

December 7, 2009

Media Release

## **GRAHAM PERKIN JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD EXTENDED TO BROADCAST, ONLINE MEDIA**

Broadcast and online journalists will be eligible for Australia's most coveted media prize for the first time this year.

The Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year Award has been the premier annual award for print journalists since its inception in 1976.

From this year, television, radio and online journalists and editors will also be eligible for the award. The winner receives \$20,000 and permanent recognition for excellence.

The change in eligibility co-incides with the Melbourne Press Club taking responsibility for the administration of the award. The Age will continue to provide the prize money.

The Perkin award commemorates one of the finest Australian editors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perkin, a Walkley Award-winning reporter, was editor of The Age from 1966 to 1975. He pioneered aspects of journalism that are now mainstream, campaigned vigorously for Press freedom and led a revival of The Age which saw it become acknowledged by independent observers as one of the finest newspapers in the world.

The Editor-in-Chief of The Age, Paul Ramadge, said the expansion of the criteria for the award was overdue. He said: "So many wonderfully talented print journalists have won the Perkin. But journalism has changed, and it was time for the Perkin to move with the times.

"The Age is delighted to form a partnership with the Melbourne Press Club to further enhance the standing and success of the nation's top journalistic prize."

The President of the Press Club, Michael Venus, said the award has always been judged independently and it has been won by journalists from a wide range of publications, but The Age felt the award's independence would be enhanced if it was administered by an external group.

“The Press Club is delighted to commit to this obligation and help celebrate what this award stands for. The club has been associated with the award for more than 10 years because it has been presented at our Quill Awards dinner. We know how much this award means,” Venus said.

“The Perkin award has been won by many of the greats of Australian journalism in the past 33 years. We believe Perkin would have embraced new technology as enthusiastically as anyone so it is appropriate that the newer news media is eligible for this fantastic award.”

“The Perkin award has a combination of features which made it unique. It can be won by a reporter or an editor. Journalists may nominate themselves or be nominated by an editor. People can nominate journalists from another media outlet. It can be won with a single article, a series or a body of work. And it can be won by an editor who has not written a word, but has shown courageous leadership on an issue.”

The Press Club announced that the judges for the next three years will be Les Carlyon, Paul Kelly and Jana Wendt. Entries for the 2009 award are open now and close on February 12.

*Further information on [www.pressclubonline.com](http://www.pressclubonline.com) and Michael Smith 0411 055 306*