

Toodyay Act Belong Commit Bush Poetry Festival 2018 Report

The WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners Assn Inc. held their annual Act Belong Commit Bush Poetry Festival in Toodyay on the first weekend in November. The Toodyay Memorial Hall was full for most sessions with many people coming from Nambung Country Music Muster where several of our poets performed the previous weekend. The Memorial Hall is a beautiful historic building and its character and decor make it an ideal venue for performing Bush Poetry. The Toodyay Shire is to be commended on the condition of the hall, and the manner in which it complements the historic nature of the town.

Following the effort involved in hosting the Australian Bush Poetry Championship last year, this year's festival was much more relaxing for the committee and ran very smoothly. Entries were up on previous State Championships and the standard of poetry presented was as good as can be found anywhere in Australia. The Makit Hardware Trophy for WA Champion Bush Poet was won by new member Michael Barclay, with Peter Blyth runner up and our President, Bill Gordon in third place. Peter Blyth won the "Rusty Christensen Trophy" for Yarnspinning, with the ever popular Peg Vickers once again taking out the Poet's Brawl. The festival started on Friday afternoon with a workshop presented by the judges for the State Championships, Bob Magor (Myponga SA), Tom McIlveen (Port MacQuarie NSW), and Keith Lethbridge (Armadale WA). A 'Meet and Greet' dinner followed at the Freemasons Hotel before the poetry started on Saturday morning. Proceedings concluded on Sunday afternoon with presentation of trophies and certificates to the winners by Toodyay Shire President Brian Rayner.

The Saturday night Variety Concert was well attended with Tom McIlveen and Susan Ashton heading a talented line up of artists to present a night of music and dancing. During the evening awards were presented for the written poetry competition held in conjunction with the festival. Major trophy, the Silver Quill, was won by WA poet Terry Piggott, with another local, Chris Taylor close behind. Terry has won many awards for his poetry Australia wide, and is proud to have one of Dave Smith's trophies adorn his mantelpiece.

The Toodyay Mini-rail was again the venue for Sunday lunch with poems on road and rail safety presented in the attractive setting at Duigee Park. Chris Taylor again showed his prowess as a writer by gaining most popular poem in both sections. WA Bush Poets and Yarnspinners Assn Inc president, Bill Gordon, acknowledged the generous support of the Toodyay Shire and the WA Government in making the festival a free public event. Healthway and Lotterywest are major sponsors with local support coming from Bendigo Bank, Makit Hardware, Toodyay Caravan Park and Toodyay Mini-rail.

Bill Gordon—President