

WRITERS VOICE



fawns.org.au

Short Story Trouble and Strife

Paul Vallis, Moocooboola FAW

WELL, THERE I was, dead to the world, as the saying goes. Comfortably ensconced between two luxury cotton sheets, each of a thousand thread count, which I am reliably informed are luxurious, by she who must be obeyed. You know, what that legal chappie from the Bailey calls his better half. Or is it the elephant in the room? I always get those two expressions mixed up. Though now I come to think of it, I am convinced it must be the latter. That's because, I am sure I can say with as much conviction as is at my disposal, everyone loves an elephant. Whereas, a lady who insists on obedience all the time is unlikely to be loved as much by the other form of the species, than would be an elephant, quod erat demonstrandum.

Anyway, I digress. I was rudely awakened by the elephant that I had better get my skates on if I was to be on time to meet Freddie and Digby at the Flowerpot Café. I peered at my alarm clock and nearly had a heart attack to see that it was telling me it was 8.45 am. Though to be factually accurate, you will appreciate, the alarm clock was not actually speaking to me and having never experienced a heart attack it was remiss of me to suggest I nearly had one. But I think you get my drift of what occurred. Suffice to say, I shot out of bed like a bullet from a revolver but I am not able

to say whether it was a Glock or a Smith and Wesson, the revolver that is. As for the bullet; well bullets are bullets in my book. Apologies to any ballistics experts out there.

When I finally reached the breakfast table I queried the other half why I would need skates to get to the Flowerpot Café, as there was no sign of snow or ice from the bedroom window on my side of the bed. She simply replied, it was a figure of speech. Now that's as it may be but I think these figures of speech, whoever they are, have a lot to answer for. From my perspective, they always seem to put in an appearance when they are not wanted but nowhere to be seen when you want one. You know what I mean, just like taxis or the 148 to Burwood.

Then, as if my day had not got off to the best of starts, when sitting down at the breakfast table I discovered marmalade on my lightly buttered toast. Hey, I called out to the lady of the house, who naturally was nowhere to be seen; just like those figures of speech. When my angelic elephant returned with a fortifying brew of Earl Grey I questioned the positioning of the marmalade upon the toast. She looked at me as

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS



Congratulations to
Laura Davis - Eastwood Hills
Kathryn Litchfield - Southern Highlands
For achieving their Distinguished Service Awards.

though I was off my loaf. Not quite withering but pretty damn close. To which I hastened to inform her that the marmalade jar only emerged from the fridge on Saturday mornings. Do you know what, the elephant had the affrontery to advise me it was Saturday. Regrettably, my memory is not as good as it was but of course, that's another thing elephants are good at.

IN THIS ISSUE...

State Council News	3
Vale Elaine Staples	3
The perfect writers retreat	4
News from the SSW NSW	4
Branch Reports	5
Writing Competitions	10
Competition Results	12
Poet's Voice	21
Literary Achievements	22
FAW Members' Bookshelf	24
Short Stories	26
Branch Meetings & Contacts	27
About the FAW	28

Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc.



ABN 59 557 152 715
Incorporation Number Y12630-47

General correspondence:

Hon. Secretary, FAW NSW Inc.
Jackie Laing, honsecretary@fawns.org.au

Annette Pearce, Membership Registrar.
PO Box 432, Picton NSW, 2571

Patron:

Ms Patti Miller BA, MA

State President:

Colleen Parker – (02) 9548 1614

Vice President and Competition Convenor:

Cate Plink – 0492 833 522

Hon. Secretary / Publicity Officer:

Jackie Laing – 0413 285 431
Email: honsecretary@fawns.org.au

Hon. Treasurer

Rick Watkins – 0414 658 411
PO Box 690, Bowral NSW 2576

Membership Registrar:

Annette Pearce – 0432 857 236

General Committee:

Alison Davey – TBA
Kath Berryman – 0403 836 591

Isolated Writers Convenor:

Philippa Yelland – 0449 651 190

Webmaster:

Ken Driver – (02) 4314 5062

Writers Voice Editor:

Craig Cooper – 0437 144 607

TO CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF THE FAW NSW
STATE COMMITTEE (LISTED ABOVE) BY EMAIL,
PLEASE USE THE 'CONTACT US' FORM AT
FAWSW.ORG.AU/CONTACT-US

WRITERS VOICE ISSN 0817-0746

The official Bulletin of the Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW Inc is published quarterly. Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the FAW or the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit or delete submissions for length, content, or policy. All advertisements and items are accepted in good faith but the FAW NSW Inc cannot accept responsibility for misrepresentation by advertisers nor does inclusion of any item imply endorsement by FAW NSW Inc.

Editor: Craig Cooper. *Submission should be sent to:*
Email: wveditor@fawns.org.au (preferred), or:

The Editor, Writers' Voice
PO Box 93, Dapto, NSW, 2530

Mobile: 0437 144 607 (leave message)

QUARTERLY COPY DEADLINES:

15 AUGUST, 15 NOVEMBER, 15 FEBRUARY, and 15 MAY
For September, December, March, and June issues respectively.

FAW NSW Inc. State Council Delegates Meetings

The Executive Committee and Branch Delegates meet four times each year. The AGM is in **May**, and quarterly meetings are held either in person or online in August, November, February of each year. The AGM is followed by the Ernestine Hill Awards luncheon and Presentation of Awards.

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 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.**

Writing Fellows

FAW Writing Fellows are listed here: fawns.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, **Jackie Laing (honsecretary@fawns.org.au)** and **Annette Pearce, PO Box 432, Picton. NSW 2571.** The application should:

- 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.
- indicate the Branch where the applicant is currently a member and the number of years of FAW membership.
- 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 fawns.org.au/about-us/distinguished-service-awards/.

Guidelines for assessing recommendations for Distinguished Service Awards:

- Recommendations must be the unanimous decision of a current Branch Committee.
- Qualifications to include the following features:
 - Length of service as a current financial member to be at least ten (10) years.
 - Required to have a regular attendance record at Branch Meetings.
 - 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.
- All recommendations to be submitted, preferably online, to the DSA Assessment Committee c/- **Jackie Laing, honsecretary@fawns.org.au** or mailed to **Annette Pearce, PO Box 432, Picton, NSW 2571** by 30 June each year.
- 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 Jackie Laing honsecretary@fawns.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 Jackie Laing honsecretary@fawns.org.au or phone 0413 285 431—**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.

WRITERS VOICE

Winter Edition No. 292 Jun. 2026 – Page 3

State Council News

From the desk of the State President

WELCOME TO Winter Everybody, hasn't the year flown by? With our AGM behind us and our new Office Bearers voted in I hope we are all fresh and ready for another busy year. On that note we were all returned except for Jackie Laing who has replaced Liz Shaw as Hon. Secretary and we have a new committee member, Alison Davey to replace the position Jackie has moved from. Jackie believes that Alison, a competent Hon. Secretary on her branch at Port Macquarie, will be of immense assistance to Jackie as a 'Minutes Secretary'. So it is onwards and upwards for us. As we have a lot to prepare ahead. One of the nominees for the General Committee who was not elected as there was only one vacant position, has accepted an invitation to play a role of assisting me in need, but with no official status of voting rights. So I want to thank Carolyn Cash who goes back to 1996 when I was President of Sutherland Branch and she was on Committee with me then as Hon. Secretary. I know of her excellent work ethic and look forward to receiving some assistance directly. Thank you to each of you for stepping up.

The biggest relief to us all is that the New Constitution was accepted by a unanimous vote of all attendee at the AGM after a period in excess of two years of revising and adjusting and revising again. The branches are entitled to hold one in their Hon. Secretary's file for reference by any member with permission through their Committee, and are encouraged to use it.

Volume 12 Seniors Stories is well underway with another response in the vicinity of 530. The workshops were particularly well-attended this year especially through the addition of having the technology that we are now permitted to use (see our new constitution). I especially appreciate my Vice President, Cate Plink and her friend and fellow member, Sandi Boyd for their knowledge in this area.

I thank all Committees for their tireless work both at the State level as well as our wonderful 20 branches across the State. Especially I cannot thank Hon. Treasurer Rick Watkins, and Membership Registrar, Annette Pearce enough, for all the extra time and effort they spent assisting me to finalise our updated Constitution. Please have your branch committees to read it thoroughly so they can respond to your queries and know just where to look up the responses for you. Next year I plan to create another Document to sit side-by-side with the Constitution to help us all move forward seamlessly long into the future and operate without any legal issues. The new document will be

called POLICY AND BY-LAWS which is for the traditional operating processes we use that can be adjusted by changes or new information added by the State Committee when necessary. Some examples would be: possibly adjusting the annual subscription if needed, purchasing the bundles of ISBNs for our publishing members, Assistance with members' need to change Branch memberships when they change residences ... things like that which do not need to be 'locked in forever' in the constitution.

Whilst welcoming in the new committee I want Liz Shaw to know her work was appreciated over the last couple of years as Hon. Secretary ... thank you Liz.

Colleen Parker, President



Colleen Parker

Vale Elaine Staples



It is with great sadness that our long-term member of FAW Sutherland branch, and before that FAW St George/Sutherland has passed away on 3 March 2026.

Elaine contributed her humorous stories and life stories over the years, and won many writing competitions in a number of journals including Free Xpressions, the Senior Stories anthologies and later in life she published a book with her stories, poems and paintings.

Elaine continued to submit stories as a remote member of our group, when she moved from Sydney to a nursing home in the Newcastle area.

Silvia Vago

Article

THE PERFECT WRITERS RETREAT

OUR PRESIDENT, Marilyn, has the perfect writers retreat. A B&B on the edge of the beautiful Capertee Valley. An old shearing shed converted into bunk style accommodation.

Our Mudgee writers group have had several writing excursions to stay overnight in this most creative space.



This is a photo of our most recent stay at which we were very happy to welcome members from the Blue Mountains Group.

An anthology, Tales From Brigadoon, resulted, much to our delight, and hopefully to our readers.

Jill Baggett

FINISHED YOUR BOOK? READY TO MOVE ONTO ... PUBLISHING! LET US HELP!

We have a range of experts and professionals just ready to help out!

Mel Ifield of the Isolated Writers branch, is offering manuscript assessments, with a fully developed report, some editing and a path forward.

Craig Cooper, the editor for Writer's Voice, can provide manuscript typesetting and cover art design. We can then liaise with **Chris Grant** of BPG (the printer of Writer's Voice) to print your book.

We can even provide FREE ISBN if you need it!

Getting a book published can be a daunting task. Our team has the experience and expertise to make it an absolute breeze!

Please contact FAW's secretary, Jackie Laing, 0413 285 431, honsecretary@fawns.org.au and quote your FAW Membership Number and name.

LET'S PUBLISH!

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN WRITERS NSW

OUR CENTENARY celebrations are over. We are now busy planning for the next 100 years with changes in the way we conduct our competitions and keep a register of memberships, which are two very time-consuming functions for our Committee. We are looking at online software solutions and have a subcommittee currently doing the research.

In the next twelve months we will run three competitions: The Hilarie Lindsay Prize for a story with a social justice theme, the Pauline Harvey Prize for a short historical fiction story and our bi-annual National Writing Competition with three categories – Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry. Without an online method for submission and payment of entry fees we would need returning officers for all these and would be adding to the workload of our already overworked Treasurer.

We worry that potential entrants may be put off by online submissions, but this seems to be the way most organisations are conducting their competitions these days.

The Membership Secretary's job can also be a nightmare. Members move house, change their email addresses and telephone numbers without letting our Membership Secretary know which means it becomes expensive when you print and post hard copy newsletters such as your Writer's Voice and our Women's Ink, and so many are returned to sender.

I hope in my next report to Writer's Voice I will be able to tell you how we have solved these problems.

We had 69 entries to the Hilarie Lindsay Prize which was more than we expected, being the inaugural competition. The 20 longlisted entries are currently with the final judge, and I don't envy her job as I believe the quality of writing is very high. The winner will be announced at a Sparkling High Tea at Parliament House, Macquarie Street on 24th July.

Willoughby Literary Festival is on again this year at Willoughby City Library from 17th-19th July. Last year the Society of Women Writers held a panel discussion with four poets discussing the making of a poem. This year we will have a panel of children's writers (Susanne Gervay, Libby Hathorn, Karen Hendricks, and Julie Thorndyke) discussing Literacy for Everyone: language, inclusion and story in children's picture books.

Please see our website for details <https://womenwritersnsw.org/index.php> and I hope to catch up with some of you at the Fellowship of Australian Writers Ernestine Hill Awards Luncheon on 2nd May.

Pippa Kay, Co-President, Society of Women Writers NSW

Branch Reports

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

CONTINUING OUR love affair with writing at our March meeting we were delighted to have guest speaker Paula Roe lead a workshop on Romantic Fiction writing. Working in groups, Paula showed us how to concoct fantastical romantic settings and conflicts. Using her prompts we explored the character's goal, motivation, conflict, story tropes and plot twists. We learned some of the 'rules of romantic fiction': no one dies and you need a happy ending! By the end of the workshop we found ourselves giggling like giddy teenagers.

At our next meeting we were honoured by a visit from FAW State President, Colleen Parker who shared her knowledge of the publishing industry. Colleen revealed how she became hooked on writing from an early age and kept pursuing it. We learned about her experiences working with publishing houses including Griffin Press and McMillan's and how she established her own publishing company. Having Colleen in our midst, we were able to hear about upcoming initiatives of the State Committee and learn more about the Seniors' Stories Competition.

Led by Rosemary Baldry at our May meeting, members had the chance to get valuable feedback on their early drafts for the Seniors' Stories Competition. Using our proven 'Critiquing Checklist' members were offered constructive



Paula Roe leads Romance Writing Workshop at Blue Mountains FAW

ideas to apply when editing their stories. We thank those who offered up their work for discussion, as the whole group benefited from deep consideration of what might be improved to suit the writer's purpose. Thanks also go to Annette Brown for her warm-up stimulus, to get us writing from our 'stream of consciousness' and allow ourselves to write freely and enhance our sensory perceptions while putting aside our inner critic.

From Romance writing to Life writing, there's an undeniable attraction that keeps us coming back month after month: our love of self-expression through the written word.

Jeanette Temesvary

CANBERRA FAW

OUR TASK for the whole of 2026 is editing entries to our anthology called "Dances with Words". Our group is finding doing the task of editing as a group very helpful for our skills development. Our varying points of view really help to tease out how to be sure the submitted work is communicating what the writer intended.

Each meeting we also have time to share what we call homework. We set a topic each month and write on it. At the meeting we share our work.

At each meeting there is always time allowed for in-meeting writing if the agenda items have been covered.

The focus is on members writing something each month. The skill of writing is expanded by writing. Having topics set that may be outside our personal areas of interest helps us get out of our comfort zone and try something different.

Keep on Writing!
Dianne Porter

EASTWOOD HILLS FAW

OUR MARCH workshop featured many members keen to unpack key aspects of how to write historical fiction; presented by Linda King. Writing historical fiction requires a certain level of commitment. Writers are required to engage in significant and often time-consuming research to ensure authenticity. Members worked hard with their writing exercises and while this may have been new for some, there were some excellent attempts at establishing a setting with atmosphere.

It was at this meeting that we congratulated Sally Lewery on being awarded the trophy for our annual Pauline Walsh open genre short story competition. Sally's story was titled Margaret, Marg, Mum. Sally also won the annual John Kelly Award for an original myth, legend or fairy tale. Sally's story was titled Witches Bunting. It is rare that one person is awarded two trophies in the one year. A wonderful achievement.

In April an interesting workshop was jointly presented by members Laura Davis and Erina Booker - 'Writing Tips' and 'Tips from Various Poets'. Laura led us to consider a range of effective tips. We created an imaginary person who could not leave a particular scene. This was followed by an exercise where we made up a character then described them using a multitude of adjectives. This showcased some very inventive and humorous characters. A discussion on flash fiction followed.

Erina shared some tips from various poets with a focus on the difference between poetry and prose. We were encouraged not to overthink poetry and that it really should be fun. We discussed techniques used by poets such as

Cont. next page...

Branch Reports



*'Reaping the Rewards for Hard Work'
Sally Lewry with her John Kelly and Pauline Walsh trophies*

Audry Molloy, Richard Hugo and Gerard Manly Hopkins. Erina concluded by sharing Catherine Daveny's 'Five Tips for Writers'. Myths and Legends were the topic for our May workshop. This fascinating genre was ably presented by Laura Davis who began by asking us to write a definition for a 'myth', followed by one for a 'legend'. This prompted some good discussion. We looked at legendary figures such as Robin Hood and Ned Kelly. Laura presented us with 11 points for discussion. We were then handed a list of monsters and other creatures that feature in myths. A fascinating array of 'beasties'.

Linda King

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

SANDI BOYD drew an engaged audience when presenting on 'publishing with purpose' at our March meeting. She expertly walked us through the 5 types of publishing that writers can aim for: traditional publishing; small press publishing; hybrid publishing; self-publishing; and collaborative/anthology publishing. Members found Sandi's approach and depth of knowledge very informative.

A workshop on constructing characters proved both engaging

and useful at our April meeting. Member Bethany Wooden showed us how to use Dungeons and Dragons character type alignments to build consistent and meaningful characters. A related writing exercise showed us the importance of planning our characters in-depth, and ensuring that character actions, features and responses were consistent with our plans and type alignment.

In May our workshop topic was 'Trauma sensitive writing'. Member and presenter Karen Stafford skilfully helped us navigate this challenging topic, with the view that we would not be visiting our own traumatic experiences at the workshop but rather looking, in general, at how we might deal with traumatic subjects in our writing. We explored ways in which trauma could be sensitively and effectively incorporated, and techniques we could use both to undertake the writing and to produce powerful results.

Pam Garfoot

LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW

IN APRIL 2026 we welcomed guest speaker Daisy Joseph-Cole one of our local authors. This was her second visit to our group. She shared insights into self-publishing and the creative journey. Both of which were inspiring and incredibly valuable to members and visitors on the night. Daisy introduced us to her newly self-published work "Exile" which forms part of a trilogy. She is currently working on volume two.

Our poetry and short story writing competition opens on June 1st. It has been a busy time for members involved in getting the competition up and running. Thanks to the skills of new members, Lauren, Sophie and Georgie we have updated our Facebook page and by

the time you receive this edition of Writers Voice our website will be operational.

We are beyond excited to announce that one of Australia's most beloved children's authors is heading our way. She's coming to Young in July to help us launch our writing competition. For our student winners this year we're doing things a little differently with some once off and exclusive opportunities.

Sadly, long term member and FAW DSA recipient Joan Dwyer together with her husband John have chosen to resign from active duty. Joan has been a branch stalwart for almost as long as the branch has existed. The branch thanks them for their service and wishes them well for their future endeavours.

Jennifer Haynes

MUDGEES FAW

MUDGEES VALLEY Writers did well in the Mudgees Seniors Week competition this year – to say the least (and not to brag). We won First, Second and Third place in the Prose section and a Highly Commended in the Poetry. It's time to celebrate – especially as we had our 40th birthday in April. Forty years of fun and creating so many stories, poems, books and memories.

We are now meeting at our member, Peter's place. His wife, Louise, is an amazing artist, so we sit in a room surrounded by beautiful artworks. We think we are very lucky.

Jill Baggett

ORANGE FAW

A VISIT by Colleen Parker (FAWNSW President) was the highlight in March. Not only did Colleen present an excellent writing workshop for the Seniors' Stories Vol. 12 Writing

Cont. next page...

Branch Reports



FAW Seniors' Stories Volume 12 Writing Workshop conducted by Colleen Parker, FAWNSW President, Friday 13 March 2026.

Competition but she also managed to meet members of the OFAW Branch and to share some of her writing expertise. Colleen led the group in drafting six short chain stories as a demonstration of story structure. Jenn thanked Colleen for taking the time to visit Orange and joining us for the March meeting.

There were four items of interest tabled at the April meeting:

Banjo Paterson Writing Award, Deadline 1 May 2026.

FAWNSW AGM Luncheon, Sydney 2 May 2026

Seniors' Stories Vol/ 12, Deadline 14 May 2026.

Teaching Anthology by Dianne Bates, Deadline 30 June 2026.

March also saw the establishment of the 'Dribbles, Drabbles and Spits' email page where writing generated at OFAW meetings is collated and circulated to members only. This can then be revisited and shared with members who may have missed the meeting. The Dribble for April was 'I don't like...', suggested by Jenn, which resulted in five very different stories. These ranged from disgusting public toilets, porridge, uninvited people using a nearby hill for better connection to make mobile calls, steep windy roads and dusting to a whinge list of fifty words. Vickie suggested 'It was a cold and rainy day...' as a Drabble

(100 words) for May.

The always popular etymology-based crossword, created by Dennis for March was on collective nouns. For April he produced a Hunt-A-Word with a secret message.

Sylvia provided the April Writing Activity on beginning sentences with prepositions. Prepositions help create better visual images, as well as making the story more dynamic. The resulting stories, Clary the Horse, Harry the Dog, The Kangaroos' Race, The Yellow and Black Football and Lost in the Underground of the Sydney Railway System, could all be easily developed further.

Uta gave a short talk on self-publishing. It is a lengthy but very rewarding process involving multiple drafts, attaining an ISBN number from FAWNSW and tech support before the item is ready for the printer. She encouraged members to try it when they feel they are ready to do so. She suggested the group might like to try and publish a small anthology towards the end of the year.

The meeting ended with the delightful recitations, from memory, by Jenn and Sylvia of their favourite children's stories, 'Hubert's Hair-Raising Adventure' by Bill Peet and 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' by Dr. Suess respectively.

Jennifer Allen and Uta Purcell

REVESBY FAW

THE REVESBY Writing group recently had a guest speaker, who spoke about genealogy. She talked about gathering information about family and methods to record the information in book form, for younger family members, to learn more about their family history. She passed around several books, which she has had published. She was fortunate to also have some photos, dating back

to the late 1800's, of family members from the early days in Australia.

Unfortunately, not all families have old photos. My family migrated from the Netherlands, not long after the second world war. I personally, have very few old family photos. Certainly none that might have been taken, before the mid 1950's.

Entries have now closed, for the Seniors Writing Competition. The topic was; neighbours, strangers and those who come in-between. It seemed a daunting task at first. Then I decided to make an effort and started to write. Delete and start again. Finally, I had 986 words, with which I was happy, to enter into the competition. Fingers crossed.

Good luck to all of you, who have also entered the competition.

Eddy Schaap

PORT MACQUARIE FAW

THE YEAR has flown by remarkably quickly. Owing to the change in our meeting schedule from the end of the month to the beginning, our general election was held much later than usual. As we were unable to meet in January to prepare for a February election, it was instead held in March. Nevertheless, everything went smoothly, and we welcomed a blend of new and returning leaders. Brian Tolagson was elected President and Jackie Laing Vice President, while Alison Davey and Walter Van Hoorn will continue in their respective roles as Secretary and Financial Secretary.

Following the lull at the end of last year and our recent membership drive, we are pleased to welcome a new member, John Cooper, who brings extensive writing experience and an impressive number of self-published books. We look forward to learning from him, sharing new experiences,

Cont. next page...

Branch Reports

and welcoming others who may join us this year as we continue to explore the joys of writing.

We have arranged a series of workshop sessions to keep members engaged throughout the year. Topics to be explored include, but are not limited to, critiquing our work, the use of Artificial Intelligence as a writing aid, progressive storytelling, and public speaking.

Members Jackie Laing and Alison Davey attended and enjoyed the State AGM and meeting. Jackie is now the State Secretary, and Alison has joined the committee to support her and assist where needed. We congratulate them both on their new positions and wish them every success in the year ahead.

We joined another local writers' group for the Port Writers Weekend, titled Writers for Writers. Former president Ian Keast was part of the poetry panel, while Alison attended two sessions that provided a valuable opportunity for learning and inspiration. She also brought back excellent notes to share with members. One session, *The Secrets of Short Story Success*, presented by Elizabeth Macintosh, offered practical insights for writers.

The second, *Writing Creative Non-Fiction based Family Research*, presented by Lyndall Naim, explored story-writing techniques including plot, setting, character development, theme, and point of view. Participants were encouraged to select a protagonist, consider relationships, timelines, purpose, and structure, and then shape an ancestor's story into a creative narrative. The discussion and critique made this an especially engaging and worthwhile session.

We also enjoyed a presentation from Brian Tolagson on *The Essence*

of *Good Fiction*. Brian challenged us to think carefully about how to write a strong hook, reminding us that it should always aim to reveal emotional truth. Members enjoyed the discussions that followed and benefited greatly from the exercise of writing hooks for a range of topics, including a romance involving concerns about an age difference and a detective-style scenario centred on the discovery of a body.

There are plans to continue to grow membership and be more involved with the community so we look forward to the new experiences in store for us this year.

Pinado Waba

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FAW

IN a special, but unheralded ceremony at our May meeting, existing DSA recipient and long-time Southern Highlands member, Greg Tome presented Kathryn Litchfield with her Distinguished Service Award. Kathryn joined FAW in 2009 and has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the branch ever since, especially during the COVID years, keeping members active and interested. Typically for this stalwart of the Southern Highlands, Kathryn was truly surprised and accepted the award with great humility.

In a stark change of pace, the meeting continued with Greg Baker presenting a detailed lesson in the mysteries of solving Crossword puzzles. It was fitting that Greg led this session as he always includes a cryptic word puzzle at the end of his monthly Etymology sheet.

Our Members Reading Their Own Works session was particularly enriched with two short stories and two poems. Our members are really stepping up with their creativity and presentation skills.

Kate Fletcher was a guest



Kathryn Litchfield being presented with her Distinguished Service Award by Greg Tome.

speaker at our April meeting. Kate leads the Southern Highlands Community Hospice Biography Service, for which a band of volunteer biographers spend time with people in the very twilight of their life to record their conversations. Kate explained the process of turning these special remembrances into biographies which the families can distribute and cherish.

The theme for our 50-word 'Dribble' in April was "parental guidance is advised" and once again the wit and off-beat creativity of our writers was on display.

In March our president and secretary attended the Seniors Week spread of stalls in Bowral. In amongst diverse parties offering all kinds of services to our senior citizens, it was encouraging to find so many people interested in writing. We had many a spirited conversation with members of the public and we hope that these encounters may have sparked the chance for some to pick up a pen or select Word on a laptop.

Rick Watkins

STROUD FAW

JUST A short report this quarter as our entering into the 12 Stories

Branch Reports

Project three months ago has taken precedence over other activities. Six members of Stroud Writers have started on the project which is proving to be a very interesting challenge. Most of us have now received the twelve kits and are being spurred on by their content and encouragement. With the prompts giving us ideas and the 'I could write about that' feeling, we are making progress with our memoirs. Writings are shared at our meetings.

Discussion takes place and we learn about each other's lives at the same time. Something we may never have done in such depth prior to beginning our 12 stories. There is definitely a book in all of us. We just have to get it written.

Hilary Heanly

SUTHERLAND FAW

Our first meeting took place on the last Saturday in February at 12.30pm, at the new Kirrawee Library in South Village, Kirrawee.

The guest speaker and workshop coordinator was Nick Bolton, a regional filmmaker and chair of Screen Illawarra. He is a practitioner in writing, directing and producing plays.

Our group hosted five speakers specialising in different area of writing this year to help our members in their writing journey. These sessions have proved to be beneficial to members and all are welcome to join us to hear the guest speakers. There was a cost of \$10 to cover the cost of the speaker, room hire and afternoon tea for visitors.

Our April and May speakers were: 18th April- Peter Frankis who will be discussing poetry and its purpose.

30th May- Greg Moriarty who will discuss measuring readability.

Future speakers will be:

27th June- Hayley Scrivener who

will hold a writing workshop.

22nd August- Meredith Jaffe who is discussing the task of publishing novels.

A subcommittee of the Sutherland FAW group has been formed and is beginning to organise the very successful Writers Unleashed Picture Book Competition that has been held in the past. This competition has been very successful in previous years, with writers from around the world submitting children picture book scripts. A number of the successful authors have gained a publishing deal. The entry date for this competition will be the beginning of March. More information will follow on the conditions re entry on the Sutherland Shire FAW website.

The Sutherland FAW is also holding the Writers Unleashed Festival Saturday, September 19th at the Kirrawee Library. More information will come with the list of speakers, workshops as well as editing consultants from publishing firms.

The first meeting of the year was an excellent one led by Nick Bolton a documentary, scriptwriter, producer and director.

There were 26 people in attendance.

The Writers Unleashed Picture Book Competition commenced on 2nd March and finished on May 2nd. There were 154 entries.

The head Judge is Susanne Gervay (author of over 15 books) will announce the winner at the Writers Unleashed Festival held on 19th September at Kirrawee Library. The winner will also receive a mentorship with Susanne as well as \$500. More information can be found on our website – writersunleashed.com.au

The guest speakers for the Festival are in the planning stage

and will cover a number of areas.

A workshop on self-publishing will be led by Sal Gallaher as well as a crime workshop led by Dinuka McKenzie. Sue Whiting will lead a workshop on children's writing as well as Nick Bolton on building character. Fantasy Fiction and how it has taken over the world will also be discussed.

Kate McClymont and Sue Williams will lead a session on truth telling. Sue Williams will speak on the difficulties on telling true crime.

The festival will also have editor consultations available from publishing houses for writers who want to get feed back for their manuscripts. This will be available for a fee and will only have limited places.

What an amazing program!

At our open microphone gathering in March, members shared with the group their writings and projects for the year. The quality and depth of the writing was outstanding.

Peter Frankis led our third meeting with a workshop on poetry. It was well attended and the group enjoyed the focus on poetry and the writing that followed.

The workshop in May will be led by one of our own members, Helen Armstrong who has edited and help publish our anthology in 2025 along with assisting others in their writing journey

Thanks to our executive Sylvia Vago, Pat Ruell and Cherie Corbett-Jones for their continued support and work to keep the Sutherland FAW a dynamic functioning group.

A sad note for our group is the passing of Elaine Staples, a member for many years. She was an amazing writer who wrote from the depths of a life well lived, my condolences to her family.

Fiona Johnstone

Writing Competitions



FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS JEAN STONE AWARD 2026

Entries close: 31st August 2026
CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Failure to comply with the following conditions will result in disqualification without refund

1. The Award is for a poem or group of poems up to 60 lines.
2. Entrants must be permanent residents of Australia.
3. Submitted entries must not have previously been published, nor be under consideration for publication. Entries may have been entered in other competitions but not won a monetary prize. Receipt of entry will not be acknowledged.
4. Multiple entries are permitted, a separate Entry Form must be submitted with each entry.
5. Entry Fee is \$15.00 per entry.
6. The closing date is 6pm 31st August 2024.
7. Entries are to be submitted and paid for using the Stripe payment system via the online form available on the FAW website at www.fawns.org.au
8. For those unable to use the online form, a separate form will be forwarded by email from the

Closing 31 August 2026:
**2026 HILARIE LINDSAY POETRY
COMPETITION FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL
CHILDREN**

SECTION 1: Years 11 & 12	up to 60 lines	Prize \$125
SECTION 2: Years 9 & 10	up to 50 lines	Prize \$100
SECTION 3: Years 7 & 8	up to 40 lines	Prize \$90
SECTION 4: Years 5 & 6	up to 40 lines	Prize \$70
SECTION 5: Years 3 & 4	up to 30 lines	Prize \$50
SECTION 6: Years 1 & 2	up to 20 lines	Prize \$30

Entries are sought in the following categories:
Entrant's name must appear on the entry form ONLY. The entry fee is \$5.00.
All entries and payments should be done via the submission form on the fawns.org.au website with the

compconvenor@fawns.org.au

9. The author's identity must appear on the Entry Form ONLY. The author's name must NOT appear on either the manuscript.
10. The results, and the judge's report, will be emailed to all contestants after 31st October 2024
11. The author retains copyright to all work submitted, although prize-winning entries or a precis must be available for publication in the Fellowship's bulletin "Writers Voice" and on the FAW NSW website. Unsuccessful entries will not be returned.
12. Entries must be original, creative and inspiring works which present to the audience an engaging work of literary excellence. The use of AI is not allowed.
13. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. **There will be no individual appraisals.**
14. FAW NSW reserves the right not to award any prizes if, in the judge's estimation, no entries of sufficient merit are received.
15. Normal competition rules apply, see website for more details.

THE AWARD

PRIZE: \$500
The Prize winner will be invited to attend the Awards Luncheon in May 2027
Cate Plink
8/15-21 Gosford Avenue
The Entrance NSW 2261
Email: compconvenor@gmail.com; Phone 0492 833 522

entry attached where indicated as a word document. Should an online submission not be available, students may request an entry form and payment details from compconvenor@fawns.org.au. Entries must be student's own work, unpublished and not having won any competition at time of entry. Normal Competition Conditions apply. **Closing date for the competition is 6pm 31st August 2026**
Winners will be notified prior to 31st October 2026

Additionally, owing to the passing of long-time judge Jan Dean, we are looking for somebody to take on the role. Anyone who is interested should contact Cate Plink by the details below.

For any further information please contact the competition convenor, Cate Plink, by ph. 0492 833 522 or email compconvenor@gmail.com.

Writing Competitions

SCRIBES WRITERS OPEN POETRY COMPETITION 2026

Entries close: 30th June 2026

Style: Free Verse

Theme: Open. Line count 60 maximum (excluding title)

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

Highly Commended and Commended Certificates at the judges discretion

Entry fee: \$12 EFT Only (no cheques or postal orders please)

Entry via email or post. Please note all postal entries must be postmarked on or

before closing date (30 June 2023)

For full competition details, Conditions and Entry Form please visit the Scribes

Writers Website and follow links to the Poetry Competition page

www.scribeswriters.com/poetry.html

Closing 30 June 2026:

SCRIBES WRITERS OPEN POETRY COMPETITION 2026

Style: Free Verse

Theme: Open. Line count 60 maximum (excluding title)

Prizes:

1st prize \$200

2nd prize \$100

3rd prize \$50

Highly Commended and Commended Certificates at the judges discretion

Entry fee: \$12 EFT Only (no cheques or postal orders please)

Entry via email or post. Please note all postal entries must be postmarked on or before closing date.

For full **competition details, Conditions and Entry Form** please visit the Scribes Writers Website and follow links to the Poetry Competition page:

www.scribeswriters.com/poetry.html

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW ALICE SINCLAIR MEMORIAL WRITING COMPETITION 2026

Opens May 29th; closes Midnight, July 31st

Entry fee \$15 per entry

Prizes: First \$300 + certificate; second \$150 + certificate

Open theme short story (to 2,500 words) or poetry (to 50 lines)

Entry form and conditions of entry available on LMFAW website <https://lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com>.

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.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2026

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



C. S. COOPER PUBLISHING CONSULTANCY

Services include manuscript typesetting, formatting, and publishing.

Hourly rate \$50

(\$60 for non-members)

Reach out at:

www.cscooper.com.au/contact

Hilarie Lindsay Poetry Competition 2025

CATEGORY	WINNER	SCHOOL
Junior Primary A	Eleanor Searle	Dubbo South Primary School
Junior Primary B	James Liu	Knox Grammar Preparatory School
Senior Primary	Yunha Back	Kent Road Public School
Junior Secondary	Allegra Barboza Martello	Central Coast Steiner School
Senior Secondary	Mia Jackson	Churchland Senior High School

Ernestine Hill Memorial Award 2025

Winner	Suzan Temby
Short Listed	Sharyn Munro
Short Listed	Alex Elizabeth Wormald

Hilarie Lindsay Poetry Competition 2025
Award for Excellence Winner

Where the sound of light exists
by Yunha Back

NOBODY NOTICED the boy with the violin. Every afternoon, like clockwork, he settled at the very edge of the city square — just where the sunlight began to fade and shadows stretched like whispers across stone. His figure was slight, fragile even, as if the world had forgotten to let him grow. His arms wrapped around his violin with the aching gentleness of someone who had known solitude far too long. And when he played, it was never with grandeur or force. His bow moved slowly, tenderly, each stroke a gentle sigh, as if he was pulling secrets from the air itself. The music was never loud or perfect. It was quiet, searching, aching with a sorrow that seemed to vast for words.

The music that emerged was soft, tentative-filled with longing and the kind of sorrow that didn't cry out but lingered in the quietest corners. It was music for those who listened between the noise of the world. But no one did. People hurried past, heads down, wrapped in their own worlds. Some dropped coins into the worn case without looking. A few cents for a fleeting moment of melody-then moved on. No one dared meet his eyes. No one stayed to unravel the sadness woven into his songs. They heard, but they didn't listen. No one ever stopped long enough to feel what he was saying.

Except her.

She came every Thursday, rain or shine, wearing the same green sweater that had faded just enough to be

Ray Cerhan Australiana Ballad 2025

Winner	Helen Harvey
Second Place	Rebecca Hodges
Third Place	Jodie Kewley

soft like old memories. Her fingers always clutched a red notebook, but she never opened it. She didn't take notes, didn't sketch or write poems. Instead, she sat quietly a few feet away, as if the music was stitching threads around her broken edges, weaving her back together without a single word spoken. Her presence was not casual; it was an offering-pure and patient.

Week after week, she returned. Rain tapped gently on her shoulders sometimes; other times the sun warmed her face. But she never missed a day. And neither did he. His music was a language beyond speech, telling stories no one else could hear. And every Thursday, she listened, her breath held like a prayer.

Then, one Thursday, something changed.

His bow lifted with a trembling brightness, and the melody that poured out shimmered with warmth. It was hesitant, but hopeful-a song of morning after long, endless night. He dared to open his eyes, and for a fleeting moment their gazes met. She was crying-not from sadness, but from something deep and raw, as if the music had touched a place inside her that had long been silent.

It was the last time she saw him.

The next Thursday, the bench was empty. No boy. No violin. Only the noise of the city, cold and unfeeling.

That day, she came as usual and took her seat. But the wind was colder than before, and the sky hung heavy with gray clouds. She slipped her hands deep into her pockets and drew a quiet breath. Inside her chest, a mix of waiting and fear tangled tightly-words she couldn't quite say. The silence where his music once lived felt louder than any sound. People around still passed by,

Competition Results

unaware of him, but she knew. She knew that he might never return to this place. Yet she didn't leave. She stayed, guarding the empty bench until the very end.

She waited for hours. She came back the next day. And the next.

Days turned to weeks. Rain dripped from leafless branches. The city square emptied with the falling Autumn leaves, but she remained-still in her green sweater, clutching her red notebook, waiting for a sound that never came.

On the eighth Thursday, something was different. On the stone where he once sat lay a small envelope, worn by weather and time. She opened it with shaking hands. Inside was a single violin string and a short, carefully written note:

“Thank you for hearing me. I'm going home now-to where the sound of light exists. Keep listening. -J.”

She pressed the string to her chest, afraid it might dissolve into nothingness. The string was all that remained of him, yet it carried the weight of a thousand unspoken words.

Years passed.

She grew taller, stronger, and carried the memory of his music deep within her heart. Though that heart bore cracks, it was no longer hollow. His sorrow had taken root there, blossoming into something new-hope threaded with pain.

She became a composer. Her symphonies whispered with the echo of his sadness and shimmered with the fragile glow of his hope. At every concert, she saved one seat in the front row. Empty. Lit by a single golden spotlight.

Perhaps it was foolish.

But maybe, in the quiet spaces between the notes, where music lingers like a whispered secret, he could still hear her too.

Marjorie Barnard
Short Story 2025 Winner

Swinging Gates
by Catherine McElroy

FROM THE clothesline, Megan watches a distant cloud of dust. A car approaches along the gravel road that borders the farm. Not many people have cause to pass along this road: a car seen out here is either nearing its destination, or lost. The western sky is aflame, all the colours draining and swirling towards the horizon; the surrounding paddocks are shrouded in a soft light. The vehicle appears to slow as it nears her driveway entrance. For one long breath Megan is certain it will turn. But the

car passes by, the sound of tyres hitting gravel receding as it continues south. She exhales, and reaches to feel the clothes on the line; they've caught the damp. She turns to go into the house, sees Neil and his boy, Clancy, walking up from the shearing quarters, the two sheepdogs trailing behind.

It's Wednesday evening. The dark steals in quickly now; daylight savings has finished. Neil and Clancy prefer their meals early. Megan serves their dinner and sits with them in the sunroom, a glass-enclosed section of the verandah Angus built ten years before when they first bought the place. The boy is ruddy and fair-haired, while Neil is wiry and dark. Clancy stays close to his father. He must barely be fifteen. At dinner he is so quiet, you'd forget he was there, only for the displaced air and the way those dogs watch him, like he is the only real thing around. The two kelpies plant themselves belly down in the open doorway, eyes on their master.

Megan slices lemons and puts them in the water jug, takes it through to the table. ‘Out!’ she orders, but the dogs don't take a scrap of notice until the boy gives some signal, then they pick themselves up and lie on the dark lawn.

Neil tells her they will have the shearing finished on Saturday, which means she'll be able to send the remaining stock on the farm to the saleyards the following week.

‘It's all the same to us,’ Neil says, when she asks if he's okay working the weekend. She agrees; she needs the job done. It makes little sense for them to travel home to Dubbo, over two-hundred kilometres, only to return for a day or two the next week. On Saturday she will be turning thirty-nine. She registers this, then pushes it away.

The room seems too small for the three of them. With soft fingers, Clancy picks at the sunburn scabs at the hairline on his neck.

In the shed Clancy is fast and skilful; he does the work of two people, effortlessly leaping onto the boards to pen up, then back to Megan's side to skirt and roll the wool, sweep up the locks, gather and throw each new fleece. Neil shears. Star, the older dog, rests quietly, head on her outstretched paws. But Jet, Clancy's young kelpie bitch, shadows her master everywhere, ears sharp whenever she senses he's on the move. She's a sleek young thing, still a pup really, like Clancy. Her nerviness irritates Neil, who has words with her if she gets too near while he's shearing, disturbing the sheep locked in between his knees.

‘She's stuck on you,’ Megan says to Clancy, and he half-smiles. With some invisible gesture from him, Jet has

Competition Results

retreated to the back of the shed, disconsolate.

With just one shearer, Megan doesn't need to be in the shed. She lends a hand skirting, and she does the wool classing, but all the heavy-lifting and running falls to Clancy. The doctor has told her to take it easy; she'll need to conserve her energy now. But she hates feeling like she's doing nothing.

It's the first time she has hired Neil and Clancy, though they are regular workers in the district — that's how she found them, asking around town for someone who could come at short notice, help her tie up loose ends. Something cheap and quick. She's not sure about Neil. She has no complaints about the work. There's something hard in his eye, though. He's probably heard things in town.

'You've got to let it go,' her sister says, down the phone from Sydney. 'He's not coming back. We're worried about you.'

At smoko on Thursday, Clancy disappears and she knows he'll be in the shed, checking the pens. Neil has packed the sheep in; he's worried about the forecast of rain. The shed is small and he's penned them too tight. Clancy will be moving amongst them, finding space, spreading the sheep out evenly across the shed. Making sure that no weaker ewe has slipped down between the flanks of the other sheep, legs buckling, in danger of being suffocated in the hot press of bodies and fear.

Angus would have called it stock sense, but she thinks it's more than that. It's an uncommon gentleness Clancy has. Megan sees how the animals calm around him. Or does she imagine it, is she searching for things that don't really exist? Some respite from the relentlessness of farm life, the way things ultimately come down to an exercise of power.

She doesn't have it, that touch with animals. It's not that she doesn't care. But here, you had to turn away sometimes and pretend not to see.

'He's got a knack,' she says to Neil, over the smoko table.

'Yeah, he's doing alright.' Neil says this in a grudging way, and she regrets her words — the need to speak and fill a space. She puts the cup to her lips and blows the scalding brew.

Neil pushes his chair back and stacks her plate on his. As he washes up in the small basin, she watches the clean steady movements of his arms and hands.

In the afternoon she drives into town, leaves Clancy in charge of sorting and classing the fleeces. In the waiting room, to distract herself, she watches the flatscreen television, high in the corner. 'Every living thing has a heat signature,' the American voiceover intones. They

have thermal maps and drones; they are searching for signs of life in a barren landscape. Megan doesn't know where the place is, or where it is meant to be. She can't follow the camera's rapid juddering. She closes her eyes. The image of the screen is burned there, bright and hot.

'Load of rubbish, that is.' The thin woman seated beside Megan in the waiting room has spoken. Megan opens her eyes. The woman licks one finger and flicks the page on a copy of New Idea. 'You believe it? You believe in that?' She nods at the television.

Megan says 'maybe.'

The woman looks affronted by such uncertainty. She looks down at the magazine, raises her eyebrows. Nothing more can be said.

She'd only ever had modest ambitions for the place. Perhaps she should have wanted more, dreamed harder. It was no protection against loss, if you kept your desires small and acceptable. She drives around the empty paddocks with Clancy late on Thursday afternoon, once she gets back from her appointment. They bring up the remaining stock — one hundred or so wethers — to the shed for shearing. It's a mean piece of land: long and thin like a blade. Something you could hurt yourself on. Still, to own something. Something you could hold in your hands. That had been the thing.

They run the wethers down the driveway and into the house paddock. Clancy jumps out of the passenger seat to pull the mallee gate closed. He points. One of the swinging gates lies propped on the fence, barely visible in the long dry grass. Angus brought it home just before he left twelve months ago, and it had never been hung. He'd brought her two gates that day on the back of the ute. It had been a shared vision: swinging gates at the driveway, and the house paddock. He must have already had in mind to leave, and so the gates, what were they — some apology? And what was the point of them any more?

'White-washed swinging gates, that was the plan, once,' she says to Clancy as he gets back into the cabin.

'Dad says you're sick,' Clancy says. So Neil does know, he's heard it in town. She nods.

'Bad luck,' he says. She glances at him, and now he looks stricken at the sound of his words. She doesn't mind. The words are genuine.

'Yes,' she says. 'Rotten luck.' She laughs and Clancy smiles uncertainly.

Megan pulls the ute up near the shearing quarters, and he's out the door, Jet landing lightly off the tray of the ute and following his heels.

Funny how it hurts to find the gate, buried there under the matted dry grass. She thought she'd given up on the appearance of things.

Competition Results

In the night Megan wakes. Her pillow is sodden. She brings her palm up and presses the dampness in surprise. In the dream she'd been so happy. She turns the pillow over and lies on her side, pulls her legs up to her chest.

Friday lunchtime the rainclouds roll over fast. There's a rush to get the remaining wethers in the shed. Megan finds herself out in the yards with Neil, pulling a facemask from her pocket, flimsy protection from the dust. Jet, the young kelpie, is in the yards too. Like Megan, she's where she shouldn't be, she's in the wrong place. Clancy is in the shed, moving ewes, creating more space. The sheep begin to clatter up the concrete ramp and into the shed, but a bottleneck at the door slows things down. Jet is strong and sticky, too strong. The wethers turn on her and stamp their feet. Neil growls, tells her to keep off. One wether breaks and charges for the back fence, slams into it and rolls on its side, stunned. Jet darts in to bite, and Neil runs at the dog, raising his stick.

'Get out of there,' he roars. She cringes, flees across the yards, leaps the rails. But she doesn't leap high enough: her hind leg catches in the top rail while the rest of her body sails over. There's a sickening crunch, and the dog hangs with her leg caught, yelping.

Megan feels the first fat raindrops fall.

'Oh you crazy little bitch.' Neil moves fast to the dog.

The final sheep clatter up the ramp into the shed.

Jet bares her teeth at Neil as he untangles her from the railing, her eyes glazed and wild with pain. 'Settle,' he says. She writhes and nips until he lowers her to the ground. She limps to a corner, whimpering.

'Broken. She's clean snapped it.' Neil runs the palm of his hand over his mouth. The rain starts to come down. He looks around. 'Sheep in?'

They both look to the top of the ramp, where Clancy is shutting the shed door, no expression on his face. He must have seen everything, Megan thinks; he's seen the whole debacle.

The dog won't let anyone near her except Clancy, who squats by her side, a hand in the fur around her collar.

'You'll take her to the vet?' Megan says.

'No vets,' Neil says. 'I haven't got that kind of money.'

'Let me take her in. I'll pay for it.' She can't afford it either. But Clancy — her heart is breaking for Clancy with his head bent over the dog; his frozen face.

No one speaks. She can see Neil working his mouth. He doesn't like it. She's overstepped.

'Please let me take her in.' Megan says again. 'It will give her a better chance.'

Neil shrugs. 'It's up to the boy,' he says. He walks out of the yards.

'Bring her to the car Clancy, hey?' Megan feels sick.

Clancy doesn't move. Jet has stopped whimpering; she shivers in pain, huddled in the corner. After a while, he slowly puts his arms under her body. She doesn't resist, although it hurts her, Megan can see, the way she shudders. He stands up, cradling the dog.

'I'll get the car,' Megan says.

Clancy shakes his head. 'No. No vets.' An echo of his father. He walks slowly away from her.

'Clancy. She needs a vet.'

The boy does not answer, and Megan feels a hopeless rage.

'Oh, come on. What is wrong with you?' she shouts at his departing back. 'What the hell is wrong with you?'

That night she lies awake for a long time. She's been on farms long enough not to be disturbed by this kind of thing. Still, it's got to her. A storm blows in, there is scattered rain, lightning. She thinks she hears a gunshot, though it might just be the lightning. She worries about the newly shorn stock, but the storm passes, the rain is light, and there's nothing she can do, anyway. She falls into a restless sleep.

In the morning the dog is gone. Replaceable. Like all creatures on a farm, Jet is replaceable. But not for Clancy.

'Did you kill that pup, Neil?' she says, during the morning, when Clancy is penning up out the back.

'It doesn't concern you,' he says. 'Stick to your own problems.'

She'll never know. But she wants him gone. As if he reads her mind, he says 'We'll have those last sheep done by this arvo. We'll be on the road then.'

It won't be too soon, she thinks. There's an awful ache in her chest for the boy.

Neil and Clancy leave late afternoon. The day has been clear and warm. Megan is in the sunroom when the ute trundles past the house. Neil doesn't stop, merely raises a hand through the open window. Just one dog chained to the headboard on the back.

She transfers payment to Neil's account, sits with a lukewarm cup of tea. Inside the house it's quiet as death. She stands and stretches her back, with a mind to walk down and begin cleaning up the shearing quarters. A flash of white hits her eye when she rounds the corner of the garden shed, and she stops and stares. It's the gate Clancy spotted in the grass on Thursday, now white-washed and hung at the entrance to the house paddock. And there — she puts her hand up to shield her eyes from the westerly glare — the other new white gate shines down the end of the driveway. Clancy. She shakes her head. Neil must have helped out as well. She walks over and unlatches the gate, feels the effortless glide under her palm as it swings open. It's oiled and perfect. She

Competition Results

wants to sob.

She refastens the latch, and then leans on the gate, looking down the driveway. She will leave the cleaning of the shearer's quarters until tomorrow. The sky is softening to apricot-gold; the air is calm. Beyond the fenceline, the gravel road is empty, not a vehicle in sight. And under her feet, after the overnight rain, she hears the small sounds of the earth sighing and opening up.

Ernestine Hill Memorial Award
Short Story 2025 Winner

Let this Place Speak

by Suzan Temby

THIS IS Catherine, Cat for short, talking to her father Ferg, Fergus Fraser. A clever man, witty, generous, self-educated. He died not long after this conversation. Let him speak. Let this place speak. Let Cat's childhood speak as well.

'Where'd you come from Ferg?'

'I came from here. You know that.'

'Really? Here? No one came from here except a few Indigenous folk.'

'They weren't around when I got here.'

'When was that?'

'1918. I was ten.'

'Ha! You arrived when you were ten and you sent me away when I was ten.'

'Yeah, well, you were a little ignoramus. You needed a school.'

'Was anyone here when you came?'

'Hardly anyone. Then the returned soldiers started coming. They were given just enough land to ruin their lives. What that vicious war started was well and truly finished off here.'

'Holy shit.'

'See they put roads in, just dirt tracks and then the people came. Some of them on bikes. There was a siding here. Someone wanted this area opened up. Not that they had a clue. Those poor buggers would get off the train and hop on their bikes and ride and ride until they found what they thought was a good block of land and that was it.'

'Didn't they pay?'

'Yeah, with their bodies, their souls, their kids and their wives. It was cruel, Cat. They had to clear a certain number of acres by a certain time or it would be taken away from them. Only the desperate were out here trying to do that.'

'Like you'

'I was a kid. It was a big adventure. Your grandfather

bought the place. He wasn't a returned soldier.'

The maggies are back. They love lawn fresh mown. Mum, Dad and the spoilt teenager running along behind squawking, squawking. I want a worm, no not that one another one. I'm starving, I'm bored, I think I'm adopted.

Awaken to their sweet dawn song and know real gratitude. They teach us delight. They teach us to fly.

And so these people she'd known all her life have become strangers. The auctioneer in his mole skins, blue shirt and Akubra sits baked brown and wrinkled, on the fence squinting at his iPad. He owns this dreaded day. He scans a long line of equipment. Big paddocks, big machines. Three million easy he thinks. Knows they'll be lucky to get half that. The drought, the drought. Everything is about the meagreness, the meanness of rain. Few of these neighbours have enough in their pockets to pick up a bargain, except the ones who work for the Saudis or the Chinese.

Once a show place, now down, now out. All sold up. Too much debt. New American chief executive flown in to boost the stupendous profits at the bank. Here to conquer the wild west so he can retire and die sumptuously on a hill with 360 degree views. Doesn't know, doesn't care that in three months it'll start to rain and go on raining for ten years in a mirror reaction to ten years of drought. The water ski club, out of action for forty years, will reconvene on the salt lake,

Every season has its own scent. The aroma of arid lands. There is none of that steamy pungency of humid coastal valleys. No smell of rotting silage. Out here it is clean, pure. New turned earth smells like heaven. Like a handful of warm cake. On an early spring morning the silken air shifts around politely, carrying with it the last gentle wafts of winter wattle. In summer the buttery smell of baked grass. At the start of winter the minty smell of the first green shoots.

In among the gimlets with the shiny cork screw branches and the shiny, shiny leaves, in there were the people of another time. They were invisible but they would come and be with a lone child. A small ghost. No colour in her skin. No tree saw to her birth. She just turned up readymade. Who was she? They came to find out and discovered a child playing, singing, dancing and they joined in. They'd come to play with her. They knew she knew. She was never lonely. Only later did she wonder at their acceptance. How to them it would have been so strange. They came to be with her under foreign trees that died in winter. And where were her mob, her aunties, her cousins?

At ten she went away. Sometimes she came back for

Competition Results

a week or two but the tree people were never there. Mostly she didn't think about them except when she found herself out there under those trees alone. Perhaps they didn't come because she no longer played, no longer danced and sang.

Now it's time to pick up and go. To move out entirely and never return. To let go of what was most beloved. Refugees. Like the first peoples here, forced out by people who thought they knew so much better.

'You were ten when you came here, where were you before that?'

'In the city.'

'At school?'

'Yeah, sometimes.'

'Started your life of crime early.'

'Had to work for my dad.'

'At ten years old?'

'Probably started at seven.'

'Doing what?'

'He'd get the horses off the ship and I had to help drive them to our place and look after them. Some of them were a bit any old how after three weeks at sea.'

'Where did you keep them?'

'We had a few acres on the edge of the city. We'd feed them up, then I'd swim them across the river at the narrows and take them to market.'

'As a little kid?'

'Didn't bother me. More fun than school.'

'Bloody hell. It's deep at the narrows.'

'Telling me.'

The tall, wide salmon gum has been dead like that for decades. Died in its prime during one of the floods in the early sixties. Miraculously it comes to life at harvest time when there is spilled grain everywhere and the galahs know where. They come fifty, sixty at a time, and sit on the bare branches like pink and grey Christmas decorations. Always within days of the 25th. Joy to the world. They scream and squeal at the wonders of all the ready food and yet when they are on the ground feeding, there is no greed, no squabbling. In the tree they sit and wait a while, regroup in all their beauty. They know their beauty. They are their beauty. To see them like this is to become breathless. They might return every day for a week and then fly off to cooler places where the grain is about to ripen. Next year they'll turn up again for Christmas.

There used to be a bounty on fox tails. In the fifties during the Korean War the need for warm army uniforms took the value of wool to the dizzy heights of a pound a pound. Everyone bred up their sheep flocks and the foxes bred themselves up like rabbits. This was the

Fox War, no uniforms required. One morning early she heard the truck drive in. Her dad and four others, three on the back still holding their rifles and on the tray of the truck a pile of dead foxes, twenty five, thirty. Just the dead, no prisoners taken. They stopped outside the house to show their catch, to elicit praise, the recognition they deserved. In one night they'd solved the dead lamb problem.

'Poor little foxes.' said the child.

'Twelve and six a tail,' said the boy neighbour with the red hair.

'I thought that was emu beaks,' she said.

'Those too,' he said.

It was something to look forward to, with horror. The child who played with her friends under the trees has turned up to help with the clearing out of the house. She has flown in from the other side of the country where she has lived all her adult life, to help deliver the last rites and the rubbish to the tip. She brings her daughter and small granddaughter who might like to play under the trees with the spirits.

After the disembowelling of every cupboard and drawer, the last thing left in the house is a still life done decades before by her mother. They divvy up all her other works, charming renditions of the farm, but this one is more impersonal. Oranges, probably from the tree in the garden and a small jug of a famous English potter containing a handful of chrysanthemums also from her garden. This one would stay where it had always been, on the dining room wall. It would say that this was once the house of a hard working woman who loved this place and loved to paint. And yet when they are finally ready to leave, their cars bloated with the spoils, the relics of defeat, it seems like a betrayal. They go back and stand in front of it trying to keep sentiment at bay. The farmer himself is doing something else. He must be shown only bravery by the rest, no sorrow, no sadness, just courage in the face of defeat. He is at his own funeral, grieving his own death.

Was it like that for the people of the gimlets? Vanquished. Forced to go, to hand over everything to the victor. The child would see them in the streets of the town many miles from the farm. They came in from where they lived in huts outside the town. She never spoke to them. They seemed not to see her. How would she know that they were smart enough not to engage with her kind?

'You drove your pony and sulky two hundred miles on your own? Why didn't you just catch the train?'

'Not on my own. I had Jack with me.'

'How old was Jack?'

Competition Results

‘Ten, like me. In the same class at school. The tear-aways.’

‘I’ll bet.’

‘Took us two weeks. Camping where there was grass and water for the pony.’

‘Incredible.’

‘Kids worked back then. Your grandfather treated us like grownups. He didn’t really know about kids. Most blokes were like that. We arrived here and were put to work. Lived in tents. Then Jack had to go back to school and I was on my own when Dad went off to buy more horses.’

‘On your own at ten?’

‘Someone had to stay and look after the horses. I used to lie awake listening to the dingos howl. Gave me the creeps. The Italian clearing teams would invite me to their camp for spaghetti. Couldn’t understand a word. They were my friends.’

The big granite rock was a favourite place. On a warm evening they’d all be up there eating greasy chops burnt black and looking at the stars. Some lucky nights the swags would come out and all the mossy dents would become beds from where they could name the constellations and imagine the lives of those who lived up there. In the morning the child and her brother would run around looking for things. Flowers, feathers, smooth rocks, and they’d open up the gnamma holes and reach down to see if they could touch the water. The rock was a reservoir for the gimlet tree people, probably as far back as forever. To lift the thin stone cover off a gnamma hole was to touch an antique world. The wealth of a full, clean, natural tank of water in this parched land is more than any gold to be found in Tutankhamun’s tomb, and far more ancient.

‘When did you build the house?’

‘Not till the Depression. Before that we lived in a tin shed with a dirt floor.’

‘Better than a tent. You made the house yourself.’

‘I had a friend who’d come from the city after being put off just before his apprenticeship finished. He was nearly a carpenter. But the main player was an Italian from Calabria. He taught us how to make mud bricks. We couldn’t afford any other kind. We had the time, no one was buying wool or wheat. We lived off what we grew and I’d make a few pounds winning races at athletics meetings.’

‘I didn’t know you could run.’

‘Beat the state champion once.’

‘Like that movie, Gallipoli.’

‘Except I didn’t have a coach. Bought the timber for the joists and beams with that prize money.’

‘What about the horses, couldn’t you sell those?’

‘No one was buying and if they were they’d have bought a car. No, your grandfather was out of business. He took off for the East to work for his brother. We were pretty much down to about sixteen draft horses, the team for seeding and harvest and a couple of riding horses.’

The child’s mother had a print of a painting that sat on the table in the hall. Anne Hathaway’s thatched cottage with a beautiful garden of flowering shrubs of various kinds and colours. The child loved this picture because here there was a garden just like it, on top of a low hill in sand plain country where the occasional tree gave way to low bushes and ground cover. In spring the flowers would bloom on these bushes. White, yellow, purple, pink and the deepest cornflower blue perfectly spaced as if someone had planted them with intention. It was a much larger garden than Anne Hathaway’s. It was a sensory gift here. Sight, scent and the sound of the whispering Tamma trees nearby. A great wonder of her small world.

Fergus wore himself out on the farm, but the fifties and sixties were good to him. In his day they knew little of conservation. After decades of ploughing and burning and ploughing again, the soil became hard and hydrophobic and the sun would craze the surface with fissures. Everyone had done the same, and the blinding red dust storms connected them to each other. The next generation began a new regime of care and regeneration. The sharp footed sheep were sent away. The stubble was not burnt but left to enrich the soil which became friable and receptive. The ploughing was reduced to direct drilling. Millions of trees were planted back and slowly the understory came back as well. But what use if the rain stayed away?

‘You met mum in hospital when you broke your neck. She was the only medically trained person in the whole town. There was no one to tell her how much sedation to give you so she had to guess. Nearly killed you.’

‘The doctor when he turned up a couple of days later said she probably saved my life. The overdose kept me still.’

‘Then you had to stay in hospital for months, in that tiny town seventy miles from home. What did you do all that time.’

‘Read books. They were a bit short on at first. There was only the Bible and Shakespeare.’

‘What the complete works?’

‘Read them cover to cover.’

‘More than I’ve done.’

‘And you’re the educated one.’

Competition Results

‘That’s not the whole story. You fell in love with Mum.’

‘Well, who wouldn’t? She was smart and kind. But she went to the Middle East with the army and I didn’t see her for two years.’

Early mornings in autumn, fog can obscure the animals and leave a charcoal sketch of trees and fence posts. A semi diaphanous scrim hides the scenery like a stage show. The mundane becomes mysterious. Only the bleating of the lambs and the calves calling to their mothers are evidence of what is there. The gradual reveal is tender and a little disappointing. Everything is as it was yesterday. And in autumn when the days are still warm and the first rains have come, there are mushrooms as big as a plate to fry up in butter for breakfast. You have to know which are the toadstools and which are the delicious mushrooms with the dusty pink gills, and the mouthwatering musty smell.

In years of at least average rainfall, there was a place any child would love to go. A grove of bright green, soft leaf bushes on the cool side of the rock, the south where the sun was less intense, and where there was often a gentle stream of water coming off the rock.

The child would tie her horse in the shade and find the way in through the undergrowth made by some animal; kangaroo, dingo, and sit watching the birds flit about at the speed of light, and listen to their song. A cool and complete refuge. If a snake came to drink she would sit still and watch it take the water and slither away. The weebill, the red capped robin, the grey fantail would go silent and disappear, but soon return twittering and whistling again.

Best of all were the willie wag-tails that talked to each other and to her in the night, in the trees outside her bedroom where she lay unable to sleep. They would ask her over and over again; ‘What on earth are you doing?’

Once or twice there was a picnic to the caves that had the outline of hands painted on the walls. No one knew who painted them or when. But everyone knew it was long, long ago and that this was truly a faraway land. Perhaps it was a time when the land around the caves was lush and green all year, instead of just a few months in the middle of the year. Perhaps there were fresh water lakes and rivers with fish in them and lots of people whose hands were on the walls of the caves, going about their daily lives. Things we’ll never know that didn’t happen anymore, happened here.

Enchantment was still everywhere around. After winter rains came profusion. On the uncultivated ground where wispy native grasses were allowed to grow, whole fields, whole hills, wild and wide, became pink overnight like a paddock of tiny flamingos and

alongside, another paddock of gold, thick, shiny treasure. Everlastings, with a scent as heady as any French perfume. How far back into history did their DNA go? You could walk way out into the middle of the field and lie down on a bed of flowers. All the worker bees were out, native bees that didn’t sting. Around the edges among the sparse malley trees, spider orchids, donkey orchids and bacon and egg plants were waiting to be discovered.

‘After you built the house you were still in the middle of a depression.’

‘Went to the goldfields. A mate and I had a little mine, not that far from here.’

‘Did you find anything?’

‘Just enough to live on. After about eighteen months we got a better idea. We set up a butcher’s shop. An instant town had grown up and they needed food. We had paddocks full of sheep we couldn’t sell.’

‘How did you learn to do that?’

‘I just made it up. It’s pretty logical. If you’ve ever been to a butcher’s shop you can see what they do.’

‘Did you have to build a shop?’

‘Yeah out of poles we cut in the bush and hessian painted with white wash.’

‘Did you make money?’

‘Enough to keep the bank off my back. Saved the farm. Back from the brink. Not for the first time.’

‘How long did you do that?’

‘A few years. Couldn’t wait to get back to the farm.’

‘Wasn’t it hard on the farm? Freezing in winter, broiling in summer.’

‘Mornings in winter, the water in the taps would freeze. The grass would crunch under foot with frost. The team had to be harnessed in the dark. The crop had to go in at the right time. The first rains. If you missed that, you were done for another year. It doesn’t rain much out here but if you get your timing right you can survive in normal times. It was good. Always liked the work. When I could afford a tractor, on a frosty morning I’d make a small fire under the engine to warm it enough to get it started.’

‘But summer was worse, yeah?’

‘Not if you’re sensible. I wasn’t always sensible. Ended up in hospital once with heat stroke. Taught me a lesson. Cover every inch of your skin, wear a hat and drink a lot of water. And don’t do heavy physical labour in the heat of the day.’

‘The contradictions of this place can be seen on a shimmering summer’s day, actually seen. A mob of maybe twenty or thirty emus will be running through the wheat knocking it down before the harvester can

Competition Results

get to it, knocking down fences and letting the sheep into the crop. But who wouldn't want to see those emus running, running as if their tails were on fire? Or who wouldn't want to share the new shoots of a winter crop with a family of western grey kangaroos, or to see a wedge-tail eagle on a thermal just waiting for you to let the chooks out? You have to take the good with the bad and sometimes the good is the bad.'

Fergus was saved by death from a crushing defeat on his home ground.

Weather ten, farmers nil.

Rae Cerhan

Australiana Ballad 2025 Winner

Song of The Depression

by Helen Harvey

The wool demand has fallen and it's much the same for wheat – the country-side is ringing with the sound of tramping feet. In sombre solitude we wander as we wonder why our land is so much poorer since the world has passed us by. We are the sons who sailed away from home to fight The War beside a distant Empire, now, we have to ask – what for?

We tramp around the country seeking only to survive, in search of work and shelter in our quest to stay alive. With swags swung round our shoulders and black billy by our side, we cross a lot of country as we try to salvage pride. We wonder what the day will bring or where to camp the night, then pray the family at home is getting by alright.

And so, The Great Depression marches on with us in tow; some falter and may stumble if esteem becomes too low. You know that times are hard when men no longer can provide, a meagre meal for children clinging to their mother's side. Is this the cause for which we fought? We cannot fathom why, the reason we deserve these times that drag on slowly by.

A campfire out along the track is such a welcome sight – some company to share with men adrift in the same plight – a chance to break the silence of the daily, numbing grind, by trading conversation which can leave hard times behind, if only as a respite but we know that come the morn, we're back to tramping roads again just as the day is born.

We hear the children singing in the streets as we pass through, 'our dads are on the susso, so tonight we eat real stew.'

We see their dirt-stained faces and are glad that they are spared, the worries of their fathers with defeated spirits bared.

We tramp along the endless roads just searching for a job, but one day we'll get lucky when we join the susso mob.

One day we'll give up tramping when we join the susso mob,

but vacancies are few and far with scant chance of a job. We live in hope that one day we can stop and settle down - set down some roots and bide awhile – perhaps in our home town.

For now, we keep on walking with a hope stored in each heart, that times will turn for families who have been torn apart

For now, The Great Depression calls the tune and sets the beat,

which keeps us all a-tramping through this land on weary feet. While mothers of our children pause to wonder where we are, or pray that we are safe somewhere beneath the evening star, which shines upon a country gripped by hard days that still roll, without the prospect of an end, which takes a heavy toll.

Sometimes we feast on pigeon stew if aim is true and right, or yellow belly from the creeks when they are on the bight. We set up camp on loamy banks in welcome gum tree shade, and while away a day or two as wary herons wade among the muddy waters where the cunning crayfish hide, in waterholes where we can rest nearby the river side.

We've tramped away from quarries nestled in the Wollemi, near cliffs and tall escarpments standing stark against the sky.

We said goodbye to families when we rolled up our swags, with rations and some clothing tucked away in sugar bags. Our hearts abide with loved ones who are now so far away. When will this Great Depression end? Seems no one dares to say.

We're sons of working miners who are not afraid of work, but quarry gates were locked and so we walked right out to Bourke, in tracks of camel pads or sheep the droving stock had made on stretches without water and no trees to throw some shade. Just common men in search of toil with hopes to earn a bob, until we're on the susso, and can hold a steady job.

Our working boots are almost done and let the damp seep through, but with no extra earnings there is nothing we can do, until some honest work comes up then we can quit the track, and bid farewell to camping days and pray they don't come back.

Then with some steady wages when we earn a bob or two – we'll bid farewell to tramping and to eating pigeon stew.

We walked away as younger men, but somewhere on the track,

our softer ways had hardened and they won't be coming back.

One day this Great Depression will be just a memory, and children singing susso songs will fade from history.

Until that day we walk and pray that time will not repeat, another Great Depression with the sound of tramping feet.

Poet's Voice

The Shortest Day

Between now
and some day
in the groin of June
each day is shorter
than the previous
like a slowly tightening noose
Greg Tome, Southern Highlands FAW

Blood Red Poppies

Another year has come and gone
youth proudly march
where service personnel
no longer tread.
Medals glisten
honouring the bravery
of yesteryears dead
Blood red poppies
reminds us all
of the cost.
Declaration of war

Today's forces
acceptance of all.
Proudly testify to
our military might.
Peace keeping missions
too have a deadly price

Blood red poppies
reminds us all
of the cost.
Declaration of war.

Dignitaries place wreaths
at the Epitaph.
The bugler sounds
a minute silence
tomorrow's loss
Blood red poppies
reminds us all
of the cost.
Declaration of war!

Lyn Yates, Lambing Flat (Young) FAW

SUBMISSIONS TO POET'S VOICE:

Send your poem in the first instance to the Poetry Editor, Brian Tolagson: 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.

Poker Face

The face learns early
what works,
what is acceptable.

With practice,
it hides the mind,
hides the heart.

Then what the heart desires
does not show
on the face
or in the eyes.

So, maybe a smile,
perhaps a joke.
Move on.
No one the wiser.

In time, the face no longer knows,
mistakes a joke for the truth.

And the pretence becomes reality.
Greg Baker, Southern Highlands FAW

The Hunters

By the time you get this letter I'll be feeling somewhat better
'cause I'm leaving this here Gidgee for the coast.
'Though I'm not a great go-getter I'll be heading where it's wetter
for it's down there that it always rains the most.
And I've had my time of trying, all the anguish, all the crying,
it's this country that has wasted all my best
as the blessed banks keep prying into crops that no one's buying
'cause they're too darn crook to pass the market test.
There is no damn use in waiting for the rain that's still abating
for a lack of rain is Nature's great abuse
and it's not much help berating, Mother Nature's not creating.
What is left of life should have a better use.
It's a shame to have to quit it, as the olden bards once writ it,
that 'I'm wedded to the land that's part of me'.
But my age does not befit it, one more struggle can't acquit it,
it is time to break the bindings and be free.
And you know you must begin new when just one more fight's not in you.
It's exhaustion that leaves livelihoods destroyed.
If you've burned out every sinew and you just cannot continue
Then it's time to find a life that's not a void.
Then, tomorrow I'll be going to a place that's not for knowing
and I'll leave behind faint traces of my toil
and to start anew not owing to a bank that's always showing
just how greed can make society uncoil.
A new future now invites me to explore what now excites me
as it calls on me to give up all this strife.
I'll be off to what delights me where no longer Nature fights me,
for a chance at last to fix my tattered life.
Just one look at Nature's thieving, all the ploughing and the heaving,
as my soul is wrenched apart beyond repair.
There'll be time enough for grieving all the mem'ries that I'm leaving
to somewhere between Valhalla and Despair.

Brian Tolagson, Port Macquarie-Hastings FAW

Curlew's Lament

When evening shadows fade into a starry night
and peaceful slumber gathers dreams,
When the moon glides across the sky
and the curlew sings its mournful song,
Then I will come to you
To lie by your side,
While the moon and stars are in the sky
While the curlew sings its mournful song
I will come,
To lie by your side.

Elizabeth McVie, Wyong FAW

Literary Achievements

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAW

Rosemary Baldry

Untitled Tanka published in *Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal*, Issue 40, May 2026

Jeanette Temesvary

Untitled Tanka published in *Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal*, Issue 40, May 2026

EASTWOOD / HILLS FAW

Beverley George

First Place Eastwood/Hills FAW Summer Haiku
Nominated for SWW National Alice Award 2026

Linda King

Presentation of workshop Writing Historical Fiction, March 2026

Margaret Longhurst

E/W FAW Dec 22025 Christmas Limericks: Commended.
E/H FAW Highly Commended for short story “Ngiyana Winangay Ganunga”.

Liz Shaw

Second in CWA NSW State Cultural for Digital presentation all photography and writing.

Julie Thorndyke

Read picture book Alice’s Shoe at NextSense School for Alice Betteridge Day 2026.
Ten tanka, translated into German, published in 31 - The magazine for tanka and related forms February 2026, Issue 52, by invitation of the editor.
One tanka in Laurels #5 (USA)
One tanka in Tanka Hangout (USA)
One tanka in Ribbons (USA)
Two tanka in Kokako 44 (NZ)
One tanka in Quail Eggs 3
One tanka in Quail Eggs 4
‘damp morning’ [haiku] Echidna Tracks 16 Summer/Autumn 2026
‘Prudence’ [short story] E/H Monthly assignment Historical Fiction Commended.

Weidong Tian

One tanka published in Spring/Summer Issue 2026 Ribbons (ISA)
One tanka accepted by Eucalypt Issue 40.

Chris Weston

E/H FAW Competition (Short Story) ‘Midnight’s Journey Home’ - The Five Commandments of Storytelling - Commended
E/H FAW Competition (Short Story) ‘Safe Harbour’ - Taking the Tension Out of Tenses - Second Place

Debra Widdicombe

Published a 16-line Poem called “An Enchanted World of Elfin Glades” in the Monthly Poet Gallery for May 2026

website: <https://monthlypoet.com> under pen name “Sarah Hunter.”

ISOLATED WRITERS

Issy Ginarmo (Jill Baggett, Narelle Noppert, and Maureen Kelly)

Our Grandad, *The Show of a Lifetime*, *Her Time*, *The Birth of Issy Jinarmo*, *Fixing the Problem* DoubleSpeak
From the Mouths of Babes MockingOwl Roost
The Catch All Your Stories
A Vantage Point YAWP
Sweet Dreams C.A.A.B Publishing
Scarred For Life! Linton Press
Top of the Hill Culture Cult
The Short Cut Otherwise Engaged
Christmas In A Gaming Chair Wicked Shadow
Doll in the Window Farthest Star Publishing
Elizabeth Macintosh: Port Writers Inc ‘Writers for Writers Weekend’ in Port Macquarie, 7th March, 2026: Presented Workshop on ‘The Secrets of Short Story Success’.

LAKE MACQUARIE FAW

Black Crow Walking

Awarded a grant to write a book of plays for non-violent communication, by Newtown Older Women’s Network (OWN); is on a book launch tour in northern NSW for her book, Days of wisdom.

Sandra Boyd

Host of a panel at the Lake Macquarie WriteHere Festival, on the topic of ‘Thinking of Joining a Writing Group?’ (the panellists being presidents of 3 other local writing groups); assisted with the launch of the IndigoTeen magazine.

Irina Frolova

Shortlisted in Minds Shine Bright international writing competition on Place, poem “Village vignettes”.

Pam Garfoot

Shortlisted in Minds Shine Bright international writing competition on Place, short story “Distant magic”.

Olga Korlevic

Officially launched the IndigoTeen magazine, of which she is the Chief Editor and which was a finalist in the Awesome Newcastle awards (see <https://awesomenewcastle.org/autumn-awesome-newcastle-arrives/>)

Kristen Mair

Assisted with the launch of the IndigoTeen magazine.

Jan Mitchell

As judge of the Hilarie Lindsay Competition for Australian School Students, Jan attended the FAW(NSW) Awards luncheon and read the judge’s report.

Mick Payze

Has completed the draft of Part 1 of his memoir (provisional title ‘Making way, not waves’); Part 2 in

Literary Achievements

process.

Cate Plink

Launched (under the name Cathrine Marshall) her latest novel for middle grade children, Charlie and the Professor (the third novel in her Dancers series).

Wayne Russell

Accepted for the West of the Moon: more Australian fairy tales for the 21st century anthology, story “Salt and Glass”.

Linda Visman

Has received her proof copy of her book, Tales from the Northern Territory: remote area teaching 1990-1994.

Emma Walton

Assisted with the launch of the IndigoTeen magazine.

Bethany Wooden

Assisted with the launch of the IndigoTeen magazine.

LAMBING FLAT FAW

Maree Myhill

Eucalypt: A Tanka Journal, Issue 40, 2026, Tanka accepted
5th Place Elyne Mitchell Photo Story Award 2026 Open Section for ‘True Gentleman’
Echidna Tracks #17 Haiku accepted

MOOCOOLLA FAW

Elizabeth Hamlin

Novel *The Life of Sylvia Lennox*, Amazon (2026)

MUDGEES FAW

Peter Windeyer

Story *Why Is Milk White?* 1st Place Mudgee Seniors Week 2026 Competition
Poem *An Aussie Christmas Tree* H/C Mudgee Seniors Week 2026 Competition

Jill Baggett

Story *The Colour Of Times Gone By* 2nd Place Mudgee Seniors Week 2026 Competition
Story *The Egyptian Exhibit* Wicked Shadow Press
Poem *Sing Me A Song* PoArtMo Magazine

Pamela Meredith

Story *Colour Through The Seasons* 3rd Place Mudgee Seniors Week 2026 Competition

ORANGE FAW

Uta Purcell

Arrrrr!! A Parallel Story of Pirates and Isla the Treasure Hunter
Children’s Story published Orange NSW April 2026

‘The Hunters’

Poem published in Writers Voice No. 291 March 2026

PORT MACQUARIE - HASTINGS FAW

Emma Gaulton

2nd place in her group in the NYC midnight short story challenge to proceed to next round.

Jackie Laing

The Dentist - Published WV.291 March 2026

Brian Tolagson

The Twinkling Fisherman. Published WV.291 March 2026

SUTHERLAND FAW

Tracey Chouvin

has a movie submitted to Barcelona NWSXX.
Short film presented at Randwick Ritz.

Cherie Corbett-Jones

accepted into the Masters of Information studies course at Charles Sturt Uni

Christine de Matos

co-edited article: War and Culture Studies. ‘Classicisms and modern war in the long twentieth century.’
had a book review published in Japan Social Sciences, ‘Nationalism in Japan.’
had a book review published in the Journal of British Studies. Gilly Carr and Rachel Pistol, eds. “British Internment and the Internment of Britons: Second World War Camps, History and Heritage” in the Journal of British Studies vol 64 (2025)

Sophie Grant

accepted to the Lighthouse Arts Residency, in Newcastle.

Christine Sykes

selected for residency at Jamberoo Abbey for poetry collection.
She will research and write historical novel, Residency for up to 3 months in England.
entered an essay to Kogarah Historical Society – all the entries will be put on the website.

Sylvia Vago

Published a short story in Rarae Aves, March Edition, Wollongong e-magazine

Bookshelf

MAXWELL PARTINGTON

The Maxwell Empire Books

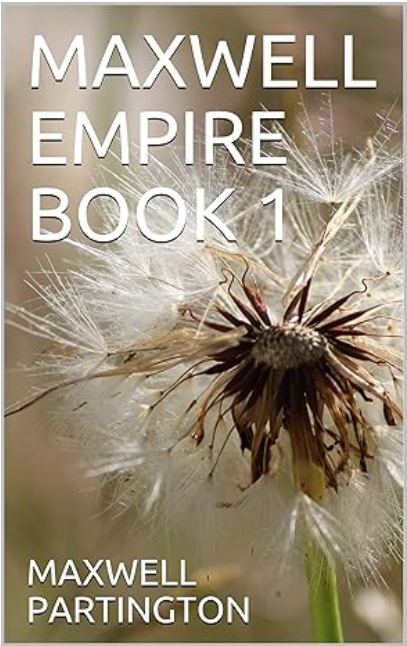
Set in the year 4576 the Maxwell Empire Books describe life on Earth, the Moon and Space City, and the expansion of mankind to nearby habitable planets in a series of books following the activities of Jimmy the sportsman, Kailee his girlfriend, Scott and Simon on their tour of Space City and its various factories, and other Earthlings.

Read how people are coping with sea level rising, engaging in a Celebration of Life for those about to cease living, communicating with Maxwell 01, the spaceship in orbit around the nearest habitable planet outside our solar system, enjoying the conflict of the hunt when criminals try to avoid cessation of life by winning against a number of hunters, engaging in a vastly different education system to that of today, having robots do all the work, and other changes to life over two thousand years in the future.

People follow The Octet, Eight guidelines for living your life, which promotes caring for yourself and all other living things. The website for the books at <https://maxwellempirebooks.com/> for more information about the families of the characters, the locations of the Hunts, the need to preserve the DNA of all species as humans become too plentiful, and the history of the Earth to the year 4576.

You can also download a copy of the Octet.

Available on Amazon Kindle: <https://www.amazon.com/MAXWELL-EMPIRE-BOOK-1-PARTINGTON-ebook/dp/B084KPN78Q>

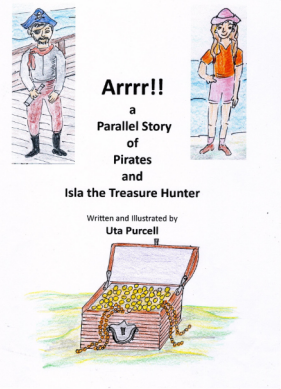


UTA PURCELL

Arrrr!! A Parallel Story of Pirates and Isla the Treasure Hunter

This is a parallel story of fictional pirates and Isla and her friends exploring Springbank Island in Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, with a treasure map supplied by Mum. The pirates love being pirates and are not ready to retire from their life of freedom on the high seas. Isla and her friends love the treasure hunt and find more than they had expected.

The stories are written using direct speech to make the reader feel included in the conversations between the characters. A game of ‘What’s Your pirate Name?’ adds some fun to the end of the book. Available at Collins Booksellers Orange and from Uta Purcell, utapurcell@gmail.com



GREG MUTTON

Krespah

Earth has never seen so much interest; every hotel room is occupied and there are hundreds of ships in orbit. The birthplace of the human race is no longer just a curiosity, or a foot note in history. Over a million people, most of whom have never seen Earth before, have made the trek to a week-long event – all because of the discovery of an ancient automobile collection, hidden for almost a millennium, deep in an old bunker on the Abraham compound. This discovery is at the centre of Earth’s resurgence and, with the full support of Earth’s governing council, the known galaxy will witness the first car race, in a thousand years.

However, on a distant outlying colony, Utopia, a bizarre situation may enmesh the Coalition in a new conflict. Responding to a vague report of an uprising and rumours of massive loss of life; a force of 400 Coalition marines was deployed in a rescue operation. The mission was a disaster and only one combat marine, Colonel Andrew Molinar, survived. The experience has left him broken and psychotic. Intel suggests this is not just some random action, but is linked to the planet Varga and the “Queen in Waiting” prophesy.

An ancient, brutal, androcentric cult, “Krespah”, have used Utopia as a testing ground for a new weapon, one that could enslave the entire 12th Realm. The reports obliquely link events to Petra Abraham, and her identity. To solve this riddle, Petra and Aaron travel to Varga, only to be betrayed and marooned on Raslor, a distant and virtually unknown planet. From a celebration on Earth, to the mystical realms of the “Oracle”, to the desolation on Raslor, they must survive if the 12th Realm is to be saved.

Available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Krespah-Greg-Mutton/dp/0645978981/>



FAW members:
Send details of your recently published books to wveditor@fawns.org.au

WEBSITE OFFER FOR FAW MEMBERS

To help support the writing and wider community, I am offering a limited number of affordable simple websites for FAW members until 1 August 2026.

Professional websites in Australia often cost several thousand dollars, even for small 5-page websites. Many freelancers and agencies charge anywhere from approximately \$1,500 to \$5,000 or more for similar work.

To make this more accessible for community groups and writers, I am offering a simple website package for \$499.

The package includes:

- A simple website of up to 5 pages
- Contact form
- One email address
- 5 hours of support
- Detailed written instructions on how to update the website and its content

Please note that yearly domain name and hosting fees are not included and are paid directly by the website owner. Typical yearly costs are approximately \$150–\$300.

Anyone interested is welcome to contact

contact@indigohub.net.au

Olga



A guaranteed professional review by a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer

Affordable and high value
and for Bowker customers
just \$359 (that's \$40 off!)

A professional review by a trusted third party sets your book apart. And Publishers Weekly is the most respected name in book reviews. The feedback and insights you receive from a professional review can help you target your book to the right audience, promote your book more effectively, and improve your writing style. Along with your BookLife Review, you’ll get comparison titles and authors, a one-sentence takeaway, and evaluations of your book’s packaging and production.

AN AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

“Through the process, I had the pleasure of interacting with people who were professional, always on top of things, prompt, and friendly. The icing on the cake was receiving a very positive book review! The follow-up guidance and support on what to do and expect next were also excellent.”

— Norm Oshiro

<https://booklife.com/landing/booklife-reviews-for-bowker.html>

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 *

Laura Davis
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 *
Kathryn Litchfield
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
Trevor Langlands *
Dr. Hilarie Lindsay *
Colleen Parker
Jean Paddison *
Peter Pike
Cate Plink
Barbara Snel
Ron Stevens *

*Deceased

Short Story

Beyond the Moon

Debra Widdicombe, Eastwood/Hills FAW

THE SKYREACH II crew of four had reached the furthest point ever travelled from Earth, and they all stared out of the glass bulb at the Moon in wonderous delight. “Next time we will land on the Moon,” the Flight Commander seemed to be talking to himself. “Why aren’t we landing on the Moon this time, Victor?” Christina asked earnestly. She had wanted to return to walk on the Moon as her predecessors had done, but this just seemed to be a flypast. Suddenly, the spacecraft began to shake and rattle, rolling onto its side. “What’s happening?” Jeremy shouted. He was the only Canadian on board the vessel. Although he was very well trained, when such unexpected occurrences happened, he had to think on his feet and felt a little off-balance. “The Moon’s gravity is pulling us into its orbit. The calculations must be off,” replied Reid. However, Reid wondered how the onboard computer and those back at Mission Control could have allowed this to happen. Hurling through space at such high speeds meant you needed to consider every eventuality. As their spacecraft got pulled lower towards the Moon’s cratered surface, Victor gave the command to prepare for an unplanned landing on the Moon. He hoped they wouldn’t land in the middle of one of the larger craters there. “There’s the Mons Mouton Plateau. It’s one of the planned landing sites for SkyReach III. Let’s go there,” Victor calmly announced as their rockets moved their spacecraft to a better landing position. “What about Noble Rim 1, Noble Rim 2, or even Slater Plain? We could reach one of those landing sites as well,” commented Christina as the walls shook again. “No, let’s continue on our course to the Mons Mouton Plateau,” Victor confirmed. At last, the spacecraft’s landing gear was deployed, and they landed heavily on the Plateau. “Is everyone OK? We need to contact Mission Control immediately.” The sound of buzzing comms could be heard and then a voice explained that they would be stuck there for some time, unable to take off again. A rescue team would be dispatched from Earth but it would take a few days to organise. The SkyReach II team just stared at each other in disbelief. “Well, if we’re stuck here, then I’m going for a Moon walk.” Christina prepared to leave the lunar module. Nobody stopped her. Once outside, she explained that she was heading to the far side of the Moon but

wouldn’t go into the darkness as it was difficult to see, even with illumination lights coming from her helmet. After half an hour, Christina’s excited voice came back onto the comms. “You’re not going to believe this but I just met another astronaut taking a walk on the Moon, and he was as surprised to see me as I was to see him!” Victor looked at the remaining SkyReach II crew. Was this a secret Mission by another country? Then they heard Christina’s muffled voice again, “I’ve been handcuffed.”

Seasons of Life

Birth,
The season of Spring,
The moon rising into the night sky,
Revealing a new life brought into the family.
Marriage,
The season of Summer,
The planet of Mars is in full heat,
Revealing the love between a newlywed couple.
Children,
The season of Autumn,
Our Mother Earth reproducing herself,
Revealing babies falling into a cot as if leaves from a tree.
Death,
The season of Winter,
The planet of Venus is cool and distant,
The icy end to a life well-lived and forgotten memories.

Debra Widdicombe, Eastwood/Hills FAW

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 <i>Enquiries:</i> Jeanette Temesvary Phone: 0423 908 199 <i>Email:</i> temesvary.jns@gmail.com <i>Postal:</i> 91 Buena Vista Road, Winmalee 2777 <i>Facebook page:</i> Blue Mountains Writers FAW	LAKE MACQUARIE FAW 2nd Saturday – 2:30 to 4:30pm Toronto Multi-Purpose Centre, 9 Thorne Street, Toronto. <i>Enquiries:</i> lakemacfaw2@gmail.com <i>Facebook:</i> /LakeMacFAW <i>Web:</i> lakemacfaw2.wordpress.com <i>X formerly Twitter:</i> @lakemacfaw2 <i>Instagram:</i> #lakemacfaw2	ORANGE FAW 3rd Sunday of the month – 2:00pm to 4:00pm Orange Library Research Room, Civic Square Byng St., Orange 2800 <i>Enquiries:</i> Uta Purcell (Sec.) <i>Phone:</i> 0420924346 <i>Email:</i> orangenswfaw@gmail.com	STROUD WRITERS FAW Fortnightly Thursdays 9:00 am to 12 noon Stroud Library, Church Lane Stroud <i>Enquiries:</i> Hilary Heanly 0466 994 142 hilary.stroudwriters@gmail.com
CANBERRA & REGION FAW Second Sunday – 2:00 pm O'Connor Uniting Church Hall, Cnr Brigalow St and Scriviner St, O'Connor, ACT 2602 <i>Enquiries:</i> Dianne Porter (Pres.) <i>Email:</i> porter.32@bigpond.com <i>Phone:</i> 0428 138 503	LAMBING FLAT YOUNG FAW 2nd Monday – 5:30 to 7:30pm <i>(Except December and January)</i> The Young Services Club Cloete Street, Young <i>Enquiries:</i> Jennifer Haynes (Pres) <i>Phone:</i> 0457 903 240 <i>Email:</i> lambingflatbranchfaw@hotmail.com <i>Website:</i> lambingflatwriters.wordpress.com <i>Facebook:</i> @LambingFlatWritersGroupYoungNsw <i>Instagram:</i> @LambingFlatWritersGroup	PARRAMATTA FAW 1st Saturday – 12:30 to 3:00pm 5 Phive, Parramatta Square, Parramatta <i>Enquiries:</i> Cecilie McCarron (Sec.) <i>Email:</i> qsteps15@gmail.com	SUTHERLAND SHIRE FAW Last Saturday – 12:30 to 3:30pm Kirrawee Library, 6 Kiln Road, South Village, Kirrawee <i>Enquiries:</i> Sylvia Vago (Sec.) 0402 016 883 <i>Email:</i> sutherlandshirefaw@gmail.com <i>Web:</i> www.writersunleashed.com.au/faw-meetings
EASTWOOD/HILLS FAW 1st Saturday – 1:30 pm Pennant Hills Community Centre, Cnr Yarrara & Ramsay Rds, Pennant Hills <i>Enquiries:</i> Frances Moon (Pres.) <i>Email:</i> riaraebeam@gmail.com <i>Web:</i> hillsfaw.wordpress.com	MACARTHUR FAW 3rd Sunday – 1:00 pm Campbelltown RSL Club (Topaz Room), Carberry Lane. 4862 2771 <i>Email:</i> macarthurfaw@gmail.com	PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS FAW 1st Saturday – 1:00 to 4:00pm Venue: Endeavour House, 176 Hastings River Drive, Port Macquarie <i>Enquiries:</i> Brian Tolagson (Pres.) 0478 729 322 PO Box 67 Port Macquarie 2444 <i>Email:</i> brian.tolagson@gmail.com	SYDNEY CITY FAW 3rd Friday – 2:00pm 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. <i>Enquiries:</i> John 0400 321 066 <i>Email:</i> sydcityfaw@gmail.com
GOULBURN FAW Third Wednesday – 6:00 am to 8:00 pm Goulburn Worker's Club, McKell Place, Goulburn <i>Enquiries:</i> Janice Jensen (Sec) <i>Email:</i> Goulburn.FAW@gmail.com	MOOCOOCOOLA FAW 3rd Thursday – 1:30 pm Gladesville Library Pittwater Road, Gladesville. <i>Enquiries:</i> Robert Dickins 0407 682 443	REVESBY WRITERS FAW 1st Saturday – 1:00 to 4:00pm Macarthur Room, Dixon Lane, Revesby <i>Enquiries:</i> Shirley Galloway 9709 4117. <i>Email:</i> revesbywriters@gmail.com <i>Web:</i> revesbywriters.com	WOLLONDILLY FAW 2nd Sunday – 1:00 pm <i>Enquiries:</i> Annette Pearce (Pres.) 0432 857 236 wollondillybranch.faw@gmail.com
ISOLATED WRITERS FAW This group of writers do not meet in person but keep in contact through Philippa Yelland, their Convenor, either through the state FAW website fawns.org.au or isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au (See <i>Isolated Writers page (back cover)</i>)	MUDGEE VALLEY FAW 1st Monday – 1:00 to 3:00 pm <i>[Note change of date and time]</i> <i>Enquiries:</i> Jill Baggett 0409 609 869 <i>Web:</i> mudgeevalleywriters.wordpress.com	SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS 2nd Saturday – 10am to 1pm <i>(Except January)</i> Welby Hall, Welby. Postal Address: Gail Leighton-Daly, 2 Highlands Close, Moss Vale 2577 <i>Enquiries:</i> Jennie Mickle (Sec.) 0414 444 165 <i>Email:</i> fawshnsw@hotmail.com <i>Web:</i> fawsh.wordpress.com	WYONG WRITERS FAW 4th Saturday – 1:30pm Woodbury Park Community Centre 1 Woolmers Cres. (off Woodbury Park Drive), Mardi. <i>Enquiries:</i> Glen D'Cruz (Publicity) 0413 291 129 glenndc@ozemail.com.au <i>Web:</i> www.wyongwriters.org

FAW ISOLATED WRITERS BRANCH

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES:

Philippa Yelland, Isolated Writers Convenor
Email: isolatedwriters@fawns.org.au
Mobile: 0449 651 190

ASSISTING THE CONVENOR:

Jill Schuler
Email: jillschuler9@gmail.com
Mobile: 0467 677 764.

MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Editor, Writers Voice
PO Box 93
Dapto, NSW, 2530
Email: 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. 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
Internet: 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

Western Australia (FAWWA):

Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) Inc.
PO Box 6180, Swanbourne WA 6910
www.fawwa.org

Queensland (FAWQ):

Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland (FAWQ)
www.fawq.com.au



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C007299

The paper this publication is printed on is in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council®. The FSC® promotes environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.