

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ACM CELEBRATES REGIONAL AUSTRALIA'S MOST OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 - Regional Australia's best journalism has been celebrated at the 2024 ACM Excellence Awards, with the *Newcastle Herald* named regional masthead of the year, South Australia's *Stock Journal* winning best agricultural title in its 120th year and the *Goulburn Post* winning best community masthead.

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

Senior journalist Andrew Thomson of *The Standard* in Warrnambool, Victoria, was presented with the top individual honour, the Gold ACME for Journalist of the Year, for his long-running coverage of Geoff Clark, former chairman of the disbanded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, who was sentenced on November 24 to a six-year prison term for an almost \$1million fraud described by the sentencing judge as "morally reprehensible".

Court reporter Grace Crivellaro of the *Illawarra Mercury* was named Young Journalist of the Year and Nick Guthrie was named Sports Journalist of the Year for his work across the NSW central-west for Dubbo's *The Daily Liberal*, Bathurst's *Western Advocate* and Orange's *Central Western Daily*.

ACM editorial director Rod Quinn congratulated this year's winners for making a difference in their communities.

"Thank you for your commitment to your communities, your passion for the truth and accuracy, your dedication to informing and connecting our audiences, and your unflinching determination to hold the powerful to account," Mr Quinn said.

Executive chairman of ACM Antony Catalano presented Mr Thomson and Ms Crivellaro with their awards at Tuesday night's presentation ceremony in Sydney.

The judges described Ms Crivellaro's court reporting for the *Illawarra Mercury* as compelling and Mr Thomson's detailed storytelling for *The Standard* as diverse and deeply engaging.

Editor Lisa Allan accepted the Regional Masthead of the Year trophy on behalf of the *Newcastle Herald*, which also won News Story of the Year and the Editorial Director's Award for reporter Matthew Kelly's Walkley Award-winning series on a homeless Vietnam veteran reunited with his family, Court Story of the Year for journalist Anna Falkenmire's reporting in the aftermath of the 2023 Hunter Valley wedding part

bus crash and News Photo of the Year for photographer Marina Neil's coverage of the military funeral for former defence minister Joel Fitzgibbon's soldier son, Lance Corporal Jack Fitzgibbon, who died in a parachuting training accident.

South Australia's *Stock Journal*, one of ACM's specialist weekly titles serving Australia's important rural and farm sector, was named Best Agricultural Masthead of 2024.

*Stock Journal*, which marked its 120th year of publishing this year, was represented at the awards by newly appointed editor Quinton McCallum and outgoing editor Elizabeth Anderson, who has recently rejoined *The Land*.

Editor Sally Foy, who oversees the *Goulburn Post* on the NSW Southern Tablelands, accepted the award for Best Community Masthead from ACM managing director Tony Kendall.

"The journalism of ACM keeps the communities of regional Australia strong, informed and connected and we are incredibly proud of the efforts and achievements of our teams during a year that brought many changes and challenges," Mr Kendall said.

"The local news and trusted journalism our teams provide is vital to a strong and healthy regional Australia," he said.

Ballarat's *The Courier* was acknowledged with several awards for its rolling local coverage of the search for missing mother Samantha Murphy, a heartbreaking mystery that gripped the nation.

Journalist Emily Anderson, of Wagga Wagga's *The Daily Advertiser*, was named Trainee of the Year and Chris Dutton, who leads sports coverage for *The Canberra Times*, was named Coach/Mentor of the Year.

The ACM national affairs newsletter *The Echidna*, anchored by journalist John Hanscombe and columnist Garry Linnell, won the award for innovation while *The Border Mail*, led by editor Xavier Mardling, was recognised for its efforts across 2024 to attract, engage and retain digital subscribers.

Among the commercial content categories, the hefty 88-page *Foundations of Beef* special publication, produced by ACM's agricultural titles to celebrate Australia's beef sector, was named Magazine of the Year.

### **Full list of 2024 ACM Excellence Awards winners**

Gold ACME Journalist of the Year

Winner: Andrew Thomson, *The Standard*

Young Journalist of the Year

Winner: Grace Crivellaro, *Illawarra Mercury*

Masthead of the Year - Regional

Winner: *Newcastle Herald*

Masthead of the Year - Agricultural

Winner: *Stock Journal*

Masthead of the Year - Community

Winner: *Goulburn Post*

Editorial Director's Award

Winner: Matthew Kelly, *Newcastle Herald*

Sports Journalist of the Year

Winner: Nick Guthrie, *The Daily Liberal*, *Western Advocate*, *Central Western Daily*

Trainee of the Year

Winner: Emily Anderson, *The Daily Advertiser*

Mentor of the Year

Winner: Chris Dutton, *The Canberra Times*

Building A Subscriber Community

Winner: *The Border Mail*

Team Innovation

Winner: *The Echinda* newsletter

Team Collaboration

Winner: *The Courier*

Best Video - Local

Winner: Tahlia Sinclair, *The Daily Advertiser*

Best Video - National

Winner: *The Courier*, Maddy Fogarty, Georgia Rossiter

Campaign of the Year

Winner: NSW Paediatric Care Crisis (joint regional NSW mastheads)

Comment Piece of the Year

Winner: Ciara Bastow, *The Daily Liberal*

Feature Story of the Year

Winner: Sarah Lansdown, *The Canberra Times*

Highly Commended: Sarah Falson, *Explore* travel magazine

Court Story of the Year

Winner: Anna Falkenmire, *Newcastle Herald*

Highly Commended: Allison Hore (*Daily Liberal*), Tess Kelly (*Northern Daily Leader*)

Story of the Year - Community

Winner: Annie Hesse, *Katherine Times*

News Story of the Year - Agricultural

Winner: Bryce Eishold, *Stock & Land*

Property Story of the Year

Winner: Jade Lazarevic, *Newcastle Herald*

National News Story of the Year

Winner: Coverage of Westfield Bondi attack (National team, *The Canberra Times*)

Highly Commended: Ayden Dawkins

Sport Story of the Year - Regional

Winner: Melanie Dinjaski, *The Canberra Times*

News Story of the Year - Regional

Winner: Matthew Kelly, *Newcastle Herald*

Highly commended: Madeline Link, *Newcastle Herald*

Production/presentation of the Year

Winner: The Algorithm Decides by Josh Hall

Sell of the Year

Winner: Emily Sweet, *The Courier*

News Photo of the Year - Regional

Winner: Marina Neil, *Newcastle Herald*

Sport Photo of the Year - Regional

Winner: Gary Ramage, *The Canberra Times*

Highly commended: Darren Howe, *Bendigo Advertiser*

News Photo of the Year - Agricultural

Winner: Quinton McCallum, *Stock Journal*

Photo of the Year - Community

Winner: Glenn Ellard, *South Coast Register*

Highly Commended: Ben Smyth, *Bega District News*

Magazine of the Year

Winner: Foundations of Beef, ACM Agri

Commercial Feature of the Year

Winner: Ashley Walmsley, Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries partnership

Paid Content Campaign

Winner: Elizabeth Habermann, Miranda Aitken, NBN campaign

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**ACM** is Australia's largest independent media company collectively reaching over 4 million\* regional Australians each month. The ACM network comprises more than 100 brands, including leading regional news brands ([The Canberra Times](#), [Newcastle Herald](#), [The Examiner](#), [The Border Mail](#), [The Courier](#) and the [Illawarra Mercury](#)). The Agricultural division, ACM Agri reaches 78% of Australian farmers each month with a national footprint of agricultural specialist brands ([The Land](#) and [Queensland Country Life](#)), marketplaces ([Farmbuy](#) and [Ag Trader](#)) and events ([Agquip](#) and [Farmfest](#)). We are passionate about keeping our communities strong, informed and connected. ConnectNow with ACM.