

2019 Southern Cross Short Story Competition (SCSSC) Coordinator's Report

In 2019, Ballarat Writers Inc conducted a very successful Southern Cross Short Story Competition (SCSSC). Author Lee Kofman (see her bio below) was contracted early in the year to run a writing workshop and judge the competition. The workshop, 'Writing Compelling Characters and Dialogue', was held in July. Judging began mid-October with entries sent to three pre-readers and a short list of 30 entries handed to Lee for final consideration. Five prizes were awarded - \$1000.00 for first prize, \$400.00 for second and \$100.00 for third, as well as two Honourable Mention certificates. Entry fees were \$20.00 or \$15.00 for BWI members.

Phil Green began the competition process early in the year by contacting Lee and getting her agreement to be the judge for this year, and organising the workshop. I took over in August/September when he went overseas and continued in the role after his return. (Thanks, Phil, for doing the setting up.) My role was to collect and record entry details, distribute entries after the deadline to our three pre-readers – Heather Roche – author and past chairperson of BWI, Susan Coleridge and Delia Thornton, both teachers in the Professional Writing and Editing programs at Federation University Australia. And finally, arrange for Lee Kofman to receive the final 30 entries (each pre-reader needed to narrow their list down to 10).

All judges remarked on the high standard of entries for this year which made their choices difficult. It is heartening to know that the SCSSC is attracting writers of a high calibre.

In all, 170 entries were received by the deadline. This is well up on the 2017 competition which received 119 entries. The competition attracted three entries (from the same person) in Canada, as well as many Victorian and a number of interstate authors. Approximately 15 entries were from BWI members. Almost 20 authors submitted more than one entry which made distribution to pre-readers a little tricky. I had to ensure that three entries from one person, for instance, were given to each of the pre-readers. There was also a range of word count. The upper limit was 3000 words, and many entries were close to this but a number were less than 1000 words (the shortest, 444). This also meant that I needed to be careful with distribution to the pre-readers so that they all had roughly the same number of words to deal with.

Winners of the competition were:

1st place – *The Remains* by Jacqueline Winn from Possum Brush, NSW

2nd place – *Found* by Jodie Kewley from Red Hill South, Victoria

3rd place – *Nereus's Daughter* by Karen Hollands from Seven Hills, Queensland

Commendations: *The Lottery* by Jodie Kewley, from Red Hill South, Victoria and *Whale Sharks* by Suzi Green from Manly, NSW

Competition entries were received by email to the competitions@ballaratwriters.com with only one or two exceptions. Payment for entries via Trybooking also seemed to

work well with again only one or two exceptions. In both cases, these issues were relatively easily resolved.

From Lee Kofman's workshop we received	\$458
From SCSSC entries we received	\$3192
BWI overall expenses amounted to	\$2955
BWI overall profit amounted to	\$695 <i>This amount effectively equates to BWI 'breaking even' for this event. This is in line with general BWI policy.</i>

Recommendations for SCSSC in 2021

- ✍ Continue to use email for submissions. This is good for a quick and easy reply to submissions to acknowledge receipt and respond to queries. As most people were able to submit their entries this way, perhaps limit submission to this.
- ✍ Continue to use Trybooking. Most people seemed to navigate this system of payment.
- ✍ The pre-readers do a great job under time constraints. If the funds are available, could their payment be raised? At present it is a flat \$100. (NB No pre-readers are required for the Martha Richardson Memorial Poetry Prize in alternate years.)

And finally, I really enjoyed the part I played in this years SCSSC. I was very happy to contribute to the local and wider writing community and support the great work BWI continues to do so well.

Irene Warfe

SCSSC coordinator (September – December, 2019)

Lee Kofman is the author of five books, including memoirs: *Imperfect: How bodies shape the people we become* (2019, Affirm Press) and *The Dangerous Bride* (2014, Melbourne University Press); and editor of *Split* (2019) and co-editor of *Rebellious Daughters* (2016), anthologies of personal essays by prominent Australian authors via Ventura Press. Her short works have been widely published in Australia and overseas. Her blog was a finalist for Best Australian Blogs 2014. More at www.leekofman.com.au