

Media release

***Back Block Bards* book launch and art exhibition**

Hillston NSW will host the launch of a new collection of bush poetry and an exhibition and sale of artworks by well-known artist Joan Vagg on Saturday 13 October.

The launch of *Back Block Bards - A Collection of Bush Verse by Bush Bards* and the exhibition will be held at the Hillston Ex-Servicemen's & Citizens Club at 4:30 pm. Geoff Wise, former Western Lands Commissioner, will officially launch the book at 6.00pm. Free wine and cheese tasting will be provided.

From Balmain cowboys to bush nurses, from feral goats to giant fish, bush mechanics to haunted bishops, snakes in disguise and in the dunny; floods, drought, accidents, illness - these poems paint a broad picture of life on the land in western NSW.

The red dirt and mallee trees, the larger than life characters that pass through, the men and women who struggle with the elements and hold families together through the good times and the hard are all brought to life in these pages.

Eight bush poets from the Parker and Vagg families in western NSW share their experiences in this often funny, sometimes serious, sometimes poignant collection of verse.

Former Deputy Prime Minister and ex Ambassador Tim Fischer AC who wrote the foreword to the book has apologised for not being able to attend the launch but praised the book and its role.

"The wind has turned the rusted key and time is on the jog, so enjoy your launch night of Back Block Bards and my apologies and best wishes. It is a great revivalist book of poetry that will help many in these tough times, from Hillston to way beyond", Mr Fischer said.

Books autographed by the authors will be on sale for \$25 each. 28 artworks in various media will also be on sale on the night.

Because the families have been affected by early onset dementia, funds from the sale of the book and the artwork will go to the Dementia Australia Research Foundation.



Jon Vagg (Roto) and Joan Vagg (Hillston) with some of Joan's paintings

Contact: Mary Vagg (mob) 0427 368 266

BackBlockBards@mail.com

BackBlockBards.org.au