



MEDIA RELEASE

ABC's Anne Connolly winner of the 2019 Kennedy Prize for Australian Journalist of the Year

TABLE 24 has been set aside for MEDIA

Friday, August 9 2019

The ABC's Anne Connolly was tonight crowned winner of the 2019 \$25,000 Kennedy Prize for Journalist of the Year at a gala ceremony at the 8th annual NRMA Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism.

Connolly, a senior ABC Investigations journalist, was at the fore when ABC News last year launched a major crowd-sourced investigation into aged care, with 4,000 people responding in just a few weeks.

Connolly, who for the past two years has covered the aged care beat relentlessly across ABC News digital, television and radio, working with the broadcast teams at Four Corners, 7.30, ABC News and Background Briefing, led a small team as they spent three months sifting through highly sensitive material.

The stories Connolly uncovered in the "Who Cares?" series shocked Australia and are widely credited as having sparked the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety - announced by the Prime Minister the day before the first episode of the Four Corners programs aired.

The investigation focused on whistleblower staff whose allegations revealed a flawed business model in nursing homes - an average \$6 a day spent on food; one staff member caring for 70 patients; and complaints which fell on the deaf ears of managers and government agencies.

Four Corners revealed shocking cases of abuse and premature deaths in our nursing homes but despite the severity of the cases, there were no penalties for nursing home providers.

One aged care home resident had been strapped to a chair for a total of 14 hours in a single day while video and pictures of nursing home residents strapped to chairs with belts and sedated highlighted the lack of rules around chemical and physical restraint in aged care.

Following the story, the Aged Care Minister Ken Wyatt announced reforms which he said would make restraint a “last resort”.

In other aged care investigations, ABC News digital examined three days in the life of a blind, 80-year-old man where it was revealed how he was left in his room all day, sitting in leaking continence pads for hours and with no exercise and missing out on meals.

Connolly, who also shared the coveted Outstanding TV Current Affairs gong with Four Corners ABC-TV colleagues, Mary Fallon and Patricia Drum, had her catalogue of work judged ahead of former multiple Kennedy Award winner, The Australian newspaper’s Greg Bearup, and Al Jazeera’s Peter Charley.

The Nine Network’s news legend Brian Henderson was the recipient of The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph Lifetime Achievement Award while the Sydney Morning Herald’s Sports Editor, Ian Fuge, was awarded the Cliff Neville Award for Outstanding Team Player.

The ABC was a major player tonight with journalists and investigations teams taking out eight prestigious awards including Journalist of the Year, Outstanding Crime Reporting, Outstanding Regional Broadcast Reporting, Outstanding Radio Journalism, the \$5,000 Young Journalist of the Year, Outstanding TV Current Affairs, Outstanding Nightly TV Current Affairs and Outstanding Online News Breaking.

News Corp, through **The Daily Telegraph**, **The Sunday Telegraph** and **The Australian**, were big winners taking a total seven awards, including Outstanding Turf Reporting, Outstanding Podcast (The Australian), Outstanding Portrait, Outstanding Illustration (The Australian), Outstanding Sport Reporting, Outstanding Columnist and Outstanding Reporting on the Environment (The Sunday Telegraph).

The Sydney Morning Herald was again a major player, taking out Racing Writer of the Year, the Cliff Neville Award for Outstanding Team Player, Outstanding Travel Writing, Outstanding Feature Writing and Outstanding Foreign Correspondent in that award’s inaugural year.

And the **Australian Financial Review** team of Jonathan Shapiro, Angus Grigg and Lisa Murray took out the Outstanding Finance Reporting Award.

The Nine Network took out major awards – Outstanding TV News Reporting and Outstanding Consumer Affairs Reporting - while **Nine News** senior sport journalist Danny Weidler won Scoop of the Year.

The **Seven Network** collected the Outstanding Online Video gong and took out the Outstanding TV News Camera Coverage Award.

The **Newcastle Herald** was again a major regional player, collecting the \$5,000 Outstanding Regional Newspaper Reporting Award which also comes with a \$7,000 grant from the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas for the journalist to develop a major story, or series of stories, on regional issues. The **Newcastle Herald** also won the Outstanding Court Reporting Award.

The Guardian Australia's Lorena Allam won the Outstanding Indigenous Affairs Reporting Award while, in a breakthrough win, photographer Simon Bullard took out the prestigious Outstanding Sports Photo Award with a sensational shot for **Australian Consolidated Press**.

And in a breakthrough win, Peter Charley, **Al Jazeera**, took out the prestigious Outstanding Investigative Reporting Award from Anne Connolly and Greg Bearup while **Sky News Australia** won the coveted Outstanding Political Journalism Award.

Kennedy Foundation chairman Mr Simon Dulhunty said more than 130 nominees from a record field of 640 entries were judged in all 35 competitive categories to finally decide winners in the 2019 NRMA Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism.

Mr Dulhunty said the deserving winners had come out on top in an absolutely fiercely competitive news year, which included finalists from interstate and all major metropolitan newspapers and television and radio networks, international journalists and photographers as well as artists and photographers from regional newspapers and radio networks throughout NSW.

“In a bumper news year the standard of submissions was exceptional in every category. As in previous years, in some categories it took judges long hours to finally sort out the winners from absolutely talented fields, some of which had more than 50 entries,” Mr Dulhunty said.

“From investigative journalism to news breaking, superb feature writing, incredible pictorial entries and wonderful art work, a class field emerged to take out the coveted Spirax Trophies.”

This year's Kennedy's “winter ball” featured the superb talents of the non-stop musical powerhouse Mitch Anderson and his soul and funk band followed by celebrations at the after party at the ATC's The Stables.

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Nine News, Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas, Tata Consultancy Services, News Corp, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph, Twitter, Sydney Morning Herald, Vodafone, 10 News, Sky News, AGL, Google, Watpac, Seven News, Castle Rock Global Capital, Hillbrick Bicycles, Australian Turf Club, Racing NSW, Salty Dingo, Godfrey Wines, Crown Hotel, RM Global Asia Pacific, Virgin Airlines, Fraser Suites, University of Technology Sydney.

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Full list of 2019 winners in a separate attachment.