

Tale of some tough truths

By Jess Baker

A renowned bush poet and author from Stanthorpe has released his fifth book, *Queensland's Frontier Wars*, which aims to reveal the true and violent nature of the state's colonisation.

Born in rural New Zealand in 1950, Jack relocated to the Granite Belt in 1990. He now resides at Eukey with his wife Stella Matheson-Drake, where he ran a horseback, trail riding business until 2001.

Since retiring, Jack has thrown himself into his passion, writing and reciting bush poetry and books.

He said his most recent book, *Queensland's Frontier Wars*, exposed shocking but important truths of how the state was wrested from its original inhabitants.

"The government from federation suppressed the fact that this country had been invaded, virtually, and the land was taken off the traditional owners," Jack said.

"I think the truth needs to be told. How are we going to get reconciliation without people knowing the real story?"

Jack has spent the past three years scouring records and archives, digging up old newspapers and magazines, and speaking with "several hundred" people in research for the book.

Now, it is complete and available for purchase.

Jack said he imagined many people would be surprised to learn the, often grisly, truth behind the European settlement of local land.

"We've always been fed this line that Australia was settled peacefully," he said. "Well, it wasn't."

Jack said one of the many stories that stayed with him after researching and writing the book was about the discovery of some hanging trees in far western Queensland.

"That was all pretty new. I was introduced



Stanthorpe author Jack Drake has now officially released his fifth book, 'Queensland's Frontier Wars'.

to it by an old fellow who was out there in the 1960s and he'd talk to old people," Jack said.

"It's all in the book but I think that has only cropped up in a few other things. I didn't find it in any of the university-type publications. (It's) gruesome, but interesting."

He said he made sure to write in a way peo-

ple would understand, with maps and illustrations, so that all readers could come away having learned some important truths about Australia's past.

The book is Jack's fifth, but certainly not his last. In fact, he currently has two in the pipeline — one, a book researched for 50 years by a friend

of Jack who died before he put pen to paper.

Queensland's Frontier Wars is available for \$35 from Jack at www.jackdrake.com.au, from Boolarong Press at publish@boolarongpress.com.au, from Outback Books in Toowoomba at closeandmoller@gmail.com and from book shops in Brisbane.

Picture: JESS BAKER

My Own Story
"Red Gum Ridge" Eukey