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Photo Competition

TopShot '26, the photography competition to find the best images across NSW and the ACT, is now open. Closing date for entries is 10 May 2026.

Finalists can win prizes worth thousands of dollars, and be exhibited at the TopShot '26 Exhibition in June.

Finalists will also be considered for the Australian Interstate Photography Competition which pits the best photographs from NSW against the best shots from all the other States of Australia.

It's a great way to get some national recognition for your photography.

There is one important hint I give to everyone – please read the definitions. It is terrible when an excellent image has to be disqualified because it did not fit the definition. For all the
Cont.....

definitions, and to enter this year's TopShot competition, go to [TopShot '26](#).

In an exciting new development for photography in NSW and the ACT, nine photography clubs from the south coast region have met for the first time to discuss working together.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Wollongong Camera Club, Wollongong Media Makers, Kiama-Shellharbour Camera Club, Bay and Basin Camera Club, Milton Ulladulla Districts Camera Club, Milton Ulladulla Videography Club, Eurobodalla Photographic Club, Narooma Camera Club, and Sapphire Snappers Camera Club.

Thank you to Sue Curtis, Wollongong Vice-President and FCC Committee member, for organising the meeting. The FCC is always happy to support regional photography developments such as this one. If successful, a south coast interclub would complement three other regional groupings of clubs in NSW. They are the Northern NSW Zone of Photographic Societies (for

Clubs from Port Macquarie to the Queensland border); the Northern Photographic Federation (for Clubs in and around the Hunter region); and the Western Districts Association of Camera Clubs (for clubs from the central west of NSW).

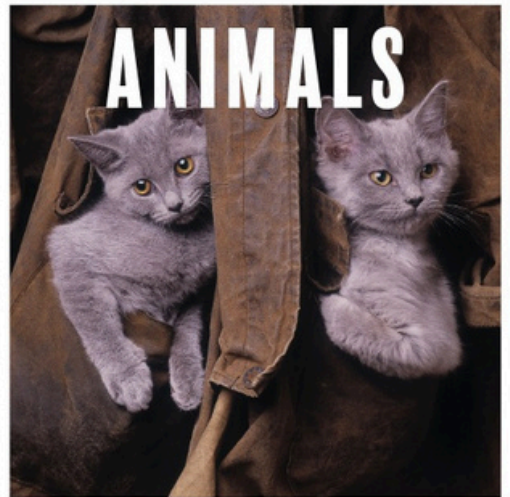
I also hope you enjoy our articles, In the Bigger Picture section of F-Stop, on making portrait and storm photography, and an exhibition by Trent Parke, Australia's only member of the famous Magnum Photography cooperative. We also answer a question raised by a Club member about if, and when, you should get a Model Release form.

Finally, if your Club is doing something you think other clubs may be interested in hearing about, send us a message via the <https://fccnsw.com.au/>, or an email to nswfccsecretary@gmail.com

Until next time, keep creating!

Michelle Kennedy
FCC President

TOPSHOT '26 COMPETITION NOW OPEN



One of the most prestigious photography competitions in Australia.

See website for full conditions and section definitions

Entries **OPEN NOW**

Entries **CLOSE MAY 10TH**

TOPSHOT '26 COMPETITION NOW OPEN

TopShot '26 celebrates the use of photography for visual storytelling, portrait-making and documentation in nine different categories: Fine Art Prints, and eight digital categories (Animals, Action, Digital Art, Flora, Portraits, Scapes, Staged and Urban).

It is open to the 2,500 new, emerging and established photographers who are members of clubs affiliated with the Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW).

TopShot '26 offers prizes worth thousands of dollars. In 2025, there were more than \$8,000 worth of prizes including cameras and equipment. Finalists are also publicly exhibited at the TopShot '26 Exhibition and Award Ceremony planned for June.

The best TopShot '26 images will also be entered into the Australian Interstate Photography Competition (AIPC) which pits the best photographs from NSW against the best photographers in all the other States of Australia. It's a great way to get some national

recognition for your photography. NSW has won the overall competition for the past three years.

It's also a great way for photographers of all levels (professional, amateur, student) to get together, network, see the latest developments in photography and camera technology, and develop your creativity.

The TopShot '26 exhibition and Awards Ceremony will also include announcement of the winners of the FCC's Nature Photography competition. The Exhibition will include a Photography Trade Show (with all the latest in camera and related gear, and special offers for attendees); and an exhibition of short videos made by NSW video maker clubs. The FCC AGM, where member clubs elect a new FCC Committee for a two-year period, also is on at the time.

For Fees and Competition Requirements see <https://topshot.myphotoclub.com.au/conditions-of-entry/>.

TopShot '26 closes on 10 May, 2026.

SOUTH COAST PHOTO AND VIDEO CLUBS WORKING TOGETHER



Nine camera and video clubs on the south coast of NSW met in March to discuss the value of building stronger connections between their clubs.

They agreed working together could result in sharing of resources, better access to presenters and more education opportunities, better social interaction between clubs, and possibly joint activities such as regional inter-club weekends. Representatives from Wollongong Camera Club, Wollongong Media Makers, Kiama-Shellharbour Camera

Club, Milton Ulladulla Districts Videography Club, Eurobodalla Photographic Club, Narooma Camera Club and Sapphire Snappers Camera Club attended the Zoom meeting.

Sue Curtis, Wollongong Vice-President and FCC Committee member, coordinated the meeting.

Unlike the three other regional groups of clubs in NSW – the Northern NSW Zone of Photographic Societies (for Clubs from Port Macquarie to the Queensland border); the

Cont...

SOUTH COAST PHOTO AND VIDEO CLUBS WORKING TOGETHER



Northern Photographic Federation (for Clubs in and around the Hunter region); and the Western Districts Association of Camera Clubs (for clubs in the central west region of NSW) – the south coast meeting expressed support for having the region’s photography and video clubs being included in any regional activities. The meeting also discussed the practicalities of having regional

meetings, such as the availability of suitable large venues and the long distances some clubs may need to travel to any regional activities.

Three clubs are looking at organising venues for the inaugural face-to-face meeting for south coast regional clubs.

For more information, contact, Sue Curtis on Curtisimages@outlook.com.

29TH NATIONAL STEREO PHOTOGRAPHY CONVENTION, 16 AND 17 MAY



The Sydney Stereo Camera Club, along with the only other stereo/3D camera club in Australia (the Victorian 3D Society), take turns to convene an international convention in Australia every two years. The convention attracts stereo photographers and videographers and other people interested in 3D image-making from interstate as well as overseas.

This year the Stereo Convention takes place in the NSW Southern Highlands over the weekend 16 and 17 May 2026. The weekend includes a 'Convention Dinner', on 17 May, and screenings of numerous 3D I

The Sydney Stereo Camera Club sends the following invitation to all photography and video-maker clubs and all interested people.

Images and AV's, including the first public screening of this year's Southern Cross Stereo Images Competition, which attracts entrants from around the globe. For more information on this stereo photography competition see [Sydney Stereo Camera Club](#).

We would like to take the opportunity to invite you and your club members and their families, to the FREE screening, which will take place in the Carrington Room (Large Auditorium), at the Mittagong RSL, commencing at 8pm on 17 May 2026. It would obviously assist us and the club, if you could provide some details/indication by way of numbers of potential attendees, prior to the day.

For further information, contact Stefan Hreszczuk, Sydney Stereo Camera Club on 0407 663 093.



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DIGITAL CINEMA CAMERA



NEW TRENT PARKE EXHIBITION IN CANBERRA



Photo: Trent Parke, Laurie's 70th birthday surprise

Trent Parke, Australia's only member of the famous Magnum Photography cooperative, has a new exhibition in Canberra until 6 September 2026.

The exhibition, *The Christmas tree bucket*, is a tender and darkly humorous portrayal about how we celebrate Christmas in Australia.

Parke says he grew up "with images and movies of snowy rooftops and xmas trees by open fireplaces", something that never happened in real life in Australia. So, one Christmas, he

photographed his extended family as they celebrated Christmas together.

He then took his images of his family get-together and sequenced the images to tell "a different story from the moment they were taken."

The result is both a realistic and a funny picture of an Australian Christmas. Instead of snowmen and reindeers, we see photos of a real Christmas including an old fir tree stuck in a bucket of sand

Cont.....

NEW TRENT PARKE EXHIBITION IN CANBERRA

surrounded by presents, children squabbling, dogs barking, and people with sunburnt backs and sleeping off hangovers.

All the images are taken in Parke's distinct visual style using light, shadows and colour.

Trent Parke was born in Mulubinba/Newcastle in 1971. He picked up a camera in his teenage years after the sudden death of his mother from an asthma attack. For Parke, photography is important because it "makes you look at things you've never looked at before."

Parke began work as a press photojournalist in Singleton and other papers such as The Daily Telegraph before shifting to long-term, personal, fine-art projects. He says it took him about 25 years to develop his own style of surreal, cinematic and emotional images expressed through the careful use of light and shadow.

Parke often collaborates with his wife, photographer Narelle Autio, a highly regarded photojournalist in her own right and World Press Photo award winner. For an

example of Autio's and Parke's work see their award-winning series called Roadkill ([Narelle Autio & Trent Parke World Press Photo](#)).

The secret to a good photo, Parke says, is to look for the right type of light. Light is needed to illuminate the main subject – but then you need to go further and look for the type of light that "turns the ordinary into the magical".

For more about Trent Parke's approach to photography, see his 2024 interview with famous British photographer, Martin Parr (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltMOHNFqum0>).

The Christmas tree bucket exhibition runs until 6 September 2026 at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Free. You can see six of the photos in the exhibition at

<https://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/trent-parke-the-christmas-tree-bucket/>.

3D PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO EXHIBITION: UNFINISHED BUSINESS



Unfinished Business uses 3D-photography to tell the stories of 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities from remote, regional and urban communities across Australia.

3D-photography, which creates an illusion of depth, movement and transformation, is used along with video in a closing soon exhibition of people living with a disability.

The exhibition presents 3D lenticular portraits, a short documentary and a new

installation.

Lenticular portraits are created by specialist lenses which use many tiny, cylindrical magnifying lenses (lenticules) to refract light, allowing a viewer to see different interlaced images.

These images can make images that appear to change or move or transform from one image into another.

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3D PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO EXHIBITION: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The exhibition, on at the Australian Museum, College Street, Sydney closes on 19 April.

Each participant in the exhibition determined how their story would be shared, using their own words, chosen narrators and imagery to give audiences an insight into their lives.

The exhibition has also been designed so audiences can engage with the stories through tactile panels, audio descriptions, online resources, and Auslan content.

The Australian Museum describes the exhibition as ‘a thought-provoking recognition of the ongoing impact of colonisation, and a call for meaningful social and systemic change’.

For more details, including an example of a 3D moving portrait, see the Australian Museum website: [Unfinished Business - The Australian Museum](#).

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE, 2025



Photo: Blue Tongue,
2025
by Natalie Grono

Looking around for ideas on how to make better portraits?

An excellent resource you can use for free is the annual National Photographic Portrait Prize. Finalists and winners can be found at [National Photographic Portrait Prize](#), [National Portrait Gallery](#).

The National Photographic Portrait Prize supports and celebrates photographic portraiture in Australia and is

open to new, emerging and established photographers across the country.

Natalie Grono is a photo artist and filmmaker based in Lennox Head/ Nyangbul in New South Wales.

She was a finalist with the picture above. She said 'This portrait of Annabelle and Dakota

Cont.....

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE, 2025

captures a crucial moment in their self-discovery – two tweens standing at the edge of adolescence, exploring and questioning their identities. It reflects the fragility and strength of their transformation as they navigate a world that sometimes demands they grow up too quickly. Through their expressions and presence, the photograph meditates on the delicate balance between innocence and maturity, as well as the quiet intensity of young people searching for their place in an ever-evolving world. It's a visual exploration of the complexities of identity during a time of rapid change.'

The winner of the Portrait Prize receives a prize of \$30,000 cash courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery and \$20,000 worth of equipment courtesy of Imaging Partner Canon Australia.

There are also other cash prizes. All finalists receive artist and copyright fees as well as all costs covered for freight and travel.

The 2026 winners will be announced in mid-2026, and will be exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra before travelling around Australia on tour.

So have a look at some of the best photographic portraits, have a go at coming up with something as good as, or better, and enter your images into the FCC's TopShop '26 exhibition. Then enter your best portrait into the National Photographic Portrait Prize. It opens for entries from mid-December 2026 and closes mid-February 2027.



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PHOTOGRAPHING STORMS



The Lovely Monster over the Farm, Camille Seaman

Nature photography can be much more than pretty animals and flowers – it can also be about violent storms.

In fact, some photographers called storm chasers specialise in finding cyclones and other extreme weather events to photograph.

“Storm” was the theme of the 2025 Prix Pictet, the international prize and exhibition focused on photography and

sustainability.

Amateur and professional photographers from around the world photographed storms in different ways.

Some shot wild-looking weather phenomenon to show what they look like and how much damage they can produce. Other photographers used their storm photos as a metaphor for the

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PHOTOGRAPHING STORMS

powerful environmental and other forces shaping our world today. Others used their photos of storms to tell stories about how storms can bring about destruction, transformation, renewal and hope.

Camille Seaman, shortlisted for the Prix Pictet in 2025, isn't interested in the spectacle of storms. As a storm-chaser, she has seen the immense damage extreme weather can cause people, farms, towns and cities. This taught her to feel great empathy and compassion for local people. That is why, she said "Her images were never about what these storms destroyed or the pain and damage they inflicted. She always wanted them to speak to the duality of all things – there is no creation without destruction; a cloud can be beautiful, terrible, or both – the embodiment of the sublime. There is no art more dramatic, in scale or emotion, than that created by nature. At the end of the day, we are the storm.

Seaman says the "biggest gift" she ever had was learning how to use light.

She was photographing with Steve McCurry (famous for his photo [Afghan Girl](#)) when he saw her photographing in harsh, bright conditions. He yelled "What the hell are you doing in this light?" Then pulled Seaman into an alley and showed her the soft light there with no harsh shadows. He said: "It doesn't matter how good your composition is or your subject is—if you don't understand the quality of light, your images won't withstand the test of time."

For more insights into how Seaman photographs Nature, and about how she became a photographer when she was 32 see [Camille Seaman and her Portraits of Weather](#).

For Seaman's storm photos and others shortlisted for the Prix Pictet, see [Prix Pictet](#).

WHEN YOU MUST GET A MODEL RELEASE FORM



Photograph: Emma McIntyre/Getty Images for Coachella

In February 2026, Amy Taylor, leader of the rock band Rock Amyl and the Sniffers (pictured above), sued a photographer, Jamie Nelson, because she was selling her photos of the band without the band's consent. This legal battle would have been prevented if the photographer had gained a signed Model Release Form before any photos were taken.

Under Australian copyright law, photographers own the images you make. However, owning an image does not automatically give you the right to publish that image – especially if you want to publish your images of a person for commercial, advertising or promotional use.

The solution is to have a Model Release Form. This Form is a

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WHEN YOU MUST GET A MODEL RELEASE FORM

a written contract, often only a page or so long, where a person (the “model” or “talent”) gives consent to you (the photographer or videographer) to publish any images you make of that person.

The Form is written evidence that the person consented to you capturing their image and using it for specific purposes (such as for sale). For videographers, Model Release Forms also prove the talent consented to you capturing and using their voice.

Generally, you will not need a Release Form if you are only showing your images in your Club or in photo competitions where there is no commercial gain. However, if you want to sell your images of a person, you should always obtain a Model Release form signed by the model or talent before you take any photographs (or videos).

There is an added problem with nude photography. Sharing or posting nude images of someone online without their consent can be a crime. Always get a valid, written Model Release Form before taking any nude images so it is clear the person consented to you publishing or posting nude images of them, whether for commercial reasons or not. Model Release Forms which are consistent with Australian law can be found on the internet, for example, the Arts Law centre (<https://www.artslaw.com.au/product/photographers-model-release/>). The cost is around \$200, but this business expense is tax-deductible because it is directly related to you earning assessable income.

Note: The information in this article is of a general nature. If you are selling your images on a regular basis, contact a lawyer for legal advice specific to your situation.

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MAKING PORTRAITS: LESSONS FROM THE BRITISH ROYALS



Queen Elizabeth II on her Coronation, 1953, by Cecil Beaton (left) and Dorothy Wilding (right)

There are many different ways to make a portrait of someone. Most of us start by asking our subject to stand in the light, perhaps to pose a little, and then to smile. We say “Smile” because we don’t merely want to take of photo showing what they look like – we want to show our sitter as if they were looking happy. But what if you had to go further. What if – instead of a “happy snap” – you wanted to show your subject as powerful,

dignified and yet also approachable? Or elegant, sophisticated and modern? These are the challenges which faced Cecil Beaton, Dorothy Wilding and Annie Leibovitz when they made portraits of the British Royals.

Cecil Beaton photographed members of the royal family from 1930-1979. His style changed several times over this period.

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MAKING PORTRAITS: LESSONS FROM THE BRITISH ROYALS

At first, Beaton wanted to portray the royals as both modern and traditional using the Hollywood Glamour style of portrait photography. This style of portrait aims to show the sitter as a serious, enigmatic, or intense looking person – like a mythical, beautiful and untouchable movie star.

To do this, Beaton photographed the Queen Mother wearing luxurious, light-reflecting fabrics (like satin, velvet, fur, and pearls). She stood in front of a large room full of flowers, mirrors, curtains, rugs, historical furniture and other symbols of power, wealth and sophistication. He photographed her by placing the camera slightly below her eye line to make her look powerful, statuesque, and confident. Beaton also asked the Queen Mother to pose in a passive, reclining, or recumbent way to suggest a lifestyle of luxury and ease. Lighting is always fundamental – Beaton typically used soft, diffused light on the subject, and sometimes had additional light on the

background to create a “burnt out” effect.

During the Second World War, Beaton changed his approach. He now wanted to portray the British Royals as a symbol of unity, stability and hope for the whole nation, as well as for troops and people across the world. He switched from photos of elegant dresses and ornate backdrops and replaced them with military-style clothing and hats, active poses, and settings showing the royals working together. More of Beaton’s photos can be seen at [Cecil Beaton Royal Photographer](#) For the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, Beaton took yet another approach to making a portrait. He wanted to show the symbolism and drama of the historic event. He therefore photographed Queen Elizabeth II in full regalia against a painted backdrop of the Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey. As can be seen above, he combined studio lighting with natural light from

Cont...

MAKING PORTRAITS: LESSONS FROM THE BRITISH ROYALS

above to create a look which showed Elizabeth II with an almost supernatural “radiance that encircles those who occupy a throne”.

Dorothy Wilding was also asked to photograph Elizabeth II for her coronation. As can be seen above, Wilding took the opposite style of portrait to Beaton. Where Beaton evoked the atmosphere and the theatre of the Coronation, Wilding wanted to show the precision and symbolism of the new monarch.

Wilding wanted to portray the new Queen as having “majesty, dignity, authority”. She therefore used a modern style of portraiture, with strong and harsh natural lighting to highlight the beauty of Queen Elizabeth, formal dignified-looking poses against a blank background. Wilding’s image of the Queen – unlike the sumptuous, dreamlike pictures made by Beaton – were modern and iconic. Her portraits of Elizabeth II were subsequently reproduced on coins, currency notes, stamps and seen around

the world. A short video on Wilding’s approach to portraits can be found [here](#).

Annie Leibovitz took a totally different approach to portrait photography when she photographed Queen Elizabeth II in 2007 and in 2016. In 2016, in particular, the Queen had a clear idea of how she wanted to be portrayed – not as a powerful, wealthy royal or a media celebrity but as an everyday person surrounded by her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and corgis. This intention influenced Leibovitz’s decisions to use natural lighting (coming in from the large palace windows), to select rooms which looked more homely than official, the use of informal clothing (rather than the trappings of office), and informal poses which showcased the Queen with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. For more on Leibovitz’s approach see [Annie Leibovitz remembers photographing Queen Elizabeth II](#).

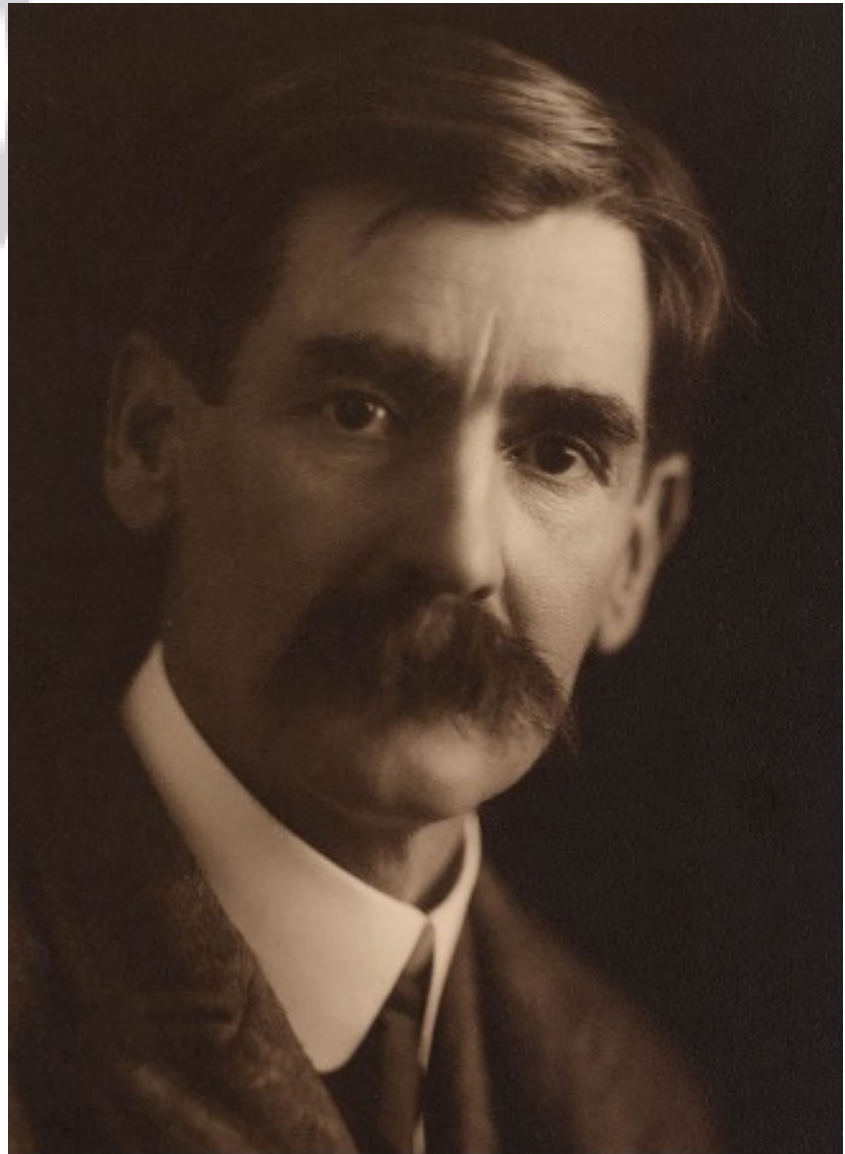
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MAKING PORTRAITS: LESSONS FROM THE BRITISH ROYALS

These are not the only ways to make portraits. Lord Snowdon, a professional photographer before he married Princess Margaret, took portraits of the royals which focussed more on showing the abstract shapes and tones of the subjects, as can be seen at [Lord Snowdon's portrait of Princess Margaret](#). For a video that compares Snowdon's approach to making portraits with Cecil Beaton's approach, see [Cecil Beaton and Lord Snowdon approaches to portraits of the British Royals](#)

So next time you want to make a portrait of someone, start by taking the traditional, smiling happy snap. But you can always go one step further: ask what is that person's personality, or their family or work role, or are they symbols of important human qualities (such as strength, caring or pride) – and how can you use lighting, background, posing and props to tell us something unique about that person.

HENRY LAWSON PHOTO COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL



Portrait of Henry
Lawson, ca. 1915,
by May Moore.
Source: Mitchell Library,
State Library of NSW

Photographers have been invited to enter a photo competition, and to photograph the street festivities, at the 2026 annual Henry Lawson Festival.

The Festival commemorates the birth of Australia's most famous authors in the then-gold town of Grenfell in central West NSW. Lawson lived and wrote about his life as a bush worker, house

painter, telegraph linesman, journalist and roustabout. Much of what he saw and experienced went into his short stories, but his deepest feelings are revealed in his poetry. For decades his portrait was on our ten dollar note.

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HENRY LAWSON PHOTO COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL

The Henry Lawson Festival includes a festival of the arts to promote aspiring Australians in their artistic endeavours.

This festival invites photographers from all backgrounds and ages to enter this year's photography competition. The competition has an Open section (Colour, Monochrome and Digital categories), a Junior section (for under 16s); and a Local Only section (for photos on the theme of 'Within the Weddin Shire').

Entries close 22 May. For details and costs see

[Photography Competition - Henry Lawson Festival](#)

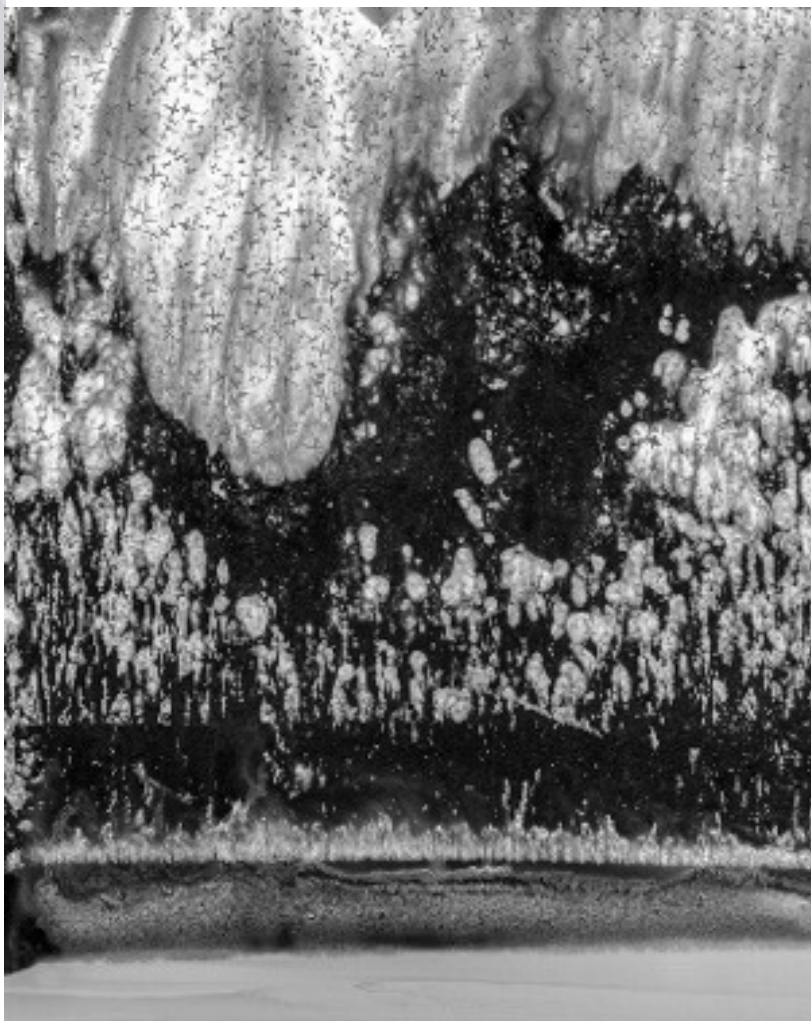
Prizes range from \$100 to \$300 per category.

The Henry Lawson festival includes poetry reading, a parade, car show, busking and coach rides. It takes place on the three-day long weekend from Saturday, 6 June, to Monday, 8 June 2026.

If your Club wants an outing in the Central West of NSW (for landscape, architecture, action photography and astrophotography as some of your many options) start your planning now.

The photo of Henry Lawson (above) was taken by May Moore. May and her sister Mina Moore were two of the first commercial photographers in Australia. They were famous for their Rembrandt-style portrait photography, and their subjects who included famous artists, musicians, and writers of the era (such as Henry Lawson). For more of May and Mina's photos see [here](#).

**APS NEWS – \$30,000
MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE**



The Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize is a national \$30,000 acquisitive prize for Australia's best conceptual photographic works. Finalists are exhibited at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre with the prize-winning work joining the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection.

Entries must "illustrate an abstract idea and/or emotion". They must also be the original

work of the Entrant, be made without AI, and must have been completed in the 12 months immediately prior to the close of entry to the Prize.

For all other Terms and Conditions, and to enter your images, go to: <https://artgallery.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/prizes/#page-section-7>.

Entries Close – Midnight 12 June 2026.

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