

**OUT OF THE ASYLUM (INC.)**  
**2022-2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (21 October 2023)**  
**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon and welcome everyone to the 2023 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. I would like to express my sincere appreciation on behalf of the Committee for your continued engagement with OOTA. We seek to continue to support the connections between us and celebrate your creativity.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the wonderful and voluntary contributions of our 2022/23 Committee members: Richard Regan (Vice Chairperson, Membership Coordinator), Rita Tognini (Secretary), Jennifer Jones (Treasurer) and to Committee Members Julie Watts, Josephine Clarke, Jan Napier, Kevin Gillam and Jenny Hetherington.

Richard Regan was A/Chairperson and Julie Watts A/Vice Chairperson from May to mid-August 2023 during my leave of absence. As always, the OOTA Committee is a team effort.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Our current membership stands at 87. We were fortunate enough to attract 11 new members during the year while only losing five, of whom two resigned and three did not renew their membership.

The committee has decided to hold the membership subscriptions at their current level (\$60 Full and \$40 Concessional) through 2023/24. This will be reviewed prior to next year's AGM.

**OOTA EVENTS**

We have been delighted to welcome Dr Bruce Russell as the tutor for monthly **Prose Classes** since August 2022. Participation has been consistent at the *Fellowship of Australian Writers WA* venue.

From July to November 2022 **Poetry Classes** were held fortnightly at FAWWA. These were tutored by different people: Scott-Patrick Mitchell, Natalie D-Napoleon, Kevin Gillam, Mags Webster, Shane McCauley and Shey Marque. Thank you to all.

From July to November 2022 we enjoyed **Poetry Bites** from our members: Rita Tognini, Dick Alderson, Veronica Lake, Laurie Smith, Carolyn Abbs, Gail Willems, Aileen Hawkes, Rachael Petrides, Kevin Gillam, Josephine Clarke, Peter Burges, Shane McCauley and Lucy Czerwiec

The OOTA **Prose Critique Group** continues to run at Fremantle.

Members have enjoyed a new monthly OOTA **Poetry Critique group** led by Kevin Gillam since February 2023. This began in response to members' feedback about preferred types of events.

**OOTA's Literary Fridays** also emerged from members' feedback. These have been held monthly with an alternating focus of Prose, Poetry or combined Prose and Poetry, in recognition of the varying interests of members. The first was held in November 2022, led by Josephine Clarke with a terrific Round Robin reading of poetry and prose from all members present.

Monthly Literary Fridays resumed in February 2023 and continue. These have been combinations of a guest reading their own work, discussing their writing or leading a writing class and also readings by members who participate in these sessions. To date, guests have included: Richard Regan, Tineke Van Der Eecken, Cynthia Innes, Annette Mullumby, Brooke Dunnell, Kevin Gillam, Jackson, Cath Drake, Helen Hagemann, Leanne Searle, Murray Jennings, Lucy Czernicz, Carolyn Abbs, Alison Davis, Bruce Russell, Veronica Lake, Rose Van Son and Kay Cairns.

The **Spilt Ink Poetry and Prose Writing Competition** was held in 2023 and the Awards will be made after the completion of this AGM today. We were very pleased to have Roland Leach and Brooke Dunnell as Judges for Poetry and Prose respectively. I extend my thanks to Committee members who have managed the Competition and the two Judges.

The 2022 OOTA members' **Anthology 'Tempus'** was launched at our Christmas Lunch in the Courtyard at 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. Our Committee especially thanks Peter Burges for his formatting of the Anthology and Carolyn Abbs for her proof-reading, Dr Ashleigh Angus for the cover design graphics and Dr Daniel Jukes for writing the Foreword. The Anthology is only possible due to these peoples' voluntary time. 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.

We acknowledge and thank Roland Leach for creating a wonderful Poetry Publication '**Cuttlefish**', that showcases 80 WA poets and includes poems from many OOTA members. It was launched in June 2023 and in August OOTA poets gathered at the Fremantle Library and read their poems. It was a thoroughly enjoyable celebration of our poetry.

### **COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

We continue to be a member of *Writers WA* and following changes in their leadership, have engaged in their recent consultation with Writers' groups.

#### *Fremantle Arts Centre*

In late 2022 we secured bookings at the Seed Room which is an accessible, newly renovated room. We used this for our Poetry Critique Groups in November 2022, February and March 2023 and also for our Literary Fridays in November 2022 and February 2023. In early March 2023 the Centre unexpectedly cancelled all bookings to undertake a major roof renovation that is still ongoing. We are in continual contact with staff and are hopeful that we will be able to negotiate bookings in 2024.

#### *Fellowship of Australian Writers WA*

We have been very grateful for the positive and supportive relationship with FAWWA and the regular bookings for our Prose Class, the Poetry Critique Group and the OOTA Literary Fridays.

#### *Westerly at UWA*

We value our continued engagement with Dr Daniel Jukes, Lecturer in the UWA School of Humanities, 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

### **MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

Members have continued their considerable creative endeavours with many publications, placings in competitions, and presentations at spoken word events.

I would like to acknowledge Members who have recently published books adding to the richness of WA writing..

Tineke Van der Eecken for her poetry collection *A Place to Land*, Mulla Mulla Press, 2022

Reneé Pettitt-Schipp for her book *The Archipelago of Us*, Fremantle Press, 2023;

Annette Mullumby for her poetry collection *Strategies for Digging out Onion Grass*, Mulla Mulla Press, 2022

Roland Leach, the editor of '*Cuttlefish: Western Australian Poets*', Sunline Press 2023

On behalf of the 2022-23 OOTA Committee I thank you for another year of creative connections and friendships.

Yvonne Patterson

Chairperson, Out of the Asylum Writers, 2022-23