

Jess Malcolm wins 2020 Journalism Student of the Year

The 2020 Ossie Award winners, showcasing Australia's best student journalism, have been announced during an online awards session at the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia conference.

Links to the stories and judges' comments are below, where publicly available.

The Australian Press Council Prize for Journalism Student of the Year (\$750 prize)

Winner – Jess Malcolm, University of Melbourne. ([Body of Work](#))

Writing with flair, accuracy and mastering today's digital media complexities are today's basics that stand a journalist apart. This year, our winner, Jess Malcolm, dug deep and exposed hidden gems by going country - reporting on bees, seaweed and pig poo, to name a few. Jess's solid academic record shone, delivering information packed articles with passion, accuracy and clarity.

Judges from The Australian Press Council

Best text-based story by an undergraduate or postgraduate student – 750 words or less (\$200)

Winner – Jodie Wolf, Macleay College: [Homelessness strikes Sydney women hard](#)

This is a piece which shows the importance of general curiosity as a journalist. Jodie has successfully used words that create great imagery. A craft that sometimes requires a delicate balance. This piece gives a voice to those often silenced. There is a good mix of interviewees too.

Judge: Nicole Hegarty and Rachel McGhee, ABC

Highly commended –

- Emma Hoy, Monash University: *Pandemic takes toll on kids in custody*
- Venetia Vecellio, University of Technology, Sydney: [*I've cried, apologising to my baby for bringing him into this*](#)

Best text-based story by an undergraduate student – over 750 words (\$200)

Winner – *Rhett Kleine*, Griffith University: *A shift in all markets: How the illicit drug trade adapted to the Covid fallout*

Rhett wrote an unusual, unexpected and intriguing story about the biggest news event in the world, which is hard to do. I commend him on asking an interesting question, and following it through to its conclusion.

Judge – Myriam Robin, *Australian Financial Review*.

Highly commended –

- Samantha McCoombe, Swinburne University: [*Cameras in trucks breach personal space*](#)
- Thomas Kelsall, University of South Australia: *Blood and soil in Hindu nationalist India: How one Delhi university became the centre of a nationwide crisis*

Best text-based story by a postgraduate student – over 750 words (\$200)

Winner – Oliver Lees, RMIT University: [*China's LGBT community expresses disappointment after Shanghai Pride cancelled indefinitely*](#)

Oliver has produced an interesting, highly contextual and professionally-written feature article on young LGBT Chinese people. Too little reporting like this is done on China, to

Australia's immense strategic disadvantage. I commend him on helping dispel some of the fog that surrounds all matters Chinese.

Judge – Myriam Robin, *Australian Financial Review*.

Highly commended –

- Jess Malcolm, University of Melbourne: [*As almond orchards blossom, a sting in the tail when busy bees get to work*](#)
- Benjamin Silvester, University of Melbourne: [*Rumbling in the \(contracted\) ranks of Australia's most elite university*](#)

Best audio story by an undergraduate or postgraduate student – 2 minutes or less (\$200)

Winner – Sinead Nolan, University of Technology, Sydney: [*Medical cannabis is legal so why are patients being forced onto the black market*](#)

Sinead's medical cannabis story engages from the opening, is technically strong and provides a great choice of interviewees in a strong case study and for expert perspectives. The natural sounds in guide the story and help the listener to follow the narrative.

Judge: Amelia Bernasconi, ABC's Rural NorthWest NSW.

Highly commended – Lara Smith, University of Wollongong: [*New Year, fearful beginnings*](#)

Best audio story by an undergraduate or postgraduate student – over 2 minutes (\$200)

Winner – Mie Sorensen, Monash University: [*Growing Pains: bridging the education gap leaving young women vulnerable to dating violence*](#)

Mie's piece had all the tenets of excellent audio journalism. Her story was thoroughly researched and sensitively approached, combining first-hand experiences, expert voices and cultural critiques. There was a real sense of intimacy to her storytelling, and subtle and compelling sound design added to the piece without overwhelming it.

Judge: Ruby Jones, Schwartz Media

Highly commended: Lucy Luo, University of Wollongong: [*The night Nancy Prasad and Charlie Perkins took on White Australia*](#)

Best video story by an undergraduate or postgraduate student –2 minutes or less (\$200)

Winner – Liam Mendes of Macleay College: [*Oyster farmers*](#)

Good journalism is being able to find your own stories through connections, contacts and just plain old 'talking to people'. Liam was mature enough to recognise there was a better angle than the one he set out to cover. Camera work was excellent, good strong interview talent. Well done.

Judge: Katie Toney, Seven News

Highly commended –

- Lawrence Jeffcoat, Queensland University of Technology: [*CBD halted in climate change cycle protest*](#)
- Georgia Vaughn, University of Technology, Sydney: [*Second chance at an education for Ezidi refugees*](#)

Best video story by an undergraduate or postgraduate student – over 2 minutes (\$200)

Winner – Liam Mendes, Macleay College: [*Dark Side of Reality TV*](#)

Liam's video presents with a very, very powerful opening and is filmed with creative, thoughtful sequences. The work is well-edited and has a solid, consistent use of sound. And most importantly, is really, really emotionally engaging.

Judge: Simon Royal, ABC Adelaide

Highly commended: Clodie Veyrac and Kevin Giraldo, La Trobe University: [*Behind the Screen: Being a cam girl*](#)

John Newfong Prize for reporting on Indigenous affairs (\$200)

Winner – Else Kennedy, University of Melbourne: [*In town camps of Alice, coronavirus raises stakes of digital divide*](#)

This is a beautifully written, well-structured piece on an important and under-reported issue. The evocative language brings the landscape and characters to life, offering a window into Aboriginal Australia. Strong quotes from community members and experts, backed by thorough research and political context provides a comprehensive break down of the issue and its broader implications.

Judge – Ella Archibald-Binge, ABC

Highly commended:

Amalyah Hart, University of Melbourne: [*Aboriginal health services really got this pandemic by the horns*](#)

Riordan Davis, RMIT University: [*Gunaikurnai Festival*](#)

Best innovation in journalism

Winner – Anna Bailey, Jackson Kai Seng Wong, Alfredo Mendoza and Ashman Mahfudz, Swinburne University: [*Depressed, Anxious and Isolated: The mental health state of international students in Australia*](#)

This work put the voices of its subjects front and centre, blending video, audio, data and photographs in a way that deepened engagement, rather than distracting from the story. It also stood out because it worked well on a mobile phone, which should be considered essential these days, and the multimedia elements were embedded on the page (instead of opening in a separate window) – a critical part of keeping the audience engaged.

Judge: Inga Ting, ABC Digital Story Innovations

Best publication (sponsored by Intellect Books)

Winner – University of Technology, Sydney: [*Central News*](#)

Central News is a polished, professional publication with a strong focus on traditional news values and timely stories. It produces news using a range of audio, visual and text formats and draws on data and interactive story-telling techniques. Its 2020 regional reporting project was inspired and inspiring.

Judge: Saffron Howden, Crinkling News

Highly commended – [*MOJO News*](#), including [*The Struggle*](#)

Best photojournalism by an undergraduate or postgraduate student

Winner – Isabella Porras, Griffith University: [Golden soil and wealth for toil](#)

The work took on a complex and relevant story and executed it in a simple, effective way. The images engaged and informed the viewer and packaged the story in a classic photojournalistic style. For our time, this is such an important story and the photographer managed to find a way to show this in a series of documentary pictures that were direct, to the point and passed the story and information directly to the viewer, which is the base of good photojournalism.

Judge: Chris McGrath, Getty Images

Highly commended:

- Isabella Melody Moore, of the University of Technology, Sydney: [The Forgotten Ones](#)
- Mark Kriedemann, University of Technology, Sydney: [Red to black to green: a fresh challenge as colour returns to Kangaroo Valley](#)

Best investigative journalism by an undergraduate or postgraduate student (\$200)

Winner – David Bogi and Kate Wong, University of Melbourne: [How China uses Muslim press trips to counter claims of Uighur abuse](#)

It was a tight race, but David and Kate's story was out of the box. It not only revealed something new that hadn't been widely reported before, but showed the student journalists' investigation was thorough and tackled a difficult subject during difficult times. The fact they were able to track down Muslim journalists and convince them to go on the record was integral to the credibility of the story. As was their courage considering the ramifications for many who expose wrong-doing in China. It was well written and captivating, proof of which was illustrated by it being published in both The Guardian and Observer. Well done.

Judge: Alison Sandy, Seven Network

Best investigative journalism by an undergraduate or postgraduate student (group)

Winner – Bevin Liu and William Owens with Daniella Scotti, Matthew Kruzmetra, Henry McGilchrist and Madeleine Achenza, from the University of Technology, Sydney: [Climate induced gas build-up forces the closure of Gaden Cave](#) and [Caves hold the secret to understanding groundwater](#).

It was good to see both Bevin and William got out and about to do this investigation, providing a voice in areas which are often overlooked while tackling a fresh angle on an important subject. They took the story further than just the closure of the caves and why and provided great insight into how regional communities can better use and manage water. Their resources were also taken into account in this decision as was their ability to write an engaging and interesting story with various pictorial elements that proved integral to an engaging investigative package.

Judge: Alison Sandy, Seven Network

Mindframe (individual, any medium, undergraduate) for reporting on a mental health or suicide related issue responsibly, accurately and sensitively (\$200 prize)

Winner – Hannah Fortune of Swinburne University: [The good fight: tackling an invisible illness, one conversation at a time](#)

Hannah's piece was a positive story of lived experience, sharing messages of hope and recovery. Hannah followed the Mindframe guidelines by discussing mental ill health and suicide in a safe and productive way. The discussion surrounding diagnosis and treatment was destigmatising, demonstrating that people experiencing mental difficulties can lead meaningful lives and can build successful relationships and careers.

Hannah included positive imagery throughout the article and provided numerous help seeking organisations.

Judges: Dr Elizabeth Paton and Bronte Lyford, Mindframe

Highly commended:

- Caitlyn Watts, Curtin University: [Food for thought](#)
- Jackson Frantz, La Trobe University: [Demystifying men's mental health](#)

Mindframe (individual, any medium, postgraduate) for reporting on a mental health or suicide related issue responsibly, accurately and sensitively (\$200 prize)

Winner – Danielle Collis, RMIT University: [Mental health apps and 'gamification' of online support helping young Australians amid COVID-19](#)

Danielle's story was a positive piece that provided personal stories of recovery using mental health apps. The stories of lived experience shared throughout the piece showed how effective and accessible e-mental health services can be. The piece balanced app information and expert advice well, included multiple help-seeking organisations and included positive imagery.

Judges: Judges: Dr Elizabeth Paton and Bronte Lyford, Mindframe

Highly commended: Dominique Hennequin, RMIT University: [Healthcare workers struggling with mental wellbeing during pandemic](#)

Our Watch (individual, any medium, undergraduate) for a story which represents best-practice reporting of violence against women (\$200 prize)

Winner – Alexandra Middleton, RMIT University: [Regional, rural and remote women need resources to fight family violence](#)

Alexandra's well researched story highlighted the additional barriers encountered by domestic violence survivors and perpetrators living in regional and remote areas. It used a highly engaging format and powerful survivor accounts to tell the important story.

Judges: Anneka Simonis, Herald Sun and the 2020 Walkley Award for Public Service Journalism winner, Nina Funnell

Highly commended – Aleisha McLaren, Queensland University of Technology: [Indonesians need to open up about sex to lessen abuse, violence](#)

Our Watch (individual, any medium, postgraduate) for a story which represents best-practice reporting of violence against women (\$200 prize)

Winner – Raili Simojoki, Monash University: [Australian children pick up the tab for parents failing to pay](#)

Raili Simojoki's highly original story gave great insight into the issue of child support abuse as an extension of domestic violence. The piece was well-written and incorporated strong data and personal case studies that sensitively managed issues around anonymity and child safety.

Judges: Anneka Simonis, Herald Sun and the 2020 Walkley Award for Public Service Journalism winner, Nina Funnell

Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma – Asia Pacific for reporting on the impact of violence, crime, disaster and other traumatic events (\$200 prize)

Winner – Inga Neilsen of the University of Technology, Sydney: [*Nursing homes wrong place for young people*](#)

This was a powerful piece that used Inga’s personal story as a springboard to explore a range of experiences of young people needing age-appropriate long-term residential care. Inga skillfully wove her own narrative amongst numerous voices and perspectives, leading the viewer from her own traumatic experience to an optimistic and constructive outcome for others. This was both a brave and skilful piece of journalism.

Judges: Amantha Perera, Aly Walsh and Cait McMahon of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma - Asia Pacific.

Highly commended – Laura Green, RMIT University: [*COVID Transitions*](#)

Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub Prize (\$200)

Winner – Jess Malcolm, University of Melbourne: [*Could seaweed forests help turn the tide in the fight against climate change?*](#)

Jess's winning entry exemplifies best practice science journalism. It carefully balances the need for scientific accuracy, relevance to its audience and clarity of explanation in addressing the role of seaweed as a carbon sink and the importance of blue carbon ecosystems. The article raises the importance of the carbon recovery cycle by consulting a range of experts about an important solution being researched in Australian coastal settings that has global implications for mitigating climate change.

Judge: David Holmes, Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub

Highly commended –

- Matthew Kruzmetra, University of Technology, Sydney: [*On fallow ground: conversations about soil, climate change and the future of agriculture*](#)
- Mikayla Van Loon, RMIT University: [*The rising tide on climate change, racism and human rights*](#)

The Australian Press Council Undergraduate Prize for an essay on the topic of media ethics (\$200 prize)

Winner: Imogen Slater, Monash University: Untitled essay on the ethics of source protection

Imogen's essay discusses the challenges that all journalists face with their ethical obligation, when they have agreed to protect source anonymity under the current constraints and ambiguity of the Australian legal system. For her research and compelling argument for legal reform, Imogen is the recipient of this year's award.

Judges from The Australian Press Council

The Australian Press Council Postgraduate Prize for an essay on the topic of media ethics (\$200 prize)

Winner – Merve O'Keefe, Monash University: *The Me Too Movement's Impact on Journalistic Practice*

Merve wrote a well-structured essay on the ethical and legal impacts of the MeToo Movement on journalistic practice. It was a thoughtful connection to a topical subject highlighting the need for journalists to maintain their ethical standards in contrast to the unrestrained environment social media.

Judges from The Australian Press Council

Main image caption: Isabella Porras' [photo essay on refugees](#) and what it means to be 'Australian', which won this year's Best Photojournalism Ossie Award, and took "a complex and relevant story and executed it in a simple, effective way". Photo by Isabella Porras.