

2011 NEWS AWARD WINNERS LIST

YOUNG JOURNALIST

Amelia Harris, Herald Sun.

As the paper's youngest police rounds reporter, Amelia has shown gutsy determination and impressive initiative. Her relentless and lengthy investigations proved Victorian Police had fudged official statistics to paint a rosier picture of crime in Victoria. The revealing splash was the final nail in the coffin of a beleaguered police commissioner and resulted in a change of policy regarding quarterly crime statistics. Whether pursuing the Transport Accident Commission over its plan to sponsor a brewing competition or interviewing the family of a murdered child, Amelia produces results for print and online, shoots video on her iPhone and files online audio packages. "It's great to be pioneering new ways of story-telling."

CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

Townsville Bulletin, Watergate.

The Bulletin's forensic four-month campaign against the Townsville City Council's new water pricing policy resulted in an intervention by the Premier, Anna Bligh, and a reversal in policy by the Council. It was a hard-fought victory for the Bulletin and its community, particularly against an aggressive Council who continued to deny the accuracy and legitimacy of the paper's reports. The decision to overturn the unpopular policy saved the average ratepayer up to \$1200 a year.

BUSINESS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Anthony Klan, The Australian .

Anthony's tenacious reporting brought to life serious concerns surrounding the two men presiding over the biggest infrastructure project in Australia's history – the \$36 billion National Broadband Network. His persistent and dogged research – often in the face of public accusations of running a smear campaign – revealed the NBN bosses had made false statements regarding their past running a company, Alcatel, which under their watch, had engaged in one of the biggest foreign corruption cases in US history.

PRODUCTION JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Natalee Ward, Herald and Weekly Times

Natalee produces FARM, a 40-page free monthly insert in The Weekly Times from start to finish. She is the editor, production editor, sub-editor and feature writer. She commissions journalists, briefs photographers, provides direction to graphic artists and is responsible for page flow from advertising placement to cover design and send. In between, she edits all stories, writes headlines, introductions and captions. Even writes the odd story. She also produces The Weekly Times quarterly HOME magazine.

VISUAL JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR (body of work)

Gregg Porteous, The Daily Telegraph

Gregg applies his skills in both photographic and video to a diverse portfolio across news, sport, portraiture and human interest. His memorable images of the past year include a fully-suited former Olympian and now corporate executive Grant Hackett strolling across the bottom of a pool to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Sydney Games; Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke grimacing as Australia loses the Ashes to England at the SCG; his video package of the Sydney University Eight training at sunrise on the harbour ahead of race against Melbourne; and Jackson the alligator while underwater. As in, taken underwater while inside the pool with the alligator.

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Steve Grice, The Advertiser

Steve's portfolio shows his talents across multiple disciplines with a range of 3-D, multi-media interactive designs, magazine covers and online game illustrations. His all-round skills see him deliver on topics as diverse as the Centenary of Flight to the Royal Wedding, with a mix of irreverence, humour and authority. Steve illustrated all the game assets for the online Wedding special, Can You Get Kate to the Abbey on time?

SPECIALIST WRITER OF THE YEAR

John Rolfe, The Daily Telegraph

John established himself as the leader consumer affairs reporter in Australia and his s Public Defender column as the top reader advocacy column. Whether its ATM fees, food costs or phone bills, John breaks news that matters to his masthead's audience and uses his expertise and writing skills to the make complex comprehensible - across all platforms. John's Public Defender also had significant benefit to the broader business, attracting sponsorship revenue and the column has since been replicated in the Herald Sun.

FEATURES JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Trent Dalton, The Courier Mail

Trent's passion for beautiful writing, originality and creativity continue to shine in his work for QWeekend Magazine. This year's examples include an investigation into the state's domestic violence epidemic, which earned him the honour of being the world's first journalist invited to be a White Ribbon ambassador by the organisation's founder; his The Long Goodbye feature, with accompanying short video products, about a young dad and his battle with Motor Neurone disease; and the definitive story of Queensland's flood of the century written through the eyes of the residents of Beck St. He constructed this feature while filing general news and flood commentaries for daily and special afternoon editions of the newspaper, website and app. When Cyclone Yasi reared, Trent stood beside Premier Anna Bligh in the war

room for 24 hours, documenting the decisions of the disaster management team and compiling a powerful 7,500 word feature in a day.

INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

Fat Monkey – Perth Now

FatMonkey is the name given to the creation of PerthNow front end developer Simon VanderHeyden who thought he could make News Limited's \$65 million content management system FatWire even better. After many hours tinkering away in his own time, Simon revealed with little fanfare what is now regarded as a significant software breakthrough.

His creation has made editing stories online easier and simpler – reducing it from a six-step process to one step.

He has saved his colleagues endless hours per week, and weeks per year and saved the company many thousands and thousands of dollars.

Today FatMonkey is used in every major digital masthead in News Ltd.

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Sandy Bresic, The Australian

Sandy's entry combines her bold designs for the Courier Mail's Qweekend magazine and more recently following her return to Sydney, the redesign work for the Weekend Australian Magazine. From a blank canvas, and amid the chaos of the Queensland's natural disaster, she created the stunning Flood Issue for Qweekend – and in July, the eye-catching Stephanie Rice edition for The Weekend Australian magazine. In all her work, Sandy demonstrates her flair for bold, clean design with great use of photography and typography. Her clever and subtle added touches never overshadow or diminish the power of the pictures, but accentuate the power.

VISUAL JOURNALISM

Stuart McEvoy, The Australian

After meeting with Glenn Middleton at the Brisbane refugee centre, he agreed to return to his house to see what condition it was in, having no idea how high the water was. When he arrived with Stuart, there was 100m of the swollen river between them and the house. They both stripped down and waded in, following the sloping street down to the house. Stuart, neck-deep in water and holding his new hybrid camera that shot both stills and video above his head, he thought of only two things: Don't drop the brand new camera and don't get any of this stuff in your mouth. He captured Glenn's emotional return to his damaged home in both still and moving imagery.

SPORTS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Patrick Smith, The Australian

Patrick's writing encapsulates the issues of sport with clarity and clear-mindedness that few can match across any sport from AFL, horse racing, V8s, rugby union or tennis. His writing has also had significant impact and benefit for sport: he has lobbied tirelessly to see illegal betting in AFL shut down; highlighting holes in government legislation that has allowed criminals to prosper. He has also been a long-time advocate against the use of whips in racing. Limited whip use is now mandatory, in part, due to Patrick's criticisms.

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

body+soul

body+soul has had quite a year. Now the biggest health media brand in Australia, it relaunched in January with a new design and content direction; wrote \$21.6 million in advertising revenue – 16.5% over budget in a declining market; launched a website and a glossy newsstand edition. It has also developed several successful brand extensions such as body+soulkids and body+soul man. Judges described the multi-faceted body+soul as the definition of a modern magazine.

SCOOP OF THE YEAR

Simon Erero, PNG Post Courier, for Meeting the OPM

After three years persistence, Simon was granted an interview with the outlawed West Papuan army rebels, the OPM, who operate against the Indonesians in the rainforests of West Papua and also run secret training camps across the border in PNG. Simon describes getting this story as the most dangerous of his career: not only the demands of reaching the rebels via jungle and kayaking across rivers, but at the final moment, in order to secure the meeting with the OPM rebel leader, he was challenged to participate in a cleaning ceremony which required his circumcision with bamboo sticks.

The impact of Simon's scoop in PNG was enormous – the PNG Police Commissioner launched a major operation to tighten the borders and close down the OPM refugee camps.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

The Manly Daily

In the last year, the paper has strengthened its reputation for strong news content and being a champion for its northern beaches readers. Its news agenda is driven by its understanding and connection with the community, and then delivered with wit and determination. With the area's drink-driving arrests twice the State average, the Daily ran a DUI disgrace campaign, in which it published a weekly column of convicted drink drivers. In June, the paper launched its Fixer column to be the voice of residents, lobbying local government, gas and mobile phone companies on behalf of its readers. The Fixer has now been rolled out across Cumberland group.

REGIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Cairns Post

The true test of any newspaper's strengths is not when times are good, but when times are tough. And times don't get much tougher than they've been in Cairns this past year: record high unemployment, business downturn, bashed by floods and cyclones. But the Post stepped up and came out stronger. It was the leading voice in several successful public campaigns – including its mission to revive the neglected CBD which resulted in \$38 million from the State government to upgrade the city's main street and bus terminal. It proved itself a vital point of contact and community connection when natural disasters struck and the paper extended itself with new lift-outs, sections and features to promote confidence and instil support in the region.

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

The Sunday Telegraph

This year, The Sunday Telegraph has reinforced its strengths in breaking news, strong sports coverage, agenda-setting debate and commentary. Examples of its exclusives include: revealing the NSW ALP President Bernie Riordan was secretly advocating a vote against Labor at the state election (he was dumped); the first interview and pictures with Paul Hogan after tax charges against him were dropped; the first interview with Mark McLnnes, the man at the centre of the country's largest workplace sexual harassment case and the first photographs of Ian Thorpe back in the pool, secretly training for an Olympic comeback. In January, the paper has its biggest design and content overhaul in more than a decade, revamping sections and introducing new ones, noticeably ShopSmart which is an editorial and commercial success. Online, the paper's entertainment team have embraced social media and online coverage with popular weekly video content a must-watch and a new online product, The Sunday Debate is already proving highly popular.

The SIR KEITH MURDOCH AWARD FOR JOURNALISM

Jill Baker, Herald Sun

You've heard Jill's story tonight but what you haven't heard is the story from the colleagues who nominated her – unknown to Jill.

They wrote: "Jill is a rare example of personal bravery, selflessness and devotion to newspapers that has truly been above and beyond the call of duty."

As you heard earlier, Jill's story, The Big C and Me, was an honest, raw and deeply moving piece of journalism.

The story cut across all demographics and created a deluge of reader feedback.

Jill is, and was in that year, the deputy editor of the Herald Sun.

After her diagnosis, she continued to report for duty whenever she could, sometimes for just a few hours a day, as she underwent gruelling chemotherapy and radiation treatment, only taking time off when she was too physically ill to come to the office.

When she lost her precious hair, she met the challenge, first trying a wig then settling for a new and colourful scarf each day, which raised her spirits and her colleagues'.

Colleagues describe her as an editor who believes in the quality of writing, layout and design. She gets the best out of people by firm decisions and an open-door policy.

She mentors both experienced reporters and young journalists. She has occupied the editor's chair, on several newspapers, always with great distinction.