

*Down Under
Ditties*

*Rhymes of our times
2025*

*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 managed just over a hundred then stopped when I got Covid - and newspaper articles seemed to contain little to make fun of (was this long Covid affecting my brain?).

Early in 2024 I looked over the 2023 items and enjoyed being reminded of events that had caught my attention and the summaries that the rhymes gave – often with a humorous twist. This prompted me to start up again, resuming

the “Ditty a Day” challenge on 1 May 2024. I then gave myself Sundays off, later convincing myself that other days could be skipped if the versifying juices were not flowing – or the paper had no suitable items. *Down Under Ditties: Rhymes of our times 2023*, and *Down Under Ditties: Rhymes of our times 2024* have been published. Here is the 2025 collection.

I kicked the project off with the following email to The New Zealand 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.*

It is 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

February 2026

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1. NCEA Hooray?

NCEA results are available online today. A red-letter day for many students across the country.

NCEA results are almost here

A maximum point of student fear

On reading the outcomes published today

It will be either sad dismay or a loud hooray

At what they've achieved in the last year

15Jan25

2. Lyn Fleming Tribute

Senior Sergeant Lyn Fleming was farewelled today. She was killed by a driver of a car that rammed her in the early hours of 1 January. She is the first New Zealand woman police officer to be killed in the line of duty.

For the average Kiwi in the police she fought
Sadly this mother's life was cut tragically short
On the eve of twenty twenty-five's New Year
This Senior Sergeant for duty did volunteer
A senseless hoon at her drove - unprovoked
Witnesses watched in disbelief - and choked
Mown down in a cowardly senseless act
The end of her career a shocking fact

Give thanks now for Fleming, Lyn
And for the Force she was serving in.

17Jan25

3. Bring in the pros

New Public Service Commissioner, Sir Brian Roche, says the public service needs to improve efficiency, decision-making and responsiveness. There are too many meetings, too many layers of management, too much duplication, not enough clarity about its role and not enough focus on outcomes. A brilliantly accurate analysis from someone who should know. Will there be any changes, Sir Brian?

Too many management layers

Too many inexperienced players

Too many meetings amongst long-term stayers

Wasted efforts from duplication

Such is the public service situation

In the outcome stakes they are deficient

All the above making them inefficient