February, 2014
The inaugural Gavin Mooney Memorial Essay Competition: winner announced

Sydney GP Dr Tim Senior has won the inaugural Gavin Mooney Memorial Essay Competition with an essay titled, “Climate change and equity, whose language is it anyway?”

The competition honours the work and memory of the late Professor Gavin Mooney, a health economist who was a tireless advocate for social justice.

The competition is a joint project of the Sydney School of Public Health at the University of Sydney, the public health blog Croakey, and Inside Story, an online current affairs publication from the Swinburne Institute for Social Research.

The judges said the winning entry challenged the language of climate change activism, and also incorporated the voices of those who are most likely to be affected by climate change.

The competition was judged by Gomeroi writer and blogger Kelly Briggs (also known on Twitter as @TheKooriWoman); Peter Browne, Editor of Inside Story; Professor Shane Houston, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) at the University of Sydney; Professor Glenn Salkeld, Head of the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney; and Melissa Sweet, moderator of Croakey blog.

The 18 entries were de-identified for the judging process, and assessed according to four criteria:

- The work is disruptive i.e. challenging or prompting change in status quo.
- The work incorporates novel ideas or approaches or thinking or style.
- The work is telling stories that matter.
- The quality of the writing.

Dr Senior will receive a $5,000 prize for the winning essay, which will be published by Inside Story.
The four runner-up entries - authored by Steve Campbell and Lucie Rychetnik, Oscar McLaren, Peter Boyer and Dora Marinova, and Fergus Green - will also be published as part of an e-book associated with the competition.

The judges said the quality of the entries was impressive.

Peter Browne said: “The prize is off to a great start, and Inside Story is delighted to be involved.”

Professor Salkeld said: “Gavin’s most frequent response to a health issue was to say, “ask the community what they want”. We asked the community about climate change and equity, and the response was terrific – plenty of ideas, diversity and a willingness to challenge the status quo. Gavin was never one for the status quo!”

Melissa Sweet said: “The best of the essays in this competition add a depth to discussions about climate change that is sadly lacking from most mainstream media coverage of the issue.”

The topic for the next Gavin Mooney Memorial Essay Competition will be announced in early June, with entries closing on November 3.

• For further information, contact: Professor Glenn Salkeld: 02 9036 9262