

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – March 2025

This month's main speaker: Bill Edgar

We had the pleasure of hosting the author of “**The Coffin Confessor**” back in 2021 if my memory serves me right (not always accurate... 😊) In a previous life as a real-life private detective, he was engaged by his (by now deceased) client to gate-crash their funerals and reveal secrets that some of the mourners attending had preferred to be kept secret.



Since then, Bill has soared to the Stratosphere: There is a yet to be formally confirmed rumour that he has contracted with **Netflix** to do an entire series of “Coffin Confessions”...

You wouldn't get into a private meeting with Bill free of charge easier, so this is certainly not to be missed! Treat it as not just entertainment, but as a “how to grab an idea and run with it”.

Two 'Under the Spotlight' speakers this month



Jack Kregas

In a follow-on from last month (see details below), at this month's meeting Jack will teach us on **How to make an Audiobook – Free!**

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.



Grahame Moore

Our convenor will outline **the rules and etiquette of writing a critique** when asked to review another member's work (and you may indeed be asked to critique someone else's book). Critique is not necessarily the same as a review, and there are some very important points that one must adhere to.

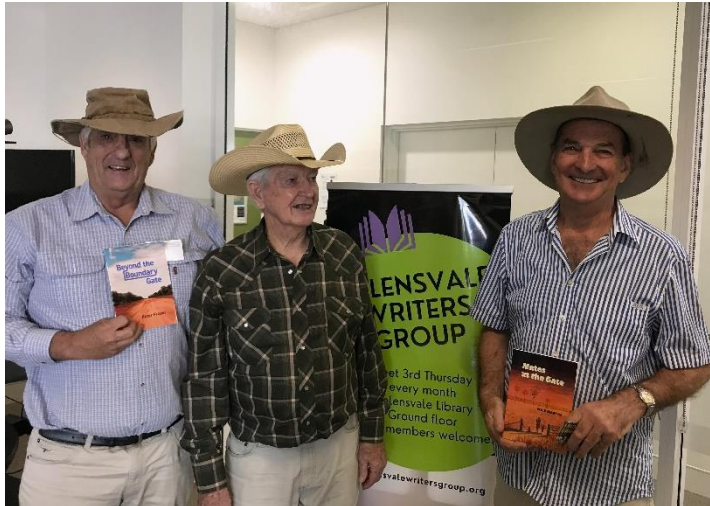
Last month's Spotlight speakers

Jack Kregas: How to design your own book cover.

Visualise: You are in an Airport Bookshop, and you need to get something to keep you occupied for the next 12 hours, sitting in lounges and cramped aircraft seats. You check your favourite authors, but you have read them all. So, what prompts you to pick a book in the first place? Yes, the cover! Last month, Jack introduced us to an app he uses himself: [BookBrush.com](#). There is a free version which is ideal to “play” with it, but an investment of \$99.00 (Plus version) or \$146.00 (Gold version) will truly give you the tools to make YOUR book the one that get's picked!

Jim Dickson: How a 1000 word competition on Fear evolved into writing an entire novel
Jim had only joined our group last year and participated in all the three major 1000 word competitions, the first one on the theme of 'Fear'. That's when the writing bug caught him... and the 1000 word story ended up a 98,000 word novel: ['Feel the Fear'](#) It is available on Amazon – click on the link.

Last month's guest speakers: Peter Frazer and Mick Martin



What a treat! Last month's certainly was the most humorous meeting I've attended since I joined our group, about three years ago! Grahame had organised **Peter Frazer** (the Queensland State Representative of the [Australian Bush Poets Association](#)), himself an accomplished poet and writer. The idea was to get us warmed up for the first competition of 2025 with the theme of 'An Outback Yarn'. Well, Peter brought his mate **Mick Martin** along, and together, we

enjoyed the sort of presentation you'd expect to pay good money for! Both recited some poetry from their own trove, both serious and humorous and regaled us with their very typical Outback Yarns. What is a Yarn? Well, simply a good story that you can tell around a campfire, or in a quiet bush pub. And, if it's meant to be humorous, don't let the truth get in the way either! So, if you still don't get it... well, you'd better start working on it!

Thank you, Peter and Mick, for sharing your knowledge whilst entertaining us! I'm still chuckling when I think of the three-legged chook! (Photo, l-r: Peter Frazer, Grahame Moore, Mick Martin)

What else happened / will happen?

You might as well block out your diary for the third Thursday of next month as well: Rumour has it that **Josh Hale**, Author, Film Producer and Director will be our main guest speaker (to be confirmed)

Can you improve on that?

A congenital defect, perhaps, inherited from his mother, whose own mother had married beneath her to spite her cruel father, who'd been beaten as a child by a nursemaid who was forced into service when her faithless husband abandoned her for a woman he chanced to meet when his carriage wheel broke in front of the milliner's where she'd gone to have her hat trimmed. If we begin there, young David is fatherless because his great-great-grandfather's nursemaid's husband's future mistress's hat needed adornment.

Hillary Jordan, [Mudbound](#)

New Grahame Moore Challenge: An Outback Yarn

You have only to the end of this month to submit your entry! Yes, there will be three major competitions for our members this year. The subject of the first one is 'An Outback Yarn'. Definition of a 'Yarn'? Well, don't let truth to get in the way of a good story! After

last month's presentation by two "Outback specialist", you have no further excuses anymore. The genre is open, only few 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. (It's actually 31st, but that is a Monday and I won't have the time nor the energy to compile all the entries for submission to the judges on a Monday... 😊)

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

- Furphy Literary Award** – max 5000 words, 1st prize \$15,000 and a LaTrobe University residency (subject to availability), 2nd prize \$3,000, 3rd prize \$2,000. Open now – closing 30th April 2025. Theme: Australian Life in All its Diversity. Well, take a leaf out of Jim Dickson's exercise book (see above) and extend your 1000 word story to 5000. Somebody has to win it! To give you an idea of the level of sophistication, you can read last year's winner – [click here](#).
- Writing for Children? [The Book Links website](#) says 'Competition for Adults' (i.e. most of us), but the story must be suitable for children of any age up to 15 years old. You need to hurry: entries close on **4th April**. 1500 words.
- 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 March meeting, usual day, time and place: **third Thursday of the month, 20th March, 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 speakers, it's again going to run at a fast pace!

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
Helensvale Writers Group
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I want AI to do my laundry and dishes, so that I can do art and writing, not for AI to do my art and writing so that I can do my dishes.

