



The Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation Inc 2020-21 Chairperson's Report – presented at the KSPF Annual General Meeting held 31 October 2021

By Elizabeth Lewis

It is once again my great pleasure to present a report on the joys and challenges of running the KSP Writers' Centre. Each year when I sit down to write this report, I realise just how much we achieve at KSP and how many wonderful supporters and volunteers we have.

This year we have focused on improving the governance of KSP and building strong supports under our staff, volunteers and programs to ensure sustainability, to look after our small and dedicated team so we can keep providing a warm and welcoming home and quality training and support for writers at all stages of the craft.

Successes:

Thanks to funding from -

The Shire of Mundaring

We are continually grateful to have a Shire that values the arts and year after year supports the creative community at KSP. We simply wouldn't be able to provide our services without their support.

This year, our funding agreement with the Shire of Mundaring was renewed for the next 4 years and increased, the first successful increase since 2002. Councillors responded to the excellent business case, written by our CEO Shannon Britza, with a unanimous agreement to increase our funding to include a subscription to Submittable, a sophisticated submissions management software program. Submittable has reduced administration processing time of competitions entries and

residency/fellowship applications by an estimated 70%. This funding increase has also allowed us to create a new *Community Engagement Officer* staff role. It is very exciting for the centre to have an increase in hours for a support staff role to manage the growth we have achieved over recent years.

We had 53 job applications for this role and 6 high calibre interviewees. Our successful candidate, Lindsay Fletcher-Hammond, began work in August 2021 and is bringing confidence, warmth, design skills, a wealth of marketing experience and a passion for writing and supporting writers to the KSP team. Welcome Lindsay.

WA Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries

It was with great delight that we received a renewal of funding from DLGSC for the 4 Centres Emerging Writer Program co-ordinated by Fremantle Press. This means we can continue our First Edition program for a further 2 years! We received 38 applications for the 9 positions offered.

6 First Edition fellows will receive accommodation, exclusive workshops, seminars and mentoring sessions as they work towards completion of their first full length novel.

3 First Edition Retreat recipients will receive 2 fully sponsored retreats inclusive of advance fiction workshops, peer critiquing, manuscript assessment and one-on-one mentoring with Dr Laurie Steed.

Lotterywest

Thanks to a Lotterywest Covid-19 Relief Fund grant in the Strengthening and Adapting Organisations category, the KSP Board of Management and staff have attended planning meetings and governance workshops with Wendy Lamotte of *Making a Difference Enterprises* to undertake an organisational health review, develop a sustainable Strategic Plan 2021-25 and implement significant updates to our Constitution. Thanks to this grant we have clarified our processes and strengths and can move forward with confidence, knowing we are up-to-date in our governance of the KSP Writers' Centre.

National Library of Australia

The KSP Foundation Inc was granted \$10,780.00 from the National Library of Australia (NLA) as part of their Community Heritage Grant program to participate in a series of conservation and collections management workshops. KSP has never applied to this program before and we were one of only 61 organisations to receive funding in the 2020 round out of 123 applications.

KSP staff and volunteers attended a number of heritage conservation workshops throughout 2021 covering everything from how to catalogue our collection to make it

available to members and the public, to digitising photos and documents, paper conservation and collections governance and display. The workshops were hosted by Sam Beard and Elizabeth Doepel from the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) WA and Stephanie Baily, a local Paper Conservator.

Thanks to this unique opportunity we now have staff and volunteers trained in caring for the important heritage items relating to Katharine Susannah Prichard, Hugo Throssell VC and the Centre, a comprehensive heritage collection policy and a project plan moving forward.

Literary Program

Our literary program this year saw a wonderful collaboration with the Mundaring Arts Centre, offering a KSP residency to accomplished Perth poet Josephine Clarke who ran a series of 'Food for Thought' themed workshops for a select number of our writers' groups, including our two youth groups. The poems produced were published by the Arts Centre and celebrated at an open day and an artist interview event and poetry reading in June 2021.

We offered our usual full program of writing workshops and competitions including the ever-popular Spooky Story competition, big thanks again to our sponsor Tabetha Rogers-Beggs of Little Black Dress Productions and to our judge Carolyn Wren who so generously gives her time and enthusiasm to this competition, and always wears the best spooky costume. Thanks also to Lisa Wolstenholme for her assistance with the design and production of the Spooky Stories anthology.

We hosted over 40 contractual writers this past year, including a full complement of Established, Emerging, Invited and Upcoming Writers-in-Residence, Fellowships, and Westerly Development Program recipients. In addition, our private writer bookings significantly increased from last year. Next year we look forward to adding the new category of one week Flash Fellowships to our program as well as two CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) scholarships.

Challenges

Our biggest challenge this year was again a result of ongoing Covid-19 with many of our interstate Writers in Residence and Fellows having to reschedule or cancel due to Covid lockdowns and travel restrictions. We can only reschedule so many residencies into the following year before it starts impacting availability for our next cohort of writers. It is a huge amount of work for staff to constantly reschedule accommodation. Our program is fully booked for next year so unfortunately reschedules will no longer be available.

A successful solution to cancellations due to Covid has been our *Write Now Retreats*, last minute discounted cabin stays to fill dates vacated by unavoidable cancellations. Our members and visitors can access a generous discount to book a last-minute stay.

This also helps us fill the gap in our bookings revenue, an important source of income for KSP, win-win!

When undertaking our organisation health check with Wendy Lamotte we reviewed membership prices and cabin rates and found that we were no longer covering the maintenance and utilities expenses of the house and cabins. As of the new financial year we have increased memberships and cabin rates by approximately 15% so we can continue to maintain the cabins and heritage property of KSP for the use of our members and community. We have not increased the price of attending our writing groups or workshops.

Another investment has been much needed tech upgrades to ensure our office and working from home equipment is efficient, thanks to Dwayne and Kate for their paid help, and Kris from Plasmasource for donating his time and expertise. We will also be upgrading our office computers soon which is long overdue.

Property

The Board have invested in some big, and necessary improvements to the KSP property this year. You will notice a new asphalt driveway (to replace the potholed one), grading of the driveway down to the cabins, a new oven (the old one stopped working), new mattresses in the cabins and new microwaves in the house and cabins. There are ongoing maintenance costs which is the nature of a heritage building. Much of the guttering is due to be replaced and is on the agenda for next year.

We are still planning to build a new powered utility shed near the cabins to make it easier for our Writers in Residence and our Housekeeper to access laundry services. Our challenge is the limited availability of builders in the current building boom.

Thank you to KSP Staff

Our brilliant CEO Shannon Britza has once again led KSP through a challenging year with grace, positivity and vision. Our cheerful housekeeper Sheree Lewis is a bright and welcoming presence at KSP, and provides delicious baking for our busy bee volunteers and special events. Lindsay Fletcher-Hammond is a friendly and accomplished addition to the KSP office. Sincere thanks to each of you for the work you do to support or writing community.

Volunteers

Board of Management

This year we farewelled Melanie Hall as Secretary, congratulations on your first novel Mel. We welcomed Michelle Greening as interim secretary – thank you Michelle for

also hosting workshops, a KSP stall and being a wonderful relief teacher for our youth writing groups. Tess McGregor then stepped in as our new Secretary, welcome Tess.

We also farewell Shireen Watson, who provided valuable governance advice and was a great supporter of our heritage project, Lisa Rodrigues who brought communications and marketing experience and always provided practical and positive insights and Valerie Everett who has been a KSP Board member since 2013. Thank you for your enormous contribution Valerie, to our events, meetings and especially the 'Blackboy Hill is Calling' book. You've been a wonderful champion of KSP over the last 8 years and we will miss you greatly.

Welcome to new member Jayde Robinson-Clancy, and welcome back to our continuing Board members Jake Liddelov and Mardi May.

Literary Committee

Thank you to our Literary Committee members who volunteer their time and wisdom to review applications and select our Writers-in-Residence and Fellows - Mardi May, Melissa O'Shea, Nathan Hobby, Carolyn Wren, Guy Salvidge, Glen Phillips and Melinda Tognini. Special thanks to Mardi May who has coordinated the Literary Committee with wisdom and great warmth. We appreciate all the time and care you have contributed Mardi.

A silver lining of lockdowns and technology advances has meant we can now conduct shortlist interviews via Zoom, rather than phone.

Writing Group Facilitators

Thank you once more to our valued writing group facilitators who give their time to welcome and support members and guests, to Jane Wallis (Writefree), Wence Vahala (Non-fiction), Renee Snow (Scribe Tribe and Homeschoolers), Andy Ward (Fish), Mardi May (Past Tense and Poets), Helen Doran-Wu and Debbie Cooper (Words and Writers), Phil Mayne and Tim Nelson (TNG) and Nicole Taylor (Avon Valley Writers).

Our writing groups produce excellent anthologies of their work each year. A special congratulations to the Writefree women's writing group this year on your 25th Anthology!

Team

Thank you as always to the irrepressible gardening poet Fern and your team, Bernie, Sheree and Dan. The grounds are beautiful because of your hard work and care.

Thanks also to Bernie Lewis for dedicating your time to be our volunteer maintenance and general handy person, lightbulbs, signs, gates, steps, anything that needs fixing. It's the small things that make a big difference.

This year we also farewelled Rebekah-Jane Sheedy who dedicated her time, energy and expertise to assist our members to self-publish their own books through Wild Weeds Press. With over 5 member publications released this year, thank you Rebekah for your dedication and passion to support stories and new authors into the world.

Wild Weeds Press has now reverted to its original form, an imprint for our writing group anthologies and in-house publications only. Rebekah and Lisa Wolstenholme are offering publishing support with a special discount for KSP members over at Dragonfly Publishing.

Thank you again to Glen Phillips, our Patron, for always cheering us on, and representing us in the wider writing community.

Thank you to our Donors & Sponsors for 2020/2021

Tabetha Rogers Beggs (Little Black Dress Productions), Flora Smith on behalf of Annette Cameron, Karen Treanor, Shire of Mundaring, Lotterywest, WA Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries, National Library of Australia, Patrick Bertola (Lion Mill Winery) and Dr Bill Leadbetter.

Special Mention

KSP Alumni Nathan Hobby's new book 'The Red Witch: A biography of Katharine Susannah Prichard' will be published in May 2022 and is available for pre-order now from The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Publishing. Well done Nathan, we can't wait to add this to our library.

The biggest thank you goes to our KSP community, our members. You are the heart of KSP.

Every one of you is inspiring for following your writing dreams. Thank you for sharing the journey with us.