Does Truth Really Matter in Australian Politics? 
Political Accountability in an Era of Agitated Media

Convener: Peter Fray
Hosted by Department of Media and Communications and
The Institute for Democracy and Human Rights

9th of April 2013, 10am – 4pm
Darlington Centre Boardroom, Off City Road, University of Sydney

10:00 – 10:15 Arrival Refreshments

10:15 – 10:30 Introduction - Truth, Accountability and the Election: Three Reasons to be Here Today
Peter Fray, University of Sydney

10:30 – 11:45 Session One - What Does the Truth Get You? Are We Living in a Post-Truth Era?
  • John Keane, Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, University of Sydney
  Truth Abandoned: A Few Thoughts on Silence and Bullshit
  • Danielle Celermajer, Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, University of Sydney
  The Unknown Unknowns and the Loss of Civic Polite
  • Natasha Cica, Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society, University of Tasmania
  Truth Reclaimed: The Short Route to Political Downfall

Respondent: Gerard Goggin, Dept. Media and Communication, University of Sydney

11:45 – 12:00 Morning Coffee

12:00 – 1:15 Session Two - When Truth Goes Missing: Two Case Studies and the Power of Spin
  • Judith Betts, University of Sydney
  The Iraq War
  • David Marr, The Monthly
  Children Overboard Affair
  • David McKnight, Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales
  Spin: A Legitimate Tool in the Face of a Hyper-Adversarial News Media

Respondent: David Higgins, News Ltd.

1:15 – 2:00 Lunch

2:00 – 3:30pm Session Three - Are There Better Ways? Innovations in Political Accountability
  • Pippa Norris, Electoral Integrity Project, University of Sydney
  Can a Watchdog Press Drive Accountability? Lessons From Overseas
  • Max Groemping, Electoral Integrity Project, University of Sydney
  Crowd Sourcing for Truth
  • Steven Maras, Dept. Media and Communication, University of Sydney
  Media Accountability in Australia: Double Binds and Responsibility Gaps
  • Rod Tiffen, Dept. of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney
  What the Finkelstein Taught Australia about Accountability
  • Matthew Landauer, OpenAustralia Foundation
  Beyond Media
  • James Alexander, Incubate
  Forecast: Cloudy with Disruptive Periods

Respondent: Julianne Schultz, Griffith Review

3:30 – 3:45 Closing Remarks