

**2017 ABPA NATIONAL AND WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP  
PERFORMANCE BUSH POETRY COMPETITION RESULTS  
TOODYA BUSH POETRY FESTIVAL, WA**

Conducted under the auspices of The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

**Male Champion**

Winner: Keith Lethbridge  
Runner-up: Ken Tough  
Third: Peter Blyth

**Female Champion**

Winner: Sue Pearce  
Runner-up: Rhonda Tallnash  
Third: Carmel Wooding

**WA Champion**

Winner: Keith Lethbridge  
Runner-up: Peter Blyth  
Third: Bill Gordon

**Traditional**

**Male**

Winner: John Hayes  
Runner-up: Ken Potter  
Third: Bob Kettle

**Female**

Winner: Sue Pearce  
Runner-up: Carmel Wooding  
Third: Rhonda Tallnash

**WA**

Winner: John Hayes  
Runner-up: Barry Higgins  
Third: Keith Lethbridge

**Modern**

**Male**

Winner: Ken Tough  
Runner-up: Keith Lethbridge  
Third: Ken Potter

**Female**

Winner: Sue Pearce  
Runner-up: Rhonda Tallnash  
Third: Jacqui Warnock

**WA**

Winner: Keith Lethbridge  
Runner-up: Peter Blyth  
Third: John Hayes

## **Original Serious**

### Male

Winner: James Fitzpatrick  
Runner-up: Keith Lethbridge  
Third: Ken Tough

### Female

Winner: Carmel Wooding  
Runner-up: Rhonda Tallnash  
Third: Jacqui Warnock

### WA

Winner: James Fitzpatrick  
Runner-up: Keith Lethbridge  
Third: Roger Cracknell

## **Original Humorous**

### Male

Winner: James Fitzpatrick  
Runner-up: Keith Lethbridge  
Third: Brian Langley

### Female

Winner: Sue Pearce  
Runner-up: Rhonda Tallnash  
Third: Peg Vickers

### WA

Winner: James Fitzpatrick  
Runner-up: Keith Lethbridge  
Third: Brian Langley

## **Novice original**

Winner: Chris Taylor  
Runner-up: Ray Parks  
Third: David Morrell

## **Novice other poet**

Winner: Peter Marshall  
Runner-up: Anne Hayes

## **Yarnspinning**

Winner: Peg Vickers  
Runner-up: Peter Blyth  
Third: Keith Lethbridge

# 2017 ABPA NATIONAL AND WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WRITTEN BUSH POETRY COMPETITION RESULTS

Conducted under the auspices of The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

## CLASS NOVICE – CATEGORY SERIOUS

First	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>The Anzac Game</i>
Second	Ray Jackson	Shelley WA	<i>A Challenging Land</i>
Third	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>Crocodilian</i>
Highly Commended	Bill Gordon	Boyup Brook WA	<i>Sandakan</i>
Commended	Norton Palmer	South Yunderup WA	<i>The Orabanda Cup</i>
Commended	Ray Jackson	Shelley WA	<i>Camooweal Billabong</i>

## JUDGES' COMMENTS RE NOVICE SERIOUS CATEGORY

There was a range of subjects covered in this section and the majority related to Australia, Australians and our way of life. Most rang with a sense of authenticity, suggesting that entrants were writing from direct experience or about subjects that were meaningful to them.

The winning poem *The Anzac Game*, skillfully juxtaposed the concept of a sporting game with a war game to give a different slant to a deep subject. The second place getter, *A Challenging Land*, is a beautiful, meaningful poem that has the potential to win in Open competition.

Some great ideas were spoilt through technical inconsistencies but most of the poems presented could be developed to a higher standard with careful editing. Judges' suggestions are to look at the 'Tips' on the ABPA Website, find a mentor, seek to obtain critiques wherever possible and '*wrestle with the words until they 'yield'*'. The most important thing is to keep writing and learning about the exacting craft which we all love. Thank you.

## CLASS NOVICE – CATEGORY HUMOROUS

First	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>The Gun</i>
Second	John Dooley	Qld	<i>Today's Shopping Habits – or the Good Old Days</i>
Third	David Ellis	WA	<i>On Hot Weekends</i>
Highly Commended	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>Old Bill</i>
Highly Commended	John Dooley	Qld	<i>To the Outback and Back – To Lite 'n' Easy</i>
Highly Commended	Peter Burke	Toodyay WA	<i>Corellas in a Toodyay Park</i>

## JUDGES' COMMENTS RE NOVICE HUMOROUS CATEGORY

Humour is one of the most difficult areas of writing so congratulations to all who did well in this competition and to all who took part. There were some good yarns in the selection and some of the resultant poems would be fun to perform. The winning poem *The Gun* was a fine example of Aussie humour.

Congratulations to the winners and to all, the main thing is to enjoy what you do and to enjoy the process of working towards constantly improving both the writing and the oral presentation of your comic stories and experiences. We have enjoyed sharing your submissions. Thank you.

ABPA Judges – Brenda Joy, Gregory North and Robyn Sykes

## CLASS OPEN – CATEGORY SERIOUS

First	David Campbell	<i>Sweetwater</i>
Second	Will Moody	<i>Driftwood</i>
Third	Irene Conner	<i>When the Wattle Turns to Gold</i>
Highly Commended	Irene Conner	<i>Re-birth</i>
Commended	Shelley Hansen	<i>On the Brink?</i>
Commended	Paulene Haggith	<i>Procrastinating</i>

## JUDGES' COMMENTS RE OPEN SERIOUS CATEGORY

There was a wide range of subjects covered in this category where poems told stories, expressed beauty through, or put forward viewpoints on, poetry and aspects of modern living. As always, some poems showed great potential but were brought down by poor craftsmanship and, in some cases, a lack of care in presentation.

However, the top selection of poems were beautifully written demonstrating both skill and depth and those in the winning bracket were worthy of succeeding at this high level. The first and second placed poems were fractionally divided and the top four place getters stood apart for their lyric, poetic qualities and the moving flow of their language.

The winning poem, *Sweetwater*, where a universal concept of human pathos is placed unmistakably in an Australian environment, is full of the nostalgia and pain of the effect on a partner when the other declines through aging. The runner up, *Driftwood*, interweaves a story of individual love and life into a scene of the fragile interventions of Man and the endurance of Nature.

Congratulations to all who succeeded this time around and thank you to all entrants for sharing the out-pourings of your hearts and minds.

## CLASS OPEN – CATEGORY HUMOROUS

First	Shelley Hansen	<i>Buy-Swap-Sell</i>
Second	Will Moody	<i>The Busker and the Bikies</i>
Third	Tom McIlveen	<i>Fishing for a Gucci</i>
Highly Commended	Shelley Hansen	<i>Boiled Eggs</i>
Highly Commended	Tom McIlveen	<i>The Breathalyser</i>
Commended	Glenny Palmer	<i>Bush Justice</i>

## JUDGES' COMMENTS RE OPEN HUMOROUS CATEGORY

In this category there was not a lot of 'laugh out loud' poetry but there were, some poems which cleverly brought out the trials and traumas of both country and city life and of both past and modern eras and from these a good selection of worthy winners was possible. Examples are *Buy-Swap-Sell* which is an astute take on the modern throw-away, media-obsessed society and its engendered errors, while the comic twist at the end shows the writer's own 'supposed' entrapment in the lures. *The Busker and the Bikies* maintains comic tension by providing unusual interaction between people of diverse backgrounds.

The top ten poems were well written but some outside this bracket would have scored higher if they had not been marred by technical glitches or inappropriate subject matter. A poem may lend itself to performance at a poets' breakfast or other similar event, but for a competition of this caliber, it must also be a poem that is well written and complies with the high levels required for an ABPA Championship meant to showcase the best writing that poets of our era are producing.

To succeed, sometimes it is only a matter of taking more care in the final editing process and this is well worth the effort both to improve our own work and also to maintain the standards of our genre.

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WITH SECOND PLACINGS IN BOTH THE OPEN SERIOUS AND OPEN HUMOROUS CATEGORIES, THE 2017 ABPA AUSTRALIAN WRITTEN CHAMPION POET Will Moody of Bellingen, New South Wales.

ABPA Judges – Brenda Joy, Gregory North, and Robyn Sykes

## TOODYAY BUSH POETRY FESTIVAL REPORT

Two new Australian Bush Poetry Champions emerged from the Act Belong Commit Bush Poetry Festival held at Toodyay, WA over the weekend 3-5 November. Keith "Cobber" Lethbridge from Armadale, WA, won the male title from Ken Tough of Pretty Beach, NSW and Peter Blyth, Elleker, WA. Sue Pearce (Tumut, NSW) had a narrow victory in the female competition over Rhonda Tallnash (Violet Town, Vic) and Carmel Wooding (Warwick, Qld). Keith also won the WA crown from Peter Blyth and Bill Gordon.

The festival got off to a great start with a "Meet and Greet" in the beer garden of the Freemasons Hotel on the Thursday night. Friday morning started with a workshop conducted by Noel Stallard who was one of the judges along with Carol Heuchan and Jack Drake. A lunchtime visit to the Toodyay Miniature Railway where several poems were recited on a railway theme, was followed by a ride on the train. Competition on the Friday afternoon in the junior and novice sections was followed by Yarnspinning. This resulted in a clean sweep to WA with Peg Vickers prevailing over Peter Blyth and Keith Lethbridge.

Pat Drummond proved very popular with his concert on the Friday night. Pat is well known in bush poetry circles, having been a member of the "Naked Poets". Pat is descended from one of Toodyay's founders, Sir James Drummond, and was in Toodyay to check out his ancestral roots.

The Memorial Hall was packed for two days of competition for the Australian Bush Poetry championships, with 25 – 29 poets competing in each section for the titles and trophies which were made by Dave Smith, one of our best Yarnspinners and last year's winner of that event. Saturday competition was in the traditional and modern poetry categories. MC for the whole weekend was Eric Biddle. Eric kept proceedings rolling with his anecdotes between poets, and ensured the audience was thoroughly entertained throughout.

Those who still had energy on Saturday night enjoyed a Bush Dance put on by the highly acclaimed Perth band "Loaded Dog". An early start on Sunday morning for the Lions Club Bush Poets Breakfast followed by the poet's brawl. This popular event was won by Peg Vickers from Albany, WA. Peg is a regular winner of brawls in the west, not surprising to any who have heard her or read her books on Grandpa's Farm and his many escapades.

Competition resumed with poets performing poems they had written themselves, both serious and humorous. Winner of both these sections was a poet competing for the first time. James Fitzpatrick is a paediatrician from Perth. James has made a name for himself with work he has done improving health outcomes among the indigenous community in the Kimberly region of WA. He has just made a name for himself as a poet of the highest calibre and we have great pleasure welcoming him to our ranks.

The festival would not have been possible without the generous support of the Toodyay Shire, Bendigo Bank Toodyay, Toodyay Community Op-shop, Makit Hardware, Toodyay Riverside Caravan Park and Toodyay Miniature Railway. State Government support came from our major sponsors Healthway and Lotterywest. Full results of the competitions can be found on the website at [www.abpa.org.au/events/results](http://www.abpa.org.au/events/results).

Bill Gordon, President  
WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn. Inc.