



He Writes to Think

Asked why he writes poetry, Ted Rickard replies:

"I write poetry just because I like to think. I like to get away on my own and think about things."

There is no doubt that Ted's poetry is that of a thoughtful and concerned man. It wasn't till 3 years ago that Ted began to put his poems on paper.

Since then he has had examples of his work published in *Identity*, in an anthology of verse published in England, and in the *Moree Champion* newspaper.

Today Ted works as a greenkeeper at the local bowling club in Mungindi where he lives.

He is only 51 years old but has crammed a wealth of living into those years. He was born in Moree and moved to Mungindi in 1923. It was at Mungindi that he spent most of his early life.

His formal education was small—6 months at the local school and 18 months at a school in Queensland when he was 12.

He then went droving till he was 18 years old. By this time war had broken out and Ted joined the army. He was at Singapore when it fell to the Japanese in 1942. Nearly 4 years were then spent in a prisoner-of-war camp.

After being released, he was discharged from the army in September of 1945.

After 6 months casual work on the railways at Moree Ted sat for an exam to get a full-time job but was failed because of his colour-blindness. At this time he met and married his wife, Cetress.

Ted then returned to Mungindi and worked on a local property. In 1949 he took up shearing, something that was to provide his family with a living for the next 11 years.

In 1960 Ted's bad health, including tuberculosis and kidney problems, forced him to leave the sheds.

Consequently he took a job as a bar steward with the bowling club and 8 years ago became its greenkeeper, the job he still holds.

Today he and Cetress live in their small house in the centre of town. He has given his original



Ted Rickard

house to his only daughter, who is now widowed. Ted has three grandchildren.

He spends his spare time writing and recording his poems. "I've always liked verse", he says, "and I find writing it is a bit of challenge".

His other main past-time is reading—mostly magazines and especially history.

Since settling at Mungindi Ted has been active in the local community. At various times he has been president of the local branch of the AWU; vice-president of the bowling club and the R.S.L.; and a voluntary ambulance driver. At the moment he is publicity officer for the swimming pool appeal and has also, in the past, been involved in numerous local sporting committees.

Despite his acceptance in the white community, Ted maintains his Aboriginal identity. This is expressed in his presidency of Mungindi's Aboriginal Advancement Committee and in his poems, one of which is reprinted in these pages.