

Oxford Australia Word of the Month

May 2009

chook run – (at a bowling club, golf club, etc.) a social competition in bowls, golf, etc., with frozen chickens etc. as prizes.

Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary

Why have I received **Oxford Australia Word of the Month**?

You are receiving this email because you are a valued customer of Oxford University Press.

You can unsubscribe at any time by sending an email to wordofthemonth.au@oup.com with 'Unsubscribe WOTM' in the subject line.

How do I subscribe?

If you have a colleague or a friend who you think would like to receive Oxford Australia Word of the Month, all they need to do is email wordofthemonth.au@oup.com with 'Subscribe WOTM' in the subject line.

Where can I learn more about the **Australian National Dictionary Centre**?

Visit: www.anu.edu.au/ANDC

Where can I learn more about **Oxford University Press**?

Visit: www.oup.com.au



• **Word of the Month: The Full Story**

• **Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary**

Please direct all media enquiries to:

Betty Hew

Marketing Coordinator
General Division

Phone:
(03) 9934 9131

Email:
betty.hew@oup.com

chook run

The story behind the Word of the Month

We all recognise **chook** as an Australianism for **chicken**. The word comes from British dialect **chuck** (also appearing in the form **chookie**), where it was used as a 'call to fowls', and then as a word for 'fowl, hen, chicken'. It became established in Australian English in the second half of the nineteenth century, though with a variety of spellings: **chuckey**, **chookie**, **choock**. The spelling **chook** had won out by about 1910.

The word is now so established in Australian English that anyone with the surname **Fowler** is likely to be nicknamed '**Chook**' Fowler. The compound **chook raffle** was established by the 1960s as a term for a raffle, often in a pub, for which the prize was a ready-to-cook chicken. The idiom **he couldn't run a chook raffle** came to be used as a comment on perceived incompetence, as in this recent letter to the editor in the *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 20 March 2009: 'Senators Fielding and Xenophon, who were elected by a miniscule number of votes, parade around promoting themselves as saviours of the Australian people. I frankly would not employ them to run a chook raffle.'

A **chook house**, or **chook yard**, or **chook run** is a fenced-off area (often fenced in **chicken wire**) where domestic poultry are kept. But what do you make of the following **chook runs**?

Chook run plucks eagle. In a recent chook run at Belconnen, member Hamish Murray scored an eagle on the 480m par-five 17th. *Canberra Times*, 11 December 2008

Goondiwindi golfer Bonhomme, a regular in the Friday 'chook run' on the bush course four hours' drive southwest of Brisbane, traded shots with heavyweights Allenby and Geoff Ogilvy early in the day. *Courier-Mail*, 14 December 2007

BOWLS Belconnen: chook run, mixed pairs, men, women, coaching 10 a.m. *Canberra Times*, 9 December 2006

Our bowlers suffered a surprise defeat at the hands of Kerang last Saturday. ... The chook run tonight will commence at 6 p.m. and names to John Hunter or Herbie Hehir no later than 5.30. *Pastoral Times*, 25 November 1988

This is clearly a new sense of **chook run**, which involves a competition (usually a shortened form of the usual competition) at a sporting club, for which the prize is much the same as that for a pub **chook raffle**—a ready-to-cook or frozen chicken.

metrosexual
weapon
of mass destruction
karrack
glycaemic
burka
index
barbecue stopper
senior moment
Sudoku
hornbag
dishlicker
witlof
cyberstalking
Naltrexone
pear-shaped
yakitori
Bioterrorism