

Media release

***Back Block Bards* donations reach \$50,000**

It's only been 10 months since a western NSW family set out to raise funds for the Dementia Australia Research Foundation with a series of events including publishing a book of poetry and an art exhibition, but this week they've brought their donation total to \$50,000.

Members of the Vagg and Parker families from the Hillston/Ivanhoe district produced *Back Block Bards*, a collection of 58 poems by eight poets, all born and bred in western NSW, with their verse based on their experiences in the area. The illustrations for the book were done by matriarch and well-known artist Joan Vagg, who also has poetry featured.

One of the poets, Graham Vagg of Ivanhoe, said the success of the book had exceeded all expectations, with sales as far away as New Zealand, Canada and the United States and the funds were going to a great cause.

"Dementia is a cruel disease that impacts on so many of us. The donations made will allow more research into dementia and hopefully one day will lead to a cure. To everyone who has bought a book or a painting and supported our campaign, thank you," Mr Vagg said.

The fundraising campaign began with the book's launch and a successful art exhibition and the poets have been on a "recitals tour" around the region. This tour continues at the Darlington Point Spring Festival on 14 September and the Barellan Good Old Days Festival on 5 and 6 October.

Mr Vagg said the Darlington Point event is a fun-filled day for all the family with stalls, children's activities, train rides, jumping castle, entertainment, exhibits, wine tasting, food and refreshments.

"The Barellan Festival is a fund-raising event for the local community with demonstrations of early farming techniques, milking and butter-churning, Clydesdale and bullock teams, camel races, vintage farm machinery, animal nursery and much more," Mr Vagg said.

"The poets will be doing recitals at Barellan during breakfast on Saturday and Sunday as well as Saturday evening."

Books will be on sale at both Festivals or can be purchased for \$25.00 each at backblockbards.org.au.



Jon Vagg – Roto



Graham Vagg – Ivanhoe



Allan Vagg - Hillston

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