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For immediate release



Media
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Public interest journalism board announced

The board of the new Foundation for Public Interest Journalism – a not-for-profit that will explore new business models for journalism has been announced today.

The new board includes leading Australian journalists, publishers, journalism academics, community advocates and online media innovators.

Professor Julian Thomas, director of Swinburne University's Institute for Social Research (ISR), which is the home of the foundation, was thrilled with the appointments.

"We were overwhelmed by the quality and volume of applicants for the positions, and are delighted by the calibre of the board members," he said.

The foundation will support investigative, interactive journalism while exploring ways of making good journalism sustainable in the new media age.

The board members are:

Professor Michael Bromley: Head of the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland.

Ms Bronwen Clune: Director of Norg Media (<http://www.norg.com.au/>)

Mr Chris Graham: Co-founder and editor of the National Indigenous Times newspaper.

Mr Jonathan Green: Editor, Crikey

Mr Steve Harris: Strategic consultant

Mrs Elaine Henry OAM: Chief Executive Officer, The Smith Family,

Mr Chris Masters : Freelance reporter and author, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland

Mr Gerard Noonan: Freelance business journalist, chair of Media Super, and active in the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors and the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees.

Professor Julianne Schultz AM: Founding editor of Griffith REVIEW, and a professor at Griffith's Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, a member of the board of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Arts Minister's Creative Australia Advisory Group.

Dr Margaret Simons: Freelance journalist, author and lecturer at Swinburne University, Simons has published seven books and numerous essays and articles over her 29 year career as a professional journalist.

Ms Melissa Sweet

Freelance journalist and author, with adjunct positions at University of Sydney School of Public Health and University of Notre Dame's medical school (Sydney campus)

Professor Julian Thomas

Director of the Institute for Social Research and Professor of Media and Communications at Swinburne University.

Dr Margaret Simons has been appointed interim chair of the board, and Melissa Sweet is the interim secretary.

Simons said there had been more than 40 nominations for the Board positions, suggesting that there is great public and professional interest in developing vigorous new models of journalism.

In addition to the board members, Dr Simons said she was delighted that many other journalists, academics and community members had volunteered to lend their expertise and experience to advising the Board.

"We look forward to drawing upon a large pool of talent to assist with the Board's work," she said.

"We expect the new board will hold its first meeting next month, and that its priorities will include establishing a website and work-plan, as well as developing fundraising strategies,

"We will be seeking support from philanthropic organisations and individuals who appreciate the importance of a healthy, active media for our society."

Donations will be tax deductible.

The foundation will fund worthy journalism projects initiated by either members of the public or practising journalists. Its first project will be to establish a website through which members of the public and journalists can come together to organise journalistic projects without the intervention of Big Media. This will be partly modelled on USA experiments such as www.spot.us

Projects will be assessed on their capacity to serve the public interest, with priority given to issues that are under-reported by the traditional media.

As well as publishing works of journalism, the foundation will make a major contribution to journalism education and research.

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Media contacts:**Professor Julian Thomas**

Ph: 03 9214 5466

Mob: 0410 569 457

Email: jthomas@swin.edu.au

Dr Margaret Simons

Ph: 03 9376 8907

Mob: 0411 254 478

Email: msimons@swin.edu.au