

JUDGES REPORT

2022 – April - Open

Judge: Jenny Graff
Tasmania

Grade	ID	Image Title	Comments	Score
A		Looking for Breakfast	This is a well composed image and bringing out the gold in the water has worked well. The image has been over sharpened as can be seen by the halo around the beak and I suspect that is why you have been a bit heavy handed with the noise reduction - the seagull almost looks smooth and there is very little definition in the feathers. In spite of this it is still quite a striking image.	5
A		Sunrise in City	There is lovely lighting in this image – classic for this time of day – and it really makes images pop. It is well exposed and the reflections add depth. It would be a good idea to crop on the right to remove whatever that thing is sticking up from the roof – alternatively clone it out. It's a good image – well done. <i>This is a general comment – objects at the edge that are chopped off like that are usually easy to deal with – every photographer should run their eye around the edge of an image checking for little things like this, and at the same time look for other things that can easily be rectified such as sensor spots, bits of rubbish lying around, hot pixels etc.</i>	7.5
A		Spinning flame	These are always dramatic images, and the flames are always attention grabbers – they are fascinating to watch. The rock in the foreground is interesting – I'm not sure why it has been included because the rest of the image is dark and it doesn't really add anything. It would be very easy to clone it out and keep the full attention on the circles of flame.	6.5
A		Sunset over Rose Bay	This is a beautiful sunset taken from a good angle and the lone fisherman (I think I can see a rod) is a big positive in the composition. As far as that goes – you could look at cropping at the bottom to remove the light-coloured rock, which does tend to catch the eye – alternatively it could be darkened a little in post processing. There is a tiny bit of foliage high on the left which could be cropped or cloned out. The light at this time would have been fairly dim and the darker areas have been lifted, which has unfortunately led to magenta noise which can be seen quite clearly in the foreground rocks; the trees across the water also look a bit washed out. It isn't a problem to leave these things a little darker in this situation – experiment with this	5

			because this image is worth a little more work to make it stronger.	
A		Bleep	This dog has the most incredible eyes – all my dogs have had brown eyes so it's amazing to see big beautiful blue eyes like this. It's an excellent portrait. The nose is a little soft and in what sounds like a contradiction it would be good to lighten it up just enough to see more detail. As it stands it is a dark circle in the image with very little definition, so the viewer looks at it to see what is there. If possible, leave a little more room above the ear; I would also try presenting this in portrait format. It's a great image – well done.	8.5
A		Totally devoted	This adoring expression on this little dog's face makes this photo special. It is a lovely image and has been well and thoughtfully composed. The mood lighting is excellent. You have done a great job – well done.	8
A		Bella Italia	The colours and structure of these houses are fascinating and more so because we don't have anything like this in Australia. Colours and composition are good, as is exposure. The cumulus clouds look somewhat unrealistic mainly due to the mix of colours in them – white, greenish grey, blue and magenta. This is something I would revisit and fix, because it is otherwise a good image.	6.5
A		Clear Off	I think I would clear off too – what a scary looking creature. Landscape format is great – and cropping it to this size removes any extraneous objects that may be distracting. If possible, leave a little more room on the left so the tip of the tail isn't right at the edge of the image. It's a great image – well done.	7.5
A		Chive Flowers	It's interesting that these vegetables have such lovely flowers. This is a sharp image that depicts the flower beautifully. It would benefit from having the background a little darker so I would play with this in post processing to see what you think.	5.5
A		Frilly Hibiscus	What a fascinating hibiscus – I had no idea these existed. This image looks like it came out of a botanical book – or could go in one; it could also be used on a greeting card. You have done well to keep the entire flower sharp to the point where all the markings on the petals are very easy to see. This is great work.	7.5
A		An unexpected photo opportunity	This is an interesting image and the treatment you have given it makes it even more so. It's actually quite fascinating to look at as there are a lot of incongruent items along with a couple of discrepancies that hold the attention and cause speculation. One of these is the tiles, which are parallel on the right then change angle on the left and disappear unevenly into the darkness. The other is what I am assuming is a Swiss ball, which looks as though the far ring has been modified, because	6.5

			following the laws of perspective the rings should be narrower as they get further away. As well the lighting on them does not follow the pattern of the others. However, it is a well thought out and interesting image.	
A		Someone Else Noticed This Too	What a fascinating growth pattern – and what a clever image! Somebody else in the past also saw the 'X' and marked the tree accordingly, and you were lucky to find this photo opportunity. It's a great image.	7
A		Come to mamma	This is a good action shot of a very focused dog, but the point of focus is behind the head, so his whole head is slightly soft. The colours are good and the background is attractive but there is a lot of fringing evident – it is particularly obvious against the skyline. There has been some post processing done in the sky and also to the headland and sea to the far right. This has resulted in some odd textures in the sky and a headland that looks as if a bite has been taken out of it. Remember to keep any photo manipulation invisible to the viewer.	5
A		Eyes on the prize	What an intent expression – the prize must have been something really worthwhile! The background in this image is quite busy but skillful use of depth of field has kept the dog well delineated and very much in the foreground. The splash of red and the pink mouth of the dog add contrast and life. Composition and exposure are good. There are a few white areas along the bottom of the image – I would consider cloning out the large one on the left because as it isn't really obvious what it is the eye keeps returning to it trying to figure out what is actually is. The other thing that needs to be removed is the small fraction of a white letter right on the edge of the red area. It's a very good image.	7.5
A		Come into my Parlour	This spider is nice and sharp as it spins its web. The colours are good as are exposure and composition. Nice work.	7.5
A		Contemplating my next move	This is a lovely image with great colours, and the bird is sharp against a beautifully soft background. There are uneven grainy areas around the bird and fence wire which could be from using a brush to soften the background more, and if this is so more care needs to be taken when doing this. There is also a fragment of what looks like fence wire but could be a seed just below the fence wire – irrespective of its nature it would be better cloned out. In spite of all this the image is very appealing.	6
A		English Cattle Resting	In my ignorance I would have called these yaks, especially the closest one. Having the three of them in a line has made the composition strong, although it would be better if the top of the image was cropped at the horizon – the white patches of sky are quite distracting. Exposure is good – dappled shadows can be a challenge.	5.5

A		Qld Bower Bird snacking	This is a great image. The bird is sharp and well positioned among the leaves and in the frame. The background is wonderful – soft bokeh on the right and those fascinating patterns from the palm leaf on the left. There isn't really anything else to say other than well done.	8.5
A		An intense look	This is a great portrait and you have chosen your subject well. The lined face is full of character, the big bushy beard adds to this as does the battered hat – and the logos on the shirt top it all off. Technically there are errors in the image – there are some specular highlights on the nose which aren't as noticeable in black and white as they would be in colour. When there are background lines that should be vertical it is better to keep them vertical as having them leaning is somewhat disconcerting, especially to those viewers who have a 'straight' eye; the image will not suffer if the subject is leaning to the left. The major flaws in this image are a result of post processing – the light areas on the left have been shaded but it is incomplete, and there are also light areas around the edges of the shoulder and hat. The area at the top of the hat has been modified and it now looks as if the wood is going through the hat. Unless you are trying to create a special effect it is vital to keep post processing invisible – the viewer should not see the flaws you are trying to cover or the work you have done to fix them.	6.5
A		Settling Down	You have captured this pelican well and everything in the image has fallen into place. The detail in the bird's wings has been retained, the water is well exposed, and composition is good – well done.	7
A		Afternoon drink	This is a lovely image – a sharp foreground with attractive colours against a muted background of similar colours. Composition is good as is exposure. Great work!	9
A		Collision Course	You have done well to take this photo and get it as sharp as you have. Suggestions to make it stronger – allow a little more room at the top as the wing tip is almost on the edge of the image, decrease the noise levels by very careful use of the luminance tool and lift the shadows just a little so more detail can be seen in the dark areas. It's a great image that you were lucky to catch.	7.5
A		Cactus Flowering	I think most cacti have surprisingly beautiful flowers and this is no exception. Even though this flower is a light colour and the photo was taken in the sun you have managed to demonstrate the sheen on the petals without losing detail. Good work.	6.5
A		Wilpena Pound Rim	This is a lovely illustration of the Australian outback that is taken from a vantage point which really shows it well. Exposure is good as is composition. The colours of the land are perhaps a little muted and could be	7

			made more vibrant. There is banding in the sky which is so obvious I suspect it could have been deliberately done to create a watercolour effect – and if this is the case it is very effective. If this was not intended then the colours of the sky have been pushed too far, and it needs to be rectified.	
A		Early Morning Row	This is a great image which has it all. It is sharp, and well composed and exposed. The reflection of the sky, the patterns in the water from the oars and the shadows on the water all combine to make this a striking image.	9
A		Strolling along Ross River	This is a beautiful, restful image that is well composed, well exposed, has great colours and good composition. Well done.	7.5

IMAGE OF THE MONTH
(ONE only for each Grade please)

Grade	ID	Image Title	Reason for Placing
A		Early Morning Row	It is just a great image that I can't fault. (Karen Grice)

Grade	ID	Image Title	Comments	Score
AB		Red Duck of the West	This is an interesting rock formation and if one looks hard enough there are all sorts of things that can be made out in it aside from the duck. It is a good illustration of the outback – the craggy rocks, clear blue sky and one eucalypt. It has been taken at the right time of day to show the textures and patterns in the rocks. The background is a little soft in comparison to the foreground and I have mentioned this with some suggestions as to how to overcome it in my comments about a similar image. This is the type of image one would expect to see in an outback calendar.	7.5
AB		Weathered Sandstone NT	Our outback is quite magnificent, and these rock formations are no exception, as is demonstrated in this image. The sun has highlighted the orange-red rocks, bringing out the contrast with the brown and white rocks. There is some haze from the sun on the left which could have been decreased by moving to the right (although that may not have been possible) or turning to the right a little. Overall, the colours are a little flat. The foreground is sharper than the background, which is often related to focus (assuming the aperture is at a higher f/stop). One way to get everything in the photo sharp is to focus at 'double the distance' – that is twice as far away as the closest object in the photo – and this is not necessarily as easy as it sounds. It is worth trying next time there are foreground objects a lot closer than the distant ones.	6

AB		Strange Bedfellows	I agree – a very odd couple. This image has good colours and is well exposed. Composition could be improved by having a little more room on the left to give more room behind the frog. This is an image which would be better sharp throughout, and as there are no intrusive elements in the background using a higher f/stop to give more depth of field would not be a problem. Getting down lower and taking the photo from the level of the two creatures would also help (and moving back a fraction also). Well done for seeing this interesting couple!	6
AB		Vella Fallax-Antlion	The light colour of the rendered wall behind this insect has allowed the beautiful patterns in its wings to be clearly seen. The insect is not completely in focus – the wingtips are very soft and almost give the appearance of being ‘smudged’. There is a small slightly dark area towards the back of the left wing which should be removed. There are also several very white areas around the legs and antennae which give the impression that the white wall has been shaded in post processing and these areas have been missed. This may not be the case but if it is what has been done it is vital to get it right.	5
AB		Beautiful Lily	The vibrant colours of this lily really stand out against the background, and the patterns on the petals are striking. The image is well exposed. Composition could be improved by having a little more room at the top, but the issue with this image is the focus. The lily is soft in the foreground, and this is quite a distraction for the viewer. With close up photography it can be very difficult to get the entire subject in focus, particularly if you want the background to be soft. Focus stacking is one way of doing this; another is to use a telephoto lens and choose a small enough aperture to ensure the depth of field extends across the entire subject. When there are beautiful flowers like this around it is definitely worthwhile experimenting with this.	5.5
AB		Black Swan	Black swans are always attractive, but the star of this image is the water - its beautiful colours and patterns really catch the eye. The feathers on the swan’s body are nicely highlighted but the head and neck are in shadow, making the eye very difficult to see. This is something that could be improved in post processing. The swan is central in this image - composition would be improved by having a little more room on the left, to give it space to swim into.	5.5
AB		Egret	This beautiful white bird stands out against the green grass, and the leaves of the plant on ‘our’ side of it add depth to the image. Having the water at the bottom of the image gives context; composition would be strengthened by having a little more room on the left and top. The image is slightly soft throughout. White	5.5

			subjects can be a challenge to photograph as it is easy to overexpose as has happened here, resulting in loss of definition of the feathers. Exposure bracketing is a good way of dealing with white subjects but can be extremely difficult with moving subjects. Spot metering off the subject, exposure compensation and using the histogram on the camera are all helpful tools to use and well worth trying.	
AB		Honeyeater feeding	This image has a lot of potential, but unfortunately is out of focus throughout, which is a problem. Aside from that composition and exposure are good, the colours are lovely and the water droplets add interest to the flowers. There appears to be a light rim on the left and top edges, with an obvious line on the right edge - these should all be cropped out. Bird photography is not easy so if you are interested and have the opportunity keep persevering with it.	4.5
AB		Guarding the tomb	The pristine white uniforms of these guards stand out beautifully against the background, and you have exposed this image well so none of their details have been lost. The colours are good, and the trees soften what would otherwise be quite a harsh background. The image is rotated slightly to the right and correcting this would make a significant difference; it would also eliminate the area of sky in the top right corner. The rim of the pot in the bottom left corner is a little distracting and cropping to just above it would fix this. I find it interesting that the whole area is absolutely spotless – there is not one bit of rubbish or even a leaf on the ground.	7.5
AB		To work	Speaking as one who is a hopeless pushbike rider the sight of someone loading up a bike like that and not falling off is quite impressive – I have no idea how he would have even been able to get onto it with so many baskets attached to it! Although the background is busy he is undoubtedly the centre of attention. His serious expression is accentuated by the harsh light and shadows on his face, and contrasts with the placid face of the lady riding behind him. This is a good image – well done.	8.5

IMAGE OF THE MONTH (ONE only for each Grade please)			
Grade	ID	Image Title	Reason for Placing
AB		To Work	It is a well-balanced, colourful image that has been well caught – when an opportunity like this arises it is easy to miss, so the photographer did well to get such a good image. (Trevor Dunstan)