

The Write Stuff

<https://www.helensvalewritersgroup.org>

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – January 2026

Happy New Year!

... and may all your good resolutions come true! Without doubt you would have made at least one, and – so far – have steadfastly stuck to it? We'll test your resolve at the upcoming meeting in two weeks' time, on **Thursday 15th January**: Grahame will put out a couple of packets of sweet cakes, which some of you would unfalteringly refrain from touching... 😊

But there will be plenty to talk about. The bulk of the time will be taking up by a **workshop** – see below. It will still be held at the same venue where we had the last three meetings, at the **Helensvale Community Centre**, opposite Club Helensvale.

Do-it-Yourself Editing workshop



Now, some of you may suggest that DIY Editing cannot possibly be effective.

Well, **Rochelle Miller**, the President of the Gold Coast Writers Association, together with **Christine Betts**, who is a professional author and editor, claim to differ. They will run this workshop with you. Did I mention that **it will be a workshop**? That means that **it will be interactive**, so make sure you bring sufficient writing material!



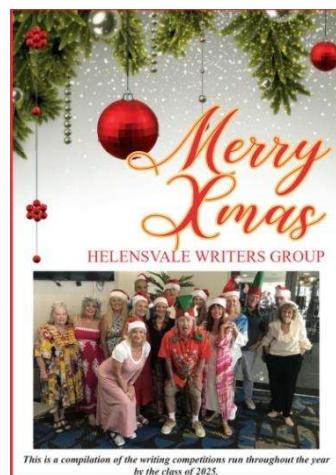
Compilation of all this year's competition stories, overall winners

At the Christmas Luncheon **Grahame again presented a booklet**, containing a compilation of all the competition stories submitted throughout the year, to each one of the authors. It was printed by his **printer, Clark & Mackay**. Every author who had submitted an entry during 2025 received a copy. (*Image of cover on right, with photo of last year's Christmas luncheon.*) If you qualify, but were unable to attend the luncheon, make yourself known to Grahame – he might still have a copy for you.

Grahame also announced the winners of the '**Out of the Darkness**' competition. You recall that this one was 'peer-judged' by every author who submitted an entry.

1. **Stacey King** (regrettably absent – at the time on the way, sailing to the Sydney New Year's Eve fireworks)
2. **Anna Crighton**
3. **Hamid Mirfenderesk**

Congratulations!



This is a compilation of the writing competitions run throughout the year by the class of 2025.



The annual award for 'Most Improved Writer' was presented to **Hamid Mirfenderesk** (2nd from left), with **Ralph May** (on right) runner up. **Rolando Rizzo** (3rd from left) was awarded 'Champion HWG Writer for 2025'

... and yours truly received the 'Most Conciencious Worker HWG' award.

Much appreciated, but, had a silent ballot of all members be held, Grahame would have been awarded this to himself. Ed.

Great Christmas Luncheon



Our convenor **Grahame Moore** deserves a big **Thank You!** for organising a buffet luncheon for us at Club Helensvale, in their 'Glass Room'.

We had a great time socialising, chatting, and... some of our members were put on the spot to give us an impromptu speech. In the humble opinion of your editor, **Peter Loveday** took the cake – obviously, his training with Toastmasters came to the fore...

Can you improve on that?

The drink was perfectly balanced. The delicate sweetness of the fruit rounded out by the gentlest hint of bitterness. A warm southern breeze seemed to rise from the glass in my hand.
Gretchen Rubin – Life in Five Senses

1000 Words Competition – Q1, 2026: Murder



Time to sharpen your pencils (or more likely, crank up your computer). The first competition of 2026 is on the theme of a **murder mystery**. The title is to be **‘But you said you loved me!’**

The usual conditions: Fiction, or “creative non-fiction”, 1000 words maximum (including title), and you may want to get started: **deadline is 17th March 2026** (2 days before our March meeting), and no late entries accepted.

Note: Copyright remains with the author. This is a private, group-internal competition, and thus does not preclude you to submit your story to any open competition, nor, as our end-of-year compilation cannot be purchased on the market, it thus does not constitute as “having been published before”.

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) Deadline 26th February 2026: [**Next Generation Short Story Awards**](#). **What? You’re not ‘Next Generation’?** Look closer. They have categories for ‘Seniors 60 – 69 years’ and ‘Seniors 70 years and above’. Some our group’s members qualify for these... ☺
- b) [**Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest**](#) – so you can write humorous poems? This is for you! And **entry is free**. \$2,000 first prize, plus various gift vouchers. Deadline is 1st April 2026
- c) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [**reedsy.com**](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Gold Coast Writers Association Membership

From 1st January 2026, all our members ought to also be members of GCWA, which assures us of proper insurance cover. Just in case you don’t know: when we hold a meeting inside a Gold Coast City Council meeting room, the Council’s insurance does NOT cover us. With this arrangement, we still remain independent, but we are now covered. And, of course, you are entitled to all the goodies that are available to you as a full member of GCWA!

So, if you are not already a member, click on this link to register:

<https://www.goldcoastwriters.org/membership>.

Positions Vacant: Convenor

A year ago, Grahame indicated that he wanted to retire... and then was overwhelmed with phone calls and emails from our members to be considered for the job. NOT. This time, he is quite serious. So, let’s look at the “official” positions that need to be covered in our Helensvale Writers Group (HWG):

- **Formal requirements of incorporation**, necessary in respect of government registrations and insurance: Since we are now associated with the Gold Coast Writers Association, these are covered. Which leaves...
- **Keeper of the cash kitty**
- **Membership database**
- **Member communications**, newsletter etc:

I’m happy to continue doing this (unless, of course, someone else would like to?)

Position Vacant

- **Webmaster, Facebook etc:**
Stacey King indicated she's happy to continue doing this

So, exactly what is the job of Convenor? Here is a summary of what this job entails:

1. **You are HWG's representative with the Gold Coast City Council**, and must be indoctrinated by someone on the GGCC staff on what to do in case of fire, and where the emergency areas are around the building. This is a **one-time only** requirement.
2. **You arrange for speakers** to attend, ideally at least two months in advance. These can be authors, educators, or any person who can provide the group with useful advice, information and/or entertainment.
3. **Replenish the grocery box** (Cakes, Biscuits, Coffee, Tea, Milk), and get a bottle of wine (or other suitable present) for our main speaker, and bring it along to the meeting and take them back again after the meeting. Note: once we are back at the library, we will have our own small storage cupboard for non-perishables. All expenses will be paid out of our cash kitty.
4. **Place the pull-up banner and directional signs** in the appropriate areas to direct members and visitors to the location, and after the meeting take them back.
5. **Run the meetings**, e.g. you ring the bell, and offer members to talk about their projects, then invite the 'Under the Spotlight' speaker and, after the coffee break, the main speaker to the microphone. (Grahame will continue to bring his speaker/microphone along).
6. Ensure the room is cleaned up again after the meeting, and tables/chairs (if not meeting at the library) are put back. All able bodied members should help with this.
7. If possible, attend the monthly meeting of the Gold Coast Writers Association (3rd Saturday of the month, 12:00 pm to approx. 3:00 pm). All our members ought to be also members of GCWA, to be covered by their corporate registration and insurance.

Note: every one of these tasks can be separated, so if any of you are prepared to take on an individual one of the above items, **let's hear it!**

For the new year, may you be blessed with lots of happiness, good fortune and contentment.
See you next Thursday, 15th January. **Usual time 10:00 am, at the Helensvale Community Centre** (opposite Club Helensvale), where we met the last three months.

Best wishes,
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EVERYONE :
Happy New Year ❤



A NOVELIST

The year turned like a page in a well-worn book, the ink of yesterday fading into the margins of memory. Ahead lay a pristine chapter, untouched and waiting to be written. With hearts alight and pens poised, we step boldly into the unknown, eager to fill the lines with stories of joy, love, and discovery. Happy New Year—may your tale be extraordinary.

**I once went on a date with a
simile.**

**I don't know what I
metaphor.**

OK, I'll see myself out...