



MEDIA RELEASE

Nine's Chris O'Keefe 2017 Coca-Cola Journalist of the Year

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Friday, 11 August 2017

Nine News reporter Chris O'Keefe was tonight crowned the 2017 Coca-Cola Journalist of the Year at the 6th Annual NRMA Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism.

O'Keefe's raft of stories that clinched the coveted Gold Spirax trophy included the story also judged Scoop of the Year – his exclusive revelation of how gross negligence at Bankstown Hospital led to the death of a newborn baby and left another infant suffering severe brain damage after a nitrous oxide gas mix-up.

He also exposed secret discussions at Macquarie Street to reverse the controversial ban on greyhound racing and another exclusive that cabinet had signed off on privatising inner-west bus services, putting hundreds of jobs in limbo.

O'Keefe, who also took out the Harry Potter Award for Outstanding Television News Reporting, Scoop of the Year and Outstanding Political Journalism awards, is the first journalist commercial television journalist to win the \$25,000 Coca-Cola Journalist of the Year Award, the richest in Australian media.

His catalogue of work was judged ahead of previous Kennedy journalists of the year - two-time winner Adele Ferguson of Fairfax and the ABC's Caro Meldrum-Hanna.

Adding to O'Keefe's swag for Nine, cinematographer Adam Bovino took out the Gary Ticehurst Award for Outstanding TV News Camera Coverage and nine.com.au won the Kennedy Award for Outstanding Online News Breaking.

Seven's Michael Usher, the MC for tonight's glittering gala, took out the prestigious award for Outstanding TV Current Affairs, while 7 News Sydney's Shaun Besgrove was awarded the Cliff Neville Award for Outstanding Team Player.

Lucy Langtry of Prime7 Local News and cameraman Rod Smith won the Paul Lockyer Award for Outstanding Regional Broadcast Journalism with their excellent coverage of the devastating Northern Rivers floods.

Ita Buttrose was presented with the 2017 Kennedy Award for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement.

News Corp journalists and photographers took out 10 prestigious awards including Racing Writer of the Year, Outstanding Turf Reporting, Outstanding News Photo, Outstanding Portrait, Outstanding Sports Photo, Outstanding Online Video, Outstanding Travel Writing, People's Choice Award for Outstanding photography, Outstanding Columnist and Outstanding Court Reporting.

Fairfax was again a major winner, collecting seven individual awards – the \$5,000 Powerade Young Journalist of the Year (Jack Morphet of The Daily Advertiser), Outstanding Regional Newspaper Reporting, Outstanding Radio Current Affairs and Audio Blog, Outstanding Sport Reporting, Outstanding Finance Reporting, Outstanding Illustration and Outstanding Feature Writing

The ABC collected five individual awards – Outstanding Indigenous Affairs Reporting, Outstanding Nightly TV Current Affairs, Outstanding Consumer Affairs Reporting, Outstanding Reporting on the Environment and Outstanding Investigative Reporting.

NITV and BuzzFeed News were breakthrough winners in the Outstanding Crime Reporting category while prolific Kennedy Awards' winner Natalie Peters of 2GB took out the Sean Flannery Award for Outstanding Radio Reporting.

The finalists tonight, more than 100, included media professionals from all major metropolitan newspapers and television and radio networks, international journalists and journalists, photographers and artists from regional newspapers and radio networks throughout the state, including the Hunter, western NSW and Northern Rivers and Riverina regions.

Kennedy Foundation chairman Simon Dulhunty congratulated all nominees for setting exceptionally high standards with their raft of entries.

“In a huge news year the standard of submissions is really exceptional through the pictorial and print categories to the digital, radio and broadcast awards,” Mr Dulhunty said.

“From investigative journalism to news breaking, classic feature writing and incredible pictorial entries, class entries emerged to contest the coveted Spirax Trophies produced by Pelikan Artline tonight.”

Mr Dulhunty said the NRMA Kennedy Awards was now a special event, firmly established as a prestigious awards night celebrating quality Australian Journalism and recognizing the past greats of a demanding and highly competitive industry.

“These awards have mushroomed beyond a tribute to a very special journalist and colleague and friend to be recognized as a unique night, celebrating the best of our professionals and the best of journalism.”

Tonight’s winners came from more than 100 nominees from a field of more than 500 entries throughout Australia for all 32 competitive categories. The winners and finalists were chosen after weeks of scrutiny by teams of vastly experienced judges.

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.

Mr Dulhunty said the Kennedy Foundation would like to thank all its wonderful sponsors NRMA, Coca-Cola Amatil, Coca-Cola South Pacific, Acco Brands, Nine Network Australia, Nine News, A Current Affair, The Australian Turf Club, ANZ Stadium, NRMA Insurance, the Seven Network, Racing NSW, The Sydney Morning Herald, City of Parramatta, Racing NSW, Vodafone, Clubs NSW, Paradigm Resources, One Big Switch, Hillbrick Bicycles & Clothing, Hunter Burton Capital, Briscoe Hotel Group, Ed Digital and Salty Dingo.

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Full list of 2017 winners follows....

Winners: 2017 NRMA Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism

Announced at the Grand Ballroom, Royal Randwick, Friday August 11

2017 Coca-Cola Kennedy Journalist of the Year: Chris O’Keefe (Nine News)

Les Kennedy Award for Outstanding Crime Reporting: Allan Clarke (NITV and BuzzFeed News)

Paul Lockyer Award for Outstanding Regional Broadcast Reporting: Lucy Langtry, Rod Smith (Prime 7 North Coast)

Chris Watson Award for Outstanding Regional Newspaper Reporting: Jack Morphet (The Daily Advertiser)

Rod Allen Award Racing Writer of the Year: Ray Thomas (The Daily Telegraph)

Outstanding Turf Reporting: Greg Bearup (The Australian)

Sean Flannery Award for Outstanding Radio Reporting: Natalie Peters (2GB)

Outstanding Radio Current Affairs and Audio Blog: “Phoebe’s Fall” (Fairfax Media)

Cliff Neville Award - Team Player: Shaun Besgrove (7 News Sydney)

Peter Frilingos Award - Outstanding Sport Reporting: Chris Barrett, Adam Collins (The Sydney Morning Herald)

2017 Young Journalist of the Year: Jack Morphet (The Daily Advertiser)

2017 Participation Award: Crinkling News

Outstanding Travel Writing: Catherine Marshall (The Weekend Australian)

Lifetime Achievement Award: Ita Buttrose

John Newfong Award - Outstanding Indigenous Affairs Reporting: Caro Meldrum-Hanna, Mary Fallon, Elise Worthington (Four Corners)

Gary Ticehurst Award - Outstanding Television News Camera Coverage: Adam Bovino (Nine News)

Harry Potter Award - Outstanding Television News Reporting: Chris O’Keefe (Nine News)

Outstanding TV Current Affairs: Michael Usher (7 News)

Outstanding Nightly TV Current Affairs: James Thomas, Lesley Robinson (ABC 7.30)

Peter Ruehl Award - Outstanding Columnist: Rick Morton (The Weekend Australian)

Outstanding Finance Reporting: Michael Smith, Angus Grigg, Lisa Murray (The Australian Financial Review)

Outstanding Consumer Affairs Reporting: Sophie Scott, Meredith Griffiths (ABC 7.30)

Outstanding Online News Breaking: Emily McPherson (nine.com.au)

Outstanding Court Reporting: Emma Partridge (The Daily Telegraph)

Outstanding Reporting on the Environment: Caro Meldrum-Hanna, Jaya Balendra, Alex McDonald (Four Corners)

The Rebecca Wilson Award - Scoop of the Year: Chris O'Keefe (Nine News)

The Vince O'Farrell Award - Outstanding Illustration: Cathy Wilcox (The Sydney Morning Herald)

Outstanding Investigative Reporting: Caro Meldrum-Hanna, Mary Fallon, Elise Worthington (Four Corners)

Jim Oram Award - Outstanding Features Writing: Stephanie Wood (The Good Weekend)

Outstanding Political Journalist: Chris O'Keefe (Nine News)

Coca-Cola Journalist of the Year: Chris O'Keefe (Nine News)

Pictorial

Outstanding News Photo: Toby Zerna (The Daily Telegraph)

Outstanding Portrait: Phil Hillyard (The Daily Telegraph)

Outstanding Sports Photo: Phil Hillyard (The Daily Telegraph)

Outstanding Online Video: Nathan Edwards, Sarah Blake, Toby Zerna (The Daily Telegraph)

People's Choice Award: Dylan Robinson (The Daily Telegraph)

