

2013 Annual Report Hunter Writers Centre

2013 saw a drop in funding from ArtsNSW on previous years. Traditionally we receive approximately \$35 000 but 2013 funding approved was \$20 000. This required a year of good money management. We began the year with \$8 400 in our bank account and ended the year with \$17 000 in the bank (nil debts).

Our Year in Review

We opened the year with our traditional writers-in-residence. As part of our tenancy at the Lock-Up Cultural Centre at 90 Hunter Street we were fortunate again to be given a residency as part of the Cultural Centre's artist-in-residence program. This enabled us to host both Marion Halligan and Margo Lanagan.

January also saw HWC partner with the Newcastle Herald to promote the Summer Short Story Writing Competition. 150 entries were received from across the region and 3 out of the 4 award winners were members of HWC. The Newcastle Herald and ABC1233 have been wonderful supporters of Hunter Writers Centre throughout 2013

Workshops held in 2013 included:

- Newcomers Creative Writing Course – held February, March and October
- Editing with media sub-editor Gina Cranson
- Young Writers Creative Writing program
- Non-Fiction Writing with Robert Watson, Heinemann Editor
- Writing for Children with Kerri Lane, Children's author
- Travel Writing with Karen Crofts and Rosemarie Milsom, Newcastle Herald journalist
- Prose Poetry Writing with Cassandra O'Loughlin, poet and PhD (current) UON
- Professional Self-Publishing with publishers Mark Maclean, Christine Bruderlin and self-published author Dionne Lister

Feedback on our workshops is always so positive. Here are sample comments:

I most enjoyed the range of writing from the participants and the genuine heart which they brought to their writing.

So great to share stories and hear everyone's 'voices' and learn powerful ways to improve our writing skills.

A beautiful collection of exercises and readings.

I really like the group atmosphere; enjoy it thoroughly.

I enjoyed all of this. It was well constructed, timed, a good balance of activities, class participation and practical.

So enjoyable and pertinent, really worthwhile.

Enjoyable, informative and great participation by group.

Really interesting, had a great time learning! There is always something in these courses you can use! Thanks

This was great. I learnt more than listening to a professor talking about writing at uni.

I enjoyed the real life examples. Course was enjoyable /informative

I found the talk informative and interesting

Informative, practical, focussed, useful

Informative and instructive

Competitions

The **Newcastle Poetry Prize** is our major competition of the year. In 2013 the competition was judged by Dennis Haskell and Jean Kent. Entries were 1.5 times the previous year total and the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Andrew Parfitt, was very pleased with the result. 75 attended the prize ceremony held on October 12. Feedback from entrants and attendees at the ceremony:

- ✓ *Congratulations Jennifer! And congratulations to all the short-listed poets - I'm very much looking forward to reading the anthology. Rachael Mead*
- ✓ *Thank you for putting on such a gorgeous event. It was a singular pleasure to be amongst such fine company, in a wonderful town, and immersed in so much respect for the art of poetry. Also, the chocolates were AMAZING. Karina Quinn*

- ✓ *Congratulations to all winners and those who were shortlisted. A wonderful achievement. Diane Lymbury*
- ✓ *I think the lyricism and language this year are rich. Mark Liston*
- ✓ *Hi, Karen: Thanks for a great evening. The winning poems are gorgeous and so soul affirming (I wanted to say Amen to Karina's hallelujah!) and so are their authors. Beautiful people creating beautiful and necessary work. I thought the whole event was all lovely and elegant. And it also had the feel of friendship and of community which made it unique. I think that has a lot to do with you, your warmth and your direction. Thanks. Ann Walsh*

HWC formed another partnership with health practitioners in the region, our main link being HWC member Kathleen Wurth, who is both a writer and palliative care nurse. The outcome of the discussions was the inaugural **Grieve Writing Competition** in honour of Grief Awareness month. 150 entries were received which was a terrific response as it was only open to members. A live reading of the top 25 works was held in August (Grief Awareness month) and the [ebook was published](#)

Newcastle Writers Festival

A key event on the calendar for 2013 was the inaugural writers' festival. HWC member Rosemarie Milsom is the director and the program involved dozens of HWC members as panellists, guest authors and volunteers. Here is a link to the very successful 2013 program:
<http://www.newcastlewritersfestival.org.au/download-the-program/>

Members

The HWC website was streamlined and the members' section expanded

Editors and Publishers

She True Stories

Jaye Ford book launch – in the Exercise Yard. Huge success. Terrific exposure for HWC.

She: Project. A partnership between the libraries, HWC and YWCA. Our members contributed stories.

Still open. More info here: <http://shetruestories.org/>

National Young Writers Festival and Younger Young Writers Festival. HWC Admin assistant and the

PR interns involved in the latter over 4-5 October.

Relocation of HWC

A major achievement I am most proud of is negotiating to relocate HWC to City Library for 2014 and beyond. The Lock-Up Cultural Centre have offered us terrific subsidised rent for years but we found the teaching facilities and access were two major impediments to our growth. My initial contact was with Carol Edmonds and David Jenkins, Manager of Newcastle Region Libraries, and we found the libraries would provide a range of excellent facilities: date projection, . We finished 2013 at the Lock-Up Cultural Centre and looked forward to a new location. Advantages of the relocation are:

- obvious literary links with the library (book launches, reading-writing workshops, literary services);
- multiple spaces and better facilities for our workshops including greater capacity, data projector and other technologies;
- improved access (via lift) and comfort for our members with disabilities and the aged;
- nil rent;
- hours of operation that suit our programs: Monday-Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 9am-2pm;
- libraries are a statutory section of local council so are not subject to restructuring like other services
- free-of-charge wi-fi
- free Saturday parking
- potential for large scale literary events.

Regional library network access for promotion and activities. Branches of the libraries region: New Lambton, Hamilton, Beresfield, Raymond Terrace, Dungog Shire and Port Stephens.

Activity	Quantity
Members	End of 2013: 220 = \$8000 approx
Workshops	Typically 15-22 at each workshop
NPP	660 entries in 2013 = approx \$19 000 Number of entries per state FYI ACT- 20 NSW 270 NT 4 QLD 29 SA 35 TAS 18 VIC 104 WA 25 unknown 120
Grieve	150 entries
Halligan In Conversation	90
Lanagan In Conversation	50
Regular Live Readings	12-25 (seasonal)
Facebook	Grew from 300 to 700 in 2013
Book sales	Typically \$1200 per year

2012 stats

Members asked to outline their writing skills/experience:

- (Business writing) - 20
- (New Writers) - 33
- (Typesetter) - 1
- (Journalist) - 7
- (Qualified Editor) - 11
- (Student of Writing) - 18
- (Educator - writing related subject) - 14
- (Creative writer) - 87
- (Scriptwriter) - 9
- (Other) - 17

Why did you join?

- To attend writing improvement courses - 51
- To join a regular writing group - 46
- For competition & publishing information – 36
- Mainly social - 29

In a year of tough times when the ArtsNSW grant was only \$20 000, it is terrific to think we enter 2014 with a solid financial base + a healthy grant from ArtsNSW of \$36 000. Thank you to all board members for your support in 2013.

The Board and the Director/CEO

The relationship between the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Board of Directors (Board) is the most crucial, and the state of this relationship has potentially the greatest influence on organisational success.

For this relationship to work well, it must be one of negotiation, consideration and understanding of the role and perspective of the other. There must also be a recognition that the CEO and the Board play separate and distinguishable roles, but must work together in order to achieve organisational goals.

It is important that the CEO and the Board are seen as a partnership, as allies, who play roles, which are essential to achieving the common organisational purpose.

From HWC Director:

- I like regular contact with the chair of the board once a week for approx 30 minutes. Vital!
- I like to know the board are friends with us on facebook and follow us on twitter. Please 'like' our posts and re-tweeting our tweets as much as you can.
- Know the HWC website, check it once a month before board meeting so you are up to date
- Please read the director's report emailed to you one week before each board meeting
- If you want to be involved in a program that's terrific but remember you 'wear a different hat' in that instance.
- You are not permitted to leave the board until you have personally raised in excess of \$400 000 each