

November 7th 2018

NEW ZEALAND BUSINESS JOURNALISM AWARDS
(With extracts from the Judges' Comments)

BUSINESS NEWS

Finalists: Jenny Ruth (NBR)

Madeleine Chapman (The Spinoff)

WINNER: JENNY RUTH

The judges found that Jenny Ruth's story about ex-Fletcher boss's abusive internal e-mail was a standout news story of the year. It dealt with an issue of great importance and it had an impact. The story was dramatic, informative, coherent and balanced.

The journalist had considerable knowledge of Fletcher and had cultivated good relations with people working within the company. This resulted in people confiding highly sensitive information. One of the key journalistic skills in news reporting is to build trust, find relevant sources, cultivate and protect them, and Ruth's work demonstrates this ability.

BUSINESS FEATURES

Finalists: Rebecca Stevenson (The Spinoff/Stuff)

Liam Dann (NZ Herald)

WINNER: REBECCA STEVENSON

Rebecca Stevenson's feature, *'The rise and fall of CricHQ, the star backed Facebook for cricket'* tracks how the ambition and potential of a well-supported startup collapsed within a relatively short space of time.

The reader is taken across different continents and different deals as various well-heeled individuals from New Zealand's former Prime Minister John Key to former advertising guru and Saatchi head Kevin Roberts heap praise and reinforce the overall business potential. Success was short lived.

Despite cricket greats Stephen Fleming and Brendon McCullum being among the company founders and enabling doors to open and despite initial runs on the board the tailspin went past correction.

Rebecca unravels the story with alacrity and detail.

BUSINESS COMMENTARY

Finalists:

Rod Oram Newsroom/Independent)

Tim Hunter (NBR)

WINNER: ROD ORAM

Rod Oram's columns on Fonterra were based on a wide variety of sources which along with his own considerable experience and analytical skills gave them an authority and gravitas which demanded that they be taken seriously.

Written in an accessible style they added new information and therefore value to the reader's understanding of what was going wrong at our largest exporter.

BUSINESS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

JENNY RUTH

Across all three categories of these awards Jenny Ruth displayed a level of knowledge, skill and professionalism that was outstanding.

She has clearly positioned herself as a journalist who will use information wisely and for maximum impact. Few of her stories would have been as powerful without the willingness of outsiders to convey what they knew, trusting her in the process.

Her tenacity in pursuing subjects was also evident in her commentary on vertical integration in the financial services industry. Her shoeshine column, which pulled no punches in addressing the degree to which financial advice is 'independent', followed a series of news stories investigating financial advice available to retail customers.

Her ability to produce consistently high-quality news, features and commentary show her to be a skilled all-rounder. Those attributes, together with the importance that attaches to her work on Fletcher Building, marks her out as an obvious choice as Business Journalist of the Year.

YOUNG BUSINESS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

MADELEINE CHAPMAN

Madeleine Chapman displays the best traits in a journalist – curiosity, courage, tenacity, thoroughness and sense of fair play. Her investigation into the origin of World T-shirts was sparked by a chance reading of a t-shirt's internal label. She traced manufacture to

Bangladesh and China. The fashion company had prided itself on producing garments in New Zealand.

In taking on this story the young journalist had to challenge one of the icons of New Zealand fashion, Dame Denise L'Estrange Corbet. She did so by systematically investigating the manufacturing origins and availability of T-shirts, sweatshirts and sweatpants sold by the company and carrying "Fabrique en Nouvelle-Zelande" (Made in New Zealand) swing tags. Her story included compelling evidence to back her claims and a level of description that left the reader in little doubt about where the garments were made and how they were presented.

Ms Chapman's story was picked up by other media, at least 21 news stories flowed from her initial report and six complaints were laid with the Commerce Commission over the labelling of the clothing.