

Chairperson's Report for Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre 2023

Dear Members,

As we close another year, it brings me immense pride to present the annual report for the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre.

The Centre's dedication in fostering and championing the literary arts is invaluable. We provide a place where writers meet and form continuing relationships. In 2023, KSP saw an increase in membership, and a significant growth in online followers, connecting writers with each other from across Australia.

We hosted over 300 gatherings, ranging from writers' groups, writing workshops, author meet-and-greets, to book launches. We also launched an excellent new podcast, Writing from Square One. A huge thank you to Sofija Stevanovic and Georgia Cabelle for this initiative.

Our writer-in-residence and fellowship program welcomed esteemed authors from various genres at different stages of their careers, offering them a dedicated place to write and develop their work. Our residencies continue to be our major point of difference, with writers-in-residence often reporting that staying at KSP gave them the space and time to significantly advance their work.

Benefits to Target Groups:

Our commitment to serving a broad spectrum of writers, from budding to established, remains unwavering. KSP:

- Offers writers a place to retreat and focus on their craft.
- Helps writers refine their skills through peer reviews and professional assessments.
- Creates avenues for writers to see their work flourish in print and digital platforms.
- Organises workshops and events, allowing writers to master their craft.
- Opens our heritage doors to all, ensuring the rich legacy of Katharine Susannah Prichard is preserved and celebrated.

Financial Health:

Despite economic challenges, our Centre remains fiscally sound. Through careful budgeting, and the unwavering support of our members and volunteers, we have maintained a balanced budget and made critical infrastructure upgrades.

Challenges and Future Outlook:

Transition periods are challenging, and 2023 was no exception. Despite the planned transitions following staff and board of management changes, the task of maintaining our heritage-listed building and retreat accommodations, with its myriad maintenance requirements, posed significant challenges. The meticulous balance between daily operations and these maintenance tasks, especially in a heritage setting, is demanding. Shannon Britza, a stalwart with over a decade of experience with KSP, provided indispensable support to our new Coordinator, Sofija Stevanovic in the transition period. Thank you, Shannon.

The Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation's Strategic Plan for the coming years aims to:

- Enrich the craft of writing through our diverse literary programs.
- Enhance our community engagement through digital mediums and collaborations.
- Uphold the highest standards in governance.

- Ensure financial sustainability and broadening our support base.
- Celebrate and preserve the illustrious legacies associated with the KSP Foundation.

Acknowledgements:

I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our hard-working staff, volunteers, and the executive committee.

Sofija has stepped into the Coordinator role with enthusiasm and works relentlessly to ensure the Centre continues to function smoothly and efficiently. Her love of KSP and the work she contributes is above and beyond what is expected. Deepest thank you for everything you do.

We welcome Sristy Gurung, who is doing an amazing job juggling housekeeping and administration tasks. And say thank you to Sheree Lewis for her tireless work in the role.

Thank you to Fern Pendragon, whose dedicated help ensures the vibrancy of our beautiful rambling gardens.

Thank you to our valued Literary Committee, a team of esteemed local authors who volunteer their time to select our KSP Writers-in-Residence and Fellows – Nathan Hobby, Guy Salvidge, Glen Phillips, Emily Paull, Josephine Taylor, Melissa O'Shea, Carolyn Wren, Mardi May, Melinda Tognini and Elizabeth Lewis. Huge thanks to our judges, and a special shout out to Carolyn for judging and hosting the Spooky Story Competition, and Nathan for selecting 2024's Fellows.

The writers group facilitators, who are the beating heart of the Centre, thank you for your regular on-going commitment to nurture writers.

Thank you to the Board members, Mardi May, Jake Liddelow, Marilyn Chin, Henry Plunkett, Francesca Stewart and Sarah Leck for your strategic thinking and valuable oversight of the governance of the Centre. Thank you to out-going members Lisa Rodrigues and Jayde Robinson-Clancy.

Thank you to Glen Phillips, our Patron for your continued encouragement and support of our writers and events at KSP.

Thank you to our donors and partners: Shire of Mundaring, Sports and Cultural Industries (4 Centres Emerging Writers Program), Westerly Magazine, Wooroloo Prison Farm, Writing WA, Westerly, Mundaring Arts Centre, and Dragonfly Publishing.

Katharine Susannah Prichard is quoted as saying, "Don't sacrifice your life to work and ideals. The most important things in life are human relations... I found that out too late". It's with this spirit that we move forward, ensuring that writers, whether emerging or established, find a home with us and a tribe they can belong to.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Warm regards,

Kate Driver
Chairperson
Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre

Excerpts from Writers-In-Residence Reports

Julienne van Loon, Established Writer-in-Residence, April/May 2023:

'I will certainly recommend the KSPWC residency program to emerging and established writers I know. As a creative writing academic in a leading program in Melbourne, I have a well-established and constantly expanding writerly network, and have already been singing the praises of your program.'

The Australian Book Review has recognised Julienne van Loon as "a writer and thinker for which the world of ideas is all the richer." The award-winning author of three novels as well as the highly praised non-fiction book *The Thinking Woman* (2019), her work has made a significant contribution to Australian literature through its unflinching appraisal of contemporary Australian life. Her service to Australian writing and publishing includes more than two decades as a teacher and mentor to emerging Australian authors, regular engagement in public debate on books and ideas, and various industry advocacy roles including a period as Chair of the Australian Society of Authors.

Gemma Nisbet, Invited Writer-in-Residence, January 2023:

'Staying at KSP gave me the opportunity to focus, in a deep and uninterrupted way, on my project at a crucial point in its timeline. It also gave me the sense of being part of a community and a lineage of writers connected with the centre. I can see how participating in a KSP residency again in future would be similarly helpful at a variety of stages of a future project, in the way it facilitates not only this opportunity for deep concentration but also a collegiate atmosphere of community and support.'

Gemma is a professional writer, literary critic and journalist with 15 years of experience writing and editing for print and digital publications. As a writer of creative nonfiction, essays, memoir, criticism and short fiction, Gemma has been published in magazines, newspapers, journals and anthologies including *Westerly*, *TEXT*, *Australian Book Review*, *Axon* and *Meniscus*. Her professional experience includes a decade as a staff journalist at *The West Australian* newspaper, including seven years as a travel writer, and she currently writes a book review column published each Saturday in *The West*. Her first book, an essay collection titled *The Things We Live With*, is forthcoming from *Upswell* in 2023.

Mara Papavasilou, Upcoming Writer-in-Residence, May 2023:

'The environment of the KSP cabins provided a beautiful and distraction-free environment that is not easily replicated elsewhere—I was able to tackle my manuscript with a clear head, which resulted in higher quality writing output than any standard writing day I have experienced recently.'

Originally from Perth, Mara Papavassiliou is a public servant by day, and writer by night. Mara currently lives in the Goldfields of Western Australia, where she is inspired by abandoned mine sites and the gothic landscape of the Great Western Woodlands. An alum of the Centre for Stories Mentorship Program, she is interested in literary and speculative fiction.

Extracts from Fellowship Reports

Kathy Sharpe:

The stretches of uninterrupted time in the peaceful surrounds of KSP are a rare gift. The KSP team has absolutely nailed the balance between being friendly, helpful and welcoming and respecting the writer's reason for being here. I am a huge fan of the accommodation and the set up at KSP and

have recommended it to many writer friends. For me, it's difficult to think of a more ideal writing environment.

Nean McKenzie:

'Being at KSP has reminded me that writing is important. I've been able to stay in my story instead of constantly jumping in and out of it, with sometimes a lot of time in between. I lived with my characters, in the world I created. I thought about them while I ate and before I went to sleep. I woke up ready to join them again. I don't know when I'll be able to do this sort of thing again, but I will remember it. It made me feel like a writer.'

Renee Trembl:

'The fellowship was exactly what I needed, and I sincerely thank KSP for their support with this opportunity. I work from home and always have several other ongoing contracts and projects on my to-do list, as well as family obligations and interruptions. It is extremely hard for me to dedicate large chunks of uninterrupted time to focus on a new (and yet unpaid) project. Having KSP award me a fellowship provided me the confidence to know that this project does have promise and it allowed me to fully focus on the project.'

Rhian Healy:

'Before I came here I really struggled to feel like a writer or to tell people that I was a writer (perhaps Imposter syndrome). But being here and being trusted to write and meeting other writers has given me the confidence to say I'm a writer. I think this has been the biggest benefit to me personally. The opportunity to write in such peaceful and welcoming surrounds (and to be trusted to write by the KSP Writers centre) without the demands of everyday life was also beneficial to my writing practice.'

Ayesha Inoon:

'I valued my time at KSP and found it incredibly productive and refreshing. I found the atmosphere very conducive to writing and creative pursuit and will always value the relationships I formed while there. I would be grateful for another opportunity to spend time in that environment and work on my writing.'

Emma Pignatiello:

'I gained so much from this fellowship. Laurie Steed's wisdom and insightful feedback into my manuscript was invaluable. It reinvigorated my belief in myself and my manuscript and I felt like I'd been given the tools, time and space I needed to have a fresh start on it. The time and space to edit without distractions has made me feel like I've done a sizeable portion of work and I can now work on the smaller edits while still working full-time. I needed this space and time to immerse myself in the big, structural elements without being ripped out of the story so I hope the book will be better for it.'

Molly Schmidt:

'It is always an absolute joy to be at KSP. The most valuable asset for me personally as a writer is the space to write, undisturbed. The cabins have everything I need to immerse myself in the world of my novel, from the white boards (which, following my first stay at KSP have become a big part of my creative and editorial process), the large desk, great view, peaceful environment... the list goes on. The access to bushwalks and stunning views really assists my "headspace" and fulfills my need to walk to clear my mind (and talk to my characters). The library within the main house is wonderful to

peruse when in need of a distraction of sorts, the access to a printer is priceless for writers like myself who need to be able to see some changes physically on the page. The journals, complete with entries from previous fellows provide delightful insight into the minds of other writers who have come before me and create a feeling of community and support, even whilst you are alone in a cabin with your pen.'