

Men's Rights Agency Media Awards 2006

Men's Rights Agency recently announced the second annual Media Awards.

"The Awards are intended to highlight the need for both sides of gender issues to be explored fairly, without men being subjected to unreasonable ridicule and criticism", said Mrs Sue Price, a director of Men's Rights Agency.

"Too often men are portrayed, particularly in television commercials, as bumbling idiots or aggressive, angry men ready to settle any argument with their fists. A few may behave like that, but the vast majority are just trying to get on with their lives – working and caring for their family", continued Mrs Price. "They do not deserve to be portrayed in this way. It also sends a very poor message to the young men of this country that they are not valued."

The winners, recognised for their ability to view social issues fairly, without undue bias and/or providing positive support in for men/fathers are:

- The Sunday Mail, Brisbane wins the Press award for publishing the article "Have men lost their jobs?" by influential British commentator Melanie Phillips. As the author, Ms

Phillips receives an award for this article and in recognition of her other writings, wherein she strives to counter the bias against men and fathers.

- The Movember Group, for their innovative campaign to raise funds for prostate cancer and male depression by calling on men to "grow a mo" in November. At the conclusion of the campaign more than five million dollars has been raised. Mo Bros and Mo Sistas partied their way through November as they raised funds for very worthy causes.

- Professor John Macdonald and Micheal Woods, for their endeavours as co-directors of Men's Health Information and Resource Centre. The Centre actively supports projects contributing to the health and well-being of men and boys.

- A Print award goes to Federal MP Alby Schultz who investigated complaints from paying parents, mostly fathers, who told of their appalling treatment by the Child Support Agency. Mr Schultz documented the results in a free handout booklet, *The Battle for Balance: A heartfelt war of relationship, families and money – Child Support in Australia*

- Two winners from the 2005 Awards are also acknowledged for their continuing efforts in reporting issues of importance to men/fathers. They are the community

radio program on 2GLF 89.3FM Dads on the Air (dadsontheair.net) and The Outback City Express (Queensland).



This year proved to be extremely difficult to identify articles, radio and television programs portraying men positively or at least giving "their side of the story" in an honest way. The judges decided not to award a winner for either radio or television due to the lack of worthwhile nominations. It is a sad indictment on the failure of the media and others to portray men and fathers in a positive light.

Dr Jim Macnamara from University of Western Sydney (UWS), found in recent research that, by volume, 69 per cent of mass media reporting and commentary on men was unfavourable, compared with just 12 per cent favourable and 19 per cent neutral or balanced. Some of the recurring themes in media content portrayed men as violent, sexually abusive, unable to be trusted with children, 'deadbeat dads', commitment phobic and in need of 're-construction'. "Men were predominantly reported or portrayed in mass media as villains, aggressors, perverts and philanderers, with more than 75 per cent of all mass media representations of men and male identity showing men in on one of these four ways," Dr Macnamara says. Further, in somewhat of a back-handed compliment, when positive portrayals of men as sensitive, emotional or caring were presented, these were described as men's and boys' 'feminine side.'

On the other hand the MRA Toady Awards presented no such difficulties...plenty of nominations to choose from.....

The Toady Awards

The MRA Awards not only focus on the positive portrayal of men, but the worst comments appearing in the media will earn for their authors, a specially created "Toady Award".



Peter Costello's Toady Award



Germaine Greer's Toady Award

- This year the judges unanimously selected Germaine Greer to receive a Toady Award for her grossly insensitive comments about Steve Irwin after his accidental, tragic death. (Sept. 7, 2006 Herald Sun)
- The second Toady goes to Treasurer Peter Costello who seems to think all dads prefer to stay in the pub rather than go home (*Time, please*, July 30 2006 Sunday Mail, also in Sunday Herald Sun).