

2002 Press Council Prize Winners

WINNER:

Molly Blair

Molly was born in Melbourne in November 1975 and moved to Adelaide when she was four years old. In Adelaide she attended the Wilderness School where she was the school magazine editor and recipient of the Senior School Prose award. During her high school years, she also received a highly commended and a first prize in the Young Writers' Award short story section.

In 1993 she went on to the University of Adelaide, study towards a Bachelor of Arts, completed in 1995. There Molly was the editor of the St Marks College Magazine and a writer of the College Review.

After graduating Molly moved to Melbourne where she worked in the script department as a researcher and publicity writer for the Channel 7 drama, *Blue Heelers*. Deciding that she wanted to see the world, in 1999 she moved to Sydney and became an international flight attendant for QANTAS.

Late last year she came back to earth, leaving the airline to continue her love of writing; but, rather than returning to television, Molly determined to pursue a career in journalism. Accordingly she now moved to the Gold Coast and enrolled at Bond University in the Masters of Journalism program. She has received a Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

When she completes her Masters, at the end of this year, she hopes to become a feature-writer for magazines and newspapers.

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Cherylanne Rees

Cherylanne is 36 years-of-age and is currently a mature-age student at QUT. She has a 4-year-old daughter and consequently is kept pretty busy between study and my parenting duties. Cherylanne is in her final year studying journalism and this year began an undergraduate law degree. At this stage she hopes to practice law, at least for a while, when she graduates.

She finds both journalism and the law interest her because she sees them as offering opportunities to contribute to society and requiring ethical and motivated people to do so. The inter-relationship between both disciplines and ways that relationship can be improved also interests her.

[NOTE: The Council has not received biographical details from **Kiara Woollhams** at the time of publication. Those details will be posted on the website when received.]

2002 Judges' Comments

Judge 1

Given recent events and the subject of the essay, it is not surprising that similar issues were discussed in the majority of essays. I thought that there was considerable variation in the standard but was still difficult to select a shortlist of favored candidates.

Judge 2

Reporting on minorities is a complex issue, one which requires careful consideration of real events in journalism and society, as well as reference to ideal practice. Overall, there was too much of the latter and not enough of the former in these essays. In many, there was a disappointing deficiency of in-depth analysis of actual press coverage and adjudications by the Press Council, particularly of a recent nature.

Judge 3

Many of the entries reflected insufficient appreciation of the difficulties of balancing freedom of speech with sensitivity to race, religion, nationality, color and country of origin. Some entrants appeared not to understand the complexities underlying the question, and reduced a topic which has many shades of grey to a somewhat 'black and white' argument. Others seemed to undervalue the principle of freedom of speech. Having said that, though, a significant number of entries also reflected a strong grasp of the issues and a coherent approach to the question.