



WestWords

Sharing the wealth of words

Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation

2020 Annual Report

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WestWords

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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

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.

*I feel so lucky to have been a WestWords Fellow. The financial support and mentoring gave me the time, skills and confidence to finish my manuscript about hearing loss. WestWords also helped me navigate the publishing process by providing industry contacts and advice. My debut memoir, *The Shape of Sound* is forthcoming from Text Publishing in 2021. Fiona Murphy*



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

2020 was a memorable year.

The COVID 19 pandemic meant a lock down in March that forced a reimagining of ways to deliver the programs we had planned for young people and for special writing groups.

Support from all levels of government enabled us to continue operating during these hard times. The ATO Cash Boost stimulus package, City of Parramatta COVID resilience grant, Service NSW small business grant, Copyright Agency Emergency Action Funding and Job keeper allowed us to digitally pivot to online programming and to retain four staff members despite the drying up of some sources of income.

Our in-person public events program went online and we created additional programs such as our podcasts and mini masterclasses to showcase the writing and writers of Western Sydney.

WestWords worked closely with Parramatta, Blacktown and Campbelltown City Councils, reflecting our physical presence in those regions and we thank them for their support, but in addition we were involved with ten councils via their Library Services which form part of WestLit Libraries and other programs including The Blake Poetry Prize with Liverpool City Council.

The Board met via Zoom from March. We farewelled one member Susanne Gannon who had been with us since before incorporation. We seconded Jasmine Seymour and look forward to working with her in the future.

COVID meant no fundraising dinner. Instead we staged an online Art Auction of works generously donated by members of the illustration community. In October we mounted Booktober, where individuals nominated to read a certain number of titles and were sponsored by supporters. In each case, our development officer Kathie Elliott was instrumental in developing, managing and marketing these programs. She brought on Digiground and Booktopia as partners, urging on those who purchased, read and sponsored.

COVID also meant the loss of much of our public programming, sub-tenants and writers-in-residence at the Centre. We therefore found it difficult to maintain our private rental arrangements. In response, we re-envisioned the Wedderburn Writers' Retreat, with thanks to Campbelltown City Council whilst maintaining our presence in Parramatta, across Western Sydney and virtually. We are currently in negotiation regarding a new, exciting location in North Parramatta.

Despite the obvious difficulties, WestWords has maintained its reputation as the premier literary organisation in Western Sydney. This was acknowledged by our winning the Commonwealth Bank Excellence in Arts and Culture prize in the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence. Michael Campbell, our Executive Director, was also a finalist in the AAA City Removalist Outstanding Business Leader at the same awards.



The Board congratulates Michael for this recognition. His inexhaustible labour and strategic thinking have served us well and he has been supported by part-time staff: James Roy, Kathie Elliott, Christian Pazzaglia, Hajer Al-awsji, Christina Donoghue and Peg Thatcher.

In August Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW and her husband Mr Dennis Wilson became the inaugural Patrons of WestWords. Her Excellency spoke generously of the work of WestWords. We look forward to sharing some of our activities with her and her husband in 2021.

The Board thanks and acknowledges all our funding and program partners including NSW Government through Create NSW, Cultural Fund Copyright Agency, Australian Catholic University, City of Parramatta Council, City of Campbelltown Council, Blacktown City Council.

Thanks to the members of the Board and to our two ambassadors Bryan Brown AM and David Borger. May we be able to use their support more fully in the coming year, serving the needs of young people in Western Sydney.



Libby Gleeson AM

Executive Director's Report

2020 marks five years since WestWords was incorporated and five years for me as its Executive Director. The transformation has been remarkable. It is a story of singular growth, from a hot desk and myself as its only part-time employee to a powerful force in supporting the growth of writers and literature from Sydney's West. It has been a vision based on fulfilling the needs of the communities we serve, one that nurtures children to develop their skills and a confident voice, provides a comprehensive pathway of opportunities for emerging writers to grow into a career, as well as providing employment to writers to deliver our programs. We have centres across Western Sydney and have diversified our income streams to become responsive to the changing funding landscape. This resilience has set us in good stead for 2020.

We began the year blanketed in smoke and about to roll out our programming with writers engaged and partnerships in place. In mid-February, as we were in finalising the first six months of schools programming and preparing for a weekend celebrating Western Sydney writing at our Centre in Parramatta, I had my first meeting to discuss contingency planning for a potential pandemic. A month later we were in lockdown.

It was a difficult year. Circumstances changed rapidly. We lost the majority of schools' program as they dealt with providing young people with an education in a suddenly virtual world. Our fee for service programming dried up as people and organisations were overwhelmed with this sudden shift. Our tenants at the Parramatta Centre faced suspension of trading, not being able to maintain their businesses. Our writers-in-residence stayed home – as did we. For an arts organisation, working in separate



ACTIVITIES & SERVICES

It has been an extraordinary year! In the face of all its uncertainty, unpredictability, lockdowns, isolations, challenges and exhaustion we ran

147 activities maintaining 2019 levels.

In fact WestWords has gone from strength to strength.

This year we:

- received the patronage of the NSW Governor and her husband;
- were awarded the Commonwealth Bank Excellence in Arts and Culture at the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence (Our Executive Director was also a finalist for the Outstanding Business Leader Award);
- secured multi-year funding (2021-2024 inclusive) ensuring our ongoing future;
- established two new fundraising initiatives – the art auction and Booktober
- supported our writers through this crisis increasing our annual employment to facilitate programs by 14%;
- pivoted online;
- showcased WS writers and writing in an unprecedented way to international audiences

locations can work when engaged with task-based activity, but the lack of ongoing creative collaboration between staff, which is at the core of our day-to-day activity, was taxing.

COVID required reinventing how we delivered on our mission. We created fortnightly newsletter style podcasts, weekly mini-masterclasses, online video workshops, a showcase/events program including readings and interviews from Western Sydney authors, Hemingway's Polydactyl Kitten Club and Speakeasy, a monthly slam, Poets' Corner. We managed and promoted writing prizes, notably the Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize and the Blake Poetry Prize. We were commissioned by Sydney Living Museums and Parralanes Festival to engage and create new works for online delivery.

2020 required agility; no more so than in managing the financial stability of the organisation. At times our ongoing viability was unclear. Strategic thinking, close budgeting, and re-budgeting and the emergency funding schemes and opportunities from all levels of government and the Copyright Agency, support from our partners allowed us to weather the volatility.

It is a testament to the staff and the artists we work with that we could pivot digitally so quickly, reimagining and deploying new programs, fundraising efforts and then be in a position to move into the hybrid world of virtual and live events, mentorships and residencies so easily.

But with extraordinary change comes extraordinary opportunity. Engaging in a digital world has meant offering our participants and audiences of a new way of engaging with us, and importantly it has expanded our reach internationally, providing a platform for the writers and writings of Western Sydney to be enjoyed in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Iran, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Vietnam, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay.

I am so proud that we could increase the breadth of our program, employ 137 writers and illustrators (up from 104 in 2019). This amount equates to a 14% increase in payments to artists in a pandemic year where the Arts industry was otherwise decimated.

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, who began the year as our producer, moved to the Northern Rivers mid-year on the arrival of his daughter, and became our Digital Producer
- James Roy, who began the year as Blacktown and Blue Mountains Program Manager and transformed into being our full-time Producer when Christian moved north;
- Hajer Al-awsy, Associate Producer, who after two years with us planned in March to relocate overseas, but stayed with us through to September;
- Christina Donoghue, Associate Producer, who joined us in October;
- Kathie Elliott, our Development Consultant, who contributed so much to the organisation throughout the year, donating both significant amounts of time and money;



- Simon Graham, who worked with us pro-bono on our marketing strategy;
- Deb McInnes DMCP, publicist;
- Peg Thatcher, bookkeeper;

We are a team: without this team we could not have achieved what we have done. I further thank:

- all the professional writers, editors and illustrators we have worked with this year.
- the 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;
- Our patrons, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of NSW and her husband Mr Dennis Wilson, ambassadors Bryan Brown AM and David Borger.
- And all those who support and assist us through their generosity and foresightedness.

At the end of 2020 WestWords is in the strongest position it has ever been, financially and reputationally, with increased reach nationally and internationally. Our work has been recognised in the Western Sydney Business Awards for Business Excellence Awards for Excellence in Arts and Culture. As we look to 2021 and beyond, we look to maintain ourselves in a hybrid world of live and digital. 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

Excellence in Arts & Culture

In a ceremony held on 20th November at Rosehill Racecourse WestWords' achievements were recognised, winning the Commonwealth Bank Excellence in Arts & Culture award in the 2020 Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence! Executive Director, Michael Campbell was a finalist for Outstanding Business Leader.

Thank you to all our Board, partners and staff – and importantly the writers and communities we work with and serve. This award recognises your contribution and dedication to the ever-growing literature of one the most exciting and diverse regions in Australia. May our stories continue to be told and celebrated.



- supported our writers through this crisis increasing our annual employment to facilitate programs by 14%;
- pivoted online;
- showcased WS writers and writing in an unprecedented way to international audiences
- worked with schools to ensure that our young people still can receive mentorship and guidance from the best of the best;
- lost and rebuilt our fee for service program;
- in a concertina of work at the end of the year, published 5 anthologies in the space of three weeks as the culminations of our programs
- We are in the strongest position we have ever been, financially, reputationally.



In 2020 WestWords was thrilled to welcome the joint Vice Regal Patronage by The Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson.

The office of Governor of New South Wales is the oldest public office in Australia, dating from 1786 when Captain Arthur Phillip was issued with a Commission to become the Governor of New South Wales after the First Fleet had arrived.

Prior to her appointment as Governor, Her Excellency enjoyed a long and distinguished law career spanning 43 years, during which time she served as a role model for women in law at both the State and national level. Appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1989, in 1993 she was made a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the first woman to sit exclusively in that Court. In 1996, she achieved the distinction of being the first woman appointed to the New South Wales Court of Appeal and, subsequently, as the first woman to be appointed as its President. She served, on a number of occasions, as Administrator of the Government of the State of New South Wales. She was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List on 26 January 2020 for “eminent service to the people of New South Wales, particularly through leadership roles in the judiciary, and as a mentor of young women lawyers”.

Mr Dennis Wilson is a barrister, mediator, and accredited international arbitrator, whose work generally includes difficult cases in both fact and law, dealing in matters of high value or involving significant principle. He is a long-standing member of the legal profession in Australia and has advised on legislative review and policy development and implementation in environmental law and in the mining and resources sectors. Mr Wilson has a particular interest in the World Trade Organisation, the Energy Charter Treaty, Mining and Oil and Gas law and dispute resolution. Mr Wilson, is an Adjunct Professor of Law, at Notre Dame University, Sydney.





GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC

Governor of New South Wales

UNESCO tells us that 'literacy is a matter of dignity'. It is a human right, a necessary tool to navigate our world. Literacy is also something quite beautiful. It is the gateway to literature.

Over the past few years, young authors and storytellers have emerged from one of the fastest-growing and most vibrant and dynamic communities in New South Wales - the Western Sydney community. Instrumental to this emergence of storytelling - in all its richness, breadth and diversity - is the work of 'WestWords', a creative, cultural organisation that celebrates and champions the stories of the people, places and cultures that are at the heart of Western Sydney, where one-third of people speak a language other than English at home.

Working with schools, universities, libraries and community groups, and through writers' workshops, fellowships and residencies, WestWords' award-winning writers mentored 27,000 young and emerging writers in 2019. Through its Centre for Writing programs, it partnered with 73 organisations, including 26 schools, enabling the voices of Western Sydney to be heard.

Some of these writers have gone on to receive national and international recognition. Others are finding their voice through community writing workshops. In supporting the professional development of young writers, WestWords is supporting the personal growth and development of young people in Western Sydney, providing them with the skills to realise their potential.

During COVID-19, WestWords has enhanced its online programming through conferencing, webinars and livestreams, and through its bank of writing masterclasses, interviews and readings from Western Sydney authors.

It is a great pleasure, therefore, to be the inaugural Patrons of WestWords. We look forward to joining you at a WestWords event. Thank you, WestWords, for enabling the stories of the people of Western Sydney to be heard and to flourish.

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales

Mr Dennis Wilson

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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

REACH

In 2020,
despite the challenges
and the quick pivot to
the mode of program
delivery

13,281 people
directly participated
in our activities:
4,317 in-person
6,500 YouTube
2,464 Podcast

In 2019
9,138 people
directly participated in
our programs

That's an
increase of 52.8%
on 2019 direct
participation rates!

In addition more than
8,500 people attended
our exhibitions
despite the COVID
restrictions

Total reach:
Over 21,000 people
engaged with our
programming

If you include the
reach of the
translations of the
picture book, *Where*
Happiness Hides the
reach increases to over
93,000!

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

From 11th April when we launched our digital programming on our Youtube channel WestWordsOFFICIAL, we had:

6,500 active engagements with our online content ie people who watched our videos, with 144 subscribers

Audiences predominantly originated from: Australia, Vietnam, Ireland, United Kingdom, United States.

On our podcast channel, incorporating the WestWords Podcast and the mini-masterclass series, we engaged with (ie people downloading and listening) 2,464 people

Audiences predominantly originated from: Australia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Portugal, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, United States, Guatemala, Canada, Columbia, India, The Philippines, Denmark, Kosovo, New Zealand, France, Finland, Honduras, Iran, Ireland, Malaysia, Uruguay



WestWords' Centres for Writing across Western Sydney

2020 was our third year of 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 and to provide visibility for the sector to the wider community. Writers need space to work and to feel themselves part of a supportive and well-resourced community. We recognise that need, and consequently we continued to build our programming and services to reflect their needs working out of three centres 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, including Action Education (theatre in education company) and Goajo Agency (educational agency for Africans who want to study in Australia) amongst our resident companies. 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 outreach activities within that region. The room is supported by Blacktown City Council and Blacktown City Libraries.



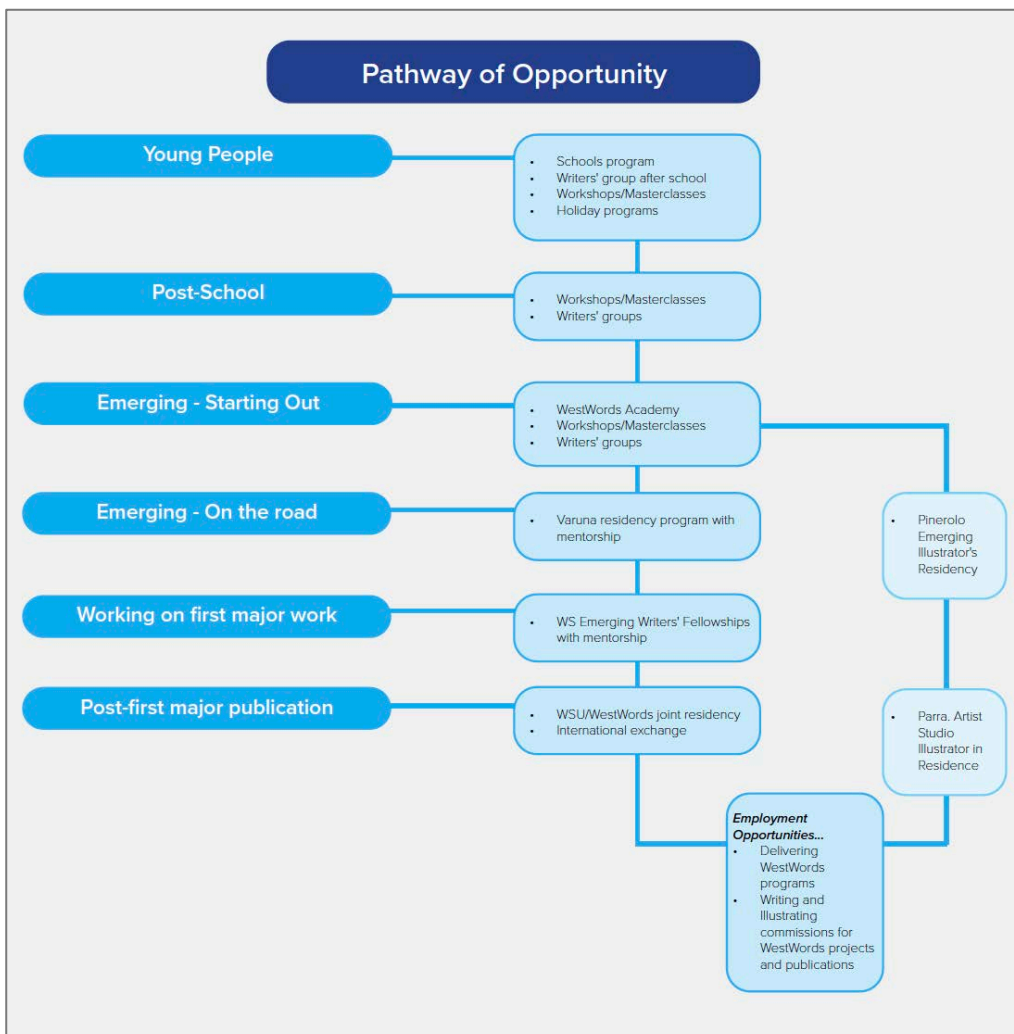
With the onset of COVID we pivoted - moving to online program delivery and the creation of new programs to deliver on our mission. Our resident companies were hit harder than us, they suspended trading and wound down their businesses either completely or to minimal operations to weather the pandemic. We did not return to in-person programming or fully activate the centres for the remainder of the year.

The Pathway of Opportunity

Over the first four years of WestWords as an independent organisation we have developed, and secured funding for a pathway of opportunity to play a critical role in the staged evolution of emerging writers in Western Sydney. Throughout the progression WestWords provides 360 career support to writers to achieve their career potential, including writers' groups, commissions, workshops and masterclasses. This pathway moves from:

- the school years to post-school
- to the pilot WestWords Academy where emerging writers get trained in the practicalities of being an independent artist in today's uncertain world
- to the WestWords/Varuna and Pinerolo illustrators' residencies where emerging writers and illustrators need time away from busy lives to focus on their work to complete a substantial portion of their writing
- to the Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowships where writers on the verge of completing the manuscript for their first major work receive 6-8 months of tailored mentorship, income relief and career advice
- to the WestWords/Western Sydney University/ writers in residence program for writers at that difficult moment post their major work to work on their second and build their skills to teach, mentor and pass on their knowledge and experience to the up and coming.
- to providing employment for writers to maintain their careers

Taking emerging writers through our programs has seen writers like Rawah Arja become a WestWords/Varuna writer in residence to employing her to facilitate our after-school classes and a number of our writers in schools program, seeing her debut book being published receiving accolades and award nominations, to becoming a WestWords/WSU writer in residence to develop her second novel.





Writer Development

The program for children and young people

Developing the skills of Western Sydney writers from the earliest of ages is core business for WestWords. Activities often intersect with our on-line programming, competitions, and also include workshops and masterclasses, residencies in community, in-school and after-school; holiday programs; mentorships; facilitated short and continuous writers' groups; The Clubhouse website, publications; and so on, as highlighted elsewhere in this report.

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 delivering individually tailored programs with professional writers, illustrators and editors. All our programs into schools are subsidised to a greater or lesser extent. We offered a range of free (thanks to the generous support of Copyright Agency and the Commonwealth Bank Staff Foundation) and fee for service programs. With Sydney going into lock-down in late March followed by remote learning and subsequent restrictions for incursions into schools the program we began the year with rapidly changed. The schools were inundated by arts organisations and education providers offering their services however the teachers were under significant pressure readjusting to how to deliver remotely the core curriculum their students. This was particularly the case with the primary schools and State schools. Nevertheless we maintained our relationships through the crisis of the pandemic, maximised the opportunities offered by delivering digitally, entered into discussions regarding increased programming for 2021 and delivered programs into:

- Abbotsleigh School
- Amity College
- Baulkham Hills HS
- Cherrybrook Technical HS
- Delany College Granville
- Meriden School
- Inner Sydney HS
- Katoomba HS
- Mater Maria Catholic College
- Northmead Creative and Performing Arts HS
- Penrith Anglican College
- St Bishoy College
- St Charbel's College (Punchbowl)
- Sydney Secondary College – Leichhardt
- The Ponds HS
- Westfields Sports HS
- Woollooware HS
- *homeschools 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. With the move to remote learning online workshops, masterclasses, residencies opened up the choices of who to select as the best writer to meet the students' needs. Consequently we engaged more regional and interstate writers to deliver our programs and we could deliver Western Sydney based writers into schools well beyond Western Sydney.

As with any customised program the genres of writing covered are many. In 2020 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.

For the second year the biggest residency program was with Cherrybrook Technical High School where 12 writers were in residence for three weeks in November working with the school's entire Yr 10 cohort of 315 students. There will a publication containing work from the school coming in 2021. The writers were Ben Peek, Kirsty Eager, Will Kostakis, Susanne Gervay, Laura Greaves, James Knight, John Larkin, Helen Thurloe, Michelle Hamadache, Belinda Murrell, James Roy and Hsu-Ming Teo

*Our schools programs are supported by
Cultural Fund Copyright Agency (Writers in Western Sydney Schools),
Commonwealth Bank Staff Foundation, Create NSW, WestWords and the schools themselves.*

COPYRIGHTAGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

In 2020 we worked
with
23 schools

including
x5 in-school residencies

engaging 3,672
students



After-school classes and writers' groups:

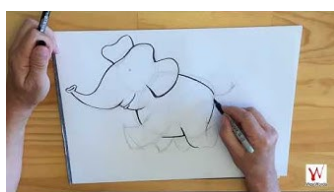
We began the year scheduling in-person workshops, masterclasses and holiday programs across Western Sydney. In late March we quickly recalibrated to deliver these online. Concurrent with this change we also reassessed our marketing strategies to reach participants at home. There were challenges with zoom fatigue and parents wanting to limit their young people spend on digital devices. However the positive gained from the disruption is that we are now building a library of resources accessible anytime for free and which remains in perpetuity.

After School classes We commenced our 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*. With the advent of COVID we delivered these as live zoom sessions, focusing on offering a creative outlet as an antidote to the home learning the young people were receiving. We are 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

Without the possibility of coming together, across the year we ran a variety of workshops and masterclasses making them available via our YouTube channel - WestWordsOFFICIAL. The writing and illustrating workshops were run for various ages, and in various genres. They included: Creative writing with Jodie McLeod, Erin Gough, Illustration workshops with Martin Chatterton, Tanya Harricks, and Eloise Short.



As part of our Mini-masterclass podcast series focussing on different aspects of writing and the writers' life there were specific episodes that were pertinent to children and young people. These were available via all the major podcast providers, accessible via our website, the podcast website and highlighted within The Clubhouse website. Topics covered included: Setting,

Hunting and Gathering Ideas, Poetry for Beginners with, Anger & Eloquence – Creating Tension, Plotting and Planning, World Building and Short Stories.

Storyroom

In partnership with Parramatta Libraries we had planned a series of *Storyrooms* across the course of the year in both the Parramatta and Epping libraries. *Storyroom* would run 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. Unfortunately the first Parramatta *Storyroom* was cancelled half-way through and the Epping program didn't have the chance to begin.

Writers' Groups

The Scribblers writers' group for children aged 12-14 in Blacktown ran out of our Blacktown Writers' Room facilitated by Barbara Polito. It began in person, but in response to COVID those participants transitioned into our After-School classes. The Muslim Women's Writers' Group met at Parramatta every fortnight until the start of lockdown.

The Clubhouse

The Clubhouse is a dedicated website for children and young people, primarily ages 9-14. Tested with young people the site includes an interactive blog where kids can chat with a monthly guest blogger, hear what they have been up to and they can tell them about their stories. We have videos of writers reading from their latest books, writers and illustrators giving in-depth tips and tricks for their writing and drawing, they can read the work of other kids their age. We provide information about competitions, after-school and holiday workshops we run. There is also information for parents about how they can use the NSW Government Creative Kids vouchers.



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



Writer Development

WestWords Academy:

Everything you need to know to be a writer - beyond the words on the page

The Academy was a pilot for a year-long training program for emerging writers and multi-disciplinary artists. It provided early career development for six artists, supporting and mentoring them to hone their craft, develop projects and seek opportunities. Once a month WestWords ran online seminars, led by expert facilitators focussing on administration for the independent artist, pitching, building community, presentation skills, grant writing, building your 'brand', where to find outlets for your work, resources amongst others.

I would tell any new Academians to make the absolute most of the program, even if you're not feeling well and struggling to engage. What I gained from it was invaluable. Go to every seminar, engage as much as possible, because it will benefit you in ways you probably couldn't have predicted before diving head-first into it. The first session on admin was everything I hoped for, the session on pitching to agents was even better!

Benjamin, 2020 Academician

Varuna: The National Writers' House

In October we partnered with Varuna to give for four emerging Western Sydney writers from diverse backgrounds, Nicole Lee, Nicole Cadelina, Libby Hyett and Samara Lo the chance to spend a week at Varuna to write in seclusion and be mentored by award-winning writer Wai Chim. Fifth writer Olivia Guntarek found herself stranded in Melbourne when the borders closed. She will receive her time at Varuna in early 2021.

I was deeply grateful for the thought that went into making sure that we had such a supported time.

Nicole Lee

A beautiful space of quietude, productivity, and connection – [this week] was equally a retreat from the everyday, and an opportunity to affirm myself as a writer. Nicole Cadelina

I was a bit surprised to be asked what I wanted!! I didn't expect to have input choosing the mentor.

Libby Hyett



Pinerolo: The Children's Book Cottage



In 2020 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 through space to work and daily consultation with mentor Margaret Hamilton AM, a professional publisher of picture books for over thirty years. The successful candidate was Elizabeth Stewart, however the residency was postponed to 2021.

I've heard so much about this wonderful writing space nestled in the Blue Mountains and now I know why it's been so heralded and celebrated amongst the writers. ... It was very rewarding to be a part of this valuable and unique experience.

Wai Chim

Aside from the assistance the Fellowship gave me in developing my first full length manuscript, one of the greatest benefits from it has been the long-lasting connection to a network and community of writers and professionals, making me feel less isolated and more supported as a writer.

Michele Freeman



Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowships

The Western Sydney Emerging Writers' Fellowships annually offer three Fellowships for writers on the brink of potential publication. One of the Fellowships granted is for an emerging writer specifically writing for children and/or young people. The 2019/20 fellows were Aishah Ali, Claire Cao and Erin Sayers. As part of their fellowship winners receive a program of tailored mentorship. The mentors were 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. With the support of the Cultural Fund of the Copyright Agency the fellowship program has been running since 2011 and has directly assisted Western Sydney writers achieve their first major publication, many which have been recognised with Premier's Literary Awards, 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. 2018/19 Fellows, Fiona Murphy with *The Shape of Sound* and Zoe Ghani *Pomegranate & Fig* have contracts with Text and Hachette respectively.



The 20/21 Fellows are Kim Pham, Emma O'Neill-Sandham, and in a joint fellowship, Alaa Alfaraon and Vivian Pham. **Kim Pham** intends to finish writing her screenplay *Bird Hands Beaver a Fishmint Bouquet* with mentorship from **Ian David**, former president of the Australian Writers' Guild, and the writer of numerous AFI winning shows. **Emma O'Neill-Sandham**, is working on completing her manuscript *The Death Fixer*. Emma's mentor is award-winning YA writer **Simmone Howell**. **Vivian Pham & Alaa Alfaraon** intend to explore complex, political issues through the eyes of a child in their graphic novel *The Book of Fixed Stars* with WA writer/illustrator **Campbell Whyte**.

This is a life changing experience for me. Zoe Ghani

WW/WSU Writers in Residence Program



The WestWords Writing Centre and The Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University partnered to provide an opportunity for two early career writers to develop their professional skills and develop new work through a tailored program of activities across both organisations. During the residency which spanned both 2020 and 2021, Kavita Bedford worked on a memoir-style novel, a follow-up to her novel *Friends & Dark Shapes* (Text, Australia and with Europa

Editions, USA). Rawah Arja worked on a collection of short stories reflecting her experiences in Punchbowl. Her debut YA novel, *The F-Team* (Giramondo Publishing), was released in September 2020.

Western Sydney Emerging Writers Fellowships and WW/WSU Writers in Residence Program are supported by Cultural Fund Copyright Agency

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The WW/WSU Writers in Residence Program is in partnership with Western Sydney University

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



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

Writing about Kavita's workshops at Northmead CAPAH, students wrote: Listening to Kavita's experiences on becoming a writer herself, gave me inspiration and hope to find what I love doing most and pursuing that into the future; and I liked how eloquently she spoke and how passionate she was.

Reflecting on mentoring received Rawah said WestWords staff were wonderful to work with and really took the time to ensure resources were available to me and that I was given many opportunities to expand my knowledge [...] skill and craft as a writer.



Writing competitions

What Matters?

Now in its twelfth 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 selection is drawn from a hat containing the names of the schools which the shortlisted students attend. This year we offered three virtual author visits: Boori Monty Pryor to Kiama High School, Tim Harris to Meriden and Tamsin Janu to Abbotsleigh.



Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize

For the second consecutive year WestWords, in partnership with Blacktown City Libraries and Blacktown City Council, ran the 2020 Mayoral Creative Writing Prize open to people 8yrs old to adult. Responding to the theme

The Whole World at Home, we received 370 entries

representing an over 100% increase on 2019. With an overall prize pool of \$1,600 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 Blake Poetry Prize

In partnership with Casula Arts Powerhouse and Liverpool City Councils we ran the 2020 Blake Poetry Prize. This competition challenges Australian poets to explore the spiritual and religious in a new work of 100 lines or less. Judges were Julie Janson, Lachlan Brown and 2017 winner Julie Watts. This year, the Prize attracted over 480 entries from across Australia and internationally from countries including The Philippines, The Netherlands, China and the Republic of Congo. **Judith Nangala Crispin**, a poet and visual artist of Bpangerang descent, won this year's prize with *On Finding Charlotte* in the *Anthropological Record*. Highly Commended was Sydney-based poet and member of the Writing & Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University, Louise Carter's poem *History of Sadness*. Each poem on the shortlist was read and videoed by the poet and appears on the WestWords' website and YouTube channel.



Of the winner, the judges said, "*Charlotte, a prose poem about identity stood out with its form, imagery, importance and its truth. It is a poem about a meeting across boundaries of space and time, weighted with the erasure of identity and song lines, of a legacy of broken families, racism and discovery. It is an important Australian poem, tender, real, conversational, she is telling us a story and we enter every word, every vivid image. A poem that all Australians should take the time to read.*"

The judges said, "*History of Sadness speaks to the times in which we live. It wrestles with the 'inner misalignment' of all things. A poem that has 'smoke choked' assonance, it is domestic and feminine and the everyday. It bursts with resonances of the rising spirit and our shared grief in 2020.*"

<https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/blake-poetry-prize-winner-announcement/>



HOME

It used to be where we came back to after work. After school. A place of family. A place for relaxation.

BUT THEN 2020 HAPPENED

And suddenly the whole world was at home.

And, at least for a while, home was our entire world as, through our screens, we entered the homes, and the worlds, of strangers.

We meet on the surface of a photograph, as a fish and bird might meet in a lake, at a point of sky and the water's plane.

Charlotte, in a book called The Aborigines of Northern Victoria, sits jade-black on earth, wind disarranging her hair. Trees obscured by falls of campfire ash.

From

On finding Charlotte in the Anthropological Record

By Judith Nangala Crispin



The African Australian Literature Development Program

The African Australian Literature Development Program was a new initiative in 2020 to support, develop, share and celebrate the richness of the stories of African Australians within the multi-cultural context of Western Sydney.

Run by WestWords, in partnership with the African Australian Advocacy Centre, and supported by the Adès

Family Foundation, the program spanning three years aims, through stories, to create a bridge of understanding and empathy between communities and generations, create a sense of belonging and pride.

We began the year with intention of holding in-person writing groups in various locations across Western Sydney. However due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 the group moved online. The group was facilitated by 'Oluwanifemi Temitayo Maxwell, led members of the group to undertake other opportunities within WestWords' programming and a masterclass with Maxine Beneba Clarke. The program culminated in the publication of the anthology *Smile 'Cross the Oceans*.



Supported by The Adès Family Foundation

LGBTQIA+ writing group

Every second Wednesday throughout the entire year the LGBTQIA+ writers group met first virtually, then at Parramatta Library. The group talked about the representation of LGBTQIA+ characters, writing about LGBTQIA+ characters and sharing writing of their own in a creative space where everyone gets what being queer means, no need for explanations. The group was facilitated by Wilfred Owen. The program culmination in the publication of the anthology *Lights On*.



It's so BRILLIANT!!!

I feel like I have a safe space to write and explore. I couldn't be more pleased. It's perfect. The feedback is clear, supportive and most importantly we're encouraged to go beyond the 'white gaze'.

I couldn't be more grateful. This opportunity gives me the chance to just be me.
Denise Chapman
Member AALDP

*December 2003 – Discs/God
A boy and a star fall in love. He looks up; it is there, smiling It leaks into his eyes and forms pools of twinkling light, and all is well until he realises that it is no star but a crashing comet.*
Sujith Kumar



Writer Development



Workshops and masterclasses

As a result of COVID we ceased all our in-person public programming and in response we focussed on delivering digitally our workshops and masterclasses both via YouTube and as a podcast series. With audiences looking online in greater numbers what we found was that our reach exponentially grew attracting international audiences.

Mini-masterclasses podcast

The mini-masterclass podcast series were created in response to COVID when our live are “bite-sized” conversations with professional writers, poets and editors, focusing on different aspects of story and writing – some examples of topics covered are: creating characters; gathering ideas; beating writer’s block; world building; research; writing poetry, and so on.

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.

Deborah	Abela	<i>Hunting and Gathering Ideas</i>
Tim	Harris	<i>Plotting & Planning</i>
Rawah	Arja	<i>Characters from Personal Experience</i>
James	Knight	<i>Non-Fiction - Bring Me and Angle</i>
John	Larkin	<i>Anger & Eloquence - Creating Tension</i>
Fiona	Wright	<i>I, Memoirist</i>
Catherine	Jinks	<i>Use of Language in Historical Fiction</i>
Melina	Marchetta	<i>Writing about Identity</i>
Tim	Harris	<i>Setting</i>
Harry	Laing	<i>Poetry for Beginners</i>
James	Roy	<i>Short Stories</i>
Amelia	McInerney	<i>Writing Picture Books</i>
Deborah	Abela	<i>World Building</i>
James	Roy	<i>Editing Pre-Editor</i>
Scot	Gardner	<i>Finding Time and Place</i>
Randa	Abdel-Fattah	<i>Writing with a Purpose</i>
Nardean		<i>Hip-Hop for Fun and Profit</i>
Ali	Whitlock	<i>The Barn-Fed Poet</i>
Tanya	Vavilova	<i>The Personal Essay</i>
Margaret	Hamilton	<i>Picture Books - A Publisher's Perspective</i>
Malla	Nunn	<i>Crime Writing</i>
Michelle	Rickerby	<i>"Bring Good Biscuits" - Running Writing Groups</i>
James	Knight	<i>Books on Writing</i>
Lee	Castledine	<i>Storytelling</i>
Scot	Gardner	<i>Edgy Y.A. for Edgy Young Adults</i>
Hajer	Al-awsi	<i>"It's More than Just Writing Words": Career Skills for Writers</i>
Lowell	Tarling	<i>The Art of Ghostwriting</i>
Isobelle	Carmody	<i>Reality as Fantasy</i>





Video workshops

For emerging writers and illustrators, and to complement the mini-masterclasses podcast series, we created online workshops made available on our YouTube channel WestWordsOFFICIAL. As part of the Western Sydney Emerging Writers Fellowship we mentored the fellows in how to create an effective online workshop from content to the associated technical considerations.

Three illustration workshops	Martin Chatterton
Three illustration workshops	Tanya Harricks
Drawing a lyrebird	Eloise Short
Creating animal characters	Laura Greaves
Creative writing workshop	Jodie McLeod
Writing Frenemies	Erin Gough
Wise Words with WS Emerging Writers Fellows: <i>Worldbuilding</i>	Erin A. Sayers
Wise Words with WS Emerging Writers Fellows: <i>The Science of Subversion</i>	Aishah Ali
Wise Words with WS Emerging Writers Fellows: <i>Writing Place: the power of observation and detail</i>	Claire Cao

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLb8bHCZBRMBiMpOu3hVB4gQnJnNLvFu6n>



Thank you so much for organising the shadowing opportunities. It was definitely eye opening to see how the workshops were run and how it changes with different age groups.

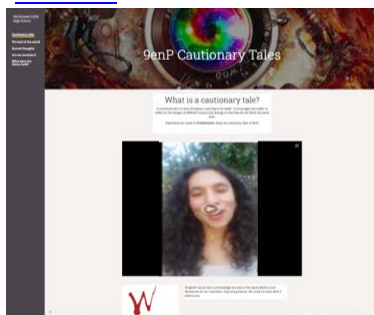
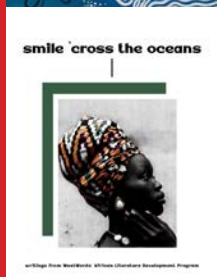
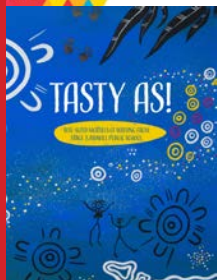
Krystale Anne Venal
2020 Acadamien



WestWords 2020 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.

- **One Week in December** It took over a year in the planning but for one week in December 2019 Cherrybrook Technical High School's entire Year 10 cohort of some 470 students had chance to work with twelve exceptional writers – a big undertaking at the end of a big year. The residency was envisioned to support and inspired their students as they look towards their final years.
- **Tasty As!** work emanating from the three-week residency with James Roy. Leanne Mulgo Watson (who won the Children's category with Jasmine Seymour of the 2020 Prime Minister's Literary Awards) was commissioned to provide the artwork. The launch of Tasty As! was held on 15th Dec. <https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/tasty-as/>
- **Smile 'Cross the Oceans** is the culmination of the first year of the African Australian Literature Development Program. <https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/smile-cross-the-oceans/>
- **Lights On** The inaugural publication from WestWords LGBTQIA+ writers' group. <https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/lights-on/>
- **Finding the Edge Pieces** From the crackling edge of Sydney's north-west edge this publication proudly represents the dedication and creativity of The Ponds High School Creative Writers Guild. The launch of *Finding the Edge Pieces* was held on 14th Dec. <https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/finding-the-edge-pieces/>
- **The Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize 2020** was open to adults and children who live in Blacktown city. Entrants wrote a short story or poem responding to the theme of *The Whole World at Home*. The publication showcases the winners, highly commendeds and special mentions from the Prize. A virtual awards ceremony was held on 3rd December by the Mayor of Blacktown, Cr. Tony Bleasdale. See: <https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/2020-mayoral-creative-writing-prize/>
- **Inspired In_Syd Stories** Every Monday afternoon, a group of students meet to practise their writing and share their work. At the beginning of the year, they began in person with Tanya Vavilova, transitioning to online as the world changed around us all.
- **Cautionary Tales** The culmination of a residency with five writers the Yr 9 students of Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School created a website to showcase their work, complete with video messages from the writers who facilitated their writing. <https://www.sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/northmead-capa-high-school/are-we-monsters>



WestWords' publication program is supported by the AustralianCatholic University





Public Programming: Commissions

Where Happiness Hides translations

WestWords was proud to have been part of Dirt Lane Press' COVID-19 response to publish *Where Happiness Hides* by Anthony Bertini with pictures by Jennifer Goldsmith online in approx. 35 languages. WestWords collaborated with Dirt Lane Press', Margrete Lamond, to assist in the translations into nine languages. We also worked with the African Australian Advocacy Centre for the African language translations as part of our African Australian Literature Development Project, a project supported by Ades Family Foundation.

WestWords translated *Where Happiness Hides* into: Afaan Oromo, Amharic, Arabic, Dinka, Igbo, Mandarin, Kinyarwanda, Samoan and Swahili.

Contributing translators: Dor Akech Achiek, Xin Di, Gabriel Faatau'uu, Daniel Gobena, Qanani Hika, Vincent Ogu, Florence Kankundiye, Kifah Lebde, Rev. Fr Alexander Mutua Munyao, Palepa-Sabrina Time, Solomon K Yeshitela

In the first three months of their release the downloads of the translated versions were remarkable: Mandarin - 57,742, Arabic - 3,585, Swahili - 7,485, Ethiopian - 2,792, Samoan - 592.



Eat our Words: ParraLanes 2020

Parramatta Lanes is a festival held annually in Parramatta's CBD, where 12 streets are shut down and filled with food, art and live entertainment. In 2020 the festival went digital with an online broadcast, streamed nightly from 7pm, 17 – 21 November. WestWords was commissioned to present a series of stories and poems about food. We served three courses of delectable words from Aishah Ali: *Children of Chai*; James Roy:

Breadmaking for Fun and Profit; Christina Donoghue: *Emotional Eating* and projection artist and animator June Lee.

<https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/eating-our-words-parralanes/>

Sydney Living Museums: A Thousand Words Exhibition

A Thousand Words presented 100 of the most compelling photographic images from the rich collections of Sydney Living Museums and the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW, created between the 1880s and the 1980s. WestWords was commissioned by Sydney Living Museums to engage ten emerging western Sydney artists to respond to an image they selected from the exhibition.

The commissioned writers and illustrator were: Hani Abdile, Eunice Andrada, Ethan Bell, James Elazzi, Zoe Ghani, Christina Huynh, Yumna Kassab, Enoch Mailangi, Nardean and Vivian Wei.

<https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/a-thousand-words-exhibition/>



Sydney Living Museums: Rouse Hill

Sydney Living Museums commissioned us to create a work to imagine life and story into their collection. Harry Laing wrote a poem in response to the Rouse Hill Magic Lantern.

Tasty As! commission: Leanne Mulgo Watson

For the publication associated with WestWords Writer in Residence at Bidwill Public School we commissioned Darug woman and illustrator Leanne Mulgo Watson, recipient of the 2020 Prime Minister's Award for Children Literature for *Coee Mitigar*.



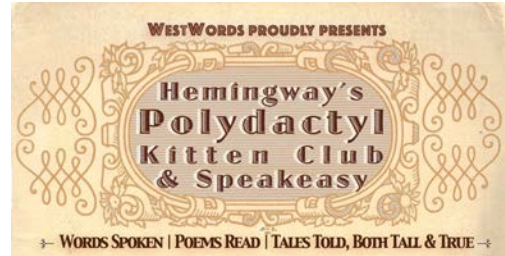


Public Programming: Audience Development

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.

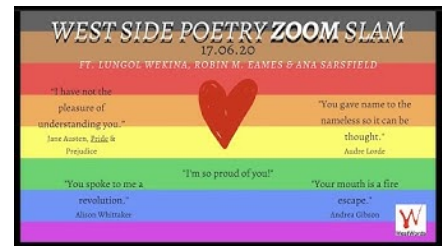
Hemingway's Polydactyl Kitten Club & Speakeasy

In July 2019 the Speakeasy, a spoken word event held in the intimate art-deco setting of the Avalon Cocktail Bar, Katoomba opened its doors. Hosted by James Roy, each month a featured writer gave a twenty minute reading of their work followed by an open mic. With the lockdown the evening the monthly event became a zoom event with edited highlights available via our YouTube channel. Guest included: Ali Whitelock, Malla Nunn, Isobelle Carmody, Rawah Arja and Judith Nangala Crispin.



West Side Slam

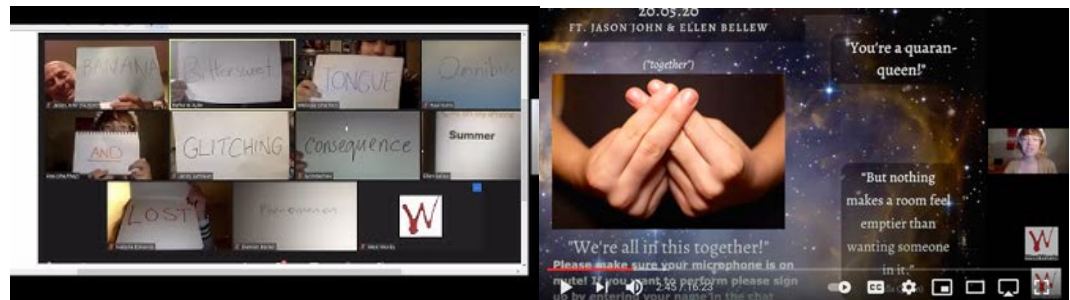
On the third Wednesday of the month we hosted the West Side Slam. It is co-convened by Defne Huzmeli and Melodie Grafton, who was a member of WestWords' Blacktown Writers' Group for six years throughout her high school years. It is an open mic night where, following the usual slam format, poets sign up on the night and perform/read an original piece of writing. Each month it was held as a live streamed event with edited highlights posted to our YouTube channel. Every slam also has a feature poet and over the course of the year has included:



Mohammad Awad, Alasdair Carter, Amani Mahmoud, Jason John, Robin M. Eames, Arielle Cottingham, Mel Ree, Kelly van Nelson, Skylar J. Wynter

*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



Poets' Corner

After just one live event Poets' Corner transition to a YouTube conversation between convenor David Adès and the guest poet, made live On the the last Thursday of the month. With the digital format it allowed poets and audience from across the globe enjoy the in depth showcasing of some of our most respected poets including Peter Bakowski, Anne Casey, Andy Jackson, Geoff Goodfellow, Judy Johnson, Nathanael O'Reilly, Melinda Smith and Alex Skovron.



The WestWords podcast

The podcast is where you will get fortnightly news, interviews and featurettes showcasing and highlighting the work we do. Hosting the podcast is WestWords' producer and award-winning author, James Roy. Available on all the major podcast platforms.



WestWordsOFFICIAL: WestWords on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDt8IEVT2kwW-7ayCvJ0Kgw>

Writing Western Sydney: The Readings showcases the writers and writing of contemporary Australia, in particular focussing on writers from, and/or who work into Sydney's west – one of the world's most diverse regions and home to almost 10% of Australia's population. The richness and depth of the writing is always captivating, at times challenging, and reflective of the multi-faceted nature of human experience. Although we started the series during the worst of the pandemic this is now a continuing program.

Writing Western Sydney: The Readings

Will Kostakis: *Monuments* (Hachette)

Luke Carman: *Intimate Antipathies* (Giramondo)

Tamsin Janu: *Winston and the Wondrous Wooba Gymnastics Club* (Omnibus Books, a division of Scholastic Australia)

Deborah Abela: *Final Storm* Penguin Random House Australia

Tanya Vavilova: *We are Speaking in Code* Brio Books

James Roy: *One Thousand Hills* Omnibus Books, a division of Scholastic Australia

Fiona Wright: *The World was Whole* (Giramondo)

Erin Gough: *Amelia Westlake* (Hardie Grant Egmont)

Jessie Tu: *A Lonely Girl is a Dangerous Thing* Allen & Unwin

Pamela Freeman: *Amazing Australian Women* Hachette

Siobhan Coleman: *Pink* (Normoyle and Cogan)

Felicity Castagna: *No More Boats* (Giramondo)

Catherine Jinks: *Shepherd* Text Publishing

Claire Cao: *Spellbinding* (short story written as part of her WW WS Emerging Writers Fellowship)

Erin A. Sayers: *Rephlexa Book 1* (written as part of her WW WS Emerging Writers Fellowship)

Aishah Ali: *Moulting of the Mayfly* (three poems from her upcoming collection written as part of her WW WS Emerging Writers Fellowship)

Oliver Phommavanh: *Brain Freeze* Penguin Random House Australia

Greg Woodland: *The Night Whistler* (Text Publishing)

James Knight: *Back on Track* (Hachette)

Ursula Dubosarsky: *Brindabella* (Allen & Unwin)

Lowell Tarling: *This is It!* (Generation Books)

Libby Gleeson: *Amy and Louis* (Scholastic Australia)

Tristan Banks: *Detention* (Penguin Random House Australia)

Claire Zorn: *No Place for an Octopus* (University of Queensland Press)

Rawah Arja: *The F-Team* (Giramondo)

Rosyln McFarland: *All the Lives We've Lived* (Ginninderra Press)

David Brooks: *The Grass Library* (Brandl & Schlesinger)

Mark O'Flynn: *Dental Tourism* (Puncher & Wattmann)

Wai Chim: *The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling* (Allen & Unwin)

Tegan Bennett Daylight: *The Details* (Simon & Schuster)

Writing Western Sydney: The Interviews

Over the first five months of the COVID crisis we conducted long form interviews with some of our most exciting writers who push the form, challenge expectations and are at the vanguard of contemporary writing. The writers were: **Zoe Ghani, Sarah Ayoub, Luke Carman, Jessie Tu, Judith Nangala Crispin** and **Louise Carter** (the winner and runner up of the Blake Poetry Prize).

Writing Western Sydney is supported by

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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.

Touring exhibitions

We toured three exhibitions into libraries across Western Sydney, including Blacktown, Liverpool, Penrith and Hawkesbury libraries:



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. In 2020 the exhibition toured to Campbelltown City Libraries.



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 toured to Camden Cultural Centre.



Ooderoo Noonucca by Leanne Tobin,
Melina Marchetta by Zoe Caracatsanoudis.

Birds of a Feather: An Exhibition

is a celebration and expression of contemporary Iranian culture "Birds of a Feather demonstrates how illustration can be innovative and abstract at the same time as being approachable and engaging. In the hands of Iranian artists, illustration is decorative as well as narratively expressive."

"...birds have been a fundamental component of Persian culture and philosophy for millennia. Birds of a Feather has become not just a thematic focus for a particular



practice of contemporary illustration. It is also an expression of a unique cultural tradition. Representations of birds are not all that make Iranian illustration unique. There are more elusive elements at play. It is these elements that make Iranian illustrators among the most acclaimed in the world, and that infuse Iranian illustration with their mix of novelty and familiarity."

– Margrete Lamond, Curator, *Birds of a Feather*

Birds of a Feather with Mayor of Camden, Cr. Therese Fedeli.



The exhibition toured to Camden Civic Centre, Liverpool City Library and digitally at Campbelltown City Libraries.

Birds of a Feather presented in collaboration with



There I stood in the middle of the street, tall, fair with a defined body, hair as black as coal and completely naked if you don't count the blood polluting my skin.

Oscar: Yr 7 Inner Sydney HS

Mallory was getting frustrated. It was all she was feeling the past week. She dipped her brush into the paint, brought it up, splattered light blue onto the canvas and stared at it. She stared at it. It looked like the sky, just a small part of it.

Mallory smothered on some more colours – greens, greys, whites, reds, browns. It looked like the tree outside her house. Birds in trees, flowers swaying, leaves crinkling. Cars rumbling, people chatting.

Without a word Mallory put down her brush and palette and peered into the painting. It was quiet. Unusually quiet. No-one was there. There were always people in her paintings. Why wasn't anyone here?

Janini: Yr 9 The Ponds HS

Fundraising

In 2019 we held our inaugural Annual Fundraising Dinner at McLaren Hall at the University of Sydney. With the cessation of public gatherings we reassessed our fundraising efforts and instead ran two initiatives:

COV-art

In June we ran our first art auction. Facilitated by the generosity of 20 illustrators and the Oktion fundraising platform 31 works were available online for people to bid on. Contributing illustrators: Jeannie Baker, Bronwyn Bancroft, Freya Blackwood, Nick Bland, Martin Chatterton, Max Hamilton, Leigh Hobbs, Christina Huynh, Ann James, Stephen Michael King, Alison Lester, Andrew Maclean, Anna Pignataro, Emma Quay, Donna Rawlins, Tohby Riddle, Michel Streich, Owen Swan, Julie Vivas and Anna Walker.

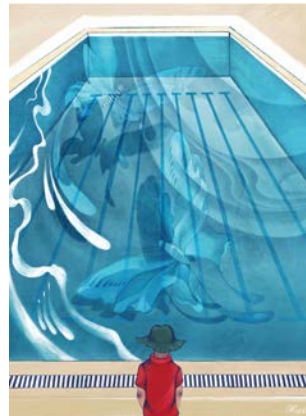


We raised \$10,590. Funds were directed to supporting our programs for children and young people.



Illustrations (right): *Old Tom* - Leigh Hobbs, *Cleo Faces the Mess* – Freya Blackwood, *Stories of Strength* – Christina Huynh

COV-art was supported by Oktion, Digiground and Kathie Elliott



I wish I could live in a world where my father loved me. Not for my body, but for me, my entire being. Then I saw him. The beer smells forever lingering on him after countless nights spent in the pub. Then I saw his great, solid body towering in the doorway of our house.
Grace: Yr 10 Cherrybrook Technology High School

Booktober

After a small pilot in 2019 to test the platform we ran Booktober™. There's lots of walks, runs and shaves for charity but now there's an event where you can stop, breathe and read a book. We designed it to be really simple. Decide how many books you'll read during October, make that pledge and encourage your friends and family to support you. Each person could opt in to raise further funds to support WestWords to provide books and literary programs. Accompanying Booktober were suggested reading lists of contemporary Australian literature.

Partnering with Booktopia who assisted us with promotion and the donation of books, Booktober raised \$10,737.

<https://www.booktober.org.au>

Booktober was delivered with the support of Booktopia

<i>One eye shut</i>	<i>70,000 miles away</i>	<i>Across the country</i>
<i>One arm raised</i>	<i>A young girl lies</i>	<i>In a small shack</i>
<i>My finger following the glistening stars</i>	<i>Hands over both ears</i>	<i>A boy looks out at the stars</i>
<i>Connecting the constellations</i>	<i>The stars are out and shining</i>	<i>Mum isn't home yet</i>
<i>I sigh in piece</i>	<i>But she is too scared to look up</i>	<i>He looks down</i>
<i>The velvety feeling of comfort</i>	<i>Planes screaming destruction</i>	<i>At dirty fingernails</i>
<i>Washes over me</i>	<i>Bombs dropping</i>	<i>And ragged clothes</i>
<i>I whisper, "Home"</i>	<i>She sighs, "Home"</i>	<i>Tears well. "Home"</i>

Muneeza Ayub, 15 yrs old



Treasurer's Report for YE 2020

Financial management of the business has continued to be prudent throughout 2020. This approach, along with strategic and flexible decision-making in response to the uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has ensured WestWords has ended the year in a strong financial position.

During the course of the year the company faced significant challenges. In March all face-to-face programming including our in-schools programming ceased. The sub-tenants at the Parramatta Centre could no longer pay rent and we were faced with paying the full commercial rent. In addition, WestWords was required to vacate its leased office space, with staff working on a flexible basis.

The 2020 financial accounts have been audited with retained earnings of \$66,749. 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.

During 2020, 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 and beyond. Most significantly we were assisted by the ATO Cash Boost stimulus package, City of Parramatta COVID resilience grant, Service NSW small business grant, Copyright Agency Emergency Action Funding and Jobkeeper. This support ensured that programs could pivot online, new digital programs could be developed and staff were retained. The support of City of Parramatta, Blacktown City Council and Campbelltown City Council were also critical. Due to COVID restrictions we could not hold our annual Fundraising Dinner. In response we held an online art auction raising over \$10,000 and Booktober raising an additional \$10,000.

Fortunately our Executive Director was able to successfully negotiate a position where employment to our writers was increased by 14%. This was a tremendous outcome in the context of the difficult financial position of the independent artists during the pandemic.

Despite moments where sustainability for the company was in question during the course of the 2020, WestWords achieved overall income of \$571,311 which represented a 9.8% increase on the previous year (\$520,256). The ongoing success of WestWords over the past five years (2015-2020) is evidenced by its revenue growth over the period (from \$211,211 in 2015) which equates to a 163% 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 2021 and beyond.

Brett Perry



Income and expenditure statements for the year ending 31st December 2020

Summary

INCOME	2020 \$	2019 \$
Operating grants	210,000	210,000
Project grants	198,608	109,693
Interest income		1
Membership subscriptions	-	-
Activity & services income	52,906	67,172
Other income	54,508	90,629
Donations	55,289	42,761
TOTAL	571,311	520,256
EXPENDITURE		
Marketing expenses	14,436	14,025
Occupancy costs	46,661	78,688
Administrative expenses	106,926	96,218
Artist fees	102,357	93,500
Other expenses inc. wages	274,118	251,040
TOTAL	(544,498)	(533,471)
Surplus before income tax	26,813	(13,215)
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus from continuing operations	26,813	(13,215)
Surplus for the year	26,813	(13,215)
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		
Total comprehensive income for the year	26,813	(13,215)

Statement of Financial Position for the year ending 31st December 2020

Total comprehensive income for the year	26,813	(13,215)
ASSETS		
Total current assets	214,141	116,125
Total non-current assets	-	-
Total assets	214,141	116,125
LIABILITIES		
Total current liabilities	146,309	73,755
Total non-current liabilities	1,083	2,434
Total liabilities	147,392	76,189
NET ASSETS	66,749	39,936

INCOME

From 2019 to 2020 income grew by \$51,055 being an 9.8% increase in revenue from 2019 totals.

Over the period 2018-2019 WestWords saw a similar year to year increase in income of \$52,000, which was a 11.4% increase on 2018 levels.

PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT

In 2020 we paid \$102,357 in fees to writers, illustrators, editors and allied artists

That's a 9.5% increase on 2019!

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.

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.

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.

Eyob Yesus

Eyob is the sole director of Icon Corporate Events. With a career spanning more than 15 years in the events and entertainment industry, Eyob works closely with corporates, non for profits and charities to deliver creative events that harnesses the power of human engagement, creativity and exceptional organisational skills by bringing their brand to life. Organiser and event manager inc: Official event partner for the Sydney Hills Business Chamber – 5 years and current, Official event partner for Positive Vibes Foundation 2019 and current.

Vivienne Skinner

Vivienne is a Professional/Industry Fellow in the School of Built Environment at the University of Technology Sydney and Principal of the urban strategy company Metropolis. For nearly two decades she 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 a member of *The Big Issue* Women's Advisory Committee. Her 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, Beyond Empathy and the physical theatre company, Legs on the Wall. She sits on the Community Consultative Committee for the construction of the Sydney Football Stadium and is Vice-President of Saving Moore Park. Vivienne has a Masters degree in Urban Policy and Strategy from UNSW and a Bachelor of Arts from the Australian National University.

Lucy Brotherton

Lucy 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.

Jasmine Seymour

Jasmine is a Dharug woman, artist and writer and a member of the Dharug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation. Her books *Baby Business* and *Cooee Mitigar: A Story on Dharug Songlines* (co-authored with Leanne Watson) were published by Magabala Books in 2019. *Cooee Mitigar* won the 2020 Prime Minister's Literary Award, Children's Literature. She is also a library teacher at Riverstone Public School in Sydney's west.



Our Staff

Michael Campbell: Executive Director

With over 35 years of experience Michael has worked as CEO, Artistic Director, an arts consultant and strategist, artistic co-ordinator, producer, events manager, librettist, editor, writer, events manager, director, choreographer and dancer. He was the Festival Director for the Brisbane Writers Festival (2006-2009). He is a former 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). 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, Griffin Theatre Company and for Opera Australia on numerous works over a 19 year period. 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. 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. Michael was a finalist for the Excellence in Business Leadership Award in the 2020 Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence.

Christian Pazzaglia: Digital 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, including 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 Goethe-Institut, and the Italian Cultural Institute.

Kathie Elliott: Business Development

Kathie brings over 20 years' experience in business development, marketing and management to WestWords. In 2002 she moved to Australia after a career in NZ as a professional dancer and worked in the recruitment industry for over eight years specialising in the industrial, community/not for profit, resource and transport/ logistics sectors. Changing paths, she went on to managing corporate and community partnerships for two large Australian charities, negotiating significant social responsibility programs with various ASX listed organisations, and delivering community education programs state-wide. She has been a Director on the boards of Anywhere Theatre Festival, Australian Pain Management Association and was

part of the management committee for the 139 Club – a homeless drop-in centre. She is currently Vice Chair on the board of Supercell Dance Festival. Seeing a gap in the NFP sector for smaller organisations to allocate time and resources to sourcing partnerships and funding, Kathie decided to form her own consultancy, Square Pegs. She is passionate about assisting small to medium arts, social justice and disability organisations source extra funding, sustainability, diversification, and support for their program through establishing mutually beneficial partnerships, generating revenue and raising their profiles through targeted campaigns and advocacy work.

Hajer Al-awsi: Associate Producer (Jan-Sept)

Hajer 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. Hajer co-wrote and acted in the 2019 ABC iView webseries *Halal Gurls*.

James Roy: Producer

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 35 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.

Christine Donoghue: Associate Producer (Oct-Dec)

Christina is a graduate several times over from the University of Wollongong with degrees in Journalism, Creative Writing and Creative Arts. Her research area is in decolonial theory and the framing of the African Diasporic voice in Australian Contemporary Literature. She is a practising multidisciplinary artist who has published poetry in the Cordite Poetry Review. Christina recently completed her first poetry collection that dissects the development of identity for a Black child growing up between Australia and Tennessee USA.

Bookkeeper: Peg Thatcher





In 2020, we partnered with 65 organisations, of which three were universities and 23 were schools. These companies, government agencies, trusts and foundations, arts organisations, libraries, museums 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



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CULTURAL FUND



Our community and arts partners include:

- Australian Catholic University
- Blacktown City Libraries
- Booktopia
- Camden City Centre
- Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
- Commonwealth Bank Staff Foundation
- City of Parramatta Library
- Adès Family Foundation
- Digiground
- Dirt Lane Press
- Finishing School
- Liverpool City Council
- Liverpool City Library
- Oktion
- Penguin Random House
- Penrith City Council
- Pinerolo: The Children's Book Cottage
- Sailor Studio
- Sydney Living Museums
- Sydney Review of Books
- The Whitlam Institute
- University of Sydney
- Varuna: The National Writers' House
- WestLit Libraries: Public Libraries Association NSW, Western Zone Public Libraries
- Western Sydney University

And our individual donors including
Robyn Ewing AM, Libby Gleeson AM, Vivienne Skinner, Kathie Elliott

We couldn't do it without you!

WestWords

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PARTNERS

We worked with:
65 organisations

including
3 universities
and
23 primary and secondary
schools



In 2020, we collaborated with 137 writers, illustrators, editors, spoken word artists, actors and other allied. These extraordinary individuals included:

- Randa Abdel-Fattah
- Ursula Dubosarsky
- Amelia McInerney
- Hani Abdile
- Kirsty Eager
- Andy Muir
- Deborah Abela
- Stephen Edgar
- Malla Nunn
- Donna Abela
- Peter Fenton
- Nathaniel O'Reilly
- David Adès
- Pamela Freeman
- Kristina Olsson
- Safdar Ahmed
- Jackie French
- Ben Peek
- Alaa Alfaraon
- Angela May George
- Kim Pham
- Aishah Ali
- Scot Gardner
- Vivian Pham
- Manisha Anjali
- Suzanne Gervay
- Oliver Phommavanh
- Rawah Arja
- Zoe Ghani
- Wilfred Roach
- Mohammad Awar
- Nardean Gharsa
- James Roy
- Sarah Ayoub
- Roanna Gonsalves
- Kirli Saunders
- Tristan Bancks
- Geoff Goodfellow
- Randa Sayed
- Peter Bakowski
- Erin Gough
- Eloise Short
- Kavita Bedford
- Laura Greaves
- Alex Skovron
- David Brooks
- Michelle Hamadache
- Michel Streich
- Lachlan Brown
- Tanya Harricks
- Lowell Tarling
- Claire Cao
- Tim Harris
- Hsu-Ming Teo
- Isobelle Carmody
- Chloe Higgins
- Helen Thurloe
- Luke Carman
- Simone Howell
- Jessie Tu
- Louise Carter
- Tamsin Janu
- Adam Turner
- Felicity Castagna
- Gareth Jenkins
- Leanne Mulgo Watson
- Martin Ed Chatterton
- Catherine Jinks
- Julie Watts
- Wai Ping Chim
- Yumna Kassab
- Vivian Wei
- Judith Nangala Cripsin
- James Knight
- Ali Whitelock
- Ian David
- Will Kostakis
- Chi Vu
- Tony Davis
- John Larkin
- Adina West
- Tricia Dearborn
- Ailsa Lui
- Ali Whitelock
- James Elazzi
- Mark O'Flynn
- Fiona Wright
- Melina Marchetta
- Claire Zorn

and more...

PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT

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

120 came from NSW, including:
11 from regional NSW and 83 from Western Sydney – that's 60.6%
17 were national
1 was international

This is a 14% increase on the number of artists we collaborated with, and employed, in 2019.