



Media Release

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The Punch Launches – Australia's best conversation

News Limited is proud to announce the launch today of The Punch (www.thepunch.com.au), a new opinion-driven news and current affairs site for every Australian with a passion for lively and informed debate.

Billing itself as Australia's best conversation, The Punch is headed by former Daily Telegraph editor David Penberthy and will lead the national debate with its energetic and engaging coverage of issues of the day.

The Punch has assembled some of the country's best writers for a multi-platform publishing venture, which will deliver content online through www.thepunch.com.au, in print through the News Limited stable of newspapers, and on television through Sky News Australia.

It will offer real-time comment and analysis – “breaking” opinion the way other sites break news – written by the Punch team and a rolling roster of 100 outside contributors, with plenty of scope for reader feedback and interaction.

The Punch team is editor David Penberthy, deputy editor Tory Maguire, managing editor Paul Colgan, senior writer Leo Shanahan and readers' editor Lucy Kippist.

Punch contributors include some of the brightest names from politics, and writers on everything from business and sport to food, fashion, science, health and technology.

The website offers a daily menu of exclusive original content from the Punch team and contributors, with aggregated news and opinion links to other sources, both News Limited sites and independent or “competitor” sites.

“This is going to be a whole stack of fun,” Penberthy said. “The Punch is all about the content. We're striving to provide smart, engaging, real-time opinion coverage of events, issues and individuals making the news.”

“We've been thrilled to assemble such a great team of outside contributors whose pieces will roll out over the course of this week as the site grows.”

The Punch is a free site offering readers a subscription to receive a free morning email alerting them to the morning's exclusive and aggregated content.

News Limited chairman and chief executive John Hartigan said, “The Punch will be original, intelligent and irreverent. It is the kind of news opinion site this country needs; well informed with compelling insights, uncontaminated by the agenda of dispirited ideologues.

“The roster of contributors is unrivalled with more to come. As a civic forum it will have no boundaries. It is an investment in journalism at a time when everyone else is scaling back. I hope it makes a lot of friends and just as many enemies,” Mr Hartigan said.

David Penberthy will appear regularly on Sky News and later this year The Punch will be launched as a weekly Sky News program once the website has been established.

The Punch Team:

David Penberthy – editor

Punch editor David Penberthy joined News Limited in 1992 with The Adelaide Advertiser and was its national bureau chief in Canberra from 1996 to 1999. He joined The Daily Telegraph that year as NSW Parliament bureau chief and worked as chief of staff and opinion editor before his appointment as editor in April 2005, to November of last year, and has been working on The Punch for the past four months.

Paul Colgan – managing editor

Punch managing editor Paul Colgan joined News Limited in Sydney in 2003 after moving from Ireland, where he worked at the Dublin bureau of The Sunday Times. He has been in online journalism for six years and was last deputy editor at news.com.au, where he led coverage of major news events including two federal elections and the News Ltd’s online coverage of the Beijing Olympics.

Tory Maguire – deputy editor

Punch deputy editor Tory Maguire joined News Limited in 2000 with The Daily Telegraph. She was a business reporter before moving to the Canberra Press Gallery as a political reporter in 2002. In 2005 she joined the Telegraph’s back bench, where she worked as night editor, assistant editor and assistant editor, political affairs. She joined The Punch in March.

Leo Shanahan – senior writer

Punch senior writer Leo Shanahan started in journalism in 2005 as a researcher for The Age’s Canberra bureau and secured a cadetship, working as a general reporter as well as in online, business and sport. At the beginning of last year he became a federal political reporter for The Age’s Canberra bureau. As Punch senior writer he will be based in Melbourne and at the Canberra Press Gallery during sitting weeks.

Lucy Kippist – readers’ editor

Punch readers editor Lucy Kippist joined News Limited after completing a journalism degree at UTS and an internship at the Village Voice newspaper. She started working as a careers writer for careerone.com.au in 2008 before joining The Punch in May 2009.

Contributors:

The team of Punch contributors will continue to evolve but for launch it includes the following people – political names such as Mike Rann, Maxine McKew, Chris Pyne, Anthony Albanese, Barnaby Joyce, Joe Hockey, Scott Morrison, Jason Clare, Mark Arbib, John Cobb, Jamie Briggs, Nick Xenophon, Alex Hawke, Corey Bernardi, Bronwyn Bishop, Peter Dutton, and pollsters and lobbyists Mark Textor, Peter Lewis, David Gizard and Tim Gartrell. Our sportswriting team includes Kate Ellis, Ben Buckley, Anthony Sharwood and Luke Foley, on business and economics we have Clive Mathieson, Steve Keen, Frank Zumbo and Cameron England, as well as a suite of writers including Catharine Lumby, Tracey Spicer, Fergus Linehan, Ed Charles, Matt Kirkegaard, Clive Small and Nedahl Stelio covering music, entertainment, technology, crime, food, fashion, economics, media and social trends.

The Punch will also include exclusive original content from a number of established and up-and-coming News Limited journalists including Dennis Atkins, Joe Hildebrand, Fiona Hudson, Di Butler and Tory Shepherd, as well as journalists from other media outlets including Leigh Sales from the ABC and Fiona Connolly from ACP.

The Punch will also encourage its readers to log on as themselves, not only to encourage a quality standard of debate, but also to give them the opportunity to become contributors to the site under their own name.

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