

**Bush doctor
Jamie First**

Patience has paid off big time for Hawthorn GP Stephen Whiteside.

His collection of children's poetry, which he started writing a quarter of a century ago, has just received the top gong at the Australian Bush Laureate Awards in Tamworth.

The Billy That Died With Its Boots On and Other Australian Verse won Book of the Year and was honoured with a Golden Gumleaf.

Mr Whiteside's work contains 65 poems over 150 pages and is targeted at children over nine years of age.

It is all in rhyming verse, in the style of Banjo Paterson and C. J. Dennis.

It also features a number of paper cut out illustrations by first-time book illustrator Lauren Merrick.

The book contains the poem *The Sash*, which won a Golden Gumleaf for Children's Poem of the Year in 2013.

That tells the true story of how a young Ned Kelly was awarded a bright green sash after saving a younger boy from drowning in a flooded creek.

Mr Whiteside said he was especially thrilled because the award he was given this year was a judgment against all other writers, not just children's authors.

"To win against books written for adults is especially gratifying," he said.

Mr Whiteside has been producing rhyming verse for more than 30 years, and has written up to 2000 poems.