

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – September 2023

This month's guest speaker: Damian Hussey

So you want to be in the movies (behind the camera, that is...)?
Damian Hussey is a Cinematographer, Writer and Director

He joined the Australian Army in 2001 and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2006. He then travelled extensively throughout the world before beginning his filmmaking career. He uses these experiences to tell unique and authentic stories that can make a difference. His films have been screened at international film festivals and have won numerous awards.

He is also the owner and operator of his own production company, Iron Forge Pictures. His feature film directorial debut was with 'The Lost One' in 2020'.



But wait: there is more! No, not steak knives, but our member and Chat GPT guru **Peter Loveday** will present on... just that: **Chat GPT**, aka as Artificial Intelligence (AI). Many of us in the writer community consider AI to be a serious threat. And indeed it is. Just as the motor car was a serious threat if you were in the business of shoeing horses or the computer if you were a book keeper manually writing up ledgers and journals. "It's a new style hammer" Peter remarked. His presentation will be in the early part of our meeting, so be sure that you are there on time!

Last month's guest speaker: Melaina Faranda.



"I like story telling, but not necessarily to kids directly. I prefer to write"

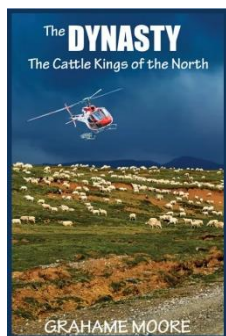
Melaina said in answer to the question why she writes children's stories. Growing up in Murwillumbah, she studied English, then completed a Dip Ed. "A friend won a Queensland award for best emerging author. I was very jealous – she was meant to be a visual artist, I was meant to be a writer!" Well, she certainly lived up to her goal:

Melaina has written over 50 books, targeting every age group up to 18 years.

Many of her books are directed to educational publishers. Just google her name and you'll get about 39,000 replies...

Here is a tip she shared: **How do you determine what age group applies for your work?** Go to a bookshop and see what others write for a particular age group. Ask librarians. There are also specialist bookshops. Note: in concert with this theme, see article below on Australian Publishers, provided by Stacey King.

Why you should have been there yourself:



Our convenor **Grahame Moore** has published his latest book: 'The Dynasty – The Cattle Kings of the North', a love story of sweat, pain and tears, built on love and trust in the intense heat of the Australian outback. **Jack Kregas'** novel 'Shattered Innocence' has reached the top 400 on Amazon. He has now written a sequel 'The Visual Deception'.

"People don't like hanging endings" he said. [*Permit me to disagree: here is one reader who is a sucker for sequels and trilogies! Ed.*]

Brian Kennedy has returned from his trip promoting his books, specialising in Irish families, and particularly in his family, the Kennedy's. Some interesting facts coming out: Is he, or is he not related to JFK? And

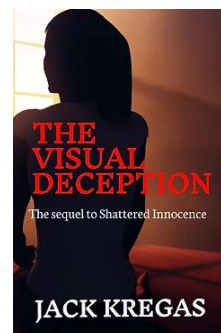
Rolando Rizzo has started a new book: "It's controversial, the powers behind the powers to be... – approx. 50% there" he said.

Stacey King expands into novelettes, the stories taking place in the Banaba Island environment, her expertise. Regrettably, we'll miss

Stacey at this month's meeting; she is off to Fiji.

There was plenty more action, and we welcomed two new members: **Good to meet you, Chris Sorensen** and **Sue Jones!** In her 40's, Sue (a friend of Stacey King) went with her husband and 5 kids on a world cruise

with their dream sailing boat. Halfway through, the husband left without a trace. And Sue had to learn how to sail... Can't wait for that story to be published!



This month's challenge: Can you improve on that?

She looked like rising dough. White and round and kind. She looked like the kind of person you could fall into and have a soft landing. (Jodi Piccolt – Wild Honey)

My challenge is not necessarily for you to write a better sentence (if you do have one, please let me have it!) but if you come across a sentence you catch yourself re-reading again and again... I'm a sucker for it. Share it! Take a photo with your mobile and **send your entry as a photo, text, email or doc to helensvalewriters@gmail.com** (simply reply to the email in which I sent you this newsletter).

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- [Scribes Writers Prose Competition - 2023](#)** Short Story – 1000 word limit, \$200 first, \$100 2nd prize. Closes 30th September 2023
- [Ernestine Hill Memorial Short Story Award](#)** Short Story – max 4000 words – Rural setting. \$1,000 first prize. Closes 21st October 2023.
- There are another 583 (last time I looked) competitions on **[reedsy.com](https://www.reedsy.com)** – There must be one or two which suit you!

How to get Australian Publishers take note of your manuscript submission

Stacey King kindly provided [this link](#) leading to the [Arts Hub website](#). The article refers to the manuscript submission requirements of Australian Publishers, in other words, what you need to provide to get their attention, when is the best time to submit it, which ones specialise in which genre etc..

Arts Hub doesn't just deal with publication but also maintains a jobs database that is specific to the Writers and Arts Industry. You'll have to subscribe to access the data (from \$9.90 per month, cancel any time). If you have a student email address (with a .edu domain), membership is free.

Last month's 100 Word competition: Murder.

[Click on this link](#) to read the pearlys that have been contributed by members.

Disappointing, in that only 5 members responded to the call.

Exciting because the entries (in order of appearance) deal with Bondage, Baynes Theorem (yes, John, I had to look it up), Lily sending shivers down my spine – with a twist, Lisa putting up a shocker of a story, and Livia's story includes Pit Bulls and Rottweilers.

Do so before the next meeting: we'll have a poll on who is considered top of last month.

This month's competition: Poetry.

Bush poetry. Well, any poetry really. Between 100 and 200 words. Can be either traditional (e.g. rhyming and metered) or modern. Take your pick as to what subject you want to write on. If you have written poetry in the past (and it is not bigger than 200 words), why not send it? Of course, you'll retain copyright.

See next page for an example. And Grahame is offering a nice **bottle of red for the best entry**. [Email it to me](#) and we'll put up a separate document (accessible by members only).

This month's meeting

The August meeting will be on 21st September 2023. Usual place and time: ground floor meeting room at the Helensvale Library, 10:00 am. Put it in your diary now.

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Many people hear voices when no one is there.

Some are called "mad" and are shut up in rooms where they stare at walls all day.

Others are called "writers" and they do pretty much the same thing.

Ray Bradbury.

“A poem!” said ol’ Silvafox
For next month’s writing competition
To get their fogg’d brains off their blocks.
Write in the olden-style tradition,

With strictly metered, rhyming tact,
Or modern style
nonsensical whatchamacallit
Overindulging sagacious
Discernment, often
Just
one
or two
words per line
Far too high up the food chain
For the riff-raff of the unwashed masses.

“One hundred to two hundred words”
He said. The theme is open, take your pick.
You can describe exotic birds.
A lonely child will do the trick.

Or “writer’s block”, no inspiration,
A total brain-stem constipation.
Or movement down at Grahame’s station,
(The female lead’s perverse gyration.)

In style of Banjo, Lawson, Keats,
Or Shakespeare, Milton, Socrates,
Or CJ Dennis. But no cheats!
Oh, if you have to: Murray, Les.

So off you go, sharpen your pen,
Go tap your keyboard, tablet, phone.
When done, you will feel born-again.
Reward yourself! Côtes du Rhône!

(151 words)