

Combining clarity with compassion: *The Sydney Morning Herald's* Peter Hannam and Laura Chung

EMPA Australia Awards for Excellence in Communication in the category *Media*



The Sydney Morning Herald's coverage identified early on that NSW was facing a severe fire season. At each stage, the newspaper and online service provided a rich vein of unforgettable images, live blogs and articles, with Peter Hannam and Laura Chung's work particularly prominent.

Highlights of their joint entry for the media award include exclusive vegetation mapping as the forests began to dry out and poignant vignettes of the people and communities caught up in the unfolding infernos.

Both Peter and Laura have sought to maintain a presence of bushfire news and analysis in the mainstream media long after the flames were extinguished, and amid the onset of the coronavirus that pushed non-pandemic information into the background. As the various inquiries including the Royal Commission play out, communicating the lessons learned from the past season could be as important as reporting the events themselves.