Top Class Drama

Jeremy Harland solo transcript
The Bush Poet: Banjo Paterson / Henry Lawson

**Kath:**

Look at me, look at me, Members of the Committee!

We have been tapped to create a new $10 note by the powers that be.

Now let's be frank, the Reserve bank doesn't want to piss around this think tank

With all this tap and go, transfer and swipe, we need a personality to generate hype

So let’s pay homage to some bush mythology, perhaps with some poetry?

Cue the keynote.

**Banjo:**

Did someone say Poetry? Patterson, Banjo Patterson

And as an alumni of the $10 note, I think my face will really float Australia’s boat!

**Lawson:**

Not so fast, not so quick!

Henry Lawson here - Banjo do you always have to be a...

**Kath:**

Time out, time out you slide show spirits.

Any more machismo and you’ll give me the irates

**Banjo:**

Are you thinking what I'm thinking Lawson?

**Lawson:**

Poetry slam! Gonna be awesome

[Ding ding ding]

**Lawson:**

I am back from up the country - very sorry that I went,

Seeking for the southern poets land whereon to pitch my tent;

I have left a lot of broken idols out along the track

Burt a lot of fancy verses - and I am glad that I am back

I intent to stay at present - as I have said - in town

Drinking beer and lemon squashes - taking baths and cooling down

**Banjo:**

So you're back from up the country, Mister Lawson, where you went

And you're cursing all the business in a bitter discontent

Well, we grieve to disappoint you, and it makes us sad to hear

That it wasn’t cool and shady and there wasn’t whips of beer

But, perchance, the wild birds' music by you was despised,

For you say you'll stay in townships till the bush is civilised.

You had better stick to Sydney and make merry with the push

For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush

**Lawson:**

It was pleasant up the country, City Bushman, where you went

For you sought the greener patches and you travelled like a gent

And you curse the trams and buses and the turmoil and the push

But the city seems to suit you, while you rave about the bush

And you'll admit that up the Country, more especially in drought

It isn't quite the El Dorado that the poets rave about

**Banjo:**

Well, I've waited mighty patient while they all came rolling in,

Mister Lawson, Mister Dyson, and the others of their kin,

With their dreadful, dismal stories of the Overlander's camp

How his fire is always smoky, and his boots are always damp;

And they paint it so terrific it would fill one's soul with gloom –

But you know they're fond of writing about "corpses" and "the tomb".

So, before they curse the bushland, they should let their fancy range,

And take something for their livers, and be cheerful for a change.

**Kath:**

I’m sorry, I just don't think you two represent the current Australia

**Banjo:**

Oh what do you mean not the current Australia? Oh you're probably just comparing use to those do-gooders doing good, aren't you? Yes, Reverend John Flynn.

**Flynn:**

Alright mate, we’re gonna get you some help

**Banjo:**

Yes, yes, John Monash

[Sounds of war]

**Banjo:**

I ask you, how many of them wrote Waltzing Matilda? Hm?

**Lawson:**

They may represent Australian innovation and invention, but we represent the Australian national identity - hell we created it!

**Kath:**

ORDER, ORDER. Thank you! If we can get back to purpose of this meeting please. Now I really think the design that we choose should represent the true story of Australia and

what it means to be Australian. Lawson, your thoughts?

**Lawson:**

Ah, well, over my time I've certainly seen how the Australian national identity has evolved if you will. It's gone from bushman to... Bushma...

**Banjo:**

A bushman, bogan, larrakin, Anzac and Croc Dundee

Convict, Surfer, Hipster why don’t ya crack a cold VB!

From Ned Kelly the bushranger who said “such is life”

To call a prawn a shrimp and you might find you're in strife

We like a stereotype but we wont apologise

Grab a pair of budgie smugglers and try them on for size

We really found our national mojo if you will in the 70s, with an ad company called...mojo! They tapped into what we hoped to be, put it into a jingle for all the world to see, more Australian than we’ve ever been, and it sounded awfully familiar:

“You ought to be, Congratulated

I feel like a tooheys, I feel like a tooheys, I feel like a tooheys or two

Come on Aussie, Come on, Come on, Come on Aussie Come on”

You see, we've evolved but we've come full circle, as it were. We like nostalgia, so a bush poet like me, like ME, is reassuring. All those in favour?

**Intern**:

Actually, I've just got a quick question, sorry to interrupt, but what does it actually mean to be Australian? Because I can't be the only one sitting here struggling to find an answer.

I mean, do you downball with Kevin 07 having a good time

While conveniently on channel 7 forgetting about the Bali 9.

And just because Scomo gets a bit of FOMO

Is it ok to love your country as much as it loves coal

While silently letting our neighbors cop the toll

Now, I can’t agree that thousands of years of history are non-existent or unimportant

Nor can I agree that hating the footy makes you discordant

To a set of values that no one really values,

Only used to devalue the worth of life of the disempowered few

**Banjo**:

Well young lad you sound like a poet yourself, excellent turn of phrase

**Intern**:

I'm not a poet, I'm just a member of the next generation asking questions

I feel this burden of unresolved transgressions

A repression, of first nations people not below but equal

Because I fear that if we leave this bed unmade there will be a sequel

How? How can we Act as if this country has and will always be fair and free?

**Kath**:

Well, that was confronting, thank you. Shall we just stick to the norm then?

All those in favour of Banjo?