



## BALLARAT WRITERS INC

### 2024 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee - Secretary Liam Monaghan, Phil Green on Competitions and Membership, Bev Foster on Workshops, Casandra Arnold on Publicity and the Treasurer, whoever they are, who stumbled through the calendar year 2024 with an abacus and hope. If we have achieved anything in 2024, it's because we stood on the shoulders of Chairperson Laura Wilson, Secretary Michael Amhaz, Rhonda Cotsell and Pam Swanborough.

The changes in office bearers were brought on by resignations and people ceasing to be eligible members. The new members were appointed by the Committee under Rules 57(1) and 57(2) of our rules. In 2023, Laura Wilson and Darren Rout started a project to amend our rules to bring them more into line with our usual practice, and we would like that process to continue.

In 2023, each of our workshops ran at a profit. In 2024, we weren't so lucky. 'Polish to Publish' was less popular than we would've liked, but 'How to Self Publish' was very well attended. We did **lose** less money on the Martha Richardson Memorial Poetry Prize than we did in 2022, so that's something. We attended Clunes Booktown, Seniors Festival and Springfest in 2024 - but so far only Springfest generated any interest in Ballarat Writers itself. Those of us who had books to sell in Clunes sold some of them, but the Seniors Festival got a lot of interest on the day, but people didn't follow that up. We did sell five copies of the anthology ***Below the Surface*** at Springfest and generated one membership.

Publicity, though, resulted in a surge in membership, up 38.67% year on year. (Year on year? I can't believe I wrote that.)

***Below the Surface***, BWI's first anthology, has sold a few copies. It was made a reality by Rebecca Fletcher and started out in our critique groups. Copies are trickling out the door, so eventually we're going to run out.

The three critique groups roared along in 2024, generating megabytes of high-quality fiction and poetry and a substantial increase in revenue for the Lake View and American hotels. People seem to enjoy getting quality feedback. Who knew? And as part of the community, it's good to support your local hostelry, right? We are going to try to set up a night-time group for those who critique best at night - or who are writing vampire fiction.

Lastly, let me thank the members – new, old, young and established, sober or charged with community spirit. Ballarat Writers is a club of **writers** – and poets, playwrights, screenwriters and lyricists – for writers, with writers in mind, and I think I write for and on behalf of the Committee when I say what a great feeling it is to keep something with a three dozen year history running for us all. Chairing a committee sometimes resembles herding cats, but it's just as rewarding and there's a lot less litter involved. And if I may borrow a phrase from Laura Wilson's 2023 report, if I win the lottery on the weekend...I'm shoutin' the bar.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DJ Rout', with a stylized, cursive script.

D J Rout  
Chairperson  
Ballarat Writers Inc  
11 February 2025