

Ossie Awards 2009: Winners and Highly Commended Entries

1. Best Print News Story by Undergraduate or Postgraduate Student

Judges: Mike Osborne, Editor, Australian Associated Press; Joanne Williamson, News Editor, Australian Associated Press, and Phil Dickson, Editorial Manager, Australian Associated Press

Winner: Krista Ferguson, of AUT University, New Zealand, for her story, 'Charities Find Dance Flaw', published in the Sunday *Star-Times* and *Sunday News*, August 16, 2009

Citation: A well-researched article that required persistence and determination to reveal the extent of overhead charges that eat into donations to charities made using text messages or telephone calls in New Zealand. Sharp and tightly written, it revealed that charities received 60 per cent of the money pledged to contestants in Dancing with the Stars in New Zealand - the other 40 per cent went to the telephone and vote-tallying companies involved. An accompanying fact box provided an easy to read and simple display of how much each contestant raised and the eroded amount passed on to charity.

Highly Commended: Matthew Knott, of the University of Technology Sydney, for his story, 'Centrelink about to crack, say welfare groups', published *The Australian*, November 17, 2008, and Fenton Lutua and Arin Kumar, of the University of the South Pacific, for their story 'Online gaming craze hooks Suva teenagers', published in *Wansolwara* in April 2009.

Citation: Matthew's story highlights shortcomings and failures in the administration of Centrelink and puts a human face to the problems caused for the unemployed and Centrelink workers. A widely researched and revealing article. Fenton and Arin's story looks at the effect of an online gaming problem among young people in Suva. The article ignited public debate and the Fiji Government acted to curb online gaming outlets after its publication.

2. Best Radio News Story by Undergraduate or Postgraduate Student

Judge: Jason Morrison, 2GB's Director of Current Affairs and talk-radio presenter.

Winner: Briana Barrett, of Edith Cowan University

Citation: The story was a genuine news issue with a hard hitting edge. It demonstrated good use of active language and well presented. Actuality was of good quality and clarity and its use was appropriate and 'written into' well. Great use of facts midway through the story to reinforce the angle. Presentation was of a standard that an employer would expect for Commercial Radio or ABC.

Commended: Zhien U Teoh, of Wollongong University.

Citation: Good issue. It was well put together and used good language and good production techniques.

3. Best TV News Story for an undergraduate or Postgraduate Student

Judge: Tracy Bowden, ABC-TV award winning journalist

Winners: Calliste Weitenberg, Stephanie Dalzell, Padraic Cannon, of the University of Technology, Sydney

Story: FBI Radio

Citation: This story was longer than the average news story, but it was well researched, shot, presented and edited. The structure was good and there were some nice lines in the scripting. The interview subjects were well-chosen, with the report covering the current dilemma and explaining the history of the radio station.

4. Best Print Feature (\$100) by an Undergraduate Student

Judge: Tony Stephens, Walkley Award winning journalist from *Sydney Morning Herald*

Winner: Emma Kemp, of University of Technology, Sydney, for her story on the deterioration of the environment in Nepal.

Citation: This outstanding piece is based on extensive research on the ground in Katmandu and the Everest region. Her story takes on dramatic weight through her interviews with local people.

Highly Commended: Matthew Whitby, Ghenwa Gannaun, and Michelle Ridley, of Murdoch University, for their article on the emissions trading scheme.

Citation: This story deserves commendation as a bold, comprehensive attempt to explain a complicated subject.

5. Best Print Feature by a Postgraduate Student

Judge: Pam Walkley, editor of *Money Magazine* and member of the Australian Press Council

Alexandra Barnard, of Macleay College, for the story 'A Delicate Business'.

This article stood out from the rest because of its straightforward, no-nonsense treatment of a very interesting subject, and the author's commendable resistance of the temptation to write at interminable length, as some of the other entrants did. The article held the reader's interest from the first word to the last and the writer displayed an excellent use of quotes.

Highly Commended: Anna Tsekouras, of Macleay College, for her story 'Queens of Mean'. It was well written and tight but did skirt a little around using the "bullying" word early in the article.

6. Best Radio Current Affairs Story by an Undergraduate Student

Judge: Kirsten Garrett, executive producer of ABC-Radio's *Background Briefing* and Gold Walkley Award winner

Joint-Winners: Esther Hann, of UTS, and Patrick Wright, of UTS

Citation: Esther's story was on child sex crimes, and was played on PM. She had some new information, and the piece sounded professional and interesting, even though it is an old story. She had done some pretty good research and put it in a contemporary economic background. Patrick's story on roo shooting in farmlands also worked because he got the people on the land to talk about real issues. He seemed to have done his research, and it was not just retelling an old story.

7. Best TV Current Affairs Story by an Undergraduate Student

Judge: Bronwyn Herbert, ABC-Radio and TV reporter and 2008 Andrew Olle Scholar

Winner: Lauren Day & Sophie Tarr, of the University of Technology, Sydney for their story "Climate change and Sami reindeer herders", a glimpse into the lives of indigenous Sami reindeer herders in the Norwegian Arctic and the double-edged impacts of climate change on this community.

Citation: This story presented compelling footage shot in harsh conditions and the narrative on climate change was well told.

Highly commended: Ana Quinn, of Edith Cowan University, for her piece "Dr O'Neil", a personal look at how patients are impacted by a regulatory battle over a controversial medical intervention for heroin addicts. Perth doctor George O'Neill implants slow-release tablets to ease addicts cravings for opiates, but it isn't yet approved by the federal regulator.

Citation: Ana's piece offered a newsworthy storyline and excellent case study with good talent and choice of grabs.

8. Best Broadcast Current Affairs Story by a Postgraduate Student

Judge: Lyndall Crisp, broadcast journalist and editor of News Limited's *The Deal*

All nine entries were excellent. There was a good choice of subjects – plastic waste, drag racing casualties, Google street search, unemployment in Wollongong, laptops for disadvantaged schools, cataract surgery/interest rates/aging, Tasmanian devil, gun laws and housing affordability. All are relevant, important issues using well chosen "talent" to get the message across. So it was a difficult choice arriving at a winner.

Winner: James Moore, of Edith Cowan University, for his story on Google street search

Citation: He chose a contemporary issue and one that I hadn't heard tackled before. His was a seamless report with thoughtful use of music (Pink Panther theme really got me in from the start), interviews that got to the point quickly and covered a lot of information, plus visuals which explained the "problem" clearly and effectively.

Highly Commended: Rebecca Munro, of Edith Cowan University, for her moving story on the sometimes fatal consequences of drag racing, and Alexandra Barnard, of Macleay College, for her story 'Our House'.

Citations: Rebecca's story made me sit up and take notice. It should be shown in schools. While Alexandra's story focused on a subject that's been covered many times, her story was concise and told with such authority that she came across as though she'd be broadcasting for years.

9. Best Online Story by an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Student

Judge: Jonathan Green, a journalist for over 30 years, many of them at The Age, and now editor of Crikey

Winner: Andrew MacKinnon (UTS) for his piece, Both Sides of the Tracks

Citation: An exquisitely shot, audio backed slideshow that, through the extreme contrast of two very different lives, brought home some stark truths about the global financial crisis. Andrew used the medium beautifully to tell a compelling, human, tale.

10. Best Story by an International Student

Judge Alan Kennedy, member of the International Federation of Journalists and president of the Australian Journalists Association

Winner: Kristine Lapez, of the University of Technology, Sydney, for her DVD presentation on electronic convulsion therapy

Citation: Good piece of objective journalism on a difficult and controversial subject. Used first person interviews to progress the story and provide balancing points of view. Good use of archival footage.

11. Best Photojournalism by Undergraduate or Postgraduate

Judge: Moshe Roszenweig, award-winning photographer and founder/Curator of the photographic competition and exhibition, Head-On

Winner: Andrew Mackinnon, of University of Technology, Sydney, for his work entitled 'Both Sides of the Tracks, which takes a creative look at the global financial crisis.

Citation: Andrew's work presents a topical story in a different way – it uses two vastly different individuals: Dave, a vendor for The Big Issue and Peter, a financier at the Australian Stock Exchange who share their thoughts and ideas on the GFC and the role money plays in society. Andrew's work is concise and well thought through.

12. Hunter Institute Response Ability Prize for mental health reporting

Judge: Amy Laybutt, Senior Project Officer for Response Ability for Journalism Education, Hunter Institute of Mental Health, and Marc Bryant, Projects Manager, Hunter Institute of Mental Health and former UK journalist.

Winner: Maria Tan, of Macleay College, Sydney, for her print article 'Between the Lines'

Citation: This print feature outlined the very public struggle of a high-profile politician with depression and his subsequent recovery and work in mental health advocacy. Through his story, the article emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about mental health problems and promoting help-seeking among vulnerable people. Conscientious use of quotes, facts and statistics, expert comment, and strong messages of how and where to seek help combined to make this an excellent example of sensitive, accurate and engaging reporting of a mental health issue.

Highly Commended: Eliza Cox, of Macleay College, Sydney, for her print article 'The upside of being down'

Citation: This print feature is another excellent example of how a human-interest story of one person's journey through mental illness can send a powerful and positive message. The article weighs in on the topic of stigma and depression, but more importantly focuses on the journey to recovery and the lessons learned from having experienced severe depression and come through at the other end. The article also gives due emphasis to some current strategies in place to help young people who are feeling depressed. This piece is an excellent attempt to increase awareness of the realities and challenges of mental health problems and the pathways to getting help.

13. Best Regular Student Publication

Judge: Sue Carney, Editor, *Reader's Digest*

Winner: *Te Waha Nui*, AUT University, submitted by Jessie Colquhoun, Editor

Citation: A very lively newspaper that satisfies its readers with a full range of stories and images that entertain, inform and challenge their thinking. *Te Waha Nui* blends good news reporting with extensively researched and edgy features, reflective profiles plus unpredictable photographic essays. It smartly cross-promotes its online and print offerings to maximise reader engagement. Each issue reflects high production values, energetic teamwork and considerable talent.

14. Best Occasional Student Publication (Any medium)

Judge: Sue Carney, Editor, *Reader's Digest*

Winner: *Precinct*, produced by University of Technology, Sydney, submitted by Katie Hoskins, on behalf of Section Editors

Citation: *Precinct* delivers a wealth of engaging content in a smart and relevant way. It is well designed, clearly structured and ably addresses the concerns and issues that motivate its community audiences. Features are well paced, and the mix of content makes this a surprising and entertaining package that stands out in its field.

15. Best Online Publication

Judge: David Penberthy, former editor of *The Daily Telegraph* and now founder/Editor of online publication *The Punch*

Winner: The UTS website for *Precinct*

Citation: It stands out in terms of design and content. Its clean look and ease of navigation makes it very inviting for the reader. But most importantly it has really tapped into its campus audience by covering issues which are not only relevant to the university, but also to this special part of inner-city Sydney. It combines great hard news and opinion with really energetic and engaging coverage of lifestyle and society issues. The content is very well organised and easy to access. It is a very professional looking website but one where its news values shine through – it elevates the writing with the cleanness of its design.

Highly Commended: 3rd Degree from Edith Cowan University.