

# AB.P.A.



**Australian Bush Poets Association  
Volume 29 No. 5 October/November 2023**



**Melbourne Cup 2023 Edition**

# INVITATION



## 2023 Broken Creek Muster 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October



At the unique rural Broken Creek Bush Camp 15 kms from Benalla  
A Grey Nomads & Campers Paradise. [www.brokencreekbushcamp.com.au](http://www.brokencreekbushcamp.com.au)  
Day participants and audience welcome. Muso's bring your instruments!!!  
6pm Friday 'Meet & Greet' old friends and make new ones

### SATURDAY

After Poets & Singers Breakfast  
various entertainment

ANZAC Tribute 2pm - 4pm

Concert 7.30pm - 10.30pm  
with selected performers.



### Bush Poets & Singers

BREAKFAST  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY  
8.30AM TO 10.30AM

Novice Performed Poem  
One Minute Poem

Other sessions and information TBA. **Family entertainment All welcome.**  
Concludes 12 Noon Sunday. Conducted by Victorian Bush Poetry & Music Assoc Inc.  
[www.vbpma.com.au](http://www.vbpma.com.au) Muster page E: [info@vbpma.com.au](mailto:info@vbpma.com.au) **A Victorian Seniors Festival Event**  
Info: Tel: Jan Lewis 0422 848 707 or Tim Sheed 0438 861 271  
All enquiries re the venue to Camp management: Doc Hair 0428 574 799 or,  
E: [cathyhair1@gmail.com](mailto:cathyhair1@gmail.com) **See FBook Broken Creek Bush Camp, Benalla Vic**

## Muster moves from Benalla to Broken Creek Bush Camp

After many years of having a Bush Poetry and Australian Song/Music Muster at the Benalla Bowls Club, the Victorian Bush Poetry and Music Association (VBPMA) Committee has decided upon a new venue for 2023.

A true 'Aussie' setting at the BROKEN CREEK BUSH CAMP just 15 klms from Benalla off the Shepparton road, is on a beautiful 40 acre rural block. See [brokencreekbushcamp.com.au](http://brokencreekbushcamp.com.au)

I, and others I know who have stayed at the venue rate it highly. Truly unique.

The Muster begins with a Meet and Greet at 6pm on Friday the 13th October and continues through to 12 noon on Sunday 15th.

Saturday and Sunday mornings will have Bush Poets & Singers Breakfasts from 8.30am to 10.30am.

Saturday will see various entertainment that includes an ANZAC Tribute from 2pm - 4pm

There'll be a Concert from 7.30pm to 10.30pm with selected performers.

On Sunday morning a Novice Performed Poem Competition will be held. Also the Carol Reffold memorial One Minute Poem.

Whilst the venue is ideally suited for self contained Caravaneers, Motor Homes, and campers. Day and evening visitors are welcome. All enquiries re the venue to Camp Management Doc Hair 0428 574 799.

A large fridge, excellent cooking and kitchen facilities available within a large under cover area enclosed on 3 sides. There is also a separate outside stage with a large hard standing area for use in good weather. BYO Chairs and food. There should be at least one night when Pizzas will be able to be ordered. Showers with hot water, flushing toilets. No entry fee for Muster or segments.

VBPMA enquiries: Jan Lewis 0422 848 707 or Tim Sheed 0438 861 271. [www.vbpma.com.au/muster](http://www.vbpma.com.au/muster)



# President's Report

As the year rushes towards the end we still have a couple of major events in the offing.

On the 14th and 15th of October we have the Victorian Bush Poets and Musicians Association get together at the Broken Creek Bush Camp. It will consist of a meet and greet on the Friday night and poets breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning with a concert on the Saturday evening and an Anzac tribute on the Saturday afternoon.

The other major event is the NSW Bush Poetry Championship in Guyra on the 18th and 19th of November in conjunction with the Poets on the Mountain Festival so look that one up, it sounds like fun.

The Logan Muddy River Bush Poetry Competition was held in the Phoenix Ensemble Theatre at Beenleigh showground on the weekend of 23 and 24 September. A great weekend of Bush Poetry and fellowship.

Former ABPA President Gary Fogarty has produced a book in conjunction with a local artist called "I Wish I was a Farmer" to educate young people about where their food comes from. Contact Gary if you would like one.

All in all the predicted demise of our form of rhymed and metered verse has not gone the way of the dodo as predicted and is in fact increasing in popularity.



Onwards and Upwards for  
Bush Poetry  
Tim Sheed

Make sure to mark your calendars for the NSW BUSH POETRY CHAMPIONSHIPS...18th & 19th NOVEMBER at 144 Bradley Street Guyra. We are planning 3 x divisions of Contest...TRADITIONAL...MODERN and ORIGINAL.. there will be individual cash prizes and trophies for each division, with an extra cash prize and trophy for overall champion...

"POET ON THE MOUNTAIN"...Poetry workshops written and performance will also be run on days preceding competition. A written competition is also being run in conjunction with The NSW Championship. All details and entry forms are available on the ABPA website.

Free camping will be available nearby, with motel accommodation in Guyra (book early) and Armidale. venue...enquiries phone either Tom McIlveen .. 0417251287 or James Warren ..0423 478656

## ABPA Magazine Advertising Rates

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### Black and White Ads

Full page \$95

Half Page \$55

Quarter Page or less \$35

### Full Colour Ads (Space limited and applicable to Printed Magazine only)

Full Page \$240

Half Page \$140

Quarter Page not available

## ABPA Committee Members 2023

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### Non Committee Positions

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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)

All payments to be made within 14 days to

### **The Treasurer - Christine Middleton**

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## **Next Magazine Deadline is November 27th 2023**

# Mandildjarra Mourning

© Peter O'Shaughnessy  
Winner, Boree Log 2023,



There is nobody left on the Spinifex plains  
where the desert winds ruffle the sands,  
for this lonely old nomad is all that remains  
of the people who hunted these lands –  
the tribes who once lived in these lands.

He was born Mandildjarra, but came here to die  
all alone in this desolate place,  
where he dreams of a life that has now passed him by  
and he mourns for the past of his race –  
for he is the last of his race.

And he mourns for the days when he roamed this red land  
where he hunted and lived with his wife.  
Where the distant blue hills lay like mist on the sand  
and his tribe was a part of his life –  
his tribe a big part of his life.

They would camp by a creek in the shade of the trees,  
where the breeze over desert pools hums  
with the sounds of the birds and the tiny bush bees,  
in the shade of the ghostly white gums –  
the shady, great, ghostly white gums.

He still dreams of the times when they caught kangaroo  
and then roasted the tail on the stones.  
And to trap an emu they used tricks that they knew  
would draw strength from the life in the bones –  
the life they could draw from his bones.

And he misses the sounds of the desert at night,  
the wind's hiss in the dry mulga trees,  
how the black desert oak's silky whispers delight,  
or the fizz of a red sand-hill breeze –  
the fizzing hot red sand-hill breeze.

He remembers mirages the summer sun makes,  
silver shimmers that promise so much  
and the shining white glare of the salt on the lakes,  
full of spectres nobody could touch –  
the mirages no one could touch.

And those days when the rugged hill country's cool pools  
were the places where people survived  
and the Martu all lived by the hot summer's rules,  
but they lived there and loved there and thrived –  
the desert tribes lived there and thrived.

And those icy cold nights when a winter was dire  
with a frost on the Moongooloo Hills.  
When he slept with his dingoes beside a small fire,  
so they'd ward off the desert wind chills –  
they'd ward off the desert wind chills.

They were times when the winds off the desert would hiss  
over crystalline frost on the plain,  
with the wind in the mulga the cold, icy kiss  
of the ice on the desert terrane –  
the frosty cold desert terrane.

But a terrible drought for some years had lain on  
the hot hills and the sand plains were dead.  
All the water at Barragoodingo had gone  
and the malu and emu had fled –  
and even the euro had fled.

Then with dread he had watched the dry country revolt  
and his lands become tortured and bare,  
for he feared the great, glittering oceans of salt  
and the plains of dry spinifex there –  
the silver, dead Spinifex there.

In despair he had searched the hot hills of his home,  
but the gnamma holes there had all dried.  
All alone in a wasteland where he used to roam,  
all his dogs and his people had died –  
and even the wildlife had died.

So he fled from his land – it had no more to give –  
to this town where he knew he would die,  
but in dreams he returns to where he used to live,  
where the bones of his ancestors lie –  
for that's where his spirits will lie.

- \* *Malu and Euro ... varieties of kangaroo.*
- \* *Gnamma holes...semi permanent water holes in the rocks.*
- \* *Martu ... collective name for the Western Desert people.*

*This poem was written to reflect the life of Warri Kyango, ('The Last of the Nomads', Dr WJ Peasley, 1983) Warri and his wife Yatungka came in to Wiluna from the drought stricken Western Desert in 1977. They died in 1979 and are buried in the Wiluna cemetery.*

# SO WOMEN WEPT...

© Brenda Joy

Winner The Nandewar Poetry Competition 2023, Narrabri and District Historical Society, Narrabri, NSW

## *She – from London Town*

In the heart of a harsh and weathered land, under blaze of the outback sun,  
she reflects on the sadness her life has come to know,  
in a searching attempt to understand what the deeds of the dark have done  
to the girl who came down on the ship so long ago.

Only eighteen years old, her voyage led to the south where the promise lay.  
With a heart full of trust and excitement she'd arrived  
into Botany Bay with hopes to wed, in that outpost so far away  
from the system which kept those of 'lesser' birth deprived.

But in Sydney's domain she came to see, though she bore neither crime nor stain,  
that this counted for nought where barbaric moral mores  
of a rugged and rough society could condone the inflict of pain  
on all 'lower-class' women just seen as sluts and whores.

In that coarse, anti-female atmosphere, in her struggle to just survive,  
to get food and protection and shelter, her demise  
saw her forced to give sex through need and fear if she wanted to stay alive,  
for a girl was a chattel for men to utilise.

Finding Joe meant escape from fearful nights at the whim of some vicious brute  
(if a man took you on you were saved from all the rest).  
Even though a de facto had no rights and was labelled a prostitute,  
not for love, but for safety, to stay with Joe was best.

So when Joe left the town to head out back (for he wanted the chance to live  
without stigma attached to his convict background), then  
she had willingly joined him on his track, but he'd found that he could not give  
her a home, for the squatters would only house the men.

Having lost her escape she'd turned once more to the selling of sex for pay  
and the pimp of the district was quick to take her on.  
Just a bed in a tent, an outback whore, in a struggle to live each day  
with no future ahead and the hopes of girlhood gone.

She'd become what they'd said she was at last and the passing of years could bring  
only sorrow and sadness as youth and beauty died.  
And she looked at the lady going past and she felt she had everything  
with her husband, her home and her children by her side.

## *She -- from Sydney Cove*

In the heart of a harsh and weathered land, under blaze of the outback sun,  
she reflects on the sadness her life has come to know,  
in a searching attempt to understand what the deeds of the dark have done,  
to the girl who came out on the coach so long ago.

Only eighteen years old, her journey led to the west where the promise lay.  
With a heart full of trust and excitement as a bride,  
at her father's command, she'd come to wed in this wasteland so far away  
from the genteel existence his rank and wealth supplied.

But in marital state it came to be that this man, nearly twice her age,  
who appeared on the outer to be devout and kind,  
was a product of base society and his conduct and fits of rage  
saw the starry-eyed hopes of a girl left far behind.

In that coarse, anti-female atmosphere, where a man had complete control  
over property, finance and spouse, her cruel demise  
saw her forced to succumb, through need and fear, to the bonds of her marriage role  
as a chattel her husband could rule and utilise.

Though his temper and wrath meant fear-filled nights and abuse in the marriage bed,  
with a husband, she had some respect from all the rest,  
even though she'd surrendered her total rights and the hopes of her youth were dead,  
not for love, but for safety, to stay with him was best.

Then the children were born and she was cast in a part that could help allay  
all the sorrow she felt for the life she'd left behind.  
While her pleasures belonged in a distant past, her emotions were kept at bay  
as she stifled regrets that would infiltrate her mind.

And she looked at the woman leading life, as an outcast from social grace,  
without judgement. She knew, "But for fortune there go I.  
She is paid as a whore, I'm paid as wife for the deeds that the dawn can't face  
for when men have the power then women must comply."

So the lady who passed could understand what the 'harlot' she saw had done,  
and she felt the compassion that only women know.  
In the heart of a harsh and weathered land, under blaze of the outback sun,  
lie the dreams of the women who wept so long ago.





# Vale John Lees



In the early hours of Friday 25th August, John Lees of Bundaberg, Queensland passed away after suffering a stroke in May. He was 88 years old.

John and his wife Sandy were outstanding organisers and hosts of the Bundy Muster bush poetry festivals for 22 years. They were also staunch supporters of the Bundaberg Poets Society and any budding bush poetry performers. John took on technical aspects such as stages, sound and lighting with his trademark attention to detail and friendliness.

Sandy and John have attended many bush poetry events across the country over the years, always enjoying themselves and offering help. They were invaluable support to the Naked Poets, handling ticketing and merchandise at many of their shows, especially during the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

Always ready to offer constructive advice and help poets in whatever way he could, John was a generous and enthusiastic supporter of poets at all levels.

Outside of bush poetry, John had also been involved in square dancing and was a highly-skilled and sought-after motor trimmer and upholsterer. He never really retired and worked from his shed in the backyard until very recently.

John Lees was a great mate to so many bush poets and will be sorely missed. Our sympathies go to his wife Sandy and their three children and their families.

John's funeral was held on Friday 1 September where Ray Essery spoke eloquently on behalf of the poets who knew and respected John. Thank you Ray.

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John, along with his wife and best mate Sandy, were very much unanimous with the Bush Poetry scene for many many years. From Tamworth CMF to the Gympie Muster and other CM Festivals, they were always there to help out with anything the poets ever needed.

So many years at the Tamworth Golf Club they would be seen at the door organising tickets, seats and merchandise for the Naked Poets Shows, where they were as much a part of the shows as Marco, Murray, Bobby, Shirley and Ray, and certainly a lot better behaved!

Myself, along with Gary Fogarty, John Major, Rupert McCall, Jack Drake and others, started our shows, Sex, Lies and Bush Poetry, and John and Sandy were there straight away to help out.

They would come to the Longyard and always be there to help with Raffles and showing people to their seats and looking after Artist's merchandise.

But it was at the famous 'Bundy Muster' where they really came into their own as Festival Organisers as well as often performing themselves on the odd occasion. Poetry lovers down to the back teeth, John was often seen mentoring Bush Poets who were just beginning and passing on his world of knowledge to them, which he had picked up along the Poetry roads.

I will always remember ringing John and asking "Hey mate, you know any where that I can get some scaffolding to paint my house in Bagara?"

Casually John replied, "You won't need it. I just bought a Cherrypicker!"

Only John could 'Just buy a Cherrypicker!' And on top of that, he helped me paint my entire two stories with it!

A wonderful man and a pleasure to have crossed tracks with him in life and truly call him a mate. You will be missed John, and we pass on, from everyone in the Bush Poetry family, our heartfelt condolences to Sandy and the family.

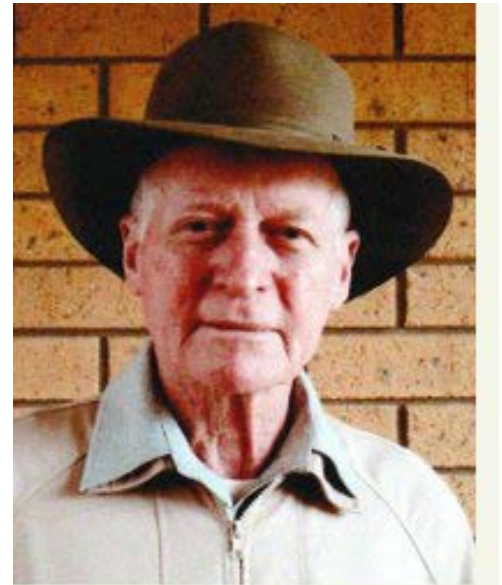
*"Sandy would like to thank those who sent cards, messages and posted their thoughts on various websites recently. She has been very overwhelmed by the messages, flowers and love that has been sent to her at this very sad time. It was never just John or Sandy but always John & Sandy. She said her door is always open so if you are visiting Bundy she would love to see you and that she will put the jug on for a cuppa and a chat."*

# Vale Don Crane

Donald Crane was born and educated in Moree, NSW and died in Toowoomba, Queensland on 30th July 2023, aged 92. His funeral service was held in Toowoomba on Tuesday 8th August..

His entire working life was spent in the cattle industry — twenty years on large commercial properties in northern NSW and south west Queensland. In 1968 he joined the CSIRO as Livestock Overseer/Manager at Narayen Research Station, Mundubbera.

It was only since retiring in 1988 that Don started writing bush verse and success came with his very first poem. A Funny Breed of Cattle won the Queensland Country Life poetry competition and was a cheeky look at the youth who frequent Queen Street Mall in Brisbane. The challenge of competing with other writers of bush poetry provided the inspiration to continue writing and competing in written bush verse competitions around the country. Don won over a dozen prestigious written competitions and said it was “the icing on the cake” to win the Bronze Swagman Award for written bush poetry in 2013 with his poem Midnight Muster.



The poem pays tribute to legendary stockman Jim Wormwell and tells of a real-life, authentic and personal experience taken from the author’s own working life.

He also accumulated a swag full of places and highly commended awards. Several of his poems were published in the Melbourne Books’ Anthology, Award Winning Bush Verse and Stories 2012 and 2013. He also had his own book of verse published and launched at the Outback Writers Festival in Winton, Queensland shortly before his death.

Although a non-performer, Don travelled over 80,000 km following the bush poetry circuit around Queensland and NSW attending events as far afield as Winton, Charters Towers, Bundaberg, Tenterfield and Dunedoo. He was a familiar figure to those who competed at these festivals and was thrilled that other poets recited his poetry in competition.

The following award-winning poems by Donald Crane are on the ABPA Poetry page:

A Bovine World  
Bush Mother  
Dooley’s Banker  
Drover Dreaming  
Equus Caballus (The Horse)  
The Old Timer

The book Verse by Donald Crane, edited by Jeff Close, is available from Outback Books.

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Hi Neil

*In the August/September copy of the ABPA magazine Kevin Pye made what I thought was an excellent suggestion to encourage more participation in competitions (and bush poetry generally) by introducing an intermediate section in competitions. He reiterated this idea in the ABPA magazine in October/November 2022. I wrote a letter in support which was not published. I still think this is a good idea.*

*Once you win a novice event there’s nowhere to go but the open section, a heck of a big jump. In the open section we have a lot of excellent poets who deservedly win many competitions. As winners they can also afford to enter multiple poems. We’ve seen occasions where the winning poet has taken out the lesser awards as well, again deservedly, and good on them for doing it, but for most novice poets it’s a single entry. Other newer poets possibly feel they have no chance of competing against the skill of these professionals so don’t enter at all. Then they haven’t much incentive to keep writing, especially if they live in an area where there are no active bush poetry groups.*

Regards  
Maureen Stahl

# MIDNIGHT MUSTER

© Donald Crane

Winner, 2013 'The Bronze Swagman Award', Winton, Queensland.

The out of work drovers and no-hoper ringers who'd mustered the station for many a year,  
Were race and chase merchants without any knowledge of working wild cattle, their tactics not clear.  
Despite their bravado these whip swinging yahoos were lacking in talent when put to the test,  
With a couldn't care manner and policy setting of 'get what we can and to hell with the rest'.  
'Round the campfire at night they would skite 'bout the chases and boast 'bout the number of bulls they had tossed,  
The cleanskins they'd tied from the mobs they were running — with never a mention of those they had lost.

Now onto the scene came a master scrub rider, a legend 'mongst stockmen whose prowess and fame  
Was gained from a lifetime of working wild cattle, in vine scrub or wattle; Jim Wormwell by name.  
Through whipstick or mulga, in basalt or wattle, this peerless scrub rider was up with the best,  
With a knowledge of cattle, their minds and their habits, as feats oft recounted do rightly attest.  
Where others would bustle and scatter the scrubbers, and tie one or two risking goring or fall,  
This wily old stockman would follow a distance, the mob kept in sight, and come out with them all.

How many missed cleanskins had yet to be yarded, how many wild scrubbers was anyone's guess,  
But Jim and three stockmen, (including yours truly) had taken the contract to clean up the mess.  
Three weeks of good going had mustered most paddocks — ahead was the scrub where the 'escapees' ran,  
A task we were dreading, for real is the danger in catching scrub bulls, both to horse and to man.  
For these were the cunning most roguish of scrubbers who'd beaten the musterers time and again,  
And ours was the challenge to have a 'clean' muster, our task was a tough one, the danger quite plain.

Daytime would find the whole mob on the creek flats, 'round waterholes languid 'neath gum trees they'd laze,  
Where shade was aplenty and grasses abundant, from deep in the vine scrub they'd come out to graze.  
But the sight of a horseman, the slightest disturbance, would have the whole mob on their feet in a flash,  
And back through the vine and the whipstick and wattle, on daily used pads they would hastily dash  
To their sanctuary deep in the scrub and safe refuge, away from the torment of dogs and of man,  
But little they knew that their free days were gone, as the boss 'round the campfire unfolded his plan.

"We'll muster the gully tonight in the moonlight!" — those words struck us dumb, was the boss off his head?  
To muster the worst of the country — and cattle — at night, and in darkness!, a task we should dread.  
"We'll muster the gully tonight in the moonlight", we found ourselves asking if this was a joke,  
But after he told of his plan in more detail, 'twas plain to us all that experience spoke.  
And as we partook of our corned beef and damper, Jim told of the times and successes he'd had,  
Recounting the times he had mustered by moonlight, when paddocks were vast and the scrub bulls were bad.

Our horses were saddled an hour before midnight, we lingered awhile with a last quart of brew,  
Then riding three miles found us roughly mid-gully, where Jim gave strict orders, instructions anew.  
Our task to be done without hustle or bustle, to move about quietly, ghostlike — at a walk,  
And this above all; — for no matter what happens, in absolute silence, no noise and no talk.  
To utter a sound would assure a disaster, for this was the secret those old stockmen knew,  
And also the reason why others who'd mustered had troubles galore and came home with so few.

Not a beast was in sight when we got to the gully; — in thought I was wondering whether  
We were wasting our time, 'til the boss calmly spoke, "I'll try putting a small mob together".  
And with that from his throat came the sound of a calf in distress, and its bellows were sounding  
Like a pack of wild dingoes were pulling it down; the result of this ruse was astounding,  
For from deep in the scrub came the bovine response, their protective instincts were then stirred,  
With the cracking of sticks from each flank of the creek, to the rescue — a thundering herd.

Like spectres we horsemen sat silent and still as the mob gathered 'round us kept milling,  
As they searched, but in vain, for the calf in distress that the pack of wild dogs had been killing.  
But alas, they'd been conned by a bushman who knew every trick in the book and who'd played  
On the instincts protective inbuilt in each beast, their response he knew well now displayed.  
Nothing more could we do but encircle the mob and move off on our homeward bound course,  
And strange as it seems, while strict silence prevailed, man was seen just as part of the horse.

With the branded stock settled and acting as 'coachers', the cleanskins, though nervous and tense,  
Were led by the quiet ones and finally trapped as they went through the gap in the fence.  
Come daylight we yarded the fruits of our labour, then drafted the lunar-lit haul,  
Counting scrub bulls and mickeys, bush heifers as well, — twenty seven I seem to recall.  
Our contract fulfilled there was nought left to do, with the 'Ten Mile' clean mustered once more,  
So we rolled up our swags as Jim modestly said, "Three hours work, not a bloody bad score".

Now those days are long gone, the vine scrub has been pulled, and it's sad the scrub rider whose fame,  
Made him stand out from stockmen whose chosen life's work was to follow the mustering game  
Has departed the scene; modern times have arrived, and the horse given way to the 'quad',  
And instead of good horsemen to muster the stock, now a helmeted Honda bike squad!  
But I fancy if somehow old Jim could return, he would yearn for the times that have passed,  
When the pear scrubs were thick, and the scrubbers all wild, and the paddocks still unfenced and vast.



This month we have two more successful  
from the Cloncurry Poetry Prize (Junior) 2023.  
The theme was 'Outback Heroes'  
[cloncurryprize@cloncurry.qld.gov.au](mailto:cloncurryprize@cloncurry.qld.gov.au)

# Our Poetry Kids

with Brenda Joy

## H.C. 4<sup>th</sup> Place 2023 Cloncurry Junior OUTBACK BLUES by Yasiru Wijesooriya

A vast expanse of uncharted terrain  
and boundless plains of crimson hues,  
skulking across a sweltering horizon,  
a despairing song: "The Outback Blues".

Smothering all traces of life and soul,  
dulling the landscape of colour,  
the outback heat purges the land  
a jarring melody of incessant dolour.

Misfortune striking, unforeseen,  
and nature's violent forces scorning:  
Bushfires, floods, droughts and landslides.  
Alas! A recurring chorus of warning.

Who could withstand such a barren land?  
Who could persist through  
such unendurable heat?  
Who had what it takes to survive in the outback?  
Who, I ask, could fulfil this feat?

The answer lies not very far,  
amongst the bare fields of mahogany,  
for Australians as one have what it takes!  
A melifluous bridge to disrupt the monotony.

Forged of hardship and stories of anguish,  
our resilient Australian character appears.  
We are all heroes of our outback home,  
a melodious harmony bringing  
merriment and cheer.

Yes, sometimes our song can be  
rough and uneven  
and it's hard to hear the voices singing.  
But listen closely beyond your sorrows  
and you'll hear their rejoices clearly ringing.

© 2023 Yasiru Wijesooriya (at age 13)

## H.C. 5<sup>th</sup> Place 2023 Cloncurry Junior OUTBACK HEROES by Lisa Pankhurst

2019 was a year filled with fear as nature  
was set ablaze.  
Full of panic and confusion, happiness an illusion,  
unable to see through the thick and smoky haze.  
Flames licked the trees clean of life  
and all that was green,  
This sudden turn of events had rapidly arrived unseen.

Fire slithered through the trees, a serpent of corruption,  
Leaving nothing in its wake

except chaos and destruction.

The only threat to its journey

were men in yellow and red,

They fought back the fire wherever it had spread.

The flames ate them, the heat cooked them alive,

But these brave men carried on

so us people could survive.

They didn't ask for money, nor did they ask for a bed,

Into the heat of the battle, these brave men were led.

Skeletons, charcoal and ashes

were strewn across the land,

But all that mattered were the firefighting services

lending a helping hand.

It was more than a job, many lives were at stake,

It was the crucial moment that would either

make or break.

The fire was too strong, it wouldn't leave without a fight,

The firefighting crews fought with so much might.

Covered in soot and charcoal, arising from the ashes,

Visible wounds seen, blood weeping

from burns and gashes.

Over long periods of time, the fire continued to burn,

What would happen next, was everyone's concern.

The ferocious winds began to settle,

the fire eventually starved.

The heroism of the RFS, forever in history,

survivors had carved.

Many sacrificed their life, many did not return.

Much had been lost to the fire but memories didn't burn.

Fire had brought such suffering,

many were exasperated.

Such horrific scenes and memories,

later to be promulgated.

Every story was repeated and shared with one another,

Told of our brave fire crew, without

they wouldn't have each other.

Not all heroes have capes or supernatural powers,

Our heroes dedicated their lives and all of their hours.

Many were never acknowledged

for everything they had done,

Without them, the battle with fire

wouldn't have been won.

Our Rural Fire Services wore no suits

and bore no powers,

But still into the heat, they rose.

These men in yellow and red,

covered in ashes from feet to head,

Are the people we call, "Our Outback Heroes."



© 2023, Lisa Pankhurst (at age 14 )

Both Poems have been prepublished on  
the Cloncurry website

[www.cloncurryshirecouncil.com.au](http://www.cloncurryshirecouncil.com.au)

Thank you to the organisers for  
permission to share poems from this great competition.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WA

WA Bush Poets have returned from winter sojourn and are gearing up for some new and familiar events. Bill and Meg Gordon arrived home in time for the Sandarkan memorial service held each year in Boyup Brook and Bill recited Duncan Butler's poem "Mates". It is good to be part of this event as it is an opportunity for school students to appreciate the story of Australian, New Zealand and British soldiers who were forced to labour on the Sandarkan to Ranou Death March during the Second World War. The story of six survivors from over 2000 men is part of our history that was hidden for 50 years.

## W.A. Bush Poets



Bill Gordon at Sandarkan memorial  
Boyup Brook



Mark Norval art in Derby

**WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners**

**Toodyay Bush Poetry Festival**

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For more information, visit  
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**Events coming up are: Chapman Valley Muster.** As Nambung Country Music Festival has now run its course, Poets and Musicians will gather at Chapman Valley near Geraldton on 21 and 22nd October. In the poet lineup will be Bill Gordon, Roger Cracknell, Alan Aitken, Bev Shorland and Peter Rudolph.

**WA State Championships** will be held again in Toodyay and poets will be competing for the title in November.

**Cervantes township will be celebrating 60 years as a WA fishing town on the 17th November.** Poets on the stage will be Cobber Lethbridge, Irene Conner and Alan Aitken. Terry Bennetts will be providing music and will be performing songs that he has collaborated on with Cobber Lethbridge recently.



Bev Shorland (above) has been busy with her performances at Probus Clubs and Retirement Villages in Perth.

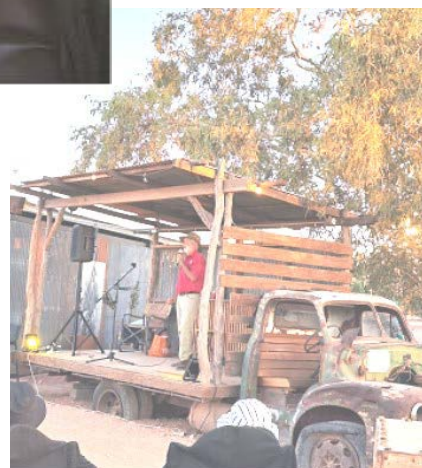
As well as being a poet enthusiast, Peter Nettleton (pictured right with partner Jane Cochrane) is frequently in local live productions in Perth and a folk singer with the Wanaroo Folk club which has just been affiliated with WA Bush Poets



Bill Gordon (below) on a great stage at Bullara Station south east of Exmouth



Meg Gordon (left) enjoyed being back with Green-bushes Acoustics at the Spring Campover



# BUSH WALKING

© John Lees

I'm not a real 'bush walker'  
but I've walked a track or two  
Been there and back to have a look  
like true bush walkers do.

Climbed hills and slippery gullies  
Roamed through forests dense and green  
And crossed some open grass plains  
where wild life can be seen.

The family also like the bush  
Sometimes that's where we went  
We'd head away with our camping gear  
and our old trusty tent.

To places we had been before  
and others we'd not seen  
There to enjoy the peace and quietness  
of nature so serene.

We've wandered by a mountain stream  
strolled by a lazy river  
Edged along a rocky ledge, where  
to look down made one shiver.

Walked through the tree tops tall  
Just like the possums do  
And spent a day just strolling  
through Dubbo's lovely Zoo.

We've seen some special places  
Like Katoomba's Wentworth Falls  
Eungella, Finch Hatton and Blackdown  
with its mountains very tall.

There's Cania Gorge and Porcupine  
to mention just a few  
Still there are many hundreds more  
that I would like to view.

But walking isn't always fun  
I'm sure that you'll agree  
You'll wonder why you do it  
as you lean against a tree.

After you have fallen down  
and hurt some body bits  
That's when you'll say 'bush walking  
is only for the twits'.



One day whilst you're out walking  
a faded sign you'll spy  
But it's been a bit neglected  
and so you'll wonder why?

There's an 8 and an M that's visible  
Could it mean an 8 minute trip?  
An hour later it meant 8 miles  
So boy are you a drip.

When hiking on a real hot day  
A chafe becomes your lot  
You can hardly walk at all  
but a jogger says to trot.

Then back at camp relaxing  
is where you'd like to be  
With an ice-cold drink of cheer  
underneath a shady tree.

Of course you'll be returning  
when next a walk is planned  
Asked "if you'd be going?"  
Up will shoot your hand.

'Cause if you want to give yourself  
a really special treat  
Then a day of Aussie bush walking  
is a thing that can't be beat.



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# **FOLLOW THE PATH TO MORE EFFECTIVE WRITING**

*\_with  
Irene Dalgety Timpone*

## **THE USE OF DIRECT SPEECH IN BUSH POETRY**

What do we remember most about the poems and Short Stories of the Australian bush? We remember the stories and the characters. We remember the man from Snowy River, Hanrahan, Clancy, the man from Ironbark, and McDougal who topped the score. We also remember why we remember them – their actions, their heroism, their narratives. Do we remember whether the poems were written in Iambic Pentameter, or in a conglomeration of mixed Trochees and Anapaests? Do we remember that the rhyme scheme was ‘a bit different’? Do we remember the syllable count? I certainly do not! As long as the lines run smoothly, most of us are happy.

The use of direct speech is one of the most common and useful ways to create character in narrative verse. Direct speech is also a wonderful tool in the progression and clarification of the narrative elements. Many writers deliberately avoid direct speech because of the problems associated with its punctuation. Here are a few suggestions:

- Use the “double speech marks” rather than the ‘single speech marks’ which come in handy to highlight a word or phrase for some particular reason.
- Punctuate the ‘spoken’ section of direct speech as if it were separate from the ‘linking’ content. Try to make clear who is speaking without using he said or she said too often.
- The final sentence of a stanza must end when the stanza ends. Sentences must not be carried across from one stanza to the next. This bad habit has been making its way through a few cracks.
- If the direct speech content carries across a stanza break, DO NOT put speech marks at the end of the stanza because that would indicate the end of the speech section. Simply put the opening speech marks at the beginning of the next stanza to indicate the continuation of the speech. The same applies in the writing of prose stories with paragraphs. You will find an excellent example in “The Man From Snowy River”, between stanzas 4 and 5.

The use of dialogue does require direct speech; but it contributes to both characterisation and narrative in advantageous ways, especially in spoken verse. The reader or listener gains knowledge in multiple ways. The reader learns from ‘what is said’, and from ‘the manner in which the words are said’. There is a meaningful difference between praise and scorn, for example. The reader also gains knowledge about the speaker as well as the person spoken about, and possibly the person spoken to.

If the poem or story is effectively a monologue, direct speech can be avoided or replaced by thought patterns which are usually expressed by means of italics. I frequently use this device in Short Story writing.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Those of you who are familiar with my poetry will know that I rarely write in four-line stanzas unless I am writing humour. I have found that the common problems concerning the punctuation of direct speech; the errors and lack of clarity caused by faulty use of pronouns; and the overuse of connectives such as and, but, or, so, then, particularly at the beginning of a line, are all compounded by the use of four-line stanzas. I strongly believe that poems on serious themes benefit from the added flexibility of the longer stanzas. Many of my poems extend beyond one hundred lines and the use of four-line stanzas for those would have been ludicrous.

ANSWER TO A QUESTION SOME OF YOU MIGHT ASK: Why does she write ‘Short Story’ instead of ‘short story’? A short story is a narrative with no specific limitations. It could range from a yarn of about 200 words to the length of a piece of string. There are no particular requirements other than narrative content. On the other hand, a Short Story is a recognised writing genre for which there are specified requirements. A ‘surprise ending’ is not required, but can be effective if handled well.



# The Thought Process

©Phil McManus 2013

The path of decision, is hopefully, a get it right mission  
Making the thought processes not one of biased thinking.  
For one only has an instance with very little assistance,  
When the distant outcome may be detrimental to living.

When one is at point "X", they don't know what to expect,  
For they have dreams to fulfill in this time of instant need.  
With perception being clouded, by the wants n needs shrouded  
In a cloche of unreasoning, making the future for one to heed.

There are various factors that cause these mental reactors.  
Love, finance, dreams, situations of total hopelessness  
Are contributing to the demise, in how one should realize,  
There is a bright side if one reaches for wholesomeness.

This is where one needs a seer, to allay that path of internal fear,  
A visionary, with the prognostication of spiritual vaticination,  
One who has the sight to give one that path of foresight  
Through the small window we peer, to gain illumination.

Along that pathway there are too many potholes to say,  
As one stares out to the future, one's focal point is in view.  
But as one treks that trail the boundaries seem so frail  
For the hyper anticipation previously, has gone askew.

Those dreams one has when growing to be Mums n Dads.  
Making one's lifelong decisions, reaching for the heights.  
One's euphoria tolerates a load, when in anticipation mode,  
And the swelling of success and pride are full of delights.

Although that exterior vision, could hide a questioning derision,  
In the mind of one who has fallen in a doubting culpable fear.  
For that mental loss comes at a cost, making one feel remotely lost,  
When in the approaching hindsight light, of a decision, held dear.

To the depths of despair, sinking without a hope or a care  
Are the glimpses the mind allows, in that eclectic state.  
And so, forms confusion that evolves into fleeting exclusion,  
With the signals from some, coming to others too late.

These shine of a melancholy mood, that makes one brood  
Over the foreboding hindsight that wasn't in the foresight.  
Subjecting one to self-doubt, increasing the mental burnout,  
Spiraling in the vortex of blue from the lack of tactical insight.

Yet with the facility of deduction, one should make a reduction,  
In the thought processes that create this insipid illusion.  
For it's the exterior forces of fate, one doesn't control mate,  
And that is what transpires into the internal confusion.

With this then one must deduce, that when in mental use,  
To put hindsight before foresight to gain a clear insight,  
On the issues that one wishes and not to confuse,  
The understanding of living life, by just doing right.



# The Gympie Muster Poets

First the trill of the songbird, the rustle through the dry leaves from the wakening of the early rising goanna, and the almost silent drip of the dew from a gum leaf, comes the cry from the Bush Poet's camp of "Who wants a Bloody Mary?"

And it's all systems go for another morning of preparations for the Poets Breakfast at the Gympie National Music Muster in the Amamoor Forest in Queensland!

Rumoured this year to have had over 100,000 people through the gate and smashing all records, the Poets depart from their pathetically inept Camp Fire and their 'unique' camping huddle, to the track leading down past Main Stage to the Great Northern Muster Club marquee.

A motley crew, directed by Marco Gliori and dragging along such minuscule and geriatric performers such as Neil McArthur, Peter Capp, Murray Hartin, Alan Glover and the spritely and over-enthusiastic Errol Grey, the team staggered down towards the stage to do their pre-show aerobics and anti-dementia exercises.

No one noticed.

And then 'BANG'

A not so sleepy Marco would emerge from the vomit-green room to kick up a storm amongst the early morning revelers and start the show off in fine form. With a succession of staggering, uncoordinated yet brilliant performers, such as I, to follow on from there, was, as legend has it, legendary, as is my use of commas.

One witty comment after another had the crowd entranced. From the Lymericathons to the Neil McArthur dominated One Minute Poets Brawl, there was little left to the appetite of the Muster Poetry Punter! They loved it and showed their full appreciation by browsing over the artists merchandise before ambling across to the nearest bar. The final day saw the Camper's take to the stage to fight it out for the major prize in the Camper's Brawl One Minute Brawl, this year won by Treen from Tasmania.

And the rest of our Muster camping adventure will never be spoken about again!

*Muster Poets from Left. Murray (Muz) Hartin, Marco Gliori, Alan Glover, Errol Grey, Peter Cap and out of step Neil McArthur*



*Winton Outback Festival & Nanango Country Muster*

Marco Gliori, Errol Grey and Ray Essery took their incredibly unique Storytelling styles to the 2023 Winton Outback Festival where they packed the Hall for their Poet's Breakfasts. Then it was on down to Nanango wher Marco and Ray joined with Gary Fogarty to keep alive the Bush Poetry Spirit to the hoards who gather every year for the Nango Country Music Muster.





# 'Dementia Action Week'

© Harry Donnelly 14-9-23

(18th to 24th Sept. 2023)

Cup of coffee in the morning  
stirring molecules inside, a  
s fog becomes the factor  
and immobility the guide.

A blurry recollection  
of that life lived long ago,  
and an empty expectation  
of the future yet to know.

So she sits in quiet solitude  
slowly rocking in that chair,  
with thoughts so cruelly hidden,  
unable now to share.

Of that family she helped grow  
way back in virile, younger days,  
where living, working, playing  
mix and match within the haze.

Her frustration overwhelming  
each emotion held inside,  
her demeanour, ever placid, fi  
ghts to shield a crippling pride.

So she rocks and sips her coffee  
to gently fill another day,  
as her once articulate mind  
deteriorates within decay.

And somewhere there amongst that  
misty corridor of thought,  
a face appears...unheralded,  
a memory clear is caught.

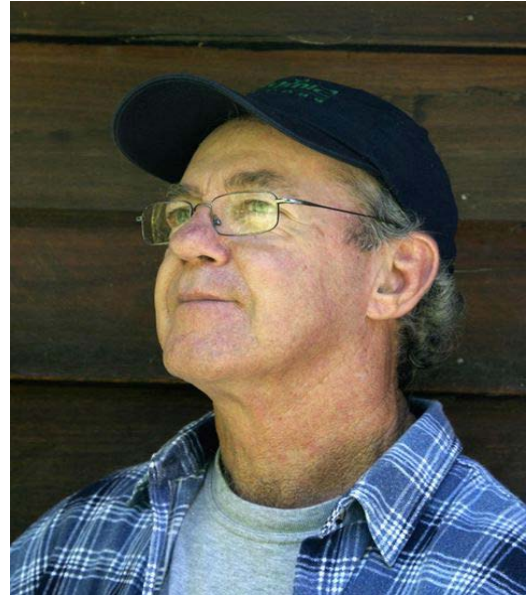
To be sadly sucked immediately  
toward that dreaded fog once more,  
to taunt and tease her prayer  
for one small moment to restore.

She no longer feels the pain  
those horrid bed-sores used to bring,  
nothing cuts her more than  
this damned memory blurring thing.

Then the rocking has her sleeping,  
exhausted now by thought,  
this dreamless void she slips to  
holds no usage to report.

Because she's going through the motions I  
ike the countless have before,  
and who really knows what future  
our own lives will hold in store.

So I watch her slowly withering  
through each pain-filled waiting day  
and pray that someone, somewhere, somehow,  
finds a loving — humane way.



Laurel's daughter planned a trip that would take her overseas. She had a dog named Hank. She said, "Mum, can you mind him please?" Of course Laurel minded little Hank; she walked him every day; she brushed him, gave him treats and threw a ball for him to play.

Then a second plea was made to Laurel and her husband Bruce, to mind their son's dog, Stubby? "No!" said Bruce. It was no use. "I treat them both the same," said Laurel. "On that I never fail. How could I say 'Yes' to Kylie and then say 'No' to Dale?"

So Stubb was left next day and Dale went off to catch his plane. Stubb who'd stayed with them before was happy to come again. But Hank, he was not pleased, he loved all Laurel's attention; to share her with another dog he had no intention.

He curled his lip; he growled, then lunged at Stubb and took a bite, but Stubby was no coward, he was old but still could fight. Some savage snarls and nips then caused the fight to escalate. Along the front fence neighbours soon began to congregate.

The dogs were snapping, fur was flying; they fought tooth and nail. Poor Laurel called out cajoling them but all to no avail. Those little furry bodies writhed and struggled on the ground while the cheering of spectators upped the volume on the sound.

Those dogs they fought like wolves, you'd never think that they were pets. An enterprising neighbour ran a book and took some bets. Laurel screamed out to her spouse, "Go get a bucket of water quick." "Bugger the water!" Bruce said and gave each dog a kick.

Then howling Hank ran straight inside seeking comfort in his bed. While Stubbs, with tail between his legs, ran into Bruce's shed. Poor Laurel was softly sobbing, Bruce just swore and cursed, and with the excitement over, the neighbours all dispersed.

Laurel went inside to check on Hank; make sure he was alright. Then went to check that Stubb had not been injured in the fight. Emerging from the shed, in his jaw was a block of blue. Laurel screamed, "The rat bait you put under the barbecue."

Laurel looked down in stunned dismay at her son's beloved pet. She said, "You hold him Bruce while I go in and ring the vet." The vet said, "This is bad, but is something I know about. Bring him into the surgery; we'll get that rat bait out."

They gave poor Stubb a pill designed to make a dog throw up big lumps of rat bait spilled out from the gut of this poor pup. His poor mouth looked red raw from all that poison coming through; his eyes were glazing over but his teeth, they still looked blue.

Another pill was given and poor Stubb threw up some more; There was vomit on the table and more vomit on the floor. Poor Stubbs was really drained now; what a sad and sorry sight. He looked at Laurel with soulful eyes now pleading for respite.

"He'll need some vitamins, that vomiting was extensive. I'll get the smallest bottle because they are expensive." "This will cost a bloody fortune," Bruce said, loathe to pay. "I told you it was madness having both of them to stay."



They left with directions on how to ease the dog's distress. While Bruce's face was red with rage, his wallet weighed much less. Dale called them from the airport as he had some time to fill. Bruce thought he wouldn't speak about the fight, or vet, or bill.

Poor Laurel didn't know that Bruce had not told Dale about the drama they had just been through and so she blurted out, "He's going to be alright Luv, he vomited twice he'll be fine." "What the hell have you done to him?" poor Dale gasped down the line.

She realised he was ignorant so then tried to explain; and Dale began a long flight thinking of his poor dog's pain. He sat with thoughts of poison; fears were churning in his head. he texted on landing, "How's me dog? I hope that he's not dead."

From then on there were no mishaps Laurel kept those dogs apart. She'd take one for a walk then with the second make a start. Bruce showed the vet's receipt, to Dale who said, "Not mine to pay. The poison was your fault; you should have put the stuff away."

"He's your dog you should cover all expenses he incurred." "I suffered trauma too," said Dale, Bruce went on undeterred. "I spent a lot of money so I should be recompensed." "But what about my suffering before my trip commenced?"

The argument goes to and fro and it's not settled yet about who is responsible for payment to the vet. "All's well that ends well," so they say but Bruce put his foot down. "Next time we're asked to dog-sit we're road tripping 'outta' town."



# **"LEST WE FORGET."**

© Peter White

In Queensland's First Contingent he sailed for foreign shore,  
across an ocean he had never seen.  
Off to Southern Africa to fight the wily Boer,  
a loyal Colonial soldier of the Queen.

Within two months of sailing he fought at "Sunnyside".  
He lost a mate from Company "A" and "B":.  
Troopers Jones and McLeod, their names carved with pride  
on a cairn for everyone to see.

The first two Australians to perish in that war,  
he'd survive the war to the end.  
He received the news he'd been waiting for,  
he'd be going home with his friend.

In 1914 his young son raised his age  
to enlist to see Gallipoli.  
Serving with the 15th, he survived this stage.  
Then off to France, more action he would see.

Fighting on the Western Front he'd gotten used to mud.  
Conditions there really were that dire.  
Shell-holes filled with water darkly stained with blood  
contributed to the stinking mire.

Pozières, Bullecourt, Messines and 'Wipers' too,  
at Polygon Wood he fought as well.  
Back home to Australia when the war was through,  
deciding there were things he would not tell.

In 1941 his son saw action in Tobruk,  
fighting once again his father's foes.  
With strong determination to do everything it took  
to avoid the trauma of death's throes.

The 2/9th were ordered home to regroup again.  
Our shores were threatened by a cruel foe.  
To serve in New Guinea went the 2/9th men.  
All of them were keen to 'have a go'.

He also served in Borneo before the war was won.  
He managed to survive without a mark.  
Asked by his family the things he'd seen and done,  
he'd say, "It was no walk in the park."

In 1966 6th Battalion RAR  
on a troopship bound for Vietnam.  
His son was there, another generation, how bizarre,  
once again supporting "Uncle Sam".

As part of "A" Company he was called to help his mates  
in "D" Company fighting at Long Tan.  
They were all determined not to leave them to their fates,  
to rescue them, ready to a man.



Returning home was painful, no welcome to receive -  
no acknowledgement the nation showed.  
Such a change in attitude his mates could not believe.  
Many left to seek life on the road.

Thirty years on the 6th Battalion off again  
to fight a war in Afghanistan.  
The Vietnam Veteran's son was among the men.  
The war's swift cessation was the plan.

This dirty, lengthy war put our soldiers to the test  
with I.E.Ds concealed in every track  
No wonder that this family thought that it was blessed,  
another serving member safely back.

After twenty years the Allies walked away  
an end to Australia's longest war.  
His mates, by their own hand, still perishing today.  
He wonders what their sacrifice was for.

Five generations of one family touched by war.  
It seems we haven't learned the lesson yet.  
All the pain and suffering there has been before  
is what we all, apparently, forget.





# Red Jack

by Tony Hammill

My thanks go to Jack Drake for his article (ABPA Aug/Sept223) on the life of Red Jack ( Hannah Glennon 1872-1902). From an obscure bush identity remembered only by old timers in regional newspapers years after her death, she is now front and centre in terms of legendary status, and there are fortuitous reasons for this. She would be mystified at the idea that she could ever be celebrated in such terms, but her unique position as a woman in a rough man's world of droving and shearing makes her a legendary figure.

I've known about Red Jack from brief newspaper articles since I was a teenager, but my interest for years now has lain in researching and writing about legendary bush identities, and she was prime amongst them. I traced her journeys around Queensland through Trove, Ancestry and the work of other researchers, and found her deposition on the suicide of her first husband Thomas Doyle in 1891. He had accused her of infidelity and used to bash her over the head with a hair brush. My article on her ran over two issues of History Queensland in 2013 and 2014 (issues 9 and 10). Here I want to simply touch on a number of relevant points and place her status in perspective.

Hannah was born at Toowoomba hospital in 1872 to John and Catherine Glennon, Irish immigrants and Westbrook farmers. She would have been educated at the local state school since education by law was free, compulsory and secular from 1875. She was literate, and signed her name on her deposition at her husband's inquest (illustrated).

A series of tragedies in her family led her to take to the Warrego Highway in 1889. She headed west to Charleville, north to Cloncurry then east and north to Chillagoe. She ended her life in Mareeba in 1902 from complications following childbirth as mentioned by Jack Drake. There has been a mix up as to her grave site in the Costin St, Mareeba cemetery, and her grave is unmarked and lost. She was no man-hater, as she had several partners during her brief life, but used a stockwhip to keep away unwelcome attention, which isn't surprising in that man's world (perhaps stockwhips should be standard gear for women in Federal parliament!)

During her travels Hannah was given the sobriquet 'Red Jack' by a bushman in a classic display of laconic Aussie wit. She worked at droving, cooking, horse tailing, and laundry work in 'the camps of man's unrest' (George Essex Evans). A resourceful woman, she owned a packhorse, formerly a racehorse, which she used to ride and clean up with at bush races. She had four children, one dying soon after birth, and because of her wandering lifestyle, she placed two of them in the care of others or institutions. The descendants of her final child, Ada, live at Mareeba today.

But now, it's down to my main point. Thomas Hardy wrote words to the effect that sometimes incidents occur, the possibility of which are so remote, that they may not be chance at all. How was the 'almost forgotten' woman (Sorenson) plucked from obscurity to become internationally known? We can thank Michael Durack and his daughter Mary ('Kings in Grass Castles', 'Sons in the Saddle') for this remarkable chain of chance. Mary records that her father Michael encountered her while driving the stagecoach from Richmond to Hughenden (the driver had handed over the reins to him and gone to sleep in the parcels box!). Hannah was believed at the time to be working at a nearby station. This is what Mary Durack wrote:

In additional notes on this journey made at a later date, M.P. wrote of 'one person worthy of special comment – a woman – tall, gaunt-looking and with bright red hair', who helped him rummage for her mail and with the customary salutations rode on her way. He learnt that she went under the sobriquet of Red Jack and was known on many stations in those parts as an efficient stockwoman. She was also an expert with her stockwhip, which she effectively used on any of her fellow workers who ventured to press on her their unwelcome attentions. No-one seemed to know anything about her private life or background, her horse Mephistopheles being her only close friend and confidant.

From here international recognition awaited. Hannah had lodged in the minds of Michael and Mary. Mary wrote her beautiful ballad 'Red Jack' which struck a chord around the world, and was published in illustrated book form in Australia, the U.S. and Canada where it was widely used in schools.

'Red Jack' with its themes of the bush and women's liberation has almost miraculously ensured that Hannah's name will forever be celebrated. She would have been dumbfounded!

(sketch by Pam Hopkins).



# Snowy River

© Robert Davis

Amid the Great Dividing Range, where the Australian Alps abide,  
In the realm of lofty mountains, where clouds do often hide,  
From Mount Kosciusko's lofty peak, a river takes its flight,  
The Snowy River emerges, a tale of nature's might.

It flows like verse from Banjo's journal,  
Through landscapes wild and free,  
Weaving magic eternal,  
As it journeys to the sea.  
The mountain winds do whistle, through valleys and 'cross glade,  
As Snowy River dances, 'neath sun and mottled shade.

From mountain's snowy embrace, where winter's touch does thaw,  
It starts its winding journey, obeying nature's gravity law.  
From Australia's highest point, it begins its winding quest,  
To reach both lands and ocean, in waters it invests.

Midst the crisp and clear mountain air, across granite ground,  
Past snow gums that sway and whisper, its melody unbound.  
Seasonal thaw and melting snow dictate its winding path,  
A river that gains strength, cold waters flowing fast.

Eucumbene and Thredbo rivers join, mountain spirits blend,  
Their waters clear and crisp, ancient alpine friends.  
Through Jindabyne's dam and others, it continues on its way,  
Snowy River resolute, over obstacles it holds sway.

More tributaries converge, their stories interlace,  
As it flows through national wilderness, nature's sacred space.  
Cascades at Stone Bridge, Corrowong, and Pinch's embrace,  
Its crystal waters shimmer, as it continues its seaward race.

Through the Alps and Tablelands, where pioneer stories are told,  
Slowing through the Snowy Basin, where the land unfolds.  
But fed by rains and tributaries, it gathers strength anew,  
A river of determination, 'neath skies of grey and blue.

Over rocky rapids, it rushes with fervent glee,  
A cascade of liquid crystal embracing its destiny.  
Past kangaroo and brumby mobs, continuing its coast-bound run,  
Through shaded willow glens, beneath red river gum.

A journey long and varied, with twists and turns untamed,  
A river that's grown in stature, yet its spirit's still the same.  
At Snowy Inlet's gentle kiss, where its voyage finds its end,  
Into Bass Strait it merges, a union to transcend.



# CLIMATE CHANGE

© Len Banks

The weather changes day to day  
but the climate has a pattern.  
No matter whether you're here on Earth  
or on Venus, or Mars, or Saturn.

Our orbit round the Sun is set.  
We have a fixed rotation,  
and the Moon will never leave our sight.  
They call it gravitation.

The gases in our atmosphere,  
like finely balanced teams,  
combine to moderate our world  
from heat and cold extremes.

So changes to the composition  
of the atmosphere  
will alter just how hot or cold  
the Earth gets year to year.

A rise of one or two degrees  
would likely not be felt,  
but it's enough to trigger off  
a massive ice cap melt.

This will mean sea level rise;  
a danger for low islands,  
and as the water temp goes up  
more cyclones hit the highlands.

Some might say: "Let's bring it on.  
Who lives on the polar ice?  
And an extra one or two degrees  
in winter would be nice".

But what if it rose by three or four?  
We could be heading that way.  
The increased risk of fires and storms  
is a price too high to pay.

Over hundreds of years, we could adapt;  
but it's changing at a faster rate.  
We've already let it go too far  
to be able to shut the gate.

We can't pretend it's all a myth  
and go on in defiance.  
We need to take some larger steps  
and listen to the science.

Plant more trees as carbon sinks  
for atmosphere renewal.  
Reduce our waste to landfill  
and use less fossil fuel.

Invest in science to find new ways  
(some may at first seem strange).  
New ways to work; new ways to live.  
Let's tackle climate change.

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## 2024 BANJO PATERSON AUSTRALIAN POETRY FESTIVAL 17 to 25 February 2024

Put the dates in your diary for the 2024 Bano Paterson Festival in Orange NSW and the surrounding villages of the Cabonne Shire. The festival will start with a gala day to celebrate Banjo's birthday on Saturday 17 February and will feature walk-up opportunities for performers throughout the following week. There will be a return of our poetry performance competition as we had it before COVID and the National Championships of 2023. This includes both youth and adult sections with poets performing their own original poems. See the ABPA website for the competition details and entry form. Entries close on 12 February and the competition will be in Orange on Friday 23 February 2024. A full festival program will be available soon, but you can be sure of the day of entertainment at Yeoval, poetry Brawl at Molong, visit to historic sites, walk-ups at the Cargo Inn and a Rotary market with more being organised.

Len Banks  
Rotary Club of Orange

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## MILDURA COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL POETS

Mildura's Festival Revival continues on, and this year the Famous Mildura Working Man's Club played host to the Walk-Up breakfasts. Hosted by Neil McArthur, guest poets included Rhonda Tallnash, Jim Lamb, Kathy and Ross Vallance, Brian Hunt (The Poetic Huntsman, Dave Melville and LA Based Award Winning Cowboy Poet, KC La Course. Other Walk Up Poets joined in to entertain the packed venue, which seemed to surprise our new Hosts but Bush Poetry at Mildura has been pulling full houses for many, many years and will continue to into the future, Be great to see some other new faces turn up next year to join in the fun!



Rhonda Tallnash



Jim Lamb



# WAUCHOPE'S RHYMERS VARIETY SHOW,

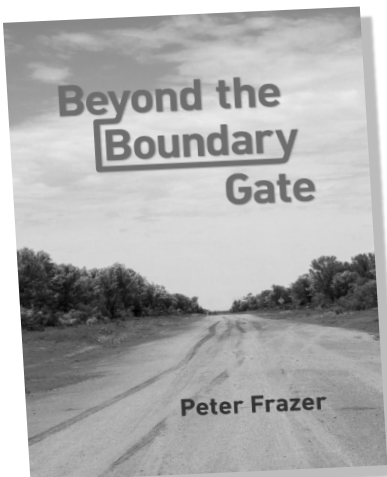
Hosted by Tom Mcilveen and Susan Ashton is continuing to gain popularity and drawing audiences from the community at large.

It was a fun-filled Sunday afternoon of frivolity, poetry, music and shenanigans. Featuring the inimitable, legendary Greg North, who was in top form, having just returned from his annual migration to the northern climes of Winton, Queensland, where he performed two daily shows, entertaining grey nomads and appreciative locals.

It was inspiring to watch audience members who had never been to a Bush Poets' performance, warm immediately to Greg, and tune in to the many different characters he portrays so well, both humorous and serious. Supported by Dave Melville, who is constantly honing his performance skills and gaining popularity with local audiences. Dave showed his versatility by acting out his part as Mac Davis's 'Hard to be Humble' in our zany Woodstock musical skit.

We performed at a local Heritage homestead in Port Macquarie, known as ROTO HOUSE on the Saturday night before the Wauchope show, to a very different and appreciative audience, made up mainly of local free verse poets and writers, with their families and friends. They enjoyed poems from Greg and Dave, and were absolutely gob smacked that they could recite and perform, without notes. Susan Ashton and myself performed poems merged with musical choruses to add a little spice and variety, which they truly seemed to enjoy. T'was a wonderful audience and venue, and we look forward to performing there again. We are hosting regular poetry, music and story telling open-mic events around town, and they continue to grow in popularity. It is proving to be a successful mix in introducing audiences of all genres to performance poetry.

Tom Mcilveen and Susan Ashton.



56 pages  
\$10 (+ \$10.50 post)

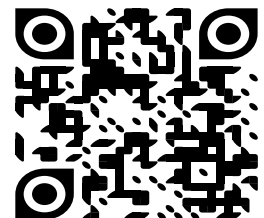
***Beyond the Boundary Gate*** is a collection of fourteen poems including: *The Mulga Lands, Behind the Boundary Gate, Come Waltzing with Matilda, Wear the Poppies, David's Bright Red Billy Cart, The Tree, The Rabbit Fence* and *Helen Won the Cup*.

**To order a book** or for information on the Amazon Kindle version please visit this website:

[www.peterthebushpoet.com](http://www.peterthebushpoet.com)

or [www.bit.ly/poems-1](http://www.bit.ly/poems-1)

or scan the QR code with your phone's camera app.



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**About the author:** Peter Frazer is a founding member of the Toowoomba Bush Poets, and the Queensland representative for the ABPA. He is actively participating in, and promoting bush poetry wherever possible. He won first place for his poem at the Bush Poet's Competition 2022, Royal Queensland Show, Brisbane.

## AN ODE TO MY FATHER

Frank McAlary was a mighty man, a mighty man indeed.

He lived for quite a long time, my father yes I'm pleased.

He passed away earlier this year holding his wife's hand.

And many people in the country spoke of how he was quite grand.

A famous lawyer Frank was who had immense charm.

He did battles in the courts of law, and set precedents to do with a boy's arm.

In England, France and America, he travelled world wide.

Even foreigners would want this man to defend them before they died.

Alan Bond he did intern into the jail you see,

A case he won 23 times for the publicans to be free.

Kostya Tszu the Russian boxer was another he chose to defend,

He managed to liberate this man right to the very end.

At the end of the second world war Frank was caught dancing down the street.

Leaping and twirling his hat in the air, it was a very spontaneous feat.

The newsreels did capture, the sheer joy of this man,

And after that he became known as the dancing man.

Stamped on the dollar coin, for all the people to see,

His image has now become part of Australian history.

There were newspaper articles and speeches for he, but nobody really mentioned what he did in the Kimberley.

Frank came to these shores with a company called PDC,

Who built the Willare bridge, so crossing the Fitzroy became easy.



He then purchased Yeeda Station, under my mothers name,

and fed half of Derby, with all of the killers taken.

He was a director of DEMCO, Broome and Wyndham meatworks too.

And introduced the brahman bull to the Kimberley, at Cockatoo.

As he travelled over the Leopolds, another grand land he did see,

Mount House and Glenroy Station where he spent a lot of time with me.

He negotiated with the aboriginals, Teddy Bolton and Jack Dale too,

and gave them land at Saddlers Springs before Native Title was due.

Frank loved getting in the yards with all the cattle milling around,

and being part of the action it was all very profound.

The black stockman did love him, because of his immense charm.

He treated them all fairly, and they would banter at billy time.

On a Sunday morning, Frank might have been seen,

sitting in the pews of the church, head bowed, praying.

Afterwards he would chat with Father Lorenz,

and discuss German history right to the very end.

As his spirit now flows across the Yeeda plains,

Frank is at peace with the land and nothing has ever changed.

The only regret I have of my Father passing away,

Was I never got to tell him about the baby inside me today.

Cait Westlake (performed at Derby Bush Poets Breakfast)

## Regular Monthly Events

### NSW

**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

**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 @ Cafe on Queen, 15 Queen St. In the studio by the Balgalal Creek. 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 Old School House at Christ Church, 39 Rutledge St, Queanbeyan. Enter via Church Lane. Contact Laurie McDonald on 02 6253 9856

**POETRY IN THE VINES PORT MACQUARIE...**the 4th Sunday of the month at Douglas Vale Winery. 235.Oxley Highway, (next to Westport School)...Port Macquarie. Contact Tom Mcilveen Ph..0417251287

**Katoomba Poets in the Pub** 22nd Sunday 2pm at Blackburn's Family Hotel. All forms poetry, free entry. Contact Greg North 0425 210 083.

**Singleton Bush Poets.** Meet at the Albion Hotel, John Street Singleton. 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month. Contact Neville Briggs 02 65711398.

**Wombat Bush Poets** meet at 1.30 pm at the Young Hotel for poetry, music and open mic. Last Sunday of even months except December. Contact Ted Webber 0459 707 728

**Australian Poetry Hall of Fame- Guyra** Wednesday Words Open Mic Poetry 6:30pm every Wednesday. 144 Bradley St, Guyra Contact James Warren 0423 478 656 [www.australianpoetryhalloffame.com.au](http://www.australianpoetryhalloffame.com.au) (Free RV camping at the Lagoon)

### QUEENSLAND

**Toowoomba Bush Poets** meet on the second Saturday of each month at the meeting rooms in the Toowoomba library. We meet between 10 am and midday, Read..write..recite or listen .... Everyone is welcome. Contact Peter Frazer 0401130636.

**North Pine Bush Poets Group** Open Mic- Visitors welcome! Pine River Men's Shed, Old Petrie Town, Dayboro Road Kurwongbah- 1st and 3rd Sundays of most months 9a.m. –12 noon. Contact Mal on 0417765226 or Howard on 0431689054.

**Kuripla 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. For these social poetry afternoons please contact Jayson on (07) 4155 1007 or Sandy (07) 4151 4631 for venue details.

**Beaudesert Bush Bards** meet on the **Second** 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.

**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

**Shorncliff "Poets of the Park"** "Poets of the Park" meet at St Margaret's Church Hall in Sandgate, beside the primary. every 3rd Tuesday from 5-45 pm contact 042 15 14 555

**Townsville Bush Poetry Mates Inc. BUSH POETRY MATES Inc.** meet monthly at the Aitkenvale Library meeting room. For information on current day & times, please phone Barry on 0487 195 156. Visitors always welcome. Come along and join our group.

**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

**Logan Performance Bush Poets** - meet 2nd Sunday of every month, 9 to 11am at the Beenleigh Historical Village. 205 Mains Road Beenleigh. All Welcome. Breakfast available Ring Gerry 0499942922..

### Victoria

**Kyabram Bush Verse Group** – Second Sunday of every even numbered month at the Kyabram Town Hall 199-209 Allan Street Kyabram. Enter via rear door off the Bradley Street Car Park 2pm. 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** Mostly third Sundays in even numbered months except December when first Sunday. Bendigo Club, 22 Park St, Strathdale (Bendigo) 1pm to 4pm. Contact: Colin Carrington 0401 076 085.

**Henry Lawson Memorial & Literary Society Inc.** – Meet third Saturday each month/except January. Ross House 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne All Welcome. From 1-30pm till 4-00 pm. Contact: Maree Stapledon: 0408 100 896

**Mansfield Bush Poets Group** - Second Tuesday of the month 1pm - 3pm, Mansfield Library. Contact Val Kirley 0400 654 596

### WA

**Perth** 1st Friday monthly 7-9.30pm The Auditorium, 26 Plantation Drive, Bentley Park. Contact Rodger 0419 666 168 or Sue 0418 941 016

**Albany** 4th Tuesday monthly. Contact Peter 08 9844 6606

**Bunbury** 1st Monday even months 7pm. Rose Hotel. Contact Alan 0400 249 243 or Ian 0408 212 636

**Geraldton** 2nd Tuesday monthly. Beliar Caravan Park. Contact Roger 0427 625 181

**Kalgoorlie** 1st Wednesday monthly. Kalgoorlie Country Club. Contact Paul Browning 0416 171 809



# 2023 ABPA new south wales BUSH POETRY PERFORMANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

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TRADITIONAL...MODERN and ORIGINAL..  
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trophy for overall champion..."POET ON THE  
MOUNTAIN"...Poetry workshops written and  
performance will also be run on days preceding  
competition...

Free camping will be available nearbyvenue  
...enquiries phone either  
Tom Mcilveen .. 0417251287 or  
James Warren ..0423 478656

