



## **Categories & Entry Criteria**

Entries open 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2026 – Close 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2026.

Eligibility Dates for 2027 M.E. Awards: 1st of September 2025 - 1st of September 2026.

**1.**

# AUSTRALIAN BUSH BALLAD HERITAGE SONG OF THE YEAR

In the style of songs listed:

**Kidman's Men - recorded by Peter Coad**

<https://youtu.be/X2xH-GPQ18>

**Hilda's Rest – recorded by Dean Perrett**

[https://youtu.be/INhUzUFjhn4?si=RsfYcCEG\\_U8zSZ4](https://youtu.be/INhUzUFjhn4?si=RsfYcCEG_U8zSZ4)

**The Saddle by the Door · Dean Perrett**

[https://youtu.be/xSSS\\_WyDFtM?si=7lhJslIWuD6d8d4i](https://youtu.be/xSSS_WyDFtM?si=7lhJslIWuD6d8d4i)

Rural heritage lifestyle/historic events. Australian Bush Ballad style presentation.  
Simple musical arrangements with prominent pick and strum/that compliments the vocal story line.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

- **1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.
- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

## 2.

# AUSTRALIAN BUSH BALLAD - CONTEMPORARY SONG OF THE YEAR

In the style of songs listed:

*Bush Takes Care of Its Own* – recorded by *Matt Scullion*

[https://youtu.be/jGZLNy2H\\_tU](https://youtu.be/jGZLNy2H_tU)

*We're Still Here* – recorded by *Tom Curtain*

<https://youtu.be/y-Lxz3AWHRM>

*Raining on the rock* – recorded by *John Williamson*

<https://youtu.be/j11iMLd1YA>

Lyrics reflect rural life with a simple musical arrangement with folk style influences.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

### **\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

### **• 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

### **ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.
- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

### **TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

### **3.**

## **OPEN SECTION - SINGLE OF THE YEAR**

Solo artists/ Groups/Duos can enter.

Australian Bush Ballad/Traditional Country/Hillbilly/Bluegrass style.

Single judged on overall quality & commercial appeal.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage)
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)

**• 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

## 4.

# OPEN SECTION – CLASSIC SONG OF THE YEAR

**This section includes cover versions of classic releases.**

**The song must be from an Australian Songwriter/s**

**Classic tracks of TRADITIONAL COUNTRY, AUSTRALIAN BUSH BALLAD, & BLUEGRASS re-recorded in the eligibility timeframe accepted.**

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).

- Submissions for the OPEN SECTION - CLASSIC SONG OF THE YEAR.

Cover versions of previously released songs, but the version **MUST** be a **NEW** recording and released within the eligibility time frame.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

- **1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to the Classic Song being RE-RECORDED & Video released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

## 5.

# TRADITIONAL COUNTRY – HERITAGE SONG OF THE YEAR

In the style of songs listed:

1942 – recorded by Peter Coad (About the bomb attacks on Darwin)

<https://youtu.be/47w81Zy1S4w>

Where Country Is – recorded by Slim Dusty (About Characters/particular places)

<https://youtu.be/odpNYrufDic?si=KKzr44ceESjqeSka>

She Gave Us The Song - featuring Lee Kernaghan and Sara Storer - recorded by Tom Curtain (Paying tribute to Joy McKean OAM)

<https://youtu.be/zGbdXMZ09rU>

Lyrics can be about Australian lifestyle, past or present events. Traditional Country music style presentation.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

### **\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

- **1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

### **ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

### **TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

## 6.

# OPEN SECTION - VIDEO CLIP OF THE YEAR

Supply link YouTube Link of video.

**Australian Bush Ballad/Traditional Country/Bluegrass style.**

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage)
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

• A track can only be nominated once in the Awards, with the exception of Video Clip Of The Year wherein the song can be nominated in one other separate category - if the Video clip track was released as a song for airplay as well and both the SONG & the VIDEO Clip were released in the eligible time frame.

\* A video for a Classic Song, Single of the Year, Vocal Collaboration can be entered if both the song and video are a NEW recording/production and released within the eligibility time frame.

\*Commercial Music release details:

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

• **Can enter 1 VIDEO ONLY in this Category.**

\* **Video Clip of the Year can be entered separately into a music category as a song.  
Both the SONG & the VIDEO Clip must be recorded/released in the eligible time frame.**

### **ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Producer & Directors names.
- A YouTube link is required for the Video Clip Category via the online platform.
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

### **TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

# 7.

## **TRADITIONAL COUNTRY - SONG OF THE YEAR**

**In the style of songs listed:**

*Trains – recorded by Troy Cassar-Daley*

[https://youtu.be/Eg\\_aUQAW5EA](https://youtu.be/Eg_aUQAW5EA)

*The Verandah - recorded by Tania Kernaghan*

<https://youtu.be/mVgnsEjznzI>

*Losin' My Blues Tonight – recorded by Slim Dusty*

<https://youtu.be/zjJsJWDqGkM>

**General Australian lifestyle.**

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

**\* 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.
- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

**8.**

## **OPEN SECTION - INSTRUMENTAL OF THE YEAR**

**Bush Ballad/Country/Bluegrass styles.**

**Instrumental track must be recorded in Australia and must be an Australian composition with Australian musicians.**

**\*\* 2027 - This section now includes re-recorded classic instrumentals as well as new originals.**

- Instrumental track must be recorded in Australia with Australian musicians.
- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

**• 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.
- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

**9.**

## **OPEN SECTION - GOSPEL SONG OF THE YEAR**

**Bush Ballad/Country/Bluegrass styles.**

**With Gospel sentiment.**

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

\*Commercial Music release details:

Released for sale e.g., digital download via artist personal or commercial website such as iTunes, Spotify, or via a Commercial Compact Disc release, e.g., CD album, Single, or EP under artists name or as part of a commercial compilation album artist release.

\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

**• 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

**10.**

## **OPEN SECTION - VOCAL COLLABORATION**

**Bush Ballad/Country/Bluegrass styles**

**Both vocalists must clearly be sharing parts of the song.**

**\*\* 2027 - This section now includes re-recorded classic songs that are Vocal Collaborations as well as new originals.**

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage)
- All material (Songs or \*Videos) entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

**\*Commercial Music release details:**

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\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

**• 1 Song ONLY IN VOCAL Collaboration.**

**An Artist can only nominate ONE Vocal Collaboration in this category.\***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

- \* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.
- \* Track Title
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* Recording Artist Name
- \* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)
- \* Commercial Release Date
- \* Promotional Release date
- \* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)
- \* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another Category, no need to upload again)

**1 TROPHY each to the WINNER of the category up to 2 trophies (2 persons).**

**For additional members of a collaboration extra trophies can be purchased.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

# 11.

## TRADITIONAL COUNTRY - BLUEGRASS SONG OF THE YEAR

In the style of songs listed:

*The Ringing Of The Steel* – recorded by Peter Denahy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2j6lviKZ-w>

*Moonlight, Moonshine and Blue Moon of Kentucky* – recorded by Kristy Cox

<https://youtu.be/F2eICIK4vH8>

*Lonesome Highway Blues* – recorded by Runaway Dixie

[https://youtu.be/n0F\\_w4m1nAA](https://youtu.be/n0F_w4m1nAA)

Traditional Bluegrass style/banjo/acoustic instruments.

Traditional Bluegrass style/banjo/acoustic instruments.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
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- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

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\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

- **1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

### ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another section, no need to upload again)

### TROPHY TO THE WINNER.

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

# 12.

## AUSTRALIAN BUSH BALLAD – TRADITIONAL SONG OF THE YEAR

In the style of songs listed:

*Leave Him In The Long Yard* – recorded by Slim Dusty  
<https://youtu.be/4v1J9nnfss4>

*The Brass Well* – Slim Dusty  
[https://youtu.be/0W9KtyRlx2g?si=cXmGtl3unhsb\\_wOM?](https://youtu.be/0W9KtyRlx2g?si=cXmGtl3unhsb_wOM?)

*Bloodwood & Clover* - recorded by Dean Perrett  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS84P1KqkFo>

Lyrics reflect rural life and events.

Simple musical arrangements with prominent pick and strum/feel that compliments the vocal story line.

- Material submitted recorded by Australian Artists.
- Songs written by Australian Songwriter/s.
- Independent artist music releases only.
- All material (Songs or Videos) submitted to the awards must be of commercial standard (not demos or home footage).
- All material entered must be a first \*commercial release of the composition within the awards Entry Eligibility dates.

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\*Videos officially released (with song) through online platform such as YouTube.

**\* 1 Song ONLY per category.**

**Can not enter same song in different categories. \***

**\* If the song has a video this can be entered separately into the Video Category. (Subject to both the Song & Video being released in the eligible release time.)**

**ENTRANTS MUST SUPPLY:**

\* Mp3 of track (320kbps) sound file via the online entry platform site link provided by Song Central.

\* Track Title

\* Recording Artist Name

\* List ALL Songwriter/s (including their own name if a songwriter)

\* Commercial Release Date

\* Promotional Release date

\* Single cover or Album cover artwork (PDF)

\* 200 word bio & Artist photo. (If you have already submitted a bio and photo in another section, no need to upload again)

**TROPHY TO THE WINNER.**

**Framed certificate to all other Nominees in the section.**

## **/ ENTRY / FINEPRINT**

- In entering the ABBA Music Excellence Awards the entrant has deemed to have read, understood and agreed to the rules associated with entering the awards.
- The ABBA cannot be held responsible for any perceived digression or non-compliance in any matter.
- Offensive material, or songs containing language not deemed to be acceptable should not be entered.
- The awards will be presented at the ABBA Music Excellence Awards concert in January at the ABBA Balladeers Homestead in Tamworth.
- All Nominees will be announced prior to the Awards via media release on the ABBA Facebook page, and also via [www.bushballadeers.com.au/MEAwards.htm](http://www.bushballadeers.com.au/MEAwards.htm)
- If you are a Nominee, please advise the ABBA via email if you are not able to attend the Awards and who your nominated representative will be to collect your Award in the event of you winning. Email [info@bushballadeers.com.au](mailto:info@bushballadeers.com.au)
- An artist who has won a section in the ABBA Music Excellence Awards cannot enter that same song in future ABBA Music Excellence Awards via the same or any other category.
- Specialist judges chosen with in depth knowledge in Australian Bush Ballads, and specialist judges chosen with in depth knowledge of Traditional Country Music.
- The judge's decision is final and the ABBA will not enter into any discussion regarding the results, rules or the process of the Awards.
- Judges' names will not be disclosed.
- The ABBA committee cannot judge.
- Apart from Vocal Collaboration only 1 trophy is given out. For those who wish to obtain another, extra trophies can be purchased on request.

\*\*\*\*\*

**A.B.B.A M.E. AWARDS ENTRY LINK via**

**[www.bushballadeers.com.au/MEAwards.htm](http://www.bushballadeers.com.au/MEAwards.htm)**

**from the 1<sup>st</sup> of JULY.**

**Nominees announced late October.**