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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of Ozwords for 2019. This edition reflects a few things that have happened since the last. Our lead article is a tribute to former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who died on 16 May this year. Hawke was an enormously popular and influential prime minister. He also has a considerable presence in our Australian National Dictionary, and our lead article explores the way he is associated with particular Australianisms, as well as his use of language.

The ANDC ran the first of our annual appeals for contributions from the public at the beginning of August. We plan to run these annual appeals on particular topics to encourage public contributions to the dictionary, and to help us find new words to consider for inclusion. The topic of this first appeal was 'Nicknames for places': we asked people to let us know what they might call the places they live in or grew up in. Mark Gwynn reports on some of the fascinating results of the appeal. We are still collecting contributions, so do get in touch if you'd like to have your nickname for a place included in our database.

We also include an article on the word 'butchy boy' by Julia Robinson, as well as our usual Mailbag, From the Centre, and competition pages. We hope you enjoy this edition, and as ever we welcome your feedback and contributions.

**Amanda Laugesen**

Director



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# THE SILVER BODGIE AND AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

AMANDA LAUGESSEN

Earlier this year, former Prime Minister Bob Hawke (born 1929) died at the age of 89. Hawke was Australia's prime minister from 1983 to 1991 and the Australian Labor Party's longest-serving prime minister. He was leader during a crucial period in the country's history, and his government is renowned for a number of achievements. These include the introduction of Medicare, compulsory superannuation, economic reforms including deregulation and the floating of the Australian dollar, and international campaigns such as the pressure on South Africa to end apartheid.

The 1980s saw a lot of change in Australia, including a sense of a 'coming of age' and a reconfiguring of Australian identity. Hawke's government, for instance, oversaw the official establishment of *the green and gold* as Australia's national colours. Hawke's language and distinctive style combined with his government's policies and politics to make his years in office significant ones. Descriptions of his time before and after being prime minister are also notable for connecting to Australian English.

After Hawke's death, many obituaries and accounts of his life and contributions mentioned his *larrikin* style (often labelling him 'the larrikin PM'), reflecting that we identify Hawke strongly with humour and a lack of pomposity. Obituaries also noted that Hawke was often called the *Silver Bodgie*, a reference to the fact that Hawke had a distinctive head of silver hair worn in a style reminiscent of *bodgies*. *Bodgie* is an Australian English term, first recorded in 1950, that describes a particular type of Australian youth of the 1950s, similar to the British 'teddy boy'.

Descriptions of Hawke have contributed a number of quotations to the *Australian National Dictionary*, all of which tell us something about his public image or memorable moments. Hawke provides evidence for our entries for *sherbert* 'alcohol', *two-bob lair* 'an exhibitionist; a show-off', and *sluggos* 'swimming briefs'. Who could forget the famous photos of Hawke in his *sluggos* (better known to many of us as *budgie smugglers*)?

Hawke was perhaps most often identified with his fondness for *skolling* beer, something he did a lot of in public in his later years, as well as in his youth. In the 1950s he won the world record for drinking a yard of beer (two-and-a-half imperial pints) in eleven seconds. While in office, Hawke did not drink (and had in fact declared himself as trying to overcome alcoholism), but his popular identification with drinking beer has perhaps reinforced a particular idea of Australian male culture.

*Skol* (or *skull*) is an Australian English word meaning 'to drink (a glass etc. of alcoholic liquor) in a single draught'. It is first recorded in 1975, and has since become widely used in Australia. Bob Hawke has become so identified with his capacity to *skol* beer that prime ministers after him have been seen as comparatively lacking. For example, an attempt by Prime Minister Scott Morrison to *skol* a beer at the Prime Minister's XI cricket match last year resulted in the *Sunday Age* commenting that 'Morrison's act is a pale, polyester imitation of Bob Hawke'. (4 November 2018) Not everyone thinks this association between Hawke and drinking is the thing we should best remember him for.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Another term used of Hawke that also alludes to some of his more questionable behavior is *boudoir bandicoot*, referring to Hawke's womanising. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote of Hawke, a few months after his election as prime minister: 'I'm not much impressed by his public breast-beating about being a reformed alcoholic and a boudoir bandicoot.' (22 September 1983) Although evidence is fairly slim for this term, it is one of the more colourful ones relating to Hawke in the lexicon.

Hawke's public persona beyond his drinking has long been a subject of discussion and fascination, even before Hawke became prime minister. He became President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions in 1969, and President of the Federal Labor Party in 1973. Not long after, in 1974, the Sydney magazine *Gayzette* commented: 'Since Big Gough Whitlam and Bonzer Bob Hawke, the maleness of Australian society is becoming more, rather than less emphatic.' This quote reminds us that even though the 1970s and 1980s were important decades of social change, Australian masculinity continued to be associated with particular qualities that not all men identified with.

The public's affection for Hawke was based on his easy ability to connect with working people everywhere, including those in pubs, on worksites, at the race track, and in the street. His gregarious nature, his lack of pretension, his love of a drink and a gamble, and his ability to show emotion also contributed. People liked him, warts and all. But Hawke, who was educated at a selective public school and won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, also moved easily among the bigwigs and in boardrooms. This branded him in the eyes of some critics a *silvertail*, 'a privileged person', who socialised with *the big end of town*: 'Many (of Mr Hawke's mates, said Pilger) come from the big end of town—big money, that is.' (Adelaide *Advertiser*, 21 January 1988).

Hawke and Hawke's government, as might be expected from a government that was in power for a long time and in a time of change, contributed a number of new terms to Australian English. These include *accord*, *clever country*, and *Dawkinisation*. All of these give us a glimpse into the agenda of Hawke's Labor government.

*Accord* is first recorded in 1983. It referred to an agreement between the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions negotiated as part of a prices and income policy. Other agreements followed. While perhaps more of historical interest today as a word, the *accord* was a major landmark in Australian economic and industrial relations policy. Similarly, *Dawkinisation* is not a word that continues to be used, but it does speak to a process – the turning of colleges of advanced education into universities – that transformed Australian education. John Dawkins was Minister for Education, and initiated and oversaw the process of changing the higher education system in Australia.

*Clever country* is a term that appears to be diminishing in use in Australia. However, through the 1990s and into the 2000s, it was in wide use, referring to Australia as a country that prospers through investing in education, research, and technology. First mentioned by Dawkins in 1988, it became a key term used in Labor's 1990 federal election campaign. It is often paired with the idea of the *lucky country*, coined by writer Donald Horne in his 1964 book of that name. Originally used ironically, *lucky country* was increasingly used without irony over time. In the 1990 campaign, Hawke declared that Australia should not be just the lucky country, but must be the *clever country*.

Economic policies during the Hawke years also contributed or helped to popularise a couple of key terms of the Australian political lexicon. One of these is *magic pudding*, 'an endlessly renewable resource'. It derives from Norman Lindsay's book of the same name, published in 1918, about a never-ending pudding that renews itself after a slice is taken. Paul Keating, Hawke's treasurer, declared in 1985 that there was no *magic pudding* in giving Australians tax cuts and providing government services to them. *Magic pudding* has continued to be used in discussing government economic and spending policy.

*Economic rationalism* was much used in the 1980s in regard to government policy. Coined in 1979, it refers to the idea of using efficiency and productivity as the primary measures of economic success. It was often used by and of the Labor government, as well as Liberals. A figurative sense of *lolly bag*, meaning 'a sum of money to be distributed as a political bribe or largesse', is first recorded in 1988, and used of the Hawke and Keating government: 'Hawke and Keating are the biggest boys on the block and they were not letting go of the lolly bag for some cheeky new show-off.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May)

What of Hawke's own language? *Hawkespeak* was coined in 1983 to refer, usually in a derogatory way, to Hawke's unique style of speaking. A 1993 source captures the essence of the criticism of this style: 'Or what about Hawkespeak (former Prime Minister Bob Hawke's ability to say as little as possible in the greatest number of words)'. (P. Jeans, *My Word*) But *Hawkespeak* was a word that could be used in various ways; it could also simply allude to the policies of his government.

“  
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”



PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE.  
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Hawke used a number of Australianisms in his speech, as was fitting with his style and persona. He provides quotation evidence in the *Australian National Dictionary* for several non-political Australianisms, including the following:

- *bucket* ‘a damaging revelation (about someone, often a political opponent)’: “I’m not going to give him another bucket”, Mr Hawke said in answer to an Opposition question in Parliament.’ (*Australian*, 18 October 1990)
- *chewy on your boot* ‘(in AFL) a barracker’s call intended to discourage a player from performing well’: ‘Mr Hawke puzzled the crowd when he described their reaction to the Khehlani disclosure as ‘You were wrong, chewy on your boot”.’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1975)

A number of entries in the *Australian National Dictionary* that describe Hawke also provide us with evidence for Australianisms. Some of these include:

- *to come the raw prawn* ‘to attempt to deceive (a person); to misrepresent a situation; to attempt to treat (someone) as an inexperienced fool’: ‘Sceptical groans which were, if I translate them correctly, requests for Mr Hawke to stop coming the raw prawn.’ (*Canberra Times*, 17 November 1983)
- *to be jack of* ‘disenchanted; tired of (a person, activity, etc.)’: ‘A number of ALP parliamentarians believe that more and more people are getting ‘jack’ of both strikes and the ACTU President, Mr R.J. (‘Bob’) Hawke.’ (*Bulletin*, 8 May 1971)
- *to do one’s lolly* ‘to lose one’s temper’: ‘In Britain they had seen Richard Carleton’s *Nationwide* interview with Hawke in which Hawke did his lolly.’ (*Australian*, 26 March 1983)
- *two-bob lair* ‘an exhibitionist; a show-off’: ‘You sometimes think Hawke has to be the most undisciplined Prime Minister we’ve ever had ... Snarling, smirking, haranguing, rude, bumptious. You know, generally acting a like a two-bob lair who knows it all.’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 1988)

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Politicians have historically contributed a lot to our lexicon. John Howard gave us *barbeque stopper*, and in recent times, Tony Abbott popularised the figurative use of *shirtfront*, while Scott Morrison has made much out of discussing the so-called *Canberra bubble* and *quiet Australians*. However, few prime ministers have been linked quite so much to Australian English in the popular imagination as Bob Hawke, or provided so much evidence to the *Australian National Dictionary*.

Amanda Laugesen is Director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

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## YOU'LL DO ME FOR A ROUGH COBBER

In an email exchange about the word *cobber*, a reader recalled one of his grandfather's expressions: *you'll do me for a rough cobber*, and *I'm not fussy*. We hadn't heard this before and went looking for evidence. A search in Trove's early newspaper database turned up *you'll do me for a rough cobber* in a comic piece in 1930 (*Smith's Weekly*, 9 August), which suggests to us the idiom has legs. Also, we found the heart of the expression, *rough cobber*, in a Mosman Library online resource commemorating local diggers from the First World War. A few days before his death in 1918, Private Gordon Lacey wrote to a mate from hospital in France, signing off **his letter** with 'your *rough cobber*, Lacey'. Several newspaper references in the 1920s use the term *rough cobber* in quotation marks, indicating that it is considered colloquial. For example, in a disparaging comment about a foreign leader, a journalist writes: 'Not the sort of chap an Australian would choose for a "rough cobber".' (*Smith's Weekly*, 24 March, 1928) Has any reader heard this term, or the extended idiom *you'll do me for a rough cobber*? Please let us know.

## TOEY - RAISING EYEBROWS?

*I used the term 'toey' in conversation recently to mean anxious, nervous, and others were shocked, thinking I was saying I was horny! We laughed... I had never heard that usage before. I grew up in Victoria (Melbourne and Western District) and they were in NSW (north-west Sydney suburbs) so I wondered if it was a regional usage. Collins dictionary online lists both meanings, but I see this dictionary lists the definition I use only, so perhaps the second meaning is newer?*

K. Booth

*Toey* is an Australian term in the sense you are familiar with: 'restive, nervous, touchy; keen to begin (a race etc.)'. It dates from the 1920s, and quite a bit of early evidence relates to racehorses being *toey* before a race. For example: 'When the horse entered the enclosure he seemed to him to "be a bit toey and sweaty".' (*Brisbane Courier*, 12 February 1929) There is also some evidence in the 1970s of a related usage of *toey* meaning 'fast': 'They had a getaway that Roger Bannister would have envied. Real toey, Arch reckoned.' (B. Scott, *My Uncle Arch*, 1977) However, the 'horny' sense that you mention is newer than both these meanings. We don't find it until the 1980s, where the earliest evidence occurs in the context of a performance by male strippers: 'You know it'll be a good night if the girls are a bit toey to start with.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1982) Neither the 'nervous' nor 'horny' sense is confined to a particular region or state. Both meanings are current, so you are unlikely to be the only person whose use of *toey* is causing surprise!

## SCHNOZZLE, ASYLEE

*I noticed a 'new' meaning of 'schnozzle' in last October's edition, as 'drunk'. I remember an early 20th century American comedian named Jimmy*

*Durante who was known as 'the Great Schnozzle' because of the size of his nose. I can also remember the use of another Yiddish word 'schemozzle' (a real mess) still being used, though now not as often. On another trail—new words—I read in the Sydney Morning Herald last week in an article by a correspondent concerning Julian Assange, that 'the ASYLEE' should be responsible for taking care of his cat. Never before heard or read THAT particular word. Am I wrong? Is it in vogue?*

P. Kaukas

The Yiddish contribution to English is significant. It has given us words like *bagel*, *klutz*, *nosh*, and *chutzpah*. Words starting with *sh-* and *sch-*, such as *schmaltz*, *schlep*, and *shemozzle*, are often especially associated with Yiddish. Interestingly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* says that the origin of *schnozzle* (meaning 'nose') is 'pseudo-Yiddish'. Its first evidence is in fact a reference to Jimmy Durante's nickname, dated 1930. In regard to *schnozzled* 'drunk', there is still work to be done on its history. It may be related to *sozzled* 'very drunk', a word dating from the late 19th century, derived from a British dialect. As well, there is evidence from US sources from the 1980s for *schnozzed* with the same meaning.

The word *asylee*, meaning 'a person who is seeking, or has been granted, political asylum', has a longer history than you might think. It dates from the 1950s. It's still in use, but not nearly as common as terms like *asylum seeker* or *refugee*. Given the current political and social climate around the world, we may see and hear more of *asylee* in future.

## DROPPING BORRIES

*I grew up in country Victoria and we commonly used the word 'borrie' for defecation. An example would be 'I am going to drop a borrie'. I often wondered what the origin of it was, as people I know from other states had never heard of it. Only fairly recently did I learn that the Melbourne sewerage system was designed by one Charles Borrie and we even have a body of water at the Werribee sewage farm called Lake Borrie. Is this too good to be true? Have you guys heard this one?*

R. Stares

We've heard of *borrie* in the sense you mention, 'a piece of excrement'. It does seem to be an especially Victorian term, and it's likely to be derived from Lake Borrie, part of Melbourne's Western Treatment Plant at Werribee. Wikipedia tells us it was named after Edwin Fullarton Borrie, a Melbourne civil engineer and town planner. We haven't heard of your term to drop a *borrie*, but will keep an eye out for this one. Residents of Werribee must be very tired of the jokes (we record the idiom *to be in more shit than a Werribee duck* 'to be in serious trouble'). To redress the balance, it's good to know that Lake Borrie is part of an area of wetlands internationally recognised for its diversity of birdlife, second only in Australia to Kakadu.

## FUTURE TENSE, PAST TENSE—ENDANGERED SPECIES?

*Has anyone else noticed the modern trend to do everything in the present tense? Whenever there is a re-enactment of a past factual event on film or television in particular, it is nearly always narrated in the present. Example: 'Jim hides the dagger under the bed' or 'Bill walks over to his ex-wife's house'. This has been the style for some time and generally I can put up with this. However, now I have noticed that the future tense is also disappearing. A Channel 7 weather person in Melbourne is the worst culprit, but there are scores of other people talking in the same way. She habitually says things like 'it rains on Thursday' instead of 'it will rain on Thursday' or 'it is fine on Cup Day' instead of 'it will be fine on Cup Day'. This style of speech drives me crazy! Is this trend tied up with the tendency these days for people to live in the here and now?*

I. Messer

This has become a popular trend in recent years. It is a pet peeve of ANDC's Amanda Laugesen, who says that many historical documentaries are now done this way: 'There is such a thing as the "historical (or dramatic) present tense" which can be used to describe past events. Generally it is used to make things more lively and dramatic. However, it does seem to have become annoyingly common.' A recent writer in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* complains that use of the present tense, while having a perfectly good place in other contexts, is particularly irritating in discussing the past: '... it lacks the authority, the range, the depth, and the power of the past tense.' We agree with I. Messer that weather reporters should reconsider their use of the present tense—unless, of course, their Wednesday prediction 'it rains on Thursday' is a rolled-gold guarantee.



found a new word?

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'Chuffed' is not an Aussie word. It's a Brit slang term from mid-century. Would you love or leave a pub that served a 'schmiddy'? We've found evidence for 'honey joys' going

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD

The first issue of *Ozwords* appeared twenty-five years ago in 1994, published by Oxford University Press in Melbourne. It was edited by Nicholas Hudson, author of *Modern Australian Usage* (still going strong in its third edition). The editorial announced that *Ozwords* ‘has a modest aim—to promote discussion of our official language, genus English, species Australian, and its dozens of subspecies’.

The lead article in that issue was on plain language in the law. It also contained articles on taboo language, a new edition of the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, and inclusive language in the church. The ‘pedants’ corner’ explained why you should not use *cross-section* when you mean *random sample*. The issue also contained a mailbag section, still a regular feature. An item by ANDC director Bill Ramson noted that the major achievement of the centre’s first five years was the editing of new editions of the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* and the *Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*: ‘editions which have been individually successful and which together have dramatically changed the reference landscape in this country’. Updating these dictionaries for an Australian audience continues to be a core activity of the ANDC. We have now edited and updated five editions of the *Concise* and six of the *Pocket*, as well as numerous school dictionaries.

The look and layout of *Ozwords* has changed over time. Originally black and white, a little colour was introduced in 1995 (a modest amount of red and grey), along with a new masthead featuring the southern cross. The masthead changed again in 1996, 2002, and 2012. The most significant change happened in 2017 when *Ozwords* moved from hardcopy to digital publication, making it accessible to a wider audience. It continues to be published by Oxford University Press, and currently we have some 3000 subscribers. Throughout the life of *Ozwords* we have enjoyed feedback from our readers. We used to receive the bulk of this as snail mail, but today email and social media have overtaken deliveries by Australia Post. Not so easy to pass around over morning tea, but we have input from a wider range of readers in Australia and elsewhere.

Each editor of *Ozwords*, Frederick Ludowyk, Bruce Moore, and Amanda Laugesen, introduced their own style and interests. The late Frederick Ludowyk, editor for fourteen years from 1996, is especially remembered for his wit and erudition. Twenty-five years on from the first issue, our brief remains the same: to promote discussion of Australian English. We aim to engage the general reader with a mix of language-related topics that may be scholarly or popular, current or historical, national or local. We know some readers have been with us since our early days, and we thank them for their loyalty and stamina!

## ANDC VISITOR

This year we welcomed a visiting scholar, Junling Wang, to our centre. Junling is from Inner Mongolia University in Hohhot, China. She is currently researching vernacular Australian English, and is planning a comparative study of Australian English and Chinese. Junling brings a different perspective to our conversations about Australian English, and we are delighted to host her.

## AUSTRALEX CONFERENCE

In the first week of September we hosted AustraLex, the biennial conference of the Australasian Association of Lexicography. The theme this year was ‘Lexicography and Dictionaries in the Public Sphere’. Professor Jakelin Troy gave the keynote speech on revitalising Indigenous languages through dictionary creation, and discussed her family connection to the Ngarigo language and Snowy Mountains country. It was fitting in this International Year of Indigenous Languages that a number of papers addressed aspects of language revitalisation, such as community engagement, the history and role of dictionaries in these projects, and the theory and practice of dictionary-making, including online dictionaries and apps. Thanks to all who attended and made the conference a success, to the outgoing committee members and office-bearers, and to the newly-constituted committee. Special thanks to Phoebe Garrett for her organisational role.

## WORD OF THE YEAR

Once again we are bending our minds to the annual question: what will we select as our Word of the Year? Last year we chose *Canberra bubble*, a term much used by commentators and politicians to describe (and disparage) the insular world of federal politics. We’d love to hear your pick for the 2019 shortlist. What words or phrases have you heard this year that express something about our cultural, social, sporting, or national life? Please email, tweet, Facebook, or put them in our *Word Box*.

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Language is central to a people’s identity, history, and traditions, and many of the world’s indigenous languages are endangered. In Australia, the ABC is especially active in promoting Indigenous language topics in radio programs such as *Word Up* and *Speaking Out*. Regular weekday *news bulletins* are broadcast in the Northern Territory languages Warlpiri, Yolngu Matha, and Kriol. As well, the ABC project *This Place* invites local people to explore the meaning behind Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names. At the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies, a number of language dictionaries are planned.

First cab off the rank is the *Ngarinyman to English Dictionary*, launched in July. Lead compiler is linguist Caroline Jones. It is the first dictionary for this Northern Territory language, and the result of a long collaboration between the Ngarinyman community and linguists. Other tangible celebrations of language are the Royal Australian Mint’s launch of a *new 50 cent coin* featuring fourteen different Indigenous language words for ‘money’, and Australia Post’s release of a commemorative *stamp*.

## NEW COMMONWEALTH STYLE MANUAL

Some readers will recall the old *Style Manual*, an essential reference work for writers, editors, and printers of government publications. It was published in 1965 and revised five times up until 2002. Now a new, digital, edition is planned to reflect current style for government departments and agencies. The Digital Transformation Agency will oversee the new edition. The team working on content development includes communications specialists Ethos CRS, ANDC’s Amanda Laugesen, and Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand. The new edition will have a particular emphasis on the requirements of digital content and style—unheard of in 1965—and will be launched next year.

## MISSING IN ACTION: TRADING BANK

Thirty years ago we were a new centre, established following the 1988 publication of the *Australian National Dictionary*. Trawling through the archives recently, we found an item in an old in-house newsletter reporting on reviews of the dictionary—in particular, its shortcomings:

*Words we missed in AND. No reviewer worth his or her salt reviews a dictionary without finding words that should have been in but aren’t! AND reviewers were no exception. Edmund Campion noted that we had ‘Anglo-Celt’ but not ‘skip’. Rod Usher registered a Melbourne point of view when he found ‘cocky’, ‘cod’, ‘coldie’, ‘collared sparrowhawk’, ‘Collins Street’, and ‘colonial’ but not ‘Colliwobbles’. Les Murray thought we had sold ‘chocka’ a bit short by not including the sense illustrated in that ‘immortal phrase’—‘Sorry, Ocker, the Focker’s chocka!’ Arthur Delbridge took us to task for not recognising ‘trading bank’ as an Australianism (though we got points for including ‘the more obvious Reserve Bank’). But the prize to date goes to Evan Jones who found that we didn’t have ‘silver beet’!*

Happily, we can report that our second, 2016, edition includes entries for all these terms, with one exception: *trading bank*. Which proves that despite our best efforts, things go awry. Arthur Delbridge’s comment prompted us to put *trading bank* in our general dictionaries, starting with the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* in 1992. But somehow we forgot to add it to the list of must-haves for our historical dictionary. *Trading bank* will appear in later editions—finally!



# LOOKING FOR BUTCHY BOYS

Julia Robinson

Searching for clues about the history and origin of Australian words can be rewarding, frustrating, and sometimes both. Despite the fact that the digital revolution has given us access to the vast resources of the Internet, it does not guarantee success. Early in the new year we came across references online to a tantalising term that has—so far—resisted our efforts to uncover its story.

Two years ago, in a Melbourne city kindergarten, children and teachers began a ‘Butchy Boy Project’ to discover all they could about a tiny backyard creature:

Recently, the Kindergarten children have been absolutely interested in a bug-like crustacean called the Butchy Boy... When we’re playing in the outdoor yard, you will find the *children* digging near rocks and logs for butchy boys. These animals are small and climb all over your hands when you pick them up and sometimes even roll into a ball. (*Kool Kidz* website, 14 February, 2017)

This little bug is more commonly known in Australia as a slater or woodlouse, but at least some Australians use the synonyms *butchy boy* or *butcher boy*. The earliest reference we can find is dated 1996: ‘Slaters... Known variously as woodlice, pillbugs and butcher-boys...’. (Horne & Crawford, *Backyard Insects*) A number of sources suggest the terms *butchy boy* and *butcher boy* may be used chiefly in Victoria, as seen in the following comments in an online forum:

*DuckysMama*: I’m from Victoria, and have always known them as butchy boys ... never heard them being called slaters until I was a teenager!

*Em Cee...* I’m from Vic and we all have known them as butchy boys.

*CAVOK*: They’ve only ever been called Butchie Boys around here (Victoria). (*Essential Baby*, 1 November 2007)

All online evidence is post-2000, although it’s likely ‘DuckysMama’ knew *butchy boy* from at least the 1990s. Twitter posts also indicate earlier use: *butcher boy* was known in country Victoria in the 1950s, and *butchy boy* in Melbourne in the 1960s.

No current dictionaries record the terms. Historical archives also yield nothing—only literal butcher boys, employed by butchers to deliver meat to customers. In early newspapers, common names for backyard insects are sometimes mentioned in nature and gardening columns, or in children’s pages, but not *butchy boy* or *butcher boy*. Before the 1990s, usage may have been too informal or too localised to be recorded in print.

Is *butcher boy* perhaps the original term, with *butchy boy* as a variant? It seems possible, and if so, we’d expect to find earlier evidence for *butcher boy* than for *butchy*. However, although our first solid evidence is for *butcher boy* (in 1996), Twitter hints at mid-century use for both terms. Right now there is just too little evidence to tell.

Lacking further evidence, we can only speculate about a likely origin. If we think *butcher boy* is the earlier form, is it related to *butcher*, the person who sells meat? One sense of *butcher*, now rare, is ‘dark-blue’, the colour of the traditional butcher’s apron. Slaters are a dark blue-grey. Does *butcher boy* allude to colour?

Or does the interesting *butcher’s guinea-pig* give us a clue? The *English Dialect Dictionary* (1905) records this as a term for ‘woodlice’, but gives no further information. Supporting evidence for the ‘guinea-pig’ element of *butcher’s guinea-pig* appears in single comment in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: ‘The term [guinea-pig] is applied dialectally to the woodlouse...’. The comment dates from 1900 (when the letter ‘G’ was first published). Again, no information is given.

These intriguing snippets raise more questions than answers. Butchers and guinea-pigs—what’s the connection with slaters? Is there a link to our more recent Australian terms?

It’s tempting to speculate, but we have no evidence of a connection between *butcher’s guinea-pig* and *butcher boy*. As well, there is a big gap in usage. It’s unlikely the term *butcher’s guinea-pig*, used around the early 1900s, has influenced the Australian use of *butcher boy* so much later in the century. Unless we find a missing link between these terms, the jury is out.

Meanwhile, the Melbourne kindergarten—wisely unconcerned with word origin—had fun with their Butchy Boy project:

...we created an environment in the classroom for the butchy boy which we use to observe their behaviour and life. The children enjoy having these animals as pets in the room and are excited to do more butchy boy art activities. (*Kool Kidz* website, 14 February, 2017)

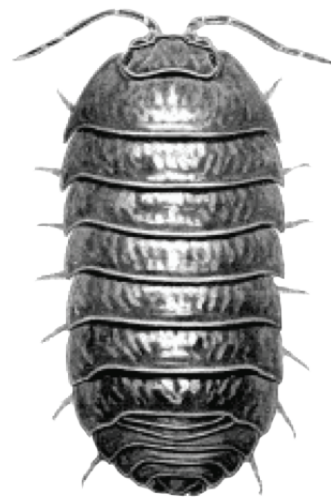
Our own *butchy boy* project continues. If you have any information about *butcher boy* or *butchy boy*, please contact us.

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

“

Before the 1990s, usage may have been too informal or too localised to be recorded in print.

”



ARMADILLIDIUM VULGARE, ONE SPECIES OF SLATER FOUND IN AUSTRALIA. WEBB & SILLEM, BRITISH WOODLICE, 1906.

# DO YOU SAY BRISBANE, BRISSY, BRISSO, BRISVEGAS, BRISBANTINOPE, OR BRISGANISTAN?

Mark Gwynn

In August, the ANDC launched the first annual appeal for contributions to our archive of Australian English. As well as supplementing our database, these appeals will help us identify possible new entries for the *Australian National Dictionary* (AND). Each annual appeal will focus on a different theme.

This year's appeal asked for the nicknames of Australian places: the informal names we use for our regions, cities, towns, and suburbs. The *Gazetteer of Australia* provides information about official and formal names, with over 370,000 geographical names in its database. This vast record is supplemented by the *Australian National Placenames Survey*, which provides further historical and linguistic information. However, information relating to the colloquial forms of Australian placenames is limited.

The AND currently includes a small number of nicknames for places that are well-established or have some historical and linguistic importance. For example, there are a number of entries for states (or former colonies), including: *apple island* (Tasmania), *Banana land* (Queensland), *cabbage garden* (Victoria), *Crowland* (South Australia), *Ma State* (New South Wales), and *Sandgroperland* (Western Australia). Nicknames for cities include: *Brisvegas* (Brisbane), *bush capital* (Canberra), *city of churches* (Adelaide), *Emerald City* (Sydney), *Silver City* (Broken Hill), and *Smellbourne* (Melbourne). There are also a number of terms for Australia, such as: *Aussie*, *Oz*, *Lucky Country*, and *land of the long weekend*. Names for regions include: *dead heart*, *top end*, *the mallee*, and *the mulga*.

The appeal was publicised through broadcast media and generated nationwide interest. The response was enthusiastic and demonstrated the large number of colloquial names for places across the country; already we've added close to a thousand distinct names to our database. Many of these were submitted multiple times, revealing the frequency of some of the terms.

Of particular interest to us are the similarities between the patterns of nicknaming and other forms of word generation in Australian English. Here are some initial observations on the contributions.

One of the simplest forms of naming is the basic abbreviation: *Brun*s (Brunswick), *Coffs* (Coffs Harbour), *Foots* (Footscray), *Kal* (Kalgoorlie), *Shep* (Shepparton). Other types of abbreviated forms include: *Curry* (Cloncurry), *Melbs* (Melbourne), *MoPo* (Moonee Ponds), *Ninsh* (Mornington Peninsula), *SoHo* (South Hobart), *Trak* (Toorak).

The most common pattern is an abbreviated form of the name with the addition of the *-y* (*-ie*) or *-o* suffix. This is the characteristic feature of Australian English we see in words like *arvo* (afternoon) and *barbie* (barbecue). Here is a small sample of the contributions we received: *Barky* (Barcaldine), *Bridgie* (Bridgewater), *Deni* (Deniliquin), *Freo* (Fremantle), *Gero* (Geraldton), *Goldy* (Gold Coast), *Paddo* (Paddington), *Reddy* (Redcliffe), and *Straddy* (Stradbroke Island).

Another common pattern is the use of an abbreviated name preceded by *the*. This is a particularly Australian form, recorded since the 1880s in names of northern towns such as *the Alice* (Alice Springs), *the Isa* (Mount Isa), and *the Tennant* (Tennant Creek). Examples include: *the Berra* (Canberra), *the Doo* (Humpty Doo), *the Go* (Bendigo), *the Gong* (Wollongong), *the Gun* (Gunnedah), *the Mount* (Mount Gambier), *the Rat* (Ballarat), and *the Reach* (Longreach).

The *-vegas* ending in placenames, as in *Brisvegas* (Brisbane), proved to be quite common. The allusion to Las Vegas is ironic, comparing a relatively quiet place to the razzamatataz of the casino city. We now have evidence for *Ascot Vegas* (Ascot Vale), *Dubvegas* (Dubbo), *Gloss Vegas* (Glossodia), *Moss Vegas* (Moss Vale or Mossman), *Palmvegas* (Palmerston), *Prosvegas* (Proserpine), *Rockvegas* (Rockhampton), and *Yass Vegas* (Yass) to name a few. We give a similar nod to US placenames in *Ballaformia* (Ballarat), *Brisneyland* (Brisbane), and *Moss Angeles* (Mossman).

Two other common nickname patterns, both ironic, are worth noting. In the pattern '*x*' by the Sea, the name of a coastal town or city is replaced by that of a smaller, more rural, or supposedly less attractive place—as in Townsville being named *Broken Hill by the Sea*. Other examples are: *Dubbo by the Sea* (Sydney), *Logan by the Sea* (Redcliffe), and *Mount Druitt by the Sea* (Coffs Harbour). Another lengthy nickname pattern is the form *People's Republic* of '*x*', alluding to especially inner-city areas where residents are perceived to be socially progressive. Examples are chiefly Victorian, with the *People's Republic* label applied to Brunswick, Coburg, Moreland, and Yarraville. Canberra has the *People's Republic of Ainslie*, and a left-leaning federal electorate in New South Wales is the *People's Republic of Grayndler*.

“Of particular interest to us are the similarities between the patterns of nicknaming and other forms of word generation in Australian English.”

As well as the many derogatory names (often with affixes like *crime*, *ghetto*, *hole*, *slum*, and *stab*), we had plenty of tongue-in-cheek contributions. For example, *Charlie's Trousers* (Charters Towers), *Happy Rock* (Gladstone), *Marry your Brother* (Maryborough), *Shagger's Ridge* (Rooty Hill), *Sheep Dunny Cow Dunny* (Woolloomooloo), and *Swinging Pig* (Rockingham). Quite a few places had multiple names, such as Woy Woy (*Above Ground Cemetery*, *the Woy*, *Two Woy*, *Why Why*, *Wow Wow*, *Yow Yow*).

The appeal is ongoing so please send us your nicknames for Australian places.

Mark Gwynn is a senior researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre.

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# OZWORDS COMPETITION

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 52 RESULTS

This competition was inspired by Levi Budd, the young Canadian boy who created the word *levidrome* to describe a word that makes a different word when read backwards. So successful was his coinage, thanks to social media, that Oxford Dictionaries put it on their watch list as a potential inclusion in future dictionaries.

We asked you to send us your levidromes. If the word pair were somehow related—or you persuaded us they were—so much the better. We posted our competition on Twitter, where Levi's dad, Robert Budd, saw it and retweeted. Thanks @lucky\_budd! We had a great response, with some people submitting sentences and even poems containing levidromes.

Several word pairs were popular, with *flog & golf* being one of the favourites. A number of people sent us *knob & bonk*, a connection one person found 'crudely amusing'. So did we. We were tempted to snigger at the popular *nuts & stun*, but were pleased that one person explained it as 'danger in a coconut plantation'.

Food and animal themes were well-represented: *deer & reed*, *wolf & flow*, *paws & swap*, *edam & made*, *leek & keel*, *buns & snub*. Curiously, *dog & god*, the most famous levidrome of all, was universally overlooked. Not all entries tried to interpret a word pair, but we appreciated those that made the effort. We liked *knits & stink* (unwashed jerseys), *plug & gulp* (frog in throat), *lager & regal* (a drink with Prince Harry), and *yaws & sway* (choppy boat trip). *Smart & trams* (city traffic solution) spoke to us as residents of Canberra, since the city has a brand-new light rail system.

There were a number of pop culture and literary references. *Drows & sword*: Dungeons and Dragons fans will know a 'drow' is a dark elf. *Desire & Erised*: Harry Potter fans won't miss the significance of this reference. They know that J.K. Rowling named the Mirror of Erised because it spells 'desire' backwards. *Dennis & sinned*: one that needs no explanation for fans of Dennis the Menace, star of the comic strip and movies. Someone

suggested the famous nonsense word *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* as a levidrome (we don't trust ourselves to type it backwards), pointing out that Mary Poppins says it backwards in the book. The justification? 'Since it's in a book, it's a real word'. Good try, but no cigar!

One reader offered *carpark* as a levidrome, noting that not only does it spell another word backwards, but also provides a synonym. His regular carpark must be full of sub-standard vehicles. We are sympathetic, but *kraprac* is not in any dictionary we've seen.

First place goes to one reader for two entries, because we couldn't choose between them. The runner-up appealed to our landlocked dreams as editors in the nation's capital.

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

*diva & avid* 'keen prima donna'

*draws & sword* 'landscape artist'

S. Robson

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

*edit & tide* 'This one has personal significance: I'm an editor who lives by the sea.'

S. Carey

## OZWORDS COMPETITION NO. 53

Mark Gwynn's article on nicknames for places (see page 7) shows that Australians are habitually creative with language. For this competition, unleash your imagination! Tweak any existing Australian word and create a new word with a new meaning. You could abbreviate the word, and/or add a suffix, prefix, or a verb ending. And don't forget to add your new definition. Here are two examples we dreamed up, based on the words *esky* and *pavlova*:

*eskify*, to enhance a social event by providing chilled beverages in portable coolers.

*depav*, to embrace a no-fat, no-sugar diet on Boxing Day.

## Entries close 29 February 2020.

Send entries to the ANDC via Twitter, Facebook, or by post. Contact details at the top of the next column.

The Australian National Dictionary Centre is jointly funded by Oxford University Press Australia and The Australian National University to research aspects of Australian English and to publish Australian dictionaries.

Would you love or leave a pub? Bogan - now seen as a prideful reference to Australia's disregard for convention? There are 14 Indigenous words for money on our new 50 cent coin.