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## ON THE MAP

### Silver Dagger

● JAMES McLean, a fourth-generation Australian farmer ravaged by the worst drought in living memory, has turned his hand to writing a novel which proved popular at FarmFest at Kingsthorpe.

Told from the villain's perspective, *The Silver Dagger* is a first-person account of a highly intelligent but deeply tormented serial killer operating along the country's pristine beaches.

James McLean wrote the 300-page novel over four months, having inherited his love of storytelling from his grandfather, former Quilpie mayor Bob Sommerfield.

McLean says it was their lengthy and wide-ranging chats that gave rise to his fertile imagination, which often runs wild during tireless hours on his

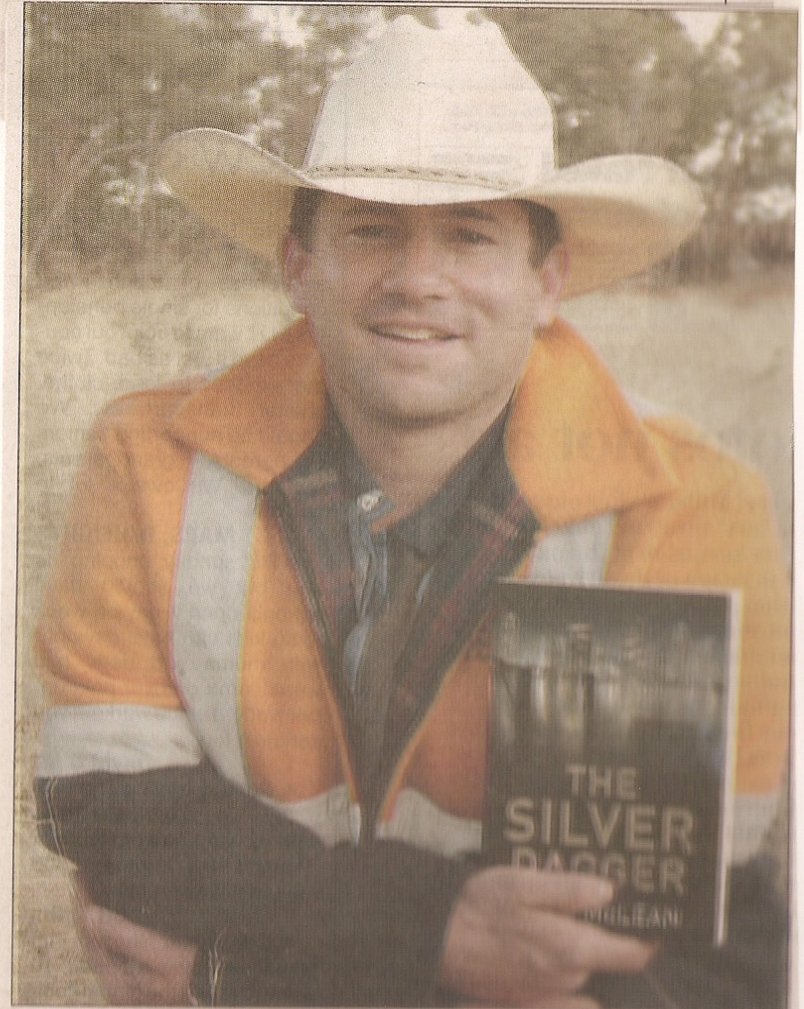
40,000-hectare sheep and cattle property.

The 32-year-old man grew up outside Cheepie, 140km west of Charleville.

"My idea was not to entertain readers with what the killer does — because he is, after all, a vicious man with a misguided sense of right and wrong — rather to draw them in through a compelling justification of his actions," he says.

*The Silver Dagger*, he insists, is not autobiographical.

*The Silver Dagger* is distributed through Pan Macmillan Australia, with a recommended retail price of \$29.95.



Cheepie farmer James McLean was at FarmFest selling his book *The Silver Dagger*. PICTURES: SUPPLIED