

**Annual General Meeting
Geelong Writers Inc
17 October 2023
President's Report**

(30th anniversary edition!)

After its election last October your committee began the planning for 2023 and the 30th anniversary for Geelong Writers. This off-spring of Geelong's 'Streets Poets' is proud to be counted among the Gen Y millennials whose dynamic presence is now felt throughout our communities, and in literature and the arts in particular.

It is a proud occasion for Geelong Writers to bestow a life membership on one of its founders who has maintained his commitment and support for our community organisation over the past three decades. Congratulations Dr Ted Reilly.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Our membership continues to grow and Geelong Writers now has 193 members (June 2023). Winner of our mid-year membership drive (July 2022) was Wendy Spall who received a \$100 voucher from The Book Bird, Pakington Street, Geelong West. The number of our social media followers continues to climb beyond 1000.

OUR ACTIVE WRITERS

Many of our members have continued to submit their written work to the growing opportunities for publication in print as well as those for short works of fiction for publication on our website. I thank our members who have made themselves available for profile stories.

Our Belmont Page writing group has remained active and is ably supported by Claudia Collins. Their annual publication will be available before Christmas.

Thanks to the dedication of Jenny Macauley the Dome Poets continued to hone their craft at their regular monthly meetings.

Our 'Shut Up & Write' group continues to meet twice per week from 10:00 am to 12 noon at the Box Office Café in Geelong West. While its numbers ebb and flow from week to week, the participation rate has grown and it attracts an average of about 7 per session. It has become a fount of ideas for new writerly activities as well as providing opportunities for effective mentoring.

To provide encouragement for emerging writers, Geelong Writers has begun a special fund to provide additional modest support for their development through contributions to course fees or mentoring support, for example.

ACHIEVEMENTS

It has been a year of significant achievements for Geelong Writers beginning with the publication of *Different Journeys, Shared Stories*, an anthology of life writings emerging from a project funded by grants from the City of Greater Geelong and Writers Victoria, and facilitated by Natalie Fraser and Amra Pajalic.

Significant achievements include:

- Publication of the *Geelong Writers Prize 2023* anthology of the 10 short-listed stories. The prize winners were adjudicated by Dr Liz Monument and the prize pool of \$2750 was funded largely through crowdfunding
- our very popular regular ekphrastic writing challenges
- *Polyglots* returned for Pako Festa 2023 after a hiatus of 2 years
- a dynamic new website and social media presence
- a very successful membership drive
- well-supported members' social meetings
- the on-line publication of members' writings
- the publication of our annual anthology *Eclectic Words 2022* as well as several chapbooks, including the, the poetry anthology *AnoMaly Street Vol 1, No 2* and *Vol 2, No1*, our winter solstice challenge, *a story in 22 words*
- regular informative e-zines and Facebook posts
- a series of workshops on poetry, research for writers, and an emerging interest in history writing

APPRECIATION

None of the achievements of the past year would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the following committee members of Geelong Writers: Claudia Collins, Jean Pearce, Victoria Spicer and Carol Hullin (on leave since mid-year). Judy Rankin joined the committee mid-year to take on the job of Treasurer. Many thanks to each one.

My special thanks to Victoria, who fulfilled not only the demanding duties of Secretary but also that of Treasurer for most of the past year and all the while

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she continued with the demanding job of editing and publishing many of our publications and coordinating writing competitions. The past year has been a very demanding one for Victoria and she has wisely decided to take a break from these executive roles on the committee to concentrate on publications and competitions.

Throughout the past year, Geelong Writers has been greatly assisted by the following members: Jo Curtain as editor of *AnoMaly Street*; Kerstin Lindros, Jenny Hurley, Claudia Collins, Kat Skarbek, Julie Rysdale and Jo Curtain who served on selection panels for submissions and as editorial assistants and proof-readers for our anthologies.

As our volunteer media & communications coordinator, Julie Rysdale has taken our web and social media presence to an exciting new level.

Pauline Butler has contributed her artistic and design skills to several of our publications.

In addition to convening the Dome Poets, Jenny Macauley has also initiated the regular Courthouse Writers Retreat in Drysdale.

My gratitude to each of the above.

My thanks to the following for their grants: City of Greater Geelong and Writers Victoria (Grace Marion Wilson Trust)

THE YEAR AHEAD

In preparation for the continuing development of Geelong Writers we seek to fill all seven of the available vacancies at this year's election of members of the committee of management. This will ensure a more equitable distribution of the organisation's workload as we continue to grow.

The committee shall also be seeking additional volunteers to help make 2024 another eventful year for all members of Geelong Writers.

Guenter Sahr
President
Geelong Writers Inc.