

2017 ABPA NATIONAL AND WA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WRITTEN BUSH POETRY COMPETITION JUDGE'S ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Conducted under the auspices of The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

CLASS NOVICE -- CATEGORY SERIOUS

1 st	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>The Anzac Game</i>
2 nd	Ray Jackson	Shelley WA	<i>A Challenging Land</i>
3 rd	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>Crocodilian</i>
4 th	Highly Commended	Bill Gordon Boyup Brook WA	<i>Sandakan</i>
5 th	Commended	Norton Plamer Sth Yunderup WA	<i>The Orabanda Cup</i>
6 th	Commended	Ray Jackson Shelley WA	<i>Camooweal Billabong</i>

JUDGES' COMMENTS RE NOVICE SERIOUS CATEGORY

There was a range of subjects covered in this section and the majority related to Australia, Australians and our way of life. Most rang with a sense of authenticity, suggesting that entrants were writing from direct experience or about subjects that were meaningful to them.

The winning poem *The Anzac Game*, skillfully juxtaposed the concept of a sporting game with a war game to give a different slant to a deep subject. The second place getter, *A Challenging Land*, is a beautiful, meaningful poem that has the potential to win in Open competition.

Some great ideas were spoilt through technical inconsistencies but most of the poems presented could be developed to a higher standard with careful editing. Judges' suggestions are to look at the 'Tips' on the ABPA Website, find a mentor, seek to obtain critiques wherever possible and '*wrestle with the words until they 'yield'*'. The most important thing is to keep writing and learning about the exacting craft which we all love. Thank you.

CLASS NOVICE -- CATEGORY HUMOROUS

1 st	Peter O'Shaughnessy	Eaton WA	<i>The Gun</i>
2 nd	John Dooley	Qld	<i>Today's Shopping Habits – or the Good Old Days</i>
3 rd	David Ellis	WA	<i>On Hot Weekends</i>
4 th	Highly Commended	Peter O'Shaughnessy Eaton WA	<i>Old Bill</i>
5 th	Highly Commended	John Dooley Qld	<i>To the Outback and Back – To Lite 'n' Easy</i>
6 th	Highly Commended	Peter Burke Toodyay WA	<i>Corellas in a Toodyay Park</i>

JUDGES' COMMENTS RE NOVICE HUMOROUS CATEGORY

Humour is one of the most difficult areas of writing so congratulations to all who did well in this competition and to all who took part. There were some good yarns in the selection and some of the resultant poems would be fun to perform. The winning poem *The Gun* was a fine example of Aussie humour.

Congratulations to the winners and to all, the main thing is to enjoy what you do and to enjoy the process of working towards constantly improving both the writing and the oral presentation of your comic stories and experiences. We have enjoyed sharing your submissions. Thank you.

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CLASS OPEN -- CATEGORY SERIOUS

1 st	David Campbell	<i>Sweetwater</i>
2 nd	Will Moody	<i>Driftwood</i>
3 rd	Irene Conner	<i>When the Wattle Turns to Gold</i>
4 th	Highly Commended Irene Conner	<i>Re-birth</i>
5 th	Commended Shelley Hansen	<i>On the Brink?</i>
6 th	Commended Paulene Haggith	<i>Procrastinating</i>

JUDGES' COMMENTS RE OPEN SERIOUS CATEGORY

There was a wide range of subjects covered in this category where poems told stories, expressed beauty through, or put forward viewpoints on, poetry and aspects of modern living. As always, some poems showed great potential but were brought down by poor craftsmanship and, in some cases, a lack of care in presentation.

However, the top selection of poems were beautifully written demonstrating both skill and depth and those in the winning bracket were worthy of succeeding at this high level. The first and second placed poems were fractionally divided and the top four place getters stood apart for their lyric, poetic qualities and the moving flow of their language.

The winning poem, *Sweetwater*, where a universal concept of human pathos is placed unmistakably in an Australian environment, is full of the nostalgia and pain of the effect on a partner when the other declines through aging. The runner up, *Driftwood*, interweaves a story of individual love and life into a scene of the fragile interventions of Man and the endurance of Nature.

Congratulations to all who succeeded this time around and thank you to all entrants for sharing the out-pourings of your hearts and minds.

CLASS OPEN -- CATEGORY HUMOROUS

1 st	Shelley Hansen	<i>Buy-Swap-Sell</i>
2 nd	Will Moody	<i>The Busker and the Bikies</i>
3 rd	Tom McIlveen	<i>Fishing for a Gucci</i>
4 th	Highly Commended Shelley Hansen	<i>Boiled Eggs</i>
5 th	Highly Commended Tom McIlveen	<i>The Breathalyser</i>
6 th	Commended Glenny Palmer	<i>Bush Justice</i>

JUDGES' COMMENTS RE OPEN HUMOROUS CATEGORY

In this category there was not a lot of 'laugh out loud' poetry but there were, some poems which cleverly brought out the trials and traumas of both country and city life and of both past and modern eras and from these a good selection of worthy winners was possible. Examples are *Buy-Swap-Sell* which is an astute take on the modern throw-away, media-obsessed society and its engendered errors, while the comic twist at the end shows the writer's own 'supposed' entrapment in the lures. *The Busker and the Bikies* maintains comic tension by providing unusual interaction between people of diverse backgrounds.

The top ten poems were well written but some outside this bracket would have scored higher if they had not been marred by technical glitches or inappropriate subject matter. A poem may lend itself to performance at a poets' breakfast or other similar event, but for a competition of this caliber, it must also be a poem that is well written and complies with the high levels required for an ABPA Championship meant to showcase the best writing that poets of our era are producing.

To succeed, sometimes it is only a matter of taking more care in the final editing process and this is well worth the effort both to improve our own work and also to maintain the standards of our *genre*.

WITH SECOND PLACINGS IN BOTH THE OPEN SERIOUS AND OPEN HUMOROUS CATEGORIES, THE 2017 ABPA AUSTRALIAN WRITTEN CHAMPION POET IS -- **Will Moody of Bellingen, New South Wales.**