



Country Press New South Wales Inc.

Australia's oldest newspaper industry association
Founded 1900

2013-2014

Newspaper Awards & Judges' Comments

114th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Rydges Sydney Central
28 Albion Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

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JOURNALISM

SECTION 1

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Journalism

Judge: Chad Watson

"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 impregably 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 honored 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 crisis 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.

Chad Watson is editor of the Newcastle Herald and holds a Bachelor of Arts (Communication Studies) degree from the University of Newcastle. Having started a cadetship with the Herald in 1989, he spent his formative years covering surfing, football and music. Mr Watson later had stints as a police reporter, magazine writer, daily columnist and newspapers-in-education coordinator before moving into editing roles. He also worked as a part-time media course presenter at The University of Newcastle, Hunter TAFE and WEA.

In 2007, he was appointed chief of staff of The Sun-Herald in Sydney, where he later served as news editor and acting editor. He then enjoyed a stint as night editor of The Sydney Morning Herald before returning "home" to become deputy editor and now editor of the Newcastle Herald.

Mr Watson has collected numerous journalism awards, including Northern NSW "Prodis" for sub-editing and design, a National Youth Media Award for feature writing, and a team Walkley Award for coverage of community and regional affairs. Under his editorship, the Newcastle Herald has won successive Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association Awards for best newspaper and website. He is a member of The University of Newcastle's Alumni committee while also serving on the external advisory board for the School of Design, Communication and IT.

He is an ambassador for the Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance and the White Ribbon campaign to stop violence against women, a committee member of the Hunter Region Sporting Hall of Fame, part of Newcastle's community engagement group for the 2015 Asian Cup football tournament, sits on the national media group for Mindframe (advising on the reporting on suicide and mental illness), is a board member with the Joy Cummings Reserve Trust, a committee member with New Lambton Football Club and a Justice of the Peace.

Winner

The Armidale Express

The Armidale Express manages to stand out in a sensational field. Provocative journalism delivered consistently with eye-catching design incorporating clever headlines. News content is strong and presented with flair, sometimes even daring. Strikes refreshing balance between big-picture community issues and human interest stories. The opinion page overflows with views and information via "Our Say" from the masthead, reader letters and web comments. The Armidale Express – as Australia's third-oldest newspaper – is clearly evolving with its audience and region. Daily metropolitan editors should take note of this dynamic bi-weekly offering.

Highly Commended

The Northern Daily Leader

The Northern Daily Leader is an exceptional newspaper that keeps getting better. A fearless approach to campaigning journalism has rightly gained national attention this year. The Leader's tremendous commitment to covering the annual Tamworth country music festival is something most mastheads can only aspire to. It looks great and reads well. Also deserves recognition for its devotion to local sport, with the back of the paper often matching the front for lively content.

Certificates of Merit:

Dailies: The Daily Advertiser

Tri-Weeklies: South Coast Register and The Area News

Weeklies: Milton Ulladulla Times

One-Journalist Newspaper (if required): Blayney Chronicle

**The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for
Journalism
2013-2014
is awarded to**

The Armidale Express

FORMER WINNERS

1953	<i>The Daily Examiner,</i> Grafton	1972	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	1992	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette,</i> Richmond, and <i>Illawarra Mercury,</i> Wollongong
1954	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury	1973	<i>The Evening Post,</i> Goulburn	1993	<i>Kiama Independent</i>
1955	<i>Manning River Times,</i> Taree	1974	<i>The Evening Post,</i> Goulburn	1994	<i>Namoi Valley Independent,</i> Gunnedah
1956	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1975	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra</i> <i>News</i>	1995	<i>The Valley View,</i> Tuggeranong
1957	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury	1976	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra</i> <i>News</i>	1996	<i>Port Macquarie News</i> and <i>Namoi Valley Independent,</i> Gunnedah
1958	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1977	<i>Richmond River</i> <i>Express Examiner,</i> Casino	1997	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette,</i> Richmond
1959	<i>The Daily Examiner,</i> Grafton	1978	<i>The Queanbeyan Age</i>	1998	<i>Armidale Express Extra</i>
1960	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1979	<i>The Inverell Times</i>	1999	<i>Manning River Times,</i> Taree
1961	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1980	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2000-01	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>
1962	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	1981	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	2001-02	<i>Manning River Times,</i> Taree
1963	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	1982	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra</i> <i>News</i>	2002-03	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury
1964	<i>Northern Daily Leader,</i> Tamworth	1983	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	2003-04	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury
1965	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury	1984	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	2004-05	<i>The Border Mail,</i> Albury
1966	<i>The Northern Star,</i> Lismore	1985	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga	2005-06	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga
1967	<i>The Daily Examiner,</i> Grafton	1986	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2006-07	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga
1968	<i>Northern Daily Leader,</i> Tamworth	1987	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette,</i> Richmond	2007-08	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga
1969	<i>Moree Champion</i>	1988	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette,</i> Richmond	2008-09	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga
1970	<i>The Courier,</i> Narrabri	1989	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2009-10	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga
1971	<i>Windsor & Richmond</i> <i>Gazette</i>	1990	<i>Namoi Valley</i> <i>Independent,</i> Gunnedah	2010-11	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette,</i> Richmond
		1991	<i>Illawarra Mercury,</i> Wollongong	2011-12	<i>The Area News,</i> Griffith
				2012-13	<i>The Daily Advertiser,</i> Wagga Wagga

JOURNALISM

SECTION 2

The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for Editorial Writing

Judge: Russell Eldridge

Russell Eldridge is a retired editor of The Northern Star newspaper. He now writes fiction, freelance articles, trains journalists and conducts corporate media training. Russell began his career in South Africa, working on The Natal Witness, the South African Press Association and the Johannesburg Star. He immigrated to Australia in 1979 to work for the Sydney Morning Herald. He made a lifestyle change and moved to the NSW North Coast. After two glorious years of hippiedom, he was sucked back into mainstream journalism and worked for The Northern Star, based in Lismore.

He retired as Editor in 2008. Russell has won several regional, state and national newspaper awards including W G Walkley Award Commendation. He edited and co-wrote a history of South African Tennis. He is a founding member of the Byron Bay Writers' Festival committee and regularly moderates sessions at that Festival. He also has a long association with the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival as a volunteer, and more recently as a moderator.

General Comments

The two leading entries were notable for the passion and sincerity of their arguments. The voices were clear, original, and the editorials offered specific information to back their point of view. Overall, it was good to see newspapers focusing on local issues, avoiding grandstanding on international affairs. There were many instances of strong individual editorials among the entries, but inconsistency let some of the papers down. Structure was a problem for some writers: If the writer has thought carefully beforehand and organised their supporting data, they would be in a better position to set out a coherent argument from the start. Originality of expression also needs attention. Leader writing can be onerous, and there were examples of skilled writers slipping into cruise gear, motherhood statements and generalisations.

WINNER

Deniliquin Pastoral Times

The keyword here was passion. Each editorial dealt with a relevant local issue. The paper's position was stated clearly and boldly, and then backed up with strong argument. The editorials were hard-hitting without becoming shrill. You felt the writer cared deeply about these issues.

Highly commended

The Cowra Guardian

A good example of how editorial writing need not be formal. The writer's individual style was engaging and quirky. The human touch would have resonated with readers, even if the first person pronoun was overworked. But the issues were real and well-examined.

Commended

Southern Highland News, Bowral

The submitted editorials were relevant local issues, delivered in clear language. The points were well made and thoughtful, with the community's best interests at heart. Use of more specific examples would have improved the paper's chances.

General comments:

The Armidale Express

An uneven entry. The best were good and the weakest were mere observations of current events. Some good issues were tackled and would have had more impact with clearer arguments and a tougher line.

The Courier, Narrabri

The editorials feature good writing skills. Arguments are approached in a roundabout way and would be better served by making the point early. Offer specific examples rather than generalisations.

The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga

Good issues are covered. The strong, formal style gives the editorials a formulaic tone. The comment would be improved by the writer using their own language rather than that of rhetoric and cliché. Specifics would work better than generalisations.

Goulburn Post

The editorials deal with worthwhile topics. Too much space is given over to reiteration of stories and quotes already reported. This may be a problem of too much space to fill. A shorter editorial column and more developed arguments would improve the content.

Guardian News, Nambucca Heads

Good local issues tackled here. The writer would be well served to focus more tightly on what point they want to make, and then back it up with specific arguments. The editorials are let down by poor command of the language.

Mudgee Guardian and the Weekly

Good issues and good arguments. With better structured editorials, this could have been a contender. The writer's position needed to be clear at the start. One editorial on something called the Drip was confusing. A visitor to a town should be able to understand the local paper's editorials.

The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth

A lively, colourful style. The issues were pertinent and the arguments reasonable. The language at times relied on emotive flourishes that weakened the impact and led to generalisations that could play to prejudices and work against understanding.

**The EC Sommerlad Memorial Award for
Editorial Writing
2013-2014
is awarded to**

DENILQUIN

~ Incorporating the Denilquin Standard ~

1859 ~ 2014

PASTORAL  **TIMES**

FORMER WINNERS

1971	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1992	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>
1972	<i>The Singleton Argus</i>	1993	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1973	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1994	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1974	<i>Shoalhaven & Nowra News</i>	1995	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1975	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	1996	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1976	<i>The Evening Post, Goulburn</i>	1997	<i>Manning River Times, Taree</i>
1977	<i>The Queanbeyan Age</i>	1998	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1978	<i>Murrumbidgee Irrigator, Leeton</i>	1999	<i>The Courier, Narrabri</i>
1979	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	2000-01	<i>The Coonamble Times</i>
1980	<i>The Macleay Argus, Kempsey</i>	2001-02	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1981	<i>The Armidale Express</i>	2002-03	<i>The Northern Star, Lismore</i>
1982	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2003-04	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1983	<i>Cooma-Monaro Express</i>	2004-05	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1984	<i>Kiama Independent</i>	2005-06	<i>The Western Advocate, Bathurst</i>
1985	<i>Port Macquarie News</i>	2006-07	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1986	-	2007-08	<i>The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>
1987	<i>Hawkesbury Gazette, Richmond</i>	2008-09	<i>Merimbula News Weekly</i>
1988	<i>The Newcastle Star</i>	2009-10	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1989	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2010-11	<i>Goulburn Post</i>
1990	<i>The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	2011-12	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>
1991	<i>Namoi Valley Independent, Gunnedah</i>	2012-13	<i>Guardian News, Nambucca</i>



iSENTIA
INFLUENCE • INFORM • INSIGHT

JOURNALISM

Section 3

The iSentia Award for Local News Reporting

Judge: Mal Kearney

Mal Kearney's 43-year career in journalism in was spent almost entirely and always deliberately in regional newspapers, mainly in the Hunter Region.

Positions included several periods as an editor of weekly, tri-weekly and daily newspapers, both paid and free. Other posts in the newsroom embraced all aspects of the news presentation, including photography.

For eight years he was the national journalism trainer for, at first, Rural Press Limited, and for Fairfax after the merger in 2006. Retired now and still living in the Maitland area of the Hunter Valley, he still does some writing and photography, with a distinct emphasis on travel.

General Comments

Okay, a soap-box moment; there is a pressing need in our industry to lift language skills. Too often, quotes are used because the reporter simply collects the words from a source and passes them on, unaltered and most definitely unimproved through paraphrase or clarification. Surely readers pay their money for newspapers so they can be spared the turgid jargon of officials and have whatever is the topic *de jour* reported in language they can understand. Moreover, they deserve to have that same information carefully arranged according to their interests and compressed so they can get the information and then get on with their lives.

If this seems harsh criticism, I'd suggest at a time when newspapers are trying to retain favour with readers, we can't afford to be ignoring anything that enriches the reading experience.

One more observation and the nagging will stop: Punctuation serves an extremely important role in text. In writing, it is the emphasis, inflection, pace and meter of the spoken word. Commas are almost universally abused and deserve better. Hyphens have an important role but have not been seen in sensible use since the dinosaur age. Apostrophes lie in an unmarked grave. Omitted or incorrect punctuation causes readers to backtrack to reread sentences, and they don't have time for that, they're emphatically telling us.

So I'm not seen to be a complete newspaper Grinch, an upside that definitely deserves comment and recognition is that many of the reports sent to be judged (and others in the newspapers sent for judgment) would not have been possible if the newspapers and the people who staff them were not trusted and held in high regard. It's a business in which enemies are made more easily than friends, but our communities would know a terrible void if the papers were plucked from them.

Further – and finally – new sources for news need to be found and embraced. We must have our measure of MPs, mayors, cops, etc but we will be seen to be more inclusive if we also have washing machine repairers, grocers, stay-at-home mums and others. If you think they don't have any news to tell or comment on, you're not monitoring social media.

Highly Commended

The Daily Advertiser

So much true drama plays out in courtrooms and inquests, so this makes them prime positions for reporters in search of raw tales of the human condition. Equally, investigations into the conduct of those in society we should trust can deliver both justice and drama that newspapers owe in coverage to their readers. The Daily Advertiser had a coronial inquest into a murder-suicide and an inquiry into the

professional competence of a doctor as the basis for its entries. Each was told with no obvious omissions and with a compelling narrative. By the barest margin, the 'Tiser was pipped at the post by . . .

WINNER

Northern Daily Leader

The edge in this win was that the Leader was prepared to put some skin in the fight. Advocacy is risky, especially where a drug such as marijuana is concerned. The issue had potential for a backlash from the community over an ex-drug squad cop sourcing marijuana to relieve his terminally ill son's pain and with any one of a number of experts who might bring strenuous or humiliating counter-argument to the debate. But none did, and, in the end, it was the politicians who were left lonely and out-of-touch on the issue. The Leader and its association with the sick man's family to strive for reform grew to be a national issue. But the fight was always coming from home ground in Tamworth, enabling the newspaper to stay at the sharp end of the coverage, led from the front by editor Daniel Johns. It was always a hard story to put down and an example of how newspapers can shape and progress their community or, in this case, the nation.

Additional Entry Comments:

Bega District News

Vietnam veterans who reunite in Bega after 40 years – with the News providing a link that enabled the reunion – draws together a number of aspects of regional life that newspapers do well. Reporting such events is the obvious, but the newspaper's letters pages carried the call to find missing comrades, including one who was thought to have been killed. The reports blended history and contemporary events well.

Shark attacks grab national attention like few other tragedies, so a fatality at Tathra would always be a hotly contested story by all media. The News's editor responded swiftly to get to the scene and used the newspaper's good will to get close to local sources. Comprehensive coverage included a newspaper clipping from 1891, the last reported shark fatality in the area. A dark day for one family and its community was a well captured by the News.

Corowa Free Press

A trail of political attempts to fund a stock sale yard upgrade had all of the aromatic qualities of the sale yard's atmosphere. The trail winded through the customary tug-o-war between the tiers of government to end with the yard's owner, the local council, choosing to do a limited refurbishment with its own means. More interpretation needed.

The Free Press's other entry was a bio-piece on an English immigrant who has spent his 40-plus years in the district in community service, enough to award him a local Australia Day honor. He was a deserving winner but learning this did not take the reader through a well-organised narrative. Reference to earlier facts was too often necessary for a smooth read.

Cowra Guardian

Like a pub with no beer, a town's oncology unit without a nurse has little chance to serve its purpose – but it makes for some deserving copy to keep the public, especially the suffering public, informed and those who run these services accountable. The Guardian did both, although it leaned heavily on jargon quotes and did not venture into interviews with present and potential users of the service.

A new dam is no small issue for rural and effected town dwellers, so a proposed storage aroused arguments about its impact on natural heritage and its cost-effectiveness compared with alternatives. The Guardian's coverage over a few weeks (before the cut-off time for entries) covered key aspects but it did not seem to tap the sentiment of a wider circle, leaving its reports based on predictable sources.

Goulburn Post

A \$5.7 million civic construction project is significant in a city the size of Goulburn, and its implications for ratepayers make it necessary for coverage by a local newspaper, and cover it the Post did. Through procedural anomalies, dissenting voices and investigations by regulators, the Post kept readers informed about the issues, the points of view and efforts to change them. The complexity of the topic often meant large swathes of grey on the pages. Access and appreciation of many facts might have been better if graphically represented.

Three mates go fishing in a canoe on a dam, but only two return. The Boxing Day accident gets comprehensive coverage from the Post and is followed with a tribute on the day of the dead man's funeral. Coverage was well composed and contained detail that brought the reader close to the event.

Great Lakes Advocate

Local newspapers typically get to write the epitaph of deserving citizens in their communities, and the Advocate took on a tribute to a 29-year-old who had died from testicular cancer. The newspaper augmented its coverage with pictures on the web, a marvellous opportunity to overcome the limits of space in the printed edition. The report was extended to family and peers to make for compassionate and complete coverage.

Public sentiment seldom runs to sympathy for criminals, perhaps because we often don't know their story. The Advocate told of a convicted teen and a mentor for his recovery from crime in a fine interview piece that gave insight into the motives of each, offering an understanding we are too often keen to deny ourselves. Good interview that could have benefitted from paraphrased alternatives to some wordy statements.

Milton-Ulladulla Times

Medical services are always close to the hearts (and other organs) of readers, so the erosion of these services arouses concern and a flurry of excuses, denials and flick-passes by those responsible. Accountability, in such circumstances, is fair game and civic duty for local newspapers, and the Times stepped up in fine fashion when this scenario happened on its watch. Dangerous overuse of the jargon and euphemism that is the ammunition in such circumstances did happen, but was tempered by a fine story about one man who had to arrange an advance on his Newstart allowance for a medical fee; flesh and blood in what was an almost anesthetising debate.

Namoi Valley Independent

A bikie gang bust in Gunnedah is news to yank the country town into the capital city Big Time. The Independent was there shutter-snapping and note-taking as leather-jacketed suspects were patted down and spread-eagled on the clubhouse lawn. Newspaper deadlines in larger centres mean such coverage is usually confined to mop-ups, but this put readers on the street across from the event.

Cessnock Advertiser

This judge is on record for a conviction that editorial treatment of newspaper promotions does not qualify for consideration as Local News Reporting. By definition, news reporting is that spectrum of defining, gathering, compiling and writing information the newspaper and its reporters must hunt and capture. Promotions are generated inside the newspaper or by a source that delivers it in all but a complete package. On this basis, the Cessnock Advertiser's coverage of the opening of a new hardware store in its area did not qualify for judgment. Bad roads are the bane of most living in the country, and always a gung-ho topic for a local newspaper. So the Advertiser offered space to those who suffer third-world roads a few kilometres from a new motorway. It invited nominations for Cessnock's "worst road" and

made a campaign of it. Gripes aplenty, but no interviews that suggested why the conditions are what they are or when or how a solution might be found.

The Inverell Times

Suppose there could be an abattoir that was almost self-sufficient for energy, had a surplus of fresh water, produced fertiliser commercially and created new jobs. Inverell is going to have one, and the Times told how it came about, including a meeting in Canberra over a cup of coffee where the plan was hatched. Snapshot graphic made information easy to comprehend.

Homelessness is a difficult topic because its victims are usually private so the speaking is left to carers and administrators for whom, with every respect to their contributions, telling a story is overly cautious and not typically their strength. It's up to the reporter to make it so, but the Times fell short in the effort entered for the awards. No pictures, so faceless people told a story about the problem and not sufficiently about or by the people who live it. Tombstoned copy put a human story – and an important one in our increasingly disconnected society – out of reach to too many readers.

The Daily Advertiser

Two entries from the Daily Advertiser show its holistic commitment to news presentation. It starts with topic, quality of reporting and presentation through layout, pictures and graphics. The first entry is coverage of an inquest into a murder-suicide under the headline “No one saw this coming”, a summation of the inquest findings that there was no clue a father would take the life of his 13-year-old son and then his own, sparing two other children and his estranged wife. A family's bewilderment and a mother's anger are sensitively portrayed on the front and across two inside pages. Thorough professional job, with none of the quality control issues that plague so many papers these days.

“Not good enough” is a clever *double-entendre* into the death of a woman on the operating table by a surgeon whose competency is questioned and a system that didn't detect or predict any inadequacies in time. The Advertiser pursues the issue through its many channels, producing a thorough picture of all aspects from family pain to the doctor's defense and the regulators' reactions. Both reports speak to the professionalism of the newspaper.

Southern Highland News

This report about insufficient effluent to commission a treatment works had the promise of a good chuckle, but, somewhere between a cost blow-out and explanations of the supply chain failure and remedy, the humor dissipated. If there's another treatment plant to be commissioned soon, it's hoped the News can find its funny bone in time.

Monaro Post

Vacant shops in Cooma's CBD had the Post calling for action but getting little of it from town leaders, the mayor forecasting a report the following month. The report entered the debate the following March, but the issue was then to go to a public meeting. The business chamber was keeping its own counsel on the matter and didn't answer the Post's questions. A worthy campaign for the newspaper but (presumably) two reports a year is not enough to keep the pot boiling. Some statistics could have been done graphically and an editorial or two seemed warranted to share in direct terms the newspaper's concerns for the town's commercial destiny.

The South Coast Register

A tree with a trunk that resembles human buttocks, not surprisingly called the Bum Tree, aroused public support when it became known it was to be removed for road widening. The Register chronicled some hot-potato passes over civic responsibilities and origins of the tree's termination order along with the public support demonstrated for its retention. Alas, the Register was also there for its final moments as

chainsaws gnawed it from the ground. A good example of where public sentiment goes, newspapers will follow.

In another example of people power, this time more successful, the Register followed in several editions the bashing of a 76-year-old and the support he was given by residents and their subsequent rallies to demand and create safer streets as police hunted and finally captured the two assailants. The paper followed their journey through the courts to sentencing. A forgiving victim was the final report on the front page. The coverage was an illustration of the now often omitted practice of following such stories through to their completion. Well done.

The Irrigator

A council ranger shoots a dog after it is captured because of a complaint. This triggers a community-wide debate about the council's handling of several issues related to pet dogs and The Irrigator sticks with the topic despite the best efforts of local officials to be secretive, especially about an independent report on the action and its broader issues. The newspaper effectively blends reporting and support for pet-owners and sympathisers through a subsequent incident to the eventual Solomon's Wisdom solution of blame shared between the ranger and the owner and fresh procedural changes. A compelling and complete coverage that didn't lose objectivity while representing a clear community concern.



iSENTIA
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**The iSentia Award for Local News Reporting
2013-2014
is awarded to**

**The Northern Daily
LEADER**

JOURNALISM

Section 4

The Australia Post Award for Feature Writing

Judge: Graham Gorrel



Graham Gorrel has had 55 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 weekly columns in The Daily Advertiser on current affairs and sport. He judges newspaper and journalism awards in NSW, Victoria and South Australia and runs a weekly local news comment program on community radio station, 2AAA FM.

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

He was regarded highly as a sports commentator on television. Graham has been a member of Rotary for more than 34 years at the South Dubbo, Hornsey (London), Wollundry Wagga and Wagga Wagga clubs and he was awarded a Paul Harris fellowship in 2007.

With an obvious increase in entries compared to the previous year's category the anticipation that with 14 entries this year there was something special ahead in the judging process was to be quickly confirmed. Also established early on was a definite surge in the scope of subjects covered by the feature writers and quite clearly proof that the quality of the journalist's craft was alive and well. Not one entry disappointed. Interest in the subject matter was held throughout. All this meant for a challenging job in determining winners and in the end a Commended and Highly Commended were added to the winning entry.

It must be mentioned that smaller newspapers held their own in this section and the newspapers concerned are to be congratulated for allowing their writers to source and write features which are time consuming, a difficult assignment in a small country newspaper office. Well done!

WINNER

Great Lakes Advocate: Two stories _ poles apart in context _ by Janine Watson provided riveting reading. Breaking the silence on one woman's horror story of domestic violence was contrasted but balanced with another of a love story that has endured 60 years. Great reading by a compassionate and skilled writer. The newspaper is to be congratulated for prominently placing each story.

Highly Commended

Southern Highland News: A two-part feature on a local aboriginal woman's life story was splendidly written by Megan Drapalski but the second entry about a local woman often seen walking the streets of Bowral with a bald-chested cockatoo on her arm or shoulder stole the show and was written with great warmth and feeling by Emma Biscoe.

Commended: Goulburn Post: A newspaper that normally produces great features, didn't disappoint. Online editor Chris Gordon's tribute to local teacher, Rick Buckley, a much-loved mentor of many local students was powerfully written. The community work of the Salvation Army was the subject of another strong feature in this entry.

Other entry comments:

Tenterfield Star: Two absorbing entries submitted by journalist, Renate Moerman, that showed great writing maturity about two widely diverse topics. The story of a couple's love affair that blossomed from their attachment to second hand furniture and thus a shop, was well written with feeling, as was a story about local Landcare enthusiasts.

Namoi Valley Independent: This newspaper never disappoints. Its history of creative writing was again displayed with a number of articles leading into Anzac Day about the war-time experiences of local people but the single entry by Ashley Gardner about a family's battle living with dementia was not only poignant but appropriate at a time when national importance increases to combat this disease.

The Scone Advocate: Caitlin Andrews' story about a man who gave Scone "150 per cent" and made "it a better place" was written with great warmth and admiration as was an equally fine piece about a local man made good which was in fact a story within a story as it was something of a recommendation for bringing up the family in a better place _ the country regions.

Milton Ulladulla Times: Journalist Glenn Ellard never fails to write entertaining features and his two entries this year were right up there with the highest journalistic standard.

South Coast Register: The contribution to the local community's society by three people, two of them now great friends from diverse backgrounds, provided two entries that were of outstanding quality and were right in the contest all the way.

Guardian News, Nambucca: An entry that concentrated on the men and women who served the district through war and military service seen through the eyes of a local author, was well documented by the newspaper; it was balanced with one about the retirement of a well-respected magistrate.

The Singleton Argus: The newspaper produced three entries. All of which matched the standard expected from this institution of country press journalism. The pick of them was a story of great merit by Louise Nichols about using education to open doors.

The Inverell Times: Two interesting entries about local men and their lifestyles and philosophy on life, each well-crafted by the writer that held the reader's attention to the end.

The Irrigator, Leeton: Three outstanding local agricultural businesswomen who were placed in the top 100 in their field formed the basis of the newspaper's main entry with the other focusing on a boost for a local pre-school in funding but posed the question, at what cost to those left out? Well-crafted in each case by journalist, Talia Pattison.

Cowra Guardian: Two passionately written stories about people, affected by trauma, setting out to raise funds to assist others. These are always touching stories but also require strong writing to give maximum exposure to the related issues. These two stories did that.

Mudgee Guardian and The Weekly: Two strong parochial entries with the main one being examples of a regular feature about the story behind the town's street names. Painstakingly researched and a credit to the writer, Sam Paine. The second was the newspaper's review of a major overhaul of the town's former Town Hall.



The Australia Post Award for Feature Writing
2013-2014
is awarded to

 **Advocate**
GREAT LAKES

JOURNALISM

Section 5

The Media Super Limited Award for Sports Journalism

Judge: Ian Heads



Ian Heads has covered the passing parade of Australian sport for more than 50 years - as a sportswriter for newspapers and magazines and since 1988, as author or co-author of more than 40 books.

Along the way, Ian has helped tell the stories of some of Australia's most renowned sporting figures - including Mark Taylor, Jack Gibson (4 books), Matt Burke, Ken Arthurson, Ian Thorpe, Frank Hyde, Noel Kelly, Brian Mayfield Smith, Arthur Beetson, Nova Peris, Des Renford, George Piggins, Louise Sauvage, Shane Webcke (2 books), Peter Sterling, Wayne Pearce and Ken Sutcliffe.

He wrote a definitive history of rugby league 'True Blue' in 1992 and co-authored the major (1988) Bicentenary book: '200 Years of Australian Sport; A Glorious Obsession' and 'And the Crowd Went Wild' (2011) – both with Gary Lester.

In 2008 he co-authored with David Middleton the major work, 'A Centenary of Rugby League, 1908-2008' - the official celebration of the game's first 100 years. His latest books are a major centenary history of Sydney's Balmoral Beach Club and 'The Night the Music Died: How a Bunch of Bushies Forged Rugby League's last great Fairytale' – telling one of the great underdog stories of Australian sport.

A former president of the Australian Sportswriters Association and a senior Media Liaison Officer for the AOC at the Atlanta, Sydney and Beijing Olympics, Ian received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2010 for "service to the media as a sports journalist, author and mentor". In August 2014 he was one of the first 15 inductees into the Sydney Cricket Ground's new Media Hall of Honour – alongside the likes of Richie Benaud, Ray Warren, Frank Hyde, Bill O'Reilly, Norman May and Ray Robinson.

General Comments:

The world of sport this year provided a healthy harvest of entries from across NSW, small towns and larger, and a great variety of material. With entries from a dozen different newspapers, it was a formidable juggling act for a lone judge to match up entries covering a remarkably wide range of sporting territory. I commend all entrants and continue to admire the daily and weekly task at all of the newspapers involved – and the daily challenge within them for journalists to switch from subject to subject, inside sport itself – and way beyond, of course. Often there are immense amounts of copy to be written..... story after story – such as Ben Harris's effort for the Mudgee Guardian and Weekly in covering the National Touch League at Coffs Harbor.

Contemplation brings back memories of my own starting days at Sydney's Daily Telegraph in the early 1960s – of the diversity of 'general news' jobs day by day, then, at weekends, the different task of trying to cover sport(s) – with gradually acquired knowledge and growing expertise. How much things have changed. When I started at the Tele, there was one female news reporter (on a large staff) and none in sport. In tackling these awards, I noted the numbers of female journos on the sporting pages and enjoyed the work of the likes of Lauren Wright (Southern Highland News and Great Lakes Advocate) and Samantha Newsam (The Northern Daily Leader)

Well done all. As the great League coach Jack Gibson might have put it: 'You 'played strong ...done fine.'

Commended

South Coast Register

'Road to Recovery' & 'Bails Fly'

Two excellent and well displayed stories presenting the contrasting face of sporting lives. There is inspiration in Patrick Fahy's news/feature of a young man courageously fighting back after a serious sporting accident and a cracker of a photo accompanies Jordan Matthews's back page story, expanded inside, of a local cricket star reaching a notable milestone.

Highly Commended

The Daily Advertiser (Wagga Wagga)

'Coverage of the Wagga Wagga Cup'

In all aspects – the stories told by journalist Matt Malone, the colourful photos (of both horses and humans) and the down-memory-lane '10 Great Moments' features penned by Courtney Rees – the Advertiser covered the 2014 Gold Cup carnival with style, expertise and thoroughness. It was a big-town paper coverage thoroughly befitting one of the grand annual sporting events of an ever-growing city.

WINNER

Goulburn Post

'Tackling Concussion'

'Light shines through on Wendy's day'

Chris Clarke's April 11 feature on a subject increasingly in the spotlight in world sport – that of the effects of concussion in the 'collision' games – was both timely, as the discussions raged in the wider media, and also tailored to local realities in country sport. It began with a colourful declaration by a well-known football man of how things used to be when players took a knock.

It was excellent sports writing....and educative.

Chris Clarke's story on Wendy Walter, wife of the renowned horseman Guy Walter who had passed away two weeks before was illustrated by an outstanding photo, taken on a wet afternoon at the Goulburn track. The jockeys line up in respectful remembrance. Wendy that day won her first race as a trainer. The tears flowed, and Chris's story captures the poignancy of the occasion. A fine photo, and a story to match.



**The Media Super Limited Award for Sports
Journalism
2013-2014
is awarded to**

Goulburn Post

JOURNALISM

Section 6

The Canon Award for Photography

Judge: Sam Mooy



Sam Mooy picked up a camera at age 15 and hasn't put one down since. Moving to Sydney at age 18, Sam worked as a freelance photojournalist, contributing to The Courier newspaper group and Australian Associated Press.

In 2004, Sam was employed by The Australian Newspaper, Australia's only national newspaper, where he worked both national and international assignments for the News Limited masthead for 10 years.

Sam's work has been also selected as finalists in the Walkley Young Journalist of the year 2008 & 2009, Australian Head-On 2014 and the Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum International Photography Award 2014.

In May 2014, Sam was appointed Photographic Editor of Australian Associated Press, Australia's national wire agency, which services both national and international publications.

Winner

Northern Daily Leader

"We can't go on" This page one image by staff photographer Geoff O'Neil encapsulates a strong news picture despite tough lighting conditions. Not an easy task but handled well with the use of suitable aperture, reasonable fill, composition and interaction with the subject, instead letting the environment speak for the picture. The image reflects the story brief by illustrating the tough climate and lack of water and envelops a feeling of isolation with life on the farm, facing these conditions.

"Olivia's racy star return" Barry Smith's page one image of a young actress shows technical skill in dealing with strong lighting conditions and using his local knowledge of locations to produce a page-one-feature photograph which evolved a beautiful environmental portrait, engaging the reader to be brought to the story.

"Big bash a smash hit" As is often the case in sport, the picture can be over in a split second, an image Gareth Gardner captured with fantastic timing an eye-grabbing image in a local cricket match run out.

Highly Commended

Mudgee Guardian

"A contribution that counts" - Darren Snyder's page one image of local wine maker David Lowe encapsulates all elements needed for an eye grabbing front page image. His technical use of natural light, shallow but suitable aperture, composition and engagement of the talent resulted in an image fit for the front page. Impressively, he wrote the accompanying story too.

"Onward and Upward" - A lovely well rounded page one image, composed strongly, the picture breathes life as Snyder just captures kids being kids. A perfect page one image to reflect NAPLAN scores improvement in the district.

"Catching final bug" A fairly straight forward sport image, Snyder's image of a local baseball player spells out the score in the local Mudgee Softball Association. The image, shot wider than most for baseball, draws in local engagement of fans seen watching the match, but is rounded out well with a caption paying tribute to the valuable role of the catcher during the game.



**The Cannon Award for Photography
2013-2014
is awarded to**

**The Northern Daily
LEADER**

JOURNALISM

Section 7

The Media Super Limited Award for Feature Supplements

Judge: Laurie Barber



Laurie Barber has worked on many country newspapers, including those at Inverell, Maitland, Tamworth and Port Macquarie. He is a past Rotary district governor and serves on the national board for Australian Rotary Health. He was Port Macquarie's senior citizen of the year this year. His books include Please Print for Country Press Australia and My Word, Ringo and Massacre at Myall Creek for Sid Harta Publishers of Melbourne.

General Comments:

In years past, most newspapers had quality supplements covering something of importance in their district, whether a centenary, a country show, the opening of a new industry or even something "manufactured" to aid the newspaper's bottom line, such as an industrial feature. What is happening to some city newspapers is not necessarily what is happening in the country. Have country newspapers decided to give the game away and leave the front running to television, or the internet? Do some country editors feel intimidated and no longer able to take the initiative? If standards have dropped, then this is a time for sober reflection and a determination to do better next year. Let's return to the golden age of country newspapers. It can be done. Please try to be a strong part of your community again and do the things country papers used to do well. (I once edited a 104-page country supplement and I have in my possession a 126-page country paper supplement, both well-supported by advertising.) Don't give up without a fight because of what others might say about the future of newspapers.

Congratulations to those papers that entered this section and subjected themselves to criticism that they might feel is unwarranted.

WINNER

The Courier, Annual Review 2013

I was very impressed with the Courier's feature on 2013 and to my mind this was what country newspapers have always done best. This supplement, stapled, was on good quality paper, with good captioned photos, a story on page 2 saying what the feature was all about and quality throughout. From the excellent first page to the last, Courier staff obviously took this supplement seriously. I was extremely pleased to see this feature and I congratulate all at the Courier for a top-class effort.

This was the type of supplement that I remember from years past in many country papers. It was a good size, on good quality paper, the short stories and pictures were relevant, they also had captions and thought was put into the layout. There was some very minor criticism at the wording in a few Courier stories. For instance, on page 7: "Earlier this month it was announced that..." The announcement could not have been "later this month" so why include the word "earlier"? And what is meant by "it was announced that". What was announced that? Pedantic? Perhaps, but my instructions were "this is an educational exercise, as well as a competition" and I think the editor deserves some modest help along the way. Overall, the editorial quality was excellent and reading the supplement was a pleasure. Congratulations to all involved on a great effort that shows the value of a country newspaper to its own community.

Highly Commended

Irish Woolfest, Boorowa;

An excellent front page led into this feature. The second page had a welcome story saying what the feature was all about. Page 3 had three stories about local businesses, which I felt could have gone further back, but no doubt that was a marketing decision. The remainder of the small feature was good, with good pics and good editorial, as well as pleasing advertising support from local businesses. To me, this was what a country newspaper supplement should be all about. Congratulations to all involved.

Centenary edition

Having just read the Courier's annual review, I then turned my attention to the centenary edition. Again, a story on page 2 said what the feature was all about. Contributors included the Prime Minister. Pictures were relevant and properly captioned and across the bottom of most pages was a time line of what happened in the community in that year. Tied in with the newspaper's centenary was a lot of information about Narrabri. The paper even had Page 3 girls at one stage. I have no doubt this paper was read from cover to cover. A lot of work went into this. Congratulations go to all involved.

Great Lakes Advocate

Pacific Palms Recreation Club celebrating 50 years

This was a six-page supplement, strongly supported by advertising, with editorial content featuring the beginning of the club, the search for long-term members and what the club provides now. I felt the history of the club, with a big headline, should have been a bit forward from the last page, but the supplement showed what the club now offers.

Amaroo Cruises, celebrating 35 years

This was a small but pleasant supplement with some great pictures of whales, dolphins and birds. The supplement was well-supported by advertising. The supplement was able to include a picture of the paper in 1979 announcing the arrival of the new ferry boat. It wasn't too big on history, but it served its purpose in showcasing an important local industry.

Nambucca Guardian News

The Year That Was

This feature was a bit confusing, but it had some good photographs. It started on page 14, which meant a couple of pages were repeated. The captions to the photographs were listed as "clockwise", which meant the reader had to choose a starting point and try to guess the photographs which were being described -- something I don't like, but I might be in the minority. It was, nevertheless, a good feature. A little bit of editorial content would have helped and better page numbering, if possible.

Local achievers:

A similar criticism about page numbering could be applied to this feature. The first page I was judging was the newspaper's front page, then page 2, then page 2 repeated, and then back to the front page, then page 8, then page 7 (a real estate page), then page 9, two copies of page 10 and finally page 9 again. This was no doubt a problem imposed on the editor, but it was a bit confusing to the judge and possibly to casual readers. The feature was well-presented with good photographs and lots of detail that other newspapers in my opinion did not include but I had the feeling at least some of the information in this feature had to be presented as a news item anyway. Top marks for the effort, but please look at page numbering for next year.

The Inverell Times

2014 Best Employment

This was put together in a professional manner, but the editorial treatment was scant, apart from three stories -- one about the guest speaker, one from the chamber of commerce president (who used to be my

next door neighbour) and one from the mayor. The stories were good and relevant to the subject. The photographs were attractively presented and borders were good, but I felt a short story devoted exclusively to what the business awards were all about would have helped a great deal.

Holy Trinity School Jubilee

This feature had only two stories, but it had many relevant photographs, from the time the school was established to the present day. It also had a box with relevant dates in the school's life. I enjoyed looking through this feature, because I felt it was all that was needed in a supplement of this type. I am sure readers enjoyed looking at the photographs. I know I did, but to be more relevant to the casual reader all photographs should have captions in addition to simply the year. Even if you don't know the names, each photograph must have been important to somebody.

Northern Daily Leader

Tamworth Regional Council

This was an excellent entry, but I have been told two nominations have to come in this section. It had some good photographs and some strong, short stories, in a glossy, stapled format. I am really sorry I could not judge this entry, because it was top class and deserved a better fate.

The Cowra Guardian

Look What We've Got For You

The title on the front page and the holiday-mood photograph were eye-catching. But I had difficulty finding what the feature was all about – although I believed it was a feature on why people live in, and visit, Cowra. I felt even a small box saying what the feature intended to convey would have been a great help. Black introductions, in a different typeface, were on page 2 but abandoned for the other pages. It was well produced, although I felt the lines around boxes were a bit unusual and even a bit overwhelming in some places.

Newspaper Week

I was pleased to see that one of the entries – only one in this section – covered what country newspapers were doing to recognise Newspaper Week. It had a good front page story on the relevance of newspapers, and this theme was continued on the inside pages. The front-page heading had Cowra Guardian in italics, but it was not in italics inside. Photographs were well-framed. Congratulations to the Guardian on having a go, and shame on the other papers for not joining in at a time when papers everywhere think they are under threat. Every paper should have had a Newspaper Week feature. Try not to mix your typefaces. The editorial at the bottom of page 20 said "clockwise, these are just some examples of our successful advertisements throughout the year". Why "clockwise"? I liked your comment on the last page that said, rightly, "the town's most comprehensive local news content". Page 22 could have had slightly smaller type with more spacing.

Boorowa News

Lest We Forget

This again was an appropriate feature, with a good front page and relevant pics and stories inside. I really felt that Boorowa was fortunate to have a paper such as the Boorowa News, that was trying to be a key part of the community. The section "MAPPING OUR ANZACS" was excellent. Everything was in the right place and despite the passing of the years this feature showed that a country newspaper can still do a good job on such an important subject. There seemed to be some confusion about whether you should write ANZAC or Anzac. Opinions differ, but to my mind, be consistent with whatever you choose. The bottom of the front page said "Remember the ANZAC's".



**The Media Super Limited Award for Feature
Supplements
2013-2014
is awarded to**



THE COURIER



iSENTIA
INFLUENCE • INFORM • INSIGHT

JOURNALISM

Section 8

The iSentia Award for Special Publications

Judge: Mark Hodgson

Mark is a third generation newspaperman who joined the family newspaper as a cadet journalist at the age of 16. He also completed a trade course as an offset printer and platemaker. Mark is a life member of Country Press Australia, and Queensland Country Press Association.

General Comments

It was rewarding to see a greater number of entries in this category compared to last year.

This award is to recognize top quality in journalism and advertising, and the general presentation of this content in special publications.

The general purpose of these special publications would be to attract interest, increase circulation and widen readership appeal within the newspapers distribution area or to its specifically directed clientele.

Special publications must be published at least four times during the competition year, and entries must comprise one copy of two different issues. I stress this condition, as there were several quality publications that unfortunately had to be overlooked, because they failed to comply with this condition.

Because of the large number and high quality of entries I have awarded an encouragement and highly commended award as well as first place. Congratulations and well done be to all newspapers.

The encouragement award goes to the GOULBURN POST, GOULBURN, for their publication ETCH.

Well done on producing a publication aimed at encouraging young readers to support our print media while at the same time incorporating their own forms of social media. A very new product with issues no 1 and 2 supplied for judging. The product was well composed for the younger reader, and putting much effort to encourage reader input and participation. Good use of pics with editorial. I look forward to seeing this publication with more editions under its belt, as I feel with the reader support already evident it should have a good future with young readers.

I feel ETCH should be a great tool for the Goulburn Post to widen the newspapers appeal to their younger audience and increase circulation to a group of readers they may not be attracting.

Congratulations to Brittany Murphy and all her team at ETCH and wish them every success with this new publication.

Highly Commended

The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth
'Taminda Advertiser'

An eye-catching quality quarter fold, produced with much pride and enthusiasm.

The pages all had a clean easy to read layout, supplemented with some great local pics and backed up with great local editorial, all of this stitched into a quality gloss cover.

The advertising content is strong and a plus to see an easy find advertising index in the early pages. Print quality is A1. With accurate consistent registration and good ink density throughout the product.

Advertising and editorial layout was uncomplicated, fitting well with the idea of the publication, and making things easier for the printers to deliver a quality magazine.

A truly great product to insert and value add to its parent newspaper, and one guarantee to work well for the advertisers featured.

Congratulations to Anna Rose, Cheryl Pomroy and all your team on producing a publication I feel sure all at the Northern Daily Leader and justly proud of.

WINNER

Southern Highland News
'Snapshot'

Judging by the reader contributions of both pictures and editorial from their local community the publication is truly appreciated and owned by the community of the Southern Highlands.

Advertising content is strong, and readers are both entertained and informed by a great mix of local stories highlighting the characters and events of the surrounding communities.

The magazine format and composition of the pages is clean and easy to follow and read. The printing is of an extremely high standard, as is the quality and composition of the photos throughout the publication.

Editorial content was varied, appropriate for this type of publication and just the right length for a magazine format. A good use of white space and graphics throughout the layouts.

This product would most certainly be retained by its readers and would most probably be found on most coffee tables throughout the Southern Highlands, and provide a great library of local stories and reference articles, a huge benefit for the many supporting advertisers.

A truly worthy winner of the special publications category, I congratulate Jackie Meyers and her professional and talented team at Snapshot on producing a publication our industry can be very proud of, well done.



The iSentia Award for Special Publications 2013-2014 is awarded to

Southern
HighlandNews

JOURNALISM

Section 9

The Award for Newspaper Presentation

Judge: Nick Hartgerink



Nick Hartgerink spent 24 years as a journalist at the Illawarra Mercury in Wollongong, where he was Editor from 1995-2001. He is now a media consultant and author, based at Kiama on the NSW South Coast. He has written five books, including a best-selling biography of motorcycle racer Wayne Gardner (1989), a history of the clubs industry in NSW co-written with Gary Lester (2009), and a history of the University of Wollongong for its 60th anniversary (2011). He is currently working on his sixth book.

General Comments

The way newspapers present their editorial content doesn't just reflect the technical skills of the journalists, photographers and graphic designers who contribute to a paper's look and feel. In many cases it also reflects their passion for their paper.

That's one of the reasons I have enjoyed judging the Presentation Category for the Country Press NSW awards for the past decade or so. Passion is clearly evident in all the entries.

During this decade, outsourcing design and sub-editing tasks to large central hubs and even off-shore has robbed some of Australia's larger regional dailies and even metropolitan mastheads of much of their flair and individuality. Many larger papers seem to be produced to a formula.

Country newspapers in NSW, on the other hand, have done a pretty good job of retaining their identity - judging by the great diversity and creativity among the entries in the two sections of this category.

The standard of this year's entries was once again outstanding, particularly in the bi-weekly/weekly category which had a pleasing large number of entrants. Consequently I had three Highly Commended Awards in the bi-weekly/weekly category because I couldn't split the contenders. The winner, however, was a stand-out - as was the winner in the daily/tri-weekly category.

The two winning newspapers are excellent benchmarks for the other mastheads.

Many of the entrants included a special edition of coverage of a particularly important event in their communities, and these features were invariably of a very high standard both in content and presentation. It is pleasing to see country papers in NSW doing a great job on their presentation despite the industry's well-catalogued challenges.

Section i: Daily and Tri-weekly Newspapers

WINNER

Daily Advertiser, Wagga

The Daily Advertiser is always a leading contender in this category, and this year's entries maintained the high standard and professionalism in design and overall presentation that we have come to expect. The quality literally bursts out of the front page, with outstanding use of photographs, arresting graphics and big, smart headlines. The quality is maintained throughout the paper, with strong page leads on the news pages, quirky headlines and excellent use of colour. The Advertiser's features, especially the excellent Saturday section, and sports pages maintain the high standard.

Highly Commended
Goulburn Post

The Goulburn Post is another consistently strong performer in this category. This year's entry editions were again attractive and easy to read, with imaginative front pages and excellent use of photographs and colour. The Post's editorial team are restricted somewhat by tight space, but make the very best of what they're given.

The winner of the Award for Newspaper Presentation for daily and tri-weekly newspapers for 2014 is

The Daily Advertiser

Section ii: Weekly and bi-weekly newspapers

Great Lakes Advocate

The Advocate is a busy, bright paper with bold headlines, strong page leads and good use of photographs making it a pleasure to read. The Advocate's sports and features sections are outstanding, while a supplement on a local cruise company celebrating 35 years was particularly well presented.

Inverell Times

The Inverell Times draws readers in with busy, interesting front pages, and backs that up clean, modular layouts in the early general news. Strong page leads are a feature throughout, while the paper's features pages are presented particular well - a nice bonus inside the paper.

The Irrigator, Leeton

The Irrigator won this section in 2013 and certainly didn't let standards drop in 2014. Once again it provided the benchmark in this section, with eye-catching and imaginative front page graphics and smart, well-designed inside pages featuring strong page leads. The Irrigator's Federal Budget feature was a standout, with all the critical information presented in an attractive and easily-digestible format. The Irrigator oozes professionalism.

The Courier, Narrabri

The Courier exudes quality and consistency, following a well-honed formula from the front page to the sports section. Its attractive design is based on excellent use of colour and photographs, and packing in lots of content without getting too cluttered.

Highly commended: The Courier, Narrabri, Great Lakes Advocate and The Inverell Times.



**The Media Super Limited Award for Newspaper
Presentation**

**2013-2014
is awarded to**

The Irrigator

JOURNALISM
Section 10
The Country Press NSW
Award for Online Editorial Coverage
Judge: Emily Sweet



Emily Sweet began her career as a cadet journalist for Victorian daily, The Courier, in 2006. She covered various rounds including court, rural, water and environment, business and property, as well as acting as chief of staff. During this time, she was the recipient of a Rural Press Club of Victoria Award for best regional news story. In 2011, she was appointed Online Editor for The Courier, where the website won several accolades for online coverage through the Rural Press Club of Victoria, PANPA and the ANZIA Internet Awards. She joined the national Fairfax Regional Digital Media team in 2012 as Digital Editor for Western Victoria. In this role, she oversaw The Courier, Wimmera Mail-Times, Stawell-Times News and Ararat Advertiser's websites and their transition from being solely print publications to multi-platform news organisations. In 2013, she was appointed Deputy News Director (Digital) for the national team, before leading the team acting as News Director in 2014.

Highly Commended
South Coast Register

WINNER
Manning River Times

As a non-daily, traditional coverage of a bushfire for the Manning River Times would have to wait until its next edition. But this site has fully embraced the use of its website and its tools, to provide rolling coverage to its audience.

The site provided galleries and video footage, with the site's photographer working from the RFS headquarters, uploading photos into the coverage well into the night.

Social media is a vital tool during emergencies in regional communities and the site received lots of engagement via its Facebook feed.

A great use of digital platforms to tell the story as it unfolded and keep the community updated around the clock.



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

**The Country Press New South Wales Award
for Online Editorial Coverage
2013-2014
is awarded to**

MANNING RIVER
Times

JOURNALISM

Section 11

The Country Press NSW Community Leadership & Involvement Award

Judge: Paul Roberts



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

Paul Roberts has 30 years' experience in the industry after starting his journalism career as a copy boy at News Limited in Sydney in 1983. He completed his cadetship on the Daily Telegraph and joined the rugby league team on the sports desk at The Telegraph in 1987. He transferred to London in 1990 for a stint as Sports Editor at Leisure Week magazine.

In 1991, Paul took up a position as sub-editor at the Hawkesbury Gazette and Courier, and in 1993 was appointed News Editor. He was promoted to Managing Editor in 1998.

Paul joined the Rural Press (now Fairfax Media) training team in 2005 and was promoted to Editorial Training Manager in 2008. He took on the added role of Training Operations Manager in 2010, and is now part of the newly-structured training team in 2013. Paul spends his time away from newspapers and the media with wife Karen on their mountain bikes.

General Comments

This award's criteria place the most pressure on today's newsrooms. Not only does it ask for the end result – in print or digital – but also for the community interaction and leadership. Too much to ask? Never.

Even with the added pressures of digital platforms, our role is to lead conversations. It's to pro-actively jump in the driver's seat to support our communities, not take an easy ride on the recliner of reactive journalism.

All of the entries in this year's award jumped on board that bus and steered clear of that back seat. Most however, took to the safety of the centre and only one grabbed the wheel with both hands.

This award is about people. Too often we're putting processes before people. Yes, we're finding stories of interest. But all too often they come from the squeaky wheel and we find it difficult to shake them and discover the thoughts of our broader community.

Many of the story packages in this year's award were locked in on the community groups, on the people behind the petition. They are undoubtedly crucial to our stories and our community involvement. So too are our administrators – the "suits and tie brigade" often provide real movement at the big end of town.

Where we often fall short is with the majority. We don't turn around to ask the greater community. And because of this we're often left with a two-pronged tripod. We come away with the emotion and drive of the minority plus the admin-speak of the bureaucrats. We're left with dry packages of column centimeters, static group photos and head shots of polities.

We're certainly A-grade in including petition signature counts into their tens of thousands. But we slip back a grade or two when seeking comments from these people. Better still, comments from those who didn't sign it. Why not Mr Smith? We need to broaden the appeal of our stories and packages beyond the squeaky wheels and those trying to grease them.

No doubt our newsrooms are under pressure. And our editors take easier options at times. We've all done it. Community leadership requires an extra step beyond involvement. Often it's no more difficult; it's seeing the step that needs to be taken.

Congratulations to all those who submitted entries in this year's award; for taking the time, the energy, the resources, and to seek feedback about your craft.

Southern Highland News, Bowral

Fewer council meetings should be met by our newspapers and their communities with a roar of approval. Unfortunately, Wingecarribee Council's decision to cut its two Ordinary meetings each month back to one flew in the face of commonsense. As outlined by the Southern Highland News, Bowral, Council was already struggling to push through its business agenda. So it questioned why and doubted the decision in its first editorial on the topic.

The Southern Highland News followed with four stories over the next four months, outlining council's inability to meet the needs of its community by continuing to add to its backlog of items. Some quirky council coverage and in-fighting exposed one councillor who favoured his own voice to making timely decisions.

Council, in its wisdom and with the constant voice of the Southern Highland News in its ear, finally voted to return to its two Ordinary meetings a month.

Coverage of this issue would have been improved by community input. Who had been impacted by this slow decision-making process and how? What were their thoughts about council's pedestrian approach? Residents' stories are imperative to ensure the community dips in to the conversation.

Unfortunately with all that said, Southern Highland News failed to follow the conditions of entry to supply "five examples of specific and different issues..."

Others to fall foul of this were The Armidale Express and Muswellbrook Chronicle. However, this judge feels feedback is the unwritten benefit of these awards so will provide comments on their entries despite them not meeting entry conditions.

And let's remember, all three went in to bat for their communities - and should be applauded for making a difference.

Muswellbrook Chronicle

The Muswellbrook Chronicle certainly provided hope for its community as it backed the Muswellbrook Aged Care and Hospital in a New Environment (MACHINE) group. At very least, the Chronicle had uncovered a new acronym ideal for headline writers! Indeed, MACHINE predictably "moved in to top gear" in one subsequent page 3 lead.

The Chronicle's dogged support of MACHINE and its campaign for a new hospital provided hope for its community and a major thrust as 10,000 signatures were called for to put it on the government agenda.

A public forum involving Minister for Health Jillian Skinner and NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell helped secure those signatures and put it before both parties in the NSW Legislative Assembly.

Although shortlisted for \$20 million funding (about \$70 million is need to complete the project), Muswellbrook missed out. But as editor Rod Thompson points out, the community's and Chronicle's fight is far from over.

Powerful lead stories and passionate editorials underpinned this entry. But apart from its initial front page coverage and photo with young families, it drifted in to the hands of the community group rather than the community itself.

More stories, photos, opinions of residents impacted by this underwhelming hospital service (no fault of the current dedicated staff) would have provided a truer picture of the community's plight. It also offers readers more than just chunks of text with the occasional headshot or photo of the "suits and ties" brigade.

The Armidale Express

'Bravo' The Armidale Express for incorporating its website and social media to work hand in hand with print in its entry. Unfortunately, it submitted only three of the five different issues needed to satisfy entry conditions and one component of its entry fell outside the July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 time frame.

Its coverage of the rise and demise of University of New England chief operating officer David Cushway underlined the need for consistent, transparent and balanced reporting in the face of considerable commercial pressure from the university.

The jewel in its entry was the double-page spread over its ratepayers' fury about increased fees to cover an infrastructure backlog. The Express didn't allow coverage to slip into mere council bashing and played the all-too-often ignored line of explaining why the rise was needed and where the extra money would be spent.

The spread plus coverage across the digital platforms consisted of editorial, letters to the editor, website comments, an online poll and social media support via Facebook and Twitter.

The third component of its entry reminded us of the invaluable part we play in support of our community events, including Armidale's inaugural Dancing with the Stars to raise money for the Cancer Council.

Central Western Daily, Orange

They're a charitable bunch out Orange way. Appeals, charities and relay fundraisers underpinned the entry from the Central Western Daily, Orange. And it does them very well – succinct writing, interesting yarns, easy-to-read design.

No doubt though it would have been a constant challenge set in morning news meetings to find a recipient of the Anglicare Bush Pantry Appeal. Administrators, volunteers, even newspaper staff form worthy angles. But someone thankful to have food on their family table would have topped it off.

Its community involvement also comes to the fore in the story and editorial about a 24-hour emergency medical helicopter service finally taking flight after 11 years of lobbying and 30,000 signatures. This project no doubt required the Central Western Daily to flex its leadership wings. However, much of this fell outside the time frames of entry conditions. And quite frankly it's no fault of the team when you consider our support of such crucial projects sometimes crosses decades, not only years.

Wauchope Gazette

Health care, transport, roads, the environment, and some outlandish statements from a reverend on Anzac Day – welcome to the Wauchope Gazette. You can't beat this entry as far as a mix of topics. It provided the broadest of broad appeal, true staples of community journalism plus a controversial speech to send its Facebook page into a spin.

The Wauchope Gazette's commitment to the palliative care unit's fundraiser was admirable as it supported the community drive to raise more than \$100,000 in six months; its front page barometer a constant reminder of progress for readers. Its early coverage would have benefitted from more people in its photos to run with progressive buildings shots and an artist's impression.

The Busways route change cried out for the Gazette's intervention as poor signage and a lack of consultation left the community confused and distressed. A month and 1500 signatures later, the unpopular route was discontinued and the old comfortable way returned. Again, those impacted by the changes – beyond the petition organiser – would have provided greater inclusiveness for the community.

Much the same would have been achieved in the issues of flood damage repair for Rocks Ferry Reserve and the neglect of Sarah's Crescent, King Creek. Both included key campaigners but few others beyond the expected council cronies led by Mayor Peter Besseling.

And so to our outraged reverend who, during a 10-minute Anzac Day address, noted Jesus loved his enemies unlike our soldiers loved their foes. Therefore, Jesus' sacrifice was more worthy. And you think that didn't get them talking in the streets of Wauchope – and via the Gazette's Facebook page.

Highly Commended

Deniliquin Pastoral Times

One thing's certain; the Deniliquin Pastoral Times won't back down when it's fighting for its community. Pages in this entry scream "parochial and damn proud of it!" You almost feel the mighty punch of this publication reflects the very township and community it serves.

Revisit the 1970s classic Network when you get the chance. Remember Peter Finch playing the half-crazed long-time TV anchor? And his maddened plea to the nation to go to their windows and shout: "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

Well that's the Pastoral Times in a nutshell. But its voice is no angry diatribe. It's a balanced, yet emotional call on behalf of its community for a fair go. Time and again through the five topics submitted, the Pastoral Times uses its editorials and stories to put authorities and the region's movers and shakers on notice. And more often than not, it comes out on top on behalf of its community.

Its coverage and stance helped ensure the region's merged Local Land Services office would be sited in Deniliquin, not Albury. It also supported the successful appointment of two local landholder-elected positions onto the Murray LLS Board.

The Times' questioning of Mayor Tom Weyrich's performance also led to a councillor mediation process to benefit the shire's administration and ratepayers. It also brought forward an honest and open page one interview with the mayor in which he admits "I can be controlling and opinionated" and "I still struggle to pay my rates like everyone else".

And where else would you see a 100-plus point bold three deck headline screaming:

POP. DROP. ROT

The Pastoral Times of course as it attempted to get to the bottom of the NSW Planning Department figures showing Deniliquin's population would drop by 1600 by 2031. Its campaign resulted in NSW Government minister Adrian Piccoli investigating the figures and formula behind them.

The Times rightly recognised coverage of this issue as far more than a numbers game, but one of community confidence as the town fights for its rights.

Not that the newspaper shows much confidence at times in Member for Murray-Darling John Williams. In fact, it's not backward in reminding anyone who cares to read that it's more than 700km from Sydney and more than 600km from Broken Hill – and there's no place for complacency out there for its local member.

Strong editorial presence is the backbone of a respected newspaper. And the Pastoral Times has it in spades as its 15-20 par average leader kept the pressure on Mr Williams across the logging industry, decentralisation, regional neglect and the fight for a natural gas connection.

The final component of its entry – The Blues & Roots Festival – recognised the real success of community involvement was to interact with its residents. And what better way than pictures, pictures and more pictures?

One small suggestion to the editor would be to decrease the use of "... told the Pastoral Times." It perhaps shows the newspaper has accessed a quote from a noted figure for its specific publication over another dull and boring generic press release. But it also serves to slow the storytelling. Nothing still beats "he said" or "she said".

WINNER

The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth Triumph, tragedy and a touch of courage filled the five entry topics submitted by The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth.

Kicking off with the courageous, it's often said in this industry "never back an unpopular campaign". And while The Northern Daily Leader's support for a 24-year-old fighting terminal bowel cancer isn't unpopular on the surface, his pain treatment certainly raises more than a few eyebrows. Marijuana is no longer taboo in terms of easing pain, but it is illegal and still criticised in many parts of society.

Fortunately, the greater good prevailed and the parents of Dan Haslam decided to buy the drug on the streets and behind closed doors to help their son. The Leader also stepped in to offer its support. Within 48 hours of the original story and editorial, 15,000 signatures had been added to the family's push to decriminalise medical marijuana.

The newspaper's Doing it for Dan campaign was born and quickly grew when it urged Health Minister Jillian Skinner to "Say Yes, Minister" in a kicker headline when she visited Tamworth and met with the young man.

Police, an anti-drug campaigner, residents, doctors, businesses and politicians joined the fight to support a private member's bill. Even radio powerhouse Alan Jones weighed in, followed by commercial television stations. The Leader continues to provide its community with information on how to help Dan and his fight.

Another interactive community campaign led by The Leader was Bill Busters, a public forum to provide residents ideas on how to save money on everyday household expenses. It ran articles, including menu suggestions and tips to cut costs, plus social services information and access to government department support. Most importantly, residents left the forum in Tamworth Town Hall with ideas on how to save. One man left estimating he could cut \$1400 in bills; a pensioner was shocked to learn she was eligible for a rebate of more than \$500.

Dollars and sense were also central to the controversial development proposal for Tamworth's Scully Park. Described several times as "iconic", the sporting arena is certainly well known to the region. And for the handful who hadn't heard the Scully name, you have now as The Leader continues to eat up column centimeters with plans by Wests Entertainment Group to build a \$12 million motel on the park and redevelop the No 2 oval.

The paper's Soapbox on its opinion page has bubbled over in the past 12 months with Scully chat, as have letters to the editor, online comments and Facebook posts.

The Leader also dipped its toe, foot and entire leg into the liquor laws debate as it supported the local liquor accord and businesses in their fight to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence. The crackdown – long before Barry O'Farrell's statewide measures - included a blanket ban on shots, 12.30am lockouts and a multi-venue barring policy.

Its entry ended on a sobering note as it supported four-year-old Patrick Coombes, battling against an inoperable brain tumor. Much to the family's credit – and trust in their local newspaper – readers were

taken on the family's journey as the community banded together to help out until his death earlier this year.



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

**The Country Press NSW Community Leadership
& Involvement Award
2013-2014
is awarded to**

**The Northern Daily
LEADER**

PRINTING

Section 1

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

Judge: Warwick Moore



Warwick Moore has 42 years' experience in the printing industry over a broad range of printing disciplines. Many of those years were in heatset web offset and coldset newspapers both in Australia and overseas. Warwick has been a teacher at Sydney Institute in the Printing Machining Section for 26 of those years.

Established in 1949 by William "Billy" Richards, as he was affectionately known in the advertising industry, was the principal of the Sydney agency, Weston Advertising Pty Limited, with which he was associated for half a century. He was still chairman of his company when he was in his nineties. He was a strong supporter of the country press as an advertising medium and Weston Advertising was one of the half-dozen agencies in Sydney accredited to place advertisements in country newspapers. To encourage improved technical production, he established the WO Richards Award in 1949 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the New South Wales Country Press Association. He presented the association with the bronze plaque depicting Athena, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom and Protector of Arts and Handiwork, regarded as a patroness of the printing craft.

Commended

Monaro Post

Very good colour wise, variation between editions on the masthead. But for the amount of color, the registration was very good. The layout and placement of images appeared to work well. Some of the colour set influenced other but that of course can't be helped.

Highly Commended

The Courier

There was colour variation between the masthead and the colour throughout was good. The placement of images allowed for good results, though some of the scans weren't the best, but overall very good.

WINNER

The Guardian News

Overall the production looked good, with good image placement, colour and registration. Even though a 24pp paper, the quality and look were good.



**The WO Richards Award for Technical
Excellence in Newspaper Production
2013-2014
is awarded to**

Guardian *News*

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Section 1

The DIC Award for Locally Produced Advertising

Judge: Ross McPherson



Ross McPherson is Executive Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of the McPherson Media Group and is based in Shepparton, where his family has published The Shepparton News since 1888. The group comprises of a dozen other paid mastheads around the Goulburn Valley and Southern Riverina as well as printing and internet businesses. Ross is a director and past-president of the International Newsmedia Marketing Association and was a long-time director of PANPA.

General Comments - (circulation up to 5,000)

I have been judging this section for a number of years and I am impressed by the strong improvement in layout, illustrations and type choice right across the category. It is extremely difficult to pick winners in such a lively and quality competition.

If I have a general observation, it would be that more attention could be paid to the offer that entices readers to respond: attractive and easy-to-read ads are even better when they include an irresistible offer, so don't be afraid to push clients to include a well-priced enticement in every ad possible.

WINNER

The Armidale Express Extra

The Schmued Sportspower campaign allies a thoughtful strategy with a promotion-minded client to produce compelling, eye-catching ads containing strong sale offers, supported by equally eye-catching brand promotion.

Highly Commended

The Courier

"Man's Best Friend" is a fine piece of work, taking a great idea and working it into an attractive offer while using an innovative ad shape and excellent illustrations. The drinks cooler on offer gets a little lost in the black background - perhaps a gray screen would be better.

Commended

The Cowra Guardian

The Guardian's sale ad for "the Closet" is a classic piece of offer-value advertising with a clear, simple message, perfect illustrations and excellent layout, powered by a very enticing offer. Well done.

The Singleton Argus

"Singleton Square" may lack a little in type-size choice and slick layout but is commendable for its bold use of informative text for the target market. This is backed up by clean illustrations and plenty of pricing detail. Breaking up the primary text and adding a little more layout finesse would make this an outstanding ad but it has all the right ingredients and probably worked very well just the same.

Comments (in no particular order):

The Irrigator

"Need a Lift" - a lot of useful information is included in a small ad with a clean layout and pleasing type choice - a fine example of a text-rich service ad.

The Singleton Argus

"Rustic Sales" lacks a compelling headline and offer. The product is lost against a distracting background.

The Goulburn Post

Generally competent work with clean illustrations, particularly "House of Alpaca," "B&J Kitchens" and "Give Calligraphy a Go." However, most ads missed the chance to make a compelling offer - no prices or special offers among them. "Goulburn Historic Waterworks," for example, could list its features in point form under a stronger headline.

Namoi Valley Independent

"Karen Carter Chemist" is a colourful, eye-catching sale ad.

"Gunnedah Automotive" is somewhat diminished by the indistinct headline type, making instant recognition harder, but it has plenty of price and product information in what is a well-composed and lively car ad.

The Area News

"Vita's Restaurant" loses impact with a narrow, hard-to-read headline typeface, but has the perfect illustration for its purpose. The type size promoting the private dining venue could be much larger.

"Billabong Bottleshop" includes a strong offer, clear layout and appropriate, no-fuss illustrations.

Cowra Guardian

"Cherry Blossom Festival" includes lots of information in an ad that breaks some of the rules about mixed colours and clutter but has a bright and cheery feel and was almost certainly effective.

General Comments - (circulation over 5,000)

Since the Cessnock Advertiser was the only entrant in the category this year it should be no surprise that it is also the winner. The lack of competition should not diminish the quality of the winning entry, however, for it demonstrated admirable professionalism.

WINNER

The Cessnock Advertiser

"Quit cigarettes" is a visually powerful ad, combining an arresting headline with dramatic (and appropriate) background colour, a simple but evocative illustration and an enticing offer - "100% guaranteed." Well-chosen testimonials add conviction to a strong and effective advertisement.

It is a cut above The Advertiser's second entry, "Travel on Cooper," which appears to be a local top above an agency travel ad and lacks visual appeal.



**The DIC Award for Locally Produced Advertising
(circulation up to 5,000)**

**2013-2014
is awarded to**

The Armidale Express

**The DIC Award for Locally Produced Advertising
(circulation over 5,000)**

**2013-2014
is awarded to**

**THE
Advertiser**
The Newspaper for the Coalfields



ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Section 2
The DIC Award for Commercial Supplement
Judge: Mark Hodgson



This award is to recognize supplements primarily of an advertising nature but usually containing some editorial matter.

Entries were judged from an advertising stand-point on visual appeal, page presentation, attention-drawing content and impact on readers.

An entry is two different supplements each with a minimum of four pages. Each entry is expected to be accompanied by a brief statement explaining the objective, strategy and results obtained from the publication.

Congratulations to all entrants who took time to submit publications for this award. Because of the large number and extremely high quality of entrants this year I felt compelled to also award a highly commended as well as first place.

The highly commended award this year goes to THE MAITLAND MERCURY – MAITLAND for their supplements – “TOCAL FIELD DAY WRAP, and GUIDE BOOK”.

A clever use of two separate supplements to promote a major annual event. A 12-page wraparound of the Maitland Mercury, followed up with a 48 page quarter fold guidebook.

Distribution of the guide book via the insertion into 12 newspapers plus the impressive 12 page wrap on the Mercury would certainly have put a smile on the faces of all advertisers and contributed greatly to the success of the local 3 day event.

This whole concept value added to a range of newspapers, increased revenue for all involved, and introduced many advertisers to entirely new markets. The organizing committee for the event were more than impressed with the efforts of the Mercury team, making the promotion an incredible PR exercise as well as a handsome money earner.

The layout and overall production of the two products was top class.

Easy to read and follow pages full of useful information promoting and guiding the community throughout the event.

Congratulations Jan Heron and her entire team at the Mercury for your efforts, well done.

WINNER

The South Coast Register

'Amazing Homes and Weddings Shoalhaven'

Two supplements any publisher would be proud to display on their counter.

Major changes to layout and overall design of the Weddings guide are to be congratulated.

The printing quality of both publications is excellent. The use of a matt cello or varnish on the cover of the Weddings magazine helped soften the look of the product and gave it a great quality feel. Being a publication which would be used as a regular reference guide with much handling it also helps preserve the appearance and longevity of the product.

Both publications displayed plenty of high quality and well composed photos. Page layout was clean, open, good use of white space, and easy and inviting for readers to peruse.

Advertising layout and makeup was clever and suited the theme for both products.

Both of these supplements ticked all the boxes as far as judging criteria was concerned, visual appeal, page presentation, attention drawing content, and impact on readers. And most importantly, I feel certain, a positive impact on revenue and pride for the publishers.

Both publications are not new to their readers, and it is refreshing to see they both are prepared to adapt and change to cater for their market needs.

Congratulations and well done to Rachael Thornett and her talented team responsible for the publication of these two outstanding supplements.

General Comments

Armidale Express

Student Guide

A quality handbook aimed at new students at UNE. Print quality earns top marks, as does the concept of encouraging younger readers to refer to print media for reference. Layout was clean and easy to read considering the difficulties of composing smaller format pages. Well done to all concerned. Unfortunately only one supplement was submitted for the award.

The Northern Daily Leader

De Vine Weddings 2013/14

Well done for producing a supplement that truly defines quality. Printed on gloss, the photos and adverts literally jumped out of the pages. Page layout was clean and easy to read and follow. The addition of a planner and budget guide further added to the reasons a reader would retain the product for an extended time. The publication ticked all the boxes to satisfy its readers, advertisers, and very importantly the parent newspapers accountant. Congratulations to the newspapers team on a great effort. It is a shame the newspaper only submitted one entry.

The Irrigator

Kinders and Capers/Leeton Sunrice Festival

Two professionally produced publications any publisher would be proud of. I was extremely impressed with the overall layout of both products. Plenty of local pics. I feel certain both supplements were appreciated by their local audiences and helped contribute to more interest in their parent newspaper. Well done to all concerned.

The Area News

McWilliams Centenary/On The Road

Two well produced publications value adding both in revenue and interest in their parent newspaper. Page layout was easy to read and fitting with the concept of both products. Difficult to judge a publication where page proofs only are submitted, with no printed editions to study.

Singleton Argus

Anzac Day/Welcome to Singleton

Two well supported 4 page tabloid supplements. It would have been helpful to have more information supplied on the success or otherwise of the products. It doesn't matter if your supplement is 4 pages or 40 pages the reason for supplements are the same – to increase revenue and readers response and appreciation for the local newspaper. Well done on two good reads.

The Monaro Post

Innovation Magazine/Sunpost Magazine

Two successful well-supported publications produced in tabloid format. Advertising content is very strong and on reading the report a very positive return for the publisher. Print quality was generally good, but let down badly by some pages having fine black text and solids being reproduced in CMYK, and low res files for some logos.

It would assist the printer and improve the overall look of the products if prepress could check files from third parties to ensure they comply with your production requirements.

From an advertising and attention-drawing point of view both supplements earn high marks.

Congratulations to all concerned.

The Courier

The West Is Best/Join A Club

Commercial supplements create a unique opportunity to attract advertisers not normally promoting to your newspaper audience, or extra dollars out of happy existing clients. The two supplements submitted by The Courier are two excellent examples of what can be achieved with that little bit extra effort by all concerned. Well done.

Cowra Guardian

Toyota/Winter Fun

Both products well printed tabloid on newspaper. Both looked successful and no doubt generated extra and new revenue for the parent newspaper. Both products were easy to read, and well composed, congratulations.

Manning River Times

From Past To Present/Niche

Two well supported publications, great content, and products that would attract reader support for their parent newspaper. Both products were well presented and printed, and both no doubt would be retained by the readers of the Times for an extended period.

A big effort by all, well done.

Deniliquin Pastoral Times

Easter Entertainment Guide/ Interreach,

Two tabloid products, which when inserted into their parent newspaper would have value added and generated extra sales no doubt. Well supported with advertising and relevant editorial.

The Northern Daily Leader
Your Home 2014

A quarter-fold publication of extremely high quality, sheet fed printed on gloss art. Layout was clean, straight forward, and easy to follow. Unfortunately only one supplement was submitted for judging.

Hunter Valley News
Seniors Guide

A neat little quarter fold publication that was well composed and printed with pride. Pages were clean, easy to follow, with good mix and use of pics. Certainly a product retained by the seniors of the Muswellbrook area. It is unfortunate that only one supplement was supplied for judging.



The DIC Award for Commercial Supplement 2013-2014 is awarded to



ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Section 3
The DIC Award for Advertising Ideas
Judge: Brian Daly



Brian Daly is Group Creative Director at Australia's largest regionally based independent advertising and communications agency, Enigma, based in the regional city of Newcastle. With over 17 years' experience in the industry, Brian has worked on local, national and international brands to create memorable, effective campaigns for a broad cross section of clients, from small retail outlets to major government and corporate entities, including Newcastle Permanent, RSPCA Australia, TAFE, GPT, and Hunter Tourism.

A writer, director, composer, musician and one-time Red Faces winner, Brian has earned many national and international awards in his career, most recently the Australian Marketing Institute's NSW Brand Revitalisation Award for Newcastle Permanent Building Society.

Commended
Namoi Valley Independent
Tucker

As a magazine that 'salutes the excellence of the Namoi Valley's finest agricultural produces', the art direction and design of the Tucker publication is of a fittingly high standard. The layout, photography and typography all work together to create a fresh, contemporary, sophisticated yet down-to-earth feel that reflects the character of the region and the stories presented in the magazine. The art direction was a stand out amongst all the entries in this category.

South Coast Register, Nowra
Our Beaches Need You

A great advertising idea is an effective advertising idea. And developing effective ideas that address important local issues is where local press can really shine. The 'Our Beaches Need You' campaign to increase memberships of South Coast Surf Life Saving Clubs was just such a campaign. Utilising the iconic red and yellow SLSC colours, the clear, consistent messaging that ran across both advertising and editorial drove memberships and saved a couple of clubs from imminent closure. A very effective, very important campaign.

Highly Commended
Bega District News, Bega
2014 Calendar

This quirky and fresh idea from Bega District News shows how creativity can solve pressing business issues. Facing a decline in revenue from a major advertiser, the News came up with the concept of a calendar featuring local businesses each month. The trick was to create a memorable hook that would get businesses interested. In a concept reminiscent of UK miniaturist artist, Slinkachu, the team developed the idea of shrinking photos of the workers down and placing them on a relevant oversized background, like the bowling club workers as miniature people on a bowling green. The humorous idea was so successful that it was rolled out across other regional mastheads, generating over \$40,000 in extra revenue. And next year's calendar is already sold!

WINNER

The Courier
Live & Learn Locally

The Live & Learn Locally Idea had the objective of 'raising awareness that shopping locally provides employment for the district's young people.' In so doing it aimed to address the issue of economic sustainability in the local community. With a focus on stories of generational sustainability of business people, The Courier garnered a groundswell of community support, received \$8,000 in youth training grants from local sponsors, helped local businesses greatly increase their sales in the crucial pre-

Christmas period, and raised \$70,000 in advertising revenue. It is an idea that goes to the heart of the important role the local press plays in supporting the community it serves. A great achievement.

Other entry comments

Maitland Mercury – Co-op Feature with The Newcastle Herald, Cessnock Advertiser and Singleton Argus

Hunter Expressway Grand Opening

This impressive feature across four mastheads shows an innovative and collaborative approach to celebrating a momentous regional event. The opening of the expressway provides major opportunities for communities throughout the region. The prominence of the feature in all regional papers ensured maximum exposure for the advertisers, and links back to online galleries and stories encouraged further engagement with readers. The feature also generated a significant advertising return.

The Singleton Argus

A little bit of Italy in Broke

This campaign shows the power of local papers. The Italian Festival in Broke had struggled over the previous couple of years after focusing its promotion of the event in metropolitan areas. This year, by working with the local Singleton Argus, they were able to turn the fortunes of the festival around. The Argus created a distinctive campaign that gained approval from all stakeholders in the event and obviously resonated with the target audience, turning this year's festival into a great success.

The Singleton Argus

Charbonnier and Charades Restaurant and Bar

This campaign highlights the importance of consistency in branding and design. It is crucial to set the right tone. The colour scheme, imagery and typography of this campaign created a sense of 'approachable elegance' that obviously appealed to the target market. Maintaining this consistent feel across all the ads proved very successful. The clarity and brevity of messaging in small space ads shows exemplary discipline in ensuring the reader is only presented with one concise message in each ad. Good work.

South Coast Register

Shoalhaven Women in Business, celebrating International Women's Day

The adage 'Think Globally, Act Locally' really rings true in this campaign from the South Coast Register. Creating relevance in the local community is at the heart of what we do in regional press. By profiling local business women, celebrating their stories and successes, the South Coast Register managed to do a great job in promoting local businesses, engendering community spirit, celebrating the importance of women in business and plugging into a global event with local focus. And they generated additional income. There were many winners in this campaign.

Namoi Valley Independent

Find us on Facebook

Finding ways to engage with changing consumer behaviour is a huge focus these days. The prevalence of new technologies and the challenges they pose is not lost on anyone in the media. It is commendable to see The Independent take steps to bridge the tech gap with this campaign, and to deliver a benefit to both consumers and businesses who are already active in the digital space.

The Forbes Advocate

The Farmer's Friend

Identifying an opportunity to create an advertising platform for suppliers to local farmers has paid dividends for The Forbes Advocate. 'The Farmer's Friend' is a one page classified program aimed specifically at 'the man on the land'. By simply identifying this

gap in the market, The Advocate has increased revenue by over \$1500 a month and created an engaging, affordable and effective marketplace that connects Farmers with their suppliers.

Manning Great Lakes Extra

The Tradies Toolbox

Coming up with new ways to engage with readers isn't always easy. But this simple little idea from Manning Great Lakes Extra shows just how well an idea can work when you put a bit of thought into it. By inserting a 'guess this tool' competition into a tradie specific feature, they are creating engagement with the target market, increasing involvement with advertisers, and generating higher returns for the publication. A very targeted, relevant and successful concept.

Manning River Times

Melbourne Cup Fashion

This promotion is a well thought out approach to increasing connection between the offline and online masthead environments. Cross promotion across platforms increased traffic and led to higher advertising revenues. Voting online for the best Melbourne Cup Day fashion saw greater traction on the website. The success of the concept has led to further advertising opportunities. It is great to see strategies like this crossing the technological divide and maintaining relevance in an increasingly fractured media environment.



The DIC Award for Advertising Ideas as

2013-2014

is awarded to



THE COURIER

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Section 4
The Award for Online Advertising
Judge:



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

No entries were received for this award.

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Section 5

The Norske Skog Award for Newspaper Marketing & Promotion

Judge: Ross McPherson



General Comments

This was a smaller field than usual, with half the number of entries compared to previous years. If that signals a shift of focus towards securing ad revenue alone then that is a pity, for our future depends upon audience, whatever delivery platforms we deploy. The winner of this category also reminds us of how Marketing should be viewed as a profit centre rather than a cost.

WINNER

The Wingham Chronicle

The Chronicle's fire awareness campaign comprised a series of three monthly features in the lead-up to the 2014 fire season, with advertisers locked in for the series and the Chronicle splitting off a donation per ad to the local fire brigade.

It provides an excellent example of how to combine a valuable reader/community service with subtle reinforcement of the paper's support for its community - as well as turning a tidy profit.

Highly Commended

The Area News

The annual wedding fair hosted by The Area News has been entered before but it is notable that the event is now in its 22nd year, with its attendant small-format gloss magazine packed full of ads and again strongly supported with in-paper promotion for the one-day fair. A reliable, profitable concept, well executed - and easily borrowed.



**The Norske Skog Award for Newspaper
Marketing & Promotion**

**2013-2014
is awarded to**

**Wingham
Chronicle**



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

Special Presentations

As the oldest organisation of newspaper publishers in Australia, the association of country newspaper publishers in New South Wales has been conscious of the significant contribution many of its members have made to the effectiveness of its significant segment of the publishing industry through 114 years.

Scores of its members have received national, state and industry recognition, acknowledging the service they have provided to and through their vocation within the ever-expanding sector of media communication.

In our grass-roots segment, member publishers constantly go the second-mile to serve their local communities with the support of their industry association, which warmly acknowledges their positive contribution. Tonight, we recognise three of our members who have given us outstanding service for many years.

Allan Browne

Allan has been in the newspaper business for 47 years, serving specifically in WA, SA, Victoria and New South Wales. His role and expertise has been in management from regional newspaper companies to his final position as CEO and publisher of Fairfax Media Australia's Regional Newspaper Division involving 240 mastheads.

He has been a board member of three state Country Press associations, including president in South Australia, and in New South Wales from 1998, represented on the board of Country Press Australia, serving as president from 2008 to 2010. His extensive experience in management improved the financial results of many regional newspapers as they endured rapid change in the media industry and his influence within the Fairfax company was instrumental in sustaining their Country Press membership of our national industry organisation.

Alan Pont

Economist Alan Pont entered the ranks of the provincial newspaper industry from the Hunter Valley Research Foundation in the mid-1980s, bringing a wealth of knowledge and financial expertise to the Regional Publishing Division of Rural Press at Maitland. Eventually this was shared throughout the country publishing industry, beginning with Fairfax Media publications.

He progressed through the ranks of Country Press NSW, serving as president from 2005-2007, and for years was a valuable member of the Country Press Australia board, where his shared knowledge of marketing techniques maximized member-newspaper advertising revenue and newspaper circulation as well as strengthening regional newspaper management. His specialised knowledge proved of great value to all association members, thus earning widespread appreciation and his Life Membership of the NSW Country Press association.

Garry Baker

As representative of the Deniliquin Pastoral Times, Garry has brought management and editorial skills of great value to the Country Press NSW association for the past 27 years. As a member of the board for 18 years, he became only the third person in the association's 112-year history to have served two terms as president.

As a committed home-town editor, his newspaper has been at the forefront of community involvement for decades and personally he has led deputations to State officials and parliamentary leaders to press positive action on issues of local, state, regional and association significance. He has been an outstanding example of a newspaperman committed to high ethical and editorial standards and a significant and respected leader in both community and newspaper industry activities.