

# A.B.P.A.



## Australian Bush Poets Association

Volume 23 No. 3

June/July 2017



## Winter Edition

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# EDITORIAL



Well, here we are heading into another Winter but people must have had their heads down all Autumn as we have received many poetry submissions for this issue.

One question that I have been asked by some members recently is what constitutes a Joke Poem, and is it a fair advantage over originality. Good question. Many poems have been written around old jokes. To me this is a great risk that I have seen backfire on several people. Why? Because the only jokes you own are those you have written yourself, and even then, if they are any good, you will not own them for long. My advice to those who wish to go down that path are:-

1. Be Cautious!
2. If you do then make it short, as in a one minute poem. Remember that a good joke teller or yarn-spinner will deliver that same joke in under twenty seconds.
3. Do not base your set around it and have it as your big finale, as you will be sorely disappointed if the performer before you uses the joke as a throw away before their poem and thus destroy any hope you have of getting a laugh.
4. Try to at least steer clear of old jokes with cobwebs on them or email jokes you have just received from a friend who has passed them onto everybody they know and they have passed it on, etc. etc. Just read through one and see how the 1000 words in the joke could have been delivered the same way in 50! (Does this sound familiar? Wait for it.....this is just great.....here it comes.....your going to kill yourself laughing!.....) A good comedian would be finished and off the stage by the time the email joke has finished! Also if the joke is common then it is extremely embarrassing to find that half a dozen other poets have used the same joke as the recipe for their own version of a poem.
5. Remember that other poets and judges are not ignorant. It was pointed out to me that some competitions, including the Bronze Swagman, have been won with poems arranged around old jokes. Most people know the punchline so get bored with the three or four minutes leading up to it, waiting for the inevitable punchline.
6. Why have I formed this opinion? Because I have tried it and failed myself and seen others fail with it quite badly at times. Why not just use the joke to intro an original comedy poem?
6. Be Cautious!

## ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

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### Black and White Ads

Full page \$95

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### Full Colour Ads (Space limited)

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### Poets Calendar and Regular Events free (one or two lines only)

To help offset costs, articles regarding a festival or event would be appreciated if accompanied by a paid Ad. Send all details in plain text, Word or PDF Format to [editor@abpa.org.au](mailto:editor@abpa.org.au)

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**Neil McArthur**

**[editor@abpa.org.au](mailto:editor@abpa.org.au)**

**NOTE:- Next Magazine Deadline for submissions is July 27th**

## ABPA Committee Members 2017<sup>v</sup>

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# President's Report



Greetings to all fellow ABPA members and magazine readers. May is almost gone and June will be well and truly upon us by the time this magazine arrives in your mailbox. The past two months have been a little quieter on the Bush Poets' calendar, with the Corryong Man from Snowy River Festival Victorian championships done and dusted for another year. A huge thank you to Jan Lewis for another successful festival. Jan, you truly are a marvel and a legend... this wonderful event could not possibly be run without you co-ordinating and managing behind the scenes as only you can do. You are one of our greatest ambassadors! Congratulations to all new newly appointed Victorian champions, namely...Open Performance champion female, Rhonda Tallnash (1st) and Christine Boulton (2nd). Open performance Male Ken Tough (1st) and Ken Potter (2nd). Ken Tough also won the Man from Snowy River recital perpetual trophy. (Truly a 'tough' act to follow). Congratulations and commendations also go to organisers, winners and indeed all participants in the Tenterfield Oracles of the Bush festival.

According to Bill and Meg Gordon, bush poetry is buzzing along beautifully in WA... following the running of the inaugural Port Bouvard Bush Poetry Day at Mandurah and also the Moondyne Festival at Toodyay. A reminder, whilst speaking of Bill and Meg, don't forget their upcoming ABPA National Bush Poetry Championships being held in Toodyay W.A, Friday 3rd till Sunday 5th of November 2017. It is only 80kms northeast of Perth and well worth the trip, even if only to check out the rustic charms of historic Toodyay's studios, galleries, boutique shops and wineries. (Not to mention an extravaganza of Australian Bush poetry at its finest). Google [www.toodyay.com](http://www.toodyay.com) for any accommodation enquiries. Air fares are considerably cheaper if booked ahead and very reasonably priced in comparison to other destinations. Leading MC's and judges will be Carol Heuchan, Noel Stallard and Jack Drake. This is shaping up to be one of the greatest showcase events on our calendar in recent years, and I would encourage all members and readers to seriously consider making the pilgrimage.

Speaking of pilgrimages, wonderful ambassadors and iconic bush poets... Greg North has commenced his annual one-man crusade in Winton, entertaining travelers during his nightly shows at the Matilda Tourist Park. Wow! I would wager that there would be some surprised grey nomads walking into one of Greg's shows, way out back of the black stump in Queensland. I get to meet a lot of caravanning grey nomads in my day job, repairing their TV systems and satellite receivers, and already I am hearing feedback from many of them in regards to Winton last year. They seem to take great delight in telling me how they happened to stumble upon this amazing bush poet performer in Winton of all places. I then take great delight in telling them...yes I know that bloke. He's a mate of mine! Thank you Greg, for taking your awesome talent outback and sharing it with the travelers. They truly are spreading the word around Australia, and it's amazing how they network and beat the drum for our cause. Geoffrey Graham take a bow for bringing Henry back to life at Port Arlington! You are a living legend!

I would also like to acknowledge some of our other travelling performing poets, namely... Ray Essery, Gary Fogarty, Neil McArthur, Brenda Joy, Mel and Susy, Bill Kearns, Jack Drake, Robyn Sykes, Rhonda Tallnash, Marco Giori, Dave Proust, Murray Hartin, Carol Heuchan and Jason Roweth, and all others that I have not mentioned, who are currently travelling and performing to audiences. You truly are modern day disciples, in taking the written word out and preaching to the masses. Along with our contemporary writers, you are the lifeblood of Australian Bush Poetry today, and on behalf of the ABPA, I would like to take this opportunity to honor you and commend you for the wonderful work you do.

As mentioned in Carol's 'Folding Stuff' column in this magazine, there are still tickets available in our inaugural ABPA chook raffle. Please support her in this, as she is proving to be an angel in need, in keeping the ABPA coffers in the black, which is imperative for the very survival of our beloved organisation. Without cash we are going to wither and fade away, as have so many other organisations in this chaotic, cyber, time strapped world that we live in. Buying tickets is easy...simply post a cheque to the treasurer (\$5 per ticket)...or go to ABPA webpage for further instructions on how to do it on line.

The ABPA committee met on Thursday night 11th of May. Matters discussed were...becoming more proactive in canvassing for prospective new members at bush poetry events, by means of giving out back dated magazines, promotional brochures and membership applications. A new trophy for the Frank Daniel Junior Award is being organised by Jan Lewis to foster and encourage junior poets at upcoming West Australian championships. In regards to proposed ABPA Poetry Anthology book, we are looking at ways of protecting ABPA coffers by getting sponsorship in covering the exorbitant costs involved in printing books. Our angelic treasurer is currently negotiating. Our goal is to have books printed and ready to promote and sell at Tamworth Festival 2018.

Well folks, that is all from me for this edition. Until next time.

In Poetry, Tom McLveen

# The Folding \$tuff

Hello from Carol Hutcheson your family friendly and transparent Treasurer, keeping members aware of how your money is used and the need for more, how we are going to get it and help you to get some from your own efforts.

**MUCH** has happened since the last magazine thanks to the generosity and concerns of members who have been receiving "**Chook**" Raffle emails. The postage would break us if everyone received a real letter, apologies, so please don't feel ignored – here is the contact you've been waiting for.

**THE FIRST Limited Issue "Chook" Raffle** was launched by email on Anzac Day with a plea for prize donations and to 'please purchase tickets *post haste*'. Get this – within 48 hours \$800.00 had been donated by members for the first two raffle prizes and ticket purchases were under way. Isn't that just wonderful – you are answering the call as our forebears did.

**TO DATE (18/5/17) 150 tickets have been purchased by 35 people**, and by the time this reaches you it is important that you can see your way clear to snaffle up the balance of 400 quickly. Purchases are by cheque and direct deposit, NOT Paypal. The draw ought to be before 1<sup>st</sup> July or when sold out soon after. Please ask friends and family to help out – show them the marketing poster in this magazine and go for it please.

**ABPA BADGES.** Did you know that we have a bronze penny with ABPA logo on it as our badge? It's pin is designed for hats, lapels, shirts, (not for pierced ears) and is only **\$10.00 post paid** in a cardboard mailer box.

**BENDIGO Bank** is going to be approached very soon for full funding of our long awaited **book of poems**, with a full-on compelling application backed up by facts and figures compiled by Will Moody and Brenda Joy.

**THE USE OF Paypal** by ABPA is ceasing end of June, please note everyone who uses it to pay subs, and is being replaced by AustPost **SecurePay** for payment of membership and PLI by **credit card** – plus the processing fee. Details will be on our website. The fee is much cheaper than Paypal, which ABPA has been picking up for you, and is not invasive of your personal details. **SecurePay** only wants to process your credit card payment, **and does not get your profile** as Paypal does. Not invasive for me either. **International** members – a NZ member suggests to search out a company called 'forex' (or OFX) on [www.ofx.com](http://www.ofx.com) for no-fee\* international transfers. \*Please be aware that ABPA will NOT pay your 3<sup>rd</sup> party fees any more.

Email me: [treasurer@abpa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@abpa.org.au) Ph: 07 4162 5878  
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**Annual Memberships up to December 2017 . Six magazines per year.**

Posted Members Magazine: \$45. emailed Members Magazine: \$35.  
Dual Family Membership/one Magazine: \$60. Juniors with magazine: \$20.  
International Posted Magazine: \$70. International emailed Magazine: \$35.  
**Welcome anyone with an interest in bush poetry with gusto! Say - 'Take a leaf from our book and a whole new world will open up to you'. A full-blown new member drive is now on – ask me if you can help please.**

## Brain Food

How did you get on with "**The Walgett Episode**" writing exercise last mag?

It's nigh on impossible as the metre is so disjointed only someone like Banjo Paterson could get away with it. That poem is a **performance poem**. Judges always note the metre at performances, so if you want to win that prize money, choose your poems carefully for regular metre and rhyme.

Here is how **David Campbell** would have re-written one line with better metre. It changes the impact for performance but is still not OK for written competitions. Thanks David for taking the time for our edification:

Then he smiled a smile as he **pouched the pelf**,

"I'm glad that I'm **quit** of them, **win or lose**:"

You can **fetch** them in when it suits yourself,

And you'll **find** the skins – on the kangaroos!"

The second line has a different structure to the other three. If it had been "And I'm **glad** I'm **quit** of them, **win or lose**" it would have been fine, but this is a typical example of Paterson playing fast and loose with metre. In fact, if you look at the whole poem you'll find that none of the stanzas are the same. Easy to adjust to for performance purposes after a bit of practice, but not exactly showcasing the ABPA's "clear mastery of metre".

**See what I mean.** The word 'bawbee' was there last mag to send you to your dictionary to find out that it is a Scottish coin now out of circulation.

Have a go with this 'money' word: **lucre**. Try writing four lines in perfect metre and rhyme using that word. Post or email it to me. Till next time...xx

## Letters To The Editor

### A Response to David Campbell's "We Must Maintain Standards in Written Competitions"

Having read David's article, and being a poet as well as a recent member of the ABPA who has entered one competition, I am responding without the benefit of knowledge of the ABPA history or traditions.

David is an accredited judge and is bemoaning what appears to be a "liberal interpretation" of the judging standards by some of the other competition judges. At this point I am assuming that the judging assessment sheet is available for all to see (I haven't looked) and all entrants would be familiar with the judging requirements. If "clear mastery of metre" is one criteria, then David possibly has a point, similarly with his comments on rhyme (in paragraph 3).

But the tone of the article seems to indicate that David cannot abide with less than strict interpretation. "Either metre and rhyme are the foundation stones of our written competitions or they are not. There is no half-way house." I wonder if the strict interpretation, as David would have it, is in the best interest of the poetry or the organisation.

Why haven't I entered any more competitions? One reason is apparent in the winners list for the 2017 Dunedoo Bush Poetry Festival results, Tom McIlveen, 2nd in the Open Serious, Highly Commended, Commended x 3 and second in the Open Humorous. Good on you Tom, I have no issue with you or your poetry at all, and I am impressed with 'Bobby is Back'. But, as a new member, this tells me either, some people have understood and worked out the judging assessment system (conversely, some haven't worked it out) or not enough people are entering the competitions. I suspect those who have good stories and struggle with metre, are giving up, and we miss out on their talents.

With David's "strict interpretation", almost no innovation is possible, (a static criteria is a dying criteria) and I suspect the winner is the poem 'not found wanting' in its presentation. To me, the story is more important than the metre and rhyme. Maybe we need to look at a new category for competition, 'Good Aussie Bush stories' with a liberal interpretation in judging metre and rhyme, just a suggestion.

Craig Coulson, Victoria

G'Day! Neil. It's Me old "Skew Wiff" (88 not out) Howyagoin? Mate. I am writing to congratulate on the Magazine (ANZAC). It's top class. Well Done.

It has a great WARMTH TO IT. Plus interesting Articles-- Great poems-- Good Work. I've been sending a few poems to the Illawarra Group. (by email) They meet every week – A great Club. I'll enclose one nonsense poem .

All the best and Regards to all . Hooroo!!

A young Editor bloke Oh! So keen ,  
Did publish a Great Magazine,  
There were poems so great,  
To enjoy – celebrate,  
"Three Cheers for the BEST EVER SEEN.!"

Thanks Heaps Skew Wiff! Neil



# Letters To The Editor

Hello Carol (and ABPA members),

Thanks for your email (re use of Paypal finishing with ABPA end June), I am sorry the ABPA is having a hard financial struggle. I can understand what is going on and happy to help where I can. I have a couple of payment options I can use, I can pay overseas bank accounts directly through a foreign exchange account called forex, it is something other overseas members could use too; they don't charge a fee\*\* and the rates of exchange are the best I have found. The loss of PayPal is not an issue for me. \*\* (NOTE: The ABPA will NOT outlay a receiver/merchants fee for subs and PLI if there is one. Check with The ABPA Treasurer before using forex. Carol.)

I enjoy the ABPA and your magazine, I have been promoting bush poetry in NZ for many years, I had hoped we could have set up a reciprocal interaction with your association however my attempts so far have not been picked up.

Funding a magazine and arranging all the events is expensive, you have done it well so far and the festivals I have attended in Australia have generally been very enjoyable, especially the last few. I have found the young generation in NZ are interested and very capable of writing some great material however with all youngsters the attention span is often a problem, the best thing is they are introduced to bush poetry and I am sure later as they begin to reflect on life, as they will do with age, their support for bush poetry will grow.

If you ever have knowledge of Australian Poets traveling to NZ I would appreciate being made aware, we run a poetry club monthly in Nelson and would welcome your artists.

Very kind regards,  
Roger Lusby, Member ABPA.  
email rlusby@xtra.co.nz

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Letter to The Treasurer, Carol Hutcheson from Olive Shooter, ABPA Life Member, and a founding member. Please support with her lots of letters.

Dear Carol,

Glad to know you. I am a life member of ABPA and was once the Secretary - Treasurer. I am forwarding a cheque for the 'Chook' Raffle toward prize donation for the third raffle and tickets for two raffles.

Last November I slipped and broke my femur, then followed 15 weeks in hospital non weight-bearing for three months, so I am trying to learn to walk again. Slow progress. On a wheelie walker. Sorry I didn't get my apology to the Annual General Meeting. I was thrilled to get an actual address as I have no email and often would have liked to contact Neil. They are all good mates of mine. I write a bit of poetry, perform rarely now, but I was never much good and had fun. The magazine is great. Hope you are well.

Yours Sincerely,  
Olive Shooter.

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The Australian Bush Poets Association invites you to participate in our

## Limited Issue 'Chook' Raffle

Our **Prize Sponsors:** Jeff Close of **www.outbackbooks** Toowoomba \$50  
Mick Martin of **Best Gutter Solutions** Clontarf, Qld. \$100  
Ian Groves \$50, Nigel Johnson \$50, Robin Marshall \$50, Anonymous  
\$100, and Anonymous \$400 for the second Chook Raffle. Thank you.

Also, since 25/4 to date 18/5, 35 people have purchased 150 tickets.

**250 tickets are still going begging** and we would very much like to have this first Issue in the silos and starting to be used for your benefit by 30<sup>th</sup> June if we can. I know it sounds a lot in a short time - there are still a couple of hundred of you and your friends out there who are willing to participate and we hope you will be able to see your way clear by 30<sup>th</sup> June or soon after. **Please ask friends, family, neighbours to help.**

**Prize is \$400.00** to be 'assigned' to the winner's preferred retailer, for food, shoes, tyres, school fees, etc, anything that is really needed. Gaming rules apply. **Only 400 tickets at \$5.00 each.**

**Better odds than Lotto - 1 ticket in 400 will win.**

To purchase tickets, please send The Treasurer an email with your name, address, amount banked and deposit receipt number from your online banking 'pay anyone', to [treasurer@abpa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@abpa.org.au) and direct deposit using 'pay anyone' the amount of purchase: Bank BSB 633 000. A/c no: 154842108. A/c name A.B.P.A. Inc Reference: 'Tickets Name' (e.g. 'Tickets Hutcheson' - no more)

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Please - help the A.B.P.A. Inc to keep our Oz unique Australian poetry, our Oz way of storytelling, our Oz language, our ABPA shows, competitions, mentoring for juniors and anyone who is interested, our Members' Magazine, sponsorships, public Facebook and Webpage, friendships formed, places to go - alive and flourishing. Thanks everyone for your generosity. Go for it! Carol Hutcheson.



Also visit our website at

**[www.abpa.org.au](http://www.abpa.org.au)**

# Lost for Words!

© Shelley Hansen

Winner – Humorous Section – 2017 Dunedoo Written Bush Poetry Competition

The good old Aussie lingo that we knew when we were kids  
is being overtaken. Yep! I'm sure it's on the skids!  
We're following a trend – but have we stopped to count the cost  
when we awake to find our spoken heritage is lost?

These sayings, rich with colour, would escape my mother's mouth –  
like "Don't look now, my girlie, but it's snowing way down south!"  
This phrase was uttered when a slip had dropped below a skirt –  
its cryptic code designed to place the wearer on alert.

"Well, look at what the cat's dragged in!" she'd say if we were late.  
"You'd better throw your hat in first, before you shut the gate."  
"Don't sit there like a shag upon a rock – there's work to do!"  
(In those days "shags" were cormorants – not slang for something "blue"!)

"You'll catch more flies with honey than with vinegar," she'd say,  
"We'll see you when the weather breaks!" (when neighbours went away).  
"Loose lips sink ships" would silence childish chatter with a frown.  
"He shot through like a Bondi tram" (when Uncle Ted left town).

You'd have "dirt on the liver" if you grizzled, griped or whinged.  
If Mum suspected gossip, she'd complain her "ears were singed".  
She'd claim a bitter taste was "like the floor of cocky's cage",  
And if a kid put on a turn – "He should be on the stage!"

"He's flasher than a gold tooth on a rat," she'd say in jest  
if someone got the notion he was better than the rest.  
In holiday apartments she'd wash everything by hand.  
"Your own dirt's clean," she'd tell me when I tried to understand.

The cat would mew around her as she filleted the fish.  
"No party without Punch!" she'd say – and drop some in his dish.  
"You kids are like a fiddler's elbow – go outside, or sit!"  
Untidy hair was said to be "a birch broom in a fit".

"He's got the life of Riley!" she'd exclaim about the dog,  
recumbent in the morning sun, as lazy as a log.  
She'd say that you could "ride to London" on a kitchen blade  
that needed to be sharpened. "Like a bought one" meant homemade.

She'd say that "Bob's your uncle" if endeavours met success.  
"The fat was in the fire" for sure if things turned out a mess!  
"Like mutton dressed as lamb" was someone clad in raunchy stuff;  
Full "up to dolly's wax" meant you had eaten quite enough.

My mother's speech was epic, from a time when she would wear  
her Apple Blossom perfume, setting lotion in her hair.  
When common sense was served with meat and veg and home-baked sweets,  
and garden birds (not people) were the ones who uttered "tweets".

But now we've been besieged by "OMG" and "LOL"  
and everything that's mildly good is "awesome", "sick" as well.  
The "F" word soils the lips of kids as young as three or four –  
in our day swearing left us tasting soap forever more!

Of course we must have progress – our vernacular must change –  
but what we have replaced it with is nothing short of strange!  
Vocabulary is reduced. Its meaning? For the birds!  
I think of what we had, and stone the crows! I'm lost for words!



# In Search Of Gold

© Hugh Allan

The early nineteen twenties saw some fortunes being made,  
by farmers and by miners and by men who sometimes strayed  
from steady jobs, to try their luck and maybe find some gold—  
and so it was with two young mates who fitted in this mould.

They'd sweated digging copper at Cloncurry for a year,  
'til Eddie, feeling restless, said to Charlie, 'Listen here,  
I reckon we'd do better up in Arnhem Land, you know,  
I've heard there's heaps of gold up there and miners making dough.'

And Charlie, an adventurer, agreed, but raised a hand,  
'There's no way that I'm walking all that distance overland—  
I'll take a chance with horses though, and have a go; you bet!  
We'd better get a move on, mate, before the flamin' wet.'

The day arrived and off they rode on horseback down the road,  
with pack-horses behind them just to help them with their load.  
Beyond the languid Leichhardt lay a homestead on their way,  
and pausing for a chinwag spelled their horses for a day.

The land around looked curious so Ed went off alone,  
and scratching here and there he found a strangely coloured stone.  
He took it back to Charlie with, 'I've seen this stuff before,'  
the miner in him recognising evidence of ore.

'I reckon you've found copper, mate,' said Charlie with a grin,  
'Let's dig around and peg a claim.' But Ed just scratched his chin,  
then shook his head and softly said, 'It's gold I want to find.  
It's worth much more than copper, mate, and money's on my mind.'

And Charlie didn't disagree, so off they rode again,  
towards the Roper River, a determined pair of men.  
Then turning north for Arnhem Land they found a decent site;  
a small affair their little mine, their futures looking bright.

They laboured hard did Ed and Charles, extracting from the seam  
sufficient ore to give their hearts a satisfying gleam.  
But two years on the gold ran out, and Ed and Charles retired,  
a thousand pounds in each man's name, a sum they well admired.

They journeyed back to Queensland, keen to see their own home state,  
and stopping at the homestead saw a sight they came to hate:  
beyond a rocky rise there lay a haze that caught their eyes,  
suggestive of a bush fire pumping smoke into the skies.

The homestead owner said to Ed, 'The copper that you found  
resulted in a mine out there, the biggest one around.'  
And Charlie said, 'Well, never mind, these mines are all the same.'  
The homestead owner gave a shrug, 'Mount Isa is its name.'





# THE ROAD A-HEAD

© 2016 Brenda Joy

Winner, 2017 The Larrikin Award, ABPA Victorian Written Bush Poetry Championship – Humorous Section.  
The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival, Corryong, Victoria

The journey I am taking north from Brisbane up to Cairns  
will give me some reflective time to sort out all my plans.  
I've had some troubled dreams of late; I need to take a rest  
and look for signs to give a clue to help me on my quest.  
Now here's a sign beside the road that says, there's works ahead.  
That means I'll have some waiting time to see which way I'm led.

My mind takes off – 'ROAD WORKS A...HEAD'! Whose head I want to ask?  
To solve this mystery it seems, is my allotted task.  
A cross-road seems symbolic, like a tip to aid my quizz.  
It points to 'Old Bruce Highway' so the head might well be his?  
A sign to drivers warns fatigue can cause a crash. How true!  
'TIRED DRIVERS DIE' it tells me, so I've got another clue.

Yes, 'BREAK THE DRIVE AND STAY ALIVE', did Bruce forget to brake?  
Perhaps he had a breakdown; maybe that was his mistake!  
Now off the top of my own head, I'd say that's no excuse  
to take off like a headless chook like geriatric Bruce.  
Was Bruce a little head-strong? (When a highway bears your name  
you might well get big-headed – do your block because of fame!).

Perhaps his head took liberties abandoning Old Bruce  
(a head gets hedonistic thoughts when 'ID' goes on the loose).  
If left to its devices, it might think up naughty schemes  
and signs like 'SLIPPERY WHEN WET' fuel cravings for extremes –  
A massive head slide! (Oh what fun!) But downhill, heads will roll,  
for all of these indulgences inflict a heavy toll.

I'm up against a head-wind gust. Has Bruce just had a belch?  
I just ran over something round, I felt a little squelch!  
A lorry's in the distance. Did his head fall off a truck,  
become a flat head? Fishy thought! Did Bruce run out of luck?  
Is that the end? But no, I feel there's other heads around.  
How many heads are rolling? Are there dozens to be found?

But where are these illusive heads? To whom do they belong,  
perhaps some headless torsos form a night-time ghostly throng?  
How many others pining for a head that they once owned?  
But then, I find the answer (it's as if they have been cloned),  
for where more road works stand forlorn as workers take their tea  
there's 'witches hats' along the road for motorists to see.

Are witches' heads in hiding under hats that form a row?  
I take a furtive look as signals flash I must 'GO SLOW'.  
What if a hat gets blown around – some witch could cast a spell  
then tales of Bruce and witches would have no-one left to tell.  
It's getting late, I'm sure I hear those headless harpies' screams  
(a sound to haunt and infiltrate my nightly world of dreams).

Was that a wail from Bruce as roadside mowers cropped his hair?  
(I'll shudder in my sleep if crazy cackles rent the air  
or if old hags on broomsticks with their pointed witches' hats  
prowl 'round in eerie darkness with the flying-foxy bats).  
I'll put my foot down, get away from Bruce's nightmare road  
where signs can send a poet's brain to verbal overload.



# ABPA Victorian Bush Poetry Championships at MFSR 2017

Such goings on! In Corryong! In the Lions Youth Club Hall, where the 2017 championship was fought by one and all. Jan Lewis, organising, with her trusty team of mates. Poets came from everywhere from 6 of 7 states!

Apart from shows they featured in, all around the town, Friday saw the start of it ... Ken Tough knocked 'em down! The Man from Snowy River – the hardest poem to say was spoken in the twilight on Banjo's Block that day.

The final three contestants in that Recital Competition were brilliant and in the end only a very few marks separated them all. But that was just the start of it! That evening in the hall the crowd was treated to the running of the Serious original poems section. (Classical, Original Humorous and Modern sections on Saturday)

An amazing span of poems was presented all through the weekend. Metaphors, similes and abundant alliteration swirled through the weekend as the contestants produced another wonderfully eclectic array of images in rhyme. About 400 readers, performers and all-important listeners travelled from all over Australia to share in this amazing spin-off and celebration of Banjo's amazing poem.

From hauntingly personal word-pictures, rollicking bush yarns, long-forgotten poems found scrunched at the bottom of a brief case, images of friendship, horses, dogs and places; and jokes guaranteed to make you laugh, the audience was treated to a feast of words during competitive and non-competitive sections.

Ultimately the main winners in the Written Poem sections were Tom McIlveen (overall) and Serious poem section, with Brenda Joy winning the Humorous Section. In the Performance Poetry Rhonda Tallnash and Ken Tough won overall top Female and Male Poets, with Rhonda also winning Jack Riley Heritage Award and Yarnspinning Champion.

Thanks to our team of judges for the main sections Graeme Johnson (Senior Judge), Carol Reffold, Robyn Sykes, and Maurie Foun. Thank you for judging Novices and Intermediates, Noel Bull, Rhonda Tallnash and John Peel. Our MC's Geoffrey Graham, Laurie McDonald, and Matt Hollis kept the show moving with great expertise.

Special thanks to our trophy makers at Corryong Men's Shed and the RSL and Lions for use of their venue. We have a great team of long term sponsors, volunteers who assist with admin, set up, take down, door duty, product sales, moving chairs, and a myriad of jobs. Thank you all.

What better way to spend a fresh Autumn weekend than to be in Corryong and see such wonderful poets competing, then gather around an open fire and hear an excellent, impromptu range of poetry and music! Thanks to Helene and Graeme from Alpine Gourmet Goodies who were supplying delicious meals and drinks at appropriate times.

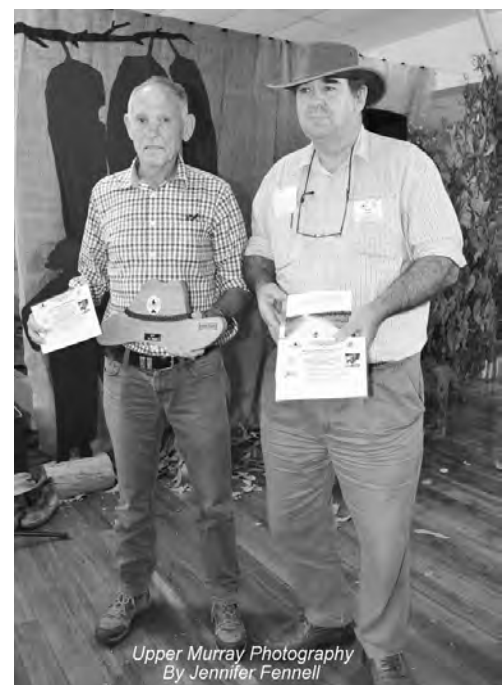
Planning for next year's Victorian Bush Poet's event during the Man from Snowy River Festival has already started. We are hoping to have a special treat in store on the first weekend in April next year: 5th - 8th April 2018.

All welcome!  
Carol Reffold

## 2017 ABPA VICTORIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS held at The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival, Corryong

01 VBPM Written Serious Poem 2017 (Silver Brumby Award)			PAGE 1
TOM MCILVEEN	Bobby	1st	
TOM MCILVEEN	Tempered and Tamed	2nd	
RHONDA TALLNASH	Retribution Road	3rd	
TOM MCILVEEN	From Gallipoli with Love	HC	
HELEN HARVEY	The Brumby Mob	HC	
Highest Scoring Novice In Serious:	RITA DIPLOCK The Grey		cert
02 VBPM Written Humorous Poem 2017 (Corryong Larklin Award)			
BRENDA JOY	The Road Ahead	1st	
TOM MCILVEEN	When Irish Hearts are Happy	2nd	
TOM MCILVEEN	A Simple Colonoscopy	3rd	
BRENDA JOY	As Age Adds On	HC	
SHELLY HANSEN	Boiled Eggs	HC	
Highest Scoring Novice In Humorous Written Section			cert
PAMELA FOX	The Acting Postie's Day		yes
VBPM WRITTEN POETRY CHAMPION 2017			
TOM MCILVEEN	Bobby		yes
VBPM WRITTEN POETRY NOVICE CHAMPION 2017			
RITA DIPLOCK	The Grey		
03 BANJO'S MFSR Performance FINAL 2017			
KEN TOUGH		1st	
RHONDA TALLNASH		2nd	
RALPH SCRIVENS		3rd	
04 VBPM Open Women's Classical Poem Performance: 2017			
CHRISTINE BOULT	Do You Think That I Do Not Know? (H Lawson)	1st	
KATHY VALLANCE	Taking His Chance (H Lawson)	2nd	
RHONDA TALLNASH	Marian Lee (B Espinasse)	3rd	
JULIE MORRIS	Geebung Polo Club (A B Paterson)	HC	
MARGARET BEECHEY	The Story of Mongrel Grey (A B Paterson)	HC	
04 VBPM Open Men's Classical Poem Performance: 2017			
TOM O'CONNOR	Sandy Hollow Line (D Tritton)	1st	
KEN POTTER	Kerrigan Boys (E Harrington)	2nd	
KEN TOUGH	The Old Mass Shandydan (J O'Brien)	3rd	
JOHN DAVIS	Father Riley's Horse (A B Paterson)	HC	
RALPH SCRIVENS	Johnson's Antidote (A B Paterson)	HC	
05 VBPM Open Women's Original Serious Poem Performance 2017			
RHONDA TALLNASH	Retribution Road JR	1st	
CHRISTINE BOULT	The Ring	2nd	
JULIE MORRIS	The Mistress of Jack Riley JR	3rd	
CHRISTA DWYER	The Closing of the Door	HC	
KATHY VALLANCE	The Watcher	HC	
05 VBPM Open Men's Original Serious Poem Performance 2017			
KEN TOUGH	Boondee's Mob	1st	
RALPH SCRIVENS	Have you left something behind?	2nd	
JOHN PEEL	The Flames of Fury JR	3rd	
KEN POTTER	The Cabinet in the Corner	HC	
JOHN DAVIS	Visions of the Past	HC	

06 VBPM Open Women's Original Humorous Poem Performance 2017			VBPM CHAMPIONSHIPS PAGE 2
RHONDA TALLNASH	The Wrapper	1st	
KATHY VALLANCE	The Man Cave	2nd	
CHRISTINE BOULT	Frank's Gone Mad for Macca	3rd	
JENNY MARKWELL	A Burradoo Love Triangle	HC	
JULIE MORRIS	The Aussie Sheila's Reno	HC	
06 VBPM Open Men's Original Humorous Poem Performance 2017			
KEN TOUGH	Larkin	1st	
KEN POTTER	The Snake	2nd	
JOHN PEEL	Renovate, Rejuvenate?	3rd	
ROSS VALLANCE	The Reply	HC	
RALPH SCRIVENS	Three Wishes	HC	
06A JACK RILEY HERITAGE AWARD Performance 2017			
RHONDA TALLNASH	Retribution Road		
07 VBPM Open Women's Modern Poem Performance 2017			
CHRISTINE BOULT	Basil's Irish Stew (P Blythe)	1st	
KATHY VALLANCE	The Show Must Go On (B Kearns)	2nd	
RHONDA TALLNASH	Where Poppies Bloom (B Joy)	3rd	
JENNY MARKWELL	A Letter Home (D Campbell)	HC	
JULIE MORRIS	Black Horse in the Lead (Kym Eitel)	HC	
07 VBPM Open Men's Modern Poem Performance 2017			
TOM O'CONNOR	Ghost of Long Tan (T McIlveen)	1st	
KEN TOUGH	Gold Star (B Simpson)	2nd	
RALPH SCRIVENS	Fencing in the Dark (D. Meyers)	3rd	
JOHN PEEL	The Boys (Brian Bell)	HC	
JOHN DAVIS	Saddle the Grey (F Daniel)	HC	
08 VBPM Open Yarnspinning Performance Championship 2017			
RHONDA TALLNASH	Weather Woes (Original)	1st	
MICK COVENTRY	Blame it on the Little Red Car (Orig)	2nd	
DON MCQUEEN	A Football Coach's Dilemma (Orig)	3rd	
JOHN DAVIS	The Tales of the Fox (Original)	HC	
TIM SHEED	Desmond the Paper Dog (Orig)	HC	
09 VBPM Novice Poet CHAMPION 2017			
CRISTA DWYER	The Closing of the Door (Original)	1st	
DON DWYER	The Cattle Dog's Revenge (J Drake)	2nd	
MARGARET BEECHEY	Shearing in the Bar (D Tritton)	3rd	
10 VBPM Intermediate Poet CHAMPION 2017			
JUDY BOYD	The Silent Shearer (A B Paterson)	1st	
JOHN RAINE	Said Hanrahan (J O'Brien)	2nd	
EXTRA AWARDS : One Minute Poem			
KATHY VALLANCE		1st	
CHRISTA DWYER		2nd	
Lawrie Sherridan Encouragement Award	JOHN DAVIS		yes
Jan Lewis Encouragement Award	MARY FRENCH		
Seniors' Encouragement Award	RITA DIPLOCK		
11 VBPM OPEN PERFORMANCE CHAMPION & MATILDA AWARD (Best Overall Female) 2017			
RHONDA TALLNASH		1ST	
CHRISTINE BOULT		2ND	
12 VBPM OPEN PERFORMANCE CHAMPION & CLANCY'S CHOICE AWARD (Best Overall Male) 2017			
KEN TOUGH		1st	
KEN POTTER		2nd	



Upper Murray Photography  
By Jennifer Fennell

# Report on the 2017 National Folk Festival.

The 2017 National Folk Festival was once again held in balmy Canberra over Easter where heavy coats, scarves and beanies were the order of the day. Poetry director Laurie McDonald put together a diverse group of performers to ensure the spoken word maintained its prominent position at the festival.

They included Rhonda Tallnash, Geoffrey W Graham, Peter Mace, David Hallett, The Rhymer from Ryde, Stephen White-side, Sandra Renew and C.J. Bowerbird.

Each morning there was a two hour Poets Breakfast where poets were not only entertaining the crowd but also in line for the "Reciter of the Year" judged this year by the 2016 winner Chris McGinty.

And the winner this year from Nimbin was Leno, a very popular choice.  
The Yarn Spinner trophy was awarded to C.J. Shaw by last years winner Rhonda Tallnash.  
By my calculation there was over thirty hours of poetry performed at the festival.

Easter Monday saw the first half of the Poets Breakfast dedicated to a celebration of the life and works of "Blue the Shearer" Blue was a regular performer at the Nationals, where he infamously, on one occasion, fell backwards off the stage and disappeared from view.

Thanks to the work of Kieth McKenry . the board of the National Folk Festival have agreed to instigate a "Blue the Shearer" award for the best original poem performed at any one of the first three Poets Breakfasts.

Other poetry highlights from Canberra included the "World Poetry Debate", "Bush Poets verses the Rest" ( Won by the Bush Poets) and a nightly "Poetry in the Round" for those who could not get out of bed for the breakfasts.



Leno receiving his Award

Peter Mace

## More Photos from Vic. Championships at Coryong



Female Open Performance  
Champion: Rhonda Tallnash (right).  
Second: Christine Boulton (left).



Written Champion:  
Tom McIlveen



Intermediate winner: Judy  
Boyd. Second: John Raine.



Lawrie Sheridan  
Encouragement Award  
winner: John Davis.



Novice Winner: Chrysta Dwyer (right).  
Second: Don Dwyer (centre). Third:  
Margaret Beechey (left).



Male Open Performance Champion: Ken Tough  
(centre). Second: Ken Potter (right). MC  
Geoffrey Graham (left).



Some of the competitors and judges that made it such a great festival. Congratulations to all.



One Minute poem winner: Kathy  
Vallance (right). Second: Christa Dwyer.



# This Land

© Hugh Allan

I value this land as I value my hand  
and I value the friend who will shake it.  
And over the years I have raised many cheers  
for the people who've struggled to make it.

The pioneer breed who will always succeed  
when adversity rises to thwart them,  
are those who achieve, and work hard and believe  
in the values this country has taught them.

I value this land as I value the hand  
of those people who come here to make it.  
I'll give them a hand in this wonderful land,  
but will fight against those who would break it.

# Lake Weyba

© Nick Hancock

There are many legends telling of Lake Weyba and its dwelling  
In both the ancient and the modern times.  
A history of attack, and that's a truthful fact  
A tale of white man, with his many crimes.

I've stood upon its shores, and pondered on the laws  
That changed the very character of the land.  
Where once stood mighty trees, that swayed in gentle breeze  
Now swimming pools and luxury houses stand.

Where once grazed kangaroo, echidnas possums too  
With nature's harvest crop so freely found.  
Black man's simple needs were met, by spear, harpoon and net  
For generations; on this his sacred ground.

I've walked along the creek, the murder site to seek  
And found it now a serene and tranquil spot.  
Facts so rarely told, of a cowardly ambush bold,  
Where spear could ne'er compete against lead shot.

Where men of local Station, slaughtered a once proud nation  
To deprive them ever, of their hunting right.  
To murder without compassion, which of the day was fashion  
Foreshadowing the native peoples' plight.

Hello All,

I am writing in with regard to bush poetry in Queensland.

I am a prolific writer of bush poetry, (I describe my style as  
Australiana - rhyming verse), but I am totally unknown to  
anyone.

I am formerly from Melbourne and a past member of the East  
Gippsland Bush Poets group in Rosedale, east of Melbourne.

I am currently living at Kilkivan, 50 kilometers west of Gympie  
and would be interested to contact and meet fellow bush poets  
or groups in the Gympie region (or other parts of the Wide bay  
district).

Any information you can give me would be highly appreciated.

Thank you,  
Tony Hawkins  
0434 846 882

# THE BUSKER

©Zillah Williams

February 21 2017

There was a busker on the pavement  
Outside the city stores;  
Beside him was his old brown dog,  
His head down on his paws.

The busker's hair was grey and wild,  
His face she couldn't see;  
She didn't like the music played –  
Not her cup of tea.

Passers-by had thrown him coins  
As they went upon their way,  
But she wasn't going to do the same –  
She'd lost her job that day.

With heavy heart she'd walked the streets  
Not caring where she went;  
Without a job she didn't know  
How she would pay the rent.

She wondered if he owned a car  
And a beachside house as well  
With children at a boarding school,  
You couldn't really tell.

Or he might have been a farmer  
Going through the pain  
Of loss of stock and property  
Because of lack of rain.

She passed him by, then stopped and thought  
Why not help him out?  
Isn't kindness to your neighbour  
What life is all about?

She turned and threw a coin  
Into his music case,  
And he then said three words that put  
A smile upon her face.

"Thank you, darlin'" — that was all,  
She heard the busker say,  
But somehow those three little words  
Completely made her day.

The brown dog's tail thumped on the ground  
And he lifted up his head,  
His old brown eyes showed he agreed  
With what his master said.

She walked away with lighter step,  
The day seemed brighter too;  
"Thank you, darlin'" warmed her heart  
As nothing else could do.

"Thank you, darlin'" warmed her heart  
As nothing else could do.

## OUR POETRY KIDS

The poems this month gained prizes at the 2016 Ipswich Poetry Feast. Thanks go to Carol Moore and to Jennifer Greenough of the Ipswich City Council Libraries for all the work done to co-ordinate the lead up school workshops and the annual Awards presentation night. Held in October at the Metro Hotel Ipswich International, this event has become an iconic feature of the bush poetry scene for children and for adults.

For information and entry form for the 2017 Ipswich Poetry Feast written competition, go to our website [www.abpa.org.au](http://www.abpa.org.au) in Events.

Our young writers certainly have some deep thoughts.

### A PLACE by Rebecca Wang

Hornsby Heights, NSW

Highly Commended  
Ipswich City Council Award --16-17 Years

There was a place  
beyond the trees  
where sunlight danced  
with the breeze.

There was a place  
where nature spread  
rainbow carpets –  
an endless bed.

There was a place  
where children played  
in midst of the  
enchanted glade.

Now they are dead.

I hobble with my walker  
to revisit the place.  
The perfumed air we breathed  
is rich with dust and petrol and cars.

The endless hills of metal stretch  
and brush the horizon,  
a bleached rainbow.

Yet sunlight filters through the steel,  
and dances with the breeze  
Puzzle pieces, lost, confused,  
searching for the trees.

### SAD SUNFLOWERS by Abby Jennings

St Joseph's Catholic School, North Ipswich, QLD

First Prize – Ipswich District Teacher Librarian  
Network Award 8-10 Years

When it's cold we wish for sunshine  
when it's hot we wish for snow.  
Why is it that we never miss things  
until we see them go?  
I see that your life was a sad one  
all black and white and grey.  
Did anyone ever notice?  
Were you brave enough to say?  
Did your sunflowers show  
what you were feeling  
unable to stand up straight?  
Were the stars in the sky  
your wishes to catch?  
You were somehow always too late.  
Did the room show that you were lonely  
with no one around to share?  
And now that you are gone  
why is it that we now all care?

### I DON'T CARE by Julina Frame

Cleveland District High School, Cleveland, Qld.

Highly Commended  
Ipswich City Council Award --16-17 years

I DON'T CARE  
if you're young or old, I don't care,  
skinny, fat, I don't care,  
tall, short or in between, I don't care,  
girl, boy, both, neither, I don't care,  
black, white, Asian, all three or more,  
I don't care,  
gay, straight, pan or ace, I don't care.  
I don't care who you are, what you like,  
what you do.  
You respect me – I'll respect you.  
I DON'T CARE.

*All poems previously published Free XpresSion 2015.*

*Thanks to Brenda Joy for submitting our Kid's Poems each Edition*



# Vale Col Wilson aka 'Blue The Shearer'



AS most people are now aware Col Wilson AKA Blue the Shearer left this world last Friday Morning. Many people have asked about his funeral. It will be held in the crematorium at Leura Memorial Gardens at 12 noon on Thursday 9th February. Many people have expressed their respect and sorrow for the family and I was able to read some of those to him just before he lost consciousness last Wednesday. I like to think he heard them.

Below is a press release that I sent out before one of his many appearances in the Illawarra- we declared him an honorary local, he came that often. Under that is a valedictory from Ted Egan AM, A note from the family re the funeral arrangements and finally a fine poem written 30 years ago about racism- Blue always tried to understand the underlying causes of the prejudices we hold. He was after all the Regional Director of Youth and Community Services for the Western Division of NSW.

And of Course there is the Old Reprobate himself, 'Blue the Shearer'. Do we have to say anything about Blue. Like Banjo, Henry, Adam Lindsay, and Henry Kendall his poems will outlive him. Every week he sends the ABC ratings plummeting by reciting his weekly verse on air. He is the scourge of politicians whom he dissects with merciless satire, he comments upon the foibles of our lifestyle and no subject is too trivial to escape the cutting edge of the incisive Blue mind. From fitted sheets to chainsaw massacres, from grandkids to macho men, Blue is in there, making sure that these important things in our lives are never swept under the carpet. Best of all Blue has been down here so often that he regards himself as a local. He is also the official 'pote' of the Tripe Club.

Here's Blue in a contemplative mood with his famous hat. And what did the PHDH stand for- well you had to ask him and the answer was always the same, no matter who you were- "POET'S HAT, DICK HEAD"

## ***FROM TED EGAN AM IN ALICE SPRINGS***

Australia has, in some respects, lost one of its greatest sons. He is physically no longer with us. In other respects, though, because of the prolific intellect and wordsmithing ability of Col Wilson aka Blue the Shearer, we are able to cherish forever, through his writings, one of the better overviews of how our land was faring through many years. And that's the beauty of Blue's work, it was/is The National Diary.

I must admit that for many years I have felt that Blue was living on borrowed time, for I was witness to his disappearance when he went backwards off the stage at the National Folk Festival. I thought: "He's dead for sure". Well now, he has died and the world is a poorer place. Having seen how good palliative care is in Alice Springs, I am sure Blue was accorded the dignity he deserved. PC is a great organisation.

All of us, the family, Big Russ, even hundreds who never met him, will share the grief. But with the passage of time, we will be left only with the wonderful, scintillating memories of times we shared together. He will remain an integral component of all of us who benefitted from his acquaintance.

Sadly, I am unable to attend the funeral, but I shall raise a glass at around 5 this afternoon and certainly another on Thursday afternoon next.

And Big Russ, as with John Dengate, I am sure a slice of future Illawarra Folk Festivals will be dedicated to Blue the Shearer? May his tribe increase.

Ted Egan

## ***From The Resident Censor, Pat and the rest of the Blue's Family To the elite list***

It is with great sadness that we write to let you know that our 'Blue' passed away on 3 February 2017. He had been unwell for many months and had been moved to palliative care just a few days before his passing. He will be greatly missed by many but none more so than his grieving family. His funeral was held at Leura Memorial Gardens at 12 noon on Thursday 9 February 2017.



# SHADES OF GREY

BLUE -- the shearer (copyright col wilson)

"Written not long after I retired in April 1986"

I've been out West a time or two, and called a white man "mate".  
I've tried to do the same with blacks, and met distrust, and hate.  
And since I'm well regarded, most places that I go,  
I need to seek the reason, for resentment that they show.

Are Western towns all racist towns? All black folk say that's true,  
And having had experience, I'd say they're racist, too.  
But white folk who reside there, would tell me otherwise,  
And all reports on bias, are simply labelled: "lies."

So knowing that some Western blacks, view me with resentment,  
Because I'm white, does not imbue a feeling of contentment.  
The white folk, they resent me too, because I don't agree  
With their debate, they say I'm too Pro aborigine.

I'd like to say to whites I meet: "I've not denied my race.  
I'm merely trying to see things, with a caring, human face.  
Why can't you, with all you have, try to understand,  
Their dignity, and sense of loss. You know. It WAS their land."

I'd like to say to blacks I meet: "I didn't kill your forebears.  
So don't blame me. I'd like to help, not hinder you in your cares.  
I'M not going to go away, this is MY land, too.  
So you help ME to understand. Tell ME what to do."

Some things you can't help noticing: The levee round one town,  
Protects that town, and golf course, 'til the floodwaters go down.  
But that levee round that town, and the purpose that it serves,  
Leaves those black folk prone to flood, who live on the reserve.

The shops are well protected, with brick walls, bars, and chains,  
Against those Aborigines, resenting lack of gains.  
I wonder, though, if violence, against the stores would stop,  
If black folk saw their own race, serving in a shop.

I wonder if the schools could learn, from black folk that they teach,  
The lessons that schools need to know, if black kids, they would reach.  
I wonder if white citizens, could understand the plight,  
Of black folk living in a town, designed and run by white.

If police could understand the threat, their uniform imposes,  
On black and hopeless citizens, on whom the cell door closes;  
Would they, themselves feel threatened, by toning their role down?  
Or would they bow to wishes of the white folk in the town?

Too many blacks have died in gaol. For reasons unexplained.  
Between the blacks and policemen, the bitterness remains.  
Those symbols of authority: The truncheon, and the cap,  
Maybe, could be less emphasised, if they would bridge the gap.

I know that black unrest is causing, unrest in the whites.  
Being white, I feel it too, this emphasis on rights.  
My guilty sense of justice, though, tells me things are wrong.  
Our guilty lack of action, has gone on far too long.

I've heard what Charlie Perkins said. That lawyer, Mansell, too.  
Though I understand the anger, that's a wall I can't get through.  
Surely, now it's time to have some reasoned, sane debate,  
To find some real solution, already, it's too late.

Jobs, and education, the problem of the drink,  
Restoring pride in culture, are some measures, that I think  
May show the blacks in all towns, some whites do really care  
What happens in the future: It's the one thing that we share.

Vote seeking politicians, conscious of position,  
DO have the power to legislate, beyond a Royal Commission.  
Surely, they must entertain the premise, not denied,  
Of past due recognition, of a Treaty, and some pride.



# More about maintaining standards in written competitions

DAVID CAMPBELL

After my comments in the previous issue about standards and the very liberal interpretation of “clear mastery of metre” in some written competitions it’s possible that a number of people were left wondering what all the fuss was about. I included a poem called “Metric Madness” in the magazine as an example, but perhaps there are still some saying “Who cares about getting a poem technically correct in a written competition? Near enough is good enough!”

Don’t get me wrong, I like flexibility. It’s why I enjoy writing free verse. But if we have an ABPA guideline that specifies “clear mastery of metre” for written competitions, it seems reasonable to have some discussion about what it means. So I’ve given my opinion. But, for those who disagree, let’s look at some possible implications of “near enough is good enough”. The question I asked was, if we’re going to overlook basic faults, where do we draw the line? Below is an example. Ignore the subject-matter, which is just a bit of nonsense. Instead, focus on where the stresses fall (highlighted in bold capitals), and the syllable-count at the end of each line.

The CRY of the SEAgull is MADness inDEED, (11)  
it SENDS us all CRAzy when DOWN at the BEACH, (11)  
its SQUAWK**ing** a NOISE that reSOUNDS in your HEAD (11)  
if you LISTen too KEENly to THAT strident SCREECH. (12)  
When you’re LYing there RESTing and SEAgulls come CALLing, (13)  
their WINGS flapping MADly aCROSS the blue SKY, (11)  
you are WOKEN from SLUMber and CURSE them quite LOUDly, (13)  
and WISH it was LEGal to BAKE seagull PIE! (11)  
You iMAGine them ROASTed, with LASHings of GRAV**y**, (13)  
or GRILLED on the BARbie and SLATHered with SAUCE, (11)  
with some LETTuce, toMato, a BIG pile of ONions, (13)  
all TOPPED by some FINELY chopped MUSHrooms, of COURSE! (11)

The syllable count varies from 11 through to 13, with no obvious pattern, so we’re faced with a random mix of metres. The biggest change, however, comes in line five where we’re suddenly hit with a feminine line-ending (“CALLing”), and that’s followed by three more in alternate lines. Imagine that you check the remaining stanzas in this ode to seagulls and find that, not only are there no others structured exactly like this one, but no two stanzas are the same. Does it matter? Does that indicate “a clear mastery of metre”? What’s your decision?

Note that, with only a little bit of practice, all those technical faults could easily be disguised in a performance. The stanza certainly has rhythm, in fact several different rhythms, and performance is all about presentation, not metric precision. However we’re talking about a written competition here.

Now let’s take it a step further. If your decision is that the above example is not a problem and “near enough is good enough” with regard to metre, then why bother about accurate rhyme? Here’s an example:

Australia’s history is littered with tales  
of the bushranging days and outlaws who went  
plundering coaches of Cobb & Co mail,  
desperate men who waited, silent,  
by deep-rutted tracks where a traveller’s blood  
might spill for the sake of children back home  
in a tumbledown shack where there’s not enough food  
and a woman afraid she’ll be left widowed, alone.

Is that acceptable for metre and rhyme? Once again, it could easily be performed, but it’s got ABPA written score-sheet faults by the bucket-load. Have we drawn the line yet? Or how about this?

He sits on the homestead veranda,  
matchstick thin, his weathered skin  
stretched taut on brittle bones.  
Hands that wander, flutter  
like broken-winged birds,  
sometimes caught  
as if to pray. Vacant eyes  
reflect drought’s wasteland; he cries,  
the sounds he utters  
no longer coherent words.  
She sighs and hovers,  
recalling the lovers  
of forty years in bitter tears,  
now come to naught.

The content is Australian, and it has metre and rhyme. But is it bush poetry? Where is that imaginary line now if we’re not worried about technical accuracy? You be the judge.

# They Don't Give a Stuff About Us

(c) 2016 – Manfred Vijars

*'Australia is a lucky country, run by second-rate people who share its luck.'*  
Donald Horne - "The Lucky Country"

We once had a Lucky Country with a real fair go for all  
Stand by your Mates through thick and thin - of course we'd heed the call  
stick up for the underdog don't kick them when they fall  
and we all really cared about that

Now we're run by second-raters with their snouts deep in the trough  
hiding public books that show their dirty deeds is not enough  
Self interests stick together 'cause they're not living rough  
And they don't give a stuff about us

Farming is a calling - not a job - they feed us all  
battling for harvests year on year sometimes they fall  
now they leave their farms in boxes - suicide's the latest call  
(cause no-one gives a stuff about them)

Sell our freehold overseas and they suck our Darling dry  
Frack the Great Artesian Basin - brings a tear to this bloke's eye  
wreck our reef for sake of coal - can't help but wonder why  
don't OUR pollies give a stuff about OUR country?

So it's steady as she sinks with these bastards at the wheel  
standing by their foreign mates who screw us every deal  
selling off our future any wonder that we feel  
that they don't give a stuff about us?



---

## *If the Reaper Called Tomorrow*

If the reaper called tomorrow and told me I was through  
I can't think of a thing I should have done.  
I can say that I've done everything my heart told me to do.  
I've lived my life - the mishaps and the fun.

I've driven down life's highway where mirages weave and dance  
with a new adventure over every range.  
Thrown the old hat in the ring to dice with fortune's chance  
and mingled with the steady and the strange.

All the good times and bad horses, all the girls in tight blue jeans,  
go drifting down the bush tracks of my mind.  
For it's not the destination but the roads that run between,  
never knowing what comes next, just running blind.

Dreamings of a dreamer down the road where dreams are made  
without a thought of putting down a root.  
Running fast at freedom, grabbing life before it fades  
since first I tossed a slim swag in the ute.

Every moment is a bonus 'till you shed this earthly clay  
if you live your dream and cop the good and bad.  
It's a better thing to shake life up and live each lifelong day  
than sit back sad, just wishing that you had.

© Jack Drake 1-2-2012





# GREAT AUSSIE READS

with Jack Drake



When Queensland separated from New South Wales in 1858, the fledgling state had only seven pence and one halfpenny in its treasury. The discovery of gold at Gympie in 1867 would save the new state's bacon and a series of more northern strikes ensured Queensland would develop into a prosperous part of Australia.

"Nomads of the 19th Century Queensland Goldfields" by Lennie Wallace (CQU Press 2000), tells the story of the Central and North Queensland goldfields building the saga around the life story of Dr Jack Hamilton one of the most fascinating players in those rambunctious times.

Jack Hamilton was a self-taught physician, a prospector, bare knuckle fighter, world champion pistol shot and general soldier of fortune who became a legend in North Queensland. He later ventured into politics eventually serving as a parliamentary whip in the McIlwraith government.

Like many other amazing Australians, Dr Jack has slipped through the cracks of our history and few people are even aware he existed.

Lennie Wallace has done a fine job chronicling Jack Hamilton's action filled life and preserving a fascinating part of history for posterity.

"Nomads of the 19th Century Queensland Goldfields" is a great read.



"The Shearers: The Story of Australia Told from the Woolsheds" by Evan McHugh (Viking 2015), is a well written history of Australia's shearing industry from the arrival of the first sheep to the present day.

Evan McHugh has written at least ten books. I have read several and look forward to perusing the rest.

"The Shearers" is very well researched and written. It takes us from the untrained convicts who were given a set of hand shears and told to get the wool off the sheep, to the blade shearing 'guns' like Jackie Howe. McHugh deals with the shearers' war with squatters in the 1890s, strikes, the development and adoption of machine shears, through the wide comb dispute of the 1980s, right up to the state of the wool industry today.

This is a very readable book. Evan McHugh gives us the history of Australia's iconic shearing and wool industry as well as the parallel development of New Zealand's industry across the 'ditch' and the interaction between two shearing cultures.

"The Shearers" ends with profiles of inductees of the Shearer's Hall of Fame and a list of world shearing records. Good on ya Evan.

More great Aussie reads at  
[www.outbackbooks.info](http://www.outbackbooks.info)

*Jack Drake*

# Liberator

## Beautiful Betsy's last Flight

© Lynden Baxter



*In February 1945 an American Liberator B24 bomber named Beautiful Betsy, disappeared without trace on a night flight from Darwin to Brisbane.*

*The wreckage was found on the Kroombit Tops in July 1994.*

A silver war-bird, moon bright sky  
Casts shadows on soft cloud below.  
Two thousand miles by outback stars  
And Darwin's lights lost long ago.

A Liberator, Stars and Stripes  
Your aircrew, boys all far from home  
A welcome stranger in our skies  
As solitary tonight you roam

Tonight you fly the Brisbane track  
The compass set, a night flight long  
In friendly skies the crew relax  
The danger from night raiders gone

Your Pratt and Whitney's sound so sweet  
Big radials, now trimmed to lean  
The manifolds glow cherry red  
An awesome, rumbling, war machine

But no more battle skies for you  
Your war paint gone, your guns withdrawn  
They patched you up as good as new  
A tired old war-bird, now reborn

But many tales your scars could tell  
When Bombardier had set his sight  
The gunfights when night fighters came  
And tracer flame had ripped the night

All through the night you rumble on  
While far below the outback sleeps  
Perhaps a drover hears you pass  
His lonely night watch vigil keeps

Now, faint the dawn glows in the east  
There's coffee, steaming, from the flask  
There's talk, there's plans, perhaps some leave  
Below, clear skies are all they ask

The Navigator checks his charts  
Dead reckoning by his thumb worn slide  
The sums are done, corrections made  
Below should be the flood plain wide

The Captain says, "We'll take her down"  
The throttles eased, a slow decent  
The gyro whirls, horizon's gone  
In cloud, he trusts his instruments

The Pratt and Whitney's muffled beat  
Reverberates, through murk they fly  
They watch the altimeter fall  
In darkness, concentration high

A quietness settles on the crew  
And steady, steady as she goes  
A different world when flying blind  
Unseen, a danger no one knows

A ghostly shadow, there's no time  
A blinding flash, a fireball  
Your massive frame is torn apart  
And scattered through the bloodwood tall

And then it's over, all is lost  
This Liberator charred and torn  
And Death was swift, small mercy shown  
Then silence, silence greets the dawn

And no one sees this funeral pyre  
With dawn the Gods of War decree  
This stony ridge, a sacred place  
Be lost in time, a mystery

This stony ridge, their destiny



# Mad Jack's Cockatoo

*Anon.*

There's a man that went out, in the flood time and drought  
By the banks of the outer Barcoo,  
They called him "Mad Jack", 'cos the swag on his back,  
Was the perch for an old cockatoo.

By towns near and far and shed, shanty and bar  
Came the arms of Mad Jack and his bird  
And this tale I relate, it was told by a mate  
Is just one of many I've heard.

Now Jack was a bloke who could drink, holy smoke!  
He could swig twenty mugs to my ten,  
And that old cockatoo it could sink quite a few  
And it drank with the rest of the men.

One day when the heat was a thing hard to beat,  
Mad Jack and his old cockatoo,  
Came in from the west to the old "Swagman's Rest"  
And they ordered the schooners for two.

When these had gone down he pulled out half a crown  
And they drank 'til their money was spent,  
Then he pulled out a note from his old tattered old coat,  
And between them they drank every cent.

Then that old cockatoo it swore red, black and blue,  
And it knocked all the mugs off the bar,  
Then it flew through the air and it pulled at the hair  
Of a chap who was drinking "Three Star",

And it jerked out the pegs from the barrels and kegs,  
Knocked the bottles all down from the shelf,  
With a sound like a cheer it dived into the beer  
And it finished up drowning itself.

When poor Jack awoke not a word then was spoke,  
But he cried like a lost husband's wife,  
And with each falling tear made a flood with the beer,  
And the men had to swim for their life,

Now poor Jack was drowned and when finally found,  
He was lying there stiffened and blue,  
And it's told far and wide that stretched out by his side,  
Was his track mate the old cockatoo





# Across the Condamine

© Charlee Marshall

There's an old grey-headed stockman  
In a unit over town -  
He seldom smiles or finds a word to say,  
His hands are worn and calloused,  
His face is thin and brown  
And his eyes burn with the fire of yesterday.  
Sometimes the grandkids visit  
When they have the time to spare,  
They kiss his cheek and say he's looking fine,  
But he seldom hears their chatter  
For he isn't really there...  
He's riding herd across the Condamine.

There's a blue-eyed girl he married  
Comes smiling through his dreams,  
She's buried in a sleepy country town.  
For she couldn't bear the loneliness  
of western droving teams  
And the Phantom of the Outback struck her down.  
Now the welfare lady calls in,  
She brings him all his meals,  
With now and then a pension cheque to sign -  
But she'll never know the hunger  
And the longing that he feels  
For the taste of dust across the Condamine.

There's a creaking of the saddle  
And a twitching of the rein  
The smell of sweat and horses on the trail,  
And his eye is on the leaders  
As he checks the drive again  
And whistles to old Bluey at the tail.  
He grips the ragged cushions  
Of the lounge between his knees,  
His waving hand is counting one to nine;  
But he's ridden many 'jumpers  
With a better turn than these  
At rodeos across the Condamine.

There's a nurse comes every Friday  
To listen to his heart;  
How can she know it's roaming far away  
From that frail and tired body  
Where once it was a part -  
A host that it will beckon to one day  
. On some misty summer morning  
He will heed the call to go  
Where skies are blue and stars will always shine,  
And a smile upon his waxen lips  
Will let the neighbours know  
He's home at last across the Condamine.



## THE 'BETTY OLLE' POETRY AWARD

## Written Competition

- For traditional Australian rhyming poetry with an Australian theme.
- Open and Junior (12 years and under) sections.
- Open section - First Prize \$500 plus trophy.  
Runner-up \$200 plus certificate.
- Junior section - First Prize \$100 plus trophy.  
Runner-up \$50 plus certificate.
- Entry fee - Open \$10 per entry form ( 2 poems)
- Entry fee - Junior section - free.
- Closing date - 30th August 2017.
- Entry forms and conditions of entry available from the ABPA website - events and results page.
- Conducted by the Kyabram Bush Verse Group in memory of foundation member Betty Olle.

The aim of the Betty Olle Poetry Award is to provide an opportunity for poets to share their work, to encourage the writing of new work, to acknowledge the skills of our junior poets, and to keep the spirit of Bush Poetry alive.



# 2017



THE 15TH ANNUAL  
**NANDEWAR POETRY COMPETITION**  
CONDUCTED BY  
NARRABRI & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



**FIRST PRIZE: \$150 AND TROPHY**  
**SECOND PRIZE: \$100**  
**THIRD PRIZE: \$50**

**ENTRY FORM**

Narrabri & District Historical Society Inc.  
P. O. Box 55  
Narrabri 2390  
Entry forms to be returned to:  
The above address

**THE NANDEWAR POETRY COMPETITION 2015**  
Conducted by  
**The Narrabri & District Historical Society Inc.**  
In conjunction with the rules of the ABPA

**ENTRY FEE: \$5.00 PER POEM OR 3 POEMS FOR \$10.00.**

Extra poems can be listed on a separate cover sheet. Entry forms may be copied. **Closing Date - July 30th**

**A Call Out**  
***For Poetry Submissions***  
***For our Next Magazine.***  
***Deadline July 27th***

***Poems***  
***Results***  
***Club News***  
***Poet Profiles***  
***Items Of Interest***

***Please help to keep this***  
***Magazine alive by submitting***  
***articles to print.***

## **Regular Monthly Events**

### **NSW**

Illawarra Breakfast Poets meet every Wednesday at 7am at Coniston Community Hall, next to Coniston Railway Station. Ample parking, no steps, everyone welcome.

"Laggan Bush Poets." The Laggan Pub, Laggan NSW. The 1st Wednesday of every month, starting at 7.30pm. For further details contact Mike or Elaine on (02) 4837 3397

Gosford Bush Poets meet at 7pm the last Wednesday of every month at the Gosford Hotel, crn. Mann and Erina Streets Gosford. All welcome. Contact Vic Jefferies 0425252212 or Peter Mace (02)-4369356

Port Macquarie (Hastings-Macleay) Poetry Group now meets 2nd Sunday afternoon 1pm to 4pm, Port Macquarie Senior Citizens Club (Pioneer Room), south end of Munster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Rod, Janice, Ian, Tom or Bessie 6584 5425

Milton Ulladulla Bush Poets and Yarn Spinners Group First Sunday Every Month at Ex Servos Club Ulladulla 2pm start visitors welcome contact John Davis 02 44552013

Binalong - A Brush with Poetry @ Black Swan Wine Bar and Gallery. last Sunday of every odd month (except January), 2-4pm Open mic. Contact Robyn Sykes 02 6227 4377

The Queanbeyan Bush Poets meet at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month in the Casuarina Room at the RB Smith Community Centre, Crawford Street, (opposite the Council Chambers). Contact Laurie McDonald on 02 6253 9856

Port Macquarie Minstrels, Poets and Balladeers meet fortnightly; 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm in the Pioneer Room, Senior Citizens Hall south end of Munster St, Port Macquarie. Contact Tom McIlveen 0417 251287

2nd Sunday - 2:00 pm Poetry at the Pub Katoomba Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Denis Rice 02 4782 6623 tdrice3@southernphone.com.au

SINGLETON BUSH POETS. Meet at the Albion Hotel, John Street Singleton. 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Neville Briggs 02 65711398.

### **QUEENSLAND**

North Pine Bush Poet Group meet from 9am on 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at The Distillery - North Pine Hotel, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Rd. Petrie Contact :- Manfred - 0411 160510 or Cay - 07 34083219.

Kurilpa Poets - last Sunday of the month 2pm to 4.30pm, Croquet Hall, 91 Codelia St. Sth Brisbane. Contact Marilyn 0458 598 683

Geebung Writers - 9.30 am every 2nd Wednesday of the month at Geebung RSL. Contact Jean (07)32654349

Bundaberg Poets Society Inc. 2nd Saturday of the month. Rum City Silver Band Hall, Targo Street. Contact Edna 0428 574 651; Jayson (07) 41550778 or Sandy (07) 41514631.

Beaudesert Bush Bards meet on the 3rd Friday of each month from 9.30am at the Beaudesert Arts & information Centre, Mt. Lindesay H'way, Beaudesert. Phone 07 5541 2662 or 3272 4535.

Redcliffe Peninsular Poets - 1st Tuesday of the month, 7pm to 9pm. Winton Room, Redcliffe Cultural Centre, Downs Street, Recliff. Contact Janice Ebrington 0421941494

Russell Island Writers Circle - 2nd Thursday of the month at 9.30 am. St. Peters Church Hall (Next to IGA). \$2 donation. Contact Trish (07)34091542

Shorncliffe Cafe On The Park - 3rd Monday of the month from 6pm, 6 Park Pde, Shorncliffe.

Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc meet every first Tuesday of the month at Aitkenvale Library Meeting Room at 7:00pm. They also meet at Bellevue Hotel, Allen Street, South Townsville, every third Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm for 'Pub Grub' and 7:00pm for 'Walk-Up' poetry. Loads of fun. All welcome.

Bribie Island Bush Poets meet at 6.30 pm on the 4th Monday of each month in the Conference Room of the Blue Pacific Hotel, Woorim on Bribie Island. Contact Cay - 07 34083219.

### **Victoria**

Kyabram Bush Verse Group- First Monday, every second month, namely Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec. at the Kyabram Baptist Church meeting room, crn Fenaughty Street and Lake Road Kyabram 7.30pm. Contact Mick Coventry 0427-522097

Gippsland Bush Poets meet Monthly, 7.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the RSL Hall in Hood St. Rosedale

Top of the Murray Poets and Bush Storytellers (TOMPABS) meet Monthly (mostly Tuesdays in Corryong) for writing workshops, Monthly on 3rd Sunday for Music and Poetry at Maurie Foun's 'Poets' Paradise'. Contact Jan Lewis (02) 60774332

Bendigo Goldfields Bush Poets - Third Sunday even numbered months, except December when second Sunday. Newmarket Hotel, cnr Nolan St & Strickland Rd, Bendigo 1.30pm to 4.30pm. Contacts: Geoffrey Graham 03 5446 7104 or Ken Jones 03 5441 5121

Henry Lawson Memorial & Literary Society Inc. - Meet third Saturday each month/except January. Monastery Hall St. rear St. Francis Church, Lonsdale street. Melbourne. All Welcome. From 1-30pm till 4-00 pm. Contact: Maree Stapledon: 0408 100 896

### **WA**

Albany Bush Poets Group 4th Tuesday of each month. Contact Peter 98446606

Perth monthly muster, 1st Friday of each month 7pm - 9.30pm at The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive Bentley Park 6102 Contact Dave 0438341256 or Terry 0894588887

### **New Zealand**

All local and visiting ABPA members are welcome to 'Nelson Live Poets', every third Wednesday in Nelson, top of the South Island, New Zealand. Contact Roger Lusby email rlusby@xtra.co.nz for more information. ABPA Member..

## **AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETS ASSOCIATION**

*If you wish to find out more about the Australian Bush Poets Association, or if you are not already a member of the ABPA and wish to become one, please go to the our Website [www.abpa.org.au](http://www.abpa.org.au) to download a membership form, or contact the Secretary [secretary@abpa.org.au](mailto:secretary@abpa.org.au)*





**WA Bush Poets  
& Yarnspinnners**



# *Act-Belong-Commit Toodyay Bush Poetry Festival*

**Hosting the  
*Australian Bush Poetry  
Championships***

**Fri 3rd - Sun 5th Nov 2017**

Proudly sponsored and supported by



**For entry forms and more information, visit  
[www.wabushpoets.asn.au](http://www.wabushpoets.asn.au)**

**or contact Bill Gordon 0428 651 098  
[president@wabushpoets.asn.au](mailto:president@wabushpoets.asn.au)**

## **Toodyay Hosts the Australian Bush Poetry Championships**

**WA Bush Poets** are holding their annual State Championship in Toodyay on 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2017. This year the **Australian Championships** are being held in conjunction with that event. Written entry forms and conditions are now available on ABPA website

Toodyay is situated 80km north-east of Perth, in the picturesque Avon Valley. Toodyay enjoys a rustic charm with a unique valley backdrop with the Avon River flowing through the centre of town. It is classified as a Historic Town by the National Trust. The town's architecture reflects its colonial and convict past, also offering an enviable array of charming studios, galleries, boutique shops, varied accommodation, wineries, eateries and family entertainment.

Toodyay is an excellent base from which to visit places such as New Norcia, Australia's only Monastic town, The Chittering Valley Wine Trail and Bindoon, famous for its citrus orchards. Midland is a comfortable hour away on the air-conditioned Avonlink commuter train, traveling through the spectacular Avon Valley National Park. More information about Toodyay, including accommodation can be found at [www.toodyay.com](http://www.toodyay.com) Caravans and motorhomes check out [www.toodyayholidaypark.com](http://www.toodyayholidaypark.com) or [www.toodyaycaravanpark.com](http://www.toodyaycaravanpark.com)

Some of the best Bush Poets from across Australia will be converging on Toodyay for the Australian Championships. Visitors to the Bush Poetry Festival can be assured of a feast of traditional and modern poetry in the style of the great masters Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson. There will also be a concert on the Friday night and a family Bush dance on the Saturday night. **Everyone is welcome and there is no charge for any of the weekend.**