

From: Metro Internal Comms
Sent: Wednesday, 27 June 2012 9:07 AM
Subject: Message from Garry Linnell

Colleagues,

Our future begins today.

We are proudly unveiling the most significant editorial transformation in this company's history.

These are extraordinary times for all of us and they demand extraordinary people and collegiate effort to steer us through a period of uncertainty and unprecedented change.

The Editorial Review Project has been the most searching, collaborative – and consultative – study into our newsrooms ever undertaken.

Twelve of Metro's most senior editors drawn from print and digital – working alongside almost 100 of their colleagues – have delivered a plan to take our journalism into a new era.

The blueprint will fundamentally change the way we work. It is a new operating model that will deliver our unique and independent journalism to rapidly expanding digital audiences while continuing to ensure our newspapers remain centres of excellence.

The new model means our newsrooms will be based around our audiences. It will allow more flexibility, more sharing and more transparency about how we work.

Some newsroom practices such as duplication, over-commissioning and "editor-shopping" will disappear. Our new model promotes speed, protects the special geographic interests of our readers and greatly encourages creativity and collaboration.

Some newsroom roles will disappear while many new ones emerge.

But the best things about us – our pride in our independence, our desire to be the pulse of the cities we serve, our demand to be first and best along with the trust and faith our readers place in us – will not only remain but be strengthened.

This model is your model. You helped create it. We have looked at some of the best ideas tried elsewhere. We have adopted and adapted some of them. But our newsroom model is unique.

As it should be.

The accompanying information pack provides a summary of the findings of the project. And as we begin briefings around the country in coming days, and start implementing this new way of working over the coming weeks and months, more detailed material will follow.

Some insights:

New Leadership Positions

- For the first time Fairfax mastheads will have local **Editors-in-Chief** with cross platform responsibilities. The old divide between print and digital has been dismantled. No more silos. One leadership for one integrated newsroom.
- **News Directors** will be the Editor-in-Chief's delegated authority and the newsroom's operational leaders. Platform agnostic, News Directors are responsible for ensuring our newsrooms function throughout day and night under the "follow-the-sun" model.

- **Platform Editors** in charge of print, online, tablet, social media and mobile will focus exclusively on their specialised areas. Reporters will no longer report directly to them. They will work to and with **Topic Editors**, who are also platform agnostic. This creates a newsroom level immediately below platform editors – opening new career paths to many of our best and brightest staff.
- **Topic-based reporting teams** will be arranged around local and national subjects. This recognises the need to plan, commission and capture your ideas in a more efficient and organised manner. Topic Editors are in charge of delivering content to all platforms when our audiences want it. This system aims to give clearer reporting lines and allows us a sustained focus on areas of our core journalism.
- **Enhanced national coverage:** we are already operating powerful editorial teams in national politics, business, travel, food and wine and motoring. Using the combined strengths of our five states we will build more national teams around topics. This allows us to better avoid duplication, to share more of our stories across the country that interest a national audience. Open and transparent newlists will be a feature of this new approach.
- **National pools** will be established in production, presentation (video, graphics and design) to help us better meet the needs of this digital-facing news operation.
- **Topic-based reporters** will be expected to file through the day to meet audience needs. Their copy will flow through a Fairfax ‘wire’ – visible and accessible to all Metro newsrooms. Copy will be edited, checked, headed and made ready. It can be used on any platform. If issues arise on timing or platform, the decision rests with the duty News Director.

This reverses the “print-first” approach that has dictated production processes for generations. Instead of copy being handled multiple times, it will be produced once.

My thanks to all of you who have developed this new model. We have spent many years talking about it – and many recent months working on it.

Now we begin doing it.

The following staff sessions have been organised:

Date	Location	Who
Wednesday June 27: 11.30am	Melbourne	Garry Linnell and project team representatives
Wednesday June 27: 4pm	Melbourne	Project team representatives
Thursday, June 28: 10am	Canberra Times	Garry Linnell, Rod Quinn and Grant Newton
Thursday, June 28: midday	Canberra Bureau	Garry Linnell and project team representative
Thursday, June 28: 4pm	Sydney	Garry Linnell and project team representatives
Thursday, June 28: 4.30pm	Canberra Times	Rod Quinn and Grant Newton
Friday, June 29: 12.30pm	Sydney	Garry Linnell and project team representatives

Separate sessions will be arranged shortly for Brisbane and Perth newsrooms. There will be a series of further detailed large and smaller staff sessions commencing July 2. I look forward to seeing all of you at the sessions.

Garry Linnell
Editorial Director
Metro Media