



THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

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Age, protest, gender, the green and the spiritual



Finalists and co-ordinators (at front)

by Warwick Fry

Don't ever ask me to judge performance poetry.

I favour the wordsmith, but I love the actor / actress. Performance poetry bridges an age-old debate about the transition between print, the spoken and the written word and oral/aural performance around the wordplay that is life, the universe, literature and everything.

The Nimbin World Poetry Cup is a valiant effort to promote just that.

David Hallett, the old hand and polished performer, fitted this bridging exercise as a finalist perfectly with a nostalgic piece about ABC radio juxtaposed with the post-9/11 world and the 'virtual reality' of an established soundscape. Loved it!

Len Martin continues to represent septuagenarians proudly and shamelessly. It was wonderful to see the tough old survivor in the finals yet again; raising the themes, the questions and the protesting attitude on the issues that affect the new generation.

Tug Dumbly was the 'professional' – an artful, passionate performance

that is the ultimate exercise of great art; that it looks spontaneous. But who, as 'time goes by', (and you must remember this...) wants to see the 'veterans' turning up again and again? I was on the lookout for the young talent.

The feminists were out there, as were the environmentalists, the drug law reformists and the socialistically-inclined activists. To the ears of an ageing poetaster, some of it sounded a bit shrill, but I was delighted that Zoe Anderson made it to the finalists' stage. A nice balance between the art of crafting words and presenting to a live audience.

She trumped Katherine Stewart, who (to my mind) presented a far more mature approach. Katherine has been a finalist before, but she is unlikely to ever take out the Cup, because she is not a 'performance poet'. She is a true wordsmith, and can run harmonious ladders of wordplay and imagery that you appreciate the more as you read or listen in retrospect.

Every poem is a statement of sorts, so I thought that Katherine's exploration of her femininity in a poem framed as a discourse



Ahliya Farebrother

between the poet and the (female) Muse shatteringly brilliant.

AAh! And then you get the performance. Did I say I have a 'thing' about the 'word' and the 'act'? Wherein lies the poetry, and whereat stays the performance? Luke Jackson – another finalist – went a long way to answering those questions.

Luke just went into total Druidic. No script, no notes, he just kneeled and did the total Bard – eyes closed the whole time. (Many if not most of the bards of Greek and Celtic lore were blind). A delicious Celtic accent, and a poem that engaged passion and feeling.

Ahliya Farebrother, youthful and strident in her swimming costume, was knocked out in the semis but scooped the pool for the \$500 People's Choice award.

And the young bloke Josh Holms took the \$2000 purse. Someone said that it is because Josh is tuned in to the 'new' poetry. The poetry of the rappers, the compelling blending of poetry and music, and protest. It's out there.

Congratulations all. It was good to see the young 'uns take out the Cup.



Lee Rhiannon and John Kaye in Lismore

Greens launch campaign to save TAFE

The Greens NSW have launched their new campaign 'Stop Privatisation Before It Stops TAFE' on the North Coast.

Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon and Greens NSW MP John Kaye visited TAFE campuses at Grafton, Trenayr, Lismore and Wollongbar to speak to staff, students and the community, and held a public forum in Lismore to discuss the future of TAFE in the Northern Rivers.

The Greens are calling for at least 85% of the total vocational education and training budget to be secured for TAFE.

"TAFE needs funding certainty," Senator Rhiannon said.

"Rising fees, declining enrolments at TAFE and a devastating loss of staff are the result of a 2012 national agreement between the former Gillard Labor government and the NSW Coalition.

"The 'Smart and Skilled' training market that implements the national agreement in NSW is now pushing the state down the same disastrous path as Victoria where TAFE has just 27 percent of enrolments in vocational education and training.

"Quality education and training for school leavers in the

North Coast region, access to opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs, and the ability for workers to re-train are being devastated in the name of market economics."

Greens NSW MP John Kaye said, "TAFE campuses on the North Coast are showing the distressing signs of a system in trouble, with teachers reporting that enrolments are significantly down.

"Students are being driven out of training because of the high fees imposed by the Nationals and Liberals through their 'Smart and Skilled' competitive market. "At Wollongbar campus, teachers have been told that the horticulture section is 'under review' with jobs at serious risk, due to insufficient funding to run programs in arboriculture and floristry."

The Upper House of the NSW Parliament has established an inquiry into Vocational Education and Training, and is currently calling for public submissions.

Deadline for submissions is Friday 14th August. See: <http://j.mp/TAFEinq2016>

The Committee of Inquiry will be holding public hearings in Lismore in September.



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