

# *You are invited to be part of the 2025 Blackened Billy Verse Competition*

**For the 35<sup>th</sup> consecutive year**, this Annual Competition encourages showcasing of evocative literary mastery set upon the music of rhyme and metre. **Accurate** rhyme and **consistent** metre are **essential technical requirements** of the Australian *bush poetry* genre.

"Bush poetry goes from strength to strength as people in all walks of life come to recognise its capacity to capture the unique nature of the Australian ethos. The humour, the pathos, the drama of the experience of being Australian in this sunburnt country which never allows us quite to be in charge." Cliff Hathaway quote from Preface of 'Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition - The Original Poetry presented at the 1996 Competition plus the Winners of The Blackened Billy Verse Competition'. Published by the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group of 1996. Sourced from Jan Morris 2024.

In Tamworth Poetry Reading Group's first publication in 1994, Cliff Hathaway wrote of the collected works as 'hopefully reflecting something of country life and even a little slice of history'. Modern Billy also welcomes civic and contemporary and quirky creative contributions. An Australian element of relevance is necessary. The topic or theme is otherwise wide open for wordsmiths to weave their wonder.

Last words for the launch of BB2025 are from Cliff Hathaway's Preface to the 1994 book and span the decades to remain relevant. These words timelessly align with Competition hopes now and for the next 16 years - until Billy turns 50, publishes a book and retires or launches refreshed anew. "Within these pages you may catch a glimpse of what moves us country folk and what makes us happy and sad, all mixed with that great and worthy desire to entertain and be entertained." Write for Cliff. Write for Billy. Write on.

For a chance to win one of the 13 Blackened Billy Verse Competition Awards, share your verse.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Blackened Billy winner will be rewarded with \$1000, a First Prize Certificate and keepsake iconic Billy trophy, customised with the names of the winning poet and poem.

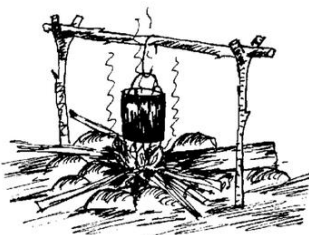
**For your chance to win, submit your superbly crafted verse entries, via post or email, prior to the 30 November 2024 closing date. Entries are restricted to a maximum of 3 per poet.**

## EVALUATION OPPORTUNITY

Entrants may obtain feedback from the adjudication panel. Cost is \$10 per poem with at least 2 evaluations provided. Prior entrants frequently report finding these both helpful and encouraging.

Competition Promoter is Tamworth Poetry Reading Group ABN 86 769 949 254

## **\$1500 Prize Pool**



**First Prize**

**Second Prize**

**Third Prize**

**Highly Commended**

**Commended**

**\$1000 plus Trophy and Certificate**

**\$250 plus Certificate**

**\$150 plus Certificate**

**5 x \$20 plus Certificate**

**5 x Certificate**

# ***2025 Blackened Billy Verse Competition***

## **CONDITIONS OF ENTRY**

1. Entries are to be rhymed and metered bush verse, relevant to modern Australia or Australians, featuring impeccable spelling and punctuation, appropriate language and evocative impact. Polite language suitable for a general audience is preferred. **Accurate rhyme** and **consistent metre** are essential features.
  2. Entries must be the author's own work and not previously presented in the manner provided for consideration in competition or published prior elsewhere. Poems awarded a cash prize in prior Blackened Billy Verse Competitions are ineligible for future entry in this Competition.
  3. Entries must not have been awarded first prize in any written poetry competition by 20 January 2025. Competition organisers are to be advised promptly should an entry become ineligible. The entry fee will be refunded, or credited for later year, and the entry withdrawn from the current Competition.
  4. Entries are to be typed, left-aligned, on A4-sized page, using 12-point Arial or Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing. Poems should sit without decoration on the page, with only the below footer detail and, if deemed warranted, a brief author's note permitted. Adornments of borders, art or other embellishments risk disqualification of entry as a potentially identifiable 'tell' indicative of author. For multi-page entries, a footer showing title on later pages and 'page x of page y' on all pages is preferred. Please do not staple pages. A template is available on the website to assist with electronic entry formatting.
  5. Rank Order Tally will be utilised to determine winning entries and will be adjudicated upon by 3 highly regarded poets with reputable technical proficiency. The 2025 competition evaluation panel includes poets with champion performance titles, poetry publication experience and a comprehensive tally each of poetry awards and achievements. Amongst their accolades, 2 are previous winners of the Blackened Billy.
  6. Entries may be forwarded by post (1 copy, unstapled, on A4, printed on one side only), or electronically as a Word Document or PDF. The author's name must not appear on any page of submitted verse.
  7. For the Entry to be deemed eligible, Submission of the poem, Entry form detail and Payment of relevant fees is required by Closing Date 30 November 2024. Please note that revision of earlier entries, prior to the Closing Date, will require submission as a new entry, including further fee payment.
  8. Copies of the Entries will be printed by the Promoter for the purpose of Competition Administration and Adjudication. Poems will not be returned unless Evaluation has been sought or constructive comment, or poems have been annotated by the judge(s). Entrants acknowledge the Promoters right to reproduce the winning poem, in support of the Blackened Billy Verse Competition, in both electronic and print forms, with due credit and without further compensation to the author, for perpetuity. Copyright is retained by the author.
  9. There is a maximum limit of 3 entries per poet. **Electronic submission closes at midnight AEST on 30 November 2024. Postal entries need to be received by 30 November 2024.** (Delivery times vary and entrants should allow sufficient time for receipt in Gladstone Qld 4680 from their location)
  10. Winning entries will be announced, and prizes presented, during a live online Ceremony, during the first quarter of 2025. Details will be emailed to entrants in the leadup to the event and made available on the website for supporters to join the fun.
- Winners of First, Second and Third Place will be notified prior that one of their entries is in the top three. The First Placed poem will be read or recited, by either the poet or a proxy, after awarding. Full results of Award winners will be made public after the Ceremony and emailed directly to all entrants.

Email your entries or enquiries to **Lux@blackenedbillyversecompetition.com**  
or post your entries and Entry Form to **BB2025, P O Box 644, Gladstone Qld 4680.**

*Please retain these terms and conditions for your records.*

# 2025 BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of Entries – *Maximum 3 entries.*

*Evaluation  
Requested  
(\$10 each)*      *Unsolicited  
Feedback  
(Y/N)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Fee (\$10 per poem, or 3 for \$25)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Critique Fee(s) \$10 per poem      \$ \_\_\_\_\_      TOTAL      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Reference (date, amount, Ref No.) \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method      CHEQUE      BRANCH DEPOSIT      EFT DIRECT DEPOSIT      (Circle one)

Payment Details : Account name - Blackened Billy      BSB 484799 A/c 609557083

*Please use your surname and initial(s) as the EFT or deposit reference and provide notification of your payment to the Competition's postal or email address shown beneath the Conditions of Entry.  
Entrants will receive a Confirmation of Entry after eligibility including payment is received.*

## PLEASE SIGN BELOW

By entering the 2025 Blackened Billy Verse Competition, I confirm the submitted verse is entirely my own work and complies with the Conditions of Entry. I understand I retain copyright, and that the Promoter reserves the right to publish the winning poem, in perpetuity, without further payment to the author, in official media related to the Competition, and with credit to myself as the author .

## I agree to the Conditions of the Competition

Date \_\_\_\_\_      Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(To submit this page electronically, please forward a photo or scan of the signed page via email. Alternatively, submission of entry detail, sent from the entrant's email account, along with payment of the entry fees will be regarded as evidence of the Entrant's consent for the above and compliance with the Conditions of Entry)

# 2025 Blackened Billy Verse Competition Assessment Guide

Elements to consider for Evaluation *Modified from base 2018 guidelines of ABPA Inc.*

Does the entry meet primary competition criteria of relevance to Australia or Australians?		YES	NO
<b>Metre</b>	Is the metre consistent throughout? ( <i>Rhythm set in first sequence of one or multiple lines is maintained without disruption to conclusion.</i> )		
	Do stanzas, or clusters of stanzas, conform to a pattern throughout? ( <i>Stanzas printed complete on a page is a modern preferred standard, though irrelevant for adjudication</i> )		
	Does the verse 'flow' naturally with coherent syntax that does not rely on inversion? ( <i>Sentences should resemble usual speech with an underlying rhythm near unnoticed</i> )		
<b>Construction</b>	Is the metric scheme unusual, adventurous or inventive?		
	Are rhymes unforced ( <i>i.e. all words stressed in usual spoken manner</i> ) and suitable?		
	Is the rhyming pattern unusual, distinctive or otherwise effectively notable?		
	Is the rhyming pattern meticulously maintained throughout the poem?		
	Is the punctuation appropriate for sentence structure?		
	Is the standard of grammar acceptable and admirable?		
	Is the standard of spelling impeccable?		
<b>Language</b>	Is the language appropriate to the chosen topic and in common use for the time?		
	Do word choice length and alliteration, phrasing and diction enhance the verse?		
	Does the verse utilise imagery effectively to enhance sensory experience of reader?		
<b>Overall</b>	Does choice of tonal mood language contribute to conjuring of emotional response?		
	Is reliance on cliches and words of others minimised, and offensive content avoided?		
	Does the verse engage and maintain the reader's interest throughout?		
	Does the story flow logically, without factual or other errors, to a satisfying conclusion?		
	Does the verse convey the subject with an original or novel approach?		
	Does the verse provide thought-provoking impact and insight or other factors of merit?		

## Words from the Adjudicators – compilation of extracts – 2020 – 2024

Entrants may wish to consider relevance with regards to their particular poem(s) being crafted and considered as an entry of merit in BB2025. Note that members of the adjudication panel differ annually.

*Do not be afraid to use an exclamation mark;* think of your poem as prose, like a newspaper article, and punctuate it as such; *a moving poem with good imagery;* well-crafted with a uniquely new approach; *entertaining poem with a serious message;* lovely and lyrical, beautifully written; *artistic literary talent with excellent imagery and effective alliteration;* quirky, unusual, refreshingly different; 'engaging poem of succinct form though a longer form would suit this particular competition' *versus 'perhaps too long for today's readers';* language applauded for invoking haunting imagery; *internal rhyme and unusual metric pattern won favour;* enjoyed for its original storyline.

The 2025 Award Ceremony will be held online. Entrants will be provided notice via phone or email in the fortnight prior to the date being announced. Entrants, supporters and poetry fans everywhere will be able to engage and celebrate together, virtually, in real time and without the travel costs. Individuals with poetry festivals, publications or recordings to promote will be invited to make mention as time permits, either before or after the official hour long Awards. Poetry festival organisers are welcome to email details to Lux for the hosts to mention. Please join us for the fun and poetry friendliness as we unite across the land to celebrate modern Australian Bush Poetry and the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Blackened Billy Verse Competition.

## Blackened Billy Winners Timeline

<i>Year</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Poet</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
1991	1st	Bob Miller	The Aussie
1992	2nd	Neil Carroll	Warrego Jack's Galah
1993	3rd	Charlee Marshall	The Mosquito Trap
1994	4th	Ron Stevens	Tourist Guide
<b>1995</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>Ron Stevens</b>	<b>Identity</b>
1996	6th	Ellis Campbell	Remember Chubby?
1997	7th	Carmel Randle	Just an Isolated Case
1998	8th	Carmel Randle	One
1999	9th	Col Hadwell	Our Youth Our Future
2000	10th	Neil McArthur	The Colt from Old Regret
2001	11th	Glenny Palmer	Shades of Grey
2002	12th	Veronica Weal	The Spirits of the Outback
2003	13th	Joyce Gaul (prev. Alchin)	The Aussie Spirit
2004	14th	Milton Taylor	The Saga of Cecil
<b>2005</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>Alec Raymer</b>	<b>The Guardians</b>
2006	16th	Carol Heuchan	Why?
2007	17th	David Campbell	Hero
2008	18th	Dean Trevaskis	The Power of Kokoda
2009	19th	David Campbell	Desertion
2010	20th	Ellis Campbell	The Arsonist
2011	21st	Catherine Lee	A Bushman's Last Farewell
2012	22nd	David Campbell	A Father's Prayer
2013	23rd	Milton Taylor	The Passing of a Legend
2014	24th	Milton Taylor	Remember?
<b>2015</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>Brenda Joy</b>	<b>Where Poppies Bloom</b>
2016	26th	Brenda Joy	Bond of Love
2017	27th	Trevor Shaw	Dentures to the Rescue
2018	28th	Catherine Lee	And did those Hooves
2019	29th	David Campbell	My Father's Voice
2020	30th	Catherine Lee	The Wanderers
2021	31st	Shelley Hansen	Bittersweet Harvest
2022	32nd	Irene Dalgety Timpone	Elegy
2023	33rd	Tom McIlveen	Freddy 'K'
2024	34th	<b>Sean Duffy</b>	<b>Gold Rush Embers</b>
<b>2025</b>	<b>35th</b>	_____	_____

