



# WestWords

*Sharing the wealth of words*

Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation

**2019 Annual Report**

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**IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE YOUR STORIES AREN'T TOLD  
NO BOOKS. NO FILMS.  
NOTHING ABOUT YOU, YOUR FAMILY OR YOUR CULTURE**

WestWords gives Western Sydney  
a voice, a space to be heard and celebrated.

Join us in creating, building and empowering our communities.

### **MAKING THE DIFFERENCE: STORIES OF SUCCESS**

*Working with WestWords changed my life.*

*It's helped me with my confidence, it's helped me with my writing skills, with how I write, with the way I view writing. They basically made me a better person.*

Ali, aged 15, Granville Boys High School

Having worked with Granville Boys' High School over two years on multiple programs including the inaugural year-long *Landscape, Place & Me* program, in 2017 GBHS ran its first Extension English 1 class in over a decade. In 2018 this led to its first Extension 2 English class in as many years and we continued to work with the boys. All the boys in the programs became Prefects, Vice-Captain or Captain. Ali was Captain.



In 2017 we partnered with Varuna: The National Writers' House to run an Emerging Writers' Residential Program for culturally and linguistically diverse writers.

*I want to thank you WestWords for giving me this opportunity and showing me that being from a diverse background should be celebrated. I now have the confidence to pursue something I once feared and that's wonderful.* Rawah Arja: 2017 resident

In 2020 Rawah's debut book *The F-Team* will be published by Giramondo. She facilitates our after-school classes for children.



Alumni of the Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowship program have consistently gone on to publish their work and receive wide acclaim. 2016 Fellows Maryam Azam had her debut poetry collection published with Giramondo, and Peter Polites' novel *Down the Hume* was nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Filmmaker/screenwriter/2017 Fellow Joseph Chebatte's short film has been in short film festivals across the US. 2018 Fellow Chloe Higgins' debut memoir was shortlisted for Non-fiction Prize and won the People's Choice Award in the 2020 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. As part of their fellowships each received a tailored program of mentorship for these works.



*During 2018 and working with WestWords, Northmead CAPA High School started Creative Writing Club to develop students' skills in writing. One of the students who attended the after-school sessions was very passionate about creative writing but struggled elsewhere. This program focused this student despite the challenges he was facing. He was able to find a voice through this program and was proud at its completion because his story was published in an anthology with his peers. This also inspired him to continue his post-school studies where he is focused on creative writing and screen studies at TAFE. WestWords was a wonderful experience for all our students but was particularly life changing for this student.*

Samantha Lee: Head Teacher English Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School

## Chair's Report

2019 was another very successful year for WestWords.

As an independent not-for-profit cultural organisation we have continued to celebrate and champion the people, places and cultures that are to be found in Western Sydney. We believe in the power of literature and literacy and the need for everyone to express themselves creatively.

As in former years we have received significant support from Create NSW as well as assistance from the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency, Campbelltown City Council, Blacktown City Council and Parramatta City Council. In addition we welcome the Australian Catholic University as our publication partner and Alive 90.5 as a media partner.

This has enabled us to maintain our role, embedding ourselves in the cultural life of Western Sydney.

Many of the schools we have previously worked with have continued their relationship with us and others have sought to benefit from the writing workshops we offer. Long form residencies for classes from year 3 to year 12 have also been taken up. We have also offered classes in libraries, community centres and in our own premises for children after school and in school holidays. This year we have published 6 anthologies. These are an important part of our work as often they are the only publications in the homes of the students we have worked with. As well we: contributed 14 stories to *Standing on a Book: Stories from classrooms around Australia*; two commissioned essays in *Sydney Review of Books*; commissioned writing and illustration for *Blume Magazine*; and staged five exhibitions of children's book illustrations.

We have been acknowledged by a number of councils seeking assistance in running projects. These included Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize, Postcards Project, working with CAPAH (Citizens Action Penrith Affordable Housing), resulting in the relevant members writing their lives on postcards, and the Casula Powerhouse *Word of Mouth* project which had us working with four NGOs.

Fundraising is of vital importance to an organisation such as ours. In May we held our first fundraising dinner at the University of Sydney. In the Maclaurin Hall, the diners were treated to speeches by Bryan Brown and Jane Caro. Sam Neil was also in attendance and all agreed it was an occasion to be repeated. It is becoming an annual event.

In October we piloted a project: Booktober. This, also an annual event, encourages reading and the gathering of funds as donations or rewards according to the number of titles read.

Our program is huge, employing a hundred and four professional writers and illustrators, and partnering with twenty six schools, four universities, ten libraries and twenty three independent organisations. It is an incredible achievement for a small staff. Our thanks go to our Executive Director Michael Campbell whose inexhaustible labour and strategic thinking serves us well. He has been assisted by part timers Christian Pazzaglia, Hajer Al-awsi and James Roy. Development consultant Kathie Elliott contributes important strategic and business planning along with publicist Deb McInnes and bookkeeper Peg Thatcher.

Thanks must also go to the board and to our ambassadors Bryan Brown AM and David Borger and former board director Philip Porter. With their assistance we will continue to grow and further our vision for the young people of Western Sydney



**Libby Gleeson AM**



## Executive Director's Report

In February 2016 WestWords brought together literature organisations working in or into Western Sydney for the first time to participate in a seminar and workshop entitled *Writing the West: Future Directions for Western Sydney's Literary Culture*. The outcomes of that day were a unified call for two actions: greater connectivity in the sector, and a Western Sydney Centre for Writing. This Centre would be non-traditional, specific to the diverse cultures and languages of Western Sydney and be a highly visible focal point for the promotion, development and distinctiveness of the region and its peoples. I wrote and presented the report to Create NSW, who in response commissioned us to undertake a formal Scoping Study. This second report was delivered to Create NSW in April 2017 and released for publication in November. This process of extensive consultation has also provided us with the needs basis that is underpinning our strategic direction, programming decisions, business and operational model.

2019 has seen continued growth, achievement and change. Importantly, we have realised much of the vision called for by the sector through our consultation process. We have seen the writers who have undertaken courses, residencies mentorships and fellowships achieve mainstream recognition and publication. Our public events program has grown to showcase the writers and writing of the region. Elsewhere in this report you can read the statistics, context and stories of success that demonstrate the effectiveness and impactfulness of our approach and the work we do. One of the most important aspects of this work is the ongoing commitment to, and investment in, the people, the stories and the region. And most important of these are the emergent voices who carry the experiences they bring to this place and through their writing create new insights and stories of this, one of the most diverse and exciting regions in Australia.

So often you hear people talk of the disadvantaged, the marginalised in Western Sydney. We don't see it that way. We are so proud of the children, young people, emerging and established writers we work with. We think they are rich beyond belief. They bring to their work understandings beyond anything I, or we, could know. It seems inadequate to say that our programs offer skills development, self-confidence and engagement. These young people are central to the story of what it is to be Australian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We offer the opportunity for them to work with professionals of the highest calibre, acting as role models and mentors, developing their skills and striving for excellence. We give them agency, so they can be read and heard by people beyond what they could dream possible.

There are always more people than space to thank them individually. So, collectively, thank you:

- Libby Gleeson AM and the rest of the Board of WestWords who understand that the achievements we all celebrate are the direct result of consistent, unglamorous work;
- Christian Pazzaglia, our new producer who joined us in March; Hajer Al-awsy, associate producer; Blacktown and Blue Mountains Program Manager, James Roy; Deb McInnes DMCP, publicist; Peg Thatcher, bookkeeper; and Kathie Elliott, Development Consultant who joined us through a Creative Partnerships grant. We are a team, without which we could not have achieved what we have done;
- the 104 professional writers, editors and illustrators we have worked with this year.
- The 80 partner organisations we work with, and the people within them who make those relationships possible and so pleasurable;
- the children, young people, emerging writers who engaged in our programs, challenging themselves willingly and bravely;
- And all those who support and assist us through their generosity and fore-sightedness, so we can serve the writers and writing of Western Sydney.

As we look to 2020 and beyond we seek to further diversify our income streams, attracting increased corporate and philanthropic support. We will increase our internal capacity to enable us to engage more broadly with the community. We will fill our centres with activities that develop and celebrate our rich diversity/s through writing.



**Michael Campbell**



## ACTIVITIES & SERVICES

We ran:  
**148 activities**  
that's a 42%  
increase from 2018

including:

- Running three satellite centres across GWS
- 6 in-school residencies
- 67 in-school workshops and masterclasses
- 21 in-school author events
- 8 residency programs for local, interstate, international emerging and established writers and illustrators
- 36 public workshops, masterclasses & courses
- 4 writing groups
- 42 showcase events
- 8 publications
- 4 commissions
- 4 exhibitions, including 2 that toured WS
- 6 fellowships for emerging WS writers
- 3 project management of writing prizes

In addition, through our centres, we offered space for writers to meet, network and write.

## WESTWORDS: WESTERN SYDNEY'S LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION OUR REMIT: GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY

- 9.1% of Australia's population lives in the Greater Western Sydney region.\*  
*That's 1 in 11 Australians.*
- 49.7% of Western Sydney's population is under the age of 35.\*
- GWS residents represent over half the world's population coming from more than 170 countries and speak over 100 different languages.#
- 33% of people in GWS were born in countries where English was not their first language - with India, China, Vietnam, Philippines, Lebanon, Iraq, Fiji, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Pakistan ranked highest.\*
- Greater Western Sydney has the third largest economy in Australia after Sydney and Melbourne CBDs.#
- Greater Western Sydney has higher than average unemployment and lower than average salary levels. There are high levels of mortgage and rental stress. The region is heavily car dependent with resulting impacts on air quality, health, quality of life and household budgets. Of the 544,000 jobs located in the GWS, 75% of those who live in the region also work in the region.#
- The majority of new immigrants (60%) who come to Australia settle in GWS and over the past decade 50% of these arrivals were from Iraq and Sudan.#
- One-fifth of Australia's Aboriginal population is located in GWS, with the densest clustering being in Blacktown and the Macarthur region. Of these, 60% are aged under 24.\*



Sources: \* 2016 Census; # Regional Centre of Expertise, Western Sydney University



Drawings from Martin Ed Chatterton's residency at Parramatta Artists' Studios





## WHO?

WestWords is an independent not-for-profit cultural organisation with DGR status serving and located within Western Sydney with centres in Parramatta, Campbelltown and Blacktown. The nine-member board is led by award-winning author Libby Gleeson AM, with Bryan Brown AM and former Parramatta Lord Mayor and Western Sydney director of Sydney Chamber of Commerce, David Borger, as its ambassadors.

## WHAT WE DO

- WestWords celebrates and champions the people, places and cultures that are at the heart of Western Sydney.
- We promote and encourage reading, writing and story-making by children and young people living in Western Sydney and beyond. In so doing we develop and enhance community sustainability through cultural vitality.
- We provide pathways of opportunity for young people to develop authentic and articulate voices and showcase them through innovative literature-based, multi-arts programs.
- We support the ongoing careers of professional writers and illustrators.

To achieve these goals we deliver a comprehensive program of residencies, fellowships, workshops, performances, presentations and publications.

## WHY?

We believe the power of literature and literacy (written, oral and visual), self-expression and creativity can change lives and the experiences of communities.

## HOW?

We work with like-minded individuals and organisations to identify the need, imagine the potential, then work together with our partners to create programs that are uniquely suited to the people and the context.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

We work with writers and artists of all ages and at all stages of their career with a strategic focus on children and young people. We collaborate with teachers, schools, universities, community and arts organisations. We target culturally rich and diverse communities that historically aren't recognised for the value of their cultural expression, frequently appearing as low on SES indicators. We believe in long-term engagement rather than short-term intervention with programs and partnerships running over the course of years. We invest in bringing established authors and artists to mentor our participants.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- We bring cross-cultural communities together to learn from each other.
- We break down barriers through sharing experiences, identifying common issues and concerns.
- We generate fresh artistic insights for the creative expression of WS voices.
- We create a platform for emerging voices to realise their potential.
- We create career pathways for established writers to mentor successive generations.
- We develop confidence and self-agency to the young people we work with.
- We develop skills for life.



## REACH

*In 2019*

***over 27,000 people  
were engaged with our  
activities***

***9,138 people  
directly participated in  
our programs***

***That's an increase of  
55.9%  
on 2018 participation  
rates!***

***More than  
18,000 people attended  
our exhibitions  
and even more through  
our fortnightly spot on  
Alive 90.5FM***

## WestWords' Centres for Writing across Western Sydney



### WESTWORDS WHAT IS LITERATURE?

#### Literature

is when the craft of writing itself carries some of its meaning.

#### *What does that mean?*

Anyone can write a shopping list – that's utilitarian.

#### *But...*

But a poem written in the form of a shopping list can provide a detailed character portrait of the buyer's personal circumstances: their income, their culture, what they like to do for leisure, whether they are single or have a family, etc.

Literature is when the craft of writing tells us something about ourselves and the world we live in.

#### Writing

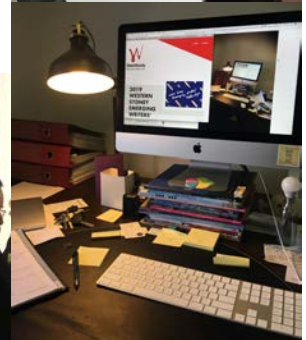
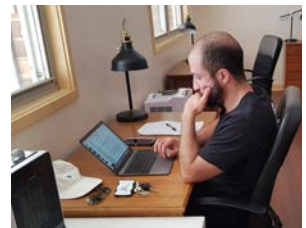
is writing in all its forms: from fiction to poetry, from playwriting to lyrics, from slam to essays, from screenwriting to...

2019 was our second year of full operations of our Centre for Writing in Parramatta. This initiative was taken in response to significant consultation with the sector. We recognise that in our role as a service organisation it is incumbent on us to provide pathways of opportunity for the development of the authentic and articulate voices from the region. Writers need space to work and to feel themselves part of a supportive and well-resourced community. We recognise that need, and consequently built our programming and services to reflect their needs including extending our network to include writers' rooms spanning Western Sydney, located in Campbelltown (Wedderburn), Blacktown and Parramatta.



Each centre has its own distinct character. WestWords' Centre for Writing in Parramatta offers a venue to showcase the writers of Western Sydney, provide space for them to meet, learn and gather in writers' groups, launches, workshops, masterclasses and after-school classes. We also provide space for other organisations to work from the Centre, and have

welcomed Action Education (theatre in education company) and Goajo Agency (educational agency for Africans who want to study in Australia) amongst our resident companies. The public programs offered at the centre are supported by a City of Parramatta project grant. Wedderburn offers the atmosphere of a retreat and a closeness to nature that is also a distinct part of the Western Sydney experience. The centre is supported by Campbelltown City Council. Blacktown is within Blacktown Library: Stanhope Gardens and is the focal point for the activities within that region. The room is supported by Blacktown City Council and Blacktown City Libraries.







## The program

Developing the skills of Western Sydney writers from the earliest of ages is core business for WestWords. Activities include workshops and masterclasses, residencies in community, in-school and after-school; holiday programs; mentorships (in person and online); fellowships; facilitated short and continuous writers' groups; creative writing courses for HSC students; and so on.



### In partnership with schools

Key to providing the best opportunities to the children and young people of Western Sydney is working in partnership with schools, both within the Public and Catholic Education system, delivering individually tailored programs with professional writers, illustrators and editors. We believe building relationships with schools, their staff and students over time is critical to providing the best possible outcomes both for the students and the professional development of the teachers. The 26 schools we collaborated with in 2019 included schools we have been working with for a number of years as well as new relationships. We offered a range of free (thanks to the generous support of Copyright Agency) and fee for service programs. These schools included:

- Beresford Rd PS
- Glendenning PS
- Woodland Park Rd PS
- Granville Boys HS
- Ingleburn PS
- Quakers Hill PS
- Wentworthville PS
- Cabramatta West PS
- Mt Druitt PS
- Punchbowl Boys HS
- The Ponds HS
- St Hurmzid Assyrian PS
- Katoomba HS
- St Frances of Assisi PS
- Greystanes PS
- Northmead Creative and Performing Arts HS
- Carlingford HS
- Cherrybrook Technical HS
- Parramatta Nth PS
- St Nicholas of Myra PS
- *and more!*



Each school's engagement is created in close consultation with the teaching staff to uniquely tailor the program's offerings and includes consideration of the choice of writer. These engagements are frequently characterised by author events, masterclasses, as well as short and long term residencies. The latter typically run for 3-6 weeks, and can be up to two terms.

As with any customised program the genres of writing covered are many. In 2019 we ran programs focussing on creative writing techniques, speculative fiction, crime writing, poetry, slam, reportage, illustration and editing. Some of our five-six week residency programs culminated in publications of the students' work.

By far the biggest residency program was with Cherrybrook Technical High School where 12 writers were in residence for a week in December working with the school's entire Yr 10 cohort of 315 students. There will a publication containing work from the school coming in 2020. The writers were Ben Peek, Tony Davis, Will Kostakis, Angela May George, Sarah Ayoub, Helen Thurloe, Deb Abela, Kirsty Eager, Jane Burke, Rawah Arja, Michelle Hamadache and Pip Smith.



*WestWords brings critically acclaimed, published authors into the schools' environment to not only offer their experience but also to act as role models for the young people. We believe those authors who have been through the crucible of publishing their own work have unique insight into skills that will enhance effective communication, and the building of articulate, confident voices, assured of themselves in the world.*



**In 2019 we worked with 26 schools across Western Sydney**

**We delivered 6 in-school residencies and 67 in-school workshops and masterclasses and 21 author talks with author events from some of Australia's best writers and illustrators inspiring a love of reading and writing.**

*Thank you. Jakob started this year with a fear of reading and writing and see him grow this year to love reading and writing. Today to see his proud face accept his book and each student become a published author. This is a program that all kids should participate in. So proud of Jakob and all his classmates.*

Nadine: parent  
St Francis of Assisi PS

Writers in Western Sydney Schools programs is supported by Cultural Fund Copyright Agency and the schools themselves.

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CULTURAL FUND



## Writer Development

### Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowships

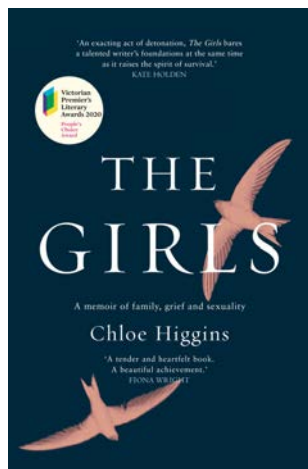
The 2019/20 Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowships offered three Fellowships to emerging writers aged 16 years and over.

The program is aimed at writers on the brink of potential publication. One of the Fellowships granted was for an emerging writer specifically writing for children and/or young people. The 2019/20 fellows are Aishah Ali, Claire Cao and Erin Sayers. As part of their fellowship winners receive a program of tailored mentorship. The mentors are Manisha Anjali, Melina Marchetta and Ben Peek respectively. As an example of our strategic approach to providing a pathway of opportunity for writer development Erin was a recipient of the WestWords residency program at Varuna: The National Writers' House.



*WestWords is an organisation that truly puts its money where its mouth is with regards to empowering people from Western Sydney in the arts, and strengthening our community.*

*Every young writer from Western Sydney that I've spoken to wants this Fellowship! This opportunity has opened more doors for me, as well as for many Fellows who have come before me, than any other opportunity I've had in my career.*  
Eda Günaydin  
2016 fellow



With the support of the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency the fellowship program has been running since 2011. Recent recipients have included Peter Polites who worked on the manuscript for his debut novel *Down the Hume* (published 2017, Hachette), Maryam Azam whose poetry collection, *The Hijab Files* was published by Giramondo in 2018, and essayists Sheila Pham and Eda Günaydin whose work went on to be published in *Griffith Review*, *Voiceworks* and *Meanjin*. In addition Joseph Chebatte got funding to produce his short film screenplay, *Entrenched*, released in June 2018. 2018 fellow Chloe Higgins' debut work, which she worked on as part of her fellowship *The Girls* was published by Picador in August and was shortlisted for Non-Fiction prize and won the People's Choice Award in the 2020 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards. Previous mentors in this program have

included Maxine Beneba Clarke, Judith Beveridge, Bryan Brown AM, Sara Knox, Chi Vu, Jessica White and Walter Mason.

***This is a life changing experience for me.***

Zoe Ghani: 2018/19 Fellow

***Being disabled, finding the time and energy to completely devote myself to writing full time has been difficult. Being provided the time and space, and also financial support to really focus on my work, has been invaluable. I've been able to develop my manuscript and prepare it to go out to agents and publishers. Having access to my mentor, someone who understands the process of being a writer, means I know there is a place to go.***

Erin Sayers: 2019/2020 Fellow



*Providing fellowships for Western Sydney writers is an integral part of making sure that we hear, honour and support the diverse and dynamic stories of the region.*  
Felicity Castagna  
author *The Incredible Here and Now*,  
winner of the 2015 Prime Minister's Award – Young Adult.



***The WestWords fellowship has been vital to my development as a writer. With my family under financial stress the money from the fellowship has been helpful in reducing anxiety, keeping my process structured and inspiring me to craft the stories I hoped to create.***

Claire Cao: 2019/2020 Fellow

***Without WestWords there would be no book.***  
Peter Polites: 2016 Fellow

Western Sydney Emerging Writers Fellowships are supported by Cultural Fund Copyright Agency

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CULTURAL FUND





**Community residencies**

In 2019 we partnered with a number of different arts organisations to provide residencies for writers and illustrators. Demonstrating our commitment to writers through the various stages of their careers these opportunities, along with the Fellowships, were closely targeted to provide mentorship, space and support.

**Pinerolo: The Children’s Book Cottage**

In 2019 we offered one emerging illustrator a week-long residency at Pinerolo at Blackheath. The aim of this opportunity is to extend illustrators’ knowledge of picture book creation and design, the process of publishing and the publishing industry. Working on a illustrations for an upcoming publication Christina Huynh was given daily consultation with mentor Margaret Hamilton AM, a professional publisher of picture books for over thirty years.



**Varuna: The National Writers’ House**



In October we partnered with Varuna to give for four emerging Western Sydney writers from diverse backgrounds, James Elazzi, Erin Sayers, Tina Nyfakos and Gonzallo Cappielli, the chance to spend a week at Varuna to write in seclusion and being mentored by mentored by a television screenwriter turned crime novelist, Andy Muir and publisher and editor, Jody Lee. James was finishing the script for his play *Lady Tabouli* which went on to be produced by Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta as part of the 2020 Sydney Festival.

**The Blume Illustrated Mentorship Project**

In 2018 WestWords partnered with *Blume Illustrated* magazine to offer three mentorship programs to young designers, illustrators, and writers aged between 18 and 24. The successful applicants: Tessa Burton (Illustration/Design), Pat Alan Doyle (Design/Writing), Annabel Pettit (Writing) each received an internship on the magazine, professional support and skills development mentorship from both Blume and WestWords along with space at The Writers’ Den, Katoomba. The outcomes were featured in the 2019 issue #3 of *Blume Illustrated* Magazine and the associated Blume exhibitions.

**Sydney Review of Books**

2018 saw a new partnership between WestWords and the *Sydney Review of Books* giving the opportunity for Western Sydney writers to write an essay on place for publication in the *Sydney Review of Books*. Under the program the successful applicants receive a two-week residency at one of our locations with a \$1000 stipend and editorial oversight. Anjali Roberts’, the 2018 recipient, essay was published in April 2019. In 2019 we awarded two residencies, Paul Kelaita in Wedderburn and Rawah Arja in Parramatta for essays on *Urbanism, Suburbanism and Sub-urbanism*. Paul’s essay *Assyrians in the Aerotropolis* was published in November.

**Parramatta Artists Studios**

The 2019 WestWords Illustrator in Residence was Martin Ed Chatterton. Martin is an illustrator, writer and performer who has, for the past 30 years, appeared extensively at schools, festivals, conferences, TV, radio in the UK, Australia, India, China and the USA. This two-week residency allows for a writer/illustrator to combine development of their own work alongside a series of community engagements including events, workshops and visits to schools and libraries. Martin ran illustration workshops with children and young adults of varying ages, asking them to assist him develop his upcoming book *Green*. Developing both environmental themes along with questions of association and identity, an alien encounters a strange planet called Earth trying to understand them and what they are doing to their home.



**Craig Field**

*“I didn’t want to be part of that corporate world, so I moved to Spain and lived in a desert for about seven months, then started a fashion agency in Madrid.”* Craig Field fits a lifetime of experiences into a single sentence and I got to hear about a few.

**Annabel Pettit**

Published in *Blume Illustrated #3*

**Will the City be Okay?**

*How did the city support love? Were there cushions to cry on? Groves in which to say goodbye? Were there places to sit and wonder? Or only places of darkness, where the cold seeped in from wind and vapour. Could I find something to heal me? Could the city love me?*

**Anjali Roberts**

on Parramatta  
Published in *Sydney Review of Books*

**Assyrians in the Aerotropolis**

*The Experience Centre is soft-selling something that has already been bought: economic potential, jobs for future kids, a seemingly meaningful engagement of Indigenous stakeholders, the assurance that your place now will be the centre of things long after you are gone. This is meant to convince us all that this is good change. There’s something vaguely ominous about these promises, like a countdown has started on a future that doesn’t include you.*

**Paul Kelaita**

Published in *Sydney Review of Books*



## Writing competitions

### **What Matters?**

Now in its eleventh year, the *What Matters?* writing competition invites students from years 5-12 from across NSW, Vic, WA, Tasmania and the ACT to write a 400-600 word piece on 'what matters' to them and why – fact or fiction, poetry or prose. The program is run by the Whitlam Institute. WestWords' Executive Director Michael Campbell is one of the judges and WestWords provides one of the participating schools from NSW with the opportunity to host an author at their school. The author is selected in consultation with the school and the interests of the students. For the second time the author of choice was Claire Zorn giving a presentation to over 300 students along with writing workshops to Yr 7 students at Carlingford High School.



### **YOUTHWrite**

WestWords and City of Parramatta Libraries partnered to invite young people aged between 12 to 25 to write a 400-600 word opinion piece on one of three topics, Gender Equality, Mental Health or Social Media. Across the three age categories the entries were provocative and thoughtful.

#### **Meta Social Media: Comparison is the Thief of Joy**

***As I scrolled through my Facebook feed, I came across a post of a photo of a friend's first kiss with his girlfriend. Two thoughts came to mind. Firstly, a moment of happiness for him – something that devolved into jealousy and self-deprecation. The second one was more sinister - such an intimate, spontaneous moment, yet there was perfect lighting, angle and camera positioning.***

***What was his real intent behind this photo?***

**B.Chen 17yrs old**

### **Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize**

WestWords, in partnership with Blacktown City Libraries and Blacktown City Council, ran the 2019 Mayoral Creative Writing Prize open to people 8yrs old to adult. Responding to the theme *Language. Place. Story.* we received 176 entries with 50 schools participating in the competition. Winners aged 17 or younger received \$100 and their school, if it was located in Blacktown City, received a corresponding \$100 as incentive to encourage the budding authors of the area. The competition was judged by Michael Aiken, Angela May George and James Roy.

#### **Hope**

***The town of Oxville hadn't always been discoloured. It once used to be drenched in all the colours of the rainbow, but ever since Dr Grey swept the life and energy out of Oxville, the town became like him; grey.***

**Maryam Bukhari: winner short story 8-11 yrs**

***The opportunity to read the entries for this prize was a wonderful experience, and reaffirms to me that literature is as urgent and vital in our culture as ever, if not more so. The pieces submitted were all passionate and compelling, and demonstrated enormous originality across all the categories. It gives me heart for the future of our national literature to see such a breadth and depth of talent from our emerging writers.***

**Councillor Kathie Collins**

### **The Blake Poetry Prize**

In partnership with Casula Arts Powerhouse and Liverpool City Councils we are running the Blake Poetry Prize. With the competition closing and being awarded in 2020 this competition challenges Australian poets to explore the spiritual and religious in a new work of 100 lines or less. Judges are Samuel Wagan Watson, Lachlan Brown and 2017 winner Julie Watts.

## WESTWORDS WHAT IS LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT?

We develop **the writers:** giving writers at all stages of their careers, from pre-school onwards, strategic opportunities to develop their craft and the skills development to sustain their careers.



## Writer Development



### Workshops, masterclasses, holiday programs, after-school classes and writers' groups

Through our public programming we offered a number of workshops, masterclasses and holiday programs. Run through our various centres or partnering with a diverse range of organisations, our activities sometimes transcend the easy categorisation of writer or audience development. For example, showcasing work from workshops and writing groups is also about providing a focal point and outcome to the developmental work they have undertaken. Exhibitions of illustrators' work have accompanying workshops; workshops series morph into writing groups; author tours to schools culminate in holiday workshops. It is a strategic, embedded

approach aimed to build strong networks, pathways and support.

### After School classes

We commenced running after-school classes for three age groups at our Parramatta Centre: school years 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. The facilitators were Rawah Arja, a writer and former primary school teacher, and Michelle Hamadache, writer, lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Macquarie University and Managing Editor of *Mascara Literary Review*. We became a Creative Kids provider:

this is a NSW Government scheme to help kids get creative with a voucher available with a value of up to \$100 per calendar year for each student aged 4.5 to 18 years old enrolled in school.



### Workshops and masterclasses

Across the year we ran masterclasses a variety of workshops and masterclasses at our various centres, and in partnership with libraries and community centres. The writing and illustrating workshops were run for various ages, and in various genres. They included:

Luke Carmen in Camden; Oliver Phommavanh in Merrylands and Auburn; Elliot Reynolds running a three session series of songwriting workshops in Katoomba; a five session workshop series *Making Picture Books* in Parramatta with Alison Giles; a three week series of workshops with Sarah Ayoub; Haiku workshops with Julie Thorndyke; a spoken word masterclass with US poet Desiree Dallagiacomo; holiday workshops with Nat Amooore, Oliver Phommavanh, Deborah Abela, Martin Ed Chatterton.



### Storyroom

In partnership with Parramatta Libraries we ran a series of *Storyrooms*. For varying ages each *Storyroom* ran after school at Parramatta Library and Epping Libraries over five weeks where children and young people spend four weeks building their writerly skills before presenting their work to friends, family and staff in the fifth. Presenters were: Mick Elliot, Lesley Gibbes and Tamsin Janu in Parramatta, John Larkin in Epping with Elliot York Cameron running a Storyroom slam also in Parramatta for slightly older teenagers.



### Writers' groups

We ran three writers' groups: one in Katoomba growing out of one of our workshop series in 2018; the Scribblers writers' group for children aged 12-14 in Blacktown ran out of our Blacktown Writers' Room facilitated by Barbara Polito; the LGBTQIA+ writers' group was facilitated by Allison Gallagher and then in the second half of the year by Erin Gough.

### Summer Scope

*I stare hard at the picture  
frame  
Those summer memories  
they just came  
Small sparrows in their cosy  
nest  
Warm sun is in the rusty  
west  
Gran's popsicles drip cold as  
ice  
Their strong sweet taste is  
quite precise  
A salty stench that fills the  
air  
Swift sea spray that fills the  
air  
Wide tides of words  
They flood my head  
So I lie down upon my bed  
But even then I cannot rest  
Still thinking of that rusty  
west.*

Eloise aged 11



### Word of Mouth:

#### Migration is only part of the Journey

Word of Mouth is the culmination of a series of writing workshops led by Rawah Arja and Tanya Vavilova where participants from refugee backgrounds told, wrote and developed their stories. The ten writers whose stories appear in the anthology presented them on the 21<sup>st</sup> June at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre as part of Liverpool’s contribution to celebrating Refugee Week 2019.



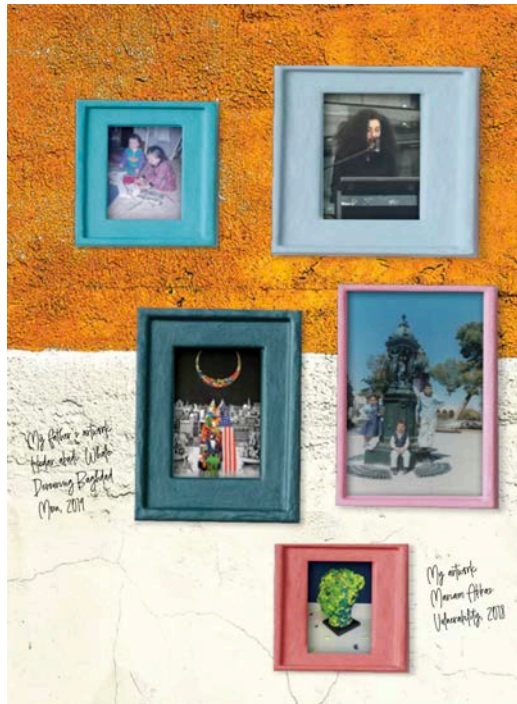
*I want to emphasise the importance of hearing refugees’ stories told in their own words. Our nation’s understanding of refugees and asylum seekers is often through the lens of news media or through politically motivated debates. Rarely do we have the opportunity to hear from the people at the centre of the stories. Stories are powerful ways to connect people with each other and to cross cultural and linguistic barriers. Projects like these are crucial in sending a message to our community that our stories matter and are part of the fabric of Australian society.*

Councillor Charishma Kaliyanda, Liverpool City Council



### WESTWORDS WHAT IS LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT?

We develop **the artform:** Working inter-artform, inter-culturally and inter-linguistically we push the boundaries of what literature can be.



*It was a small wooden boat. But there were a hundred of us. We were surrounded by an unknown sea. The earthy scent coming from the floor we sat on became stronger every time it rained. There was nothing to cover our hopeless heads. It was scary. Very rarely the water was calm and the view of the sky beautiful. But no words were able to describe the fear the grownups held under their tongues. Whenever my eyes met my mother’s I saw doubts in her light brown eyes.*

Asma Mayim Ullah

*It all started when ISIS attacked and bombarded our cities on 10th of June 2014.* Sameem

*My story is a small part of a bigger story.* Mariam

*To be called a refugee is the opposite of an insult: it is a badge of strength, courage, and victory.* Jehan



This was a joint project between WestWords  
Liverpool City Council, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre  
in collaboration with Settlement Services International, Navitas,  
Marrackville Training Centre (Liverpool) and Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre.





## Postcard Stories



In late 2018 WestWords was approached by CAPAH: Citizens Action Penrith Affordable Housing to work with them so that the people they represented could write their stories. These people are experiencing difficulty being able to put a roof over their and their families' heads. Workshops, led by James Roy, took place early in 2019 with a series of five postcards produced in March, which were left for people to read in public spaces. The writers are resilient and hard working – and their stories speak of journeys through life that are both poignant and full of hope. The project also led to a launch where the project was officially launched by Penrith Councillor Tricia Heaton, a community meeting as well as a workshop with the Homelessness Interagency Penrith.

*It all started to unravel around the time my mother died. My wife and I were struggling to adjust to being parents. You know the story. To cope I drank – too much. Alcohol lead to harder stuff, and it didn't take long for our marriage to collapse. Within three months or so I was living under a hedge next to Council Chambers, drinking over a litre of spirits a day. The hole I was in was so deep I didn't know how I would ever get out.*  
Rohan

**My journey from South Sudan to St Marys has been one of survival. But I'm so tired.**

---

When I was fourteen I fell from a moving train. I was in hospital for eight months, and in that time, no one came to see me. Such is the lot of an orphan.

I have been bitten by snakes, stung by scorpions, attacked by dogs, but I did not die. As a small child I was infected with smallpox, but I did not die. Such is the way of a survivor.

I survived a marriage breakup that left me a single dad of seven children. I worked hard, got a diploma, did whatever employment I could get – bus conductor, office clerk, teacher, cleaner, housekeeper, anything, and I did it all for my kids. Was it tough? Of course. But remember that

AROU

even at the age of five I was tending cattle and working in the fields, so no, hard work doesn't frighten me.

Not providing for my children is what frightens me.

I am 51 now. I work two jobs, seven days a week, just to house my family.

I am an orphan. I am a father. I am a survivor. I am a hard worker.

But some days having to work this hard just to survive feels like too much.

AROU

**CAPAH** Citizen Action Penrith Affordable Housing

CAPAH aims to mobilise our community into action on the issue of lack of affordable rental housing in Penrith.  
For more information:  
[facebook.com/citizenactionpenrithaffordablehousing](https://facebook.com/citizenactionpenrithaffordablehousing)

Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation

This project has been supported by Penrith City Council. WestWords is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW

*My son?  
He can afford the repayments on a modest home in the outer suburbs of Western Sydney. His rent would be the same as a mortgage repayment. But he can't raise the deposit. How can he save when after food, clothes and bills there's no money left for the jar on the fridge?*

*Where are my dreams for my children?*

*Where are their dreams?  
Steven*

**This project was supported by Penrith City Council**

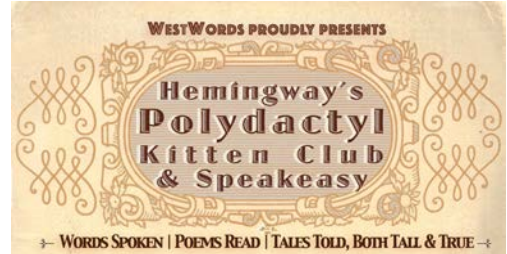


## Public Programming: Audience Development

Developing audiences for the written cultural expressions of Sydney's West allows the region to see itself and its experiences being reflected back to itself, and builds a complex, rich identity that reaches into those communities. Our programs also showcase some of Australia's best writers, providing access to these writers and to literature close to where audiences live and work.

### Hemingway's Polydactyl Kitten Club & Speakeasy

From July, on the first Monday of the month we ran Hemingway's Polydactyl Kitten Club & Speakeasy, a spoken word event held in the intimate art-deco setting of the Avalon Cocktail Bar, Katoomba. Hosted by James Roy, each month



a featured writer gave a twenty minute reading of their work followed by an open mic.

Features included:

Kate Fagan, Mark Tredinnick, Steven Herrick, Tohy Riddle and James Knight.



*You see,  
I bought a bigger bed  
Hoping it would give us  
more space  
For our love  
But I guess it took up too  
much room  
And gave more distance  
to the road between our  
eyes.*

Mohammed Awad  
@ August's West Side  
Slam



### West Side Slam

On the third Wednesday of the month we hosted the West Side Slam. It is co-convened by Defne Huzmeli and Melodie Grafton, who was a member of WestWords' Blacktown Writers' Group for six years throughout her high school years. It is an open mic night where, following the usual slam format, poets sign up on the night and perform/read an original piece of writing. Random audience members score just for the fun of it and winners are awarded a



support feature slot at the next slam. Other performance artforms are also welcome. August's event was also the Parramatta heat of the

Australian Poetry Slam, run in partnership with Word Travels. Every slam also has a feature poet and over the course of the year

has included: Cassie Ross, Zohab Zee Khan, Aishah Ali, Liam Smith, Waffle Irongirl and Paola Fanous.



### Poet's Corner



Growing out of the *Touch of Poetry* evening held Castle Hill Library in 2018 Poet's Corner was held on the last Thursday of the month at WestWords Centre of Writing Parramatta. Convened by David Adès it showcased some of our most respected poets including David Malouf, Omar Sakr, Jennifer Compton, Eunice Andrada, Richard James Allen, Tricia Dearborn and Ali Whitelock.







### Community celebrations

Throughout the year many of our programs were included as part of wider public programs and celebrations including Liverpool’s Senior Festival, Hawkesbury’s celebration of International Women’s Day, Narellan’s Youth Week, Liverpool’s Refugee Week celebrations, Campbelltown’s Fisher’s Ghost Festival, Varuna’s Mountains Writers’ Festival, Word Travels’ Storyfest at The Rocks.

### Launches and author talks

We held launches for the books we published and projects we were involved with, with audiences between 30 and 140. Launches, which are really



celebrations and the first sharing of the work and stories of emerging Western Sydney literature, included the *Word of Mouth* launch at Casula Performing Arts Centre as part of Refugee Week, the launch of *Blume Illustrated Vol 3* attended by over 100 people, as well as hosting the launch of Yumna Kassab’s debut novel *The House of Youseff* (Giramondo).

### Author talks and showcases

In addition to our regular series of events we also held one off author talks and events across a broad range of topics from *An*



*Introduction to Digital Publishing* with writer in residence, Adina West, to Richard Glover talking about his most recent book, *The Land Before Avocado: Journeys in a Lost Australia*.



### GIVING VOICE TO THE WORD

#### Giving Voice to the Word

*Giving Voice to the Word*, presented in partnership with SAMAG (Sydney Arts Management Advisory Group) at University of New England, Parramatta with Aishah Ali, Troy Wong, Sunil Badami, Felicity Castagna, featured performances, and investigated how writing cultures in Western Sydney have developed over time and how writers and the organisations that support them can bring this work to wider audiences.

### Against the Wall

*Against the Wall* was a street art collaboration inspired by Campbelltown Arts Centre’s exhibition *OK Democracy, We Need to Talk*. The workshop began with a yarnning circle exploring different cultural perspectives and the language of democracy with writer Ethan Bell, before collaborating with street artist Merindah Funnel to visually representing these words, themes, harmonies and conflicts against the wall of Campbelltown’s HJ Daley Library.

### Hasta La Bella Vista Baby

Led by Tina Havelock Stevens, *Hasta La Bella Vista Baby* was a C3West project done partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art and Landcom, and involved the communities around Bella Vista Station, a new Sydney Metro Northwest station. The project culminated in an evening event near Bella Vista Station, featuring performances, a dance video and talk show. At the heart of the project was Landcom’s desire to “explore the communities around the Bella Vista Station in the Hills Shire, to learn more about the demographic make-up of the Hills area and how residents, particularly those in the 18 to 40-year-old demographic, feel about the area.” We held writing workshops with Vanessa Berry to create a collection of work that featured on the hoardings surrounding the site at the event.



### Alive 90.5FM

Michael Campbell, representing WestWords, appeared fortnightly on Alive 90.5 FM’s *Point of View* with Aparna Vats showcasing the writing of Western Sydney. The radio station broadcasts across the region.

### WESTWORDS WHAT IS LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT?

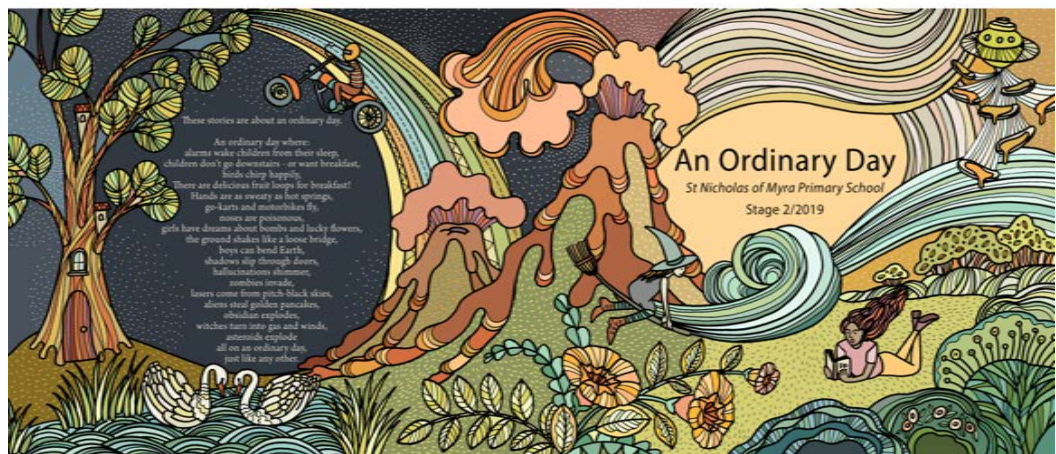
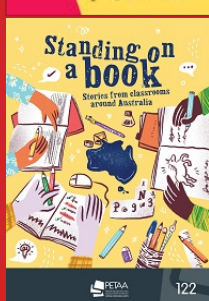
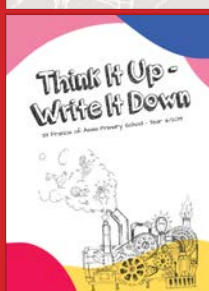
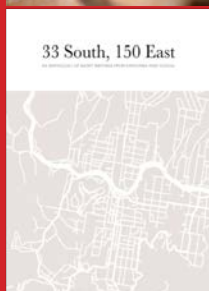
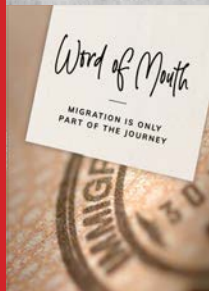
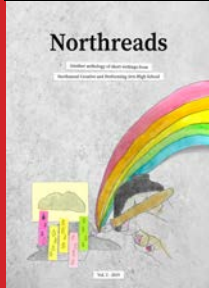
We develop the audiences, creating the opportunities for audiences to experience the writing emanating from this unique region. We do this through showcasing writers and their works online, in publications and at events.



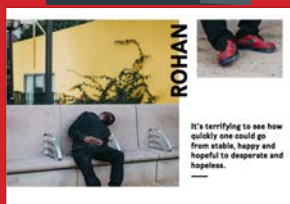
## WestWords 2019 Publications

The publications WestWords produces are direct results from our programs. We invest in giving them the highest possible production values so they look like a book you might buy in a bookshop. We do this because the publications are a marker of the value we accord the contributors and their stories. This is particularly important in communities that are marginalised or low SES. The artwork is either commissioned or the work of the students.

- **Beast.Belly.Beast**, written by Peter Maple in consultation with Australian Military veterans the play and dramaturged by WestWords' Executive Director Michael Campbell, the play delves inside the minds of two ex-servicemen suffering the repercussions of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- **Northreads: Another Anthology of Short Writings from Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School Vol2-2019** was created from a residency with Tanya Vavilova with the school's creative writing club.
- **Word of Mouth: Migration is Only Part of the Journey** is the culmination of a series of writing workshops where participants from refugee backgrounds developed their stories. It was launched as part of Refugee Week celebrations.
- **33 South, 150 East: An anthology of short writings from Katoomba High School** brings together stories of place; places of the heart, of sadness, love, hope and joy created during the course of a residency with Catherine Jinks and during some of the most intense heat Katoomba has ever known.
- **Think It Up – Write It Down: St Frances of Assisi Primary School – Year 4/2019** was created over the course of a five-week residency with Amelia McNerney where students and teachers were encouraged to be brave with their ideas and their writing.
- **Standing on a Book: Stories from classrooms around Australia** is a collection of stories written by students and compiled for teachers, by the Primary English Teachers Association Australia (PETAA) drawn from classrooms around Australia. We contributed substantially to the publication.
- **Postcard Stories of Affordable Housing** Working with CAPAH: Citizens Action Penrith Affordable Housing, James Roy led workshops so that people who are experiencing difficulty being able to put a roof over their and their families' heads could tell their stories. Their stories speak of journeys through life that are both poignant and full of hope.
- **An Ordinary Day: St Nicholas of Myra Primary School Stage 2/2019** is the culminating publication from a joint residency program with Jodie McLeod and Eloise Short. The publication is testament to the students growing belief in the power of their own writing and the magic of their own words.
- **Sydney Review of Books** As part of a joint residency and publication program two essays were published in the online journal. Anjali Roberts' essay "Will The City Be Okay" was published in April. Paul Kelaita's, "Assyrians in the Aerotropolis", appeared in November.



WestWords' publication program is supported by the Australian Catholic University





## Touring exhibitions

We toured two exhibitions into libraries across Western Sydney, including Blacktown, Liverpool, Penrith and Hawkesbury libraries, with WestWords providing complementary writing and illustration workshops:



*Cover to Cover* is a collection of Roald Dahl book covers from around the world, providing an insight into the different cultural perspectives on the same work. *Cover to Cover* was originally part of the 2017 Children's Festival of Moving Stories presented in partnership with WestWords. Accompanying this exhibition were *Revolting Rhymes* workshops.

Inspired by the children's book *Shout Out to The Girls: A Celebration of Awesome Australian Women* this showcases some of the beautiful artworks featured within the book; each illustration is created by



Australian women, celebrating famous Australian female achievements. The exhibition was launched by Hajer Al-awsji at Hawkesbury Library as part of celebrating International Women's Day.



At the Centre for Writing in Parramatta we continued to exhibit:

- o The WestWords' commissioned, original artworks by Tony Flowers and Sadami Konchi for two of our publications resulting from residencies at Tahmoor Public School and Parramatta North Public School. Subsequently each artist has generously donated their work to WestWords.
- o *Picture Gallery* is a collection of exceptional contemporary

Australian children's book illustrators on display at WestWords Parramatta.

## Annual Fundraising Dinner

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May we held our inaugural Annual Fundraising Dinner at McLaren Hall at the University. In a room that transported the 230 attendees to Hogwarts, the attendees enjoyed talks from Jane Caro and WestWords' ambassador Bryan Brown AM and participated in a silent auction, live auction and raffles. The evening raised over \$46,000 so that we could continue our work with, and for, the literary culture of Western Sydney.

*I saw a tsunami of lego.  
Maybe that's what woke me up.  
Naah, it was probably the bomb of toys that hit...  
Nope.  
Oww.  
I know. It was the truckload of stuffed animals.  
Yep.  
I remember.  
It all went down like this.*  
Oliver Yr 4, St Francis of Assisi Primary School  
from *Think It Up – Write It Down*



**Anxiety**  
*It is the oily black colour of a hasty scribble.  
It happens when you are stressed and overwhelmed.  
It sounds like disappointment in voices  
And smells like the salty tears of a breakdown.*  
**Anxiety**  
Kaylee Yr 8  
from *Northreads: Another anthology of short writings from Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School*

*Wisteria...  
The soft and gentle shadows  
Of yesterday*  
Julie – haiku workshop,  
Fisher's Ghost Festival

*Along the oceanside  
Dancing with the waves  
Moving with the sea  
Letting the rhythm of  
the water  
Set my soul free*  
Jenna  
from 33 South, 150 East  
An anthology of short  
writings from Katoomba  
High School

*It's a world full of  
Giants and Ants...  
Do you hear me?!  
GIANTS, and ANTS...*  
*Beasts and Babies.  
Predators and Prey.  
Guilty and Innocent.*  
*And if you're not one;  
Then you're the other.*  
*One or the other, man  
One - or the other!*

Captain  
Hamish Michael Forbes  
*BEAST.BELLY.BEAST*  
Peter Maple



# WestWords

*Sharing the wealth of words*



## Treasurer's Report for YE 2019

Financial management of the business has continued to be prudent throughout 2019. WestWords was successful in securing a different mix of revenue which has enabled it to continue to fund and deliver its critical work to the people of Western Sydney. The 2019 financial accounts have been audited with retained earnings of \$25,342. The capacity of WestWords to maintain existing programmes and grow its activities will be dependent on extension of existing funding sources and new funding raising initiatives. WestWords commenced the year with a confirmed significant reduction in philanthropic funding that required the Board, our Executive Director and our staff to work tirelessly to replace this funding reduction through alternate sources. Most significantly, WestWords held its inaugural Fundraising Dinner in May 2019. The event was extremely successful from a fundraising perspective, but it also elevated the WestWords brand by showcasing the value of our work. In addition, higher rental income was achieved through the letting of vacant space at our Parramatta office. WestWords was able to deliver all budgeted programmes in 2019. We achieved a three-fold increase in our fee for service activities which also facilitated the need increase in the number of writers employed.

During the year we faced a budget challenge when the Australian Society of Authors, without notice, increased published rates for writers. This decision placed at risk our ability to run a number of our programmes. Fortunately our Executive Director was able to successfully negotiate a position where rates to our writers were maintained at the historical rate.

In 2019, WestWords achieved overall income of \$520,256 which represented a 11.1% increase on the previous year (\$468,337). The ongoing success of WestWords over the past four years (2015-2019) is evidenced by its revenue growth over the period (from \$211,211 in 2015) which equates to a 146% increase over the period.

The Board recognises that the programmes and the services delivered by WestWords rely on a small but dedicated team who are truly committed to our purpose. To maintain and grow our team and business, the funding from existing sources including corporate, philanthropic, individual donations, fund raising events and fee or service are all critical. In the uncertain times we currently face this will be the most significant financial challenge for 2020 and beyond.

**Brett Perry**



## Income and expenditure statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

### Summary

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2019 \$</b>	<b>2018 \$</b>
Operating grants	210,000	210,000
Project grants	109,693	107,000
Interest income	1	-
Membership subscriptions	-	-
Activity & services income	67,172	23,998
Other income	90,629	21,362
Donations	42,761	98,772
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>520,256</b>	<b>468,337</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Marketing expenses	14,025	19,831
Occupancy costs	78,688	78,380
Administrative expenses	96,218	124,807
Artist fees	93,500	80,335
Other expenses inc. wages	251,040	172,424
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(533,471)</b>	<b>475,777</b>
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>	<b>(13,215)</b>	<b>(7,440)</b>
<b>Income tax expense</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Surplus from continuing operations</b>	<b>(13,215)</b>	<b>(7,440)</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>(13,215)</b>	<b>(7,440)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income, net of income tax</b>		
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>(13,215)</b>	<b>(7,440)</b>

## Statement of Financial Position for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>(13,215)</b>	<b>(7,440)</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Total current assets	116,125	115,237
Total non-current assets	-	-
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>116,125</b>	<b>115,237</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Total current liabilities	86,346	68,328
Total non-current liabilities	4,437	-
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>90,783</b>	<b>70,331</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>25,342</b>	<b>44,906</b>

### INCOME

From 2018 to 2019 income grew by \$52,000 being an 11.2% increase and a redistribution of income sources away from foundations to sponsorship, private donors and fundraising.

Over the period 2015-19 WestWords saw a 146.3% increase in income from \$211,211 to \$520,256

### PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT

In 2019 we paid \$93,500 in fees to writers, illustrators, editors and allied artists

That's a 14% increase on 2018!

## Our Board

### **Libby Gleeson AM Chair**

Libby is author of forty titles for children and young adults. She is formerly Chair of the Australian Society of Authors, Chair of the Literature and History Committee of ArtsNSW, a Director of the Copyright Agency and recently stepped down as a Director of the Public Education Foundation.

### **Prof. Robyn Ewing AM Deputy Chair**

Robyn is Professor Emerita, Teacher Education and the Arts, Sydney School of Education and Social Work and Co-Director of the Creative Research, Engaging the Arts, Transforming Education (CREATE) Centre, University of Sydney. A former primary teacher, Robyn is passionate about the role that quality arts experiences and processes can and should play in our lives and learning. She is a past president of the Australian Literacy Educators Association (ALEA) and the Primary English Teachers Association (PETAA) (2001-2006) and a former Council Member and Chair of the Academic Board of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Robyn has worked in partnership with Sydney Theatre Company on the School Drama teacher professional learning program since 2009 and is an Honorary Associate with Sydney Theatre Company.

### **Janice Lee Co-Treasurer**

Janice is the Australian Head of Government Practice at L.E.K. Consulting. She brings 18 years of advising state and federal governments on social and economic policy, including on tackling disadvantage and promoting economic development. She worked as a policy adviser to the Australian Treasurer and Federal Infrastructure Minister, and in the NSW Cabinet Office, and is a former Director in Economics and Public Policy at EY. Janice has worked and volunteered in a range of educational roles for children, and is passionate about reading, poetry and storytelling with her two children.

### **Brett Perry Co-Treasurer**

Brett has 40 years experience in the banking industry. He joined The Commonwealth Bank of Australia in 1990. Throughout his career, Brett has worked in various roles, including Institutional Banking, Project Finance, State Manager Business Banking Qld and National Manager Corporate Risk Management. Brett holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Deakin University).

### **Assoc. Prof. Susanne Gannon Secretary**

Susanne is Associate Professor in the Centre for Educational Research in the School of Education, Western Sydney University (WSU), and was previously a secondary English teacher for many years. She was an executive member of the Australian Association of Teachers of English from 2011-2016, and is a former Editor of their research journal, *English in Australia*. She currently co-edits the international journal *Gender and Education*. She researches and is widely published in a range of areas pertaining to equity and social justice in education, gender and education, early career teacher trajectories into the profession, English curriculum and pedagogy in secondary schools, and high quality teaching in HSC. She has a particular interest in the place of creative writing in and beyond schools, and the impacts of NAPLAN testing on the teaching of writing in secondary school English. She is committed to education as a public good and as the foundation of democratic participation and social inclusion.

### **Hania Radvan**

Hania has over 30 years' experience as a professional arts worker across performing arts practice, industry and audience development, venue management, arts policy development, funding implementation and strategy. Hania spent 22 years working in the Northern Territory first as Marketing Manager at the Darwin Entertainment Centre, then for the NT Government, ultimately as Director, Arts NT. In 2013 she took up the position of CEO Penrith Performing & Visual Arts operators of the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith Conservatorium and Q Theatre.

### **Vivienne Skinner**

Vivienne is principal of the urban strategy company, Metropolis, and for nearly two decades was an adviser and speechwriter to two NSW premiers and the deputy prime minister of Australia.

Vivienne has been a television newsreader and journalist and is director of Beyond Empathy, which uses the arts to improve the lives of severely disadvantaged young Australians. She is a member of The Big Issue Women's Advisory Committee, and SAMAG, the Sydney Arts Management Advisory Committee. Former board appointments include the Centennial Parklands and Moore Park Trust, chair of the Centennial Parklands' Community Consultative Committee, deputy Chair of the Adelaide Film Festival, the South Australian Film Corporation, and the physical theatre company, Legs on the Wall. Vivienne recently completed a masters degree in Urban Policy and Strategy at the University of NSW.

### **Lucy Brotherton**

Lucy Brotherton is a Community Capacity Building Officer, Social Investment at the City of Parramatta. In her role in Council, Lucy implements and facilitates a range of social investment activities in the Parramatta Local Government Area. These activities use innovative approaches to create positive and sustainable social change in the community. Lucy also has extensive experience in State Government engaged within policy development, project management and strategic planning particularly in relation to social issues.

### **Ethan Bell Aboriginal Advisor**

Ethan Bell is a Ngunnawal man from the Yass Valley NSW. At 15 he moved from country to Campbelltown prior to enlisting in the Australian Defence Force. He works in community services, supporting youth within the Campbelltown area and is studying Creative Writing, History and Politics at Western Sydney University.



## Our Staff

### Michael Campbell

#### Executive Director

With over 35 years of experience Michael has worked as an arts consultant and strategist, editor, writer, events manager, director and choreographer. He was the Festival Director for the Brisbane Writers Festival (2006-2009), and the literary events program at gleebooks in Sydney for 4 years (2002- 2005). He is currently the Chair of Currency House, and of its Editorial Committee, and edited *Keith Bain on Movement* and *Keith Bain: The Principles of Movement* for Currency House and Oberon Books (UK). Michael has also worked across the arts in various other capacities including as an artistic director, director, choreographer, artistic coordinator, producer, events manager, librettist, writer, editor, and dancer. He was a principal dancer with West Australian Ballet, Queensland Ballet and Oper der Stadt Köln, and has worked for companies including Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare Company and Griffin Theatre Company. He has worked for Opera Australia on numerous works including *Merry Widow*, *Handa on Sydney Harbour: Carmen* and *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino* and *Salomé*. In 2004 he directed the opera *Madeline Lee*, which he also co-wrote, and was nominated for seven Helpmann Awards. The work was restaged by State Opera of South Australia in 2019. Recent projects include directing, producing and co-creating *The Faces of Mercy*, a multi-artform work performed in Sydney and Rome; presenting the TV show *For the Love of Books*; Studio TV, Foxtel and judging the 2013, 2014, 2016 WA Premier's Book Awards. In 2018 he was a member of the Western Sydney Arts, Screen and Culture Roundtable and served on the Creative Arts and Humanities panel for Australia Research Council's inaugural Engagement and Impact Assessment. In August 2019 Michael was appointed to the inaugural Create NSW Artform Literature Advisory Board.

### Christian Pazzaglia

#### Producer

Christian has been a multidisciplinary curator, artistic director and producer working in Amsterdam and internationally for the past seventeen years. He has created exhibitions, public programs, activations and special events for some of the leading cultural institutions in the Netherlands. This include the International Amsterdam Documentary Film Festival (IDFA), Dutch Film Institute (EYE), Van Gogh Museum, Goethe-Institut and Alliance Française. He has also produced feature films and documentaries and, more recently, VR experiences. Christian moved to Australia at the end of 2016 and has since collaborated with cultural institutions such as Sydney Living Museums, Goethe-Institut, and the Italian Cultural Institute. His areas of expertise cover a wide range of subjects, contexts and audiences.

### Contract positions

**Development:** Kathie Elliott, *Square Pegs Consulting*

**Bookkeeper:** Peg Thatcher

### Hajer Al-awsi

#### Associate Producer

Hajer was born and raised in Australia in Western Sydney, primarily in the Parramatta region. She is of Iraqi descent. She is a multi-disciplinary writer capturing the complexity of being a second-generation Muslim, Arab immigrant. Her writing focuses on female experiences within this identity. The stories encapsulate the psychological effects of tribalism and religiosity, often in contexts that challenge practices the protagonists have been discouraged, and in many cases forbidden, to participate in. Hajer is part of the Finishing School Collective, a mentorship program run by Felicity Castagna based in the Parramatta Artist Studios. She has had her writing published in *Conatus News*, in an installation for Parramatta Lanes Festival, an audio installation for Unspoken Words. Most recently, Hajer co-wrote and acted in ABC iView webseries *Halal Gurls*. *Halal Gurls* is a 6 x 6 minute comedy series offering a candid look into the lives of three twentysomething Hijabis living in Bankstown as they endure the unseen and everyday culture clash between their faith and desire. Having moved around Western Sydney throughout her childhood and adolescence, Hajer attended disadvantaged schools and she is aware of the lack of support for the arts and writing that exists in Western Sydney. She believes that WestWords is making a difference, creating spaces where kids can grow up with opportunities for them to be nurtured and flourish, as people and as artists.

### James Roy

#### Blacktown and Katoomba Program Manager

James Roy was born in western New South Wales and spent much of his childhood in Papua New Guinea and Fiji, adventuring by day and reading books at night. Then one day, tired of reading books by dead people, he decided to start writing his own. Since his first novel was released in 1996, James has written a number of critically acclaimed works of fiction and nonfiction for young people. These include the CBCA Honour Books *Captain Mack and Billy Mack's War*, and six CBCA Notable Books. In 2008, *Town* also won the Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature in the NSW Premier Literary Awards, as well as the Golden Inky in Australia's only teenage choice awards. *Anonymity Jones* won the 2010 Western Australian Premier's Book Award for young adult literature. His latest book *One Thousand Hills*, written with Noel Zihabamwe won the NSW Premier Literary Award and a NSW Premier's History Award. James lives with his family in the Blue Mountains. He enjoys trying to make music and art, doesn't like olives very much, and hasn't entirely abandoned his dream of sailing around the world.





Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation

In 2019, we partnered with 73 organisations, of which four were universities and 26 were schools. These companies, government agencies, trusts and foundations, arts organisations, refugee and community organisations share in our fundamental belief in the power of the written word to shape lives and communities. We welcome our new supporters and acknowledge the ongoing relationships with those who have been with us over years.

Together we change lives and bring about social cohesion.

On behalf of all those who participated in, and were touched by, our programs - thank you.

*Our major partners:*



Create NSW  
Arts, Screen & Culture



creative  
partnerships  
australia



## PARTNERS

We worked with:  
**80 organisations**

including  
4 universities  
and  
26 primary and secondary  
schools

*Our community and arts partners include:*

- Alive 90.5 FM
- Australian Catholic University
- Avalon Cocktail Bar, Katoomba
- Blacktown Arts Centre
- Blacktown City Libraries
- Blume Illustrated
- Camden City Council
- CAPAH
- Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
- Campbelltown Arts Centre
- City of Parramatta Library
- Liverpool City Council
- Liverpool City Library
- Lost in Books
- Migrant Resource Centre (MRC)
- Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA)
- Navitas
- Parramatta Artists Studios
- Penrith City Council
- Pinerolo: The Children's Book Cottage
- Sailor Studio
- SAMAG
- Sydney Living Museums
- Sydney Review of Books
- Sydney Writers' Festival
- The Whitlam Institute
- University of Sydney
- Varuna: The National Writers' House
- WestLit Libraries: Public Libraries Association NSW, Western Zone Public Libraries
- Western Sydney University
- Word Travels

And our individual donors including Robyn Ewing AM, Libby Gleeson AM, Vivienne Skinner, Friday's Child, Blue Illusion, North Shore Poetry Project  
We couldn't do it without you!

### WestWords

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**In 2019, we collaborated with 103 writers, illustrators, editors, spoken word artists, actors and other allied. These extraordinary individuals included:**

- David Adès
- Randa Abdel-Fattah
- Michael Aiken
- Aishah Ali
- Richard James Allen
- Nat Amoore
- Eunice Andrada
- Liz Anelli
- Rawah Arja
- Sarah Ayoub
- Sunil Badami
- Vanessa Berry
- AJ Betts
- Jane Burke
- Gonzalo Cappielli
- Luke Carman
- Felicity Castagna
- Martin Ed Chatterton
- Wai Ping Chim
- Jennifer Compton
- Emily Crocker
- Desirée Dallagiacomo
- Tony Davis
- Tricia Dearborn
- Kirsty Eager
- James Elazzi
- Mick Elliott
- Kate Fagan
- Paola Fanous
- Dante Florez
- Alison Fraser
- Pamela Freeman
- Angela May George
- Suzanne Gervay
- Zoe Ghani
- Alison Giles
- Richard Glover
- Erin Gough
- Michelle Hamadache
- Wayne Harris
- Jack Herrick
- Christina Huynh
- Defne Huzmeli
- Matilda Imlah
- Waffle Irongirl
- Megan Jacobson
- Tamsin Janu
- Gareth Jenkins
- Catherine Jinks
- Paul Kelaita
- Zohab Zee Khan
- James Knight
- Will Kostakis
- John Larkin
- Jody Lee
- David Malouf
- Sara Mansour
- Melina Marchetta
- Amelia McInerney
- Jodie McLeod
- Stephen Measdale
- Andy Muir
- Fiona Murphy
- Tina Nyfakos
- Oliver Phommavanh
- Tohby Riddle
- Cassie Ross
- James Roy
- Omar Sakr
- Erin Sayers
- Eloise Short
- Liam Smith
- Pip Smith
- Michel Streich
- Hsu-Ming Teo
- Julie Thorndyke
- Helen Thurloe
- Mark Tredinnick
- Tanya Vavilova
- Chi Vu
- Adina West
- Ali Whitelock
- Faye Wilson
- Troy Wong
- Elliot York Cameron
- Noël Zihabamwe
- Claire Zorn *and more...*

## PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT

**104 professional writers, illustrators, editors and other allied artists facilitated our programs**

97 came from NSW, including 66 from Western Sydney – that's 63.5%  
6 were national  
1 was international