

# The Southern Yarn

August/September 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.



## downundercalendar

Members will be notified by email when the next Zoom chat is scheduled.

### SEPTEMBER

**ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
**Saturday 4th September,**  
**10:30am at The Players,**  
**2695 Inkster Blvd.**

We are holding our annual tournament at "The Players" course, off Inkster Boulevard. The game will be "Best Ball", where you are part of a team of four, and you all hit your next shots from the best positioned ball in your group. It is a great format for social golf, and for those who just play occasionally, because if you don't hit a great shot yourself, you simply pick up your ball and play from your team's best position.

We will start at 10.30am and play 9 holes. The course has a nice open-air area attached to the restaurant, overlooking their man-made lake, where we gather after the game for results, a beverage, and a burger.

It is a casual event and guaranteed good time. Call Peter Munn at **204 237-1805** to let him know your attendance. Look forward to seeing the regulars and many more.

### **Cricket on Saturdays** **Assiniboine Park**

The Manitoba Cricket Association fields quite a few teams for **Saturday** matches. The majority are played on three pitches at **Assiniboine Park** across from the Pavilion, entry off Corydon Avenue.

It would be fun to have a social few hours at the cricket in Assiniboine Park, likely a **date later in September** will be chosen and we will email members closer to the time. There is no cost involved; we would gather under the trees across from the Pavilion sometime after 11 am on the day, and plan to bring a picnic lunch and/or afternoon tea, COVID regulations at the time permitting. Stay tuned.

## Naadohbii: To Draw Water

**New exhibition  
on now at the WAG**



Above: Nici Cumpston, *Oh my Murray Darling*, 2019.  
Right: Nici Cumpston. *Bared* (detail), 2019.  
Both courtesy: WAG.

This wonderful new exhibition brings together artwork from Turtle Island, Aotearoa, and Australia, and contributes dialogue on water and our changing environment from an Indigenous perspective and with an international scope.

Kimberley Moulton, senior curator at South-Eastern Aboriginal Collections at Museums Victoria, connected six First Peoples artists from across Australia with Naadohbii: To Draw Water. The works exist in the mediums of animation, painting, print making, and photography.

"Water is a connector for all humanity, along with the air we breathe. It is life, and we must respect this. Bringing the Indigenous artists from across the three countries together in conversation around what water means to each other creates a strong cultural space where the threads of Indigenous water sovereignty (are) at its core."

According to Riva Symko, head of collections and exhibitions and curator of Cana-



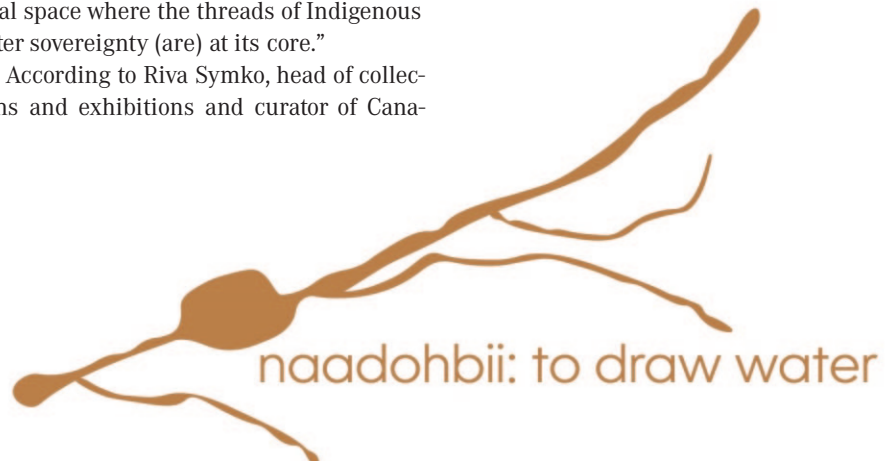
dian art at the WAG, Naadohbii: To Draw Water's unveiling during a time of prolonged drought in central Manitoba has made its themes even more prescient.

"I think there's something for Western viewers, in particular, to reflect on through these Indigenous perspectives of water that could perhaps bring us closer to understanding water as something that should be protected."

You can watch the opening event online [link], which included greetings from Pataka Art + Museum, Wellington, NZ, and First Peoples Department, Museums Victoria, Australia.

The exhibition runs until February 5, 2022. Contact the Winnipeg Art Gallery for details. And for more information, visit the WAG website [link].

Water is sacred. Water is life. Enjoy!



online



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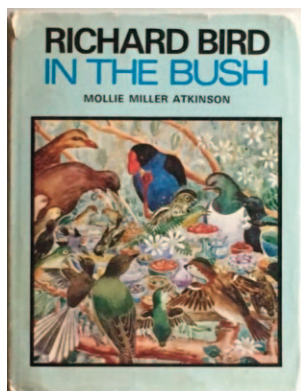
## editorially yours

Charlie Powell



Well, the severe drought foreshadowed by last winter's minimal delivery of snow is now manifesting itself big time in the form of wildfires. The inconvenience of smoke in our air is nothing compared to the sad ordeal of having to leave one's home and belongings to the mercy of the wind and flame. When it last struck Australia in 2019-2020, Canadian firefighters were quick to respond. Now, Aussie counterparts are deployed to help contain the blazes in Northwest Ontario. You can learn more at this [link].

You never know where you will find a downunder connection. While browsing a thrift store in Arborg, rural MB, a children's



storybook with a very birdie cover (see below) caught our eye. Looking closer, the author, Mollie Miller Atkinson, was a New Zealander. A little research led to the following information: In 1936 Mollie Miller Atkinson married Hal Atkinson, a nephew of

Harry Atkinson's son, Alfred Charles Atkinson. She presumably met him through the artist Dorothy Richmond while she was living in Wellington. Mollie was involved in the Arts and Crafts movement in New Zealand. Initially practicing metal work, she turned her attention to painting and writing after she became ill with tuberculosis. [link]

And that led to another little piece of NZ history concerning four-time Premier of New Zealand, (Sir) **Harry Atkinson** which you can read under "Hurworth" in NZNews, p.5. Interesting trivia, eh? Well, with so little Club activity to talk about, due to COVID, we do our best.

Thank you to Jenny and Brian for their assistance again with this issue, and to Peter, Ed, Malcolm, Mario and Judy for contributions. Please take note of our advertiser sponsors and support them where possible.

Enjoy,

## president's ramblings

Peter Munn



Over the past few years, my kidlings have been acquiring two things,

- a) partners (with discerning taste), and
- b) dogs, that either came with the partner, or were acquired in tandem.

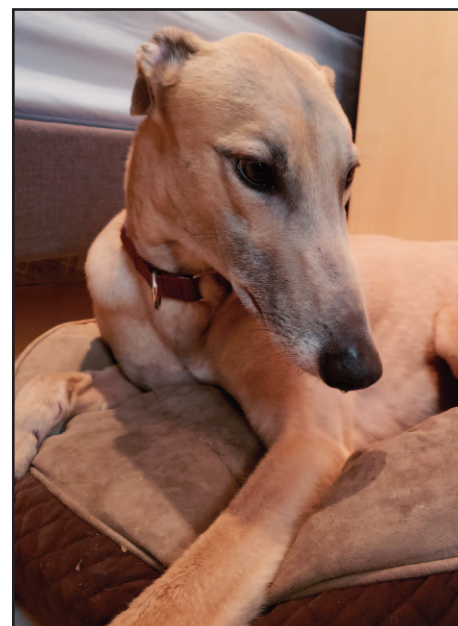
And so, as gathering restrictions in Manitoba become less restrictive, we are seeing more of the families with their associated pets. We have prepared for family gatherings by strengthening perimeter fencing, and checking on all gate locks. We have a multi-person birthday party coming up late August, where Tyler and Hannah are flying in from Toronto, and all our other children will join us for the birthday bash. Dogs are included, apart from **Klondike**, Tyler's rescue greyhound (pictured here). Twice the size of most greyhounds, fresh from a successful racing career in Florida before they shut down the sport there, this is a dog with a split personality. One half crazy, the second half hungry. Eats anything – regular food, stolen food, a cell phone, whatever. Being so tall, he once reached over a kitchen counter to steal the brisket that had been planned for dinner.

The smallest dog, **Chewie**, has belonged to Richard for many years, and **Harley** has

been faithful to Tara for much the same time. Harley was joined by a rescue pup about a year ago, called **Joey**, who does not have an off-button. The latest member of Jodi and Chris' family is another rescue, **Louise**, who has the mane of a lion, and the hoofs of an elephant. Once hoped to be a midsize dog, she is up to about 70 lbs already.

Not invited is the final pet, a cat named **Turkey**, owned by grand-daughter Grace.

– Peter



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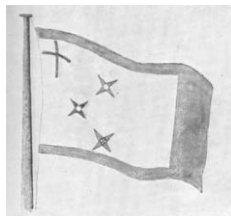


## 100yearsAgo...

history of note

### Tūrangawaewae marae established ...

[Source: New Zealand History] After the First World War and the devastating influenza pandemic of 1918, Waikato leader Te Puea Hērangi resolved to rebuild a centre for the Māori King movement at Ngāruawāhia, its original home before the land confiscations of the 1860s. Waikato leaders purchased 4 ha of riverside land opposite the township in 1920. The following year Te Puea began moving her people from Mangatāwhiri to build a new marae, Tūrangawaewae. Years of hard work followed, draining and filling swampy, scrub-covered land and fundraising for buildings. They also had to overcome opposition from Ngāruawāhia's Pākehā citizens, who initially tried to have them removed from the borough. Read more: [link]



Drawing of the flag hoisted on the proclamation of Matutaera Tāwhiao as Māori King was made at Ngāruawāhia in 1863, shortly before the Waikato War began.  
Image: Wikipedia

## DUCWNetworking

### Helping Out Our Mates ... again

Everyone still doing okay?

When this piece was posted in the October/November issue of the *Yarn* last year, new social distancing restrictions were about to be put in place in Manitoba. Current restrictions have now been relaxed, although there's still reason to be cautious and careful.

As you know, we have not had any in-person Club events for more than a year, and not sure when that will change, but we have had several online get togethers. Folks have zoomed in from across the city and around the world, and many an excellent conversation has been had.

This issue seemed like a good opportunity to remind you about our advertisers. If you are looking to book, buy or hire in the near future, consider supporting our mates and/or recommending them to others if they are also looking.

**Downunder Travel** in Calgary is a PARTNER of the DUCW, and has been helping us with our travel plans for more than 10 years. Many of us have booked our adventures with Jason and his team, and while there's not much travelling right now, you can still get in contact with them so you'll be good and ready when borders fully open up again. Call Jason at 1-866-664-6989, or visit <https://downunder-travel.com/>.

**Kiwi Installations & Sales** is a SUPPLIER of the DUCW, and has been busy fitting our homes and businesses with rolling security shutters and exterior blinds for 15 years. Based in Winnipeg, they can also help with your fencing and decking needs during the summer months. For a free quote, contact Terry at (204) 229-6642, or visit <https://www.kiwiinstallations.com/>.

**William Pooley Legal Services** is a SUPPLIER of the DUCW, and can provide a variety of law services at your place of convenience. Services include estate law, wills, civil litigation and elder law. To set up an appointment today, contact Bill at 204-783-1632.

If anyone in the club would like us to mention their business in the next issue of the *Yarn*, email Jenny at [info@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:info@downunderclub.mb.ca) with the following details:

- name of your business
- what you offer in 5 words or less
- contact name
- contact phone number

Hopefully we'll see you all soon, but for now, take care, stay well and happy, and let's see if we can help out some of our mates.

- Jenny Gates



### As important then as now

Who knew that a public health poster from the time of the Spanish influenza pandemic in 1919 would be as important a message then as now.

The poster included the above illustration drawn by Australian illustrator and author May Gibbs. It was part of a government campaign in New South Wales to limit the spread of the deadly Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919, in which about 12,000 Australians died, 6,300 of them in New South Wales.

Gibbs was one of the most popular children's writers of the time. Her characters, such as bush babies and banksia men, were inspired by the uniqueness of the Australian bush and appealed to adults as well as children. [link]

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To date, only nine drops have fallen in the famous Pitch Drop experiment.

## Like watching paint dry

[Source: The University of Queensland, Outreach] We're home to the famous Pitch Drop experiment, which holds the Guinness World Record for the longest-running laboratory experiment.

The experiment demonstrates the fluidity and high viscosity of pitch, a derivative of tar that is the world's thickest known fluid and was once used for waterproofing boats.

Thomas Parnell, UQ's first Professor of Physics, created the experiment in 1927 to illustrate that everyday materials can exhibit quite surprising properties.

At room temperature pitch feels solid, even brittle, and can easily be shattered with a hammer. But, in fact, at room temperature the substance – which is 100 billion times more viscous than water – is actually fluid. Read more: [link]

*Editor:* that reminds me of a fact I was told about the stained glass windows in centuries-old cathedrals – the glass is thicker at the bottom, due to its “liquid” state.



## Clever cockie ...

[Source: *The Conversation*: John Martin, Barbara Klump, Lucy Aplin, 22 June 2021] In a small, isolated village in southern Sydney, the local sulphur-crested cockatoos are particularly clever. Once a week, when the neighbours roll their wheelie bins to the kerb, cockies fly over and, with skillful dexterity, open the lids in search of food.

It may seem as though cockatoos open-

ing a kerb-side bin lid is a simple action. But our research, published today in *Science*, discovered this behaviour is far more significant than you may have first thought.

Sulphur-crested cockatoos are copycats. After one solves the lid-flip puzzle, other birds nearby imitate the new foraging behaviour in a stunning display of “social learning”. For decades, scientists believed humans were the only animals capable of culture. Now, thanks to the community's observations, we can add parrots to this small (but growing) list, which also includes chimpanzees, hump-back whales and New Caledonian crows. [Link]



## Snake, rattle and roll: Where aircraft share accommodation with snakes and scorpions ...

[Source: *Qantas 100*, 3 June 2021] It's rattlesnake season in the Californian Mojave desert and Qantas engineers based at the airline's Los Angeles hanger have added a new pre-inspection procedure to avoid the wrath of startled rattlesnakes when they carry out weekly maintenance on Qantas' parked fleet of A380 aircraft.

The engineers are tasked with maintaining the A380s that are currently parked in deep storage, with the fleet expected to return to service when international travel demand gets back to pre-COVID levels – which could still be two years away.

Qantas Manager for Engineering in Los Angeles, Tim Heywood, said having a team of engineers driving the two hours from LA to Victorville for regular inspections is a vital part of keeping the aircraft in top condition during their downtime. Encounters of the slithering and rattling kind are all part of the job.

“The area is well known for its feisty ‘rattlers’ who love to curl up around the warm rubber tyres and in the aircraft wheels and brakes. Every aircraft has its own designated ‘wheel whacker’ (a repurposed broom handle) as part of the engineering kit, complete with each aircraft's registration written on it.

“The first thing we do before we unwrap and start any ground inspections of the land-

ing gear in particular is to walk around the aircraft stomping our feet and tapping the wheels with a wheel whacker to wake up and scare off the snakes. That's about making sure no harm comes to our engineers or the snakes.

“Only then do we carefully approach each wheel and unwrap them before performing our pressure checks and visual inspections.

“We've encountered a few rattlesnakes and also some scorpions, but the wheel whacker does its job and they scuttle off. It's a unique part of looking after these aircraft while they're in storage and it's another sign of how strange the past year has been. These A380s would rarely spend more than a day on the ground when they were in service.”

Their work involves everything from covering the interior seats with plastic sheeting to applying protective film to the top of the rudder and on all of the cabin windows. The wheels, tyres and landing gear legs are wrapped in protective film and all inlets and orifices on the fuselage are plugged to avoid insects, birds and even bats making themselves at home. [link]



## Adelaide's public olives

Did you know the City of Adelaide permits members of the public to register for an olive collection permit?

The permit entitles the holder to collect olives from trees located within the Park Lands, with the exception of fenced areas within Bonython Park / Tulya Wardli, and trees located within garden beds. Conditions apply. [link]

However, some of the residents show utter contempt for the rules. – Thanks to Ed Powell for sending in this evidence showing corellas feasting.







## Inaugural Gumboot Awards ...

[Source: *NZ Herald*, The Country, 1 Aug 2021]  
And the winner in the "Best Farm Entrance/Mailbox" category was this classic mailbox in Caples Valley. See the other category winners at: [link]



## Hurworth ...

[Source: Pouhere Taonga/Heritage New Zealand]  
Hurworth was a settlement established near New Plymouth in the 1850s. Of the six houses in the settlement four were destroyed in the New Zealand Wars and another lost to fire. Built in 1855-56 by pioneer settler and future four-time Premier of New Zealand, (Sir) Harry Atkinson, this modest cottage (also christened Hurworth) is the only remaining building of the small Taranaki settlement that flourished during the 1850s.

Harry Atkinson, having learned from a sawyer, cut the wood for it himself and by 1857 the house was finished in its original form. The outbreak of the Taranaki War in March 1860 threatened the idyllic lifestyle at Hurworth, with Harry sending wife Jane and their children to safety in Wanganui after burying their valuables.

Harry joined the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers and fought in many battles around the province over the next few years, rising to the rank of Major with the Forest Rangers.

He had become involved in politics, and in 1861 he became the member in the House of Representatives for his local Grey and Bell constituency. His political career rose to

greater heights, and he held a number of provincial positions including MP for New Plymouth and Superintendent of Taranaki, and served as Minister of Defence, Minister of Crown Lands and Immigration, and Colonial Treasurer.

In 1876 he became Premier of New Zealand, an office which he held four times between then and 1891.

Atkinson was away from Hurworth for much of his political life, with the house considerably changed and enlarged before his death in 1892 when the property was sold.

Hurworth is typical of early settlers' dwellings in its simplicity – rectangular in shape, clad in vertical board and batten with a pitched roof and French doors opening onto a four-sided veranda.

The cottage was donated to Heritage New Zealand in 1967 and restored to its original specifications. It was during this time graffiti from the New Zealand Wars was uncovered, which continues to fascinate visitors today.

906 Carrington Road, New Plymouth, NZ  
<http://www.visitheritage.org.nz>



## New arena for Christchurch

[Source: *Radio NZ*, 13, Aug 2021] City council has finalised plans to construct a new arena for \$523m. While Mayor Lianne Dalziel is nervous about how the city will pay for

it, she believes it's what residents want. Chris Chen, from the University of Canterbury, said the new arena could be positive for the city's image. "Christchurch was perceived as really old fashioned, with a dull and negative image. And having a world class stadium and arena established would definitely attract a lot of young people and change this kind of perception ... and help build a sense of community." [link]



## NZ Opening Up

[Source: *Stuff NZ*, 13 Aug 2021, ] From early 2022, travellers to New Zealand are set to follow one of three "pathways" based on their vaccination status and the risk profile of the country or countries they have spent the past 14 days in. Eventually, the Government would like all travellers fully vaccinated against Covid-19 to be able to enter New Zealand quarantine-free, while most of those unvaccinated will have to spend 14 days in managed isolation. New Zealand's ability to maintain its elimination strategy when the phased re-opening begins will be key to determining when this will happen. [link]

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## George Hubert Wilkins

In 2015, the Australian Museum in Sydney – my old stomping ground – staged the exhibition “Trailblazers: Australian’s 50 Greatest Explorers”. One of those explorers was George Hubert Wilkins, and the following is taken from the Museum’s website [link]. That Wilkins has a connection to Canada is a bonus. Enjoy reading about this amazing man.

*Jenny Gates*

In a life filled with extraordinary adventures, George Hubert Wilkins is particularly noted for ‘firsts’, including flights across the Arctic and in Antarctica, and taking a submarine beneath the frozen Arctic Ocean. He was also a war correspondent, cinematographer, naturalist, geographer and pioneering climatologist.

Born in outback South Australia in 1888, Wilkins studied engineering at the Adelaide School of Mines and travelled to England as a stowaway where he learned to parachute and fly aeroplanes, becoming an aerial cinematographer who performed and filmed stunts.

He became one of the first to film a battle, during the Balkan War of 1912-13, and his prowess with the camera saw him invited to join the Canadian Arctic Expedition in 1913. During this expedition, he and leader Vilhjalmar Stefansson became separated from their vessel, and narrowly escaped with their lives after hiking hundreds of kilometres across the sea ice.

After crashing in the England–Australia air race of 1919, Wilkins joined Shackleton’s 1921 Antarctic expedition. He was then asked to lead a British Museum expedition to Australia to collect rare animals.

During a series of Arctic flights in 1926-27, Wilkins had several life-threatening adventures, including having to land on sea ice when a plane ran out of fuel, and then walk for 13 days to be rescued.

In 1928, in a single-engined ski plane, Wilkins made by far the longest flight in a polar region, a trans-Arctic flight from Alaska to Spitsbergen, and was knighted for services to aviation and exploration. Later that year he was back in Antarctica, commanding the Wilkins–Hearst Antarctic Expedition. During this expedition, he made



the first Antarctic flight, taking off from Deception Island and exploring the Antarctic Peninsula. He returned to Antarctica a further five times over the next decade.

Not content with adventuring in the air, he bought a submarine and in 1931, became the first to venture under the Arctic Sea ice.

Throughout his life, Hubert Wilkins gained vital scientific insights into a range of fields. As a result, he became a consultant in polar survival for the US Government, improved weather forecasting, and developed techniques for flying at night.

Wilkins is commemorated with the naming of the Wilkins Ice Shelf, Wilkins Sound, the Wilkins Ice Runway at Australia’s Casey Station, and Wilkins’ Rock-wallaby, a specimen of which he collected in 1925.

– Jen Cork, Australian Museum

### Farewell friend

One of our long-time DUCW members, **Lorraine Tinckam**, has peacefully passed away after a brief illness. Lorraine’s late husband, Mervyn, was from Sydney, Australia, and after they met in Winnipeg in 1971, they moved downunder for a while until returning to Winnipeg 17 years later. An educational assistant, Lorraine was known for her culinary and entertaining skills, and her magic touch with children. Our sincere condolences to Lorraine’s friends and family.





## Human rights awards

[19 July 2021] The winner of the first 'Christof Heyns Memorial Commonwealth Prize' was announced during the virtual **13th Nelson Mandela World Human Rights Moot Court Competition**.

The Competition, which ran from 2-16 July, was organised by the Centre for Human Rights based at the Faculty of Law of University of Pretoria, South Africa in partnership with the Washington College of Law of the American University, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

This year's overall winners of the competition as well as the Christof Heyns Memorial Commonwealth Prize were the two-member team from Strathmore University, Kenya, Sumatra Hussain and Sanjana Ragu. The Prize money will be used towards organising a fully sponsored internship for them at the Centre for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

## Tourism impacts small states

[1 July 2021] The dramatic plunge in global tourism due to the COVID-19 pandemic is having far-reaching and devastating effects, particularly for Small States. Yesterday, during a Commonwealth Tourism Seminar, the Commonwealth Secretariat proposed the development of a global 'Tourism Action Plan' to help spur a much-needed recovery.

Drawing on research from a new Commonwealth report, **'Tourism and COVID-19: Mapping a Way Forward for the Commonwealth Small States'**, the action plan provides a number of practical policy options for reviving the tourism sector over the short, medium and longer term.

The recommendations emphasize that to restore global tourism and stimulate demand there is a need to foster traveller confidence and protect workers employed in the tourism industry, especially vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, it highlights that the recovery of tourism in Commonwealth States, particularly small states, is dependent on the actions of major tourism source markets, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. This underlines the need for coordination between source markets and traveller destinations to facilitate and foster tourism demand.

## Global youth report

[10 August 2021] The Commonwealth Secretariat will unveil its flagship **report on global youth development** on 10 August 2021.

This is the third edition of the Global Youth Development Index, which measures the state of health and wellbeing, education, employment, equality and inclusion, political participation, and security for more than 1.8 billion young people around the world.

Developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Youth Development Index informs policymakers about young people's needs and opportunities while indicating areas for success as well as where attention and investment are needed. It also acts as a data advocacy tool, highlighting the importance of gathering statistics on key youth indicators to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Government representatives, youth leaders and experts will join a special newscast, designed to unveil and analyse key findings on youth development performance in 181 countries.

The results programme will air across the Commonwealth on multiple television channels.

## Trade impacted by pandemic

Commonwealth countries are estimated to have lost up to US\$345 billion worth of trade in 2020, including \$60 billion in intra-Commonwealth trade, according to 2021 Commonwealth Trade Review on **"Energising Commonwealth Trade in a Digital World: Paths to Recovery Post-COVID"**.

Released today, the Commonwealth Trade Review provides a timely and comprehensive analysis of the impact of the pandemic on the trade and investment flows of Commonwealth member countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll globally, substantially impacting all Commonwealth members economies and leading to US\$1.15 trillion in foregone gross domestic product (GDP) in just one year. Compared to pre-pandemic growth trends in 2020, Commonwealth economies contracted by approximately 10%.

Most Commonwealth countries also experienced a significant decline in overall Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in 2020, with a loss of US\$153 billion to the Commonwealth.

Given the linkages between trade and investment and the role of FDI in supporting cross-border trade, these disruptions could limit trade prospects for Commonwealth countries.

## Bush Yarn

### Parrot Fashion

The bush missionary had travelled over a lot of Australia, and here he was riding his buggy along an excuse for a road in the Queensland backblocks when in front of him appeared a bullock team with a load of sleeper rails. He couldn't get past and it was obvious that the bullocky had not seen him. Besides, there was a flow of the most vulgar and violent language coming from the front of the team. He walked around to the front, but hard as he looked, he couldn't see anyone and yet the foul language continued to assail the air. He tried cooeing, but no response came except for more bad language. The only thing he could find was a bright green parrot sitting on the furthest bullock's back.

The parson, mystified, shrugged his shoulders and managed to pass the team, continuing on his journey until he reached a small settlement which offered nothing more than a few houses, a post office and a hotel. He noticed two men lazily seated on the hotel verandah drinking beers, so he decided to investigate.

He said "There's a bullock team about twenty miles back, completely unattended. I looked for its driver in vain."

"Thanks, parson," said the lean, long one, "you needn't worry. That's my team but, to tell you the truth, it ain't completely unattended."

"Well," said the preacher doubtfully, "I didn't see a soul for miles, the only thing I saw was a green parrot perched on the back of one of your polars."

"Ah," said the bullocky with a certain knowing pride, "that's Percy, me South American parrot. I trained him meself and he's one of the best. In fact, he doesn't even need me."

"Pity about his language," sighed the parson, "I never heard such filthy language in my entire life."

The bullock driver slammed down his beer glass, clearly annoyed.

"Why, that good fer nothing little feathered ba...rd!" he roared. "I told him never to swear in front of ladies or preachers. He'll get the sack when he bl...y gets back!"  
[Source: "Classic Bush Yarns, by Warren Fahey, 2001]

# birds*i*view...

by Charlie Powell

Right: Eastern kingbird  
Below: Western kingbird  
(C. Powell, at Winnipeg Beach)



## Kingbird ...

These guys overwinter, meek and mild, in South and Central America, feeding mostly on fruit and berries. But when they come north, the other side of their personality shows - loud, aggressive and visible insect predators. Their Latin name, *Tyrannus*, gives a hint that they're not afraid to defend their nest and territory. Kingbirds go after the much larger crows and hawks, even humans, if they get too close to the nest. They remind me of the willie wagtail, so ubiquitous and well-know downunder, and also so fearless.

Manitoba seems to be where the black/grey and white eastern overlaps with the more colourful western. They will be seen perched, openly, on the lookout for insects. The western will also track cattle, to snatch the bugs they disturb. The males are noted for their acrobatics during courtship.

Here is an apt poem [link]:  
"for any ruffian of the sky" by e e cummings

for any ruffian of the sky  
your kingbird doesn't give a damn—  
his royal warcry is I AM  
and he's the soul of chivalry.  
In terror of whose furious beak  
(as sweetly singing creatures know)  
cringes the hugest heartless hawk  
and veers the vast most crafty crow.  
your kingbird doesn't give a damn  
for murderers of high estate  
whose mongrel creed is Might Makes Right  
- his royal warcry is I AM.  
true to his mate his chicks his friends  
he loves because he cannot fear  
(you see it in the way he stands  
and looks and leaps upon the air)



## Reader feedback

Thanks again to Malcolm in Canberra for another birdlike flower - the Yulon magnolia (left); and this little colourful beauty - painted bunting (right).



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This newsletter can be downloaded in PDF format from the website. Thank you to all of our contributors within the club, from overseas and information services. Layout by design@hydesmith.com

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