



ROMANCE
WRITERS
of Australia

Romance Writers of Australia (Inc) Annual Report 2017/18

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Our vision is a world where Australian romance writers are well supported, highly respected and professionally successful.

Our mission is to support, promote and educate Australian romance writers.

Romance Writers of Australia: the heart of Australian romance

Romance Writers of Australia (Inc.) supports and develops writers of the world's most popular genre. RWA provides programs that target all stages of a writer's career – before, during and after publication – and promotes excellence in romantic fiction. RWA's strong community of members ensures writers can grow their careers in a nurturing and professional environment. So come join a professional, supportive writers' organisation where everyone loves romance as much as you do.

Objectives

- Promoting excellence in romantic fiction
- Helping writers become published and maintain strong careers
- Providing continuing support and development

Values

- Excellent Service: providing the best experience for members and associates
- Respect and Community: valuing and supporting each other and the genres we write
- Innovation and Creativity: fostering and implementing ideas to improve our services, programs and experiences for members
- Learning and Knowledge: building knowledge of writing craft, business practices and industry to better serve members
- Integrity and Ethical Practice: strong corporate governance, transparency, effective communication and honesty

Strategies

- Provide dynamic and responsive services that benefit romance writers in all stages of their careers.
- Ensure the highest standard of customer service while balancing the workloads of our volunteer workforce.
- Deliver valuable knowledge and networking through events, services and products.
- Promote the romance genre to media and the public.
- Develop a financially sustainable business model for ensuring the organisation's long term viability and growth.

Measures

- Our membership grows (3% annually with a 70% retention rate).
- Our organisation is financially stable and profitable.
- Our members consider their membership good value for money and integral to their career success.

Romance Writers of Australia (Inc.)
PO Box Q740
Queen Victoria Building NSW 2193

Website: www.romanceaustralia.com
Email: admin@romanceaustralia.com

2017/18 Committee

Executive

President – Claire Boston

Vice-Presidents– Lana Pecherczyk and Victoria Purman

Treasurer – Shelley Findlater

Secretary – Penelope Janu (until June 2018)

– Renee Geelen (from June 2018)

Ordinary Members

Events – Bronwyn Stuart

Professional Development

– Jillian Jones (August-October 2017)

– Pauline Johnston (from October 2017)

Social Media – Louisa West

Public Relations/Media – Laura Greaves

Website – Lana Pecherczyk

Sponsorship – Victoria Purman

Volunteers – Michelle Diener

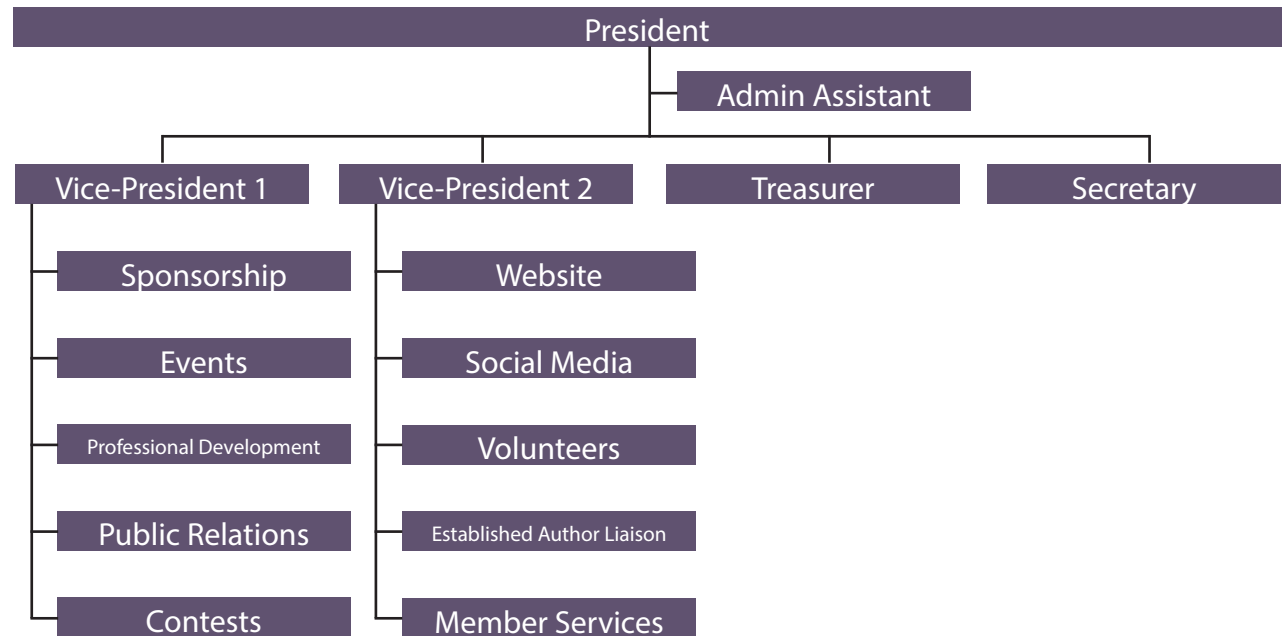
Established Author Liaison - Michelle Diener

Member Services – Shelagh Merlin

Contests – Claire Boston

Organisational Structure

This is the make-up of the committee for 2017/18.





Executive Summary – President's Report

Romance Writers of Australia continues to provide its members with opportunities, support and professional development, although membership is down from last year.

This year saw the employment of a new Administration Assistant, Lucy Watts, after Shannon Stein resigned. RWA would like to thank Shannon for her work over the past few years. Lucy has been a valued addition to the organisation and implemented a new registration system for the conference this year. This will be reviewed and the process streamlined further in the coming years.

RWA also hired a book-keeper to do the day-to-day financial bookkeeping. Michelle Timperley from First Class Accounts has streamlined our processes and provides monthly reports for the committee to review. She also reviewed the conference budget and updated it.

RWA set up a debit card in order to make online transactions and pay for monthly software subscriptions. The process still requires two signatories to approve the transfer of money to the debit card account before a transaction is made, but avoids committee members having to use their personal accounts and make monthly expense claims.

We awarded \$2000 in group grants this year, with the money going towards speaker fees, and an intensive writing retreat.

The contest portfolio saw the change of the Selling Synopsis contest to the Selling Submission contest and after a number of complaints about the Ruby changes made in 2017, the committee ran another survey. Those changes will be implemented in the 2019/2020 contest seasons.

RWA welcomed on board some new sponsors in Draft2Digital, Kobo, IngramSpark and Bolinda, as well as retaining the support of Harlequin Australia, Penguin

Random House and Hachette.

This year saw a lift in media engagement with requests being received for authors fitting certain criteria. Of particular interest were male romance writers and the #cockygate saga.

Conference hotel contracts are often signed two years in advance, and the Sydney contract had been signed with the expected delegate number of 400. Unfortunately registrations this year were significantly down and after discussions with the hotel, the president was able to renegotiate the contract saving almost \$30,000. Negotiations for the 2020 conference have been with a view to decrease the day delegate rate as much as possible, by replacing the large buffet lunch with a more simple wrap and sandwich package. The committee is also renegotiating the 2019 Melbourne contract to make similar savings which can then be passed on to the members.

Our online groups, in particular the Established loop, have been asking for a different platform than Yahoo Groups. The committee is reviewing all our online communications and Deb Tait is currently assessing options for us.

The Volunteer of the Month has been reinstated with committee members nominating volunteers. It is our way of showing our appreciation for all of our volunteers. In addition, the onboarding process has been streamlined and the membermouse database has been utilised to flag our volunteers.

The OWLs continue to be popular and the promotion via Facebook of the workshops has seen an increase in registrations.

Our Online Communications Manager, Louisa West has been instrumental in revitalising the RWA blog and ensuring there is regular fresh content for both members and potential members.

This year all of our committee are stepping down

and much work has been done to ensure procedural documentation has been updated and the handover process to the new committee is smooth. To support the process, our Secretary Penelope Janu stepped aside in June so the new Secretary Renee Geelen could get up to speed and both Lana Pecherczyk and Claire Boston began an early handover of the webmistress and contest portfolios respectively.

RWA would like to thank all the volunteers and RWA committee members who have helped throughout the year and look forward to a successful year to come.

Treasurer

RWA's operational costs during the 2017/18 financial year resulted in a net profit of \$20,589.03. Our net assets currently sit at \$166,544.87. For further detail please see the financial report.

Income and Expenses

Our main sources of revenue continue to be memberships, contests, OWLs and interest earned. Our main expenditure include wages and superannuation, honorariums and consulting with a bookkeeper hired this year.

Group Grants Scheme

There was a delay in administering the 2018 Group Grants scheme due to organisational challenges, but it was concluded (and applicants were notified) by June 30.

This year, three applicants requested a total of \$3500, however the amount available was only \$2000 (reduced from previous years).

The panel were pleased to note that the applications included a range of Aspiring, Emerging and Established writers and that the applications were well-considered and well-written.

A total of \$2000 was awarded being:

- \$1000 (partial funding) to Writers not Waiters a small group from the Sunshine Coast who are self-educating ahead of a planned self-publishing venture. The grant will contribute towards their speaker's fee.
- \$500 (full funding) to Turramurra Critique Group. This small group of credentialled members and past volunteers will be undertaking an intensive writing retreat. The grant will contribute to accommodation costs.
- \$500 (partial funding) to Melbourne Romance Writers Guild towards speaker's fee for a workshop planned for twelve members.

Applications for 2019 group grants will open in February.

Claire Boston
RWA President 2017/18

Historical Membership

2009	723
2010	718
2011	732
2012	838
2013	897
2014	970
2015	992
2016	947
2017	904
2018	748

Highlights 2016/17

- Hiring a bookkeeper to do the day-to-day financial bookkeeping for RWA
- Discount code for members to IngramSpark
- Improved engagement in the RWA blog

Memberships

Membership as at 30 June 2018: 748

Membership has dropped since last year, but is a constantly fluctuating number month-to-month.

Total Membership: 748

Ordinary Members: 737

Honorary Members: 11



Portfolio Reports

Contests

Coordinator: Nicole Lenoir-Jourdan & Claire Boston

Contest entries have been low this year in comparison to the last two years, however this seems to be the trend. We have a couple of years of high numbers and then they will drop for a couple of years. This could be due to entrants being successful in publishing and are no longer eligible to enter, or could be a reflection on the economic times. We also didn't extend many of the opening periods this year for extra entries.

Many of the contest coordinators were new this year and did a great job running the contests. Lis Hoorweg, who has run the Little Gems for the past nine years, is stepping down next year and the committee thanks her for her passion and volunteer time. She has made Little Gems into the excellent contest that it is.

This year we had a change to the Selling Synopsis contest, changing it to the Selling Submission contest and including the requirement to write a blurb and cover letter as well. Entries dropped slightly and this continues to be our least popular unpublished contest, so we will need to review the numbers next year to decide whether to replace it with a different kind of contest.

We replaced all scoresheets with online scoresheets which worked well but will need to investigate allowing judges to put in half scores to avoid having so many tied scores.

Our most popular contest this year was the Little Gems with 67 entries, followed by the Valerie Parv at 55. The Romantic Book of the Year (Ruby) remained about the

same number of entries as last year at 161.

Both short story anthologies received good numbers with the Spicy Bites increasing from last year. The stories are a wonderful representation of the sub-genres our members write and both anthologies are a great read. We continued the RWA branded covers, with Lana Pecherczyk designing both covers for us.

We had a number of members complain again about the changes made to the Romantic Book of the Year last year. Many had not participated in the contest survey held in July 2017 and wanted the chance to have a say now. The committee asked Keri Arthur to compile a list

of names and feedback, and on receiving 78 names, we ran another contest survey, specifically related to the Ruby changes. This received 222 responses which accounted for about 30% of members. As a result of the feedback the decision was made to only use writer judges if there were not enough reader judges, to discontinue the overall Ruby trophy next year, and to switch the Ruby categories from length to sub-genre next year. This will be a trial to ensure the numbers support the change.

We continue to investigate ways in which to improve the contest experience for our members.



Sponsorship

Coordinator: Victoria Purman

RWA's Sponsorship Coordinator and a vice President of RWA, Victoria Purman, has continued her work throughout the year with a particular focus on organising sponsorships for the Sydney conference.

RWA has long-term and continuing relationships with some of Australia's biggest publishers.

We are delighted to once again welcome Harlequin Australia as our Major Partner for Conference 2018 and we thank them for their long-term and on-going support of romance writing and writers in Australia.

Similarly, we welcome back Penguin Random House as a Conference Partner and welcome, for the first time, Draft2Digital as a Partner.

Our Sponsor Supporters include Hachette, Bolinda, IngramSpark and Kobo.

We thank all our sponsors for their support.

Victoria is standing down from committee after three years and Bronwyn Stuart will be taking up the sponsorship role.

Major Partner



Partners



Penguin
Random House
Australia

Partners



Supporters



Official Bookseller



Media

Coordinator: Laura Greaves

RWA's public profile has continued to grow at an impressive rate during the 2017-18 committee year. The Sunrise live broadcast from the 2017 Brisbane conference appears to have made several leading media outlets sit up and take notice of our organisation.

RWA now has some significant media relationships via this portfolio, including Booktopia, the Australian Writers Centre and Sunrise, which will hopefully continue to be fruitful going forward. As in 2017, Booktopia announced the 2018 RUBY finalists on its popular blog, and will also publish an interview with the winner.

In the past year interviews have been facilitated with members on national TV (Weekend Sunrise) and in mainstream print publications (ELLE and Australian Women's Weekly magazines). In addition, the producer of a forthcoming reality TV show was connected with one of our members. Our President was interviewed on ABC's Radio National about the 'Cockygate' saga.

The more entrenched RWA becomes in the media consciousness, the easier it will be to leverage our growing profile into ongoing media/promotional opportunities. Our media strategy to date has been very proactive; we've created our own media opportunities, which has in turn begun to allow us to take a more reactive approach – in short, the more we put ourselves 'out there', the more frequently media outlets will seek us out.

ROMA

The ROMA is RWA's annual award for reportage of romance and/or romance themes in the Australian media. To be considered, an entry needs to be published in Australian media by an Australian journalist about romance publishing/industry in Australia.

In 2017/18, there were nine member-submitted entries in the ROMA across online, print and broadcast mediums. The vast majority were from the 'online' category which may simply be the preferred method for entry by those nominating or it may be indicative of a trend away from mainstream media in favour of the comparatively cost-less online context. This year we had our first internationally available podcast (distributed via iTunes). Once again, this year there was no television reportage nominated for a ROMA and only a single broadcast piece; but this may reflect the fact that traditional broadcast media in Australia fully expended their (limited) interest in romance in heavy coverage of the Prince Harry/Meagan Markle nuptials.

The ROMA judging panel disallowed one entry – it was published online in The Conversation (AU) but was a syndicated piece by a US journalist about the US marketplace. Therefore, eight pieces were formally assessed by the panel – this means valid entries were 1/3 down on the previous year. A three-way tie for runner up meant four finalists in total.

Significant RWA events (annual conference, major awards) continue to trigger state-level coverage of a reasonable quality and the inclusion of 'breaking new ground' as a kind of reach means that we can acknowledge romance topics which access new audience even if the circulation is not as high as traditional mediums. A single piece on male romance writers triggered several follow-on pieces on the same theme (though not all were nominated), showing that the media are still hungry for new angles.

The challenge for RWA going forward is to find and promote those topics and themes to engage the media and inspire exploration.

Hearts Talk

The official journal of Romance Writers of Australia

Edition #301 | June 2018

ROMANCE WRITERS of Australia

Geelong author **Alli Sinclair** is among those blazing a trail to ensure women's voices are being highlighted in history. Here she discusses why it's so important...

When I was a kid in high school, one of my favourite subjects was history. I loved learning about ancient civilisations and people who had changed the world. So it was no surprise that when I started writing stories, I delved into different time periods and cultures for inspiration. What I didn't realise in high school was that most historical figures we studied were men. We learnt history from a male perspective, the effect men had on the world, the wars they fought. Rarely did we learn women's history, or see it from the viewpoint of a woman. Even until early last century, most women had little voice.

For example, women weren't allowed to vote or work in politics, weren't allowed to make decisions about their own body, couldn't marry who they wanted or own property. Sadly, this is still the case in some parts of the world but, like throughout history, there are people working quietly, and sometimes secretly, creating networks, gaining strength and finding ways to change destiny. As a teenager, I took it upon myself to seek out historical fiction written from a woman's viewpoint, and at the time, it was difficult to find. That was, ahem, 30-plus years ago, and I'm happy to say that historical fiction about women is a lot easier

to discover these days. All you need to do is look online or in bookstores and you'll find a plethora of stories about everyday women from an array of time periods, enduring all manner of challenges and finding strength to forge ahead and make a better life for themselves and others. And our own RWA boasts a very impressive selection of members who write historical fiction about women.

I often get asked why historical fiction is so important and why it's vital that we read from a woman's perspective. Humans are wired to

Continued on page 4...

Events

Coordinator: Bronwyn Stuart

This year the committee delegated the task of coordinating our conferences to a specific portfolio on committee. Bronwyn Stuart took on this role, working closely with the local state-based conference teams. RWA has been very conscious of the load on the state-based conference teams and was trying to spread the workload and implement some changes to have better continuity, as often three conferences are being organised at once.

The registration process has been taken over by our administration assistant, Lucy Watts who is doing an excellent job.

Annual Conference

Brisbane Conference – Love Gone Wild 2017

The Brisbane conference was held at the Pullman King George Square from 11-13th August 2017. Our guest speakers included Kate Forsyth and Anne Gracie and our keynote speaker was Marion Lennox. International agents and editors included Waxman Leavell Literary Agency, Harlequin, William Morrow/ Avon, Penguin, Hachette, Tule Publishing and Entangled Publishing. New items included a business hub with businesses like Google, Draft2Digital and Bolinda as well as paid manuscript assessments. The assessments worked quite well and generated revenue



Sydney Conference 2018

Emily Madden is the conference coordinator for the Sydney 2018 conference which will be held at the Sofitel Wentworth 17-19th August. Bronwyn Stuart sourced speakers and guests and with the help of the executive committee and Emily, a program was created and registrations opened using a new platform - Grenadine. Special guests include Moe Ferrara from Bookends Literary Agency, Kathleen Schiebling from Harlequin and internationally renowned screenwriter Ross Greyson Bell. Our own Rachel Bailey will be presenting one of the two Friday workshops. Publishers include Harlequin, Escape Publishing, Penguin, Hachette and Tule Publishing. Business Hub participants include Draft2Digital, IngramSpark, Kobo, iBooks and Bolinda.

Registrations have been down this year and the committee will be surveying membership in November as a part of a wider feedback and consultation process to try to ascertain why people did not attend.



Melbourne Conference 2019

Dianne Inglis is the conference coordinator for the Melbourne 2019 conference being held 9-11 August 2019. An international agent and Friday workshop speaker has been sourced and will be announced at the Sydney conference. The committee are looking into simpler food and beverage packages in order to reduce the day delegate rate and therefore the conference fee.

As of August 2018, Bronwyn will be stepping out of the conference manager position and into sponsorships.



Member Services

Coordinator: Shelagh Merlin

Member Services has been very active this year with strong participation in each of the three author loops, and a steady build of information about affiliate groups.

Shelagh has been active in removing inactive members of some of the groups within RWA, most notably the RWA Facebook Community Group and the RomAus Yahoo Loop while our loop coordinators have conducted similar culls. Ideally these exercises will take place quarterly in the future to ensure that only those people who have paid for RWA membership will have the benefit of information shared within those loops and groups.

Shelagh has also worked with RWA administration assistant Lucy Watts to ensure the currency of information about RWA affiliate groups which is shared on the RWA website.

Grants

Shelagh applied for two grants in the past twelve months, one from the Australia Council and the second from the City of Sydney. Unfortunately neither was successful.

Aspiring Author Loop

This loop has had another active year with strong participation from both existing and new members, ably encouraged by our two wonderful loop ambassadors Danielle Line and Emily Barlow. In addition to providing a welcoming environment in which members can discuss issues, help and encourage each other and learn, the loop coordinators have continued an excellent program of activities to nurture members including monthly author Q&A sessions and the bi-monthly BIAW (Book In A Week) challenges which encourage members to set a writing target for the week and then work towards achieving that target.

Emerging Author Loop

This loop is the quietest of the three, but member discussion is constant and varies across a range of topics. Members are happy to provide assistance and advice to others when needed.

Established Author Loop

Rachael Johns stepped down from the loop coordinator role early in 2018 after several years in the role. She was replaced by Annie Seaton, who only held the position for a short time but who was both dedicated and active in the role. Pamela Eldridge has recently taken over and is doing an excellent job. Discussion in this loop fluctuates but when an issue arises which is of interest to or affects members of the loop there is significant contribution. Members are also clearly keen to investigate a change in the platform on which they meet. There have been issues with Yahoo through the year and this has hampered some members from contributing at times.

Critique Partner Scheme

Joanne Dannon stepped down from the critique partner matching role in March this year and has been replaced by Madeline McCreanor. Bec Sampson, the other half of this team, handles applications to join the scheme and has been active in this role for more than ten years. While there are a number of critique partners listed on the Critique Partners database, the scheme has been very quiet over the past six months and the next RWA committee should consider its role in the current environment.

Independent Writer Scheme

Nas Dean has been coordinating the IWS for years and has done an excellent job in this role. Having said that, IWS has been virtually inactive over the past twelve

months and the next RWA committee should consider its role in the current environment.

Group Liaison

Rowena Candlish took over coordination of group liaison in 2017 and has been steadily working to build a current list of RWA affiliate groups including a list of their members. This enables RWA to ensure that each affiliate group has a sufficient percentage of active RWA members to enable them to continue with their RWA affiliate status. Rowena also manages Lonely Hearts in which role she attempts to find writer groups for members around the country to join

Volunteers

Coordinators: Michelle Diener

This last year has seen the volunteers form go fully online, and it has meant much less data input from the volunteers coordinator.

The volunteers coordinator also revived the Volunteer of the Month programme, where portfolio holders on the committee were able to celebrate and thank the volunteers who work with them. It has been a great way to show RWA's appreciation for our volunteers.



Web Services

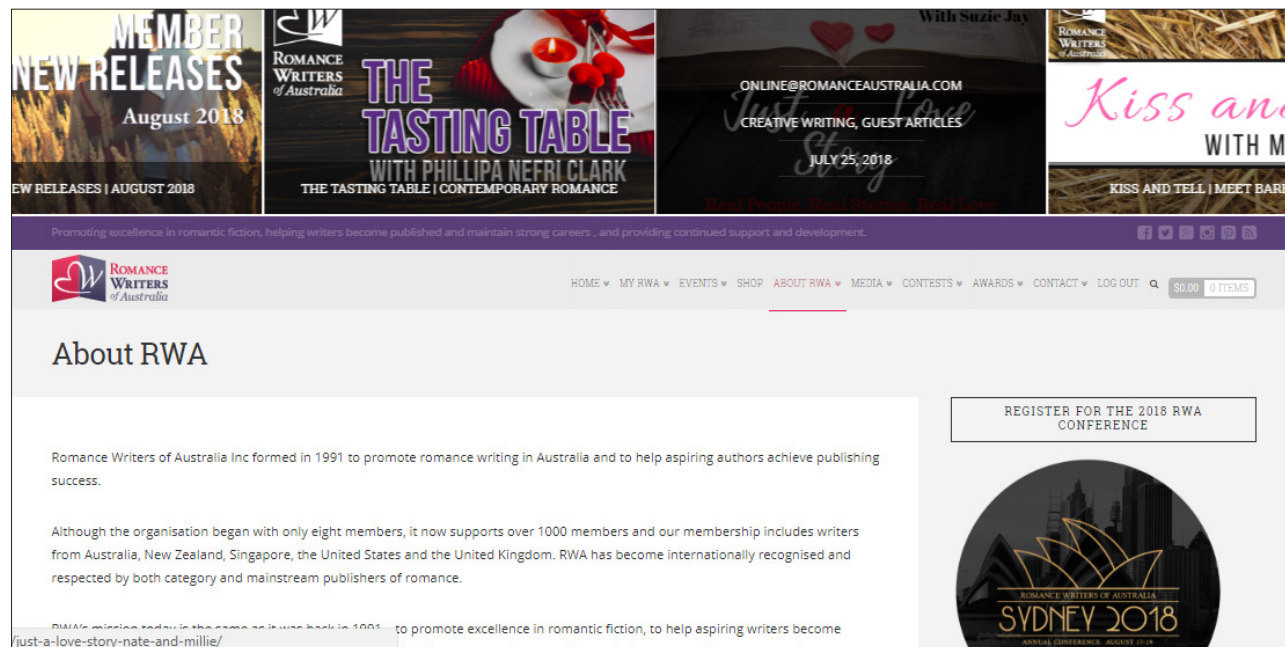
Coordinator: Lana Pecherczyk

Over the past year, Lana has maintained the Wordpress website with her helper, Bree Vrendenburgh, who will now be taking over the role of webmistress. The membermouse system has continued to manage our members, but there are still many obstacles that unfortunately mean if we want more features, we will have to pay for it.

We investigated integrating a forum to our website as there has been a lot of discussion about RWA groups all round. The best solution would be to have a native forum to our website that can automatically manage members based on current membership status, making this easy on the volunteers. Our current system has this capability, but the down side is that you will have to log in on the website, and it seems people only do this when they absolutely have to. Further discussions and polling of the membership will happen during the year.

Traffic to our website is going strong, and our automatic mailing list for our blog content is now at 239 subscribers.

The Google Suite has been extremely helpful, and after Claire secured non-profit status for us, we receive free hosting and server space to upload all of our official documents on the cloud. This means that every time a committee swaps over, the previous years' documents are easily accessible, and nobody needs to reinvent the wheel.



Despite membership being down, the web traffic has remained steady since the start of the year, averaging at about 6-7,000 hits a month. This is largely attributed to the awesome blog series and member contribution articles being regularly posted there.

Despite Mailchimp doing well, our membermouse system doesn't quite integrate as well as we'd hoped and there is still a monthly maintenance needed to be done.

The ecommerce function on the website has been working well, and we've integrated a new payment

function called Stripe, which is a secure system that allows us to take credit card payments on site.

We now add a monthly boost post feature to all OWL workshops, which increases the visibility of the OWL one week before the cut off date. For \$10, we get our post in front of 700 more people who like our page. Usually this results in 40-50 engagements, and more ticket sales.

Though it is Lana's last year as webmistress, she will be continuing on as the Heart's Talk designer.

Social Media

Coordinator: Louisa West

RWA Blog

The RWA Blog is the primary source of RWA news. At the beginning of the year, content was limited to official announcements, contest announcements, member new releases, and the occasional feature post.

A new contribution system was set up, with members being offered the opportunity to volunteer to write monthly feature articles on an ongoing basis for the blog. These articles extend the blog's monthly content, with the schedule currently including:

- Member new releases
- Volunteer of the Month
- Confessions of a Romance Writer
- Upcoming Famous and Fabulous Romance Writers
- Cover Crush
- Simply Writing
- Tips from an Industry Insider
- Kiss and Tell
- Just a Love Story
- The Tasting Table

All articles are pushed out to the RWA Official Facebook page, with authors tagged and sharing encouraged.

Blog statistics

Since July 2017, we have:

- Engaged 17 new member volunteers to provide quality blog content
- Published 107 posts
- Received 1489 hits on the RWA blog main page

Facebook

The RWA Official Facebook page is our primary social media channel at this stage. It is our platform for sharing blog posts to our social followers, and also where we provide members with other opportunities to highlight themselves to a wider community and potential readers.

Facebook statistics

Since July 2017, we have:

- Increased the page likes by 367 new fans
- Increased engagement with the page by 68% per month on average
- Promoted 43 members through #RWAMemberMonday

Twitter

The RWA Twitter account had been reposting information already available on the Blog and Facebook channels. It is envisioned that this will be the next channel to receive clear focus going forward.

Other social media channels

The RWA Pinterest and YouTube have been static in the past year, as focus has been on the Blog and Facebook channels. It is envisioned that these channels will receive a branding and content refresh in the coming year. The RWA Instagram account was managed as part of the Media portfolio and has been a fresh and fun way to see what's going on across the organisation.

Looking ahead

An online communications review should be undertaken in the upcoming year. This will provide guidelines for all aspects of RWA's digital channels and clear pathways for continuing to build engagement with members and the wider community

<p><i>Just a Love Story</i> Real People, Real Stories, Real Love</p>	<p>Just A Love Story – Nate and Millie In Creative Writing, Guest Articles by online@romanceaustralia.com / July 25, 2018 / 8 Comments</p> <p>Nate strolled around the shopping centre like he'd done a hundred times. When you're a teenager living in the suburbs there wasn't much to do. Without breaking the law of course.</p>
<p><i>Kiss and tell</i> WITH MAYA LINNELL</p>	<p>Kiss and Tell Meet Barbara Hannay In Guest Articles, Interview by online@romanceaustralia.com / July 21, 2018 / 2 Comments</p> <p>You know the landscape must be spectacular when a writer has to leave the best views to ensure productivity! And fortunately for readers, this is the sacrifice that Barbara Hannay is willing to make. Situating her office so she can't be distracted by her sprawling hinterland north Queensland.</p>
<p>ROMANCE WRITERS OF AUSTRALIA VALERIE PARV FINALISTS 2018</p>	<p>Valerie Parv Finalists 2018 In Contests by online@romanceaustralia.com / July 20, 2018 / 1 Comment</p> <p>AJ Blythe Jillian Jones Paquita Fadden Ree Andersson Sara Hartley</p>



Professional Development

Coordinator: Pauline Johnston

Pauline Johnston took on the Professional Development Portfolio in October 2017 following the resignation of Jillian Jones. Pauline was also the Coordinator of the RWA OWL Program 2018 and Libby Iriks will take over the role for 2019.

OWL PROGRAM

Over the past few years this program has gone from strength to strength. Overall it receives very positive feedback. This is due to the skill, expertise and professional delivery of materials from our presenters. The back-of-house team is effective and efficient and a large part of the current and ongoing success of the program.

Following the resignation of Nas Dean earlier in 2018, Tania Lee has done an amazing job as sole Registrar for the OWL program. She is ably assisted by Linda Apps as the RWA Moderator, however the team advises that another volunteer to assist with registration would be appreciated. Jo Brierley resigned in June as our Promotions/Social Media coordinator. Jillian Jones has stepped into the role. This is a bonus for the team as Jillian previously held the role.

Lucy Watts (RWA Administrator) assists and liaises with the Treasurer regarding payments to presenters and the TryBooking system. In 2017 TryBooking was implemented as the preferred option over PayPal. RWA Treasurer and Bookkeeper are responsible for payments to presenters and receipt of registration payments.

This calendar year there are a total of thirty (30) workshops offered (18 presenters) via the Moodle On-Line Learning Program. This is almost twice the number of workshops offered in the previous year.

A draft schedule was distributed to Committee members for discussion and ratified at the November 2017 meeting. In 2017, a decision was taken by

Committee to increase the cost of the OWL Program in 2018. \$55 (members), \$88 (non-members). Members were informed of the price increase via the December 2017 Hearts Talk.

Registrations for the OWL Program have declined in 2018. This may be due to several reasons:

- Repeat workshops – members may have previously participated in the OWL;
- The increased cost of the OWL Program;
- Members judiciously deciding to spend their money on external workshops and/or saving for the annual RWA Conference.

It is hard to pinpoint a definitive reason. Although feedback is sought from participants, the OWL team receives very little feedback. What little there is reflects positively on the program.

Expression of Interest (EOI) 2018

A decision was taken in 2017 to call for EOIs for 2018. The intent was to solicit alternative ways for offering on-line education to members. Modalities suggested were: on-demand, podcasts, shorter duration, e.g. one-day workshops. We received five (5) EOIs.

Presenters suggested they could offer one (1) day workshops, weekend workshops or on-demand options. This option could be further explored and considered in the future. All options could be conducted on the Moodle Platform or on-demand via the RWA website 'shop'. In addition, Samantha Bond and Rob Grindstaff suggested that courses they offer in their "Writing Gym" could be offered in a variety of ways with a range of cost to members.

OWLS on Demand

An on-demand course is a onetime purchase for an

instant downloadable course and users will learn at their own pace with zero interaction with the presenter. The intention is that these courses will provide passive income for presenter and RWA.

Cost to members and income to RWA

It is suggested that a discussion takes place regarding the price structure of the RWA OWLs to determine whether the current presenter/RWA split is the most appropriate for the current OWL program and any alternative modes of delivery.

RWA Retreat Program

Originally Jay Hicks organised a team to look at the possibilities of RWA Retreats. Due to the focus on the OWL Program there has not been the opportunity to do much work on this program.

Focus for 2018/19

In addition to our ongoing responsibilities for the portfolio we will be investigating and developing the following areas for the next 12 months:

- A review of online communications including online groups
- Member Survey in November
- Reviewing the contest entry and scoresheet system
- Investigate new opportunities for grants
- Review conference planning and programming
- Consider the ability of RWA to run retreats or roadshows
- Review OWL program's structure and ways of sourcing new presenters
- Member retention



Volunteers

Thank you to all volunteers, contest managers, judges and more who helped RWA so much in 2017/18.

Committee

Victoria Purman, Lana Pecherczyk, Shelley Findlater, Penelope Janu, Renee Geelen, Bronwyn Stuart, Shelagh Merlin, Louisa West, Laura Greaves, Jillian Jones, Pauline Johnson, Michelle Diener, Claire Boston

Contest Team Members

Lis Hoorweg, Michelle de Bruyn, Sue Dowsett, Fiona Marsden, Heather Garside, Tracey Rosen, Karina Coldrick, Sarma Burdeu, Jayne Kingsley, Nicole Lenoir-Jourdan, Nikki Logan Claire Boston, Beverley Eikli

Contest Judges

Aislinn Kearns, Anna Cowan, Brooke Dell-Sewell, Catherine EVANS, Cherelle Murphy, Cherrie Forrest, Coleen Yan, Deanna Lang, Denise Rossetti, Emma Dobinson, Enisa Hasic, Heather Kopp, Helen Moore, Helen West, Jack Bridges, Janette Whitehead, Janice Bridges, Janice Gallen, Jennifer Ensor, Jenny Addicoat, Karlene (Karly) Blakemore-Mowle, Kathleen Curtis, Kerrie Starbuck, Kerry Stapleton, Kristin Meagher, Leanne Francis, Leisl Leighton, Lis Hoorweg, Lisa Chaplin, Lisa Stanbridge, Madeline McCreanor, Margaret Penhall-Jones, Marian Chivers, Melanie Page, Melissa Haack, Michelle Conder, Pam Collings, Pauline Fluerty, Renee Geelen, Rosemary Foy-Brown, Rowena Candlish, Sandra O'Grady, Sarma Burdeu, Sasha Cottman, Shannon McCarthy, Shelley Findlater, Shona Husk, Suzanne Cass, Terry Keeling, Virginia Suckling, Virginia

Taylor, Wendy Leslie

Events Team Members

Brisbane Conference

Kendall Tabot, Tina Marie Clark, Tania Joyce, Bronwyn Stuart, Sylvia Marson, Sue Ellen Pashley

Sydney Conference

Emily Madden, Bronwyn Stuart, Pamela Cook, Joanne Boog, Lisa Ireland

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Pauline Johnston, Tania Lee, Nasreen Jahan, Josephine Brierly, Linda Apps, Kim Lambert Jay Hicks and Coleen Kwan.

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Web Team Volunteers

Bree Verity, Vicki Taylor