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Where we are now

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As we are now well into our third year of editing *Australian Feminist Studies* it seems an appropriate time to look at how the journal is travelling. In our first editorial we talked of our desire to consolidate the journal's place as a key forum for transformative feminist ideas and analyses, nationally and internationally. With this in mind, one of the most exciting developments we have witnessed is the marked increase in interest in *Australian Feminist Studies* from readers outside Australia. The latest data we have from our publishers show that in the last year article downloads across Europe and North America combined (46%) exceeded those in Australia (43%). This development follows no doubt from a number of recent initiatives we have undertaken. We have made a concerted effort to encourage international submissions as well as commissioning a number of exciting lead articles from leading international feminist scholars, something we will continue to do. Our editorial board has also been refreshed to reflect a diverse mix of national and international scholars who are invested in the future of the journal. In addition, we have actively sought to position *Australian Feminist Studies* at the forefront of feminist debate such the journal is recognised as an open and responsive forum for novel ideas. The inclusion of new sections such as 'Feminist Debates' and 'Research Notes' has assisted in this regard. We believe that together these initiatives are successfully giving the journal a new profile. The increase in the journal's impact factor to 0.810 in 2016 up from 0.5 in 2015 is further evidence of this shift and we hope to sustain this going forward.

It fair to say that our expanded social media presence for *Australian Feminist Studies* has played a critical part in the promotion of the journal to new audiences. When we took over as

editors we were especially keen to connect not only with a wider international audience but with emerging scholars who may not yet know the journal. Social media was always going to be the most productive way to achieve this. Our Twitter account @afsjournal has a growing following and has shown itself to be a highly effective platform for building awareness of the journal. We have found calls for papers advertised via Twitter spread the word far more effectively and generate many more quality submissions than any of the conventional means that journals have used in the past.

In the same way, altmetrics are showing us very clearly the ways in which research and research news now travel in and through social media. Although only published in the last issue, an article such as Michelle Moravec's 'Feminist Research Practices and Digital Archives' has already achieved an altmetric score of 62 and more than 800 downloads. Our authors are also using social media very strategically to promote their own work and to celebrate the work of others. Indeed, we have been surprised at how well Twitter functions to support and facilitate the rapid sharing of outstanding new feminist scholarship. Content from *Australian Feminist Studies* is also promoted via the Routledge Sociology page on Facebook and across the period January 2016—August 2017 this platform generated more than 1,000 downloads of our articles showing that it really does drive traffic to our site and lend visibility to the journal. For those of us who grow up photocopying much-needed journal articles in library stacks where the journals could not be borrowed, this stuff is pretty satisfying!

We believe that one of our most important and successful innovations has been the AFS Mentoring Programme for New Academic Writers which we introduced in 2015. Both editors have long histories of mentoring early career academics and so incorporating that into our editorial brief was a natural step. Now in its third round, the programme has to date supported fourteen emerging scholars, seven of whose papers are already in print, including several

appearing in this issue. The mentoring programme is proving to be an effective mechanism in ensuring that *Australian Feminist Studies* continues to publish emerging scholars alongside established voices, as well as playing a significant new role in the professional development of those emerging scholars. For the same reasons, *Australian Feminist Studies* has also provided travel grants to support early career academics presenting their work at relevant conferences such as the 10th International Somatechnics Conference last year on the theme of ‘Technicity, Temporality, Embodiment’ and ‘How the personal became political: Re-assessing Australia's revolutions in gender and sexuality in the 1970s’ earlier this year.

One of the things we committed to when we took on our editorial roles was making peer review something that worked for our academic authors. With this in mind we wanted to making the peer review cycle shorter, a change that the move to an online submission platform has achieved. We’ve also undertaken to work quite closely with authors and provide clear guidance around how to interpret and respond to reviewers’ recommendations, something that we know doesn’t always happen. Data from our publisher’s survey of authors shows that our authors are overwhelmingly finding the peer review process to be a positive one. This, for us, is one of the most important results we can have.

As (still) relatively new editors we often asked about the challenges of editing a journal and the chief one for us is making good decisions about how to use the comparatively small annual space we have to publish new research articles. When you first start out the opportunities seem dauntingly large but we now recognise that even with four issues a year we can realistically publish only about thirty articles annually. This can (and does) make for tough choices. Our overwhelming desire is to offer work that promises original feminist interventions, ones that can make a difference to how we think about and engage with particular subjects and that push us to ask bold new questions. And sometimes this means pushing authors to own more of that boldness. ‘Tell us what’s at stake here’, is our repeated

refrain! We keep coming back to the questions of what makes a feminist journal an exciting and relevant space in this current moment and how can we best serve feminist knowledge-making into the future? When we look at how articles from past years, including some from very early in the journal's history, continue to be downloaded (and we'll presume also to be read), we recognise that legacy is an issue here too. How do we steer a journal and ensure that the path we mark out continues to support and sustain the project of feminist knowledge-making long term? We're working on it.