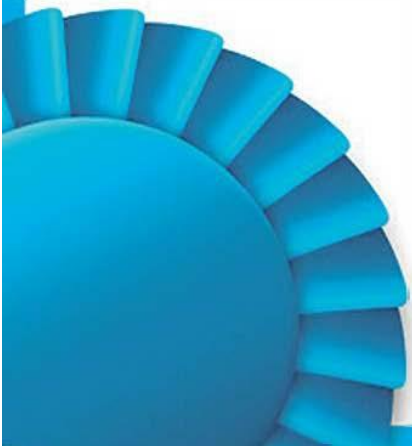


CNA AWARDS

2026

WINNERS



WINNERS AND JUDGES' COMMENTS

BEST IDEA/INNOVATION

Winner: Dairying By Design

A fantastic new annual publication to a niche market, producing 26,600 copies and delivered free to dairy farmers nationwide, showcasing everything in the industry and beyond.

Particularly impressed with advertising feature advertorials and display adverts – the publication is laid out in a truly professional style. From cover to cover it is totally readable, the photography content is excellent and a publication to be proud of. These two women really know their stuff; they took a risk, followed it and delivered a top product. Well done!

Runner Up: Metropol Creative Canterbury

Considering this fabulous quarterly product was only launched in May 2025, it's an absolute credit to Nina Tucker and her team. It has a cover a lot like Cosmopolitan and invites the reader to "pick it up" and get into the issue.

The content is diverse - from business, to theatre, fashion, wellness, home and living, with a flair of professionalism to be proud of.

The layout, fonts and pagination is outstanding and yet the ratio of advertising remains high and profitable. Well done Nina!



BEST FEATURE/SUPPLEMENT

Winner: Hibiscus Matters - Destination

A credit to those involved. Good readability, a creative layout to draw readers in, and very informative. Adverts are largely story style. Added bonus - its longevity and far-reaching reader audience

Runner Up: Dairying by Design

An excellent, informative and entertaining read from start to finish. Clean editorial-style layout supported by adverts. One worth syndicating!

Overall Judging was a difficult task and there was not much between many entries.

Comment: I marked on copy, readability, target audience impact and visual impact

BEST COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Winner: The Valley Profile

Investigation Into Methamphetamine in Thames

This entry tackled a subject that many would shy away from, with some risk in creating a profile around this difficult topic and the negative publicity it may bring to the town. The topic was well covered and handled with a sensitivity that only comes from experience.

Runner Up: The Beacon

Whakatāne Hospital Maternity Downgrade

A very real issue that united the community and achieved a positive outcome.



BEST GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Winner: Michelle Lewis, Gulf News/Waiheke Weekender

Runner Up: Clare McGillivray, Times Media

Overall An excellent field of entrants made judging this category incredibly difficult.

Comment: What stood out across the submissions was a clear focus on creating meaningful impact for advertisers, and these finalists achieved that in impressive ways.

Each entry brought something different to the table, showcasing striking visuals, confident layouts, and strong creative thinking.

Ultimately the campaign that broke the deadlock was a brilliant demonstration of the power of print advertising. With a bold concept that demanded attention, the ‘Wham, Bam, Boom’ campaign captured exactly what great design should do – cut through, engage audiences and leave a lasting impression.

Congratulations to all of the designers who entered – the standard of work this year was exceptionally high.

BEST LIFESTYLE FEATURE WRITER

Winner: **Daryl Holden, Ashburton Guardian**

An insightful writer who understands community topicality. His stories would be well read in any publication.

Runner Up: **Britt Coker, Nelson Magazine**

Fun, quirky and very readable. Interesting subject and topics that would appeal to a wide range of readers.

Overall Comment: It was exciting to see the diversity (a) in the entries and (b) in the individual writers' portfolios



BEST SALES PROFESSIONAL

Winner: **Tessa Wards, Times Media**

Tessa's commitment to increasing sales revenue has played a key role in the growth of Franklin Times and her ability to build trust with local businesses has paid dividends for the publication.

Runner Up: **Lucy Peterson, Times Media**

Lucy's year-on-year portfolio growth across both publications in the business is impressive, particularly as this work is wrapped around full-time study.



BEST HEADLINE WRITER – BRIAN ROGERS MEMORIAL AWARD

Winner: Daryl Holden, Ashburton Guardian

Daryl's headings are well thought out and range from clever and snappy to harder hitting. As he explains in his entry, headlines must call out to the reader "look at me, read me". He achieves that.

**Runners Up: Neryda McNabb, Beacon Media Group
Gordon Preece, Top South Media**

Neryda and Gordon Preece both certainly came into the equation and I couldn't separate them for second place.



BEST SPORTS JOURNALIST

Winner: Sam Coughlan, The Star, Selwyn Times

A vibrant newspaper relies on the shoe leather of its reporters, and the sports department is no exception. This year's winner exemplifies this dedication, sniffing out news stories as well as profiles, heart-warming yarns about club stalwarts, and even a feature on sports photographers. It's a well-rounded portfolio from a well-rounded journalist.

**Runners Up: Kees Chalmers, Bay Harbour News, The Star
Daryl Holden, Ashburton Guardian**

Overall Comment: Sports writing isn't as formulaic as news reporting. It relies on a deft touch, and colourful turns of phrase. The best entries stood out for their flair, and not stacking most of the facts in the first few paras. I hope our communities appreciate their local publication's efforts – they're well-served.



BEST JUNIOR NEWS JOURNALIST

Winner: Alisha McLennan, The Beacon, Opotiki News, Īta

Alisha's entry had an excellent range of stories from softer pieces to hard news. They were really well-written, using a wide range of sources and the special focus she gave Rachel Weatherly's story is worth highlighting for the in-depth and creative way she tackled this, resulting in a really impactful outcome for Rachel's family.

Runner Up: Kees Chalmers, Bay Harbour News

Kees' entry exhibited a wide range of pieces, highlighting his extensive repertoire as a reporter and also his excellent writing abilities. He tackled some really tricky issues with insight and sensitivity and gave a voice to people who may not always have such a platform.



BEST SENIOR NEWS JOURNALIST

Winner: Rob Drent, The Devonport Flagstaff/The Rangitoto Observer

Rob's entry featured a wide range of compelling, engaging, well-written pieces showing that he clearly has his finger on the pulse of his community. His work exhibits all the attributes of an expert community journalist, who knows how to spot a story and then chase down leads, even when the subjects of the story are not cooperating. His entry featured exclusives, impactful hard-hitting news, and features that ensure the reader is fully informed about the big changes happening in their area.

Runner Up: Alice Parminter, The Valley Profile

Alice's entry provides a wide range of well-written pieces highlighting her skill as a journalist and also her close connection to her community. The pieces feature real sensitivity for tricky subjects as well as highlighting the big national issues affecting her area. She is able to use all the tools of an expert reporter to get to the truth of an issue and it's clear her work makes a meaningful difference for the people in her community beyond just reporting on the news that's happening around them.

BEST PHOTOGRAPHER

Winner: Troy Baker, The Beacon/Opotiki News

Troy excels in all aspects of photography, capturing sharp, colourful and interesting pics that make the reader want to know more. His work is a very high standard, showing that he knows how to use light, angles, composition and above all, capturing the essence of what the story is about.

Runner Up: Mark James, Whangamata News

A close second. Mark's strength lies in his ability to capture the moment in a way that is authentic and appropriate to the story. One of his images of a man dragging a tyre down the road was outstanding and one of the best in the competition. Excellent work.



BEST FRONT PAGE - MAGAZINE

Winner: Nelson Magazine

Their covers are clean, easy to read and truly reflect the community nature of the publication. Clever use of embellishments make the covers stand out.

Runner Up: Metropol

A very close second. Fabulous use of full colour and bold text draw the eye to this publication and all it holds within.



BEST FRONT PAGE – NEWSPAPER

Winner: Waimea Weekly

Waimea Weekly stood out for its clear understanding of what a community newspaper should be. The layout was clean, accessible and easy to read, with a strong emphasis on clarity and hierarchy. Importantly, the paper placed its most significant local news story at the forefront, supported by an appropriate and engaging image. There was no unnecessary clutter or over-styling, allowing the content to speak for itself. This straightforward, reader-first approach made it highly effective as a community newspaper front page and set it apart from the rest of the field.

Runner Up: Selwyn Times

Selwyn Times also performed strongly, reflecting its role as a weekly community publication delivering a wide range of local news and information. Its front page showed good news judgement and a solid structure, with a clear effort to present relevant local stories. The paper had a good balance of content and maintained a recognisable newspaper format. However, compared with the winner, there was slightly less clarity and focus in the execution. It remains a strong and effective entry, clearly aligned with the purpose of a community newspaper.

Highly Commended:

Nelson Weekly

Nelson Weekly delivered a solid community newspaper front page, with clear evidence of strong local content and good engagement with its readership.



BEST MAGAZINE

Winner: Metropol

From visually stimulating covers to creative design and interesting reads, it was hard to beat.

Runner Up: Rural Guardian

Superbly on target for its farming audience, with great editorial and advertising content. The cover subjects were interesting, and great use of photos



BEST COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER - FRANK VEALE MEMORIAL AWARD

It's amazing what's achieved in community journalism today, despite financially challenging times and, often, with few staff. The prevalence of publicly funded reporters reminds us that times are tough.

Local faces are plastered proudly over pages peppered with need-to-know news, business, and sport. They tell you what's on, and what you need to know.

The best papers have thought-provoking opinion and letters sections and remind readers how life used to be. It's pleasing to see rural life reflected too.

Choosing the winner was a difficult decision with fine margins. The field was high-quality.

Winner: The Valley Profile

This year is one for the little battler; a small paper that, against the odds, shone brightly in the company of bigger, better-resourced, and high-performing opposition.

The winner stood out for its investigation into methamphetamine use, and accountability journalism in the wake of local body elections, as well as an array of heart-warming and tear-jerking yarns.

There was even an international element with an Australian man's search for the remains of murdered Swedish tourist Heidi Paakkonen.

The response to its stories showed local heft and impact. A rugby club ad feature was highlighted as one of its most successful.

The paper's circulation has quadrupled to 16,000 copies since it was first published in 2020, and it now has a website and app.

As is too often the case, it's now the only community paper in its patch. Well done to The Valley Profile.

Runner Up: Mountain Scene

The runner-up, Mountain Scene, is everything a community should want in its paper – well-written, captivating yarns, and constantly campaigning on important issues, with great layout and an array of compelling stories. It also produces high-quality ad features and pullouts.

Highly Commended:

Gulf News

Ashburton Guardian

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