



**JUDITH NEILSON INSTITUTE
FOR JOURNALISM & IDEAS**

Media Release

Judith Neilson Institute supports Australia's regional newspapers through the Chris Watson Award

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The Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas has made a significant investment in Australia's newspaper industry with a generous \$30,000 grant to the Kennedy Foundation to boost the Chris Watson Award for Outstanding Regional Newspaper Reporting.

The grant will provide a \$5,000 cash prize to the winner of the Chris Watson Award as well as a significant grant to allow the winning journalist to undertake a future reporting project or reporting projects on regional issues.

It will also provide support to the Kennedy Foundation as a registered charity providing assistance to media professionals facing hardship and to help promote the annual Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism.

The Judith Neilson Institute has become the inaugural sponsor of the Chris Watson Award established at the first Kennedy Awards for Excellence in Journalism in 2012, an award which recognises the superb contribution regional newspaper journalists have been making to the growth of the industry in Australia for more than 150 years.

The prestigious award is named in honour of the late legendary Newcastle Herald editor and mentor to scores of young reporters, Chris Watson, who died in 2014 aged 63 years following a battle with cancer.

Kennedy Foundation chairman Simon Dulhunty today praised the Judith Neilson Institute for its generous support of regional newspapers throughout Australia.

“The Chris Watson Award is a recognition of superb regional newspaper reporting by professionals who keep the regional and rural communities up to date on the latest events affecting their lives and we are honoured that the Judith Neilson Institute has committed to back the industry,” Mr Dulhunty said.

“Regional journalists and their proud mastheads are the backbone of Australia’s media industry and their tireless coverage of daily news provides a combined number in the millions of people with a round-the-clock update of events shaping their lives.

“The Kennedy Foundation is extremely grateful that the Judith Neilson Institute recognises the importance of promoting and supporting our national regional newspaper industry.”

Mr Mark Ryan, board member Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas, said: “Regional journalism is one of the obvious areas worthy of support right now given the role it plays in serving communities around Australia.

“It does valuable work that the major metropolitan media either can’t or won’t do and it has proven time and again that it can dig out local and regional stories that then become national and international news on the biggest topics of our time.

“There is real excellence in regional journalism and we want to play our part in making sure that continues.”

The Outstanding Regional Newspaper Reporting award is hotly contested every year at the annual Kennedy Awards and only crack entries have won since the category was first introduced.

Mr Dulhunty said the Judith Neilson Institute’s support of the Chris Watson Award would help ensure the raft of high quality of entries to the annual awards.

The Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas was established to celebrate and encourage quality journalism in Australia and the world through education and grants and by hosting lively events on the big issues of the day.

Enter the Chris Watson Award:

You can enter the Chris Watson Award for a tax-deductible donation of \$50 for each item of work published between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

The entry fee helps cover Kennedy Foundation administration costs and there is no limit to the number of entries, if each is registered separately.

As has been the case, entry for every **unrelated** item of work or for a series of **related** stories (maximum of five) is also \$50. Once registration is complete, email entries to **kennedyawardsjudging@gmail.com** and a recent headshot and up to 400 words in support of the entry.

Your email to **kennedyawardsjudging@gmail.com** should include: Subject line: "Award Entry" and the category name, entrant's name, date of publication and publication/outlet.

NB: For *Journalist of the Year, Best Columnist, Political Reporting, Young Journalist of the Year and Racing Writer* you can enter a body of work up to a maximum of five pieces under a single \$50 entry.

In the ***Young Journalist of the Year*** category entrants qualify if they are ***yet to turn 27 by June 30***. For all other entries competing against one's self is allowed and an entry fee is applicable for each item of work submitted.

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