

2020 Blackened Billy Verse Competition

The 30th Annual Blackened Billy Verse Competition Awards were announced in a ceremony on Thursday 20th February 2020 at Duntryleague Orange NSW. Congratulations to all Award Winners. MC Carol Heuchan led proceedings with a message about the importance of writing competitions, and the merit of the use of rank order and judging panels.

A reflection of past winners over the 29 year history concluded with Carol's vibrant recital of Milton Taylor's first Blackened Billy Award Winning poem 'The Saga of Cecil'.

2020 entrant Caroline Tuohey delighted the audience with her recital of 'I've Never Won a Raffle'. Robyn Sykes read Catherine Lee's 2020 Blackened Billy winner 'The Wanderers' with superb characterisation and emotion. This is Catherine's third Blackened Billy win.

Robyn later recited her Commended entry in this year's competition, after echoing Carol's call for quality Australian bush poetry writing competitions. Robyn stated that great poetry performance relies on quality writing. Like so many in the bush poetry family of Australia, Robyn expressed sincere gratitude to Duntryleague for supporting this year's competition, and ensuring it continues as an annual event.

Attendees enjoyed lovely refreshments and each other's company as they took time to interact after the event.

Congratulations to all Award winners, and thanks to all entrants who supported this prestigious Competition. A sincere thank you also to our panel of 3 adjudicators.

Results of the 2020 Blackened Billy Verse Competition

First Place:	Catherine Lee	<i>The Wanderers</i>
Second Place:	Shelley Hansen	<i>Lawson's Legacy</i>
Third Place:	Shelley Hansen	<i>My Singing Garden</i>

Highly Commended

Jim Kennedy	<i>One Silent Night</i>
Peter O'Shaughnessy	<i>The Last Mob Down the Canning</i>
David Campbell	<i>Judgement Day</i>
Shelley Hansen	<i>The Trial of Harry Redford</i>
Jim Kennedy	<i>George – Anzac Day, 1955</i>

Commended

David Judge	<i>The Miner and his Mates</i>
Jim Kennedy	<i>No Known Grave</i>
Robyn Sykes	<i>When the Stretcher Bearers Died</i>
David Campbell	<i>Reach for the Sky</i>
David Judge	<i>Settlers' Dreams</i>

Adjudicators – Noel Stallard OAM, Brenda Joy Pritchard, Tom McIlveen.

Entries for the 31st Annual Blackened Billy Verse Competition will open on 1 September 2020.

Janine Keating.

2020 BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION JUDGE'S REPORT

The 2020 Blackened Billy Verse Competition brought forth a depth of passion and patriotism as poets wrote of the past and the present to express their love of, and their hopes and fears for, Australia. Some used this medium as a sounding board for their personal opinions while the best entries, through skillfully presented words and images, allowed each reader to enjoy and to respond individually to their poems.

Characters in stories of both truth and fiction ranged from war heroes, outback legends, bushies, townies, farmers, miners, poets and politicians and included the interaction of man with Nature, horses, dogs and the environment. There was also a welcome group of comic poems demonstrating the Australian sense of 'larrikin' good humour.

This iconic competition is now in its 30th year and special thanks must go to the enthusiastic efforts of the 2020 co-ordinator, Janine Keating and to Jan Morris and the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group for the work and dedication to ensure the Blackened Billy survived this year and will be taken into the future. The support from the Dunty League Guest House in providing a new 'home' for the Billy, linking it, appropriately, to the Orange Banjo Paterson Australian Bush Festival, is greatly appreciated by all who value the importance of avenues to continue and to expand the written component of our unique Australian art form of storytelling through the structure of rhyme and metre.

Congratulations to the winners and to all the poets who entered this year. It has been my privilege once again to co-judge this prestigious, high-standard competition and on behalf of all concerned, I thank you for sharing your thoughts and feelings.

Brenda Joy