

EDITORIAL

Lauren Samuelsson explores the phenomenon of mock foods in her fascinating article for this edition of *Ozwords*. Do you remember eating or cooking mock chicken or another mock food? If so, we encourage you to enter our competition on page 8, which asks you to share your best story relating to mock food, or family names for food. We also encourage you to take Lauren's survey and share your memories of using recipes from the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine and cookbooks (see the link to her survey at the end of the article).

In this edition, we also include an article by Julia Robinson discussing our reading program, and in particular some of the new words we have identified in the genre of memoir. Keeping traditional Aussie English alive, and contributing new and colourful idioms, is Nick Cummins, rugby player and star of the latest series of *The Bachelor* reality television show. His inventive use of language is apparent on both the show and in the two books he has published, and Mark Gwynn explores some of his language in an article in this edition.

The ANDC has recently moved offices, so please take note of our new postal address if you are writing to us by snail mail.

Amanda Laugesen
Director



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'I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT CHICKEN!': MOCK FOODS IN THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY

LAUREN SAMUELSSON

Then the Queen left off, quite out of breath, and said to Alice, 'Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?'

'No,' said Alice. 'I don't even know what a Mock Turtle is.'

'It's the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from,' said the Queen.

– Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1869.

Like the puzzled Alice, many Australians may never have heard of 'Mock Turtle' before. Nor will they likely have had the pleasure of eating any of the mock recipes that graced the Australian table up until the late 1960s. Recipes for mock foods used to be remarkably popular, and yet in our modern era the only mock foods we encounter regularly are vegetarian and vegan substitutes for meat, and perhaps mock cream. So, what happened to mock recipes? When did they disappear from our plates, and why did they do so?

The *Australian Women's Weekly* (the Weekly) can tell us a lot about the demise of the mock recipe in Australian food culture. The Weekly is an Australian institution. It is still Australia's most widely read women's magazine, a position that it has held since its establishment in 1933. During the 1950s and 60s it had the largest circulation per capita of any women's magazine in the world and was read in twenty-five per cent of Australian homes. Food and cooking have held an integral position in the magazine since the very first issue. The Weekly provided food editorials and didactic 'how to' features while also engaging with its readers by having them send in favourite recipes for their weekly recipe competition. By virtue of both its popularity and proliferation, the Weekly can tell us many stories about Australian culture, including the story of why we eat the way we eat.

It can also illuminate the contribution of mock foods to the Australian vocabulary. Food is a productive area for Australian English, and the many food terms that have come and gone in our lexicon over the years reveal the social history of Australia. Several mock foods are recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), including *mock turtle*, *mock brawn*, *mock venison*, and *mock goose*. Most of these terms are first recorded in the 18th century. As we shall see, the Weekly reveals a number of others, and also attests to the popularity of certain 'mock' dishes in Australian culture, notably *mock chicken* and *mock duck*.

Mock Duck. One pound lean rump steak, 1 onion, 4 tablespoons breadcrumbs, 1 egg, 1 dessertspoon butter, salt, cayenne, rashers of bacon, cold water, gelatine. Mince the onion, add crumbs, seasoning, and butter. Bind with the beaten egg. Spread this mixture on the steak and roll up to look as much like a duck as possible; fasten with string. Put

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

into baking dish. Cover with rashers of bacon, add dripping. Bake in moderate oven about ¾ hour. Remove bacon and allow 'duck' to brown. Make a little gravy, [mix] well, add a little gelatine, and when beginning to set pour over the cold duck. Decorate with thin strips of gherkin and leave in cold place. Serve sliced with salads. (*Australian Women's Weekly*, 24 December 1938)

This recipe for *mock duck* (a term first recorded in the OED in 1907) was shared by the Weekly's food editor Mary Forbes, and was the star dish of an editorial feature dedicated to the perfect Christmas picnic menu. The recipe, which is a rolled, stuffed steak, instructs the cook to 'roll up the steak to look as much like a duck as possible'; an interesting proposition given ducks usually have wings and legs! The recipe raises many questions. How does one fashion steak into the shape of a duck? And perhaps more importantly, *why* does one fashion steak into the shape of a duck? What can the popularity of mock recipes, like this mock duck, tell us about Australia's culinary habits?

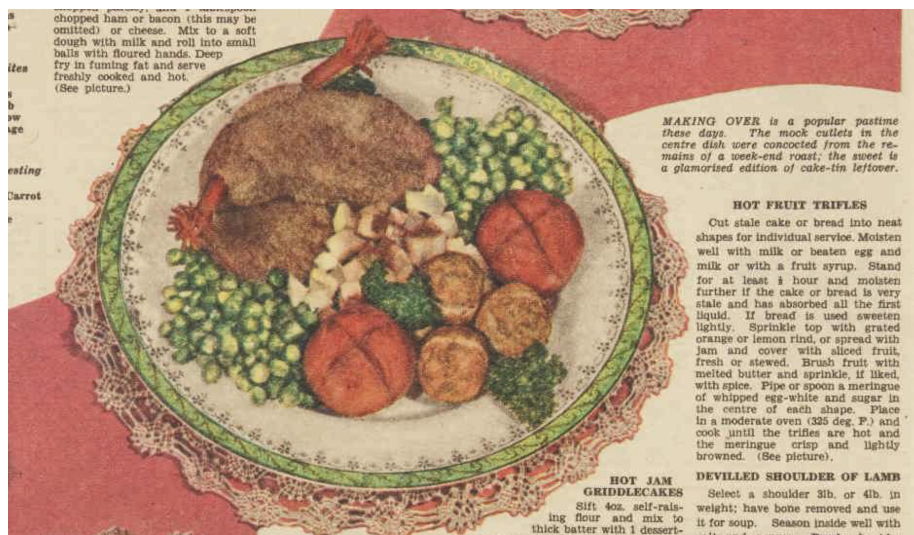
The British culinary tradition is no stranger to mock foods, as the OED evidence suggests. The most famous of these is perhaps the 'Mock Turtle Soup' referenced by Lewis Carroll, which was wildly popular during the mid-nineteenth century. The soup saw turtle being replaced by a calf's head, which was supposed to mimic the gelatinous texture of real turtle. Mock foods were designed to either look or taste like the 'real thing,' and were usually a response to scarcity (either seasonal or economic).

In light of this, it is perhaps unsurprising that mock foods were remarkably popular during the 1930s and 40s. Analysis of the Weekly shows that there was a sharp decline in mock foods after the Second World War, and by the late 1970s, they were almost non-existent. Of the just over 300 mock recipes found in the Weekly from 1933 to 1982, two thirds were published during the 1930s and 40s, with almost half of this number being published during the war years. This indicates that mock foods in the Weekly were indeed a response to scarcity: economic during the 1930s, and as a result of wartime rationing in the 1940s. The recipes themselves are inventive and imaginative, which tells us that Australian women really cared about what they were serving their families. In the face of scarcity, they took their meagre resources and transformed them into something special.

The names of the recipes can tell us a lot about their role as an antidote for scarcity. Recipes for 'Whipped Austerity Cream' and 'Poor Man's Pate de Fois Gras' leave little doubt that the recipes being provided were cheaper alternatives to the 'real thing'. This is also reflected in the ingredients: cheaper cuts of meat, or no meat at all, are used as a substitute for more expensive cuts; egg white stands in for cream; breadcrumbs for almond meal. The majority of mock recipes were submitted by readers as a part of the Weekly's recipe competition, which is an indication that they were being cooked on a reasonably regular basis, as recipes contributed by readers can be considered to be an acceptable reflection of what people were cooking.

So, what were they cooking? Some of the 'mock recipes' that made multiple and regular appearances, by virtue of which they could be considered popular, included *mock oysters*, *mock marzipan*, *mock ham*, *mock champagne*, and the ubiquitous *mock cream* (a chiefly Australian item, first recorded in Australian English in 1879). While all of these recipes are no doubt interesting and can tell us a great deal about Australian culinary culture, there is one type of mock recipe that really stands out: *mock chicken*.

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of scarcity,
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”



'MOCK CHICKEN CUTLETS' USING MUTTON, VEAL OR RABBIT. (AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY, 10 OCTOBER 1942)

Today, chicken is cheap and abundant. Australians are among the highest consumers of chicken meat in the world. However, before the implementation of modern chicken farming practices in the mid-twentieth century, poultry, particularly chicken, was a novelty. It was a dish served on celebratory occasions such as Christmas (or when the laying hen stopped laying).

Mock chicken was a remarkably popular family recipe in Australia, brought to the table in many forms: mock chicken croquettes, mock chicken mould, mock chicken cutlets, mock chicken loaf, and the popular mock chicken pie. One recipe in particular demonstrates the power of the mock recipe to transform cheap ingredients into 'something special'.

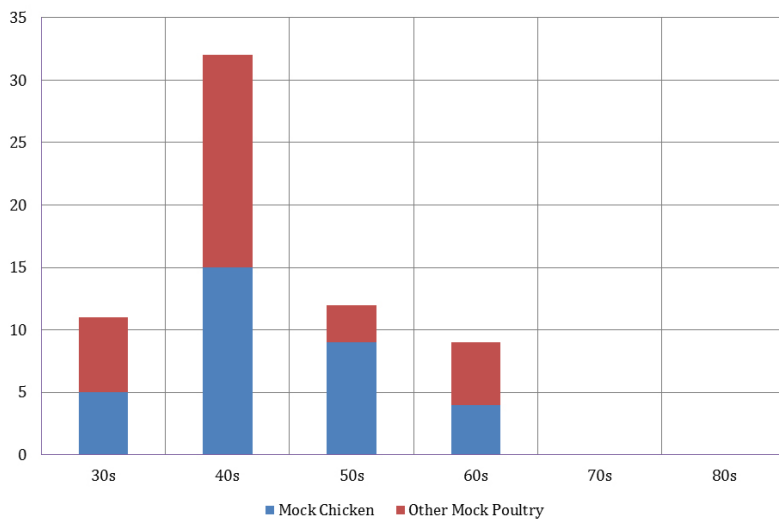
Savory Mock Chicken Pie. One pound tripe, 1 onion, 3 or 4 thick slices of stale bread, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, ¼ teaspoon thyme, salt and pepper, squeeze of lemon, 1lb green peas, 1 dessertspoon butter. Blanch the tripe and cut into small pieces. Cover with water, add onion and 1 teaspoon salt and simmer until tender, about 1 hour. Make a seasoning by moistening the bread with the tripe stock, add chopped onion from the stock, beaten egg, chopped parsley, thyme and lemon, pepper and salt to taste. Place a layer of bread seasoning in a greased ovenproof dish, cover with tripe, then cooked green peas. Lastly cover with a layer of seasoning and dot with butter. Bake in a moderate oven (375 deg. F.) for 45 minutes. (*Australian Women's Weekly*, 9 February 1946)

This recipe for 'Savory Mock Chicken Pie' won first prize for Miss M. Bell from South Australia in the weekly recipe competition in February 1946, and substituted tripe for chicken. Historically, Australians have had a complicated relationship with offal consumption, as it is generally associated with poverty. In a revealing statement regarding Australian attitudes towards offal in the interwar period, the 1936 report of the Advisory Council on Nutrition claimed that Australians, particularly those on lower incomes, harboured 'a deeply-rooted prejudice... against the eating of internal organs'. (*First Report of the Advisory Council on Nutrition*)

Miss M. Bell was clever, however. By simply calling this recipe by another more creative name that held no reference to the tripe it contained, the dish became palatable—or certainly palatable enough for her to win one pound for her recipe! 'Tripe Pie' sounds positively depressing, but 'Savory Mock Chicken Pie' created from exactly the same ingredients has a more sophisticated ring to it. Chicken was imbued with higher status than tripe in the Australian middle-class home, and the enterprising home cook used her ingenuity to jazz up a frugal dish and please her family.

By the 1960s, chicken became economical enough for a 'reasonable family meal'. An editorial from 1961 claimed that 'Scientific farming is helping to reduce the price of chicken ... in the near future bigger, tastier chickens will be on sale to the housewife at a cost comparable with the average meat price.' (*Australian Women's Weekly*, 12 April 1961) Reflecting the growing affordability of chicken, the data I collected from the magazine shows the gradual disappearance of mock chicken. By the 1970s it was non-existent in the pages of the *Weekly*, after reaching a peak in the 1940s.

The Australian food culture of the 1930s and 40s was a food culture of austerity. The Depression and the scarcity of the war years made for a lean table. But this does not mean that Australian women gave up caring about the quality and appetite appeal of the food that they were creating. Evidence from the *Weekly* suggests that women were interested



THE DEMISE OF MOCK CHICKEN ... BY THE 1970S, IT WAS NO LONGER FEATURED IN THE MAGAZINE.

“ Mock chicken was a remarkably popular family recipe in Australia ...

”

in innovative ways of preparing food within the limitations of the time – and mock foods were one way that they achieved this. They inventively transformed low cost, low status, and unrationed ingredients from the mundane to the novel, with a little bit of imagination. Australian women were showing a propensity for creativity, experimentation and improvisation, which are key elements of our modern Australian food culture. As a result of improving economic conditions, mock foods had almost entirely disappeared by the late 1960s. Mock chicken, mock hollandaise, and mock champagne were relegated to a nostalgic historical curiosity as post-war affluence arrived.

Lauren Samuelsson is a history PhD candidate at the University of Wollongong. Her interests include the history of food and drink, popular culture, and Australian cultural history. Her doctoral research focuses on the *Australian Women's Weekly* and its role in the development of Australian food culture during its first fifty years of publication. Email: slauren@uow.edu.au

Research Participants Wanted

If you would like to take part in a research survey on your experiences with and memories of using recipes from the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazines and cookbooks, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AMatterofTaste> to participate or for further information.

MAILBAG

We welcome readers' comments on their recent observations of Australian usage, both positive and negative, and their queries, particularly those not easily answerable from the standard reference books.

YOU SAY TIGHTS, I SAY LEGGINGS

I've just been reading the recent edition of *Ozwords* regarding the Australian use of variant names for common objects. My experience in retail fashion revealed a very clear divide in the community about the name for a pair of what we in retail would call 'leggings', but which were just as often emphatically asked for by customers as 'tights'. I was never able to discover what their term was for what we would call tights. In retail, 'leggings' are thick, tight, non-transparent, stretch leg coverings with no feet. 'Tights' have feet and are still thick but may be slightly transparent. The line of demarcation between tights and pantihose doesn't seem to be clearly defined.

C. Kelly

Thanks for your retail perspective on tights and leggings. It's interesting that you found such a strong difference of opinion among customers, because we found the same among ANDC staff (with one person adding the term *footless tights* to the mix). As you note, the term tights is the one that causes dispute. Most general dictionaries define tights as a stretchy garment covering the legs and lower half of the body, in terms that don't specifically include or exclude feet—although the *Oxford English Dictionary* says they are 'worn in place of stockings'. The history of tights as a leg-covering is nearly 200 years old, and it is recorded as a term for men's tight-fitting breeches from the 1820s. In 1836 Charles Dickens provides the first evidence for the word tights as a garment worn by dancers and acrobats; and from 1897 the term appears as an undergarment 'taking the place of knickers and stockings'. The first evidence of our modern tights, in the pantihose sense, is recorded in Peter O'Donnell's novel *Modesty Blaise* (1965): 'Modesty wore ... a full black skirt, with black stretch tights.' Very appropriate for a sexy crim turned spy!

SHIFT OR SHOOT?

As an aside to R. Solomon's letter in *Ozwords* April 2018 regarding changes in language use, I was reminded of an incident a teacher friend told me about some years ago. She had been reprimanding a couple of unruly 7-year-olds in her class, and finally said sternly to one that if he didn't stop talking she would have to shift him. This had a greater effect than she intended as another class member gasped, and shrieked 'Shoot him?' Ah, the power of words!

L. Grosse

No doubt teachers are pushed to breaking point sometimes! Perhaps a different choice of word may have had a less dramatic effect. R. Solomon lamented in our last issue that *shift* is replacing *move*, but this particular use of *shift* has a long history. With the meaning 'transfer from one place to another', *shift* is first recorded in the 14th century, about the same time as a similar sense of *move* occurs.

WATCH THAT SPACE

I have a question concerning a now commonly-used expression which I find extremely irritating.

In a number of contexts, but mainly academic, the phrase 'in that space' is being used as a trendy catchphrase in lieu of 'in that discipline', 'in that field of enquiry', 'related to that activity', etc. I hear it at work all the time, especially 'in the teaching space'; 'in the online teaching space'; or—even worse—'we need to constructively intervene in that space'. In the media I have heard 'in the disability space' and at poetry readings 'in the poetry space'. Where did this come from? I am assuming, perhaps erroneously, that it is American? Anyway, it makes me want to spew in the toilet space.

H. Neilson

The use of the term *in that* (or *this*, or *the*) *space* has increased considerably in recent years, and is by no means confined to academia. It appears to be more common in the US, although recent evidence shows it is used right across all varieties of English. It may have begun life in the 1980s with both US and UK evidence from around this time. Newspaper records suggest a possible origin in business and marketing, where it is often found today. We see it in the Australian English space from the 1990s, with increased usage through the 2000s—and especially since 2010. Looks like this one's here to stay.

HORSE SWEATING AND SHERROCKED

S. Dunlop came across a couple of unfamiliar terms in her reading and dropped *horse sweating* and *sherrocked* into our Word Box. They occurred in a 1930s work (Gordon Buchanan, *Packhorse and Waterhole*) referring to gold-digging in the Kimberleys in the late 19th century. She guessed correctly that *horse sweating* meant 'riding a horse without the owner's permission'. It is an obsolete Australian term that we record from the 1860s until the mid-1930s. We were especially interested in the second term, *sherrocked*. It appears in the text as: 'Sam Croker ... on being questioned as to the whereabouts of the wanted man replied, 'Oh, he's *sherrocked*, your worship.' We think it is related to another Australian term, *sherrock*, found in the phrase *to take* (or *give*) *sherrock* meaning 'to take leave without permission'. We record it from 1896 until 1999, but there is very little evidence in the 20th century, and we do not have any evidence of the verb form *sherrock* that S. Dunlop found. Her evidence adds to our knowledge of the history of the term, and we will investigate *sherrock* further. Many thanks to this contributor.

BOWSERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DITCH

As an Aussie living in NZ, one word that I didn't realise is an Australianism is 'bowser', like petrol bowser. This appears to be only used in Australia.

S. Eichler

You just haven't met the right Kiwis. *Bowser* is recorded in both Australian and New Zealand English with the meaning 'petrol pump', dating from the time of the First World War. *Bowser* is a proprietary

name for a system of dispensing petrol from a holding tank, from the name of a company established by US inventor and entrepreneur S.F. Bowser (died 1938). From the *West Australian* newspaper in December 1914: 'The Bowser system of storing petrol in garage is being adopted in Australia. ... The system consists of an underground tank, holding over 500 gallons. An ingenious pump is connected at any desired distance from the tanks, and by a simple appliance the pump delivers any desired quantity from a quart upwards. The petrol is delivered any distance through a flexible pipe, and eight gallons can be filled into a car in five seconds.' From the mid-1920s in Australia, at a time when the motor car was becoming more widely available, the meaning of *bowser* is transferred from the whole system to the endpoint, the petrol pump itself. Elsewhere in the English-speaking world you will find another, related, meaning, where *bowser* is 'a tanker used for fuelling aircraft and other vehicles or for supplying water'.

MORE ON LEG COVERINGS

Can you help me with 'gaiter', a word I can't find in my dictionary? I have always assumed 'gaiters' are socks or some form of compression covering the leg. Is 'gaiter' Australian, or used outside Australia?

A. Harrison

The word *gaiter* is a standard English word, not specific to Australia. It means 'a protective covering of cloth or leather for the ankle and lower leg'. The word is first recorded in the early 18th century, derived from the French word *guêtre* for the same item. *Gaiters* are not stretchy or compressive like socks. There are various types of *gaiters*, including those used to keep snow, or vegetation such as weed seeds or prickles, out of boots, trousers, and socks. *Gaiters* are also worn as part of the traditional costume of an Anglican bishop (buttoned at the side). You may find one in your car, because a *gaiter* can also be 'a flexible covering for the base of a gear lever or other mechanical part'.



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THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

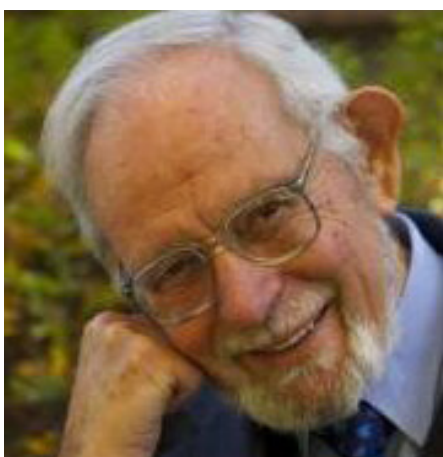
This year marks the 30th anniversary of two milestones for the centre: the publication of the first edition of the *Australian National Dictionary* in 1988, as well as the establishment of the ANDC at the Australian National University, in partnership with Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand. You can celebrate too—Oxford is offering the two-volume second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary* (2016) at the discounted price of \$145. For those who want the good oil on 16,000 Australian words and phrases, it's worth every brass razoo.

WORD OF THE YEAR 2018

We invite you to help us in our search for the Word of the Year, a word or phrase that has grabbed our attention in Australia in 2018. In past years our shortlists have included words covering a range of Australian experience, including social issues (*marriage equality*), bureaucratic bungles (*census fail*), political moments (*shirtfront*), foodie favourites (*smashed avo*), and sporting matters (*jumper punch*). If a word or phrase has come to your particular notice this year, please let us know. You can tweet, email, facebook, or use snail mail. See contact details opposite.

PATRICK TROY

Emeritus Professor Patrick Troy AO was a leader in urban planning and research, a fierce advocate for social justice, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. He was also a loyal friend and supporter of the ANDC for over three decades. His death in July saddened us all, and we will miss his visits, generous spirit, and good humour. Pat is immortalised in the *Australian National Dictionary* in quotation evidence for the word *thong*, a fact mentioned in a eulogy at his funeral: 'Pat Troy of the Australian National University's urban research unit ... usually wears shorts and thongs to work at this time of year.' (from *The Bulletin*, January 1973) We extend our sympathy to Pat's family.



PATRICK TROY, FRIEND OF THE ANDC. IMAGE: FENNER SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY, ANU

PRINTING A COPY OF OZWORDS

Now that our newsletter has gone digital, we find that some people prefer to print out *Ozwords* to read in hardcopy. Recently a reader told us that one of the issues in our [archive](#) fails to print out properly. We have tested this thoroughly and found no problem. If you are having difficulty printing *Ozwords*, we suggest you try the print option 'fit to page'. Do let us know if you find any problems with our archive, and please include your email or contact details so we can get back to you.

DICTIONARIES COMPLETED

We have completed work on new editions of three general dictionaries in recent months. The *Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (8th edn), *Australian Middle Primary Oxford Dictionary* (2nd edn), and *Australian Middle Primary Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2nd edn) have been edited at the ANDC by Mark Gwynn and Amanda Laugesen. Simultaneous work on three dictionaries had its moments. Format and stylistic conventions differ between dictionaries, and the editorial team were sometimes challenged by mentally switching back and forth between styles. Occasionally it was a case of 'if it's Tuesday, this must be the *Pocket*'. But we are proud of the new editions, and pleased to be finished!

CONFERENCE

ANDC's Amanda Laugesen was a keynote speaker at the 'Languages and the First World War' conference in London in September. Her topic was 'The Afterlife of War Words (and the Creation of a New Language by Australian Returned Servicemen)', one aspect of her continuing research into language in times of conflict.

NEW WORDLIST

The new Oxford Wordlist is a resource for teachers and educators. The Wordlist contains the 500 most frequently used words by Australian children in their first three years of school, and it updates an earlier, 2007 list. It is based on research in 2017 conducted by Oxford University Press with literacy and reading expert Anne Bayetto of Flinders University. The research [report](#) examines the changes to the list that have taken place in the last ten years, such as the inclusion of more informal language, the order in which the 11 most common words occur, and the appearance of new words. The report will be of particular interest to people with a professional interest in the early primary years.

SCIENTIFIC STYLE GUIDE

A new online resource for science writers and editors was launched in August at the Shine Dome in Canberra. The *Australian Manual of Scientific Style* provides guidance on scientific style, language, terminology, and the presentation of data. The event also celebrated the launch of a partnership between the co-publishers, Macquarie

University and scientific publisher Biotext. Emeritus Professor Pam Peters from Macquarie University notes the partnership will conduct associated research on readability, accessibility and usability.

NEW HOME, NEW ADDRESS

ANDC has moved once again, thanks to construction works on campus. Along with our physical location, our postal address has changed. See the opposite page for details. Your letters, along with your emails, Facebook posts, and tweets, are always gratefully received.

PUBLISHING AWARD

We were pleased to hear that the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* (6th edn, 2017), edited by ANDC's Amanda Laugesen and Mark Gwynn, has won a gong in the Educational Publishing Awards Australia 2018. The dictionary won the Secondary Reference Resource category, announced at the September awards presentation in Melbourne. The judges said: 'Presenting both ancient and modern interpretation of the English language, as well as usage, pronunciation and etymology, this resource is a suitable addition to a student's arsenal of understanding.' Congratulations to our publisher, Oxford University Press.

APPEAL FOR YOUTH WORDS

The Oxford English Dictionary is [appealing to the public](#) for help in identifying slang terms used by children, teens and young adults. These words are difficult to monitor because slang can be elusive, evolving rapidly according to fashion, and because of the use of ephemeral forms of social media preferred by younger people (such as Snapchat and texting). The OED gives as UK examples *dank* 'cool, great', *hench* 'fit, muscular', and *bare* 'many or much; a lot of'. They note that youth slang often has 'a bigger story to tell about varieties of English used by particular ethnic or cultural groups.' Young Australians have their own slang too. We'd love to know if you have heard any unfamiliar terms from your young friends, family, or colleagues. See our contact details below.

Letters, emails and tweets are welcome.

Please address letters to:
Ozwords
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School of Literature,
Languages and Linguistics
Australian National University
14 Ellery Crescent
Acton ACT 2601

Email: andc@anu.edu.au

THE HONEY BADGER LOVES HIS SIMILES

Mark Gwynn

When this year's instalment of *The Bachelor Australia* hit our television screens in August, staff at the ANDC were flat out like lizards drinking recording the various Australianisms uttered by Nick Cummins, whose nickname is the Honey Badger. The former Wallaby is an interesting choice by Channel Ten as this year's Bachelor because he is a larrikin, as famous for his quirky post-match interviews as he is on the playing field. His use of Australian terms and expressions, and his penchant for inventing some of his own, has endeared him to many sports fans.

There is one particular figure of speech that stands out in the Honey Badger's linguistic repertoire, and that is the simile. He has a preference for very colourful comparisons. These have a long tradition in Australian English, and are often associated with the kind of larrikinism the Honey Badger typifies.

I have recently read two books by Nick Cummins, *Tales of the Honey Badger* (2015) and *Adventures of the Honey Badger* (2016), for the ANDC reading program (see Julia Robinson's article on page 7). From these I collected evidence of more than 100 similes. Some of these appear as entries in the *Australian National Dictionary*, including: *head like a robber's dog*, *in more shit than a Werribbee duck*, *drier than a Pommie's towel*, and *off like a bride's nightie*. However, the majority of expressions I collected provide evidence for possible future entries in the dictionary.

The Honey Badger has several ways to describe a very busy person. They may be *as busy as a one-eyed cat watching two rat holes*, *as busy as a one-legged man in a bum-kicking competition*, or *as busy as a one-armed bricklayer in Baghdad*. If someone is lacking in the looks department, the Badger might say they have *a face like a half-sucked mango*, *a head like a beaten favourite*, or *hair like a bush pig's arse*. If someone is baffled, they may be *more confused than an All Black at a bookstore*, *as confused as a goldfish with dementia*, or *more confused than Tony Abbott at the Oxford Street Markets*.

If someone is very happy, they may be *like a hippie with a dole cheque*, *happier than a mosquito in a blood bank*, or *have a grin like a dead sheep*. Something very hot is *hotter than a flatscreen TV in a pawn shop*. Something very dry is *as dry as the Caxton after Origin*. A place packed with people is *as full as Centrelink on payday*.

These similes rely on the humour or absurdity of the comparison for effect. Many rely on some knowledge of what is being compared. For example, if you're at a popular fishing spot there may be *more rods out than the Lang Park urinals at half time*. Lang Park is a Brisbane football stadium; at half time, after a lot of beer consumption, the toilets are well patronised.

As well as using ribald humour, Cummins uses some expressions containing sentiments that are not exactly politically correct. *Sweating like a gypsy with a mortgage* and *drier than a Pommie's towel* stray into this territory. But for the most part the Honey Badger's use of similes shows a preference for having fun with language and for not taking himself too seriously. I hope he wasn't *as nervous as a rugby league player during a TAFE exam* when he made his debut as the Bachelor this year.

“

... he is a larrikin, as famous for his quirky post-match interviews as he is on the playing field.

”

Mark Gwynn is an editor and researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre.



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MEMOIR AND THE READING PROGRAM

Julia Robinson

The ANDC reading program is an essential resource for identifying new Australian words and meanings for our archive of Australian English. We draw on this archive to create new entries for all our dictionaries, but especially the historically-based *Australian National Dictionary*. This dictionary shows the life history of each word through illustrative quotations across time, so gathering quotation evidence is a core task in creating an entry. The reading program has two functions: it alerts us to possible new Australian words and meanings, and it provides quotation evidence for constructing entries.

The reading program is an evolving list of books, magazines, periodicals, and other recent works we think will reflect current Australian usage. We read across a broad range of Australian publications, keeping a close eye on book reviews and publishing websites to see what's new. We prefer to read in hardcopy and make good use of library services. Each reader at the centre has a favourite genre (such as crime fiction, musical biography, political memoir), so when new books arrive we often know who will put their hand up for a particular work.

I am sometimes asked what specific words I am looking for in a particular book. The answer is 'I'll take anything I can find'. What I really want to find are unfamiliar word and meanings. In a book about migrant experience, I hope to find examples of migrant English. In a sporting biography, I hope to find new sporting terms. But in either book I will also find words or phrases unrelated to the subject: a new use of *bogan*, perhaps, or new evidence for *kangatarian* or *pot and parma*. We cast a wide net to gather in as much as we can.

At present we are finding that memoir is a productive genre and, luckily for us, memoir is having a moment. Bookshop displays are groaning with autobiographical works by athletes, media personalities, politicians, musicians, and other local and national identities. Of special interest are the writers whose literary voice has a regional or local accent, because we are always keen to expand our knowledge of Australian regionalisms. We look for works with the author's own style, vocabulary, and syntax.

From the autobiographical works we've read this year, here is a small selection of the authors we found especially useful, and examples of the terms we collected.

Media personality Tracey Spicer's exuberant style gave us idioms such as *off like grandma's pants on payday*, *up and down like stripper's knickers*, and *porch over the pubes* (a post-labour paunch). Richie Vaculik, Bra Boy and MMA fighter, gave us *typewriter* and *gearstick* (terms for rough physical pranks perpetrated by teens on younger kids), and *micro-grom* (a very young surfer). Top End musician Seaman Dan gave us *ailan blues* (blues played Torres Strait Island-style) and *Torres Strait hula* (a dance style).

Cup-winning jockey Michelle Payne alerted us to *green whistle* (a handheld pain relief device), and *no carrots* (of a horse in a race, no gas in the tank). Author Michael Mohammed Ahmad, in a novel based on his experience growing up in a Muslim community, gave us *shu cuz* (a greeting), and the similes *poor as kebabs* and *more Aussie than beetroot*. Kings Cross identity John Ibrahim gave us *bridge up* (to arc up for a fight) and *box visit* (a non-contact prison visit). Tasmanian author Rachael Treasure gave us *nutty as a Picnic bar* (crazy) and *schnozzled* (drunk).

Politicians past and present have been busy. Jacqui Lambie gave us *chirpie* (a drink) and *hug doctor* (a person who is comfortable giving sympathetic hugs). We liked Anne Aly's euphemism *what the felafel*. Sam Dastyari gave us further evidence for *halal snack pack* (kebab meat topped with chips and sauces). Gareth Evans gave us *silly-shirts photo-call* (official group photo of APEC leaders) and *tick-and-flick* (describing the routine approval of an agenda item). Craig Emerson gave us *cracker gun* (a 'toy' made by inventive kids when fireworks were legal).

This is a small selection of the rich mix of terms we are collecting through our reading. A year ago I reported in *Ozwords* that, in the year since the publication of the second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*, we had a list of 300 possible new dictionary entries. Thanks to stepping up our reading program, we now have a list of some 2000 words and phrases that may be Australian in origin or usage. Further research is needed to determine this.

We welcome suggestions for our reading list. If there's a recent Australian book you think we should read, especially one with a local or regional focus—or one that is *more Aussie than beetroot*—please contact us.

“

We look for works with the author's own style, vocabulary, and syntax.

”

Julia Robinson is an editor and researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

OZWORDS COMPETITION

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 50 RESULTS

We asked you to invent a new tourist slogan to draw the crowds to Australia, or to your State, Territory, or town. Entries ranged from the minimalist *G'day* to an outpouring of pride in rhyme:

*We're scenically and culturally diverse
You'll feel like a bursting into verse
We've shining cities, surf and sun
We're small on hassle, big on fun.
Enchanting sweeps of grand delights
The satin hush of outback nights
So come on down to the great Down Under
Land of wombats, wilderness, wonder.*

Tourism Australia could use a line from this as a stand-alone slogan: *small on hassle, big on fun*—genius! Extra points for not rhyming 'Down Under' with 'chunder'.

For every entry expressing a nationalist sentiment (*Australia: if you're not here, you're somewhere else, poor bugger*) there was an entry with a cynical note. These included: *Is the Great Barrier Reef still there? Better come and check.* And this counter-intuitive spruik: *Sick of the Grand Tour, jaded with The Parthenon, Notre Dame, the Colosseum and the Taj, or Giza and its Pyramids? For a bit of a relief, come to Australia and drive across the Nullarbor Plain.*

Canberra came in for a bashing, as ever, but we long-term residents of the ACT are hardened to insults. Years ago T-shirts and bumper stickers were sold with the legend *Canberra, gateway to Queanbeyan*, and this sentiment was echoed in a couple of entries. We liked this back-handed compliment: *Canberra: how's the serenity?*

Could we cash in on the current popularity of the young royals? One entry suggested we appoint Prince Harry as the next Governor-General, and cash in with an advertising campaign: *Come and visit Australia, home of Prince Harry and Meghan.* This is a long shot, but may work for tourists who don't know Government House is off-limits to the public for 364 days of the year.

Several entries sold Australia as a destination for adventure tourists in a way as yet unexplored by the industry: *Thrill to*

face-to-face experiences with mesmerising creatures ... go scuba-diving with the intriguing irukandji; surprise the aloof death adder; be bug-eyed at our blue-ringed octopus; eyeball a terror-triggering taipan. Not to mention *come and smile at a crocodile.* What could possibly go wrong?

The winning entry took our fancy with its ambiguity. Is *deadly* used in the Australian sense (great, terrific), or a reference to something more sinister? Second prize to another wry reflection on life in the national capital, recent leadership spills notwithstanding.

1st prize (books to the value of \$150 from the OUP catalogue):

Australia, the deadly country.
T. Cadaver

2nd prize (books to the value of \$100 from the OUP catalogue):

Canberra: perfect for a bit of shoosh.
C. Thomson

OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 51

We hope you enjoyed reading Lauren Samuelsson's lead article on mock foods as much as we did. Our favourite Australian mock food is *colonial goose* (recorded from 1874), a name for a dish of boned, stuffed leg of mutton in the days when mutton was cheap and available—unlike goose.

The article prompted discussion at the ANDC about our own memories of mock foods, family meals, and the tactics our parents employed to disguise or rename some foods in order to get us to eat them.

We know you will have some interesting memories and stories of your own about mock foods, family names for food, or your mother's mealtime fibs and strategies. We invite you to send us your stories, and the two we like best will win prizes.

Entries close 28 February 2019.

Send entries to the ANDC at our address at the top of the next column, and please include a postal address, so we know where to send the prizes. You can also submit via Twitter @ozworders, or on our Facebook page.

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