

needs of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ news, print and broadcast platforms, covers vox pops and doorstops, deathknocks and in-depth profile interviews, gives tips on dealing with politicians, celebrities, criminals, innocents, children and experts. There is advice on doing email, Skype and phone interviews, and an excellent chapter called Keeping Safe that explains how to stay on the right side of the law, sources and editors. Readers are frequently encouraged to listen intently to what sources are saying, and at one point are told that keeping silent can encourage sources to talk. On matters of cross-cultural reporting, however, the book is limited, getting little further than tips on how to dress for a tangi.

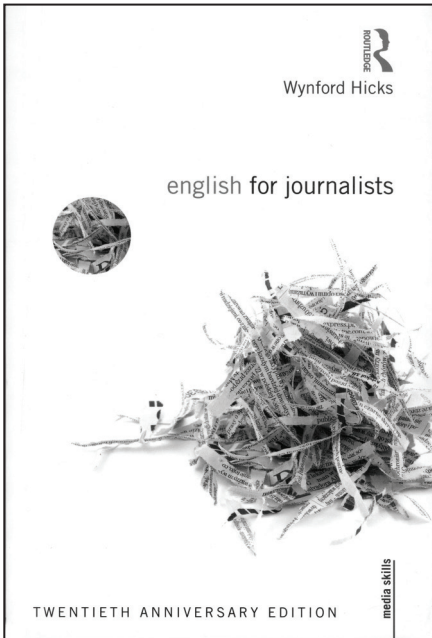
Much of the wisdom comes from respected, if now retired, old hands. While they are mostly Aussies, like former ABC 7.30 Report host Kerry O’Brien, there are a couple of Kiwis too—former Radio New Zealand journalists Al Morrison and Brian Edwards. Although the frontline advice seems dated at times—12 of Sedorkin’s 14 personal and email interviews with these journos were done in 2001 or earlier—their tips are mostly timeless. Appended to *Interviewing* is a helpful list of journalism websites from Australia, the UK and the US. Overall it’s a useful textbook for beginners and for industry pros looking to raise their game.

DR ALLISON OOSTERMAN is associate editor and reviews editor on Pacific Journalism Review.

## Technology’s impact on English not all bad.

**english for journalists**, by Wynford Hicks (20<sup>th</sup> ed.), London, New York: Routledge, 2013. ISBN9780415661720 (pbk).

MANY an argument between journalism educators has been conducted in the corridors of AUT over points of grammar, spelling, style and punctuation. These were eventually resolved, but usually without all agreeing. I can remember in particular a heated debate over whether team and band should be plural or singular. I lost to the sports and arts writers who insisted on the former. My shelf contains many books on such matters and now has arrived yet another small volume to add to the growing ranks. And a very useful one it is too. Those who winced at my starting a sentence with ‘And’ can relax. Wynford Hicks, the author, calls the prohibition on starting a sentence with this conjunction a ‘silly ban’ (p. 5) and claims fragments are nothing new and are being used increasingly by respected writers and the general public alike. Before launching into a consideration of such arcane matters as the rules



of grammar, spelling, punctuation, reporting speech, style, word usage, Hicks discusses just what kind of English the book is about. As many before him have noted, the strongest influence on the language has undoubtedly been American, but latterly the influence of new technology has been considerable, and not necessarily in a negative manner, says Hicks (p. 1). He quotes researchers who see many positives in the influence of social media, claiming that for as many mistakes that appear on Twitter, for example, as many people are busy pointing them out. The English language is not decaying, says Hicks, but there are still problems.

These are what Hicks spends the rest of the book delineating. His list of 10 common grammatical mistakes was the chapter I turned to first on opening the book. I hoped to see my personal *bêtes noires*, but on writing that foreign phrase, wondered how to use the plural. (The book was no help, it only had the singular. I had to turn to a larger dictionary to see I needed the ‘s’ on both words.) Among Hicks’ 10 examples are several I am pedantic about—dangling modifiers, number disagreement, fewer and less and tenses out of sequence. But nowhere could I find reference to the usage of reign instead of rein. I have seen several NZ *Herald* headlines with this word used incorrectly. Then there’s ‘hone in’, and ‘myriad of’, and ‘amount of people’... I should stop now. But *english for journalists* is a worthy addition to one’s collection of books on words and their usage or misusage.

## More helpful hints for writers

***Bateman New Zealand Writer’s Handbook: An indispensable guide to getting published.*** by Tina Shaw. Auckland: Bateman, (6th Ed.), 2013. 208pp. ISBN: 9781869538361.

**K**EEN writers New Zealanders might be, but knowing how to get started and where to get pub-



lished can still be a fraught exercise. On hand with helpful advice is the latest edition, the sixth, of the *Bateman New Zealand Writer's Handbook* from fiction writer and tutor of creative writing Tina Shaw. This fully revised and updated edition caters for those who want to write anything from children's books, family histories to articles for the country's newspapers and magazines. There are chapters on getting professional help, how to research, presenting manuscripts to publishers and how to use images effectively. A note on being patient, particularly when it comes to book publishing, is a timely reminder from the author. Writing

that masterpiece might actually be the easy part, as the process after the delivery of the opus to the publisher can be an extremely lengthy one. If a writer is lucky enough to have a manuscript accepted, then the topic of contracts arises and the handbook lists information about advances, royalties, copyright, and how to manage taxation issues. So you think publishing your work yourself is the way to go? Shaw has advice for you on this, noting that so-called 'vanity publishing' no longer has the stigma it carried previously, thanks to e-publishing and the use of print-on-demand (POD). Writing can be a lonely occupation but once that manuscript has been accepted and published then comes the hard part for some—promoting your work. If you want your book to sell, people have to know about it and want to buy it. The rest of the handbook lists the contact details of the country's main newspapers and magazines, the major book publishers, writing organisations and even writing courses available. Need financial assistance? The book lists where this might be found, along with the numerous writing awards and competitions held in this country. There is a final word for those uncertain of their proof reading skills, with notes on style, referencing, marking-up etc and a short list of how-to books on writing.