

Media Release



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Australian journalists honoured for hearty matter

Inaugural Victor Chang Media Awards to be presented in Sydney

Today Tonight Perth reporter Mark Gibson has been awarded the inaugural Victor Chang Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Journalism (Metropolitan Category) for his story about popular radio announcer [Ian Blackley's](#) heart-attack on air.

The Awards, to be presented tonight at the Victor Chang Heart-to-Heart Ball in Sydney, are the first in Australia to recognise print and broadcast journalists for their work in raising public awareness about diseases of the heart and blood vessels, Australia's number one killer.

The Judging Panel, made up of a prominent mix of Australian media and scientific professionals, unanimously agreed that Gibson's report was exceptional in highlighting the major issues around heart attack, particularly for men.

"Men are notoriously bad at talking about their health, acting on warning signs and getting to a doctor," said Professor Bob Graham, Executive Director of the [Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute](#) (VCCRI), and member of the six-strong judging panel.

"What we loved about Mark's piece, was the openness of his subject, Ian, and his readiness to talk about his experience in the hope of educating others. The story was instructive and informative, and in the end, heart-warming for the audience," added Professor Graham.

Mark, along with his subject Ian Blackley, and other winners will accept their awards at the special charity fundraiser in Sydney, in front of a crowd of around 750 guests.

"At some stage, diseases of the heart and blood vessels will affect nearly every family in Australia. These awards are about recognising the crucial role journalists play in educating the public about this, and their ability to add value to this country's greatest yet least highlighted health concern," continued Professor Graham.

Other award winners include Fairfax journalist, Janet Hawley, who received an Honourable Mention for her Good Weekend story, "*Could it happen to you?*". Her story focused on Sudden Unexplained Death Syndrome, a condition now thought to kill around 1000 apparently healthy Australians aged under 35 each year.

The winner of the 2010 Regional Award was freelance journalist, Fred Witsenhuysen, whose work "*Facing up to Heart Disease*" was published in the Sunshine Coast Daily (Queensland). Based on his own experiences of bypass surgery, his article aimed to reassure other patients and stressed the importance of minimising heart disease risk factors.

The Judging Panel included Editor-at-Large of The Australian newspaper, Mr Paul Kelly; Fairfax journalist, Ms Jill Margo; CEO of the Australian News Channel, Mr Angelos Frangopoulos; journalist and representative of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Mr Alan Kennedy; VCCRI Director, Professor Bob Graham and VCCRI Deputy Director, Associate Professor Jamie Vandenberg.

Submissions for next year's Awards open in November 2010, and will close in May 2011.

For further information, visit www.victorchang.edu.au.

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About the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute

Established in 1994, the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI) is committed to excellence into heart disease and cardiovascular biology, cardiovascular research training and facilitating the rapid application of research discoveries to patient care. In Australia alone, heart muscle diseases - the cause of heart failure - are responsible for the death of over 130,000 people annually with 400 new cases being added each week.

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