

The
Australian
Bush Poets Association Inc.

RULES
For
Australian
Bush Poetry Competitions

Conducted under the auspices of the ABPA

version 1 revision 1

as amended on the 18th February 2007

INTRODUCTION

In January 2000 a committee was formed at the Annual General Meeting of The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. in Tamworth to draw up a set of guidelines for conducting Bush Poetry competitions.

At a special meeting this committee drafted a set of guidelines based on opinions and criticisms from all quarters, and a booklet was printed to assist interested organisations in conducting such competitions.

The 'Guidelines for Bush Poetry Competitions', as drawn up by this committee, were submitted and approved at the AGM in 2001.

The 'Guidelines' came under severe, but fair, criticism during the ensuing two years. Further positive input gained from experience and opinions and suggestions put forward by members of the association has seen the development of this book of 'Rules for Australian Bush Poetry Competitions'.

This booklet was drafted by members of the Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. and approved at the annual General Meeting in Tamworth NSW on 25th January 2003.

Further improvements followed annually with this edition last updated at the AGM in January 2007 at Tamworth.

This, the latest approved booklet, was released on
18th February 2007

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AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY

TERMINOLOGY and DEFINITIONS

ABPA — The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

Australian Bush Poetry is poetry having good rhyme and metre, written about Australia, Australians and/or the Australian way of life.

Bush poetry — Australian Bush Poetry.

Bush Poet — One who writes Bush Poetry.

Performance Poetry — Spoken bush poetry.

Performer — One who performs bush poetry. (Performance Bush Poet).

CATEGORIES

Bush Poetry can come under any of the following categories.

CLASSICAL — (Traditional)

Australian Poetry written before and including 1950.

(In Performance Competitions, poetry not written by the performer).

MODERN TRADITIONAL — (Contemporary)

Australian Poetry written since and including 1951.

(In performance competitions, poetry not written by the performer - where author's permission, if possible, should be sought).

ORIGINAL

Australian Poetry written by the performer.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

Can be devised by competition organisers such as a 'Banjo Paterson' section a 'Henry Lawson' section, or a section on a topic of their own design to suit a particular festival. Conditions should be made clear on entry forms.

CLASSES

Levels of competition should be clearly stated on the entry forms as determined by the organisers.

Separate Male and Female classes may be included.

ADULT CLASSES

Novice (Performers who have not won a competition).

At competitions where large numbers of entries are received and time is important, the organisers may at their own discretion limit Novices to Novice classes only, and not allow them to enter a higher class.

Open (Performers who have been successful in competitions or prefer to enter open class competitions).

Duo — Class for two performers.

Intermediate - for performers who have won one novice event but have not won an open competition.

Restrictions — Again at the discretion of the organising body, restrictions may be placed on the number of entrants in each and every performance class.

A competitor's status at the beginning of any competition remains throughout the competition irrespective of success in that competition.

(e.g. Novice remains Novice)

JUNIOR CLASSES

Children under seven years.

Children 7 years and under 12 years.

Performers 12 years and under 16 years.

TIME LIMITS

Adults: 8 minutes including Preamble.

Junior Classes: 5 minutes

POET'S BRAWL (One minute cup, cut-out or competition).

Original poetry written and performed at the venue not exceeding one-minute in delivery. Unless previous arrangements by the organisers exist, poets on arrival at the venue, can either purchase or simply draw a 'title' or subject from a hat and then at their leisure, write a one-minute poem on that subject for delivery at a later time in the programme.

Titles or subjects are usually determined by the organisers, having something in common with the festivities.

Preambles in a Poet's Brawl should be non-existent or kept to an absolute minimum, and are not to be included in the timing of the poem.

YARN-SPINNING — Open category for male or female all ages.

Yarn-spinning is the telling of Australian stories as per the idiom of our forebears from the city and the bush.

Yarn-spinning is not a connected line of jokes, nor is it rhyming verse.

TIME LIMIT: 8 minutes maximum.

CLOSING DATE

For cataloguing purposes, a closing date allowing sufficient time should be set. Late entries may be accepted at the organisers discretion.

Entry Fees may be charged by the organiser.

Organisers may allow Novices to compete in different classes if convenient for their festival. *(This does not necessarily apply at State or National levels of Competition).*

No competitor shall repeat any given poem in any competition.

In a State Competition, no competitor may repeat a poem he/she has won with in that State's Competition in a previous year.

In a National Competition, no competitor may repeat a poem he/she has won with in a previous National Competition.

WRITTEN COMPETITIONS

The following classes are suggested for written competitions.

JUNIOR

(Childrens) under 7 years.

7 years and under 12 years.

12 years and under 16 years.

OPEN

Written competitions are open to all writers of bush poetry.

Organisers may set a theme for individual competitions.

The organizers may limit the number of entries per author or the total number of entries in a particular competition. Entry must be the individual work of the author.

Co-authorship is not permitted.

A Closing Date should be set at least a month prior to the event to allow for adjudication.

Entry fees can be determined and set by the organisers.

International entries are acceptable provided they are written about Australia, Australians and/or the Australian way of life, having good rhyme and metre.

Previously Published (not for profit) original works may be permitted in written competitions.

Previous winning poems are not permitted.

Cover Sheets. A separate cover sheet should accompany all entries, bearing the authors name, address in full, class and title of poem.

Authors names must not appear on copies of works entered. Poems and title sheets to be in plain type, on plain white A4 paper, with no art work or decoration of any kind. *(anonymity is vital)*

APPROVED JUDGES

A list of approved judges for written competitions is enclosed in this booklet. (Page 11)
These award winning writers have agreed to be available to judge up to two written competitions per year.

NOTIFICATION of WINNERS

The Judges decision is final in all competitions - written or performance.
Poets should retain copies of their own poetry. (Entries are not always returnable).
Separate (long) SSAE (Stamped Self Addressed Envelopes) are required for Entry forms, and the return of results and Judges Sheets, unless other arrangements are made by the organisers.

Anthologies. Organisers may reserve the right to publish winning poems or an anthology of poems submitted. Copyright must remain with the author.

PERFORMANCE POETRY COMPETITIONS.

CLASSES

Separate classes such as Male and Female, and categories such as Classical, Modern Traditional (Contemporary), Original, Serious or Humorous, Duos, Poets Brawl or a selected masters work can be determined by the organisers.

ENTRY FORMS.

An entry form should contain the name, address and phone number of the applicant.
It should indicate the classes in which the entrant wishes to compete.
Entry forms not fully completed will not be accepted. Entry forms must be accompanied by the full payment of entry fees.

A choice of three poems (at least) should be nominated for Non-Original Categories in order to avoid repetition of works by contestants.

The organisers will then decide on a first in - first served basis, and advise entrants of any changes.

JUDGING PANELS should be made up of competent people.

Judges should be positioned separately throughout the auditorium, not within communicable distance of each other.

Scrutineers. At least two suitable scribes will be required to collate, record and check scores as determined from the judging sheets.

TIE BREAKERS

In the event of a tie scrutineers shall refer to the judges sheets and determine the winner by a count-back method whereby total points awarded in Start of the poem are considered, then in Body and the Conclusion of poem, until a separation occurs.

DEDUCTIONS.

Ten (10) points shall be deducted in all cases for reading of poems in open classes.

Five (5) points shall be deducted (from the aggregate of points for that poem), for every fifteen (15) seconds or part thereof over the time limit.

Performers exhibiting loss of memory and forgetting their lines should be heavily penalised.

JUDGING SHEETS

Judging sheets should be made available to competitors as soon as practicable after the completion of the festival.

No competitor shall repeat any given poem in any other section of the same competition.

Judges Decisions will always remain final.

STATE and NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

All such competitions should carry the title:

(Name of the State OPEN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

or NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Championships should be decided over at least three **OPEN** categories;

1. Classical 2. Contemporary (Modern Traditional) 3. Original.

Options are as set out below;

1. Classical

OR

1. Classical

2. Modern Traditional (Contemporary)

2. Modern Traditional

3. Original (Serious)

3. Original

4. Original (Humorous)

Entries will be accepted for individual classes but championship contenders must enter all classes.

Junior Classes may be added.

Each of these sections should have separate prize-money.

A Written Championship Competition should be included in all State and National Championships, irrespective of author's State of address.

(Our writers are as important as our performers)

Written competitions should be Open - Separate classes for Humorous and Serious are acceptable. The Championship will be awarded to the highest scoring entry.

OVERALL CHAMPION

The Overall Male and Female Champion will be decided from aggregate points gained over all combined male and female Open categories (1 to 4 above), including Finals if held. Finals are not necessary.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

State Championships should be open to all competitors, the winner being declared the **(Name of State) Open Champion Bush Poet.**

The Highest placed resident of such state, Male and Female, should be recognized and/or awarded.

YARN-SPINNING competitions can be held in conjunction with the State and National Titles but will not influence the Overall Champion results.

NOTE: The foregoing format caters for all presenters of bush poetry. Opportunity exists for quality reciters who are non-writers to win a category. The OVERALL TITLE can only be won by someone who writes as well as recites.

OFFENSIVE MATERIAL and or objectionable material will not be accepted and should be marked as such by the adjudicators and NO SCORE given.

CONDUCT OF COMPETITIONS.

Organisations adopting these rules will have the ABPA Inc. approval to publish the following notation on their competition advertisements and forms.

‘Conducted under the AUSPICES of the ABPA Inc.’

TIE-BREAKERS.

In the event of equal scores, scrutineers shall refer to the Judges Sheets of the ‘tied entrants’ and determine the winner from the highest scores recorded for the Start, the Body and the Conclusion categories on these judging sheets.

TIME-KEEPING.

Time commences from when the entrant begins to speak. The Time Keeper must accurately time all contestants — indicating the time limit has been reached by some soft audible means and repeat the sound at fifteen (15) second intervals.

ASSESSMENT of PERFORMANCES.

Performances will be assessed to a maximum of 100 points per each of the criteria on the Assessment sheet. (The high scoring technique on the Assessment Sheet greatly assists in eliminating ties)

PENALTIES FOR OVERTIME are to be deducted at the rate of 5 points for every 15 seconds or part thereof. Over time should be advised by the time-keeper to the scrutineers who can make the necessary deductions from the performer’s aggregate of points for that poem.

SCRUTINEERS should collate judges sheets, total the scores, and present them for confirmation to a second authority.

Accuracy of score totals is absolutely necessary. When errors are found, they must be corrected even if results have already been declared and prizes distributed. Such errors must be publicly announced and the rightful winners or place getters given their correct prizes.

DUTIES OF COMPERE/MC.

The comperer’s duties are to announce the events proceedings and to fill in where necessary with suitable material without wasting undue time.

The compere should only introduce performers by name and along with some geographical information.

The compere should not refer to the competitors past successes, his or her standing in the ABPA or give other details which may unduly prejudice judges.

In announcing presentations, the winners names should be given in reverse order. i.e. 3rd, 2nd, 1st., including name of the poem and the author as performed by each.

STATE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS.

States are encouraged to conduct their own State Championships using the ABPA approved rules.

AUSTRALIAN BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The ABPA Inc. is the only organisation entitled to use the name ‘Australian Bush Poetry Championships’ or ‘Australian Bush Poetry State Open Championships’ in which the National or State Champion Poets (Male, Female and Junior) are chosen.

Approval for the holding of State and National Bush Poetry Championships is declared at the Annual General Meeting of the Association held in January each year or at a later date if none have been allocated.

Applications for such events should be directed to the Secretary of the ABPA Inc.

Notices regarding the championships and application details are placed in the ABPA Inc. Newsletter.

** For a current copy of the “**Register Of Judges For Written Competitions**” contact the ABPA [Web Administrator](#).