

SUCCESS IN PRESS

COUNTRY PRESS SA 2020 AWARDS



February 26, 2021
Clare Country Club, Adelaide





2020 CPSA Conference and Awards - Clare Golf Club

The 110th Annual gathering of Country Press SA officially commenced on Friday, February 26 at the Clare Country Club.

The 2020 Host, Andrew Manuel, introduced the first speaker for the day, Malcolm May, Deputy Mayor.

Malcolm has an incredible business sense and his passion for the region was very apparent as guests paused over breakfast to listen attentively to his every word.

Other keynote speakers included: Bruce Ellen, President of Country Press Australia; Paul Thomas, Managing Director of Star Newspaper Group; Rosslyn Ferry, President of the Barrier Industrial Council; Alison Meany, owner of Bukirk Glamping; David Galeano, Your Local Business Guide; David Heinjus, CEO Pinion Advisory; Ian Osterman, Editor of The Courier; Damian Morgan and Russell Wadell, retired Clinical Director of STD Services at the RAH.

In the evening, more than 115 guests eased their way into a beautifully presented function space

overlooking the lush green grass of the Clare Golf Club.

As newly elected President, it was a great honour to welcome all of the guests and take the opportunity to again highlight the importance of our industry throughout the past year.

Our newspapers were vital in helping to connect our communities during a time when they were most distant.

Cementing his position as the Association's permanent MC, Ian Osterman helped to create a relaxed atmosphere and ensured that all guests were comfortable and thoroughly entertained throughout the evening.

It was a huge honour to welcome the Hon Michael McCormack MP, immediate past Deputy Prime Minister and his wife, Catherine, to our Awards night.

Prior to entering Parliament, Mr McCormack began his professional life with a Journalism Cadetship with The Daily Advertiser in Wagga Wagga.

As a keen sportsman, it was fascinating to observe the competitive spirit on display during an entertaining game of putt putt golf against the South Australian Labor Leader, Peter Malinauskas, among other willing participants.

It was also wonderful to see that all member newspapers were recognised for their efforts in some way throughout the evening.

Another successful event was achieved and a lot of this credit can be attributed to the work that Trevor McAuliffe has managed.

I would also like to thank our host, Andrew and Merridy Manual for his valuable contribution.

This annual gathering is the glue that connects the members, staff and guests in the most unique and special way. This connection is so valuable as we all strive for the continued success of our industry.

It also presents us with a terrific opportunity to celebrate the emerging superstars of our industry as we again witnessed at this year's event.

I wish everyone well as we continue to navigate our way through the ongoing challenges that we're currently facing. We've been faced with much hardship again this year, but I am confident that our commitments will be rewarded and opportunities will be abundant.

Darren Robinson,
President
Country Press S.A.



OUR VALUED SPONSORS



Major Sponsor



BEST NEWSPAPER - CIRCULATION OVER 4,000

THE MURRAY PIONEER



Paul Salter from SA Power Networks, Jane Kuerschner from The Murray Pioneer and Ben Taylor.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS BOB YEATES

The business of many Australian country newspapers in the last 12 months may have, across the board, changed more than ever before.

The Covid effect saw some local economies suffer and in turn the revenues of local newspapers sometimes dip dramatically forcing local papers, in some instances to close, or change publication rituals.

In some cases like the *Border Watch* area of Mt Gambier papers closed, but "*The Border Watch Today*" has come back as a solid weekly paper with new owners and management.

This particular newspaper entered the awards this year but because of circumstance only placed one paper to be judged.

It should be noted this one paper was very well laid out with excellent editorial content. If the paper is produced like this week in week out, it is one of Australia's stand-out reader friendly, stylish newspapers, no doubt using a style guide or manual.

Judging the best country newspaper in South Australia with an over 4000 circulation, I have used the objective criteria supplied but to reach my decision I have used a degree of subjectivity!

The impact of a newspaper to a newspaperman is hard to measure

as things can be impressive without meeting the criteria.

All publications submitted for the awards this year have continued to deliver local news to their communities or the segment of the local market that are discerning readers, who like to stay connected to the local community with a weekly dose of reliable considered local news.

Only the local newspaper is directly held accountable for its news delivery and performance by the local community.

Coupled with local news services, advertising is paramount to the ongoing service of the local country newspaper. It is imperative that as a service and industry we have trained and professional sales and marketing people working side by side with our reporters and journalists to strengthen our future together.

Looking at all papers submitted for judging I noted a common thread of generally one big picture, one big headline and one story for the front page that measures not much news for page number one. Two stories that turnover with a big picture is worth considering, drawing people to the paper then into it.

In some cases the front pages appeared messy at first fast glance, not a good first impression at the newsstand.

I believe we have a clever audience of readers, who use the local paper to stay in touch locally, and they like

an organised, well-laid out medium to scan, not a medium with so much colour and activity that the pages are difficult to scan.

What comes quickly to mind are strips of colour tints behind type or bold areas of solid colour with editorial messaging on them.

In regard to front page presentations consider handing production or get them to create six wellthought out layouts and build the pictures and words to suit the template, not create a messy result on the fly.

Generally all front pages in the category except "*The Border Watch*" was a visually disturbing experience, the question was...where do I look next?!

Although newspaper websites are a world away from the printed paper, many newspaper websites are very clean and uncluttered.

Papers could consider the concept of two stories for the front page and the big picture and perhaps a content brief strip for the reader to follow into the paper.

After reading many parts of all of the entries, the local country newspapers of South Australia are to be commended for continuing to report local council activities and chronicle community life faithfully. No one else does it! That is our strength, selling point, and point of difference.

The winning newspaper for 2020 is the *Murray Pioneer*, now a weekly paper it appears to have a strong engagement with the community

with its consistent letters pages each edition and doing its best to present a clean reading paper around colourful display advertising. Editorial content reflects the vibrant nature of the Riverland and its people.

Headlines within the paper were big enough to easily draw the reader and the print quality consistent.

The Leader of Angaston was placed a very close second to the *Murray Pioneer*, again like all entrants "*The Leader*" is a great local country paper with first class editorial pages with local names, faces and places. A midweek paid local newspaper "*The Leader*" is a locally owned family business employing local people doing every task to produce a local paper at Angaston including their own printing plant demonstrating the independent strength of South Australia.

"*The Courier*" at Mt Barker came in third this year. Editorial reporting included short pars with headlines to fill small spaces, small stories with a headline are a sure piece to be read.

"*The Courier*" had impressive 12 to 16 page sports lift outs contained within their publications during Covid times, a great effort when they did so. Congratulations to all newspaper professionals who bothered to enter the awards this year, you are to be commended as leaders in our newspaper community.

Keep up the good work of an enthusiast!

BEST NEWSPAPER - CIRCULATION UNDER 4,000

THE PLAINS PRODUCER



Paul Salter from SA Power Networks, Louise Michael from The Plains Producer and Chris Cooté.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS BRUCE MORGAN

It was disappointing to see just two entries in this category as there are a number of eligible papers around the state that could be involved.

But the standard of the two entries was very good.

The runner-up is The Border Times

The winner is the Plains Producer

The Producer has featured regularly in the awards and has bulked up in recent years to include coverage of a wider area. It has a good local story count and hundreds of local faces in each edition. It is a credit to the small team behind it.

General comments

Plains Producer

The Producer can be described as a big, fat paper for this category. Its paging prior to the pandemic was

solid and even when there was little sport being played, it continued to have good paging, before bouncing back with more pages once sport started again.

There are a high number of local news stories covering local issues, as well as quirky stories that readers like to see. And as for sport, the coverage is extensive and features a high number of names and faces. I'm not a real fan of sports lift outs as I find it a bit disjointed, but that's just a personal opinion and not newspaper law.

The photographs with the news stories look to be well thought out and have good visual impact to draw the reader in. When sport was on there are plenty of photographs of people out and about, which readers and participants still like to see. And the excellent printing means the photographs pop from the pages.

The paper is clean and well laid out, making it easier for readers to

navigate. The colour behind some of the stories is just on the right side of too dark, and not over-used – any darker and it would make the stores hard to read. Acronyms in headlines and captions should be avoided as readers can't work out what they mean

I like the use of by-lines in small papers as the readers get to know the journalists and they are used generously in the sample papers.

The advertising layout is clean and neat with a good ad stack, and the content of the ads is of a good quality. The number of ads is also very good and would be no doubt be pleasing for the proprietor.

All in all, this is a good paper that would be serving its community well.

The Border Times

The local story count is high in the paper despite the small paging.

And, the stories are good local reports, that are the backbone of

small newspapers – local people and local issues. And there were a good number of local faces in photographs, although they weren't always named, which all photographs should be.

The sports pages were fewer than the Plains Producer but were still filled with local content – even given the lack of local sport.

The layout was solid but in general, revers around front page stories should be reserved for only the most hard-hitting news, including deaths and major crime. Like the Producer, acronyms should be avoided in headlines and captions, and dot points in stories should be used sparingly.

The ad count wasn't high but last year was a peculiar year so here's hoping this picks up.

This paper represents what a community could expect from a paper in this category.

BEST COMMUNITY PROFILE

MEL JAUNAY, THE LEADER / THE BAROSSA MAG

JUDGE'S COMMENTS TOM RICHARDSON

FIRST - Mel Jounay, *The Leader / Barossa Mag*

“Fire scars”

A beautifully written insight into the mental trauma that can follow firefighting volunteers: the central metaphor maintains the narrative, while the juxtaposition of the then-contemporary Kangaroo Island fires reinforces the importance of the subject's experience.

SECOND - Elisa Rose, *The Courier*

“Marty Finds A Silver Lining”

The reporter highlighted an engaging human story behind what could otherwise have been a straightforward report about a new wine label raising money for medical research, and told it with empathy and a sensitive touch.

THIRD - Josh Brine, *Murray Pioneer*

“‘Just a brown slouch hat’: Ex-serviceman's prized possession found after eight decades”

An extraordinary event well-reported: the narrative establishes the emotional importance of the old “brown slouch hat”, making the payoff of its return 80 years on incredibly resonant. Combines an overview of a local's wartime experience with a genuine piece of human interest news.

Further notes: All the entries in this category show a high level of quality and commitment to sharing the lives of locals with their broader communities.



Mel Jaunay from *The Leader* and Hon. John Dawkins MLC.

YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

SARA GILLIGAN, THE BUYNIP

JUDGE'S COMMENTS LEIGH RADFORD

On balance, I feel that Sara Gilligan has the edge. She is operating at a higher level and there's already a maturity in her approach. It was a good selection of stories and demonstrated that she can turn her hand to a diversity of subjects. Overall, there was some assured depth to her reporting and she tackled some very difficult things with confidence and in a well-considered way. In my view, she is the strongest entrant and I would recommend Sara as my pick for the Young Journalist of the year.



Sara Gilligan from *The Bunyip* and Mr Tony Pasin M.P.

BEST SPORT PHOTO

ROY LIEBICH, THE COURIER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

SEAN MCGOWAN

FIRST - *The Courier*, Roy Liebich. "Birds of a Feather"

A classic great sports photo with good framing, stark focus, face, ball and action. The cocked bat injects potential into the scenario, the batsman's eyes are zoned on the ball and the bird creates a flukey weirdness that makes the viewer look twice, and then a third time. Deservedly utilized as a large font page {lift-out}.

SECOND - *The Courier*, Andrew Ausserlechner. "Leap of Faith"

More than just another big mark, this exciting image catches the subject in a strange reclined position and begs the question, "How well did he land?" Unfortunately the shutter was a split second late and may have

been closer to the perfect "hanger" shot if there was contact between the subject and his ride, and if the subject's eyes were still open.

THIRD - *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*, Rod Penna. "Triple Flip"

Excellent timing to capture the three riders inverted in unison. A change in angle may have provided better framing, maybe catching all riders against the sky, framed by the trees and a crop to remove the distracting elements from the bottom would have helped maintain the viewer's focus on the subjects.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Plains Producer, Ethan Allen

"Bored in COVID Times"

Well composed and executed with solid lighting techniques employed. Perhaps more suited to Feature or News categories but a great illustration, nonetheless, of some tricky skills.



Josh Teakle from *The Courier* and Bruce Ellen.

BEST SPORT STORY

JOSH TEAKLE, THE COURIER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

IAN SHUTTLEWORTH

FIRST - Josh Teakle, *The Courier*.

We are unfortunately in an era where reporters are often short of time and under resourced but it presents an opportunity for those who are truly dedicated and passionate about the craft of storytelling to stand out. The article about the decline in junior football participants is the work of a reporter who clearly invested a great deal of time and energy. It is well written and outlines the issue at hand, provides supporting statistics, reasons behind the fall, and well-chosen comments from appropriate spokespeople.

SECOND - Joe Schwab, *Murray Pioneer*.

The Riverland Football League's decision to schedule junior matches on the morning of Anzac Day was always going to be an emotive topic. The journalist pursued the story in the face of resistance and abuse from an interested party and used their best endeavours to present the reader with both sides of the debate. Well-chosen quotes not only highlighted the emotion involved but ensured the story flowed nicely.

THIRD - Fin Hansen, *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*.

This was an uplifting story where the reader gained an appreciation for the twists and turns of a journey from a South Australian farm to the bright lights of the NBA. The journalist clearly covered a lot of ground in their interview with the young man working at the Sacramento Kings and then importantly, was able to piece the story together in an informative and entertaining manner. It was an enjoyable read!



Josh Teakle from *The Courier* and Chris Tierney

BEST ROAD SAFETY REPORTING

SAM BRADBROOK, GAWLER BUNYIP

JUDGE'S COMMENTS KIRBY MCDONALD

Criteria:

Promotion of safer roads, safer people, safer speeds, or safer cars

Encouraging community discussion about road safety.

Highlighting the severity of consequences of poor road safety.

I put myself in the position of the local reader - does this article make me stop and think, or encourage me to be a better driver/motorist?

FIRST - *Gawler Bunyip*, Sam Bradbrook (1st Place article in my opinion)

A fantastic piece – providing a strong introduction given 3 recent deaths in the area, the use of the full page to then get 3 x opinion pieces from the CFS, Police and SA Ambulance gives the reader differing view points on the one main issue. An angle we don't often consider, the impact a crash causes on first responders. I like that it humanises the issue, and citizens should feel lucky to have such great people across the 3 services in their community.

We often forget it's not just the Police responding – it's volunteers too.

Loved the use of breakout space and colour recognition for the services, I

think this article would make many people stop and think.

Brendan Simpkins A great well researched piece that references SA Police, speeding research and a nice tie in to the COVID pandemic from Chief Inspector Addison.

My only recommendation would be on reviewing how this article is different to previous articles on speeding. Potentially more historical information around those caught over the holiday period would be beneficial, to further heed speeders. SECOND - *Plains Producer* (both pieces), Louise Michael.

A really lovely and timely piece at Christmas time – taking a car accident with lasting affects and using it as a warning to motorists during the holiday season. I always think its good to humanise road safety articles, as we're talking about tight knit communities where usually everyone knows everyone.

Dangerous Roads (Gabrielle Hal, Ethan Allen) A great rolling focus piece on the one/two stretches of road – particularly Gabrielle's retelling of what truck drivers face on the road and how it breaks down underneath them, I found really interesting. I would hope continually focusing on the issue not only warns road users to be safe, but hopefully helps lobby to get the road fixed permanently.



Sara Gilligan from *The Bunyip* and Tim Whetstone M.P.

THIRD - *The Courier*, Anna Christian and opinion piece.

Eye catching title that makes the issue clear – and an opinion piece to reinforce. It felt like a lot of research and investigation went into the piece making it a compelling read.

Yorke Peninsula Country Times – Sonny Coombs A well written piece highlighting that poor roads can be a critical road safety issue, particularly

for people who aren't experienced with the strip in question.

Multiple people spoken to, and demonstration of the knowledge locals have of the road.

Murray Pioneer – Josh Brine A nice piece uncovered, highlighting the need for road improvements and for drivers to be careful. Great image used, loved Paul's quotes too!

BEST PHOTO

PETE THORNTON, THE LEADER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS BRUCE MORGAN

Overall, some excellent – if sometimes predictable – entries. And being predictable is not necessarily a negative, in that lots of pictures of happy faces having fun is bread and butter to a good community newspaper. So, keep doing all the good things, photographically, that you are doing.

FIRST - Pete Thornton, *The Leader*

There are some fundamentals in what makes a good newspaper photo. It needs to grab your attention in that you want to know "what's this about?" It must have good composition and it must tell the story that is qualified by the accompanying words. This picture does all that and a bit more. It is so tantalising, even amusing, and I just wanted to know more. When lined up against all other entries, it leapt out. Therefore, it did its job exceptionally well.

SECOND - John Kruger, *The Leader*

This is another grab for attention, and beautifully framed and composed. The print version, surprisingly, produced better than the print. And, although some might say this is a tad contrived, it nevertheless shows imagination and good use of techno tricks. It does all that the winner does, except perhaps provide the same thirst for storytelling.

THIRD - Rod Penna, *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*

Being predictable is not a negative, as emphasised in the introduction. This is a great example of a newspaper photographer doing what still works when done well. What is captured here is more than kids having fun; the fun is captured as a spontaneous, genuine moment. These children represent families and communities and why they are worth a photograph in the first place.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Elisa Rose, *The Courier*

Both of her entries were very well composed, with interesting subject matter and a story to tell,



Tony Robinson from *The Leader* and Andrew Schreyer.

although they did not translate into newspaper print quite as well as the winners. Nevertheless, there is some real talent on show here.

...And the rest

There was no photograph entered that was not worthy of an entry;

none that failed to compliment the story being told and all reflected what is so necessary for South Australia's regional and rural newspapers: community engagement.

Well done everyone!

COUNTRY PRESS SA AWARDS NIGHT

FEBRUARY 26, 2021



Margaret Manuel Life Member, Scott Michael and Louise Michael.



Steve Marston and Jon James.



Jane Kuerschner, Pamela Perre, Sara Gilligan and Kiona McLennan.



Karen and Chris Tierney.



Paul Slater, Tracy-Lee Logos, Greg Eyers and Steve Logos.



Chris Bennett, Helen Salter, Russell Waddell, Victoria Waddell and Kathy Bennett.



McKenzie Thompson and Glenda Malinovski.



Jane Kuerschner.



John Dawkins M.L.C., Tim Whetstone M.P. and Adrian Federick M.P.



Tony and Angela Robinson and Mel Jaunay.



Chris Bennett and Greg Eyers.



Sheila Dawkins and McKenzie Thompson.



Rowan Ramsy M.P. and Ian Dunnet.



Greg Mayfield OAM, Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister and Dylan Smith.



Sandy and Ian Shaw.



Merridy Manuel, Bron Helgeson, Melanie Smith and Renee Bennett.



Hugh Schuitemaker, Ben Taylor, Life Member, Glenda Malinovski, Jane Kuerschner, Deirdre Graham and Josh Brine.



Pamela Perre and Renee Bennett.



Tony Robinson and Greg Mayfield OAM.



Kelly and Peter Robinson.



Bron Helgeson, Melanie Smith, Renee Bennett and Dylan Smith.



Bernice Williams, Rhiannon Koch, Kayla and Nick Perry.



Tom Nancarrow, Clare Hesketh, Julian Mittiga and Josh Zugajev.



Sara Gilligan, Kiona McLennan and Tony Pasin M.P.

COUNTRY PRESS SA AWARDS NIGHT

FEBRUARY 26, 2021



Ben Taylor, Life Member; Richard Wilson, Life Member and Tom Raggatt.



Anthony Lamond and Andrew Manuel.



Volunteer waitresses from the North Clare Netball Club: Ruby Stringer, Laylah Lyon-Bradley, Rosie McMurray, Sally Grigg and Lara Degenhardt.



Darren Robinson from The Leader and Andrew Schreyer.



Bruce Ellen, Merridy Manuel and Paul Thomas.



Tim Whetstone M.P.



Margaret Manuel, Life Member; Ethan Allen, Andrew Manuel, Bron Helgeson, Renee Bennett, Louise Michael, Gabrielle Hall and Merridy Manuel.



Clare Scriven, Louise Michael, Jane Kuerschner and Hon. Emily Bourke M.P.



David Galeano, Michael Ellis, Life Member and Greg Herrick.



Ethan Allen and Louise Michael from The Plains Producer.



Paul Roberts, Mel Jaunay from The Leader and Kym Tilbrook.



Mark Clemow, Jon James from The Courier and Dorothy Staruchowicz.

BEST NEWS PHOTO

LISA SCHULZ, PLAINS PRODUCER



Josh Zugajev and Louise Michael from *The Plains Producer*.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS SEAN MCGOWAN

FIRST - *Plains Producer*, Lisa Schulz

"Lights, Camera, Action"

The title perfectly describes this well planned and professionally executed shot. Schulz used two off camera lights to separate her subject from the background and injected action by having the popcorn tossed in the air. Enough light spilled onto the seats for the viewer to understand immediately that they're in a theatre of some sort. The finishing touch is the great swathe of negative space which allowed the editor to overlay white text for great "pop".

A striking front-page image.

SECOND - *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*, Rod Penna

"Taking the Rains"

Such a magnificent puddle perfectly illustrating the rain event and a great wordplay in the title. A technically difficult shot which just missed on a couple of levels: the sun crowds the subjects and may have worked better if obscured by the horse's head as a rim light; and the on-camera (direct) flash has flattened the child by deleting shadows necessary for 3-dimensionality.

THIRD - *The Courier*, Elisa Rose

"Taming a Tiger"

The subject's gaze into his own memories haunts Rose's post-bushfire image. The setting is

great but the black trees to right of frame are too dominant and there's an unfortunate tree growing out of the subject's head.

Eliza Rose is one of those journalistic rarities who can both write and photograph well. I'd recommend experimenting with off-camera flash to elevate her images to the next level.

SPECIAL MENTION

The Leader, Mel Jaunay

"Bruce Turns Heads"

Terrific snap. Especially enjoy the coffee drinkers totally ignoring the spectacle and the ocker bloke in the alley with his WTF expression.

And snaps to the editor for running it!

EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

MEL JAUNAY, THE LEADER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS KYM TILBROOK

There were nine entries in this category which gives journalists the opportunity to showcase their skills, whether it be day-to-day reporting or investigative reporting. Criteria for the award states: "A local news or human-interest story – must be breaking news, delving into an issue in the entrant newspaper's community."

As I have mentioned before in judging notes, quality journalism is a must if papers are to thrive in the ever-expanding digital era. The papers, through excellence in journalism, can hold governments, politicians, councils and rogue businesses to account.

They can report in detail the issues behind the headlines and dig deep into social issues faced by their communities.

This year's entries show that communities are well-served by their local newspapers. Readers can be confident that the papers will tackle the tough issues on their behalf.

Even though there were only nine entries they were of a very high standard. Issues covered included domestic violence, bushfires, coronavirus and State Government moves to privatise the Across Government Facilities Management Services.

Once again, there was some excellent journalism which made it very difficult to pick a winner.

Because of the strength of entries, I gave three honourable mentions:

They were to:

Elisa Rose, of *The Courier*, for her

comprehensive coverage of the Cudlee Creek bushfire which claimed one life and destroyed more than 80 homes. As well as reporting on the fire, Elisa also reported extensively on the recovery process. Her series of articles was well-written and informative. Her editor, Ian Osterman, noted that Elisa gave fire victims "a voice when they could have been forgotten in the chaos."

Deirdre Graham, of *The Border Times*, for her coverage of coronavirus issues in the region. Through an extensive series of articles, she revealed the impact on border communities. In an excellent editorial Deirdre criticised the handling by governments of issues hurting cross-border communities. She noted: "is it too much to ask for a common sense answer to the latest restrictions on the border."

"If Governments can put in restrictions at the drop of a hat, surely they can revise those restrictions when it becomes clear they are unfair, and probably all they will do is to create angst in border communities."

Sara Gilligan, of *The Bunyip*, for her articles raising awareness about domestic violence. Sara is very passionate about the issue of domestic violence and received an honourable mention at last year's awards for her writing on the subject.

I awarded first place to Mel Jaunay, of *The Leader*, for her compelling investigative report into domestic violence. She lifted the lid on what can happen behind closed doors in what people think are quiet, loving communities.

Mel interviewed a young mother of two named Jade Bulmer who spoke of her experience at the hands of her

violent partner. It was hard to read... the violence was frightening. It's a story that leaves a lasting, horrifying impact.

"If anyone knows what it is like to fear for your life, it's Jade Bulmer," wrote Mel.

Jade observed to Mel at one stage: "My story will never get acknowledged compared to the story that's on TV because I'm not deceased." Mel's reaction was: "But her story does matter. It matters then, and it matters now, just as every person who has suffered at the hands of an abuser has a story that matters."

Mel was new to journalism last year and was second in the Excellence in Journalism category. I noted in judging notes that she appeared to have a bright future in journalism. This year's entry has confirmed my thoughts. It was an excellent piece of journalism.

Mel's story certainly met all the criteria for the award - "A local news or human-interest story – must be breaking news, delving into an issue in the entrant newspaper's community."

Second – Stan Gorton, *The Islander*.

Stan's coverage of the devastating Kangaroo Island bushfires was top class. The fires broke out while he was on leave and with no publication of *The Islander* over Christmas, he went online providing information to KI residents via the paper's website and live streaming on Facebook.

With the paper back in print, Stan continued his extensive coverage of the impact of the fires. He reported from the fire fronts and public meetings. He interviewed locals who had lost everything, wildlife experts

who were trying to save stricken fauna and tourism operators who saw their livelihoods severely damaged as the fire ravaged the island.

Stan noted on his entry: "As the only journalist on the island, I felt great responsibility to keep the community informed as the fire developed over the days and weeks of January."

Stan certainly did keep his community informed and he and the paper deserve hearty congratulations.

I gave third place to Rhiannon Koch of the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*. She and the paper ran an excellent "grass roots" campaign against state government plans to privatise the Across Government Facilities Management Services which handles the maintenance and management of public buildings, like schools.

Over three months she interviewed a large number of local tradespeople, contacted state government representatives and attended numerous meetings. In a series of seven well-researched articles, Rhiannon put the concerns of the tradies - who believed they could lose up to 70 per cent of their work - front and centre.

The paper, through Rhiannon, gave the tradies a strong voice to air their grievances and elicited numerous assurances from the Minister that the move would not impact tradies like they feared.

Importantly, Rhiannon gave strong coverage to both sides of the story, with the government given plenty of opportunity to put their side of the divisive debate. In today's busy media world, the chance to give adequate response is sometimes neglected.

BEST ADVERTISEMENT - PRICED PRODUCT

THE LEADER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS MARK CLEMOW

WINNER - *The Leader*, Hypatech
This ad is a simple idea that is well executed. The device of the skewed, or upside down, ad is not a new one in branding, so it's nice to see it being deployed in a retail offer context.

Nobody turning to that page would fail to stop, consider what's wrong and then read why. The tie in to school is perfect, the offer is unambiguous and mentioning "the upside down ad in *The Leader*" is a great call to action. Nice work.

SECOND - *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times*, Enfield Furnishers

There is nothing new, or innovative in this ad. Furniture advertising using personalities and nice pictures of the stock has been around for years. Where this ads stands out is with the "less is more approach". Instead of the usual whole page of items, there are just five pictures of furniture, with the "personality" store owner doing a signature pose in the middle. It gives the impression of size, variety and value without cluttering the page.

Simple, colourful, nice artwork and typography. A very effective and nicely built ad.

THIRD - *The Plains Produce*, Docair
This is a bold and simple layout that connects the market with a timely offer. The headline, with the fun

image of the sun and cool colours, introduces the premise of the offer and the pricing is clearly stated. Topped off with a recognisable product image, great use of colours and the face of the owner, you have a very effective ad.

SPECIAL MENTION

The Courier, Oakbank Golf Club

Here is a very appealing ad, both in the layout and the offer. There is a lot of information to convey, however with the offer central to the layout and a pleasing hero image, it's an easy proposition to read the information.

The price point makes a membership an affordable gift option and the call to action is easy to find.

Other entries (in no order)

The Courier, Irrigation Pump Depot

An engaging and timely advertisement, featuring a potentially life saving offer, with the reassurance of a photo of the team.

The lime green of the offer was distinctive in making the ad stand out.

The Yorke Peninsula Country Times, Gunnings.

A nicely created and laid out ad with a good strategy behind it. The brand is well reinforced, the offers are clear and the call to action is obvious. Car advertising can be cluttered and messy, but this one proves that with good design and strategy, it can be lifted.

The Bunyip, Vadoulis Garden Centre



Mark Clemow with Darren Robinson from *The Leader* and David Harris.

The ads I see for Vadoulis are always well done and have won awards in the past. This one follows the pattern of a professional layout, good colours and clear information. It leaves the customer with no doubt over what to expect from the business.

The Bunyip, Steinborner Hyundai

An elegant ad and good to see it was created in house. A very popular vehicle is presented well, with a clear offer, nice imagery and good call to action.

The Murray Pioneer, Riverland Motor Group

This ad brings a colourful and quirky touch to used car advertising. This is a cluttered category and used car advertising can be pretty dry. Cartoon characters introduce a sense of fun and adventure and

make the cars look more interesting. Noting the photos above the ad, the positioning is good.

The Plains Producer, Foodland

A nice corporate ad with a clear seasonal offer. Distinctively local so readers will know its for their "local" store, rather than for the network.

In future, please provide accompanying information about the ad and how it performed.

The Border Watch, Taylor Marine

These are a good series of ads that tell the story of this well established business and the various services they provide. Marine colours compliment the appeal, with interesting information and images. These ads work well to convey an offer, as well as to reinforce the brand.

BEST HEADLINE

"TWO-DELOO", THE BUNYIP

JUDGE'S COMMENTS ROSS MCPHERSON

Judging this category is always an enjoyable but challenging task: I am repeatedly inspired by the creative spirit and humanity that shines through these headlines – composed by hard-working editors under pressure.

Rightly or wrongly, my final arbiter is reader engagement – which entries not only attract attention but resonate in some emotional way? The task is made easier by having entries lined up beside each other – enabling multiple colleagues to take a look to test my biases. Here is the jury's decision:

FIRST – *The Bunyip*, "TWO-DELOO"

Say what you like, a story about two new toilet blocks (and good-bye to an old one) in Gawler was the unanimous winner, out-pointing "important" stories about de-frocked ministers, disgraced councillors and bank closures. *The Bunyip's* editor

Sara Gilligan takes first prize (again.)

SECOND – *Murray Pioneer*, "TIM(E) OUT"

The story about Riverland MP Tim Whetstone's loss of his ministerial portfolio over expense claims had plenty of national exposure – with none headed any better than the Pioneer's clever word play. It would have been easy not to bother but the effort is rewarded: it instantly presses the reader to take (at least) two meanings out of the incident, immediately enriching the reader experience.

THIRD – *YP Country Times*, "TAKING THE RAINS"

My first editor told me to "never go past a kid and a dog" and the same goes for a cute kid and a horse, particularly in a wet paddock. This compelling headline and pic also won the approval of multiple colleagues, reminding us that, among the drama and anxiety inherent in hard news, readers still look for something joyfully human. It's what we're good at!



Sara Gilligan from *The Bunyip* and Tom Raggatt.

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

I should also make special mention of the clever *YP Country Times'* Another No-bank Zone, playing on the well-known ANZ branding for attention; *The Courier* (Mt Barker) heading and pic, Marriage

of Inconvenience; and *The Plains Producer's* Pollen Party – all making that extra effort to engage/amuse/provoke and inform through a headline.

Well done, in a tough year!

BEST EDITORIAL WRITING

THE BUNYIP

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

SHAUNA BLACK

I need not add any commentary to the millions of words written about this "unprecedented" year, except to note the demise of several much-loved and historical mastheads from the Country Press SA stable. I make particular mention of the South-Eastern Times, winner of this award for the past two years, and its sister paper the Penola Pennant, itself a worthy place-getter in recent years.

Just five entries this year: perhaps not a surprise given closures and pauses in the industry. It is worrying to think of the gaps in local discourse that have been created by this absence.

There is just a category winner this year, no places will be awarded.

That winner is the very worthy *The Bunyip* of Gawler.

In any year and with any number of entries, the work of Sara Gilligan would have stood out.

Gilligan has shown she can persuade and can influence change in her community by use of the editorial space. As a young editor, Gilligan shows she has much to offer as her career matures.

Her words and the work of *The Bunyip* have helped to reverse an unpopular demolition decision and

prompted greater transparency in local government. There can be no greater reward for a regional journalist than to speak on behalf of her readers and achieve action on their behalf.

Of the remaining entries:

Ian Ostermann at *The Courier* continues to mesmerise with his beautiful and fluent prose, taking on universal topics but also sharpening his quill to speak to the local Member of Parliament. Gee, readers must look forward to reading his work each week.

Shout out to the *Plains Producer*. You almost got there! Two out of the three editorials submitted were actual leaders and one was an opinion piece, and all the writing of a high quality by Louise Michael. Kudos for the football violence piece.

Honourable mention to the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times'* Nick Perry who provided a diverse range of work, including a unique editorial which exhibited graphs.

I enjoyed the work of new *Murray Pioneer* editor Jane Kuerschner in tackling broad issues and localised problems; the essential work of a local newspaper.

After a year of consolidation, closures and comebacks, I look forward to seeing more entries next year as Country Press SA remains vibrant and active.



Sara Gilligan from *The Bunyip* and Barry Wilson.

BEST FRONT PAGE

THE COURIER, ADELAIDE HILLS

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

WANDA DUNNET

WINNER: *The Courier* – Adelaide Hills

A strong front-page story, a bold heading and a deep etched photo of a prominent and recognisable identity, the deputy mayor, across three columns, made this the standout entry.

The copy was well written with the first sentence encapsulating the essence of the story – the deputy mayor was found to have made an exaggerated claim about a serious issue – that she had been stalked.

As we read on, the story by Nick Grimm reveals that one of the alleged stalkers is a person with whom the deputy mayor had been involved in a number of disagreements relating to council matters.

This page would have been widely read with strong interest in the community. It has an eye-catching layout with the 'pick me up and read

me' factor. It is well written and engaging. I would be interested to know what happened after the story was turned to page two, but page 2 was not provided to the judge.

SECOND PLACE – *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times*

A strong heading on a very relevant issue and an attention-grabbing story by Nick Perry made this an impressive entry. Everyone wants to know what is happening with COVID-19.

The information box provides the reader with what they need to know at a glance. A timely article. The spectacular photo of the lightning bolt had an impact, but the small font caption in reverse was a little difficult to read. There is a whole story in the caption.

An attractive front page well laid out and attention grabbing.

THIRD PLACE – *The Bunyip*

The front page celebrates the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions with a



Mr Peter Malinauskas M.P with Josh Teakle from *The Courier* and Wanda Dunnet.

series of photos of life returning to normal. There is nothing more normal than having a beer with mates and their smiling faces in the main photo says it all. Unfortunately, the caption was lost in this picture, again a small font reverse. The great neon light

graphic 'Open for business' signals that good times are returning.

The quality of entries overall was impressive. However, the trend to use small fonts in reverse captions is a case of 'form over function' and can be a barrier to easy reading.

BEST SUPPLEMENT

THE BAROSSA MAG, THE LEADER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS ANDREW SCHREYER

What a difficult task. This category attracted many high quality entries this year. In judging the award I put myself in the position of the reader – what would I like to pick up and read and what would I get the most use out of as a consumer. The best entries used modern and crisp layout styles, strong photography, interesting editorials and plenty of well designed ads. I really liked how some entries had included an electronic element to their offering through e-editions, EDMs and online advertising.

FIRST - The Barossa Mag (*The Leader*)

A cracking publication that would appeal equally to locals and tourists in and around the Barossa Valley and further afield. The judged edition was 72 pages filled with current information on local events, stories on local people, well used photos, strong advertising, recipes, local weddings and of course a wine review section. The publication used

white space extremely well and its modern layouts made the content easy to consume. As a reader seeing this publication for the first time I am already looking forward to the next edition. The publication is also supported by its own website, social media and an EDM offering for advertisers. Congratulations to the team at *The Leader*.

I have one small suggestion. Some of the small reverse text in ads and photo captions reversed onto dark areas of photos was a little difficult to read. I'd suggest making these fonts larger or more bold or opting not to use reverse text in these areas.

Second: Riverland, Mallee and Lower North Farmer (*The Murray Pioneer*)

The judged entry was a 52 page publication with a high quality gloss cover featuring a full page photo of a local watermelon and wine grape growing family. The cover and well designed index made me want to read on. Lots of large photos, excellent page layouts and varied editorial content across many ag sectors made it easy to see why advertisers are keen on this

publication. The 'industry expert update' section also provides great value to the reader. Advertising is strong and prominent without being overwhelming. This publication also offers an e-edition. A top class publication from the team at *The Murray Pioneer* – well done.

I have one small suggestion. Some editorials turn over to the next page – perhaps to a from page/to page note would assist the reader follow the story.

Third: Regional Business Directory (*Plains Producer*)

A massive effort by the team at *Plains Producer*. The edition was the first business directory produced by this organisation and it really is an asset to the region. Containing over 1500 business listings the work involved in pulling this information together would have been immense. The booklet is extremely well laid out, with easy to read headings and business names with those choosing to pay for listings given due prominence. The display ads are well placed under their relevant sections and reward the advertiser for their spend. The directory was obviously

well received by advertisers and readers. The print version was backed up by an attractive digital/online business directory offering. Well done to the team at Plains Producer.

SPECIAL MENTION

York Peninsula's Copper Coast 2021 Visitors' Guide (*Yorke Peninsula Country Times*)

Printed on top quality gloss stock this publication would be a 'must grab' for tourists visiting the area. The publication uses stunning photography and interesting editorials to keep the reader entertained. There are many things to see and do in the area and these are well covered in short, sharp paragraphs throughout the guide. The guide is well laid out with a good selection of maps included and is well supported by advertisers. Great work by the team at *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*.

I have one small suggestion. Some of the fonts are quite small and when reversed onto a background they become a little hard to read. If smaller fonts are not reversed this will help.

BEST HOUSE AD

THE YORKE PENINSULA COUNTRY TIMES

JUDGE'S COMMENTS GREG HERRICK

Once again it has been an honour to be asked to Judge this year's Best House advertisement for 2020.

While there weren't many House advertisement entries this year, the entries that were received were of the highest quality which made the judging quite challenging but still a joy to do.

The criteria for judging each advertisement were based on:

Clear and relevant headline.

Copy that enhances the headline, promotes the brand, concept or cause. An image that compliments the copy.

Font which is easy on the eye and easy to follow. Call to action.

A maximum of 100 points were available for each advertisement based on.

Originality and concept. Headline.

Body Copy. Call to action. Layout.

Third place was shared by two newspapers.

Plains Produce, DIGITAL EDITION:

Very clean advertisement with two very good images of a Tablet and a Smart Phone promoting the opportunity to purchase a digital

subscription per edition, body copy was straight to the point, easy to follow and where to go to subscribe. A great example when space allows advertise big and bold, don't hide your own promotional advertisements in the corner.

The Leader, GOOD MORNING:

A simple designed advertisement that catches your eye immediately with a great image of the *The Leader* newspaper along with a cup of coffee. Just above, this advertisement does not need many words as the images tell the story. "nothing better than having a cup of coffee reading your local newspaper each morning", and to have that happen you can simply contact your local newsagents.

Second place - *The Leader*, 12 GOOD REASONS TO SHOP LOCAL THIS CHRISTMAS:

This advertisement is all about LOCAL, to have 12 good reasons as to why shop local this Christmas shows that a lot of thought and effort went into this advertisement, there is nothing greater when a local community newspaper is seen supporting the local business sector with full page advertisements encouraging locals to spend local, certainly the bold colour use of pink is very unique and would not have been missed.

First place: JOINT WINNERS - *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*, COME BACK STRONGER...Look local first:

With the advent of the 2020 Corona virus and the impact it has had on every community throughout Australia the easy option would have been to down tools and put in the too hard basket.

With the advertisement promoting "Come Back Stronger" *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times* has presented an advertisement showing the community that they understand the impact the Corona virus has had to the local community and the business sector, the Corona virus pandemic caused major community and economic stress to all local businesses, history shows when these abnormalities occur in the times of crisis businesses need to make calm, clear-headed decisions and look for opportunities, this is where *Yorke Peninsula Country Times* came to the fore by offering businesses the opportunity to be proactive and join them for an no obligation, advertising strategy seminar that will be important on their next advertising marketing moves.

Yorke Peninsula Country Times, YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU:

The Yorke Peninsula Country Times have nailed with this series

of community advertisements encouraging the readers to continue to support local businesses as much as possible while *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times* continued to offer their services and support to the local business community.

The imagery of the first advertisement, "Your Community Needs You" was an extremely powerful message that was straight to the point, LOOK LOCAL FIRST.

The second advertisement was a letter to the local community from the Managing Director, "How Locals Can Help Locals", It was informative, it was reassuring, and it was personal, a very strong message to the community that I am sure would have been well received.

The third page advertisement, "Thank you for your support. Now let us support you."

Is a thoughtful letter to the business partners advising that *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times* will continue to serve them and the readers with strong trusted editorial content along with creative advertising /marketing strategies to the local community as they have for 155 years.

Congratulations to *The Yorke Peninsula Country Times* on being "joint winners" for the Best House advertisement for 2020.

BEST ADVERTISEMENT - IMAGE/BRANDING

THE COURIER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS MARK CLEWOW

WINNER - *The Courier*, Gawler Street Cafe

This ad represents the right formula for an enduring brand campaign, with stylish imagery, key information and clear layout.

The earthy colours are warm, inviting and unambiguously identify the client's brand. Pictures of the café facade and food are in tones that match the primary colour. Information about the business is clear, as are the various ways to interact and seek information.

Customers viewing the advertisement should have instant recognition of the business and stay top of mind for their next dining experience, or as a prompt when they are in the vicinity.

SECOND - *The Leader*, Beam Internet

This is a very effective advertisement for a local business, created and executed with local talent. The layout fits the category of a telecommunications provider, with active colours, key information and simple to find calls to action. The ad reinforces localism through the headlines and text, with an evocative hero image of a local employee flanked by a famous local landmark.

The various executions presented with the entry show the versatility of the ad in various sizes, settings and publications.

THIRD - Warburtons Butchers, *The Murray Pioneer*

Note: This ad was entered by the

newspaper in the priced/product category, but was considered more suitable as a branded ad.

This is a classy ad that positions the client as professional, trustworthy and quality. A terrific hero image of the butchers in front of their store could not convey the quality of the brand more effectively. The timely and quirky 2020 to 2021 star rating device is effective, leading to the marvellous strap line of "meat makes everything better".

SPECIAL MENTIONS

The Yorke Peninsula Country Times, Kadina Hotel

I liked the premise of this ad to focus on the personality of the publican. Putting him in fun situations and using bold colours makes them easily recognised on the page and likely prompted people to go into the hotel for a meal or drink just so they can "tease" the publican.

The Yorke Peninsula Country Times, Hamiltons Pest Control

A very simple premise to play on people's fears of bugs and insects with large images. Although the ads are small, the size of the image of a spider, proportionate to the space, (in the example provided), is a highly effective attention device.

Other entries (in no order)

The Bunyip, Gawler Lock and Key

A nice idea to make a simple written and visual statement about a core service. Repeated over time and in a consistent position, this will reinforce a good brand position.

The Bunyip, Gallery Building.

This ad, combined a quirky visual with a personal call to action, is

straight to the point and addresses a common problem.

Home renovations are a major purchase, so this ad would do well being repeated to gain a "top of mind" response when the service is needed. The call to action is also memorable.

The Murray Pioneer, DHM Partners

An effective corporate ad that invites curiosity and conveys a simple concept of why a business adviser is important. It would have been good if the talent was someone in the business, or a client of the business, as stock images can sometimes convey an unreal impression in a local setting, where people can feel that recognition of the people is part of the trust transaction. In using a real person, a caption identifying the person is a powerful thing. (For example, "Susie Smythe, *Renmark Millinery*").

The Murray Pioneer, Eat Me StreetFood and Kebabs

A colourful and cheerful ad that conveys the business well and includes a special offer. The image of the food is nicely staged and makes an effective visual hook to the information. This ad can be a template where the offer and photos are varied within the same layout.

The Courier, Dapple EQ

A stylish ad that represents the brand of RM Williams well. It has colours not often used in newspaper advertising, but closely tied to the sector and the product. You can almost smell the leather in the photo!

In future, please provide accompanying information about the ad and how it performed.

The Leader, Kodo Business Support

This ad does a great job of fulfilling the intention of representing the brand as fun and approachable. It's always good to see local talent engaged for local ads. It creates a strong personal bond with the business and is a great memory device.

The Plains Producer, Viss Water.

This is a colourful ad with a beautiful hero image of cattle taking water. A picture of the staff is always a great device and in this one, because of the number of staff, it reinforces the seriousness and capability of the team. A nice ad that informs well.

In future, please provide accompanying information about the ad and how it performed.

The Plains Producer, Clare Valley Taxis

This ad proves that the simplest of ads can be the most effective. The message is clear and bold and the image is simple and interesting. There is no doubt to the reader that this business is still operating, with a robust fleet of vehicles.

In future, please provide accompanying information about the ad and how it performed.

The Border Watch, GB Shearing

Simple and bold. This ad would have been seen and the call to action is clear for anyone needing shearers. It's also quite an unusual for the industry and would have provoked some curiosity.

I felt there was an interesting story about this campaign, so in future, please provide accompanying information about the ad and how it performed.

BEST ADVERTISING FEATURE

McEVOY MITCHELL RACING 10TH ANNIVERSARY, THE LEADER

JUDGE'S COMMENTS JOE ITALIANO

FIRST - McEVOY MITCHELL RACING 10th ANNIVERSARY, *The Leader*

The hallmark of a good advertising feature is that it does more than simply advertise a product or service. The McEvoy Racing 10th Anniversary feature is not only an excellent promotion of the company but is also a good read. The good editorial is sure to retain reader attention and in doing so draw attention to the advertisers in the seven-page feature.

This feature also appears to have been well supported by businesses associated with racing but by no means regular newspaper advertisers. Truck services, software, packaging, fencing and horse suppliers among these.

It is well written, has well designed and printed advertising and is a credit to the publisher.

SECOND - A - Z HOME GUIDE, *The Plains Producer*

There have been made an A - Z feature done over the years but few achieve the impact the Plains Producer has been able to achieve in this offering.

Any feature running three or more pages deserves a "front page" and this is achieved by running a full-page picture on a right-hand page to set the standard for what is to follow in the next seven pages.

Rather than have adverts supported by editorial, the feature runs a series of A to Z advertorials based on products, businesses and service providers. It is well done.

THIRD - TRUCK, FREIGHT and TRANSPORT SERVICES, *Yorke Peninsula Times*

The publishers set out to attract advertising from an industry which generally is not seen as a mainstay advertiser in regional newspapers. It appears to have achieved its objective.

The four-page feature is supported by 12 advertisers and is professionally put together with bright advertisements and supporting editorial.



Darren Robinson from *The Leader* and Chris Raynor.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

Smart marketers understand the power of regional news media audiences. Here's why.

- There is continued strong demand (and passion) for the printed product in rural and regional Australia. In fact, the majority of audiences prefer a printed newspaper, with younger generations also part of this trend.
- Country Press readers overall are 2.6 times as likely to read their local paper in print than in digital format
- Audiences overwhelmingly view a printed copy of their newspaper as an essential service for their community.
- Audiences indicate they are five times as likely to go directly to a local news website for their local news rather than Google or Facebook
- Just 5% of younger audiences say they mostly use social media to find out about local news.

If you're looking to communicate with regional South Australia, make the smart choice and invest in the power of print today! We've got you covered.



www.sacountrypress.com.au



**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
SA'S REGIONAL JOURNALISM**