



**Ballarat Writers**

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## Membership Report for 2020

Firstly, on behalf of the organising committee of Ballarat Writers, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the membership who continued to support the organisation in various ways throughout 2020, including joining or renewing memberships at a time when activity could be expected to be minimal. While this past year may have appeared to be a fallow one, the committee spent much time and energy assessing the present state of the organisation and considering the changes that might be made in 2021 and beyond to assure its ongoing health and vitality. We are heartened to have so many of you along for the journey!

The BW membership tiers established in previous years remain the same and costs to members likewise have not changed. As of 31/12/2020, there were **85** financial members of Ballarat Writers, bringing in a total of **\$1,890** in dues, with the breakdown by type as follows:

| Membership Type | Annual Dues | Number |
|-----------------|-------------|--------|
| Full            | \$30        | 21     |
| Concession      | \$20        | 58     |
| Junior          | \$10        | 1      |
| PWE Student     | FREE        | 0      |
| New Resident    | FREE        | 5      |
| Lifetime        | FREE        | 1      |

Of these members, **62** were renewing and **23** were brand new, with ratios evenly balanced across the above tiers. There were also **57** members who lapsed in 2020 which is more than double the average yearly attrition rate and represents a significant loss to BW. The majority of members who lapsed did not respond to reminders and so the reason behind their decision not to renew their membership is largely unknown. The handful of lapsed members who did respond cited relocating from the Ballarat district or the impact of COVID-19 as the reason they did not renew. The latter group still expressed support for the organisation and hoped to re-join in future years.

The MailChimp Newsletter list has **455** subscribers as of the writing of this report (2/2/2021). Almost all financial members are on this list but obviously there are many more subscribers who are not members. This mailing list is the primary method of contacting our members, as well as providing outreach to the community and potential future members, and it is a valuable resource for Ballarat Writers.

Our last in-person Members Night at the Bunch of Grapes Hotel was in February 2020. The scheduled meeting for March was cancelled due to restrictions imposed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, with no further in-person meetings held for the remainder of 2020. Ballarat Writers experimented with online Zoom meetings which were regularly attended by a small number of regulars but it is acknowledged that they were a poor replacement for those who value the monthly Members Night as an opportunity to dine out and socialise with like-minded folks. The committee hopes to re-establish gatherings at the Bunch of Grapes and have booked our regular last Wednesday nights for the whole of 2021.

In closing, the membership of Ballarat Writers remains relatively healthy and enthusiastic, considering the unique challenges brought by 2020, and provides an excellent base on which to build as our community recovers from the impact of COVID-19.

Kirstyn McDermott

Treasurer & Membership, Ballarat Writers 2020.