

Junior Poetry 2026 by Winton Correspondent Jeff Close

On Thursday 17 September, 150 primary school students from the Central Western Queensland were part of Australia's largest bush poetry performance competition for children. The venue was the Winton Shire Hall and the Winton Business and Tourism Association conducted their 31st Festival. Winton State School, St Patrick's Catholic School in Winton, Our Lady's Catholic Primary School in Longreach, Longreach State School and students from the Longreach School of Distance Education were all represented.

Event co-ordinator Kate de Koning said the aim was to encourage students to participate in story telling through poetry in both group and individual presentations, enhancing their ability to speak publicly and interact with confidence. Kate had a team of 19 volunteers, the support of the Winton State School and 18 sponsors. Kate thanked the parents, supporters and the teachers for their terrific support.

Mayor Cathy White welcomed all to Winton and opened the festival. The North Gregory Hotel's Irene Moore not only penned a bush poem welcome but also delivered it to start off a wonderful day of performances.

The Banjo Paterson Award, open to any student who performed their choice of Banjo Poem, was won by Meg Elliott from the Longreach School of Distance Education with her rendition of A Bush Christening.

Results: LDSE: Longreach School of Distance Education; OL: Our Lady's School, Longreach; LSS: Longreach State School; WSS: Winton State School; St Pats: St Patrick's Catholic School, Winton.

Group – Prep, Year 1, Year 2. 1. Our Lady's, 2 WSS, 3 LSDE.

Year 2: 1. Rosie Nuendorf (OL), 2. April Lin (LSS), 3. Ruby Faehr (OL).

Year 1: 1. Vivienne Fitzgerald (LSDE), 2. Anna Button (LSDE), 3. Everley Lenton (WSS).

Prep.: 1. Olivia Bates (WSS), 2. Chloe Batt (LSDE), 3. Heidi Purcell (OL).

Little Swaggies Award for Prep, Year 1, Year 2: Rosie Nuendorf (OL).

Group Performance – Years 3 and 4: 1. Our Lady's, 2. LSDE, 3. St Pats.

Year 3: 1. Annabelle Elmes (OL), 2. Clark Batt (LSDE), 3. River Edgar (St Pats).

Year 4: 1. Meg Elliott (LSDE), 2. Isobel Richardson (OL), 3. Albert Button (LSDE).

Little Swaggies Award for Year 3 and Year 4: Annabelle Elmes (OL).

Group Performance – Year 5 and Year 6: 1. Longreach State School. 2. St Pats. 3. Our Lady's.

Year 5: 1. Charlie Button (LSDE), 2. Paige Dorries (St Pats), 3. Greta Nuendorf (OL).

Year 6: 1. April Batt (LSDE), 2. Ella Goodman (LSS), 3. Charlotte McDonald (LSS).

Little Swaggies Award for Years 5 and 6: April Batt (LSDE).