

# Yearbook 2024







## Thank you to our partners

None of what we do would be possible without the tremendous support from our many partners who believe in the value of journalism. Underpinning this is the contribution from media organisations that come together collaboratively to support the Walkley Foundation.

### PLATINUM



### GOLD



### SILVER



### MEDIA



### COMMUNITY PARTNERS



### INSTITUTIONS



### COMMUNICATION PARTNERS



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PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE WALKLEY AWARDS FOR OVER 40 YEARS

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**Legal advice:** MinterEllison  
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Cover photo: **Nick Moir**, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 'The Wet West': After a dry spring in 2023, NSW had a very wet summer that included this violent storm near Nyngan. (Nick Moir is the 2024 Nikon-Walkley Press Photographer of the Year and a finalist for Sport Photography.)





Winners at the 2023 Walkley Awards. PHOTO: ADAM HOLLINGWORTH.

# About us

The Walkley Foundation supports a robust, fair and diverse Australian media that strengthens and sustains our democracy. We are the custodians of excellence in reporting in our nation, working independently and collaboratively with all media organisations to encourage ethical, best-practice journalism.

The impact of the Walkley Foundation is felt in every corner of the media industry and the wider community. We champion the role of journalism in society by promoting awareness of the craft, raising the profiles of journalists and their work, and publicly recognising the achievements of our peers.

We work with industry partners to support professional development and increase opportunities for training and networking. These efforts are aimed at safeguarding the role of journalism in the present and sustaining this vital work into the future.

## Encouraging excellence

- The Walkley Awards
- John B Fairfax Family Young Australian Journalist of the Year Awards
- June Andrews Awards
- Partner Awards

## Professional development

- Scholarships and fellowship
- Training and webinars
- Leadership
- Mentoring

## Supporting and valuing journalism

- Grants
- Meta Australian News Fund



**5,000**  
NEWSLETTER  
SUBSCRIBERS



**23.7k**  
TWITTER  
FOLLOWERS



**6.6k**  
FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS



**2.8k**  
INSTAGRAM  
FOLLOWERS



**3.4k**  
LINKEDIN  
FOLLOWERS



**5.4k**  
MEDIUM  
FOLLOWERS





# Independence and good governance

The Walkley Foundation is an independently funded company limited by guarantee and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. The Walkley Awards belong to journalists and the industry, and we work independently and collaboratively with all media. Support from media organisations, in the form of financial support or in-kind contributions, is critical to our success.

## Walkley directors

The company directors, also known as the Walkley Foundation trustees.



Chair: Adele Ferguson, ABC



Deputy chair: Karen Percy,  
federal president, MEAA  
Media



Sally Neighbour, chair of  
the Walkley Judging Board



Erin Delahunty, freelance  
journalist, national vice-  
president, MEAA Media



Kate Ferguson, national  
vice-president, MEAA Media



Victoria Laurie, independent  
director, freelance writer

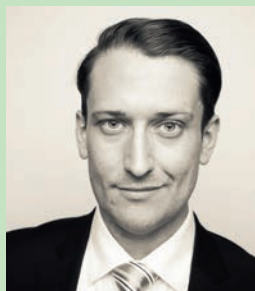
## Walkley Public Fund committee



Chair: Pamela Williams,  
author



Paul Bailey, former editor,  
*The Australian Financial  
Review*



Dan Bouchier, ABC



Kate Haddock, Banki  
Haddock Fiora



Kate Julius, PwC



Alan Sunderland, journalist  
and author





## Walkley Judging Board

The Walkley directors appoint the Walkley Judging Board. This is an advisory committee composed of senior media industry members who judge the Walkley Award winners, advise the directors on matters relating to the awards, and act as ambassadors for the Walkley Foundation.



Chair: Sally Neighbour



Deputy chair:  
Cameron Stewart,  
*The Australian*



Sarah Abo, *TODAY*,  
*60 Minutes*, Nine



Suzanne Dredge, ABC  
(abstained from 2024  
judging)



Colleen Egan, author  
and former journalist



Anton Enus, *SBS*  
*World News*, SBS



Rashell Habib,  
Paramount



Gabrielle Jackson,  
*Guardian Australia*



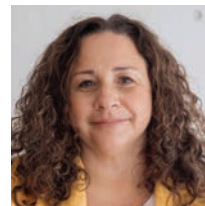
Kate Kyriacou,  
*The Courier Mail*  
(abstained from 2024  
judging)



Claire Mackay, ABC  
South Australia



Konrad Marshall,  
*Good Weekend*,  
*The Sydney Morning*  
*Herald* and *The Age*



Solua Middleton, ABC



Jake Nowakowski,  
*Herald Sun*



Donna Page, *The*  
*Newcastle Herald*



Mark Riley, *Seven*  
*News*



Kathryn Wicks,  
*The Sydney Morning*  
*Herald*



## WORKING TOGETHER

We are the custodians of excellence in reporting in Australia, working independently with all media organisations to encourage journalism of the highest ethical standard.

**Thank you to the many senior journalists who gave their time to judge the Walkley Awards this year:**

Natalie Ahmat, NITV  
Drew Ambrose, Al Jazeera English  
Richard Andrews, Sky News  
Ella Archibald-Binge, ABC 7.30  
Paul Bailey, former editor, *Australian Financial Review*  
Candida Baker, freelance journalist, author  
Anne Barker, ABC  
Caroline Baum, freelance journalist, radio and TV producer  
Bruce Belsham, freelance  
Ray Bonner, freelance journalist, bookshop owner  
Alice Brennan, ABC *Four Corners*  
Peter Broelman, *The Advertiser*  
Emily Bryan, ABC Tasmania  
Jane Cadzow, *Good Weekend*  
Patrick Carlyon, *Herald Sun*  
Nicky Catley, *Australian Geographic*  
Antony Cirocco, freelance producer, photographer  
Tim Clarke, *The West Australian*  
Amanda Collinge, ABC *Compass*  
Matthew Condon, *The Australian*  
Alex Coppel, freelance photographer  
Miriam Corowa, ABC  
Jane Curtis, UTS Impact Studios  
Sarah Danckert, *The Age*  
Thea Dikeos, ABC 7.30  
Geraldine Doogue, ABC  
Aisha Dow, *The Age*  
John Durie, freelance, *The Australian* columnist  
Tom Dusevic, *The Australian*  
Carly Earl, *Guardian Australia*  
Fiona Ellis-Jones, Australian Radio Network  
Monique Farmer, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*

Declan Fry, freelance writer, poet, essayist  
Patricia Gill, *Denmark Bulletin*  
Nick Greenaway, freelance  
David Hardaker, freelance journalist and author  
Belinda Hawkins, freelance documentary producer/director  
Elise Holman, Sky News  
Jonathan Holmes, freelance  
Sandra Jackson, Seven West Media  
Fron Jackson-Webb, *The Conversation*  
Genevieve Jacobs, UTS Centre for Media Transition  
Matt Jasper, The Jasper Picture Company  
Erik Jensen, Schwartz Media  
Michael Kalenderian, *Guardian Australia*  
Melanie Kembrey, Spectrum, *The Sydney Morning Herald*  
Mags King, freelance  
Daniel King, First Person Films  
Kate Lahey, *The Age*  
Peta Landman, freelance writer, publisher, author  
Ellen Leabeater, Southern Cross Austereo  
Sean Leahy, *The Courier Mail*  
Joanna Mather, *The Australian Financial Review*  
Jillian McClelland, *The Sydney Morning Herald*  
Richard McGregor, Lowy Institute  
Luke McIlveen, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*  
Karen Middleton, *Guardian Australia*  
Rosemarie Milsom, Newcastle Writers' Festival  
Mark Morri, *Daily Telegraph*  
Kylie Morris, freelance  
Callan Morse, *National Indigenous Times*  
Kirsty Needham, Reuters

Sean Nicholls, ABC  
Bianca Nogrady, freelance science journalist  
Gerard Noonan, freelance  
Daniella Ortega, Screen Australia  
Sean Parnell, *Brisbane Times*  
Tamara Penniket, ABC  
Andrew Quilty, freelance photographer  
Chris Reason, Seven Network Australia  
Deb Richards, ABC *Backroads*  
Kellie Riordan, Deadset Studios  
Frank Robson, *Good Weekend*/freelance  
Stephen Romei, *The Australian*  
Colleen Ryan, freelance  
Tory Shepherd, *Guardian Australia*  
Naomi Shivaraman, BlackBay Lawyers  
Suzanne Smith, freelance  
Sue Spencer, freelance executive producer  
Svetlana Stankovic, *Guardian Australia*  
Nina Stevens, Ten News First  
Rebecca Stubbs, SBS World News  
Matt Thompson, Seven Network  
Cam Tyeson, *10 News First*  
Max Uechtritz, Kundu Productions  
Michael Usher, 7News  
John Van Tiggelen, freelance  
Paul Walker, 7News  
Richard Welch, AFTRS  
Andrew Weldon, freelance cartoonist  
Charlotte Wheaton, Good Thing Productions  
Mike Williams, LiSTNR

**Integrity observers**

Sarah Curnow  
Narelle Hooper  
Fenella Souter



## Impacting the future of Australian news media

The Foundation has provided professional development, funding and career pathways for journalists in 2024, writes Walkley Foundation CEO **Shona Martyn**.

In 2024, as the Walkley Awards reach their 69th year, the Walkley Foundation has continued its mission of promoting excellence in Australian journalism through its awards, scholarships and grants.

Mindful of the need to offer support and professional development in the ever-changing media landscape, the Walkley Foundation presented accessible online webinar programs on solutions journalism, AI, finance journalism, journalism revenue and managing trauma exposure. Supported by the Walkley Foundation's Public Fund, a new Solutions Journalism grant program was initiated to directly support storytellers focused on presenting positive approaches to change.

The third and final round of the Meta Australian News Fund, administered by the Walkley Foundation, enabled another 51 journalists and small news organisations to share a grants pool of \$5 million, the last tranche of a \$15 million fund. Excitingly, we are now seeing projects funded in earlier rounds make the finalist lists for the Walkley Awards. The recipients of other grants have revolutionised or resuscitated news coverage in rural and regional areas.

It has also been gratifying to see young journalists who have been chosen for our scholarships programs secure jobs as a result of their time in newsrooms. Scholarships are an important alternative pathway into the media and the quality of the applicants we see each year is impressive. It is reassuring to think of the impact they will have on the future of the Australian news media.

The Walkley Foundation funds its work through the generosity of sponsors, supporters and donors. My thanks to the many loyal partners who have supported the Walkley Awards, the Mid-Year Awards and our professional development initiatives for many years. A hearty welcome to the raft of new partners who have joined us in 2024.

Particular thanks go to our Platinum sponsor, the John B Fairfax Family's JIBB Foundation, which supports the Young Journalist of the Year Awards, which we present in June. This year's overall winner was Bill Ormonde



Shona Martyn at the 2023 Walkley Awards. PHOTO: MONIQUE HARMER

from the ABC in Broken Hill for an interactive online story about mental health in remote Australia and a grazier who tried to take his own life. Bill will travel to the UK in early 2025 to expand his experience by visiting major newsrooms.

In addition, this year I would like to recognise a new major donor to the Sean Dorney Grant for Pacific Journalism, the Foundation for Development Cooperation. Its generous gift will ensure the future of this important program, which assists mid-career journalists with coverage of the Pacific region. Thank you FDC.

If you or your organisation is interested in donating or partnering with the Walkley Foundation, I would love to hear from you. Email me a message at [shona.martyn@walkleys.com](mailto:shona.martyn@walkleys.com).

I would also like to thank the Walkley Foundation directors, the members of the Public Fund committee, the judging board and the many journalists, from around Australia, who have donated their time as judges and advisers and, of course, the hard-working staff of the Walkley Foundation. What we do would not be not possible without your support. •





## Setting the benchmarks for excellence

In my first year as chair of the Walkley Judging Board, I have been inspired by the calibre of the journalism before us, writes **Sally Neighbour**.

**T**he 2024 Walkley Awards are a showcase of Australian journalism at its very best. World-class news reporting, ground-breaking investigations, searing analysis, brilliant photography and much more.

In an era when misinformation and fake news are ubiquitous, it is both heartening and critically important that Australian journalists remain committed to upholding the highest standards of public interest journalism that is honest, brave and trustworthy.

The Walkley Awards play a central role in setting the benchmarks for the excellence that serious journalists aspire to in this country.

Walkley-standard journalism must be accurate, fair, responsible and ethical. It must be original, revelatory, impactful, incisive, thoroughly researched, well written, produced and presented. It should shine a light into the dark corners of our society and body politic. It should tell truth to power and hold the powerful to account. Most importantly, it should benefit the public, because that is the key point of what we do.

The Walkleys do not condone or reward chequebook journalism. Our rules have been strengthened this year to make this unequivocal.

In my first year as chair of the Walkley Judging Board, I have been inspired by the calibre of the journalism before us. I commend all of our finalists and winners for their work.

As an investigative journalist, I've been impressed by the number and quality of outstanding investigations we've seen this year. They include stunning revelations of corruption and criminality in the CFMEU by Nick McKenzie and the team at Nine; the astonishing exposé of Chinese secret police activity in Australia by *Four Corners*; and Chris Reason's four-year investigation into an alleged serial sexual predator at the highest levels of the Catholic Church for Seven. There are many more.

These stories exhibit meticulous research, tenacity, courage and an unswerving dedication to exposing the truth.

Another element that all of these stories share is the critical role played by whistleblowers. Each of the stories I've mentioned here relied on someone being prepared to call out the wrongdoing they have witnessed.

Every day, journalists connect with whistleblowers to help find and tell stories that would otherwise never be



told. And every day, courageous Australians put their livelihoods, reputations, health, family life and even their freedom on the line, in order to share information that reveals corruption, negligence, criminality, failure of governance or abuse of power.

Whistleblowers play an essential role in upholding our democracy and the rule of law.

And yet, in this country, they are routinely subjected to severe punishment, which is intended to dissuade others from following their example.

Despite some amendments to the laws, there is still little to no guaranteed protection for whistleblowers in this country.

In May this year, former army lawyer David McBride was jailed for five years and eight months for leaking classified army documents that helped the ABC expose war crimes by the Australian Defence Force in Afghanistan.

Lawyer Bernard Collaery, a former ACT attorney-general, was prosecuted after his client, the former ASIS agent known as Witness K, exposed how the Australian government had bugged the office of the Timorese Cabinet during oil and gas negotiations in the early 2000s.

The case against Collaery was heard almost entirely in secret, until Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus discontinued the prosecution in 2022.

Richard Boyle, a former debt collector with the Australian Taxation Office, could face up to 46 years in prison if found guilty, after exposing aggressive and punitive debt collection practices that targeted small businesses.

The lack of protection for whistleblowers in Australia is a blight on our nation's supposed commitment to open democracy, freedom of information and a free news media.

In June this year, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said the government was "committed to delivering strong, effective and accessible protections for whistleblowers".

The Walkley Foundation calls on the federal attorney-general and the Prime Minister to deliver on that promise as a matter of urgency, and to create a Whistleblower Protection Authority – as it promised to do more than five years ago – to ensure whistleblowers are applauded, rather than punished, for their contribution. •



# Time to be strong

Challenges for Australian journalism continue, writes **Karen Percy**, Walkley Foundation deputy chair and MEAA's Media section president.

I couldn't believe my eyes and ears when I woke that morning in June to discover Julian Assange had left Belmarsh prison and was on his way to a remote US island in the Pacific to face a final court hearing. A day or so later, it was thrilling and moving to see him touch down on Australian soil.

But it was disappointing that the US refused to take espionage charges off the table. The fight to clear his name continues, including a push for a presidential pardon.

Assange's release is a rare bright spot in what continues to be a highly challenging environment for Australian journalism.

It's a year when we've learnt how deeply racism and misogyny are embedded in news organisations such as the ABC, Nine Entertainment and Channel 7. It's not just that the business models are broken; dishonest and exploitative practices are too prevalent – and it's journalists and journalism that are paying the price.

It's time for owners, executive managers and editors to listen to their staff and freelance contributors. It's time they made genuine efforts to fix the systemic issues and poor cultures that are damaging journalists and media workers, and eroding trust and confidence in our industry.

We need to put journalists – their knowledge, skill and energy – at the centre of our industry, and put the 'public' back into public interest journalism.

As our members negotiate their enterprise agreements – whether it's at AAP, the ABC, Nine or *The Guardian* – it's crucial that workers' contributions to the success of their organisations are recognised and rewarded.

Financial pressures are no excuse for organisations to undermine their workers and their missions.

Our social licence as news media organisations, and as journalists, comes from serving the public interest with honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others.

Once again, it's MEAA's Journalist Code of Ethics that will guide the way.

Journalists must be able to do their work ethically and free from threats that their work will be censored, their jobs put in peril, or their mental and physical health put at risk.

With the threat of AI, the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, and social media giants and other digital services exploiting our work for their gain, we must stand together to ensure the public's right to know.

MEAA has given evidence at a number of inquiries this year seeking greater protections for the work of journalists and the sources and whistleblowers we rely on.

We're pleased to see recommendations from the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor that offer some protections for journalists who 'deal with' classified and sensitive material, by suggesting they not be criminalised



just for receiving documents. But the laws that affect Australia's defence, national security and policing are still too secretive, with little regard for whistleblowers and the public interest.

We told the Inquiry into Social Media and Australian Society that Meta and Google must pay for the journalism content that draws users to their sites.

We urged the government to ensure that legislation to counter misinformation and disinformation allows journalists to report on the issues and safeguards free speech.

MEAA is seeking an AI Act that demands more disclosure about the use of data to prevent theft of original work, whether it's by journalists, musicians, actors or other creative workers.

What the media is dealing with overseas is even more concerning. Our members are watching events abroad with growing alarm. More than 120 of our media colleagues are dead as a result of the Israel-Hamas war, most of them Palestinian. Those who remain in Gaza work under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. But with international media shut out, they are the eyes and ears of the world.

In Israel, there are new restrictions on media freedom, not only on foreign outlets such as Al Jazeera, but also on domestic outlets. From Gaza to Lebanon, Ukraine, Sudan and other hot spots, journalists continue to show exceptional courage in covering the conflicts.

These remain information wars as much as military ones.

Australian journalists have had to walk a difficult path to report on the Gaza war in a way that acknowledges the context and history of the conflict and is sensitive to the views of both Jews and Palestinians in our society.

The truth is, indeed, so often a casualty. What we're witnessing in the US is a dire example of deliberate division and derision of our industry for political gain. At home, we're seeing attacks on Australian journalists asking reasonable questions on behalf of their communities.

It's imperative journalists be safe and respected in their work. This is not the time to be timid. It is a time to be strong – to stand by our colleagues, stand up for our industry, and stand our ground as truth tellers who hold the powerful to account.

Despite these challenges, awards such as the Walkleys and MEAA's state and territory awards showcase the remarkable journalism being done in organisations small and large, by freelancers and in-house staff, in large cities and tiny towns.

We are rightly proud of this work. It proves the importance of what we do for our society and our democracy. •





# 2024 GOLD WALKLEY

## TELEVISION/VIDEO: CURRENT AFFAIRS LONG (OVER 20 MINUTES)

Award Partner TEN News First

**Building Bad Team - *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian Financial Review* and *60 Minutes***  
“Building Bad”



Selected unanimously by the Walkley Judging Board, “Building Bad” is the story of the year. The judges declared it “an incredible, courageous feat of investigative journalism with huge ramifications. A story Australian

journalists have been trying to tell for decades.” They added: “Nick McKenzie and his team finally nailed it, in a massive cross-platform, inter-newsroom collaboration.”

The *60 Minutes* program came after a months-long investigation, and revealed how bikies, criminals and underworld figures had infiltrated the building industry, including on large publicly funded projects.

The Building Bad Team is Nick McKenzie from *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *60 Minutes*, David Marin-Guzman from *The Australian Financial Review*, Ben Schneiders from *The Age*, Garry McNab and Amelia Ballinger from *60 Minutes*, and Reid Butler from *Nine News*.

McKenzie, Schneiders and Marin-Guzman pooled sources in the union, building industry, policing agencies and underworld to kick off the investigation. CFMEU assistant secretary Leo Skourdoumbis blew the whistle on camera, and the Heydon royal commission’s lead investigator gave his first-ever interview. McKenzie got covert recordings of union threats and spent weeks surveilling crime figures, getting critical corroborative video of dealings between the union and gangsters. The team organised a sting to expose a union fixer and bribe taker.

Marin-Guzman used a network of sources and court records to unpack a corrupt Enterprise Bargaining Agreement involving underworld figures, while Schneiders and McKenzie obtained phone and police records that exposed Victorian branch head John Setka’s secret communications. Butler convinced a grieving Indigenous family to go on the record, while Ballinger and McNab helped produce the program.

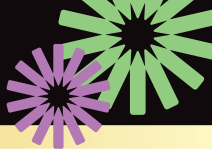
After “Building Bad” broke, John Setka resigned and the construction branch of the CFMEU was placed in administration. The program sparked major probes and new laws, and led the Albanese government to commit to sweeping root and branch reform of Labor’s biggest donor.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

This was a sustained and surgical journalistic operation on a malignant public scandal. Exhaustive research, trust building and a compelling array of interviews, secret recordings and surveillance recordings were distilled into a startling exposé. Few stories have such swift and stunning consequences.







**THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD YARN.**

And nowhere better to enjoy one than at the Walkley Awards,  
celebrating the best of Aussie journalism.





# NIKON-WALKLEY PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Award Partner Nikon

## Nick Moir

*The Sydney Morning Herald*



Nick Moir specialises in documenting meteorological and environmental events such as storms and bushfires. Here he has captured significant moments in Sydney, western NSW and the USA by combining his expertise as a photographer with his skills as an amateur meteorologist and his service as a volunteer firefighter. Many of the images in this selection were possible due to his own research, and some to his own funding.

Nick Moir is chief photographer at *The Sydney Morning Herald*, where he specialises in severe weather, bushfires and environmental events. He has won three Walkley Awards, including the 2002 Nikon-Walkley Australian Press Photographer Of The Year.

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

With a diverse range of beautiful photos across every genre, the judges couldn't fault Nick Moir's portfolio selection. With strong images of portraiture, sport, current affairs, and the environment – they are the whole package, and underline his technical skill and experience. Moir visualises climate stories like few can – and it's notoriously difficult to photograph a platypus.

1. **USA fires:** A 'hotshot' crew from American River is forced to retreat from the oncoming Park Fire in California.
2. **Funeral of Faraz Tahir:** The family of murdered security guard Faraz Tahir speak to injured Muhammad Taha at Faraz's funeral. Taha was stabbed along with 17 others, six fatally, at the Bondi Junction Westfield shopping centre on 13 April 2024.
3. **The wet west:** Despite 2023 being an El Niño year, after a dry spring NSW had a very wet summer that included this violent storm near Nyngan in the state's west.
4. **Platypus revival:** Platypus have been found to be breeding successfully in the Royal National Park, south of Sydney, after being locally extinct for over 50 years. Ten were released and, when they were recaptured to test their status, young platypuses – known as puggles – were found.
5. **Birdsville Rodeo:** Bronco rider Joe Curtin falls from his ride at the Birdsville Rodeo.







5.



Introducing the Z 8, an agile mirrorless camera made for creative-filled narratives in videos and stills. Condensing the flagship performance of the Nikon Z 9 into a compact and portable body, whilst also maintaining reliability and uncompromising functionality. The Z 8 gives you the agility and power to create your best work in the toughest of conditions, and for extended periods.

45.7MP STACKED CMOS SENSOR | 8.3K 60P N-RAW VIDEO RECORDING  
UP TO 120 FPS CONTINUOUS SHOOTING | GROUNDBREAKING AF SUBJECT DETECTION  
4-AXIS TILTING TOUCH OPERATION LCD | REAL-LIVE ELECTRONIC VIEWFINDER





## CARTOON OF THE YEAR

### Cathy Wilcox

*The Sydney Morning Herald*  
“Break glass”



In June 2024, Australian Wikileaks founder Julian Assange was released from Belmarsh Prison, after years of legal and diplomatic advocacy and international pressure to prevent his extradition to the United States on charges of espionage.

Whistleblowers in Australia speak out at considerable personal risk, in a system that seems more geared to ensuring secrecy and sheltering wrongdoers than protecting those fighting for transparency. This year David McBride, an army lawyer who leaked classified military documents to the ABC, was jailed after helping expose allegations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan. Whistleblowers Bernard Collaery and Witness K, who helped reveal Australia’s espionage against Timor-Leste, have been prosecuted. Days after Assange’s release, Richard Boyle lost his appeal for protection after exposing wrongdoing within the debt recovery team at the Australian Taxation Office.

“It’s a mad and contradictory system, Kafkaesque in its absurdity,” Wilcox says. “I sought to capture this contradiction with a simple, readable illustration of the inherent trap – a feature, as they say, not a bug in our laws.”

Cathy Wilcox is a Sydney-based editorial cartoonist. She has worked for *The Sydney Morning Herald* since 1989 and *The Age* since 1993. She has illustrated numerous picture books and theatre productions. She is a member of Cartooning for Peace and president of the Australian Cartoonists Association. This is her fourth Walkley Award for cartooning.

#### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

With a few strokes of the pen, Cathy Wilcox exposes the absurdity of the federal government’s harsh treatment of whistleblowers. The prosecutions of David McBride, Bernard Collaery, Witness K and Richard Boyle undermine the integrity and transparency of our institutions. “Break glass” cleverly and succinctly captures the reality facing anyone who dares to expose wrongdoing and corruption: do the right thing and pay the price.







# PRINT/TEXT NEWS REPORT

## Carrie Fellner, Matt Davidson, Matthew Absalom-Wong and Michael Evans

*The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age*  
“The factory that contaminated the world”



This series was the culmination of a near decade-long investigation into PFAS, or “forever chemicals”. It started with a world exclusive on manufacturer 3M’s alleged campaign to deceive the world about the dangers of forever chemicals and their presence in the blood of the general population.

The investigation harnessed the power of visual storytelling to explore the risks to consumers from 900 household products containing the chemicals. The team trawled through studies to identify the products affected, bringing the findings to life with graphics and illustrations, and interviewing experts and industry about the implications.

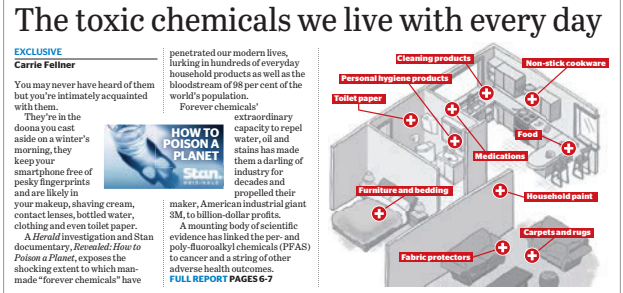
The team unearthed evidence that Australia’s drinking water supplies had been contaminated. With the help of a water quality researcher and freedom of information requests, they sifted through hundreds of samples to locate relevant data and make it intelligible.

Two weeks after the investigation was published, Sydney Water conducted widespread sampling for the first time, finding the chemicals at five of its nine filtration plants. The World Health Organisation recently declared that a notorious forever chemical is carcinogenic, vindicating the *Herald’s* ongoing efforts to challenge claims from parties with potential liability that the substances are not harmful.

Carrie Fellner is a three-time Walkley award winner. She joined the *Newcastle Herald* in 2016 and the SMH investigations team in 2018. Matthew Absalom-Wong is National Creative Director for *The Age* and *SMH*. This is his third Walkley. A Walkley-winning graphic artist at *The Age* since 2000, Matt Davidson regularly illustrates the *Age* and *SMH* weekend pages. Michael Evans spent 27 years at *The Sydney Morning Herald*, including seven years as investigations editor.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

This world exclusive revealing the presence of forever chemicals in the nation’s water supply took tenacity, patience and an impressive range of journalistic skills. Simple graphics and concise writing about complex scientific issues brought home the dangers lurking in a glass of water, forcing governments to take action.







# FEATURE WRITING SHORT (under 4000 words)

Award Partner *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*

## Ben Walter

*Island*, “The only fish: Flathead decline in Tasmania”



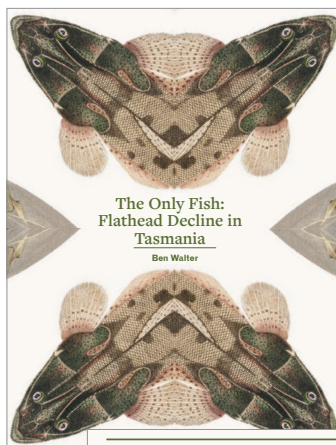
Inspired by reports from The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania, freelance writer Ben Walter wrote a clear, research-backed and stylish feature about declining flathead numbers in Tasmania. Flathead are easy to catch, easy to fillet and great eating – and if you’re a Tasmanian going fishing recreationally, “there’s a 68 per cent chance that’s the fish you’re going to be reeling in.

“The estimated annual catches of different species put it into shocking perspective. Leatherjacket: 6,059. Silver trevally: 8,277. Flathead: 730,699.”

Bookended with personal narrative, Walter’s feature weaves together the cultural significance of fishing for Tasmanians with the broader environmental context and policy around fisheries.

As the piece went to print in *Island*, the Tasmanian government announced a new set of regulations for sand flathead fishing, retaining the minimum size, establishing a maximum size limit, lowering the bag limit quantity anglers can take home, and banning commercial fishing completely.

Ben Walter is a freelance writer of fiction, poetry and nonfiction. His work has appeared in *Griffith Review*, *The Saturday Paper*, *Meanjin* and



**There are people who go after bream, or trevally, or cocky salmon, and others who revel in species like kingfish and snapper arriving with warmer water from the north as the climate changes. Still, most people are going after flathead.**

*Overland*, and internationally in *3:AM Magazine*, *Poetry Ireland Review* and *Lithub*. He is the author of the short story collection *What Fear Was*.

## JUDGES’ COMMENTS

“The only fish...” poignantly documents the sharply decreasing stocks of Tasmanian anglers’ most popular fish, the bottom-dwelling flathead, and explores what to do about the issue. With a deft touch, Ben Walter weaves a highly readable and exceedingly sensible story not just about Tasmania’s recreational flathead fishery, but about fisheries everywhere.

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# FEATURE WRITING LONG (over 4000 words)

**Sarah Krasnostein**

*The Monthly*

“Peace in the home: The trial of Malka Leifer”



Former principal Malka Leifer was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment for sexual offences against three sisters who attended the ultra-Orthodox Adass Israel Girls School in Melbourne. Over five years of reporting, Sarah Krasnostein attended the trial and spoke to religious leaders, community members and the two victims and their sister: Ellie Sapper, Hadassah Erlich and Nicole Meyer. She explored how shame and trauma are treated by the criminal justice system, how institutions fail children in their care, and what might cause a community to close ranks against outside scrutiny.

Krasnostein drew on her position as a journalist with a doctorate in criminal law and her lived experience as a member of Melbourne’s Jewish community to illuminate two traditionally opaque institutions: the Adass sect and the criminal justice system.

She explained where women and children sat within the power structure of this closed sect; how their low status facilitated the offending and its concealment; and how that dynamic is replicated in similar communities nationally and globally. Through broad context and close detail, she painted the human picture behind the statistics.

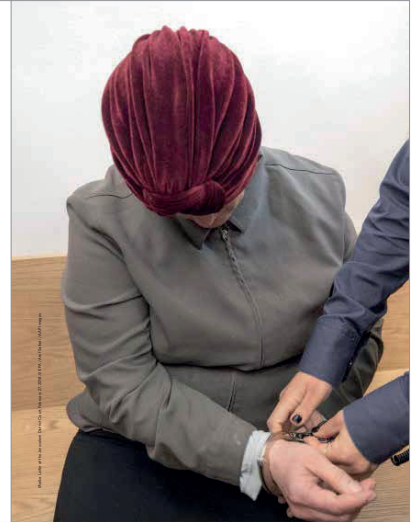
Sarah Krasnostein is the best-selling author of *The Trauma Cleaner, The Believer, the Quarterly Essay “Not waving, drowning: Mental illness and vulnerability in Australia”* and *On Peter Carey*. She is a regular contributor to *The Monthly* and *The Saturday Paper*.

## JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Sarah Krasnostein’s “Peace in the home” is a compelling, thoughtful and significant investigation into the trial of former school principal Malka Leifer for sexual abuse. Krasnostein deftly places the trial into a wider social context in order to explore the pitfalls of the justice system, and some institutions, when it comes to dealing with sexual abuse and trauma.

## Peace in the home

Former principal Malka Leifer was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment for sexual offences against three sisters who attended the strict Adass school in Melbourne. SARAH KRASNOSTEIN attended the trial, and spoke to the sisters, religious leaders and community members to explore how shame and trauma are treated by the criminal justice system, how institutions fail children in their care, and what might cause a community to close ranks against outside scrutiny.



From left: Ellie Sapper, Hadassah Erlich and Nicole Meyer outside the Family Court of Victoria, April 3, 2023. © Joel David / AFP/Getty Images

In Year 12, she began receiving “private lessons” from Leifer at the school on Sundays. These eventually moved to Leifer’s home “in preparation for teaching”. Soon, she stated, Leifer responded the occasionally sleep over. “It was casual and special and privileged to be able to be invited to sleep over at Mrs Leifer’s home.”

Recounting one of these overnights, Nicole explains that after she was dropped off by her father, Leifer showed her to a bed in the child’s daughter’s bedroom. Her daughter was sleeping elsewhere. “So Mrs Leifer came into the room, and I was alone. The beds were certainly double and it was very light filtering through. That was the little bit of light there was in the room, and the beds were certainly just at straight. She sat down on the bed to talk and then, I don’t recall how long after she began talking, she began hugging and kissing and pulling me towards her.”

After her father picked her up at 7pm, an arranged, Nicole did not tell him, or anyone, what had happened. When Leifer asked why, she replied, “I really was told one time that it was a secret — I didn’t have that kind of relationship, or words to put it anything, because I didn’t even understand what was happening at all. There was just no words possible to me at that age at that time.”

Leifer asked what she thought when these things were going on, “I just froze.”

Selected by Leifer to teach the private lessons continued after graduation. “The nature of the lessons were the same as

they were in Year 11, but Mrs Leifer did more — took more ownership of my body, I suppose.”

“Anything about an incident that she alleged took place at a 2008 winter camp. Nicole describes sharing a bedroom and a bed with Leifer, and David coming to the camp separately and sleeping in that room. One David arrived late in the day and soon disappeared for some time, as did Leifer. How, when David returned and sat on a crate of gifts during an activity, her face was very red.”

In her evidence, Nicole testified about incidents of sexual assault that took place at Leifer’s home, on school camp and at the school, including in Leifer’s office, which had a window that overlooked the entrance of the school but was “so high up that no one could see in”.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. Hill refers to the fact that her first police statement, in November 2011, made no reference to the non-consensual digital penetration that she described in her testimony. Nicole explains that she had made that police statement in circumstances where she had three young children and the legal process had responded her trauma.

Hill notes that it was also not mentioned in her second statement, in December 2011. “The first time we set that allegation in the form of a police statement in 10 years later — a decade later, in September 2021,” he says. “Correct?”

“Trauma changes our very capacity to think... The critical issue is allowing yourself to know what you know. That takes an enormous amount of courage.”

“Yes.”

“On Yes, of course — sorry, 16 March. I’m not by some means.” Hill says, correcting his mistake, his human error. “Almost nine and a half years later — 16 March 2021 — that’s the first reference to any digital penetration — correct — in a police statement?”

One item of Hill’s questioning is whether Nicole read David’s statement before making her own. Nicole testifies that she did not. Hill reads Detective Sergeant Gregory Nann’s first statement. “Nicholas [Nicole] had told me that she had seen David’s statement. I had advised her that it was important that she only included things in her statement that she had seen or heard and asked her not to look at anyone else’s statements.” Hill asks if she had that conversation with Detective Nann.

“That’s what I read.”

“But you wrote, only moments ago before the jury, that you did not read David’s statement prior to making your first statement, didn’t you?”

“Because I have no memory of ever doing so.”

Nicole is then cross-examined on information she disclosed to two psychiatrists. She did not mention digital penetration to one, and she did not mention an incident of assault in Year 11 to the other.

Hill asks whether she told her sisters that “things of an inappropriate nature” were occurring in Years 11 or 12. She replies,

“no, not that she can recall. He asks if she told them during her first year of teaching.”

“It could be at one point. I don’t recall when David and I warned Elly that Mrs Leifer wasn’t all who she seemed, but that was the extent of that conversation, as we had no words anyway.”

“You didn’t have any words?”

“No.”

“Is that your excuse for not saying in your first statement to the police not one word about digital penetration?”

“It was an excuse, it’s trauma.”

“Trauma?”

“Yes.”

“So trauma caused you in that first statement to say nothing about digital penetration?”

“That day I gave my first statement I found not saying anything with any sympathy. That was the only way I remember that day at all clear in my life. It was extremely difficult for me to talk about anything for the first time in my life and it’s still difficult for me to talk about it now.”

“But 10 years later you were able to give a statement to the police for the first time about it?”

“Correct, because I have been in therapy and I’m working on processing some of that trauma.”

THE PROSECUTOR BRUCE VAN DER KAM, a specialist in traumatic stress and memory, noted that trauma “changes not only how we think and what we think about, but also our very capacity to think... The critical issue is allowing oneself to know what you know. That takes an enormous amount of courage.”

LATER, MR. NANN’S QUESTIONS identified the year of the winter camp in her initial statement, remembering it as “June or July 2007”. She explains it was later amended for that reason to 2008.

“This is at a time, what — six weeks or thereabouts before your wedding?”

“Yes.”

“You forget that fact when you came to make your first statement to the police, that it was six weeks prior to your wedding?”

“There are many things I didn’t say in that first statement because it was so traumatic for me to speak about it for the first time.”

“Is that your excuse for not saying things in that statement?”

Leifer answers, “I object to the word ‘excuse’.”

“Excuse?”

“That’s your reason for not saying things in that statement?”

Hill continues, “Is that your reason for not saying things in that statement?”

“Excuse is a very bad reason.”

About the camp, Hill asks, “The room that you were in, you told us it had a double bed and a single bed. Correct?”

“Yes.”

“Was the single bed in an alcove?”

“There may have been an additional single bed on an alcove. But there was a single and a double bed next to each other, with some distance between them.”

In another line of questioning, regarding an incident Nicole

“Children were not raised having knowledge of world events and were completely isolated from anything ‘beyond the community [they] were within.’”





# COMMENTARY, ANALYSIS, OPINION AND CRITIQUE

Award Partner ThomsonGeer Lawyers

## David Leser

*The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age*  
“The war in Gaza: Not in my Jewish name”



Writing is an act of bridge-building and peace-making for David Leser, whose three opinion pieces were written in the wake of Hamas’s October 7 attack on Israel and the slaughter unfolding in Gaza since.

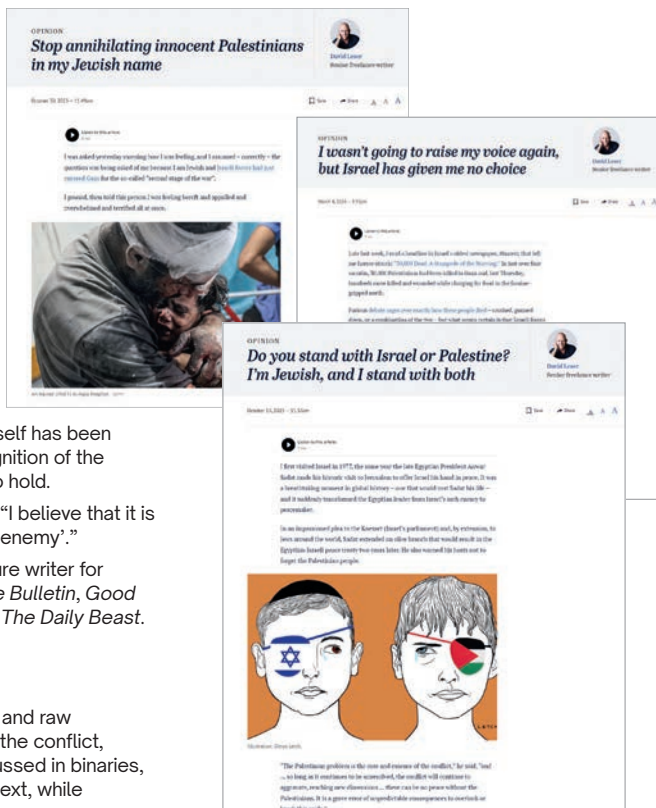
Leser has, in his own words, “considerable skin in this game”. His father a German Jew who escaped the Holocaust, his mother an Australian-born Jewish woman who lost 41 relatives to the Nazis in Latvia. Leser himself has been visiting the region, to witness and report, since 1977. His increasing recognition of the Palestinian people’s plight and despair is not an easy position for a Jew to hold.

Leser says that to write is sometimes to bleed onto the page, and adds: “I believe that it is possible to bleed for both sides, even if the other side is your so-called ‘enemy’.”

David Leser has been a journalist for 45 years and has worked as a feature writer for *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *HQ* magazine, *The Bulletin*, *Good Weekend*, *The Australian Women’s Weekly*, *Vanity Fair*, *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast*. He is a regular contributor to *Good Weekend*.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

David Leser’s pieces about the war in Gaza are written with compassion and raw emotion. He engages with the intergenerational trauma on both sides of the conflict, while addressing the pitfalls of moral equivalence. On a topic often discussed in binaries, Leser offers a deep understanding of the historical and geopolitical context, while reminding us of our shared humanity.



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# ALL MEDIA: EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM

## Faster, Higher, Stronger Team

*The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*

“Faster, higher, stronger”



The Faster, Higher, Stronger Team set out to complement coverage of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games by contextualising the physical feats on display. They deconstructed complex track and field events to illustrate the evolution of athleticism and technology and show how these events, and the athletes in them, have changed since the 1924 Paris Olympics.

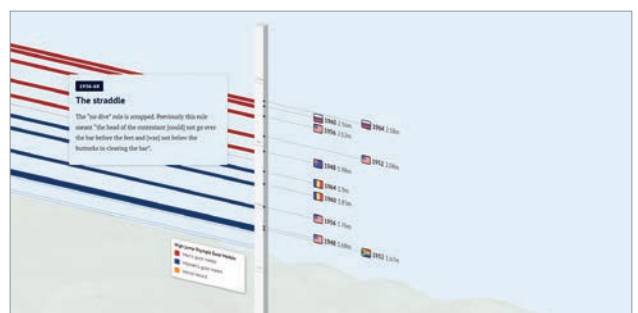
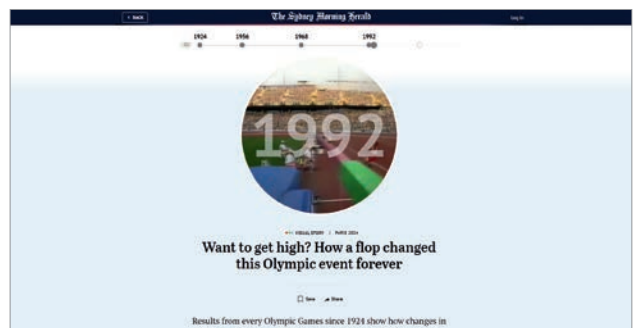
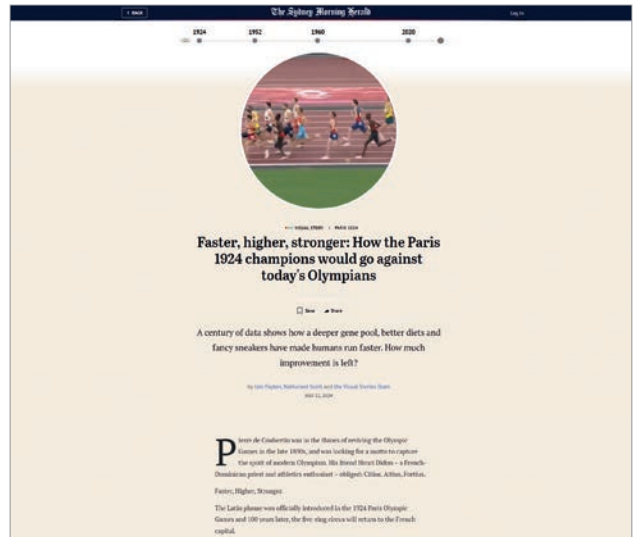
The team chose three events to complement the Olympic motto (*faster, higher, stronger*): the 1500m race, high jump and shot put. They collected gold medal data and combined this with historical research to create a timeline of the events. They had experts explain what had changed in the sport to make way for significant improvements, such as how the Fosbury flop in the 1960s dramatically improved high jump results.

The project combined written journalism and data with visual mediums such as graphics, photos and videos, linking dynamic animated charts with archival footage. The experts also made predictions about what might develop in the 100 years to come.

The Faster, Higher, Stronger Team consists of Billie Eder, Iain Payten, Nathanael Scott, Matt Malishev, Luis Araujo, Jamie Brown, Chloe Saltau and Mark Stehle. The team is made up of reporters, artists, developers, editors and project managers from *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*.

## JUDGES' COMMENTS

“Faster, higher, stronger” is a captivating explainer – an epic, inviting learning experience at the time of the Olympics. The layouts combined historical and biological information on the dramatic developments in physiology and sport over the past century. The writers, illustrators, graphic designers and editors demonstrated excellence and imagination and, ultimately, conveyed real joy.





**Caroline Graham, Kylie Stevenson and Tilda Colling**

Freelance journalist Kylie Stevenson and UQ digital journalism lecturer Caroline Graham co-wrote the podcast *Lost in Larrimah* and Australian bestselling book *Larrimah*. Tilda Colling is a Charles Darwin University student journalist. The “NT schools in crisis” series was written for *The Australian*, supported by a Meta Australian News Fund Public Interest Journalism grant.

An original and unstinting investigation into the gross underfunding of the Northern Territory's remote education system. Indigenous voices were respectfully centred in the text and video, with reporting also provided in local Indigenous language. This is a solutions-focused and consequential series, with a compelling distillation of facts and a focus on accountability.

Arminius Gurindji, 7  
at the Central Australian  
Exhibition, Centre for  
Indigenous Studies,  
University of Western  
Australia, Perth, 2004

‘Traditional way, we  
Western way, we w

[illegible]

English and Kazakhstani songs, also called "film" songs and "re-arranged". Dzhibis (southern people) endangered. Kazakhman (not tall/black) not safe. Ma-lashibis (Kazakhstan's national) endangered.

[illegible]

**EXCLUSIVE**

KYLE STEVENSON  
CAROLINE GRAHAM  
YELDA COLLING

The Northern Territory school

bury has the country's second educational outcomes because of an "inequitable" funding system that discriminates against remote Indigenous communities by giving less money to schools with low attendance rates.

NT-Asie discrimination

learning on a wheelchair balanced on a wheeled bin because the classroom, which has no power, is too hot and dark to use. This year, Gamardi had his first visit from a registered teacher on May 18, more than three months after the beginning of the

"The Northern Territory should be setting the standard for addressing disadvantage," Australian Education Union NSW president Michelle Ayres said. "But instead, we are setting the standard for widening the gap."

The NT is the only Australian

system is failing students by leaving at least one in five effectively uneducated, offering an education so poor that it is tantamount to no education at all, and failing to meet minimum standards of literacy and numeracy, and in some cases not even providing full-time lectures.

The current annual funding shortfall of \$24.6m is contributing to such low standards that some say it amounts to a human rights violation.

Eighty per cent of all students and 95 per cent of Indigenous students fall below minimum literacy and numeracy standards, and attendance rates are as low as 20 per cent, some experts claim.

Experts claim the Territory is failing its young people, and Commissioner Joseph Yoganarajan said the inequitable outcome was a result of the attendance-based funding system, which rewards fundamental rights safeguards in the Convention on the Rights of Children.

The current model fails to achieve that opportunity and in fact promotes inequitable outcomes," he said.

NT Education Minister Ev Lawler said in a statement that the Territory Government is committed to every child right across the Territory so they become valuable contributors and future leaders of the community.

At the end of last week, The Australian will report on the funding

and systems failures that stem from one in five NT students effectively having no money spent on their education.

Among the more affected are the 100,000 students in remote households. Many have access only to part-time education, and many are not attending just once or twice a week, but only once a month. They are learning in buildings without power or water, and lack assistance with their schoolwork, sometimes for months.

The situation is similar for students at Canada's 75 remote communities in central and northern Canada.

school year.

Dr. Robert Gervais, government has known about the dire conditions in these facilities since 1993, which was never released.

But the government has almost 78 remote communities that have no access to local secondary schools. They are often with no rates and some children going to school in the winter.

Many experts suggest poor health outcomes and high rates of poverty in these communities are a direct disadvantage are symptoms of the government's failure to be doing over for more than a decade under successive governments.

jurisdiction to use a widely cited 1997 report on the model, in which resources are allocated on the basis of the location of the health of the population.

In some schools, fewer than 10 students are enrolled. For example, in 2002, Cambridge School received no funding for 2002-2003. Cambridge School had 10 unattended children in 2002-2003.

Ms. Ayres said the NT government should be starting funding for the 100,000 students.

**MORE REPORTS P5  
EDITORIAL P4**





# ALL MEDIA: COVERAGE OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Award Partner BHP

**Matthew Kelly**  
*Newcastle Herald*,  
“Three decades  
on the streets”



Alwyn Craig is a recognisable figure on Newcastle's streets, having spent the past three decades sleeping rough, but no-one knew his name. The *Newcastle Herald* and outreach worker John Cross campaigned to find Alwyn, 76, who is non-verbal, a permanent home. Matthew Kelly's story included new details: his name, place and date of birth.

In a twist of fate, relative Felicity Patrick in Florida, USA, read the story online, then communicated the news to her cousins in Wollongong. Alwyn was reunited with several of his siblings. They described a once happy young man who became a loner after returning from the Vietnam War.

The revelations prompted Minister for Veterans Affairs Matt Keogh to acknowledge Australia's poor treatment of Vietnam veterans. Veterans Affairs, the RSL and local services are working on a long-term care package for Alwyn.

For Anzac Day, the Herald located three of Alwyn's fellow conscripts.

They spoke with great fondness and regard for their mate 'Shorty'. Like Alwyn, they had struggled with post traumatic stress. A reunion of the 6RAR battalion was scheduled in Newcastle, where Alwyn would finally be presented with his service medals.

Matthew Kelly has worked as a journalist for more than 30 years, and been a general reporter at the *Newcastle Herald* since 2018. He has covered issues including the health and environmental impacts of coal wagons, the legacy of pollution of former industrial sites and freedom of information issues.

## JUDGES' COMMENTS

This was moving, nuanced reporting. The story of a Vietnam veteran reunited with his family after years on the streets is both joyous and thought-provoking. Matthew Kelly reminds readers that homelessness is a complex, deeply rooted issue, while celebrating his community's embrace of a vulnerable man.

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# SPORTS JOURNALISM

Award Partner University of Queensland

## Michael Warner

*Herald Sun*, “White line fever: AFL illicit drugs crisis”



Michael Warner’s series of reports exposed rampant illicit drug use in the AFL, facilitated by a secret testing regime for more than a decade. The reports triggered a Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) investigation and the dismantling of the league’s controversial three strikes policy.

In February, Warner reported that Melbourne star Joel Smith had been charged with cocaine trafficking, and the father of footballer Harley Balic, who died of a drug overdose in 2022, broke his silence to reveal he blamed the AFL for the tragedy.

In March, he revealed Demons doctor-turned-whistleblower Zeeshan Arain had admitted to conducting “off the books” tests – authorised by the AFL – to help players evade detection for breaches of the world anti-doping code.

Federal MP Andrew Wilkie detailed the revelations in a late night speech in parliament, leading to the SIA calling for an “immediate overhaul” of the AFL drugs policy and a warning over criminal infiltration in Australian sport. Warner then revealed how the parents of a drug-addicted AFL player had been “blackmailed” by a crime gang.

Michael Warner is an investigative journalist with Melbourne’s *Herald Sun* newspaper. He won the 2021 Walkley Award for Sports Journalism, as well as the Melbourne Press Club Gold Quill. Warner was also named the 2021 Harry Gordon Australian Sports Journalist of the Year for his book *The Boys’ Club*.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Michael Warner’s “White line fever” reports have set the agenda over the past year on the issue of illicit drug use by AFL players. Transcending sport and reaching the floor of federal parliament and a Sports Integrity Australia investigation, the *Herald Sun*’s journalism intensified the spotlight on an AFL policy that has life and death impact.



CREATE CHANGE

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# SPORT PHOTOGRAPHY

## Quinn Rooney

Getty Images

“Australians in the pool”



Quinn Rooney’s five images showcase Australians on their quest for gold in the pool at the 2024 Paris Olympics. It’s a portfolio that captures the beauty and drama of aquatic sports, with Rooney’s skill and experience on show.

The judges said the five classic pool shots illustrate Rooney’s ability to render a dynamic moment with artistry. The well-edited suite shows a diversity of sports and moments, with clean backgrounds to let the athletes shine. He shot from below as a swimmer dived in for her relay leg, catching her body half submerged. “Bubble” is an image that could only be taken in the first lap of a race, capitalising on the water’s surface tension.

Quinn Rooney is an Australian-based staff photographer with Getty Images. His passion for sports photography has carried him around the world, covering major sporting events including Olympic Games, FIFA World Cups, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and World Swimming Championships. Rooney won the Walkley for Sports Photography in 2023.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Five classic pool shots from Quinn Rooney illustrate his stunning ability as a sports photographer to render artistry in dynamic moments, with clean backgrounds that let the athletes shine. Shooting athletes in the water is technically challenging, and Rooney’s experience shines through in his ability to anticipate peak moments in an arena where milliseconds are the difference between an average picture and a brilliant one.

- Focus:** Flynn Southam prepares to compete ahead of the Men’s 200m Freestyle Final at the 2024 Australian Swimming Trials. 11 June 2024. Brisbane, Australia.
- Underdog:** Jacob Mercep of Team Australia celebrates a goal in the Men’s Water Polo Quarterfinal against Team United States on day 12 of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. 7 August 2024. Nanterre, France.
- McEvoy magic:** Cameron McEvoy of Team Australia competes in the Men’s 50m Freestyle Semifinals on day six of the Paris Olympic Games. 1 August 2024. Nanterre, France.
- Pallister perfection:** Lani Pallister of Team Australia competes in the Women’s 4x200m Freestyle Relay Heats on day six of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. 1 August 2024. Nanterre, France.







## AUDIO SHORT (under 20 minutes)

Award Partner ABC

### Ayla Darling and Hannah Palmer

Triple J, *Hack*, and ABC Investigations, “Behind closed doors: How one child’s voice exposed the dangers of rape inside mental health hospitals”



This report exposed systemic failures in safety and management within a psychiatric facility for vulnerable children. It was the culmination of a three-year investigation led by Ayla Darling and ABC Investigations after they uncovered reports documenting alleged sexual assaults in mental health wards across several states.

Darling interviewed hundreds of patients, families, and healthcare workers. Ultimately, it was the brave testimony of a 13-year-old girl that brought the story to light, and Darling spent a year communicating with the family and understanding the trauma-informed reporting needed to safely tell her story.

The investigation was based on years of research, including numerous freedom of information requests, government incident reports and testimonies from hospital whistleblowers. Darling and Palmer obtained sensitive hospital reports, verified details under strict privacy regulations, and adhered to child protection laws.

The reporting led to more families coming forward with stories of sexual abuse and prompted crucial discussions in state parliament, including an announcement of the refurbishment of the ward and a reevaluation of sexual safety measures.

Ayla Darling is a journalist at the ABC. Hannah Palmer is a radio producer for triple j, *Hack*.

#### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

The judges commend this investigation into alleged sexual assaults in mental health wards across several jurisdictions. Combining the power of audio news with cross-platform amplification, Ayla Darling and Hannah Palmer demonstrated meticulous research and compelling storytelling skills. Their ability to maintain immediacy and relevance for their key demographics earned them high praise in an extremely competitive field.



Mitch Woolnough and Nick Dole covering the Hamas attack in southern Israel. (ABC NEWS: Orly Halpern)

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winners and finalists

**ABC NEWS**





## AUDIO LONG (over 20 minutes)

Award Partner McGrathNicol

### Paul Farrell and the Background Briefing Team

ABC, *Background Briefing*  
“Stop and search”



Brad Balzan, 20, was chased by four plain-clothes police officers into his own backyard in Western Sydney, where he was shot twice and died. Paul Farrell and the *Background Briefing* Team entered three episodes of a four-part *Background Briefing* podcast investigating and challenging the official narrative of what led to the young man's death.

They gained the trust of Balzan's family: his mother, Belinda, never spoke to police but gave an interview for the program. They scrutinised the inquest and police testimony, and explored the bigger picture of NSW Police's "proactive policing" system.

Using data obtained through freedom of information laws, Farrell and the team revealed how proactive policing created a culture where police were encouraged to search as many people as possible, and searched people in migrant, low socio-economic communities and Indigenous areas far more frequently. They secured two interviews with former police officers who were critical of the system, including its founder in NSW. In exploring



what went wrong in Brad Balzan's case, the podcast raises important questions about what it means for the broader approach to policing in the state.

Paul Farrell is a reporter with the ABC's Investigations unit. His award-winning investigations have aired on 7.30, *Background Briefing* and *Four Corners*. He previously worked for *BuzzFeed* and *The Guardian*, where he led the Nauru files reporting team.

#### JUDGES' COMMENTS

This series is an outstanding investigation with significant public interest. With a clear, concise narration and the testimony of key sources, the story powerfully dissects the factors at play in a deadly police shooting, revealing a policing policy that went off the rails and subverted the relationship between police and the community.



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## DIGITAL MEDIA: INNOVATION JOURNALISM

### Guardian Australia Team

*Guardian Australia*

“Leaving Gaza”

**The  
Guardian**

How do people communicate in a war zone today? As Hamada Nasrallah survived being bombed, besieged, displaced and malnourished in Gaza, he sent updates to his friend Nahed Elrayes in the US – messages that became more infrequent as access to the internet became sparse.

“Leaving Gaza” pieces together Hamada’s story via these exchanges from August 2023 to April 2024, as well as material he posted to social media, and details he shared with *Guardian Australia*. Through a bespoke interactive scrolling chat interface, the multimedia feature follows one man’s movements through Gaza.

Over painstaking months of research, material-gathering, correspondence, writing, web development and editing, the *Guardian Australia* Team combed through volumes of messages and social media posts, translated texts and songs, verified social media posts, maintained ongoing correspondence with Hamada over WhatsApp in a war zone, and undertook technical trial and error to build the immersive multimedia format from scratch.

“Leaving Gaza” was led by *Guardian Australia* associate news editor Shelley Hepworth, investigations reporter Ariel Bogle, data editor Nick Evershed and reporter Rafqa Touma, with website development by Andy Ball and translations by Christelle Bassil and reporter Mostafa Rachwani.



### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

As the atrocities in Gaza have worsened, harrowing stories of survival have emerged from those on the ground. “Leaving Gaza” presents one such story, uniquely told through a deeply personal collection of real-time text messages, social media posts, and voice memos that chronicle one Palestinian man’s perilous journey out of the stricken region.

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# SCOOP OF THE YEAR

Award Partner *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*

**Nick McKenzie, Michael Bachelard and Amelia Ballinger**

*The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*  
“The Pezzullo files”



This reporting exposed the backroom political dealings of Michael Pezzullo and provided a window into how Australia’s then most powerful public servant wielded that influence. After years of examining the Department of Home Affairs’ operations, Nick McKenzie and his team legally obtained hundreds of encrypted messages that Pezzullo, the head of the department, had sent to influential Liberal Party powerbroker Scott Briggs.

The messages revealed Pezzullo’s attempts to influence two coalition prime ministers and cabinet, and to muzzle the press, with the aim of promoting the careers of conservative politicians he considered allies and badmouthing those he did not like.

Securing this scoop entailed months cultivating sources to secure a trove of private messages sent by Pezzullo over several years. The reporters trawled through thousands of WhatsApp and Signal messages to build this exposé of covert influence, which was presented through digital, print and television stories.

On the night the stories went live, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spoke to the minister for Home Affairs, Clare O’Neil. The following morning, Pezzullo was stood down. O’Neil referred concerns to the



Australian Public Service Commission and, within weeks, Pezzullo became the first public servant to be dismissed for misconduct. A National Anti-Corruption Commission inquiry is now under way.

Nick McKenzie is an investigative journalist with *The Age* who has now won 20 Walkley Awards. Amelia Ballinger is a Walkley Award-winning journalist and producer with *60 Minutes*. Michael Bachelard is a Walkley Award-winning investigative reporter with *The Age*.

## JUDGES’ COMMENTS

This remarkable series of stories by Nick McKenzie, Michael Bachelard and Amelia Ballinger exhibited all the hallmarks of a truly top-level scoop: exclusivity, impact and strong public interest. The revelations about the covert conduct of Michael Pezzullo, one of Australia’s most powerful and controversial public servants, will have a lasting influence on our national politics.

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## ALL MEDIA: COVERAGE OF A MAJOR NEWS EVENT OR ISSUE

Award Partner Ogilvy

**Chris Reason and Simon Hydzik**  
7NEWS, “Israel-Hamas war”



Chris Reason and Simon Hydzik brought the Israel-Hamas war into Australian living rooms. Their submission opens with the crew coming under rocket attack mid-way through a live cross. As they run for shelter, Iron Dome missiles are heard intercepting the Hamas rockets above. Amid the chaos, Hydzik had the skill to position the camera perfectly, and Reason delivered a calm and measured piece to camera.

Reason and Hydzik also got the first on-camera interview with Australians trapped inside Gaza, and Reason was the only Australian journalist to question Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

They got a then exclusive with former PM Ehud Barak and another then exclusive with Hamas leader Osama Hamdan. They were the only Australian media to access Israel's national morgue.

Reason and Hydzik worked constantly to provide context and depth: getting embedded with Israeli soldiers in training; engaging with Palestinian teenagers battling deadly street fights in the West Bank; visiting a West Bank gun shop as weapons sales soared; and taking

us inside an Israeli apartment to explain life with a safe room.

Seven News chief reporter Chris Reason and senior cameraman Simon Hydzik have worked on multiple national and international assignments together, including their Walkley-winning coverage of the Ukraine war in 2022. The pair paid tribute to journalists Ibrahim Hazboun in Israel and Abed AlSalaam in Gaza for helping their coverage, along with driver Golan Kwiat and security providers Liam Ryan and Ross Milosevic.

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

Dangerous, difficult and divisive: the Israel-Hamas war has challenged reporters the world over. Showing the benefit of experience, the small Seven team used all available resources, delivering careful and considered coverage of the unfolding conflict. They not only broke news, but also revealed the human face of tragedy on both sides.

# Congratulations to the winners and finalists!

Ogilvy PR is a proud sponsor of The 2024 Walkley Awards.

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**Ogilvy PR**





## NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY



**David Gray**  
AFP, “Walk to freedom”



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange’s arrival at the RAAF base in Canberra after years in exile was a major news moment, but photographers were up against it, with no guarantee they would be able to see Assange, let alone capture an image. When he did emerge, Julian Assange raised his fist, a final act of defiance after more than a decade of avoiding deportation to the United States.

Photographer David Gray shot this image through the security fence that surrounds the airport. Conditions were extremely dark, so he had to take this picture at 20,000 ISO.

David Gray joined the AFP news agency in Sydney in July 2023, after starting his career at *The Australian* in 1989 and joining Reuters in 1995. He has previously won two Walkleys, including Nikon-Walkley Press Photographer of the Year in 2008.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Julian Assange’s arrival at an airport in Canberra after years in exile was a major news moment, but it was Assange’s triumphant fist pump that made for an iconic image. Shot from behind a security fence in darkness, David Gray’s wide treatment offers a visual contrast to Assange’s years of confinement.

**Walk to freedom:** Ground crew watch as WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange raises his fist after arriving in Canberra. Assange pleaded guilty at a US court in Saipan to a single count of conspiracy to obtain and disseminate US national defence information. 26 June 2024.





# ALL MEDIA: SPECIALIST AND BEAT REPORTING

Award Partner MEAA

## Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw

*The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and Brisbane Times*, “The portrait Gina Rinehart doesn’t want you to see”



This collaboration produced arts beat journalism at its best, revealing that Gina Rinehart had asked the National Gallery of Australia’s chair and director to remove a portrait of her from an exhibition by Vincent Namatjira. The gallery also received complaints from associates of Rinehart’s company Hancock Prospecting and from athletes she sponsors.

The story began with a tip, which had to be verified with sensitivity, extensive contacts and freedom of information laws. The first report set off a media storm, as it was followed up by national and international media outlets. Social media memes sprang up; there was even a crowdfunding campaign to put it on a New York billboard.

Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw were the first to approach Kevin Hausmann after receiving information that the head of Queensland Swimming had backed Gina Rinehart’s complaint. They were also the first to obtain comment from Olympic swimmer Kyle Chalmers confirming he had written in support of the removal of the portrait.

These stories explored efforts by Australia’s richest person to control her image, and the pressure on cultural and sporting institutions increasingly dependent on philanthropy.

The picture Rinehart hates



Gina Rinehart, Australia’s richest person, has demanded the National Gallery remove a portrait of her by Aboriginal Prize-winning Indigenous artist Vincent Namatjira. [NEWS PAGE 11](#)

### INDIGENOUS ARTIST

## Rinehart demands gallery take down unflattering portrait

Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw

Gina Rinehart, Australia’s richest person, has demanded the National Gallery of Australia remove a portrait of her from an exhibition by Aboriginal Prize-winning Indigenous artist Vincent Namatjira.

The 81-year-old mining mogul directly approached NGA director Nick Mitchell and NGA chair Ryan Stokes in April to press for its removal.

There have since been more than 100 complaints to the gallery from associates of her company, Hancock Prospecting, which have accused the NGA of “doing the bidding of the Chinese Communist Party” by displaying her image in an unflattering way.

Rinehart recently praised the “Chinese government for ‘doing a better job than our government’, and it is unclear what the “bidding” referred to.

Complaints have also come from athletes she sponsors, according to sources who are familiar with the correspondence but who asked not to be identified due to the sensitive nature of the issue.

Ben Kelly, a friend of Namatjira who collaborated on an artwork for the show, said Namatjira was one of the most important artists of our time. The portrait is one of



Artist Vincent Namatjira has painted many notable Australians.

Australia in colour, which opened on March 2. Namatjira, a celebrated portraitist and a satirical chronicler of Australian identity, could not be reached for comment.

The gallery told the show as one that takes a “very look at the politics of history, power and leadership from a contemporary Aboriginal perspective”.

Rinehart’s request is understood to have been rejected by the gallery on the basis the cultural institution’s artistic vision should not be swayed by individual or political opinion. Rinehart is listed as a “friend” of the gallery on its supporters’ page, after donating between \$4995-\$9995.

In response to a series of questions about Rinehart’s complaint, Mitchell, 50-year-old, said: “... candidly

tie merits of works in the national collection, and to on display at the gallery. We present works of art to the Australian public to inspire people to explore, experience and learn about art.”

The dispute follows a series of controversies for the company’s executive chair. In March last year, Rinehart withdrew her bid to sponsor the Sydney Opera House after Indigenous player David White asked for her uniform not to include the Hancock Prospecting logo. White was protesting against comments made by Rinehart’s father and Hancock Prospecting founder, Lang Hancock, in 1994 that Indigenous Australians should be starved and “bred themselves out”.

Rinehart has refused to condemn her father’s comments and cancelled her funding for Netball Australia after players refused to wear her company’s logo.

In June, Rinehart claimed the West Australian government’s changes to Indigenous heritage laws, after Bill Thwait’s destruction of the sacred site of Ankerbong in 2020, would force some owners to get heritage approval to build granny flats in their backyards.

The 70-year-old has drawn praise from some Indigenous leaders for millions of dollars in funds

Linda Morris is a specialist arts journalist for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. Eryk Bagshaw is an investigative reporter for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. He was previously North Asia correspondent, economics correspondent and a political reporter in Canberra.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw’s entry is an outstanding example of collaborative rounds-based journalism. A tip that Australia’s richest person wanted an unflattering portrait removed from the National Gallery became a rolling saga of power and vanity, philanthropy, sport sponsorship – and what money really buys.

## Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 Walkley Awards

As the union for Australian journalists since 1910, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance is a proud supporter of the Walkley Foundation.

We extend our congratulations to the finalists and winner of the 2024 Walkley Award for All Media: Specialist and Beat Reporting for upholding the finest standards of Australian journalism.

[meaa.org](http://meaa.org)







# ALL MEDIA: BUSINESS JOURNALISM

Award Partner ING Australia

## Linton Besser and Ninah Kopel

ABC, 7.30 and ABC Investigations, “Netstrata”



Linton Besser and Ninah Kopel’s investigation into the strata industry revealed a sector rife with conflicts of interest and secret kickbacks.

On 7.30, with the help of whistleblowers, including one senior former manager who agreed to appear on camera, Besser and Kopel reported that high-profile firm Netstrata had been taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from contractors hired with apartment owners’ money.

Netstrata had also been using a subsidiary company to charge insurance broking fees three times the market rate, while failing to disclose those fees to its clients. Despite written assurances to unit owners that brokerage fees were not flowing back to Netstrata, the ABC confirmed they were – and had totalled \$21 million in the past nine years.

Managing director Stephen Brell was forced to confirm Netstrata had been taking kickbacks, and conceded his company had failed in its fiduciary duties. Within hours, Brell was forced to stand down as the state president of the industry peak body. In June 2024, the NSW government unveiled legislative reforms to ensure ‘real time’ disclosure of some commissions and the banning of others, while tightening oversight and beefing up enforcement.

Linton Besser is a multi-award-winning investigative journalist and former foreign correspondent who has reported for *Four Corners*,



*Foreign Correspondent* and 7.30. Ninah Kopel is an award-winning journalist and producer. She joined the ABC Investigations team after working across multiple platforms and mediums.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

This story is highly consequential, with the fallout likely having further to run. The many Australians who live in apartment buildings will be better off because of Linton Besser and Ninah Kopel’s bold and thorough reporting. This story unearthed demonstrable evidence of wrongdoing and forced the NSW government and others to act.



# Well said.

Congratulations to all 2024 Walkley Awards winners from ING.

[ing.com.au](https://ing.com.au)







## FEATURE/PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

### Diego Fedele

Getty Images, “In the shadow of a deadly sky”



The war in Eastern Ukraine grinds into its third year since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. The relentless bombardments have been aimed at crippling Ukraine’s infrastructure, economy and way of life.

Fedele’s 12 images were taken in Ukraine’s eastern regions, Kharkiv and Donetsk, and in the area around the capital Kyiv. As part of his long-term project recording the impact of war on civilians, Fedele travelled to Ukraine in 2023 and 2024.

On 5 October 2023, a Russian Iskander ballistic missile attack killed 59 people in Hroza in eastern Ukraine. Next to the cafe, a children’s playground was strewn with casualties. They were civilians attending the reburial wake of Andriy Kozyr, a Ukrainian soldier who had died earlier in the conflict.

Fedele said: “Around 6.30 the following morning, I was thrown out of bed by the deafening noise of another Russian Iskander missile that flew over our hotel and exploded a few blocks away, striking a residential building and killing two civilians. People were still escaping when we arrived at the scene, where I took the picture of the man fleeing with blood on his forehead.”

Diego Fedele is a freelance photojournalist based in Melbourne. He is a stringer with Australian Associated Press and Getty Images and was a finalist for the 2023 Nikon-Walkley Press Photographer of the Year Award.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

We’ve seen so many pictures of the conflict in Ukraine there’s a risk of becoming desensitised. But Diego Fedele’s images are impossible to ignore or forget. His shot of the officer sitting beside the bodies in the playground is both horrific and heart-rending. In every shot he captures the dignity and resilience of the Ukrainian people as they struggle to survive.



1. **Hroza massacre:** A Ukrainian police officer sits on a merry-go-round in the village of Hroza. Civilian bodies lie on the ground outside the cafe, which was struck by a ballistic missile just hours earlier. 5 October 2023. Kharkiv region.
2. **Beheaded literature:** A decapitated statue of Russian writer Maxim Gorky in the city centre of Chasiv Yar. The statue has allegedly been destroyed by shelling in the town, which overlooks the highly contested city of Bakhmut. 8 October 2023. Donetsk region.
3. **Farewell Vuhledar:** Tetiana Shvets, 62, is hugged by friend and neighbour Svitlana as she is being evacuated from Vuhledar by the Ukrainian military chaplain Oleg Tkachenko. 19 October 2023. Donetsk region.
4. **The defenders of Chasiv Yar:** A Ukrainian 17th Tank Brigade member operates a Soviet-era self-propelled artillery piece, firing 122mm shells on advancing Russian infantry. 27 February 2024. Chasiv Yar.
5. **Fleeing:** A man flees from a residential building that was struck by a Russian ballistic missile that killed two civilians. Emergency personnel pulled the bodies of a 10-year-old boy and his grandmother out of the rubble. 6 October 2023. Kharkiv region.
6. **The last goodbye:** Family members attend the funeral of brother and sister Oleksandr and Iryna Hodak at Hroza. Gravediggers had to dig at least 22 more graves to bury the victims of the 5 October Russian strike on the town that killed 59 people. 9 October 2023. Kharkiv region.









FEATURE/PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY (continued)



7. **Maidan Square:** On the tenth anniversary of the deaths during protests in Kyiv's Maidan Square, Czech anti-tank hedgehogs are deployed alongside a cross that commemorates the fallen. 10 February 2024. Kyiv.
8. **Supplying the essentials:** Nadiia (right), a former resident of Vuhledar, collects money after selling food to locals who, despite the intense hostilities, decided to stay in the town. 19 October 2023. Donetsk region.
9. **What's left of Vuhledar:** Residents carry water and food after a distribution during a lull in the shelling in Vuhledar. 19 October 2023. Donetsk region.

10. **Hang in there:** Vitalii, 58, hangs up clothes in the basement of a bombed-out school in Velyka Novosilka, where he has been living with 12 other displaced residents since the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine. 17 October 2023. Donetsk region.
11. **Scars of war:** A drone image shows the scars of war on Ukrainian territory in the village of Kamianka. 27 February 2024. Donetsk region.
12. **Ruins:** A coat hangs among the rubble at the scene of a Russian missile strike on a civilian neighbourhood. 22 February 2024. Kramatorsk.





## TV/VIDEO: CAMERAWORK

### Matthew Davis

ABC, *Foreign Correspondent*

“From the high Arctic, to the hustle of Seoul”



Matthew Davis worked as a solo camera operator and producer in one of the planet’s most isolated locations, Norway’s Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, capturing the epic landscapes that have become part of a tussle for power between Russia and NATO nations.

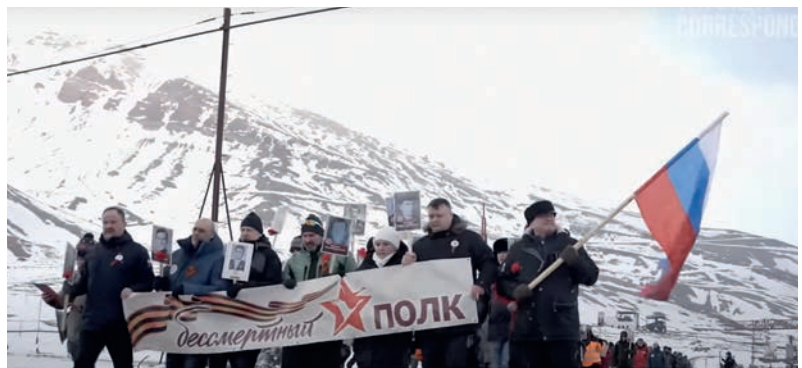
Davis and reporter Stephanie March faced logistical challenges daily, but none more unpredictable than the Arctic weather. In harsh conditions, Davis had to rely on minimal gear (a mirrorless camera body, lens kit and drone), at one point travelling eight hours while filming from a snowmobile.

For a 12-day shoot in Seoul, to report on the perils of historical adoption in South Korea, Davis relied on a pared-back kit to sensitively record intimate, emotional interviews. With a strong sense of place he visualised the contrast of a future-focused city with the character and culture of its past: using deliberate portraiture and slow-motion for this character-driven report.

Matt Davis is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker based at the ABC’s flagship international current affairs program *Foreign Correspondent*. Throughout the world’s metropolises and backwaters, Davis has worked on the front line of some of the world’s biggest stories for over a decade. He also won this category in 2023.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Matt Davis’s stunning drone footage transports viewers to the Arctic’s untouched landscapes, one of nature’s harshest yet most stunning environments. Shot with limited equipment, the footage shows his consummate skill as a frontline camera operator. Davis’s exceptional framing and use of natural light in Korea’s urban settings demonstrate his versatility and creativity.







## TV/VIDEO: NEWS REPORTING

Award Partner Seven

### Ben Lewis

*SBS World News,*  
“October 7 attacks”



Ben Lewis’s three news reports on the October 7 attacks in Israel included an exclusive interview with the only Australian survivor of the kibbutz assaults.

Anthony was deeply shaken but wanted the world to know what his young family had been through. Lewis added no voiceover and minimal prompting to the interview, alongside footage Anthony had filmed during his ordeal.

As the only Australian journalists allowed access to the Nova rave site, where 364 people had been killed, Lewis and his team tried to convey the fear that those who had attended the rave must have felt. Much of what they filmed was too graphic to broadcast. During filming, Israeli soldiers started firing at an unidentified man who approached.

Lewis also interviewed the daughter of a missing woman presumed to have been taken hostage. She was insisting that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) must increase its bombing campaign on Gaza,

despite the risk to her mother. It later turned out her mother had been killed in her kibbutz.

As they filmed near Gaza, the area was under constant rocket fire and Lewis had to take cover dozens of times.

Ben Lewis is the chief international correspondent for *SBS News*, based in London. In 2023, Lewis won this category with Colin Cosier. These stories were filmed by freelance camerawoman Emily Wither and produced by local fixer Dana Karni.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Ben Lewis’s reporting from Israel immediately after the October 7 attacks was an excellent example of TV news reporting. He obtained exclusive material, worked under pressure in dangerous areas, and kept a balanced view and calm tone to deliver honest accounts. His moving interview with an Australian survivor of the kibbutz assaults, and his reporting from the rave site, were standout moments.

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## TV/VIDEO: CURRENT AFFAIRS SHORT

Award Partner SBS

### Nick McKenzie, Amelia Ballinger and Michael Bachelard

Nine, *60 Minutes*, "The power player"



Nick McKenzie, Amelia Ballinger and Michael Bachelard's report exposed a power play by one of Australia's most senior public servants, Michael Pezzullo. Pezzullo was the head of the Home Affairs department, responsible for Australia's national security. McKenzie and his team legally obtained hundreds of encrypted messages Pezzullo had sent to influential Liberal Party powerbroker Scott Briggs. These showed Pezzullo's efforts to build his power, reshape successive coalition governments and influence Australia's national security regime.

The messages also showed how Pezzullo spent years using a political backchannel to two Liberal prime ministers to undermine his perceived political and public service enemies, promote the careers of conservative politicians he considered allies, and lobby to muzzle the press.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spoke to the Home Affairs minister, Clare O'Neil, about the program on the night of the broadcast. O'Neil referred concerns to the Australian Public Service Commissioner,

who named former senior public servant Lynelle Briggs to conduct the inquiry. Pezzullo was asked to step aside. Six weeks later, after the inquiry found he had breached the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct, he was fired by the prime minister.

Nick McKenzie is a Walkley Award-winning investigative reporter with *The Age*. Amelia Ballinger is a Walkley Award-winning journalist and producer with *60 Minutes*. Michael Bachelard is a Walkley Award-winning investigative reporter with *The Age*.

#### JUDGES' COMMENTS

This report exposed the power plays of Australia's then most powerful public servant, Michael Pezzullo. It revealed his behind-the-scenes actions and multiple breaches of the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct. The disclosure forced an inquiry and cost him his job. This beautifully produced story exemplifies the critical role of journalism in holding the powerful to account.



**SBS congratulates the winners of the 69th Walkley Awards for Excellence in Journalism**

Congratulations Nick McKenzie, Amelia Ballinger and Michael Bachelard – winner TV/Video: Current Affairs Short Award





# ALL MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM

Award Partner Sydney Airport

## Dateline Team

SBS, *Dateline*, “Finding Yusuf”



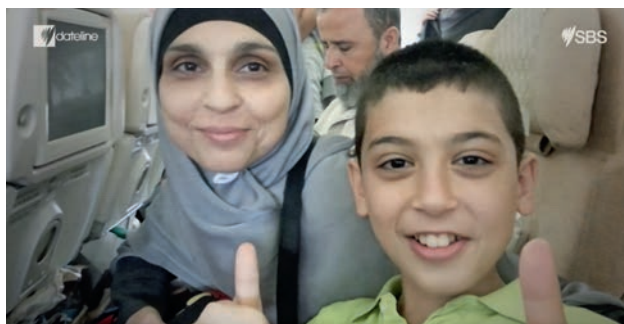
The heart-wrenching investigation “Finding Yusuf” raises questions about justice for people with suspected links to terrorism, Australia’s human rights obligations to its citizens, including children, and the right to a fair trial.

Australian Yusuf Zahab was taken to Syria by his family at the age of 12, and after the fall of Islamic State (IS) he disappeared into the men’s prison system. International media, NGOs, the UN, and Yusuf’s family had all tried to locate him without success, and he was feared lost or dead.

Reporter Colin Cosier followed this story for 18 months, winning the trust of Yusuf’s family. He and Agnes Teek travelled to north-east Syria in February 2024 in search of Yusuf. They expected to be chasing a ghost, emblematic of the ‘lost boys’ of Syria, but they found a scared, desperate young man. SBS was the first media organisation to break the news to the family and globally that Yusuf was alive.

Local journalist Mustafa Al-Ali set up meetings with key Kurdish officials who gave *Dateline* unprecedented access, including an interview with Yusuf’s father, who had been reported dead.

In an interview with *Dateline*, the former UN special rapporteur Fionnuala Ní Aoláin condemned the countries, including Australia, that continue to leave their citizens in the region, claiming “they are in breach of their international human rights obligations”.



The story had a profound impact for Yusuf’s family, and led MPs, NGOs and advocates to push for answers on what will happen to Yusuf and the other Australian families held without charge in this region.

SBS *Dateline* is a team of dedicated international current affairs filmmakers. Colin Cosier is a journalist who reports, films and produces. Simon Phegan is an editor/cameraperson, and Louis Dai is a producer/cameraperson and editor. Agnes Teek is a journalist and the series producer. Mustafa Al-Ali is an award-winning local producer.

## JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Colin Cosier and the *Dateline* Team deliver a stunning example of public service journalism conducted across international borders with this investigation into Australian families detained in Syria. Exposing government inaction and incompetence, Cosier discovers a young man previously thought dead and informs his overjoyed mother in this deeply moving and riveting television documentary.

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**Congratulations to the  
winners and finalists of the  
2024 Walkley Awards for  
International Journalism**  
**SBS, *Dateline*, ‘Finding Yusuf’**







# ALL MEDIA: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Award Partner Guardian Australia

## Chris Reason

7NEWS, “The Bishop of Broome”



Chris Reason’s series of stories about Bishop of Broome Christopher Saunders, accused of historical sex offences dating back decades, drove both Church and state to act.

Reason’s relentless four-year investigation began with a tip-off from a whistleblower priest in February 2020. Reason spent weeks travelling as a lone videojournalist across the vast Broome diocese gathering evidence, earning the trust of victims and clergy who alleged Saunders had repeatedly used his power and position to target young Indigenous males. Former Church staff shared financial records alleging Church funds were used to groom his alleged victims.

Reason obtained a leaked copy of the 200-page report from the Papal Vos Estis inquiry ordered into the case by Pope Francis in 2022 and presented to the Vatican in 2023. Reason’s resulting week-long series of stories revealed Saunders was suspected of raping four young victims and grooming 67 more. There were also allegations of drug supply, gun crime and fraud.

The Church was forced to hand the report to police, who re-opened their investigation. The bishop was arrested in February 2024 and charged with at least 26 sex crimes. The case is currently before the courts. Saunders has pleaded not guilty.

Chris Reason is chief reporter for Seven News. In three decades with Seven, he has reported on some of the biggest news events of our times. Winning two Walkley Awards this year brings his collection to five.

### JUDGES’ COMMENTS

“The Bishop of Broome” is reporting in the best traditions of investigative journalism – a four-year investigation with shocking allegations of grooming, sexual assault and fraud by a Catholic bishop in remote Western Australia. Refusing to accept the stalled inquiries by the state police and the Catholic Church, Chris Reason pursued the story and scored an exclusive international scoop – a highly secretive 200-page Vatican report – and forced the police and the Church to act.



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Guardian**





## DOCUMENTARY AWARD

Award Partner MinterEllison

### **Katrina McGowan, Janine Hosking, Mat Cornwell and Carrie Fellner**

iKandy Films and Stan, *How to Poison a Planet*



*How to Poison a Planet* exposes one of the largest environmental disasters in human history, a crisis caused by PFAS chemicals. These toxic man-made chemicals don't fully break down naturally in the environment.

The project began more than four years ago when the team travelled to the Aboriginal community of Wreck Bay near Jervis Bay, chasing a lead on a community contamination stemming from poor management of firefighting foam on a neighbouring Defence airbase. They spent years travelling back and forth to Wreck Bay to earn the trust of community members. First Nations producer Mat Cornwell's role in the team was critical. The team also spent three days trawling through documents obtained through freedom of information to track the history of the Defence's PFAS use in Australia, specifically Wreck Bay.

The team gained exclusive access to the US legal team taking on industrial giant 3M, which manufactured PFAS chemicals, on behalf of hundreds of communities affected by contamination like Wreck Bay. The filmmakers trawled through hundreds of documents and deposition transcripts spanning three decades, revealing that 3M had known for decades that PFAS chemicals were toxic and getting into people's blood.



*How to Poison a Planet* is an iKandy Films production directed and produced by Katrina McGowan, and produced by Janine Hosking and Mat Cornwell in collaboration with *The Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Carrie Fellner. The film was commissioned by streaming platform Stan as part of its Revealed documentary strand.

#### **JUDGES' COMMENTS**

A bold, brilliant documentary which takes a local regional story and expands it to reveal a globally significant issue, relevant to us all. The team demonstrates tenacity, creativity and excellence in all aspects of documentary craft, while applying strong journalistic rigour. A gripping, powerful work, and thoroughly compelling for a global audience.

MinterEllison is proud to support the Documentary Award. Congratulations to this year's winner:

**Katrina McGowan, Janine Hosking,  
Mat Cornwell and Carrie Fellner**  
iKandy Films and Stan  
*How To Poison A Planet*

**Real stories  
seen**

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## WALKLEY BOOK AWARD

Award Partner Banki Haddock Fiora

### Andrew Fowler

*Nuked: The Submarine Fiasco that Sank Australia's Sovereignty*, Melbourne University Publishing

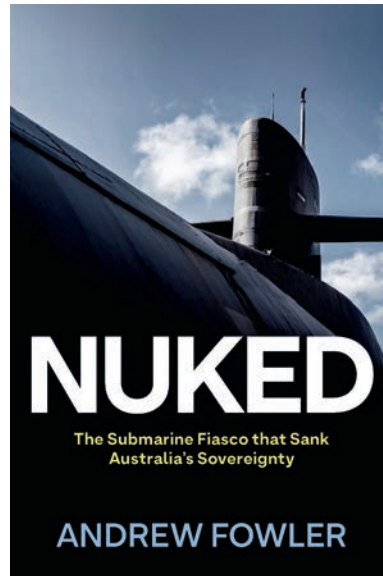


*Nuked* investigates how the Morrison government secretly worked against plans for the French to build Australia's new submarine fleet, and organised a new defence pact, AUKUS.

In 2016, the French won Australia's biggest-ever defence contract, a multi-billion dollar deal to build 12 conventionally powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy. By 2021, Scott Morrison announced the AUKUS pact and a plan for nuclear submarines to be built in South Australia, scrapping the deal with France.

Andrew Fowler spent nearly two years piecing together how the deal had been done, wading through thousands of pages of US, UK and Australian defence reports and gaining access to confidential French military files. He interviewed many of the main people involved and talked to sources in Paris, London, Washington and Canberra.

Amid debate about the necessity of strengthening the Australian public service's independence to resist executive overreach, this August it was revealed that the National Anti-Corruption Commission was investigating some elements of the submarine acquisition program.



Andrew Fowler has been a journalist for nearly 50 years. He was a reporter for the *London Evening News*, acting foreign editor on *The Australian*, a reporter for Channel 7 and SBS *Dateline*, the ABC's *Four Corners* and *Foreign Correspondent*. His work stretches from Timor and black South Africa's liberation struggle to the impact of WikiLeaks on journalism and government accountability.

#### JUDGES' COMMENTS

Andrew Fowler's razor-sharp analysis uses extensive research and interviews to explore the government's diplomatic betrayals, alliances and failures, and reveals the lack of transparency in major decisions involving gigantic sums of taxpayer money. An eye-opening masterclass in political deceit and the potential consequences.

Banki Haddock Fiora is  
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Congratulations to all  
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# OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO JOURNALISM

Award Partner MEAA

## Robert Gottlieb AM



Robert Gottlieb is an icon of journalism. He pioneered business journalism in Australia and made it so mainstream that comedy shows in the early 1990s, such as Steve Vizard's *Fast Forward*, imitated him and dubbed him "Whispering Bob" for his breathless, excitable style. His regular appearances on TV and radio were legendary, as he talked about business as if he were telling a story to an enthusiastic child.

Bob speaks to big business, small businesses, investors and Australians. He makes the economy, superannuation, property and industrial relations understandable to everyone. He is a brilliant marketer who understands that business is more than numbers. What makes it interesting is the personalities, the gossip and the boardroom intrigue. Bob became famous for his fly-on-the-wall analysis of what went on behind the scenes during company takeovers, business collapses, political stoushes and sharemarket machinations.

During his 65 years in the media he has done it all. He has worked for newspapers, for 3AW radio station for 37 years, and for television. He's written a book and won a series of awards, including a Walkley in 1976 and Graham Perkin Journalist of the Year in 1977. He was inducted into the Journalism Hall of Fame and was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to journalism.

Bob began his career at *The Melbourne Herald* straight out of school, and gained a diploma in journalism at the University of Melbourne in 1959 before starting at *The Age's* business section. He moved to Sydney in 1962 to report for *The Sydney Morning Herald's* business section before moving back to Melbourne for *The Australian Financial Review* (AFR).

In 1974, he created the AFR's famous backpage *Chanticleer* column, which is still the mainstay of the paper's analysis. In 1979, he handed the baton to future AFR editor Alan Kohler, whom he had mentored. In 1980, he created the glossy business magazine *Business Review Weekly* (BRW), launching the Rich List, which continues to this day in the AFR.

During the next 20 years Bob Gottlieb was the big cheese. BRW was a resounding success, and Gottlieb was responsible for hiring many journalists who would go on to become household names, including Pam Williams, Laura Tingle, Ross Greenwood, David Koch, Karen Maley, Narelle Hooper and Adele Ferguson... There's hardly a journalist Bob hasn't hired.

His empire building continued when he set up *Personal Investment Magazine* and *Shares*, both of which made a fortune for Fairfax.

In the early 2000s, he left his beloved BRW and went to *The Australian* as one of its leading columnists. It was a big coup. In 2006, he retired, but after a year he decided to ditch retirement and take a risk to join Alan Kohler in a new cutting-edge venture, *Business Spectator*. He wrote a daily column and helped finance it. In a short time it became a must read, and secured a significant market share, prompting its purchase by *The Australian*, where he returned and still remains.

Bob has been an inspiration for so many journalists. His generosity, marketing genius and understanding of business and personalities is second to none. His daily columns have a solid following. He has covered more than 50 federal budgets and countless company successes and collapses, booms and busts, and seen governments and policies come and go.

He has never lost sight of the importance of the audience, or of the treatment of whistleblowing. Since Australian Taxation Office (ATO) whistleblower Richard Boyle was arrested and charged in 2018, he has written columns calling on the government to drop the case.

It's time to honour this legend of journalism.







“Bob has been writing for 65 years. It’s time to honour this legend of journalism.”

Adele Ferguson AM

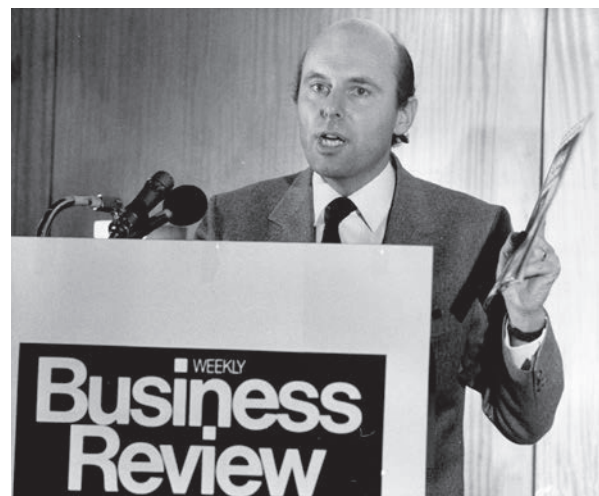
“Bob Gottlieb’s writing, editing and entrepreneurialism changed finance journalism in

Australia. It has directly affected the understanding of all Australians about the economy, and about their own finances. It is perhaps the greatest legacy of his career. Because of Bob’s journalistic efforts – and writing – Australians are today among the most business and economically literate people on the planet. He created hundreds of journalism jobs and nurtured some of Australia’s best journalists.”

Ross Greenwood

“With more than 60 years of journalism he is still at the top of his game. In the past year alone his columns have seen almost 3 million page views. He understands the real economy. He is always so connected to the real world and what people are thinking. His topics are always relevant and fresh.”

Michelle Gunn, editor, *The Australian*







# 2024 WALKLEY FINALISTS

## PRINT/TEXT NEWS REPORT

**Carrie Fellner, Matt Davidson, Matthew Absalom-Wong and Michael Evans,** *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, “The factory that contaminated the world”

**Samantha Maiden,** *news.com.au*, “Pay you cash”

**Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw,** *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *Brisbane Times*, “The portrait Gina Rinehart doesn’t want you to see”

## FEATURE WRITING SHORT (UNDER 4000 WORDS)

AWARD PARTNER THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD AND THE AGE

**Lorena Allam, Sarah Collard and Blake Sharp-Wiggins,** *Guardian Australia*, “Buried lives”

**Jackson Ryan,** *The New York Times*, “The long, long way to the woods”

**Ben Walter,** *Island*, “The only fish: Flathead decline in Tasmania”

## FEATURE WRITING LONG (OVER 4000 WORDS)

**Nicole Hasham,** *Australian Book Review*, “Bloodstone: The day they blew up Mount Tom Price”

**Sarah Krasnostein,** *The Monthly*, “Peace in the home: The trial of Malka Leifer”

**Edmund Tadros,** *The Australian Financial Review*, “Inside the undoing of PwC”

## ALL MEDIA: COMMENTARY, ANALYSIS, OPINION AND CRITIQUE

AWARD PARTNER THOMSON GEER LAWYERS

**Annabel Crabb,** *ABC News*, “Shades of grey”

**Greg Jericho,** *Guardian Australia*, “Speaking truth to power with graphs”

**David Leser,** *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, “The war in Gaza: Not in my Jewish name”

## ALL MEDIA: EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM

**Mridula Amin and Alex Lim,** *ABC News*, “This isn’t the 30s I was promised”

**Faster, Higher, Stronger Team,** *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, “Faster, higher, stronger”

**Riley Stuart, Lucy Sweeney, Haidarr Jones and West Mattheussen,** *ABC News*, “Inside Israel’s ‘doomsday’ development”

## ALL MEDIA: COVERAGE OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Kathryn Diss, Daryna Zadvirna, Keane Bourke, Jake Sturmer and the ABC News Perth Team,** *ABC News*, “WA’s youth justice crisis – the death of Cleveland Dodd”

**Lorena Allam, Sarah Collard and Blake Sharp-Wiggins,** *Guardian Australia*, “Buried lives”

**Caroline Graham, Kylie Stevenson and Tilda Colling,** *The Australian*, “NT schools in crisis”

## ALL MEDIA: COVERAGE OF COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS

AWARD PARTNER BHP

**Oliver Jacques,** *Region Riverina*, “Rise and fall of Griffith winemaker who owes \$32 million”

**Matthew Kelly,** *Newcastle Herald*, “Three decades on the streets”

**Erin Parke and Andrew Seabourne,** *ABC News* and *ABC, 7.30*, “Boat arrivals”

## ALL MEDIA: CARTOON OF THE YEAR

**Matt Golding,** *The Age*, “(M)Any questions?”

**Fiona Katauskas,** *Guardian Australia*, “True colours of 2024”

**Cathy Wilcox,** *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “Break glass”

## ALL MEDIA: SPORTS JOURNALISM

AWARD PARTNER UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

**Tom Decent,** *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, “The secret Zoom call that brought down a Wallabies coach”

**SBS News Documentaries,** *SBS Television*, “Came from nowhere: Australia’s most controversial football club”

**Michael Warner,** *Herald Sun*, “White line fever: AFL illicit drugs crisis”

## SPORT PHOTOGRAPHY

**David Gray,** *AFP*, “Light, shadows, action at the Australian Open tennis”

**Nick Moir,** *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “Birdsville Rodeo”

**Quinn Rooney,** *Getty Images*, “Australians in the pool”

## AUDIO SHORT (UNDER 20 MINUTES)

AWARD PARTNER ABC

**Ayla Darling and Hannah Palmer,** *Triple J, Hack* and *ABC Investigations*, “Behind closed doors: How one child’s voice exposed the dangers of rape inside mental health hospitals”

**Nick Dole,** *ABC, AM*, “After October 7”

**Peter Ryan,** *ABC, The World Today* and *ABC News Daily*, “Qantas crisis – demise of the Flying Kangaroo”

## AUDIO LONG (OVER 20 MINUTES)

AWARD PARTNER MCGRATHNICOL

**Paul Farrell and the Background Briefing Team,** *ABC, Background Briefing* and *ABC Investigations*, “Stop and search”

**Charlotte King and Andy Burns,** *ABC, Background Briefing*, “The price of freebirth”

**Megan Williams and Dan Schulz,** *2DRY FM* and *Community Radio Network*, “Water watch: Wilcannia weir or Wilcannia won’t”

## DIGITAL MEDIA: INNOVATION JOURNALISM

AWARD PARTNER MASTER BUILDERS AUSTRALIA

**Guardian Australia team,** *Guardian Australia*, “Leaving Gaza”

**Josh Nicholas and Andy Ball,** *Guardian Australia*, “Quiz: What’s getting better for Australians today, and what’s getting worse?”

**The Visual Stories Team and Shane Wright,** *The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald, Brisbane Times* and *WAtoday*, “AI language models – Budget speeches analysis”

## ALL MEDIA: SCOOP OF THE YEAR

AWARD PARTNER THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD AND THE AGE

**Nick McKenzie, Michael Bachelard and Amelia Ballinger,** *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “The Pezzullo files”

**Chris Reason,** *7NEWS*, “The Bishop of Broome”

**Christopher Walsh,** *NT Independent*, “NT Labor’s ministerial shares scandal”





## ALL MEDIA: COVERAGE OF A MAJOR NEWS EVENT OR ISSUE

AWARD PARTNER OGILVY

**9News & Current Affairs – Bondi Attack Team**, Nine, *9News*, *A Current Affair* and *Today*, “Bondi Junction stabbings”

**Building Bad Team – The Age, SMH, AFR and 60 Minutes**, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian Financial Review*, “Building Bad”

**Chris Reason and Simon Hydzik**, *7NEWS*, “Israel-Hamas war”

## NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

**Flavio Brancaleone**, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, news.com.au and *The Australian*, “Bondi Junction stabbing attack: No place is immune to the reach of terror”

**Kate Geraghty**, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “Aftermath of October 7 attacks”

**David Gray**, AFP, “Walk to freedom”

## ALL MEDIA: SPECIALIST & BEAT REPORTING

AWARD PARTNER MEAA

**Carrie Fellner, Matt Davidson, Matthew Absalom-Wong and Michael Evans**, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, “The factory that contaminated the world”

**Christopher Knaus**, *Guardian Australia*, “Out in the cold: Australia’s invisible crisis of homelessness deaths”

**Linda Morris and Eryk Bagshaw**, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *Brisbane Times*, “The portrait Gina Rinehart doesn’t want you to see”

## ALL MEDIA: BUSINESS JOURNALISM

AWARD PARTNER ING AUSTRALIA

**Linton Besser and Ninah Kopel**, ABC, *7.30* and *ABC Investigations*, “Netstrata”

**Primrose Riordan and Sarah Thompson**, *The Australian Financial Review*, “Jon Adgemis and the costs of the private credit boom”

**Jonathan Shapiro and Aaron Patrick**, *The Australian Financial Review*, “The ANZ bond trading scandal”

## FEATURE/PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

**Sean Davey**, *Oculi / ABC News*, “The Goode fight”

**Diego Fedele**, Getty Images, “In the shadow of a deadly sky”

**Christopher Hopkins**, Al Jazeera, “They teach us to sing”

## TELEVISION/VIDEO: CAMERAWORK

**Matthew Davis**, ABC, *Foreign Correspondent*, “From the high Arctic, to the hustle of Seoul”

**Scott Morelli**, Nine, *60 Minutes*, “Sending a message”

**Cameron Schwarz**, ABC, *Foreign Correspondent*, “US Immigration”

## TELEVISION/VIDEO: NEWS REPORTING

AWARD PARTNER SEVEN

**9News and Current Affairs – Bondi Attack Team**, Nine, *9News*, *A Current Affair* and *Today*, “Bondi Junction stabbings”

**Ben Lewis**, *SBS World News*, “October 7 attacks”

**Sharri Markson and Montana Duncan**, *Sky News*, “Nine’s MeToo moment”

## TELEVISION/VIDEO: CURRENT AFFAIRS SHORT (UNDER 20 MINUTES)

AWARD PARTNER SBS

**Adele Ferguson and Chris Gillett**, ABC, *7.30* and *ABC Investigations*, “Financial housing prison”

**Nick McKenzie, Amelia Ballinger and Michael Bachelard**, Nine, *60 Minutes*, “The power player”

**The Prayed Upon Team**, *The Courier-Mail* and *The Sunday Mail*, “Prayed upon”

## TELEVISION/VIDEO: CURRENT AFFAIRS LONG (OVER 20 MINUTES)

AWARD PARTNER TEN NEWS FIRST

**Building Bad Team – The Age, SMH, AFR and 60 Minutes**, Nine, *60 Minutes*, “Building Bad”

**Adele Ferguson and Chris Gillett**, ABC, *Four Corners* and *ABC Investigations*, “Pain factory”

**Ben Smee, Jennifer Luu, Jodie Noyce and Chloe Angelo**, SBS, *The Feed* and *Guardian Australia*, “In the box: Inside the isolation cells where Australian kids are imprisoned”

## ALL MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL

AWARD PARTNER SYDNEY AIRPORT

**Dateline Team**, SBS, *Dateline*, “Finding Yusuf”

**Prue Lewarne**, SBS News, “Inside Nicaragua”

**Avani Dias, Naomi Selvaratnam, Madeleine Genner and Mayeta Clark**, ABC, *Foreign Correspondent*, *Four Corners* and ABC Listen, “Reporting from Modi’s India”

## ALL MEDIA: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

AWARD PARTNER GUARDIAN AUSTRALIA

**Building Bad Team – The Age, SMH, AFR and 60 Minutes**, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian Financial Review*, “Building Bad”

**Echo Hui, Elise Potaka and Dylan Welch**, ABC, *Four Corners* and *ABC Investigations*, “Ruthless pursuit – China’s secret police, its agents, and global campaign of repression”

**Chris Reason**, *7NEWS*, “The Bishop of Broome”

## WALKLEY DOCUMENTARY AWARD FINALISTS

AWARD PARTNER MINTERELLISON

**Katrina McGowan, Janine Hosking, Mat Cornwell and Carrie Fellner**, iKandy Films and Stan, *How to Poison a Planet*

**Erin Moy, Gabriel Gasparinatos, Sarah Noonan and Jennifer Peedom**, Entropico, *Stranger Than Fiction* and Netflix, *ONEFOUR: Against All Odds*

**Dora Weekley, Orly Danon, Chris Masters and Nick McKenzie**, Stan, *Revealed: Ben Roberts-Smith Truth on Trial*

## WALKLEY BOOK AWARD LONGLIST

AWARD PARTNER BANKI HADDOCK FIORA

**Andrew Fowler**, *Naked: The Submarine Fiasco that Sank Australia’s Sovereignty*, Melbourne University Publishing

**Royce Kurlmelovs**, *Slick: Australia’s Toxic Relationship with Big Oil*, University of Queensland Press

**Anne Manne**, *Crimes of the Cross: The Anglican Paedophile Network of Newcastle, Its Protectors and the Man Who Fought for Justice*, Black Inc.

## NIKON-WALKLEY PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

AWARD PARTNER NIKON

**Matthew Abbott**, Freelance / Oculi

**Christopher Hopkins**, Freelance

**Nick Moir**, *The Sydney Morning Herald*





## NIKON PHOTO OF THE YEAR PRIZE



**Funeral at Al-Aqsa:** Palestinian mourners carrying a coffin are stopped momentarily by an Israeli police officer before entering the Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem.  
27 October 2023

### **Kate Geraghty** *The Sydney Morning Herald* “Funeral at Al Aqsa”



The Nikon Photo of the Year is chosen from all the images entered in the Walkley photographic categories. This 2024 prize-winning shot was part of Kate Geraghty’s submission for the Feature/Photographic Essay category. Geraghty said she set out to document “the contemporary realities of life under occupation, which disrupts every aspect of daily life, including restrictions on the freedom of movement, access to farmland, military raids and imprisonment.”

The judges said Kate Geraghty’s photo of Palestinian mourners being stopped by an Israeli official at the Al-Aqsa mosque felt so emblematic of a frozen moment in the stand-off between two peoples that it had to be their Photo of the Year.

“No single image can capture the nuances of an entire story, but it can encapsulate a complex issue. Kate Geraghty anticipated the moment, bearing witness with technical skill, exemplary composition and empathy. Even though this was a temporary impasse, and the funeral procession moved on, the moment is emblematic of the stalemate in the past year’s conflict.”

Kate Geraghty joined *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2002. She has covered assignments including wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, South Sudan, Ukraine and, most recently, the Israel-Hamas war. She has won eight Walkley awards, including the 2017 Gold Walkley Award with Michael Bachelard.





## NIKON PORTRAIT PRIZE

### Christopher Hopkins

*The Age/SMH, Good Weekend Magazine, "Scars of regret"*



Mel Jefferies transitioned from female to male in her teens. At 16, she was affirmed as a trans man by doctors, the trans community and mental health professionals. For years, off and on, she took testosterone. She has had a double mastectomy and now, at 32, she bears more than just physical scars of regret.

The judges said: "Christopher Hopkins has created conditions where his subject feels comfortable and in control enough to pull down her mask. It's a single capture but it looks like he spent a lot of time with his subject developing the frame: there's intimacy, vulnerability, and trust shining through.

"The painterly lighting and stark composition put focus on Mel, stripped down, simple and beautiful in a way that recalls Diane Arbus.

Mel's stare expresses the pain of her quest to feel at home in her body. She makes you want to learn more, connecting this human moment to a broader issue for the community."

Jefferies told Hopkins that, when she looks in the mirror now, she sees herself for the first time as a cis-het woman. "I thought transitioning was a panacea for all my problems, but it's compounded them." She sees herself as an advocate for those wishing to "detransition". She finds it hard to talk about her confusion, and that felt by others in her community, for fear of being labelled as trans-phobic.

Hopkins said Mel had been strong in her desire to wear a pink balaclava. "It represented the time in her life when she felt forced to hide behind a gender-specific societal construct." As they began making portraits it became apparent that Mel's eyes were not visible, and he mentioned this. She immediately ripped the balaclava over her head, revealing her face.

Two-time Walkley winner Christopher Hopkins divides his time between his long-term project work and commissioned assignments for major media outlets such as *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.



**Scars of regret:** Mel Jefferies sits for a portrait in her share-house bedroom in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. 30 October 2023.





## Over 40 years of Gold Walkley winners

**The Gold Walkley has been awarded since 1978 and is recognised as the pinnacle of journalistic achievement**

1978	Catherine Martin, <i>The West Australian</i>
1979	Ron Tandberg, <i>The Age</i>
1980	Leslie Grant Heading, ABC TV Hobart
1981	John Lewis, <i>The Newcastle Herald</i>
1982	Kerry O'Brien, ATN Channel 7
1983	Mary Delahunty and Alan Hall, <i>Four Corners</i> , ABC TV
1984	Jan Mayman, freelance
1985	Chris Masters and Bruce Belsham, <i>Four Corners</i> , ABC TV
1986	Ron Tandberg, <i>The Age</i>
1987	Phil Dickie, <i>The Courier-Mail</i>
1988	Norman Swan, ABC TV
1989	Alan Tate and Paul Bailey, <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>
1990	Janet Hawley, <i>Good Weekend</i>
1991	Monica Attard, ABC Radio
1992	Jenny Brockie, ABC TV
1993	Phillip Chubb and Sue Spencer, ABC TV
1994	Peter McEvoy, ABC Radio National
1995	David Bentley, <i>The Courier-Mail</i>
1996	Peter Hartcher, <i>The Australian Financial Review</i>
1997	Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, <i>The Australian</i>
1998	Pamela Williams, <i>The Australian Financial Review</i>
1999	Richard Ackland, Deborah Richards and Anne Connolly, <i>Media Watch</i> , ABC TV
2000	Mark Davis, <i>Dateline</i> , SBS TV
2001	Andrew Rule, <i>The Age</i>
2002	Anne Davies and Kate McClymont, <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>
2003	Richard Moran, <i>National Nine News</i>

2004	Neil Chenoweth, Shraga Elam, Colleen Ryan, Andrew Main and Rosemarie Graffagnini, <i>The Australian Financial Review</i>
2005	Tim Palmer, ABC TV
2006	Liz Jackson, Lin Buckfield and Peter Cronau, <i>Four Corners</i> , ABC TV
2007	Hedley Thomas, <i>The Australian</i>
2008	Ross Coulthart and Nick Farrow, <i>Sunday</i>
2009	Gary Hughes, <i>The Australian</i>
2010	Laurie Oakes, Nine Network
2011	Sarah Ferguson, Michael Doyle and Anne Worthington, <i>Four Corners</i> , ABC TV
2012	Steve Pennells, <i>The West Australian</i>
2013	Joanne McCarthy, <i>The Newcastle Herald</i>
2014	Adele Ferguson, Deb Masters and Mario Christodoulou, <i>Four Corners</i> and Fairfax Media
2015	Caro Meldrum-Hanna, Sam Clark and Max Murch, <i>Four Corners</i> , ABC TV
2016	Andrew Quilty, freelance / <i>Foreign Policy</i>
2017	Michael Bachelard and Kate Geraghty, Fairfax Media
2018	Hedley Thomas and Slade Gibson, <i>The Australian</i>
2019	Anthony Dowsley and Patrick Carlyon, <i>Herald Sun</i>
2020	Mark Willacy and the ABC TV Investigations-Four Corners Team
2021	Samantha Maiden, news.com.au
2022	Anne Connolly, Ali Russell and Stephanie Zillman, ABC <i>Four Corners</i>
2023	Neil Chenoweth and Edmund Tadros, <i>The Australian Financial Review</i>
2024	Building Bad Team - <i>The Age</i> , <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , <i>Australian Financial Review</i> and <i>60 Minutes</i> , Nine