



WestWords

Sharing the wealth of words

Western Sydney's Literature Development Organisation

2022 Annual Review

Contents

Chair's Report	4
Executive Director's Report	5
Case Studies	7
Our Remit: Greater Western Sydney	8
WestWords: Who? What? Why? How?	9
WestWords' Western Sydney Centre for Writing	10
The Writers' Pathway	11
Children and Young People	12
Writers' Groups	15
Emerging Writers	16
Fellowships	17
Workshops and Writers in Residence	18
Established Writers	19
Writing Competitions	20
Publication Program: WestWords Community – Schools	22
Publication Program: WestWords Community	24
Publication Program: WestWords Books	25
Publication Program: Dirt Lane Press	26
Sharing the Stories – live and online	27
Exhibitions	32
Fundraising	33
Our Board	34
Our Staff	35
Our Partners	36
The Writers	37

WestWords

ABN 60 603 106 136

41 Hunter St. Parramatta NSW 2150 • PO Box 3708 Parramatta NSW 2124
T 1800WestWords • E admin@westwords.com.au • W www.westwords.com.au



**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.

CREATING AND SHARING THE STORIES OF WESTERN SYDNEY

The contribution of WestWords to the local literary culture of our region cannot be overstated. On a daily basis, WestWords is out in our community ensuring the ongoing stability and development of literature in the area, whether that means bringing a love of literature to young people who might otherwise go without reading; providing an array of opportunities to writers who might otherwise never publish; or making careers in the literary arts possible for authors who might otherwise remain unknown to readers. Through their engaged and nurturing school programs, their unparalleled commitment to residencies for local and emerging writers, their consistent and well attended writing development workshops, their early career scholarships for writers, and so many other essential initiatives – not least their recent acquisition of a respected not-for-profit publishing imprint – WestWords has almost single handedly transformed the nascent literary culture of the region into a flourishing ecosystem, where a profitable new economy of opportunity and reward is enabling a whole generation of new readers, writers, editors, illustrators, and artists, of all kinds, to hold their own in Australia's arts and culture sector.

Luke Carman: writer and lecturer Western Sydney University



Words bring people closer, they enrich lives. WestWords offers people more than just words. They offer us WORLDS within ourselves to explore. I cannot recommend everything they do highly enough. Not only for the good of the individual, but for the benefits of having writers in our communities at large.

ali whitelock: poet



It is with heartfelt sincerity and gratitude that I say that WestWords has positively transformed the trajectory of my life. I am just one of many hundreds of people – emerging writers, young people and the western Sydney community – whose lives have been positively impacted by the literacy programs that WestWords has hosted and facilitated. WestWords has been integral in sharing a love of words with the community, providing access to literary workshops and opportunities to people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those disadvantaged, marginalised and/or from minority backgrounds. This has made arts and culture more accessible to the masses, which is of significant public benefit, having an enduring positive impact on the community.

Paris Rosemont: emerging writer



Chair's Report

2022 began following two years of lockdowns and with a move into new premises in Parramatta. The former saw a return to our earlier way of directly working with the community, while the latter gave us a more visible presence at the centre of the region we service.

During lockdown there was a shift to provide on-line content to maintain services and with the return to a 'new-normal', this has been integrated into face-to-face programs for both school children and adults.

We have continued all our partnerships including those with the University of Western Sydney, as well as Campbelltown and Parramatta Councils. In addition, we have made new partnerships with Macquarie University and the Bad Sydney Crime Writers' Festival.

A new major development for WestWords came at the beginning of the year when we were gifted Dirt Lane Press. This gift included all of that company's resources, the back list of publications as well as others still in development. This company, working in regional New South Wales had a reputation for publishing high quality picture books from and for marginalised communities. We felt the ethics of the company were similar to our own. One of the titles gifted us, *Just One Bee*, was successful in the Children's Book Council Awards.

Of the fifteen titles in our 2022 publication program including three into the trade and eight schools' publications, we were very pleased to include, *Falling Forward*, the memoir of Margaret Hamilton, who had worked with us since our inception.

Like many arts organisations, WestWords is able to achieve much, with few financial resources. This is only possible due to the passion, commitment and energy of the Executive Director Michael Campbell and his staff, Kathie Elliott-Scott, James Roy, Sheryl Cootes, Christine Donoghue, Christian Pazzaglia and Chris Adams. We are benefitting from the appointment of a new creative producer, Ally Burnham who joined us in March having been part of our 2021 WestWords Academy program.

In addition, our board members Vivienne Skinner, Brett Perry, Lucy Brotherton and Janice Lee have been joined by Brian Cook, Jackie Manuel and Jacqui d'Warte. Our expertise in publishing and in contacts with academia have thus been considerably enhanced.



Libby Gleeson AM



Executive Director's Report

2022 saw us all tentatively emerge from the lockdowns, isolation and uncertainty that had characterised the past two years. Towards the end of 2021 we made the decision that with the new year, that we too had to emerge from inhabiting the digital spaces and become visible in the world again. In the latter part of 2020 we left our home in North Parramatta. The lease was due for renewal. The landlord offered no rent relief. Our tenants were either folding or moving their operations to their kitchens and bedrooms. And we could no longer run in-person programs. We navigated the subsequent 16 months with the generosity of our families; Campbelltown Council via the Campbelltown Library Services providing us with accommodation at Wedderburn Writers Retreat where we as a staff met and worked – when we could meet and work together in person; and Blacktown Library services who allowed us to store equipment. We could not have survived this time without the Governmental COVID relief packages and private support to maintain core operations and pivot online without any of our fee for service programs. For this we are immensely grateful.

There is so much to be celebrated and it is with great pleasure that this report is in essence a celebration of what has been achieved:

- We opened WestWords' Western Sydney Centre for Writing at 41 Hunter St in the heart of Parramatta.
- On March 1st we were gifted a publishing house – Dirt Lane Press, a children's picture book not-for-profit publisher based in Orange. The press, founded by Margrete Lamond, was to publish books 'from the margins to the margins'. After seven years the decision was made to wind up the company, and being a not-for-profit all assets of the company needed to be settled or dispersed to a like minded organisation. They were offered to us and after assessing the viability of us developing a trade publishing arm, the benefits to produce books for both children and adults as the next stepping stone in our writers' pathway, along with creating books that showcase and celebrate our region was undeniable. We now have three distinct publishing programs: WestWords community – books by and for the community, examples include our schools' publications and an outcome of targeted development programs with particular groups; WestWords Books – adult books for the trade, distributed nationally through our distributor, Peribo; Dirt Lane Press – children's picture books. Margrete continues on as DLP publisher bringing with her the knowledge and experience of 30 years in the trade.
- Writing takes time to develop and through our pathway it is with pride that we see writers develop their craft, have their work published in the trade, be critically acclaimed, win awards and create careers.
- This year it is of particular note that we employed 216 writers, illustrators, editors and allied artists \$123,697 in fees increasing our commitment and support for freelance artists and contributing to their career sustainability coming out of the turbulence of the previous two years.
- Our national and international reach extended both providing a showcase for Western Sydney writers and writing.
- We presented at various symposia and conferences including Switch Annual Conference of the New South Wales Public Libraries Association, the 2022 Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium click [here](#), and part of Western Sydney University' research paper Media, Art and Stories: Enabling communities' creative expression in Sydney's West.

Towards the end of the year Margaret Hamilton AM, one of Australia's powerful most proponents for quality children's books and the benefits they bring to our youngest of readers, died. Over the past four years through to 2021 WestWords partnered with her to provide residencies for emerging illustrators at Pinerolo: the Children's Book Cottage in the Blue Mountains. Those residents have gone on to find their work being recognised and acclaimed in Children's Book Council of Australia awards. Her passing is a great loss to the sector. We, through the opportunity afforded us by becoming a publisher, celebrated her life by publishing her



I love having a connection with WestWords because Michael Campbell (Executive Director) and Ally Burnham (Creative Producer) are passionate about arts in the area and ensuring that there are workshops, academies and public talks that are welcoming and foster a sense of community.

Each football club in the world understands the importance of an academy to ensure that there is a new generation of players coming through. WestWords plays a similar role in the broader Western Sydney region through their Academy and the workshops they deliver in our public schools.

Literature in Western Sydney is currently flourishing and through the efforts of WestWords, I believe there will be an even stronger generation in the years ahead.

**Yumna Kassab – author
The Lovers, Australiana,
The House of Youseff**

memoir *Falling Forward*. Whilst it was published posthumously we managed to deliver advances to her so she could literally hold her life in her hands.

But after the times we have had and the achievements made during the course of 2022, the year has had its significant challenges. There are no Government supported premises in Parramatta for organisations such as ours. Consequently to return to in-person, and now hybrid programming, we entered into a commercial lease. We had support from Create Infrastructure for the move and fit out, albeit requiring matched funding which was a stretch for a small to medium arts organisation. The year saw us rebuilding the community of writers as they began to enter the world again. We established our schools' program with an intensity of concurrent programs congregating in the centre of the year. We maintained many of our digital programs developed during Covid – our constituency, having become accustomed to online delivery is now more discerning and requiring of both means of engagement. Not to mention that digital familiarity overcame a significant barrier and challenge in Western Sydney - the lack of public transport servicing the region. We also couldn't disenfranchise the significant national and international audience for the writers and writing of Western Sydney we had built. Financially there were COVID relief grants to be found at Local, State, Federal Govt. levels as well as from the private sector during 2020 and 2021 but these substantially dried up during the course of the year. There was a return to the pattern of short-term project grants available from both government and private sectors which isn't entirely suitable to a service based organisation building the infrastructure and ecology of an artform. Added to this is the economic downturn where people cannot afford to personally pay for services, fundraising efforts were significantly down by 40%. It is true to say that whilst there was much excitement and energy for a renewed beginning, 2022 was the most difficult year since our formation as an organisation eight years ago, from both artistic and financial perspectives.

Looking forward to 2023, the post-Covid economic uncertainty for small to medium organisations such as ours will have a significant impact especially when looking to the private sector and fundraising to bolster governmental support and maintain our financial sustainability. There is no doubt that the services we offer are critically needed. The region is disproportionately underfunded and underfunded and we simply cannot meet demand. Yet the richness of experience, the stories, and the wealth of talent to be nurtured is palpable. I truly believe that the story/s of Western Sydney is the story of contemporary Australia and it is a privilege to play my role in providing pathways for writers and writing to reach audiences and to create platforms for their voices to be heard.

Nothing in the Arts can be achieved alone. The success of us as an organisation and its ability to provide life and career changing opportunities for the people we serve is entirely dependent on two things - those organisations and individuals who recognise and value the work we do, not just through acclamations but support us financially. Without money none of anything contained in this report could be realised. The second is our people. They are the ones who work together, bring their experience, expertise and passion together to create and deliver the exceptional quality of programming and the breadth of offerings WestWords provides. In the first instance it is the staff – they are an incredible group of people; Ally Burnham, our new Creative Producer, and demonstrating the pathway of opportunity we seek to provide the sector, former WestWords Academician, joined us in March, development manager Kathie Elliott-Scott, multi-award winning writer and program manager James Roy, associate producer Christine Donoghue, digital producer Christian Pazzaglia, schools' program manager Sheryl Cootes, publisher Margrete Lamond, publicist Deb McInnes and DMCP, and Chris Adams our bookkeeper. Then it is the people who work in our partnered organisations – with them we create the relationships that are the strength behind achieving success. They are so often not recognised but each and every one makes everything possible. And lastly the community of writers – they tell our stories; their generosity brings meaning to our lives; their openness mentors the next generation. We are all indebted to them.



Michael Campbell

Case Studies: Macquarie University partnership

We worked with Hsu-Ming Teo and Michelle Hamadache from Creative Writing, Discipline of Literature and Creative Writing, Macquarie University on a project that saw third year students interview and write up articles on writers and beneficiaries of WestWords' programs. The students gained insight not only into the skills that could benefit them in their own research and future employment but also personal connection into a community of writers that they will soon be entering. From the WestWords perspective 11 case studies were created that document and give valuable insight into the programs we run.

Fiona Murphy - interview with Maya Veloso

Years of chasing possibility eventually led Fiona to WestWords. Fiona was awarded the fellowship in 2018; a moment she describes as a pivotal step in her writing journey. "I had gotten used to doing [writing] competitions, but I didn't see [the fellowship] as an overall possibility towards a book being published. I didn't have the capability of thinking like that or knowing even how to do it. So having the support of WestWords, having the mentorship allowed for me to understand how to go about things, and how to get things done as well as being a part of something bigger than myself. Being part of a community was so validating and really exciting."

James Elazzi – interview by Thomson Warner

James Elazzi says that it is underestimated just how much of a role institutions play in the development of a literary culture. For him, this is where WestWords really played a part in his career development. The reality, especially for those successful writers, is that they spend a lot of time interacting with other like minds interested in storytelling. It is spaces like those offered by WestWords that makes it possible for writers to be able to bounce ideas off each other, gaining insights and creativity and giving each other confidence.

According to James, communities are built by having leaders and role models—people upcoming writers can look up to and aspire to be. For James a key part of what WestWords does is to, "Elevate writers or individuals that show leadership skills in the industry, and to support them so they can represent the community..." James emphasizes that WestWords initiatives offer aspiring writers important industry skills, as well as support and community. For James, WestWords is an example of an organization people can point to and say, "this is what it means to be part of our community."

Kim Pham – interview by Nicholas Aravindhan

Kim is passionate about addressing inequalities, and she strongly believes that WestWords helps to propel voices from Western Sydney that might otherwise remain silent and marginalised. Apart from her Emerging Writers Fellowship, Kim has participated in many creative writing workshops that WestWords organises. Before WestWords, she did not know that creative writing could be a career path for her. During her time in high school, Kim never got to see a creative writer invited to her school to talk about writing and that it could be a career path. Joining WestWords allowed Kim to be exposed to the world of writers and the industries and communities that both support writers, but also often provide career opportunities. As far as Kim was concerned, WestWords is an oasis to a parched traveller as they were the ones willing to give her the opportunity to flourish and nurture her screenwriting skills.

Vivian Pham – interview by Priyasha

The impact of WestWords' involvement within her community was palpable, from providing opportunities to developing authors to building a community presence through informative events and writing groups. After being published, Vivian began to question whether her work was being read and whether or not her novel was reaching her audience and peers. Following publication, Vivian felt a sense of isolation from the wider writing community. She was prompted to apply for the 2020 WestWords Emerging Writers Fellowship, as she felt it would be helpful in reaffirming her sense of community and development as a newly-published writer. Reflecting on WestWords' impact on her, Vivian said that it's so important "just knowing that there's people out there, an organisation out there that's dedicated to you as an artist. Feeling like there's a space for your work to hold a conversation in — that your work can speak to other artists in Western Sydney." Vivian continues to immerse herself within the writing community in Western Sydney through panels and events organised by WestWords. The way that WestWords designs, invites and creates a sense of community is really thoughtful, and it's done in a way that she's not seen before.

ACTIVITIES & SERVICES

It has been an extraordinary year! As we emerged tentatively from the uncertainty and unpredictability of COVID we ran:

**298 activities
employing
216 writers
and allied artists**

In 2021 we ran 244 activities
- an increase of 54!
that employed 152 writers
- an increase of 64!

The increase has been a result of returning to live programming whilst continuing to serve our growing online constituency.



Our Remit: Greater Western Sydney

10% of Australia's 26 million population lives here.

- The region is home to more Australians than Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart, and Darwin combined.

Young people

- 26.8% of GWS's population is under the age of 20.
- 32.9% of NSW's young people live in GWS
More young people live in:
 - Western Sydney (337,787) than live in South Australia (287,026).
 - Blacktown and Penrith LGAs combined (101,972) than live in the ACT (75,393).
 - Blacktown LGA (64,270) than live in the Northern Territory (43,863).

Where we've come from

- GWS residents represent over half the world's population, coming from more than 180 countries.
- 58% of the GWS population have both parents born overseas.
- 67.8% of GWS residents have at least one parent born overseas:
 - primarily coming from India (5.4%) China (3.6%) Vietnam (2.9%), Phillipines (2.4%) Iraq (1.9%) Lebanon, (1.9%), United Kingdom (1.9%), New Zealand (1.5%), Nepal (1.2%) Fiji (1.1%)

Aboriginal population

- 2.1% of GWS population (54,509) identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestry, with the densest clustering in Blacktown and the Macarthur region.

Language

- We speak over 100 different languages.
- 45.7% of people speak a language other than English at home:
- primarily: Arabic (7.1%), Mandarin (3.9%), Vietnamese (3.7%), Cantonese (2.4%), Hindi (2.2%), Filipino/Tagalog (2.0%), Punjabi (1.5%), Urdu (1.5%), Assyrian/Aramaic (1.4%), Nepali (1.3%).

Economy

- Western Sydney is Australia's third largest economy, with an estimated gross regional product of \$157b or 24.84% of NSW's economic output.
- Western Sydney is home to the most disadvantaged location in NSW - the suburbs of Bidwill, Hebersham and Emerton. Disadvantage is based on 37 indicators, across seven main categories: social distress, health, community safety, economic, education, environment, lifetime disadvantage.

Sources:

Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue - 2021 census unpacked: What does it reveal about Greater Western Sydney? Media Release July 25, 2022.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/young-people/statistics>, Department of Communities and Justice

<https://profile.id.com.au/cws/>

Doubling Down on Western Sydney Where to go from here? Deloitte, January

2023. <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/future-of-cities/articles/doubling-down-on-western-sydney.html> including quote from Prime Minister Albanese Bradfield Oration, 6 December 2022.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/young-people/statistics>

REACH

In 2022
over 38,000 people
engaged with our
programming

In 2022,
29,639 people
directly participated
in our activities:
8,579 in-person
18,436 YouTube
1,829 Podcast
795 competitions and
call outs
with an additional
more than
8,500 people
attended our touring
exhibitions

In 2021,
20,984 people directly
participated in our
programs
That's an
increase of 79.37%
on 2021 direct
participation rates!

Creating and sharing the stories of Western Sydney

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. Our Patrons are The Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales and Mr Dennis Wilson.



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 establishment and 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.

DIGITAL AUDIENCES

During the course of 2022 our Youtube channel WestWordsOFFICIAL had:

18,808 active engagements with our online content, ie, the number of views by people who watched 1,057 hours of our videos, with 334 subscribers

We increased viewership from 14,840 in 2021, to 18,808

That's an increase of 26.7%

Audiences predominantly originated from (in order): Australia (74.7%), Philippines, United States, New Zealand, Vietnam, India, Croatia, United Kingdom

On our podcast channel, incorporating the WestWords Podcast and the mini-masterclass series, we had an audience of 1,829 people

Audiences predominantly originated from (in order): Australia (75.1%), United States, India, Singapore, United Kingdom, Thailand, Israel

TOTAL DIGITAL AUDIENCE
20,265



**WestWords'
Western Sydney
Centre for Writing**
41 Hunter St, Parramatta

*located in the
1897 Presbyterian Manse
just off
Parramatta Square*



Wedderburn Writers' Retreat



WestWords' Western Sydney Centre for Writing



In December 2021 we signed the lease on new premises at 41 Hunter St in central Parramatta so that we could, in 2022, return to in-person programming and services. With no government subsidised accommodation available this is a commercial lease. 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, to come together and to feel

themselves part of a supportive and well-resourced community, to have a home that is not hidden within other institutions or be part of other programming. We recognise these needs, and consequently we built a program of in person author talks, launches, slams, workshops and writers' spaces. We also recognise that over Covid we built a virtual home online which brought a national and international audience so we maintained our digital program, brought hybrid capability across all our programming with our Centre for Writing acting as the focus and hub for activity across the region and across the world. The relocation and fit out was made possible, in part, with the support of the NSW Government through Create Infrastructure.

Wedderburn Writers' Retreat

During the uncertainty of COVID during 2020 and 2021 the centre of our physical operations moved to the beautiful bushland setting of Wedderburn Writers Retreat in Campbelltown. We are immensely grateful to Campbelltown Libraries and Campbelltown City Council for their invaluable support allowing us to provide a virtual Centre for Writing for the duration of the worst of the pandemic. During the course of 2022 Wedderburn became a second hub for operations, a place for writers to retreat from their daily lives in order to work and a venue for workshops and masterclasses serving the people of SW Sydney.

Organisations in Residence at the Centre

Auburn Poets & Writers (APW)

APW was formed in 2005 in partnership with Auburn Community Development Network (ACDN). In 2019 it became an independent entity, auspiced by Cumberland Multicultural Community Services. Now auspiced by WestWords and in residence at the Centre APW is a body of writers from various linguistic backgrounds dedicated to composing poetry and writing for performance and publication. This includes sharing work at its monthly meetings and devising and developing multi-lingual shows around a common theme, engaging with the wider community through outreach and collaboration. It has participated in many festivals and events including the Sydney Writers Festival every year from 2006 to the present. The group also hosts a monthly open mic as part of our public programming.

www.westwords.com.au/project/auburn-poets-writers/

African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC)

The AAAC represents the African Australian Communities in the area of advocacy, research, and policy outcomes in collaboration with different stakeholders including but not limited to non-profit organisations, state and federal government, business, industry, academia and the civil and philanthropic sectors. In December, on the Request of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the AAAC facilitated the African Communities' consultations in Australia. WestWords provides AAAC office and meeting space at the Centre and has collaborated on various projects and anthologies.

www.africanaustralianadvocacy.org.au

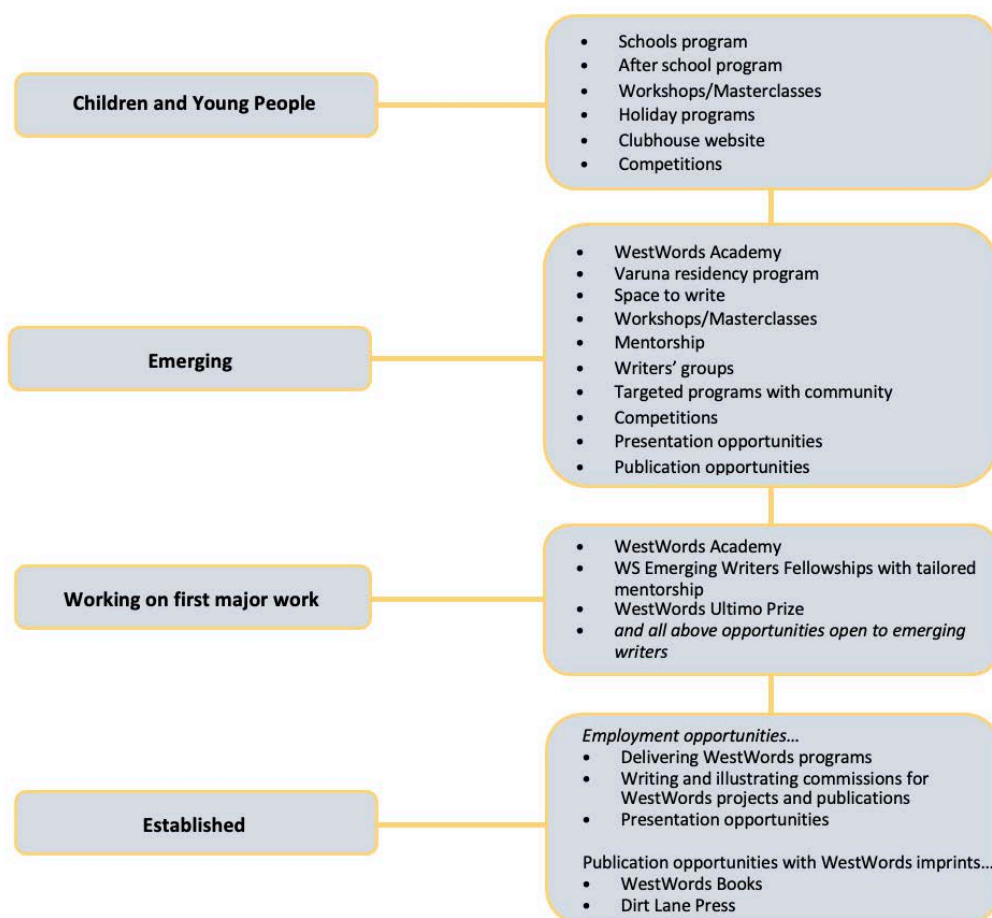


The Writers' Pathway: Creating the Stories of Western Sydney

Fundamental to the services we provide to writers and illustrators, is a pathway of opportunities to nurture their development as freelance artists, support the creation of new work, and to assist career sustainability. We see this pathway playing a critical role in the staged evolution of emerging writers in Western Sydney and to an emergent literature of this place. Throughout this progression WestWords provides 360 degree career support to writers to achieve their potential, including writers' groups, commissions, workshops, masterclasses and opportunities to present their work and publication through our various competitions and partnerships. This pathway moves from:

- the school years to post-school,
- to the WestWords Academy where emerging writers get trained in the practicalities of being an independent artist in today's changeable world
- to the WestWords/Varuna residency where emerging writers 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; and the WestWords/Ultimo writing prize where the winning writer receives guaranteed trade publication with Ultimo Press
- to providing employment for writers to maintain their careers, commissions and presentation opportunities.

The Writers' Pathway



*The frosty wind blew
across the icy
ground.
Ice pulsed through the hazy
atmosphere.
Bristly pine leaves bent
back and forth elastically,
chilled flakes of
twinkly sensations dotted the
blue sky as
the tinted clumps of
snow lay down on the
ground,
helplessly.*
Gabriel
Stage 3 Riverstone PS





In 2022 we worked with 22 schools

including 8 schools running a diversity of programs

(a combination of residencies, workshops, writing clubs, author talks, professional learning)

2 professional development programs for teachers

employing 27 writers engaging 3,880 students

creating 8 publications



The Writers' Pathway: Children and Young People

Schools' Program

Developing the skills of Western Sydney writers from the earliest of ages is core business for WestWords. After the disruption and lockdowns associated with the disruption caused by COVID our schools program returned in force to in person programming resulting in our busiest ever year. Our schools' program manager Sheryl Cootes ran the program combining her decades of experience working in Western Sydney schools with a significant depth of knowledge of the children's books to ensure the specificity, benefits and quality of each incursion was maximised. In-school activities often intersected with our other programming including writing competitions, workshops, community residencies, after-school programs and the Clubhouse website.

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. We highly value the level of consultation and collaboration with teachers to focus on the students' skills development as well as strengthening their individual voice, instilling increased confidence in our young people to effectively articulate and communicate their thoughts and imaginations. All our programs into schools are subsidised to a greater or lesser extent. We offered a range of free and part fee paying programs. Many resulted in publications with associated launches. As with any customised program the genres of writing covered are many. In 2022 we ran programs focussing on creative writing techniques, speculative fiction, crime writing, poetry, slam, reportage, illustration and editing. Eight of the writer in residence programs resulted in publications. In 2022 we worked with the following schools:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ Blackett PS | ○ Darcey Rd PS | ○ Patrician Brothers |
| ○ Blackheath PS | ○ Hornsby Girls HS | Blacktown |
| ○ Blaxland HS | ○ Kingswood Park PS | ○ Riverstone PS |
| ○ Bennett Rd PS | ○ Lindfield Learning Village | ○ Rouse Hill HS |
| ○ Bidwill PS | ○ Mt Druitt PS | ○ Springwood HS |
| ○ Braddock PS | ○ Northmead Creative | ○ St Luke's Marsden Park |
| ○ Chifley College Shalvey Campus | and Performing Arts HS | ○ The Ponds HS |
| ○ Crawford PS | ○ Parramatta HS | ○ Winmalee HS |

Professional Learning

During 2022, Professional Learning sessions were provided to teaching staff at two schools: Bennett Road PS and Bidwill PS. The focus for the sessions was on explicit and engaging teaching using quality literature in classrooms, leading to development of writing skills in students. These programs always took place alongside the in-class programs to deepen the experience and benefits of having a writer in the classroom. Teachers reported improved confidence and empowerment in the delivery of lessons, increased student engagement and improvement in student outcomes in writing.

Work Experience

For the first time we welcomed high school students for work experience opportunities. We gave year 10-12 students opportunities to attend creative writing workshops, contribute to our newsletter and social media pages, judge writing competitions, event production and management. We worked with Newtown Creative and Performing Arts High School and AUSSip Australian Schools Industry Partnership.

Foundation for Learning and Literacy's Symposium WestWords - FLLS

As part of FLLS WestWords presented a 50min online seminar focusing specifically on our writer-in-residence program. Our seminar can be viewed [here](#):

Our schools' programs are supported by Cultural Fund Copyright Agency (Writers in Western Sydney Schools), Parramatta Leagues Club via the Clubgrants scheme, Create NSW, WestWords and the schools themselves.

COPYRIGHT AGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

CG ClubGRANTS

P **PARRA**
LEAGUES



After School classes

Our after-school classes continued online this year each Monday and Wednesday during school term, catering for three age groups: school years 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. The facilitators were Catherine Pelosi, Kim Astill and Michelle Hamadache, writer, lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Macquarie University and Managing Editor of *Mascara Literary Review*. 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 between 4.5 to 18 years old enrolled in school. 28 students participated across the three classes.



Draw This!

Introduced in 2021 *Draw This!* is a monthly series of step-by-step videos presented by professional illustrators explaining how to draw a character from their books or a subject of their choice. In 2022 we added nine video workshops to the library making a total of sixteen.

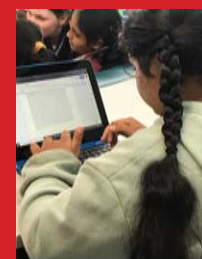
The 2022 videos were:

- Charmaine Ledden-Lewis draws [A Cloudy Sky](#)
- Max Hamilton draws [An Outback Boy](#)
- Aska draws [Alice](#)
- Jess Racklyeft draws [An Iceberg](#)
- Nicky Johnston draws [A Bunny](#)
- Emma Long draws a [Willy Wagtail](#)
- Kylie Howarth draws [Jarrah and her Kangaroo](#)
- Trace Balla draws [Ways to Love a Tree](#)
- Briony Stewart draws [Lenny](#)



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. In 2022 we welcomed young adult writers Jane Goodwin, Lisa Nicol, James Roy and Mick Elliott into the house. We have videos of writers reading from their latest books, writers and illustrators giving in-depth tips and tricks for their writing and drawing, and a place where 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.



Writers on the Road: Holiday Breaks

During 2022 we ran school holiday programs in both Orange and Broken Hill with young people aged between 11 and 18. Aimed at providing continuity and exponential growth for the participants of both programs they ran over successive holiday periods:

- Orange: winter and spring school holidays
- Broken Hill: winter, online after-school during term 3, spring school holidays and will conclude in January 2023 at the end of the summer school holidays.

In each location we collaborated with local organisations:

Broken Hill

- Big Sky Stories, a new social enterprise run by a former primary school teacher and a healthworker. During the course of the program they opened their bookshop and community space.
- Headspace

Orange

- Orange Aboriginal Lands Council
- Orange Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)
- Orange Aboriginal Medical Service

WestWords' Writers on the Road program is part of the Holiday Breaks program supported by the Office for Regional Youth in partnership with Create NSW





*Kickin' up the dust
Keeping up
But then it's like
I'm on my own
My feet in my dirt*

Thomas
Writers on the Road
Orange



*After the long night, the
mirror looks different.
Someone who looks like me
is the stranger in my
house. Overwhelmed with
anxiety, I stumble and
trip.*

*'Ah, shit.' I feel the lump on
the back of my head
grow. The envelope on the
floor seems to be
laughing at me, mocking me
in everything I do.
'Fuck off!' I smell the
alcohol odium in my voice.
There is hatred on my face.*

Makenzie
Extract from
Noah's Thoughts
Writers on the Road
Broken Hill

W

Writers on the Road: Orange

Writer James Roy and illustrator Charmaine Ledden-Lewis ran workshops with ten Aboriginal young people at *Marang Gunya* (The Good House). The aim was to develop voice whilst improving their writing skills. The young people combined illustration with their writing as well interviewing Elders offering the opportunity for intergenerational storytelling. The program was co-designed as part of the Designing Futures program. Particular thanks goes to Aunty Mary, Aunty Topsy, Aunty Muriel and Uncle Rick and the support of Micka Newman, Jessica Young and Kelly-Marie Hickey. The program resulted in an online publication – see publications.



Writers on the Road: Broken Hill

For each of the workshops series across the three holiday periods we brought different writers to the two groups. Responding to the interests of the participants the focus was on elements and conventions of speculative fiction. The younger, 'Big Sky group' was drawn from the two smallest public schools in Broken Hill. These children benefited from an opportunity for extension outside of the classroom setting to further foster their creativity, extending their skills and confidence as they transition towards their teenage years. The older 'Headspace' group already met weekly to play Dungeons and Dragons. These participants experience challenges with their mental health and marginalisation because of their gender and sexual diversity, and because their recreational interests sit outside Broken Hill's social norm. Whilst each holiday participants created work the ultimate aim was for each person to create a 500 word piece for inclusion in an anthology to be published in 2023. The program of writers was:

- Winter: Writer Ben Peek and graphic artist, comic writer Claudia Chinyere focused on worldbuilding.
- Term 3: Novelist and short story writer Alex Eldridge running weekly zoom sessions with the Headspace group focussing on plot using the framework of a D&D campaign.
- Spring: Writer Catherine Jinks focussing on pace and structure, and Alex Eldridge focussing on character development.
- Summer (January 2023): Glenn Fraser and Amelia Foxton, both screenwriters to focus on dialogue and developing the final submissions for the associated anthology.



Ally Burnham, award-winning screenwriter and WestWords Creative Producer accompanied the writers each time. As Big Sky Stories was just starting up at the commencement of the program a key benefit was the mentorship WestWords could provide to the new organisation.



BIG SKY
Stories





The Writers' Pathway: Writers' Groups

The African Australian Literature Development Program

The African Australian Literature Development Program began in 2020 to support, develop, share and celebrate the richness of the stories of African Australians within the multi-cultural context of Western Sydney. Now in its third year the program aims, through the creating and sharing of stories, to create a bridge of understanding and empathy between communities and generations, and engender a sense of belonging and pride. The

disruption of Covid, going in and out of delivering the program in person and online, had significant impact on the momentum on both the group and the individual writers. There was a good degree of fluctuation in the group's membership. In 2022 we returned to an in-person group facilitated by Mawunyo Gbogbo, who had run narrative non-fiction masterclasses in previous years. Out of lockdown and a renewed desire to create community another group formed in collaboration with Kumva & Kwibuka Team (see below). The resulting publications were published in December 2022 and in May 2023.

Kumva & Kwibuka Team: In 2022 WestWords collaborated with Kumva & Kwibuka Team - a group of survivors of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide Against the Tutsi. We ran a series of fortnightly writing workshops with the group with the aim of creating a memoir collection drawn from their experiences before, during and after the events of 1994. The anthology was launched at WestWords in December.

The African Literature Development Program is run by WestWords, in partnership with the African Australian Advocacy Centre (now an in-residence organisation) and Kumva & Kwibuka Team, and supported by the Adès Family Foundation



LGBTQIA+ writing group

Every second Wednesday throughout the year the LGBTQIA+ writers' group met at the Centre, sharing and getting feedback on their writing in a creative space where everyone 'got' what being queer meant, no need for explanation. The group continued to be facilitated by Wilfred Roach. In March we celebrated the work of the group in the publication of their second anthology *Transforming Silence: What are the Words?*

Supporting the group we ran two masterclasses determined by requests from the group: a poetry masterclasses delivered by Lou Garcia-Dolnik, a young poet who was shortlisted for the 2020 Blake Poetry Prize and a masterclass on pitching from SBS Voices program. In late November the first piece from the group was published online on SBS website. The piece by Michael Stoneburner, *Finding the real 'me' in the Mirror* was about going clothes shopping as a non-binary person. You can read it [here](#). We also ran showcase events for the group as part of Outloud's *About Us* program and as part of the Art Gallery of NSW *Live at the Lounge* series.

The LGBTQIA+ group is supported by the Aurora Foundation



With a green branch brought by the wind, Buzzagully cleans the ashes between rocks shaped into a circle and lights the fire on dry wood, making suffocating sounds as if trying to hold on to its last breath in their green life. He puts the meat in a homemade copper pot and two fish in an aluminium pot whose original colour has disappeared under soot. He chops the onion, divided it equally between the two pots, and sprinkles spices and a little salt. He busies himself by cleaning away the grass near his shelter, slowly chewing a piece of bread. He sits and stares ahead at one spot in the middle of the river; he recalls his memories, he sees his wife's face emerging from the depth of the river, and she tells him that she is pregnant with his first child; he sees her smiling like the sunrise as she holds their child in her arms, inviting him to the angelic smile of their child for the first time. Suddenly, he realises the aluminium pot is bubbling. Quickly, he takes it from the fire and opens the lid to let it cool down. The copper pot roars and boils over, announcing it is time to remove it from the fire as well.

Buzzagully, by Afeif Ismail (as part of the AALDP to be published in 2023)

Swimming with Demons

*My therapist reminded me
Self compassion
It's okay to be overwhelmed
When life is overwhelming
You reminded me
To work until
Pain fades with the distance
Of progress
How do I meet you
When you're running from your
demons
And I'm swimming with mine?*

Mimosa Rose – LGBTQIA+ group



Garden

*Attempts at nutrition:
grandma's grey hair and white
eggshells
nesting under the orange tree,
slowly eroding oyster shells
beneath the potted lemon tree,
still lustrous.
What if I have no roots to nurture
on this soil?*

Gum Guo – LGBTQIA+ group

The Writers' Pathway: Emerging Writers

Campbelltown writing program

Complementary to the in-residence opportunities offered to writers at the Wedderburn Writers Retreat we ran two groups each one meeting fortnightly throughout the course of the year. Each group acted as both a workshop series and as a more traditional writers' group where the members supported and gave feedback on each other's work. The fiction group was led by James Roy. The non-fiction by Sienna Brown. From May – October we also offered extended masterclasses at Wedderburn each focussing on a particular aspect of the craft – with James Knight, Bonnie Wynne, Brooke Robinson and Ali Whitelock. An integral part of the program was the Fisher's Ghost Writing Competition, for which we also offered free writing workshops run by Deb Tidball, Andy Muir and Kim Pham.



WestWords Academy:

The life of a writer is more than just writing

The Academy is a year-long training program for emerging writers and multi-disciplinary artists. It provides early career development for writers, 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. We also provided wrap around support with individual mentorship in grant writing, their writing, opportunities to be published including with Sydney Review of Books. In 2022 there were 20 participants.



Varuna: The National Writers' House

In September we partnered with Varuna to give five emerging Western Sydney writers from diverse backgrounds who had completed a significant amount on a major work the chance to receive

mentorship and spend a week away from daily life to write in seclusion. The recipients were

- * Harvey Liu (short fiction)
- * Finn O'Branagain (short fiction/memoir)
- * Jasmyne Ramos/J. Marahuyo (poetry)
- * Paris Rosemont (poetry)
- * Zeynab Gamieldeen (Novel - WW/Ultimo Prize winner)

The live-in mentor for the poetry focussed writers was Ali Whitelock, with James Roy mentoring the short fiction writers. Zeynab worked through specific feedback given to her by Ultimo Press as she prepares the m/s for publication.

The Varuna House WestWords Residency became a pivotal moment in Samara's life at a time she felt drained and uncertain about continuing with writing. The WestWords team are always so encouraging, and always there as a sounding board, or when one needs to ask a question. The support has influenced her to want to give back to the community—something she calls 'reaching back'. "If you can, reach back. They've [WestWords] reached back to me, so now I can too."

Samara Lo – interview with Cheirlene Roque

2020 Varuna/WestWords resident and member of the WestWords Academy

***The courier pigeons of cyberspace* Paris Rosemont**

We parlay little love notes like shuttlecocks through neon skies secret missions leaving three-pronged footprints in the dot-matrix sand.

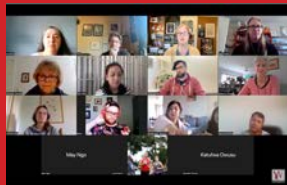
Encoded messages smuggled under our tongues, acting as both safe and key. We unravel the ciphers with our dextrous tongues, weaving the tapestry of our story, thread by delicious thread.

Paris Rosemont

I went from grasping at the fringes of being an emerging writer, to coming out the other end feeling firmly embedded in the emerging writing community.

**Ally Burnham
2021 Alumni**

In 2022 Ally became
WestWords' Creative
Producer





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. Each fellow receives tailored mentorship over the course of 8-10 months to revise and hone their manuscript. As an example of how our programs offer a developmental pathway the three 2022 Fellows have been previous recipients of WestWords support. The 2022 Fellows were:

Paris Rosemont: to complete her debut collection. Mentor ali whitelock

The collection will be "an exploration of love, loss and heartbreak, lust and sex, feminism, power dynamics, identity, displacement, generational trauma and twisted tales."

Paris received a WestWords/Varuna emerging writers residency, was a member of the 2022 Academy and received publication in Living Stories: *Things Unsaid*.

Samantha Lee: to redraft her manuscript *Bound* with a particular focus on structure.

Bound is literary historical fiction which explores the struggles of mother-daughter and sibling relationships within four generations of Chinese women.

Samantha is Head Teacher English at Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School where we have run multiple programs year on year for the past five years.

Blake Curran: to redraft his YA speculative fiction/horror novel *A Town Called Cancer*.

Mentor Ben Peek

There's something strange about the outback town of Cancer. Having arrived here from the inner-city suburbs of Sydney and still reeling from the loss of her brother, Wilhelmina "Will" Langston feels like she can't trust her parents and she's had enough. Her mother, Penelope, is not just hiding secrets from her, though. Moving back into the house she grew up in, Penelope's past resurfaces in strange and troubling ways, and, worst of all, seems targeted at her daughter. It will be up to this mother and daughter to work together and face their demons—literally—if they have any hope of overcoming the trauma that haunts them both.

Blake was a member of the 2022 Academy and received publication in Living Stories: Things Unsaid, and Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize A Voice from the Shadows.

Previous Fellows receiving debut publication

Eda Gunaydin *Root and Branch: Essays on Inheritance* (New South)

Winner, 2023, Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Non-fiction

Root & Branch unsettles neat descriptions of inheritance, belonging and place. Her essays ask: what are the legacies of migration, apart from loss? And how do we find comfort in where we are? Eda is a former WestWords Associate Producer and is currently a lecturer at Wollongong University.

Gunaydin's essays are multifaceted and engrossing, combining sharp wit and insightful commentary in a depiction of modern life. Elena Perse, Arts Hub

Fiona Murphy *The Shape of Sound* (Text Publishing)

Commended, 2022 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, Non-fiction

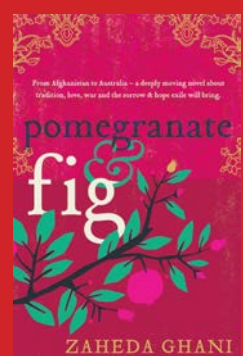
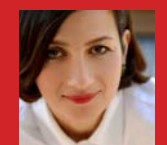
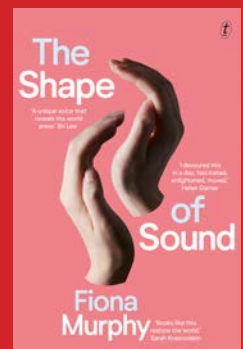
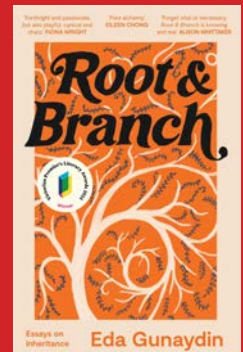
Blending memoir with observations on the healthcare industry, *The Shape of Sound* is a story about the corrosive power of secrets, stigma and shame, and how deaf experiences and disability are shaped by economics, social policy, medicine and societal expectations.

It is vital to read stories like this for their incredible insight, as Murphy navigates stigma, ableism and ideas of disability with reference to her own time in the healthcare industry. Books+Publishing

Zaheda Ghani *Pomegranate & Fig* (Hachette Australia)

Tracing the lives of three young people, the book moves from the streets of Herat in the 1970s, invaded by Soviet forces, to India in the 1980s and then to the suburbs of Sydney, illuminating the disruption, displacement and tragedy that war unleashes.

Zaheda Ghani's novel of belonging and exile is a book for our times... [it] occupies a special place in a literature that aspires to be multicultural Saturday Age



The Western Sydney Emerging Writers Fellowships
are supported by

COPYRIGHTAGENCY
CULTURAL FUND

WestWords Academian

Paris Rosemont

spent 2022 dedicating herself to her writing, and to making a life and career change. During her year with the Academy, building community, and taking up the opportunities and mentorship we provided she achieved:

Writing Prizes 2022

- Winner: Poetry Prize in the New England Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing
- Winner: Short Stories Unlimited spring short story competition
- Shortlisted: Hammond House Publishing International Literary Prize
- Shortlisted: Short Stories Unlimited winter and spring poetry competitions
- Longlisted: Heroines/Joyce Parkes Prize
- Runner up: Vocal Haiku Challenge
- Special mention: Delegate School of Arts Poetry Competition

Awards 2022

- Arts Access Australia mentorship
- Frontier Poetry Spring Poetry Lab scholarship
- WestWords/Varuna Emerging Writers' Residency
- Runner up: Writing NSW x Varuna Fellowship
- WestWords / Copyright Agency Fellowship

Published Poetry 2022

- Red Room Poetry anthology 'Admissions' (Upwell Publishing)
- Verge Literary Journal (Monash University)
- FemAsia Magazine (recognised as one of the top four publications/magazines in the British Asian Media Industry for 2022)
- Heroines Anthology (vol.4.)
- Gems Zine Issue #23
- The Frida Affect Issue #3
- I Write the Body Anthology
- Authora Australis Issue #5
- South Coast Writers Centre 34 to 37 Degrees South Anthology

Workshops and masterclasses

During 2022 we offered a comprehensive range of workshops and masterclasses right across the region and the State. Often they were integrated into other programs like the over 50+ free workshops to children through to adults as part of the Living Stories, Fisher's Ghost and Blacktown Mayoral Creative writing competitions, or after-school programs live or online, holiday workshops, or to specific groups eg. targeted towards our LGBTQIA+ group, the Academy or as part of the call out for contributors to the BAD Western Sydney Crime or African Australian Literature Development anthologies, or online through our YouTube channel or as part of our mini-masterclass series. Over 100 workshops were delivered free or at low cost to match the constraints of our constituency.

Mini-masterclasses podcast

Each of the 'episodes' of the mini-masterclass podcast series features a "bite-sized" conversation between WestWords program manager, James Roy, and a professional writer, poet, editor or one of the many professionals who work with and/or promoting literature. Begun during COVID during 2022 an additional 18 podcasts were added to the library making a total of 66 which attracts audiences nationally and internationally to the writers and literature of Western Sydney. Focusing on different aspects of story, writing or the industry, some examples of topics covered are: creating characters; gathering ideas; beating writer's block; world building; research; writing poetry, collaboration, publishing trends, the role of libraries, pitching work, marketing yourself and so on. Below are the 2022 episodes:

2022 Varuna Residents

Ally	Burnham
Alasdair	Carter
James	Elazzi
Mick	Elliott
Jane	Godwin
Clarence	Florence
Dave	Griffiths
Lee	Kofman
Georgia	Monaghan
James	Roy
James	Roy
James	Roy
Lowell	Tarling
Lilli	Wilkinson
Ally	Burnham
Michael	Campbell
Margo	Lanagan
Kirsty	Eager
Simone	King
Gershon	Maller
Erica	Wagner
Demet	Divaroren
Tony	Eaton
Paula Kelly	Paull

"Awesome, Gobsmaeked, Nurtured & Inspired"

Writing for Animation

The Hurt Healer

"On Stage, On Screen": Writing for Performance

Writing for the YouTube Generation

"Three Hats": When You're a Writer, an Editor and a Publisher

Letterpress – The 'Slow Food Movement' of Printing

The Curative Space

The Writer Laid Bare

It's All Academic

Novel Writing on Location

Mini-Practicum – Write like Hemingway

"Spoiler Alert!" The Hamilton Tension Trick

"Henry Lawson was here"

Censorship of Books for Young People

"Would you rather...?"

The 67th Blake Poetry Prize

The Lullaby(ish) Episode

During 2022 we added 18 episodes to the library of mini-masterclasses, making a total of 66 masterclasses



Writers in Residence at the Centre

Yumna Kassab author *The Lovers*, *Australiana*, *The House of Youseff*

For each of my three books, WestWords has hosted an event. In each instance, it was an opportunity for me to speak about my work, to connect with members of the community and to meet other writers. I am particularly grateful to WestWords for hosting the launch for *The House of Youseff* and also for *The Lovers*, an event which took place last week. In the week before the edits of *The Lovers* were due, WestWords also provided me with a desk and a quiet space to get my frantic work done.

Brittany Searle: Writing her memoir she was developing during her fellowship, Brittany used the Centre as a place of calm, away from home, children and other work.

Two members of the WestWords Academy used WestWords Western Sydney Centre of Writing

Paris Rosemont: Dedicating herself to a year to her writing, a career and life change, Paris worked at the Centre building her body of work, aiming towards her first anthology of work.

Lathalia Song: She used the Centre to be part of a community of like-minded people and to find a moment of quiet in her otherwise full life.

WestWords/Ultimo Writing Prize

The WestWords/Ultimo Prize is a new prize that aims to reveal the diversity of a contemporary Australia. Nowhere is the experience of a diverse culture and experience more apparent than in Western Sydney. The Prize welcomed submissions from emerging writers of fiction and narrative nonfiction with a previously unpublished manuscript who have a connection to Western Sydney. The winner receives \$5,000, a week at Varuna, The National Writers House, as part of WestWords' writer development program and publication with Ultimo Press.

The winner of the inaugural WestWords/Ultimo Prize is *The Scope of Permissibility* by Zeynab Gamiieldien. In the book, a group of Muslim university students grapple with an illicit relationship within their ranks. At the centre of this story are three students navigating the road to adulthood, balancing desire and fidelity, ambition and faith. Set in the confines of a Sydney University, Gamiieldien's incredibly accomplished debut is a coming-of-age story told in three voices as each character searches for belonging against the backdrop of politics, race and class divisions and interpersonal relationships.

Winning this prize is a wonderful surprise. This story is one I've been wanting to tell for some time, particularly for those who will relate to the depictions set out on the page and see parts of themselves in it – I wrote it with them, and us, in mind. **Zeynab Gamiieldien**

Ultimo Press could not be more excited about this year's WestWords Ultimo Prize. The high standard of entries is testament to the wealth of talented new authors out there waiting to be discovered, and we cannot wait to share the stories the prize unearths with readers everywhere. **Robert Watkins, Publishing Director, Ultimo Press**



Zeynab Gamiieldien



Daffodil Cottage Residencies for established writers

The WestWords Daffodil Cottage Artist Residencies are aimed at giving established writers and their collaborators time to spend time away from the routine and demands of daily life either with in isolation or with their creative partners. Each writer/partnership receives a week's accommodation and a

stipend of \$1,000 to recognise any loss of income they may experience due to their time away from their 'day job'. We did a call out in October for residencies spanning the end of 2022 through to 2023. The first one took place in 6-13th December with multi-award winning playwright Hilary Bell. The Daffodil Cottage residence program is made possible by the owner Katy Jenkins and The Adès Family Foundation.



It was all I'd hope for in terms of clearing my mind of other matters, including other projects, and giving me the space to map out two new short plays for 'Summer of Harold', which is programmed for the Ensemble's 2023 season.

Hilary Bell

Dec Daffodil Cottage resident

For a preview from Hilary about *Summer for Harold* click [here](#).



The 67th Blake Poetry Prize.

The Prize was announced in a ceremony at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre on 17th March coinciding with announcement of the visual arts prize and the launch of the associated exhibition. Each of the six shortlisted poems were displayed alongside the artwork. The winner was Simone King for her poem *Surfing Again*.

This prose poem successfully and indelibly creates a moving story of travel, loss and homage to friendship using language that avoids sentimentality yet embraces raw emotion.

A fine example of how restraint can be luminous and lasting. **Judges' comments**

Read it [here](#). Watch Simone reading it [here](#).

As part of CPAC's Up Late program we held a panel featuring three poets from this year's shortlist *entitled* 'Innocence and Experience'. James Roy interviewed Simone King (winner) along with Kirsten Krauth and Gershon Maller (highly commended) for our YouTube channel.

You can watch it [here](#)



Blake Poetry Prize winner
Simone King
with NSW Arts Minister
Ben Franklin MLC



The Writers' Pathway: Writing competitions

Living Stories: Things Unsaid



The Living Stories Western Sydney Writing Prize is a creative writing competition instigated by WestWords in collaboration with WestLit Libraries. It was initially supported in 2021 by the NSW Government through its Arts Restart stimulus package. We believed its importance in providing opportunities for young and emerging voices, a forum for reflection and conversation between communities, and as an insight into the rich tapestry that is Western Sydney was too valuable to lose. Now in its second year, it has been made possible through the generous support of Australian Catholic University and Booktopia.

The prize was open to residents of Greater Western Sydney and Wingecarribee Shire across four age categories: 10-12yrs, 13-15yrs, 16-18yrs and 18+. Entries could be in the form of a poem, short story or personal essay. To support the writers in their creations, in little over a fortnight, we ran over 40 in-person creative writing workshops facilitated by 18 writers in libraries across Western Sydney.

The writers were asked to respond to theme *Things Unsaid*. The entries were assessed by 34 judges drawn from local community, as defined by the 13 council districts and Western Sydney writers. The judges arrived at a regional winner and highly commended entry. The winners from each local government area went to a second round vying to be overall winner and highly commended in each category.

Local adult winners received \$300, and each of the local junior winners received \$100. Highly commended entrants won \$100 (adult) and \$50 (junior). The overall adult winner received \$1,000 and each of the three overall junior winners received \$500. Highly commended entries received \$500/\$250. In total a prize pool of over \$10,500.

The book showcasing the 124 works that were the winning and highly commended entries in each category, from each Council district, was launched along with the overall winners' announcement at the Parramatta Square Business and Event Centre in July.

When did we unconsciously decide public places were not for private conversations? We abbreviate a true version of ourselves to be hidden in texts, the group chat, or in a passing late-night comment coming home from a gig.

We feel safe here.

We are...

A cardboard box stained with lemon juice, streaks of sausage grease and the pressure of working six days a week to make ends meet.

A crumpled foil ball and a chronically ill spouse.

A plate with chili stems, pickled cabbage, skerricks of rice and a single parent coping with separation.

The last chip is eaten; our wounds triaged with food and drink. Applying a band aid when we need stitches. The sustenance of old friendship failing to sate the need for deeper relationship.

We don't move beyond this distance. We can't. The distance of our masculinity compounded by the distance of family dynamics and exacerbated by the distance of work expectations. Distance multiplied because we have no vocabulary. Keeping each other at a distance even though we live within ten minutes' drive of one another.

We Three Kings (extract): Adam Byatt

Overall winner. Adult Living Stories 2022

Pumpkins

*For fifty years she tended a
grey filing cabinet
An alphabetised account of
Angry silences
Bad ideas
Critical appraisals
(both given and received)
An unproductive life in four
heavy drawers.*

*After her granddaughter
came along
she made compost with the
files
turned the cabinet into a
trellis for pumpkins
And made soup instead.*

Jo Staker
Winner – Adult
The Hills Shire
Overall special mention
Living Stories 2022



What Matters?

The *What Matters?* writing competition invites students from years 5-12 from across NSW, Victoria, 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 was one of the judges and WestWords provides a prize of a virtual author visit to three schools chosen from the shortlisted entries for the competition. James Knight gave in person workshops to Parramatta HS and Hornsby Girls High School. Whilst Deborah Abela visited Lansdowne Crescent HS in West Hobart, Tasmania via zoom.

Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize

For the fourth consecutive year WestWords, in partnership with Blacktown City Libraries and Blacktown City Council, ran the Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize. Entrants wrote a short story or poem responding to the theme of *What now?* and the total prize pool was \$1,600. The Mayoral Creative Writing Prize is a chance to showcase and foster the talents of Blacktown City's aspiring writers. Blacktown City Council introduced the competition following the National Year of Reading in 2012 to celebrate the stories of Western Sydney. In its 11-year history, the Prize has encouraged children, teenagers and adults from Blacktown City to embrace their inner writer. This year the competition attracted 255 entries. The competition culminates in an event announcing the winners and launching the associated publication containing the shortlisted and winning entries. The 2022 judges were Ben Peek, Sheryl Cootes and Paul Traynor.

In partnership with Campbelltown City Libraries and Campbelltown City Council.



Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize

Each November, the legendary Festival of Fisher's Ghost comes alive in Campbelltown. The Festival is steeped in history, dating back to 1956. It is named after Australia's most famous ghost, Frederick Fisher. 2021 marks the inaugural Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize to coincide with the Fisher's Ghost Festival held in early November. We received 122 entries across all the categories. The judges, Luke Carman, Brittany Searle, Ally Burnham and peer assessor for the junior categories Scarlett Saunders, assessed the works on their originality and creativity,

the construction and use of language, (including creative expression, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling) and the way characters, atmosphere and setting were developed, and engagement with the theme, *A Voice from the Shadows*. The Prize was open to adults and children in Grade 4 and above, who live, or go to school, in Campbelltown City. Entries could be in the form of short story, narrative non-fiction, memoir or poetry.



CAMPBELLTOWN In partnership with Campbelltown City Libraries and Campbelltown City Council.

I am a fibreboard failure. Crafted by the hands of a deft but humble carpenter with no real passion for the work which is why he took almost five years to make one measly single-sized bed for himself. His son pawned it off for him. I have been used, reused and broken apart to make a nice, lacquered shelf that snapped within a few weeks of usage only to be grounded into powder and made into a hardwood frame with pine and oak and hemp flowing through my veins.

*Angela Chau – Short Story/Non-Fiction/Memoir Grades 10-12
Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize*

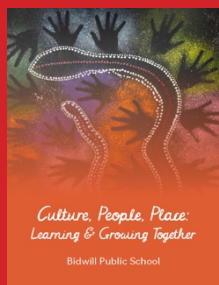
*The dwarves had children
all across the world
One named Omicron of which
moved like a bird
The dwarves came in waves to
destroy the people of earth
Now they inject fear into the
next generation, from birth*

Sai Karthik - Poetry 8-11 yrs



*A canvas of bruises and cuts,
the body like a soldier on a
flourishing battlefield.
The skeletons in the cupboard
are unveiled,
the monsters under the bed
are revealed,
The sealed lips are pried open,
spewing the unknown,
impetuously spoken.
A mayday being called, an
S.O.S written out,
A call for help as clear as a
teardrop
gushing from a victim.*

**Maryam Muzammil -
Poetry Grades 7-9**



There are many positives to maintaining a persistently sad, mostly uneventful love life throughout the entirety of your adolescence - such as the drawer of unreciprocated old confession letters I've curated over years.

The crumbled white pages of sustained singleness and over-sprayed cologne proves quite handy for an uninspired musical prodigy such as myself.

Melia Northreads
Northmead CAPAHS



WestWords 2022 Publication Program



The publications WestWords produces fall into four distinct categories: WestWords Community – these are publications directly arising from our programs supporting emerging writers; WestWords Books – trade publications for adults; Dirt Lane Press – these are children's picture books carrying on the legacy from Dirt Lane when it was an independent entity. Additional online publications are done in partnership with other organisations.

WestWords Community publications: Schools Program

Culture, People, Place: Learning and Growing Together

Bidwill Public School

Illustrations by Yorta Yorta woman Grace Barton, the Aboriginal Education Officer at the school, in collaboration with Uncle Jia Pittman through the Living Deadly program. Each of the Yr 5&6 students was tasked with planning their own character and telling that character's story. They also looked at the importance of setting and dialogue techniques. The students had feedback on their writing and were encouraged to self-edit and rewrite. Bidwill PS is located in Mt. Druitt with approximately 70 students. The cohort includes 26% of students from an Aboriginal background and 41% of students from Pacific Islander backgrounds.



Northreads: Another anthology of short writings from Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School Vol3.

We have worked with the school in many different capacities over many years. This is the third volume of Northreads, the publication arising out their After-school Creative Writing Club. We began working with the Club in 2018 pausing only for the disruption of Covid. Every fortnight during the second half of the year writer in residence Kim Pham worked with the students to explore their desire to create works of speculative fiction. The school has a particular focus on the Creative and Performing Arts programs in Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Music. The student population is approximately 1050 students with 51% coming from a non-English speaking background with just over 2% from an Aboriginal background.

Possum Tales: Stories from Braddock Public School

For five sessions over five weeks, award winning writer Tamsin Janu worked with a group of Year 3 & 4 students at Braddock Public School in the Penrith area. The aim of the five week residency was to increase the kids' confidence in writing, teach them a few techniques that might help to improve their writing, and most importantly teach them to love writing and telling their stories. The school has a current enrolment of 310 students, including 30% who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



Lessons From Loss: Stories from Winmalee High School

The residency with award winning writer Catherine Jinks brought together students from across Years 8-11. The students wanted to comment on and challenge notions of loss. They had just been through several years of lockdowns, learning from home and the threat of bushfires. Their world had changed and felt the need to creatively explore how we can learn valuable lessons from difficult and sometimes heartbreaking experiences.

Other Worlds: Stories from Riverstone Public School

Illustrations by Jasmine Seymour, a Dharug woman, Prime Minister's Literary Award winning illustrator and a teacher at the school.

Over five weeks, award winning writer Catherine Pelosi worked with a group of Year 5 & 6 students. Conversations were fostered around the creation of an engaging story. Students were taught how an idea can evolve. They experimented with different plots, settings and characters to create their narratives. The school has a student enrolment of 551. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds with 18% of students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples and 55% from an English as an Additional Language or Dialect background.



Memories and Dreams: Words by students of Mount Druitt Public School

Illustrations by Dub Leffler and the students.

Writer and illustrator, and proud Bigambul man Dub Leffler laughed, learnt and wrote with Yr 5&6 students over five weeks. Dub drew portraits of some of the students which appear both on the cover and throughout the book. The school has an enrolment of 554 with 5% identifying as of Aboriginal descent and 70% from English as an additional language or dialect.

Misdemeanors: Words by students of Blaxland High School

For five sessions over five weeks, award-winning writer Andy Muir worked with a group of Year 9 students in an English class at Blaxland High School in the Blue Mountains. Andy used his own background as a crime writer to inspire the students to create and develop their own dark tales.

Ngilaya nangamayi Together we dream: Stories from Kingswood Park Public School

with illustrations by proud Dunghutti woman Jessica Farrell.

Writer and documentary maker Lisa Nicol worked with a group of Year 4-6 students at Kingswood Park Public School in the Penrith area. Over the five weeks of the residency they experimented with different styles of writing – including spontaneous prose, magic realism and found poetry. The majority of students come from a low socio-economic background with 40% of students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 20% from English as an Additional Language/Dialect background.

A Walk into Tomorrow: Words by Chifley College Shalvey Campus and Lindfield Learning Village

Photos taken by students from both schools.

For five sessions over five weeks, award-winning writer James Roy worked with groups of Year 7-8 students from two schools: Chifley College, Shalvey Campus and Lindfield Learning Village. James worked with the schools independently and then together when they met at WestWords' Centre for Writing in Parramatta.

The approach in bringing diverse schools together is best summed up in James' introduction to the book: "In the last two-and-a-half decades as a writer I have been privileged to visit thousands of students in hundreds of schools, and I've noticed something – young people don't change. Sure, their tastes in music and TV and books shift and reset and rinse and repeat, and nowadays there's more social media in general, although it's less Facebook and more TikTok than it once was. But by and large, young people are the same as they have ever been. They're keen to fit in, they find their families essential and annoying in equal measure, their friends are everything, they are nervous yet courageous in the face of approaching adulthood, and they care about things: the world they are inheriting, the lies they are told, the opportunities they are offered, the places they occupy. This commonality between young people of roughly the same

age is never more noticeable than when students from schools on opposite sides of the city are put together. It is always exciting to watch the common interests being discovered and explored, and perceived differences melting away. And, aside from that, it is equally exciting to watch them refining their creative voice, and realising how many stories hang in the air around them, waiting to be shared."

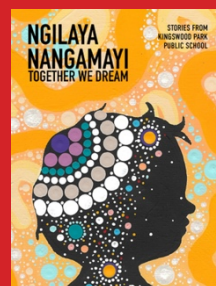
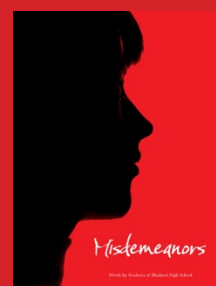
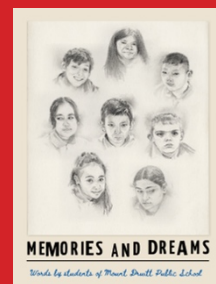


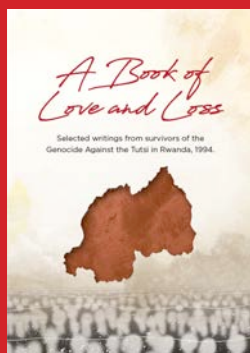
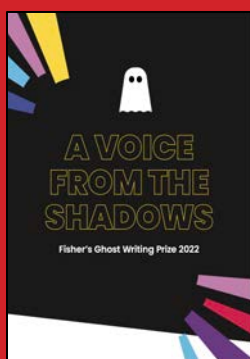
WestWords Schools' Publication Program is supported by



I stumble into my room and collapse. My hands shake and eyeliner runs down my face in black rivers, following the lines of my pores and scars. I reach into my bedside table, fingers bleeding and scarred from my constant scratching and picking at them. I feel for the smooth cold metal and wrap my fingers around the small thin blade.

Butterflies Atticus Winmalee HS Lessons from Loss





WestWords Community Publishing Program

The 2022 Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize

The prize was open to adults and children who live in Blacktown city. Entrants wrote a short story or poem responding to the theme of *What now?* The publication showcases the winning and highly commended entries and special mentions from the Prize. To view the online version click [here](#).

A Voice from the Shadows: Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize 2022

The competition was open to adults and children who live or work in Campbelltown City. Entrants wrote a short story or poem responding to the theme of *A Voice from the Shadows*. The publication showcases the winning and highly commended entries. To view the online version click [here](#).

*You are that thing I could never quite reach.
You were the song I didn't know the words to,
The colours I was colourblind to,
The drink I was never allowed to swallow,
The skin that was never mine to touch,
I spent my days infatuated by you.
You were a voice from shadows,
One I could hear but not see.
You were the remedied cure to a poison,
But a poison never meant for me.
I guess I just have to admit it to myself,
That we were never meant to be.*
Zia S. Mae Winner Poetry Grades 10-12
Fisher's Ghost Writing Prize 2022

The Good House

The Good House is the culmination of series of workshops with Aboriginal children and teens undertaken in Orange over the winter and spring school holidays. A combination of words and illustrations this marks a significant achievement for these young people. Online publication only. Click [here](#).



Transforming Silence: What are the Words?

This is the second annual anthology from the WestWords LGBTQIA+ group. The confidence and skills of the group's members continue to develop and grow. This anthology contains work that is beautiful and raw, heartfelt, tender and inspiring as both difficult terrain and celebration is explored.

A Book of Love and Loss: Selected writings from survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, 1994 by members of the Kumba & Kwibuka Team

Almost thirty years ago the world stood by as incomprehensible horror fell across the African nation of Rwanda in what became known as the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In 100 days almost a million died at the hands of the army, police and government-backed Hutus militias. *A Book of Love and Loss* is by members of Kumba & Kwibuka Team (KKT) and is a collection of memoirs taken from their experiences before, during and after the events of 1994. The book was launched at the Centre in December.



As the nightmare starts, we are anxious to open the curtains and see what all the noise is about, but no one dares. Dad has been on the phone a few hours already, trying to get some news. In a few minutes Mum will receive a phone call from Helen, the late Lando's wife, saying her goodbyes. Helen and her kids are shot while making this phone call. Mum is upset and is asking Dad what to do as she hears the screams and shots through the phone. Dad is trying to reach Kayonga at CND. Nothing... Part of Kacyiru (jandarumori) is already burning and we start to see people spilling out. Gisozi is the same. Interahamwe are starting to whistle and congregate at Kinamba. In our street nothing is happening save for the arrival of a red Toyota pickup loaded up with soldiers who are armed to the teeth. They stop a few houses from us. Minutes later we hear shots. The red pickup has done a few rounds of our street. It is one o'clock but time seems to stand still. It has been a few hours now, and being a nosy kid I am starting to wonder what the pickup full of soldiers is up to. Silly boy...

Three Months of Genocide (Part 1) Olivier Nyamushi Kameya



Today, Tomorrow, Forever

In mid 2021, just prior to Sydney entering its second lockdown I was introduced to Pan Sandar Myint, a young Rohingya woman living in Canterbury-Bankstown in Sydney's west. She had been working with three even younger Rohingya men living in the world's largest refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. The collection captures the experience of being Rohingya diaspora. For a preview click [here](#).

These poems, as harrowing as they are beautiful, invite us to open our eyes while opening our hearts. Burning with longing, beauty, tenderness, pain and hope, each poem is a lesson in love, a stitch in the fragile fabric of our humanity and will breathe life and love into everyone who reads them.

ali whitelock



Things Unsaid: Western Sydney Living Stories Writing Competition 2022

This is the publication showcasing the 128 winning and highly commended short stories, essays and poems from the second annual Living Stories Western Sydney Writing Prize. Western Sydney is full of stories expressing the richness and diversity of our collective humanity. Some of those stories are traumatic and painful, others are full of joy, relief and new beginnings. Ours is a dynamic place made up of intersecting yet distinct communities, each bringing with it a rich mosaic of history and complexity. Western Sydney is one of the world's most multi-cultural regions. The stories of, and from, this place are, in many ways, the story of a contemporary, and future Australia. To view the online version click [here](#).



WestWords Trade Publications

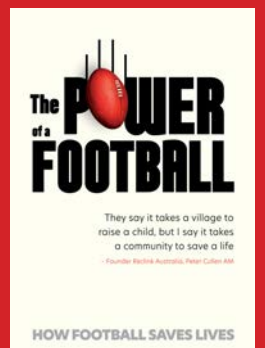
WestWords Books



The Power of a Football

A few decades ago, on the streets of St Kilda, a young man popped up with an alternative to what was being offered to those seeking solace from the 'dark side'. That young man was Peter Cullen, and the alternative he offered – to addiction of any kind – was playing community sport. Specifically, kicking an Aussie Rules football around. Thirty years later, Reclink Australia offers evidence-based programs to people experiencing disadvantage, and its reach has spread from urban Melbourne to all parts of the continent, in both major cities and outback communities, as well as regional areas. fostering socially inclusive, life-changing opportunities to

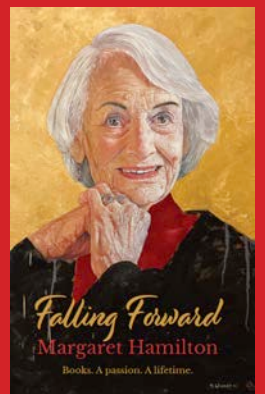
people who would otherwise have little or no access to either. *The Power of a Football* is a collection of the stories about these people, these communities, and the army of volunteers and generous supporters who have made Reclink's work possible. The book was launched in Melbourne on November 25th as a part of Reclink's annual thank you dinner to their supporters.



Full of stories of redemption, hope, pushing doors open for people and bringing out the very finest qualities in our communities. Put them together and they are a force for good. I see in them the very best of us. As you read the stories in this book, I'm confident you'll feel the same.
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP Prime Minister of Australia.

Falling Forward: Books. A Passion. A Lifetime.

In this comprehensive memoir, Margaret Hamilton AM shares the story of her life and times. A child of the post-war years, Margaret was at the forefront of Australian publishing as it strove to shake off the dominance of British and American publishers and became an independent force. Her passion for children's books led to Margaret Hamilton Books, a company developed with her husband Max, which created a list of highly regarded, award-winning picture books. We believe that the memoir is a significant contribution to the history of late 20th century and early 21st century Australian publishing. The book was supported by former CEO of Hodder Staunton, Eddie Coffey who gave Margaret her first job, and Deborah McInnes who, through her company DMCPR, provided publicity pro bono. The cover picture is by Bruce Whatley.



Dirt Lane Press

Dirt Lane Press was founded in 2016 by Margrete Lamond with the aim of publishing picture books whose themes, formats and target audiences were deemed risky or uncommercial by mainstream publishers. Based in Orange NSW, it was run by a group of volunteer publishers, editors, booksellers, and educators across the country, including publishing luminary Mark Macleod, and published notable creators such as immediate-past Children's Laureate Ursula Dubosarsky, Matt Ottley and Sophie Masson.

After seven years and with many of its books having been shortlisted for prestigious literary awards, turned into animated films and translated into multiple languages, Dirt Lane Press reached a point in its evolution where it had outgrown the available resources required to keep it flourishing and expanding. The clearest way forward was to find Dirt Lane a home with an organisation that shared its goals and aspirations, and had the resources to help the list grow in the ways that was always envisioned for it. On March 1st 2022 Dirt Lane Press wound up and came under the umbrella of WestWords, gifting all of its assets and obligations. Margrete Lamond continues as the imprint's publisher.

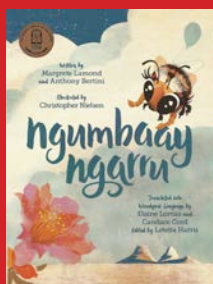
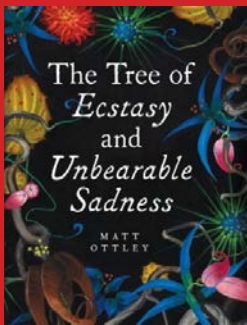
The first title for Dirt Lane, as an imprint of WestWords, was published on March 1, 2022. *The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness* by the 2021 Prime Minister's Award for Literature winner Matt Ottley. The book is a groundbreaking, large-scale multi-modal project weaving together the worlds of literature, music and visual art, film in the poignant story of one boy's journey into mental illness. The book was launched at the Chauvel Cinema in Paddington with a screening of the 50-minute film created from the book with accompanying score composed by Matt. Other events for the book included a screening and Q&A with Matt at the University of Sydney.

Just One Bee

by Margrete Lamond and Anthony Bertini, illustrations by Christopher Nielsen
Just One Bee was named as Honour Book in the Children's Book Council of Australia 2022 Picture Book of the Year Award. During the course of the year we order two reprints of the hardcover (total of 4,000 books) with an additional 2,700 in paperback. We also reprinted a small number of the Wiradjuri edition in paperback.

Backcatalogue

All books from the Dirt Lane catalogue are available on the imprint's dedicated website, dirtlanepress.com We have also made *Where Happiness Hides* freely available online translated into 29 languages [here](#).

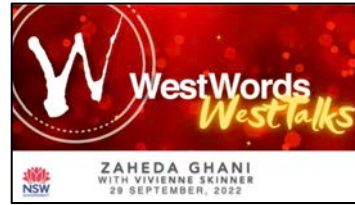


Foreign Rights

We have engaged Bold Type as our Foreign Rights agent, focussing on the Dirt Lane list in the first instance. Bold Type is a new agency created by Nerrilee Weir and Fiona Henderson. Nerrilee was Senior Rights Manager at Penguin Random House Australia since 1998 and Fiona Henderson former Simon & Schuster publishing director.

Sydney Review of Books

The two mentorship and publication opportunities for a narrative non-fiction essays with SRB are underway. The two writers are Finn O'Brانigan (LGBTQIA+) and Paul Traynor (Academy). To read Paul's essay click [here](#).



WestWords: Sharing the Stories Live and Online



Developing audiences for the written cultural expressions of Sydney's West allows the region to see itself and its experiences 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 as well as online reaching nationally and internationally. In 2022 live events at our Centre for Writing also became online events, launches which were the culmination of one of our many programs were enjoyed both 'in the room' and via our YouTube channel as well as streamed. We also ran many showcase events with our partners including the Night + Day Festival with Blacktown City Libraries, Auburn Poets and Writers, Sydney Writers Festival, Art Gallery of NSW, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Riverside Theatres and Campbelltown City Library.



At the Centre: WestTalks

WestTalks is a series of conversations and readings held at WestWords' Western Sydney Centre for Writing in Parramatta. Each event is also videoed and uploaded to YouTube so that others locally and internationally can enjoy. For some of our live events and launches online visit our [WestWordsOFFICIAL](#) YouTube channel, direct link to WestTalks [here](#)

(The links next to event listing are to their books.) In 2022 we welcomed:

- Yumna Kassab in conversation with Simone Whetton for her second novel *Australiana*. For more, click [here](#)
- Shankari Chandran in conversation with Ally Burnham for her Shankari's third book *Song of the Sun God*. For more, click [here](#)
- Zaheda Ghani in conversation with Vivienne Skinner discussing her debut novel *Pomegranate and Fig* which she developed as a WestWords Fellow. For more, click [here](#)
- Mawunyo Gbogbo for an evening of conversation, readings and hip hop for her debut memoir, *Hip Hop and Hymns*. For more, click [here](#)
- Luke Carman with Adam Byatt discussing his most recent collection *An Ordinary Ecstasy*. For more, click [here](#)
- Alex Sarkis in conversation with Ally Burnham talking about her debut novel *Something Blue* July 28th. For more, click [here](#)
- Nathaniel O'Reilly, David Adès and Michelle Cahill for an evening of poetry readings.
- Writers from the 2011 WestWords Academy in their showcase event, deferred from the end of 2021 due to the pressures of Covid. Click [here](#) to see the event.
- Writers from the 2022 WestWords Academy in their showcase end of year event. Click [here](#) to see the event.





Booklaunches

During the course of the year we hosted three book launches at the Centre and another at the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce:



***Transforming Silence: What are the Words?* (WestWords Community)**

The second anthology from our LGBTQIA+ group took place in March with a packed room at the Centre with a Q&A between Wilfred Roach, the group's facilitator and Michael Campbell, Executive Director WestWords, followed by selected readings from the contributors.

See the launch [here](#).



Yumna Kassab *The Lovers* (Ultimo Press). Launched by Luke Carman.

What happens when we become used to each other, when we become bored, when we anticipate each other's moods like the seasons cycled in a day? What happens when you tire of me and I tire of you? WestWords is proud to support Yumna over the course of her career. We hosted the launch of her first book *The House of Youseff* pre-Covid in our North Parramatta Centre, held an event earlier in 2022 for her second *Australiana* and then for *The Lovers*. For more information click [here](#)

A Book of Love and Loss:

***selected writings from survivors of the Rwandan Genocide Against the Tutsi, 1994* (WestWords Community)**

Storytelling is such an important part of being human. For tens of thousands of years we have, as a species, used story to inform, teach, entertain, instruct, explore, and much more. Sometimes those stories explore and prosecute moments of joy, elation, achievement. At other times we turn to narrative as a way to make sense of the senseless, to try to explain the inexplicable, describe the indescribable and comprehend the incomprehensible. We look to the experiences shared by others to understand what has gone before, and to provide ourselves with the waypoints to navigate our own way through the challenges of life. In this collection survivors from unimaginable horror share deeply personal experiences of love, loss, joy and unthinkable grief. At times confronting, the power and beauty of the written word heals our collective soul.

Living Stories: Things Unsaid: 2022 Western Sydney Writing Prize

In July at the Western Sydney Chamber of Commerce and via live stream we welcomed over 100 people to celebrate the richness and diversity of writing from Sydney's west. The event announced the overall winners in each category and launched the associated publication.

West Side Slam

Once a month we presented West Side Slam convened by Defne Huzmeli. In 2022 we celebrated the slam's third birthday. Through Covid the slam was held online. With the Centre opening in Hunter St. and a return to live events, the slam was held as a hybrid event from March drawing audiences and participants in person and online. The event 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 edited highlights are posted to our YouTube channel. The August slam was run in conjunction with Word Travels, being the Parramatta heat for the Australian Poetry Slam. Every slam also has a feature poet and over the course of the year has included featured poets: Sarah Temporal, Ellen Bellew, Jonathan Battista, Tom Kaloor and Gnattie, Alasdair Carter, Paul R Kohn, Cody Profaca, Mel Ree, Maddison Newman, Alphabet of Women, Leila Mansour, S'Phongo, Paris Rosemont.

Highlights are on our [WestWordsOFFICIAL](#) YouTube channel, direct link [here](#)



Poets' Corner

Poets' Corner is WestWords' monthly encounter with celebrated Australian poets, curated by David Adès. Each month a poet is invited to read and talk about their poetry on a theme of the poet's choice. The approximately hour long conversations are hosted on our YouTube channel WestWordsOFFICIAL. The conversations are also broadcast on our Podcast channel. The series is attracting significant national and international audiences. 2022 we added eleven conversations to the library making a total of 32 episodes. Featured in 2022 were: Ouyang Yu, Hani Abdile, Brett Dionysius, Maria Takolander, Steve Evans, Rae White, Scott-Patrick Mitchell, Diane Fahey, Heather Taylor Johnson, Peter Boyle and Bronwyn Lovell.

The full library is on [WestWordsOFFICIAL](#) our YouTube channel [direct link here](#)



2022 Writing Western Sydney: The Readings [WestWordsOFFICIAL](#):

Writing Western Sydney: The Readings showcases the writers and writing of contemporary Australia, in particular focussing on writers from, and/or who work in Sydney's west – one of the world's most diverse regions and home to over 10% of Australia's population. Each video is the writer reading their work. The richness and depth of the writing is always captivating, at times challenging, and reflective of the multi-faceted nature of human experience. We began the series in April 2020 as a response to COVID with a COVID relief grant from Cultural Fund Copyright Australia but have continued the series as it is an important library of work that is engaging audiences nationally and internationally. In 2022 we added 32 readings (listed below) bringing the digital library to 108.

Dani Powell	Fiction	Return to Dust	UWAP
Luke Carman	Fiction	An Ordinary Ecstasy	Giramondo Publishing
Miranda Luby	YA	Sadie Starr's Guide to Starting...	Text Publishing
Mirandi Riwoe	Short stories	The Burnished Sun	UQP
Tracey Lien	Fiction	All That's Left Unsaid	Harper Collins Australia
Bastion Fox Phelan	Memoir	How to be Between	Giramondo Publishing
Michelle Cahill	Fiction	Daisy & Woolf	Hachette Australia
James McKenzie Watson	Thriller	Denizen	Penguin Ransom House
Matthew Spencer	Crime Fiction	Black River	Allen & Unwin
Edita Mujkic	Memoir	Between Before and After	Hawkeye Publishing
Eugen Bacon	Speculative Fiction	Mage of Fools	Meerkat Press
Sally Piper	Fiction	Bone Memories	UQP
Eleanor Limprecht	Historical Fiction	The Coast	Allen & Unwin
Helen Hagemann	Historical Fiction	The Ozone Cafe	Adelaide Books
Mawunyo Gbogbo	Memoir	Hip Hop & Hymns	Penguin Books Australia
Warren Ward	Non-fiction	Lovers of Philosophy	Ockham Publishing
Sally Bothroyd	Fiction	Brunswick Street Blues	Harper Collins Australia
Lee Kofman	Non-fiction	The Writer Laid Bare	Ventura Press
Lynn Garlick	Memoir	Binding: More than a Motherhood Memoir	Ten Mothers Publishing
Maryam Master	YA	Exit Through the Giftshop	Pan Macmillan Australia
Fiona Kelly	Essay Collection	Buried not Dead	Giramondo Publishing
Patti Miller	Memoir	True Friends	UQP
Micheál Lovett	YA	Realm of the Hare	Dixie Books
Dinuka McKenzie	Crime Fiction	The Torrent	Harper Collins Australia
Josh Kemp	Speculative Fiction	Banjarnan	UWAP
Linda Jaivin	History	The Shortest History of China	Black Inc. Books
Su-May Tan	Short story	Lake Malibu and Other Stories	Spineless Wonders
Anwen Crawford	Essay Collection	No Document	Giramondo Publishing
Grace Karskens	History	People of the River	Allen & Unwin
Eugen Bacon	Short Story	Danged Black Thing	Transit Lounge
Bronwyn Adcock	Non-fiction	Currowan	Black Inc. Books
Heather Taylor-Johnson	Fiction/Poetry	Rhymes with Hyenas	Recent Work Press

67th Blake Poetry Prize: The Shortlist

Readings by the six shortlisted poets of 67th Blake Poetry Prize and an interview with the winner Simone King and the two highly commended poets is available on our YouTube channel [WestWordsOFFICIAL](#) direct link [here](#)

Poets' Corner
In 2022 we added
11 episodes
making a total of 32
episodes



Writing Western Sydney
In 2022 we added
32 readings
making a total of 108 in
the digital library

Blacktown City Libraries
are now linking their
digital catalogue to
these readings



Storytime in the Hammocks with Sydney Living Museums

As part of Sydney Living Museum's Mardi Gras programming we partnered to present Storytime in the Hammocks. From the hammocks in a relaxed atmosphere we curated a two hour program where Tanya Vavilova, Wil Kostakis and Erin Gough read and talked about their work.

About Us with Outloud

Outloud's *About Us* program was a series of nine intimate online readings, performances and conversations from artists that represented just some of the cultural communities in Western Sydney.

- *Transforming Silence* brought together nine writers from WestWords LGBTQIA+ group. View an excerpt [here](#).
- *Today, Tomorrow, Forever* brought together WestWords' Executive Director Michael Campbell with the poets Pan Sandar Mynt, Abdullah, AS Junika and Yasor Arfat from their poetry collection of the same name. The collection was developed as a WestWords project with mentorship provided by ali whitelock. View an excerpt [here](#).



Live at the Lounge @ the Art Gallery of NSW

From August to November WestWords brought Western Sydney writers to the Art Gallery of NSW in a series of four panel sessions exploring and sharing perspectives from West Sydney writers for art gallery members.

Metropius: the world of animation, comics, augmented-reality and games

with Ally Burnham (AWGIE award winning writer of *Metropius*) and producer Mel Poole for an insight into writing for multi-modal and multi-platforms and how the projects are realised.



The Passion of the Pen: Emerging Voices - The New Writers of Western Sydney

With members of WestWords' Academy and Fellowship programs in a glimpse into 'what's next'.

Transforming Silence – readings from LGBTQIA+ writers, multi-modal presentations

with members of WestWords' LGBTQIA+ group reading from their most recent anthology and discussing what it means to move to and from the margins of society, and the city.

Screenwriters – Ally Burnham, James Roy and Ian David, panel, reading and screening

Three screenwriters discuss creating writing for the plethora of screens through which we view 'content' and how to navigate the demands and opportunities each platform offers.



South Coast Writers Festival

As part of the inaugural South Coast Writers Festival WestWords curated a panel of Western Sydney emerging voices with James Elazzi, Vivian Pham and Zaheda Ghani chaired by WW program manager James Roy. Each of the participants has received career support through residencies, fellowships and employment within our programs.

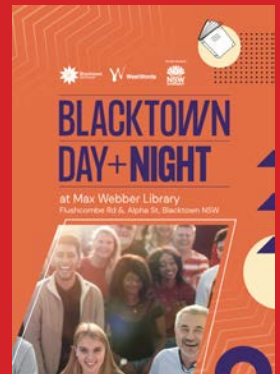




Blacktown Night+Day

Across the month of August in partnership with Blacktown City Libraries we ran the literary program Blacktown Day + Night. The program included:

- WestWords' Making a Children's Book illustration exhibitions *Coo-ee Mitigar* (including guided tour of the exhibition) and *Ghostbear*.
- For pre-schoolers Storytimes with Lesley Gibbes and Jodie McLeod;
 - Stories from around the World with Elizabeth Shim (Korea), Kiran Shah, Jasmine Baker and Kiran Shirodkar;
 - Sweet Dreams Storytime and Cuddly Toy Sleepover.
- *What Now?* Blacktown Mayoral Creative Writing Prize Workshops.
- *Moving Images: Screenplay, Comics and Games* (weekend event) with Keynote address by Tim McEwen (comic and storyboard artist, cartoonist and writer), panel discussion hosted by David A. Quinn with three industry writers sharing insights into their craft - including writing for screen, animation, games and comics - as they compare experiences on how the writing process transforms across different media. Featuring Richard de Carvalho (*Blaster in the Right Hands*) and Ally Burnham. (*Metropolis*); Double film screening with Q&A with the writers; writing workshops in writing for comics and screenwriting. Alongside hands on gaming.
- *Promising Young Woman* film screening followed by talk and discussion with award winning screenwriter, editor and director Amelia Foxton.
- *Yours, Mine and Ours: Life Writing Day* with Keynote address by James Knight, panel discussions with Tanya Vavilova and biographer and ghostwriter Lowell Tarling; life writing workshops.
- *Women Out Loud: Turning Points* a cross generational conversation with a panel of five women writers from different generations reflecting on turning points in their lives and the world around them that shapes their journey.



It was a magical performance brought to life with the edgy addition of slam poetry. Huge applause to all who made it happen.

Slam Messiah,

collaboration with River City Voices at Riversides Theatres, 16th December

In mid 2022 Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Sarah Penicka-Smith approached us to collaborate on new approach to Handel's *Messiah* – to bring together a choral Christmas tradition with a beloved Western Sydney art form. Commissioning three spoken word artists poets, J. Marahuyo, Paris Rosemont and Alasdair David Carter to create six works, the poems were interwoven with Handel's inspired music and Charles Jennens' text to create western Sydney's very own *Slam Messiah*. Handel's *Messiah* originated from a complex tapestry of politics, belief, and social justice; its story has spanned centuries and people. The vision is for the poets to bring their interpretive lens to the universal message to create a contemporary engagement with this classic of the Western musical canon.



**Donna Davis
Lord Mayor,
City of Parramatta**

A massive shout-out to River City Voices, the beautiful Western Sydney symphonic choir that calls Parramatta home. Slam Messiah last Friday literally gave me goose bumps - the combination of poetry and choral music was captivating and compelling. Thank you to all artists and WestWords for a wonderful evening! Cllr Kellie Darley, City of Parramatta



I'm a football

I'm a football –

Teams from many countries
And different races play
together with a football

I'm a football –

Playing in different teams
Being kicked by different
players

Audiences from different
countries

Enjoy the game

I'm a football –

Kicked by cruel players
I tolerate the pain alone
The winners get rewarded
Audiences feel joy
The football gets hurt

I'm a football –

Being kicked for decades
No place to rest. I was born
human. The world made
me into a football. Treat
me like a human.

I don't wanna be a football
Any more.

from *Today, tomorrow,
Forever: Being Rohingya*,
WestWords 2022

Touring exhibitions

We toured four exhibitions into libraries across Western Sydney and in Singleton during the first six months of the year.

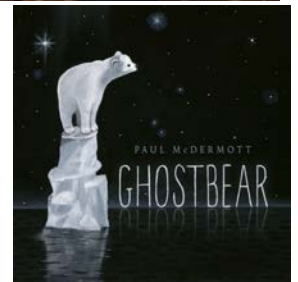
Cooee Mitigar

This stunning exhibition of the 2020 Prime Minister's Literary Award winner, 'Cooee Mitigar' designed by Donna Rawlins takes the viewer behind the curtain for a look at the process of creating a picture book. *Cooee Mitigar: a Story on Darug Songlines* by Jasmine Seymour & Leanne Mulgo Watson is published by Magabala Books toured to Castle Hill Library, Granville Library, Max Weber Library Blacktown and Hawkesbury Library.



Ghostbear

Ghostbear: The Exhibition tells the story of the book's creation and gives insights into how Paul McDermott (TV host, film maker, writer, artist and Doug Anthony Allstar) came to write, illustrate and intertwine themes of love, loss, redemption, environment, climate change, family, hope and eternity into the story of one lost, little bear and the owl who came to guide him. The exhibition toured to Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.



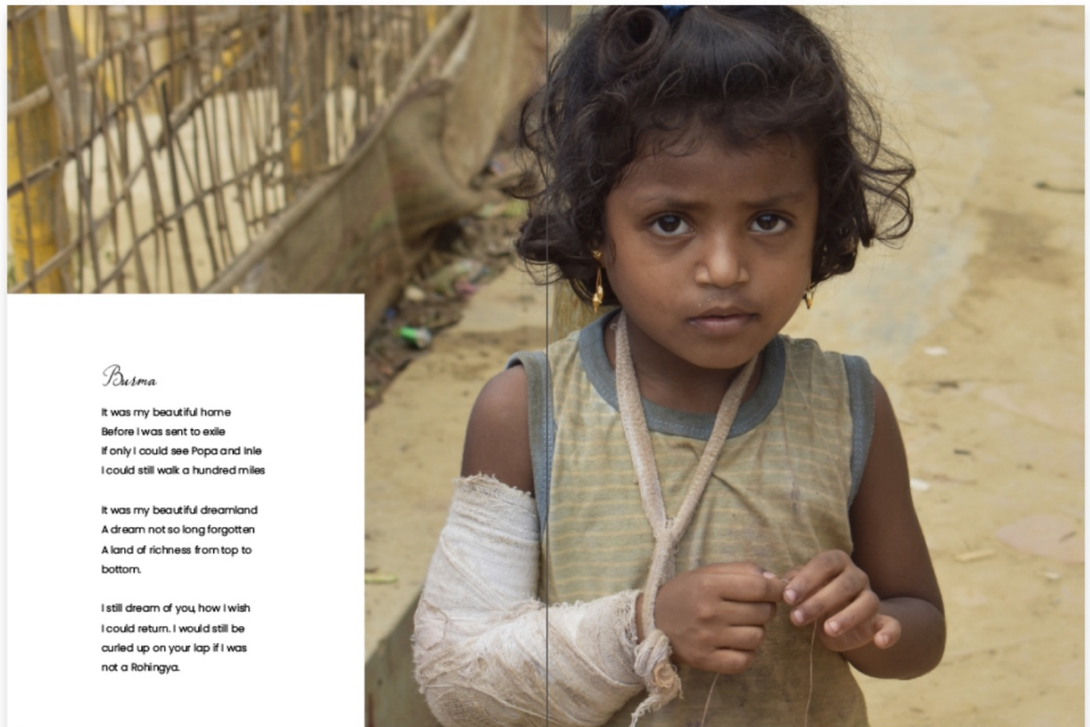
Inspired by the children's book

Shout Out to The Girls:

A Celebration of Awesome Australian Women

this exhibition 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 Penrith Library.



Burma

It was my beautiful home
Before I was sent to exile
If only I could see Papa and Inle
I could still walk a hundred miles

It was my beautiful dreamland
A dream not so long forgotten
A land of richness from top to
bottom.

I still dream of you, how I wish
I could return. I would still be
curled up on your lap if I was
not a Rohingya.

from *Today, tomorrow, Forever: Being Rohingya*, WestWords 2022



Fundraising

WestWords fundraising auction

In June we ran our third annual art auction giving the chance for people to own a limited edition print from the *Birds of a Feather* exhibition. The collection contained 22 limited edition prints by contemporary Iranian picture book illustrators. Funds raised were directed to supporting our programs for children and young people.

The online auction was supported by Oktion and Kathie Elliott-Scott



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.

Booktober raised 18,740 in donations from 78 individual donors. Through the generosity of two individuals who agreed to match any donations in the final 24hrs we raised almost \$3,000 in total.
<https://www.booktober.org.au>

booktopia
Australia's local bookstore

Booktober is supported by Booktopia and Kathie Elliott-Scott

*Jellyfish
Floppy
Camouflaged
Vicious
Two-faced
Creative
Jellyfish*

*Maya stage 3
Memories and Dreams
Mt Druitt PS*

like a fly mistaking up for out I become stuck accepting things as fate only to have surges of rebellion where I take my frustration out on people and walls of glass using my whole body to punish myself. I let others drive me through curtains of grey then blame my soaked wings on them. I collapse into a soggy heap, wallow in my thoughts and cry about the world owing me. I take a breath, and I learn to count I count the good days and the bad I disrupt my thoughts...	I look up and the sky is eggshell blue through a canopy of green then pollen flies into my eye. I see my friends laughing because I stumble over my own feet as tears fall, I laugh because I am free, I choose I feel. and I see you. some stuck, some soaked, some whose desires and hard work are swept away by time and forces beyond one's control. It really sucks. It will never stop being frustrating.	Together we see the sky darkening. I want to learn with you. how can we unravel those spools of grey <u>so</u> we can weave and stitch a new outfit for the new year? Together. <u>And</u> , together we hear the roar of a brewing storm and from that storm I want you to take those strands of lightning that are ready to set your lives afame
---	---	--

#6. - J. Marahuyo, from *Slam Messiah*

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 a Director of the Public Education Foundation.

Prof. Robyn Ewing AM

Deputy Chair (*resigned 5th April*)

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 a past president of the Australian Literacy Educators Association (ALEA) and the Primary English Teachers Association (PETAA) (2001-2006). She is a former Council Member and Chair of the Academic Board of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and an Honorary Associate with Sydney Theatre Company.

Jacqueline D'Warte

Jacqueline has 15 years of K-12 teaching experience in Australia, the UK, and India. She began her career as an elementary school teacher teaching a range of grades and specialising in ESL and literacy development. Jacqueline has written and edited literacy materials for inclusion in professional development packages and curriculum documents for Australian Public Schools in NSW. Jacqueline has been a lecturer at the University of California, Irvine and at the University of California, Los Angeles and was involved in both, curriculum and staff development in the U.S., working on a variety of interdisciplinary language and literacy projects. Jacqueline also had a continuing role as a literacy consultant for the New York City Public Schools. She is currently Senior Lecturer in English/ Literacy/ESL Curriculum and Pedagogy, K-6. Primary Education in the School of Education at Western Sydney University.

Vivienne Skinner

Deputy Chair (*from 5th April*)

Vivienne is a Professional 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. 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 is currently a director of the Women's Housing Company and Co-President of Saving Moore Park.

Brian Cook (*from 5th April*)

Brian has held senior publishing industry positions in adult and children's publishing, fiction and non-fiction. From the mid-1990s he has managed his own manuscript assessment and literary agency businesses. He is widely experienced in intellectual property development; contract negotiation; publishing and editorial; sales and marketing; and in buying and selling rights around the world. To The Authors' Agent and its clients, Brian brought a profound understanding of the traditional world of international commercial book publishing, IP management and the rapidly changing world of digital media opportunities.

Jacqueline Manuel (*from 5th April*)

Jacqueline Manuel is Professor of English Education in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. After beginning her career as secondary English teacher, Jacqueline has been involved in Initial Teacher Education for the past two and a half decades. She co-ordinates and teaches secondary English curriculum in the Master of Teaching (Secondary) program at the University of Sydney and works closely with the broader English teaching profession through school partnerships and collaborative research projects.

Brett Perry **Treasurer**

Brett has 40 years experience in the banking industry. He joined Commonwealth Bank 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.

Lucy Brotherton **Secretary**

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.

Janice Lee

Janice is Partner, Integrated Infrastructure, Infrastructure Advisory - Strategy & Planning, PwC. 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, former Australian Head of Government Practice at L.E.K. Consulting and a former Director in Economics and Public Policy at EY.

Eyob Yesus

(resigned 19th September)

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 to bring "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.





Our Staff

Michael Campbell: Executive Director, Publishing 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 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 won the 2021 Excellence in Business Leadership Award in the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence.

Ally Burnham: Creative Producer

Ally Burnham is an AWGIE winning screenwriter. A NIDA graduate (2016, Masters Writing for Performance), she is a freelance screenwriter, script editor and author best known for her feature film *Unsound* (2020) nominated for Best Original Feature at the 2020 AWGIE awards. The film won Best Australia Feature at the 2020 Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Best Fiction Feature Film at the 2020 ATOM Awards, and was nominated for Best Indie Feature at the 2020 AACTA awards. Ally is the lead writer for *Metropius*. Her short film screenplay won Most Outstanding Animation at the 2022 AWGIE Awards.

Kathie Elliott-Scott: 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, Chair of Supercell Dance Festival and was part of the management committee for the 139 Club – a homeless drop-in centre. Seeing a gap in the NFP sector for smaller organisations to allocate time and resources to sourcing partnerships and funding, Kathie formed her own consultancy, Square Pegs.

Publicity: DMCPR Media

Sheryl Cootes

Sheryl has taught in schools in the Blue Mountains and western Sydney areas for over 30 years. She has been teacher, Assistant Principal and Relieving Principal at Department of Education schools, most recently as Assistant Principal at Bidwill PS, mentoring teachers in the use of literature in the classroom and establishing a culture of 'reading for pleasure' among students. She is a recipient of the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Australian College of Education Award for Outstanding Achievement. Sheryl is currently President of the Blue Mountains sub-branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia (NSW branch). Sheryl is a judge for the Eve Pownall Award for the CBCA Book of the Year for 2021-2023.

James Roy: Program Manager

Born in western New South Wales James spent much of his childhood in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Then, 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 Nôel Zihabamwe won the NSW Premier Literary Award and a NSW Premier's History Award.

Christine Donoghue: Associate Producer

Christina is a graduate of 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. She was also the Project Officer: TWZ at Writing and Society Research Centre, Western Sydney University.

Christian Pazzaglia: Digital Producer

Christian worked as a multidisciplinary curator, and producer working in Amsterdam and internationally for 17 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. Moving to Australia in 2016 he has collaborated with the Goethe-Institut, and the Italian Cultural Institute.

Bookkeeper: Chris Adams



Treasurer's Report for YE 2022

There were specific events during 2022 that had an impact on WestWords financial results compared to 2021:

- As we navigated out of COVID there was an uplift in our activities as we delivered programmes that were deferred due to COVID in addition to our business-as-usual activity. As a result specific funding for these programmes was brought to account and there was an uplift in costs (compared to 2021) directly associated with delivering these programmes,
- In early 2022 WestWords was gifted the activities, assets and obligations of Dirt Lane Press that resulted in an uplift in our publishing activities. Dirt Lane Press brought with it specific funding for publications in train and revenue from books sales.
- In January 2022 WestWords commenced a lease of new premises at Hunter Street Parramatta with associated rental expense and running costs.

Key financial highlights for 2022 included:

- Total revenue of \$795,307 which represented a 30% increase compared the prior year;
- Operating deficit of \$30,567 mainly due to increase costs from the events described above;
- Cash on hand at balance date of \$71,883; and
- Net balance sheet equity of \$39,837.

The impact of COVID on our business our business activities and financial outcome continued to be evident in 2022. In particular the management of the programme catch-up and the integration of Dirt Lane Press into our business is a credit to our management and staff.

Brett Perry

**Income and expenditure statements for
the year ending 31st December 2022**
Summary

INCOME		
	2022 \$	2021 \$
Operating grants	210,000	210,000
Project grants	199,581	226,419
Interest income	-	-
Membership subscriptions	-	-
Activity & services income	90,780	48,591
Book sales	113,644	
Other income	73,138	32,947
Donations	108,164	91,520
TOTAL	795,307	609,477
EXPENDITURE		
Marketing expenses	22,101	34,573
Occupancy costs	-	152
Administrative expenses	125,363	138,128
Artist fees	123,697	112,245
Other expenses inc. wages	422,213	320,724
Dirt Lane Press expenses	132,500	
TOTAL	(693,374)	(605,822)
Surplus before income tax	(30,567)	26,813
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus from continuing operations	(30,567)	26,813
Surplus for the year	(30,567)	26,813
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		
Total comprehensive income for the year	(30,567)	3,665

**Statement of Financial Position for
the year ending 31st December 2022**

ASSETS		
Total current assets	162,812	183,481
Total non-current assets (right of use)	114,215	173,806
Total assets	277,027	357,287
LIABILITIES		
Total current liabilities	156,770	151,633
Total non-current liabilities	80,420	135,250
Total liabilities	237,190	286,883
NET ASSETS	39,837	70,404
TOTAL EQUITY	39,837	70,404

**PROVIDING
EMPLOYMENT**

*In 2022 we paid
216 writers,
illustrators, editors and
allied artists
\$123,697
in fees maintain and
increasing our support
for freelance artists and
contributing to their
career sustainability
coming out of the
turbulence caused by
COVID.*

In 2022, we partnered with 70 organisations, of which three were universities, 13 were schools and 22 were publishers. 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.

Major partners



Create NSW
Arts, Screen & Culture



Blacktown
City Council



CAMPBELLTOWN

COPYRIGHT AGENCY
CULTURAL FUND



PARTNERS

We worked with:
70 organisations

including
3 universities
and
22 primary and secondary
schools

Our community and arts partners include:

- African Australian Advocacy Centre
- Auburn Poets and Writers
- Aurora Group
- Art Gallery of NSW
- Blacktown City Libraries
- BAD Sydney Crime Writers Festival
- Big Sky Stories
- Booktopia
- Campbelltown City Libraries
- Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
- City of Parramatta Library
- CREATE Centre
- Granville Library
- Hawkesbury Library Services
- Headspace, Broken Hill
- James N. Kirby Foundation
- Kumvar and Kwibukar
- Liverpool City Library
- Macquarie University
- Oktion
- Orange Aboriginal Lands Council
- Outloud
- Penrith City Library
- Pinerolo: The Children's Book Cottage
- Reclink
- River City Voices
- Sailor Studio
- Sydney Review of Books
- The Aurora Group
- The Office of Regional Youth
- 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

Our 22 publishing partners that support our showcase programming

The 22 schools who partner with us on our schools' programs

Councils from across Western Sydney including Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury Bankstown, City of Parramatta, Cumberland City Council, Hills Shire Council, Liverpool City Council, Penrith City Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council

And our individual donors including

Rachael Evans, Robyn Ewing AM, Libby Gleeson AM, Vivienne Skinner, Kathie Elliott-Scott

We couldn't do it without you!

WestWords

ABN 60 603 106 136

Parramatta • Blacktown • Campbelltown • PO Box 3708 Parramatta NSW 2124

T 1800 937 896 E admin@westwords.com.au W www.westwords.com.au



In 2022, we collaborated with 216 writers, illustrators, editors, actors, spoken word artists, and other allied artists. These extraordinary individuals included:

- Hani Abdile
- Deborah Abela
- Marwar Abouzeid
- Bronwyn Adcock
- David Adès
- Zohra Aly
- Seher Aydinlik
- Eugen Bacon
- Trace Balla
- Jonathan Battista
- Hilary Bell
- Ellen Bellew
- Anthony Bertini
- Sally Bothroyd
- Peter Boyle
- Sienna Brown
- Adam Byatt
- Michelle Cahill
- Terri Campbell
- Ben Carey
- Gabrielle Carey
- Luke Carman
- Alasdair David Carter
- Louise Carter
- Lee Castledine
- Shankari Chandran
- Wai Ping Chim
- Claudia Chinyere Akole
- Jennifer Compton
- Anwen Crawford
- Blake Curran
- Trent Dalton
- Ian David
- Tony Davis
- Tricia Dearborn
- Brett Dionyus
- Demet Divoreren
- Willo Drummond
- James Elazzi
- Delia Falconer
- Delia Falconer
- Alex Eldridge
- Mick Elliot
- Vera Eterna
- Diane Fahey
- David Falcon
- Caren Florance
- Glenn Fraser
- Emily Gale
- Zeynab Gamielien
- Jackson Garcia
- Lou Garcia-Dolnik
- Danny Gardner
- Lynn Garlick
- Mawunyo Gbogbo
- Zaheda Ghani
- Lesley Gibbes
- Jane Godwin
- Jennifer Goldsmith
- Helen Hagemann
- Michelle Hamadache
- Max Hamilton
- Neera Handa
- Tim Harris
- Jennifer Harrison
- Sonja Holowell
- Kylie Howarth
- Defne Huzmell
- Heather Taylor Hyenas
- Halee Isil Cosar
- Linda Jaivin
- Tamsin Janu
- Gareth Jenkins
- Catherine Jinks
- Heather Taylor Johnson
- Nicky Johnston
- Louie Joyce
- Tom Kaldor
- Grace Karskens
- Yumna Kassab
- Billy Keohavong
- Simone King
- James Knight
- Lee Kofman
- Will Kostakis
- Billy Keohavong
- Simone King
- James Knight
- Lee Kofman
- Will Kostakis
- Margo Lanagan
- John Larkin
- Anthony Lawrence
- Charmaine Ledden-Lewis
- Dub Leffler
- Tracey Lien
- Eleanor Limprecht
- Harvey Liu
- Kneeki Lofti
- Micheal Lovett
- Miranda Luby
- Nathan Luff
- Gershon Maller
- Leila Mansour
- J. Marahuyo
- Maryam Master
- Paul McDermott
- Tim McEwen
- Fiona Kelly McGregor
- Dinuka McKenzie
- Jodie McLeod
- Renee Middlemst
- Patti Miller
- Scott Patrick Mitchell
- Georgia Monaghan
- Scott Monk
- Andy Muir
- Edita Mujik
- Leanne Mulgo Watson
- Fiona Murphy
- Lucy Neave
- Maddison Newman
- Lisa Nicol
- Malla Nunn
- Finn O'Branagain
- Nathaniel O'Reilly
- Matt Ottley
- Lorraine Peck
- Ben Peek
- Catherine Pelosi
- Kim Pham
- Vivian Pham
- Oliver Phommavanh
- Dani Powell
- Jess Racklyeft
- Donna Rawlins
- Melanie Ree
- Red Rey
- Tohby Riddle
- Miranda Riwoe
- David A. Quinn
- Wilfred Roach
- Adele Robinson
- Brooke Robinson
- Paris Rosemont
- Alex Sarkis
- Brittany Searle
- Jasmine Seymour
- Kiran Shah
- Elizabeth Shim
- Kiran Shirodkar
- Michaela Simoni
- Mathew Spencer
- Briony Stewart
- Sally Sussman
- Allison Tait
- Maria Takolander
- Su-May Tan
- Lowell Tarling
- Kristian Taylor-Wood
- Sarah Temporal
- Deb Tidball
- Mark Tredinnick
- Rey Vargas
- Tanya Vavilova
- Michael Wagner
- Erica Wagner
- Warren Ward
- Vivian Wei
- ali whitelock
- Lilli Wilkinson
- Bonnie Wynne
- Ouyang Yu
- ali whitelock
- and more...

