



WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE PROGRAM?

The Melbourne Press Club mentoring program is presented in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology. Its aim is to foster supportive professional relationships that help sustain quality Victorian journalism in an era of rapid change.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Our mentoring program is open to working journalists in Victoria with up to seven years' experience. Applicants must be employed by a media organisation in Victoria or be actively freelancing in order to participate in the program

The MPC is committed to fostering a more diverse and inclusive Victorian media industry. We encourage applications from journalists who identify as having Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage as well as journalists from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We encourage applications from early-career journalists working in regional Victoria.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING?

For mentees, the program offers an opportunity to form a connection with a senior industry professional who can provide support, guidance and insight gleaned from their time in journalism.

Mentors are offered an opportunity to give something back to the industry and to engage with early-career colleagues as they progress and develop their skills. Mentors are frequently exposed to different and fresh ways of thinking about journalism practice and the industry at large.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM TIMELINE?

The MPC Mentoring Program, presented in partnership with Swinburne, runs for approximately one year.

Applications for the sixth round of the mentoring program open in May 2022 and close 23 June 2022.

Successful applicants will be introduced to their mentors in late July 2022 and the program will formally close in July 2023.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Early career journalists can apply using the online form at melbournepressclub.com. We encourage applicants to give as much detail in their responses as possible. This helps us match you with appropriate mentors.

Please check the MPC website for the application close date.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Mentee applications are assessed by industry representatives from the club board and other senior industry professionals. The mentoring committee carefully considers pairings and facilitates connections between applicants and senior journalists, with the help of the MPC secretariat. Our approach is to connect mentees and mentors across media organisations. This increases the likelihood pairs will feel confident to engage in frank exchanges, as discussions will not be clouded by workplace politics. To facilitate this sense of trust, it is imperative that mentors and mentees respect the privacy of their partners.

The secretariat will offer some guidelines for structuring the relationship at the start of the program and check in on pairs throughout the year, however it is the responsibility of mentors and mentees to manage their own trajectory through the life of the program.

There will be an introduction session at the end of July where mentees and mentors can meet as a group. This meeting will cover how to get the most from the program.

Mentees and mentors will also be invited to regroup at the end of the program to share their thoughts and celebrate the conclusion of the program.



RESOLVING ISSUES AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

The MPC's role is to facilitate connections and oversee the program. In general, the club will not be directly involved in individual relationships. However, the secretariat and representatives will liaise with mentors and mentees at particular points throughout the year to request feedback and ensure all parties are benefiting.

We strongly encourage both mentors and mentees to contact us at mentoring@melbournepressclub.com or call **03 8080 3610** if any issues arise. All communications will be treated with confidentiality.

WHAT DOES BEING A MENTEE INVOLVE?

The MPC Mentoring Program, in partnership with Swinburne, focuses on the mentee. The mentee is responsible for setting meetings, agendas and driving the relationship. Mentees need to be realistic about expectations of their mentor's time. Given this, it is best to openly discuss the terms of the relationship early in the piece. Topics of discussion could include frequency and nature of contact, as well as each person's goals in the program.

Mentoring may unfold over coffee, on the phone, by video call or email. The fundamental goal is to establish a partnership which allows you to share information in a confidential and supportive way.

The most successful mentoring pairs recognise there is a need to balance the everyday with the strategic, looking at today's lessons as well as where you want to be in 10 or 20 years. You might like to pull apart recent work with your mentor and discuss the skills which need developing to achieve your long-term goals. It is your responsibility to be honest about your blind spots in these conversations, but you are doing so in a supportive and trusting space.

Importantly, there are limits to what you should expect from a mentor. They are not there to open career doors for you. Good mentors are on your side, but you can also expect some tough questioning! In discussing newsroom dynamics and professional dilemmas, it is not their role to agree with you, and a good mentor may call out your behaviour if they think it appropriate to do so.

Mentees must ultimately be able to ask the "stupid" questions, to recognise what they don't know and to work through their professional doubts and dilemmas with their partners.

WHAT DOES BEING A MENTOR INVOLVE?

The MPC Mentoring Program, presented in partnership with Swinburne, brings many opportunities for mentors. Their role is to advise mentees, offering support, guidance and insight. It is about bringing the skills of good journalism to the table – listening, asking hard questions and respecting confidences.

Many journalists have enjoyed the help and support of generous colleagues throughout their working lives, and one way to think of the qualities of a good mentor is to reflect on those individuals and how they have shaped your own career development.

Throughout the program, confidentiality is important. Trust is a requirement of a successful pairing, and the mentee will need to know your interest is sincere.

You will also need to consider the best way to guide your mentee. Sometimes the questions will be very practical. A mentee may want to discuss strategies for dealing with a press secretary who is causing them grief. Other issues may be more nuanced, such as managing rivalries among colleagues.

The most successful pairs also keep one eye on the horizon, discussing how their current work and skills development relate to longer-term career aspirations. In that sense, it is important to work towards a common understanding of your mentee's goals early in the piece.

For mentors, the program is a chance to support and guide the journalists of tomorrow. It is also an opportunity to reflect on your own practices and advice in the context of a changing industry. Perhaps an approach you would once have employed to tackle a problem has become less appropriate over time. Reflecting on this provides an opportunity to open discussion about alternatives.

