



# Wodonga / Albury Camera Club

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	May 8th, 2017	
<b>Judge:</b>	David Burren	
<b>Subject:</b>	Nature	

## Colour Prints – Section 'B' (Red Dot)

1	12	Look at Me	10	pts	Place	
<p>Perspective is unusual (looking down to ground?).</p>						
2	27	Graceful Gum	10	pts	Place	
<p>Eye goes to the bright stick on the ground to the right. Is that what you wanted? Most of the trunk of the tree is hidden in shadow.</p>						
3	37	Beauty	11	pts	Place	
<p>The bright OOF blossoms really drag our attention away from the other details.</p>						
4	79	Desert Bloom	10	pts	Place	
<p>High-contrast lighting is always tricky. The dark shadows (the centre of the flower) are probably where you want us to be looking, but the washed out (and thus featureless) surrounds are where our attention gets led.</p>						
5	116	Cascades	13	pts	Place	<b>Merit</b>
<p>Our attention does go to the lower falls, but follows up and down the stream quite well.</p>						
6	117	Wandering thru the Snow	11	pts	Place	
<p>Not a common sight for most of us, so is immediately interesting. A little bit more details in the shadows and a clearer view of the face would help it.</p>						
7	125	Rainbow Lorikeet	12	pts	Place	
<p>A classic and balanced composition. Lifting the shadows (the face) a little bit might lift it even more.</p>						
8	129	Bay of Fires	12	pts	Place	
<p>Managing the contrast between sky and land when the light gets interesting is one of the biggest landscape challenges. Darkening the sky and lightening the hill (subtly!) might bring out some of the details you were seeing when you took this.</p>						
9	161	Red Sundew	15	pts	Place	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>
<p>With a 3D subject like this and a narrow DOF it's always a challenge trying to decide which bits to have in focus. I think you've chosen well here!</p>						
10	168	Polar Bears	12	pts	Place	
<p>This scene feels very familiar! Keeping the Ivory Gull on the right in the story works, but you've ended up with the animals squashed up against the edges of the frame. I would be tempted to try a more-panoramic crop, trading off some of that sky and OOF foreground against having a little more room at the sides. Even if you left the Ivory Gull out and concentrated on the bears I think a pano crop might be better. Or maybe a vertical frame with <i>lots</i> of sky above the bears?</p>						
11	169	Marriners Falls	9	pts	Place	
<p>This is a very unusual framing. Your print markings show the water flowing from right to left! If it was turned 90° to the left I would be commenting on the very green colour balance, and the way you've lost detail in the water where it's turned to white. Those areas do draw our attention because they're bright, but then disappoint.</p>						



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<b>12</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>Wading</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
<p>You've got a diagonal line going on between the two prominent features: the duck's head and the stick in the foreground. Unfortunately, the OOF stick isn't at all interesting to look at. Simplifying the image by centring the bird (and getting rid of the stick) might give us an up/down flow of interest, from the bird's head down to its feet and then reflection (and back). However I would also fix the tilt (if the water overall is flat then the reflection of the head would be directly underneath the head).</p>						
<b>13</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>Unlucky Day for Some</b>	<b>13</b>	pts	Place	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>
<p>Action, and reasonable lighting. You've done well. If anything I would wish for a hint of feather detail in that bright white "shoulder" area.</p>						
<b>14</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Fallen Limb</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
<p>This is very stark lighting, and it's easy to lose context of what we're looking at, and imaging we're looking at the death throes of a strange sea-creature! (or maybe that's just me)</p>						
<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Tropical</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
<p>Isn't this upside down? It feels weird. The colour of the blossoms against the grey/blue stalk also seems strange. I'm not familiar with this plant, but with the fairly muted colours of the background it almost seems artificial (as if parts of the picture were desaturated). If it's been overmanipulated in that way it won't do well in a Nature context.</p>						



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### Colour Prints – Section 'A' (Yellow Dot)

<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Macaque</b>	<b>14</b>	pts	Place	<b>1st</b>
Lovely control of the in-focus areas, and an implicit visual connection between the monkey and the viewer.						
<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Hide and Seek</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
Lovely image of an often-elusive animal. Was this taken in captivity? Our attention goes to the face and the eyes, although the out of focus green leaves in that area are a bit distracting. There does seem to be a slight magenta cast to the image: be careful with the white balance.						
<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Sleepy Hollow</b>	<b>13</b>	pts	Place	<b>Merit</b>
Great composition, with the hint of a door out the other side of the hollow. Be careful about uneven gaps between the image and the frame.						
<b>4</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>So Much for Camouflage</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
I guess the only remaining camouflage is the fake eye at the other end of the animal. The placement of the animal and branch in the frame is great, except for the stick (or bark) protruding from the underside in a position which is quite distracting.						
<b>5</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>Damselfly</b>	<b>14</b>	pts	Place	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>
The animal may have been more horizontal in orientation on the actual plant, but this diagonal composition works very well. Great focus throughout too.						
<b>6</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>Hummingbird</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
The composition showing the bird approaching its target works well, and you've managed to freeze everything in a position that still implies movement. This is slightly over sharpened in places, both in terms of fine haloes as well as the broad strokes around the bird's body. If using Photoshop then using a Luminosity blend mode to apply the sharpening layer may help with some of the colour shifts in the haloes.						
<b>7</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
The red really draws our attention, and it's pleasantly positioned in the frame. Do be careful about the other bright items in the image though: they can fight the red for attention. If you haven't already, I would be experimenting with a polarising filter to tone down some of the reflections on the wet items.						
<b>8</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>A Crested Tern with a Good Catch</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
Well-caught with a decent spread of visible wing. Do be careful about maintaining detail in those bright whites though, and don't over-sharpen (the halo over the black head could also be caused by things like the over-use of the Shadows slider in Lightroom).						
<b>9</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>Sunset Walk to Reef Edge</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
Keeping these little guys still and sharp is a challenge. Well done!						
<b>10</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>On the Run</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
The lizard really does start to blend into the background. You've managed to make the front of the animal separate from the background a bit, but I would be careful with the subtlety of the haloes you've ended up with around the head for example. Incidentally, it looks like it wasn't actually running at the time you took the shot ( <i>I think the leg positions would be different</i> ).						



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## Monochrome Prints

<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Scarface</b>	<b>13</b>	pts	Place	<b>Merit</b>
<p>A fine portrait of this marsupial gangster. Sharp throughout the head area which is where our attention lingers. Incidentally, the first thing I noticed about the animal was the blonde fur, followed by the scars. The bright plant in front is slightly distracting, but at least it's not too close to the face.</p>						
<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Spig</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
<p>Simple and bold lighting, but the light coming from the right feels a little unnatural compared to if we position it as a vertical so the plant is "reaching up" towards the light that comes from above. It would have scored much higher if you just rotated it: I have to assess it the way you've marked it.</p>						
<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Sunbather</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
<p>You've managed to separate the croc from the background (<i>rock? concrete?</i>) as a slightly darker tone with slightly different texture, although as a monochrome image that's all you have to work with and I do think it would be a stronger image if you could increase that separation slightly. The texture on the rock is just enough that we keep going off to look at it instead of your subject. I always chuckle about the "get down to eye level" advice with predators like this, but I suspect that another angle might have given you more attention focussed on the animal. Lastly, I'm not sure that cropping the tail where you did gives the most pleasing result. Where to crop limbs of models (<i>e.g. not at joints</i>) is worth studying. Hopefully you've already experimented with some different crops and discarded the other options.</p>						
<b>4</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>Camouflage</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
<p>Removing the colour has if anything enhanced the camouflage, but the lighting is very harsh and as a result parts of the branches and the caterpillar itself are blown out to white. These draw our attention but then let us down with a lack of detail. Otherwise I like the composition, although I might have cropped in from the top right a bit to eliminate some of the bright leaves in that area.</p>						
<b>5</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Majestic Stag</b>	<b>8</b>	pts	Place	
<p>In a Nature context, it is usually important to avoid disappointing viewers who at first think they're looking at a document of reality. Here your simplification of the background by masking it out would probably result in a low score (e.g. 3) in a national / international Nature comp for example. The crop is exceedingly tight, with both the nose and the trailing antler almost touching the frame. A little more room (<i>similar to that above the antlers</i>) in front of the nose might make it feel less cramped. Also, be careful with your sharpening. The texture throughout this feels over sharpened, which I actually noticed before I saw what you'd done to the background.</p>						
<b>6</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>Dewy Web</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
<p>Great job at finding a clear refraction in all the drops. You've got a "stripe" of areas across the web that are in focus, but you should also give some thought to designing the overall composition if you can. Our eyes gravitate to the detailed (<i>in focus</i>) areas, as long as the OOF areas aren't too distracting. Think about where this guides our attention through the image. Have you considered looking at it upside down? It feels a little "other worldly" with the drops sitting on the web, but the flow of in-focus areas across the image feels a little more balanced that way.</p>						
<b>7</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>Bridled Nailtail Wallaby</b>	<b>14</b>	pts	Place	<b>1st</b>
<p>Excellent work, with both the focus and the overall composition.</p>						
<b>8</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>Bark Art</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
<p>Intriguing, although I do wonder what it would have looked like in colour. If we look at it long enough we even start to see animal heads in the artwork.</p>						



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9	117	Brewing Storm	10	pts	Place	
<p>This image feels to me more about the tree amongst the brush, with the sun shining in (<i>and with the cloud as background</i>) than about the storm. If you could move your position to the right slightly to change the merge between the dead tree and the background tree that might help it? In monochrome, all we have are shapes, tones, and textures, and some change to help the tree keep our attention longer might strengthen this image. Be careful about the coloured banding introduced by your printer.</p>						
10	129	Falls Creek	12	pts	Place	
<p>A pleasant scene, ranging from the foreground flowers, through the gnarled trees, and off to the distant hills. I can think of two things that might improve it: playing with the tone curve (<i>or the Highlights control in Lightroom / etc</i>) to maintain some more detail in the very bright flowers and the branches, and a bit more depth of field (e.g. smaller aperture) to have more detail available throughout the scene as we look around and through it.</p>						
11	146	A Gathering	10	pts	Place	
<p>Shooting fungi can be challenging. You want enough depth of field so there's enough detail in the cups of this <i>Mycena</i> sp. as we look around, but not so much that the background becomes distracting. You've had to use artificial light here, making the white cups stand out from the dark background (<i>and with harsh shadows</i>). Using a reflector and sometimes a slower shutter speed to even out the lighting can sometimes work well: hopefully you've experimented with that too. Evening out the lighting on the cups can avoid annoying "hot" areas. I like the overall composition, with the fungi reaching up and towards the right slightly.</p>						
12	168	Walrus	11	pts	Place	
<p>A peaceful scene before the seal slips off into the water. I like the composition although I play with the idea of cropping off the darker ice on the left of the frame. In monochrome, we lose the subtle contrasts between the brown of the seal and the grey/blue of the water. I would be careful with the tones here, with the dark seal quickly bunching up into blacks. Lifting the Shadows in Lightroom might help control this.</p>						
13	169	Dramatic Forest	10	pts	Place	
<p>The dark towering treetops (<i>a result of both the light falloff from your flash [?]</i>) and the contrast against the sky certainly adds an ominous feeling. The brightly-lit bare wood at the bottom does draw our attention a bit though, and that might not be what you're looking for.</p>						
14	172	Mighty Murray	10	pts	Place	
<p>Nicely framed view of the river. Maybe getting slightly closer would open up the distant view a little and help separate the hanging leaves from the distant tree a bit more. 400 ISO film can be grainy (<i>especially if you underexpose it but then come questions of whether this is slide or negative</i>) and the grain texture spread across this image is on the edge of being distracting for me. Also, be careful not to over sharpen the image: this can exaggerate the grain and has also introduced distracting haloes around the edges of objects. How old is this image? No-one uses "ASA" any more, and the newer films may have less grain.</p>						
15	119	Where Are My Babies	13	pts	Place	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place
<p>A well-framed scene of an animal interaction. You've also managed the exposure well despite the bright sun and dark birds. Shooting telephoto through hot air introduces challenges of getting a sharp image, and my first impression on looking at the faces was that they were a bit fuzzy. However, the grass just in front of them is sharper, so you might be having an issue with front-focussing. Many cameras now let you calibrate the camera for each particular lens, but you still need to be careful about which AF points are being used.</p>						
16	148	Wave Chaser	12	pts	Place	
<p>At first this is just a beach scene, but then we notice the central bird along with the footprints in the sand. These are nice touches which keep us looking around the image a bit longer. I like this composition. I probably wouldn't vignette this quite as strongly, especially as the darkening starts to cover up those footprints. Be careful with your horizon: this is tilted to the left slightly, and that should be easy to fix before printing (<i>or during framing</i>). Also be careful with sharpening: there's a halo above the cliff top which doesn't need to be there.</p>						



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<b>EDIB Competition</b>						
<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Hello</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
A fascinating portrait of this little possum. The white lump is somewhat disturbing!						
<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Aged Nature</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
Big stone formations like this make interesting subjects. Our attention goes to the outlines of the rocks and to the shapes within the hill. But this image is lacking in much detail. It feels as though it was a small image which has been enlarged and over sharpened, and when we go looking for shapes we get distracted by the fuzziness and the haloes. Moving to a slightly different position (e.g. to avoid the merge of the tree trunk on the right with the edge of the hill) might have helped, although obviously, I don't know how much flexibility you had on-site.						
<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Hungry for More</b>	<b>14</b>	pts	Place	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>
A well-executed image with interesting natural history stories within it. Don't be afraid to crop in further as I think that can focus our attention better on the two stories of the munching caterpillars and the one heading off on his/her own.						
<b>4</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>Inspiring</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
This image gives a quite different impression when we crop out the white top + bottom. I would not have placed it on a white background. Without that it becomes more about the sweeping clouds across the hills. The mown / eaten lawn/field and the dark lower right corner seem out of place for a Nature image though.						
<b>5</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>Pitcher</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
Pitcher plants are always interesting, but usually. Here the background is very visually-busy and quite distracting, although the iconic shape of the plant is still prominent.						
<b>6</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>Fish Dinner</b>	<b>13</b>	pts	Place	
A good capture of the colourful face. I would be tempted to compose this with the cormorant's head further to the left to make it feel more balanced. By the way the title doesn't seem to have much connection to the image, as the only sign of a fish dinner might be the blood on its neck.						
<b>7</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>Natural Formations</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
This feels like the Stirling Ranges in WA. Might not be though. Were you intending this as an image of the hills, with the trees forming a frame and foreground? A smaller aperture and different focus point may have helped bring the hills into focus.						
<b>8</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>Meal Time</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
If the story is about the bee then it's very small and obscured in the scene.						
<b>9</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>Lake Moraine</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
The colour of the water is vaguely believable, but overall the image has a strong blue cast. If we tweak the colour balance to make the sun-lit snow whiter, all the colours in the image feel a lot more natural. There's a lot of interesting detail in the scene, but most of it in the trees and hills. I would consider cropping off some of the foreground water to make the scene feel more balanced. Also, the stick coming in from the right over the water seems an unnecessary detail.						
<b>10</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>Damselfly</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
Good job on keeping the insect parallel to the camera's sensor. But if you can keep the camera more stable the image will be crisper (or was the branch moving?). Try to notice the background highlights when taking the photo. Without that bright brown strip on the left the visual impact might be different.						
<b>11</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>Caladenia</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
Comments: The core of the flower is in focus, but it would be stronger if the depth of field was just a little deeper to have more of the blue in focus it would be stronger. Of course, keeping the background out of focus remains key. I'm not sure the white vignette around the edges really works unless the image is on a white page.						



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<b>12</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>Palmystery</b>	<b>14</b>	pts	Place	<b>1st</b>
Comments: A good choice to go B&W and make this image (of the trunk?) almost abstract.						
<b>13</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>Mushes</b>	<b>11</b>	pts	Place	
Getting down low for the unusual point of view is always a good bed, but a little subtle "gardening" might simplify the image. You might be able to move the grey foreground stick, and maybe some of the "midground" twigs so they're not in your way, but you would have to be very cautious as sometimes the fungi are attached.						
<b>14</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>Artic Summer</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	<b>Merit</b>
I feel like I know this precise fjord! I found that cropping the top of the image ( <i>eliminating the blue sky</i> ) makes us explore the scene in more detail. Give it a try.						
<b>15</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>Stevenson's Falls</b>	<b>10</b>	pts	Place	
An iconic location. With most waterfalls if you try to include a cloudy sky above them that sky turns into a white block, which has happened here. HDR or graduated filters can help with this ( <i>although the uneven shape of the trees complicates the use of filters</i> ). I would be tempted to try a slightly darker exposure (toning down that sky plus leaving some detail in the brightest areas of your "candy floss" moving water) even if you then brightened the dark areas a little to compensate ( <i>lift the Shadows in Lightroom for example</i> ).						
<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Natures Pattern</b>	<b>9</b>	pts	Place	
Water really brings out the patterns in this bark. Wetting the entire area can eliminate distractions like the dry areas in the lower right. But my first reaction to this is that it would be stronger if you had all of it in focus. Often a tripod and a small aperture are key to this.						
<b>17</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>In Flight</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
Catching that moment of flight is great. I think you could improve this by cropping off much of the left of the frame ( <i>making it square</i> ) and fixing the tilt ( <i>at the moment the water is sloping "uphill" to the right</i> ). A useful tip is that as long as the water ( <i>mirror</i> ) is horizontal then an object will be directly above its reflection.						
<b>18</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>My Flower, Shoo</b>	<b>12</b>	pts	Place	
The bright background is slightly distracting, but only to the level of "a subtle vignette around the edges to darken the background would help concentrate our attention on the bees". Cute title.						



# Wodonga / Albury Camera Club

EDIA Competition							
1	1	<b>Flying Jewel</b>	13	pts	Place	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	
<p>A charming image of a jewel.            Your shutter speed and high ISO have contributed to the blurred “ghost” image. This might add to the effect you’re after, but if you wanted to reduce it you could use more flash units for brighter flash without lengthening the flash burst. You could put the flash heads behind a single diffuser if you needed to avoid multiple reflections in that eye of course.            I would be tempted to change the crop slightly to reduce the space “behind” the bird (on the right) as we have an impression of the bird moving to the left.</p>							
2	10	<b>Is That a Snack I See</b>	10	pts	Place		
<p>Not being known as an animal that climbs trees, this cheetah image seems to scream “zoo” to me. If you can get it further away from a background (and proportionally closer to the camera you may be able to reduce the clarity and clutter of that background.</p>							
3	14	<b>In the O’l Gum Tree</b>	10	pts	Place		
<p>An iconic framing of an iconic bird. There are two areas I would try to improve if you can: the busy background, and the “merge” between the bird’s tail and the branch in the background. Slight changes in camera location can often help with both.</p>							
4	43	<b>Two Little Red Wattlebirds Sitting</b>	10	pts	Place		
<p>Lovely birds, and a pleasant colour scheme in this image. It is a shame about that out-of-focus foliage obscuring parts of both birds though. Incidentally these don’t look like “Red Wattlebirds”, but rather the “Little Wattlebird”. There is no “Little Red” species.</p>							
5	81	<b>Scarlet Honeyeater</b>	12	pts	Place		
<p>This isn’t a bird many of us see often, and this seems to have captured some “attitude” in its pose! Well done.</p>							
6	113	<b>Antechinus</b>	14	pts	Place	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	
<p>A great capture of an elusive animal. Well done! I think I like the slightly-pano crop here, exaggerating the feeling of the animal peeking around the trunk.</p>							
7	146	<b>Greeting the Sun</b>	11	pts	Place		
<p>Good use of a square crop. I might brighten the shadows slightly to put a hint more texture in the foreground rocks, although you’d have to be careful to not make the haloes around the rocks too obvious.</p>							
8	152	<b>Sunset Light through a Seashell</b>	12	pts	Place		
<p>Fascinating light. I would be tempted to crop the sides of this off and thus simplify the composition greatly.</p>							
9	156	<b>Stranded at Low Tide</b>	10	pts	Place		
<p>An image of an animal dead or in distress like this is quite disturbing. If you wanted to explore the scene a little more I would encourage you to get down even lower for a different angle.</p>							
10	119	<b>Digging My Way Out</b>	11	pts	Place		
<p>These little guys rarely pose for long, so well done!</p>							