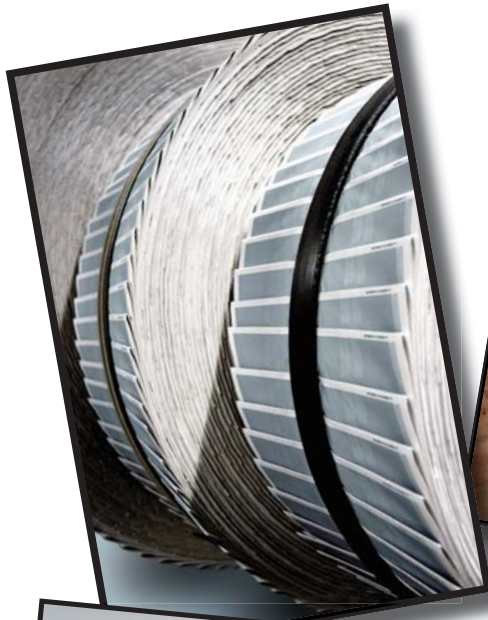




Country Press New South Wales Inc.
Australia's oldest newspaper industry association
Founded 1900



Annual Conference
Charlestown, Newcastle
7 October 2011

Judges' Comments
Book



Country Press New South Wales Inc.
Australia's oldest newspaper industry association
Founded 1900

2011

Newspaper Awards & Judges' Comments

111th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Quality Hotel Apollo International
290 Pacific Highway,
CHARLESTOWN, NSW

October 7, 2011

Our Sponsors



JOURNALISM JUDGES 2010-2011

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

JUDGE: Dan Austin, OAM

Dan Austin began his distinguished journalistic and management career as a cadet on *The Singleton Argus* in 1958. Later, he was the editor of *The Advertiser* at Cessnock, *The Maitland Mercury* and managing editor of the *Manning River Times*, Taree. As chief executive of *The Maitland Mercury*, he lifted the oldest country newspaper in New South Wales to a level that won them the Meacham Award for the top regional daily newspaper in 1975, as well as winning the WO Richards Award for Technical Excellence six times during his incumbency as Editor, Editor-in-Chief and General Manager Country Newspapers for Australian Consolidated Press. He served various proprietors as Chief Executive and Editor-in-Chief of newspapers embracing the Central West, Hunter region and mid-North Coast of NSW before joining Rural Press Limited in 1987 in charge of its regional newspaper division which had risen to 167 titles by his retirement in 1997. He also served as a director and President of PANPA and Director and Chairman of Regional Dailies of Australia. In 1993, he was awarded the Medal in the Order of Australia for service to country newspapers.

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

JUDGE: David Sommerlad

David Sommerlad spent the early years of his journalistic career with daily newspapers in Newcastle, Sydney and Bradford (Yorkshire), returning to work as a reporter on *The Inverell Times*. He progressed as managing editor at Inverell and Glen Innes to become managing director and editor-in-chief of New England printing and publishing companies, eventually to merge as the Nornews Limited group based at Armidale.

After 30 years in the country, he moved to Sydney as executive editor of Rural Press Limited publications for six years before transferring to head the Country Press Australia and New South Wales industry organisations, with which he still has some executive connections.

Newspapers he edited were frequent winners of journalism awards.

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Writing

JUDGE: Russell Eldridge

Russell Eldridge retired as Editor of *The Northern Star*, based in Lismore. He is now working as a part-time media consultant and trainer. He is also writing a novel and short stories. Russell has worked in daily newspapers for 37 years. He started his career in South Africa, where he worked on the Natal Witness, the South African Press Association and the Johannesburg Star. He emigrated to Australia to join *The Sydney Morning Herald* before a lifestyle change to northern New South Wales. He joined *The Northern Star*, where he worked for 24 years. He has won several regional, state and national newspaper awards, including a WG Walkley commendation. He lives with his partner, Brenda, in Ocean Shores

The Media Monitors Award for Local News Reporting

JUDGE: Greg Conkey

Greg Conkey is an award winning NSW country journalist. He was the co-founder and Managing Editor of The Riverina Leader newspaper in Wagga Wagga and has won the NSW Country Press Award for Feature Writing as well as being commended for entries submitted in the Local News Reporting Category. Whilst Mr Conkey was Managing Editor the newspaper also won the Local Government Reporting Award (twice) as well as awards for photography, best advertising idea (twice) and best colour and mono advertisement. Six years ago Mr Conkey launched his own Public Relations and Media Company in Wagga Wagga.

The Oceanic Multitrading Award for Feature Writing

JUDGE: Graham Gorrel

Graham Gorrel has had more than 50 years experience in newspapers beginning at The Wagga Daily Advertiser in 1958 before moving to The Area News, Griffith, in 1963. For more than 20 years he edited regional daily newspapers at *The Daily Liberal*, Dubbo, and *The Daily Advertiser*, Wagga, before being made Chief Executive Officer of The Daily Advertiser Group (now Riverina Media Group) in 1991. He retired in 2003 but maintains a close interest in the newspaper industry by writing a weekly column in The Daily Advertiser, has a newspaper consultancy business and judges newspaper and journalism awards in NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

In 1978-79 he spent time in England working for the North London Newspaper Group and The Sun, Fleet Street. He was a director of the Pacific Area Newspapers Publishers Association for 10 years, two as president in 2002-03.

He is a passionate believer in regional development and rural health and has written many articles and editorials on the subjects. He is a non-medical board member of the Riverina Division of General Practice and a former director of the management committees of Cricket NSW and NSW Country Cricket.

The Canon Award for Photography

JUDGE: Neil Newitt

Neil Newitt is a photojournalist with more than 25 years experience. Raised on the Darling Downs in Queensland, Neil is now based in Clunes, in the Central Victorian Goldfields. As a former photographer for *The Age* in Melbourne, Neil covered general news and feature photography, including four years as Pictorial Editor (News).

He shoots features and photographic essays for clients around Australia. His work has appeared in numerous publications including music journals and rural publications.

During the past decade, Neil has travelled extensively in Australia capturing unique images of rural and remote life. His personal photography documents scenes of inland Australia, particularly Victoria and New South Wales. This work differs from traditional landscapes as it features the presence of man. Whether it is in the architecture of the towns or homesteads, or captured in photographs of faded signs, you often get glimpses of what has gone before, a sense of other people lives.

His photograph of drought conditions near Wycheproof, Victoria was a finalist in the 2005 Walkley Awards.

Neil is also a guest lecturer in Photojournalism and regularly addresses groups on the issues of press photography. The Neil Newitt Photography gallery has recently opened in Clunes, Victoria.

The Media Super Award for Feature Supplements

Judge: Barry Wilson

Barry Wilson has been engaged in the newspaper industry for over 25 years. His experience ranges through reporting, editing, sales, marketing, graphics, pre-press to senior management and publishing.

An early embracer of desktop publishing he successfully founded newspapers and was later managing editor of the Kiama Independent when it won the inaugural PANPA Newspaper of the Year Award for 2000 in its circulation category.

In 2006 he established a media consulting business providing guidance to regional newspaper publishers. He has visited and researched newspapers and associations in Europe and North America, and recently addressed the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) conference in Canada. He is a current councillor and past president of the CPNSW and a past committee member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

The Media Monitors Award for Special Publications

Judge: Greg Watson

A member of a five-generation newspaper publishing family in Australia, Greg Watson has been in the newspaper industry all his life and has been serving on County Press industry organisations for over 40 years. He is a Life Member of both the Country Press New South Wales and the Country Press Association of Queensland and is a past president and long serving Executive Board member of Country Press Australia.

After leaving the family newspaper business in Tumut, Greg joined Rural Press and over a period of 20 years managed newspaper groups based at Sunshine Coast, Redlands and Port Macquarie before moving to Sydney, when as General Manager Special Projects he had responsibility for Rural Press Regional operations in three States and the Company's Technology development. He subsequently returned to the Redlands managing the Queensland and North NSW Regional Groups.

Greg resigned from Fairfax Media three years ago, and after working part-time for a year on the New Straits Times group of national newspapers in Malaysia, he joined long-time country newspaper identities Mark and Gail Hodgson as newspaper manager for their Beaudesert Times and Jimboomba Times newspapers.

Greg has a record of community involvement in several service clubs and Chambers of Commerce in a number of communities and is also on the Board of Carmel College.

The Goss International Award for Newspaper Presentation

Judge: Nick Hartgerink

Nick Hartgerink has more than 30 years' experience in the media industry. One of the first Bachelor of Communications graduates from Mitchell College (now Charles Sturt University), Bathurst in 1976, he joined the Illawarra Mercury in Wollongong in January, 1977. He was the Mercury's editor from 1995 until 2011 and now operates as a successful media and writing consultant based in the Illawarra. Nick is the author of five books including the best-selling 1989 biography of Wayne Gardner, Australia's first 500cc motorcycle racing world champion.

JUDGES 2010-2011

PRINTING JUDGE 2010-2011

The WO Richards Award for Technical Excellence in Newspaper Production

Sponsored by Norske Skog

Judge: Terrence Nolan

Terrence Nolan has been involved in the Printing Industry for over 40 years as a Lithographic Printer/Platemaker and TAFE teacher of Printing.

Terry has newspaper experience on Goss Community web offset presses as well as extensive Heat set web offset experience.

Currently Terry is a TAFE Teacher at the Printing section of Sydney Institute at Ultimo. Terry has current experience in teaching web cold offset to printing apprentices on the poster press at Fairfax Printers at Chullora.

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING JUDGES 2010-2011

The DIC Award for Locally Produced Advertising

Circulation up to 5000 and Circulation over 5000

Judge: Ross McPherson

Ross McPherson is Executive Chairman of the McPherson Media Group, an independent, family-owned business which has published The Shepparton News since 1888. The group also publishes a dozen other newspapers in the Goulburn Valley and Southern Riverina, together with several commercial printing operations and a regional internet and telco business.

A lawyer before he joined his family company, Ross is immediate past president of the International Newspaper Marketing Association, a director of the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association and a former director of SPC Ardmona Limited.

The DIC Award for Commercial Supplement

Judge: Steve Bowden

Steve Bowden joined APN Newspapers in 1991 at The Daily Mercury in Mackay, where he worked in sales before becoming advertising manager and then General Manager. He moved to Lismore in 2001 as General Manager of The Northern Star, becoming regional manager for NSW in 2003. Steve then took on the role of Sales Director of APN Newspapers, based out of head office in Brisbane. He left the company in 2009 and has worked with Westpac ever since.

The DIC Award for Advertising Ideas

Judge: Councillor Shayne Mallard

Shayne Mallard is a Councillor on the City of Sydney Council having previously served a term on the former South Sydney City Council first elected in 2000. He brings together his experience as a Councillor with a strong background in newspapers and advertising, having worked with Fairfax newspapers, direct mail and various advertising agency and public relations roles. Shayne is currently a Director at Statecraft, a government and financial advisory firm based in Sydney.

The Norske Skog Award for Newspaper Marketing and Promotion

Judge: Ross McPherson – see Award for Locally Produced Advertising above

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

“Country journalism is distinguished by its intimate contact with readers; it mirrors the life of the community and is the authentic currency of rural activities. Country papers can build themselves impreguably into district esteem by their championing of country needs...I am pained to see a country paper without an editorial. It is not enough for a paper to be a mere recorder of what happens. A virile and enterprising paper leads rather than follows.”

From *“What is ahead of the country paper?”* an address by
EC Sommerlad to the annual Country Press conference in 1945

Ernest Christian Sommerlad has an honoured place in the history of the Country Press Association of New South Wales. When proprietor of the *Glen Innes Examiner*, he was appointed general manager of the Country Press Co-operative Company and moved to Sydney in 1929. During the following 23 years he became Managing Director and Chairman of the Company, Secretary, President and life member of the NSW Country Press Association and life member of the Australian Provincial Press Association.

He led the Association through the crises of the 1930s Depression and World War II and was an outspoken champion of the country press and country people.

On his death in 1952, members of the association contributed to a memorial fund to establish the E C Sommerlad Memorial Awards for Journalism – the first journalism awards established in Australia. The initial two, first contested in 1953, were state-wide, regional awards for Journalism and for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement, the latter being supported strongly by the Rural Bank of NSW. In 1971, the Award for Editorial Writing was added. These awards were designed to recognise and encourage the three main areas of journalism which E C Sommerlad practised and vigorously advocated throughout his 40 years in the newspaper industry.

General Comments

Award entrants would assist the judging if they gave more detail about their newspaper’s activities in the judging year. In too many cases, the comments accompanying the entries are little more than a paragraph, usually light on fact.

What a year for country newspapers. The year started with drought and ended with floods. In the interim many newspapers struggled to become familiar with the internet and ways in which it could support the printed product. Social media had become practical and an ally.

The water crisis early in the judging year raised temperatures in the Riverina with the release of the Murray Darling report. This report threatened to cut irrigation usage, the lifeblood of the Riverina towns. The response was immediate and angry, leading to a rally of 6000 citizens. The opposition to the report and its recommendations was heartily supported by the Area News Griffith and other local papers and led to quality journalism in the best traditions of the craft. The Federal Government backed down.

This year the focus swung to widespread flooding that ended the drought but destroyed valuable grain crops in almost all areas of the State.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

These quirks of nature again led to forceful journalism by the Namoi Valley Independent and other papers in the towns affected.

Daily Newspapers

Western Advocate, Bathurst

At Armidale, Bathurst and the Hawkesbury, energies were devoted to paper redesign, interfacing the papers with the internet allowing instant public feedback, and in the case of the Western Advocate successfully led a campaign for a round-the-clock local fire service. News opportunities don't come much better than these.

The Western Advocate successfully completed a 12 month campaign to secure a 24 hour fire station. The Advocate has developed an internet interface to allow readers their feedback. Other developments include an Extra section which provides coverage for community groups, and local columns. The Advocate is also proud of its sports coverage which at eight pages a day is the best of the central west dailies.

Bi-weekly Newspapers

Deniliquin Pastoral Times

The Deniliquin Pastoral Times is proudly local and provides news and sports coverage across most community interests

Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

The multi-award winning Namoi Valley Independent continues its tradition of quality newspapers. It boasts strong news and sports sections and intelligent use of good photography. Other than some colour photographs as well as extensive use of black and white, there is much that is old fashioned about it. Its quality however is lasting. The copies submitted for judging give the strong impression that the Independent doesn't miss much of importance to its readers.

Headlines and campaigns include: 'Year of achievement for special pupils'; 'Camera on school awards'; 'Company whiz retires to spend life as grey nomad'; the campaign to have police numbers restored; at the worst time of the year, heavy rains first interrupt and then stop the harvest.

The Independent is well written and produced on site. If it has a shortcoming it's the absence of briefs.

The Irrigator, Leeton

The Irrigator Leeton has a wide readership from farmers to scientists. Coverage of emergency services and follow up of court reports has led to increased readership. For a bi-weekly The Irrigator has a commendable sports section. It uses an expanding Facebook presence to cross promote the paper. The website highlights and sometimes expands on local coverage.

The Singleton Argus

The Singleton Argus is successfully developing a website and interest is growing each week. The Argus is all about Singleton with a strong emphasis on local content and local staff. In the heart of mining

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

country, its campaigns included support for monitoring the impact of coal dust on the community and securing the proper measuring equipment.

Tri-weekly Newspapers

Manning River Times

The Manning River Times is heavily engaged in local sponsorship and directs its news coverage to local matters. The Times has a particularly lively and comprehensive sports coverage.

The Mudgee Guardian & The Weekly

The Mudgee Guardian publishes under two mastheads, The Guardian and The Weekly. Its campaigns include leading a protest over the closure of the Gulgong Hospital.

South Coast Register

The South Coast Register continues its tradition of excellence in news gathering and reporting. No other paper has a higher local content which indicates comprehensive community support. The Register has a reputation as the paper to go to if the community has a problem with the authorities. The Register has a website that encourages a community forum on issues of interest.

Of particular note was the sensitive way the Register dealt with a local fatal accident where a car crashed off a bridge approach into the Shoalhaven River at Nowra drowning the young driver. These emotionally charged stories are always difficult to report at local level, and the Register's handling of the story was copybook.

The Area News, Griffith

The Area News Griffith launched its 'Water Our Future' campaign establishing the reaction of people to the future of Griffith. The paper called it 'the fight of our lives'. The front page of October 11 captured the mood of the time and the feelings about what the irrigation cuts would mean: 'Rest in peace Griffith 1916 to 2014'. Opinion was sought from people in the town. The paper was swamped by letters to the editor.

The Armidale Express

The Armidale Express redesigned the paper in the judging year, introducing new sections for nearby Uralla and Guyra and new columns. Armidale is a difficult city to cover because of the university's presence and the high number of secondary schools. Headlines include 'Those magnificent men in their dying machines' and a fast food protest.

Weekly and One Journalist Newspapers

Warialda Standard

The Warialda Standard is very much the local paper for the Gwydir Shire. Its one journalist also fills a busy role as a new mother and manages to write an opinion piece for each issue. Its circulation of 800 is testimony to the resilience of the country newspaper and the strong reader support for local news. Headlines include 'Warialda attracts new business', 'Large crowd at dawn service', and 'A black Friday for one truck driver'.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

The Scone Advocate

The Scone Advocate serves the Horse Capital of Australia with a strong local and district news service. The Advocate encourages letters to the editor and invites a local councillor to contribute a column each issue. The staff of three receive strong community support and readership is increasing.

Muswellbrook Chronicle

The Muswellbrook Chronicle, although it serves a vast mining industry and supports the economic opportunities this provides, reflects the growing concern about how expansion of the industry could harm the environment. The diverse community has a broad range of interests which the Chronicle strives to cover. The paper strives for accuracy and responsibility. Headlines include 'Magazine lists Muswellbrook as top investment spot', 'Resistance to mine plan', 'Family left with nothing', 'Weight loss winner', and 'Mystery drug warning'.

Milton Ulladulla Times

The Milton Ulladulla Times relies heavily on community input for story leads. The Times reviewed its coverage philosophy to emphasize local news. It encourages reader participation and seeks to keep its reputation for accuracy and fairness intact. A commendable feature is the 12 pages it devotes to sport.

Hawkesbury Gazette

The Hawkesbury Gazette is taking a long hard look at where it sits and where it wants to be. It has concentrated its energies on the standard of journalism, design and its future in electronic publishing. Stories broken this year include 'Backlash against government's river water sharing scheme', 'Hatebook sites targeting local people', and the outbreak of deadly Hendra virus. Worthy of note was a cheeky but eye-catching open letter to State election candidates.

The Gazette has established a system of 22 editorial rounds to provide more in-depth content. It regularly does double page news features and picture spreads.

Court coverage has expanded which has been well received. The Gazette features Village voice to cover four outlying areas, kinder pages, school captains, and history keeper features. Its coverage includes a community section, with stories from the University of Sydney Western campus and RAAF base. The paper strives to include humour too. This paper could be further improved with more sports pages.

Campaigns this year include: support for farmers against unreasonable State restrictions on water usage, later reversed; campaign to upgrade Windsor Bridge without destroying heritage values; campaign to stop young drivers from speeding and risk taking, after a string of accidents; campaign to save Hawkesbury Showgirl Competition; push for local oncology unit; and the fight to overcome residents' fear of freezing through winter because of rising electricity bills.

A prominent example of its community service was the adoption of a Model T rally when the council refused sponsorship. With the Gazette's support, the rally brought hundreds of visitors to the area for a week and was judged a great success. Part of the sponsorship was producing a daily newsletter for rally participants.

The paper gave major support for the 200th anniversary of Macquarie towns and produced a Hawkesbury show program at no cost. These things are entrenching the paper's support in the community.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

With circulation growth an ongoing problem for the industry, the Gazette is reviewing its overall circulation strategy and also electronic delivery, for those residents past and present who can't access the paper in the normal way.

Section winners

Daily Newspapers: Western Advocate, Bathurst

Tri-weekly Newspapers: The Area News, Griffith

Honourable Mention: The South Coast Register

Bi-weekly Newspapers: Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

Honourable mention: The Irrigator, Leeton

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award

for Journalism

2010-2011

is awarded to

HAWKESBURY
GAZETTE

Judge: D W Austin OAM

JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

FORMER WINNERS

1953	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1972	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1991	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>
1954	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>	1973	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1992	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond, and Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>
1955	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>	1974	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1993	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1956	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1975	<i>The Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1994	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1957	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>	1976	<i>The Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1995	<i>The Valley View, Tuggeranong</i>
1958	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1977	<i>Richmond River Express Examiner, Casino</i>	1996	<i>Port Macquarie News and Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1959	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1978	<i>The Queanbeyan Age</i>	1997	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1960	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1979	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1998	<i>Armidale Express Extra</i>
1961	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1980	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1999	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1962	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1981	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2000-01	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1963	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1982	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	2001-02	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1964	<i>Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>	1983	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2002-03	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1965	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2003-04	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1966	<i>The Northern Star, Lismore</i>	1985	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2004-05	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1967	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1986	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2005-06	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1968	<i>Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>	1987	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>	2006-07	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1969	<i>Moree Champion</i>	1988	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>	2007-08	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1970	<i>The Courier, Narrabri</i>	1989	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2008-09	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1971	<i>Windsor & Richmond Gazette</i>	1990	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2009-10	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

This year's judging task was the most difficult in years.

Firstly, the Award regrettably attracted only three entrants when the conditions stipulated an increased minimum of four for the entries to be assessed. The association president, however, decreed that an award should be made if the standard was sufficiently high because only three entries had been received and judged last year before the increase in the minimum.

Secondly, every entry this year was of a high standard and, thirdly, the newspapers ranged in publication frequency from a small weekly to a strong tri-weekly to a significant daily. How do you do justice to all considering the resources available?

Further, what weight is to be placed on good journalistic direction by an editor versus strong leadership through the editorial and evidence of staff and newspaper community involvement? All are required to be considered. Another associated but indirect issue is the reason for the recent decline in entries in the section of the competition with the most prestigious prize – presentation at a function in the winning newspaper's community? (It used to attract 10 to 15 competitors). The entry conditions certainly are the most demanding but they need to be. Is the type of journalism assessed being less practised; is it not considered a requirement of a quality newspaper nowadays; are traditional editorial skills not being learned or taught today? All these seem to be matters for further consideration. But now to the point – the judgment!

The **South Coast Register, Nowra**, a regular contestant and previous winner of this award, left no angle uncovered in reporting an accident on a Shoalhaven River bridge approach that claimed a young man's life with a woman being saved from drowning. For nine months its expert reporting staff produced articles describing every facet of the tragedy with emphasis on the grief of those with any connections, plus bravery, anger and blame. It was a good example of maximum coverage sensitively handled.

The initial editorial drew attention to "the inexcusable lack of action" (by the RTA and council) to improve safety at the site where previous accidents had occurred. The newspaper's approach was to let the public "do the talking" and concrete crash barriers were installed weeks later. The *Register* editorial hailed "community outrage as a potent weapon when united in a cause" but for this Leadership Award, "editorial outrage" seemed sadly lacking.

The *Register's* journalistic attack team went into action when the new State Government announced it would slash rebates on installed solar panels. Stories revealed the Coalition's pre-election promises and the public's "sense of betrayal" while editorials noted a "breach of faith" and anger about a projected public sector wage-cap, particularly affecting police. The Shoalhaven mayor, a balance of power member of the Legislative Council, questioned the Government's "morality".

With the newspaper contributing to the debate six stories, six balanced editorials and numerous letters to the editor, the *Register* savoured the moment outside the MP's office when a planned protest turned into a celebration with the announcement the rebate decision was reversed.

An environmental battle between property owners and the council, branded "bureaucratic nonsense" by the *Register*, occupied newspaper news and editorial space for four months before council decided to remove trees overhanging houses at its cost. Declared by the newspaper "an absurdity", this was a welcomed result.

When a community without a police station became highly upset following a fatal accident and continuing lawlessness in the area, the newspaper exposed its anger at a continuing failed response, particularly about graffiti and vandalism. The *Register* arranged a residents' meeting with the Mayor, council officers and the police to consider a solution. An initial council provision of paint to local groups to obliterate graffiti when it appeared created a growing sense of community pride leading to grass mowing of public areas not within council budgets. While the fight for police resources continues, the *Register* is holding to account politicians who made promises about community assistance.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

The newspaper completed its five examples of community leadership and involvement by publishing extensive supportive supplements about the regions and the annual shows in its area, despite reduced advertising revenue. Full coverage was given to the three shows and at the two larger events stalls were set up to facilitate speaking to people about their concerns and activities. The promotion resulted in huge attendances at all shows.

This entry indicated the strength, coverage, involvement and respect the *South Coast Register* has earned and enjoys throughout its circulation area.

A welcome newcomer to the Award this year was ***The Maitland Mercury***, the State's oldest regional newspaper published continuously since 1843. (Where has it been these past 58 years?!!) It appears to be a no-nonsense newspaper really on top of and into community issues as its five examples illustrated.

The "dead heart" of the city, Heritage Mall – a hot topic of debate for years – stirred *The Mercury* to elevate its future to a pre-State election issue with the release of the Business Chamber's "Ten Big Ideas for Maitland". The newspaper launched its own, two-month campaign to ascertain the views of traders, city councillors and readers-shoppers with a six-part coverage of ideas and issues via articles, feature columns and editorials seeking community opinion through letters, blogs and an on-line survey. The result was a letter and petition from traders to Maitland City Council setting an October deadline for a decision on the Mall's future.

As one of the fastest growing cities in NSW, *The Mercury* believed its various resultant problems – particularly traffic congestion -- were being ignored by the "Sydney city-centric Premier" and published stories with editorials to prove so. As the Opposition Leader O'Farrell had made various visits to Maitland, the newspaper took the issue head-on with a full, front-page "cartoon" asking the Premier "Where the b..... hell are you?" The result was immediate with Ms Keneally arriving unannounced five days later to join the local MP in opening a new bridge over the Hunter River and meet and greet residents in the rain.

This long-awaited city-centre, \$65m crossing required a name so *The Mercury* had asked its readers for weeks for suggestions by completing published coupons. The editor was invited to join the panel judging the dozens of entries, with a well-respected local historian and *Mercury* heritage columnist receiving the honour. The newspaper received a double achievement with the Premier naming the bridge on her surprise visit.

The tragic death of a young mechanic in an accident on a notorious stretch of road on a wet morning caused *The Mercury* to launch an on-going, top-level investigation into the safety of this busy part of the New England Highway in the city. Many investigations were undertaken; a steel-rope barrier and mobile safety signs installed. Copious stories, strong editorials, letters and blogs generated wide public awareness of road safety in this area, which was considered a most significant outcome of the incident.

As with the *South Coast Register*, *The Mercury's* coverage of poignant stories produced a wide outpouring of community grief, a compelling aspect being the sorrow of the victim's uncle, a highly respected Senior Police Constable, who made an impassioned plea for young drivers to take serious care on the roads.

For six years *The Mercury's* editor has used the newspaper to forge a strong sister-city relationship with the central Queensland town of Emerald through a shared history of devastating floods. When floodwaters ravaged Emerald in 2008, two years after Maitland was flooded, *The Mercury* set up an appeal raising \$12,000 for the town, causing Emerald to call Maitland "Mate-land". Maitland responded again in January 2011 when a severe flood again engulfed Emerald with the Maitland council augmenting residents' donations and other fund-raising with a generous contribution, the result topping \$18,000. The *Mercury* office received needed goods and a removalist company showed good corporate citizenship taking a container load to Emerald at cost price.

The South Coast's ***Milton-Ulladulla Times***' detailed entry lived up to its reputation of providing extensive evidence of its activity and involvement in the communities it serves. It has continued its involvement in the Business of the Year Awards; sponsored an annual youth music scholarship; supported local business promotion campaigns and fund-raising efforts; and their editorial staffs is involved in community organisations.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

The closure of Ulladulla's food and wine festival a few years ago left a big hole in the southern Shoalhaven's events calendar so the newspaper's editor-photographer/husband-wife partnership resolved to kick-start planning for "Harbourfest", a showcase for local food and wine in November, to attract visitors to the area. Fund-raising efforts and a logo competition have been strongly supported with the business community also coming on board. This is a worthwhile community initiative giving every indication of success and is a feather in the cap of the *Times* with its 14 supportive stories and direct staff involvement.

The ire of people fined by Shoalhaven City Council officers for parking vehicles in a car park with inadequate signage, especially in the lead-up to the peak tourist season, encouraged the newspaper to institute an education campaign and question the council's hard-line tactics. This caused corrective action eventually to be taken by Council and gave a Sydney motorist the ammunition to contest successfully his fine in court.

When a caravan park owner started his own Burrill Lake – No Excuses campaign, the *Times* saw the opportunity to take a proactive role in an issue existing for years. Should the lake be kept open to the sea or let nature take its course? Many interviews were conducted with interested people for months and the lake was eventually opened by council. The debate will return when the lake closes again, but the more than a dozen stories published during three months progressed the issue of coastal estuarine management.

Seat belts on school buses has been an issue existing in the Shoalhaven for ten years but it was vigorously embraced with the death of a young boy in a Princes Highway accident. Parliamentarians have been stirred into action with the *Times* lifting its editorial coverage to persuade action by the new Coalition Government and the newspaper considers the establishment of a school bus advisory committee can be attributed in part to its lobbying.

Major events are important to the Shoalhaven but when the Milton-Ulladulla region was selected to host four major surfing events between 2012 and 2014 the location was cancelled after local residents protested strongly, claiming these carnivals would bring threats to the local community. The announcement highlighted a problem when no consultation had taken place with the residents in the areas proposed. The *Times* limited coverage of the emotive issue, concentrating on the obvious need for early consultation and the council's general manager wrote a letter of apology to the Villages' Association.

The *Milton-Ulladulla Times*, with a very small staff, deserves congratulation on tackling big local issues full-on and producing such a comprehensive entry.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

In the final analysis, the judge is required to determine the result of this newspaper contest on the primary basis of editorial initiative, leadership and action coupled with practical community involvement.

Highly Commended: Milton-Ulladulla News, Ulladulla
South Coast Register, Nowra

**The E C Sommerlad
Memorial Award
for
Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement
2010-2011
is awarded to**



JUDGE: David Sommerlad

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Leadership and Community Involvement

FORMER WINNERS

1953	<i>The Wellington Times</i>	1972	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1991	<i>Bega District News</i>
1954	<i>Glen Innes Examiner</i>	1973	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1992	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1955	<i>Bega District News</i>	1974	<i>Campbelltown-Ingleburn News</i>	1993	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1956	<i>Kiama Independent</i>	1975	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1994	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1957	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>	1976	<i>The Forbes Advocate</i>	1995	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1958	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1977	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1996	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1959	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1978	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1997	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1960	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>	1979	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1998	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1961	<i>Richmond River Express, Casino</i>	1980	<i>Nambucca Guardian News, Macksville</i>	1999	<i>Merimbula News Weekly</i>
1962	<i>The Cessnock Eagle</i>	1981	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>	2000-01	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1963	<i>The Dubbo Liberal</i>	1982	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	2001-02	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1964	<i>Cape Hawke Advocate, Foster</i>	1983	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2002-03	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1965	<i>South Coast Times, Wollongong</i>	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2003-04	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>
1966	<i>The Kyogle Examiner</i>	1985	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>	2004-05	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1967	<i>Central Western Daily, Orange</i>	1986	<i>Moree Champion</i>	2005-06	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>
1968	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1987	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2006-07	<i>The Northern Daily Leader</i>
1969	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1988	<i>Bega District News</i>	2007-08	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>
1970	<i>The Wyong & Lake District Advocate</i>	1989	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2008-09	<i>Deniliquin Pastoral Times</i>
1971	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1990	<i>Lake Times, Warilla</i>	2009-10	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>

JOURNALISM

SECTION 3

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Writing

Western Advocate submitted four editorials - call for a 24-hour fire station, a raceway stoush, same-sex marriage, school funding. All bar the same-sex editorial are strong local issues. Each is a reasoned argument, dealing in specifics, not generalisations. The language is the writer's own and avoids shallow newspaper platitudes. The editorials examine the situation and to some extent offer solutions, or at least push for those responsible to make a decision. The editorials are well-structured in developing their argument. The exception is the school funding editorial, which spars around the issue and tries to please all parties.

Goulburn Post submitted three editorials - Fast train, sacked mayor, voting system. Again, we have a newspaper championing local causes, with informed, well-structured arguments. You feel the writer knows what they're talking about and has a point of view. The quality of the writing is of a good standard, and like the co-winner, you believe the editorial is written to make a strong point and not merely to fill space. And again, the submission is let down by one weak entry, the fast train. It lacks coherence and the argument appears to be developed on the run.

Overall comment: There is a tendency in some regional Australian papers to downgrade the value of editorial opinions. Indeed, one of the country's most respected regional dailies recently abandoned its weekday editorials after a period of decline in the quality of its content. Other papers have tightened the available space, ruining the chance for a considered argument. But strong, local editorials are even more important in a time when readership is adrift in a sea of information. An intelligent, fair editorial can clarify issues, bring proportion to them, suggest solutions and provide a rallying point for the community. If a paper stands for something then readers will care about it.

JOURNALISM

SECTION 3

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Writing

Highly commended: Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

Judge's comment: Strongly local, a light touch, and well argued. Good to see a small paper with a strong voice.

Joint winners: Goulburn Post and Western Advocate, Bathurst

Judge's comment: The unusual decision to name joint winners was for three reasons: 1) Both entries were of a high standard; 2) they couldn't be separated; 3) they were clearly superior to all other entries.

The E C Sommerlad Memorial Award

for

Editorial Writing

2010-2011

is awarded to the



Goulburn Post

Leader in local news

AND

Western Advocate

JUDGE: Russell Eldridge

JOURNALISM

SECTION 3

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Writing

FORMER WINNERS

1971	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1991	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1972	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>	1992	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>
1973	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1993	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1974	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1994	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1975	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1995	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1976	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1996	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1977	<i>The Queanbeyan Age</i>	1997	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1978	<i>Murrumbidgee Irrigator, Leeton</i>	1998	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1979	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1999	<i>The Courier, Narrabri</i>
1980	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	2000-01	<i>The Coonamble Times</i>
1981	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2001-02	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1982	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2002-03	<i>The Northern Star, Lismore</i>
1983	<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i>	2003-04	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1984	<i>Kiama Independent</i>	2004-05	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1985	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2005-06	<i>The Western Advocate, Bathurst</i>
1986	-	2006-07	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1987	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, North Richmond</i>	2007-08	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1988	<i>The Newcastle Star</i>	2008-09	<i>Merimbula News Weekly</i>
1989	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2009-10	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1990	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>		

Water was one of the main subjects of this year's Award for Local News Reporting. The State's long drought finally broke after 10 years but brought other problems to many areas... severe flooding. Damage to infrastructure as well as homes was extensive with many areas in the state declared natural disaster areas. Several newspapers also submitted articles concerning the Murray Darling Basin Water Plan and outlined the devastating effects the plan would have on their communities which are reliant on irrigation. Two papers were fortunate to have within their circulation areas the key Independents that hold the balance of power in the Federal Parliament. Readers were given an insight into their dilemmas in supporting the Labor Party and the benefits they were able to secure for their respective electorates. All submissions were generally of a high standard and reinforced the vital role country newspapers play in their respective communities together with the leadership they provide. Only a few newspapers submitted covering letters which gave background details to the items submitted. All newspapers are encouraged in future to provide such background notes.

Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

The Namoi Valley Independent (Gunnedah) submitted two articles that were both of local and national interest. The first called "Koala-gate" dealt with a Parliamentary Inquiry into a raid by RSPCA Officers on a Gunnedah Wildlife Park which was filmed by Channel 7 for their program "Animal Rescue." The paper outlined what they described as "explosive revelations and widely contradicting recollections" of the event that occurred several months prior. The actions of the RSPCA were questioned along with their close association with Channel 7 with one local vet describing the raid as being about "kudos and power." The second series of articles gave a local insight into the national elections with the local member, Independent Tony Windsor, playing a key role in the re-election of the Labor Government. His decision divided the electorate of New England with Mr Windsor justifying his decision through the pages of the paper as being in the best interests of country people.

South Coast Register

In September 2010 as a result of a car accident a vehicle was shunted off a bridge into the dark waters of the Shoalhaven River. Due to the heroic efforts of a number of people a 24 year old passenger survived, however, the driver, a young man, was not so fortunate. The South Coast Register published a series of articles that focused on the people and families affected by the accident and the need to upgrade safety at the intersection. Their second entry was called "Miracle Escape" and again showed the close relationship the paper has with its readers. A young child was run over by a bus driven by her father. The miracle was that she not only survived but that she suffered no permanent injuries.

Mudgee Guardian and The Weekly

The Mudgee Guardian and The Weekly (Gulgong) submitted two entries that reported on events that devastated both communities. The first was a major flood that followed on the heels of many years of drought. The Guardian reported not only on the property damage but delved much deeper and looked at the personal tragedies and how the hopes and aspirations of many of their readers had been dashed by the floods. The plight of grape growers was also recorded and the difficult decisions they faced concerning their immediate future and the future of the industry as a whole. The second series of articles in The Weekly concerned a State Government decision to close the Gulgong Hospital. The paper reported on the effects the decision was likely to have on this small community and published comments from a wide cross section of the community. In a balanced approach the authorities were given space to justify their decision and

to explain the new basic health service. The paper gave extensive coverage to a protest rally and reported on the feelings of the hospital staff after the doors had been locked for the last time.

The Gilgandra Weekly

The sudden closure of a rural financial counselling service was submitted by The Gilgandra Weekly along with a report on a rally to protest the decision. The one journalist paper highlighted the fact recent flooding had led to a 34 percent growth in demand for the service. The paper followed up the protest rally with a report from the local council which offered the service a financial lifeline. Their second submission titled “The Big Wet” reported on the second major flood to hit the region in a 12 month period and the widespread damage caused.

Deniliquin Pastoral Times

The Deniliquin Pastoral Times also reported on a major protest rally this was also about water, the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Any plan to reduce water supplies in the Basin will have a major impact on many communities including Deniliquin. The viability of the town is dependent on water, a fact well known by the business community. The paper covered a public meeting called to discuss the plan which included an appeal to business owners to close their shops to enable all interested people to attend. The paper outlined the strong message sent to Canberra about the severe impacts of the plan which included the human cost and the indefinite water restrictions the town now faces. The paper’s second submission concerned a community debate over the most suitable location for the town’s new medical centre. The Council had purchased a site for the facility but a number of residents believed this was not the most suitable and pleaded with the council to look at more appropriate locations. Despite the debate raging for many months with all views given prominence, the Council did not deviate from their original decision.

Hawkesbury Gazette

The December 2010 floods were also featured in an article by the Hawkesbury Gazette. Their article featured the plight of one family living in the Upper Colo area which involved courage, survival, love and loss. The family arrived home to see rising flood waters threatening their home, their animals and their lives with their ordeal over the next four hours outlined in the article. Their second submission revealed details of a horse virus that had killed 10 horses and infected up to another 200. The virus was new to the Hawkesbury and the report not only warned horse owners of the outbreak but gave details of the symptoms.

Port Macquarie News

The dismissal of Port Macquarie-Hasting Council’s General Manager was one of the entries submitted by the Port Macquarie News. The report concentrated on the cost to ratepayers (\$178,000) and featured a caricature of the General Manager instead of a file photo which made for an impressive front page layout. The report gave a history of the changes in senior management levels during the General Manager’s two and a half year tenure as well as a concise timeline of major council developments during a tremulous three year period. The second entry featured the city’s independent federal member, Rob Oakeshott, and the \$130m he secured for the city in return for his support of the Labor Government. It was a strong local angle to a major national story.

The Courier, Narrabri

Water was top of the agenda for The Courier at Narrabri with the paper highlighting the serious economic and social impacts and flow-on job losses that would occur if further water cuts were implemented as part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. The paper pointed out to its readers that under the plan the Narrabri Shire would be amongst the hardest communities hit within the state. Readers were warned about the serious economic ramifications that would follow and the effects it would have for decades to come. It was perhaps ironic that the second submission from The Courier was a series of articles about the breaking of the drought. Whilst the rain was welcomed it brought its own hardships which included floods, damage to infrastructure and delays to the harvest.

Goulburn Post

The Goulburn Post featured a State Government decision to lease railway facilities in the city to an American rail maintenance company in preference to a locally based manufacturing operation. Colourful language was used throughout the reports quoting former rail workers hoping to gain employment from the manufacturing company as well as some politicians who also supported the local company. A spokesman for the successful bidder counted by outlining the company's "track" record and plans to build up the maintenance facility at Goulburn which would employ a large number of people. Water was the subject of the Post's second submission. Goulburn was badly affected by the drought and for 10 years experienced severe water restrictions. That all changed during a few short days in December last year when the town and district experienced massive flooding. Storage dams soon filled to capacity, roads and bridges were damaged and many residents lost prized possessions. The Post tracked the dramatic change over several editions and concluded with a seven page feature which included a number of dramatic before and after photos.

Milton Ulladulla Times

"Open Burrill Lake Now No Excuses" was a campaign strongly supported by the Milton-Ulladulla Times. In a series of articles over four months the paper outlined the advantages of once again opening the beautiful Burrill Lakes on the South Coast to the sea. A large number of residents were interviewed over the current condition of the Lake as well as the effects the regular flooding caused by the Lake's closure. The potential damage to tourism was also raised. Interviews were conducted with long time residents who could remember when the Lake had been opened to the sea and the difference that had made to the water quality. The paper's second entry concerned a car park in Milton which was described as a "source of frustration" for residents and a "cash cow" for the council. The car park contained a number of marked bitumen parking bays as well as adjoining grassed areas. Locals and visitors alike were fined by Council staff for not parking within the marked parking bays. No warning signs concerning the offence had been erected. The paper reported on one irate Sydney motorist who planned to fight the Council over his fine in court.

The Advertiser

A centenary of Rugby League history was the focus of The Advertiser's (Cessnock) first submission. The paper gave extensive coverage to this event which attracted more than 400 people to a special dinner organised by the Cessnock Supporters Club. The paper produced a well prepared history of the sport in the town which included interviews with a number of former players including three generations of one family who all played for the town. The paper devoted an additional five pages to the event itself which included a photo of the two oldest former players cutting the centenary cake. The second submission concerned a promise from the State

Opposition to not only keep open the Cessnock Hospital but provide \$2m worth of refurbishments. The Opposition would not commit to re-opening the maternity ward but assured young mothers they would be looked after at Cessnock once they had delivered their babies in nearby towns. This was reinforced a couple of months later (and after the State election) with a report on the post natal services available at the Cessnock Hospital.

Wingham Chronicle

A fire that destroyed one of the town's historic pubs was the first submission by the Wingham Chronicle. The fire broke out early on Monday July 5 2010 and quickly engulfed the whole building with three adults lucky to escape with their lives. Fifty five firefighters battled the blaze. In the same edition The Chronicle delved into its archives to publish a concise history of the hotel that dated back to 1866. The following week the paper rang interviews with some of the fire fighters who fought the blaze along with the former licensees who had owned the hotel for 23 years. A half page feature was also included on a number of the "characters" who had regularly frequented the hotel or lived there. Reports on severe floods in the town and district formed the paper's second submission. The paper reported that what started out to be nuisance rain that disrupted the weekend plans of many residents quickly developed into a one in 50 year disaster. The extensive reports were complimented by an extensive pictorial coverage.

Manning River Times

The effects of severe flooding of the Manning area in June this year were outlined by the Manning River Times (Taree). The Manning was one of several rivers on the central and north coast to be affected by the floods with more than 105mm of rain falling in less than 24 hours. The Manning River Times produced a special eight page publication that detailed the extent of the flooding accompanied by a large number of photographs. The special publication was followed four days later with another five page report giving more details about the effects of the flooding, the damage that had been caused and the risk to public health. Residents were urged to keep thorough records for insurance purposes and the paper gave details of the disaster relief support schemes. The paper continued with flood reports for another week devoting another eight pages to the relief effort. The paper's second entry involved a new Housing Commission project that neighbouring residents feared would lower their own house values and turn the area into a ghetto. The neighbouring residents were angered by the misleading information to come out of the Department of Housing which had allegedly claimed the new project would be for the over 55s and not for families. The mayor was also quoted as saying those responsible for the development should be gaoled for their incompetence.

The Singleton Argus

A referendum was held in Singleton last year where residents were asked to vote on three questions ... whether the mayor should be elected by the ratepayers; whether the number of elected representatives be reduced to nine; and whether Wards should be abolished. The Singleton Argus ran a series of articles about the referendum from July through to the outcome of the referendum in November. The views of the current councillors were canvassed as well as the views of local residents and even the views of mayors from surrounding local government areas. The result ... a resounding "yes" to all three questions. The paper's second submission was based around a report on the impact of coal mining on the village of Camberwell. Local residents were critical of the report claiming the government was putting the coal industry before the living conditions of nearby residents.

Barrier Daily Truth

The Barrier Daily Truth in Broken Hill submitted two related entries that focused on aged facilities (or to be more precise, the lack of them) in the city. The first series concentrated on the plight of 18 elderly patients who were forced to relocate from the city's hospital to nursing homes hundreds of kilometers away. The city's mayor called on state and federal politicians to help fix the problem. He pointed out the isolation of the city and the fact the nearest facility was 200 kilometres away. A respected visiting physician supported the city protest. The second series involved a city petition which urged residents to voice their disapproval of the state and federal government's handling of the aged care crisis. More than 9000 people signed the petition which represented a large proportion of the adult population.

Town & Country Magazine

The price of milk, and homelessness, in south eastern NSW were the subjects of the two entries submitted by Town and Country Magazine. The magazine reported on the concerns of dairy farmers in their region over the decision by Coles and then Woolworths to lower the price of milk to \$1 per litre. The last time milk was that cheap was nearly 20 years ago. Farmers claimed the price would reduce the amount they received at the farm gate forcing many out of the industry. The second article on homelessness quoted an Anglicare spokesman who said the South Eastern Region of NSW had the highest rate in the state. With the rising cost of basic services including electricity, grocery prices and rents, the article said many people could no longer afford to pay their bills and claimed many people were being forced to choose between paying rent or buying food.

Great Lakes Advocate

"Not in My Backyard" was the heading of the Great Lakes Advocate's first entry concerning a protest in Tuncurry over the demolition of four homes and a car park to make way for a new Woolworths store. Residents expressed outrage over plans to locate a loading dock adjacent to residential units claiming the whole development would reduce their property values. The Advocate's second entry also reported on the concerns of residents, this time over a proposal to build a new housing development containing 3000 homes. Residents claimed the development would threaten an endangered orchid only grown at the North Tuncurry site.

Maitland Mercury

The Maitland Mercury submitted a series of articles on a salary cap dispute involving members of the Maitland Pickers Rugby League Club. The paper broke the story stating members of the successful team were in danger of breaching the cap if they won more than 10 matches in the season. Following a team meeting players decided to take a pay cut "putting their premiership hopes before their wallets". One team member was quoted as saying: "There are more important things like winning a grand final or playing in a great team." The paper's second submission involved a twist to a tragic car accident which claimed the lives of two teenagers. A memorial to the young girls was erected at the scene outside the front entrance to a residential house. However, the memorial was a constant reminder of the tragedy to the owner of the premises (one of the first on the scene of the accident) who had been promised, but never received, trauma counselling. In an act of desperation he pulled down the memorial and erected it outside the Maitland City Council Chambers.

Commended is the Wingham Chronicle for their report on the fire that destroyed an historic hotel in the town in July 2010. . The paper gave a graphic report of the fire, ran interviews with a number of the fire fighters who had battled the blaze and spoke with a long time licensee. Follow up articles gave a history of the hotel and featured some of the people who lived there. The fire destroyed a vital piece of the town's history which was not lost on the paper or its readers. Also commended is the Maitland Mercury for the series of articles written by Sam Rigney on the town's Rugby League salary cap issue. Sam broke the story about the team being in danger of breaching the salary cap and the likely penalties if players continued to receive their winning bonuses. To avoid those penalties team members generously took a pay cut. The articles generated a flood of support for the team which was reflected in a massive turnout for a home game.

Highly Commended is **The Manning Times** for their reporting on floods that devastated the area in June this year. With 105mm falling in less than 24 hours widespread damage was reported. Many newspapers submitted flood stories but this was the best. Not only did the paper report extensively on the damage but produced a special eight page publication on the event. Follow up reports warned of the risks to public health. Congratulations to all the newspaper staff involved in reporting this event.

The winner of this year's award is the South Coast Register and their report of a car accident that claimed the life of a young man. Reporter, Glenn Elliard, came across the scene and wrote a series of articles that focused on the people and families affected by the accident and the need to upgrade safety at the intersection. It was obvious through the articles that Glenn developed a close bond with those involved, especially the family of the young man who was killed. This enabled him to give readers a personal insight into a local tragedy and the effects it had on a large number of people. There was also a positive outcome. The authorities finally agreed to improve the safety of the area to avoid a similar tragedy occurring again.

The Media Monitors Award

for

Local News Reporting

2010-2011

is awarded to the

ESTABLISHED 1885
South Coast Register

JUDGE: Greg Conkey



FORMER WINNERS

1955	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1974	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1993	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1956	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1975	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	1994	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1957	<i>The Gosford Times</i>	1976	<i>Windsor & Richmond Gazette</i>	1995	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1958	<i>The Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	1977	<i>Camden News</i>	1996	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1959	<i>The Gosford Times</i>	1978	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	1997	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1960	<i>The Young Witness</i>	1979	<i>Richmond River Express Examiner, Casino</i>	1998	<i>Southern Highlands News, Bowral</i>
1961	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>	1980	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1999	<i>Mudgee Guardian</i>
1962	<i>Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>	1981	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	2000-01	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1963	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1982	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2001-02	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1964	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1983	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2002-03	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1965	<i>The Barrier Miner, Broken Hill</i>	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2003-04	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1966	<i>Nambucca Guardian News, Macksville</i>	1985	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	2004-05	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1967	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1986	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, North Richmond</i>	2005-06	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>
1968	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1987	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2006-07	<i>Western Advocate, Bathurst</i>
1969	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1988	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	2007-08	<i>Glen Innes Examiner</i>
1970	<i>Wyong & Lakes District Advocate</i>	1989	<i>Cootamundra Herald</i>	2008-09	<i>Bega District News</i>
1971	<i>The Coffs Harbour Advocate</i>	1990	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2009-10	<i>South Coast Register</i>
1972	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1991	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>		
1973	<i>Mudgee Guardian</i>	1992	<i>Kiama Independent</i>		



The Oceanic Multitrading Award for Feature Writing

The outstanding quality of the journalists' craft and the array of topics they chose as subjects for their features more than compensated for the disappointing number of entries in this section. Since I last judged this section it was pleasing to read such a high standard of writing which reflected the excellence of interviewing and a grasp of the subject matter.

Mine was a difficult assignment, requiring a number of re-reads and assessments to find the ultimate winner. There was not one entry that didn't need to be assessed a second time so it was a pleasing task overall.

It must be noted that good feature writing is a significant contributor to a newspaper's overall appeal. Hopefully, next year, more editors will ensure their best features are represented in this section.

Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

One of the association's most respected newspapers and its two entries in this section were outstanding but Jasmine Highfield's interview and story of a mother who battled swine flu was rich in pathos and expression.

The Maitland Mercury

Emma Swain's account of a local nun's joy and participation in the canonisation ceremony for Mary McKillop was expertly crafted, cleverly woven together with the nun's own rich history. The two-feature entry was of a high journalistic standard.

Hawkesbury Gazette

This newspaper never fails to rate highly whatever the section it enters. Its two entries were outstanding but the pragmatic piece by Justine Geake about the possibilities of a Toowoomba-like tsunami hitting the local region was a classic.

Western Advocate, Bathurst

Recollections of war duty can sometimes be old hat but Sandra Parker's account of a local man's survival after being blown out of an aircraft at 19,000 feet then surviving the horrors of Dachau concentration camp was not just riveting but an editorial gem. A high quality entry.

The Singleton Argus

Another newspaper with a rich editorial history and its four entries did not disappoint. The news feature about sentencing justice for a man who assaulted a local woman which subsequently led to her death extolled the horror and gravity of domestic violence.

South Coast Register

"Stretched Blue Line" was the heading on a graphic, well researched feature spread across three pages that told of a community's fight for more police in their area and of the authority's earlier disregard of the problem. One of two cracking entries by this newspaper, either of which would not have been out of place in a metropolitan newspaper.



The Oceanic Multitrading Award for Feature Writing

Great Lakes Advocate, Forster

A strong all-round story highlighted by a compelling feature of a town rallying to provide a support service for gay couples. A newspaper that prides itself on being close to its community, their entry supported this philosophy.

Goulburn Post

You never expect anything but a high editorial standard from this newspaper and again it did not disappoint. Three entries all of top quality reading that depicted the newspaper's ability to find issues to titillate the reader.

COMMENDED: Great Lakes Advocate, Forster

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond and Western Advocate, Bathurst

The Oceanic Multitrading Award

for

Feature Writing

2010-2011

is awarded to the



JUDGE: Graham Gorrel

OCEANIC
MULTITRADING
PTY. LTD.
Exporter & Importer



The Oceanic Multitrading Award for Feature Writing

FORMER WINNERS

1962	<i>The Northern Star, Lismore</i>	1978	<i>Murrumbidgee Irrigator, Leeton</i>	1994	<i>The Riverina Leader, Wagga</i>
1963	<i>Gunnedah Independent Advertiser</i>	1979	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1995	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1964	<i>South Coast Times, Wollongong</i>	1980	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1996	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond, & Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1965	<i>The North-West Champion, Moree</i>	1981	<i>Tumut & Adelong Times</i>	1997	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1966	<i>Daily Liberal, Dubbo</i>	1982	<i>Murrumbidgee Irrigator, Leeton</i>	1998	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1967	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1983	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga</i>	1999	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1968	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1984	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	2000-01	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1969	<i>Moree Champion</i>	1985	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga</i>	2001-02	<i>Lake Times, Shellharbour</i>
1970	<i>Moree Champion</i>	1986	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2002-03	<i>Lake Times, Shellharbour</i>
1971	<i>Windsor & Richmond Gazette</i>	1987	<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i>	2003-04	<i>The Riverine Grazier, Hay</i>
1972	<i>The Cessnock Eagle</i>	1988	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>	2004-05	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1973	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	1989	<i>The Summit Sun, Jindabyne</i>	2005-06	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1974	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1990	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2006-07	<i>The Maitland Mercury</i>
1975	<i>Nambucca Guardian News, Macksville</i>	1991	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>	2007-08	<i>Northern Daily Leader</i>
1976	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1992	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2008-09	<i>The Maitland Mercury</i>
1977	<i>The Boorowa News</i>	1993	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	2009-10	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette</i>

Entries were received from ten mastheads, from across the state.

This year has seen a raise in the quality of photography across the board. Generally, good photography was rewarded with good layout.

Within each entry there were many good examples of sport, photo study, and news.

Commended: Goulburn Post

Three strong examples made up the entry from the Post.

Great timing, and good composition resulted in a good rodeo photograph in the sports section, the pic of graduating NSW Police students, was well captured and well displayed, and the news photograph captured the scene of an alleged tomahawk attack.

Good examples showing the diversity and style of photography.

Highly Commended: Manning River Times, Taree.

Diverse and strong examples of photography made up the entry from the Times.

Scott Calvin's gallery photo and Carl Muxlow's portrait of Sportstar of the Year showed good ideas that were well executed.

The surfing photograph of Michael Tyrpenou capped off the Manning River Times entry.

Winner

The Canon Award for Photography 2010-2011 is awarded to: The Maitland Mercury

The Mercury showed consistently high quality of photography in all the entries submitted. The winning entry consisted of strong examples of News, Photo study, and Sport photography.

Photographer Cath Bowen's style and sensitivity is strongly represented in the news photograph of the release of doves at a memorial service.

Cath also captured an intense moment during a basketball game. Her sensitive portrait of a young woman's tattoos completed the winning entry.

The Maitland team deservedly wins the 2010-2011 Award for Photography, for not only having great photography, but by backing it by using it well.

Congratulations.

The Canon Award

for

Photography

2010-2011

is awarded to the



JUDGE: Neil Newitt



FORMER WINNERS

News

1955	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1970	<i>Windsor and Richmond Gazette</i>	1985	<i>Deniliquin Pastoral Times and The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>
1956	<i>Singleton Argus</i>	1971	<i>Coffs Harbour Advocate</i>	1986	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1957	<i>Richmond River Express, Casino</i>	1972	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1987	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1958	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1973	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1988	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1959	<i>Singleton Argus</i>	1974	<i>The Macarthur Advertiser, Campbelltown</i>	1989	<i>Imlay Magnet, Eden</i>
1960	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>	1975	<i>Shoalhaven and Nowra News</i>	1990	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>
1961	<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>	1976	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1991	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1962	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1977	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1992	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1963	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1978	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1993	<i>Southern Riverina News, Finley</i>
1964	<i>Central Western Daily, Orange</i>	1979	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1994	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1965	<i>The Barrier Miner, Broken Hill</i>	1980	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1995	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1966	<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i>	1981	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>	1996	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1967	<i>The Border Morning mail, Albury</i>	1982	<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i>	1997	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1968	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1983	<i>Shoalhaven and Nowra News</i>		
1969	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>		

Study or Feature

1958	<i>Singleton Argus</i>	1972	<i>Southern Star, Moruya</i>	1986	<i>Lake Times, Warilla</i>
1959	<i>The Daily News, Murwillumbah</i>	1973	<i>Bega District News</i>	1987	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>
1960	<i>The Daily News, Murwillumbah</i>	1974	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	1988	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>
1961	<i>Singleton Argus</i>	1975	<i>The Macarthur Advertiser, Campbelltown</i>	1989	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1962	<i>The Daily News, Murwillumbah</i>	1976	<i>Shoalhaven and Nowra News</i>	1990	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>
1963	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1977	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1991	<i>The New Englander, Armidale</i>
1964	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1978	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1992	<i>Singleton Argus</i>
1965	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1979	<i>Shoalhaven and Nowra News</i>	1993	<i>The New Englander, Armidale</i>

JOURNALISM

The Canon Award for Photography



1966	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1980	<i>The Riverina Leader, Wagga Wagga</i>	1994	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1967	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1981	<i>Lake Times, Warilla</i>	1995	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>
1968	<i>The Border Morning Mail, Albury</i>	1982	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>	1996	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1969	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1983	<i>Lake Times, Warilla</i>	1997	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1970	<i>Coffs Harbour Advocate</i>	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>		
1971	<i>Coffs Harbour Advocate</i>	1985	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>		

Photography

1998	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2003	<i>The Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2008	
1999	<i>The Northern Star, Lismore</i>	2004	<i>The Maitland Mercury</i>	2009	<i>The Maitland Mercury</i>
2000	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2005	<i>The Maitland Mercury</i>	2010	<i>The Northern Daily Leader</i>
2001	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah, & Port Macquarie News</i>	2006	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>		
2002	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2007	<i>Manning River Times</i>		

This year the award for feature supplements attracted 7 publishers, well down on last year, providing 16 supplements to be judged. From the smaller number of entries, it appeared newspapers were less inclined to reap the rewards from producing great feature supplements for their readers' enjoyment. Several entries were of a commercial rather than editorial nature, which precluded them from scoring well.

A feature has many components, each of which impact on the reader. A great feature is just what it says – something that jumps out at the reader, whether it be serious, funny or sad, it is a record of a special event and deserves extra attention to content and presentation. These elements not only include the feature page and stories, but also headlines, photographs, captions, layout and introduction. Sometimes there was a difficult juggle between fine journalism, great graphics, time and costs.

Entries covered a diverse range of topics including sport, history, events and anniversaries. Whilst most editorial content was of high standard some features were disadvantaged by average news-page-style layout.

This year submissions were devoid of background statements to assist the judging – something that should be corrected for future entries. Information behind staff input, effort required, difficulties encountered, reader feedback and any impact on circulation or income could assist in differentiating the fine line between a winner and runner-up.

The Gilgandra Weekly presented a supplement for the Newspaper's Centenary which encapsulated some interesting historic material although presentation would have benefited by using modern design techniques to enhance their historical impact. Their second entry was a roundup for the year – Retrospect: Looking back on 2010. This retrospective contained a wealth of significant interesting content although was also let down by lack of creative presentation. It was a 4-page, 4-column, time-lined epilogue with 8 uncaptioned photographs. Both entries contained strong reader-interest material deserving of extra attention to layout.

The Maitland Mercury presented the 150th celebration of the Maitland Show, a great achievement and this supplement gave due credit to one of the oldest Show events in Australia. The feature was a fine example of how newspapers can lead other media by drawing down on the wealth of data stored in their archives. Down the side of each page an informative time-line, "Remember this" was highlighted while interesting historic photographs through the centre would have been enhanced with dating or captions. The Saint Mary feature, also by **The Maitland Mercury**, celebrated the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop with a 16-page colour souvenir. Excellent to see the many comments drawn from school children and although a little lost in the second half, an insightful interview with Kathleen Evans and her 'most wonderful story' – a miracle was emotive reading. Some aspects of this supplement appeared to be provided by associated daily newspapers.

The Manning River Times presented two features, both as A4 size booklets on gloss stock. The first was commemorating ANZAC Day over 16 pages. The content was quite informative with some insightful historic memories but struggled with its layout, while lack of captions would have disappointed some readers. The second entry, also a gloss A4 presentation titled Country Bride was more a commercial rather than editorial supplement and the copy presented for judging suffered badly from poor folding and trimming errors.

There were two gloss A5 entries from the **Muswellbrook Chronicle**, the 2011 Bengalla Upper Hunter Show Guide and the Muswellbrook Shire 2011/2012 Guide. The Show Guide entry was seriously commercial, had repetitive layout and with no evidence it was a supplement in the newspaper was difficult to be considered a serious contender. The Shire Guide was very comprehensive, but again, without any supporting evidence I consider this publication to be a commercial booklet published for the Shire and not a feature supplement of the newspaper.

The Monaro Post presented 4 colourful tabloid entries for judging. Two were editions of Your Farm while the others were Sunpost and Snowpost. These latter two had some terrific impact but were difficult to judge in this category without any evidence that they were supplements of the Monaro Post. Each contained a clear statement inside detailing unique distribution points and appeared to be stand-alone publications. The Your Farm features were a great idea with appealing front pages and I'm sure were well read by their whole community. There was a broad spread of content bonding farm and town readers with a significant depth of data. These supplements were refreshing for their content ideas and are worthy of effort to utilise a cleaner, more reader friendly layout technique.

Two entries from the **The Courier, Narrabri** were both historically based. The Boggabri Sesqui-Centenary was a massive 16-page tabloid celebrating the achievements of the very small township of Boggabri. This mammoth presentation featured such a small community with over 140 pictures (all with captions), excellent photography and historic pieces. Presentation may have benefited by melding story and pictures. The Annual Review 2010 was another huge production by The Courier, running to 24 tabloid pages on quality white stock. The result was a feature rich in content and complementing Narrabri's Sesqui-Centenary within its 2010 year in review. Laced with wonderful stories and snippets it also featured a large number of photographs. Such an important presentation though would have enjoyed greater impact using a creative rather than traditional 'news' layout.

The **Deniliquin Pastoral Times** presented a 4-page 25th Anniversary CMA Rally supplement. This feature was a good example of capitalising on a significant 'outside' event to promote the town to over 2,000 visitors, as well as involving the town within the event. It was introduced with a colourful front page story, backed up by some humorous snippets on page two. The Ute Muster event just grows every year and this supplement presented as a 4-page wrap plus six pages inside featured a cover that screamed with Cold Chisel and the two world records that were smashed. A colourful wrap with some exciting photography inside. This supplement suffered through the mix of wrap and separate pages and would have achieved greater impact if it had been possible to produce as an 8 or 12 page wrap. That said, they showcased well the results of a small town pulling together to achieve another world-breaking event.

In conclusion, our country newspapers publish supplements with a wealth of ground breaking, informative and well presented material for their readers. They contribute greatly to their communities and the events they promote. Stories are well written and many of the action photographs taken by country journalists are priceless. When combined with modern layout techniques they become the credentialed historical features of the future. Newspapers are more powerful in this digital age because their archives have authority, provenance and are now stored in both hard and digital formats for future benefit.

Today, as never before, newspapers are under attack. This attack is from a more varied base, but fortunately, these adversaries are uncoordinated and often from unreliable sources. Our newspapers need to focus on creative presentations, utilising print, web, social media and integrating all delivery channels. Smart phones have delivered a communication phenomenon for newspapers, enabling readers' phones to decipher the QR Code and expand the full digital story, photos and advertisements electronically. In supplements, these techniques could also be used to gain more revenue by delivering additional powerful value for promotions and advertisers.

With a smaller number of entries this year, I am prompted to ask if features are being overlooked as part of the newspapers' flexible armoury? I challenge all newspapers to look at how they can be further enhanced by integrating the new and emerging technologies into exciting new supplements.

Highly Commended is awarded to the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times* for the 'Special World Record Ute Muster'.

Runner Up is awarded to the *The Courier, Narrabri* for the 'Annual Review 2010'.

The Winner is awarded to The Maitland Mercury for 'The Maitland Show Celebrating 150 Years'.

**The Media Super Award for
Feature Supplements**

2010-2011

is awarded to



JUDGE: Barry Wilson



FORMER WINNERS

1970	<i>Windsor & Richmond Gazette</i>	1984	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, North Richmond</i>	1998	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1971	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1985	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	1999	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1972	<i>Tumut & Adelong Times</i>	1986	<i>Tumut & Adelong Times</i>	2000-01	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1973	<i>The Courier, Narrabri</i>	1987	<i>The Riverine Grazier, Hay</i>	2001-02	<i>Bega District News</i>
1974	<i>Glen Innes Examiner</i>	1988	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2002-03	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>
1975	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1989	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	2003-04	<i>South Coast Register, Nowra</i>
1976	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	1990	<i>Mudgee Guardian and Gulgong Advertiser</i>	2004-05	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1977	<i>The North Western Courier, Narrabri</i>	1991	<i>Tumut and Adelong Times, & The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2005-06	<i>The Border Mail, Albury</i>
1978	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	1992	<i>Deniliquin Pastoral Times</i>	2006-07	<i>South Coast Register</i>
1979	<i>Tumut & Adelong Times</i>	1993	<i>Port Stephens Examiner</i>	2007-08	<i>Namoi Valley Independent</i>
1980	<i>Port Stephens Examiner</i>	1994	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>	2008-09	<i>Muswellbrook Chronicle</i>
1981	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	1995	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2009-10	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1982	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	1996	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>		
1983	<i>Kiama Independent</i>	1997	<i>The Area News, Griffith</i>		

Special Publications have traditionally provided our newspapers, large and small, the opportunity to value add more focussed content and boost advertising revenues from industry and business sectors outside their regular client base.

In my experience special publications are really special projects – taking considerable more editorial effort and co-ordinated advertising sales than the regular newspaper routines.

However, well planned and well resourced special publications invariably add that boost in value for our readers ... certainly extra benefit from the focussed content for our advertisers ... and prestige for ourselves as multi-product publishers.

Whilst I am sure there are many members of Country Press NSW publishing excellent single and/or annual edition special publications, the criteria for this Award calls for the special publication entry to be a similarly-titled product issued at least four times a year.

The challenges for member newspapers in producing quarterly or monthly special publications can be daunting, and I take my hat off to the staff of newspapers achieving success.

The notable entries in this category were all high quality publications:

The **Deniliquin Pastoral Times'** monthly "**Farm Talk**", features strong editorial content with comprehensive coverage of topical rural issues, specialist advice and local seasonal rural activities as well as focussed agricultural advertising. Undoubtedly a much appreciated informative publication.

The Armidale Express' quarterly "**Seasons**" is an impressive lifestyle magazine with a well-balanced mix of local and syndicated editorial ticking all the boxes about people, fashion, history, health, dining, hobbies and businesses. Well designed advertising and graphic design adds to the publication's appeal.

The **Namoi Valley Independent's** magazine "**Energy**" certainly fulfils its task of informing the newspaper's local readership about the huge resources boom taking place in the region. A quality product with a balance of local editorial and commercial corporate content from the industry key players. Also assume it is a key product for the **Independent** in its quest to embrace the new residents the industry is bringing to the region.

There are two other entries which were excellent "special newspaper publications" in their own right, but were pressed to meet the "four times" criteria.

The **Port Macquarie News'** publication for the city's Ironman event was certainly a special newspaper publication for that event and especially the 1100 competitors. And the News' coverage throughout the event was significant.

The Courier, Narrabri's two entries – "Narrabri Heart of the North West" and "2010 Building Homes & Renovations" were also strong newspaper publications. The big effort in compiling the informative commercial business editorial in the building publication is especially acknowledged.

Our publishing landscape is changing, and I take great heart about the future of country newspapers when I see quality products adding value to our regular publications and extra opportunities for our advertisers. Thank you for the opportunity to once again be directly involved in the New South Wales Association's activities.

In recognition of the efforts of an obviously energetic editorial and advertising team, I have awarded a **Highly Commended Award to Namoi Valley Independent's** informative resources magazine "Energy".

JOURNALISM

The Media Monitors Award for Special Publications



Competition always brings out the best in every industry ... lifts our standards and sets new goals ... congratulations on a great magazine

The Award for Special Publications for 2010-2011 is made to ARMIDALE EXPRESS for 'SEASONS'

The Media Monitors Award

for

Special Publications

2010-2011

is awarded to

The Armidale Express

JUDGE: Greg Watson



JOURNALISM

The Goss International Award for Newspaper Presentation



Good stories about their communities well told and well presented – that is how country newspapers can withstand competition from the barrage of alternative media and information sources and flourish in the 21st century.

We all know how tough the newspaper publishing industry is these days, but the entries in this section demonstrate all that is good about community newspapers in regional NSW. These papers are clearly produced with passion, flair and innovation by dedicated and enthusiastic professionals.

The most highly rated papers were the ones that made the most of their resources, and provided consistent quality in presentation from the front page through the features sections to the sports section.

Daily and Tri-weekly Newspapers

Goulburn Post

The Goulburn Post's presentation is high quality from page one through to the sports section. Innovative graphic design incorporating the masthead is a feature of the front page, while the inside pages utilise a clean, modular design with strong page leads and outstanding use of photographs (which are often excellent). If the photo is good enough, The Post's designers will use it across the full page width on inside pages as well as the front and back. The Post's 2010 NRL grand final liftout (featuring a local-born player) was superb.

Manning River Times

Country newspapers are put to the test when big news happens in their community, and the Manning River Times responded really well with its excellently presented eight-page wraparound of the floods that devastated the Taree district in June. Generally, the paper is an imaginative and well-produced product.

Western Advocate, Bathurst

The Western Advocate is always a contender in the presentation category, and this year's entries were as usual highly professional. The paper is easy on the eye and easy to read – clear evidence that its designers know their business. Bathurst's daily paper always has very good features sections to match the over-all high standard of presentation in news and sport.

JOURNALISM

The Goss International Award for Newspaper
Presentation

GOSS | INTERNATIONAL

Highly commended: Western Advocate, Bathurst

The Goss International
Award for Newspaper Presentation
2010-2011
in the Daily and Tri-weekly category

is awarded to the



Goulburn Post

Leader in local news

JUDGE: Nick Hartgerink

GOSS | INTERNATIONAL

JOURNALISM

The Goss International Award for Newspaper Presentation

Weekly and Bi-weekly Newspapers

Great Lakes Advocate, Forster

The Great Lakes Advocate is bright and busy, with strong, clean front page layouts with good use of colour. However, the standard isn't consistent throughout the paper with some inside pages tending to look a little drab – grey and cluttered.

Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond

Innovative front pages are a feature of the Hawkesbury Gazette, which is prepared to push boundaries further than other papers. Sometimes its front pages work spectacularly and sometimes they don't come off quite so well, but you could never accuse the Gazette staff of not having a go. An example in the paper's entries for these awards was a graphic of an email to council election candidates that took up page one. It didn't quite work, but another front page using excerpts from a father's eulogy along with images from his teenage car-crash victim son's funeral was magnificent.

Milton Ulladulla Times

The Milton Ulladulla Times is a bright and busy newspaper, that manages to pack a lot of information and good photos into each edition. A mild criticism is the way the front page tends to look a little cluttered, with editorial graphic design features clashing with the advertising, but overall the presentation is very good.

Muswellbrook Chronicle

A good test for newspaper presentation is how easy the paper is to read. The Muswellbrook Chronicle passes this test with flying colours. Its pages are clean and uncluttered, with strong page leads and excellent use of colour. A very professionally-produced paper.

The Monaro Post, Cooma

The Monaro Post is a very individual newspaper, proudly independently-owned. There is a lot to like about the paper's presentation, from the excellent utilisation of big photos and generous use of colour to the quirky graphic design features sprinkled throughout the paper. I am not a great fan of the sans serif typeface for the body text, but hey, vive la différence!

The Scone Advocate

The Scone Advocate provided the most striking front page of any of the entries in this category. Fittingly, it featured a horse on the cover of its horse festival wraparound and it looked fabulous. However, the paper lost out a little because of lack of consistency of presentation through the paper.

JOURNALISM

The Goss International Award for Newspaper
Presentation

GOSS | INTERNATIONAL

Highly commended: Milton Ulladulla Times and The Monaro Post

The Goss International
Award for Newspaper Presentation

2010-2011

in the Weekly and Bi-weekly category

is awarded to the

HAWKESBURY
GAZETTE

JUDGE: Nick Hartgerink

GOSS | INTERNATIONAL

PRINTING

The WO Richards Award for Technical Excellence in Newspaper Production Printing Quality



The judging of the WO Richards Award for Technical Excellence in Newspaper Production came down to a decision between two newspapers, The Armidale Express and The Courier, Narrabri.

All entries were of a good standard but two newspapers stood out from the others as being technically better examples of newspaper production.

Both papers editions demonstrated a commitment to a consistent standard of newspaper production both in mono and colour.

Both entries editions demonstrated good cut offs and ribbon alignment. The black densities and contrast were of a good standard and the unit to unit fit was also of a good standard. There was minimum scuffing or set off on all editions of the two mentioned papers

Both papers in all editions displayed degrees of roping/piping and both had slight pin tears. All editions in both papers had a little bit of cylinder edge marking but had no other print faults such as show through, set off, scumming or wash out.

The Courier editions displayed a lack of yellow in some ads and half tones but not really to the detriment of the finished product.

The Armidale Express editions appeared to have excess yellow in some ads but not really to the detriment of the finished product.

I could not say one paper was better than the other so I have awarded joint winners.

PRINTING

The WO Richards Award for Technical Excellence
in Newspaper Production Printing Quality



The WO Richards award for
Technical Excellence in Newspaper Production

Printing Quality

2010-2011

is awarded to



THE COURIER

AND

The Armidale Express

Sponsored by



JUDGE: Terrence Nolan

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

The DIC Award for Locally Produced Advertising



This award was established in 1976 by Dampier Advertising Pty Limited, a subsidiary of Country Press Limited. Its purpose was to promote excellence in the production of local advertisements among member newspapers of the New South Wales Country Press Association. Sponsorship was transferred to the Advertising Clearing House Pty Limited, a subsidiary of Country Press Limited, which was acquired by the Neville Jeffress Advertising Group in the 1980s. This company was sold in mid-1996 and renamed TMP Worldwide, supporting the awards for two years.

In 1999, the sponsorship of the award was assumed by Media Monitors Australia, a Neville Jeffress company, and traces its genesis to a subsidiary established by the Country Press Co-operative Company Limited in Sydney in 1927.

Both colour and mono sections of the competitions were judged on general impressions, originality and professionalism of design and copy caption.

In 2009, this award is assumed by DIC Australia and now open for all locally produced advertisement in two categories – circulation up to 5,000 and circulation over 5,000.

Newspaper circulation up to 5000

Entries this lacked the clean design elements that gave last year's top entries impact and readability, although they continued to display commendable innovation and a preparedness to take risks to gain attention.

Highly commended – South Coast Register

The Register's advertisement for *South Coast First Aid Training* was the single exception to my introductory comment: a well-illustrated and laid-out promotion for first aid training with clear, thoughtful copy and a powerful headline idea.

Runner-Up – The Singleton Argus

Well-chosen illustrations for *Downunder Engineering* supports a professional and workmanlike message for an engineering and mining services firm, with restrained but pleasing use of colour appropriate to the subject matter.

Winner – The Courier, Narrabri

Two great ads for local businesses showed flair and creative application to the selling message. *Pursehouse Rural* is not a sophisticated ad but it took a couple of arresting illustrations, combined them with "speak bubbles" and made them fun to catch the reader's eye. An ad for men's shorts for *Authentic Trademarks* could have been dull, but an excellent photo combined with a simple, light-hearted message made it stand right out.



The DIC Award for
Locally Produced Advertising
(Newspapers with a circulation of up to 5000)
2010-2011
is awarded to



THE COURIER

JUDGE: Ross McPherson





Newspaper circulation over 5000

Although the number of entries was small the quality was impressive: arresting headlines, clear, clean layouts and adroit use of colour reflected a high degree of professionalism.

Runner-Up – The Great Lakes Advocate

The Advocate's entries for *Twin Towns Toyota* and *Sleepdoctor* oozed professionalism and made the choice between winner and runner-up a difficult one for the judge. Both ads featured excellent use of colour, relevant illustrations and smart, well-considered copy. Fine work.

Winner – The Area News, Griffith

The Area News used attention-grabbing headlines and powerful illustrations to superb effect in its advertisements for *Hunky Dory* and *Ron Dalla's store*. Ads like these are a small business's dream: expert use of the selling elements has them punching well above their weight for their size and both of them amply illustrate the power of great press advertising.

The DIC Award for
Locally Produced Advertising
(Newspapers with a circulation of over 5000)
2010-2011
is awarded to

The Area News

JUDGE: Ross McPherson





The Daily Advertiser, Wagga

Chamber of Commerce Business Directory & 2011 Business Awards

This is an outstanding example of the genre. Very good advertising support, a good advertising to editorial/advertorial ratio. It is obvious the Chamber, the Wagga Wagga business community, and the Daily News all cooperated closely to make this a success. Notable that the Daily News secured the job from another local operator, and locked the work down for 3 years, meaning they get time to derive a decent return on all the hard work they did up-front.

The Business Awards feature is a nice effort, combining sponsorship, circulation and advertising components to tie the paper closely to a lucrative section of the business community. A solid and professional effort from the team at the Daily Advertiser.

The Rural, Wagga

Riverina Field Days

Open and clean layout, with advertorial positioned ad-hoc to make best use of space. Cover was a tad unimaginative, but once inside the feature the reader was given a clear idea on what to expect at the field days, and no doubt advertisers appreciated the quality advertorial and layout design. Very solidly supported by exhibitors.

The South Coast Register

Behind the Bars & Zero to Five

Not often the opening of a Correctional Facility generates an advertising opportunity, and provides a good community message at the same time. Impressed by the work that went into securing this feature, some of the inter-departmental liaising must have been difficult at times. Well done.

Zero to Five provided expectant and new Mums with valuable guidance on their special time of life. Great supporting advertising, logical and clear layout and quality editorial and ad design.

The Area News, Griffith

Griffith Home Buyers Guide

If there's one thing homebuyers can't get enough of, that's information about loan, building, landscaping, design...you name it, they'll read it! Always a popular topic, and well-supported by local advertisers. A good read.

The Singleton Argus

Parenting Handbook

A very targeted product, which makes it ideal for advertisers of all sizes. No doubt a popular addition to the paper, and it is good to note revenues are on the increase year on year. Handy size ensure durability of product, always a benefit for smaller advertisers who are watching their budgets.

The Singleton Argus (with The Musswellbrook Chronicle & The Scone Advocate)

The Handbag Wedding Guide

Durable and quality product with a long shelf-life for the advertisers. Great layout and design, and the product is put together in a logical and user-friendly way. No doubt advertiser response will ensure this becomes an annual profit-maker for these papers.

Pastoral Times, Deniliquin

Building and Renovating

Good to see features still being published on newsprint, and run as part of the paper, I feel advertisers get great value as being a part of the news pages. Layout of pages, design of advertisements and quality of photos were all high. No doubt had a positive result for advertisers.



The Area News, Griffith Catholic Schools

A great departure from standard tabloid, this double-sized fold-out demanded to be read. Quality creative design, and the unique physical delivery means the client was portrayed in a very positive manner, it is no surprise to read how delighted they were. In an era that many clients of this type are declining spenders, it is heartening to see such a fresh approach and to read of such significant revenue.

Mudgee Guardian & The Weekly Community Minded & Group 10 Grand final

Great mining feature, obviously massive support from the local mining support industries, and the local businesses who are benefiting from the economic lift that mining money brings. Obviously a 'whole of paper' effort from the Mudgee team to get this massive supplement produced.

Their second supplement, Group 10 Grand Final, was a creditable effort and gave fantastic exposure to a grass-roots sport that wouldn't otherwise gain such valuable publicity for the biggest game of the year.

Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah Women in Business and Christmas Gift Guide

Always a popular read, the NVI Women in Business feature uses plenty of smiling faces to draw the reader to the page, where a selling message can be delivered via the associated ad.

The Christmas Gift Guide is a shoppers delight, crammed full of different ideas for all members of the family. Great magazine-like layout, all sorted into easy-to-browse categories to make it even easier for the reader.

Riverina Leader Wagga Spring Travel & Gardening

A bright and attractive diversion from the normal news pages, this supplement provides a wide array of holiday and travel options for local readers. A yardstick of a good advertising feature is "will it work again" and the Riverina Leader has now run several Travel features with much success. Advertisers certainly are attracted by being able to submit editorial contributions.

The Gardening feature was nicely supported by advertisers, and the inclusion of the annual planting guide gives the feature longevity, meaning better returns for advertisers. Nice wrap-around approach, combined with the use of superior stock, gives the feature position and prominence.

Manning River Times Taree Christian College & Manning Valley Anglican College

When you're onto a good thing....stick to it! Bright, open 4 page "pull-throughs" from two different schools show the recipe is working for the Manning River Times

The Monaro Post, Cooma Innovations

This is a high quality supplement with an abundance of small and large advertisements and strong ad percentage. The name "innovations" allows sales people to cast a slightly wider net than for standard building and renovating features. A very creditable effort by the team.



Highly Commended – The Monaro Post, Cooma

The DIC Award for
Commercial Supplement

2010-2011

is awarded to

Mudgee Guardian
AND GULGONG ADVERTISER
THE WEEKLY

JUDGE: Steve Bowden



ADVERTISING & MARKETING

The DIC Award for Advertising Ideas



I was delighted to judge the 2011 Country Press Newspaper Awards - 'Advertising Ideas' category. There were nearly 20 entries all of which were good quality. The number of entries is a dramatic increase on previous years and perhaps reflects more positive economic times in our rural communities. Entries covered the traditional staple of advertising ideas like celebrating the successes local football teams and clubs. However I am interested to see new areas of advertising revenues developed by new thinking in rural newspapers. To that end I narrowed the field down to the following finalists;

Runner-up - The Irrigator, Leeton for creative use of space and concept with Westpac 'L' shaped ads. it is not only volume or glossy magazines that can attract awards. the approach of The Irrigator to run 'L' shaped ads for Westpac that contain the message 'not happy with your bank? - a solution is just around the corner...' cleverly leading the readers to the branch manager and message around the corner of the ad. It is a good use of space and 'breaks through' all the advertising messages and clutter. I'm sure we will see it in metropolitan campaigns for the banks in the future.

Winner - Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah for their magazine insert 'Spring - From Paddock to Plate'. This is the first of what is planned to be an annual glossy colour magazine inserted into the newspaper and also distributed through various outlets. The magazine promotes the fine produce of the Namoi Valley and has the potential to generate a series around rural NSW. The quality of the production was 1st class, excellent photography and writing. Most importantly it appears profitable judging by the volume of advertising and lays the base for future success.

The DIC Award

for

Advertising Ideas

2010-2011

is awarded to

Namoi Valley
Independent

JUDGE: Councillor Shayne Mallard



The marketing & promotion entries showed a reliance on “tried and true” initiatives this year rather than the innovations we have seen in this section in recent years, perhaps reflecting the uncertain times. While most newspapers now have an on-line component, it is surprising that we don’t see more experiment in sustaining and growing audience through bundled newspaper and on-line platforms – surely the way of the future.

The Singleton Argus

The *Crazy Day* concept has been entered before from various markets but the Argus’s execution of it – the Argus has been co-ordinating the day for 20 years – almost guarantees success. The promotion proved consistent and persistent, reinforcing a “Paint the town red” theme throughout and constantly reinforcing the identification of the Argus with the day.

The Armidale Express

The Express launched the *Rainbow Trout Kids’ Club* in conjunction with its re-design and has met its early targets through a novel variation of attracting the under-12s in its market through a kids’ club. The club’s paraphernalia and the touchpoints it uses to engage its members through the paper have been well-thought out and pave the way for future engagement on-line – a smart strategy which should keep the Express high in the minds of its young readers over time provided it is well-executed.

Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah

The Independent’s *Stop and Shop in Gunnedah* promotion encouraged local shopping with Christmas cash vouchers as prizes and achieved handsome revenues with 19 participating businesses – a neat design that could be deployed in any market to reinforce the papers’ relationship with local businesses.

The Moree Champion

The Champion’s centenary supplement featured contributions from former staff as it recorded the paper’s reporting over the decades. It was well-supported by advertisers and demonstrated the integral role newspapers have played in regional communities over time, while acknowledging that the nature of both newspapers and communities have changed, and continue to change.

Runner-Up - The Armidale Express



The Norske Skog Award
for
Newspaper Marketing and Promotion
2010-2011
is awarded to

The
Singleton Argus



JUDGE: Ross McPherson



Thanks to our Sponsors

