

# Where to Pitch: Australian Publications That Commission Freelance Work

Selling Your Work · By Simon Townsend · 3 min read

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Simon's advice to freelancers started with one question: do you know who you are sending this to? Most pitches that failed, in his view, failed because the writer did not know the publication, did not read the publication, and had not troubled to learn the name of the editor.

This page lists the Australian publications that currently commission freelance work, roughly by category, with a note on what they want and how to approach them. It is not exhaustive. It is a working list. Publications change editors, shut sections, or stop commissioning external work entirely. Always check before you pitch.

## General interest magazines

*The Monthly*. Long-form features and essays. Well paid by Australian standards, typically \$1 to \$2 per word. Contact the editor by email with a sharp, specific pitch and a demonstration that you know the magazine. Nick Feik's editorial team has a public email address on the masthead.

*Good Weekend* (Sydney Morning Herald, The Age). Long features, profiles, reportage. Notoriously hard to crack without a track record. Pay rates are strong. Commissioning editor changes reasonably often. Pitch short, early, and with a real hook.

*The Saturday Paper*. Reportage, political commentary, culture. Strongly political, independent, Schwartz Media. Email pitches to [editor@thesaturdaypaper.com.au](mailto:editor@thesaturdaypaper.com.au).

*Griffith Review*. Quarterly essay journal. Thematic issues: they publish the theme and deadlines months ahead. Long lead times, proper editing, good pay. [griffithreview.com](http://griffithreview.com) publishes the current call.

*Meanjin*, *Overland*, *Sydney Review of Books*. Literary and essay work. Modest fees. The prestige is the pay. Essential for writers trying to build a portfolio in criticism or longform nonfiction.

## News and current affairs

*Crikey*. Daily email newsletter with strong freelance demand for news analysis, media commentary, and political reporting. Email pitches to [tips@crikey.com.au](mailto:tips@crikey.com.au) or the specific desk editor.

*The Conversation*. Free to read, commissioning academics primarily, but journalists with expertise can pitch. Short lead times, modest pay, massive reach. Good for building platform.

*The Guardian Australia*. Columns and features from freelancers. Pitch to the relevant desk editor. Contact information is on each desk's section page. Opinion editor is a separate desk from news.

*The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Australian, Australian Financial Review.* Occasional freelance commissioning. Typically through known contributors. New voices break in via op-eds first, features second.

## **Specialist publications**

Science: *Cosmos Magazine, Australian Geographic.* Cosmos commissions short-form and feature-length pieces. Australian Geographic runs long lead times and wants detailed pitches with photography plans.

Food: *Gourmet Traveller, Delicious, Broadsheet.* Broadsheet commissions reviews and short features heavily. Delicious is owned by News Corp and commissions through a small in-house team.

Travel: *Traveller (SMH section), Australian Traveller, Get Lost.* Travel writing is harder to sell than it used to be because of the collapse of newspaper travel sections. Pitch with very specific, story-led angles rather than destination features.

Parenting and family: *Kidspot, Mamamia.* High volume, moderate rates, short lead times. Mamamia has clear pitching guidelines on their website.

Tech: *InnovationAus, ITnews, The Conversation tech desk.*

Regional: Each state has regional and rural publications that commission. *The Weekly Times* for rural Victoria. *The Land* for rural NSW. The ABC Landline and Country Hour teams commission occasional freelance pieces.

## **Online and newsletter markets**

*Substack* and similar subscription platforms are now a significant market for Australian freelancers. Writers like Bernard Keane, Laura Tingle's colleagues, and countless mid-career specialists have built self-owned publications. The market for "guest posts" on established Substacks is real but small. Build your own audience first, then approach others.

Podcast research and writing. Major podcasts commission freelancers for research, scripts and interview production. *The Rest is Politics Australia*, the ABC podcast division, independent production companies like Audiocraft and Deadset Studios.

## **How to approach any of them**

Read the publication for a month before you pitch. Learn the voice. Learn the sections. Learn the names on the masthead. Learn which topics they have already covered in the last year.

Pitch to a specific editor by name. "Dear editor" goes in the bin.

Put the hook in the first line. Do not introduce yourself first. Introduce the story.

Keep the pitch under 250 words.

Include three things: the story, why now, and why you. Clippings or links in a short PS at the bottom.

If you have not heard back in ten working days, a single polite follow-up is acceptable. A second one is not.

## Rates

Rates for freelance work in Australia vary wildly. As a rough 2026 baseline: small online outlets pay between 20c and 50c per word. Mid-market magazines and major metros pay 50c to \$1 per word. Top-tier markets (The Monthly, Good Weekend, Griffith Review) pay \$1 to \$2 per word. Opinion pieces from 400 to 800 words typically flat-fee between \$200 and \$800. Always confirm the rate in writing before you file. See also *What Should You Get Paid?* on this site.

MEAA (the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance) publishes recommended freelance rates that are worth reading even if most publishers ignore them. They are a useful anchor when you are negotiating.

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Reprinted from The Wonderful World of Journalism. Written in the spirit of Simon Townsend's journalism craft advice. Visit [simontownsendjournalist.com](http://simontownsendjournalist.com) for the full archive.