

## A new direction for the MSSF

August 2018



**The Media Safety & Solidarity Fund (MSSF) was established by the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) in 2005 to assist colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region through times of emergency, war and hardship.**

Since 2010, a major focus of the MSSF has been to provide financial support to orphans of journalists killed in Nepal (pictured above) and the Philippines.

This is alongside the regular work we do with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in campaigns for press freedom and support for journalists facing immediate threats to their safety.

Funds to support those orphans have come from regular donations from Fairfax journalists and from other journalists in Australia and New Zealand.

These donations have been made as an annual payroll deduction of the first instalment of increased pay at the start of each financial year.

Over the last few years, the number of children needing support in Nepal has dropped significantly (as journalist deaths were linked to the civil war that ended over ten years ago).

However, the number of children needing support in the Philippines remains constant as journalist deaths continue under President Duterte.

**THE MEDIA SAFETY & SOLIDARITY FUND IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE MEAA TO SUPPORT JOURNALISTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION DURING TIMES OF EMERGENCY, WAR AND HARDSHIP.**

Unfortunately, the capacity of the fund to support these children is much reduced as donations from the journalist community and from other fundraising sources has dropped off as numbers of journalists employed full-time at news outlets like Fairfax have been reduced due to redundancy programs.

The MSSF management committee have been reviewing ways to make the most from your limited donations.

With increasing challenges to press freedom in Australia and in our region, the committee has identified work in this area as crucial for the future of journalism.

In November this year, the MSSF will meet to discuss a new program of press freedom campaign work for 2019.

There is much potential for the MSSF to effectively use its funds for smaller scale

support to press freedom advocacy in the region, including producing press freedom reports for South Asia and South East Asia.

Additionally, there would be greater flexibility to produce urgent situation reports in the region as needs arise. Recent examples include Kashmir, the Maldives, Cambodia and Malaysia.

We'll provide members with an update on these new initiatives early in the new year.

However, this also means that from January next year, the fund will no longer support the education of the orphans of journalists in Nepal and the Philippines.

The MSSF committee has been contacting partners in the region to seek their assistance with the orphan support.

**The MSSF trustees are Marcus Strom (Federal President, MEAA Media), Karen Percy, Michael Janda (Federal Vice-Presidents MEAA Media), Ben Butler, Alana Schetzer (MEAA Media Section Federal Councillors), Brent Edwards (E tū New Zealand).**