



NORTHERN TERRITORY Writers' Centre



REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on our first year, we find ourselves completely inspired by the NT literary community. We are exploring what's possible when such a high calibre of writers, readers and thinkers put their heads together.

We have around 220 members NT-wide and further 100 free subscribers who are also predominantly NT based. And as I sit at my computer communicating with these 320 people (through fortnightly eBulletins, social media, one-on-one surveys and steady stream of phone calls and emails) I'm blown away by the size, diversity and ability within this community. We are an extraordinary group of people!

We offer fantastic workshops and events to support people in their writing journey I feel like there is so much more to be gained from truly working together as a community, sharing knowledge and experience, and providing emotional, social or practical help to one another. Particularly for writers living remotely and/or isolated during the writing process, staying connected with other writers can be extremely empowering.

Being part of a community requires commitment from everyone, not just by paying your dues (although that helps) but through actively showing support for your peers by attending readings, plays and films written locally, and by buying books.

We would love to see more of our members and friends at spoken word events such as *Wild Words* and *Off The Page*, which not only celebrate the achievements of local writers but provide incredible insight and inspiration. With 10-15 artists performing on any one night, you will not go home empty-headed or empty hearted!

This year we celebrated many book launches, among them: *Too Many Cheeky Dogs* by Johanna Bell and Dion Beasley; *Wild Words* anthology by Sophie Constable, Sue Moffitt, Helen Hansen and Kaye Aldenhoven; *From Alice With Love* by Jo Dutton; *Maningrida* by Helen Bond-Sharp; *A Slice of Territory Life* anthology by KROW members; *My Sisters & I* by Lyndal Carbery; and *Little Big Love*, edited by Danielle Loy. Mary Anne Butler's play *Highway of Lost Hearts* also found a publisher.

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Audience at Off The Page

We also have a huge online audience which represents enormous potential for you, our members. Our website gets around 12,000 visits per month, and we have almost 2000 Facebook fans and 850 Twitter followers Australia-wide. If you would like to get your message 'out there' please send me quotes, clips, photos and links that I can post to our website and social media.

We have established a page for published NT writers on our website, and while it's not complete (please keep sending me names and bios) there are 50 names on the list, representing rich pickings for anyone wanting to indulge in the Territory's best reads. Our online bookstore provides an outlet for members who have self-published or books/projects we have been involved with. These books sell quite steadily throughout the year to individuals and schools. I'd love to see more sales in the lead-up to Christmas!

We are marshalling the expertise of published writers in our 2014 workshop program, designed to support you throughout your writing journey. The series will offer skills development in plot, character, dialogue and editing (book, stage and screen), poetry, publishing (print, online and self-publishing), presentation (page and stage) and self-promotion (media, online and events). Writers including Johanna Bell in Katherine; Phillip Hall in Borroloola; Glenn Morrison, Rod Moss and Leni Shilton in Alice Springs; Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Mary Anne Butler, Mark Carthew, Levin Diatschenko, Barry Jonsberg, Marie



Marie Munkara, Kaye Aldenhoven & Sophie Cunningham at Off The Page

Munkara, Sandra Thibodeaux and Kate Wyvill in Darwin, have put up their hands to help deliver this exciting program. For remote facilitators and attendees, we are hoping to establish video conferencing facilities to allow for greater participation NT-wide.

Finally, the 2014 Territory Read Awards will be open for submissions soon, with winners to be announced in conjunction with the NT Literary Awards as part of WordStorm 2014 festivities.

2014 is shaping up to be an exciting year, and we would love to hear from anyone with ideas about how we can work together more closely to maximise the potential of this amazing community.

Company Manager, Kaye Hall

2014 NT Writers' Awards

The Territory Read and NT Literary Awards ceremonies will be held on Thursday 29 May at the NT Library, as part of WordStorm 2014 festivities.

Territory Read

2014 Territory Read Awards will soon be open for entries. Prizes include:

The Chief Minister's Book of the Year
Non-Fiction Book Award
Children's Literature/Young Adult Fiction Award

NT Literary Awards

Entries are now open for the 2014 NT Literary Awards across a range of writing styles, closing date is Friday 28 Feb 2014

Editorial

Well it's been a very challenging yet productive transitional year for the NT Writers Centre this year with a lot of work being done to set up 2014 as a very full and hopefully useful year for our members. We are exhausted but also very happy.

So what's in store? The jewel in our crown next year is WordStorm 2014, which will be happening in Darwin from May 29 to June 1. Next year's festival will present seven themes of stimulating contemporary enquiry. Some 30 interstate writers are already confirmed so look out for announcements early next year. Of course as many NT writers will also participate. It's going to be a very entertaining and particularly thought-provoking four days.

There are many more activities in store for 2014. Our workshop series called On The Line will present professional development workshops from the basics to the advanced, including training in presentation and promotion. This series of workshops are modular and can be taken individually or in sequence. Workshops will run in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. We are also finding ways to increase activity in Tennant Creek and Borroloola. Our aim is to slowly work our way into as many communities as we can over the next triennium.

We are also looking at ways to deliver more innovative programs involving digital media in remote areas as well as in the major centres. Digital Poetry is one area that we are developing as a new platform for both emerging and established writers.

Look out for some exciting national initiatives being generated in cooperation with other State and Territory Writers Centres, as well as a new publication from a collaborative project between UWA Press, SA Writers Centre and NT Writers Centre called *Desert Writings*.

At the end of 2013 however I would like to thank our supporters, in particular our faithful members, as well as our partners. These include Brown's Mart, CDU, Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, the NT Library, Red Hot Arts, Happy Yess, Alice Springs Library, KROW in Katherine, DAGS in Darwin as well as our funding partners Arts NT and The Australia Council for the Arts. Finally I'd like to thank staff Kaye Hall and Cy Starkman, the NTWC Board and the many wonderful individuals who have helped us get through this great year.

Have a wonderful holiday season and see you in 2014.

Executive Director, Panos Couros

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Executive Director	Panos Couros
Company Manager	Kaye Hall
Program Coordinator	Cy Starkman



Update from Katherine

The main project for the Katherine Region of Writers (KROW) this year has been the production of 'A Slice of Territory Life'. Our original plan to produce a collection of biographies was abandoned and the concept was broadened to include all features of Territory life.

In June we were delighted to have a visit from Sandra Thibodeaux to do a workshop on writing for short film. We held a literary lunch on the day at Knott's Crossing, attended by over a dozen people.

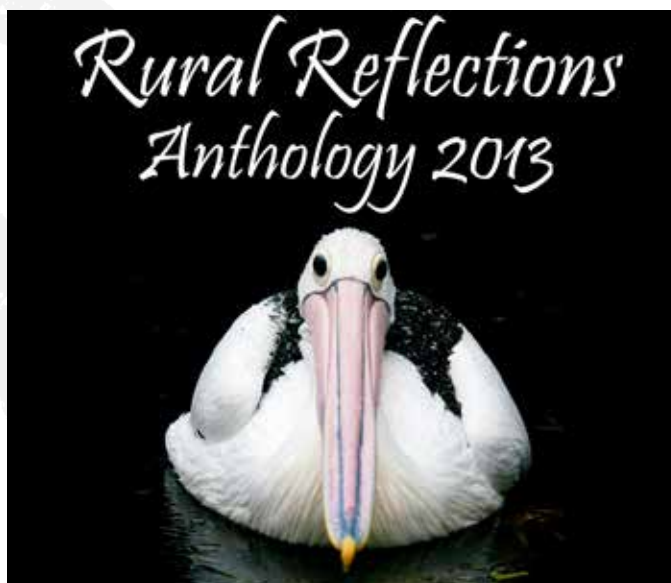
Our meetings had been on the second Saturday of the month at the library however to accommodate members who have work commitments on the Saturday morning we have recently changed to Sunday afternoon at the Coffee Club.

Royelene Hill has been doing an excellent job disseminating information to members and coordinating the meetings. We have a number of new members and hope they will become involved in our newest project 'Journeys, Jaunts and Jeopardy', a work of unlimited imagination in fiction or non-fiction.

Marion Townsend, one of our long time members has moved from Katherine but we still expect to see her name in future productions as she is with us in spirit even if no longer in the immediate locality.

Looking forward to 2014 we have a weekend of creative stimulation planned for 28 February to 2 March at Emerald Springs Roadhouse. There is no cost to attend apart from accommodation and meals. Accommodation is limited so contact the Roadhouse early if you plan to come. There will be several structured workshops available as well as time to reflect and socialise.

Jill Pettigrew



Darwin's rural area poets are celebrating 10 years of presenting original work to seniors.

Each year, the Friends of the Taminmin Library host a lunch during Seniors' Month and poets living in the rural area entertain an appreciative audience with their original verse. Some are well known poets, but many are very talented people who have always harboured poetic ability but had

not had the opportunity, or the encouragement, to share their work.

The Seniors' Poetry Lunch begins with a musical interlude by the All Stars who always delight with a selection of old and new band music. Lunch is served and the performances begin. Some 2 or 3 hours later, we head home, with poets planning their poems for the next year before the audience has finished applauding. Our next event will be on August 23, 2014 at Taminmin Community Library.

Since 2004, our poets have given us an insight into the diversity of their backgrounds, their families, their interests and attitudes. Each year we are moved by the personal and the humorous, and plenty in between, always with entertainment at the fore. We have developed a real poetry hub. From the original five poets, we have expanded to 24, three of whom have read every year.

All poems presented are published in-house in our Rural Reflections anthology. In recent years, the cover has been designed by local photographer, Jen Hall using her stunning photographs.

We have discovered some real talent and to celebrate ten years of great poetry, we intend to publish an compilation anthology in 2014, to represent the diversity and literary skills which abound. These will be selected from the collected work from the last 10 years. We hope to have this on the shelves next year.

Sandra Parker

Reviews

Eco House Writer-In-Residence

The Territory. I knew I was on my way when the bloke next to me on the plane ordered beer for breakfast. The Territory with its freedom and ask no questions reputation. A place you could go and vanish if you wanted. The landscape still has a loud voice yet to be silenced by concrete. The wild, the untameable, where the circle of death and renewal is spelled out plainly in two words — wet and dry.

I had lived in Darwin before and was delighted to be offered the inaugural residency for the NT Writers Centre and it was also my first writer's residency. I was just back from being a guest poet at the Queensland Poetry Festival, exhilarating, and frenetic. I needed to calm down. The George Brown Eco House in the Darwin Botanic Gardens was like some giant green lifeboat and I was afloat for three weeks.

In that time I met some wonderful fellow writers and I wish I had met more of you. I know how motivating visits from other writers has been for me and how beneficial it has been for my writing, so hopefully more of you will be able to support the next writer in residence. Having said that I feel the personal benefit to me as writer in residence was great. I was inspired by the small group of women who met for the en plein air



Coral Carter takes on karma

writing workshops in the wet and dry areas of the botanic gardens. At Read Back I was excited to meet emerging writers and explore their work. It was stimulating experience to edit the manuscript of a local poet. I loved meeting the audience and performance poets at Off The Page held at Brown's Mart. Thoroughly enjoyed the outings to Fogg Dam, Stokes Hill Wharf, Deckchair Theatre, Darwin Yacht Club, Croc Farm and Mandorah Pub's closing day.

Thanks to the Board and management of the NT Writers Centre for the residency and the wonderful experience. Thank you to you all.

Coral Carter

'No stealing! No stealing! No stealing our vegetables!' — a child's voice in the community gardens.

In my stilted house
woken by the spit-spit-spit of sprinklers
the wet drum of water on broad leaves
I watch the visitors
from behind slotted dark glass
in a house that should be empty
I am a secret.

Thieves bold as daylight pluck
eggplant
snake beans
Brazilian spinach
and make a getaway.

I see the thieves
and become one.

I take tomatoes
smooth skins explode under the crush of my
teeth
my taste buds exclaim -
this fruit is real.

Now I have two cherry tomatoes worth of
bad karma.

I have an eye on a chilli
I see it is hot for me!

See the blog
coralcarterresidentwriter.blogspot.com.au

Coral Carter

Varuna Sydney Writers' Festival, Katoomba, May 18—22, 2013

A trip to the Blue Mountains for the Varuna program of the Sydney Writers' Festival seemed enticing if perhaps a little distant. But the idea kept beckoning. So I made the journey from Batchelor for a four-day antidote to writers' block and 'remote' writer blues.

A special highlight was a journey to the beautiful Jenolan caves for an afternoon of poetry. In the hushed and magnificent chamber of the Cathedral Cave we enjoyed the beautiful music and poetry of Australian poet Kate Fagan as well as wonderful readings from Irish poet Dermot Healy, US poet Devin Johnston and Australian poets Lionel Fogarty and Bronwyn Lea.

The remainder of the festival program was at the elegant Carrington Hotel, a great venue and atmosphere. Among the many interesting panels and interviews, I especially enjoyed:

- Geordie Williamson talking about his new book *The Burning Library*, which looks at key writers of Australian literature and their value
- Anne Summers reflecting on her book *Misogyny and attitudes in Australia*
- Dermot Healy in conversation about the novel *Long time don't see* and his poetry collection *Fools Errand*

- Helen Trinca discussing her biography of Madeleine St John
- Cheryl Strayed on her epic trek and writing *Wild*
- Ramona Kaval on her *Reader's Guide to Life*
- Cate Kennedy (*Like A House On Fire*), Georgia Blain (*Secret Lives of Men*) and Josephine Rowe (*Tarcutta Wake*) discussing their work and the art of the short story.

It was inspiring to hear people talk about their work and the writing process, connect with writers and readers, and to see, hear and know that books are not dead and neither are those who like them.

A plus for this festival is that most events are in the one venue and the Blue Mountains are of course so beautiful, I was only sorry I didn't have time for more walks.

I returned with a much heavier case than I took, weighed down by many new books so I can elongate the sense of all those readings and thoughts on literature, and follow that sage advice for writers: read, read, read.

Thanks to Arts NT for the Quick Response Scheme Grant that made this professional development possible.



Inspirational steps in the Blue Mountains



Karen Manton

Karen Manton



Wild Words... and only four hundred of them to sum it all up. I've been privileged to be at each one of this year's spoken word open mics and see some strange and beautiful things.

I've seen freestyle raps being looped live on stage. I've witnessed the slam poetry debut of the most nervous bush poet ever. I saw a world-renowned poet read a box. I heard Darwin's very own rubbish warrior and street poet sing acapella surf rock ditties like a one-man Beach Boys. I've made a woman cry. And I've seen a 10-minute electric bass beat poem that made me want to click my fingers and put on beret non-ironically.*

But I think I'm most impressed by the variety of new participants I've seen get up on the stage and

risk giving up a part of themselves to the audience. It is no small thing to do. Wild Words has an atmosphere that encourages anyone to share their work. The intimacy of the venue at HappyYess helps, with its cramped stage, dark corners and DIY furniture. The calibre of the audience who make it so easy and so empowering for each artist to perform. There is a feeling you are amongst friends here. There's always a lot of laughter and banter to stop the air from stiffening up with awkward silences between applause, and the easy relationship between MC and audience blossoms in new and unique ways with each different show.

Wild Words has helped me to grow as MC, an event organiser and most importantly as an artist. It reminds me yet again of how many opportunities Darwin can offer and how, if you want to do something, generally you can find the support to achieve it. I'd like to thank the NT Writers' Centre for the support and patience they have given me, and the night. I hope Wild Words earns its place in the Darwin calendar and has many more lives to live. It is a wagon full of promises and the tilted face of a lazy giant mashed together on a handsome plate. Get amongst it.

* I finally learnt the origin of the tradition of clicking fingers rather than clapping at poetry. Come along on the last Thursday of the month (except Boxing Day) to get the scoop.

Matthew Haubrick



Digonta Bordoloi reading from his book "Slow"



Audience at Happy Yess

Pleasures of Tuesday

Friendly people and the sensual rhythms of poetry
Listening, talking, enjoying. Sharing our own poetry
And poems by Seamus Heaney, and Dorothy Porter -
Whoever tickles our fancies

Each month, for fun, we meet for Poetry Lunch
Hungry for poetry we never order lunch
Just good coffee. Once I had a citrus tart
as mouth-wateringly delicious as a couplet

But it's poetry and company that satisfy me.

Kaye Aldenhoven

Ubud Writers Festival

attendance of NT Writers to Ubud was made possible through the generous support of the *Ian Potter Foundation*

A few different people had told me how wonderful the Ubud Writers Festival was but I don't think any amount of good press could have prepared for me just how intensely amazing the experience would be.

Celebrating it's 10th anniversary, we were treated to lavish accommodation, the Opening night Gala at the Palace, traditional Balinese dancers and musicians, friendly locals, fine dining and street side cuisine, street parties, poetry slams, book launches, film premiers, three-hour workshops with some of the freshest and most successful writers, forum panels at a range of wonderful venues scattered across Ubud, all packed into a very intense four days that seemed to last a month. The days were filled with an abundance of intellectual stimulation and inspiration, and once the sun dropped over the hills culinary delights, captivating music, too much Bintang and winding conversations that led into the late hours of the night.

I was invited to speak on two different panels the first 'Writing Real Characters' featured four amazing young women playwrights from around the world and the second was 'Anuk Muda' with me and a young woman from Indonesia who works in a sex health organisation. It was such an epiphany to realise how similar and how worlds apart the issues facing the youth of Australia and Indonesia and such an honour to be able to speak

with a woman working to educate young people in a climate of arranged marriages, illegal abortions and abject poverty.

It was not just eye-opening but quite honestly mind-stretching to be in the one place with such a diverse range of writers (and readers) using all forms of the medium you can possibly think of – plays, novels, poetry, academic essays, blogging, cook books, films, music and graphic novels to explore issues like death, love, travel, cooking, politics, feminism, sexuality and culture. It made me really appreciate how powerful writing is as a tool of social change and communication that crosses all borders of language and politics in this very vast and tiny planet we are all inhabiting together.

Kamarra Bell-Wykes



Kamarra Bell-Wykes & Bilawarra Lee

Writers and readers from across the globe attended the 2013 Ubud Writers & Readers Festival. Speakers included women heroes and visionaries and writers across all genres, including travel writers, songwriters, playwrights, poets, comedians and graphic novelists.

I was honoured to be on two panels: 'The Elders' panel with Cok Sawitri and 'Healers and Fighters' with Claire Scobie, Astri Apiyani and Langit Amarawanti. Listening to the women and their journey's was wonderful and the response from our audience was very heart warming.

Ubud was beautiful, the food was so delicious, the weather perfect and the people very friendly and genuinely interested in the fact that I was a published writer. As the 2013 festival was the 10th anniversary of the event being held in Ubud, the local people were very involved and supportive. My only burden was how many very steep stairs and how much walking up and down steep hills I had to do – I got a lot of exercise!

My attendance at the festival was both humbling and inspiring. Having the opportunity to listen to so many diverse writers talk about their personal journeys and their topics of interest was fantastic and I hope to return to the festival next year.

Bilawarra Bee



Virginia Baxter, Fiona Carter, Keith Gallasch, Nicola Fearn & Mike Bodnar

For six days during this year's Darwin Festival a handful of Territory writers joined the editors of RealTime magazine for an arts reviewing workshop, which aimed to develop a culture of arts review in the NT. The participants honed their critical responses to art in the community while at the same time introducing some of these works to new audiences through exposure on the magazine's website.

Keith Gallasch and Virginia Baxter, the founders and current editors of RealTime magazine, hold these Reviewing Masterclasses at arts festivals across the country. The whole group attends selected performances and then reviews of between 500-750 words are due by 11:00 am the next morning. By 5:00 pm when the group re-convenes, Gallasch and Baxter have proofread these drafts in preparation for a 90-minute discussion, finishing with just enough time for a bite

to eat before heading to the next performance.

In discussions both before and after the performances, Gallasch and Baxter provided helpful context in which to situate our work. My festival highlight was Belvoir Production's play *I'm Your Man*, a work of verbatim theatre that showcases the lives and dreams of about a half dozen boxers. In approaching this performance, which uses headphones to feed the actors the actual voices of the people they represent, I found it immensely helpful to frame my thoughts in light of the round-table discussions we had about this style of theatre.

There was also a technical component to the workshop. And at times it hurt the ego. We were pushed to find a better word to describe the face of one of the dancers in *Happy as Larry* or asked for a clearer impression of what we saw and

heard at Polytoxic's performance of *Tradewinds*. In my case, there were a few humbling problems with commas and tenses that had me, an English teacher, thumbing old style books and later re-working some of my practice for the daytime preaching I do.

Within a few days of each performance our reviews appeared on the RealTime website. It was an exhausting six days of workshops, performances, writing and then for some of us a normal day of work, but it was a valuable experience. Not only did the reviewers have an opportunity to learn, hang out with each other for a couple nights, and have some work published, but the Festival benefited as well having some of its performances featured in a national publication.

Mike Bodnar



Zombies in the Banyan Tree, photo by Jess Devereux

2013 Australian Poetry Slam

On October 13 the Australian Poetry Slam National Final was held at the Sydney Opera House, the climax of the Word Travels Festival showcasing national and international spoken word artists at venues around Sydney Harbour. Notable performers were Luka Lesson, Candy Royalle, Tug Dumbly, Edwina Blush, Miles Merrill and from the USA, Urban Poetry Pioneer Ursula Rucker.

NT Poetry Slam winners from Darwin and Alice Springs represented the Territory at the national finals. I represented Darwin and Sanya Yorth represented Alice Springs.

I first heard about the National Poetry Slam the night before the event, and it was only later that I became aware of how a poetry slam is run. Basically contestants are given a microphone, a live audience and just two minutes to impress the judges with their original spoken word, poetry, hip hop, monologues and stories. Five judges are picked randomly by the MC. This is done by throwing sweets into the audience and the first five who pick up the sweets are the judges. After each performance, judges hold up score cards using a 1- 10 scale, with 10 being the highest. Of the five scores for each poet, only the middle three scores are counted.

It was slightly daunting to realise that we were going to perform our poetry on stage to 500 people at the Sydney Opera House but the folks

from the Word Travels Festival put us at ease and everything ran smoothly on the night.

The winner of the Australian Poetry Slam and was Jesse Brand from NSW with a wonderful performance. It was an exciting experience for all of us contestants; in fact we were all wonderful and all winners.



Sanya Yorth



David James

David James



2013 national finalists



Tug Dumbly



Poets walk passed the audience



Ursula Rucker

Coming up

Poetry Lunch: Alice Springs @ 12pm Dec 3

Catch up with passionate poets at the Bean Tree Cafe, Olive Pink Botanic Gardens. Bring along poems to share - your own or another's. All welcome!

Poetry Lunch: Darwin @ 2pm Dec 3

In December we remember the late Doris Lessing (1919-2013) among others. Bring along poems to share - your own or another's. Join us at the Office Cafe, 55 Cavanagh St. All welcome!

Off The Page @ Brown's Mart, 7pm Dec 5

Get inside the minds of some of our most extraordinary writers. Our final OTP for 2013 will feature Marie Munkara, Kavita Nandan, Matthew Haubrick, Sandra Thibodeaux, Kaye Aldenhoven, P/Sx, music by Mark Gray. Plus open mic and end of year drinks!

Laugh, cry, groan, sigh – it's a wild ride across terrain sometimes familiar, sometimes foreign, always entertaining.

Launch: A Slice of Territory Life, Dec 6

Join KROW for the launch of 'Territory Life' and Lyndal Carbery's 'My Sisters & I' on December 6 from 6pm at O'Keefe House, Katherine, conjunction with the Loose Group Art & Craft Exhibition. Members are requested to bring along a plate of food.

Alice Springs Consultations, Dec 9-10

Executive Director, Panos Couros is visiting Alice Springs on 9-10 December, to hold one-on-one consultations with individuals or organisations about the activities of NTWC in Central Australia. We are also seeking to engage with potential board members from the region, who can oversee and guide us on our activities in Central Australia. To book, please contact our Darwin office.

Human Writes Day: Letter Writing, Dec 10

The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (DASSAN) is hosting a letter writing event to acknowledge the power of pen. Speakers Wendy Morton, NT Council of Social Service, and Kaye Hall, NT Writers Centre. Trailer Boat Club 6pm Tues 10 Dec

ReadBack: Peer review, 6pm Dec 11

Get valuable feedback and connect with other writers. You can read your work or just come along and be part of the reviewing process. This friendly and informal session will give you confidence and help you refine your craft.

KROW Writer's Retreat: 8 Feb - 2 March

Get together for a weekend of inspired writing at Emerald Springs Roadhouse, including workshops and time to write. Free to attend, excl. food and accom. To car pool from Darwin, please contact Kaye on 8941 2651 or manager@ntwriters.com.au

BOOKINGS See our website Calendar of Events

Membership

FREE information, inspiration and networking via our website, social media and eBulletins.

Member Only services, discounts, advice and alerts re workshops, jobs, grants and competitions delivered direct to your inbox.

NT Writers Centre Membership is \$55 or \$45 concession. Sign up at www.ntwriters.com.au

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