

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A BUSH POETRY EVENT

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Performance Bush Poetry and Yarn Spinning is all about entertaining an audience, whether it be competitions, social events or Bush Poets Breakfasts. Selecting the correct venue, and setting up the venue, is pivotal to attracting and pleasing a crowd.

VENUE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Venues should be vibrant, central, welcoming with food, refreshments and rest room facilities e.g. Clubs, auditoriums, beer gardens (all out of earshot of the bar), festival marquees, country halls, vacant stud stock arenas. For those out-of-the-way venues, contact local committees to provide “catering”, as a means of fundraising for their own cause (e.g. Pre-School & Hall Committees, CWA). The aim is to attract large numbers from the general public (i.e. the audience).
- Performing area must be completely free of clutter, clean, and appropriately decorated with a Bush/Australiana theme. It should ignite pride in every performer to step up on a professional platform, to enhance their confidence and presentation of their hard learnt work. If there is a stage, use it! If there is an ABPA back-drop, use it! If the organizers have their own banner, use it! If local sponsors are supporting the event, use their banners.
- Use a reliable quality sound system, preferably with two microphone stands. Use the sound system to play Australiana ‘mood music’ prior to the event to create an engaging atmosphere. A sound-check should be done prior to the event and monitored throughout the event.
- A lectern to the side of the stage for the Compere’s notes only – (not to be used by performers/competitors).
- For the audience – a neat arrangement of chairs or hay bales; or if the audience are required to bring their own chairs, advertise as such.
- For Competition Judges - three comfortable chairs and a roomy table so that the Judges can confer with each other if required. The Judges should be positioned in the centre of the venue amongst the audience. For the Scrutineers - tables should be at the back of the venue out of sight and ear-shot from the audience.

ANCILLARY BUSH POETRY EVENTS TO SUPPORT COMPETITIONS

Performance Bush Poetry is all about entertaining an audience and leaving a lasting, memorable impression on a community. Competition organizers should take advantage of the many Performance Bush Poetry genres to enhance public interest in this art form.

1. Bush Poet's Breakfast – This event should be compered by at least one professional Bush Poet to encourage “Walk-ups” from the audience to perform and to provide non-stop entertainment for 1-2 hours. It provides a non-competitive atmosphere, and fosters camaraderie between poets.
2. Poet's Brawl (also called the One Minute Cup) - An original poem by a performer, not exceeding one minute. Preambles are not allowed – instead the content of the One Minute is rhymed verse only.

Organizers may require the Brawl to be written within 24hours of the performance, by drawing a ‘title’ from a hat, or may allow the Brawl to feature poems written at any time during the poet's lifetime.

The Brawls are time-checked by a big bell if overtime, and judged by audience applause. The Winner is the performer with the greatest applause. It is up to the Compere to monitor the applauses and to actively encourage audience participation.

3. Duo Bush Poets – Two poets combine to present an entertaining spot.
4. State of Origin OR Bushies Vs Townies - Teams of 4 or 5 poets are selected to represent each team. These shows require an enthusiastic Referee (compere) to keep the audience enthralled and vocally supporting their team. The winning team is judged by the loudest supporters.

5. Workshops and School Visits - Competition Judges and other professional poets are willing to hold workshops in the local community and in schools. Where time and funding allow, competition organizers are encouraged to include these in their program.

6. Charitable Organizations and Nursing Home visits – Show the community the compassionate side of Bush Poets with a little free goodwill and good Bush Poetry to brighten someone’s day. Future Bush Poetry events will be welcomed with open arms by the community, making it easier for organizers.