

2022 BANJO PATERSON AUSTRALIAN POETRY FESTIVAL

Another successful Festival was held in Orange, NSW, and the surrounding villages, to celebrate the birth of Banjo Paterson and his contribution to Australian bush poetry. Despite the postponement of the National Bush Poetry Performance Championships to 2023 because of State border closures, a good number of poets from interstate and across NSW came to the Festival.

Poets took the opportunities to perform at walk-up events in pubs, wineries and outdoors. There was a wonderful selection of original and old favourite poems to entertain audiences as well as some yarns which will feature more strongly next year.

The venue has been booked for 23 and 24 February 2023 for the Nationals as part of next year's Festival in Orange, which will hopefully be free of travel restrictions and will include more events for visitors and locals.

The young people of Orange and the surrounding district have once again shown that they are talented poets. Having to produce and perform their own original poem in front of two judges, family members and other bush poetry enthusiasts is a daunting task. But the entrants in the 2022 Banjo Paterson Youth Poetry Competition were confident in expressing their thoughts in rhyming verse.

The Primary School section of the competition was won by Elijah Hutchins with his poem called "AFL". Elijah's passion for the game was evident in his poem and his enthusiastic performance. Second was Hannah Wilson with her poem "Bush fires" and third was Josiah Hutchins who wrote and performed "Excuse me". The judges and the Rotary Club of Orange wish these three young poets lots of enjoyment and fulfillment from creating and performing rhyming verse.

The High school section of the competition was won by Isabelle Hassall as she recounted her family Christmas, complete with the tensions, fun and frustrations when uncles, aunts and cousins get together for Christmas dinner. Second place went to Abby Kiely with her poem "The great debrief" about the COVID-19 lockdowns from the perspective of the household pets, dolls and children. Third was Ailie Kermode with a stirring poem she had written called "Stone the crows" about the signs and impacts of the plague.

Judges David Stanley and Carol Smithers complimented the young poets on their capacity to write great poems and perform them to the enjoyment of the audience. This event will feature again in 2023.

Len Banks
Rotary Club of Orange