

# WRITERS VOICE



[fawns.org.au](http://fawns.org.au)

## The Genie in the Bottle

### How Safe is Playing with Generative AI?

**Helen Armstrong**

*Sutherland Shire FAW*

“CAN I use AI to record our consultation?” my specialist asked.

I've recently had experience of taking minutes in a meeting while someone else in the meeting used AI for “a more accurate record”.

Using AI to record a meeting turned out to not be as accurate as minutes taken by one of the attendees, but for my doctor it was his best option at the time. It was similar to the AI technology that automatically subtitles TV shows we're watching. We might chuckle at some of the mistakes, but at least it's not making it up as it goes along.

We increasingly use technology in our lives. Whether we are using spellcheck or whether we are using grammar check we are often using AI in our writing and that's okay. However, there is a difference between generative AI and simply using assistance tools that help us polish our own writing.

Generative AI is when you use an AI tool to help you create a new document. It can be used for graphics, for text, for music. The question then becomes: who owns that document that you have just created using AI?

Generative AI has been promoted to us as a useful tool for the modern world. But is it? Recent problems with ChatGPT, for example, show

that you can't necessarily trust the accuracy of what AI will come up with. There have been increasing complaints that generative AI tools get a little too 'creative' with their clients' work, losing information (and sometimes years of work) and even changing information. If you ask a question, a human will often say, “I don't know. But I will go find out.” This is intellectual curiosity. But it is reported that too often, generative AI will invent something, anything, rather than admit to not knowing. Generative AI can even falsify data in order to create a better 'fit'. This leads to confirmation bias.

When we get accustomed to AI having the answers, we risk losing our intellectual curiosity and instead lose ourselves in complacency. We are dumbing down.

When we write, we often use a wide range of tools in the same way that when we cook dinner in our kitchen we might use the kettle, the microwave oven, a wall oven, or a hot plate. Humans are a tool-using species. However, using generative AI to create a piece of fiction is very similar to ordering takeout instead of preparing a meal yourself.

In order to teach a generative AI tool to create text it needs to be trained on other texts in the same way that a chess AI program is taught by playing games against human players and studying records of championship games. The more games that an AI chess player is exposed to and plays especially

against top level players, the more rapidly the skill levels of these generative AI players improve.

Generative AI is trained on texts that have been sampled from around the world. There is no attribution; there is often breach of copyright. It is causing a lot of concern among established authors because nobody can know or prevent their work being used in this way. Generative AI is being designed to actually replace the very human writers which it is copying and training on. Understandably this leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.

On an aside, did you know that 'ChatGPT', sounds to a French speaker as 'cat, I farted' (Chat, j'ai péti)? For those wanting to increase their trivia index, a famous performer in the late 19th century was a French 'fartiste', Le Pétomane, who made his living by expelling wind on cue, even blowing out candles and playing musical instruments by such means. It was

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PLEASE USE THE 'CONTACT US' FORM AT  
[FAWSW.ORG.AU/CONTACT-US](http://FAWSW.ORG.AU/CONTACT-US)**

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## QUARTERLY COPY DEADLINES:

**15 NOVEMBER, 15 FEBRUARY, 15 MAY, and 15 AUGUST**

*For December, March, June, and September issues respectively.*

## FAW NSW Inc. State Council Delegates Meetings

The Executive Committee and Branch Delegates meet four times per year. The next meeting is **February**, and the AGM is **May** each year. Next is **August** and **November**. Exact dates and venues are advised prior to each meeting, and advised by the Hon. Secretary with the agenda.

## General Membership and Subscriptions

Membership is open to anyone who has a love for writing—writers, whether amateur or professional—or anyone interested in promoting Australian literature.

**AFFILIATION FEES – \$40 pa** Full Membership (\$20 U21/Youth Rate)—due by 31 DEC. each year and *paid to the Branch Treasurer where a member attends meetings*. **Online banking preferred**, or cheques/money orders payable to Fellowship of Aust Writers.

**Each Branch sets its own ANNUAL FEE** from which the \$40 (or \$20 U21) affiliation fees are forwarded to FAW State Council for costs involved with printing and mailing *Writers Voice*, public liability insurance and administration.

## PAYMENTS VIA ONLINE BANKING:

**BSB: 082-936 Account: 172389833** Account name: Fellowship of Australian Writers. Please include your name as identification for payment.

**ISOLATED WRITERS – \$40 pa** (\$51 overseas, \$20 Youth U18)—see back page. Online banking preferred – **BSB 082-936, Account: 172389833**. If a cheque/money order is used, please make it payable to 'Fellowship of Aust Writers' and mail to **FAW State Treasurer, Rick Watkins, PO Box 690, Bowral NSW 2576**.

## Writing Fellows

FAW Writing Fellows are listed here: [fawnsw.org.au/membership/writing-fellows/](http://fawnsw.org.au/membership/writing-fellows/).

The broad criteria for this class of membership, are that the applicant should have had a substantial body of work published and should normally have been a member of the FAW for at least two years. A committee of the State Council adjudicates on each application, which should be forwarded to the Registrar of Writing Fellows, FAW State Council, **Liz Shaw (honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au)** and **Annette Pearce, PO Box 432, Picton. NSW 2571**. The application should:

a) include \$50 fee preferably paid online **BSB 082-936, Account 172389833**, receipt for which should accompany the application; or be accompanied by a \$50.00 cheque, payable to 'Fellowship of Aust. Writers', which should be forwarded to the Registrar of Writing, mailed to the address above by 30 June each year.

b) indicate the Branch where the applicant is currently a member and the number of years of FAW membership.

c) have attached a list of published, performed or broadcast works, with dates and details of publication. Also list any literary prizes awarded, although such works may be unpublished. Unpaid contributions to newspapers etc. and self-published works (unless widely sold and acclaimed) should not be included.

The one-time fee of \$50.00 will be used to cover costs of administration and cost of certificate. Excess funds will be used to further the work of the FAW. If the application is unsuccessful, the cheque will be returned, perhaps with a suggestion to re-submit an application when a greater body of work has been published.

## Distinguished Service Award

This annual award recognises FAW members confidentially recommended by their Branch Committees and approved by the DSA Assessment Committee. DSA members will be honoured in the following way: successful candidates will be presented with certificates acknowledging their outstanding service at the Annual Awards Luncheon and in addition, a permanent Honour Roll in *Writers' Voice* lists the names of recipients, as well as on the website [fawnsw.org.au/about-us/distinguished-service-awards/](http://fawnsw.org.au/about-us/distinguished-service-awards/).

Guidelines for assessing recommendations for Distinguished Service Awards:

1. Recommendations must be the unanimous decision of a current Branch Committee.
2. Qualifications to include the following features:
  - (a) Length of service as a current financial member to be at least ten (10) years.
  - (b) Required to have a regular attendance record at Branch Meetings.
  - (c) Required to have participated in activities organised by the Branch Committee on a regular basis – or to have served on the Branch Committee – for at least eight years.
3. All recommendations to be submitted, preferably online, to the DSA Assessment Committee *c/- Liz Shaw, honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au* or mailed to **Annette Pearce, PO Box 432, Picton, NSW 2571** by 30 June each year.
4. A committee comprising the State President, the Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer will assess recommendations. The DSA Committee's decision is final.

## ISBN

A FREE ISBN (one number per publication) is available to members—contact the FAW Hon. Secretary Liz Shaw [honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au](mailto:honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au).

## Public Fund

Donations of \$2.00 and over to this account are tax deductible. When there are sufficient funds, Branches may approach State Council for an amount for a specific purpose. Without donations FAW cannot grow and achieve this aim. When a member makes a donation, a note of his/her Branch is made.

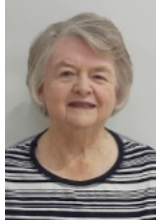
## FAW Manuscript Assessment Service

Critical reading with general criticism, editing including interpolation of articles, short stories and novels. A fee applies of \$50 (\$60 non-members) for a sample assessment of two chapters up to 7,000 words; \$25 (\$30 non-members) for one or two poems of no more than 60 lines each. To commence the manuscript assessment process please, **firstly**, contact the State Secretary Liz Shaw [honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au](mailto:honsecretary@fawnsw.org.au) or phone 0407 017 562 – **please do not forward your manuscript at this stage**. The Secretary will provide you with the contact details to enable you to forward the manuscript directly to the assessor.

## State Council News

### From the desk of the State President

**W**HILE YOU are reading this edition of WV, I am cruising on the Diamond Princess as part of our exciting visit to Japan to catch up with a delightful Japanese student we housed when she was studying English as a seventeen-year-old. She is now a mother of two girls and two boys who she brought out to meet us a few years ago. It was time for us to visit them and learn of their culture and homeland as we have kept in touch continually.



Colleen Parker

I thank the many members who participated in our August meeting, conducted digitally on 27th July which freed me up to prepare this Report in good time for this August/Sept edition. I am a strong believer that families come before our volunteering, but it is sometimes possible, with support from others, to manage both.

We have lots of projects finalised this year which shows the commitment of our committees and their diligence to make your Fellowship association as relevant as possible to your needs. We currently have 19 Active branches but are also negotiating another two; Orange and Little Bay. If they both begin, we will be reaching two areas not having had members in those two areas before. We have Uta Purcell who moved residence from Southern Highlands to thank for her commitment to begin a new one herself and assist a Port Macquarie resident to begin the other one in Sydney.

Seniors Stories Volume 11 is completed and the results have been sent to Seniors Card ready to go to print. Launching this year will be in the auditorium of the NSW Library, next door to Parliament House where previous functions have been conducted.

Country Newspapers competition judging is also completed. There were four categories so my appreciation goes to Jenny England Isolated Writers for Primary School, Ian Keast Port Macquarie for Secondary School, Jackie Laing, Adult Open also of Port Macquarie and I judged the fourth category of Country Newspaper staff. I hope some FAW members entered but we won't know the official results until later in the year. But a huge appreciation goes to the volunteer judges.

At our recent digital quarterly meeting some interesting suggestions have come forward to further interest and motivate our membership to enjoy their writing and to successfully complete their projects.

Thank you to everyone who is assisting Kath Berryman and her Panel of researchers to gather your branch information for our Centenary History Book. If

you haven't heard what is required, please contact Kath (details on P2) and send whatever you have to share with us for our history.

I have a small personal achievement this week too. I completed an original Writing Plan for 12 weeks which was my prize for winning a short story competition. We have two new members who have joined Isolated Writers who own this small business called 12 Stories. I was curious with the Plan but felt I needed to test it for myself before I shared it with our members and I was pleasantly impressed. It was a Plan which has us write a short story every week for 12 weeks based on prompts received weekly resulting in 13 stories. The Competition story and the 12 following. I was keen to publish the completed project as a book, which I will share later in this WV edition. But basically, it assists both new writers and procrastinators. Thank you, Judy and Cathy Hallowell.

Best Wishes to everyone successfully achieving 'something' they set out to do in 2025.

*Colleen Parker, President*

### News from the Secretary's Desk

**T**HE LAST quarter FAW NSW has been busy organizing the 2026 Awards lunch. Quotes have been received and there has been a change of venue in Sydney. The date remains the same 1st Saturday in May 2026. Cate Plink will be organizing the Awards lunch and we are grateful for her assistance.

Jackie Laing has returned to the committee as a general hand in Senior Story bookings for 2026.

There is talk of a couple of new branches starting up soon, one in the city and one in the country.

Our quarterly meeting was well attended by Zoom and many decisions of where the FAW NSW is going was decided. We now are using the new Zoom feature AI notes to assist the Secretary in the minutes. Thanks for everyone's efforts in the work they do each week for the Fellowship. We really appreciate all the things everyone does to keep the FAW running.

Kindness,

*Liz Shaw, Hon. Sec. FAW NSW and Publicity Officer*

### From the editor

**O**VER THE last few months, I have received a number of short stories. Due to space constraints, I have been unable to include any of them. I want to extend my apologies. I will endeavour to include more of your stories in future issues.

*Craig Cooper, Editor*

## The Genie in the Bottle

*Continued from front page*

unusual, it was engaging, people were fascinated. But like ChatGPT and other forms of AI, what is produced still stinks.

How does it work? If you want to create something using generative AI you first need to give it some instructions. Do you want to write a poem about winter? Do you want to also mention snow? Do you want to mention music? Would you like it written in a Shakespearean style? You define what you would like and the AI tool will spit out a result. There might be several results you can choose. But is it your creation? When you are using generative AI, all you are doing is prompting, not creating. It is not original work.

So what are the problems if we create a work using generative AI? After all it's easy, it can make us look good as writers.

The first big problem is who owns the work? If it has been produced using generative AI which itself has been trained on a wide range of unattributed random texts loose in the world then who really owns the work? Publishers generally do not like going anywhere near work that has suspect copyright issues. Generative AI is automatically almost by definition risky when it comes to copyright. Even if you do not admit to having created your piece using generative AI, there are now tools to assess your work as to what percentage of it has been created using generative AI. The same tools that can help us create new stories using generative AI can also help assess work to determine how much of it was created using generative AI. These tools are invaluable for teachers, for university lecturers, for editors like me, and for anybody else who simply wants to check. At university level an essay that is found to have been created using generative AI will generally get the same response from the lecturers as a student trying to sneak through something that is plagiarism. It is really frowned upon.

It is becoming increasingly important for all of us to learn how to check. If you aren't sure that a particular AI checker is accurate, then test it on a sample of your own work that you know has not been created with any generative AI. In my current editing, I am now checking all submissions sent to me and discussing any adverse results with the responsible authors.

But what if you use generative AI purely as a prompt or just to get started? Surely that's okay? Well, probably not. It's a slippery slope because where do you stop? And where is it the AI's work and where is it yours?

If you do use generative AI, it is your responsibility to disclose this information to your publisher, to the writing groups at which you are presenting this as

perhaps your homework, and to other authors who may be published alongside you in an anthology. Failure to disclose this can lead at least to embarrassment and at worst to a severe loss of reputation for both yourself and other authors published alongside you.

Increasingly, books are being published with either a statement or a graphic that makes clear indication that the content of this book has not been published either in part or in full using generative AI. To put it simply, generative AI is not creating, it is merely editing. It is merely selecting text that has been produced, often on the back of stolen or copied work from other authors. Even if you only use generative AI trained on your own piece of work you are still using a tool that has been trained using mass copyright infringement of authors around the world. Some people might say that this is the new world that we are in. But for now we are in a position to take a stand and those of us who value individual human creativity are very much in favour of the human touch in our creative writing. Using generative AI in a creative writing group to craft an original document is not creating. To quote Colleen Parker, current President of Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW, generative AI is merely editing.

If you lack the confidence as a writer and find yourself tempted to try generative AI, be aware that you will not learn and grow as a writer if what you present as your own work is actually the result of generative AI. An author that I have recently dealt with is very enthusiastic about the value of generative AI. They say it is so much easier. The writing looks so much better (I think it's a matter of opinion). They feel more confident as an author. But they fail to recognise that what they produce, while easy, is not their own and any confidence they gain as an author is false confidence because it is written by artificial intelligence and not their own intellect.

I firmly believe that in the interests of fairness for all as well as encouraging genuine creativity, Fellowship of Australian Writers must now include a clear statement that any submissions have not been created even in part using generative AI. This doesn't mean you can't use a spellchecker. But it does mean that whatever you create must be your own work and not simply work that you prompted a computer to write for you.

A final word on the value of human originality: often a grammar checker will put in its own AI version of what it thinks is correct. However, I am sure we can all quote examples of human text which have become memorable in human culture. For example in Star Trek "to boldly go where no man has gone before" is a split

## Eastwood/Hills Anniversary

infinite. But it works. And in Shakespeare in Hamlet he used “to take arms against a sea of troubles” which AI would correct because one would take arms against a host of troubles but somehow in that soliloquy “sea of troubles” works better.

What do we value in creative writing? What should we value?

This article has been written using computer assistance – I have dictated this to my computer but that does not mean these are not my own words.

Further reading:

<https://authorsguild.org/resource/ai-best-practices-for-authors/>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11015711/>

[https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/tip/](https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/tip/Generative-AI-ethics-8-biggest-concerns)

[Generative-AI-ethics-8-biggest-concerns](#)

<https://copyleaks.com/ai-content-detector>

### Eastwood/Hills FAW Celebrates 50 Years

**O**UR ‘GOLDEN gathering’ on 5th July was a time for past and present members, partners and invited guests to come together to celebrate our branch’s fifty years. Eastwood/Hills FAW was formed on 7th July, 1975. While we have seen members come and go, it has been heartening to welcome a significant number of new members into our dynamic group over recent years.

We welcomed 42 attendees including people from as far away as the Gold Coast, The A.C.T., Possum Brush and the Central Coast. The venue looked festive, with gold everywhere. It was great to see so many helpers turn up to contribute to the setting up. Our venue ‘shone’ with gold tablecloths, decorations, balloon trees and a number of ‘50s’ featured on the cake, in flowers and lights, along with shiny gold spoons shaped into a ‘50’ and ‘50’ shaped Ferrero Rocher chocolates! We admired each other’s gold-themed attire, every one lending more sparkle to the occasion. We drank tea from vintage cups and saucers and enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea.

Displayed in the room were fascinating photo archives and articles featuring branch members; our current and previous anthologies; our annual trophies and a table simply groaning with many published works written by members. It was wonderful to see such an interesting array of fiction and non-fiction books, from children’s stories to romance, crime novels, self-help lifestyle books, books about nature and books full of beautiful poetry. Over 40 books were thumbed through,



*Current Committee of the Eastwood Hills FAW*

chatted about and marvelled over – an impressive collection.

Our celebration was a happy occasion where we launched our anthology titled ‘Celebrating Writing’. A dedicated team worked tirelessly to ensure that we could mark the occasion with a fascinating book showcasing members’ work, along with each author’s writing journey listed in the back.

A gold-covered visitors’ book complete with a gold pen was available for people to record a few words about how our branch supported them as writers. The magnificent cake taking centre stage was cut with ceremony. Eight past presidents gathered with our current president Frances Moon. The group included Denise Aldridge, Life Member and early President of Eastwood/Hills FAW.

Half a century of likeminded people sharing in the wonder of the written word, developing skills and interests, creating together, while revelling in laughter sums up the history of our Eastwood/Hills branch. We always ‘Go for Gold’.

Please visit our website to see more about our celebration: <https://hillsfaw.wordpress.com/>

*Linda King, Eastwood/Hills FAW*



*Past and Present Presidents of Eastwood Hills FAW*

## Eastwood/Hills Anniversary



### Eastwood/Hills Anthology Review

Sally Lewry, *Eastwood/Hills FAW*

**T**HE EASTWOOD Hills branch of the FAW celebrated our 50th anniversary in July. As part of the celebrations we launched the 50th Anniversary Anthology titled: *Celebration of Writing*. This book is a collection of our creative work demonstrating the range and diversity of the writing of the members of the FAW Eastwood Hills branch. It is a snapshot of what this branch has achieved with 50 years of consistent meetings.

Sally Lewry and Cathy Jones teamed up to prepare, collate, edit and publish the anthology. We organised a team of editors to assist with correcting spelling and grammar errors and I'd like to thank Carolyn Alfonzetti, Chris Weston, Weidong Tiang, Anne Benjamin and Margaret Longhurst who joined Cathy and Sally in editing 36 submissions for inclusion in the anthology. Utilising the sketches donated by Margaret Longhurst the submissions were loosely grouped into themes leading with memories and nature, though to historical themes, to fairy tales, children stories, into humour then to crime, which led us to romance and then to horror, war, death and the paranormal. Finishing with memoir, as seemed appropriate to the concept of celebrating such a milestone.

Our long-term member and previous president Beverley George wrote the Foreword, Cathy and Sally wrote the Introduction and the back cover 'blurb'.

The book was then forwarded to Karen Lieverz to assist with developing the cover and with loading the content into a program that would allow us to easily upload the book to the self-publishing platform. Finally, Julie Thorndyke, an experienced and respected editor, proof-read the final book.

This has been a huge undertaking with several people working to make the anthology a *Celebration of Writing*. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone who assisted with putting the Anthology together, thank you to all of you.

### ORANGE FAW BRANCH PLANNED

**P**LANNING WORK is underway to see if a FAW (NSW) branch can be established at Orange, in the Central West.

Currently, the main FAW (NSW) branches in the Central West region are located at Mudgee and Young.

The project is being led by FAW (NSW) member Uta Purcell, who was an active participant in the Southern Highlands branch before recently moving to Orange.

It is hoped that interest will be generated on the back of momentum from the current Country Press NSW Anniversary Writing Awards, which has been organised with like-minded volunteers based in Orange.

The new possible branch could also be an option for Isolated Branch members who may already be based nearby, or perhaps members in other branches might have interested friends or relatives living in the vicinity of Orange.

Uta Purcell can be contacted on 0420 924 346.

## Short Stories

### “Did I really write that ?...”

*FAW meeting writing exercise 9 March 2025*

“**I** DID not write that! If I did it is not what I meant to write – get it!!!” said Nurse Karen.

“I am not a mind reader!” retorted the Professor.

“Show me what is written down !” snapped Karen.

The instructions read ‘Bathe your wound in salt and water for 10 minutes three times a day for 7 days.’

The professor assured Nurse Karen that is exactly what he had been doing and yet his toes were looking much worse than they had before the treatment began.

Nurse Karen was shaking her head at the sight of the wound. It looked like it had been burned. The salt water baths should have resulted in soothing healing of the wound over the 7 days. What could be causing all this damage?

Nurse Karen was in a state of confusion. The state of the wound was close to requiring hospitalisation for more in-depth treatment. The Professor was in danger of losing his toes.

Perplexed Nurse Karen turned to the Professor and asked him to show her exactly what he had been doing to care for the wound.

The Professor took Nurse Karen into the kitchen and showed her a tub of salt. Nearby was a tub of water. He explained how he put his foot in the tub of salt for 10 minutes and then the tub of water.

A sigh of exasperated sorrow escaped from Nurse

## Short Stories

Karen as her shoulders slumped.

“Professor,” she said, then gently explained, “you make a solution of salt and water and you bathe your foot in that solution.”

“That is not what you wrote” replied the Professor who clearly took every instruction literally.

*Dianne Porter, Canberra FAW*

### “K”

**I**T WAS meant to be. There was never any doubt in Keith’s mind.

It was as sure as the sun rising in the east and the dairy cows following the well-trodden path on their way to unburden themselves of their bulging udders. The same path they had used for generations on the family farm.

Keith was going to be in the police force. He was fixated with the idea even as a young kid kicking cow pats in his smelly gumboots as he cavorted around the sheds searching for clues to who knew what. Where the idea came from, he didn’t question or care.

His father did though. He constantly worried that this obsession would rob him of his hope that Keith would someday take over “Eudalla” when Lloyd’s body demanded he stop the labour that had already permanently stooped his lanky frame.

Lloyd’s fears came to fruition though, as Keith finished school and showed he was determined as ever to follow his path. He applied, as was accepted as a cadet at the Academy in Goulburn. Lloyd actually cried when Keith dumped his bag in the ute and left – his nonchalant wave lost in a blaze of exhaust and dust. The tears were as much sadness as despair at Keith’s emotional blindness to the fate of the property – and his father.

The training at the academy was tough, but Keith blitzed it. His pure determination would have been enough, but he was wiry and strong so the physical side was easy. He devoured the theory with a starving man’s hunger which surprised his parents who were secretly hoping he would fail. They finally had to accept Keith’s future when he came out on top of that year’s intake.

The parade was impressive with all the cadets lined up and marching (mostly) in time to take their place in front of the assembled dignitaries and family. His parents cried again, this time with pride.

With luck, and with nobody else vying for the position, Keith was assigned to the very locality he came from. A three person station only 27 kilometres from home. He took to the assignment with such vigour and

enthusiasm, it shocked the Senior Constable in charge. The days flew as Keith viewed his home area with new eyes even though there was little crime in this country town.

Summer approached heralding another soul destroying drought year. The local volunteer firefighters were on constant alert as the understory in the surrounding bushland was tinder dry, waiting for the slightest chance of ignition. It came in the form of a dry electrical storm. More than enough to start the destruction that rampaged through hectares of scrub and bush in such a short time, it left the locals in terror. They had all seen fires before, but this was something else. Keith was part of the team of volunteers warning everyone to evacuate – including his beloved “Eudalla”. Lloyd had already pre-empted the order and the “girls” were already on the move making their way in an orderly fashion to some cleared paddocks on the adjoining property. It was all Lloyd could do. He hoped it would be enough.

Two terrifying days later, the worst was over. The fire had miraculously spared the house and the cows. Keith came to view the surrounding destruction and to look for any spot fires or embers still burning. He scuffed through the ash, surprised to find random trees still standing or some only partly burned. On the southern boundary of “Eudalla” he stopped to reflect on the vagaries of the fire. It was then he noticed a carved letter on the trunk of a stringy bark. A large letter “K” was gouged into the heartwood. Idly, he looked closer and thought he saw something else beside it. Ripping off the charred bark further around the girth of the tree, he saw two other letters. Exactly the same. His mind raced to latch onto the connection he knew was there. A frisson of fear exploded when he looked up and saw the remnants of a rope tied around the limb above him.

Could this really be happening? Here? In Australia? He would come to learn that, yes, it could.

*Ingrid McCulloch, Southern Highlands FAW*



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## 12 STORIES PLUS 1

**I**T ALL began for me with a message on the FAW Facebook page mid-2024, promoting a short story writing competition with a minimal word count. Since taking on the Presidency a lot of my personal time gets eaten up with FAW naturally but this looked possible for me. The max of 500 words and a minimum of 350 was ‘bait’ to reel in my interest and hook me. ‘That shouldn’t take too long’ I told myself especially given the information that submissions were to be drawn from our own lives and to choose a topic through that avenue. Again I thought, well that saves a whole lot of research. Next was the instruction to share an incident that made a difference in our life in some way.

It so happened that I had proofread a script for a friend whose daughter is a movie director which was news to me at that time. The following day she wrote to thank me and offered me a role in her movie. I obviously declined initially, concerned that I can’t remember lines these days, like I used to do when doing stage plays. To cut to the chase, I met the other actors and some of the crew to read through the script. My character was explained to me, I was given a blonde wig, asked to wear a twin set and pearls and there I was selected in the Role of ‘Mother’.

The movie was a short film eligible for Tropfest and it took 5 months to rehearse and then two weekends to shoot the scenes that I was in.

That incident certainly did change me in a huge way so that became the topic of my competition story because the movie won Best Comedy in Berlin International Short Film Festival, 2025 and has 6 other nominations working through the levels of selection in other countries.

It was a thrill to receive my Congratulatory letter advising that I had won the competition and my prize was a FREE enrolment in their Writing Plan called 12 Stories. I initially considered that I wouldn’t have time to write 12 stories in 12 weeks, which was expected but then realised it might help many FAW members. The opportunity to write Life Stories seemed like a good idea for general interest but I felt strongly that I should not ‘promote’ it without trialling it first. I accepted the gift and learned that I would be sent a weekly package which would include a topic each week, along with writing assistance. Lesson 1 arrived promptly on my selected day of choice, Saturday, and so my challenge began. A week or two in I learned that another FAW member was signed up as well, so we became ‘writing buddies’. We both went the distance and completed the Plan of writing a story every week for 12 weeks and bonded in the fact that we were reaching for the same goal.

To say I loved the Plan is an understatement because the helpful material of things like brainstorming help, structure guide and sentence starters, just to name a few, were so appropriate to me (even as a writer all of my life) that I embraced the whole idea. My stories through using the prompts found ideas that I have never considered before as worthwhile to write about.

I have subsequently created a book of varied short stories. Titled Colleen’s Collection Volume 1. Sub title ‘The Life of a Storyteller in bite-size pieces’. Far more interesting than a ‘memoir’ although that is the material it covers. I believe strongly that this Writing Plan will especially assist new writers and procrastinators because it encourages a variety of story topics that are long enough to enjoy but also short enough to enjoy.

As we all know a story has a Beginning and a Development but then it needs a Resolution. I will now share the resolution with you. The Mother and daughter team of Judy and Cathy Hallowell enjoyed learning about our FAW throughout my relationship with them and they along with another member of their business, have all joined Isolated Writers because they reside in Qld.

And, as if that is not wonderful enough, this gift just keeps giving. Cathy and Judy have also honoured me with a Gift of the 12 Stories Writing Plan Certificate for me to select a branch to use because it permits all registered members of that branch to use the Plan as a group.

To participate as an individual member the fee is \$120 but the Gift presented to me for the FAW has a value of \$389. I chose Isolated Writers for this gift in my hope that with a new Convenor and both Judy and Cathy in that branch to assist the new convenor with this particular Writing Plan we will encourage those members who operate from their home, a bonding link to keep them strong. Having a writing pal to work with digitally was great support and having my completed published book in my hands is what FAW encourages our members to work towards. Thank you Judy and Cathy Hallowell as well as the member who posted that notification on our FAW Facebook Page.

*Colleen Parker, State President*



### MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2025

Please encourage new memberships.  
We need to build up membership to keep generations coming through FAW NSW.

## Branch Reports

### BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

**W**ITH SEPTEMBER'S spring air and blossoms all around, our minds cast back to our June meeting where romantic fiction writer Kandy Shepherd revealed the secrets behind writing love stories. We all tried our hands at creating a romantic interlude which resulted in much laughter and some surprising entanglements.

Our AGM was held in July and we reflected on the past year's achievements including workshops, member publications and growth in our membership numbers to 38. The committee was re-elected and we welcomed new addition Cheryl Anderson as Secretary, joining Mel Jones (President), Rosemary Baldry (Treasurer/Membership Secretary), Jeanette Temesvary (Publicity) and Pat Allen (General Committee Member). Susan Robinson and Chloé Steward continue to serve us well as Facebook co-ordinators and all the contributions of members were gratefully recognised.

After the formalities, Deb Harris challenged us with warm-up exercise that had us thinking about exploring an idea from three perspectives in the character's life: as a child listening to a grandparent, as an adult, and as an older, wiser adult.

Following the warm-up, Rosemary Baldry shared what she learned from a workshop conducted by Dr Rosie Dub Writing Complex Characters. The focus was on how

to craft compelling characters through conflict and how their physical and emotional wounds would influence the path of the story. Fascinating!

In August we were delighted to have guest speaker, Kit Carstairs from the Manuscript Agency educate us about the world of publishing. Kit described her role in providing manuscript appraisals, editing services, mentoring, and publishing guidance for authors. We learned about the stages of Structural Editing, Copy Editing and Proof Reading. Kit also explained the various publishing options available ranging from Traditional Publishing, Co-Payment with Traditional Publishing, Hybrid models and DIY publishing, each having different benefits and drawbacks.

Following Kit's presentation, Mel Jones walked us through Character Cards, a technique she developed for remembering character details while writing scenes in her novels. The cards allow the writer to distil a character's internal and external drivers and their relationships to its essence and serve as a useful reference point.

With green shoots emerging, we look forward to continuing creativity and growth in our members' writings.

*Jeanette Temesvary and Chloé Steward*

### CANBERRA FAW

**I**N MAY 2025 our group approved a planned writers' retreat Wilmslow House located at 14 Church St in Goulburn on the topic "The Logistics of Publishing". We hired the whole house from 3pm Friday 7th of September till 11am on Sunday the 9th of

September.

The idea of this geographical immersion at Wilmslow House being attendees can emerge from the shackles of imposter syndrome some writers report and be authors. The hope being the house may inspire the suggested 1500 to 2000 word stories participants will share as the Saturday Evening Entertainment.

These literary works could be a short play, a murder mystery, a poem or any other story that comes to them. These stories could then be considered for publication in our planned "Dances With Words Anthology" to be published in 2026.

As presenters at the retreat, we contacted FAW NSW President Colleen Parker and FAW NSW Webmaster Ken Driver to join us as guest speakers and were delighted they accepted our offer.

President of Goulburn FAW Graeme Neil. will also be a presenter on Saturday morning. I am the overall master of ceremonies and group leader. Members from Canberra FAW will be the core support team. We are organizing the catering.

At the retreat, we could offer some in-house accommodation, meals on site and space at the venue for day visitors. The rate we set was \$250 per person for the whole retreat and a day rate of \$100 for Saturday from 8am to 10pm or part thereof. The financial goal being cost recovery.

In our research prior to the event those interested in attending expressed a strong desire for an open forum that is planned for Saturday afternoon, following the structured presentations. I will share a report on the event in my next report to Writers Voice.

*Dianne Porter*

*Cont. next page...*



*Kit Carstairs of The Manuscript Agency addresses Blue Mountains FAW*

## Branch Reports

### EASTWOOD HILLS FAW

**WE ARE** more than halfway through the year and are still welcoming new members. Our branch is as dynamic as it is welcoming – no doubt an attractive combination!

At our June meeting Grant Burger led a fascinating workshop on Writing Crime Fiction. We discussed key components that make a good crime story – a compelling hero, a crime that matters, a dangerous or elusive villain, a battle between good and evil or order and chaos, and a satisfying conclusion. The role of the protagonist was explored, leading us to develop our own ‘hero’. An incredibly wide range of characters emerged. We unpacked the ‘crime’ aspect of a story noting how it can shine a spotlight on justice and morality, sow fear, and change the way people think and behave. Focusing on the role of the ‘victim’ enabled us to acknowledge that they could be anyone, and sometimes more than one; and that in crime fiction a greater percentage of victims are women (from 60-85%). We applied the formula ‘What is the Crime?’, ‘Who is the Victim?’, and ‘Why does it matter?’ to generate ideas. Some very creative seeds for a crime story surfaced.

We ‘went for gold’ at our July meeting as we celebrated our branch’s 50th Anniversary. Past and present members, their partners and special guests joined for this milestone celebration. Please see the reports elsewhere in this publication.

The Eastwood/Hills FAW Annual Literary Competition results were announced via Zoom in our August meeting. Short-listed authors were in attendance. We were privileged to hear the history behind the awards – Bush Ballad, Flash Fiction, Poetry, Memoir and Short Story.

Judges’ reports were presented, each one commenting on the wide range of creative writing that was submitted. First and Second place winners read their piece. It was great to see the faces of the winners, most of whom were from Victoria, with only two from NSW! This competition gives Australian writers an opportunity to compete across five genres. Our branch is very fortunate to have dedicated members who devote significant time and energy into coordinating and judging this event.

*Linda King*

### GOULBURN FAW

**THE CHANGE** from the library venue to a local club has been a positive change overall, we just need to work on advertising the change to attract other interested writers.

The diversity of our members and what they choose to write is always a bonus, the discussion times is so good for sharing ideas, pitfalls, and staying motivated. We are looking forward to participation in a writing retreat in September hosted by ACT FAW.

*Janice Jensen*

### LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

**THE FOCUS** at our May meeting was simply on getting lots of writing practice. President Sandi Boyd led a session full of writing exercises. To assist us, we referred to a book that we knew well. This led to an unexpected exercise and discussion on reading struggles.

The focus in our group is always on sharing and helping others advance their writing skills. So, in June, we had a ‘skills showcase’ where members with some sort of writing-related expertise shared their skills with the other members. Skills highlighted included: preparing Powerpoint

presentations, editing, critiquing, proofreading and writing emotion into characters.

On a cold day in July we held our Annual General Meeting. The roll-up was not huge, but thankfully enough for a quorum and the election of office holders and a new Committee. Once again Sandra Boyd was elected as President, Cate Plink as Vice President, George Graves as Treasurer and Pam Garfoot as General Secretary. We were delighted to welcome some new faces (Bethany Wooden and Karen Stafford) to other roles too.

Plans for our 25th birthday celebration (to take place in September) are well under way. This has included planning for both our anniversary anthology (a pretty big task), and for the celebration event itself. More on that next time!

*Pam Garfoot*

### LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

**THE YEAR** is simply flying by. Our meetings continue to have ‘a good vibe’ as one member put it following our August meeting. Assembling for coffee prior to the meeting and with diehards staying on for dinner afterwards gives opportunity for exchange of ideas, getting to know each other better outside the ‘confines’ of meetings.

A successful launch of the 43rd Writing Competition held in June with our local member and our mayor speaking together with a presentation by our sponsors. Enquiries started the day after the launch and are still coming as I write. This bodes well for the competition. Entries close September 19th this year.

New members have contributed positively to meetings this quarter. They bring fresh insights and encouragement to us all. Seed

*Cont. next page...*

## Branch Reports

stories with topics such as ‘the long shortcut through the forest’, ‘wills and weddings’ and ‘I recognised the handwriting immediately’ give scope for members’ creativity to flow. Often in surprising directions.

Thank you to Canberra FAW for the invitation to be part of their September writers retreat also with Goulburn FAW.

*Jennifer Haynes*

### MACARTHUR FAW

**O**UR JULY meeting was preceded by a delicious lunch at the Campbelltown RSL Club, a chance to catch up with the latest news and commiserate over the weather. It is always interesting to hear of the exploits of resident flying instructor and writer, Cathy Hobson, with her background instructing flying cadets, as well as serving in the Flying Doctor Service; only two of her many accomplishments. Cathy has written many articles about Australian women aviators.

Recent writing exercises have included the topics Habitual Behaviour, Burn Out, At the End of My Tether (how could I not write a dog story?) and New Directions. For me, the value of these exercises is that I can sometimes come up with a complete story that would take me days to write at home. Fellow member, Eric Esber, on the other hand, can compose a complete story in minutes.

During our July meeting, Victoria Chie and I found ourselves discussing novels which we are in the process of writing. Both are set in Ancient Egypt, one in the time of the Old Kingdom, the other during the reign of Ramesses 111. We were struck by the amount of historical research that was required. One question that arose: how would people living in a barter society pay for a simple service such as taking a

ferry across the Nile? As the answer has not yet been discovered, I think I shall keep my characters safely on shore.

We also agreed on the need to recognise the humanity of our characters, as certain ancient Egyptian writers did in their own fiction, such as the emotional Story of Sinuhe.

Best wishes to our colleagues in the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

*Bernard Smith*

### MUDGEE FAW

**W**E WELCOME our new members Jane Munro, Peter Windeyer, Steve Csuba and Eleni Roberts. We have been meeting in each other’s homes for the last two years but now our group is growing we have decided to move back to the Club Mudgee meeting room. We had met there for so many years it will feel like going home and we are excited to have so many creative people join us

In August we host a stall at Mudgee Seniors Expo, held at Club Mudgee, advertising our group and the projects we enjoy. This is a new initiative by our local Oak Tree Village and an excellent way to let people know of the many opportunities available in our town.

We are disappointed that we haven’t been able to secure a Workshop Grant. We have decided to go ahead with an overnight stay at our President, Marilyn’s, beautiful B&B in the old shearing shed at *Brigadoon* overlooking the Capertee Valley in October anyway. It’s a perfect writers retreat.

*Jill Baggett*

### PORT MACQUARIE FAW

**W**E FINALLY found new accommodations for our monthly meetings. From

now on we’ll be having our meetings at the Endeavour House which is quite suitable for us. It is nestled in a very quiet and picturesque area of Port Macquarie, and we couldn’t be happier. Our first homework in the new space was to write about a community organization we were involved with, and various organisations were shared, ranging from the aged care to photography and play groups it was such a delight to find out what others were doing outside of writing. We then cast our minds back to high school – I know right?

The writing prompt was - You are attending your old school reunion (from 10, 20, 20 40, more? Years ago) there are many people there, who have been associated with the school-e.g., former principals, teachers, students, groundsman, office staff, gardeners, bus drivers, canteen staff, and so on... Who have varied memories. Choose one of the people at the reunion and write about your school memories from your point of view. It was indeed a long time ago, but we dug deep and wrote fantastic stories based on characters we remembered from school. The characters were real of course but the stories were fiction, and as usual there were a lot of laughs. We then wrote about YESTERDAY. Lets just say nearly everyone got their inspiration from the Beatles.

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*Ian Keast during the Library presentation*

## Branch Reports

In June we had a presentation at the Port Macquarie Hastings Library where President Ian Keast made a presentation to guests on what we do, when we meet, our goals and missions. It was an intimate number, and they quite enjoyed the exposition. He shared a bit of his history including how he became our president and his love for poetry particularly – The Haiku. We displayed our books especially one of our prides and joy *The Painting Stories* which was written and produced during the COVID-19 pandemic showcasing our resilience and tenacity as writers. There were memorable quotes from the presentation as to why we write and for who? what inspires us and the many detours we take along the journey of writing but we all came to the consensus that at the crux of it all the main struggle is the focus on our words, in other words “getting the best words in the best order”

As the year end is fast approaching, we are now all working to get our writing projects out. We have to get everything ready by September if we are to meet our usual publishing deadline. So once again we are writing two books, one is our showcase where we publish two of our best articles from all the assignments we’d done during the year, or any other writing we’d done outside of the group but within the year. The second book is our special project and this year we are choosing one character out of the following four: Demon, Monster, Genius, Misfit.

*Pinado Waba*

### REVESBY FAW

**O**UR MEETING venue is the Macarthur Room, an annexe to the Revesby Workers Club. When I joined the group mid last year, the

Macarthur Room was difficult to find. I asked club staff who directed me to the adjacent street and it wasn’t until the following week, when the gates and doors were open, that the Macarthur Room finally revealed itself.

I raised the issue during a subsequent meeting and other members commented that they too, had difficulty finding the Macarthur Room. Suggestion was made to request a sign be made and to have it attached to the building. The club agreed and earlier this year it became reality. A sign is now prominently displayed, for all to see.

We had five members of the Revesby Fire and Rescue Service come to our August meeting. They brought out information packs and did a presentation of fire awareness in the home.

A book of short stories, written by our group members, will be published shortly. Members will each receive a free copy and will be able to purchase more copies if they want to pass them on to family and friends. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy, please contact the Revesby Writers by email. [revesbywriters@gmail.com](mailto:revesbywriters@gmail.com).

Meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month. Attendances are steady, averaging ten attendees at each meeting. Inspiration is gained by listening to other writers and their styles. Critique is offered on ten minute writing topics during each session and also on topics of the month. The resulting short stories are diverse and interesting, with greatly varying approaches from the individual writers.

*Eddy Schaap*

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FAW

**A**FTER OUR Quote of the Month, from Tess of the D’Urbervilles, our

May meeting kicked off our current series of examining excerpts from outstanding prose. Rick led a discussion on the opening paragraphs of John Wyndham’s *Day of the Triffids*, noting the opening hook, and some now dated language. Clinton presented an in-depth look at prose cadence and rhythm. Examples were drawn from Ray Bradbuys’ *Dandelion Wine* and Alfred Hayes’ *My Face for the World to See*. This presentation prompted much discussion.

This theme was continued in the June meeting with Deb examining J.D Robbs’ *Desperation in Death*, noting the technique of third person indirect speech to give the character’s view.

In August, the Quote of the Month was from Tim Winton’s *Cloudstreet*, everyone’s favourite. The prose lesson was given by Jennie, examining three passages from her favourite, *The Great Gatsby*. The members enjoyed reading through the rich text which compliments the satirical themes of this famous novel.

Our regular features, Etymology exercises, 50-word Dribble, 10-minute writing exercise and Rick’s Rant continue to keep our 16-20 members engaged each month. Greg Baker has taken over the Etymology quiz preparation from branch stalwart Greg Tome, who was presented at our August meeting with a Letter of Appreciation for his valuable service over 12 years.

*Rick Watkins*

### STROUD FAW

**W**ILD WEATHER, floods, illness and travel distance from Stroud have all conspired to impact our meeting attendees this winter – perhaps hibernation would be an option!

Though our gatherings were

*Cont. next page...*

## Branch Reports

small they were most convivial, sharing news and writing. We were also pleased to catch up with our former president, Sue, and send our good wishes her way.

Our second circulating story, Astrid, was concluded. It had provided us with a great opportunity to discuss consistency of character, setting and time period whilst also introducing surprises and plot twists and turns. We are now embarking on a third tale, this time with each contributor supplying a larger helping to the ongoing story – about a thousand words each.

At one meeting Anne entertained us with a delightfully humorous poem about mislaid dentures which she had written for a friend, and which was based on a true event. This inspired others to have a go writing a short story or poem on ‘teeth’.

Some of our members prepared entries for this year’s Seniors Card Stories, Then and Now. We eagerly wait to hear if they are among the lucky hundred stories selected for publication.

Readers Corner continues to be a much-loved regular feature of our meetings, as we all know how reading the work of others helps our own writing. New titles and old favourites are shared and discussed. Recently we talked about the problems involved in providing quality literature for children. This led to looking at children’s literature in by-gone years with reference to Mary Grant Bruce and the Billabong books.

*Elizabeth Bradhurst*

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW

**T**HERE IS a big change ahead for our group. We are moving location for our meetings to the Kirrawee Library, Kirrawee in August, the meetings will

still be on the last Saturday of each month at 12.30pm.

This year our group will be publishing our anthology ‘Living Dangerously.’

The launch of our anthology will be at the Miranda RSL on 22nd November at 2.30pm. Everyone is welcomed.

This is an exciting time for our group.

The stories are so varied and tell fascinating tales. Helen, our editor, has done an excellent job in correlating these stories for publishing. It is not an easy task but the result will be well worth it.

At our meetings this year we have heard from varied interesting guest speakers.

One such speaker was Dinuka McKenzie (a former member of our group), author of *The Torrent*, *Taken* and *Tipping Point*.

She spoke about the difficulties of getting a publishing deal and the time it takes to actually achieve one. Perseverance is the key, luck as well as self-marketing and attending Writing Festivals as a guest speaker leading to meeting with other writers. Entering writing competitions is another way to develop writing skills and gain attention from Publishing Houses.

There is also self-publishing a different process again.

It is not an easy road to achieve a publishing deal, however, it is well worth it to see a book written by oneself in the bookshops worldwide.

Our group also had an open microphone meeting where members were encouraged to share their writings and receive feedback to encourage them in their endeavours. The group listened to such quality writing from the members.

I would like to give a big thank

you to our president Julianne who is recovering in hospital and who I hope returns very soon. She has big shoes to fill.

*Fiona Johnstone*

### WOLLONDILLY FAW

**A**T WOLLONDILLY, like everywhere, we are glad that winter is over, and the warm weather is expected. We hope you used the indoor time for writing.

We want to congratulate two of our members on their success in the recent WestWords Writing Competition. Susan Webb was successful for the Wingecarribee Shire, and Hemet Malak successful for Wollondilly Shire. Congratulations! We are proud and very pleased for them.

Over the last months, with the support and entries from Wollondilly members, the Anthology Committee; Annette Pearce, Narelle Noppert, Jean Mills and Gaynor Mason, put together, and worked on a draft publication which is now complete and has been forwarded to the printer. We are keen to see the proof copy in the next few weeks.

We plan to have our launch on our meeting day on 12th October and extend an invitation for other club members to attend and celebrate with us. Please contact our branch if you need further details.

We are excited to be showcasing our anthology, “Wollondilly Voices”, at a special ‘Meet the Author’ event at Picton Library in November. This will be a first for our branch and we hope to promote Wollondilly FAW and engage anyone who may be interested in joining the NSW Fellowship of Australian Writers.

*Narelle Noppert*

## Writing Competitions



### AUSTRALIANA WRITING COMPETITION

*Closes 6pm 31st October 2025*



### ERNESTINE HILL MEMORIAL AWARD

**Short Story** with an Australian Country Theme

Maximum 4000 words

Prize \$1,000

\$20 per Entry

### RAY CERHAN AUSTRALIANA BALLAD

**Ballad** with an Australian Theme

Maximum 100 lines

1st Prize \$ 600    2nd Prize \$ 200    3rd Prize \$ 100

\$18 per Entry

For rules and submission guidelines: [fawns.org.au](http://fawns.org.au)  
Or contact Convenor: [compconvenor@fawns.org.au](mailto:compconvenor@fawns.org.au)



# Writing Competitions

## SCRIBES WRITERS PROSE COMPETITION 'SHORT TAKES'

Entries close: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Open to: All

Theme: Open Theme

Word Limit: 1,000 Words

Entry Fee: \$10

Prizes: 1st. \$200. 2nd \$100. 3rd \$50

Entry Forms and Terms and Conditions found on :

[www.scribeswriters.com](http://www.scribeswriters.com)

## Lake Macquarie Branch of FAW(NSW)

will be delighted to welcome  
best-selling Australian author

### Graeme Simsion

to their general meeting on November 8 at 2.30.

Graeme's focus will be his recent book

*The Novel Project: a step-by-step guide*

*to your novel, memoir or biography.*

Visitor welcome – please watch our website for details

<https://lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com/>

## Help for Writers

José F Nodar, a member of the Isolated Writers branch of FAW NSW, is a published author with a lot of experience in all matters relating to the written word. José offers a comprehensive range of services to writers through his extensive business network, including...

- Camden Books: Promote your novel on Facebook, LinkedIn and NextDoor Australia, each month
- World Book Reviews: A cost-effective book review service
- Quick Story Tales: A quick and easy way to get paid for your short stories or poetry and get them published (and receive a free e-book at the end of the year!)
- Writer Services: Services at reasonable costs for authors, from mock-ups to videos and the rest.
- Northport Booksellers: A free service to newbie authors, with a request to consider a donation if the individual is happy with advice or service received.

For more information, visit José's website

<https://linktr.ee/jfnodar>.



## JUDGING UNDERWAY FOR COUNTRY PRESS NSW AWARDS

**T**HE COUNTRY Press NSW Writing Awards are close to being finalized, with entries now in the hands of the judges appointed by Fellowship of Australian Writers (NSW).

The competition is a one-off event for people residing in country New South Wales, and is being held to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Country Press NSW, the oldest print media organisation in Australia.

Entries were accepted in four categories: Primary School Age, Secondary School Age, Open Adult and Newspapers (a section just for newspaper staff and contributors).

Proudly carrying out the judging has been State President Colleen Parker (Newspapers), Jackie Laing (Open), Jenny England (Primary) and Ian Keast (Secondary).

In terms of entries, Primary and Open sections were most popular, and the Newspapers section received good support, but unfortunately the Secondary section response was not as high as hoped.

Numerous FAW (NSW) branch members have taken the opportunity to enter the Open section.

Overall, Country Press has been pleased with the public response to the competition, which appears to have achieved its aim of attracting entries from all country districts.

A special condition required entrants to also include the words "local newspaper" as part of their stories, in recognition of the newspaper industry.

Country Press NSW Secretary Greg McFarland (who is also a member of Isolated Branch and has been co-ordinating the competition) said planning began in August a year ago, through initial discussions with the State President.

He said Country Press NSW, which had never run a writing competition previously, relied heavily on the experience of FAW (NSW) in putting together a plan for a successful event.

It is anticipated to be a 14-month process by the time of its conclusion, with award winners expected to be announced in October.

Place-getters will receive custom-made trophies recording their historic achievement

# Eastwood/Hills FAW Literary Competition 2025 Results

	Place	Title	Author	State
<b>Flash Fiction</b>	First	Garage Sale	Sandra Thom-Jones	VIC
	Second	Hard as a Diamond	Janice Williams	VIC
<b>Philippa Holland Award for Poetry</b>	First	Pharmaceutical Fashion	Michael Leach	VIC
	Second	Put you ear to the earth...	David Campbell	VIC
	Highly Commended	Jacob's Drift	Roger Vickery	NSW
	Commended	Chapel Beach	Pip Griffin	NSW
<b>Alan Russell Award for Memoir</b>	First	Forbidden Fruit	Janeen Samuel	VIC
	Second	Bus Journey	Janeen Samuel	VIC
	Highly Commended	Memories of Ma	Margaret Lock	VIC
	Highly Commended	The Circle of Light	Tricia Bowen	VIC
	Highly Commended	Being Nasty	Janice Williams	VIC
	Highly Commended	Writing Machines	Deb Hall	VIC
	Commended	Memoir of an Ordinary Day	Naveed Khan	NSW
	Commended	Julie	R. Kinsky	NSW
<b>Short Story</b>	First	Every Seashell	Vickie Walker	NSW
	Second	What's your Problem?	Sandra Thom-Jones	VIC
	Highly Commended	Duty of Care	Millicent Tai	NSW
	Highly Commended	The Thirteen Times Table	Bron Morrison	NSW
	Commended	Sweet Charity	Mike Woodhouse	NSW
	Commended	Miranda's Gift	Claire Reberger	NSW
	Commended	The Last Straw	Karen Payne	QLD
	Commended	Eastern Brown	Mrs Jill James	NSW
<b>Boree Log Award for Bush Verse</b>	First	The Legacy of Lawson	Kevin Pye	NSW
	Highly Commended	Surrounded	David Judge	VIC
	Highly Commended	Old Men in the Street	John Roberts	QLD
	Commended	The Great Australian Bite	John Roberts	QLD
	Commended	Such is Life	Tom McIlveen	NSW
	Commended	Young Wool	Rueben Humphris	QLD

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD HONOUR ROLL

Irene Acland\*  
Denise Aldridge  
Carolyn Alfonzetti  
Patricia Allen  
Ellen Ash  
Gavin Austin  
Barbara Aylott  
Eileen Backhus\*  
Jill Baggett  
Rosemary Baldry  
Margaret Barlow  
Miriam Bates  
Cyril Bentley\*  
Meryl Bentley\*  
Elaine Burton\*  
Ken Challenor\*

Jan Dean  
Beryl Dundas\*  
Joan Dwyer  
Margaret Ekin  
Alison Ferguson  
Thelma Flower\*  
Pam Garfoot  
Shirley Goodbar  
George Graves  
Eileen Gray  
Pip Griffin  
Mavis Gunter  
Mavis Hayes\*  
Dr Anne Howard  
Margaret Jackson  
John Jacobs

Maureen Kelly OAM  
Lyn Leerson  
Pat Lindsay\*  
Helen Luidens\*  
Johan Luidens  
Elizabeth McVie  
Jan Mitchell  
Vince Morrison  
Esther Osborne  
Rosemary Peters  
Peter F Pike  
Margaret Robinson\*  
Rina Robinson  
Alan Russell\*  
Albert Scott\*  
Bridget Sharp

Dr John Sheppard  
Margot Shugg  
Barbara Snel  
Yvonne Sorensen  
Dorothe Squires-Cooper  
Pat Strong\*  
Greg Tome  
Frank Urban\*  
Carney Vaughan  
Mei-Ling Venning  
Linda Visman  
Ted Webber  
Margaret Wilkinson  
Margaret Young\*



### FAW NSW LIFE MEMBERS

Elaine Burton\*  
Maureen Kelly OAM  
Michael Costigan  
Trevar Langlands\*  
Dr. Hilarie Lindsay\*  
Colleen Parker  
Jean Paddison\*  
Peter Pike  
Cate Plink  
Barbara Snel  
Ron Stevens\*

\*Deceased

## Competition Results

Wyong Writers

Prose Competition 2025 Winner

### I was there when ... cherryblossoms fell

by Marie Lee

**T**HE FORTRESS must have fallen long ago. However, the old mansion that had withstood the weight of time still retained the remnants of its past glory. Inside those towering stone walls, his mother resided. Standing before the tall wooden gate, he hesitated for a long time. His mother must be waiting for her son inside. Or she had even forgotten the very word 'son.' Still, he deliberately murmured to himself, "I'm here to see my mother."

As the intercom on the gate buzzed, the grand hanok – a traditional Korean house – loomed before him. As he stepped into the courtyard, pale pink cherry blossoms fell and swirled in the air. *Would Mother even be aware that the flowers were blooming?* A single cherry blossom landed on his shoe, triggering a sudden memory of his mother's black flats. At the entrance, there were no shoes at all. *Where are Mother's shoes?*

Seated in the waiting room, he gazed out at the garden. His wife's words echoed in his mind: "The building was like a palace, and the cherry blossoms Mother loves were in full bloom," he remembered. But the atmosphere of the house was damp and suffocating, like an old columbarium. The thought of meeting his mother here filled him with an increasing sense of dread.

His mother had sold her hometown house long ago and moved to Seoul, where her children lived. She and his father stayed in a senior residence until his father passed away. His mother, in the preliminary stages of dementia, had lost the one person who reminded her to take her six daily pills and patiently responded to her repeated questions like a parrot. None of her children could fill even a tenth of their father's role.

"Why should I go to a nursing home when I have a son?"

Mother would protest, shrinking away as if the very words nursing home, were an unbearable curse.

Her dementia had worsened. His wife had meticulously inspected every nursing home in northern Seoul. Her analysis led to a luxurious traditional home-turned-nursing facility in Pyeongchang-dong. She presented her findings in a family Zoom meeting: "It is a spotless hanok for well-off seniors."

All the siblings agreed that such a place would provide safe care. Actually no one had the strong heart to leave her there, yet no one could take her into their own home either. Each sibling, in turn, found an excuse to avoid taking their mother there. They eyed each other warily,

like guilty conspirators. Eventually, his wife accepted the burden.

On the day she left his mother at the nursing home, she reported to him after he got off work: "I told her we were visiting a friend's house to see the flowers, and then I left her there."

It was a scheme devised by the siblings over 4 months. To leave their mother, who was terrified of the nursing home, was a torment for all her children. Even his cold, pragmatic wife, mentally drained by the ordeal. She admitted the memory haunted her like a scene from a foreboding movie: "I did not do this because I wanted to. I stepped in because no one in your family would" "I know. You did well," he ended the conversation there.

Regret, guilt, and an overwhelming sense of helplessness tormented him. He felt like a parent who had forcibly weaned a baby. The siblings spoke little to one another. Even during weddings or the birth of a new child, their voices remained hushed as if burdened by a collective sin. Life seemed devoid of reasons to laugh aloud. When he was young, his mother's house was his home. But now, his house was no longer hers.

The sight of cherry blossoms shattering against the glass jolted him back to his senses. He tried to step out onto the terrace, but the glass doors would not budge. A caregiver's voice shattered the silence: "No, sir. The garden doors only open with the director's permission."

"I was just—," he awkwardly stared at his feet. His black shoes looked as if they had turned into Mother's shoes.

*I must find Mother's black flats.*

Summoning courage, he forced the words out: "My mother's shoes are missing. Where are they?"

"She doesn't go outside anymore," the caregiver replied.

"But she always wore them," he murmured.

"You don't need to worry about that now," the caregiver disappeared, and he shrank back.

His mother had worn those black flats everywhere. The tips had frayed, and the soles had worn thin, making them mismatched. Even in the dead of winter or sweltering heat, she refused to wear anything else. She would say, "Oh dear, wait until you are my age. Comfort is everything." He should have realized then - her obsession with those worn-out shoes had been an early sign of dementia.

Mother roamed the alleyways in those worn-out shoes, taking the bus to the market repeatedly. Even when he gave her money for taxis, she stubbornly refused. She would return home, pausing along the way, carrying armfuls of napa cabbage for kimchi. On those

*Cont. next page...*

## Competition Results

days, fresh kimchi and tender boiled pork belly would grace their dining table, and their family's happiness would reach its peak. Not knowing her feet in those shoes were blistered.

His heart started to pound again when he saw Korea's own herb - mugwort - in the yard. In spring, mother would gather young mugwort, boil it, coat it in golden soybean flour, and make ssuk-tteok, a mugwort rice cake. Suddenly he wondered if his pre-ordered sook-tteok had arrived here safely. Just then, a savory yet slightly unpleasant smell wafted into the room. Lunchtime was approaching. He heard running water and the clatter of dishes. At any moment now, the food cart would emerge.

An old woman, already seated at a table, was restlessly shaking her foot. The white indoor slippers on her feet were so small, like a baby's. Do feet shrink with age? A quiet sorrow welled up in him – he had never once thought to know the size of his mother's feet. The elderly, lying motionless in their rooms, began to stir and came out to eat. A caregiver started distributing meals. The elderly, their sunken mouths chewing, looked like fish mouthing silently. Surrounded by them, he felt lost in a strange world. His eyes darted around anxiously. *Where was ssuk-tteok I ordered?* His heart pounded.

On seeing him going to the caregiver, she jumped in first: "Oh, you mean Lee Kyung-soon? The director will bring her out soon."

"No, not that ... I mean, the ssuk-tteok I ordered ..." The caregiver glanced at him, "Ask the director. I would not know."

A cold chill ran down his back as if someone had doused him in ice water.

Then, a voice called out, "Lee Kyung-soon!" and he caught a glimpse of Mother's face. As the director walked toward him, she handed him something and said, "Look at this. It is exactly why we shouldn't give the elderly things like these."

He took it in his hand. It was dry and hard like a lump of black briquette. It was none other than a dry rice cake.

His heart sank. The guilt of leaving her here, the helpless anger within him, boiled like a molten iron. He pulled Mother into his arms. She had grown even smaller, as fragile as a wet bird. Yet, she held in his arms like a piece of wood, and said, "This ssuk-tteok, my son sent it, right? That from my hometown is the best."

A caregiver asked him to assist Mother with her meal. He spoon-fed her gently. Even as she chewed food, her frail fingers continued to fondle the dried ssuk-tteok. She repeated, "It looks just like the ones I used to make."

He felt his emotions surge. "Mother, it's me," he

choked up, but her eyes only remained fixed on the ssuk-tteok. He suddenly hugged Mother tightly, trying to feel her arms in his childhood. She was warm yet cold, like the spring breeze, like cherry blossoms fluttering and slipping away beyond reach.

It was almost time for him to return to work. While he put on his shoes, Mother was staring blankly. "Where are my shoes?" she suddenly asked. "Mother?" "I need them. I must go." "Where?" "Home."

The director came over, holding Mother's hand. When she tried to take the ssuk-tteok from her, Mother only clutched it tighter. The director sent him a sign to leave. Mother waved holding it and bowed to him politely.

"Mr., Goodbye."

"Oh, Mother"

His heart was breaking.

Standing in the garden, he watched the falling cherry blossoms endlessly, lost in thought. They fell onto his black shoes, only to melt away like snowflakes. He wished that painful memories could scatter like those petals and disappear.

*If that is fate.*

Mother was already gone from sight.

### NORMAL COMPETITION CONDITIONS

#### ***Unless stated otherwise, these conditions apply to ALL WRITING COMPETITIONS***

- Entries should be submitted in English, using one side of A4 paper, typed double-spaced (except poetry) in a standard typeface (12 pt min.), using generous margins. No fancy fonts, clip art or decorations of any kind.
- NO names or addresses to appear on manuscripts. A separate COVER SHEET must be attached, containing the title of the entry, competition name, section category if applicable, word or line count, author's name, address, telephone number and email address (if available). Title and page number (ONLY) of the entry should appear on each page of the manuscript.
- Entries must be original work and must not have won a cash prize in any other competition nor been published in any form, as at the closing date of the competition.
- Entries may be entered in more than one competition at the time of entry HOWEVER the entry must be withdrawn from any subsequent competitions if the writer is advised prior to the closing dates that the entry was successful elsewhere with a cash prize.
- Cheques and/or money orders should be made payable to the organisers, unless otherwise stipulated. Multiple entries may be paid with one cheque or money order – do not send coins or stamps.
- Copyright remains with the author. Entries will not be returned and will be destroyed after the announcement of results.
- The judges' decisions will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- If you require a copy of the results mailed to you, please send a standard DL-sized stamped, self-addressed envelope (SSAE) with your entry.

*These are general guidelines. For complete conditions relating to individual competitions, and to obtain entry forms (where required), contact the relevant competition organisers.*

## Poet's Voice

### Born to Count

Six holes in that air vent.

Three ...

Three what?

Three, anyway.

Odd is better than even.

There's always a middle.

Middle's special.

How to count stairs?

Perennial problem.

Risers? Treads?

Think about it.

A set is essential

But useless

If not all the same

Same format

Same size

Costly sometimes.

Books too

Publishers offend

If they change format halfway

Hanging offence guys.

They'll all have to go

Sorry.

That's the rule

Not everything though.

Not interested in collectibles

Too smart for that.

Evens are neurosis.

Go for primes.

Always primes.

TV volume especially.

Road speed not so much.

Lose count.

Start again.

Always.

I know now.

Three magpies.

Close my eyes.

Arithmomania.

Needs light to survive.

Close my eyes now.

Oh. Seven little spots.

Floating.

No eight.

Aargh.

*Greg Baker, Southern Highlands  
FAW*

### Concise vs Verbose

'Be concise,' she advised,

Succinct, short and brief,

Please get to the point,

In only a few words,

Clear and comprehensive,

Using snappy little sentences,

Incisive, not pithy,

Crisp and uncluttered,

Avoid the verbose and lengthy words

in sentence constructs,

Conciscus in Latin, please!

*Debra Widdicombe, Eastwood/Hills FAW*

## Literary Achievements

### EASTWOOD / HILLS FAW

#### Erina Booker

Tanka in *Eucalypt* issue 38

#### Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti

Commended in The Best of Times short story competition #39

#### Beverley George

Tanka in *Eucalypt* issue 38

#### Anne Howard

Pauline Walsh short story award 2025

Short story 'The Night Shadows' published in the Family History ACT publication *Every Family has a story* 2024.

#### Frances Moon

Short story 'Queen for a Day' published in the Family History ACT publication *Every Family has a story* 2024

#### Julie Thorndyke

'now and then' [tanka] in *Quail Eggs* Issue 1 2025

'a picture frame' [tanka] *TSA Tanka Hangout in Ribbons* Fall/Winter 2025 (USA)

'Drawing Tulips' [tanka sequence] *International Tanka* #18 2025 (Japan)

'robotic sounds' [tanka] *Ribbons* Fall/Winter 2025 (USA)

'Doing their Sums' [poem] published *INK 4 Centenary Edition* 2025 SWW NSW anthology

#### Weidong Tian

One tanka in *Eucalypt* issue 38

One tanka accepted by *Ribbons*. ( Fall/Winter Edition)

One tanka accepted by *Laurels*

The Last Paper Flower (short story) read on Writer's Club by Radio Adelaide on 30th of July.

#### Chris Weston

Commended in the FAW Eastwood/Hills May 2025 monthly writing assignment for my story titled *Midnight's Journey*

### SUBMISSIONS TO POET'S VOICE:

Send your poem in the first instance to the **Poetry Editor, Brian Tolagson: [brian.tolagson@gmail.com](mailto:brian.tolagson@gmail.com)** for review and inclusion in the next edition of *Writers Voice*. Deadlines are the beginning of February, May, August or November, for the following month's edition.

NB: Poems accepted for inclusion on this page will be deemed to have been published and therefore are not eligible for entry into FAW competitions.

Members are reminded to include your name, membership number and FAW branch with all submissions to ensure that all works presented here are from financial members.

**Copyright:** *Writers Voice* does not retain copyright of any items contributed by members, including poems. Author copyright is taken as given by the very fact that the author has provided the poem for publication and that we always include the author's name with each poem. Copyright stays with the author, and if any reader wishes to use a poem from *Writers Voice* in any other way, they should contact the author for approval.

# Literary Achievements

Home.

## Debra Widdicombe

Commended - Eastwood/Hills FAW Purple Prose Concise Writing Assignment in April 2025

“Australian Culture” [article] in the *Writers' Voice* Winter Edition No. 288 June 2025

Short Story “The Green Fairies of Ireland” in *Celebrating Writing: 50th Anniversary Anthology* (Eastwood/Hills FAW)

Short Story titled “The South African Legion Pilgrimage” published in *Every Family has a Story: Short Stories from the 2024 E. M. Fletcher Writing Competition* (Family History ACT)

Short Story titled “The Aircraft Window” and a Poem titled “Peach Melba in Melbourne” published in *Women's Ink*, the magazine of SWW NSW Inc., Winter July 2025.

Articles titled “Agent AI” and “The 1% Club vs the Mensa 2% Club” published in “TableAus” Edition 478 Jul - Aug 2025 *Australian and International Mensa News*. This included a Letter to the Editor on “Lagerphones”.

## SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW

### Helen Armstrong

Submitted article on generative AI for *Writers Voice*

### Sal Gallaher

Submitted guest post (article online).

Contribution to Australian Author Baking Cookbook

### Linda Joannides

Corporate history book launch “Heritage and Heart” history of Cabravale Diggers.

### Frank Maguire

Short story published in “Summer Contemplations” anthology in the UK.

### Pat Ruell

Short play was performed on August 17 at Crash Test Drama, Cronulla Arts Theatre.

### Sylvia Vago

Published a short story in an Illawarra monthly magazine, *Rarae Aves*.

## LAMBING FLAT FAW

### Steve Thompson

Memoir – *Back Home* – with the publishers

### Maree Myhill

Elyne Mitchell Photo Story Awards, 1st & 2nd place, The Man From Snowy River Bush Festival Corryong 2025, with the theme ‘The Man or the Myth’.

Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal, Issue 38 2025, Tanka accepted Echidna Tracks Australian Haiku, #15 Open theme, Haiku accepted

Eucalypt e-news July 2025, Avian Tanka accepted

Short Story ‘Wyoming Memories’ published in Family History ACT, *Every Family has a Story* Anthology, Short stories from the 2024 E. M. Fletcher Writing Competition

## Lyn Yates

Short Story ‘Ten Words’ published in *Seniors' Stories 10th edition*, with the theme ‘What Made Me’ 2024

Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal Issue 38 2025, Tanka accepted Eucalypt e-news July 2025, Avian Tanka accepted

Short Story ‘My Boy’ published in Family History ACT, *Every Family has a Story* Anthology, Short stories from the 2024 E. M. Fletcher Writing Competition

## LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

### Sandra Boyd

Involved in helping many writers (both members of our group and independent writers) navigate the publishing process through her business, Kani Consulting; teaching 2 days a week at the Novoschool in Newcastle.

### Ned Stephenson

Highly commended in the Peter Cowan 600 Word Short Story Competition, short story ‘Frostmere Isle’.

### Linda Visman

Final draft of her memoir, *Tales from the Northern Territory: Remote Area Teaching at Ampilatwatja 1990-1994*, prepared.

### Rob West

Published memoir, *A Sydney boy: tales from two centuries and too many cities*. See [https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/A\\_Sydney\\_Boy/N4Nj0QEACAAJ?hl=en&kptab=overview](https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/A_Sydney_Boy/N4Nj0QEACAAJ?hl=en&kptab=overview)

## MUDGEES FAW

### Jill Baggett

Plays *Circus Anyone?* and *Move Over Picasso* featured in Mudgee Performing Arts Forty Fabulous Years

Play *Time For Dinner* performed in Dubbo by Wesley House Players and published by Culture Cult in the First Folio Anthology

Article *Let's Pretend* published in FreeXpresSion Magazine

Poem *The Troubadour* published in Gem zine Anthology  
Story *Wind On The Roof* published by Zest Of The Lemon Magazine

## PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS FAW

### Ian Keast

Poem, ‘On the 50th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon’, published in, **Studio, Number 164**.

Book Review, ‘A New Day Dawns’, (Poetica Christi Press, 2024), published in, **Studio, Number 164**

## STROUD FAW

### Elizabeth Bradhurst:

Short memoir, *A Backyard Tale*, published in recent Hornsby Shire Historical Society journal, *Local Colour*.

## Bookshelf

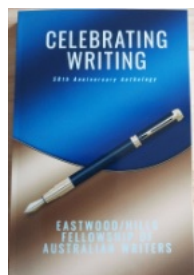


**JOAN LANE**

### *Waterfall Death*

Time and circumstance are elements never actually visible in our lives but so powerful in their effect. A holiday weekend in the scenic ranges of Queensland leads to death and tragedy, and Noelle Kingston finds herself enthralled in a web of danger and intrigue.

Joan Lane's thriller novel was published in 2022. Before this, she published several poems and found success with stage plays. You can find her book on Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Waterfall-Death-Joan-Lane/dp/1984508113>) or, better yet, you can reach out to her directly via email ([jayelle341@gmail.com](mailto:jayelle341@gmail.com)).



**EASTWOOD/HILLS FAW**

### *Celebrating Writing – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology*

Celebration of Writing is the 50th Anniversary Anthology demonstrates the range and diversity of the writing of the members of the FAW Eastwood Hills branch and what we have achieved with 50 years of consistent meetings. It is a collection of memoirs, short stories and poetry that spans several genres and will

provide many hours of easy reading and entertainment.

To order your copy for only \$28 forward your name and email address to the Eastwood Hills branch president Frances Moon [riaraebeam@gmail.com](mailto:riaraebeam@gmail.com) Frances will send you an order form and details of how to pay. Or send a message through our webpage: <https://hillsfaw.wordpress.com/contact/>

**COLLEEN PARKER**

### *Colleens' Collection Volume 1*

The Life of a Storyteller in bite-size pieces

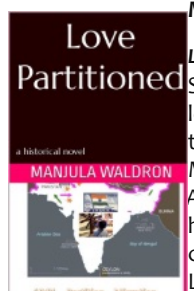
This is a collection of short stories written over the course of 12 weeks in 2025 through my involvement in the Writing Plan called 12 Stories.

My short stories share my world to encourage readers to document their experiences: good, bad, happy, sad and funny to include them as part of our Australian culture.

If you are a new writer or are like many of us, a procrastinator, this volume of short stories is the book for you. I used the 12 Stories technique from the Writing program with brainstorming tips, structure styles and sentence starters' help.

Or maybe you just love reading short stories!

I will have them for sale at the Writers Weekend Workshop in Goulburn on 6th September and through my email [parkerpattinson2@bigpond.com](mailto:parkerpattinson2@bigpond.com) For the price of \$20 plus postage.

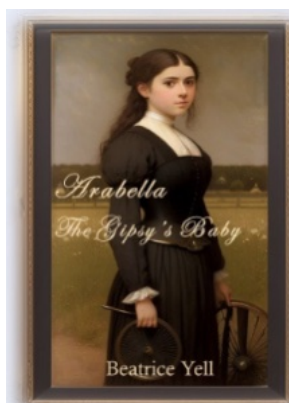


**MANJULA WALDRON**

### *Love Partitioned: A Historical Novel*

Set during India's Independence struggles leading to the Partition of India and Pakistan, this compelling novel tells the inspiring story of Mangla, her interactions with her mother Ammaji, her best friend Basanthi, and her husband Anand as they navigate their own conflicts of religion, sexuality, social privilege.

*Love Partitioned* is informed by the author's own historical journey as a refugee during this turbulent time in India, which marks its 75th anniversary in 2022. The novel is available in print and audiobook.



**BEATRICE YELL**

### *Arabella – The Gypsy's Baby*

When a gypsy's baby is left on a manor house doorstep during Queen Victoria's reign, Lady Imelda takes her in and has her christened Arabella – after her mother as she looks Spanish. The baby grows to be a young girl who forms a small choir. This story, told in first person, begins when she is fifteen years old. A foiled elopement, a rival in the choir, and journeys across England and America are just some of her

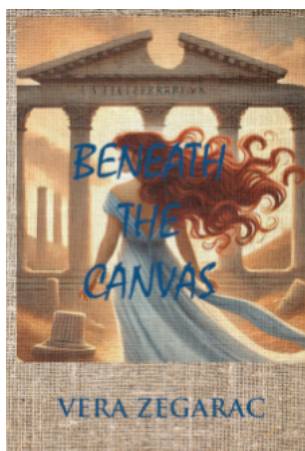
adventures, culminating in her pursuit to become an opera singer in New York.

Beatrice Yell was born in her favourite city, Sydney, to a seafaring father and a Dutch mother from the former Dutch East Indies. She spent a year in Papua New Guinea as a baby, then four years around Victoria in wartime. After studying at the National Art School, she worked with a fashion house in London, travelling in Britain and Europe at every opportunity.

Beatrice feels a strong connection with the Cinque Ports in Sussex where her Viking ancestors settled.

Bea's email address is: [beatrice.yell@outlook.com](mailto:beatrice.yell@outlook.com)

**VERA ZEGARAC**



### *Beneath the Canvas*

**One Woman's Escape, One Man's Redemption, A Love Shaped by Loss**

Olivia Summers is caught in a cycle of unhappiness, trapped in a loveless relationship and lacking inspiration in her job at Comfort Publishing in Adelaide. When an opportunity emerges to work as a research assistant for Alex Harrington, a reclusive author and university lecturer in Sydney, she seizes the chance for a fresh start. But change does not come easily.

Upon arriving in Sydney, Olivia is drawn into Alex's world – a man burdened by tragedy and guilt. As Olivia uncovers Alex's secrets, including a haunting painting concealed in his attic, she finds herself falling for him. However, with Alex' unwillingness to confront his pain, Olivia fears her feelings are destined to remain unexpressed.

Alex must confront the truth about his past – and the possibility of a future with Olivia. Together, they discover the power of love to heal, even in the aftermath of loss.

*Beneath the Canvas* is a sweeping tale of heartbreak, redemption, and the unexpected paths that lead us to where we truly belong.

If you would like a copy, you can reach out to Vera directly via email at [vzegarac10@outlook.com](mailto:vzegarac10@outlook.com).

#### **FAW members:**

Send details of your recently published books to  
[wveditor@fawns.org.au](mailto:wveditor@fawns.org.au)

## Branch Meetings and Contacts

We list on this page, our branches and their contact details for members, visitors and writers keen to meet with other writers for support, critique and to develop skills. New members are particularly welcome.

### BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

**1st Sunday – 1.45 to 4.45 pm**

Springwood Sports Club, 83 Macquarie Road, Springwood  
*Enquiries:* Jeanette Temesvary  
 Phone: 0423 908 199  
*Email:* [temesvary.jns@gmail.com](mailto:temesvary.jns@gmail.com)

*Postal:* 91 Buena Vista Road, Winmalee 2777

*Facebook page:*

Blue Mountains Writers FAW

### CANBERRA & REGION FAW

**Second Sunday – 2:00 pm**

O'Connor Uniting Church Hall, Cnr Brigalow St and Scriviner St, O'Connor, ACT 2602

*Enquiries:* Dianne Porter (Pres.)

*Email:* [porter.32@bigpond.com](mailto:porter.32@bigpond.com)

*Phone:* 0428 138 503

### EASTWOOD/HILLS FAW

**1st Saturday – 1.30 pm**

Pennant Hills Community Centre, Cnr Yarrara & Ramsay Rds, Pennant Hills

*Enquiries:* Frances Moon (Pres.)

*Email:* [riaraebeam@gmail.com](mailto:riaraebeam@gmail.com)

or Laura Davis (Sec.) *Email:*

[lauracedee@yahoo.com.au](mailto:lauracedee@yahoo.com.au)

*Web:* [hillsfaw.wordpress.com](http://hillsfaw.wordpress.com)

### GOULBURN FAW

**Third Wednesday – 6:30 am to 8:30 pm**

Meeting Room, Mulwaree Library 194 Bourke St, Goulburn.

*Enquiries:* Janice Jensen (Sec.)

*Email:* [Goulburn.FAW@gmail.com](mailto:Goulburn.FAW@gmail.com)

*com*

### ISOLATED WRITERS FAW

This group of writers do not meet in person but keep in contact through Greg Mutton, their Convenor, either through the state FAW website [fawns.org.au](http://fawns.org.au) or [isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au](mailto:isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au) (See *Isolated Writers page* (back cover))

### LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

**2nd Saturday – 2.30 to 4.30pm**

Toronto Multi-Purpose Centre, 9 Thorne Street, Toronto.

*Enquiries:*

[lakemacfaw2@gmail.com](mailto:lakemacfaw2@gmail.com)

*Facebook:* /LakeMacFAW

*Web:*

[lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com](http://lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com)

*X formerly Twitter:*

[@lakemacfaw2](https://twitter.com/lakemacfaw2)

*Instagram:* #lakemacfaw2

### LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

**2nd Monday – 5.30 to 7.30pm**

(Except December and January)

The Young Services Club

Cloete Street, Young

*Enquiries:* Jennifer Haynes (Pres.)

*Phone:* 0457 903 240

*Email:* [lambingflatbranchfaw@hotmail.com](mailto:lambingflatbranchfaw@hotmail.com)

*@hotmail.com*

### MACARTHUR FAW

**3rd Sunday – 1.00 pm**

Campbelltown RSL Club (Topaz Room), Carberry Lane.

*Enquiries:* Victoria Chie

4862 2771

*Email:* [macarthurfaw@gmail.com](mailto:macarthurfaw@gmail.com)

*com*

### MOOCOBOOLA FAW

**3rd Thursday – 1.30 pm**

Gladesville Library Pittwater Road, Gladesville.

*Enquiries:* Robert Dickins

9713 8048

Paul Valis 0415 068 163

### MUDGE VALLEY FAW

**1st Monday – 1.00 to 3.00 pm**

[Note change of date and time]

*Enquiries:* Jill Baggett

0409 609 869

*Web:* [mudgevalleywriters.wordpress.com](http://mudgevalleywriters.wordpress.com)

*wordpress.com*

### PARRAMATTA FAW

**1st Saturday – 12.30 to 3.00pm**

5 Phive, Parramatta Square, Parramatta

*Enquiries:* Cecilie McCarron

(Sec.)

*Email:* [qsteps15@gmail.com](mailto:qsteps15@gmail.com)

### PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS FAW

**Last Saturday – 1.00 to 4.00pm**

*Enquiries:*

Ian Keast (Pres.) 0437 006 202

PO Box 67 Port Macquarie 2444

*Email:* [iankeast74@gmail.com](mailto:iankeast74@gmail.com)

### REVESBY WRITERS FAW

**1st Saturday – 1.00 to 4.00pm**

Macarthur Room,

Dixon Lane, Revesby

*Enquiries:* Shirley Galloway

9709 4117. *Email:*

[revesbywriters@gmail.com](mailto:revesbywriters@gmail.com)

*Web:* [revesbywriters.com](http://revesbywriters.com)

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

**2nd Saturday – 10.00am to 1pm**

(Except January)

Welby Hall, Welby.

Postal Address: Gail Leighton-

Daly, 2 Highlands Close, Moss

Vale 2577

*Enquiries:* Uta Purcell (Sec.)

02 4862 1793

*Email:* [fawshnsw@hotmail.com](mailto:fawshnsw@hotmail.com)

*Web:* [fawsh.wordpress.com](http://fawsh.wordpress.com)

### STROUD WRITERS FAW

**Fortnightly Thursdays**

**9.00 am to 12 noon**

Stroud Library, Church Lane Stroud

*Enquiries:*

Hilary Heanly 0466 994 142

[hilary.stroudwriters@gmail.com](mailto:hilary.stroudwriters@gmail.com)

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW

**Last Saturday – 12.30 to 3.30pm**

Sutherland Multi-purpose Centre

123 Flora Street, Sutherland

*Enquiries:* Sylvia Vago (Sec.)

0402 016 883

*Email:* [sutherlandshirefaw@gmail.com](mailto:sutherlandshirefaw@gmail.com)

*Web:* [www.writersunleashed.com.au/faw-meetings](http://www.writersunleashed.com.au/faw-meetings)

*com.au/faw-meetings*

### SYDNEY CITY FAW

**3rd Friday – 4.00pm**

Sydney Mechanics School of Arts,

1st Floor, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney

(close to Town Hall Station,

light rail and buses).

Open to all writers, all genres.

*Enquiries:* John 0400 321 066

*Email:* [sydcityfaw@gmail.com](mailto:sydcityfaw@gmail.com)

### WOLLONDILLY FAW

**2nd Sunday – 1.00 pm**

*Enquiries:* Annette Pearce (Pres.)

0432 857 236

[wollondillybranch.faw@gmail.com](mailto:wollondillybranch.faw@gmail.com)

*com*

### WYONG WRITERS FAW

**4th Saturday – 1.30pm**

Woodbury Park Community

Centre

1 Woolmers Cres. (off Woodbury

Park Drive), Mardi.

*Enquiries:* Glen D'Cruz (Publicity)

0413 291 129

[glenndc@ozemail.com.au](mailto:glenndc@ozemail.com.au)

*Web:* [www.wyongwriters.org](http://www.wyongwriters.org)

## FAW ISOLATED WRITERS BRANCH

### MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES:

Greg Mutton, Isolated Writers Convenor  
Email: [isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au](mailto:isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au)  
Mobile: 0459 997 399

### ASSISTING THE CONVENOR:

Jill Schuler  
Email: [jillschuler9@gmail.com](mailto:jillschuler9@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 0467 677 764.

### MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Editor, Writers Voice  
PO Box 93  
Dapto, NSW, 2530  
Email: [wveditor@fawns.org.au](mailto:wveditor@fawns.org.au)

### AFFILIATION FEES:

FAW NSW Affiliation Fees are due  
31 December yearly...

Isolated Writers: \$40.00 pa (*\$20.00 pa for the period July to December 2025 only*)  
Under 21/Youth Rate: \$20.00 pa (*\$10.00 pa for the period July to December 2025 only*)  
Overseas Members: \$51.00 pa (*\$25.50 pa for the period July to December 2025 only*)

Mail subscriptions to the FAW State Treasurer Rick Watkins (*see page 2 for address*).  
Make cheques/money orders payable to Fellowship of Australian Writers and enclose SSAE for receipt if required.

At the same time, please advise the Membership Registrar, Annette Pearce, that you have paid. Email: [fawmembership@fawns.org.au](mailto:fawmembership@fawns.org.au). This will ensure that you are included on the mailing list to receive *Writers Voice*.

### ELECTRONIC ROUND ROBIN (ERR):

The ERR is currently on hold, following the recent passing of coordinator Brian Armour.

## Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc.



ABN 59 557 152 715

**General correspondence:** Membership Registrar, FAW NSW Inc., Annette Pearce, PO Box 432, Picton. NSW 2571 (PO Box 271, Woy Woy is closed)

**Internet:** [www.fawns.org.au](http://www.fawns.org.au)

### ABOUT THE FAW

The aims of the FAW are:

- to foster and endorse the growth of Australian writing
- to promote excellence in writing
- to encourage writers, and those interested in writing, to join the Fellowship and enjoy the support, help and knowledge of members
- to expand the Fellowship across the State
- to provide an organisation to assist writers unable to attend Branch meetings
- to take the Fellowship into the 21st century and take advantage of technology and its new role in writing and publishing.

### Branch Meetings

The branch fellowships hold regular meetings; conduct workshops and tutorials; hold writing competitions and publish anthologies of members' work. Visitors are most welcome to attend meetings or to contact the Fellowship through their respective branch (see previous page) or by contacting the FAW NSW State body (as above).

### INTERSTATE BRANCHES

#### Tasmania:

Fellowship of Australian Writers (TAS) Inc.  
PO Box 234, North Hobart TAS 7002  
[www.fawtas.org.au](http://www.fawtas.org.au)

#### Western Australia (FAWWA):

Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) Inc.  
PO Box 6180, Swanbourne WA 6910  
[www.fawwa.org](http://www.fawwa.org)

#### Queensland (FAWQ):

Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland (FAWQ)  
[www.fawq.com.au](http://www.fawq.com.au)



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