

Seven West Media scores in Walkley Award Nominations

Seven West Media acknowledges Seven News, Sunday Night on Seven and The Sunday Times for their nominations in this year's Walkley Awards for excellence in journalism.

Bryan Seymour and Megan Miller from Seven News are finalists in the TV News Reporting category for their report, Australia's Child Brides, which delved into the shocking number of girls forced into arranged marriages in Australia. The judges said the exclusive story exposed the shocking reality of the issue on our shores: "The piece was well researched, with time and effort dedicated to gathering crucial information through the FOI process and footage from a case before court. This is an important story with a high public impact."

Sunday Night's Matt Doran is a finalist in the TV Current Affairs Short category for his report, Haiti Uncovered. Doran was embedded exclusively with a strike force that brought down the leaders of a human trafficking network supplying children for the child sex trade in Haiti. The Walkley judges said: "This story exposes the shocking trade in under age sex slaves in disaster ravaged Haiti. A personal crusade by journalist Matt Doran which brought down a human trafficking network. With excellent production values this undercover sting revealed the harrowing trade and inside the safe house for the rescued child sex trafficking victims."

The Sunday Times associate editor Billy Rule's "Trying to Save Ben", about the humble bravery of a group of strangers who risked their own lives trying to save shark attack victim Ben Gerring on Falcon Beach in May 2016 is one of three finalists in the Feature Writing Long category. The Walkley judges said reading Rule's feature "made you almost feel as though you were out on the ocean just moments after the horrific shark attack occurred ... that's the beauty of this gripping, raw read. The author has done an amazing job of depicting the chaotic, bloody aftermath of a shark attack off Western Australia last year, and the instinctive, humble bravery of those who vainly tried to save a young surfer's life."

Craig McPherson, Seven's Director of News and Public Affairs, said: "Determination and devotion best sums up the Seven News and Sunday Night nominations. Australia's child brides was a 12 months battle to get to air, requiring exhaustive FOIs and then further legal challenges to expose what is happening. Bryan and Megan drove it from start to end with help from 7 News colleagues across three states."

"Sunday Night's Matt Doran spent eight months working with the US state and federal authorities to expose the heinous child sex slavery operation in Haiti. Matt went undercover to get inside the centre of the dangerous cartel. This extraordinary investigation culminating in a dramatic high seas sting, bringing down the human trafficking syndicate. More importantly his personal crusade was instrumental in the direct rescue of 30 children."

Michael Beach, Editor of The Sunday Times, said: "Billy is one of Australia's best journalists and writers. At 7000 words, this is the longest story The Sunday Times has ever published. But the acknowledgement from the Walkley judges is testament to the sensitivity and care Billy took to tell the story of the instinctive courage from those strangers who fought to save the life of Ben Gerring."