

**The Oxford English Dictionary is 90 years old.
Calling all *sandgropers, cane toads, cockroaches,
Taswegians, Territorians, and croweaters* to be part of our
celebrations, and join a new word appeal:
‘Words Where You Are’**

Monday 30th April 2018 – To celebrate the Oxford English Dictionary’s (OED) **90th birthday**, Australians are being called on to contribute uniquely Aussie regional and local words to OUP’s **regional word appeal** – [‘Words Where You Are’](#).

[Oxford English Dictionary word appeal - Words Where You Are](#)

Australian English has contributed many unique terms to the English language from *budgie smugglers* to *tall poppy*. And our words for certain things are different to those used elsewhere: we call flip-flops *thongs*, while in New Zealand they are *jandals*; a *ute* in Australia is a *bakkie* in South Africa.

In Australia, we have also developed a variety of distinctive regional terms: South Australia has *stobie poles* and *emu crossings*, West Australians call a billycart a *hill trolley*, and Tasmania is home to *yafflers* (someone who talks too much) and *nointers* (mischievous children). A person from Melbourne will call a deep-fried, battered potato a *potato cake*, while someone from Sydney is more likely to call it a *potato scallop*.

It’s likely all of us can recall a moment when a word we’ve known and been using for years at home turns out to be baffling to people from other parts of our own country or English-speaking region. While many such words are common in speech, some are rarely written down and so can easily escape the attention of dictionary editors.

The *OED* is trying to create the most comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date picture of how and where these words are used, and we need your help.

Wherever you are, we want to hear about words and expressions that are distinctive to where you live or where you are from. Send them to the OED [website](#) or join the conversation on Twitter at [#wordswhereyouare](#).

Amanda Laugesen, Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre at the Australian National University and editor of the *Australian National Dictionary*, a dictionary of Australianisms and the record of the history of Australian English, says “Australian English is richly inventive, and we have been particularly interested in tracking the development of regionalisms in our recent research. While Australian words are making their way into the OED, we also want Australian regionalisms to be properly recognised as part of the rich variety of world English, and we encourage Australians

from all over the country to contribute to OED's new word appeal and to also use our social media hashtags, [#wordswhereyouare](#), [#ozwords](#), to alert us to your words."

Michael Proffitt, Chief Editor of the OED, says *"The OED's comprehensive record of the English language is also an index of sorts to people's tireless creativity and diversity over many centuries. Regional words are among the most distinctive, inventive, and evocative in the language. They can create a sense of belonging - of childhood, family, or home - or a sense of difference. Because many regional words occur in speech more than in writing, they don't always get the recognition they deserve in dictionaries. Tell us about the words you think are specific to your part of the world, and help us improve the dictionary's description of English where you are."*

In the year of the 90th Anniversary of the OED, a wealth of information celebrating the past, present, and future of one of the largest dictionaries in the world can be found at our [OED90 website](#) and, for anyone looking to delve deeper into the history of the English language, [Oxford dictionaries](#) are available on our website.

Notes for Editors

To interview a Dictionaries editor about OED90 or our *Words Where You Are* appeal, or for any further information, please contact:

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SOCIAL MEDIA:

[#OED90](#); [#wordswhereyouare](#), [#ozwords](#)

WHAT IS THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (OED)?

The *OED* is an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, history, and pronunciation of over 829,000 words, senses, and compounds – past and present – from across the English-speaking world. As a historical dictionary, the *OED* is very different from those of current English, in which the focus is on present-day meanings. You'll still find these in the *OED*, but you'll also find the history of individual words, and of the language – traced through over 3.3 million quotations, from classic literature and specialist periodicals to film scripts and cookery books. [View OED FAQs here.](#)

HOW DOES A WORD QUALIFY FOR INCLUSION IN THE OED?

The *OED* requires several independent examples of the word being used, and also evidence that the word has been in use for a reasonable amount of time. The exact time-span and number of examples may vary: for instance, one word may be included on the evidence of only a few examples, spread out over a long period of time, while another may gather momentum very quickly, resulting in a wide range of evidence in a shorter space of time. We also look for the word to reach a level of general currency where it is unselfconsciously used with the expectation of being understood: that is, we look for examples of uses of a word that are not immediately followed by an explanation of its meaning for the benefit of the reader. We have a large range of words under constant review, and as items are assessed for inclusion in the dictionary, words which have not yet accumulated enough evidence are kept on file, so that we can refer back to them if further evidence comes to light.

ABOUT OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, a department of the University of Oxford, furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. The world's largest and most international university press, Oxford University Press currently publishes more than 6,000 new publications per year, has offices in around fifty countries, and employs some 7,000 people worldwide. It has become familiar to millions through a diverse publishing programme that includes scholarly works in all academic disciplines, bibles, music, school and college textbooks, children's books, materials for teaching English as a foreign language, business books, dictionaries and reference books, and journals.

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