

The Write Stuff

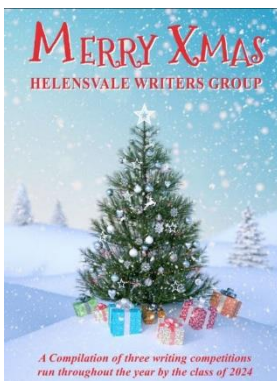
Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – January 2025

Christmas Luncheon on 12th December 2024



In my decades long career of editing newsletters for various clubs and organisations, one of the most difficult things is to take a group photo where everyone is looking at the camera, is smiling, doesn't scratch their nose (or worse). But there is always one...! 😊 (no further comment/explanation required).

There are lots more photos on our Facebook page (just search for Helensvale Writers Group). If you have any of your own to contribute, please send them to me or Stacey and we'll put them up.



We had a wonderful time at the Helensvale Bowls Club. Convened in their 'Glass Room' (which means you can hear yourself think!), our convenor Grahame Moore presented various awards, some given out months ago (but the recipients weren't there at the time), and of course the results of the 'Serenity' competition (Won by **Ralph Mayn**; second **Rolando Rizzo** (note: ROLANDO, not Ronaldo as I incorrectly misspelt it in the book...) and third **Selena Jane**. Grahame awarded the 'Most Improved Writer' award to **Hamid Mifenderesk**, and yours truly received the only truly unique 'Always in the Shit!' award for my feeble efforts to write a monthly newsletter... Finally, Grahame gave himself the Wooden Spoon.

Thank you, Grahame, for organising this event, and thank you for so generously sponsoring the three major competitions we had this year. And thank you for organising all the stories to be published in an exclusive book (photo above) that was handed out to all authors who contributed. The printing was done at no charge by [Clark & Mackay Publishers](#). Very generous indeed, thank you very much.

This month's guest speaker: Tess Merlin



Our true crime author Megan Norris has yet again organised a compelling speaker: In an earlier life, Tess Merlin was one of the first female Police Officers in Queensland. Talking about a brave woman...! Her first novel (autobiographical) 'Rank' was published in 2023. written from her lived experiences as a female officer and as someone with personal experience of the trauma of being stalked. Tess is a mother of two and a keen linguist in four languages. She has a passion for the English language, which she has taught in a variety of environments, to adults and children. Her career has also included technical and course content writing and teaching English to speakers of other languages.

'Under the Spotlight': Jim Dickson

Jim, who 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.

What else happened?

Well, of course members would have had lots of hugely pleasant Christmas and New Year celebrations, moans about excruciating hangovers, but nothing was brought to my attention that should be reported.

Can you improve on that?

... seventeen miles over a road that pitched from end to end when it didn't slant from side to side, and took a shag-barked, sharp skinned, cross-eyed wind-splitter to travel. **George W Ogden – 'The Bondboy'**, describing the inaugural journey from Sydney Harbour aiming to find a passage into the Hawkesbury River.

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.

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)*

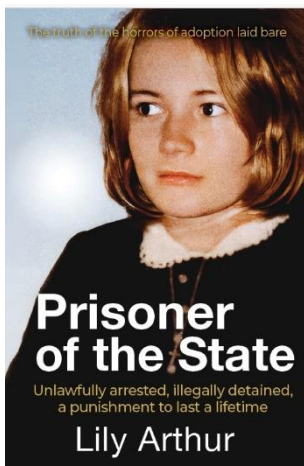
- Genre is open, e.g. can be crime, romance or anything in between
- The story must not have been previously published or won a prize in another competition
- Authors retain copyright
- **Deadline: 30th March 2025**, no late entries, please.

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

- Not sure if we would get away with this in Australia – the Discrimination Police would arrest us. But there is a competition in the UK, that limits its [submissions to Over 60's](#). And there is a juicy prize of £500! The same site has lots of other competitions too. Yes, it's still on – deadline is May 2025
- There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Lily Arthur's book launch Wednesday 29th January



Join us at **Dublin Docks Tavern on Wednesday 29th January at 6.30pm** and hear our member Lily speaking to award winning journalist and author, Megan Norris about her explosive expose which shines a light on the crimes that Australia tried its best to hide.

Bookings are essential! \$22 a ticket includes complimentary canapes, and a **free signed copy of the book, Prisoner of The State**. Click here to book:

<https://tks.im/sticky-tickets-prisoner-of-the-state-launch>

Lily, a human rights activist and the CEO of Origins Australia (Supporting People Separated by Adoption) talks about the horrors of her time spent in a Magdalane Laundry as a Prisoner of the State of Queensland. She was unlawfully arrested, illegally detained and her newborn son stolen from her in one of the biggest violations of human rights in modern Australian history.

Lily recently featured on the front cover of Good Weekend in an article Megan wrote entitled Baby Snatchers.

Looking forward to seeing you all for our first meeting in 2025. Usual date, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 16th January, 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 – there's a lot of interesting stuff coming up!

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
Helensvale Writers Group
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Don't use a big word when a singularly unloquacious and diminutive linguistic expression will satisfactorily accomplish the contemporary necessity.