Publicity report for 2018

Hi all!

Like always, it’s been a busy year for Ballarat Writers, and while we may not have hit all our goals from the 2017 Publicity Report, we’ve managed quite a few.

Our last note in the 2017 report was out intention to start a blog, and we managed to do this! The feedback from the blog has been really great, and we’ve had some wonderful content from local writers about their practice.

We posted 7 blog posts in 2018, by 5 different authors. They typically get between 70 and 110 reads, which is great for a local writers’ group. They definitely get more hits when they’re linked on Facebook, so that’s going to be an integral part of blog promotion as the year moves forward.

The biggest change to publicity has come in the last month or so. The newsletter has been moved to a monthly newsletter with a fixed posting schedule that the entire committee has access to. There will also be a monthly reminder email (with flash fiction and members’ night reminders, as well as any other pertinent information). This means that everyone can review the topics to be covered in each newsletter, and it will make each newsletter easier to draft prior to sending.

The other change has been the introduction of a competitions page to the website. It has always been confusing to post competition links on Facebook (i.e. has it been posted already? Is this the best and most relevant competition to share?), so hopefully the introduction of a static page makes it easier for us to share competitions, and will also bring more people to our website.

Our website visit numbers are down from 37 people a day in 2017 to 23 people a day, but as you may remember, in 2017 we had not only the Ballarat Writers Festival but also the Southern Cross Short Story Competition. These events drove a lot of traffic to the website, so there’s little wonder the numbers have shrunk. They are comparable to our 2016 website numbers (2016 had 26 visits a day).

There has been no activity on our Twitter account other than automated messages, and we’re at 640 followers (down from 641). We’re also now up to 69 Instagram followers (up 2), despite no posts.

As of the 14th of January, we have 663 Facebook followers (up from 585 last year), which is great given our reduced posting schedule. The changes to the website should mean that there is regular weekly content for sharing on social media (the blog, the competitions page, flash fiction and the members’ night) that can then be supplemented with relevant information (rather than the entire feed as supplementary information). I’m hoping to have a schedule drafted in time for the AGM.

We currently have 403 subscribers on Mailchimp and 69 subscribers to the Competitions Newsletter. I see no reason why these numbers won’t grow with consistent promotion (particularly the competitions newsletter). Around 39.4% of our 403 main newsletter subscribers open our emails, and around 7.4% of them click on links, both of which are above industry rates. For our competitions newsletter, 58.5% of people open it, and around 17.2% click on links. For a newsletter focused on referring people to other places, that’s great engagement.

For 2019 I’d like to see more regular content, stronger promotion of our own content and I’ll say it again (as I said it last year!), more local, physical promotion of Ballarat Writers Inc. and what we do.