

## Media Release

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### **BEACH, BUSH & BATTLERS** PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF CARTER

A fascinating touring exhibition from one of Australia's most important photographers is now on display at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. **Beach, Bush & Battlers** features a series of images from the State Library's collections by photographer Jeff Carter, selected from Carter's extraordinary collection of over 50,000 images of Australian life spanning 1944 to 2010.

Jeff Carter was a remarkable storyteller. For over 60 years he travelled Australia, using photography to celebrate the lives of 'ordinary' people at work and play, thereby producing one of this country's most historically significant photographic archives.

In 1946, at the age of 17, Carter adopted a nomadic lifestyle, travelling with a heavy typewriter and folding Kodak camera. He became passionate about producing 'true' documents, taking unposed photographs of the people who lived and toiled in rural and outback Australia, saying '... there seemed no reason for the harshness and poverty of their lives'. From the mid 1950s he worked as a full-time photojournalist. His images, often accompanied by his own text, were published in the major local and international picture magazines of the day.

Carter exposed and encouraged an appreciation of the difficulties faced every day by people living on the land, from charcoal burners, timber cutters, shearers and shooters, through to fishermen, fruit pickers, farmers and pastoralists. He also turned his attention to beach culture and city life, producing iconic images of this period in Australia's history.

The images selected by the curator Sandra Byron for **Beach, Bush & Battlers: Photographs by Jeff Carter**, were mostly taken by this down-to-earth cameraman during his travels across country Australia and along its coast in the 1950s and 60s.

Jeff Carter described himself in 2006, saying: 'I'm not really a photographer. I regard myself as a writer who takes pictures. Writers tell stories, so naturally my photos tell stories...' Nevertheless, his photographic stories of 'ordinary' Australians fascinate with their honesty and directness. With an archive of 50,000 negatives, taken over 50 years, Jeff Carter has captured the changing face of our nation.

**Beach, Bush & Battlers: Photographs by Jeff Carter** is on display at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery from Saturday 15 March until Sunday 18 May, 2014.