

*Down Under
Ditties*

*Rhymes of our times
2024*

A compilation of items written by

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“Dr DC”*

*Prompted by news items in the print
version of the NZ Herald*

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Foreword

In December 2022 as part of a New Year resolution, I decided to write a “Ditty a Day” to the NZ Herald newspaper. This was prompted by looking at a collection of the best cartoons of 2022 by Rod Emmerson. Noting that Emmerson must have to produce a cartoon a day throughout the year, I thought why not a “Ditty a Day” – based on an item in the print copy of the Herald of that day.

I kicked the project off with the following email to NZ Herald:

*As I hope you will see
I am Doctor DC
A ditty a day
I will send your way
Throughout 2023*

*Publish or not
I won't care a jot
The daily mental strain
Will be good for my brain
So, feel free to just bin the lot*

*Well, if it's not too much cheek
Perhaps once a week
If any merit you detect
You could one select
And give your readers a peek*

*I ask for no pay
For this is word play
I'll aim to amuse
Seek not to abuse
And maybe make someone's day.*

I managed just over a hundred in 2023 and most of these were published as *Down Under Ditties: Rhymes of our times 2023*.

This volume, *Down Under Ditties: Rhymes of our times 2024* is a selection of 101 ditties (out of 165) written in the calendar year. Once again it has been fun to look at each day's paper and pick an item to focus on – to distil the essence in rhyme, make fun, or prompt thinking on issues.

I hope that readers will enjoy them for what they are.

Best wishes.

David Conway Hopkins

January 2026

1. Truancy's Fine

*More fines proposed in truancy crackdown by
new Minister David Seymour*

Seymour has advice pursuant
To those who would play truant
If to absence you incline
You'll pay a really hefty fine
Better your school each day to attend
Than on truant fines your money spend
The better your school learnings
The higher your future earnings
Please do not play the fool
Each day turn up to school

15Feb24

2. The Price of Speed

*More speed cameras coming as Waka Kotahi
takes over from police.*

More speed cameras will soon be in place
To catch those who drive at too high a pace

More speedsters they plan to detect
And your safety they aim to protect

But it will come as no great surprise
They expect revenue gathered will rise

So now it's all up to each one of you
To slow down so they lose revenue.

Which they will gleefully forgo
To see less mess when you slow.

19Feb24

3. Fairy Tern Turn-around?

Fairy tern numbers are rising though extinction still threatens. Auckland Zoo doing great work to build numbers up.

It was great news to learn
Of 18 hatchings of fairy tern
Auckland Zoo's work of distinction
Is staving off tara iti extinction
Though low numbers are still a concern.

22Feb24

4. Backyard Cricket

Aussies play backyard cricket at Premier House. Usman Khuwaja says house is condemned. Not so says PM Christopher Luxon. It has maintenance issues and prefers to live elsewhere (in an apartment he owns) for which he is eligible for a \$52,000 annual grant.

The House of the PM
Usman dared to condemn
No good for Chris Luxon
Except with his tux on
This once-was Thorndon gem
The place is only fit
For backyard cricket
When it's one-hand-one-bounce
The Aussies we can trounce
No matter who's over the limit

Our PM's glad he's not facin'
Pat Cummins at the Basin
It's nowhere near as hard
In Premier House back yard
In spite of close field placin'

It seems Khawaja misheard
(He was fielding at third)
"Is it liveable or not?
Don't you give a jot?
It all seems quite absurd."

"It's not what I planned.
In a report it was panned.
Maintenance is a cost worry
And I'm not in a hurry
To miss out on 52 grand."

28Feb24

5. Foodstuffs Facial

Wide coverage has been given to Foodstuffs' introduction of facial recognition surveillance to help reduce shoplifting and improve security for their personnel. Concerns have been raised on the invasion of privacy with reference to George Orwell's book, '1984'. Some saw this as a profit-making measure, noting how prices seem to be set to confuse. Some people want large warning signs about the new technology. Perhaps something like this:

When you shop around our well-lit place
There'll always be a camera in your face
Many small high-tech camera creatures
Will secretly record your facial features
So your activities we can easily trace