



NT Writers' Centre

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT US

OUR PURPOSE

To bring people together to share story, language and culture and to support and celebrate Northern Territory writers and stories.

OUR VISION

Writing and storytelling are valued as vital parts of the Northern Territory's arts and cultural landscape. The region's diverse communities are proud of the stories that are shaped by this unique place, and are empowered to share their own.

VALUES

First Peoples First

We recognise Australia's First Peoples as the first storytellers and value their stories as a core component of Australia's cultural identity.

Place

We value Northern Territory writing and storytelling and recognise the unique contribution they make to the nation's literary wealth.

Diversity

We value the creativity and illumination that comes with diversity, and encourage writing and storytelling from people and places across Australia (and beyond).

Inclusion

We create opportunities and remove barriers to allow more people to access literary activities.

Relevance

We work to provide the best and most relevant activities and services for our members and sector.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm honoured to act as President of the NT Writers' Centre Board, following on from two years as Vice President, during which I was lucky enough to work closely with the inspiring Dr Adelle Sefton-Rowston.

The NTWC is a wonderful organisation. It supports our many different Territory writers; established, emerging, commercial, literary, and increasingly, of different genres, and offers exciting programs, and opportunities for writers in all fields. I would particularly like to thank Executive Director Sally Bothroyd, and her team, for their dedication, passion, and skill.

2020 was incredibly difficult with the Covid-19 pandemic, so a huge thanks to our talented and creative Fiona Dorrell, who took on the role of Festival Director, and against all odds, delivered an extraordinary and magical Festival in the beautiful Botanic Gardens in October.

Perhaps the most wonderful and unexpected part of the Festival was that, due to travel restrictions, it focused on local writers from all parts of the Territory, and the event was undoubtedly richer for it.

So many people put in an enormous hours and effort to help Fiona deliver the program, and a huge thanks in particular to Festival Manager Rita Horanyi, Mx Sly, Kingsley Gittins, Robbie Hoad, Kvitka Becker and the team of volunteers, who brought us all together under the theme Gunamidirra Garawa birdtj / when the tides turn.

Tanya Heaslip

Board President

NT Writers' Centre



TREASURER'S REPORT

The NT Writers' Centre, like many other arts organisations and businesses, found itself heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of the organisation's finances, the impact was significant – the rescheduling of the writers' festival, the cancellation of flights, the inability to run in-person workshops all affected the organisation's finances.

Fortunately, there was plenty of Government support on hand to assist with the crisis. We received the ATO's cash flow boost, and support from the NT Dept of Trade, Business and Industry. These subsidies allowed us to retain staff while the writers' festival was delayed.

There were also a number of grants on offer to assist artists during the pandemic. We received additional grants from ArtsNT and the City of Darwin for online initiatives. We were also able to move workshops online and maintain this revenue stream.

After all the turmoil, we were able to end the year with a reasonable surplus, and healthy reserves.

Peter Summersby
Board Treasurer
NT Writers' Centre



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2020 was a year like no other for most people, and the NTWC had to make many changes due to the global COVID-10 pandemic.

The year began with numerous well-attended workshops, including Mary Anne Butler's Story in Six Weeks, and Alice Springs program manager Fiona Dorrell had taken up challenge of being artistic director of the 2020 NT Writers Festival (the largest part of the NTWC program) which was scheduled for May in a new venue at Darwin's George Brown Botanic Gardens.

However, in March it became apparent that everything programmed for the rest of 2020 was going to have to change with restrictions on gatherings and travel.

It was a stressful time, but the NTWC staff's and board showed resilience in the face of adversity. Writing workshops switched to the online format, and amazingly, we were still able to hold the festival in Darwin in October – albeit with a revised program. It was a great success with huge support from local audiences.

Thanks must go to our funders and the Australian Government for the support we received during this period of upheaval.

The Northern Territory ended 2020 in a privileged position, with life continuing almost as usual. But for many writers and artists in Australia (and worldwide), the impact of 2020 on income and creativity will be felt for many years to come.

Big thanks must go to the NTWC team: Fiona Dorrell, Kingsley Gittins, Mx. Sly, Rita Horanyi, SezzaJai Sykes, as well as our book keeper Hamish McDonald and the NTWC board.

At the end of the year, with Fiona Dorrell keen to stay in Darwin, it was an opportunity for her to take on the role of Executive Director, enabling me to concentrate on some of my own writing.

I began working as the Executive Director in 2015, after a period of upheaval in staff and board, and I'm proud to have brought stability to the NTWC in my time as Executive Director, as well as win two rounds of four-year funding from the Australia Council. I'm hoping 2021 will bring more great things for the NTWC and the NT Writers Festival.

Sally Bothroyd

Executive Director
NT Writers' Centre

OUTCOMES

2020 SNAPSHOT

Since 1997 the NT Writers' Centre has encouraged vibrant literary activity in the Northern Territory. Our signature event, the NT Writers Festival, brings people together to share story, language and culture.

219

MEMBERS

74

EVENTS

44

PARTNERSHIPS

2,540

ATTENDANCES

26

WORKSHOPS FOR WRITERS

114

WRITERS & ARTISTS EMPLOYED*

28

VOLUNTEERS

*25% of who are First Nations.

NT WRITERS FESTIVAL

The NT Writers Festival faced unprecedented challenges this year, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Originally scheduled to be held in Darwin in the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens in May 2020, the program was postponed due to restrictions on public gatherings.

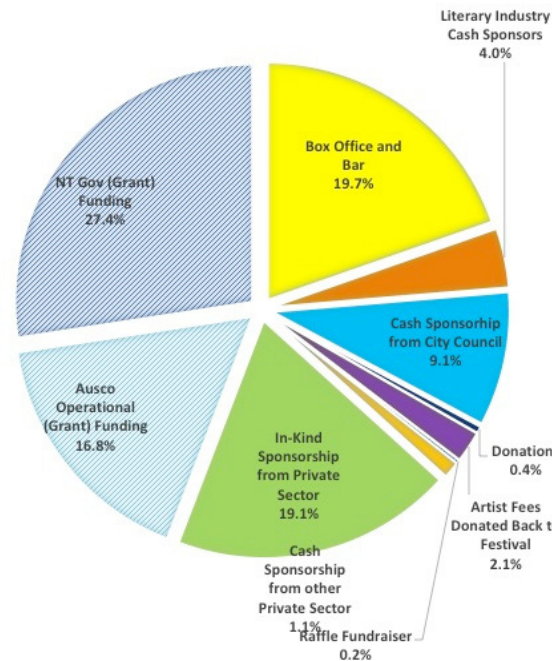
Despite these challenges, NTWF was extremely fortunate to be able to go ahead in October 2020, and was hugely well received by largely local and intra-territory audiences.

Thirty-five live and five online events took place across the four day program. Ninety-six artists were employed, twenty-eight percent of whom were First Nations and almost all of whom were NT-based.

Over two thousand people attended festival events with almost seventy percent of sessions sold out. New box

office records were set, with a total ticket revenue of \$26,991.47 before refunds and customer paid booking fees.

Analysis of Revenue Sources



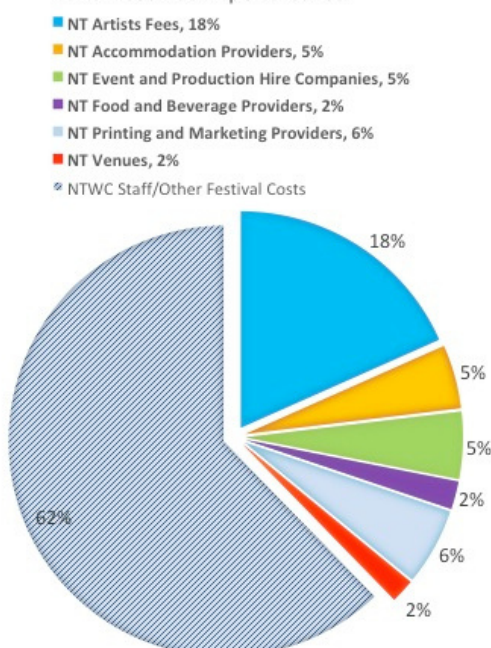
Ninety-one percent of surveyed audiences would positively recommend the festival and ninety-one percent indicated they would attend again in the future.

One hundred percent of audiences surveyed felt that they would like to see the festival take place at the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens again, firmly establishing the site as a new Darwin home venue

Successes were truly a tribute to the hard work and nimbleness of the team.

"Magic. Pure bloody magic."
Trent Dalton

2020 Festival Expenditures



CHIEF MINISTER'S BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Started by the NT Writers' Centre in 2009, and originally called Territory Read, the Chief Minister's NT Book Awards have been celebrating excellence amongst published authors residing in the NT for over a decade.

What began as a single, annual award has evolved into a biennial awards with multiple categories, and with generous support from the Chief Minister has developed into the premier prize for authors in the NT.

In 2020, the three categories were streamlined into: Fiction, Non-fiction and Children's/Young Adult.

The Chief Minister's NT Book Awards 2020 were open to authors living in the NT who published a book during the years 2018 and 2019.

We put the call out in late 2019 and entries closed in Feb 2020.

Two judges were contracted to consider all of the entries, and choose a shortlist and winners.

The shortlist was released in April 2020.

Originally, the awards ceremony – announcing the three winning books – was going to be held during the NT Writers' Festival in May 2020, but because the festival was postponed for several months, an online ceremony was streamed online on May 25, 2020 and is still available for viewing on our website.

The online ceremony enabled us to feature the nine shortlisted authors and their books, as well as giving attention to the three winning books.

It's challenging for NT authors to receive recognition or awards, since the NT is very far from the main centres of Australian publishing (Melbourne and Sydney). These awards aim to bring writers together as a community, and raise awareness of NT authors both locally and nationally.

The nine shortlisted authors were from: Darwin, Alice Springs, and Yirrkala – and showed the diversity of NT writing in the community.



WORKSHOP PROGRAM

The NTWC held a variety of writing and industry workshops throughout 2020.

Workshops throughout the year attracted around 199 attendances, delivered 80 hours of tuition and employed 17 writers (7 NT writers, and 10 interstate writers).

Face to Face Workshops

- Your beautiful book with Natalie Sprite (Darwin)
- First Nations Poetry with Yvette Holt (Alice Springs)
- Story in Six Weeks with Mary Anne Butler (Darwin)
- Starting Blocks: writing for beginners with Sandra Thibodeaux (Darwin)
- A Song Like Alice- Songwriting workshop with Darcy Davis (Alice Springs)
- Gathering Ground: inspiration from place with Kelly Lee Hickey (Alice Springs)
- A Twist in the Tale with Mirandi Riwoe (Darwin)
- Gathering Ground: inspiration from place with Kelly Lee Hickey (Darwin)

Workshops held via Zoom.

One benefit of holding workshops via

Zoom was that it allowed participants to attend from various parts of the Northern Territory (including

Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs), and also attracted participants from interstate and, for the first time in NTWC history, one workshop attracted three international participants: from Canada, the UK and New Zealand.

It also allowed the use of interstate authors as workshop facilitators.

- Gathering Ground continued with Kelly Lee Hickey
- Writing Memoir with Joanne Van Os
- Manuscript Masterclass with Nadine Davidoff
- Honouring Culture In Writing with Zohl de Ishtar
- Writing Picture Books with Katrina Germein
- A Literary Agent & You with Alex Adsett
- Writing Beautiful Language with Ilka Tampke
- How can Settlers Write First Nations Characters Respectfully with Zohl de Ishtar
- Mapping Your Story with Christian White



WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Online guided writer group with Ilka Tampke

The NTWC again ran an online writers' group, which ran like a 'short story' clinic. The participants submitted a piece of writing three times over several weeks.

Author/tutor Ilka Tampke gave them detailed feedback, and they also had the opportunity to give feedback on each others' work

There were seven participants. Four from Darwin, one from Alice Springs and two from interstate.

Workshops for youth

The NTWC ran four workshops for young people – all in partnership, and all online.

- Creative Writing for Young People with Erin Gough
- Creative Writing for Young People with Alison Evans
- Young Author Awards Workshop (primary age) with Lyndal Carbery
- Young Author Awards Workshop (secondary age) with Lyndal Carbery



EVENTS

NTWF Online Book Club

With the pandemic, quick-response funding was offered for online projects, and the NTWC was successful in trialling an online book club.

This enabled the NTWC to offer a showcase opportunity to authors impacted by our festival's postponement (as this meant some authors were not able to be part of the festival due to travel restrictions). The Bookshop Darwin was a partner, providing the books to the participants.

Twelve people paid to be part of the bookclub, and due to the funding the NTWC was able to offer six subsidised places to people experiencing difficulties due to the pandemic.

The book club ran over five months, featuring the books *Doxology* by Nell Zink; *Stone Sky Gold Mountain* by Mirandi Riwoe; *Return to Dust* by Dani Powell; *Top End Girl* by Miranda Tapsell; and *All Our Shimmering Skies* by Trent Dalton.

Authors who took part in the club via an online Q&A were: Nell Zink, Mirandi Riwoe and Dani Powell.

The Q & A facilitators were: Fiona Dorrell, Rita Horanyi and Kingsley Gittins.

Wild Words

Wild Words is an opportunity in Darwin for people to perform spoken word poetry or prose. The NTWC supports this community by paying venue fees, as well as a fee for the MC/promoter.

Due to the pandemic, Wild Words was only held on six occasions in 2020, attracting an estimated average audience of six performers and fifteen audience members.

This year Wild Words was held in Happy Yess, at Browns Mart, or in the Browns Mart courtyard (due to COVID precautions).

The MC/promoting duties were handled by local artists, Shele Parker and Shaun Green.



EVENTS

Poetry Coffee

Poetry coffee mornings are held in Darwin on the third Thursday of the Month at the Coconut Grove Café, Eat at Martins, and led by a long-time NTWC member Kaye Aldenhoven.

It's a free event allowing people to read their own poetry or someone else's poetry and enable positive discussion. This is not a forum for critical analysis of people's work, but simply for enjoyment and encouragement.

Due to the pandemic, this event was held on six occasions in 2020, attracting an average attendance of twelve people each time.

Fundraising: Book Club Trivia Night

The NTWC has continued to hold trivia nights in Darwin, with support f

rom the Trailer Boat Club who offers the Thursday evening event to not-for-profit groups. Publishers again provided us with new-release books to make up the prize packs. The questions were all literary.

The 2020 event was held in October and raised \$848.00. Thanks go to the Darwin Trailer Boat Club for offering this opportunity to not-for-profit organisations.

Fundraising: Deckchair Cinema Screening

The NTWC was selected (via a ballot process) to run a fundraiser at the Deckchair Cinema in 2020. Top End Wedding was chosen as the film, and the evening raised \$2,300.00.

Thanks again goes to the Deckchair Cinema for offering this opportunity to not-for-profit organisations.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Arelhekenhe Angkentye: Women's Talk

The NTWC's partnership with the Akeyulerre Healing Centre and Ptilotus Press resulted in the publication of Arelhekenhe Angkentye: Women's Talk. This is a book of poetry by a group of Arrernte women who attended writing workshops at the Akeyulerre Healing Centre. Poet Penny Drysdale was an integral part of this project – in running the workshop and fundraising for publication costs.

The book was also featured in the NT Writers Festival in Darwin, with several of the women making the road trip to Darwin for the event.

Andrew McMillan Memorial Retreat

In his will, Andrew left an amount of money to the NTWC “to establish an annual retreat for an emerging writer across genres”. Although the NTWC is yet to actually receive this bequest from the executors of Andrew's estate, the retreat was started in 2016.

Due to travel uncertainty, the recipient of the retreat in 2019 (Alice Springs poet Laurie May) is yet to undertake the retreat, and the NTWC decided not to advertise it in 2020 – but wait until the pandemic has settled down.



MEMBER SERVICES

Manuscript Assessments

In 2020 the NTWC formed a finding a mentor. partnership with experienced writer/illustrator/publisher, Erica Wagner. We brokered eleven assessments of picture books, and eleven writers (or writing/illustrating partnerships) held a consultation with Erica Wagner via Zoom.

In terms of longer manuscript assessment, we brokered one assessment.

Support and Advice Service

The NTWC gives advice to any members of the public.

In 2020, the NTWC recorded 60 separate inquiries and there were probably some more unrecorded inquiries. These were from people

seeking advice on writing, publishing, finding a publisher, finding an agent, and/or finding a mentor.

In 2020, the NTWC gave six letters of support for writers seeking grants for writing projects.

Imprint magazine

The fifth edition of Imprint came out in early December 2020, and was distributed to all financial members. Copies of Imprint also went to the main NT Libraries, our fellow writers' centres interstate, other stakeholders – including publishers – (a print run of 400).

Imprint includes reviews of NTWC events such as the NT Book Awards and the NT Writers Festival. It also includes advice and reviews of books by NT authors.



PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The NT Literary Awards

The NTWC has continued its sponsorship arrangement with the Northern Territory Library, finding judges for the seven categories of the NT Literary Awards. The Library says a survey of entrants shows a large number of them find out about the awards through the NTWC.

The Literary Awards were held at the NT Library in October. Almost all of the winners were already members of the NTWC, and have had a year's free membership added to their accounts.

Young Territory Author Awards

We provided workshops for young writers to generate entries to the YTAA, and a feature article about the Awards in Imprint magazine.

Arts NT Varuna Online Fellowship

Arts NT again offered a number of fellowships in partnership with the Varuna House in NSW, and this year Varuna trialled 'virtual' fellowships along with residential fellowships. The NTWC assisted Varuna with the virtual fellowships, in the form of running three 'discussion group' sessions via Zoom.

Auspiced projects

The NTWC again auspiced a grant from Festivals NT for the Red Dirt Poetry Festival, which this year was held online due to the pandemic. The NTWC auspiced a grant from Arts NT on behalf of Sam Carmody (for the purposes of him writing his second novel).



OUR PEOPLE

NT Writers' Centre Board – 2020

President – Tanya Heaslip (Alice Springs)
Vice president – Dina Davis (Darwin)
Regional vice president – Renee McBryde (Alice Springs)
Treasurer – Peter Summersby (Darwin)
Secretary – Varunika Ruwanpura (Darwin)
Public officer – Shona Ford (Darwin)
Ordinary Member – Fred van't Sand (Darwin)
Ordinary Member – Michelle Bates (Tennant Creek)
Ordinary Member – Joanna Henryks (Alice Springs)
Ordinary Member – Bronwyn Druce (Alice Springs)

NT Writers' Centre Staff – 2020

Executive Director – Sally Bothroyd
NT Writers Festival Artistic Director – Fiona Dorrell
NT Writers Festival Manager – Rita Horanyi
Development Manager – Mx. Sly
Darwin Program Officer – Kingsley Gittins
Alice Springs Program Officer – Sezza Jai Sykes
Bookkeeper – Hamish McDonald



PARTNERSHIPS

Thank you to our funders, partners,
supporters, and sponsors:

Northern Territory Government
Australian Government | Australia
Council for the Arts
City of Darwin
George Brown Darwin Botanic
Gardens
Hilton Darwin
Airlnorth
Darwin City Public Library
Deckchair Cinema
Museum and Art Gallery Northern
Territory
Crustaceans on the Wharf
Eva's Cafe
Coles
One Mile Brewing Co.
Dreamedia
Parap Fine Foods
Darwin International Airport
ZipPrint
Bendigo Bank - Nightcliff
Community Bank Branch
Northern Territory Library

ABC Radio Darwin
Tourism Top End
HOT 100/MIX 104.9
Off The Leash
Brown's Mart
Darwin Festival
The Bookshop Darwin
Corrugated Iron
Wagtale Creative
Valve Head Productions
Cinemart
Cast Away NT
EcoScience NT
Macquarie University
Good Reading Magazine
Copyright Agency Cultural Fund
Australian Poetry
Varuna The National Writers' House
Griffith Review
Ptilotus Press
Kindred Anthology
AKEYULERRE Inc.
Borderlands
Batchelor Institute Press
The Caraher and Thompson families



PUBLICATIONS BY NT WRITERS IN 2020

Angry Ginger, Melissa Kowalik (Self-published)

Aunty's Wedding, Samantha Fry (illustrator) (Allen & Unwin) by Miranda Tapsell and Joshua Tyler.

An Alice Girl, Tanya Heaslip (Allen & Unwin)

Arelhekenhe Angkentye: Women's Talk, Women in Central Australia (Ptilotus Press)

Believe, A Fairy ABC, Michelle Coleman and Rohini Chakraborty (Self-published)

Brother Moon, Maree McCarthy Yoelu and Samantha Fry (Magabala Books)

Catch Me If I Fall, Barry Jonsberg (Allen & Unwin)

The Colour Catchers, Johanna Bell (Scholastic Australia)

Cusp, Mary Anne Butler (Currency Press)

Fort Wellington : The British in North Australia 1827-29, Derek Pugh (Self-published)

Miwal ga Djambuwal: Spirit Woman and Spirit Boy, Stanley Rankin (Batchelor Institute Press)

Mocha the Water Buffalo and Milo the Horse, Melissa Kowalik (Self-published)

Zen the puppy goes to the park, Melissa Kowalik (Self-published)

Mookanunganuk, Kathy Mills (Batchelor Institute Press)

Mum's Elephant, Maureen Jipiyiliya Nampijinpa O'Keefe (Magabala Books)

Tjanimaku Tjukurpa: how one young man came good, NPY Women's Council, (NPY Women's Council)

On Both Sides of the Fence, John Spencer (Self-published)

The Parap & Rapid Creek Market Pocketbook, Tisha Tejada (Self-published)

Peace Crimes, Kieran Finnane (UQP)

Return To Dust, Dani Powell (UWA Publishing)

Saltie Mumma, Sandra Kendell (Windy Hollow Books)

The Sun Never Sets, Stephen Archer (Self-published)

This Face: Finding the courage to move on with life, AK. Bosco (Sidharta Books)

Voodoo Games, Sean Guy (Self-published)

We Sat Where They Sat: The History of the Commencement of Baptist Missionary Work Amongst the Warlpiri of Central Australia, Evan Reece (dec), (Friends of the Strehlow Research Centre)

Wolfred, Nick Bland (Hardie Grant Egmont)

Yellow Truck Road Train, Mandy Tootell (Allen & Unwin)

ACHIEVEMENTS BY NT WRITERS IN 2020

Dr Vannessa Hearman was awarded the inaugural Early Career Book Prize by the Asian Studies Association of Australia for her book *Unmarked Graves: Death and Survival in the Anti-Communist Violence in East Java, Indonesia*.

Mary Anne Butler won an AWGIE (The Australian Writers Guild Awards) in the category of Theatre for Young Audiences for her play *Cusp*.

Song Spirals by the Gay'wu Group of women (from Yirrkala) won the non-fiction category of the Prime Minister's Literary Awards (co-winning with *Sea People: The Puzzle of Polynesia*).

Song Spirals by the Gay'wu Group of women (from Yirrkala) was longlisted for the Stella Prize.

Song Spirals by the Gay'wu Group of women (from Yirrkala) was shortlisted for the Victoria Premier's Literary Awards.

Cheeky Dogs: To Lake Nash and Back (Dion Beasley and Johanna Bell) was shortlisted for a Prime Minister's Awards in the children's literature category.

Bird's Eye View by Story Projects won Podcast of the Year in the Australian Podcast Awards.

Sally Bothroyd won the ASAHQ Commercial Fiction Prize for an unpublished manuscript.

Thomas Mayor was longlisted for an ABIA (Australian Book Industry) Award, Illustrated book for *Finding the Heart of the Nation* (Hardie Grant Publishing, Hardie Grant Travel).

Thomas Mayor was longlisted for an Indie Award in Illustrated non-fiction for *Finding the Heart of the Nation* (Hardie Grant Publishing, Hardie Grant Travel).

Sandra Kendell's book *Beauty* (Windy Hollow) was recognised as a 'notable' book by the CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia).

Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr was shortlisted for the CBCA award for a new illustrator for *Little Bird's Day* (Magabala Books).

Alfred's War (Rachel Bin Salleh, illustrated by Samantha Fry, Magabala) was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Prize for Indigenous Writing.

Barry Jonsberg's book *My Life as an Alphabet* was made into the film *H is for Happiness*, in 2019 and was released internationally in 2020.

Jo Dutton was awarded a creative fellowship by Arts NT

Sandra Thibodeaux was awarded a creative fellowship by Arts NT, and a creative residency in Rome by the Australia Council.

