

word watch

AMANDA LAUGESSEN says g'day to some Australianisms.

This year the Australian National Dictionary Centre celebrates the 25th anniversary of its core work, the *Australian National Dictionary (AND)*.

The *AND*, edited by WS Ramson, is a dictionary of Australianisms – that is, words and meanings of words that have originated in, or have special significance to, Australia.

Modelled on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, entries in the *AND*, which number approximately 10,000 headwords, include a series of quotations which tell the history of the word and how it has been used over time.

The dictionary was a milestone in the lexicography of Australian English and provides invaluable insight into the rich literature, politics, and culture of Australia.

Here are some favourite quotes of Dictionary Centre staff:

bandicoot

1980 ANSELL & PERCY *To fight Wild*.

I remember the way they had of putting things, like if a bit of country was hard country, they'd say: 'Aw, she's bad, that end of the place. Saw a bandicoot with a cut lunch round his neck out there.'

bonzer—surpassingly good

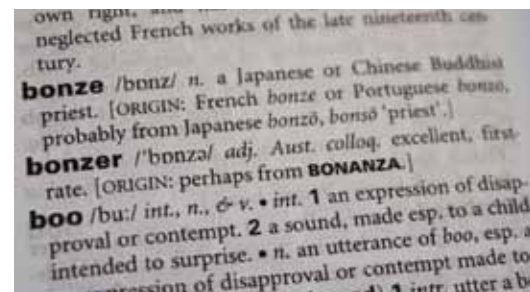
1959 H. DRAKE-BROCKMAN *West Coast Stories*. Hail, beauteous land! hail, bonzer West Australia; /Compared with you, all others are a failure.

boomerang v.

1891 *Worker*. Australia's a big country / An' Freedom's humping bluey / And Freedom's on the wallaby / Oh don't you hear her Cooee, / She's just begun to boomerang / She'll knock the tyrants silly.

up to dolly's wax—to be satiated (with food)

1965 B. HUMPHRIES *Nice Night's Entertainment*. Everyone was full up to dolly's wax and I was absolutely stonkered.



mate

1983 *Bulletin*. When they call you 'mate' in the N.S.W. Labor Party it is like getting a kiss from the Mafia.

The second edition of the *AND*, currently being edited by Bruce Moore, will include more than 3,000 new headwords, and many new quotations for the 10,000 headwords of the original dictionary. ■

A version of the *Australian National Dictionary* can be accessed online at http://bit.ly/rep_AND



James Paton and Owen Horton.

Jump to it

What's it like to skydive? STACEY POST reports.

After jumping from a plane, you have just 60 seconds of falling through the atmosphere before you need to deploy a parachute. It's a great way to focus the mind, says undergraduate and skydiving enthusiast Owen Horton.

"When you're out the door you switch out of any other mindset and switch into free-fall mode. You don't think about anything else, you just naturally go through the motions.

"During free fall your mind is a lot sharper and you get this great rush of adrenaline."

Let's pause here a moment.

To get that 60 seconds of free fall, a skydiver has to leap from a plane that is cruising at about 14,000 feet above the ground.

And, if that doesn't get the blood racing, the speed your body travels towards the earth surely will.

"What we do is called 'free-fly' skydiving. By flying our bodies vertically we push up to around 300 kilometres per hour, so we only get about 45 seconds before we have to separate and deploy. We fly smaller, more aerobatic canopies than the tandem jumpers use, so we come down a lot faster," explains Horton.

"Skydiving has taught me to embrace life at every opportunity."

"The parachute ride can be quite relaxed though; sometimes we just chill out up there, take it nice and slow, even link our canopies up. But often we just hook it in to a dive and come in quite fast. Then it's a quick pack, and back on the plane. We aim for five to eight jumps on a good day."

Twenty-three-year-old Horton and his skydiving team mate James Paton have been jumping from planes since they were teenagers.

Paton, who is studying Commerce and Asia Pacific Studies and working part time to fund his skydiving adventures, says jumping out of planes has given him a new way of approaching life.

"Skydiving has taught me to say yes to as much as possible and embrace life at every opportunity."

Horton, who is studying Economics and Archaeology, and Paton will travel to Florida in December to compete in the National Collegiate Skydiving Competition.

Teams are given a 'pool' of formations to complete during each jump. They have to squeeze in as many repeats of the pool as possible before separating and deploying their parachutes. The footage is then given to the judges to score.

"An example of a pool would be a head-down exit with a single-hand contact or 'dock', then switching to a head-up position followed by another dock, like foot to knee," explains Paton. "Then we might separate and conduct dual 360 rotations before coming back in to start the pool again."

Horton and Paton will be the only Australians represented at the competition.

They hope as university-level Australian skydiving grows in popularity, more teams will be able to head overseas to compete – would you take the leap? ■

Video: See Paton and Horton in action http://bit.ly/rep_skydive

life sentences

MELANIE NOLAN looks at the *ADB's* close connection with the Canberra community.

As the year of Canberra's centenary draws to a close, I'd like to reflect upon the long and continuing relationship that the *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)* has had with the local Canberra historical community.

One of the *ADB's* founders, Laurie Fitzhardinge, was a librarian at the Commonwealth National Library (now the National Library of Australia) from 1934 to 1946.

A classicist by training, in 1951 he was appointed reader in the sources of Australian History in the ANU Research School of Social Sciences.

Three years later he began compiling a Biographical Register – a basic card index of Australian lives, as a first stage in the creation of the *ADB*.

Jim Gibbney was another recruit from the Library. He worked in its archives division before joining the *ADB* in 1965. As well as writing over 80 *ADB* entries, and editing countless others, Gibbney maintained the Biographical Register.

By 2011, when it was replaced by *Obituaries Australia*, the Register consisted of 300,000 citations on index cards and a further 32,000 in an in-house database.

Following his retirement in 1984, Gibbney published *Canberra: 1913–1953*, one of three commissioned bicentennial volumes on Canberra.

Fitzhardinge and Gibbney were also members of the Canberra & District Historical Society, as was Nan Phillips, the *ADB's* first administrator. Many members of the society have also served on the *ADB's* Commonwealth Working Party

and have helped choose Canberra entries for the *ADB*.

Fitzhardinge and Gibbney feature in *The ADB's Story* – a history of the *ADB* being launched at ANU next month.

We have also begun to add thematic essays to our websites. Of particular interest to Canberra readers is one by Dr Karen Fox, *A City and its People: Canberra in the ADB*, which highlights the many people in the *ADB* with a connection to the nation's capital.

We hope that one day we may have the resources to greatly expand the number of entries on Canberrans to create a full-scale *Dictionary of Canberra*. ■

The *ADB's Story* is being published by ANU E Press as part of the ANU Lives series. Karen Fox's article can be found at <http://adb.anu.edu.au>