

Campaign

Low pay is top concern

By Sarah Mason

Kiwi journalists are most concerned with their pay packets, says a new journalism survey released today.

The survey, which canvassed 514 participants from print, broadcast and internet news organisations, says a lack of counselling, support and inadequate staffing numbers all concerned journalists.

But pay was by far the biggest issue with all groups scoring their income below average.

"The only significant difference between older and younger journalists on resourcing was over pay. [However] there was a

steady increase in satisfaction as age increased," says the survey.

A lack of counselling, support, mentoring and training are all areas of concern, as well as numbers of reporters and senior staff.

The research was carried out by Massey University journalism lecturer James Hollings, the University of Waikato's Geoff Lealand, and Alan Samson and Elspeth Tilley, also from Massey University in Wellington.

Co-lead researcher a Hollings, says that while pay concerns are nothing new, the lack of support identified is worrying and needs to be addressed.

"It is important for newsrooms and employers to acknowledge this need, especially as there are

so many young reporters in the industry who want guidance and support.

"Journalists are not robots. They can't operate on their own, and it's unrealistic to expect them to do so," he says.

Hollings says employers must realise they have the ability to affect journalists' sense of well-being within their jobs.

"Even if they can't pay employees more, [increasing the level of support and training] can still make a difference.

"It's the idea that other things can be done to make journalists happier in their profession."

EPMU senior national industrial officer Paul Tolich says advancing technology is partly

responsible for inadequate staffing.

"Organisations were cutting newsrooms in particular to the bone, and it's only now that they are starting to re-employ journalists."

Tolich says incomes are subject to making profits and meeting budgets so it is the journalists who often end up losing out, quite "ruthlessly so".

He also says many of the more experienced journalists have moved to PR and communications roles attracted by higher pay, leaving behind a young and inexperienced workforce.

The Big New Zealand Journalism Survey was the first attempt to find out the attitudes

of New Zealand journalists regarding coverage and ethics.

Other resourcing concerns related to the watchdog role of the media and lack of time available to journalists.

"Most respondents indicated that the watchdog role could not be performed without more journalists on staff, more time allocated to pursue investigations, and more pay to attract and retain experienced journalists... to mentor newer staff into the investigative role," says the survey.

It is published in the *Pacific Journalism Review* and can be read on its web-site at <http://www.pjreview.info>.

Pondering peace



PHOTO: JOESPH BARRET

INCUMBENTS: Dick Hubbard and Bob Harvey both face serious challenges.

By Justin Henehan

Cities for Peace — what does this mean in practice and what would a future mayor do to bring about a more peaceful city?

The question was clear but the recent AUT University hosted mayoral forum failed to elicit many answers from the left and centre-left line-up of incumbent and prospective candidates.

Auckland and Waitakere cities' recent self-declaration as "Cities for Peace", New Zealand's 20 years of nuclear-free legislation and Auckland, Waitakere and Manukau cities' participation in the United Nation formed "Mayors for Peace" initiative gave a general context to the forum.

John Banks declined an invitation to speak.

Auckland City candidate and retailer Alex Swney expressed relief at this announcement, saying: "If you're not with him, you're against him. He's spiteful and we're tired of his bitter rhetoric."

Swney attempted to further distance himself from what he described as Bank's divisive leadership style by saying: "Today I'm not promising anything more than an inclusive form of leadership."

Dick Hubbard also took the chance to attack his absent rival.

"I face the situation at the moment that my opponent John Banks doesn't think Auckland should be a peace city."

Banks, he said, thinks the peace city initiative is a "waste of time".

Incumbent Waitakere City Mayor Bob Harvey was on hand to represent the Auckland region's other peace city.

Fresh from a Pasifika celebration, still adorned with a mayoral-chain-like necklace of shells,

"Banks doesn't think Auckland should be a peace city." - Hubbard

he outlined how his council had dealt with domestic problems faced in Waitakere City.

Lisa Prager proclaimed her pride as a peace activist, reminding all of her Media Peace prize-winning 1984 documentary.

Candidate Coralie van Camp came to the debate championing a return to days gone by.

"When we were young, we had a time that was romantic. Our young people today have missed out on that."

What Auckland needs a grandma, she said, "one that understands what a city needs

for comfort and who'd love to see lovely music for young people in the city to enjoy".

"Auckland is in the first five in the index of peace cities. That's mostly because of our stance on nuclear weapons," said former AUT University vice-chancellor John Hinchcliff.

"In the age of the 'just war' theory and doomsday weapons, where first strike is essential, and with "Bush and Cheney ready to invade Iran, we have to be vigilant," he said.

The most clear-cut statements came ironically from a misunderstood question posed by a member of the public.

Xihong Li, a volunteer from the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong in China (CIPFG), asked in a tremulous voice if the successful candidate would participate in the Human Rights Torch relay, an international protest against China's human rights abuses and its persecution of Falun Gong members.

The candidates mistook her question as an invitation to highlight China's poor human rights record by boycotting the Olympic torch relay when it reaches Auckland.

With the exception of Prager, the candidates all stated strongly they would not boycott the Olympic torch, but rather use the exposure to encourage better

Opinion divided on Pagemasters

By Justin Henehan

Negotiations between the journalists' union and sub-editing company Pagemasters are going ahead in an atmosphere of good will, the Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union says.

"The union is trying to establish its presence at Pagemasters," says sub-editor and EPMU delegate at Pagemasters Val Leveson.

The union's priority going into negotiations is to achieve the best working conditions, she says.

On August 13, Australian company Pagemasters began sub-editing pages for some of New Zealand's major publications at APN's printing plant in Ellerslie.

The EPMU called the move a "dark day for news and democracy" and predicted a decline in quality and accuracy would be inevitable.

APN News & Media New Zealand responded that its duty was to "continually look for new efficiencies" for its shareholders.

In August, Pagemasters' managing editor Antony Phillips said he expected the quality of sub-editing would, in fact, increase when the new operation took over.

Sub-editors are the senior journalists who write headlines and check stories for accuracy grammar and spelling. They are traditionally experienced journalists and the stewards of a publication's institutional memory.

Around 70 sub-editors were made redundant up and down the country when APN contracted its sub-editing to Pagemasters. Half of the jobs lost were from APN New Zealand's regional papers.

Two months have passed since Pagemasters sub-edited its first page. Some of the initial predictions have come true and some have not, depending on who you speak to.

Simon Collins is the EPMU delegate at the *Herald*. He says sub-editors are the old hands young journalist go to because of their knowledge of people and

places.

"Subeditors have the institutional memory in place. They pick up errors reporters don't know about," he told *Te Waha Nui* in June.

With the loss of experienced sub-editors comes a loss of wisdom and with that, a decline in quality and accuracy — the effects of which are being felt in the *Herald* newsroom already, says Collins.

"There has been feedback from the newsdesk — it's been a bit of a nightmare. They've had to change lots of copy and even send pages back."

Because the sub-editors are in Ellerslie, the dislocation means deadlines are now half an hour earlier for reporters, "so it is harder to get late stories in the paper", he says.

However, Phillips says there is no reason there should be a drop in quality and that, for many of the publications, quality of sub-editing has improved.

This is especially true at APN's regional papers, which struggle to attract and retain quality sub-editors, he says.

"We'll do our best to at least maintain standards, if not raise them.

"All mastheads maintain their own editors, chief-sub-editors and their own reporters — if those guys aren't the guardians, who are?"

"I've been really amazed at the calibre of the people who put their hand up to work here. We only have three trainees — everyone else has been a journo with significant runs on the board.

"When we started doing the *Herald* and the paper came out, a lot of senior subs realised we weren't here today, gone tomorrow."

A sub-editor at Pagemasters, who declined to be named, says some people are happy at the Ellerslie subbery and some are not.

"We're not being treated badly — it's not a sweat shop.

"It is a place for subs, where at other places subs have been put aside. It's nice to work in a place that values subs and subbing."