostered on to work those times as well as though they are ordinary news days.
20. Our agreement incorporates the Journalists' Published Media Award, and as such, we are covered by the award penalty rate schedule.
21. Given we are now publishing to rolling daily deadlines, and we have fewer staff due to the cuts to staff numbers in our newsroom, there is no longer a distinction between the work performed on the weekends by so-called "country non-daily" editorial staff and the work performed by a regional daily journalist or indeed a metropolitan daily journalist.
22. The distinction barring myself and my colleagues from penalty rates should therefore be removed and penalty rates paid to us for the unsociable hours and weekend work we cover.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

10/05/19

Statement of Christopher Knaus

1. My name is Christopher Knaus. I live at [REDACTED], NSW, 2016
2. I have been a journalist with the *Guardian Australian* (GNM Publishers) since 2016.
3. Prior to that, I worked for the *Canberra Times* from 2010-2016 as a reporter.
4. I am currently a member of the Guardian house committee, and I represented my colleagues in the most recent enterprise agreement bargaining round (2018)
5. I am currently employed at a digital/online only publication.
6. The Guardian currently employs 65 people in its editorial operations
7. Launching the Guardian in Australia as a digital only edition was a deliberate decision by our management at the time. While the Guardian Australia started before I joined the fold, at the time the Australian edition started, it was stated by management that the online/digital format "put the reader at the heart of what we do". It was this digital-only approach that allowed the Guardian Australia to move like a start-up, hiring a small but respected stable of journalists, some from rival news organisations, at lower rates of pay and employment on-costs, with no expensive physical publishing costs to keep overheads low in order to gain a foothold in the Australian media market. This was the only way a publication with a serious investigative and analytical bent could get off the ground with print advertising revenue at such a low ebb in the Australian market. Many of my colleagues were employed by the Guardian after being made redundant by Fairfax, News Corp and the ABC due to revenue falls or funding cuts.
8. Over 1 million Australians regularly accessed the Guardian's website for news every month prior to the Australian edition starting up, and our numbers have steadily increased since then to the point where the Guardian announced last year they had broke even for the first time. This demand and growth in audiences clearly demonstrates that Australian readers expect their news to be available online. Without it, we wouldn't exist as a significant media player in Australia, particularly as our funding model relies largely on native digital advertising and reader contributions. Our competitors would also struggle without an online presence. Their readership numbers are only increasing on digital platforms. Print readership is declining.
9. The Modern Award – the JPMA –does not permit employees like me to access to Part 5, which provides protections and loadings on things like working unsociable hours, weekend work, overtime accrual and which hours you can be worked.
10. This exemption has greatly impacted my colleagues and I, and has seriously hindered our ability to gain recognition of the long hours, early starts, after work engagements and the weekends we work to cover the news.
11. During the most recent round of negotiations, one of the key priorities of my colleagues was to gain formal compensation for overtime worked, including working unsociable hours and through lunch breaks, to deliver a wide range of coverage with a small newsroom.
12. We have previously struggled to have our hours worked subject to the same overtime accrual and reward system and penalty rate payments as our journalist colleagues doing the same work at print mastheads.

13. This was due to the fact that our management did not consider this to be necessary as digital publications – those without a print version – are exempt from Part 5 of the JPMA.
14. While Guardian Australia staff do have access to overtime, we currently have no formal system of recording our hours or accruing hour-for-hour overtime. Overtime accrual is not consistently applied across sections and our current agreement does not “buy out” or compensate for overtime worked or financially compensate us for our overtime at all. With such a small staff, the individual logging of overtime without any baseline obligation on our employers to recognise the hours worked has made the application for approved overtime uncomfortable and most staff simply no longer ask. Getting equal recognition as our print colleagues for overtime hours would go a long way toward rectifying this issue of unpaid overtime and accrual of time off in lieu (TOIL)
15. Our work at the Guardian is exactly the same as that of our print colleagues. We report on breaking news, state and federal politics, the environment, indigenous Australia, sport, and lifestyle. We provide analysis and specialise in investigative reporting and producing high quality, in-depth series which have resulted in changes to federal and state legislation, won Guardian staff a Walkley in 2018 and eight nominations.
16. The Guardian is not the only digital-only publication to be in this situation. The overwhelming majority of new serious media ventures are online only – no print publication is involved.
17. As such, this award will become less and less relevant to the future workers in the industry unless we are also subject to the provisions in Part 5 of the JPMA.
18. My ordinary pattern of work means my day starts at 9am, I have a 15 minute break at lunch then work through until 6.30pm, five days a week. On my rostered days off over the weekend I remain available on email and respond as needed I also use weekends to speak to my contacts, monitor the news, and communicate regularly with my news management about new stories. Once every 2-3 weekends I will file a story on a day I am rostered off.
19. Having worked on both print and a digital-only publications, my view is that my job as a journalist is the same. My work did not substantially change when I left the Canberra Times, a print publication, to join the digital-only Guardian. I continue to perform the same functions as a journalist for the Guardian as my colleagues do working for print publications.
20. My experience in the industry has been for the most part with smaller or greatly reduced newsrooms. I went through three rounds of redundancies during my time at the *Canberra Times* and so my experience has been one of working long hours to get the job done in a small team.
21. I was at the *Canberra Times* when they hired their first online editor and the publication shifted to a digital-first publication model, which meant writing the story first for online and immediate publication, revising and updating it throughout the day as circumstances changed, and then filing a final version for the print edition.
22. Both print and digital journalists now operate from the same standpoint – getting the news out online fastest while being accurate and ethical. Both work to the same rolling deadlines, which occur throughout the day and require journalists to update their online copy frequently. The differences have narrowed in other ways too, as newsrooms have shrunk and production roles have been made redundant.
23. The majority of editorial staff now take our own photos while out on jobs, write captions for those pictures and create interactive graphics for our stories. This was previously the job of

production staff. Both the Guardian newsroom and major print newsrooms roster across a 24/7 period of time – we work weekends, early shifts and late shifts, and as such deserve to have the same penalty rates and provisions applied for doing the same job.

24. Newsrooms of the future will be leaner and smaller and, based on current trends, will be online only. Without recognition of the additional time we work - creating more content with fewer resources - we will lose overtime hours into the ether.
25. The skills I have are easily transferable to print newsrooms because we do the same job.

Signed: _____

A black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Date: _____

4/8/19