

Pitching to The Conversation

The world's leading free, fact-based news source
written by academics and edited by journalists.

Presented by Misha Ketchell

Editor, The Conversation



I'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land we're meeting on today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Conversation also acknowledges the expertise of Indigenous researchers and [Indigenous knowledge](#) holders who have written for us. (*More on this later...*)

What we do

- Independent, not-for-profit source of news, analysis and expert opinion, written by academics working with professional journalists.
- Academics get sign-off on all edits, including headlines written by editors, so we accurately portray your research.



Benefits of publishing in The Conversation

- Connects your research directly with the public, practitioners and key decision-makers and extends its influence beyond academia.
- Experienced editors help translate research so it engages and connects with a general audience.
- Faster publication than journals: communicate current research on topical issues in a timely fashion.
- Authors can use Conversation readership metrics to support funding bids etc.
- Writing skills you gain translate to writing in other forums: journal articles are clearer and grant writing more compelling.

Adapted from Osman, K. & Cunningham, S. (2020). 'Amplifier' platforms and impact: Australian scholars' use of The Conversation. Australian Universities' Review, 62(1), pp. 41-50.

Reach a global audience through our network of 20,000 republishers

- All our stories are free to read or republish – which is how we reach millions more readers through global media outlets.



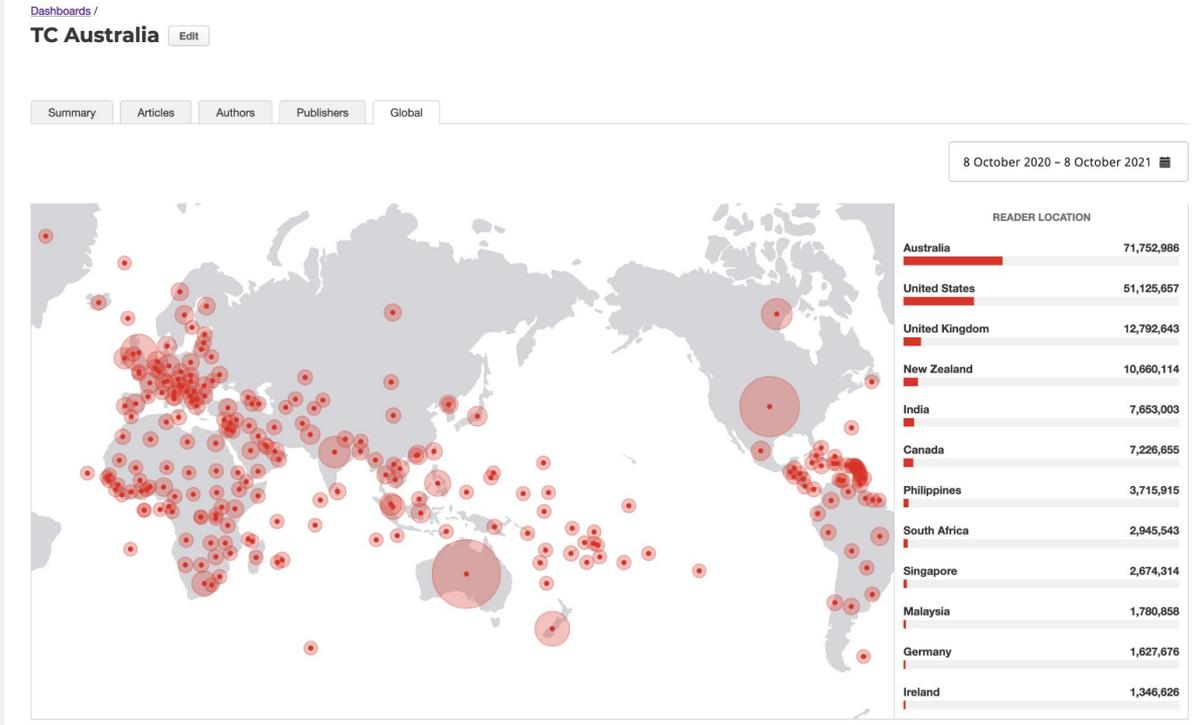
 **Kurt Sengul** @Kurt_Sengul

In 24 hours my piece in The Conversation has had more views than all of my academic papers combined will ever have 🥲

 Twitter | Jun 23rd

Kurt Sengul, Doctoral Researcher, University of Newcastle

Reach an international audience



More than half our readers are from outside Australia and New Zealand, with USA, India, UK and Canada the top four countries of origin.

Reach an international audience

- We have separate editions of The Conversation, in multiple languages, in sub-Saharan Africa, Canada, France, Indonesia, Spain, the UK and the US.
- Numerous articles are translated and republished by our international editions.



Reach a large and diverse audience

September 2021

The Conversation Australia / NZ

8.6
Million
users onsite

18.8
Million
reach through
replication

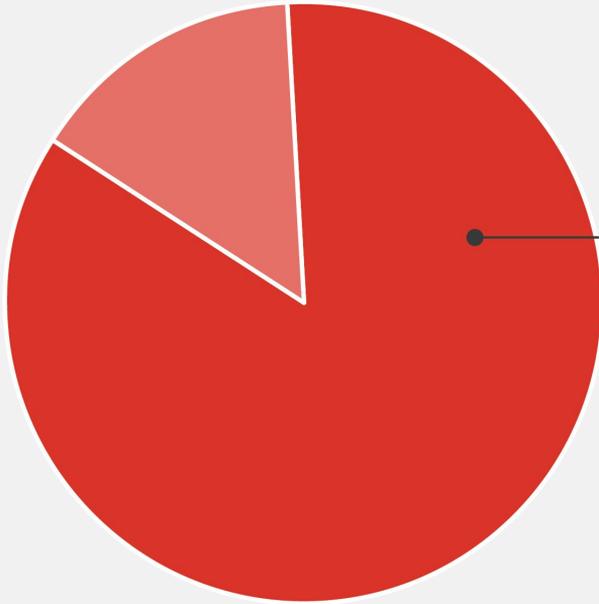
All Conversation editions

The Conversation has editions in US, Canada, UK, France, Spain, sub-Saharan Africa, Indonesia, and Australia / NZ.

26.2
Million
users onsite

60.4
Million
reach through
replication

Reach a large and diverse audience



- 15% Academic
- 85% Non-Academic

Our readers work in:

- 13% Government / Policy
- 13% Teaching / Education
- 10% Healthcare / Medical

We play a vital role in sharing research

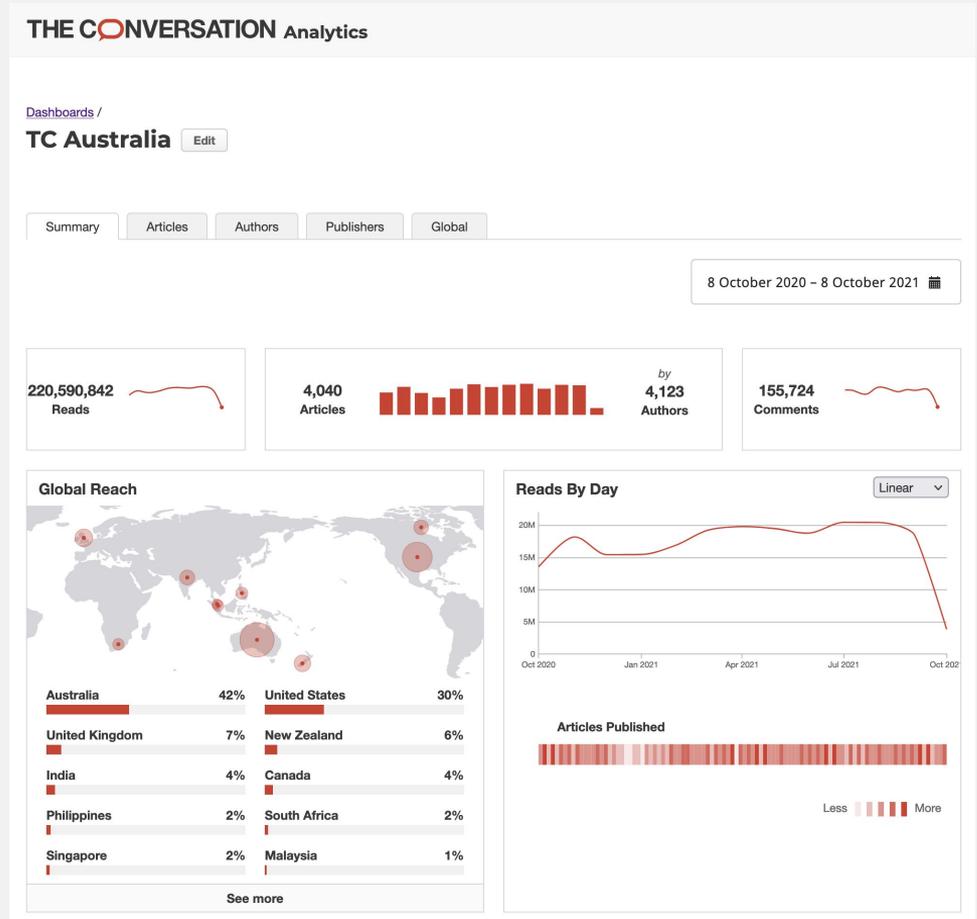


After publishing with The Conversation our authors also:

- Are invited to speak at conferences (13%).
- Discuss the article with students (32%), colleagues and the public (76%).

Use our metrics

- Anyone at your university can access real-time analytics on request.
- To gain access, email partnerships@theconversation.edu.au
- As an author, you'll also get your very own author dashboard.



3 key types of stories we publish

Timely: New research, often tied to a journal article



The ancient landscape at Yarrabubba preserves traces of the world's oldest known asteroid impact. Shutterstock

The world's oldest remaining asteroid crater is at a place called Yarrabubba, southeast of the town of Meekatharra in Western Australia.

Our [new study](#) puts a precise age on the cataclysmic impact – showing Yarrabubba is the oldest known crater and dating it at the right time to trigger the end of an ancient glacial period and the warming of the entire planet.

What we found at Yarrabubba

Yarrabubba holds the eroded remnants of a crater 70 kilometres wide that [was first described in 2003](#), based on minerals at the site that showed unique signs of impact. But its true age was not known.

Authors



Aaron J. Cavosie
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Chris Kirkland
Professor of Geology, Curtin University



Nick Timms
Senior Lecturer, Curtin University



Thomas Davison
Research Fellow, Imperial College London



Timmons Erickson
Visiting Research Associate, Curtin University



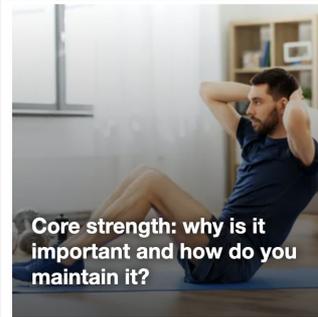
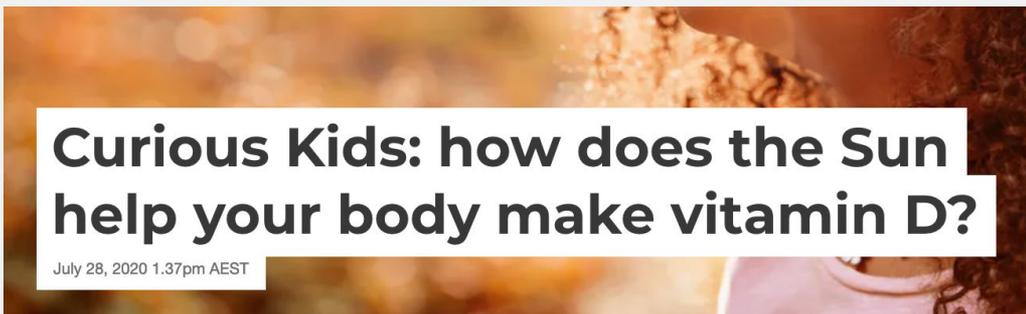
3 key types of stories we publish

Timely: Rapid analysis of issues in the news



3 key types of stories we publish

Timeless: tell an interesting story, answer an interesting question



How do we find authors?

Editors send daily expert requests to member unis' media teams

Does your media team know your work? Do they have your mobile?

Expert request

2nd September 2021

1. **Health + Medicine** What's the Mu variant, the WHO's latest variant of interest? Looking for a virologist or similar to interview today explaining this variant and how concerned we should be. Contact [Liam Petterson](#).
2. **Health + Medicine** With Victoria joining NSW in admitting it won't get back to COVID-zero, what does this mean for Australia? What will happen if other states continue to pursue COVID-zero, despite NSW and Vic? Looking for an epidemiologist or similar to discuss this for lay readers. Contact [Liam Petterson](#).
3. **Health + Medicine** How is Australia's health system likely to cope after opening at 70% and 80%? What are premiers likely to report back to National Cabinet on Friday about the state of their health systems to treat the numbers outlined in the Doherty report? Do we need to start considering flattening the curve again? NSW expects health system demand to peak in October – what is likely to happen then? Looking for an expert to help readers make sense of these health system pressures. Contact [Fron Jackson-Webb](#).
4. **Health + Medicine** How much does vaccination reduce the chance you'll pass the Delta variant on, if you're fully vaccinated and get infected? What does the latest evidence say? Contact [Fron Jackson-Webb](#).
5. **Health + Medicine** Can you still get long COVID if you're vaccinated? Looking for an expert to explore this topic in an approx 800 word article for lay readers. Contact [Liam Petterson](#).

Who can write for us? And how do we find authors?

theconversation.com/au/pitches

Pitch an idea

Got a news tip or article
idea for The Conversation?

Tell us

Can you write for The Conversation?

You must be a researcher or academic working at a member university or affiliated research institution, publishing original work. PhD candidates can write for us but we don't publish articles from Masters students or undergraduates. Contributors are not paid.

Please be aware that we are only able to accept a fraction of the pitches we receive. However, we do respond to all pitches submitted through this channel within 72 hours.

Yes — and I'm ready to submit a new pitch

How to pitch a new article idea

Be ready to answer these questions:

Story

In one sentence, what will your article say? *

Why do our readers need to know about this? *

What key points and examples will you use to support your argument?

Section *

- Arts + Culture
- Business + Economy
- Education
- Environment + Energy
- Health + Medicine
- New Zealand based authors
- Politics + Society
- Science + Technology

Who else can write for us?

Indigenous Knowledge lead or co-authors

The Conversation's main point of difference is that our authors are academics and researchers (inc. PhD candidates) from [partner](#) institutions, writing in their area of expertise.

But the lead or co-author of a story can be from outside academia if they're an [Indigenous knowledge](#) holder. It's another way to recognise deep expertise.

Indigenous Knowledge



Indigenous Knowledge has been set up as an institution on The Conversation's platform so we can feature Indigenous knowledge that exists outside formal university settings.

LINKS

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[Register to write](#)

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Displaying all articles



June 18, 2021

Friday essay: how our new archaeological research investigates Dark Emu's idea of Aboriginal 'agriculture' and villages

Michael Westaway, *The University of Queensland* and Joshua Gorringe, *Indigenous Knowledge*

We have found 140 quarry sites, where rock was excavated to make seed grinding stones, in the Channel Country of Central Australia. It's part of a major project testing Bruce Pascoe's hypothesis.



June 7, 2021

The Wet Tropics' wildlife is celebrated worldwide. Its cultural heritage? Not so much

Barry Hunter, *Indigenous Knowledge*; Alice Bührich, *James Cook University*; Asa Ferrier, *La Trobe University*; Gerry Turpin, *James Cook University*, and Patrick Roberts, *Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History*

Authors



Barry Hunter

Djabugay Aboriginal Corporation, Kuranda, Indigenous Knowledge



Erin Wilkins

Aboriginal Cultural Educator, trainer and facilitator, Indigenous Knowledge



Fred Hooper

Indigenous knowledge holder, Indigenous Knowledge



Grant Rigney

Indigenous knowledge holder, Indigenous Knowledge



Jasmine Seymour

Artist, writer, illustrator, primary school teacher, Indigenous Knowledge



Joshua Gorringe

General Manager Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation, Indigenous Knowledge



Julie Nardal Gumurdul

Senior Traditional Owner, Gunbalanya community, Western Arnhem Land, Indigenous Knowledge



Leanne Watson

Artist, educator, book illustrator, Indigenous Knowledge



Olga Havnen

Ask yourself this *before* pitching

- **What's the story?** In a nutshell, what are your conclusions or findings, or the takeaway for the reader? Be clear and succinct
- **Why should the reader care?** Why is it interesting or significant to an audience who *aren't* specialists in your field?
- **Why now?** What is it relevant to? Breaking news, or a topic of current interest? A new paper? A future event you're pitching in advance of? Or is it a general 'explainer' of an ongoing topic of general interest?
- **Do I have good examples** to explain what I'm writing about?
- **Why are you the person to write this?** What expertise informs your view? What can you bring to the story that others can't?

Read more on how to pitch from our Chief of Staff: <https://bit.ly/TCPitchTips>

Which pitch is better?

Tick paralysis is one of the most common preventable causes of death of dogs and cats along the east coast of Australia.

It results from a cystine knot neurotoxin secreted in the saliva of the paralysis tick *Ixodes holocyclus*. This ectoparasite normally lives on native Australian marsupials such as bandicoots, macropods and possums, where it causes few adverse effects...

or

Tick paralysis is one of the most common preventable causes of death in dogs and cats along the east coast of Australia.

Some 10,000 dogs are affected each year, 5% of them fatally. That means 500 dogs will die from ticks each year, with the remainder undergoing discomfort and suffering.

We get far more pitches than we can publish

The Conversation Australia & New Zealand has 30 commissioning editors (just 24 full-time equivalent). Each section has only 1-3 editors.

We publish around 4,000 articles a year — but receive many thousands more pitches. So rejection of pitches is common, even for experienced authors.

Inbox	New Pitch - The article will criticise the law's permissive approach to the challenging... - The article will criticise the	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - How international factors not Islam could de-democratise Muslim states with... - How international fact	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - Extending the driving time of individuals living with a dementia - driving. New research demonstrates tl	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - The implications of income tax in China This article would lox	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - - The implications of income tax in China - This article would	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - A provocative story to demonstrate the complexity of reproducing whiteness ... - A provocative story tc	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - the suggested introduction of a national civic service program for young pe... - the suggested introduct	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - The role of education in strengthening young people's understandings of cit... - why any new program	15 Jun
Inbox	Re: New Pitch - The environmental and land rights legacy of Phillip Toyne - Subject: New Pitch - The environment	15 Jun
Inbox	New Pitch - the order by a South African court to bar Sudanese president from leaving t... - the order by a South A	15 Jun

DO: Use The Conversation's standard pitch process (rather than emailing editors)

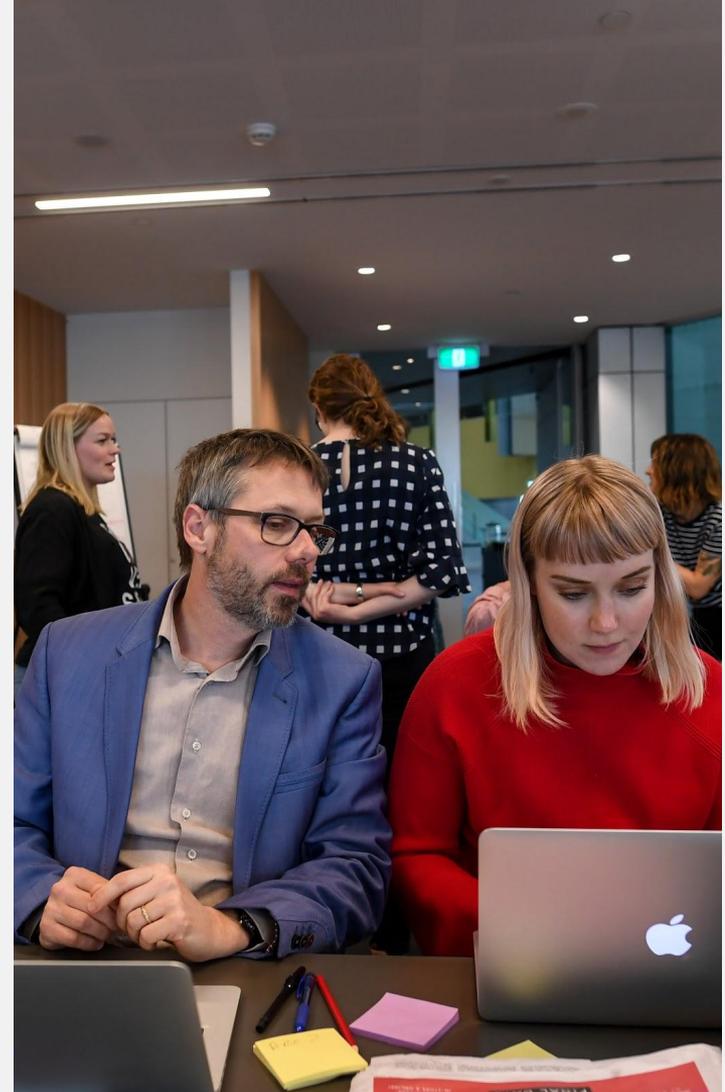
DO: Pitch as soon as possible. If it's tied to a journal article, try to let us know a rough publication date.

DON'T: Draft entire articles before pitching.

DON'T: Give up if you get a no on your first go.

Life cycle of a story

1. You 'pitch' an idea or we contact you.
2. If accepted, we agree on a brief and word count (usually 800 words).
3. You write and file your draft.
4. Your editor edits, finds extra images, and writes a carefully crafted headline.
5. We hand it back for checks, changes, and your approval.
6. Once approved, we publish on our site.
7. We try to get other media to republish it, reaching as many people as possible.



Key points of difference

Collaborative editing & shared final approval

The screenshot displays a collaborative editing interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'History', 'Edit', 'Preview', and 'Mobile'. On the right side of the top bar, there are buttons for 'Approvals' (with a dropdown arrow) and 'Finish' (with a right arrow). Below the top bar, the main editing area has a 'Headline' field containing the text 'The best article you've ever read!'. Below the headline is a rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, link, and other formatting options. The text area contains several lines of text: 'This is text - hooray!', a heading '## This is a heading!', bolded text '**I AM TYPING ALL THE WORDS**', and a paragraph 'This is an **outreach** article. It is **FANTASTIC**.' Below the text area, there is a 'Requirements' section with two red text items: '1. All authors must complete a disclosure statement' and '2. Jonti Horner must approve the piece'. To the right of the requirements is a 'Collaborators' list with four entries: Liz Minchin (Editor), Michael Lund (Editor), Molly Glassey (Editor), and Veronika Meduna (Editor). At the bottom of the collaborators list is Jonti Horner (Lead Author) with a 'Lead Author' dropdown menu. A red arrow points to the 'Request approval' button in the top right corner of the interface.

History Edit Preview Mobile

Approvals Finish

Verbal approval Request approval

Headline

The best article you've ever read!

H B I [Link] [Image] + [Table] [Quote] Saved. 100 words Readability

This is text - hooray!

This is a heading!

****I AM TYPING ALL THE WORDS****

This is an **outreach** article. It is **FANTASTIC**.

Type anything you want

BEFORE WRITING PLEASE COMPLETE THIS DISCLOSURE STATEMENT ----->>>>

Requirements

1. All authors must complete a disclosure statement
2. Jonti Horner must approve the piece

Collaborators

- Liz Minchin Editor
- Michael Lund Editor
- Molly Glassey Editor
- Veronika Meduna Editor
- Jonti Horner Lead Author (Lead Author)

Our editors spend a lot of time crafting headlines

The Conversation editors use their knowledge of what's trending on the internet and social media to use the right keywords in headlines.

The right headline can help you reach a huge global audience — like Philip C. Almond, one of UQ's most-read authors of the past year.



Philip C. Almond

Emeritus Professor in the History of Religious Thought, The University of Queensland

20

Articles

2,236,357

Readers

Profile

Articles

Activity



July 16, 2021

Friday essay: Satan is back (again) — the Devil in 5 dark details

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

By the end of the 19th century, the Devil had become a figure of myth. Ironically, that helped his image proliferate in popular culture.



April 16, 2021

Friday essay: what do the 5 great religions say about the existence of the soul?

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

Many Australians believe in the existence of the soul. Here is a brief guide to how the five major world religions imagine the soul's origin and journey.



April 2, 2021

How will our bodies be put back together? What about those eaten by cannibals? A brief history of Christian resurrection beliefs

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

Easter celebrates the Christian belief that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And for centuries, this resurrection was seen as a guarantee that our own bodies would do the same.



October 20, 2020

Five things to know about the Antichrist

Philip C. Almond, *The University of Queensland*

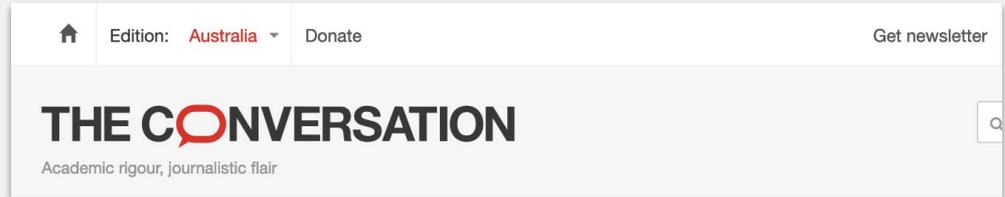
The Christian tradition says the Antichrist will come before the end of the world as we know it. So it's good to know some background on him ... or her ... or them.

A last tip: read before you pitch or write!

Reading our site and the morning newsletter are the fastest ways to see what we do – and don't – publish.

It also makes a huge difference to help your pitch stand out from the crowd.

On social media? Follow us @ConversationEDU



Home icon | Edition: **Australia** | Donate | Get newsletter

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair



Get newsletter

The Daily Newsletter

Get independent analysis on the issues that matter. Direct to your inbox by 7am each weekday, and on Saturday mornings.

Email



What to do if your pitch is accepted?

- Be responsive.
- Be available on the day of publication for media interviews.

What to do if your pitch is rejected?

- Don't be disheartened.
- Try again.
- Get advice from your media team.

In-depth training options

In our [Pitching & Writing masterclasses](#), two senior editors offer individualised feedback on pitches and stories for small groups of individuals.

Contact masterclass@theconversation.edu.au for more details.

“Outstanding workshop...It was very helpful! Honestly, one of the most useful workshops I have ever attended.”

– Dr Kelly Bertolaccini, Griffith University



Any questions?

“Writing for the Conversation has opened up a whole new world of research translation and public engagement for me.

“It has provided the structure to hone key messaging and clearly articulate key translational points of research into policy and practice.

“Unlike my experience with many scholarly journals, The Conversation editors actively engage with writers on pitching, writing and editing contributions, adding real value and reach.”

– Sean Ulm, Deputy Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage, JCU