

## **Australia's best regional journalism honoured at ACM Excellence Awards: Lismore City News' Cathy Adams and the Warrnambool Standard leading the honours.**

FRIDAY, December 9, 2022 - Regional Australia's best journalism has been celebrated at the 2022 ACM Excellence Awards, with photojournalist Cathy Adams of the Lismore City News winning the top honour for her coverage of the floods that devastated her town earlier this year.

Presented in Sydney, the annual awards recognise the most outstanding news and sport coverage, commentary and commercial content produced by the newspapers and websites of the independent ACM network, Australia's largest publisher of regional news.

Ms Adams won the Gold ACM Excellence award for her outstanding coverage of one of Australia's worst flooding disasters in early 2022 and her consistently tenacious reporting for the Lismore community in northern NSW.

Ms Adams lost her own car to the floodwaters and was working without power or heating in the aftermath, but ventured into the disaster zone to share stories of heroism and heartache which were read across Australia.

Presenting Ms Adams with her award, ACM co-owner Alex Waislitz said her work as the disaster unfolded around her showed "true grit, determination, tenacity and ingenuity".

"In the days and weeks and months after, and through both words and photos, she has told stories of courage, survival, recovery and rebuilding," Mr Waislitz said.

Lismore City News, a local news website and weekly printed newspaper launched by ACM just 12 months ago, also won the ACM Excellence Award for Non-Daily Masthead of the Year for its consistently courageous and compassionate coverage of its community before, during and after the floods.

The Standard, in Warrnambool in Victoria's south-west, was named Daily Masthead of the Year, with editor Greg Best and deputy editor Rachael Houlihan accepting the award at Wednesday night's black-tie presentation ceremony.

The Standard, one of ACM's 14 daily titles serving Canberra and key regional population centres, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2022.

Queensland Country Life, which this year along with ACM's other weekly specialist titles serving Australia's important rural and farm audiences successfully launched subscriber websites and apps, won Best Agricultural Masthead.

"Regional journalism is the glue that holds our towns together but is often overlooked by a city-focussed media industry when it comes to awards," ACM managing director Tony Kendall said.

"Our editorial staff are breaking news every day in every state and territory of Australia, keeping their communities informed and entertained.

"The local journalism of people like Cathy Adams, who stands shoulder to shoulder with her readers through highs and devastating lows, is vital to a healthy, strong regional Australia."

Canberra Times court reporter Blake Foden's global exclusive on tennis star Nick Kyrgios being charged with assault was the Best Daily News Story of the Year.

Bendigo Advertiser photographer Darren Howe's nail-biting image of a dramatic helicopter rescue of campers stuck on their vehicle's roof was the year's Best Daily News Photo.

Among the commercial content categories, The Rural Guide to a Healthy Mind published by ACM agricultural titles to support mental health in farming communities was the Magazine of the Year.

Alanna Tomazin was named Young Journalist of the Year for her community news reporting for the Lithgow Mercury and Port Stephens Examiner, as well as her contribution to the ACM network's innovative national series, Young and Regional: Find Me a Home.

### **Full list of 2022 ACM Excellence Awards winners**

Gold ACME

Winner: Cathy Adams, Lismore City News

Young Journalist of the Year

Winner: Alanna Tomazin, Port Stephens Examiner

Masthead of the Year - Daily

Winner: The Standard, Warrnambool

Masthead of the Year - Non-Daily

Winner: Lismore City News

Masthead of the Year - Agricultural

Winner: Queensland Country Life

Editorial Director's Award for Digital Leadership

Winner: Gayle Tomlinson, Janine Graham and the Illawarra Mercury newsroom

Trainee of the Year

Winner: Rosie Bensley, Illawarra Mercury

Mentor of the Year

Winner: Samantha Townsend, The Land

Audience Engagement Award

Winner: Hayley Warden, Julia Wythes and Ashley Walmsley for “Farmers Watching Farmers Wanting Wives”.

Team Innovation and Collaboration

Winner: Illawarra Mercury, UCI World Championships coverage

Best Use of Multimedia

Winner: Emma Horn, COVID-19 explainer

Campaign of the Year

Winner: Power and the Passion, Newcastle Herald

Comment Piece of the Year

Winner: Annie Hesse, Katherine Times

Feature Story of the Year

Winner: Nicholas McGrath, Central Western Daily

Daily News Story of the Year

Winner: Blake Foden, The Canberra Times

Daily Sport Story of the Year

Winner: James Gardiner, Newcastle Herald

Non-Daily News Story of the Year

Winner: Sarah Falson, Hawkesbury Gazette

Non-Daily Sport Story of the Year

Winner: Lachlan Harper, Macleay Argus

Agricultural News Story of the Year

Winner: Quinton McCallum, Stock Journal

Property Story of the Year

Winner: Brittny Levinson, The Canberra Times

Production of the Year

Winner: graphic designer Josh Hall

Sell of the Year

Winner: Samantha Townsend, The Land

Daily News Photo of the Year

Winner: Darren Howe, Bendigo Advertiser

Daily Sport Photo of the Year

Winner: Adam McLean, Illawarra Mercury

Non-Daily Photo of the Year

Winner: Scott Calvin, Manning River Times

Agricultural News Photo of the Year

Winner: Kelly Butterworth, North Queensland Register

Magazine of the Year

Winner: Robyn Ainsworth, The Rural Guide to a Healthy Mind

Commercial Feature of the Year

Winner: Linley Wilkie, Warrnambool's Jericho Cup

Paid Content Campaign

Winner: Rosie Ryan, Memory, Walk & Jog campaign for Dementia Australia

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