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# ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022

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# About Us

Romance Writers of Australia (RWA) was founded in 1991 to support and develop writers of the world's most popular fiction genre. For more than 30 years, RWA has provided programs that target writers in all stages of their career – before, during and after publication – as well as promoting excellence in romantic fiction. Currently we have a membership of almost 800 from across the Asia Pacific Region, however with our members' readerships and online networks, our reach extends worldwide.

RWA's vision is a world where romance writers are well supported, highly respected and professionally successful. We promote excellence in romantic fiction, help aspiring writers become published and published authors maintain and establish their careers. We foster a safe, equitable, inclusive and diverse community, and provide continuing support for romance writers—whatever their sub-genre—within the romance publishing industry.

The writing and publishing world has experienced unprecedented change in recent years. RWA is committed to adapting to change as we continue to evolve with our industry. Here at RWA we are constantly challenging old thinking and embracing new and exciting ways of operating. With the increased awareness of cultural appropriation, gender stereotypes, and an understanding of the need to hear stories in authentic voices, our organisation has met the challenges with a measured, consultative and thoughtful approach.

We are excited about the future of the romance writing and publishing industry

# RWA 2022 COMMITTEE

## PRESIDENT

TRACEY ROSEN



Tracey Rosen has been a connoisseur of words as far back as she can remember. She writes romance suspense, paranormal romance (with a lot of suspense), and fantasy romance (with some suspense). Joining RWA in 2016, she was rapidly enamoured of the wonderful range of opportunities offered. Commencing as a contest coordinator for the 2018 contest season, she joined the committee as the Contest Manager in 2018, moving into the Vice-President role in early 2019, before taking on the President role in January 2021. Tracey looks forward to continuing to develop the organisation to provide opportunities for all members to continue on their writing journey as well as raise the profile of the romance industry at large.

## VICE PRESIDENT

WENDY DAVIES



Wendy Davies, has been an RWA member since 2015 and writes romantic suspense stories under the name of Wendie Daniels. Wendy won the Emerald Award in 2017 and was part of the team that put the Melbourne 2019 Conference together and is a finalist in this year's Sapphire Award. Two of her short stories are published in the Spicy Bites and Sweat Treats anthologies. She was the development editor for the 2020 Spicy Bites anthology and the proof-reader for the 2021 Sweat Treats anthology.

## TREASURER

BRIDIE SMITH



Bridie Smith writes heart-warming small town and rural romance. She is a devoted fan of Harlequin/ Mills and Boon romance, especially her treasured Australian authors. Her background in business and finance allows her to give back to RWA, in the role of treasurer.

## SECRETARY / SPONSORSHIP MANAGER

JEM MCCUSKER



Jem McCusker is a Fantasy and Rural Romance author from Brisbane and RWA's current Secretary. In her term she hopes to bring not only an obsession with books and writing to her position, but also a drive for excellence and a focus on continually improving the way we can uplift and support writers in our industry. Jem is a big advocate for the work RWA does for the writing community and is thrilled to be part of the committee this year.

# RWA 2022 COMMITTEE

## CONTEST MANAGER

KRISTINE CHARLES



Kristine Charles has been a member of RWA since 2014, a committee member (responsible for contests) since September 2020 and she also currently wears the Ripping Start Contest Coordinator hat. Previously, Kristine has volunteered as Pitching Co-Coordinator at the 2019 Melbourne conference, as a guest introducer and newbie contact at the 2018 Sydney conference and as a newbie contact at the 2017 Brisbane Conference. She was the recipient of the Lynne Wilding Meritorious Service Award in 2020.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JULIE-ANNE CARTER



Julie-Anne Carter is a historical and contemporary romance writer originally from New Zealand and now based in Western Australia. She is the current Academy Portfolio Manager. In her professional life, she is involved with higher education so it is no surprise that she is keen to be involved in educational opportunities for our members. Julie-Anne looks forward to assisting you in learning about the craft of writing.

## MARKETING MANAGER

SOFIA AVES



USA Today Bestselling author Sofia Aves writes fast-paced police romances, sizzling military units, and steamy cowboys. She is a SAHM of three crazies in a returned veteran household. After eighteen years of planning, Sofia and her husband are completing their very own alpaca park this year. Sofia lives near Brisbane, Australia.

## MEMBER SERVICES

KAREN TURNER



Karen, a resident of Regional Victoria, has three novels commercially available along with a compilation of short stories. When not writing fiction, Karen writes for financial magazines, and freelances as a technical writer for the finance industry and other large corporations. She is currently working on her fourth novel, to be set in the Victorian goldfields. This is Karen's second year as Member Services Coordinator.

# RWA 2022 COMMITTEE

I.T SERVICES

KIM LAMBERT



Kim Lambert writes Regency Romance as Arietta Richmond (53 romances so far) and also writes paranormal and romantic suspense under other pen names. She spent thirty years working in IT, before giving the corporate world away to focus on writing, teaching courses, editing and cover design (all much more fun than working in corporate!). In 2019 she volunteered to take on the IT portfolio for RWA (3 websites, a full office apps suite, and 90 email addresses...), and has been managing it ever since.

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RWA's strength comes from its people. While we have our core committee, it is the countless volunteers that donate their time to ensure everything from our contests, our courses, our monthly magazine, portfolios and events run smoothly.

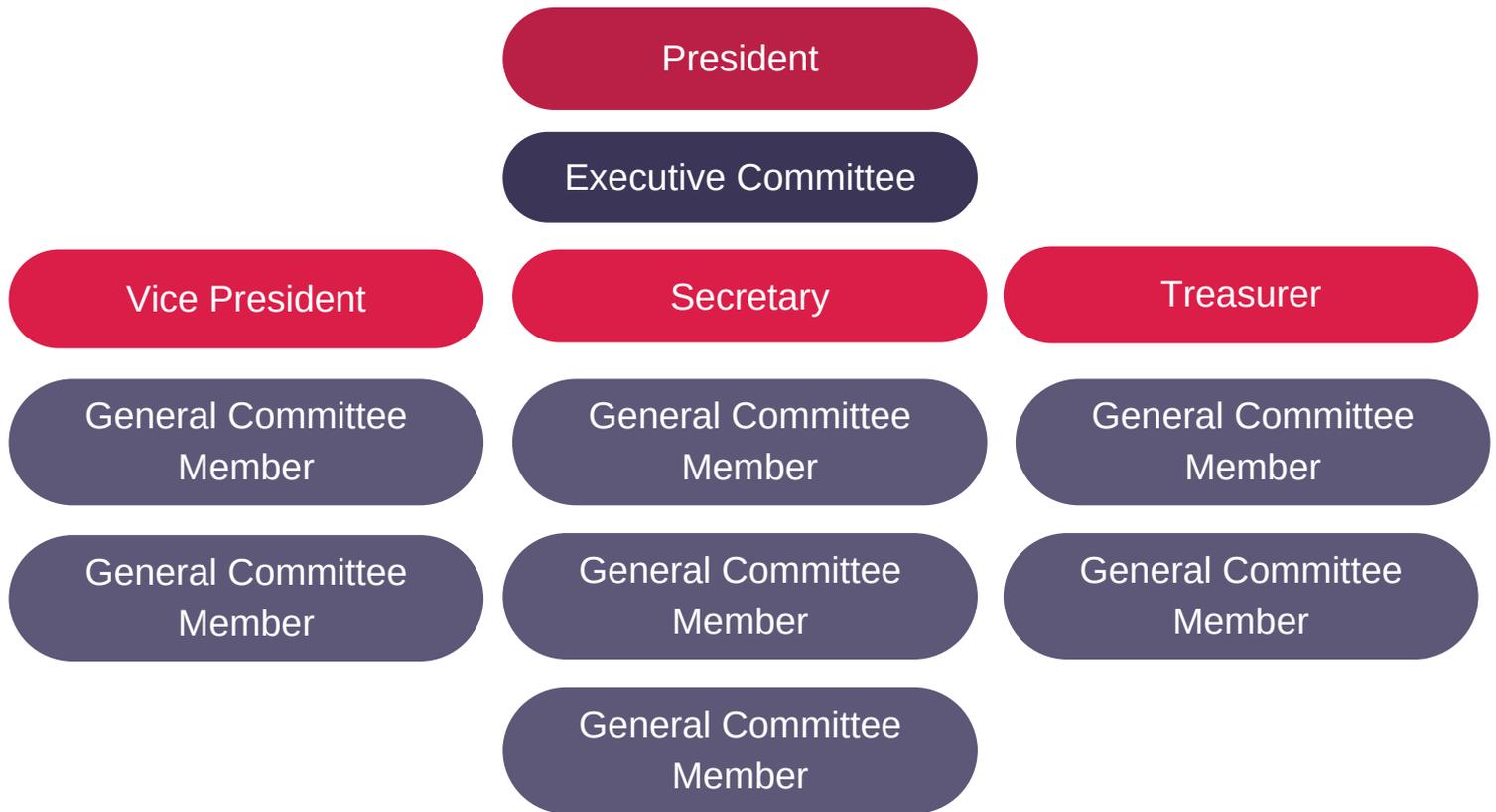
Since 2003 we have had a diverse committee spread across Australia from one side to the other. Several meetings a year are held via online teleconference, with two face-to-face meetings held in August, just after our National Conference, and in March.

Each new committee member brings with them a wealth of information from different fields of life and employment, which means that RWA is always changing and growing.

All of our committee members, and indeed everyone who is working with RWA, is a volunteer, apart from our Administrator, Donna. We are proud of our history of volunteer service, and we encourage our members to step forward to make their own mark on RWA.

# Our Organisation into 2023

## Committee Structure



## Portfolios

Portfolios may be managed by one or more General Committee Members





**ROMANCE**  
**WRITERS**  
*of Australia*

# Administrative Activities

In recognition of the importance of our members the following activities will be managed by paid administration staff.

Many of these areas have already been supported by Administration heavily over previous years.

## Member Services

General member enquiries  
New member liaison  
Membership support schemes  
Support of Group Ambassadors

## Promotions

Promotional designs and scheduling for all portfolios  
New member liaison  
Membership support schemes  
Support of Group Ambassadors

## Volunteer Coordination

Assist portfolios with recruitment  
Provide support and assistance to all volunteers

## Contests

Judge Coordination & Training  
Anthology Production

## IT

Assist with website updates  
Assist with members technical enquiries such as login and group access etc.

## General Admin

General Administration activities  
Contracts for all portfolios  
General assistance to Treasurer  
Maintenance of member lists  
Membership Mailouts

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past year has been one that has seen the continuation of change we have already witnessed throughout the world.

Within our romance writing community, it has seen development and enhancement that is exciting to see and I look forward to all the opportunities that will continue to develop into the next year.

After the last AGM we saw some changes to our committee.

We welcomed a new Secretary, Jem McCusker to our executive committee, who also took over the Sponsorship role throughout the year.

Sofia Aves took on the massive responsibility of our Marketing role, which has stood vacant for some time. Her experience within the Indie market has been invaluable in generating new ideas and helping our authors with their own promotions, especially with the 2022 Anthologies.

Sadly during the year, Tanya Kean who has been our Events manager for over three years and took us through all the intricacies of converting our physical conference to an online one in 2020 needed to step down for personal reasons. We cannot thank Tanya enough for her hard work and dedication to making our Conferences amazing over the years.

Sofia stepped into the coordination of the Conference when Tanya left and has done an excellent job coordinating both the 2022 team in Fremantle and also in establishing the team for the 2023 conference. It is never easy to step into someone else's shoes and Sofia has done an amazing job.

Other committee members who have continued from previous years have continued to give so much time and effort to RWA, and we thank Wendy Davies as Vice-President, Bridie Smith as Treasurer, Kristine Charles as Contests Manager, Kim Lambert as IT / Webmistress, Karen Turner as Member Services, and Julie-Anne Carter as Professional Development Manager. As always, we encourage new members to our committee to generate fresh ideas, as well as having members remain to provide knowledge and experience. Our committee is always open to new nominations, and we hope to have new members to join those remaining at this year's AGM.

I wish to personally thank those committee members who will not be remaining this year. Whether a committee member of many years or one, your dedication, professionalism, and service to our members is truly appreciated.

Membership has had a satisfying increase in the past year, and RWA has returned a healthy net profit for the year, and the full details can be found in the financials.

Last year's conference was delayed until December in the hopes that borders would be open to allow members to attend in person. Sadly this was not to be with the official border opening just the Monday after the conference. We were able to hold a successful conference with mostly Queensland attendees and a couple from some of the states that weren't so strict on their border policy. While it was nice to get to see everyone and the smaller number allowed everyone to mingle well, we do look forward to the 2022 conference when borders have again opened. We have a wonderful number of attendees registered and look forward to a weekend of fun, learning and finally catching up with friends, old and new.

We have done a full analysis of the engagement with our Contests, and you will see some changes to specific contests, as well as timing changes for some to allow for our judges to have better timing to read the submissions, and also particularly for the Anthologies to allow for the publication timeframe.

The revitalised RWA Academy continues to do well, with great uptake on all our courses. We are trialling a new platform to deliver our courses and look forward to a variety of new features that will make these better for participants, presenters, and the volunteers running the Academy.

The Diversity sub-committee continues to support our members with regular updates to the resources page on the website, as well many other ways that we can be inclusive and acknowledge the whole range of our membership.

We have had to revise our pricing for the first time in over five years, and both membership fees and contest fees will increase in the coming year. We have tried to be realistic and keep these changes to a minimum.

We have also restructured the organisational layout. The table on page 5 outlines how we will be allocating activities going forward, with a lot of areas that we felt were crucial to support members in a timely fashion now being managed by a paid administration team. We feel that this will provide members with prompt and accurate support, provide consistency across the organisation, and also relieve the load on volunteers.

In 2023 we will continue to develop strong and robust processes and support systems to carry the organisation into the future with surety and confidence. We trust that the health and wellbeing of our members continues and we can see even more in Sydney for our Conference, and we look forward to the skills and knowledge of new committee members complementing those that are remaining to continue to build and strengthen our organisation.

-Tracey Rosen  
President

# VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The role of Vice President is primarily to support the President, and the rest of the committee; helping to ensure that our organisation runs as smoothly as possible; making sure our volunteers are supported; and that our members have access to the best possible information about writing and publishing available.

I am very proud of being a part of the dynamic and innovative team that makes up the Committee. I am even more proud of how our members support, cheer on, and celebrate the joys – and commiserate the lows – of what writing romance stories entails.

## Achievements

Some of the things I've achieved over the last year include:

- Being a part of the decision that employed two administrative assistants to fill the vacancy that occurred when our current admin assistant left the organisation.
- Instigating and participating in – even hosting – a strategic planning event involving the executive to improve our structure and the way we do business.
- Assisting the Marketing Manager to take on the conference responsibilities when one of the Committee left. This involved rewriting the Conference Manual, sitting in on the current conference team meetings as well as the supporting and formulating next year's conference team. My role was primarily the back up and support for the Marketing Manager, as well as formulating ways to improve how we manager our conferences in the future.
- Taking over the responsibilities for running the Members Assistant Fund.
- Taking on mentoring our new administrative assistant/s, meeting weekly while they settle in and helping to ensure they were supported while settling into their role.

# Future Direction

## The Future

### CHAPTER ONE

I am looking forward to seeing the plans we've put in place to improve the structure of the committee and how we respond to members on a day-to-day basis come to fruition. To this end, some of the things I'll be heavily involved with will include:

- Ensuring that the professional events team we have engaged are fully briefed so they are ready and able to assist us with putting on a wonderful conference in Sydney.
- Highlighting and encouraging members to apply for the Members Assistant Fund so they can attend conference when this may have been otherwise impossible.
- Begin reviewing all our current procedures and documents, working with each individual portfolio manager to get our documentation into a better shape for those that follow.
- Continue supporting the President to do her role, and to continue supporting other members of the committee so they can continue to contribute without burning out or feeling overloaded.

It has been a privilege to undertake the role of Vice President over the past year. It's an absolute privilege to be embedded into the heart of the organisation. It's also been a privilege to help steer RWA's future direction, something that both excites me and gives me a great feeling of satisfaction.

- Wendy Davies

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT



Julie-Anne Carter has continued in the role as the Professional Development Portfolio Manager for 2022 and has been supported by the Academy Team as listed below.



## VOLUNTEERS

As with all volunteer run organisations, a lot of effort is required of a few to ensure opportunities for the masses. This has been the case within the Academy Team and as a result, this has resulted in a number of volunteer turnovers and adjustments made to improve role efficacy.

## The Academy Team



### Co-Ordinator/ Contracts



### Registrars

- Short
- One-on-One
- Self-Paced



### Moderators

- Short
- One-on-One
- Self-Paced



### Promotions



### PD Managers



### Financial

As we approach the mid-year mark, the Academy thanks Maryjane Sherwin and Courtney Nayda as they step away from their roles, for their contribution and assistance in volunteering in the RWA Academy area. I would also like to welcome Listya Elliot and Nas Dean to the Academy Team who have stepped into the registrar and contracts positions. I would also like to thank those who have continued to maintain their volunteer roles, as without your volunteering, the Academy would be unable to run. Continuing volunteers are: Shelley Findlater, Pam Sewell, Immy Mohrs and Bernice Greenham.

# Changes

To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often. - Winston Churchill

## 1

### **Changing course start dates to March rather than February**

This is due to the challenges involved with presenter communication leading up to and over the Christmas period. It also allows for greater flexibility in advertising in Hearts Talk.

## 2

### **Self-paced courses**

The addition of the Self-Paced courses has been well received. These courses are currently activated weekly, and this has caused a small element of concern as participants have expected automatic access.

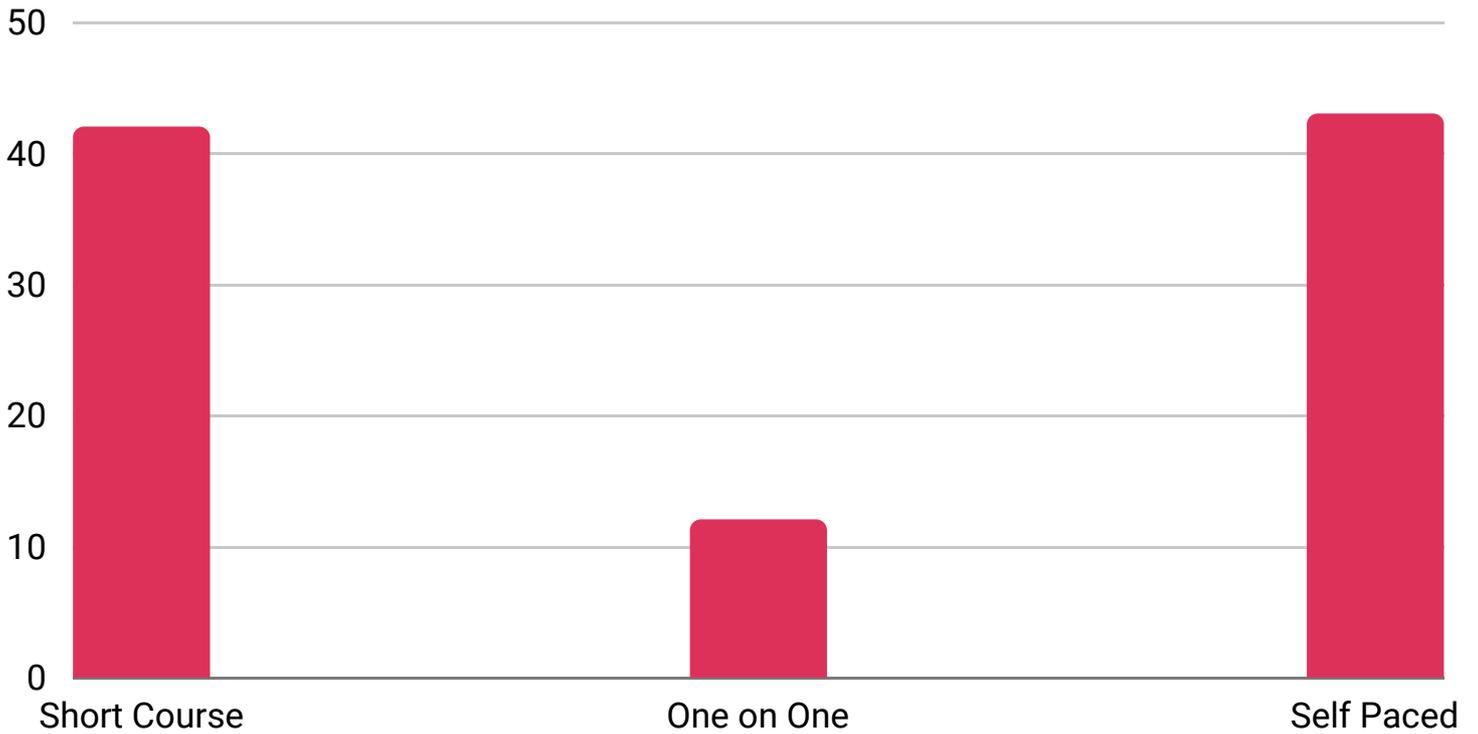
## 3

### **Course enrolment cut off dates**

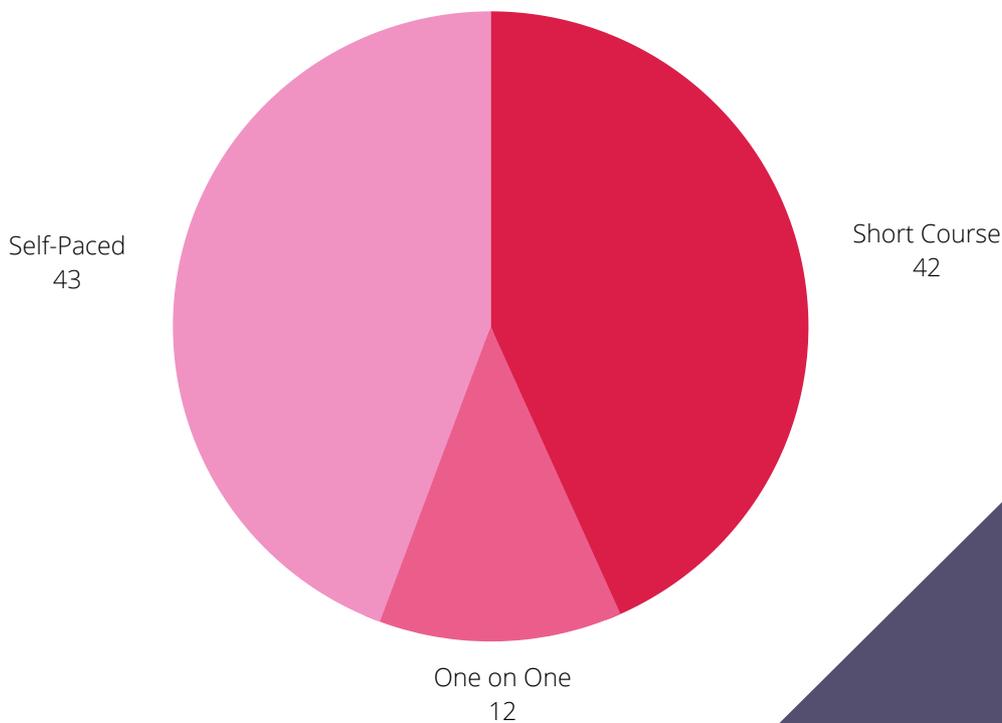
While it is appreciated that future participants may see a course advertised at the last minute and wish to enrol, with the necessary behind the scene enrolment work to be completed, it has been necessary to implement a five day enrolment closure to allow administration to be completed.

# Enrolments 21/22

## Summary



### Academy Course Breakdown



# SURVEY RESPONSES



## Short Courses

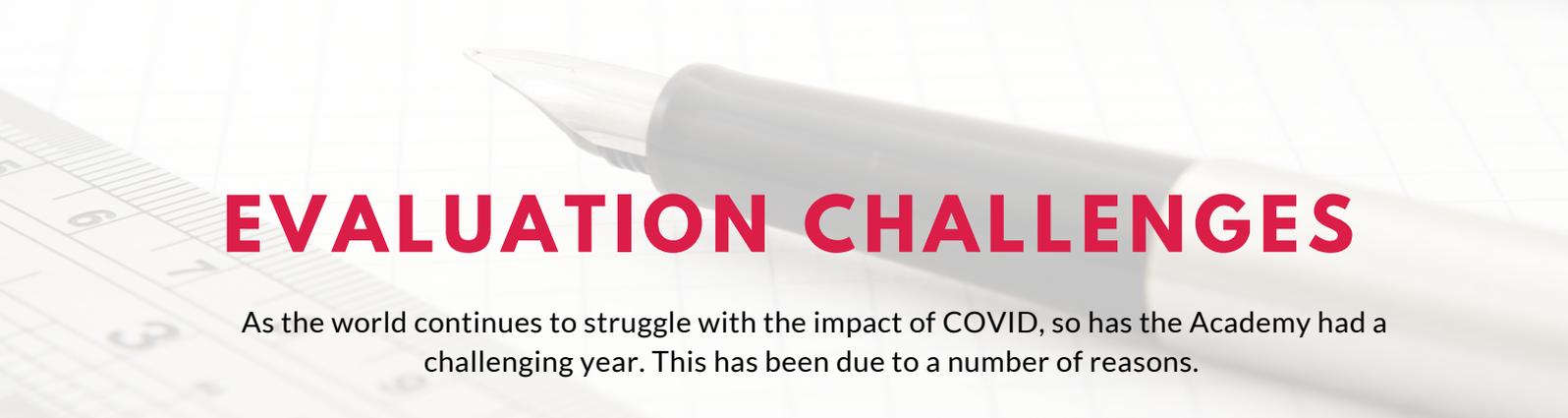
Current survey responses indicate a high level of satisfaction in all areas of the courses provided. The area of most concern was the ability to utilise and participate within the Moodle platform.

## One on One

Participants all rated the one on one courses with an extremely high satisfaction rating. Most areas have scored one hundred percent satisfaction from participants and appreciation has been expressed over the availability of the presenters and the feedback. Greater participant engagement has been mentioned as a way to improve future courses.

## Self-Paced

The data indicates a high course satisfaction response from a majority of participants. The only area of concern was the enrollment and payment system. This area was the only category which indicated participants felt that an improvement could be made.



# EVALUATION CHALLENGES

As the world continues to struggle with the impact of COVID, so has the Academy had a challenging year. This has been due to a number of reasons.

## CHALLENGE #1

Maintaining a consistent, informed and technologically-trained volunteer base.

The Academy utilises a number of technological platforms and is manually intensive in a number of aspects for both participant and presenter. This places a lot of pressure and time demands on volunteers. This has led to a number of key volunteer roles being unfilled or becoming vacant throughout the year. As the Academy moves into its second year, positions are constantly being re-evaluated and redesigned according to the volunteers' skills-base and the needs of the presenters.

## CHALLENGE #2

Implementing additional courses.

The perfect balance of courses on offer is still being sought. This year, the addition of self-paced courses has been a positive addition. Participants have readily accepted the opportunity to work at their own pace through a course. However, as our system is not automated, unfortunately, not all participants have understood that self-paced registrations are only completed weekly by a volunteer.

## CHALLENGE #3

Improving survey completion.

The collecting of data is a very important step. Understanding the data allows RWA to ascertain whether or not the courses are meeting the demands of its members. Currently, survey completion is at a low rate.

## Focus #1

The Academy has a lovely team spirit and volunteers readily give their time to help each other with technical support and encouragement. Volunteer roles have been and are continuously reviewed. Changes are made, when requested and after discussion, if necessary. The Academy is volunteer-dependent and as such, needs to be able to draw upon a number of members to assist in offering such a comprehensive learning environment.

## Focus #2

To assist in reducing the many steps of presenting and participating within a course, RWA is including and looking at transferring its courses to an additional course platform: Teachable. The use of this platform will allow participants to self-register and automatic payment of presenters to be completed. This should assist in providing immediate accessibility for all participants. Greater use of Webinar Ninjar is also being sought. This platform also allows for self-registration and a greater variety of courses to be offered.

# Going Forward

## Focus #3

To assist at improving data collection, the adoption of a new course platform, will allow a survey jotform to be embedded within the course. The survey will need to be completed before final access to course content will be released. This is a very simple step and can be completed automatically, once the embedded link has been set up. It is also expected that course presenters will be surveyed to ascertain their satisfaction with the course platforms and presentation opportunities and allow for a greater range of survey data to be collected.



# CONTEST PORTFOLIO REPORT

This year, I'd like to start the Contests Report by thanking the following members and associates for their work on RWA Contests in the 2021/2022 contest year. Without our volunteers – whether coordinators or judges – RWA would not be able to offer the contests that we do and it's important that they, along with our entrants are forefront of mind.

Finding final judges, particularly for the Emerald and Sapphire remains difficult. Considerations are still being given to how we can better source those individuals, noting that the requirement is to read a minimum of three full manuscripts and provide (brief) comments where possible, which is a big ask of editors and agents who are already required to undertake significant amounts of reading for work, and already conduct that work outside their working hours.

## Ripping Start

Contest Coordinator  
Kristine Charles

Judges:  
Beverley Cousins - Penguin  
Random House

## Ruby

Contest Coordinator  
Sarima Burdeau

## Publishing Basics

Contest Coordinator  
Fiona Marsden

Judges:  
Lauren Clarke - Creating Ink

## Sapphire

Contest Coordinator  
Jacinta Peachey

Judges:  
Cassandra di Bello - Simon  
Schuster

## First Kiss

Contest Coordinator  
Linda Joyce

Judges:  
Carly Byrne, Harlequin UK

## Emerald

Contest Coordinator  
Margaret Key

Judges:  
Michelle Klayman - Boroughs  
Publishing Group

## Spicy Bites

Contest Coordinator  
Paquita Fadden

## Sweet Treats

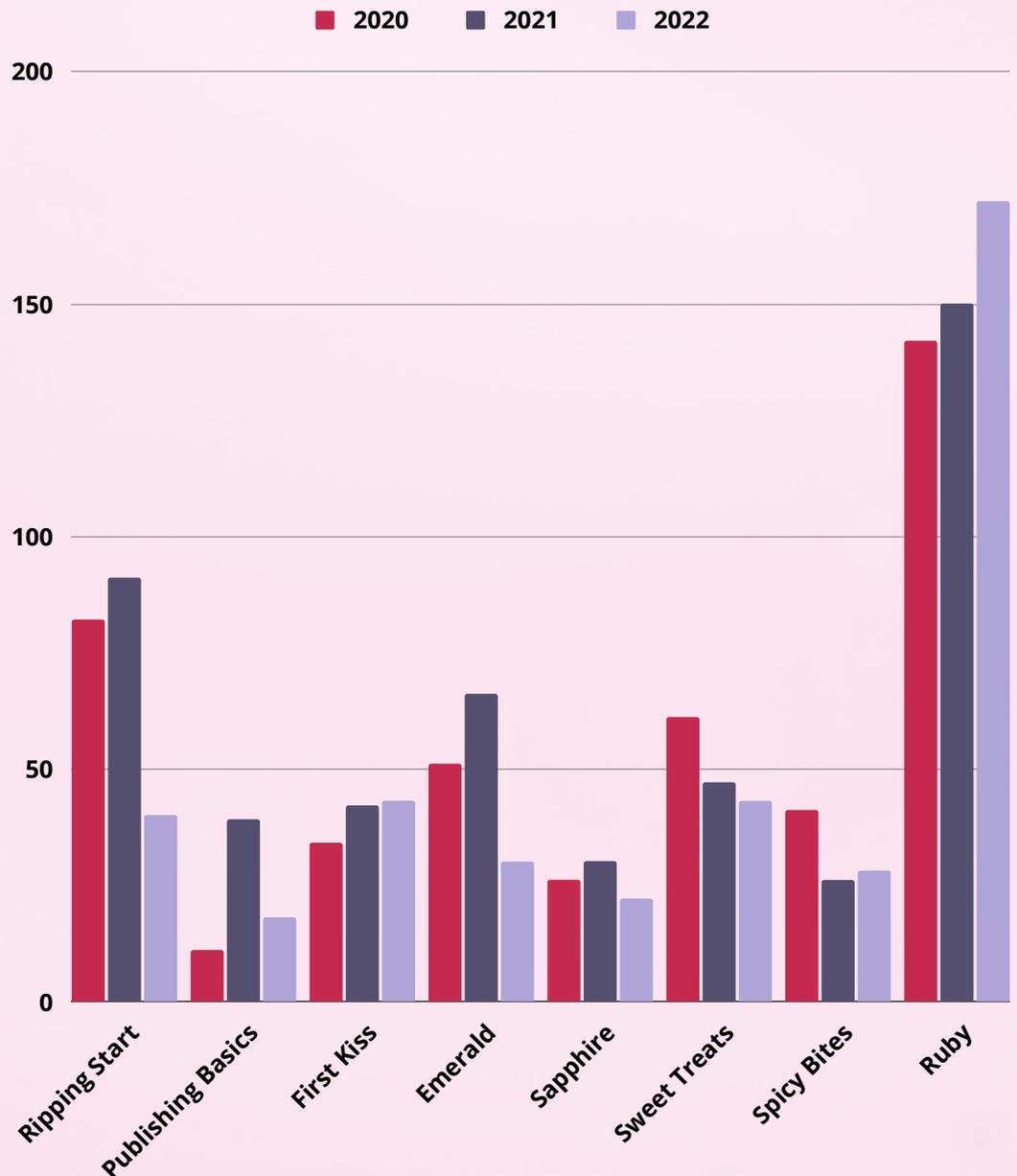
Contest Coordinator  
Annette Larrackers

# Assessment of the 2021/2022 Contests Year

The role of Vice President is primarily to support the President, and the rest of the committee; helping to ensure that our organisation runs as smoothly as possible; making sure our volunteers are supported; and that our members have access to the best possible information about writing and publishing available.

I am very proud of being a part of the dynamic and innovative team that makes up the Committee. I am even more proud of how our members support, cheer on, and celebrate the joys – and commiserate the lows – of what writing romance stories entails.

## CONTEST NUMBERS



This year, we have seen an increase in entrants to the RUBY, and the shift in the Ruby to two Contemporary Romance categories – long and short – has been successful, with good anecdotal feedback and excitement from those authors who write at the shorter word length. That being said, entry numbers in RWA’s other contests have broadly remained steady or declined.

The Committee is currently working on a survey of the membership in respect of a number of matters – but contests will be an important component of that survey and will inform any further thinking about changes to the contest program. That being said, RWA has made a decision to increase prices (as per the below) for the 2023 contest year.

| Contest Name     | Current Price<br>(Inc. G.S.T)            | New Price<br>(Inc. G.S.T)               | Increase           |
|------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| Emerald/Sapphire | \$40.00                                  | \$49.00                                 | \$9.00             |
| Ruby             | \$55.00 Member<br>(\$165.00 (Non Member) | \$69.00 Member<br>\$198.00 (Non Member) | \$14.00<br>\$14.00 |
| Ripping Start    | \$33.00                                  | \$39.00                                 | \$6.00             |
| First Kiss       |  |   |                    |
| Spicy Bites      |  |   |                    |
| Sweet Treats     |  |   |                    |

Note that the non-member RUBY price above includes the cost of membership.

The costs of contest entry have not increased in some time, and this increase reflects both a general increase in operating costs, and our desire to look to offer prizes for place getters in the Emerald and Sapphire contests, and in the Ripping Start and First Kiss contests.

We are also continuing to work to moving all entry forms and judge response forms to Jotform in a more generic form which should, in the short to medium term, make administration easier for the Contest Coordinators, and require less updating and less manual handing of results and scoresheets. Nevertheless, chasing judges who don’t respond (particularly in the RUBY) continues to provide a challenge.



## *Valerie Parv AM*

Since Valerie's passing in April 2021, the Committee has been considering the most appropriate way to recognise her contribution. One of the ways the Committee has determined to do so is by establishing the Valerie Parv AM Memorial Mentoring Award.

The intent of this award is to recognise, on a yearly basis, an RWA member who has demonstrated outstanding mentorship, having gone above and beyond and materially contributed to the careers and/or craft of those they have mentored.

The award will be run on a similar basis to the Lynne Wilding Meritorious Service Award in that, each year, current RWA members will be invited to nominate a mentor who demonstrates outstanding mentorship and the nominations would be considered by a panel of RWA members at various stages of their careers and Linda Tate of the Tate Gallery Pty Ltd, Valerie's long term agent.

This award will open for nominations in 2023.



# *MARKETING & EVENTS REPORT*

Thank You to 2021/2022 Marketing Volunteers and 2022's Fremantle Conference Committee

2022 was a year of change as the Marketing role had been vacant for so long. In 2021 the Gold Coast conference was delayed due to COVID and in at the end of the first quarter of 2022, the events role became vacant and turned over to Marketing in a temporary capacity. Throughout all this the volunteers and 2022 Conference Committee continued to work forward in force to get the jobs done. A massive thank you to all in these roles as we would not have had such a successful year without your ongoing support through change and adversity.

These portfolios combined have been a mammoth learning curve. After observing burnout due to the amount of work involved,

## *MARKETING*

Hearts Talk continues to be a strong feature and industry based magazine that benefits our members from aspiring levels right through emerging and to established membership levels. The team put out industry relevant articles each month, features current membership and seeks out trends to share with their readership which remains consistent with members looking forward to their magazine each month and adding their new releases regularly. The team creates new avenues and utilises the page space to its best capacity each month. Hearts Talks is one of the strongest and most established areas of the marketing portfolio.

## ***SOCIAL MEDIA***

The social media team works daily to produce engaging content across the board. With several portfolios and arms of the RWA intentals sending regular posts, the team posts promptly and remains an integral part of the online membership community to ensure members are aware of upcoming events, contests and can celebrate short-listed competition entrants. This year Twitter has been a focus for growth, engaging romance authors, editors and agents and will continue to grow with a Twitter volunteer brought on post conference 2022.

## ***NEWSLETTERS***

Our newsletters are one of the best ways we communicate with our members. In 2022 weekly newsletters went out to the membership covering conference updates, member services, contests, short lists, academy and of course, Hearts Talk. We also ran a very successful evening with an industry expert and the responses, open rates and click rates were fantastic. Our members' newsletter and interested non-member lists are a solid tool for ongoing communication and development. This area will continue to grow in 2022/23.

## ***ANTHOLOGIES***

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# Events

## 2022 FREMANTLE WRAP UP



The Fremantle team worked tirelessly through two Event Managers and a conference that has been on hold for the last few years. Pulling together a full conference is an incredible task, especially when the rest of the support crew resides on the other side of the country. This is the first in-person conference in over two years due to COVID and the team battled an ebb and flow of ongoing tension of if the conference would be delayed yet again due to the changing nature of events both globally and in person.

They have been flexible in dealing with VIP, presenter and agent withdrawals due to COVID related events and health but have created a full program and pitching sessions despite the drawbacks and hurdles they have encountered. The Fremantle team have demonstrated resilience and tenacity during their term and have hosted a memorable event for the enjoyment of our membership.

A post conference survey will help develop and adapt future events aimed at the development and growth of the RWA's membership at all levels.

# Sydney 2023

## MOVING FORWARD



Plans for the Sydney 2023 conference are well underway with the onboarding conference team releasing the theme and highlights at the Fremantle 2022 conference. Moving forward the conference committee will focus on developing and coordinating an exceptional program of workshops and pitching opportunities in the first conference event on the eastern seaboard that will be available for all members to attend since 2019. The team is enthusiastic and eager to showcase their host city.

### **2024 Conference**

While we are in full motion planning 2023's Sydney conference, the general RWA committee is working on the most cost effective location for members. This location is to be decided in the next financial year.

Sofia Aves  
Marketing and Events Manager

In the second quarter of 2022, the general RWA committee voted to bring on a conference planner to take on location quotes, AV, registration, VIP bookings and travel, and general logistics for the onboarding event. The organisation allows for a third party clear and experienced view of an event and removes pressure from the conference committee and Events portfolio to provide a structured event. With 2023's planning already in full motion, we look forward to sharing the 2023 conference team's event showcase.

# Information Technology Report

In the last year, there have been approximately 1 million views of the RWA website, from approximately 162,000 visitors.(image captured on Saturday 30 July 2022 and does not include visits to the separate conference website)

|               | Visitors | Visits    |
|---------------|----------|-----------|
| Today         | 326      | 8,783     |
| Yesterday     | 492      | 12,856    |
| Last 7 Days   | 3,068    | 81,056    |
| Last 30 Days  | 11,805   | 318,419   |
| Last 365 Days | 162,846  | 1,045,419 |
| Total         | 350,045  | 2,963,601 |

- 85% of visitors to the site are from Australia
- People find the site from search engines, or from Facebook
- 80% of visitors are new, 20% are returning.
- The most visited pages are those related to conference, contests and courses.
- The website sends around 1500 automated emails a month to members.
- 2/3 of people who visit the site do so on a desktop computer.
- Member numbers have fluctuated, with an average of approximately 775 active members at any one point throughout the year.
- The antispam system which we have implemented in the site has so far blocked over 118,000 spam comments, keeping our website visually clean and free of inappropriate content.

## Achievements

- The MemberPress software which replaced MemberMouse to manage our members has steadily been upgraded and optimised, and a number of problems resolved.
- An analysis of the website issues has been done, and good progress made on optimising that to minimise the size of the site, increase the speed of response, and improve the security and stability of the platform. This has built on the work done in the previous year, so that the site is much more stable now. It is still slow, and there is more work to be done.
- Ongoing analysis of the G drive structure has been done, and a plan for restructure discussed with the Admin Assistant.
- Work has been done on improving and better documenting all of our systems.
- G suite and email ongoing management continues to take up considerable time – we have nearly 90 corporate email addresses to manage, as well as Drive document storage and associated functions.
- Regular updates to the website and to the Moodle course platform have kept us up to date for security.
- Use of Jotform has been extended, with automated forms now being used for a number of regular activities.

## Challenges

- Website traffic has been somewhat erratic, affected by the upheavals in the world this year and the impact that has had on people's available time and funds..
- The website still needs ongoing work to archive out old components and documents, and document the structure changes as we go.
- Activities are limited by the lack of availability of volunteers with suitable IT experience to assist the IT manager.

## Forward Plans

- Ongoing website optimisation and improvement.
- Investigate options for further upgrades to our web hosting to boost performance whilst making cost savings.
- The implementation of new branding colours and website look and feel is scheduled for the 22/23 FY.
- Continue to work on migrating course delivery to Teachable.
- Implement G drive restructure.
- Broaden use of the Helpdesk / Change Management system
- Regularly assess our IT toolset for potential improvements.

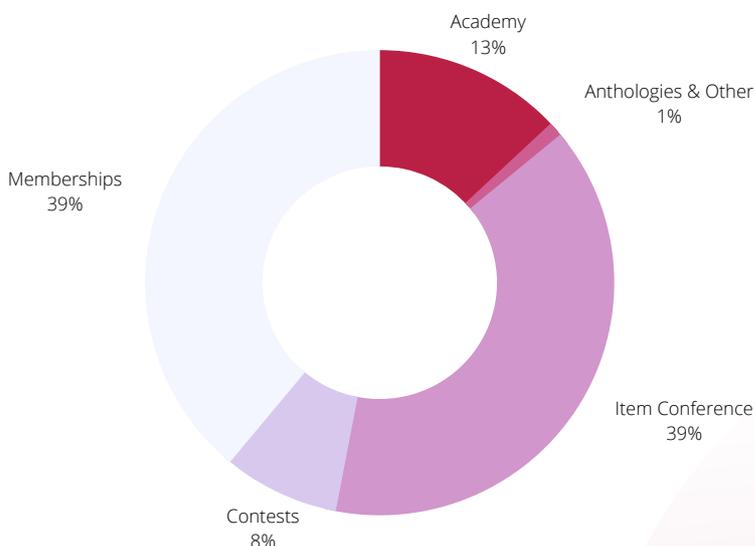
# Treasurer's Report

It is my privilege and pleasure to present the annual Treasurer's Report to Romance Writers of Australia Inc. (RWA) members. Once again RWA had a good financial year with a positive net income from activities of \$12,911.88. Good financial Management is vital to sustaining a vital and effective organisation. As always, the Committee strives to deliver value for money services to the members. Every effort is made to find the best and most cost-effective means to deliver services.

This approach meant prices of RWA services have remained stable with little or no increases in the past few years. RWA operations are not immune to recent general increase in costs. Maintaining viability, the 2022-2023 year will see modest increases in charges for services while keeping them affordable and great value for money.

## Income

The main sources of revenue in the 2021-2022 financial year were Memberships 39 %, Conference 39%, Academy 13%, and Contests 8%. Anthology sales, interest earned, and other revenue combined, was less than 1%.



|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Academy             | \$ 22,443.54 |
| Anthologies & Other | \$ 1,344.32  |
| Conference          | \$ 69,849.06 |
| Contests            | \$ 14,033.63 |
| Memberships         | \$ 70,398.42 |

## Expenditure

Conference represented 50% of expenses for the year. The next largest out lay is for payroll costs at 22% of costs. Academy costs, IT platform subscriptions and Committee meeting expenses were each 5% of total costs. The increase in air fares contribute significantly to the cost of in person meetings. Financial audit and accounting software consumed 3% of RWA outlays. Insurance and Anthologies & Contests expenses represent 2% each of costs and 6% of expenditure went on all other expenses.

|                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Academy                   | \$ 8,485.27  |
| Anthologies & Contests    | \$ 3,382.94  |
| Audit & Accounts Software | \$ 5,223.62  |
| Conference Expenses       | \$ 83,283.93 |
| Committee Meetings        | \$ 7,921.42  |
| Insurance                 | \$ 2,735.32  |
| IT Programs               | \$ 7,748.25  |
| Wages & Volunteers        | \$ 36,275.78 |
| Other Expenses            | \$ 10,118.65 |

