

## Brief: Walkley Young Journalists of the Year

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Screen Hub

The 2012 Walkley Young Journalist of the Year comes from ABC TV; the online Young Journalist of the Year is from ABC Open. Not surprising, but a sign of the times.

Last night`s ceremony in Sydney gave the 2012 Walkley Young Journalist of the Year prize to Jake Sturmer from ABC 7.30 WA, for his "investigation into the sexual abuse at a government-run hostel, by one of Western Australia`s worst serial paedophiles."

For both the ABC winners, the theme of empathy in professional practice was prominent, and very real.

These are the virtues which the judges noticed in Jake`s work: "It was confronting and compelling to see four victims of child sexual abuse reunite as grown men and share details of what they endured. Reporter Jake Sturmer showed great skill and empathy in securing these interviews... The judges were particularly impressed with the sensitivity of the interview conducted with the father of the perpetrator..."

in the online section, the award went to Miranda Grant, who used online and citizen journalism techniques to follow the survival and recovery of Grantham, devastated by flood eighteen months ago.

The commendation cited [this story](#), but you can find the whole set about Grantham backwards from [here](#).

Into this run of objective stories, still with a personal and human touch, she inserted [the story](#) of the fire which destroyed her father`s house, away in Sydney. It comes to a lovely climax:

"For me, the potential damage and the sentimental loss remain upsetting. This event has drawn into focus how precious family is and how delicately we teeter on the edge of death. With my family`s still-raw experience, my sense of empathy and engagement in the Aftermath project has been heightened. So, while I am publishing stories of resilience from Southern Queensland, I will also continue to share my family`s own personal narrative of recovery in this blog.

I believe sharing stories truly helps the soul to come to terms with the randomness of such experiences. Aftermath is a way for you to connect, share and support others in their recovery process."

While Sturmer has a conventional route into journalism, starting with commercial radio, Grant "worked as a video journalist in Mongolia, PNG, Ethiopia and the Northern Territory."

Jason has won a three week tour of newsrooms at the BBC and CNN - the latter now in a state of peril because its ratings have gone through the floor.

In Miranda`s article just before the final result, she said, "Thank you for making yourself vulnerable in order to help others feel less alone. From my heart, I thank you and hope, as a journalist, I have treated your story with the dignity you deserve."

It seems to me that journalism in Australia is being engulfed by its own disaster. We are facing a terrible loss of experienced people, as our print media is reduced to a set of malevolent cartoons dedicated to destroying a government for the worst of reasons.

It gladdens my heart to see new people coming in who are adaptable and resilient and humane.