



# COMMUNITY

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### OFFICE HOURS

Monday: 8.30am - 4pm  
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### Got a news tip?

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### Booking Deadlines

#### Tuesday's Edition

Display: 5pm Thursday  
General Classifieds: 10am Monday  
Deaths: 11am Monday

#### Friday's Edition

Display: 5pm Tuesday  
Classifieds: 10am Thursday  
Deaths: 11am Thursday

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#### Classifieds

For your convenience you can place classifieds  
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Cohuna Newsagency or the Swan Hill Guardian

A Member of



AUDIT BUREAU  
OF CIRCULATIONS



Alana Holmberg, 36, left, her sister, Greta, 33, and Sol, (now 1), in front of the prize-winning photo at the gallery in Canberra. **Picture supplied.**

# Pregnant focus a winner

## JENNY DENTON

FORMER Kerang Technical High School student Alana Holmberg has won one of Australia's most prestigious art awards, the National Photographic Portrait Prize, for a picture of her sister, Greta, nine months pregnant.

"It was amazing. It's very special to get that kind of recognition for your work," said Alana, who only took up photography seriously a decade ago.

"Going down that path is hard and you question yourself ... It's pretty lovely to get that encouragement when it comes."

Alana, who moved to Murra-bit, aged four, when her father took the job of principal at Myall Primary School, then shifted to Kerang with her family a few years later when the school closed and Rod Holmberg took over at Kerang Primary School.

Her mother, Jenny, a rural art teacher who travelled between locations, also went to work at the school.

Growing up in the country gave Alana a laid back and pretence-free outlook, and probably influenced her openness and interest in other people, the 36-year-old says.

It also instilled a curiosity about

the wider world.

"There's an element of wanting to see what's outside your home town. I always had a fascination with other places," she says.

As a girl Alana collected stamps and pondered their exotic origins.

When she was 16 the family spent a year in Canada, where she learnt photography, but after returning to Australia the interest lay largely dormant while she finished school and went on to work in marketing in Melbourne.

Losing her job, though, at age 26 set the young woman on a new career path.

"I was made redundant and that was the push I needed to go back to school," Alana says.

In 2011 she enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts in photography at RMIT, and on completing the course in 2014 was named "most promising graduate".

She then embarked on a career as a freelance photographer and videographer, working mainly on projects for non-government organisations in the Asia Pacific region producing work on themes like climate change, health and nutrition, and women's issues.

"Most of my work was out in the Pacific Islands telling stories about those places," she says.

"The organisation would send me over for a couple of weeks to build stories around particular topics."

Meanwhile, in her down time, she took photos and made video on subjects of personal interest, often with a social justice angle.

In 2017 a picture of a female Turkish activist she took was listed as a finalist for the national portrait prize.

But the photo of Greta was different.

"I started photographing her pregnancy because it was a change, and I thought it would be nice to capture our family before the arrival of [baby] Sol," Alana says.

It wasn't only Greta but the whole close-knit Holmberg family that was entering "a new chapter" as the next generation approached, and the winning photo "reflected those changes for all of us," Alana says.

"It's a tribute to Greta, who is proud of what her body did."

"It did also feel like a bit of a gift to my family, a wonderful celebration of our family and the love we have for each other."

It also reflected trends in photography in choice of subject.

"At the moment documentary photography is going through a

transformation around who is telling what stories and the power dynamics of that. The change I'd like to see is more people telling their own stories," Alana says. "This is part of a concerted effort to focus on my own life and family."

The shift is likely to see her return to the district to document her childhood and teenage surroundings, and possibly work on some local projects.

"The image of Greta is part of a broader project around family memory, story-telling and regional Victoria. There will definitely be some Kerang time in the mix," she says.

After Alana received news of her win in a phone call in February the whole family rapidly mobilised to get to the award ceremony two days later.

"Mum and dad were in Bendigo, Greta and I were in Melbourne, Ebony was in Sydney. We all made it to Canberra for the Friday night."

"To stand in that place and have your name read out in front of some amazing people in the industry is something I won't forget in a long time," she says.

"Never in a million years did I imagine winning the national portrait prize."

## Weather

### Temperatures

Thursday: minimum 6.2 degrees, maximum 23.4 degrees.  
Friday: 13.1, 20.8.  
Saturday: 10.0, 21.0.  
Sunday: 7.2, 16.0.  
Monday: 7.0.  
May minimums: lowest 3.7 degrees [17th], highest 14.6 degrees [1st] average 8.1 degrees [long-term average 7.2 degrees]. Lowest on record: -1.1 degrees [26th, 1967]. Highest on record: 18.0 degrees [5th, 1988].  
May maximums: lowest 12.7 degrees [10th], highest 23.5 degrees [18th], average 19.4 degrees [long-term average 18.2 degrees]. Highest on record: 28.7 degrees [5th, 1978]. Lowest on record: 8.9 degrees [27th, 2000].

### Rainfall

Saturday: 0.8mm. Sunday: 2.4mm. Monday: 5.0mm.  
Month to date: 42.8mm [long-term average 35.6mm].  
Year to date: 57.6mm. [long-term January-May average: 134.7mm]. Last year to May 27: 51.0mm. Highest on record: 138.0mm [1956]. Lowest on record: 0.0mm [1895, 1912, 1934].

### Evaporation

Weekly pan evaporation: 9.8mm.



Source: Bureau of Meteorology.

### Forecast

**Today:** Showers, 6-15  
**Wednesday:** Showers clearing, 9-12  
**Thursday:** Partly cloudy, 3-14  
**Friday:** Partly cloudy, 4-16  
**Saturday:** Partly cloudy, 6-16  
**Sunday:** Partly cloudy, 7-17

### Daylight

**Today** sunrise 7.22am  
sunset 5.21pm  
Wednesday 7.23am, 5.20pm  
Thursday 7.24am, 5.20pm  
Friday 7.24am, 5.19pm  
Saturday 7.25am, 5.19pm

### Ultra-violet index

Sun protection not recommended, UV Index predicted to reach 2 [Low].

### Fire danger

Mallee: Low-moderate. The Shire of Gannawarra is in the Mallee fire district.  
Northern Country: Low-moderate. The Shire of Loddon is in the Northern Country fire district.  
• Fire danger and restrictions information is available from www.cfa.vic.gov.au