



Quill
AWARDS
2020

PRESS RELEASE UNDER STRICT EMBARGO

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**2020 QUILL AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN VICTORIAN JOURNALISM**

**THE MPC GOLD QUILL
(SUPPORTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE)**

Russell Jackson, ABC News, 'The Persecution of Robert Muir'

Judges' citation: COVID-19 may have been THE story of 2020. But so too was racism. And, particularly here in Melbourne, racism in sport. Russell Jackson's piece on the 1970s Aboriginal AFL star Robert Muir provides a compelling and confronting insight into the impact of racism. It uncovers little known facts about a talented and controversial footballer, spurned by his own club, and long maligned by the footy world. The writing is first-class; with the Judging Panel describing the story as a beautifully crafted piece. Russell's meticulous research, and the clear trust he built with Robbie Muir comes through in every line. As well, the impact of this superb piece of journalism cannot be overstated. It has transformed Robbie Muir's life, sparked long overdue apologies, and contributed significantly to a wider community conversation. It is – simply put – outstanding.

*Articles about the winners will be available on our website after 11pm.
For general info about our awards, visit: <https://www.melbournepressclub.com>
Enquiries: admin@melbournepressclub.com
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THE MPC LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Colin Duck

For an outstanding contribution over more than 50 years as a journalist, editor and manager in newspapers and magazines, former *Sun News-Pictorial* editor Colin Duck was recognised with the 2020 MPC Lifetime Achievement Award. The honour, presented at the annual Quill Awards dinner each March, is bestowed at the discretion of the MPC board.

THE MPC STUDENT JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

(SUPPORTED BY THE JUDITH NEILSON INSTITUTE)

Jess Malcolm, University of Melbourne, *Guardian Australia*, ‘Meet the bee brokers: “You never stop learning about bees, they’re just incredible”’

Judges’ Citation: Exploring the work of beekeepers who muster and rent out billions of bees along the east coast of Australia for Australian agriculture, Jess produced an outstanding feature on a fascinating topic about which little is known. With great research, attention to detail and commitment during COVID-19 travel restrictions, she told a beautiful story which touched on a range of important issues in regional Victoria. A truly compelling piece of storytelling.

Highly Commended: Gillian Aeria, Monash University, *The Junction*, ‘Size me up: The need for women’s tailored football boots’ and Maggie Zhou, Monash University, *Broadsheet*, ‘How my mum’s lockdown cookouts with relatives in China helped me connect to my cultural and culinary roots’

THE MPC YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

(SUPPORTED BY THE WILNIC FAMILY TRUST)

Paul Sakkal, *The Age*

Judges’ Citation: Paul was involved in breaking the biggest stories in Victoria last year, including the hotel quarantine scandal and Liberal Party branch stacking allegations. The judges were impressed by his ability to break exclusive stories in one of the most competitive environments in the country. His work had real impact and held the government to account.

Highly Commended: Michael Fowler of *The Age*

ARTWORK

Tia Kass, *The Saturday Paper*, 'We Feed You'

Judges' citation: The richness and detail of Tia Kass' illustrations reveal the commitment the artist had to the stories of four temporary migrant workers in the food industry. The judges felt that the portraits demanded a respect for their subjects, their sincerity offset by the quirkiness of the accompanying story-telling illustrations. An expressive, media-rich combination, and one that propelled the reader through the package.

Highly Commended: Richard Gilberto of *The Age* for 'State of Chaos'.

BEST BUSINESS STORY IN ANY MEDIUM

Sarah Danckert, *The Age*, 'Bigger Than the Wolf of Wall Street'

Sarah Danckert demonstrated brilliant journalism in her series examining how crime gangs, posing as licensed traders of complex financial products, had ripped millions of dollars off Australian customers and how for years the corporate regulator had failed to do anything about it. Sarah's attention to detail was meticulous. Her explanation of the inner workings of an elite segment of the financial market and the impact of rogue dealers, locally and globally, was fluent, compelling and authoritative. She shone a bright light on an otherwise obscure area of financial criminal conduct and powerfully highlighted the insipid response of the corporate regulator. Almost every sentence brought head-shaking revelations. Judges were particularly impressed by the originality of the work, coming as it did almost out of the blue. Every now and then, one particular piece of writing or a series, cuts through, and Sarah's pieces certainly did.

Highly Commended: Adele Ferguson, Lesley Robinson & Lauren Day, ABC *Four Corners* & *The Age*, 'Immoral and Unethical'

BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE

The Herald Sun Breaking News Team, *Herald Sun*, 'Police Horror'

In a news year like no other, the deaths of four police in a bizarre traffic smash as darkness fell on the Eastern Freeway posed a challenge for newsrooms and reporters to be fast, accurate and comprehensive. The *Herald Sun* team of Anthony Dowsley, Mark Buttler, Brianna Travers, Josh Fagan and Aneeka Simonis — with the back-up of a skilled production team — achieved this. They comprehensively covered the multiple angles of this breaking news event on digital, print and video platforms. They were judged the winners from an exceptionally strong field of entries.

CARTOON

Matt Golding, *The Sunday Age*, "Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?"

Judges' citation: Matt Golding's cartoon based on the famous World War I Savile Lumley recruitment poster was a beautiful concept, executed skillfully. It carried a rapier message that cut through the noise of the pandemic about people's atrocious behaviour during the Victorian COVID-19 shutdowns in 2020. The judges thought the idea and execution lifted it slightly above the other high quality entries in an action packed year for cartooning.

Highly Commended: Andrew Dyson of *The Age* for 'Pandemic Parade' and Jim Pavlidis of *The Age*, for 'Easter Bunny'

COVERAGE OF AN ISSUE OR EVENT

The Age Online Team, *www.theage.com.au*, Coronavirus Pandemic Coverage

Judges' Citation: The Age Online Team's coronavirus pandemic coverage best represented the teamwork, multi-platformed and audience-first approach that 2020 demanded. Its live blogs were a comprehensive and dependable pillar of this coverage, but the team's work extended far beyond rolling breaking news and scoops. Innovative data-led visualisations and in-depth analysis from its Explainer team stood out as fine examples of public benefit journalism, and its reporting was backed by an impressively versatile distribution strategy.

Highly Commended: Louise Milligan, Mary Fallon & Lauren Day, ABC *Four Corners* for 'Boys Club'

FATHER BOB MAGUIRE FOUNDATION COBBERWEALTH AWARD FOR REPORTING ON SOCIAL INCLUSION (SUPPORTED BY THE FATHER BOB MAGUIRE FOUNDATION)

Charmayne Allison, *Shepparton News*, 'Homelessness: A 21st Century Tragedy'

Charmayne Allison's series of articles and outstanding podcast covered the full spectrum of the causes and consequences of homelessness in regional Victoria, with meticulous attention to evidence-based research. This is great advocacy journalism, dealt with sensitively and highlighting the need for increased social housing in regional Victoria. A worthy winner of the Father Bob Maguire Foundation Cobberwealth Award, which recognises and encourages reporting that contributes to social inclusion.

Highly Commended: Luke Henriques-Gomes of *Guardian Australia* for 'The Jobless Older Women Languishing in Poverty'

FEATURE WRITING

Nick McKenzie, *Good Weekend*, 'One Last Mission'

Judges' Citation: Almost nothing about the creation of this story was easy. Through patient research and fine writing, it reaches the most impenetrable places and gently draws out profound insights about trauma, grief and forgiveness. This extraordinary piece helps to heal the anguish of an army doctor who felt he didn't do enough and an Afghan family who lost their father to the brutality of Australian soldiers. It is truly beautiful reporting.

Highly Commended: Cheryl Hall, Belinda Hawkins & Megan Mackander of ABC online for 'Bad Romance'

FEATURES PHOTOGRAPH

Christopher Hopkins, *The Age*, 'I Want to hold her Hand'

Judges' Citation: Judges need to consider a photographer's success in distilling the essence of a story or providing new insights into an issue. They look for impact and technical excellence in a single photo or series. In a strong field of contenders, Chris Hopkins' work stood out. His poignant image depicts two sisters, one terminally ill with cancer, the other trying to say goodbye. Their reunion is hamstrung by COVID-19 quarantine restrictions, after the latter travelled from overseas to be by her bedside.

Highly Commended: Justin McManus of *The Age* for 'Life in Isolation'

**THE GRANT HATTAM QUILLS FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM
(SUPPORTED BY THE HERALD & WEEKLY TIMES)**

Nick McKenzie & Chris Masters, *Nine Network's 60 Minutes*, 'War Crimes'

Judges' Citation: The investigation into alleged war crimes by Australian forces in Afghanistan has had profound consequences. This entry is the latest story broken as part of a sustained investigation by Nick McKenzie and Chris Masters dating back to 2017. It is the result of years of perseverance and unflinching commitment to digging into the criminal behaviour and moral failures of Australian soldiers. The story of former SAS medic Dusty Miller's quest to make amends with one victim's family reveals the deep trauma and lifelong consequences of actions that for too long had been hidden from view.

Highly Commended: Louise Milligan, Peter Cronau & Lucy Carter of ABC *Four Corners* for 'Inside The Canberra Bubble'

INNOVATION IN JOURNALISM

Rachael Dexter & Justin McManus, *The Age*, Documenting life in lockdown

Judges' Citation: This entry found an innovative and interesting way of presenting the individual stories of people whose lives were disrupted by Victoria's major COVID-19 lockdown. It combined well-written print, beautifully-presented stills and video with a compelling social media presence, ticking all the boxes for this category. Several of the case studies were followed up when restrictions eased, to update their stories and provide a generally hopeful view of lessons learned and the way ahead for lives disrupted by COVID-19.

Highly Commended: ABC Digital Stories Innovations Team, www.abc.net.au/news for 'Visualising the climate crisis'

THE KEITH DUNSTAN QUILLS FOR COMMENTARY

John Silvester, *The Age*, Naked City

Judges' Citation: These selections from the veteran writer on crime demonstrate his well-honed ability to take serious issues and treat them with respect and humour simultaneously. They highlight not only his depth of knowledge in his area of expertise, with superbly researched and reasoned arguments, but a light touch that keeps the reader interested to the final, pithy point. He backs up his own assertion that "if you can't entertain, you can't inform".

Highly Commended: Waleed Aly, *The Monthly* & *The Age*, Tribal Counsel and Osman Faruqi, *The Saturday Paper*, On Black Lives Matter & Policing

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

Alex Coppel, *Herald Sun*, 'Malua Bay Fires'

Judges' Citation: In unprecedented scenes Alex Coppel's outstanding image has captured the myriad of emotions from calm to fear on the faces of both locals and holiday makers, seeking the comparative safety of the beach at Malua Bay, with bushfires closing in on their township.

Highly Commended: Eddie Jim of *The Age* for 'Inferno'

NEWS REPORT IN WRITING

Luke Henriques-Gomes, *Guardian Australia*, 'Robodebt failure exposed by leaked documents'

Judges' Citation: Luke's story was the first to reveal the deep impact of the Government's failed Robodebt scheme on some of the nation's most vulnerable. His dogged pursuit of the story over months paid off with the leak of Cabinet-level documents that were the basis of a clearly written exclusive of national significance.

Highly Commended: Aneeka Simonis of the *Herald Sun* for Celeste Manno intervention order and stalking law reform, and Wendy Tuohy of *The Age* for 'Sex discrimination and harassment widespread in Ambulance Victoria say paramedics'

PODCASTING

Rachael Brown, Josie Taylor, Tim Roxburgh & Martin Peralta, ABC, *Trace: The Informer*

Judges' Citation: Exhaustive effort to build trust over days, weeks and months secured this team exclusive access to their subject, including recording at an international secret location. The host's presence in the story added a welcome dimension - her vulnerability made for a truly authentic delivery. The piece balanced suspense and delivery of information through its narration, first-class audio production values and use of cross-platform curation. All the ingredients of best-practice podcasting.

Highly Commended: CBAA From the Embers Team, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), 'From the Embers'

QUILL FOR RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS REPORTING

**Belinda Hawkins, Andy Burns, Rebecca Armstrong & Ian Harley,
ABC Australian Story, 'Making his Mark'**

A clear winner in this category, which allowed Marlion and his family to tell their story in their own voice. Marlion Pickett's story, like many stories of Indigenous sports champions, is mostly filtered through the lens of sport. But this piece was about Marlion's journey of facing adversity, including drugs and time in prison, and was relayed openly and powerfully. Marlion's courage in telling his story allowed the audience to share a journey that many Australians know little about. The story powerfully touched on the institutional barriers facing Indigenous Australians, the experience of entrenched disadvantage and racism. Richmond's leaders spoke revealingly about how they had to break down these barriers and their own prejudices if Marlion was to get his chance. It was also a compelling exploration of the power of family. Marlion's story is ultimately one of overcoming adversity and fighting for change, and how Australia can benefit by recognising how much our First Nation people contribute when given a chance. It should inspire us all.

Highly Commended: Charlotte Grieve of *The Age* for Gomeri Heritage and Miki Perkins of *The Age* for a portfolio of work

RADIO CURRENT AFFAIRS

Matilda Marozzi, Virginia Trioli, Katrina Palmer & Julz Hay, ABC Radio Melbourne, 'Mother and child call out Victoria Police for domestic abuse failures'

Judges' Citation: This compelling piece by ABC Radio Melbourne *Mornings* exposed the problem of police-perpetrated family violence, using the medium of radio to provide a safe environment for a mother and her 13-year-old son to tell a chilling story of how the system had failed them. It resulted in an IBAC investigation, saw an assistant commissioner moved from the family violence portfolio, prompted an apology from the Police Minister about the way the case had been handled and led to follow-up national TV and newspaper coverage of this important issue.

RADIO NEWS

Richard Willingham, ABC Radio News, 'Did Health Minister Jenny Mikakos mislead the hotel quarantine inquiry?'

Judges' Citation: Willingham broke the story that led to the resignation of the Health Minister, Jenny Mikakos. Reporting on a tight deadline, he quickly identified inconsistencies between her testimony to the hotel quarantine inquiry and what was on the public record. It was a story of immense importance to the state with the hotel quarantine bungle ultimately leading to one of the world's longest COVID lockdowns.

REGIONAL & RURAL JOURNALISM

Charlotte King & Andy Burns, ABC Regional & Background Briefing, 'Regional stillbirths: No one told these country mums why their babies died'

Judges' Citation: Charlotte King and Andy Burns, in reporting jointly produced by ABC Regional and Background Briefing, contributed a well-researched and written piece detailing frequently inadequate maternal care, specifically in auditing and responding to stillbirths, in regional parts of the country. A powerful and well-told story that contributed to a national stillbirth audit program, which will improve data collection around preventable deaths.

Highly Commended: Charmayne Allison of *Shepparton News* for 'Her Voice, Our Voice'

SPORTS FEATURE

Russell Jackson, ABC News, 'The Persecution of Robert Muir'

Judges' Citation: A piece with deep impact. It put you in the shoes of 1970s Aboriginal AFL star Robert Muir and took you on a harrowing journey through decades of racist abuse and mistreatment. The piece required immense mutual trust between subject and writer and great sensitivity in its telling. It was constructed from over 40 hours of interviews. It changed the conversation at a deeply sensitive time for Australian sport.

Highly Commended: Greg Baum of *The Sunday Age* for 'The Wright Stuff'

SPORTS NEWS

Sam McClure, *The Age*, Crows Camp Catastrophe

Judges' Citation: A two-year investigation which took you inside the Crows inner sanctum to explore the team's infamous 2018 pre-season camp and the fallout among players and management. Despite repeated denials by the club and difficult reporting, Sam didn't give up until he got the story.

Highly Commended: Michael Warner of the *Herald Sun* for 'Danny's Tragic Secret'

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

Jason Edwards, *Herald Sun*, The Crux

Judges' Citation: This outstanding image of rock climber Tom Perkins was taken in complete darkness. Climbing under these conditions is unbelievably hard and dangerous, with the climber having to make every move by memory. The judging panel thought while it was a technically difficult photo to take Jason had captured it well, shining a light on a sport that requires both mental and physical toughness.

Highly Commended: Darrian Traynor, Getty Images, 'In the moment'

THE TAC QUILL FOR ROAD SAFETY REPORTING

Olivia Shying, *Geelong Advertiser*, 'High Stakes'

Judges' Citation: Olivia Shying's excellent reporting for the *Geelong Advertiser* covered issues relating to elderly drivers' safety and drug-affected driving. During COVID-19, when Victoria experienced the lowest road toll in years, Olivia's reporting was a clear standout to the judges. The judges also commend the *Geelong Advertiser* for the attention it brings to the issue of driving under the influence of drugs, which has eclipsed the problem of drink driving in the Geelong region.

TV CAMERA WORK (CREATIVE)

Travis Nemtsas, *Nine News*, After Curfew

Judges' Citation: Travis's extraordinary pictures and montages of the deserted Melbourne CBD during lockdown are both a visual feast and will serve as a stunning historical record. The piece was captured over five nights with a variety of apparatus and was edited by Travis himself. His vision provided millions of Victorians with images of Melbourne that they were unable to see for themselves. Travis captured the beauty of the empty streets and landmarks in a hauntingly memorable way.

Highly Commended: Simon Winter of ABC *Australian Story* for 'To Catch a Stalker'

TV CAMERA WORK (SHOT OF THE YEAR)

Oli Bourguignon, 7NEWS Melbourne, Road Trip with Cardinal George Pell

Judges' Citation: Oli's pictures showed Cardinal Pell for the first time since his release from prison. Seven's exclusive pictures capture the Cardinal clearly in a variety of different situations as he travelled to Sydney. The degrees of difficulty and uncertainty in the shots are not felt by the viewer, demonstrating Oli's intuition about what is needed to be in the right place and maximise a shot. The exclusive vision gave the first insight into the demeanour and appearance of our most senior Catholic, who fell from grace, was imprisoned, then was exonerated and freed.

Highly Commended: Stephen Ramplin of Nine News for 'Wonder Woman'

TV/VIDEO FEATURE (LONG FORM)

Louise Milligan, Mary Fallon & Lauren Day, ABC *Four Corners*, 'Boys Club'

Judges' Citation: Louise Milligan and her *Four Corners* colleagues unearthed a hidden culture of toxic masculinity and predatory grooming of minors at a Christian private college, a world that usually keeps within its ranks. She was able to obtain on-air interviews with subjects that would have been difficult to get to agree to disclose such sensitive information. Her story led to changes in the school's governance and attitudes.

Highly Commended: Nick McKenzie, Joel Tozer, Sumeyya Ilanbey & Paul Sakkal, Nine Network *60 Minutes*, 'The Faceless Man'

TV/VIDEO FEATURE (SHORT FORM)

Christine Ahern, Nine Network *A Current Affair*, Epping Disgrace

Judges' Citation: Ahern worked for weeks to lock down interviews with whistleblowers inside the aged care catastrophe during COVID-19. In gaining their trust, she was able to report for the first time how conditions led to out-of-control infections in the community. The emotion conveyed gave the audience a real insight into the ordeal. After the story aired, carers featured in the piece expressed their relief and gratitude about how their side of the story was finally told.

Highly Commended: Sallese Gibson & Nina Funnell, Network Ten *The Project*, 'Let Us Speak'

TV/VIDEO NEWS

Christine Ahern, Nine Network *The Today Show*, Quarantine Catastrophe

Judges' Citation: This was the story all networks were after, a whistleblower in hotel security who was prepared to go on camera to share the details of what was really happening behind closed doors. Christine worked around the clock to get the story to air in a day, highlighting the urgency and need for Victorians to hear the guard's story.

Highly Commended: Paul Dowsley, 7NEWS Melbourne, 'George Pell's First Interview as a Free Man'

THE VICHEALTH QUILL FOR COVERAGE OF WOMEN IN SPORT

Chris Gillett, ABC 7.30, Molly and Coral Taylor

Judges' Citation: This well-crafted *7.30* report captured the passion, skill and no-nonsense approach of two of the country's most successful female motorsport competitors. It highlighted the strong mother-daughter bond in a tough male dominated sport where they've earned respect and acceptance - inspirational, because it was not based on their gender but on their hard-fought achievements.

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT QUILT FOR REPORTING ON MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

André Dao, Michael Green & Tia Kass, *The Saturday Paper*, 'We Feed You'

Judges' Citation: 'We Feed You' presents multicultural voices - temporary migrants, working at the margins of the food chain - through inspired storytelling, using a collaborative approach among journalists, sources and the illustrator. The piece is highly creative, conveying the strength and complexity of the workers, the challenges they face and the important but often invisible role they play in our community. The apparent simplicity of this reporting, its use of first-person narratives, belies the deep thinking and effort behind the multimedia composition.

Highly Commended: Tamara McDonald, *Geelong Advertiser*, 'Doctor speaks out after racist attack'

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT QUILT FOR REPORTING DISABILITY ISSUES

Chris Gillett, ABC 7.30, 'Olivia's Story'

Judges' Citation: In telling Olivia's deeply personal story from the heart, Chris Gillett not only exposed the raw fears, challenges and struggles her family faced but also the absolute joy they experienced of a life together. In retracing their path - from the joy of birth to the fears something was not right, the battle for a diagnosis, planning for a life ahead and eventually acceptance and celebration of who Olivia is - Gillett provides the world a wider glimpse of the realities faced by so many others living with a disability. The depth of emotion captured in Gillett's work builds positive understanding of the issues and of the love experienced by those living with disability, enlightening his audience rather than lecturing to them.

Highly Commended: Matilda Boseley, *Guardian Australia*, 'Melburnians with disabilities fear aftermath of long lockdown'