MEDIA RELEASE

Joyce welcomes launch of Dorothea Mackellar poetry awards

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FEDERAL Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce said school students in the New England Electorate and across the nation have until 30 June to submit entries for the 2015 Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards, which is sponsored by $50,000 in Australian Government funding.

The awards are the oldest and largest poetry competition for Australian school students and will be announced in Gunnedah, on 4 September 2015. The theme for this year's competition is 'the open door'.

Mr Joyce said Australia had a long history of iconic poetry, from bush poets like Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson and Will Ogilvie to our modern icons, such as Judith Wright and Les Murray.

"Poetry is an important tool to help students improve their reading and writing."

"The Australian Government’s support of the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards complements the important steps we are taking to ensure our national curriculum teaches students the literacy skills they need."

The Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards are open to all Australian school students. From 1 March poems can be submitted by post or online. Award winners will be presented with prizes at the national presentation ceremony.

"Last year more than 8,500 poems were submitted by students from 600 Australian schools. This year, I hope even more Australian students will submit their poems to the competition,” Mr Joyce said.

“I commend the Dorothea Mackellar Memorial Society for organising these awards and I encourage every school in Australia to consider participating in the competition.”

For more information about how you or your school can participate in the 2015 Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards, visit: www.dorothea.com.au