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Kennedy Awards: 7NEWS scores top gongs Chris Reason, Bruce McAvaney and 7NEWS Spotlight honoured for journalism excellence

The Seven Network's **7NEWS** has been recognised for excellence in journalism, blitzing the top TV gongs at the 2022 Kennedy Awards in Sydney on Friday night.

7NEWS Chief Reporter Chris Reason was recognised for his extraordinary reportage from the war zone, for his entry entitled "Frontline Ukraine", dedicating his Harry Potter Award: Outstanding Television News Reporting to the people of the besieged country.

Seven's Director of News and Public Affairs, Craig McPherson said: "Chris took the audience into the heart of the Ukraine crisis, masterly capturing the human tension and toll while saturating his nightly reports with up-to-the minute war status.

"Chris put himself in the middle of the war zone with the people of the Ukraine, giving our viewers a complete understanding while capturing the 'feeling' of what was occurring. All this complemented with extensive live reporting across all hours of the day and night. It is a fitting award for journalistic excellence."

Hard on the heels of his masterful commentary of track and field for Seven's broadcast of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, **7SPORT** icon Bruce McAvaney was inducted into the Lifetime Achievement Hall of Fame, accepting the honour via video message after it was presented by leading horse trainer, Gai Waterhouse.

A humbled Mr McAvaney said: "Looking back at who's stood where I am tonight, I know I am in very good company. I am struck, not just by the big names, but the diversity of talent."

7NEWS Spotlight also took out the Rebecca Wilson Scoop of the Year prize for its insightful and compelling storytelling in "Melissa Caddick: The Vanishing".

Executive Producer Mark Llewellyn, Presenter Michael Usher, Producer Taylor Auerbach and Camera Operator John Varga toasted the program's first-ever win.

Mr Llewellyn said: "We may be the new kid on the block. We may not have the vast resources of the established players. But, as they say, it's not the size of the dog in the fight that counts, it's the size of the fight in the dog – and my small team fought tirelessly to get this huge scoop. I'm so proud."

Continuing the network's success, **7NEWS** camera operator James Cannon won the Gary Ticehurst Award for Outstanding News Camera Coverage for his frontline footage during 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Russian retreat from Irpin.



Media Release

Mr McPherson said: “Jimmy has worked through war zones from Syria, Iraq and now, his longest stint on the front line, in Ukraine, His pictures and technical ability to get the product out of the most grim locations is to world standard.

“Multi-talented, Jimmy has an eye for recording standout scenes and then editing them for broadcast on location wherever is required. In the Ukraine, all his skills came together, and his work rightfully acknowledged with this award’.”

Fellow **7NEWS** camo Simon Hydzik was also nominated in the same category for his entry, “War in Ukraine”, which was recently nominated for a *TV Week* Logie Award.

Seven took home its four awards from seven nominations, which also recognised Glenn Connley from Prime7 Local News (now **7NEWS**), nominated for the Cliff Neville Award for Outstanding Team Player Or Mentor.

In a brand-new category recognising outstanding long form current affairs – and named in memory of former Seven Chief Executive David Leckie – Denham Hitchcock, Mr Auerbach and Mr Llewellyn from **7NEWS Spotlight** were again nominated for their exclusive with NT police officer Zac Rolfe over two episodes, “The Shooting” and “The Trial”.

The Kennedy Awards are named in honour of veteran police reporter Les Kennedy, who died in 2011 at the age of 53.

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