

# The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – February 2025

## This month's main speaker: Peter Frazer, ABPA



Peter Frazer is the Queensland State Representative for the Australian Bush Poets Association ([ABPA.org.au](http://ABPA.org.au)), and is an accomplished, award winning bush poet.

Our convenor Grahame Moore has asked him to speak, so that if some of our members may be a little lost when writing a story for our first competition, "An Outback Yarn," his input will surely help. Remember, all entries must be in our hands by 30th March. See more below..

## Two 'Under the Spotlight' speakers this month

### Jim Dickson

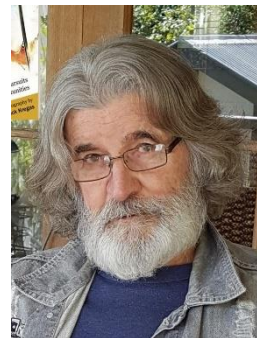
Regrettably, Jim was unable to join us last month, but he has confirmed that he'll be here at the February meeting. He joined our group in March last year, has now been published and he has sales already! The photo on the right is snipped out of the Christmas Luncheon collection. I hope to get a better one, without a Santa hat... 😊



BTW, check out Jim's style of excellent English: He wrote several stories for the three competitions last year.

### Jack Kregas

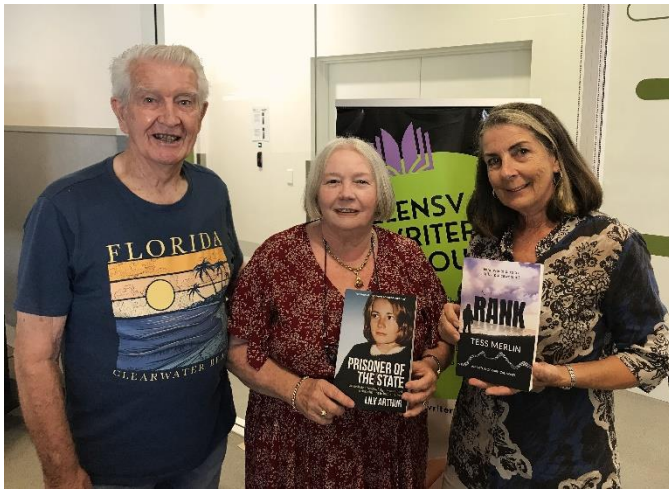
Well, everyone knows our member **Jack Kregas**, Jack is an accomplished author of numerous books of short stories and gripping fiction. His latest book, 'Shattered Innocence' deals with the horrifying statistics of thousands of teenage children disappearing every year, never to be seen again. Jack will present on the subject of designing an effective cover for your book.



## Last month's guest speaker: Tess Merlin

In an earlier career, she was one of the first female Police officers in Queensland - only 27 of them in 1970! Tess not only talked about her work, but also about the enormous stress of being exposed to the proverbial 'Boy's club', whilst attending car crashes, burn victims and the constant Domestic Violence abuse victims. But that was not all...

**'All due respect' is a wonderful expression. Because it doesn't specify how much respect is actually due. Could be none.**



Tess got stalked in private life. Her book **'Rank'**, written as “an autobiographical novel”, i.e. fiction (change of location and names of people involved), outlines it all. “The great thing about writing in fiction is that you can change anything, including putting in an act of revenge” she said. “All the people involved are now either harmless or dead” Tess laconically mentioned. You can obtain her book **'Rank'** online: [Click here](#).

Tess didn't just talk about her book, but also about how to get the basics of your intended work of art in place. “Talk to yourself”. She is currently working on her next book which is based on the town of Kingaroy. It's main theme is **'turning trauma into wisdom'**... A tall order indeed!

## Lily Arthur's book launch

At last month's meeting, at short notice, Lily jumped into the breach to present an 'Under the Spotlight' talk.

It's been really tough. **'Prisoner of the State'** is a complete rewrite of her original work 'Dirty Laundry', with the assistance of **Megan Norris** and **Stacey King** to get it on the right track. “I spent over \$30,000 last time” Lily said, “yet the book had not been circulated until 6 months after the launch”. Megan wrote a feature article to appear in the Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend Magazine. That got the ball rolling alright!

An amazing career: “I had no further education after primary until age 47” she said. Then she joined a 'politically active' group of women to submit to a parliamentary enquiry. I started writing some 40 odd years ago, using on old typewriter my husband found on the tip...” Well, if you don't have it already, the entire journey is outlined in detail in her book **'Prisoner of the State'**. It's available online: [Click here](#).



Well, as expected (the event was booked out long before) they were packed to the rafters at Dublin Docks Tavern. Great to see the culmination of Lily's work receiving such high recognition.

## What else happened / will happen?

'Old Silva Fox' (aka Grahame Moore) is introducing a new segment: each month we'll have a “discourse” about one of our members' books. **Jack Kregas** handed out two copies of his **'Shattered Innocence'**. Your newsletter Editor scored one of them (which I'll bring back so somebody else can also have the pleasure of reading it).

## Can you improve on that?

... the letters from father to daughter she had found at Le Bourget-Drancy station. She strained at the memory of her own childhood, at the sense of some rapture lost. Yet it all remained like some frozen sea, great blocks of ice, submerged, but static, and beyond the melting capacity of her conscious will. **Steven Faulks – ‘Charlotte Gray’**

## The Grahame Moore 2025 Challenge:

Yes, there will be three major competitions for our members this year. The subject of the first one is ‘**An Outback Yarn**’. "Outback" is anywhere that is at least 1000 Km inland from the coast. (see above: this month’s main speaker, **Peter Frazer**, has been engaged for this very topic).

The usual conditions apply:

- Less than one thousand words
- Only one entry per club member
- Fiction only
- No Artificial Intelligence (Chat GPT etc). *Not even a trace (yes, ve haff vays)*
- Genre is open, e.g. can be crime, romance or anything in between
- The story must not have been previously published or won a prize in another competition
- Authors retain copyright
- **Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025**, no late entries, please.

The competition does not carry monetary prizes as last year, but certificates for best writers in each competition, given one month after closing date, then trophies for best overall writers for the year at our next Christmas Party.

## Upcoming Writers Competitions

- OK, are you up to a challenge to **win \$5,000**? That is the [Sorrento Creative Writing Prize](#) 2025. Between 2,500 and 3,000 words. Deadline is 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and entry is free. And... ahm... you need to be 18 years old or over. 😊
- The [Tom Grass Spirit of Adventure Prize](#): Closes 31<sup>st</sup> March – 1,500 – 3,000 words. First prize £1,000 (yes, it’s British), and yes, you can enter even if you don’t live there.)
- There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Looking forward to seeing you all for our February meeting, usual day, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 10:00 am**, ground floor meeting room of the Helensvale Library. Please try to be a little bit early so we can start on time – With three speazkers, it’s going to be a packed event!

Best wishes,  
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