

OUT OF THE ASYLUM (INC.)
2021-2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (22 October 2022)
CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon and welcome everyone to the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Out of the Asylum Writers Group.

On behalf of us all, I acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I recognise their living culture, their continuing connection to the land, waters and community, and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

The purpose of OOTA is to support its members and provide opportunities for creative connections between us all. I would like to express my sincere appreciation on behalf of the Committee for your continued engagement with OOTA. We have sought to continue to support the connections between us and celebrate your creativity.

This past year has remained somewhat challenging with continued public health considerations as we now move out of the acute phase of the pandemic. In consideration of our health, we decided that it was prudent to continue offering the regular writing classes, but no additional social activities during this year. Attachment 1 summarises our activities during this past year.

OOTA members have continued to be very productive; our classes have engaged many of you and we have had a wonderful group of tutors for poetry and prose classes. We have been particularly excited to receive your submissions for what is shaping up to be a terrific Anthology.

I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for their commitment to OOTA and the work they carry out for us. All Committee members contribute to the overall work of OOTA and undertake various portfolio roles.

My appreciation to Richard Regan (Vice Chairperson, Membership), Rita Tognini (Secretary, Prose Class Coordination), Jennifer Jones (Treasurer) and to Committee Members Julie Watts (Submissions Calendar), Josephine Clarke (Poetry Class coordination), Jan Napier (Poetry Bites Coordination) and Veronica Lake (Anthology).

We have continued Network Tuesday Emails with information of members' achievements, events and the Submission's Calendar from Julie Watts that helps keep us on track for our publication options.

MEMBERSHIP

Our current membership stands at 77 of which eight are Honorary Members.

Five members have resigned for various reasons, but we were pleased to welcome four new members during the year. A handful of members have not yet renewed for 2022/23 but we expect most of them will.

MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

As I prepare Network Tuesday I am always very interested to hear from members about their creative achievements and always in awe of the amount of creativity in our membership. I only find out what members tell me so I am sure that I do not hear of all of your achievements.

We have members: winning and gaining places in writing competitions; publishing poems and short stories in a variety of Journals and Anthologies; publishing books; winning grants and residencies; winning places in the Four Centres Emerging Writers Program and having Plays selected for

performance. Members participate in interviews, art and writing events, in panels at festivals, in book launches and other reading events in Australia and overseas. The availability of online and zoom events has been a boost to our connections with writers within Australia and overseas.

Members are published in many Australian and International Journals, too many to list, Locally members are published in *Westerly*, *Creatrix* and engage with *Creative Connections*. Members are often placed in the Tom Collins' Competition and the Ros Spencer Competition and many are in the Ros Spencer Anthology. Members read at Voicebox and the Perth Poetry Club and other events on a regular basis.

I congratulate Rose van Son who is the Patron of the Perth Poetry Festival 2022 and Annamaria Weldon who was Patron in 2021.

Members' Publications of Collections and Books are listed here. I apologise to anyone I have missed.

- Tineke Van Der Eecken, *A Place to Land*, (forthcoming poetry collection)
- Helen Hagemann, *The Ozone Café* (novel)
- Cynthia Innes, *The Secret Of Harragar* (novel)
- Annette Mullumby, *Strategies for Digging out Onion Grass* (poetry collection)
- Renee Pettitt-Schipp, *The Archipelago of Us* (non-fiction accepted for publication)
- Rachael Petridis, *'Horse on a Roof'* (poetry collection)
- Richard Regan, *Oriental Valiant* (novel)
- Rose van Son, *From the open doorway: a collection of Haiku* (poetry collection)

PROSE AND POETRY CLASSES

Attachment 1 lists the Poetry and Prose Classes that were held between November 2021 and those planned until 30 November 2022. These have been held at Mattie Furphy House at (Fellowship of Writers WA) FAWWA at a reasonable room hire fee. The Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC) was not able to offer a room for these classes.

Tutors were engaged on behalf of OOTA, through a letter of agreement outlining the dates and conditions. This included retaining the participant cost at \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members.

We wish to express our appreciation and thanks to Dr Ashleigh Angus who tutored the Prose Classes bi-weekly from November 2021 to 30 June 2022 and to Gemma Nisbet who tutored the class on 13 May. Thank you to our OOTA member Dr Bruce Russell who tutors the Prose Classes 4 weekly from August to November 2022.

We wish to also express our appreciation to the people who tutored our Poetry Classes. For this past year we have offered Classes led by different people to give a variety of options for participants. It was also the case that those approached were only interested in leading a small number of classes.

Our thanks go to our Poetry Tutors: Ross Jackson, Kevin Gillam, Natalie D-Napoleon, Lisa Collyer, Scott-Patrick Mitchell, Mags Webster, Shey Marque and also to Shane McCauley who will tutor a class in November.

The schedule of these Classes was bi-weekly on Fridays, with Poetry 10-12pm and Prose 1-3pm until July and thereafter 4 weekly, with Prose and Poetry on alternate Fridays 10-12pm.

POETRY BITES' READERS

The 10-minute Poetry Bites readings, arranged by Jan Napier, have continued at the end of each OOTA Poetry Class. We have been delighted to have readings from members (Attachment 1).

CHANGES TO WRITING CLASSES

In mid-2022, the Committee reviewed our Writing Classes and asked members for advice. Thank you to those who responded.

It was decided that it was sensible to change the schedule of the Poetry and Prose Classes from 2 to 4 weekly. This was for a variety of reasons which we communicated via Network Tuesday on 26 July 2022.

We took into account a number of factors, including: feedback from members, class attendance and cost; noting that many organisations offer writing activities and that there is a lot of choice; recognising that FAWWA has been very supportive, enabling us to continue offering classes at Mattie Furphy House and that by using this venue we support another writing group; that Mattie Furphy is an accessible Writer's House in a pleasant setting; recognition of OOTA's long connection with the FAC, its ambience and café and recent discussions with the FAC Director.

There were two aspects to the new arrangements: changing tutor led Poetry and Prose Classes at Fellowship of Australian Writers WA (FAWWA) from 2 to 4 weekly each and proposed new activities at Fremantle Arts Centre (FAC). The change to 4 weekly Classes opens the way for new options at FAC.

FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE

We have worked steadily to engage with the Fremantle Arts Centre during the year and were delighted to have been offered three bookings at the newly renovated ground floor Seed Room at the Centre on 22 September, 20 October and 17 November 2022. Unfortunately, the September booking was cancelled due to the recently announced National Public Holiday.

We have confirmed monthly bookings at the Seed room during 2023(see attachment1) and are also seeking to partner with FAC to offer some Masterclasses during the year.

At the time of writing this Report for the AGM, it was too late to document the outcome of our first session at the FAC Seed Room on 20 October where we plan to celebrate Richard Regan's novels and Annette Mullumby's poetry collection, and discuss members' ideas for OOTA's activities into the future.

OOTA ANTHOLOGY 2022

The 2022 OOTA members' Anthology is well into production with its launch planned for our Christmas Lunch in the Courtyard of the Fremantle Art Centre on 16 December 2022. Thank you to all members who submitted poetry and prose for the Anthology and to the Committee team preparing the Anthology: Richard Regan, Rita Tognini, Jan Napier and Veronica Lake.

We would like to especially thank Peter Burges for his formatting of the Anthology and Carolyn Abbs for her proof-reading, Dr Ashleigh Angus for her graphics for the cover design and Dr Daniel Juckes for writing the Foreword. The Anthology is only possible due to these peoples' voluntary time. Thankyou.

Thank you very much to members who donated to the cost of the Anthology. With your support we raised over \$1900 dollars with which we were able to cover the costs of publication.

One free copy of the Anthology will be issued to all members. They will be available for collection at the Christmas Party. Additional copies may be purchased for \$20 each (plus postage and packing if you wish them mailed to you.)

OOTA ADMINISTRATION

The Committee reviewed all expenses for their continued appropriateness and to seek savings.

The *Post Office Box* was cancelled early in 2022 and a smaller one, more suited to our needs, was established at a lower cost.

Insurance

OOTA has held a Public Liability Insurance to cover us for third party liability when using venues. We reviewed the cost and need for this and found that some venues, including the Fremantle Art Centre, require organisations using their spaces to have their own insurance. In addition, under Insurance Law injured parties generally seek to recover damages from 'multiple contributing parties'. For these reasons we continue to hold Public Liability Insurance.

In prior years, OOTA's insurance was placed via an Insurance Broker. This arrangement and the policies offered were reviewed. An anomaly in the Brokers' fee was identified and OOTA obtained reimbursement of an overcharge of \$361.42. OOTA has since dispensed with this Broker and procured cheaper insurance through Willis Temby Insurance Brokers. This includes full Public Liability Insurance from Holland Commercial Insurance. The new annual policy commenced on 30 April 2022.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We continue to be a member of Writers WA whereby we maintain a profile in the WA writing community. We also liaise with WA Poets Inc and other writing groups as opportunities arise. We did not offer a special OOTA poetry session as part of the 2022 WA Poetry Festival, hosted by WA Poets Inc, due to their pared down format for this year.

Fellowship of Australian Writers WA

We have been very grateful for the positive and supportive relationship with FAWWA, in particular with the previous Administrator Carol Milner and the Chairperson Karen Whittle-Herbert. Through this we have been able to continue our Tutor led Writing Classes at FAWWA at a reasonable room hire rate and to support another Writing Association.

Westerly

Our collaboration with *Westerly* is going well. We have been delighted to engage with Dr Daniel Jukes, Lecturer in the UWA School of Humanities, who became an associate editor for the *Westerly* Publication. OOTA continues to provide a copy of *Westerly* to members at the December Christmas party as part of their membership

RETIRING COMMITTEE MEMBER

I would like to thank Veronica Lake very much for her years of wonderful contributions as a member and past Chairperson of the OOTA Committee. Veronica is taking a break from the Committee for this year.

ATTACHMENT 1: 2022 OOTA Activities: Poetry & Prose Classes, AGM, Christmas Party, Seed Room at FAC

Dates		Prose Tutor	Poetry Tutor	Poetry Bites Reader	AGM, Christmas, FAC
2021		2 Weekly (FAWWA)	2 Weekly (FAWWA)		
November	5	Ashleigh Angus	Ross Jackson	Rose Van Son	
	19	Ashleigh Angus	Ross Jackson	Lucy Czerwiec	
December	3	Ashleigh Angus	Ross Jackson	Carolyn Abbs	
	17				Christmas lunch, FAC
2022					
February	4	Ashleigh Angus	Ross Jackson	Ross Jackson	
	18	Ashleigh Angus	Ross Jackson	Yvonne Patterson	
March	4	Ashleigh Angus	Kevin Gillam	Mike Greenacre	
	18	Ashleigh Angus	Lisa Collyer		
April	1	Ashleigh Angus	Lisa Collyer	Rob Manning	
	29	Ashleigh Angus	Lisa Collyer	Barry Sanbrook	
May	13	Gemma Nisbet	Natalie D_Napoleon	Rose Van Son	
	27	Ashleigh Angus	Scott-Patrick Mitchell	Annette Mullumby	
June	10	Ashleigh Angus	Scott-Patrick Mitchell	Rita Tognini	
	24	Ashleigh Angus	Natalie D_Napoleon	Dick Alderson	
July	8		Kevin Gillam	Veronica Lake	
	22				
		4 Weekly	4 Weekly		
August	5		Shey Marque		
	19	Bruce Russell			
September	2		Scott-Patrick Mitchell	Aileen Hawkes	
	16	Bruce Russell			
	22				Seed Room at FAC (cancelled - PH)
	30		Mags Webster	Kevin Gillam	
October	14	Bruce Russell			
	28		Shane McCauley	Rachael Petridis	
	20				Seed Room, FAC
	22				AGM, Grove Library
Planned					
November	11	Bruce Russell			
	17				Seed Room, FAC
	25		Shey Marque	Lucy Czerwiec	
December	16				FAC Christmas lunch OOTA Anthology Launch Westerly distribution

2023 Confirmed FAC bookings: Seed Room, Fridays 9.30-12.30

February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17.

FAC Courtyard, Christmas Party 15 Dec.