

The Kennedy Foundation

Compassion in confidence

13 August 2015

Emily Wilson
Editor-in-Chief
The Guardian Australia

Via email

Dear Emily

This letter is to express our sincere regret for an error last Friday night that saw Guardian photographer Mike Bowers inadvertently presented with a Kennedy Award for Online Photographic Essay.

On behalf of the Kennedy Foundation, I have already spoken to Mike and apologised for the circumstances that led to this mistake and the resulting hurt and embarrassment.

We also apologise to The Guardian Australia after a story on Mike's Kennedy honour was published in good faith.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/08/guardian-australias-mike-bowers-wins-kennedy-award-for-gallipoli-photo-essay>

This unfortunate error came as a result of the last minute engraving of winners' names on the Kennedy Award trophies.

The "engraver's list" was created by deleting the names of those finalists who did not win.

When Friday's presentation went to the winner's video package for Online Photographic Essay it was immediately apparent that the wrong name had been sent to the engravers.

With the event underway and running to a tight schedule, it was decided to spare Mike Bowers, as the runner up, from any on-stage embarrassment.

However, we resolved to investigate the issue after the awards presentation concluded and are now tightening up administrative procedures to ensure such a mistake is never repeated.

We informed the actual winner of this category, Nic Walker of Fairfax Media, and attempted to alert Michael. Unfortunately, an email was inadvertently sent to his former Global Mail address.

Both Nic Walker and Herald editor-in-chief Darren Goodsir were equally keen to spare The Guardian and Mike any further embarrassment given his wide respect in the media industry.

We then informed the judges of this award about the error. Mike was justifiably distressed to learn of the mistake from them.

Our charity director and judging convenor Mr Peter Kogoy then telephoned Mike to apologise on the Foundation's behalf.

While we appreciate your understanding, we also acknowledge the distress this has caused Mike.

We hope that in time he will accept this was an honest error, enter in future Kennedy Awards and support the Foundation's work in supporting media professionals who fall upon genuine hardship.

Since 2012 we have presented more than 140 awards without a hitch despite our limited resources. As a largely volunteer organisation, we have one full time staff member compared to the staffing of the Walkley Foundation and the Melbourne Press Club.

We greatly appreciate The Guardian's support of the Kennedy Awards and congratulate your on your continuing success.

Once again, we can only offer our profuse apologies to Mike Bowers and your team.

Yours faithfully

Peter Ryan

Chairman
Kennedy Foundation

Cc: Mike Bowers, Adam Walters (Treasurer, Kennedy Foundation)