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2019 South Australian & Northern Territory Rural Media Award Winners Announced

From a near record number of outstanding entries, News Corp Australia journalist Paula Thompson and photographer, Matt Turner took out the major prizes at the 2019 RMSA South Australian and Northern Territory Rural Media Awards.

Now in its second year of incorporating the Northern Territory in these awards, Paula Thompson emerged from the Print category to win the 2019 Rural Journalist of the Year Award. Despite having grown up in Adelaide, Paula has had an extensive career in rural and regional journalism having first commenced her career with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) whilst studying journalism at university. Paula has also held roles with the Murray Pioneer and the Stock Journal, and is now the Regional Editor for News Corp Australia at The Advertiser.

From an extremely strong field of 18 entrants, Matt Turner was named the 2019 Rural Photographer of the Year with an outstanding portfolio of story-telling and creative photographs, winning two of the main categories and being highly commended in the other. Prior to joining News Corp's South Australian office in 2003, Matt commenced his career in photography as a freelance for the Stock Journal and then went on to hold roles with The Australian, The Sydney Telegraph and Getty Images, amongst others.

This is Matt's third RMSA Rural / Regional Photographer of the Year award in the last 5 years and clearly identifies him as not only an outstanding photographer, but one who has a deep understanding of rural issues and a connection with rural and regional people.

Representing the major sponsor for these awards, Rural Business Support's Chief Executive Officer, Brett Smith presented the awards to Paula Thompson and Matt Turner.

"Rural Business Support is proud to support our rural and regional media as they work to ensure that agriculture's important news stories are told with accuracy, impact and meaning," Brett said.

"As we move through consecutive seasons of mixed fortunes, with events including drought, fires, frost and hail storms making this a tough time for many farming families, those working in regional and rural media have such a vital role to play in making sure those good news stories continue to be sought out and shared. They're certainly still there to be told.

"While there are challenges for many rural communities at the moment, agriculture is still a good news story. Whether it was published, posted or aired, we congratulate and thank all of this year's awards entrants for their outstanding and valuable work."

In presenting these awards for the first time, RMSA President Leigh Radford OAM thanked Rural Business Support for its major sponsorship for the last seven years, stating this has allowed the expanded recognition of high achievement across all forms of rural media to continue. In particular, he praised CEO Brett Smith for his strong personal support for these awards and encouragement of the media members who have chosen to work in the vital rural and regional areas as a career path.

He also paid recognition to Primary Industries and Regions SA, FULLER, SA Horticultural Services, the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society, AgCommunicators and Superior Selections for their highly valued ongoing support and sponsorship, and extended congratulations to all the journalists and photographers who entered, stating it presented them with a wonderful learning and rewarding experience.

For these awards, the journalists and photographers were asked to submit a portfolio of their work, published, broadcast, or posted between the 1st of January and the 31st of October 2019. An important flow on is the winners of the main categories are eligible to go on to the national Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists Star Awards, and if successful, to the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) Star Awards at the next IFAJ Conference, where the RMSA winners have regularly excelled in the past.

As in past years, through the generous sponsorship of the Show Society Foundation, special awards for the Best Royal Adelaide Show Story and Photograph were presented. These were won by Australian Community Media's Stock Journal Livestock Editor Catherine Miller and freelance photographer with Australian Community Media, Jacqui Bateman respectively.

In recognition of the disadvantages smaller publications and their staff face when competing against the resources of bigger media corporations, where journalists are generally required to cover both aspects of story publication, awards were also presented for the Best Rural / Regional Print Journalist and Best Rural / Regional Photojournalist. This year those awards went to Paul Mitchell from the Murray Pioneer, and Bec Whetham from ABC Regional South East.

While regionally based journalists often work at a disadvantage, they do have a unique opportunity to develop a wide range of skills, with many past major award winners starting their careers in regional centres. Regional experience often sees Journalist's career paths develop more rapidly than their city-based counterparts.

With an increasingly high-calibre of entries each year, journalists and photographers are strongly encouraged to take up the challenge by entering in 2020.

2019 South Australia & Northern Territory Rural Media Awards Results

Journalism

Rural Journalist of the Year

Sponsored by Rural Media SA

Winner: Paula Thompson – The Advertiser

Best Rural Journalist – Print

Supported by FULLER

Winner: Paula Thompson – The Advertiser

Highly commended: Louise Michael – Plains Producer

Highly commended: Elizabeth Anderson – Stock Journal

Best Rural Journalist – Regional Print

Sponsored by Rural Media SA

Winner: Paul Mitchell – Murray Pioneer

Highly commended: Molly Taylor – The Border Watch

Highly commended: Nick Perry – Yorke Peninsula Country Times

Highly commended: Sara Gilligan – Murray Pioneer

Highly commended: Rhiannon Koch – Yorke Peninsula Country Times

Best Rural Broadcast Journalist – Audio / Radio

Supported by SA Horticultural Services

Winner: Narelle Graham – Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Highly commended: Matthew Brann – ABC Rural
Highly commended: Lucas Forbes – ABC Rural

Best Rural Broadcast Journalist – Video / Television

Sponsored by Rural Business Support

Winner: Brittany Evins – Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Highly commended: Brett Clappis – Network Ten
Highly commended: Patrick Martin – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Best Rural Broadcast Journalist – Digital / Online

Sponsored by Rural Business Support

Winner: Matthew Brann – ABC Rural
Highly commended: Sowaibah Hanifie – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Best Royal Adelaide Show Story Award

Supported by the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA

Winner: Catherine Miller – Stock Journal
Highly commended: Claire Campbell – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

2019 Rural Journalist of the Year

Sponsored by Rural Media SA

Winner: Paula Thompson – The Advertiser

About the Winner:

Paula grew up in the western suburbs and completed a Bachelor of Arts in journalism through the University of South Australia in 1999. Whilst completing her degree, she gained her first employment in the media sector, working casually for the ABC at Collinswood.

Paula started her first full-time job in media in 2000, working at the Murray Pioneer newspaper based at Renmark. While working at the Murray Pioneer, Paula completed further media studies, completing a Diploma in Country Newspaper Journalism through the Charles Sturt University.

After spending six years at the Murray Pioneer, in which time she became the Deputy Editor, Paula moved to the Stock Journal newspaper in 2006. Paula started off as the Cropping Editor with the Stock Journal, which she held for nine years, before moving into editing the livestock market pages in 2015.

While working at the Stock Journal, Paula completed another university qualification, doing a post-graduate Diploma in Journalism through Deakin University.

In March this year Paula took the most exciting step in her career so far, joining The Advertiser's business team in the Regional Editor role.

While Paula continues to write about the agricultural issues she once covered at the Stock Journal, she's also branched into other areas she hadn't covered before like the seafood and forestry sectors, as well as broader business news.

Judges' Comments:

The Judging Panel acknowledged that working for a print media proprietor who published the primarily urban-focused Sunday Mail and Adelaide Advertiser posed challenges when it came to expressing a rural voice amongst the greater volume of metropolitan readers and issues, however Paula appeared to have succeeded within that highly competitive environment.

Presented with a body of well researched and referenced work that went to the extra effort of sourcing a wide variety of viewpoints and angles, the Judging Panel felt Paula's articles were outstanding.

It was obvious why Paula's rural articles were chosen by her employer to be profiled in the weekend press, a coup that must have made many of her metro-centric peers quite envious.

Quality journalism shines through, no matter the medium used or backroom resources provided, and as such Paula truly deserves to be anointed as the *2019 South Australia and Northern Territory Rural Journalist of the Year*.

2019 South Australia & Northern Territory Rural Media Awards Results

Photography

2019 South Australian & Northern Territory Rural Photographer of the Year

Sponsored by Rural Business Support

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

2019 Best Royal Adelaide Show Photograph Award

Supported by the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA

Winner: Jacqui Bateman – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

2019 Best Rural Photographer Award – Nature / Landscape / Rural Scenes

Supported by Primary Industries & Regions SA

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

Highly Commended: Tony Hill – ABC Television

2019 Best Rural Photographer Award – Production

Supported by Primary Industries & Regions SA

Winner: Tricia Watkinson – News Corp Australia

Highly Commended: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

Commended: Alisha Fogden – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

Commended: Katie Jackson – The Border Watch

2019 Best Rural Photographer Award – People

Sponsored by Rural Business Support

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

Highly Commended: Tricia Watkinson – News Corp Australia

Highly Commended: Alisha Fogden – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

Commended: Ethan Allen – Plains Producer

Commended: Elizabeth Anderson – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

Commended: Elisa Rose – Mt Barker Courier

2019 Best Rural / Regional Photojournalist Award

Supported by Superior Selections & AgCommunicators

Winner: Bec Whetham – ABC Regional South East

Highly Commended: Katie Jackson – The Border Watch

Highly Commended: Alisha Fogden – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

Commended: Elisa Rose – Mt Barker Courier

Commended: Vanessa Binks – Australian Community Media (Stock Journal)

2019 SA & NT Rural Photographer of the Year

Sponsored by Rural Business Support

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

About the Winner:

Matt has had extensive photographic experience, initially working as a freelance with the Stock Journal, The Australian, The Sydney Telegraph and Getty Images before returning to Adelaide in 2003 to join News Corp Australia. Since then he has worked with The Advertiser, SA Weekend Magazine and nationally, covering a wide and varied range of major and everyday events.

Judges' Comments:

The judges felt Matt Turner's portfolio of 9 photos entered in 3 categories within this competition was outstanding and that he was a very deserving winner. Contained within were 6 photos the judges rated as exceptional in every way; these being supported by 3 very good photos. The result of two category wins and one highly commended award reflected this. It was the depth of Matt's entire portfolio that clearly propelled him to the top position.

Each photo was technically brilliant, had exceptional lighting and very strong composition, plus they told their own story; or superbly supported the story they accompanied. They certainly grabbed the viewers' and judges' attention.

2019 Best Royal Adelaide Show Story Award

Sponsored by the Show Society Foundation

Winner: Catherine Miller – Stock Journal

About the winner:

Based in Naracoorte, Catherine has been the Stock Journal's South East Journalist and Livestock Editor for almost 16 years. She considers herself fortunate in her role to be able to meet and tell the stories of people in South Australian agriculture, which always includes endeavouring to take great photos to complement her words.

In her spare time, Catherine is also actively involved in her family's farm and often has a camera in the ute ready to snap a great shot as the opportunity arises. She has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Adelaide and prior to joining the Stock Journal worked as a wool buyer for GH Michell & Sons and then later in the Elders Head Office in Adelaide.

Judges' Comments:

Catherine Miller's Stock Journal print story on the nearly 60-year relationship between Strathalbyn based Radstock Romney Marsh sheep stud and the Royal Adelaide Show characterised the Show as truly being a venue with firm family values.

The judges felt the story was well written and in a manner that highlighted that despite personal hardships, the third generation of the Brewer family continues to maintain active links with the Royal Adelaide Show.

This six-decade family association with the Show not only involved more than merely attending as competitors.

There was also a sense of giving-back to the rural community through a family member's four decades of service to the Royal Adelaide Show as a voluntary steward in the sheep arena.

In the article, Catherine Miller captured a beautiful quote that epitomised the work of a volunteer steward at the Show:

"For me it is not just about being in the ring and doing the paperwork, but also looking after the judge and ensuring they get to know our Show... - and that the Royal Adelaide Show is the best".

Catherine Miller has written a very nice piece about the broader impact of the Show in rural society and truly deserves to win the *Best 2019 Royal Adelaide Show Story Award*.

2019 Best Royal Adelaide Show Photograph Award

Sponsored by the Show Society Foundation

Winner: Jacqui Bateman – Australian Community Media

About the Winner:

Jacqui Bateman is an accredited photographer with the Australian Institute of Professional Photography and is based in Robe on the Limestone Coast, south-east of SA.

A partner in a farming business operating near Furner, Jacqui has been a freelance photographer for the Stock Journal since the mid-2000s, photographing and reporting on local cattle markets, bull and ram sales, general livestock events and a wide range of other current rural issues in relation to the lower south east and the Royal Adelaide Show.

Jacqui also manages her own business, specialising in rural photography, artistically showcasing all the elements of everyday farming life, including the people, landscapes, livestock and production which embody current day agriculture.

About the photos (from the photographer):

Interbreed Champions: Will Schilling, Glenlee Park stud, Gerang Gerung, Vic and Trevor James, Koolewong stud, Mundulla with the Border Leicester Supreme Interbreed ewe and ram at the 2019 Royal Adelaide Show.

Jacqui explained; *As always at the Adelaide Show, time is at a premium and the luxury of setting up a shot isn't always afforded. Making use of a section of the Sheep Pavilion where I knew the light was good, using the laneways and gratings as leading lines; the poles and beams to frame the image, and a couple of opportune bales of hay as a temporary seat; this front -page photo had to have enough room around it to fill the front page with enough negative space to fit the headline and masthead.*

Judges' Comments:

This photo was selected as the front-page image for the Stock Journal's first Show Report issue and was perfectly composed to fit this purpose. The judges felt the overall symmetry, balance and attentiveness of the subjects in this shot was exceptionally hard to fault and that Jacqui was a very deserving winner.

2019 SA & NT Rural Media Awards

Rural Journalist Awards – Judging Panel Comments

Best Rural Journalist – Regional Print

Winner: Paul Mitchell – Murray Pioneer

About the Winner:

Paul Mitchell started with the Taylor Group in 1997 as a Sports Editor for the Murray Pioneer.

Paul quickly became Deputy Editor, then in 2002 was sent to the Loxton News as Editor in order to help usher the paper into a new era of page layout and production.

In late 2006 Paul was called back to the Murray Pioneer to edit The Taylor Group's flagship paper. Paul has remained with the group ever since, save for a short stint in Melbourne in 2016.

Since becoming Editor, Paul has helped the paper deal with all manner of challenges (including a rival publication), however has remained determined to keep writing stories in honour of his love of writing, particularly about the

Riverland. Whilst the role of Editor presents various constraints in terms of time, he feels it would be a shame to waste his local knowledge and experience.

Paul relishes in the chance to help develop the many young journalists who have passed through his office, and have taken great satisfaction from doing so.

Paul feels that he is able to turn his hand to any topic, from the front page to the back page, and everything in between. He's also acutely aware of the connection readers feel to local stories.

Judges' Comments:

Paul Mitchell is one of those regional rarities who despite being under enormous pressure as editor of a suite of country newspapers spread over a wide geographic area, also manages to apply his journalism talent to write some quite significant articles himself.

The Judging Panel felt that his depth of experience shone through in the three articles Paul submitted.

Paul's portfolio reflected the regional SA Riverland community he lived in and reported on.

However one article really stood out. That was a story focused on the outcome of the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission report.

That article highlighted the talent of a locally based journalist who possessed an ability to lift his head above the immediate precinct and look outward to the wider implications of political decision-making.

Paul Mitchell's other two stories reflected happenings in the regional township community serving the wider rural sector.

These two displayed very good and fearless investigative journalism.

Paul Mitchell is a worthy winner of the *2019 Best Rural Regional-Print Journalist Award* for South Australia and Northern Territory.

Best Rural Journalist – Print

Winner: Paula Thompson – The Advertiser

Judges' Comments:

Paula Thompson is a very experienced rural journalist and the Judging Panel set extremely high expectations for her work. These expectations were met in full measure and in many aspects, exceeded.

Her articles were nicely written in a semi-conversational manner obviously tailored to the diverse readership her home publication serves.

The judges were impressed by the effort Paula made to source a wide variety of viewpoints and angles for each of her submitted stories, and all of her work was well researched and referenced.

Of particular note were Paula's articles on GM Technology and the Snapper Fishing Ban. These were particularly insightful, focused and sure to make a few high-level decision makers squirm.

Paula Thompson is a worthy winner of the *2019 Best Rural Print Journalist Award* for South Australia and Northern Territory.

Best Rural Broadcast Journalist – Radio

Winner: Narelle Graham – ABC

About the Winner:

Narelle Graham has a gift for putting her guests at ease and making the microphone disappear. She is currently the presenter of *Regional Drive*, a daily program from 4-6PM covering all areas of South Australia and Broken Hill.

In 2019, she has broadcast programs from Renmark, Tailem Bend, Clare, Naracoorte, Monarto and Whyalla.

Narelle says the best part of her job is not talking but listening to her guests and sharing their stories.

Narelle graduated from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in 2000 with a degree in Applied Science.

After working for a year as a nutritionist, she found her natural calling in journalism and cut her teeth working in for newspapers in Robinvale and Mildura.

Narelle joined the staff list at ABC in 2007, working at ABC Goulburn Murray at Wodonga before moving to ABC Riverland and then ABC Adelaide.

Judges' Comments:

Narelle Graham is the undisputed iconic voice of regional ABC radio across the entire State and across to Broken Hill.

While that's not a reason for receiving an award, it does provide context to the three stories presented to the judges for assessment.

The judges acknowledged that Narelle had a pressing need to generate radio stories to suit a general regional audience spread across town dwellers, farmers, mining and general industry.

Her portfolio of three stories covered topics ranging from Drought Stimulus, the removal of Cosi's Teddy Bear Fence on YP and new developments in Dung Beetles.

The judges felt that Narelle's conversational style, subtle humour and acumen for identifying key aspects of an issue resulted in excellent radio well suited to her general listening audience.

In particular, the Drought Stimulus story exhibited an extraordinary amount of work to line up live interviews with a Federal Member of Parliament and the heads of three Local Government areas, in addition to an audio grab from another program's interview with Barnaby Joyce.

Narelle's work clearly displayed a talent for reporting a diversity of rural topics to a very disparate regional listening audience.

Narelle Graham is a worthy winner of the *2019 Best Rural Audio / Radio Broadcast Journalist Award* for South Australia and Northern Territory.

Best Rural Broadcast Journalist – Video/Television

Winner: Brittany Evins – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

About the Winner:

Tackling the bull by the horns, Brittany started my career as a journalist in Renmark, away from my family, friends and life in the city.

Brittany's career in journalism started by reading the local radio news bulletins and before teaching herself how to use the P2 video camera in her office. This led her to spend many hours filming, interviewing and chatting to people on the land as a video journalist and eventually performing solo live crosses as a journalist, sound technician and camera operator.

It was this adventure and journey that has made her the curious, adventurous and rural-loving journalist that she is today. Most importantly though, it was the relationships and stories of the people who are on the land that drive her passion for journalism and have inspired her to become a better reporter.

Today, Brittany works in the ABC Adelaide office however has brought the skills and knowledge acquired from living in regional South Australia to the city. Reinforcing her love for rural journalism, Brittany states that *"I can truly say I understand the importance of community voice and the diversity in opinions that need to be shared to all Australians. I believe, with the knowledge and experience I have had, I can help to bridge the gap between the city and country issues and people; and will do everything in my power to tell the stories of all Australian's."*

Judges' Comments:

In the role as a television news reporter, an individual is often required to encapsulate the content of complex stories within quite short on-air pieces. The judges felt that two of Brittany's three submitted stories clearly highlighted her talent for accomplishing this without compromise.

Furthermore, a very comprehensive short story on South Australia's snapper ban and one focused on the predicted break in the agricultural season were acknowledged as of particularly high quality and were well expressed within a short period of time.

Spreading her wings a little further in her third story, Brittany generated an outstanding 10-minute feature story covering the various issues seals were causing for the local Lakes and Coorong fishing industry. With the added luxury of time, the judges felt Brittany was able to gather a variety of diverse views and opinions, moulding them into an excellent and at times emotive piece.

Brittany Evins is a worthy winner of the *2019 Best Rural Video / Television Broadcast Journalist Award* for South Australia and Northern Territory.

Best Rural Journalist – Digital / Online

Winner: Matthew Brann – ABC Rural, Darwin

About the Winner:

Matt Brann has been working for ABC Rural for more than a decade and is the host of the Northern Territory Country Hour.

Since 2007, Matt has worked as a rural reporter in Hobart (TAS), Kununurra (WA) and Darwin (NT).

He has vowed to never leave northern Australia until he catches a metre-barramundi, which given his current fishing record means he's likely to retire in the region.

Judges' Comments:

Matt presented the judges with a range of well-researched stories that had been communicated to rural audiences around the globe utilising a combination of written text, descriptive still photos, audio, video and hot-links to other story sites. Topics ranged from the fears of commercial fishermen caught in a tropical cyclone, to the potential effect of climate change on Northern Australia's mango industry.

The judges found Matthew's ability to utilise the online digital medium to communicate rural stories using all the multi-channel technologies available exceptional; and that irrespective of technology – Matt's work displayed the talent of a consummate professional rural broadcast journalist.

Matt Brann is a worthy winner of the *2019 Best Rural Digital/Online Broadcast Journalist Award* for South Australia and Northern Territory.

2019 SA & NT Rural Media Awards

Rural Photography Awards – Judging Panel Comments

Best Rural/Regional Photojournalist

Winner: Bec Whetham – ABC Regional Reporter (South East)

About the Winner:

Despite growing up in a city Bec always saw herself in 'the country'. In January this year her chance came. She packed up, moved out and settled into life in the South East; the perfect blend of cattle, cab sav and crayfish. She's been able to meet some incredible people and share some inspiring stories. She loves the pace of life and attention to smaller things and has found it's harder to get distracted and easier to tune in on life's defining moments.

The online nature of the job has given her a new excitement to get behind the camera again. While she's always loved photography, she has found that having a purpose and platform to capture moments is so rewarding. She

sometimes worries that people won't take a chance on a story because of how frequently the topic is covered (i.e. 'just another suicide story' or 'just another drought story'), but one good photo is often all it takes to honour someone's experience; saying it is a real privilege to be able to capture these stories in such an intimate way.

Bec started her journalism career with the ABC in April 2018. She was studying full-time finishing her degree and working full-time hours as a news reporter in the Adelaide newsroom (early mornings and late nights). Outside of writing news copy for radio she'd pitch the occasional TV story, or online yarn and subsequently, she started getting rostered for daytime reporting gigs.

About the photos (from the photographer):

1. *Girl's best friend – Katie the kelpie takes the backseat as her owner and best friend, 16-year-old Claire Foster, drives around the farm. You know working dogs, they just can't sit still! I just locked focus on her and kept shooting. I was stoked with the end result. The roll bar provides a nice natural framing that keeps Katie in the third, making it easy to focus on her and the expression in her face; attentive, loyal and ready to work.*

2. *Shear hope, Glencoe, South Australia – Warrnambool shearer Luke Rowbottom loses his beard of 8 years in a bid to raise money and awareness for suicide prevention after losing his best mate at Christmas. I love the detail captured in the photo of Luke's beard. I bumped the contrast and made it black and white to accentuate all the little elements in that moment; from Luke's aged and sun-kissed hands to the edge of the blades and variation in his beard.*

3. *New home – A young girl waits patiently at Bordertown's first Ja'meh Festival; a celebration of the united Afghani families who now call rural Australia home. I love the dynamics in the photo of the young girl. I usually meet kids at eye level when shooting (even in a crowded food line!) as not only are the photos better; but it provides an element of trust and equality. The young girl's positioning in front of her mum provides a sense of safety and security while she is confident enough to look at others in the eye and see what's going on for herself. The colours are just gorgeous.*

Judges' Comments:

While the winning entry from Bec Whetham could have had some composition tweaks, it was the quality within this entry on all the points we have mentioned that took them to the top position. There was subject engagement, great contrast and colour; plus creativeness including the black and white image that ideally suited that shot's subject matter. All 3 images grabbed the judges' attention.

Best Rural Photographer Awards – Nature / Landscape / Rural Scenes

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

About the photos (from the photographer):

1. *Swamp – Ecologists Bryan Haywood and Rose Thompson from the Nature Glenelg Trust in the Mount Burr wetlands, near Mt Gambier.*

2. *Canola – A stunning canola crop in flower at Undalya.*

3. *Paw Patrol – It is a brave new world for these dingo pups at Gorge Wildlife Park. At just four weeks old they are making their first steps away from mum (Piper) and exploring their surroundings. However, the weather has driven them back into the burrow.*

Judges' Comments:

Matt Turner's portfolio included three wonderful images that were technically brilliant, had terrific composition and complemented the Rural Scenes and Nature descriptions, taking them to the top position.

Best Rural Photographer Awards – Production

Winner: Tricia Watkinson – News Corp Australia

About the Winner:

Tricia started her career with The Advertiser in 1992 as an Editorial Messenger. She has always loved photography but it wasn't until she started with the company that she realised the incredible potential to work in the exciting field of press photography.

So, she furiously set out to gain as much photographic experience as possible. Her rostered days off were spent gaining valuable knowledge from the incredibly talented pool of photographers and after 18 months she was fortunate enough to be awarded a 3-year photographic cadetship.

In 1998 she was granted an overseas posting, working for The Times newspaper in London for 4 months. After 15 years as a daily photographer with The Advertiser, she was promoted to the position of Sunday Mail Picture Editor which she successfully held for almost four years.

Tricia is currently employed as a Senior Photographer with The Advertiser, the Sunday Mail and The Advertiser online.

Tricia submitted three images which sought to capture a contrast in emotions as reflective of various challenges currently being experienced by the agriculture industry. These included the hopefulness, yet seriousness of a farmer relying on the rain; the positivity of selling South Australia's wool to the world; and the quirkiness of the ever-growing vegan range of produce.

Judges' Comments:

The judges felt that the composition and technical quality of Tricia's image of 'Vegan Cheese' was brilliant and that it was one of the standout images from throughout the entire competition. The judges also stated that Tricia's use of light in the powerful and creative composition of her image 'Relying on Rain' was exceptional, and that her image representing the Australian Wool Network's Direct Network Advantage Program complemented the story it accompanied. Tricia's submission was also acknowledged by the judges for its superior level of engagement, composition and relevance to the Production category.

Best Rural Photographer Awards – People

Winner: Matt Turner – News Corp Australia

About the photos (from the photographer):

1. *Longest Wait – In order for Adam Barnes to get his life back on track and start shearing sheep again, the country boy from Meningie must wait for someone to die. Adam's liver is failing. He needs an organ donation quickly.*
2. *Pick of the Bunch – South Australia's top young winemakers from Clare Valley through to Kangaroo Island in the spotlight as pictured in the Piccadilly Valley.*
3. *The Barry Boys – Peter Barry with sons Sam and Tom in one of their Clare Valley Vineyards after taking out the coveted Winery of the Year Award at the Halliday Wine Companion Awards.*

Judges' Comments:

Amongst 15 high quality entries, the judges felt the overall 'people presence and power' portrayed in Matt's portfolio that carried his entry to the top position.

Matt's 'Pick of the Bunch' photo received special praise from the judges such as: *"My favourite photo this year! I love everything about it and would blow this up and have it on my wall. I love the blend of colours with the hints of red; the positioning of the people and the bottles; the personalities coming from the silent faces; the warmth of the lighting on the logs; the fact that the young child and the baby are looking at the camera and showing their characters, and the use of the varied forms of timber throughout... an amazing photo!"*

The judges also felt that the sad story behind Matt's first image of Adam Barnes's plight in 'Waiting to Die' was portrayed with such strong emotional conviction that while it may appear as just simple single-person shot, to bring that story out so well in this photo demonstrates remarkable skill. The colours, composition and lighting in Matt's third image of 'The Barry Boys' were also outstanding and support the story the image accompanied through marked technical impact.