

# Greg Champion

## Newsletter

Issue 7AD May 2005

### Cheers from Champs

Hello you brave-hearted Aussie battlers, and welcome to our newsletter, courtesy of 'publishers' Andrew & Del of Perth.

Trusting your problems are little ones, and that if you have aches and pains, they are in a different place each day. My mother-in-law, a saintly girl in every respect, says that as long as the aches and pains keep moving to a new place, you're still a chance to survive a while yet.

While at the Longyard in Tamworth, I met Elaine from Tumby Bay. She knew I loved the town [I've only been once] and asked if I'd like to do a Bushfire Appeal Fundraiser show there. Nine people died and about 77 homes were destroyed in the January fires around Cummins. Well, I just returned from there yesterday. If there's a finer spot in Australia than Tumby Bay, then my name's Richie Benaud. It sits on the Spencer Gulf and looks East over flat Gulf waters, as if on an inland sea. The foreshore, the remoteness, the feel of the place, the charm of the forties style sandstone houses, all make it heavenly. I sang in the pub and funds were raised for those affected by the bushfire.

Can I tell you we're about to start a new album. From May 23, we're going to a beach house in Venus Bay, South Gippsland, with portable recording gear, and the help of Rod McCormack, Gary Carruthers, Ross Hannaford and James Black. By going out of town I expect to get an earthier more rustic sounding record, with songs that are a bit rootsy, a bit 'Strayliana, and always folk/country. Some of the titles are *been there done that like to do it again, Melbourne town, keep the kettle boiling, those deadly koalas, out to Winchelsea*, and possibly *I'm just an outa luck desperado in Swan Hill I gotta make it to Mildura in the morning*. And there's two songs relating to Daddy's little girl.

The day before the Tumby Bay trip I experienced Targa Tasmania, the week-long annual car rally involving 300 cars, 1500 drivers, and 3000 volunteers. I witnessed it from a marquee half way up Mt Wellington in three degree 'heat', where I sang to the crowd before the cars came through. In March I had the privilege of playing Port Fairy Folk Festival with Rod McCormack guesting in our band, as well as usual suspects Gary Carruthers and Robyn Martin. There are few finer towns than Tumby, and there are few, if any, better gigs to play than Port Fairy, for the quality, size and support of the crowds. Port Fairy? - it doesn't get any better than that.

A week later I had the treat of going to the Kapunda Celtic Festival. Just to travel in that part of SA's mid-North again was a delight. Since then there were also trips to Burnie, Launceston and Briagalong (near Bairnsdale in Gippsland). Still in Gippy, shows in Stratford and Yarram are booked for May and June. In Maryborough Queensland, they're running week-long guitar and songwriting tutorials in July, and that good sport Michael Fix and myself will be helping out.

I'm excited about getting my new CD into your hands. May your echidnas be well-fed, and your wombats never turn on you. Thanks again to Del and Andrew for their kind organization of this newsletter. See you along the track, stay cheerful, champs



## A Champs fanatic explains.....

*Clare Ferry, farmer and grandmother, of Albany WA, must be Australia's top expert on Greg Champion's work. Clare can quote lyrics at will from fifty or more of Greg's songs, and tell you why they mean something to her. And she's a delightful Aussie girl to boot.....*

I first discovered Champs as a member of the Coodabeens on their Sunday evening programme and having always liked country / folk music, enjoyed his performances on the show. One morning as I set out on the long drive from Albany to Perth, I realised I had no music with me so stopped at the local ABC shop, purchased the tape appropriately titled 'Champs' and from the opening bars I was hooked. It is a 400km journey, giving me ample time to become completely familiar with the songs, and I loved them all, with Big Fat Broken Heart being the one that appealed most and remains one of my favourites still. For me this song epitomises the complete package you get with Champs, with the deep resonating guitar opening run, the cleverly rhymed lyrics set to a catchy tune which left me wondering where he drew breath.

The reason I never tire of his music and eagerly look forward to new work is that he never fails to entertain, with his ability to paint verbal pictures, always enhanced with melodies that stay with you and some fine guitar playing. His love of all things Australian shines through his music and his enviable musical talent ensures that no two songs are the same. He can be amusing, serious, philosophical, whimsical, tender or thought-provoking and his warmth and generosity of spirit are demonstrated well in one of his better-known songs 'May Your Fridge Be Full Of Coldies'.

My collection of his work has now grown to the point where I would need to make several road



A portrait of the artist as a young bloke—1977

trips to Perth to listen to each song once, but I don't think there would be many among them where at least one phrase doesn't stick with me as I relate to the feeling or experience or scene each song conveys.

Champs is known for his liking for lists but I would find it impossible to list 1-10 my favourite songs and couldn't even give a preference to style. For example, from Shady Tree how do

you choose between the beautiful Further Up The Mountain, so gentle and melodic, and the rousing Sleep On The Stony Ground and how do you resist the thought of 'lyin' back all day just pushin' up the daisies' from When I Kick The

Bucket ?

So the best I can hope for is that his body never wears out, he never grows old or wants to lay his cowboy shirt down and that he keeps on playin' til he is 120.

*"He can be amusing, serious, philosophical, whimsical tender or thought-provoking"*

**FROM AUSTRIA**

Hi Greg, we've been having an early/late Christmas celebration. Finally got Six White Boomers out of my head. You guys obviously had a ball recording these Christmas CDs. Consider yourself and the family invited for free room and board. They love Aussies in our part of Austria. Thank you. Best regards  
Angelika M. Engl

**FROM MOSMAN**

A few days ago I was perusing the front of store discount CD bin at the local music store when I randomly came across your "North & South" product sandwiched between Phil Collins' "Love Songs Compilations" and something called Cypress Hill. Needless to say I purchased the above item and gave it a spin when I got home. After many hours quiet contemplation of your material I am happy to report that there was not a dud song among them, although my personal favourites are track 2 "Isn't that somethin'", track 3 "Banks of the Condamine" and track 13 "Not dead and not in jail". However, the other purpose of my email is to also congratulate you on MAKING IT as an established artist which, as I am sure you're well aware, can only happen if your CD officially takes pride of place in the front of the store discount racks. Well done Champs, an established fan,  
Joe Dowse Mosman

**FROM BERWICK**

Hi Greg, Six of us were sitting at the table closest to the entrance and we would like to say how much we enjoyed your performance last night. Good Songs, Good Lyrics, Good Music, Good Luck, Good Nite. best wishes

Alan, Ian and wives.

**FROM MOOROOLBARK**

My name is Kathleen Snowball and I am a year 12 student at Billanook College in Mooroolbark. Every year my school runs a competition which is called the "House Music Festival". My friend and I decided that we wanted to do a celebration of Football. Your song The Thing About Football is essential to any Australian rules theme. After much searching I haven't been able to find any chords or tabs for the song. I was wondering if you could please send the chords or a tab for the song to me, because without the song I feel we are unable to celebrate football musically. Thank you for your time and effort.

Kathleen Snowball

**FROM CANADA**

Hi Greg, this is Mark from Canada (Toronto). We met on the plane ride from Tamworth to Sydney. It was nice talking to you and since I've seen you in Tamworth the past few years, I should have introduced myself to you sooner. I have listened to your CD and I really do like it. It certainly has that "Aussie" flavour to it. I also was thinking about listening to your show on ABC, but the time difference would have it start over here at 2:30am! Anyway, I really miss Tamworth. Besides the warm weather, the music is the best in the world, in my opinion, and the friendships made there are wonderful. I spend all year just dreaming about the next year's festival! Again, very nice to meet you.

**FROM ULVERSTONE**

Hi Greg, listening to you on radio last night, from Ulverstone in Tasmania, we were in absolute hysterics - loved the rendition of Advance Australia Fair. Please please please make the whole selection available.

We've listened to the Coodabeens for years and years but we are even more devoted fans now.

Dave & Joy Watson

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*To keep your finger on the pulse*  
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## Letters

Hi Champs, as probably a younger fan of yours and the Coodabeen's (just 20) you have been an institution on the radio for basically my whole life. You've brought me many laughs over the years, keep it up. Great to see you back on the ABC last year also! Cheers,  
Adam

### FROM WINCHELSEA

Dear Greg, heard you sing a song tonight about Winchelsea - great! I am from Winchelsea and wondered how I could get the words and music. We are opening our new Visitor Information Centre at easter and would love to be able to play it on the day.  
Sandra Jones Winchelsea Visitor Information Centre.

### FROM NARRE WARREN

On January the 2nd our caravan club (made up of our square dancers with caravans) were sitting around a campfire listening to the couldhavebeenchampions show and you sang a new song about camping that they all loved. Are you recording it? Our square dance callers put on a show each year (used to be for Bluey Day but this year for the RCH Oncology ward). Our Caravan club usually put a fun act in this year and they would love to use this song if that was possible. Regards,  
Jan

[the song was *been there, done that, like to do it again*]

### FROM NARRE WARREN (Part 2)

I'm so glad I went on Friday night. I haven't laughed that much in ages, even to the point where you me with tears running down my cheeks. Not only that, I got so choked up when you sang the song about your little girl, that the tears flowed again. I love to get a photo with the artist to put on my "song books" as well. I look at the photos and remember how good watching that artist made me feel, and hope that maybe I made someone in the audience feel that same way

Jan Dandridge



*Looks like he's fallen from a plane and thought he got lucky and was going to land on a soft spot and just noticed the bar.... oh dear.*

*John from St Mary's NSW*

Champs clears 1.45m to take Silver in the Vic Masters Athletics Championships in March—go Champs!

*If you rotate it 90 degrees to the right. Greg looks like he is in full stride, making a text book lead looking for the chest mark, inside fifty with nothing but eyes for the ball and the slightest chance of something magical happening.*

*Helen Baddeley*

## travel dates

May 18  
Clifton Hill Hotel  
Melbourne

May 21  
Frankston Performing Arts Centre  
Melbourne

May 28  
Essendon Football Club  
Melbourne

June 11  
Regent Theatre, Yarram  
Victoria

June 17  
Kooyong Tennis Club  
Melbourne

June 23  
Carlton Crest Hotel  
Melbourne

June 25—30  
Songwriting Tutoring, Maryborough  
Queensland

July 12  
Ringwood Folk Club  
Melbourne (tbc)

July 13  
All Seasons Resort  
Bendigo (tbc)

July 16  
Rupanyup Memorial Hall  
Victoria (tbc)

August 5  
Plenty Ranges Convention Centre  
Victoria

August 13  
University of Tasmania  
Hobart

*Report card reads: Champs shows great potential for the art of scaling backyard fences, after been caught picking some excess fruit from his neighbours' garden.*

*Ian Patrick*