



KSP Writers' Centre Annual Report 2016

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Chairwoman
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FOSTERING THE FUTURE

It gives me great pleasure to present this report and offer a summary of the achievements, highlights and developments of the past twelve months, as well as acknowledge those who helped to make it all happen.

While funding cuts and economic uncertainty in our sector have hung like a dark cloud threatening to wash us out, it has been my personal challenge to use these tough times as a opportunity to find the strengths in our operations and let them flourish, leaving some of the outdated practices behind, in order to remain relevant and attractive to new members.

Now more than ever, we need to look at the KSP Writers Centre as a business and search for new ways to generate our own revenue, otherwise there is a real threat of closing our doors and that would be a huge disappointment for both our current members and the future writers of WA.

One of KSP's greatest assets is full-time employee, Shannon Coyle. Many of the new initiatives and programs being introduced to the KSP program have been suggested or created by Shannon, proving her dedication to a role that is underpaid for the enormous responsibility and demands of a workplace that effectively runs 24/7. The Board agreed to change Shannon's job title from Program Coordinator to Director this year, as a more fitting label for the scope of work she undertakes.

Shannon has embraced opportunities to create a new website and confidently implemented a more digital approach to the day-to-day running of the office. She is the face of KSP and my appreciation of her work is immeasurable.

KSP is only able to achieve great things thanks to the many volunteers and friends that give their time so freely to the organisation.

People like Fern Pendragon, who not only keeps the gardens and property looking stunning, but goes over and above to ensure records are kept, the botanical history is preserved and the property is safe from fire hazards and falling branches. Thank you to Fern and her team.

To Bob Perks, who stood down as Treasurer from the Board earlier in the year, but is always on hand to help us out with financial expertise, Chris Oakley who is always available to offer advice and historical knowledge, and Nathan Hobby who is our Katharine Susannah Prichard guru and contributes to our newsletter monthly with his research.

To Glen Phillips our long-time patron, who is always our greatest ambassador and cheerleader for KSP, I give my personal gratitude for his confidence in my leadership of the Board and for his support for the new direction the centre is taking.

Erin Moody our cleaner who doubles as handywoman and seamstress, former Chairwoman Renee Hammond who runs the youth and homeschooler groups and to all the writing group facilitators who religiously turn up to offer their time and advice to other writers.

I would also like to acknowledge Melissa O'Shea who finished up as the Write-A-Rama presenter after running the youth program for 10 years. Unfortunately this was one of the programs that suffered due to the funding cuts, however we are pleased that Melissa continues to support the centre as a member of the Literary Advisory Committee.

Not wanting to drop the unique youth activities, we developed a new format to deliver the school holiday program and rebranded it as the KSP Press Club. A huge thanks to Melinda Tognini and Guy Salvidge for running these new workshops during the school holidays, we are excited by its popularity and will continue to adapt and improve it as we go.

This Press Club is among many new events that we introduced to the 2016 calendar. Others include; A new fellowship program which offers residencies to aspiring authors, volunteer service awards which includes a Volunteer of the Year category, KSP Doctors, service for manuscript assessment and intensive feedback, Story Retreat packages and the monthly Sunday Sessions, which tie a special guest presentation and a social element. A huge thanks to the following people for giving their time and expertise to these sessions:

- Campbell Jefferys

- Louisa Loder and Lana Pecherczyk
- Glen Phillips
- Stephen Starling
- Rosanne Dingli
- Guy Salvidge

And everyone that performed at the Open Mic sessions.

Earlier in the year Dr Anna Soter approached KSP to introduce an Australian version of the Hospital Poets program that she has run with success in USA. The philosophy behind the program is to take poetry into the local medical facilities, giving hospital staff respite from their daily work. After the success of the first two events, Hospital Poets is now run by a subcommittee headed by Shey Marque who is in the process of securing sponsorship to grow the program for 2017. This is an Australian first and something we can be proud of. Thanks to Ken Wyatt MP for his financial donation towards this worthy program, and to KSP member Anna for helping us to establish this program and continuing on in an advisory role from her new base in the United States.

On the back of the popularity of last year's Bonfire night, the Board of Management introduced a Ghost Writing Story competition to its existing suite of Poetry, Short Story and Spec Fic competitions. The awards for the new competition were announced on the Spooky Stories Night in August, which attracted an unexpected crowd of over 80 people, resulting in the most successful event of 2016 calendar.

On the subject of competitions, a new category will be introduced to the poetry awards in future, thanks to the kind and generous donation of sponsorship from KSP member Flora Smith in memory of her cousin Annette Cameron, a close friend of Katharine.

Long time Board Member Valerie Everett, has been instrumental in the creation of a new Hugo Throssell citizenship award, which not only will award a Year Six student from the Mundaring Shire recognizing them for their Anzac spirit, but also goes towards strengthening our relationships with local schools and honouring Katharine's husband Hugo Throssell. Thank you to Valerie for her passion to preserve the historical significance of our operations and namesakes.

Gratitude to office helpers and workers Ravenna Bouckaert, who assisted greatly in the creation of the new website, Fay Dease, Nicole Lockyer and Juanita Pirozzi, who have helped to lighten the massive administrative work load and Board Secretary, Lisa Wolstenholme whose IT skills have been instrumental in fixing computer problems and researching new components for the website and automated systems.

We have been blessed with generous and gregarious writers in residence during 2016. Melinda Tognini, Lorna Hendry, Angela Slatter and Chloe Higgins, as well as our young writers, Charlotte Guest, Kelly Palmer and Sarah Gates who spent time in our cabins during the past twelve months. It is always with a sense of pride that our guests offer cards and gifts for KSP staff, and leave with KSP ingrained in their hearts.

It is one of our key objectives moving forward to seek funding for our unique residency program, to ensure it endures. We will hear the results of a Copyright Agency grant application in December.

Thank you to the outstanding work of the Literary Advisory Committee for continuously selecting the best and most worthy recipients for this program.

Staying with committees, in 2016 we now have five functioning sub-committees: Lit Com, Gardening and Landscape, Events and Marketing, Wild Weed Press and Hospital Poets. The formation and function of these sub committees has aided the Board of Management immensely, by delegating specific tasks to the focus groups the Board is able to concentrate on management decisions and it helps to distribute the workload more evenly. This new structure offers opportunities outside of the literary field, with volunteers gaining skills, making friends and giving something back to the community. To all the volunteers that are the backbone of our operations, we are truly indebted.

Around the house and property this year, we are pleased to have installed new lighting bollards for a safer path to the cabins, new carpet, curtains and air-conditioner in the main writing room and many new plants acquired from various sources.

Moving forward into 2017 we will continue to build our partnerships with other metro and interstate writing centres through our alliance with the new WA Writers United (WAWU) collaboration, as well as get out to the State writers festivals to spruik the merits of what we do to new audiences. We are also working towards building an exchange program with the University of Pretoria in South Africa and other such affiliations.

There will be a noticeable drop in the number of workshops delivered in 2017 until we are able to secure program funding again, however this paves the way for new initiatives and allows us to throw our creative efforts into different development areas.

We are hopeful that the Shire of Mundaring will continue to offer tri-annual administration funding again from June 2017, when the current contract runs out. Should we not be successful in gaining this funding, KSP won't be able to function to its current capacity and we will need to make some tough decisions at that stage.

However, until that happens, we will pour our energies into sustaining the high standard of deliverables that are offered at KSP with that hope that one day we will no longer have to rely on grants and donations so heavily.

Saying that, we are most thankful to the Shire of Mundaring, Lotterywest, Bendigo Bank Mundaring, Friends of Katharine who have made personal financial donations to the public fund this year, local polities who have dipped their hands in their pockets and made contributions and our friends at Lion Mill Winery who have

stocked up our wine supplies for use how we see fit. We hope all our financial supporters see the value of our organisation and continue to assist us in the future.

Finally, I wish to give my deepest gratitude to the members of the Board of Management; Michael Kyd, Yvonne Westphal (who was Treasurer for part of the year), Valerie Everett, Lisa Wolstenholme, Mardi May and Shannon Coyle. It has been my privilege to sit at the helm of such a dynamic and dedicated team without whom, KSP would not be the vibrant, respected and recognised organisation it is today. These individuals are the quiet achievers, who always have KSP at the forefront of their hearts and expect nothing in return.



And to everyone else, thank you for your continued support, we hope KSP will always be your Writers Centre of choice. 😊