



KSP Writers' Centre Chairperson Report 2015

Tabetha Beggs
11 October 2015

In 2015 we have many achievements to celebrate. The first and foremost of these being the 30th anniversary of the Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation, a milestone that every past and current Chairperson, Board representative, coordinator and member can feel proud to have been a part of.

There was a changing of the guard early in the year with former chairperson Renee Hammond standing down after a three-year term where she instigated many new initiatives and dedicated much of her time to the betterment of the Centre. This was followed by the resignation of Andrew Levett who had served as committee secretary for one year. We acknowledge the work of Renee and Andrew and are happy that they continue to play a part at KSP in other roles.

As Vice-Chairperson at this time, I offered to step up to the Chairperson's position which, I'm happy to report, the Board voted unanimously in favour of. And hence why I am presenting this report today. The Board welcomed new member Lisa Wolstenholme to complete our current line-up and it is with this team of seven, made up of both new members and long serving ones, that I hold my head high knowing that we are a united force with a common goal; to celebrate the Centre's past and to create a sustainable and exciting future for its members.

Since the last AGM, KSP has formalised the change of name from the KSP Management Committee to what is now referred to as the KSP Board of Management or BoM as we fondly know it.

2015 has been a year of firsts in many ways. We ran our inaugural volunteer recruitment drive, which considering we didn't do all that much to promote it, we still attracted a worthy crowd who signed up to be part of one of our four sub-committees.

The Gardening and Landscaping committee is the most successful one at this stage, proving that with a strong and passionate leader, these committees can achieve great things. I wish to formally acknowledge the work and dedication of Fern Pendragon and her team who has transformed the gardens in the last year. The property has never looked so good and it fills me with pride whenever I walk through it.

On Fern's suggestion, and as a way to rid ourselves of the mountain of cuttings and debris building up at the bottom of the garden, we hosted our first KSP bonfire last month, which due to its success, will become an annual fundraising event with suggested improvements already being talked.

The Romance Writers Group and the Tuesday Writers Circle both launched their first anthologies this year while the ladies Writefree group boast their 19th! Our poets are also churning out the books with beautifully penned poems and prose.

We have also gained a new writing group, KSP by the Sea, which operates in Two Rocks. Another feather in the cap of KSP giving us a reach beyond the hills area.

The 2015 Literary Program continues to go from strength to strength, with all workshops showing good attendances, thanks to the variety, professionalism and appeal of the presenters and subjects. The children's writing groups and school holiday programs have increased in popularity and we hope to grow them further.

Our residency program has been a highlight with heavy weights such as Laurie Steed, Nathan Hobby and Ron Pretty all going over and above the call of residency duties. Ron Pretty in particular proved so popular that it was the first literary dinner to have over 30 bookings and the first WIR to venture out to our Northam writers group to say hello. Thank you to KSP's Patron Glen Phillips and the Literary Advisory Committee for continuing to make excellent decisions when selecting these candidates.

On to some of the more visible changes over the past 12 months. The removal of the wall in the writing room has been invaluable allowing us to run two activities at a time or to extend our capacity for larger events. Our renovations will continue in 2016, as we fundraise to continue with our improvements. This is a top priority for the Board in 2016 as we agree that this room is essential to the running of our business and is the core asset.

We have also been able to make the most of the balcony since its repair, which was utilised beautifully at the KSP Open Day. The area has great potential as do other

outdoors areas that we endeavor use to showcase the facility in all its glory in coming events.

Some of the years' most notable highlights have been the completion of the Blackboy Hill Book Project. A huge thank you to Valerie Everett for driving this and to all the writers that contributed to making this significant publication a reality in this centenary year of Anzac.

We gave this year's Open Day a makeover bringing more of the activities outdoors and giving it a more market day feel. The day attracted more than 100 visitors which was a significant increase in previous years and a great result for the effort the team put in.

All of these things would not be possible without the amazing work of one lady. Shannon Coyle is a huge asset to our Centre and without her the programs and retreats and events would not even get off the ground. So thank you Shannon for being the best coordinator we could ask for.

On that note, as the Centre evolves and our programs and events multiply to meet the demands of our business, we have made another significant investment recently. We have employed our first part-time office assistant to increase our manpower and distribute the workload more evenly. We welcome Ravenna Bouckaert to our team.

I am so proud of all the accomplishments that KSP has made this year and I know there will be many that I have missed, so I apologise for that but if I keep going you'll all miss your dinner tonight.

I would like to finish up by saying, that my thanks goes far and wide to everyone that is part of the team that makes it all happen. To our facilitators that run the groups, the Wooroloo prisoners that lend their muscle to all the handy man jobs around the place, to our volunteers, our cleaner, our ladies in the office and my colleagues on the Board, you are the people that give your time to this place. To our members, thank you, without you, we would have nobody to do this for.

On an official note, thank you to the Shire of Mundaring, Lotterywest, Bendigo Bank Mundaring and the Department of Culture and the Arts WA for continuing to fund this worthy organisation.

For every book published in WA, we can take a little bit of pride in knowing that in a small way, we have nurtured those in the WA writing community with encouragement and an environment to hone their craft.

And finally thank you Katharine and Hugo, for giving us this house and their stories. As Chairperson I will ensure Katharine's Place is both an encouraging and enriching place for writers and poets, and an energetic, dare I say, bohemian hub where friends are made, ambitions are worked upon and dreams come true, just as they would have wanted it.