

# The Australian Writer

Autumn 2018 newsletter

Supplement to The Australian Writer Collection

## FAW 2018 National Literary Awards

The national literary awards will in future be conducted across the year rather than have the concentration of more than ten awards in a short period.

This is necessary to offset the enormous workload with so many entries needing to be dealt with by volunteers within a four week time slot.

Also, because of a view from some entrants that spreading the awards would assist with economics for those who wish to enter various genres.

The Anne Elder Poetry Award leads the way.

We have also brought the year date forward; this now being the 2018 awards.

Inquiries to: [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au)

### Treasurer Needed

FAWVic is in urgent need of a treasurer. The books are re-established as part of the restructure, which has been completed. Duties would be to record membership fees and income and expenditure for the FAW.

Please contact; [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au)

# Planned Chronology for National Literary awards

The awards sub-committee is in the process of setting a permanent chronology for the national awards, based on conveniences to people involved in sponsorship, judging, and management. The following list is near to what we think it will be, but subject to change. Once it is settled it is expected to be reasonably stable. Although there will be several sub-committee meetings to which interested people are invited, the first full workshop meeting will be held on Saturday 5 May 2018 at a venue to be fixed.

Official opening and closing dates are listed, but entries will be accepted before the opening date, once they are finalised. Closing dates will be rigidly upheld.

- Anne Elder Poetry:** 1 January - 28 February. (Closed). \$1000  
Sponsor Anne Elder Trust. Judges Libby Hart and Eileen Chong.
- Excellence in Non-fiction:** 1 January - 10 April. \$500  
Sponsor Dulcie Stone. Judges Jean Thornton and Dr Bill Anderson.
- Christina Stead Fiction Award:** 15 April - 15 June.
- John Shaw Nelson Award:** 15 May - 15 July.
- Ivy Hart Peace and Environment Poetry:** 31 May - 31 July. \$100  
Sponsor Meryl Brown Tobin. Judge Meryl Tobin.
- Jennifer Burbidge Short Story:** 15 June - 15 August. \$300  
Sponsor Mary Burbidge. Judge Mary Burbidge.
- Young Poets Award:** 1 June - 1 August
- John Morrison Short Story:** 1 July - 30 June.  
Judge: David O'Dwyer.
- Michael Dugan Short Story Award:** 1 July - 30 September.
- Mavis Thorpe Clarke:** 10 July - 10 September.
- Barbara Ramsden Award:** 15 July - 15 September
- Jim Hamilton Award:** 1 August - 30 September.
- Angelo B Natoli:** 15 August - 15 October.
- Christopher Brennan Commendation Award:** 31 October. Plaque.  
No entries. Judges selection. Judges Jennifer Harrison and Philip Salom.
- Script Award:** 1 October - 30 November.

*Please remember this list is a draft  
under discussion. But suggestions from members and  
potential entrants are welcome.*

# Censorship

A certain version of the good book preaches,  
Adam and Eve were always wearing breeches,  
And David made Michelangelo,  
Was shocking to some who looked at him below,  
And when an author writes an honest word,  
Some humbugs say it never should be heard.

When controversy rages around this line,  
The puritans will recommend a fine,  
And narrow minded critics like to bar,  
Paintings showing humans as they are,  
Despite an artist's democratic right,  
Saying its subject should be hid from sight.

I haven't got the smallest bit of time,  
For those who censure pictures, prose, and rhyme,  
But if to you my detailed thoughts confide,  
I think you'd better come with me outside.

John Covill.

## Award entry forms

Entry forms for the various awards will be available on the Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic website: [fawvic.com](http://fawvic.com) as awards become due.

Or by mail from: [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au)  
Phone 0417 567 741.

# Avila

The badly wounded and the poor  
Move around the city with the sun  
And little else to keep them warm.

While time softens cathedral stone,  
Plucks eagles bald and breaks the wings  
Of St Teresa's doves in flight.

A fine day shows up broken teeth,  
Club feet, ten thumbs and squinting eyes,  
The signs of under privileged genes.  
Such people built the city walls.

Served church and king in countless wars.  
The past has much to answer for  
When sunlight is only kind to stained  
Glass windows and bejewelled swords.

**Graeme Hetherington**

## **Opportunity to Help FAW**

The Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic has been restructured and we feel we are on the right track, but could do with a few hands on helpers. We have a system of sub-committees to cover various tasks people might be interested in. Sub-committees mean people living well away from the city can be involved, with a minimum of travel. We especially need help with the awards, the website, and the anthology program. If you feel you could assist us with small tasks please email the secretary: [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au) or phone 0417 567 741. Or write to the Secretary, Fellowship of Australian Writers Victoria, 453 Bourke Road, Katamatite, 3649.

# Secretary's Report

FAWVic member Dr Pat McWhirter, and author of Harewood, Western Port Stardust to Us is leading the creation of a Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link (HPNL).

Healesville Sanctuary, Puffing Billy, and the Phillip Island nature parks will form a basis to create awareness of the need to identify, protect, and enhance natural and cultural assets across this region of tourism and ecological significance.

These three main material assets provide desired attractions for visitations and provide enormous interest to people from across the world. Opportunities exist to enjoy a unique tourist experience in a beautiful part of Victoria.

Serious issues such as flooding and land structure in part of the region need extensive research for not only the protection of the environment, but of people living in the area.

## **This group is worthy of wider support.**

FAWV has been through a major restructure and ready to become more involved in wider matters in the world of awareness creation. Pathways exists here for writers with an interest in tourism and the environment to become involved with their pens, so to speak.

There was a saying: 'The pen is mightier than the sword'.

We are currently planning a series of workshop meetings to establish a significant business plan for the National Literary Awards, managed by FAWVic.

I believe the way is open to establish an award for a short story competition with a focus on the work and aims of the HPNL. Pat McWhirter, who owns the historic one hundred and fifty year old Harewood House at Tooradin has offered the lovely manor home as a venue for a workshop meeting to discuss creation of such an award.

Dr McWhirter is interested in receiving a proposal on how this can be accomplished. Members with an interest in tourism and the environment might also take the opportunity to be involved with the HPNL. The draft blueprint is at [www.HPNL.org.au](http://www.HPNL.org.au) - or email HPNL at: [admin@HPNL.org.au](mailto:admin@HPNL.org.au) for information. I would be pleased to receive comment to [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au) about raising such an award which will also be discussed in our awards sub-committee meetings.

Jim Mynard.

# Death of John Covill

Long standing FAW member, committee member, and poet, John Covill died on 6 February aged 87.

As he grew up his interests were very much with literature and history. John was in the school cadets and commissioned as a lieutenant in the Active Citizen Forces in 1955 and posted to the Melbourne University Regiment.

He qualified as Bachelor of Laws at Melbourne University in 1962 and became a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1966. He worked in the Office of Public Prosecutions until his early retirement.

During his latter years John faced many tribulations, not the least being his deteriorating health. Having been in and out of hospital he was eventually managed by the Freemasons Home Care Service which gave him the ability to live at home and the dignity to proceed with his life. He spent his last days at the Freemasons Gregory Lodge Nursing Home in Flemington.

John's brother Frank said in his eulogy: John was a man with many interests and enthusiasms and each of these preoccupied him from time to time. His passion for travel was clear. When I looked at his passports recently I found journeys to North and South America, Europe - East and West, including England, Southern Africa, India, China, South East Asia and the Islands. On some of these he wrote daily articles known as 'Covill's Travels'. Even his visits close to home to Elwood, Elsternwick and St Kilda inspired and invigorated him and set the scene for many of his poems. John wrote many poems on many subjects.

On your service sheet you will find three of them. I couldn't include all of the hundreds he wrote; I looked at the problem and abandoned even counting them, but opted to weigh them instead. There is 1.5 kg - (or for some, three and a half pounds) written on flimsy paper and this is excluding the hymns, psalms and small pieces of prose that I unearthed as I combed through his unique filing system which was neither thematic nor chronological.

The three poems included in your order of service show his devotion to the Church - 'Holy Trinity', understanding of the import of his illnesses - 'Heartfelt' and that his sense of humour was not divorced from this century - 'It's Different Nowadays', all three are in character and discrete. Like all authors he had a variety of critiques.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe, in a letter, once encouraged John to continue writing. Ken Smeaton said of one book: "At last! A book of poems we can give to our mum or dad. At last a book of poems dedicated to all that is good and beautiful. John Covill with his sweet, inoffensive poems keeps with a romantic tradition that seeks only to give the reader some heart-felt pleasure. Covill's concerns are contemporary, he writes with compassion and empathy for people hurt by our greedy society. The poet, a solicitor, hidden away in the Victorian Public Service is not immune to suffering, he is touched to move and write."

Frank said that from poetry reading at the Rochester - ( Fitzroy Pub), Montsalvat, readings for peace in St Paul's to articles in The War Cry and readings on radio on 88.3 Southern FM, from the Feline Control Council to the banks of the Murray, and in Ballarat John's voice has been quietly heard and applauded.

He read poetry at the Eureka hotel in Geelong where some of the incentive was disclosed in the flyer - "free beer for poets!".

"Secretary of the Fellowship of Australian Writers Victoria, Jim Mynard said 'John, in his later years as a committee member was instrumental in helping to lift the Fellowship from its darkest days. This, at a time when his efforts at a grand old age must have taken a great deal of determination and fortitude. John was a retired solicitor and able to give wise counsel. And he did'.

Even though the effort has been vigorous his anthology 'Quietness' is not ready, but should be so by the end of March to complement his books "A Few Short Steps" and " Another Day."

John relentlessly followed all branches of the family tree and pursued his enquiries throughout the English speaking world. Many a parish, registrar and genealogical buff was questioned exhaustively.

John was a confirmed Anglican and found much in the liturgies of the church. He read psalms here at services and was active in church practices, enjoying writing verses for hymns to complement Luke Serrano's music, finding it easy to meld Church and Freemasonry in the one pantheon. He had a firm faith and a strong belief and put his own discomfort aside to worship formally as often as he could. He was admitted to the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Freemasons of Victoria in 1998 and took these responsibilities seriously. He was a Freemason for 59 years and served time as Master of the Old Melburnians Lodge as our father had before him. They were both Life Governors and John received further accolades in 2003.

Although the City of St Kilda and many Utilities often found them-

selves at odds with John's rather chaotic method of dealing with bureaucracy they were appreciative of his many contributions to their publications and eventual settlement of their demands.

He enjoyed the Brighton Croquet Club though some who came near him when he had mallet in hand did so at their peril. His interests were really varied and exotic: the Honourable Artillery Company, the National Trust, Disabled Athletes, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and numerous care services were a few of those who received his attention.

So that's John, a contributor to many causes, a believer in many things, a determination to see life through his own eyes, a man very difficult to help but helpful to so many in kind or counsel. Perhaps he would have been more at home in the 20th century, but he did acknowledge 'it's different nowadays'."

## Macho Man

Shaven-headed,  
the man stands before reception.  
Chrome double hoops loop down  
from each pierced ear.  
Below black tee shirt sleeves.  
Pop-Eye-like  
muscly arms bulge.  
Chains hang from his belt  
highlighting black jeans,  
braces dangle beside them.  
Like torpedoes,  
shiny chrome caps tip  
upturned shoes.

The man turns.  
Glasses dominate  
a young round face.  
Chrome ring punctures his nose.  
Oblivious of audience  
he looks to female companion  
follows her outside -  
placid bull on invisible rope.

**Meryl Brown Tobin.**

# **Minutes of a series of meetings of the Fellowship of Australian Writers Victoria National Awards sub-committee.**

## **Draft minutes**

### **Present at meetings:**

Margie Francis, president, Cathie Elder, sponsor, Jim Mynard, secretary.

### **Apologies:**

Dulcie Stone, Mary Burbidge, David O'Dwyer, Jean Thornton.

Initially the president and secretary held three meetings involving discussion about the national awards and awards management.

Agreement was reached to restructure the awards to be run over the year in order to avoid the intolerable workload by holding all awards at one time in the year.

It was agreed the secretary would seek the feelings of judges and sponsors about the best times to run each award and this resulted in a provisional chronology of dates with the Anne Elder Poetry award first.

This was followed by The excellence in Non-fiction award.

The secretary said the Anne Elder Award was closed with a 33 per cent increase in entries, and the excellence in Non-Fiction Award has so far passed the entries for last year, which was encouraging.

Because of the number of awards it has become necessary to develop a significant business plan and stringent set of rules.

During three meetings between the president and secretary it was decided we would get through the 2018 awards under the present rules, which have proved a little ambiguous.

Nevertheless, the task was made easier because of the process developed by former awards co-ordinator Gail Blundell.

It was decided to conduct a series of planning workshop meetings to establish the business plan and that the secretary would develop an agenda for the meetings based on suggestions from people with an expression of interest in the awards.

This agenda will be dynamic and used as a basis for discussion.

Judges appointed so far: Anne Elder Award: Eileen Chong and Libby Hart; Excellence in Non Fiction: Jean Thornton and Dr Bill Anderson; John Morrison Short Story: David O'Dwyer; Ivy Hart Award, Meryl Tobin Brown: Jennifer Burbidge Short Story Award:, Mary Burbidge; Commendation Award: Jennifer Harrison and Philip Salom.

**Jim Mynard and Cathie Elder** met on 17/03/2018 to discuss issues relating to the Anne Elder Poetry Award in particular and to the Award program more generally.

Jim mentioned the intention to develop a business plan for the awards.

In regard to FAW in general the idea was raised of finding a final year accounting student to act as treasurer as part of a work experience program to assist the committee.

Cathie agreed to check with the Melbourne University Business School on the feasibility of appointing a work placement of this kind.

Jim mentioned the possibility of remuneration, but unsure how much would be appropriate.

Cathie proposed that a set of dates for next year's award program be decided on and published on the website.

This would make it easier for those wishing to submit entries for the 2019 program and help with promotional efforts.

On the topic of promotion she mentioned the planned launch of the Anne Elder biography and Collected Works on November 22nd (venue to be determined), The winner of this year's award will be invited along with other poets and this might assist with promoting the prize.

A copy of the Collected Works could be gifted to the winner of this and future awards. The occasion could be used to solicit donations to the fund if TDI status for the fund can be organized by then.

The idea of expanding the reach of the awards was raised but put on hold given the current workload. It was noted more assistance was needed to help spread the workload.

Cathie mentioned that having a Webmaster or Communications officer might be desirable for the future. Jim mentioned that the next issue of the FAWV newsletter was imminent.

The idea of rotating judges was discussed because it was thought desirable to have fresh blood to avoid the awards being overly influenced by a particular individual's or panel's taste, although continuity is also important.

Then ideal panel would include one new judge and one who has had previous experience of judging the award. Best if judges don't occupy the role for more than three consecutive years? Previous award winners might be worth involving on future judging panels.

The possibility of paying judges was discussed. Entry fees could potentially be put towards payment. Jim pointed out that judges already received payment in kind by retaining copies of sometimes costly books eg in Non-Fiction award.

Before deciding on a policy Cathie offered to investigate such rules used by a range of other poetry awards.

(Eileen Chong, one of the Anne Elder judges, has already provided some information in this regard). Cathie proposed that the entry fees point which provided incentives for entrants to join FAW (e.g entry rate of \$55 for non members and \$10 for members would make joining FAW seem worthwhile)

Jim felt this rate was too high for some writers and that other activities (eg workshops) could be organized to lure new members in due course.

Drawing on insights gained from a number of judges of the Anne Elder and other awards Cathie will draft a set of standard operating procedures for the Anne Elder Poetry award which could be useful in considering conditions for other awards.

Jim raised the idea of splitting some of the current awards and finding new sponsors. Non fiction for example is a huge category and it might be more fruitful, say, to separate biography/autobiography from other categories.

This would relieve the burden on judges and make it easier to establish criteria for the different awards.

Jim to seek further ideas from people involved in the awards to be listed for discussion during the workshops.

The secretary stressed that the National Literary Awards were important to writers and adapted to provide opportunity across several genres. He said the FAW had a responsibility to maintain these opportunities.

The secretary said it would be helpful to create a team for the awards whereby one member might co-ordinate an individual award or perhaps two awards.

## Stories and Poems Wanted

The Australian Writer welcomes contributions of short stories and poetry from members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au)

# FAWVic Committee

President:

Margaret Francis                      [president@fawvic.com.au](mailto:president@fawvic.com.au)

Secretary:

Jim Mynard                              [secretary@fawviv.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawviv.com.au)

Treasurer:

Committee members: David O'Dwyer, Robyn Black, Gil Steendam.

## The Australian Writer

invites contributions of short stories, poetry, and monologues from FAW members. Please send contributions to The Australian Writer

453 Bourke Road  
Katamatite  
Victoria 3649.

or by email to [secretary@fawvic.com.au](mailto:secretary@fawvic.com.au)

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### *For Writers and Orators*

**“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend  
to the death your right to say it”**

**Evelyn Beatrice Hall.**