



Pro-am journalism and Lady Gaga: the bright new future for The Sydney Morning Herald

Herald editor-in-chief Peter Fray audits for the role of the new Deborah Cameron

Peter Fray last Wednesday:

WE do have to do more to reveal the processes behind the mastheads. We do have to show the public more about how we make that sausage. That ain't always pretty . . . There is a tendency at the *Herald* to be, you know, in Mount Herald, a lofty, nice place to be. We all love it for that reason. And we don't pay enough attention to what happens elsewhere, partly because we would have to pay attention to what the Murdoch press is writing, and so there's a kind of professional pride thing there . . . A great editor has a kind of instinctive feel and that's where the gut thing comes in . . . You know, Lady Gaga comes to Sydney, and the FM radio stations will be full of Lady Gaga. . . and the *Herald* might write something, dare I use the word, because it's a very elitist word, "intelligent" about Lady Gaga, what she means and other angles that she throws up by way of engaging with the same issue. I mean, not that we're ignoring Lady Gaga, she's a very interesting person.

. . . I like the concept of the pro-am, kind of citizen journalists. I mean wouldn't it be powerful if you said to your listeners: "Go and do x and come back to me" or if we did the same. Powerful stuff. And that's kind of much more interesting than, you

know, kind of bunch of feedback noise . . . I think it's the way you approach the citizen journalist question. I think our role in that is what we want to find out? What is it we want to do? So it can't just be "we love you, you should love us a bit more, have a hug". It really needs to be about "we want to do this thing, and this is the goal. We want to enlist you to do that."

I think we probably have reached a point where we've cut as many pages out of certain parts of the paper as we should. I think the Monday to Friday newspaper is going to stay more or less like it is, but I'd like to increase the amount of pages in the weekend papers.

Like *Good Weekend*: it isn't that long ago that *Good Weekend* actually did some literary fiction in there. But now it's only 32, or 38, or whatever it is, 38 pages: you can't do it. And the other thing is that we have to take more risks . . . We're in the process at the moment of trying to re-imagine the Sunday paper and we're heading that way. You know, when I started to do the fellowship, I did actually think for a little while of turning this whole thing into a kind of what-would-Sydney-be-like-without-the-*Herald* sort of thing. And the more I looked at it, the more scared I got. I did think that was a valid thing to say. I mean, can you imagine Sydney without the *Herald*? I think there was a period, about a year or a year and half ago, when some people actually dared to imagine that, and that is a really frightening thing. So we've got to get smart about it. We've got to be really

clear about what any pro-am arrangement is. It is fashionable to talk about the death of newspapers. I hope I have shown that predictions of demise are both premature and immature.

Price of today's SMH:\$1.50

Price of Fairfax shares on Friday:82c

Pester power? The Smarties website: WIN 1 of 500 Smiggle Packs. Parents just print off this 8 COLOURS OF FUN Colouring In Competition sheet, get the kids to colour it in.

Bob Brown yesterday:

ALL the polls show that the majority of mums and dads want to see the reduction in junk food being pushed at their kids, not least with a pester factor, as it's called — big corporations using banks of psychologists to inveigle children to have their parents buy the wrong food.

Jane Martin, Obesity Policy Coalition:

WHAT we're seeing is things like Nestle with their Smarties website having competitions for three- to 10-year-olds to win a Smiggle pack. Now, that kind of thing shouldn't be allowed. They've said it's not directed to children; it clearly is.

It pays to read the small print:

Entry is open to Australian residents aged between three and 10 years.

And by the way . . .

Entries close last mail received on 26/10/10.