# Reviews and Feedback on Sparrows of Kabul performances

## Media

“Let there be no doubt about it. Fred Smith is an Australian national treasure. Diplomat, philosopher, poet and raconteur his songs reverberate with the prophetic voice of humanity.  Smith’s songs of experience echo the poetry of Bertolt Brecht and the music of Kurt Weill. Politics and social justice combine not as harsh didactic judgements but as the profound voice of empathy. Smith’s songs take us on a roller-coaster ride of turbulent emotions. We are gripped by the cruel suffering of a courteous, hospitable and humour loving people, distraught at the deaths of young Sappers barely turned adults, Accompanying images of soldiers at war and human suffering sear the mind and blazon upon the heart of an audience gripped by Smith’s powerful narrative and the driving lyrics of his songs. Smith’s charity concert is a moving awakening of the danger, the fear, the perils and the futility of war, played out by politicians, determined by commanders and lived by innocent victims of man’s inhumanity to men, women and children.”

Smith’s song palette paints life’s diverse tapestry in all its colours, sad, funny, haunting and irreverent. Listening to this master storyteller in song and anecdote I am aware that we are one humanity travelling through the canyon of life’s experiences. Anger swells, pathos erupts, compassion collides and the minstrel of the nation’s conscience carries us along the roller-coaster ride of emotions and towards the height of understanding…an extraordinary, wonderful and heart-uplifting concert.

This concert must tour. It should be supported to tour every capital and festival throughout the land.”

…by Peter Wilkins, Canberra Critics Circle, [Canberra Critics Circle: FRED SMITH A CHARITY CONCERT TO WELCOME AFGHANISTAN REFUGEES TO CANBERRA. (ccc-canberracriticscircle.blogspot.com)](https://ccc-canberracriticscircle.blogspot.com/2022/02/fred-smith-charirty-concert-to-welcome.html)

This was more than a concert. It was an astute analysis of Australia’s 20-year involvement in the Afghan War from a humanitarian who witnessed the many shades of war first hand. It is an accurate story of political and military history which needs to be told. The audience at this concert learned a great deal, this show needs to tour the country so that Australians all over can gain an understanding of the horrors of war and the beauty of peace.

… by Ian McLean, City News

5 Stars

In a world beset by megalomaniacs, those most beset need all the help they can get from skilled down-to-earth people who feel for them. With his quiet, compassionate attentiveness, a bird’s-eye view of world affairs, a wicked sense of humour that coincidentally meets Afghani humour on its own ground, and no problem in entertaining those who need it when they need it most, Fred Smith is one of those, and he gave full credit to those on the ground in Afghanistan and others in Canberra who worked long, hard hours to rescue as many as possible before the western nations left a vacuum for the Taliban again to fill… a tight and at times haunting performance.

…John P. Harvey, BMA <https://bmamag.com/2022/02/22/fred-smith-and-friends-the-playhouse-thursday-17-february/>

“While the concert is a high-quality musical event in its own right, the context Fred provides makes it a beautiful and poignant night of learning and reflecting.”

… David Grybowski, [Sparrows of Kabul – Kabul Evacuation Anniversary Tour | The Barefoot Review](https://www.thebarefootreview.com.au/menu/theatre/119-2014-adelaide-reviews/2372-sparrows-of-kabul-kabul-evacuation-anniversary-tour.html)

“A beautiful retelling of Australia’s Afghanistan experience…a sense of sharing collective grief.”

…Adrienne Francis, ABC 666, Saturday Breakfast, 19 February 2022

Fred Smith has taken on a mighty workload taking his story far and wide around Australia. His stated purpose is to help as many people as possible understand what everyone involved went through, so that people who served in Afghanistan in whatever capacity are not met with the same lack of understanding as those who served in previous wars such as Vietnam. For this reason alone, Sparrows of Kabul is a show worth seeing, and a song cycle worth hearing. **5 stars**

**Adrian Miller** [Sparrows of Kabul: Musical Lessons from Afghanistan ~ Adelaide Fringe 2023 Review - The Clothesline - Digital Arts MagazineThe Clothesline – Digital Arts Magazine](https://theclothesline.com.au/sparrows-of-kabul-adelaide-fringe-2023-review/)

The two-hour song cycle performed by Fred Smith and his band was moving, at times humorous, and above all insightful into the longest war Australian forces have fought overseas. **Marion Williams, Narooma News**

<https://www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/story/8307353/fred-smith-explains-the-complexities-of-australias-longest-overseas-war-afghanistan/>

Audience Feedback from Newstead concert:

“One of the best performances I’ve seen in a long while! It had everything from excellent musicality to poignant and clever dialogue, to deep emotional portrayals of the plight of the Afghani people and Australian defence forces. Fred Smith and his highly skilled band brought not only another world into our everyday lives, but a first hand insight and truthtelling. An incredibly moving experience… Thankyou”

“Thank you. It was the most magnificent, moving evening. I was over awed by it - and my group of friends were also. We sat up talking for hours and have discussed it today.”

“I found the whole experience as moving as any concert I have attended.”

“Yes, Fred Smith is an amazing storyteller  song writer and musician. Another powerful performance. Congratulations getting him to Newstead.”

“Still feeling the buzz indeed…it was a powerful show which took you through the whole gamut of emotions, laughing one minute and holding back the tears the next. His delivery was impeccable and the way it was so perfectly synchronised with the backdrop of imagery or text was wholly captivating. Ably supported by the beautiful voice of Sadie and the rest of the band it was an all engrossing experience. So much to take in I’d go again at the drop of a hat.”

“outstanding show. Very moving, terrific use of photos accompanying songs.
Singers superb, violin , bass , drums and guitar  great combination.
A wonderful evening.”

Audience Feedback from Tasmania tour:

“It made me think more about things from soldiers' perspective - I often focus on the victims of war, in particular the citizens of the countries. This developed my understanding of both sides and the soldiers themselves.”

“Challenging, emotional, inspiring, informative.”

“Delivered with the right combination of wit and sober truth”

“’This was a stunning performance - unbelievably excellent and moving. “

“I thought it was excellent, thought provoking and very moving. I cried at times and proper belly laughed too”

“Things can be very much removed in Australia, particularly Tasmania so it was good to be reminded of what has happened and is still happening.”

Feedback from WA Tour:

Big thanks to all who came along to Sparrows of Kabul, a crowd of more than 80 gathered at the Narrogin Town Hall to experience Fred Smith & band's extraordinary performance.

"A quality performance providing a new perspective on this deeply emotional subject. Fred's work presented with sometimes gritty and raw images was beautifully balanced by his innate wit and the musical backing! The violinist and female vocal were stunning. What a trip! Thanks again Arts Narrogin for such diverse yet relevant programming." - Audience Feedback

“this was an absolutely fantastic performance. An amazing way to learn about the Afghan war from someone who was there. I thoroughly recommend seeing Fred Smith” Audience feedback, Gosnells performance at Don Russell Performing Arts Centre.

## Facebook Posts

Fred Smith gave a legendary performance of this show Sparrows of Kabul in Albany WA last weekend. I can recommend his show 5 stars from me. Left me transformed. Wow…the revelation that is FRED SMITH. Master songwriter, poet and storyteller who took his audience on a very personal and unforgettable journey to Afghanistan and back to Canberra. He was a diplomat and has written books, recorded his songs and should in my opinion be a household name in Australia. Unforgettable performance that shifted my axis and ship wrecked me in the dusty streets of Kabul…A national treasure.

### [**Vivienne Garrett**](https://www.facebook.com/vivienne.garrett?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWMksUIwvJN9kjumhQ8YAHG_dQFMrLXh1mRud_u60etaZoAdOeuNVklcGQCt2533PZxoDBmPXDY4CTozrrPs8u7BZGMHVBhZubb1w4aTAiPwq_SoAjM54T5Ol7tA8hQpQwPh640O1AC9zDeSM7ffmeZjsovbhx5wOgTydb4VNIaXw&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

Last night I was privileged to see the brilliant [Fred Smith](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWFMj_uo3d0zHwisWM1wPYxKhnDdACfAR60dcxDn4m3WBtKtkMWO9qGib5y9iCVENlSGqm7SSqld_PWHl-gq_a4dZ4xygd2anW6Yr0pLdato3iGa0CU8tABKecpFm3Y0cg&__tn__=-%5dK-R) performing at the Canberra Theatre Centre, in a special concert to welcome Afghan refugees to Canberra. It was a sometimes funny and often deeply moving experience as Fred recounted, in both spoken word and song, his experiences in Afghanistan and the recent history of Afghanistan more generally. His words were accompanied by beautifully curated projected images and videos that enhanced the power of his lyrics. A splendid ensemble of musicians, including my old mate [Mitch Preston](https://www.facebook.com/mitch.preston2?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWFMj_uo3d0zHwisWM1wPYxKhnDdACfAR60dcxDn4m3WBtKtkMWO9qGib5y9iCVENlSGqm7SSqld_PWHl-gq_a4dZ4xygd2anW6Yr0pLdato3iGa0CU8tABKecpFm3Y0cg&__tn__=-%5dK-R), provided Fred with virtuosic support. Many of the refugees were in the audience, and the most moving moment of the night came when Fred started to sing a well known Afghani song about attachment to land, and several audience members spontaneously joined in. The whole experience truly brought home the tragic recent events in Afghanistan and reinforced that we are all in this experience of life together. Fred is a remarkable songwriter and performer, as well as being a thoroughly decent human being. His show deserves to be seen by every Australian. David Atfield, FB

[**Hugh Watson**](https://www.facebook.com/hugh.watson.52?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTc5ODc3MjI1OTU5NV84NzYxNjM5OTM4NzQ5NDM%3D&__tn__=R*F)

Congratulations Fred. It is a commanding show, that all should see.

[**Keith Preston**](https://www.facebook.com/keith.preston1?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTc5ODc3MjI1OTU5NV81NzYxMjI2MTEzMTAwNTg%3D&__tn__=R*F)

Brilliant contribution to the story of Australia's engagement with Afghanistan...

[**Andrew Mort**](https://www.facebook.com/andrew.macnaughton.50?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MjQwNjM3OTc4OTU5NV8xNDc0NTY0NjUzMjYzNTY0&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVk-nan1Ux1vW4ugZwWG3PE4WWCi7L44sbdOBQxSLU1ysEPXnhwhARVE_MoBUXisIo456eeOWiDiCMBBYlKLPnlDHBLsZbPiQcrAfsjikSyuqIp1r_xGOaSRYaUq6U0OM4&__tn__=R%5d-R)

Mate your music will keep telling future generations about the sacrifices made

[**Chris Lambert**](https://www.facebook.com/amanda.lambert.790256?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MjI5MDM3Nzc5NDU5NV8xMDQ5OTYyOTc2ODQzMjAw&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUbsitXTpiJqCs7M5EVeFIirFfI--eNpu5vZ4Q--e9iF2juSEj0ra9M7R2jb4LFQ0NQ-8aWJpO3XhzWnOEQTOU-4Ezba6rKuuGjvzTsUQbFqCXNnVoSvQAmSsBPt-d-d-rmdLBBrewlBmxHYpGiM7c000KzjPC2kKPsNpb_FbSHjCnNyqDKt3-FpYrLPDJNoktp-ycvBVuB_ZaVQ9hsBVUKMSQKg2HfCd_ScERGquREQg&__tn__=R%5d-R)

**So blessed to have been at Fred’s show last night in Maleny. Such a thoughtful, intelligent and loving tribute to Australia’s commitment to the Afghanistan conflict and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. A complex and compelling story that must be told **

This beguiling, utterly unique performance is a must see. A powerful, unforgettable performance, beautifully produced to tell the story of Afghanistan through the eyes and hearts of Australians who were there...until the very end.

Fred is a brilliant story teller. This is his story. And it is Australia's story. It is full of heart, sorrow and glimpses of joy, woven into a narrative about love, loss, failure and hope. Don't miss it. Virginia Haussegger

Canberra Writers Festival performance mesmerising. . I think he is a genius songwriter. Such a clever wordsmith and a wonderful person. We are so fortunate to have his stories and songs. Kind regards, Suzanne

We saw an earlier version of Fred Smith's "Sparrows of Kabul" just a year or so ago. It has developed in both scope and gravitas. We both think he should go to the Edinburgh Fringe with it in 2024.

It is an incredibly moving mixture of humour and pathos that shines a light in the darkest of places. There is possibly nothing quite like it anywhere in the world, because there are probably very few diplomats who can do what Fred can do, and have been so inclined to be so courageous in telling this story on stage.

It leaves you with a fresh perspective of your place in the world. It's challenging for sure, but well worth the effort.

Kieren Butler, [Whimsical Tricycle](https://www.facebook.com/whimsicaltricycle?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXF8L8GtBUvYw1z_3JJsku66xGE6bGmk8Cbz2NQqmhxYGOO3ivfULmCBKXTk5kJ8LEszmP95i0yuH2AU4RHLM9AEf43N2GqhKwTsM_jlpmPrsy0GOGteMie2SMFUyfmO6uBQ_1t3qdiGEpwhoAw-yWJLTdQlBVtTfHIZLzkY6013juSuuXrKD010Y3r9k5l_UauRcDD1qjWEuRjiBNEYE13&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

Hi Fred. I was at your show tonight in Hastings and unfortunately we had to leave early. I attended with my husband who was in Afghanistan as a British SF soldier. Lately he’s been struggling with his past and he wanted to see your show to get a different perspective.
He cried a lot. (As did I)
It was an incredible experience and you have a real skill of telling a story that reached deep, touches you beautifully yet uncomfortably, and yet it wakens your humanity for places and people you’ve never met. I just wanted to say thank you for your insights. Your band, music, voice and talents were amazing. Your musicians were outstanding. I hope you enjoy our beautiful region while you’re here and
Aroha kia koutou mō to haerenga. (Best wishes to you all for your journey)
Kelly

I cannot recommend this show highly enough. [John](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001268364574&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVZhBez880iX5B-rXvwDp93he59AvZfKa-b4Dmoo223v5PEVxx8f3Cj3LqYViErNbqHjK16SibpcxcCvKT4Evz6BtlXBNVibumluV8lnNTZmLg2t-Y0dZLH8AgTKBVe0exOJKrY9JfzuhcXaxiUumubcS6rfUB8nyoy35zNUpm1vnkYCG22fimeYdP0sdF2iGWtqIy3JmFsuKnmmqNz5h4mLKsnuwpy2QnzYTNGe9uP6g&__tn__=-%5dK-R) and I first saw [Fred](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVZhBez880iX5B-rXvwDp93he59AvZfKa-b4Dmoo223v5PEVxx8f3Cj3LqYViErNbqHjK16SibpcxcCvKT4Evz6BtlXBNVibumluV8lnNTZmLg2t-Y0dZLH8AgTKBVe0exOJKrY9JfzuhcXaxiUumubcS6rfUB8nyoy35zNUpm1vnkYCG22fimeYdP0sdF2iGWtqIy3JmFsuKnmmqNz5h4mLKsnuwpy2QnzYTNGe9uP6g&__tn__=-%5dK-R) at his launch of his first CD chronicling his first posting to Afghanistan, years ago in the Canberra region. We were spellbound.

Fred is everything the publicity people say about him, he is truly an extraordinary storyteller who draws his audience into his experiences. As for his songs ... I still get teary when certain of his songs come on our 'shuffled' music player.

Some of you will know that I attempt to play a couple of his songs and one, "Sappers' Lullaby" has a section in it that I struggle not to sob whilst I'm singing it. Fred's songs are that powerful.

And hey, I'm not saying it's all weepy stuff - oh no! He'll have you in stitches too!

Apparently Fred is planning on this tour as being his final 'fling' for his show about his time in Afghanistan. If you haven't seen it and you can make it to one of the shows, do yourself a big favour and get there. If you don't enjoy it, shout at me afterwards ... but I suspect you'll be thanking me instead

Karen WHite

“The first hand experience made it powerful”
Nick, Nathalia

“It was very well delivered. Stuck to the facts without an agenda but was engaging. It pushed you to ask questions about the morals of situations.”
Dominic, Kyabram

“It was presented in a way I could digest and helped me learn more about a war I heard of as a kid”
Michelle, Kyabram

Hands down one of the best shows I have ever been to. The intimacy of such a small audience only heightens the focus of what is a very important subject. I'd have to give it a 12 out of 10 stars. [**Shamus Butson**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100075922600519&comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTIyMDM5ODEyOTU5NV85MzIxODQ1NzgyMTcwMDc%3D&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWSmLCnVaMITyp9zHI-VPyIy7lADOR9Yz0MRf1GcZIHrpiB32BC4YSohceaZDOuRSP81dol0bST0MXdqcr-x1KvfUEMsu86TXvwuC4REdwyhv8KvElryVg6_IS92Sk6eIc&__tn__=R%5d-R)

Saw the show at Cygnet, it was the highlight of the Festival for me and I am sure, many others. Not many artists get standing ovations at Folk Festivals but Fred got one here. [**Peter Welcher**](https://www.facebook.com/peter.welcher.56?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTIyMDM5ODEyOTU5NV84ODY3ODAyNTI1MzcwODY%3D&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXvR0XdpzMsO4QPfd6DzUnfW1uMppED1D1DBegVSL3e2AaSoPVOkEOINKWA24DMjYm7Ki7etDmEKp-BofLLjctArKrliuZo1eK5Ljdw1ar2BjMwBF6fD_E8ZmQg0aZbO0w&__tn__=R%5d-R)

What a fantastic evening. Not just music concert but a real emotional experience. Fred storytelling certainly gave me a completely different viewpoint of the whole Australia-Afghanistan conflict. Thank you.

**Andrew McDowall**

[**Leonie Francis**](https://www.facebook.com/leonie.francis.127?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoyNjY3ODU0MjI0MDk3NzRfMjY5MDc4OTA4ODQ3MDky&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZW84pE3sA5VNbphTjzKzQFugsll5MXKTy_1C8xRZvfvUmwXyCUoeSG263cHKxqpaZ44on5hSeiekUTEKibguSrZUarlpWc3hZprh8mfK9xIwasORgcbPeNadhDiJHnufDs&__tn__=R%5d-R)

I’ve just come from the performance at Nathalia and it was an amazing event! Powerful, informative, uplifting, heartwarming, sad, a bit of humour, wonderful lyrics, music, voices, stories! I would highly recommend.

[**Greg Leong**](https://www.facebook.com/greg.leong.16?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTM1MTYyMzcyNDU5NV8xODk4ODM4NjM4OTY1NTQ%3D&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVaUQW1QYaJolT3zs1d3kG-qJEAaPM33uIiaq5o8clzD0Q2XVzdASwrstTYs5w6UmVcn-CTdJUxxho1g7FNXiJtqA7lqc17XNgHP7X_GmnaPSl-3vXYdyHy18lCwaB3En8&__tn__=R%5d-R)

Good morning Fred. Last night (Saturday 22nd Launceston) "The Sparrows of Kabul" moved me incredibly. You are such a fine poet, and the talented young musician who bookended the show with wonderful songs (especially the ending number about a Afghani woman in exile) has the purest of voices. You have given so much of your life to this project, not just in terms of physical time. I also wondered how spiritually and emotionally creating the songs helps you come to terms with the trauma of your experiences (eg. The Sappers Lullabye had me close to tears). Keep well wonderful man. Greg Leong

[**Rache Ingram**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000280955316&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVp13YzJ93EH5-iUYORQi8mXVTyJqS1TSZ1a45V0MyEeS05y9vrqRvWb9JpC3hM5CPPolNzpaGtOsgdkx4boXNi6ykZFRAsQg6wcmSfD08ghmZjT3CHLJ6Ubw42cHIm5LRpovpU9XndrU_zb48E4zhuNzNH3wRUo7GtDGmXDGBOwg&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

**·**

**Took mum to Eudlo to see** [**Fred Smith**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVp13YzJ93EH5-iUYORQi8mXVTyJqS1TSZ1a45V0MyEeS05y9vrqRvWb9JpC3hM5CPPolNzpaGtOsgdkx4boXNi6ykZFRAsQg6wcmSfD08ghmZjT3CHLJ6Ubw42cHIm5LRpovpU9XndrU_zb48E4zhuNzNH3wRUo7GtDGmXDGBOwg&__tn__=-%5dK-R)**, Sparrows of Kabul/ Dust of Uruzgan tour~ really lovely & emotional evening.**

The incredible energy and social justice brilliance of [Fred Smith](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWeiUntpBDXQO_u-asS-PIncL1o0yQtowpkx5GEAzsAq-sqUjVsZvaveXQ5v3lNzcIlEYDUzttgHIMnlEeaQo8t5aembjZ0lp6v3YFw0tpVfkMvzTco1E_hH6qse6rJLK8JEPf1DnBhmJR04jSCANDH&__tn__=-%5dK-R) and [Billy Bragg](https://www.facebook.com/billybraggofficial?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWeiUntpBDXQO_u-asS-PIncL1o0yQtowpkx5GEAzsAq-sqUjVsZvaveXQ5v3lNzcIlEYDUzttgHIMnlEeaQo8t5aembjZ0lp6v3YFw0tpVfkMvzTco1E_hH6qse6rJLK8JEPf1DnBhmJR04jSCANDH&__tn__=-%5dK-R) at the National Folk Fest - amongst other truly amazing musicians it has been a feast and a test of the senses and emotions. If you can, try to see Fred Smith and [Sparrows of Kabul: Fred Smith Productions](https://www.facebook.com/events/683263746930579/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWeiUntpBDXQO_u-asS-PIncL1o0yQtowpkx5GEAzsAq-sqUjVsZvaveXQ5v3lNzcIlEYDUzttgHIMnlEeaQo8t5aembjZ0lp6v3YFw0tpVfkMvzTco1E_hH6qse6rJLK8JEPf1DnBhmJR04jSCANDH&__tn__=-UK-R) - life changing indeed  [**Julie Lyford**](https://www.facebook.com/julie.lyford.5?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWeiUntpBDXQO_u-asS-PIncL1o0yQtowpkx5GEAzsAq-sqUjVsZvaveXQ5v3lNzcIlEYDUzttgHIMnlEeaQo8t5aembjZ0lp6v3YFw0tpVfkMvzTco1E_hH6qse6rJLK8JEPf1DnBhmJR04jSCANDH&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

“memorable, heart warming and thought provoking” Cherry Best

“superb songs, a great band, the inspirational Fred Smith” Ian Milne

[**Lynda Gordon-Squire**](https://www.facebook.com/lynda.gordonsquire?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MTI4MTU0NzI5OTU5NV82MTQ0MTg2NDM5MjU1OTg%3D&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZV0MOtuyAsPAMUzUEASSX6f9KwnnM1cIq2Cibp92NezSIRqOEBpehJHCOvzHTFpOozoVfY75heeVwzypH9R9m12MWA29o_lkXKn3IXYAxOttMrWZ-s4DCefS-Xl0tOkVjPWtI8Nh4tm__rSi5F7xGqqNbXs08UqRLbjdlrwNBbB4g&__tn__=R%5d-R)

I’ve just been part of your wonderful performance at The Nash. I cried. I laughed and thank you so much for your work.

Such a wonderful show at the NFF on Sunday, so very very moving and emotional

Isabel Firkins-Fox

[**Linda Bone Photographer**](https://www.facebook.com/lindabonephotographer?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVmBb7gVIARgej0rrVWxbeeQ0ogZlq1uN7XphcaxxV0VsHHMdNaLmyTLJq8tFyNe-eort0AP6FT-5i-YdgfK-fx9Ct6lvidEAh4kKpSk1khthiHCvtVymzLhX79cP0eYDpZruyPGdDIyjSYBbCCyE2hBwrLtsVEkfqn99VDWAHrYA&__tn__=-UC%2CP-y-R)

[**August 13 at 9:40 PM**](https://www.facebook.com/fredsmithmusic/posts/559497362403585?comment_id=616668266556792&notif_id=1660452532117949&notif_t=feed_comment&ref=notif)  ·

Tonight Townsville was treated to [Fred Smith](https://www.facebook.com/fredsmithmusic?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVmBb7gVIARgej0rrVWxbeeQ0ogZlq1uN7XphcaxxV0VsHHMdNaLmyTLJq8tFyNe-eort0AP6FT-5i-YdgfK-fx9Ct6lvidEAh4kKpSk1khthiHCvtVymzLhX79cP0eYDpZruyPGdDIyjSYBbCCyE2hBwrLtsVEkfqn99VDWAHrYA&__tn__=-%5dK-y-R) playing at Jezzine Barracks, supported by the 1RAR Band.

A "quick trip" to the Strand turned into over 2 hours of contemplation and appreciation. Fred's lyrical storytelling of our involvement in Afghanistan was powerful, filled with the experiences of a man who has spent quite some time in that region, and the dry wit of a man who has seen the best and worst of times.

What was even more special was listening to Fred sing of people I know and care about, whose lives have been forever changed by our involvement in this war. Thank you for coming to Townsville Fred, it was a wonderful performance.

Good morning Fred. Last night (Saturday 22nd Launceston) "The Sparrows of Kabul" moved me incredibly. You are such a fine poet, and the talented young musician who bookended the show with wonderful songs (especially the ending number about a Afghani woman in exile) has the purest of voices. I wondered if that was indeed the final instalment started with "The Dust of Uruzgan". You have given so much of your life to this project, not just in terms of physical time. I also wondered how spiritually and emotionally creating the songs helps you come to terms with the trauma of your experiences (eg. The Sappers Lullabye had me close to tears). You probably do not remember me from when you brought "The Dust of Uruzgan" to Launceston when I was the manager at the Princess. Last night unfortunately I had to rush off after the show. I would love to have said hello. I did however buy a CD (I already have DOU both book and CD), so much to choose from. I just picked up one and listened to "Home" before bed and again I thank you for your wonderful truth speaking and melodies. Where can I purchase more albums, apart from your official website which I think only stocks your latest. Keep well wonderful man. Greg Leong

Great songs... A true storyteller.. an important piece of Australian history **Keith Preston**

“Amazing stories...great poetry, music, and a whole lot of love. Top bloke

Amazing poet, with the backing of a voice, a mind and a history from working for DFAT, that colours his stories and makes them resonate. Hmmm. I sigh, in admiration for sharing.” Kristen Young

“amazing concert. Thank you [**Fred Smith**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZW5IuPwOneiM59vcEPLr1SvuBtLtloyGPGgQnTgIG08j-aF9xx7AqMnsNZCahW1z_rnEcNmUq5XM2LLx3Uy9jiN4IxXu3LZ8_XD-R-cBKgs1PmLpqFaIp_Vo2zfEFSczNIT-zjNmB_3Yyoe6PP_beoq&__tn__=R%5d-R) for such a moving experience dedicated to the Afghan people and great to see some of the Canberra based exiles present to witness our love for them. Lots of tears along with the great songs and heartfelt words and poetry.” Sean Burke

Hello Fred, Thank you so much for tonight’s concert in Canberra. Powerful, emotional and thought provoking. So glad we drove all the way up from Geelong to see you. Your poem, The Sparrows of Kabul, WOW, just WOW, that packed a powerful punch. Kind Regards Janifer Eales Editor G’Day Mate Vietnam Veterans Federation Victoria.

[Gerry Butler](https://www.facebook.com/gerry.butler.18?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=-%5dC%2CP-R)**is at**[Payinthi](https://www.facebook.com/Payinthi-102345671180610/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=kC%2CP-R)**.**

[**September 30 at 10:26 PM**](https://www.facebook.com/gerry.butler.18/posts/pfbid0PjX15w7MPgTsnK1dH32a32Rj1aTPPynA8cCUG8E3vrZWG7ZxiKtL3SnJYxfRnA8sl)  · [Adelaide, SA](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Prospect-South-Australia/111845265495353?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=%2CP-R)  ·

Attending the [#SparrowsOfKabul](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/sparrowsofkabul?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=*NK-R) concert with [Fred Smith](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=-%5dK-R) and band in [#Prospect](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/prospect?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=*NK-R) with the poignancy of war songs with a comedic and empathetic character. BRAVO! Not surprising that [Fred Smith](https://www.facebook.com/FREDERICKRSMITH?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=-%5dK-R) is highly respected by the [#Afghan](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/afghan?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU9WDh68bG9NhYZ2xw7GzSr948FVE3XoZoz98iYLzbw8JOJE3AVkDi6jiwFUx8vVItEHLeyHrMEnnwJxN76Zt-ziG5aZneX1duQj4b8Pub3i01Z3yHoRgvt4AVfZvlDbNxiF8SckBw53QI1jyJkwqySiK8Z-X8o7RABSAkDb5CTFw&__tn__=*NK-R) people.

[**Wendy Reilly**](https://www.facebook.com/nd/?wendy.reilly.39&aref=1661588138444305&medium=email&mid=5e734592b433fG27e4174aG5e734a2c14611Gb7&bcode=2.1661638541.AbxxNaTFzN2acT8e5jA&n_m=fredsmith100%40yahoo.com&lloc=image&rms=v2&irms=true)

a unique and stunning art work in every dimension - the writing, vocal performance, visuals.

Amazing concert tonight - thank you for sharing your stories, your love for Afghanistan and her people and the miracle of hope. You took all the audience on your incredible journey this evening and showed us that humanity can change lives and make a difference. Amanda Day, FB

[**Gillian Nolen**](https://www.facebook.com/gillian.nolen.73?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDo1NTA4MDAxMzMyNzMzMDhfMzg2OTQ2Nzk2Njk0NTk0&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZW7TDQY77RgBdMGIplypiL8n11ETKpR4Q3eUj2gXaZipo8Sc0TmVU8dTWG1Js2ksfEKJ3c-hEJpXvsZAnIu57--Lp0CqJ1TyabRaHW-k0-_lHQFka5JqJL8sZhtkxQ6y91jEkrAiQ1tFyk21OqNYbFnpg15Sh0PwMqiVTI-GttAbcJMVBvs2gs0G0eapkAyEYo&__tn__=R%5d-R)

If you have the chance to see this guy it's definitely worth while he is the one who wrote the song about our nephew 'Crash MacKinney. You may need to block some of the language if it upsets, but if you have had anything to do with defence personal you have already heard it all before. He will give you an amazing history lesson on Afghanistan

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| [Michelle Faithfull](https://www.facebook.com/nd/?michelle.faithfull.7&lloc=profile_link&aref=1661612369221434&medium=email&mid=5e739fd6f9468G27e4174aG5e73a4705973aGdb&bcode=2.1661641172.AbyLi9ISqCL8S8lmTO4&n_m=fredsmith100%40yahoo.com) tagged you in a [post](https://www.facebook.com/nd/?michelle.faithfull.7%2Fposts%2Fpfbid02D7mgnVEK2qdn4MjevqM9FwErQy3T1qYuUUsAY7Hw3FFiwfBQj7ZAg9j3eYi1bKJ5l&aref=1661612369221434&medium=email&mid=5e739fd6f9468G27e4174aG5e73a4705973aGdb&bcode=2.1661641172.AbyLi9ISqCL8S8lmTO4&n_m=fredsmith100%40yahoo.com). |
| Michelle wrote: "This, was a really special night… where music brought community together, in a way that I’ve never experienced before. Having the honour of pulling this gig together for Fred Smith and his fabulous band to welcome newly arrived families from Afghanistan in my hometown, is something I will remember for a very long time. Thank you to all who came. Thank you Fred, for allowing me to do this and for the opportunity to collaborate with two amazing charities - the Indigo Foundation (Australia) and Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia. What an absolutely spectacular show - powerful, insightful, witty and raw. There will be more to this story, my work here has only just begun. Watch this space. 🙏"[**Athena McAuley**](https://www.facebook.com/athena.mcauley?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDE2MDI4MDIyMjU1MTQ0OV84MDE1NTcyOTc2MzI3NjQ%3D&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU5vG2XvF-9_kuF8ReEllamoIiAhMC0s1HGR6xTSvf16libJLPYxb0c4jcdmVLBz7fxbRWPQj1RdBY34kFX2c-iWqf4n62q78Y8w2-mqCnOemJLtBp9k-dThSOx06kna4SZBSPx2-7PfyTRMlJ4WmKg&__tn__=R%5d-R)I feel so lucky to have been there on the night, such a privilege to hear and see the heartfelt stories from Fred and our local Afghan community. An important awareness raising event and one I will continue to talk about and support. |

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On the weekend just gone by, I had the profound pleasure of travelling to Narojin to see Fred Smith and his band present 'Sparrows of Kabul'. I had seen Fred previously present his music, poetry and photography on his times as a diplomat in Afghanistan at the Nanga Music Festival in 2022, and it touched me so deeply I knew it was worth seeing again.

There are many messages one can take from this work, but the one that struck me was how important it is for any person or persons experiencing abuse on any level to have a respite period - for it is in the respite that we experience who we truly are. And even if the tyrant returns, we are changed by the period of absence, the dynamics of control are not quite the same.

In Afghanistan's case, the international contingent enabled a period of time in which the people experienced democratic government, education, public service, quality medical provision and the liberation of women into societal life. Whether it is a people, or a partner in domestic violence, respite ... absence of the perpetrator for a period of time, changes things, maybe not immediately, but embodied freedom and agency, once remembered, makes a difference.

Fred will be returning to Perth later in the year, with a show scheduled in Gosnells and another in Kalamunda. As he acknowledges in the closing moments of his show, his is not easy work to audience. His heart, humility and humour, imbue it all. One cannot help but leave it enriched, even if we don't quite understand by what. I may just buy my third ticket.

[**Fresh Perspective Psychology**](https://www.facebook.com/GeorginaMavor/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVXElAAbx7_aENNgWVYW-m3CBf2te_Coh5p2YRDEZf4vXNMJ5pmqwPlj_ELxDDhLk4NCkmDm81wAIB3UcacMv9iT92Lv97-pSe7i8SKYKDSs-agJ9UXHjUd3Xb37D-0MDtmDLWoSDoPtudarhzA7tlD&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

[**Caroline Love**](https://www.facebook.com/caroline.love.718?comment_id=Y29tbWVudDoxMDIzMDgyNTgzMDMyODU4NF8xNzEzNzYwNTQyMzkxMjA3&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZW-mxkWypqac3claP8Z5aU_mRnBvoym07Ts4x5GyJnVW19Z0F4swfzy9XHaQJtBtgRFMYwgiTn1XvTHjrq12yvSjOa6o_wpdw8tHeU-Uerp3johCHXPdyJselqUGdgh6KE&__tn__=R%5d-R)

[**Fred**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=669259594&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZW-mxkWypqac3claP8Z5aU_mRnBvoym07Ts4x5GyJnVW19Z0F4swfzy9XHaQJtBtgRFMYwgiTn1XvTHjrq12yvSjOa6o_wpdw8tHeU-Uerp3johCHXPdyJselqUGdgh6KE&__tn__=R%5d-R) we tried to leave but the kids made us stay! Better than Humanitites at school they said:) still thinking & talking about Sat night too

## Correspondence:

“superb…Excellent anecdotes, beautifully crafted songs and a delicate blend of humour and emotion” David, Hornsby

“Powerful stuff. Too powerful to applaud, in places. Unique and amazing performing art”

Dave, Erowal Bay

“I as an Afghan women I will keep golden memory from the concert night along with my life. Thank you. With full of respect.” K (a recent evacuee)

G’day Fred. My name’s Dane and I look after events for Creative Australia – formerly Australia Council for the Arts.

I saw you perform at the National Folk Festival and the rawness and honesty of your show has left a lasting impact on me.

We’re bringing a report called [Connected Lives; Creative solutions to the mental health crisis](https://creative.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/arts-creativity-and-mental-wellbeing-policy-development-program/) to Parliament House on October 19th to present different ways the arts supports well-being across Australia.

It’s important for us to include our Service Men and Women in the conversation too and I’m wondering whether you might be available to join us please? I’m thinking perhaps to do a short Pecha Kucha, talking through your experience with music and your observation of the effect of arts on the people you served with? We will likely have 4-5 people from across the arts and mental health world doing a similar thing over a morning tea.

Please let me know if this is something that interests you?

 Kind Regards,

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| **Dane Hunnerup**Producer Events & EngagementOffice of the CEO**T:** +61 02 9215 9345 **M:** 0482 184 919dane.hunnerup@creative.gov.au |

thank you so much Fred. I so admire the work you do and the story and songs you create from your experience which helps to inform others a little more of what has happened in Afghanistan.

With gratitude.

Di. Powell

Hi Fred,

Many many thanks for being such a hit at the Festival on Saturday. We've had such great feedback from the whole Festival, but your session was especially a big hit.

Here are some pix for your photo album

Cheers

Perrie

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Perrie Croshaw, Kiama Readers Festival

perrie.croshaw@gmail.com

0411700253

Living on Dharawal Land

Hi Fred, It was great to meet you briefly in Perth at your show. The situation in Afghanistan over the past few years has been a source of much grief and trauma in our household and friendship circles. Coming to your show was quite a cathartic experience . I wasn't  expecting to be so moved by your show but I was a bit of a blubbering mess by the end of it ! Clearly there's a lot of emotion that we've all been holding onto. For me it was nice to hear from another non-Afghan who also has a strong attachment to this country that we don't belong to but have been intertwined with in some way. Thanks for your work and all the best with the touring.

Cheers, Sarah Janali

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Really loved the show last night.  Paid homage to both Afghan people and the ADF.  Thanks for championing the complexities of war and diplomacy. And as you say there are no simple answers.  It is what it is.  Mandy (WA)

“It’s a special and rare thing to have a show where the aesthetic imperatives align with the ethical imperatives. You’re attending to a raw international wound and inspiring others to help heal our brothers and sisters with imagination, intelligent showmanship, and a shared, generous sense of humanity. You’re reminding us of a reality that must be felt and understood, rather than just seen on our TV screens; these are just some of the reasons that I hope your show has legs, and should be taken seriously on the national arena.”

Steven Bailey

The experience of the Narrogin performance is still getting discussed. Everyone that I have spoken to had an amazing evening, so many thanks. I thought it was awesome.

Brad Flett, Arts Narrogin

Great show at Sunpac. Your making a difference and informing the next generation, in and out of uniform.

Daniel Murphy

Keep doing what your doing mate. You are a master story teller with the ability to deliver the hard-hitting reality of lived experience.

John

--

We purchased your recent CD when you were performing at Oodies in Bundaberg.
You are doing amazing work, educating us on events which we were so far removed from, here in Australia.
Good luck with the sale of your book.
Kind regards
Faye and Con
(Veterans now enjoying retirement)

--

Thank you Fred - we particularly enjoyed your night session at the Yackandandah Folk Festival. Your stories are insightful,  informative and compelling - it is so important we get to hear balanced stories of our involvement in world affairs, and full marks to you for providing insights to the withdrawal of troops.  Love your music and your story telling.

 Kind regards,Vance Wheeler

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Hi Fred,

Thanks for your time and energy yesterday. The exceptional feedback keeps rolling in so I suspect you have created a big problem for myself and my Committee by raising the bar to a new height. The empathy you and your entertaining and highly informative  ‘story’ clearly developed with the veterans present was palpable and contributed in no small way to the great success of the day.

My kindest regards and thanks again,

Rog

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|  | **Roger W. Greene**  OAM  JP  Chair  MCC Military Veterans’ Group  Mobile:  0411 431 189 |

Good evening Fred

I just want to tell you how much I enjoyed your Sparrows of Kabul show at Nathalia the other night. I had been watching YouTube videos for a few weeks b4, so I knew what to expect. So strong! So moving! So heartfelt! & still so funny…

Thanks for all that you’ve done , & all that you’ve shared.

All the best w the rest of your tour - Judith (Shepp)

“The presentation of the production was extraordinary-beautiful music with story-telling as well as images projected on the screen. It was very touching. Beautiful songs, great band, and vocals.” Teresa Liu, President-Elect, Rotary Club of Glenferrie

Fred,

I was at the MCG Veterans’ Lunch today.  You held me spellbound.  I have not heard a story told so vividly for years.  You may not have been a soldier, but you get it!

Thank you for what you tried to do over there, for your service and especially your insight.  From a Vietnam era Infantryman.

Remember, keep talking.  PTSD has a bad habit of tearing its ugly head just when you think you’re over it.  If you need to talk, contact me.

Stay safe,

Grant COULTMAN-SMITH OAM, VA, BJ, JP

0478161518

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Dear Fred, this email is a follow-up to my attendance at your show in Launceston. You may respond like the Sparrows of Kabul by "not giving a shit", however, I felt I wanted to write to you.

A wonderful show. the themes are very important for societies and the realities of war need to be learned from the past. You provided a significant counterbalance to the existing MeToo world of instant self-gratification often represented in music.

Dr Terry J. Hannan MBBS;FRACP;FACHI;FACMI; FIAHSI; FAIDH
Consultant Physician
Visiting Fellow, Centre for Health Informatics, Macquarie University, Sydney

Fellow of the International Academy of Health Sciences Informatics

Fellow Australasian Institute of Digital Health (AIDH)

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Hi Max,

Congratulations on organizing a fabulous night’s entertainment. We thought Fred was fantastic and although the theme was sobering, made us remember how much many people are prepared to sacrifice for the wellbeing of others – and how lucky we are! Fred is an amazing human.

Richard & Betty

Hello Fred

Just wanted to say thank you for such an amazing performance. Enjoyed by everyone that attended, a funny witty, captivating and completely entertaining experience.

Anna Dalakis

Veteran & Community Support

Watsonia RSL Inc

6 Morwell Avenue

Watsonia   Victoria 3087

Email:adalakis@watsoniarsl.com.au

Dear Fred,

I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your exceptional dedication and service during your mission in Afghanistan. Your ability to capture the essence of Afghanistan and the warmth of human connection in your concerts and presentations was genuinely extraordinary. The poems and sentiments you shared not only painted a vivid picture of Afghanistan but also conveyed the deep camaraderie between the people of Australia and Afghanistan.

I was deeply moved by your efforts to provide comprehensive insights into Afghanistan's challenges and the enduring pain experienced by my people. Your empathy and compassion were palpable, and it was evident that you understood the profound struggles endured during the country's collapse. Your commitment to shedding light on these issues is commendable and serves as a beacon of hope for those affected by the turmoil.

Kind regards,

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Adeeb Nawim**Head of Media |
| **Bakhtar Community Organisation**m: 0413 169 980t: (03) 9703 2555a: PO Box 4273 Narre Warren South VIC 3805w: <https://bakhtar.org.au/>e: adeeb.nawim@bakhtar.org.au |
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