The Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) from 1938 to 1980
and its role in the cultural life of Perth.

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ABSTRACT

The Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) from 1938 to 1980 and its role in the cultural life of Perth.

By the mid-1930s, a group of distinctly Western Australian writers was emerging, dedicated to their own writing careers and the promotion of Australian literature. In 1938, they founded the Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. This first detailed study of the activities of the Fellowship in Western Australia explores its contribution to the development of Australian literature in this State between 1938 and 1980. In particular, this analysis identifies the degree to which the Fellowship supported and encouraged individual writers, promoted and celebrated Australian writers and their works, through publications, readings, talks and other activities, and assesses the success of its advocacy for writers’ professional interests.

Information came from the organisation’s archives for this period; the personal papers, biographies, autobiographies and writings of writers involved; general histories of Australian literature and cultural life; and interviews with current members of the Fellowship in Western Australia. These sources showed the early writers utilising the networks they developed within a small, isolated society to build a creative community, which welcomed artists and musicians as well as writers. The Fellowship lobbied for a wide raft of conditions that concerned writers, including free children’s libraries, better rates of payment and the establishment of the Australian Society of Authors. It organised Children’s Book Weeks, and began the Children’s Book Council in Perth. It formed branches in five country towns, arranged Writers’ Weeks in early Perth Festivals, and conducted writers’ tours to country schools. By 1980, the Fellowship had prepared five anthologies of Western Australian writing and initiated two national literary competitions.

As the story of the Fellowship in these years is also the story of Perth’s cultural life, in a time of extensive change, this account of Western Australia’s writers is set within the framework of the State’s growing artistic world.

Patricia Kotai-Ewers, BA MPhil, W.Aust.
Acknowledgements

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Throughout this work I have been aware of a tension between the benefit of my lifelong connection with the Fellowship through my father, and the need to maintain sufficient distance from the material given my current involvement in the organisation.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Patricia Kotai-Ewers
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5 P. Buddee to FAW(NSW), 20 August 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
7 F. James to D. Irwin, 2 May 1963. James papers ML 5877/4. Florence James was reporting Mary Durack’s feelings to a mutual friend.
Being from WA was always seen as a terrible disadvantage, but in retrospect I think it was a gift. It hardens us, like drought-resistant coastal plants, and you have the great opportunity to make yourself up as you go along.

Tim Winton.
Cited in Author Profiles, Published by writingWA, 2011.
Chapter One

Setting the scene …

*I shall be so pleased to talk to someone who knows something about writing*¹⁰

Mollie Skinner’s words written in 1937 to fellow journalist, Norman Bartlett, express clearly the sense of isolation and the need for informed conversation felt by one writer living in Western Australia in the 1930s. A year later a group of dedicated Perth writers established the West Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAWWA) thus providing support for writers hitherto working independently with few literary contacts in the metropolitan area. This thesis presents the first detailed study of the activities of the FAWWA from 1938 to 1980. It explores the role the organisation played within the expanding cultural life in Perth. During these years, both the Fellowship and the literature it served matured dramatically. The FAWWA’s membership grew to include writers from Esperance to Broome, with both country and metropolitan branches. Its early presidents pursued a ‘strenuous advocacy’ of Australian literature.¹¹ Following their lead, the organisation worked to improve the professional concerns of Australia’s writers. Above all, the Fellowship created a literary community which welcomed both published and aspiring writers. The following chapters explore how the FAWWA undertook these activities, the liaisons it developed with other cultural bodies active at the time, and the ongoing interactions between it and the FAW in the other states. During its first forty years, the FAWWA worked on a broad spectrum of activities aimed at

promoting Western Australian writers, and encouraging an awareness of Australian literature within the State. In considering these activities, this thesis seeks to reveal the extent to which the FAWWA contributed to the development of Australian literature in Western Australia during this period.

Such a broad question needs to be further clarified before it will provide an adequate framework within which the material can be studied. In seeking to identify the role played by the FAWWA, this thesis examines three levels of organisational activity which can be seen as advancing the story of a body of literature. The first level of activity focuses on direct assistance to individual writers and manifests in various ways. It includes the development of a creative literary community, which encourages and advises its members and positions them within the broader cultural world, offering access to professional advice, training, and financial or in-kind support. The second level focuses on promoting writers and their works to the broader community, whether through facilitating publication of their writings, or by publicly celebrating and presenting individual authors and their writings, by organising readings, displays and lectures. The third, and less visible process, involves advocacy for writers’ professional interests, including the protection of freedom of speech, copyright issues and conditions of work.12

In 2013, these aims are pursued with the help of substantial amounts of government funding. This was not available for most of the period under consideration. Nevertheless, it will be shown that the FAWWA concerned itself with all three areas for much of the forty years included in this study, to the degree that was possible with restricted funds. The question to be explored then becomes the extent to which the FAWWA, during its first forty years, carried out a three-tiered program aimed at contributing to the growth of Australia literature in this State. Did it succeed in furthering the careers of individual writers through training, advice or encouragement? Did it carry out a program of publishing its

members’ work? To what extent did it publicly present Australian literature and celebrate Australian authors? Did it successfully lobby governments and other bodies to ensure that the rights of Australian writers were protected? The following chapters seek to answer these questions.

The scope of this chapter

This chapter begins with an overview of the scope and significance of the study. An exploration follows of different critical approaches that could be adopted for this review, together with a discussion of the question of nationalism versus regionalism as has appeared in literary histories and criticisms from the late 1970s, their findings and how they connect to the current study. A survey of the critical literature relating to the history of Australian literature, and the texts used in this appraisal, precedes a brief discussion of how authors have assessed the Fellowship of Australian Writers in commentaries on Australian literature. This introduction concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

The scope of the study

The survey is limited to the period from 1938 to 1980 for three reasons. Firstly, by 1980, only one of the writers who played a guiding role in the foundation of the organisation was still actively involved. Many had died, while some had left Perth to follow new writing opportunities. These founding writers, with their dedication to the writing profession, were fundamental to the organisation’s early growth. The late 1930s was a time of confluence for writers in Western Australia, as the literary careers of a small group of men and women, passionate about their own writing and the future of Australian literature, matured against a backdrop of the emergence of that literature and the historical conditions that drew the world’s writers into political action. Some of them were already actively guiding younger writers or promoting Australian literature in various ways, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. Three of them, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Mary Durack and John K. Ewers, showed their commitment to the new organisation by serving several terms as president. This study ends once all but Durack had ceased to be active within the FAWWA.
A second reason for limiting this study to the organisation’s first 40 years is that, by the 1970s, both State and federal governments were actively developing an artistic infrastructure designed to promote the arts in Australia, including writers and their works. Before then, as in the other states, the Western Australian Fellowship was the major literary institution in the State dedicated to this purpose. The slow but steady growth in stature of Australian literature during this time-frame accelerated in the 1970s. The growth of a more formal, intellectual and cultural infrastructure during that decade significantly altered conditions for existing literary organisations. In the 1970s, the new Australia Council for the Arts and the foundation of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature formalised the involvement of governments and tertiary institutions in the promotion of Australia’s writers and their works to a degree unknown in previous years. To include the years from 1980 to the present day, with the growing complexity of bureaucratic, government-funded organisations operating in the arts sector, and the proliferation of smaller, genre-based literary groups, would result in a very different, albeit equally instructive, study.

In her Preface to City of Light historian Jenny Gregory expressed the third reason for ending the research in 1980. It is difficult to accurately judge and reach conclusions about events that are too near to the present. As the author of this thesis has been closely involved in the FAWWA since 1988, ending the study before that date is necessary to maintain an intellectual distance from the topic.

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14 Ibid., pp. 376–381.
15 A recent exercise in mapping the literary sector in Western Australia, conducted by a sub-committee of the FAWWA, listed a total of over twenty organisations and groups working in that sector in 2011.
The significance of this study

This study is significant both from the point of view of the topic covered and the individual writers involved in the early FAWWA. The area discussed, the detailed activities of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia, has not previously been subjected to critical appraisal. Thus this thesis helps to fill a lacunae existing to date in Australia’s literary history, as identified by such diverse writers as Len Fox in his 1988 history of the FAW(NSW), and Philip Mead in his study of regional writing in the 2009 Cambridge History of Australian Literature.\(^{17}\) Fox’s history concentrated on the activities of the FAW(NSW), with only occasional references to the organisation in other states.\(^{18}\) Fox himself acknowledged that the history of the FAW would be incomplete until it included more detailed accounts of the FAW in each state.\(^{19}\) The current study will, at times, cover similar ground as Fox’s study, but with discussions centred on the contribution of Western Australian writers to both the local and national literary scenes. On occasions, Fox failed to adequately acknowledge the actions of the FAWWA in achieving a result. With access to only the papers and members of the FAW(NSW), he appeared to be unaware of early tensions between the two bodies at times when the FAW(NSW) acted in the name of the organisation without consulting other state sections. On a broader scale, Mead highlighted the need for analytical attention to the histories of ‘state and regional institutions of literary patronage and cultural policy’.\(^{20}\) This analysis goes some way towards meeting these needs.

The study is significant for the writers involved in the early years of the FAWWA. They were the first group of writers to emerge from Western Australia, or to have chosen this State as their home. As the literary organisation which

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\(^{18}\) A short section devoted to the FAW in each of the other states at the end of the book goes some small way to balance this omission. See J. Williams. ‘The Fellowship in Western Australia’, in Dream at a Graveside, L. Fox, ed., 1988, pp. 175–179. During the time covered in this study, the Sydney FAW was known simply as the FAW. For clarity, it will be referred to throughout the text as FAW(NSW).

\(^{19}\) L. Fox, ed. Dream at a Graveside, 1988, p. 69.

they founded represented the earliest Perth-based venture to build a literary community which welcomed all writers, it fills a significant role within the State’s cultural life. The work of individual writers has received critical attention in many areas. However, this is the first major study to consider their contribution to the development of Australian literature through their role in the FAWWA.

Approaching the history of Australian Literature

Modern literary discourse suggests several different approaches to such a study. Until recently, the methodology applied in the discussion of literary history consisted of literary criticisms of the works of selected authors, deemed worthy of inclusion. Usually writers were discussed in specific genre categories as in *The Literature of Western Australia*, edited by Bruce Bennett in 1979. This approach provides insight into the literary strengths and weaknesses of the individual writer and, to a certain extent, of literary movements. It does not, however, locate the writer within society nor does it allow scope to follow a literary organisation such as the FAWWA. Moreover, given the limitations of space, and the fact that most works of literary criticism in Australia originated from either Melbourne or Sydney, these studies tend to focus on writers from those cities. For these reasons, the early histories of Australian literature, such as H. M. Green’s, were not used for this study. In his *Social Patterns in Australian Literature*, author and critic Tom Inglis Moore adopted a different methodology by surveying the writings of individual Australian authors within the framework of the time when each was writing. This approach has greater relevance for the topic in hand, however Moore still utilises the technique of literary criticism, which is not appropriate for this study.

Secondly, given the important contribution to the FAWWA’s growth made by accomplished women writers, this review might conceivably have been constructed as a feminist critique. Max Harris’s description of Western Australia

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as a ‘matriarchy’ led by Drake-Brockman and broadcaster Catherine King, both founding members of the FAWWA, would justify such an approach.24 Other women writers included Prichard, one of Australia’s leading communist authors, Irene Greenwood, well-known as a broadcaster and advocate of women’s rights, and Mollie Skinner, best known now for the interest D. H. Lawrence showed in her writing and the resulting collaboration which resulted in the book Boy in the Bush. A feminist approach would draw upon such studies as Drusilla Modjeska’s Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925–1945, Kay Ferres’ The Time to Write: Australian Women Writers, 1890–1930 or Carole Ferrier’s As good as a yarn with you: Letters between Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Jean Devanny, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark.25 These sources have illuminated aspects of this study. To focus exclusively on women writers, however, would provide too narrow a frame. The FAWWA included as many strong male writers, including Murdoch, Casey, Bert Vickers, Donald Stuart and T. A. G. Hungerford. In this case, discussions of the influence of women writers within the broader framework can, in fact, provide a different kind of insight into the female influence within the Western Australian literary world.

A third approach could explore the history of the FAWWA in terms of the tensions aroused between its members by their political differences, during World War II and the Cold War that continued into the mid to late 1960s. Members of the FAWWA represented all variations of political belief. Prichard expressed unwavering loyalty to the Soviet system while Drake-Brockman, descendant of a founding colonial family, had more conservative views, as did Durack, with her links to the pastoral elite. Most members expressed, through their writings, a closer identification with left-wing, rather than with conservative

right-wing opinions. In Western Australia, however, the Fellowship consciously refrained from following the example of the Sydney FAW which, once it combined with the League of Writers in 1938, aligned itself overtly with left-wing radical politics.\textsuperscript{26} During the first fifteen years of this history, ideological differences between individual members erupted in successive outbursts, threatening to disrupt the FAWWA’s literary focus. While these arguments form a significant part of the group’s history during those years, to make them the theme of the study would result in only a limited view of the FAWWA’s activities and influence. It would also contradict the decision of members themselves, who, in 1952, added to the constitution the statement that the Fellowship should carry out its objects as a ‘non-political and non-sectarian body’.\textsuperscript{27}

A fourth approach to discussions of Australian literary history emerged in the 1970s, when the acceptance of Australian literature as a legitimate academic topic made it possible to discuss regional forms within that literature. Before then, the tension between the terms ‘nationalism’ and ‘regionalism’ was exacerbated by a tendency to view them as opposing epithets, with regionalism seen as an excuse for parochial narrow-mindedness, rather than something to be celebrated in Australia’s artistic world.\textsuperscript{28} It required a broader view in order to appreciate the rich diversity which can stem from fostering a vibrant regional culture such as exists in Northern American studies, most visibly in Canada.\textsuperscript{29}

In October 1978, the first major public discussion of regionalism within Australian literature took place at a conference in Western Australia. Initiated by Fremantle Arts Centre Press, this discussion on ‘Time, Place and People: Regionalism in Contemporary Australian Literature’ featured local writers Elizabeth Jolley, Peter Cowan and T.A.G. Hungerford with eastern states.

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\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{26}] L. Fox, ed. \textit{Dream at a Graveside}, 1988, pp. 71–72.
\item[\textsuperscript{27}] FAWWA Minutes, 8 April 1952. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
\item[\textsuperscript{29}] P. Hansa Henningsgaard. ‘Outside Traditional Book Publishing Centres: The Production of a Regional Literature in Western Australia.’ Doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Western Australia, 2008, pp. 10–11.
\end{itemize}
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writers Frank Moorhouse, Thomas Shapcott and Peter Ward. Papers presented at the conference appeared in the December 1978 issue of *Westerly*. In ‘Regionalism, Provincialism and Australian Anxieties’ Moorhouse cited Western Australia as ‘the obvious case study’ for a regional slant in the literature, continuing: ‘It is by far the most self-conscious, self-analytical and articulate region in Australia’. Opposing views were expressed, with Ward emphasising the sameness in Australian states as he asked ‘What regionalism?’ Jolley and Cowan denied any overriding sense of isolation from the rest of Australia as they asked ‘Isolated from what?’ Ten years later, Bennett described regionalism as ‘an acceptance of limits, of seeking meaning within the microcosm’. Bennett’s major contributions to the discussion on regionalism were collected in *An Australian Compass: essays on place and direction in Australian literature*, published by the Fremantle Arts Centre Press in 1991.

Mead’s 2009 article in *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature* discussed the sense of regionalism in literature as it emanated from the more isolated Australian states. He judged the strength of each state’s literary output based on the quantity and depth of literary criticisms produced about the region’s literature, the number of anthologies published and quantifiable details such as literary magazines and significant publishers centred in the region. Mead named Western Australia as ‘a leader in regional literary definition’. He saw that literary history in Queensland derived from a tradition built by writers such

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36 Researcher Per Hansa Henningsgaard also utilised this correlation between the number of published anthologies of the writings from a specific region and the strength of that region’s sense of identity.
as A. G. Stephens, who was so influential in the early *Bulletin*, by the Brisbane origins of *Meanjin*, the later publication of several critical literary studies, and such publishers as Jacaranda Press and the University of Queensland Press. As Mead pointed out, although South Australia contributed the Jindyworobak movements, it has until recently produced neither literary histories nor a body of anthologies from the region. According to Mead, Tasmania has not yet developed ‘a critical regionalism comparable to that of the west or the north’.38

Western Australian writers and publishing houses have produced a large number of collections of Western Australian writing.39 Six of these, published between 1940 and 1988, were initiated by the FAWWA and edited by some of its leading members.40 The first five anthologies will be discussed further in this study. A seventh was published in 2008, with funding from the Department for Culture and the Arts, to celebrate the FAWWA’s 70th year.41

Fellowship members frequently expressed frustration at Perth’s distance from Sydney and Melbourne and the assumption in those cities that the more distant states would ‘conform to their allegedly superior values or style’.42 Although this tension was ongoing; it provided the kind of energy that encourages independence and the birthing of new initiatives.43 While protesting against the curtailing of state-based radio programmes by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1945, the FAWWA described the State’s distance as ‘a matter of

38 The information in this paragraph on regionalism in the literature from different parts of Australia is drawn from P. Mead, ‘Nation, literature, location’, 2009, pp. 556–563.
39 For a detailed account of the anthologies of local writings published in Western Australia see P. Hansa Henningsgaard. ‘Outside Traditional Book Publishing Centres’, 2008, pp. 69–70 and 93–113.
43 Former FAWWA president Glen Phillips interviewed by the author, Mt. Lawley. 28 May 2009.
perspective’ which gave its inhabitants ‘a peculiarly wide sense of perspective regarding the continent as a whole’. Bennett described the establishment of the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, in 1975, as an indication that Western Australia had chosen a ‘positive response to a sense of separateness or adversity’ rather than lapsing into an alternative passive response. This thesis will argue that, for thirty years before that date, the FAWWA advanced a ‘positive response’ to the State’s geographic isolation.

Changing attitudes to Australian Literature as reflected in critical literature

In the 1930s, Australian writers emphasised the need to gain legitimacy for Australian literature, with writers such as Vance Palmer and P. R. Stevenson struggling to convince critics that a national literature existed. In 1937, South Australian poet Rex Ingamells founded the Jindyworobak movement, which aimed at breaking away from the limitations of colonialism and achieving a truly Australian culture, which would include recognition of the values of Aboriginal Australia. The call for acknowledgement of an intrinsically national literature within a national culture continued into the 1950s, with A. A. Phillips coining the now popular phrase ‘Cultural Cringe’ to describe the prevailing colonial attitude of valuing English culture above all things Australian.

The beginnings of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Sydney in 1928, and its Victorian and Western Australian Sections in 1938, coincided with a marked growth in Australia’s cultural and social maturity. According to historian R. M. Crawford, during the 1930s Australian life demonstrated ‘a new level of maturity and professional skill’ leading to a distinct ‘coming of age’. This general maturing found expression in the achievements of Australian writers at the time.

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44 Recommendations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting by the FAWWA, 1945, p.1. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.
In particular, the number of novels published between 1925 and 1940 represented a significant increase over those produced from 1900 to 1925.⁴⁹ Nettie Palmer identified her essay Modern Australian Literature, published in 1924, as ‘the first critical essay and survey of twentieth century literature’.⁵⁰ As well as winning the Lothian Publishing Company prize as the best critical essay on Australian literature since 1909, this essay provided American social critic and Australianist, C. Hartley Grattan, with a basis for his pamphlet Australian Literature, published in 1929. In the previous year, the FAW had begun in Sydney, and the first issue of All About Books appeared in Melbourne.⁵¹ This publication, together with the South Australian magazine Desiderata: A Guide to Good Books, also first published in 1929, were important events in the beginnings of literary criticism in Australia.⁵²

In 1930, H. M. Green produced An Outline of Australian Literature, the forerunner to his later two volume history.⁵³ According to Green, the national qualities were inseparable from the history of Australian literature.⁵⁴ In 1938, M. Barnard Eldershaw, the nom de plume of authors Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw working together, published Essays in Australian Fiction.⁵⁵ Ten years after Green’s Outline, E. Morris Miller produced his two-volume study Australian Literature: A Descriptive and Bibliographical Survey to 1938, which Frederick T. Macartney rearranged in 1956, extending the bibliography to 1950.⁵⁶ In 1936, Australian literature was considered a sufficient entity for the Commonwealth (now National) Library to begin producing an Annual Catalogue of Australian Publications.⁵⁷ As well as the Jindyworobaks, the 1930s also saw the birth of J. K. Moir’s nationalistic literary organisation, the Bread and Cheese Club, in

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⁵⁵ W. Wilde, J. Hooton and B. Andrews, eds. The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature, , p. 158.
Melbourne. Also in that decade, Australia’s first literary journals emerged, with *Southerly*, edited by R.G. Howarth and A.G. Mitchell, appearing in 1939 and *Meanjin*, edited by Clem Christesen, in 1940. In 1949, another bibliographical survey began, *Australian Books: A Select List of Recent Publications and Standard Works in Print*. In 1945, Georgian House published Ewers’ *Creative Writing in Australia*. Richard Nile and David Walker described this original edition as the first critical survey of Australian creative writing that was suitable for both general readers and students. That the book met a need among Australians is borne out by the fact that revised editions followed in 1956, 1962 and 1966. Such publications provided a new legitimacy for Australian literature, as it grew to occupy a more important position in the nation’s cultural profile.

The clearest indication of this increase in stature was the gradual acceptance of Australian literature as a topic worthy of serious study. Author and lecturer Glen Phillips confirmed that in Western Australia tertiary study of the nation’s literary works began at the teachers’ colleges. The first degree course ran from 1954 to 1966 at the Canberra University College, later the Australian National University. Three new literary journals appeared during the 1950s: *Overland* (1954), *Quadrant* and *Westerly* (both in 1956). Two important books of critical study were published, in 1958: Russell Ward’s *The Australian Legend* and A. A. Phillips’ *The Australian Tradition*. In Western Australia the Perth Festival of Arts, begun in 1953, featured both local and visiting writers.

Political tensions settled in the 1960s, and Australia moved into a more peaceful period buoyed by economic stability. The first Writers Week, held in 1962 as part of the Adelaide Festival, marked an important milestone in the presentation

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62 G. Phillips interviewed by the author, 5 May 2006. J. Hay dated the first local course, led by lecturer Bertha Houghton at Claremont Teacher’s College, Perth, as early as 1946, suggesting that this might have been the first such course in Australia. J. Hay. ‘Literature and Society’, 1981, p. 627.
of Australian literature to readers and potential writers. Significant literary histories appeared in that decade. Of especial note were the two volumes of H. M. Green’s *A History of Australian Literature: Pure and Applied* (in 1961) and Geoffrey Dutton’s *Literature of Australia* (in 1965). The establishment of the first Chair in Australian Literature at Sydney University, in 1962, signalled the final acceptance of Australian literature into academe, a position for which the Fellowships in all states had worked since their inception. Authors travelled more frequently within Australia, many participating in the enlarged Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures on Australian writers and their works. The opening of new universities in all states, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, further increased tertiary studies of Australian literature. This growth was confirmed by the foundation in Canberra, in 1978, of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature, and soon the Association, or different versions of the same concept, operated at tertiary institutions throughout the country, and even overseas. It is confronting to realise that, at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, a course in Australian Studies had already been introduced in 1956.

Emblematic, too, of the new attitude towards Australian literature was the foundation, in 1963, of the Australian Society of Authors. With the advantages of a stable, paid staff, and an immediate conduit to government agencies, the Society represented the beginnings of a literary infrastructure in Australia. Writers in each state elected an author to act as liaison officer (later known as regional vice-president) for the Society. In Western Australia, for the period under consideration, these representatives were also members of the FAWWA, thus ensuring a close collaboration between the two bodies. In 1969, the Australian Society of Authors first produced its quarterly journal *The Australian Author*. Side by side with these cultural developments was the growth of offset

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67 A. Rutherford. ‘Not One of the Jacks’ in *Westerly*, No. 4 December 1987, p. 12.
printing, which enabled groups of enthusiastic, often young, writers to set up their own small presses.\textsuperscript{69}

Like all other art forms, literature received vital backing from the Whitlam government, in the mid-1970s. The Literature Board of the Australia Council replaced the old Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1973, and offered a dramatic increase in the funding available for Australian writers and publishers.\textsuperscript{70} For the State’s sesquicentenary, in 1979, Western Australia had its own survey of its literary output in \textit{The Literature of Western Australia}, edited by Bennett.

The Fellowship of Australian Writers in other states

During the early years of the twentieth century, very few organisations existed to foster Australia’s writers. Some of the earliest began in Victoria, in 1916, with the Australian Authors and Writers Guild and the Melbourne Literary Club. Vance and Nettie Palmer were involved in both organisations.\textsuperscript{71} Most similar bodies collaborated with the FAW(NSW) after its foundation in 1928. The Authors’ and Artists’ Association, founded in Queensland in 1921, with writer Arthur Hoey Davis, better known by his pseudonym ‘Steele Rudd’, as vice-president, had as one of its stated aims ‘to educate the people to the existence of the Australian author and artist, and to create an atmosphere of interest in the work of present day writers, musicians and artists living in Queensland’. As an organisation with almost identical aims, it was a logical move for it to combine with the Fellowship of Australian Writers, becoming the FAW(Q) in 1958.\textsuperscript{72} Branches of the Society of Women Writers in Australia came into being in various states, including Western Australia in 1925.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 457.
\textsuperscript{71} G. Serle. \textit{From Deserts the Prophets Come}, p. 129.
Announcing the foundation of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 8 December 1928 noted that the new organisation aimed to 'function in the material as well as the sentimental interests of Australian literature'. Six years earlier, at Henry Lawson’s funeral in 1922, his mourners regretted the fact that there were no avenues for writers to meet and discuss their craft. Editor Len Fox, in the Introduction to his history of the FAW, deemed this to be a direct catalyst for the foundation of the FAW in Sydney in 1928. At the forefront of the early FAW were writers such as Mary Gilmore, Roderic Quinn, ‘Steele Rudd’ and John Le Gay Brereton. Prichard and Drake-Brockman were members of the Sydney-based organisation, which partially helped to lessen the geographic isolation of living in Perth. Prichard was made Patron of FAW(NSW) following its amalgamation with the more radical Writers’ Association, previously known as the Writers’ League, of which she had been national president. The 1930s brought expansion for the Fellowship. New autonomous sections were formed in Victoria and Western Australia, in 1938. The following year, the Writers’ and Artists’ Club of South Australia became the Fellowship’s South Australian Section.

With the leading writers in four states joined through active Fellowship sections, Australian literature found a new voice. United lobbying by the individual sections of the FAW resulted in increased moneys being allocated to the Commonwealth Literary Fund, the first federal attempt to foster Australia’s writers. Founded in 1908, modelled on the British Royal Literary Fund, its initial concern had been to provide some means of financial support for impoverished writers and their families. In 1939, the Fund was increased five-fold, and offered its first fellowships to enable selected writers to complete a piece of work.

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75 Ibid., pp. 71–72.
76 Ibid., pp. 170–171.
77 Ibid., p. 80.
78 Ibid., p. 180.
The FAW continued to expand with the establishment of the Tasmanian Section, in 1947.79 Canberra formed its own section of the FAW in 1950. In 1958, the Queensland Artists’ and Authors’ Association finally became the Queensland Section of the Fellowship. When the Northern Territory Section began in 1972, having operated for some years as a branch of the Victorian Section, the Fellowship encompassed all states and territories.80 The FAW became a truly national movement with the formation of an FAW federal council, in 1955.81 Since its beginnings, the FAWWA had promoted the concept of such a body, with a persistence that conveys the need felt by the early Western Australian writers to create connections with writers throughout the country.

Surveys of the FAW in critical literature

Most comprehensive histories of Australian literature made little or no reference to the Fellowship of Australian Writers and any role it played in the growth of Australia’s literary culture. As has already been discussed, this resulted initially from the focus on literary criticism of works by individual writers, that was adopted in histories such as *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*, edited by Leonie Kramer, and *The Literature of Western Australia*, edited by Bennett. Ken Goodwin, however, in *A History of Australian Literature*, chose a chronological approach which offered more opportunity to include events peripheral to, but associated with, literary works. The formation of the FAW in Sydney, in 1928, is listed in the literary events, suggesting that it was considered significant, but apart from brief mentions in connection with individual writers such as Mary Gilmore, there is no indication of what that significance may have been. A section on the input of literary organisations focuses on those of more recent years. This brevity may be dictated by the immense amount of material to be included in a survey of literary development Australia-wide. It could, however, be interpreted as a popular approach dictated by the current tendency to prefer the new and the innovative.

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81 Ibid., p. 70.
In The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature the FAW’s main activities are described as advancing writers’ interests ‘in practical ways’. Both that survey and The New Penguin History, edited by Laurie Hergenhan, mention in particular its successful lobbying, in the late 1930s. Richard Nile and David Walker wrote that the Fellowship was mainly dominated by serious novelists, with an active social conscience and an intention to gain ‘professional status for writers’. This is a fitting description for the FAWWA in its early years. The newest history to appear, The Cambridge History of Australian Literature, edited by Peter Pierce, while still divided into genre-based topics, includes discussion of more Western Australian writers than the earlier histories, which could indicate increased acceptance of this State’s contribution to the Australian literary canon. The chapters by David Carter and Philip Mead have already informed this discussion. In such comprehensive histories, references to the Fellowship of Australian Writers are, of necessity, generic in nature, and do not refer specifically to the FAW in any individual state.

Mention of the activities of the FAW is frequently found in studies such as Drusilla Modjeska’s Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925–1945, where it is identified as an important avenue through which writers like Nettie Palmer, Prichard and Marjorie Barnard worked to improve the professional standing of writers and also to speak out against fascism. In Modjeska’s view, such writers saw the first of these goals as an essential means to ensure that their political views were heard and respected. As all but Prichard were based in either Sydney or Melbourne, Modjeska is referring essentially to the FAW in those two cities, and more particularly to the Sydney-based group. Modjeska reported that its members co-operated ‘most easily’ when working as a union

84 Ibid., p. 291.
86 The very recent publication Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia further extends the understanding of what contributes to Australia’s literary history to include book clubs and individual writers alongside literary movements. The absences of an essay on the FAW is perhaps explained by the nature of the work, being a collection of short conference papers. P. Kirkpatrick and R. Dixon, eds. Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia, 2012.
for writers, citing the campaign to lobby government for an improved Commonwealth Literary Fund as the turning point which confirmed the FAW as ‘the legitimate body to negotiate with the Government [sic] on literary issues’. This development ensured a higher profile for the organisation Australia-wide.

Given the time limit of Modjeska’s study, there is no discussion of any FAW activities beyond 1945. Critical studies of individual writers such as Sally Clarke’s biography of Donald Stuart and Kathryn Lawry’s thesis on his sister Lyndall Hadow, have been useful as they provide assessments of the Western Australian section of the FAW and its role in each writer’s life.

In his survey, *The Making of the Australian Imagination*, Richard Nile described the FAW’s perceived function as that of a literary trade union, extending this to ‘an intellectual chamber of commerce’. He went on to record Alan Lawson’s comment that the foundation of the Australian Society of Authors, in 1963, represented a ‘specialisation’ rather than a replacement of the FAW’s early activities, with the intention of increasing the professionalism of Australian writers. Nile is one of the few commentators to reflect, however briefly, on how the existence of an organisation such as the Australian Society of Authors impacted on the FAW in each state. This matter is considered in more detail in Chapter Eight of this work.

Considering sources of information

The main primary source for information about the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia is the organisation’s archives, held in both the Battye Library and the Tom Collins House Writers’ Centre, in Swanbourne, Western Australia. These include files of correspondence, minutes, membership lists, and publicity, together with the monthly issues of the *Fellowship News* from 1960 onwards. Early correspondence between the Fellowship in Western

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Australia and FAW Sections in Victoria and New South Wales, mainly lodged in the Mitchell Library, has provided details especially for the early years, which are missing from the Western Australian records. The flesh of the thesis comes from other writings by the writers involved in the early years of the organisation, especially their correspondence, lodged in libraries around Australia, in the private papers of individual writers, and, in some cases, their autobiographies. Particularly valuable have been the collected correspondences of Drake-Brockman, Prichard, Norman Bartlett, Paul and Alexandra Hasluck, (National Library of Australia), Miles Franklin (Mitchell Library), James Pollard and Ewers (Battye Library). A special discovery in the Drake-Brockman collection in the National Library of Australia was a number of Mollie Skinner's letters to her, written during the first years of the Fellowship in Western Australia. The correspondence between Bill Irwin and Ken Gott (La Trobe Library, Victoria) has thrown light on specific topics, as has the Meanjin Collection in the Melbourne Library.90 The records of the FAW federal council (1955–1997), in the State Library of South Australia, have not been consulted, as adequate information relating to the federal council for this period exists in the FAWWA archives.91 While being largely peripheral to the activities of each state section, this council will require its own detailed history, in order to complete the picture. Further information came from published collections of letters, especially As good as a yarn with you, edited by Carole Ferrier, and both volumes of My Congenials, edited by Jill Roe.92 The explanatory text in these volumes provided added context. Durack was the only writer central to this study who consistently kept a diary. Beginning in 1960, the volumes have recently become available in the Battye Library archives, and provide a rich resource, including, as they do, newspaper cuttings of events which involved the FAWWA and other associated material.

90 In particular this study has used extensively the Drake-Brockman, Durack, Ewers and Greenwood files in the Meanjin Collection.
91 These papers are available in the State Library of South Australia, listing Society Record Group SRG 131.
Of the autobiographies by authors involved in founding the FAWWA, *Long Enough For a Joke*, by foundation president Ewers and published posthumously, afforded a large amount of personal comment on the Fellowship as an entity, reflecting the importance of the organisation in his life.\(^93\) Additionally, valuable insights have been gleaned from autobiographies by Alexandra and Paul Hasluck, Prichard, Skinner, Vincent Serventy, Joan Williams and Dorothy Hewett.\(^94\) Particularly important for tracing the effects of the Cold War years on writers were Williams' books *Anger and Love* and *The First Furrow*, together with Ric Throssell's biography of Prichard, *Wild Weeds and Windflowers.*\(^95\) Many of the founding members of the FAWWA were frequent contributors to the journal *Westerly*, and to other Australian literary journals, and some of these articles offer unique insights into the experience of being a writer in Western Australia and relationships between individual writers.\(^96\)

Biographies of a number of other people who had an impact on the establishment of the Fellowship in Western Australia, have also enriched the study. Laurie Hergenhan’s *No Casual Traveller: Hartley Grattan and Australia* described Grattan’s visit to Western Australia and his pivotal role as a catalyst for the foundation of the Fellowship there.\(^97\) John La Nauze’s *Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir* yielded a comprehensive picture of the academic and his

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\(^96\) One article which reveals both aspects of the Western Australian experience is J.K. Ewers’ ‘A Writer in Perth’ in *Westerly*, No. 4, 1967, pp. 63‒71.

relationship with some Western Australian writers. The chapters by Sandra Burchill and Sylvia Martin in *The Time to Write*, together with Drusilla Modjeska's work, *Exiles at Home*, offered background pictures of Prichard and Skinner. The short biographies of writers central to the FAWWA, included in John Hetherington's collection of pen sketches, *Forty-Two Faces*, offered not only factual information, but an impression of the writer's personality only gained in a face-to-face interview. Sally Clarke's biography of Donald Stuart, FAWWA president and national president in the 1970s, imparted an insight into both his contribution to the organisation and a broad overview of that period of Western Australian literary history. The *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* proved to be an indispensable reference for factual information on individual writers and organisations.

Finally, an important primary source has been the large number of interviews and oral histories, some conducted by the author, others by earlier interviewers and now lodged in the Battye Library. The author's personal connection with the Fellowship and its members has also offered a fruitful background to this history. Together with the wealth of written material, these personal contacts have ensured varied perspectives on the events and personalities contained within this thesis. The wide range of sources available offer a rich tapestry of literary life in Western Australia.

This thesis also draws on other secondary sources to provide the historical framework, especially those which emphasise the impact of historical events on Australia's cultural life. A prime source for this background structure was John Rickard's *Australia: A Cultural History*, which discusses major historical developments and the Australian cultural response to them. Rickard

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101 Clarke, Sally. *In The Space Behind His Eyes*, 2006.
confirmed the tendency for Western Australians to proceed in an idiosyncratic manner at variance with the processes of the eastern states. He identified the State’s isolation as an important element in its strong sense of place and cited authors such as Prichard, Randolph Stow, Dorothy Hewett and Elizabeth Jolley as forming part of a local tradition as distinctive as the ‘stylistic school of landscape painters’ described by art historian Bernard Smith.104

Geoffrey Serle’s From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788–1972 has proved invaluable in providing the broad sweep of Australia’s cultural life, up to 1972, against which to view the activities of the FAWWA.105 Unlike most of the literary histories, From Deserts includes a number of Western Australian authors, ten in all, of whom eight were FAWWA members, although Serle does not make that connection. Like most commentators, Serle used the Fellowship of Australian Writers as a generic title, without referring to the body in individual states. Whereas he acknowledged the organisation as an element in the historical development of literature in Australia, he made no assessment of its actual role.

The 2003 study which focuses on Western Australian culture, farewell cinderella: creating arts and identity in western australia, edited by Geoffrey Bolton, Richard Rossiter and Jan Ryan, illustrates the way some aspects of artistic creativity have developed in this State since European settlement. The chapters on the growth of theatre, music and art, especially, furnished a wealth of information about the cultural milieu within which the FAWWA operated.106 The chapter on the State’s literature focuses on the development of a distinctively regional literature in Western Australia by studying the connection between place and a sense of identity in the writings of several Western Australian writers. As a work of literary criticism the chapter includes no reference to the FAWWA and its activities.107

104 Ibid., p. 262.
Political events within Australia have significantly impacted on individual writers and the Fellowship itself. Important sources for the background to these events have been the two volumes edited by Ann Curthoys and John Merritt, *Australia’s First Cold War, Vol 1: Communism and Culture* and *Better Dead than Red: Australia’s First Cold War, Vol. 2 1945–1959*. In particular, the chapters discussing, in detail, the role of writers during the Cold War years provided valuable insight into the causes of political tension among FAWWA members. Discussions in David Marr’s biography of Patrick White, regarding the impact of censorship of writers, added to an understanding of the reasons behind the FAWWA’s firm stand against censorship and the nation-wide nature of the problem.

Ruth Starke’s book, *Writers, Readers & Rebels: Upfront and backstage at Australia’s top literary festival*, provides far more than an alphabetical list of writers and events connected to the Adelaide Writers’ Week from its inception in 1960. The addition of extracts from reviews, and comments from writers and journalists, makes it a rich field of information. Writers Week held great importance for FAWWA members in the 1960s and 1970s, when it also served as the setting for meetings of the FAW federal council. In *A Writer’s Rights: The story of the Australian Society of Authors 1963–1983*, the former secretary of the Society of Authors, Deidre Hill, provides a full account of that organisation and the formation of the Australia Council for the Arts. Given the FAWWA’s part in lobbying the government to establish an Australian Society of Authors, and the importance of this organisation in the cultural infrastructure that came into being in the last two decades of this study, an account of the Society’s early years is valuable.

Information on Western Australian history has been supplied by general surveys such as F. K. Crowley’s *Australia’s Western Third*, Crowley and B. K. de Garis’ *A Short History of Western Australia* and *A New History of Western Australia*.

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edited by Tom Stannage. *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*, edited by Jenny Gregory, clarified aspects of life in the State in the decades under consideration.\(^{112}\) The latest history of Western Australia, Geoffrey Bolton's *Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia since 1826*, includes the FAWWA only briefly.\(^{113}\)

Details relating to the cultural life of Perth during these decades have been drawn from a wide variety of materials. Besides the State histories already mentioned, works like Professor Fred Alexander's history of the University of Western Australia, *Campus at Crawley*, helped place the FAWWA in the context of its relationship to the University of Western Australia.\(^{114}\) David Bromfield's *Aspects of Perth Modernism, 1929–1942*, together with his survey *Now and Then: A Hundred Years of Art and Design in Western Australia* and Annie Gray's biography of James Linton, *Line, Light and Shadow*, proved to be fertile sources of information on the visual arts in Perth from 1900 onwards, often suggesting the connection existing between writers and artists.\(^{115}\) Former FAWWA Fellow Julie Lewis, in her biographies of local identities Catherine King and artist Kathleen O'Connor (the latter written with P.Æ. Hutchings) paint a lively picture of the cultural life in Perth before the foundation of FAWWA, and during its early years.\(^{116}\) They also illustrate the interaction between Fellowship members and other notable figures in Perth's cultural life at the time. The extent to which early writers utilised such networks to promote Australian literature and local writers emerges as an ongoing theme in this study. Two local magazines


dedicated to the arts — the Critic, from 1961 to 1970, and Artlook, from 1975 to 1983, proved particularly valuable in their depiction of the growth of Perth’s cultural world during those years. As well as containing varied discussion and news, with letters and articles often written by leading members of the FAWWA, items in these magazines show the Fellowship networking with other cultural organisations.

Foundation member and archivist of the Fellowship in Western Australia, Jean Lang, offered a cursory outline of the organisation’s growth in her book At the Toss of A Coin — Joseph Furphy: The Western Link, a study of Joseph Furphy’s life in Western Australia. Before that, another past president Joan Williams edited a booklet called Joseph Furphy and his House, which was largely superseded by Lang’s book. One specifically Western Australian study, Dr Alison Gregg’s Catalysts for Change: the influence of individuals in establishing children’s library services in Western Australia, published in 1996, was particularly relevant, as Gregg used FAWWA archives to provide information for her thesis. She gave credit to the Fellowship and its members for their active role in the early development of Children’s Book Week, the W. A. Children’s Book Council and children’s libraries in this State. Another reference made available to the author, was Amanda Curtin’s listing of all resources in the Battye Library relating to Western Australian writers and writers’ organisations. This provided an overview of reference material, although more has been added since her project was completed.

Piecing together the first years of the new body was complicated by a later secretary’s loss of all records relating to that period. The secondary sources, together with the books by Ewers and Lang, provided some detail concerning early events, while other information was gleaned from various archival correspondence.

118 J. Williams, ed. Tom Collins & his house. Swanbourne, Western Australia: Fellowship of Australian Writers, Western Australian Section (Inc.), 1973.
collections, especially those of the FAW(NSW) in the Mitchell Library and Drake-Brockman in the Australian National Library.

The anatomy of the thesis

This study consists of three Sections with a total of eight chapters plus the Conclusion. Section One, The Foundation, provides the backdrop to the thesis. Chapter One details the approach taken and research material utilised, while Chapter Two outlines the cultural world of Perth in the 1930s. This chapter positions the founding writers within that milieu, discussing the literary friendships formed between them, their early involvement in promoting Australian literature and the wide-spread networks which developed among Perth's creative individuals. The chapter demonstrates that, in spite of a renewed cultural life in this decade, no literary community supported Perth's writers until the Fellowship began in 1938. Subsequent chapters include brief overviews of cultural developments in the State during the years under consideration.

The following two Sections consist of three chapters each, with events treated thematically within a generally chronological structure. Section Two discusses the FAWWA from its foundation in 1938 to 1959. Chapter Three reviews the FAWWA's beginnings and examines its initial attempts to encourage individual writers, especially members involved in World War II, while building the internal framework of a literary community which would sustain Western Australian writers. It will be shown that in order to strengthen the new organisation, its leaders sought working connections with other cultural groups, although their ambitious plans, in 1944, for the establishment of a Western Australian Cultural Council remained unrealised. Finally, the chapter examines the FAWWA's stand against war-time developments in Australia which threatened to undermine writers' professional interests.

Chapter Four examines the political disruptions among writers which destabilised the FAWWA's internal unity, from 1938 until the mid-1950s. While exploring the factors underlying these internal disagreements, the chapter
demonstrates that on literary matters the writers remained united. Censorship of books increased during this period of political tension. The FAWWA revealed its willingness to fight for freedom of speech, as it appealed on behalf of writers whose work was suppressed. Despite the internal and external political upheavals in these years, the success of Children’s Book Week celebrations organised by the Fellowship, between 1940 and 1953, marked the body’s move into a more public phase of promoting Australian literature within the wider cultural community.

Chapter Five demonstrates how, from 1949 onwards, the FAWWA became increasingly active in such public presentations of Australian literature. Becoming owners of Australia’s first literary memorial, the house built and lived in by novelist Joseph Furphy, provided a focus for the celebration of Furphy’s standing as one of Australia’s classic writers. As this chapter will show, such responsibility brought the FAWWA into a closer connection with the Australian literary world, while placing heavy demands upon a small group of writers. Nevertheless, the FAWWA continued to promote Australian writers through Children’s Book Week, the newly-established Festival of Perth, and publication of the anthology *West Coast Stories*. Through Vickers and Drake-Brockman, the FAWWA also played a major role in establishing a federal FAW, giving the organisation a national voice. During these years, the FAWWA successfully appealed to the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Australian Broadcasting Commission for increases in rates of payment to writers.

Section Three, *Expansion*, discusses the years from 1960 to 1980, which, as the heading suggests, was a time of growth both for the artistic world in Australia and for the Western Australian Fellowship. Chapter Six argues that the connections the FAWWA had developed with the Adult Education Board and the University of WA helped extend its support to writers in regional areas, with branches founded in Albany, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. The FAWWA promoted Australia’s writers and their works through public readings at a local theatre and Tom Collins House, and by organising Writers’ Weeks at the Festival of Perth. Its members joined other writers to successfully lobby for the foundation of the
Australian Society of Authors, while they welcomed writers from the Soviet Union, and other Australian states, to Western Australia.

Chapter Seven demonstrates that in these decades events forced the FAWWA to focus again on internal matters. From the late 1960s into the 1970s, the literary community within the FAWWA was shaken by the deaths of founding members and by further political disruption as well as by the loss mid-term of younger presidents, Gerald Glaskin and Vincent Serventy, to other careers. Although writers welcomed the foundation of the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, events at the Arts Centre meant that the FAWWA was no longer the only literary organisation working to meet the needs of writers in the State. There was also the destabilising threat to the future of Tom Collins House when it faced demolition to make way for a new highway.

Chapter Eight considers the effect on the FAWWA, in the 1970s, of the formation of the Australia Council for the Arts and the Australian Society for Authors and the developing cultural infrastructure, together with the FAWWA’s changing relationship with the University of Western Australia and new tertiary bodies. From 1970 to 1972 the FAWWA exercised national influence when its committee also led the federal FAW. The chapter explores the organisation’s introduction of new activities to take its members’ writings into the public domain and assesses its success in doing so. Questions asked in this chapter focus on how the development of the cultural infrastructure affected the FAWWA’s position in the literary world, especially as the Society for Authors became the focus for literary advocacy.

Conclusion

This thesis provides the first in-depth study of the role the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia played in the development of Australian literature in this State from 1938 to 1980. To this end, it focuses on three aspects of the Fellowship’s undertakings; firstly, the degree to which it supported individual writers and built a literary community that worked with other creative bodies; secondly, its actions aimed at promoting and celebrating
Australian writers and their work; and, thirdly, its efficacy as an advocate for Australian literature and writers’ professional interests. The study utilises a wide range of primary and secondary sources to establish the contribution one regional group of Australian writers made to the ongoing story of the country’s literature.

The FAWWA grew out of Perth’s expanding cultural life of the 1930s. Its founders emerged from the first group of Western Australian writers to have been born and educated in this State. The following chapter provides an overview of the cultural life of Perth in the 1930s, when these writers were becoming known as a vocal part of that life. The chapter will thus situate the FAWWA within the cultural milieu from which it grew, and provide a picture of the already-existing literary friendships which it extended and formalised.
Chapter Two

The Cultural Life of Perth in the 1930s

... the intellectual movement that there was in Perth

During the latter half of the 1930s, the arts in Australia underwent a period of growth, with an emerging sense of professionalism evident among Australian artists. In Western Australia the performing and visual arts expanded, with new groups offering opportunities for local artists. While literary output in the State also increased during these years, there was no organised support for writers other than that offered to women writers through their own society, which had grown from a group originally for women journalists. Individual writers received neither guidance nor advocacy for their problems, or help to promote their work to the general public. Earlier writers in the State, like Willem Siebenhaar (1863–1936), Alfred Chandler (1852–1941), and Edwin Greenslade (‘Dryblower’) Murphy (1866–1939), had all come from other states. As John Hay wrote, they were ‘othersiders’, drawn to Western Australia by the prosperity and adventure of the 1890’s gold rushes. The writers emerging in the 1920s and 1930s, sought to be accepted as professional, to promote Australian literature and to enrich their local cultural milieu. However, they suffered from a twofold isolation. Without a common meeting ground, many were separated from their fellow

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1 P. Hasluck to H. Drake-Brockman, 30 June 1941. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/9.
writers within the State, as well as geographically distant from the literary centres in the eastern states.

This chapter explores the cultural life of Perth during the 1930s, and the writers' place within that world. Firstly, it will argue that four specific aspects of that life influenced the development of the foundation members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia. The distinctive education system that evolved in Perth, from 1911 onwards, and especially the free tuition available at Perth Modern School and the University of Western Australia, shaped a number of them through the further education they received, and the friendships they formed, during those seminal years. From 1929 onwards, Western Australian writers benefitted from the expansion of radio technology and broadcasting. Initially, radio programming was a state-based undertaking, not yet centralised in the eastern states, and so offered local writers promotional opportunities undreamed of in earlier generations. An increased frequency of overseas travel broadened the outlook of some writers, as did the growing awareness of alternative and more radical political approaches to society's problems. These factors, and their influence on the emerging writers, are discussed in the first part of the chapter.

Secondly, the increase in artistic activities in Perth during the 1930s influenced these young writers and, through them, the literary organisation they established. In an overview of the development of theatre, dance and the visual arts, the second part of the chapter will show that the combination of isolation and a small population enabled writers to make widespread networks within the artistic and intellectual life of the State. This chapter will explore the relationships early writers developed with other creative Western Australians, which they later utilised to enrich the Fellowship's activities. Some links, like those with the University, provided avenues through which the FAWWA could promote Australian literature, and encourage its study as an academic discipline.

At the same time, this overview of Perth’s cultural life in the 1930s highlights the lack of any existing literary community. Nevertheless, by 1938, this group of distinctively Western Australian writers was becoming known in the State. They
had established friendships with other local writers, and with those living in other states and overseas. Many of these friendships were maintained principally through ongoing correspondence. Such contacts encouraged these early writers to see themselves as part of the national movement to promote Australian literature as distinct from English or American writing.

For the writers living in Western Australia in the 1930s the physical isolation of Perth and its small population were tangible influences. When the University of W.A. opened in 1911, Perth had only 121,000 inhabitants and was nearly eight days' travel by boat from the other capital cities.\(^5\) The total population of the State was 293,923.\(^6\) Nevertheless, largely because of immigration, Western Australia’s population grew at 2.9% between 1923 and 1928, whereas the total population growth in Australia at that time was only 2.1%.\(^7\) By 1939, the State’s population had almost doubled to just over 470,000.\(^8\) Despite these increases, it remained a close-knit community typified by links between a broad range of people. When members came to lobby all levels of government on behalf of Western Australian writers and their works, they were able to utilise existing friendships to achieve their ends.

Education in Western Australia

… *the principle of free tuition*\(^9\)

Pivotal to the emergence of a government-funded secondary education system was the establishment of Perth Modern School, in 1911. By the mid-1920s, a strong system of private, mainly church, schools had developed in the State.\(^10\) The Catholic Church, in particular, had established a network of primary and

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\(^5\) B. de Garis. `The Department of History in the University of WA, 1913-65′ in *Studies in Western Australian History*, Volume VI 1988. Department of History, University of W A, p.1. In 1911, H. Drake-Brockman was only ten, J. K. Ewers was seven, M. Durack not yet born.


\(^7\) G. D. Snooks. `Development in Adversity′ in *A New History of Western Australia*, 1987, p. 249.

\(^8\) [http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs) Accessed 17 February 2005. It should be noted that at the time the Aboriginal people were not included in Census statistics. They constitute approximately 2% of Western Australia’s population.

\(^9\) D. Mossenson. ‘A History of State Education in Western Australia with special reference to administration and the provision of primary and secondary schools.’ Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Western Australia, Perth W.A., 1961, p. 251.

secondary schools, as well as boarding facilities for its adherents.\textsuperscript{11} Figures quoted in the 1939 \textit{Review of Education in Australia} show that in 1938, of the 4,185 school pupils aged fourteen years and over in Western Australia, more than 50% attended non State schools.\textsuperscript{12} As the first state secondary school to prepare students for matriculation into university Modern School offered an academic education, which supplemented the technical training available through institutions like the School of Mines. The decision, in 1913, to follow the example of the Senate of the newly established University of W.A. and remove all tuition fees at Modern School set the pattern for free state education at all levels.\textsuperscript{13}

This decision provided Western Australian students with access to secondary and tertiary education free of economic constraints, and played an important role in shaping the minds of early writers. A significant nucleus of foundation members of the FAWWA benefitted from winning scholarships to Perth Modern School, thus ensuring themselves a secondary education and the opportunity to continue on to the University.\textsuperscript{14} Paul Hasluck, Leslie Rees, Donald Stuart, and John K. Ewers all came from families ill-equipped to provide their sons with five years of secondary schooling.\textsuperscript{15} Only Hasluck and Rees continued straight on to the University. Ewers became a teacher, returning briefly to tertiary studies in the early 1940s. Stuart left Perth Modern School shortly after his fourteenth birthday in 1927.\textsuperscript{16} His sister Lyndall, who wrote under her married name of Lyndall Hadow and was esteemed as a short story writer, also left school early, her first year at Modern School being the last year for Irene Greenwood (née Driver).\textsuperscript{17} This shared nucleus of educational experience formed a strong foundation on which the new organisation for writers could build.

\textsuperscript{11} Mrs R.G. Cameron, M.A. (Oxon). ‘The Non-State Schools of Australia’ in \textit{Educand}, Vol 1 No 1, 1950, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{13} D. Mossenson. ‘A History of State Education in Western Australia’, 1961, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{16} S. Clarke. \textit{In the Space Behind his Eyes: Donald Stuart 1913–1983, A Biography}. Western Australia: Claverton House, 2006, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{17} I. Greenwood. ‘She too is “part of the glory” ‘ in the booklet of the same name, published by the FAWWA as a tribute to Lyndall Hadow after her death. \textit{She too is ‘part of the glory’: Lyndall}
During the depression years, standards of education in Western Australia were badly affected by ongoing cuts in funding. Expenditure for salaries, supplies and new buildings was cut savagely. As a result, schools in Western Australia saw over-crowding, teacher shortages and large class numbers. The final stage of the Australia-wide conference of the New Education Fellowship in 1937 had an enlivening influence, however, which permeated through Perth’s intellectual and educational circles. An international organisation, the New Education Fellowship promoted new ideas in education. While only leading Australian educationalists attended international conferences in the 1920s and early 1930s, the 1937 Australian conference brought a new optimism and enthusiasm to all those working in education in the State, by adopting an innovative structure. Delegates from around the world initially met in New Zealand, continued to Brisbane for an official opening, then held sessions in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide. The conference concluded with a final week of addresses in Perth. Those who attended the sessions in Perth, whether teachers, librarians or academics, went on to become active members of cultural groups, lobbying the government for improvements in educational standards. One recurring topic throughout the talks was the need for well-equipped, free libraries, to encourage both adults and children to educate themselves through books. In subsequent years FAWWA members collaborated with librarians and teachers to take advantage of the interest aroused by these talks, lobbying extensively for the establishment of free libraries and, in particular, children’s libraries. This movement gave rise to the Children’s Book Week celebrations from 1945 onwards, with the FAWWA playing a central role in their organisation, and also backing the establishment of the Children’s Book Council in Western Australia, in 1947.

__Hadow 1903–1976: Swanbourne, Western Australia: Fellowship of Australian Writers WA, 1976, p. 10.__

19 A. Gregg discusses in detail the effect on Perth’s cultural and intellectual world of this 1937 conference. The information contained in the remainder of this paragraph is drawn from her book _Catalysts for Change. The Influence of Individuals in Establishing Childrens’ Library Services in Western Australia_. LISWA Research Series, No. 8. LISWA, 1996, pp. 25-31.
20 Ibid, p. 28.
21 For a full discussion of the FAWWA and Children’s Book Week, from 1945 to 1947, see Chapter 4.
The University of Western Australia

* a complete blank so far as Australian art and literature were concerned*22

From its first intake of students in 1913, the University of W.A. intended to play a significant role in the cultural life of the city and State. Only with the opening of new buildings at Crawley in 1931 was the University in a position to fill such a role.23 Those emerging writers who studied there in the 1930s, expressed concern at the lack of interest in Australian literature evident in tertiary courses. Journalist and author Norman Bartlett recalled there being no Australian literature discussed at the University at that time. Walter Murdoch, as Professor of English since 1913, provided the public face of writing mainly through his regular newspaper articles.24 In spite of his becoming a foundation member of the FAWWA, Murdoch's own literary preferences remained rooted in the English classics.25 Alec King, Murdoch's son-in-law, joined the English Faculty, in 1932.26 He too demonstrated his allegiance to Auden and British literature. Asked by Ewers, in 1935, to give a radio broadcast on modernism in Australian poetry, King replied that he preferred to give readings, as his knowledge of Australian literature was limited. He said that he had found very little modernism in the Australian poetry he had read, and what he had found had failed to impress him.27 Dorothy Hewett summed up his preferences in poetry, when she remembered King's enthusiasm for Wordsworth. She wrote of the occasion in 1941, remembering that she was the only student to follow his suggestion that Wordsworth was best appreciated while walking barefoot in the grass.28

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23 L. Fletcher. 'Education of the People' in A New History of Western Australia, 1987, p. 573.
27 A. King to J. K. Ewers, 1 August 1935. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/393.
The University's first location was in a cluster of tin sheds in Irwin Street, Perth, known familiarly as 'tin-pot alley'.

A bequest from the estate of Sir John Hackett, the University's first Chancellor, enabled a permanent campus to be established on the banks of the Swan River in Crawley. Foundation stones were laid for the residential St George's College in 1928, and the main building in 1929. From this site, formally occupied in 1931, the University followed two courses of action which ensured its position as a focal point for the cultural life in Perth until an explosion of cultural activity in the 1960s. The first were the Adult Education and University Extension programmes, initiated in the institution’s early years, and further developed on the Crawley site.

In the early 1920s, the term ‘University Extension’ meant exactly that, with some of the academic staff travelling to country centres both small and large, to lecture on their areas of expertise. This served, in part, to reduce the isolation felt by people in country towns far from Perth, in an era before the development of instant communications and quicker travel. These programmes were reinforced by a circulating Box Scheme, initiated in 1930 by Murdoch, as the focus for adult study groups.

To establish the scheme, Murdoch gathered around him supportive Western Australians including Ewers, who, after the initial meeting, somehow found himself named secretary. Murdoch’s intention for the Reading Circle was that it should facilitate the reading and discussion of books selected by experts on a

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wide variety of subjects. Boxes of these books were distributed to different centres, to be used as a stimulus for study groups. The scheme began in Perth, however the aim was to extend the programme to all states of Australia. Ewers wrote, in July 1930, that ‘although ARC [Australian Reading Circle] has been in existence only a few months, we number members from Central Australia to Broome’.\(^{35}\) Ewers met with Murdoch each week to organise the boxes of books. As a young teacher, returned to the city after five years of country teaching, he thoroughly appreciated this opportunity for intellectual stimulation. The regular meetings with Murdoch also fostered a warm friendship between the professor and the aspiring young writer.\(^{36}\)

While there is little contemporary indication as to the impact of the Australian Reading Circle on its readers, staff of the University who were involved must have deemed it a success because, in 1934, a Box Scheme run on similar lines was reinforced by a grant of £5,000 from the Carnegie Corporation to extend the programme more widely through country groups.\(^{37}\) By the mid-1930s, over 150 groups, in both the metropolitan area and the country, received such reading boxes. The Box Scheme became an essential part of army education provided for army personnel and their families, with Professor Fred Alexander, then Officer in Charge of Army Education, as Director.\(^{38}\) The topics included in the boxes focused on English and European topics and authors, with a bias towards philosophy, drama and general science. There was no acknowledgement of early Australian literature. In a letter, dated 1936, the Mosman Bay group complained about the lack of modern literature, and supplied a list of suggested books, most of which were by English authors with a handful of European titles. The lack of Australian authors among the suggestions is remarkable, given that one signatory was Alexandra Hasluck, wife of then journalist, poet and drama critic Paul Hasluck. While there were fewer Australian novels in print at that time, books by Henry Handel Richardson, Prichard, Miles Franklin and Vance Palmer, among others, could have been

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 671.
included. Lists in the archives of the Adult Education Board indicate that an enlarged form of the Box Scheme still operated in 1966, and included several Australian books in the Modern Literature collection. Authors of these books usually coincided with those writers speaking in the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures, then organised by the University.

The introduction of an annual Summer Residential Camp further enhanced the important role the Adult Education Board played in widening educational opportunities for adult Western Australians. Originating in Albany in 1929, before they started in Perth, these annual Summer Schools, as they came to be called, offered country people the opportunity to attend a concentrated session of talks and activities, while living in University accommodation. From 1953 onwards, the Summer Schools became closely connected with the Festival of Perth. Alexander later claimed that this initiative of the Adult Education Board had ‘developed into the most significant thing of its kind in Australia’.

In 1948, John Birman became Assistant Director of the Adult Education Board. On his return from America in 1957, T. H. (Hew) Roberts, a graduate of the University of W.A., again assumed the role of Director. Both men joined the FAWWA, spoke at general meetings, and ensured an ongoing collaboration between the two organisations.

The work of the Adult Education Board supplemented a network of mechanics’ institutes, which had sprung up in the 1860s. By 1869, as well as those in Perth and Fremantle, they were established in Albany (1853), Busselton and York (1861), Geraldton (1862), Greenough (1865), Northam and Newcastle, [now Toodyay] in 1866. Not all of these centres flourished and alternatives arose, like the Working Men’s Association, established in Fremantle in 1862, and the Working Men’s Literary Society founded in Geraldton in 1869. At the same time as endowing the University of W.A., John Winthrop Hackett joined J. S.

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40 University of W. A. Archives, Adult Education Board, File 166.
Battye in the establishment of the State (previously Victoria) Library, which from 1911 began establishing a series of circulating libraries in regional Western Australia.\textsuperscript{45} From 1930, the Australian Reading Circle built upon, and extended these existing networks.

The second activity which helped to ensure that the University of Western Australia became a focus for the cultural activity in Perth, was its policy of developing theatres on the campus. Early theatres included the outdoors Sunken Garden and Somerville Auditorium (originally a proscenium arch stage which featured live performances) and the indoor Winthrop Hall. Over the years more theatres were added, catering for the University’s own Graduates Dramatic Society, as well as providing venues for professional theatrical performances and, more particularly, becoming the focus for subsequent Arts Festivals.\textsuperscript{46} Once established, the FAWWA benefitted both from the foundation president’s connection with the Adult Education Board, and the presence of spaces at the Crawley campus dedicated to performance, where the Fellowship could present readings of Western Australian writers.

The \textit{Black Swan} and Western Australian Writers

\textit{… the magazine helped to cradle a number of writers}\textsuperscript{47}

Although, in the 1930s, Australian literature did not appear among the topics either offered at the University of W.A., or of interest to its academic staff, it was a preoccupation for some of the students. Both Hasluck and Rees wrote articles and criticism for the University’s undergraduate paper the \textit{Black Swan}, which Rees also edited. At the same time, Hasluck worked as a journalist from 1928 to 1938, when he left journalism for politics. In that time, he rose from apprentice journalist to sub-editor at the \textit{West Australian}.\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 617. \\
\textsuperscript{47} L. Rees. \textit{Hold Fast to Dreams}, 1982, p. 39. \\
\end{flushright}
The *Black Swan* first appeared in 1917, and continued until 1939, reappearing after World War II, from 1945 to 1949. For the aspiring writers studying in the 1930s the magazine offered an immediate publishing outlet and an early opportunity to work together, much as they would continue to do in the FAWWA. Rees, in 1982, wrote that the *Black Swan* offered the opportunity of publication to future writers including John La Nauze (later Professor), Dominic Serventy, Dorothy McLemens (who wrote as Dorothy Lucie Sanders and Lucy Walker), Kim Beazley Senior and Dorothy Hewett. Together with Hasluck, Leslie Rees was training as a journalist, as well as studying fine arts at the University. The *Black Swan* reported on a wide range of artistic activities beyond the campus confines. Alexandra Darker, later to become Alexandra Hasluck, was sub-editor, in 1929. She attributed the growth of the magazine in those years to Rees' editorship, writing that he had turned the journal ‘from a rather amateurish school-type magazine to a much more professional and literary one’.

Writers and the new communications technology

*... the great age of radio*

Another outlet for these emerging writers appeared with the development of radio, especially by offering the opportunity for readings of Western Australian writing and local programmes such as the women’s talk shows presented by Irene Greenwood on commercial stations and Catherine King on the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Lyndall Hadow found, in broadcasting, an outlet for her writing skills and a means of financial support, working as copywriter and scriptwriter for early radio stations. From 1930 to 1969, educational initiatives...
were increasingly disseminated through the newly developing technology of broadcasting. Radio also had a significant influence on the developing cultural life in Australia, particularly as it presented drama, music and readings of literary works, by both international and Australian authors. In the eastern states, theatrical entrepreneurs the Taits and J. C. Williamson Ltd saw it as a means of promoting their presentations of the arts, especially music. Owning some of the early radio stations, they were able to broadcast performances of concerts they presented, featuring local and visiting artists. In Western Australia, radio began with a concentration on more practical matters designed to reach far-flung communities in an isolated state. In 1924, Westralian Farmers established the broadcasting station 6WF to keep farmers informed on market possibilities. Music was initially used as a fill-in between reports on crops, sheep sales and other livestock news. Listening, however, was not an easy process. Ewers remembered being invited to ‘listen-in on one of the two head-phones’, when his hosts in the wheat-belt town of Tammin bought a Mulgaphone. ‘I seldom took advantage of this, partly because it meant depriving one of them of the pleasure of listening’. However one night he did listen to the first ‘live’ broadcast from His Majesty’s Theatre, and witnessed the following exchange:

The announcer said, ‘We are now crossing to His Majesty’s Theatre’ and this was followed by the sound of members of the orchestra filing into their places and then by the various instruments being tuned up in preparation. Then a man’s voice said, ‘Hey, Tom. What’s that thing?’

‘That’s a microphone. We’re being broadcast tonight and we’ll be heard all over the State.’

The first speaker digested this for a moment and then said, ‘Wonderful bloody thing, wireless, isn’t it?’

And the orchestra went abruptly off the air.

In 1932, the Australian Broadcasting Commission took over the station and put Basil Kirke in charge. An ever-expanding approach to production saw programme content change during the next decade from practical, gender-directed topics, such as market news for farmers and household hints for their wives, to include educational programmes on subjects such as current affairs,

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literature and health. Here, too, Murdoch exercised an influence, as a member of the Education Broadcasting Committee, emphasising the need for broadcasts to entertain even while they educated the listeners.\textsuperscript{61} Music and writing were the art forms most encouraged by this growth of broadcasting throughout the country, with writers focusing in particular on plays suitable for radio.\textsuperscript{62} Music benefitted from the Commission’s determination to establish permanent groups of musicians in the capital cities. Starting with the A.B.C. Concert Orchestras in Melbourne and Sydney, groups grew in all other states. By 1936, Western Australia had a studio ensemble of seventeen musicians, known as the Perth Symphony Orchestra, although the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra was not established until 1950.\textsuperscript{63}.

In Western Australia, as in the other states, music and talk programmes were interspersed with performances by local artists and readings from local and interstate authors. In 1929, the winning play in the W. A. Eisteddfod was read; in 1935 the Australian Broadcasting Commission serialised Ewers’ \textit{Money Street} and \textit{Fire on the Wind}.\textsuperscript{64} Kirke and his successors formed advisory committees which included citizens such as the State Senior Librarian, Dr J. S. Battye, and Dr Roberta Jull, Western Australia’s second woman doctor and mother of Drake-Brockman.\textsuperscript{65} Both Alec King and Murdoch were also on the committee. Speakers included feminist Irene Greenwood, theatre critic and journalist Hasluck and writers Drake-Brockman and Prichard. Indeed the ABC’s policy, in the years from 1929 to 1940, seemed to concur with Ewers’ sentiments expressed in a letter to Purvis, Officer in charge of talks at the ABC at the time: ‘I have always regarded talks as the most valuable part of the radio programme.’ The ABC might not have agreed with Ewers’ particularly Western Australian view that: ‘… I have not found, in this respect, that all wise men come from the East.’\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{62} G. Serle. \textit{From Deserts the Prophets Come}, 1973, pp. 156, and 159.
\bibitem{63} J. Farrant. ‘playing in tune’ in \textit{farewell cinderella}, 2003, p. 117.
\bibitem{64} \textit{The Broadcaster}, 31 July 1935. Ewers papers BL 1879/5459A/43.
\bibitem{65} Dr F. P. M. Malone. ‘Dr Corlis & Dr Jull: Medical Women in Nineteenth Century Western Australia’ in \textit{Early Days: Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc.)} Vol. 12, Part 5, 2005, p. 513.
\end{thebibliography}
All of the aforementioned speakers became foundation members of the FAWWA, and the organisation’s future decisions reflected the same strong sense of confidence as that expressed by Ewers in the intellectual contribution that Western Australians were capable of making.

The influence of overseas travel
... something of the wider world of the arts

The increased possibility of overseas travel, during the 1930s, combined with a growing awareness of radical political ideas often fostered by travel, helped expand the intellectual framework of several Perth-based writers by bringing them into contact with international cultural life. During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of Australian creative artists spent time in Britain and Europe. Some, like Jack Lindsay, Martin Boyd and Patrick White found a long-term base there. Others of them, however, like Prichard and the Palmers, returned to Australia with a new determination to promote the creative life of their own country. Western Australian writers Hasluck, Ewers, Leslie and Coralie Rees, Bill Irwin and broadcaster Catherine King were all influenced by their time spent overseas in the late 1930s. Summing up the experience, Hasluck wrote that he returned to Perth:

full of missionary zeal. The year abroad had convinced me that there was no better place to live in than Western Australia but that Western Australia was deficient in many ways and I was eager to help build there a more fully rounded society.

He continued:

we of the younger generation ... declared that the fine flower and fruit of society was not in its material riches but in creative activity, in art, literature, music, the theatre and in the search for truth and beauty.

In 1948, Patrick White acknowledged that, having escaped ‘the Great Australian Emptiness’, he was now returning to Australia in the similar hope of helping

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build an Australian community that understood the arts. Hasluck expressed the enthusiasm which other writers, returning from the broadening experience of life overseas, brought to the task of establishing the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia, with the aim of promoting Australian literature and helping create a more vibrant artistic culture in the city, where many of them had been born and educated.

A growing interest in radical politics

... a substantial dissident intellectual class emerged in the 30s

In the years immediately following the depression, writers and thinkers worldwide began to reassess the meaning and long-term effect of a capitalist society. In the early twentieth-century, Australian writers and artists increasingly saw the political theories of socialism and communism as offering a viable alternative to the growing threat of fascism in Spain and Nazi Germany. Australians from widely differing backgrounds were attracted to communism, with membership of the Communist Party of Australia growing between 1928 and 1940 from 249 nationwide to approximately 4,000. As the best known communist in Western Australia during the 1930s, Prichard used her writings to present the communist ethos to the reading public. An important supplementary activity for the Party was the Workers' Art Guild, established in Perth, in February 1936. Although many of those active in the Guild were not members of the Communist Party of Australia, and so not directly under the Party's jurisdiction, the Guild's philosophy was based firmly on Marxist principles. The Guild's role in Perth's cultural life will be discussed more fully in the sections of this chapter dealing with theatre and art. Its existence, however, increased the growing awareness of, and involvement in, international political movements, which inspired Australian artists to seek new solutions for the

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72 Leslie Rees painted a lively picture of young Western Australian intellectuals, including the Haslucks and H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs in London during these years. *Hold Fast to Dreams*, 1982, pp. 92–94.
75 J. Wells. 'The Political Commitment of Katharine Susannah Prichard: Political Activity 1930–1940 and the Writing of the Goldfields Trilogy'. Thesis presented for Bachelor of Arts with Honours, Murdoch University, 1984, p. 50.
77 D. Hough. 'the playmakers' in *farewell cinderella*, 2003, p. 31.
problems facing the modern Western world. During the politically tense years, from 1938 to the early 1950s, events within the Fellowship’s meetings reflected the political polarisation present within the general community. These times will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The impact of the wider world through educational opportunities, the development of broadcasting, travel and the exploration of radical political systems, were a potent combination which shaped the consciousness of the young writers in the 1930s. In order to understand the cultural milieu they sought to influence, there follows a survey of the world of theatre, visual art and literature in Perth before the foundation of the Fellowship there.

Perth’s expanding cultural life
... *no cultural backwater*78

In the late 1930s, Australians were torn between increasing optimism, as the country emerged from what Donald Stuart experienced as the ‘grinding, terrible poverty’ of the depression and increasing pessimism over the inevitability of a second world war.79 In Western Australia, however, thanks largely to the revival of the gold-mining industry in the 1930s, the economy recovered more quickly from the depression, sustaining a steady level of growth throughout the decade, without suffering the setbacks experienced in the eastern states.80 This growth promoted the new technology of radio as a means of combating the isolation of a small population in a large geographic area.

In the early 1930s, Perth, the most isolated capital city in the world, in a State with less than half a million inhabitants, needed some creative stimulus to move it beyond a dull parochial city. When Kathleen O’Connor returned to Perth in 1926, after seventeen years of living and painting in Paris, her reaction to her home town had been one of dread. ‘I’ll die if I stay here’, her biographer quoted her as saying. O’Connor found Perth firmly entrenched in colonial protocols, its residents enmeshed in the superficiality of ‘parochial trivia, bridge parties,

supper parties, dressing up in hats and gloves for a short stroll down to the Perth Literary Institute. Dorothy Hewett, writing about her adolescence, described Perth, in the early 1930s, as 'an innocent little city, not much bigger than a large country town, lost in time and distance, floating like a mirage on the banks of the Swan River'.

Some 40 years later, in 1977, reflecting on his early years in Perth, Norman Bartlett encapsulated a sense of the changes that developed in the late 1930s, from the perspective of a writer closely involved with the people who helped forge those changes. Although remembering Perth in the 1930s, as 'suburbia incarnate' wreathed in a 'grey provincialism', he could still write of experiencing 'no sense of intellectual or social isolation…' He attributed the intellectual and social stimulation he experienced to the presence of:

the University, Walter Murdoch's weekly essays in the West Australian, Paul Hasluck's drama criticism, Albert Kornweibel's music critiques, Keith George and the Workers' Art Guild, the Repertory Club, the Writers' Fellowship, the Mechanics' Institute at the east end of Hay Street, opposite one of the best second-hand bookshops in Australia, and, alone and aloof at Greenmount, the Grey Eminence of the Western Australian Left, Katharine Susannah Prichard.

From a twenty-first century perspective, such a list provides a very meagre offering to enrich the intellectual life of a centre so isolated from all other sources of cultural stimulation. It clearly indicates the lack of any developed intellectual infrastructure in Perth, in the 1930s. Moreover, many of these apparently stimulating elements would only have been visible to residents active in either university, drama or literary circles. In a small city like Perth, however, they were able to make at least one young writer feel intellectually alive.

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83 N. Bartlett. ‘Perth in the Turbulent Thirties’ in Westerly, No. 4 December 1977, pp. 61 and 67. Biographical details of Norman Bartlett can be found in Appendix Two.
84 Ibid., p. 61.
Theatre in the State
… *the flowering of the home-grown*[^85]

An active culture of live theatre could provide an immediate resource for local writers, most of whom wrote scripts as well as other genres. In the 1930s, however, the ‘talkies’, introduced to Perth on 6 April 1929, were taking over from live theatre as one of the most popular forms of entertainment. By then Perth had several film theatres, including the Prince of Wales (opened in 1922) and the Regent (1927). Two large movie ‘palaces’, the Ambassadors and the Capitol, had opened in 1928 and 1929 respectively. The films shown here were English and American. The once flourishing Australian silent film industry, which, in 1906, produced the first feature film, had been sidelined by a royal commission in 1927–1928, which failed to establish distribution arrangements that would support the local industry.[^86] On one hand, the new enthusiasm for the cinema damaged live performance as established theatres were converted from stage to film.[^87] On the other hand, the new theatres offered employment for local artists including ‘singers, dancers, jugglers, acrobats, magicians’.[^88] At the Ambassadors patrons could hear a Wurlitzer organ and live stage band, while the Capitol had an orchestra. Both theatres had their own *corps de ballet*, until the depression years forced them to disband both ballets and orchestras.[^89]

Some dancers, like Bertha Hough, continued a connection to the theatre through administration, others retired, to return to dance as teachers or as public competitors, in the mid 1930s, when the improved economy made it feasible. The later influx of English and American films, however, was the forerunner of a dependence on imported culture which the FAWWA fought vehemently, if unsuccessfully, through the 1940s and 1950s.

Classical ballet in Australia had already benefited from visits by dancers such as Anna Pavlova (in 1926 and 1929) and the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe, in 1936 and 1938, this company remaining in Australia until 1940, with individual

[^85]: D. Hough. ‘the playmakers’, 2003, p. 29.
dancers staying on to found the Kirsova Company in Sydney (1942) followed by the Borovansky Company in Melbourne (1943). Another Russian dancer, Kira Bousloff, who came to Australia with the Covent Garden Russian Ballet in 1938, founded the Western Australian Ballet Company in 1953. Over the years, such visits created enthusiastic audiences and helped build support for local teachers of classical ballet like Rene Esler in Perth from 1930, and Margaret Kelly in Kalgoorlie from 1931. Linley Wilson, who, in 1932, founded the WA Dance Teachers’ Society, dominated the teaching of classical ballet in Western Australia for the following three decades. This growth of classical ballet became significant in the FAWWA’s history when composer members found inspiration for ballet music in stories they heard from local writers, met through the FAWWA in the 1960s. These ballets were performed by the W.A. Ballet Company and are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, live theatre in Australia survived largely within amateur and semi-professional companies. Not until much later was there any attempt to establish theatre on a professional basis. In the 1950s, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust achieved only minor financial support, while pressure to establish a national theatre proceeded only slowly. Alexandra Hasluck attributed the proliferation of amateur theatrical societies to the isolation of Perth from the rest of Australia, naming the Perth Repertory Club as the most important. This Club was central to a developing culture of public drama, while a variety of minor groups offered performance opportunities. A vaudeville theatre, the Shaftesbury, existed in Beaufort Street north of the railway line. In 1926, it became the Luxor and specialised in vaudeville from the eastern states. His Majesty’s was the principal venue for traditional theatre, presented by visiting theatre companies organised by J. C. Williamson, and for visiting celebrities such as Richard Crookes (1936), Lotte Lehmann (1937) and musical performances such as the Budapest String Quartet (1937) or Dr

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93 Ibid., p. 249.
94 D. Hough. 'the playmakers', 2003, p. 31.
96 A. Hasluck. Portrait in a Mirror, und., p. 137.
Malcolm Sargent (1938). From 1939 onwards, some celebrities appeared in the Capitol Theatre, which, until its demolition in 1967, featured live performances of ballet, music and musical theatre. Local theatrical companies, the Perth Repertory Club and the University Dramatic Society, performed at the Assembly Hall in Perth, the Perth and Fremantle Town Halls and in small local theatres until, in 1933, the West Australian provided the Repertory Club with rooms in Newspaper House in St George's Terrace. Besides a new theatre, there was space for rooms for set building and classes in all aspects of theatrical production, an innovation for Perth in the 1930s. These new premises were opened with a season that included Drake-Brockman’s Dampier’s Ghost and Vance Palmer’s Black Horse. Other plays by Drake-Brockman were produced by the Playbox Theatre, later known as the Little Theatre. In 1934 and 1935, the same company produced plays by local authors Philip Masel, Phyllis Tweedie and A. W. Darbyshire. With the establishment of Patch Theatre by William and Ida Beeby, in 1939, Perth had another theatre school that offered a systematic course of instruction. Perth actresses Margaret Ford and Nita Pannell began their training here.

Established in 1919, by the 1930s the Perth Repertory Club was run by a Board that included several successful businessmen. This no doubt helped to determine the Club’s conservative programme development, based as it was on the maxim that theatre should entertain and leave the education of the public to other agencies. Until 1938, productions were largely confined to light, ‘drawing-room’ theatre, such cautious direction ensuring that the Club survived through the difficult depression years. With the 1938 appointment of a new director Jerald Wells, from the radical New Theatre League in Sydney, its guiding

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98 Details from theatre programmes in the George collection, held by the owner A. S. George.
100 D. Hough. 'the playmakers', 2003, p. 34.
102 D. Hough. 'the playmakers', 2003, p. 39. In the 1970s Nita Pannell worked with Durack to create, with Australia-wide success, the author’s Swan River Saga.
103 Information for the following paragraph was drawn from: T. Craig. ‘Radical and Conservative Theatre in Perth in the 1930s’ in Studies in Western Australian History, X, xxl, 1990, p. 115; and D. Hough. 'the playmakers', 2003, pp. 33–34.
principles changed dramatically. Theatre in Perth became more adventurous.\(^\text{104}\) Wells drew on his background of progressive theatre to implement a more modern approach to drama in Western Australia, in the process opening further opportunities for local playwrights to have their work performed. He took the unprecedented action of inviting the left-wing Workers’ Art Guild to perform in the Repertory Club’s theatre.

The Workers’ Art Guild began in 1936, following a meeting called by Prichard, Betsey Linton, wife of artist and teacher James W. R. Linton, and Keith George, who became its director. This exciting new venture operated under the motto: ‘Art is a weapon in the people’s struggle.’ Such a motto was the antithesis of the conservative principle on which the Repertory Club operated, and the Guild immediately attracted a group of actors, artists and writers, who were united by anti-fascist sentiments and sought a more modern approach to theatre and art. Some members, like Prichard, and Rae and John Oldham, were communists. Many shared socialist sympathies, while most were attracted by the vitality of the group and a shared disillusionment with the capitalist system and the threat of fascism.\(^\text{105}\)

The Workers’ Art Guild provided the most stimulus for local theatre and playwrights at the time. In the years between 1936 and its closure in 1940, after the Communist Party was banned, the Guild promoted theatre and the plastic and graphic arts. The most vital branch of the Guild’s activities, however, was the presentation of politically radical plays by local writers such as Prichard and Bill Irwin, then a journalist with the West Australian. Although Prichard devoted a lot of time to producing one-act plays for the Guild, her son, Ric Throssell, wrote that they were written out of her political duty, and that she did not consider them ‘significant’ pieces of work.\(^\text{106}\) A great deal of left-wing material came in from overseas. John Oldham remembered that new Socialist plays would be presented by the Guild just weeks after first appearing in England or Europe.\(^\text{107}\) This gave local authors the opportunity to experience a wider field of

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\(^\text{104}\) D. Hough. ‘the playmakers’, 2003, p. 34.
\(^\text{105}\) Ibid., p. 31.
modernist literature than that performed in the mainstream theatre of the late 1930s. Another of the Guild’s innovations was the presentation of street theatre to local communities. Mostly ‘agit-prop’ plays written by local writers to represent the struggle of the workers, these plays travelled from suburb to suburb on the back of a truck. The Guild’s success is astounding considering the scope of its activities. Its plays often received standing ovations and glowing praise from Perth’s theatre critic, Paul Hasluck, writing as Polygon.\(^{108}\) In 1937, two of its presentations finished first and third in the first Perth Drama Festival, organised by the Playbox Theatre and the Perth Repertory Club.\(^{109}\)

The impetus for this success came from the creative energy of the Guild’s director, Keith George. Although not a communist himself, George shared the desire for social change and was a brilliant producer, understanding all aspects of theatrical presentation.\(^{110}\) Prichard considered him ‘the best producer in the West’, who knew ‘classical literature inside out’.\(^{111}\) Drama critic, William Moore, who had edited Angus & Robertson’s edition of Prichard’s *Brumby Innes* and *Bid Me to Love*, described Perth as the ‘third drama centre in Australia’ because of the liveliness of its theatre world in these years.\(^{112}\) When he was dismissed at the end of 1937, because of what has been called ‘the myopic decisions of a narrow-minded committee’, the standard of Guild productions began to fall.\(^{113}\) From this time George seems to have worked with Wells at the Perth Repertory Club, as well as channelling his creative energy into promoting and organising the ballet productions of the Linley Wilson Ballet School. George and Wilson were married in 1942.\(^{114}\)

Between 1935 and 1940, the Workers’ Art Guild also played an active role in the development of the visual arts in Perth. It attracted radical artists like the Norwegian Harald Vike, Perth-born Herbert McClintock painting as Max Ebert,

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\(^{113}\) Cited in T. Craig. ‘Radical and Conservative Theatre in Perth in the 1930s’, 1990, p. 112.

and John Oldham. At times the Guild combined with the University of Western Australia’s Adult Education Branch, or the Workers’ Education Authority, to organise *avant-garde* exhibitions and public lectures on aspects of modern art.\(^{115}\) The Guild drew on a wide spectrum of Perth’s free-thinking academics and creative artists, including John Thompson, Kurt Rogers, Alec King and Herbert McClintock for such events.\(^{116}\) In 1936, John Oldham and his wife Rae lectured on Hungarian modernist Moholy-Nagy.\(^{117}\)

The Guild’s encouragement of local artists went beyond educational lectures and exhibitions. It commissioned strong, realistic posters for the propagandist plays it produced. Many of these were the work of the Norwegian artist, Harald Vike, who arrived in Perth in 1929, and of John Oldham. Oldham, a talented artist who ran a screen printing business in the depression years, had trained as an architect and landscape designer. In 1938, he was appointed designer for the Australian Pavilion at the 1939 World Fair in New York.\(^{118}\) Vike and Oldham also produced banners for local Unions and had cartoons and comic strips featured in the Communist paper *The Workers’ Star*. As co-founder, Prichard worked closely with the Guild as both playwright and adviser.\(^{119}\) This may explain why many of those active in the Workers’ Art Guild became members of the FAWWA in its early years.

Before the establishment of the Workers’ Art Guild, the Art Gallery of Western Australia had been the principal authority on fine art in Perth.\(^{120}\) Founded in 1895, the Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia were amalgamated with the Public Library in 1911. Like other established elements in the cultural world in Perth at that time, the Gallery of Western Australia specialised in conservative overseas exhibitions such as contemporary paintings from Canada (1937) and Great Britain (1939), and the Coronation robes (1938). However, the works of local artists were occasionally displayed. In 1937, the Perth Society of

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\(^{115}\) N. Weston. ‘visual sites’ in *farewell cinderella*, 2003, pp. 188–189.


Artists mounted a combined retrospective and contemporary show of Western Australian art from 1826 to 1937 at the Gallery, which aroused considerable interest.121

A number of small private galleries existed and exhibitions were held in centres such as the Booklovers' Library.122 The opening of an Art Gallery in Newspaper House, in 1932, was one of the major developments during the decade. Managers of the West Australian newspaper had agreed to make space available on the top floor of Newspaper House for use as a private gallery.123 This new space was planned as a 'sophisticated modern social venue' for Perth artists.124 It provided a necessary outlet for individual artists, as well as art societies, and gave Perth residents an easily accessible viewing centre for works by local and interstate artists, without the restrictions imposed by a conservative gallery policy. The newly formed Perth Society of Artists, 'a professionally oriented group of artists', held its first exhibition there.125 The first one-man exhibition of surrealist Herbert McClintock, exhibiting as Max Ebert, held in the Newspaper House Gallery in 1938, 'outraged' Perth's art lovers.

In the 1930s, structured courses in art education were held at the Perth Technical School and at the art societies. In 1927, George Pitt Morrison gave a series of 25 lectures on the history and practice of painting at the University in Irwin Street. The outstanding teacher of the time, however, was J. W. R. Linton, a renowned silversmith and craftsman.127 Among his students was Sarah Martha (Mattie) Furphy, daughter-in-law of author Joseph Furphy. Both Mattie and Joseph Furphy were to become significant names in the future of the FAWWA. Other names which recurred at this time in art schools, gallery exhibitions and on the committees of artists' societies, include those of A. B. Webb, who had joined Linton as assistant art master at the Perth Technical School.

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121 J. Gooding. 'Western Australian Art 1911–1939', 1978, pp. 120–121.
122 Ibid., p. 90.
123 Ibid., p. 139.
126 N. Weston. 'visual sites', 2003, p. 190.
School in St George's Terrace. Sculptor and teacher John McLeod became president of the FAWWA in 1941. Both Webb and McLeod had been members of the University Art Club, which was founded in 1929 and held its first and only exhibition in 1934.

The art societies active in Perth by the 1930s, had tended to develop out of each other in a way typical of artistic groups. The impulse towards formation of a new society usually came from an established group of artists wanting to refine the rules of membership, to become more specialised, more professional.

The original Western Australian Society of Artists was founded in 1896. In 1921, a group of Society members developed the Western Institute of Artists. Again, in 1932, yet another group of members of the Institute established the Perth Society of Artists. Membership of the University Art Club was basically the same as that of the Society of Artists. It offered, however, the added outlet of the University student magazine, the Black Swan, edited at the time by Rees.

Apart from this magazine and the promotion which the Workers' Art Guild offered Western Australian playwrights, there were few encouragements for local writers at the beginning of the 1930s. Unlike the visual artists, writers in Perth had not formed any structured groups. The work of eastern states writers and critics, such as Nettie and Vance Palmer and P. R. Stephensen, together with the strength of the literary pages in the Bulletin, encouraged new creative writing and provided one way for writers across the country to keep in touch.

The major Western Australian writers maintained an ongoing connection with their eastern states counterparts through their letters, as witnessed by correspondence in private collections in Australian libraries. As interstate transport improved, writers were more easily able to visit other capital cities and broaden that connection. In the meantime, close friendships had blossomed between some of the State’s writers.

128 Ibid., p.44.
131 Ibid., p. 76.
Literary friendships  
…I appreciate your comradeship so enormously.\textsuperscript{132}

The formation in Sydney of the Fellowship of Australian Writers fostered a growing awareness of creative writing and its practitioners, particularly in the eastern states. Prichard and Drake-Brockman were early members of the Sydney Fellowship, of which Prichard was Patron.\textsuperscript{133} Having spent her early years in Melbourne, Prichard knew Nettie and Vance Palmer and Hilda and Louis Esson well, maintaining an ongoing correspondence with them until the 1960s.\textsuperscript{134} Paul Hasluck wrote of spending an evening with the Palmers during which they 'talked of nothing but Australian literature and literary figures', presenting themselves as 'encouragers and understanders-in-chief of Australian literature'.\textsuperscript{135} In the 1930s Ewers, too, corresponded with the Palmers and, from 1941 until Ingamells' death in 1955, Ewers and Ingamells exchanged their ideas on Australian literature in general and the Jindyworobaks in particular.\textsuperscript{136}

Of the Western Australian writers working in the 1930s, Prichard (1883–1969) was the most advanced in her writing career, having returned to Australia from London in 1916 as a celebrated author. Her first novel, \textit{The Pioneers}, published in London the previous year, had won the Australian prize of two hundred and fifty pounds in the Hodder & Stoughton All-Empire competition, and been made into an Australian film, in 1916.\textsuperscript{137} With a second novel published that year, she became an accepted part of the artistic world in Melbourne, before moving to Western Australia, in 1919, as a newly-wed, with her husband Captain Hugo Throssell.\textsuperscript{138}

Renowned for her political beliefs as well as for her writing, Prichard dominated the Western Australian literary landscape throughout the 1930s. She believed

\textsuperscript{134} Prichard papers NLA/10. The preserved correspondence with the Palmers ranged from 1919 to 1961, and with the Essons from 1928 to 1958.
\textsuperscript{135} P. Hasluck. \textit{Mucking About}, 1977, p. 218.
\textsuperscript{136} Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/390.
that societal change would come about through the agency of politics, as she wrote to Miles Franklin:

I have been a member of the Communist Party since there was one in Australia, and am heart and soul in its work, though it's very difficult to find time to do all that I'd like with the comrades and in my own work as well.¹³⁹

Not only did she write plays for the Workers’ Art Guild and political writings for the Communist Party of Australia, but her play *Brumby Innes* won the Triad Prize in 1927. She published three novels in the late 1920s including *Coonardoo*, prize winner in the 1928 *Bulletin* competition. Through the 1930s she added two novels, three plays for the Guild, a book of verse, a collection of short stories and an account of her visit to Russia. This was a prodigious output for a decade which included the depression that had such disastrous effects on her own family, leading to her husband’s suicide which left her the sole parent of an eleven year-old son. Prichard also carried an increasing load of campaigning on behalf of the Communist Party of Australia, as political tensions heightened before the declaration of war.¹⁴⁰

Prichard wrote openly of the strain of living in Western Australia. Following the publication of her novel *The Wild Oats of Han*, in 1930, she complained to Miles Franklin about the treatment given her book by Angus & Robertson: 'It reached a few book-sellers—but was unadvertised, unannounced, & the sales have been less than for any other book I've written’.¹⁴¹ Missing the easy interaction with her literary friends, she wrote to Franklin, in 1932: ‘I'm in too much of a backwater to hear literary gossip’.¹⁴² Prichard was aware that living in the hills region outside of Perth exacerbated this sense of isolation. She encouraged other writers by gathering them around her. Norman Bartlett was one of the enthusiastic younger writers who saw in Prichard a mentor, both literary and political. Bartlett remembered that her followers would offer 'tangible tokens' of their support for Prichard and left-wing policies by attending union meetings,

proposing biased motions, and acting as cheer-leaders at Spanish Relief gatherings that were held in the Perth Town Hall.\textsuperscript{143}

In 1932, Prichard began an ongoing friendship with Drake-Brockman (1901–1968) after writing encouraging letters to a young Perth writer Henry Drake. Several of Drake’s short stories, featuring the North-West of the State, had been published in local papers. In 1930, a review by Drake of Prichard’s \textit{Haxby’s Circus} appeared in the \textit{Daily News}.\textsuperscript{144} Unfortunately, there is no record of when Prichard realised that ‘my dear Henry Drake’ was, in fact, Henrietta Drake-Brockman. In February 1932, Prichard wrote to ‘Henry Drake’:

\begin{quote}
It seems too bad that our rows are so far apart & have to be hoed so strenuously. But when I’m fit to be seen, at the end of this hellish weather, perhaps we may meet.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

This unlikely friendship between a staunch radical and a member of the upper echelons of Perth society, married to Major Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, who shortly afterwards became Commissioner for the North-West, typified the interactions existing in Western Australia between people of different backgrounds who were held together by their common dedication to the arts.\textsuperscript{146}

There were periods of coldness between the two women, following the outlawing of the Communist Party in 1940, when feelings ran high. In July of that year, Prichard wrote to Drake-Brockman:

\begin{quote}
I cannot blame you if you do not see clearly and are confused in your conclusions. While you’re on the other side of the fence there is little for us to say to each other.\textsuperscript{147}
\end{quote}

During the tense years of World War II, Drake-Brockman confessed to Ewers that she found Prichard ‘just too fanatic for words’.\textsuperscript{148} That the breach was overcome by the two women’s respect for each other’s literary work and their desire to further the cause of Australian literature is reflected in the sincerity of

\textsuperscript{143} N. Bartlett. \textit{‘Perth in the Turbulent Thirties’}, 1977, p. 64. See also pp. 62–65 for a detailed discussion of Bartlett’s early connections with Prichard.
\textsuperscript{145} K. S. Prichard to H. Drake-Brockman, 22 November 1932. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634.
\textsuperscript{147} K. S. Prichard to H. Drake-Brockman, 25 July 1941. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/23.
\textsuperscript{148} H. Drake-Brockman to J. K. Ewers, 30 March [1943/44?] Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/378.
Prichard’s tribute to Drake-Brockman after the latter’s sudden death in 1968: ‘The Fellowship without Henrietta! It seems incredible. We who are grieving cannot think of her yet without tears’.149

By 1937, Drake-Brockman was the author of four novels, set mainly in the North-West of Western Australia. Two of these had been commended in competitions run by the Bulletin. Although known principally for her prose works, at the same time Drake-Brockman was writing for the stage. As well as performing her play Dampier’s Ghost after moving into their new theatre in Newspaper House, the Perth Repertory Club had presented her two other plays during the decade, The Man from the Bush in 1932, and Blister in 1937, while her longer play, Men Without Wives, won the federal sesquicentenary prize in 1938.150 Although isolated from Perth society for much of the 1920s as she travelled in the North with her husband, in the 1930s, Drake-Brockman became a more settled member of Perth’s artistic society.151

Prichard had first met author Mollie Skinner when she interviewed Skinner for an article in Woman’s World, in 1924.152 In the 1930s, Skinner was one of two Honorary Life Members of the only writers’ organisation then in existence in Perth. The Western Australian Women Writers’ Club, a forerunner of the Society of Women Writers, began in the early 1920s. Originally an organisation only for women journalists, it held its meetings at the W.A. Newspaper offices in St George’s Terrace, Perth. As well as encouraging exchanges between ‘pen women of Western Australia’, and ‘intellectual pursuits’, the Club also fostered links between women writers from other parts of the Commonwealth and overseas. Absorbed into the FAWWA in 1950, it later reappeared as the Society for Women Writers.153 While Skinner was running a boarding house in the Perth hills, she met holidaying English writer D. H. Lawrence. From this meeting came the book The Boy in the Bush, published in London and New York, in 1924.

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149 Fellowship News, April 1968, p. 4.
153 J. Lang to H. Lindsay, 20 January 1972, pp. 1–2. Although written as a letter to Lindsay, this 12 page document is in fact an early history of the West Australian Women Writers’ Club. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/52.
Skinner’s collaboration with Lawrence brought her into a prominence she had not previously known.

Before the foundation of the Fellowship, Prichard had also befriended young writer Mary Durack (1913–1994), much to the latter’s surprise. Remembering her first visit to Prichard’s Greenmount home years before, Durack later commented that no writers ‘associated with Katharine can have failed to be influenced by her in some way’.\(^{154}\) Durack’s articles on station life appeared in the *West Australian*, the *Western Mail* and the *Bulletin*. From 1937, she was on the staff of the *West Australian*, writing specifically for country women and children as the columnist Virgilia. Until 1940, besides children’s books, Durack’s literary output was concentrated in three general studies of Kimberley life: *All-About, the Story of a Black Community on Argyle Station, Kimberley* (1935), *Chunuma* (1936) and *Son of Djaro* (1937).\(^{155}\)

As a young man, Ewers benefitted from friendships with two older writers.\(^{156}\) Between 1928 and 1932, Arthur Upfield (1890–1964) published the first five in a total output of twenty detective novels.\(^{157}\) All of Upfield’s books were set in the outback that he had come to know since his arrival in Australia from England in 1911.\(^{158}\) Preferring to see himself as simply a story-teller, Upfield frequently expressed a stridently critical opinion of the Australian literary world. As Ewers said of Upfield: ‘He had some pretty hearty dislikes — one of them extended to all “literary” people, especially critics’.\(^{159}\)

The correspondence between Upfield and Ewers began in 1930 and continued until 1958.\(^{160}\) Prompted by Ewers’ review of *The Beach of Atonement*, it developed into a friendship built on the professional concerns of two men.

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\(^{156}\) J.K. Ewers. ‘I had two friends’. Talk, Ewers papers BL 5459A/182.

\(^{157}\) B. Bennett, ed. *The Literature of Western Australia*, 1979, p. 73.


committed to establishing careers with their pen. Upfield was the senior both in years and experience.161 None of Ewers’ letters to Upfield survives. However, from the large number of Upfield letters, we can piece together a literary friendship which began with advice from the older writer to the younger and grew into a working partnership between reviewer and writer, when Upfield began to pay Ewers to critique his novels as he wrote them. In the early 1930s, Upfield moved from Burracoppin to Kalamunda, leaving the rabbit-proof fence, which he had overseen and where he had been completely isolated. He still chose to maintain a distance from any involvement in a society for writers in the State.

Ewers’ other writing friend was James Pollard, with whom he corresponded from 1926 to 1939.162 This exchange arose from a mutual interest in Western Australian flora and fauna. Pollard had become well-known for his writing on natural history, especially for articles published in the magazine *Walkabout* and for his regular column in the *West Australian* under the name of ‘Mopoke’.163 It was in this role that he first became known to Ewers, himself an amateur entomologist. In early letters, Ewers addressed Pollard as: ‘Dear ‘Mopoke’. Pollard was elected senior vice-president of the newly established Fellowship, in 1938, and succeeded Ewers in the presidency from 1939 to 1940.164

By the end of the 1930s, Ewers (1904–1978), a primary school teacher, was becoming known to the Western Australian public not only for his publications but as a broadcaster on the ABC and a lecturer on Australian literature. His short stories and poetry appeared in local newspapers and magazines. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Ewers conducted his own campaign to educate Western Australians about their literature, through a series of columns in local newspapers. In the *West Australian* he wrote under the *nom de plume* Telamon (1929–1932), while in the *Daily News* he was Peter Pounce (1926–1932). In the

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Australian Bookman in 1932 and 1933, and for radio broadcasts on the Australian Broadcasting Commission, he wrote under his own name.\(^{165}\) Talks given in 1935 featured guest speakers Murdoch, Drake-Brockman, G. Burgoyne and Hasluck, together with Ewers. In 1940, the University of Western Australia Senate appointed Ewers as well as journalist and student Norman Bartlett, to give the first lectures in Australian literature at the University. These were an addition to the English literature course which both Bartlett and Ewers were studying at the time.\(^{166}\)

As Bartlett claimed in his 1977 article, Murdoch’s weekly essays in the *West Australian* played an important role in informing literary knowledge for many of Perth’s population. Described by John Hay as ‘an avuncular, accessible and well-loved newspaper sage’, Murdoch was well-known to West Australians through his popular essays, a fact which led Rees to name him, in 1940, ‘the household philosopher of a thousand homes’.\(^{167}\) Of Murdoch’s lectures at the University of Melbourne, in 1906, Prichard wrote: ‘His lectures were a joy’.\(^{168}\) Prichard relished the renewal of this connection in Perth. However, as already pointed out, Murdoch based his approach to literature firmly on English works, and offered little opportunity for students to read and discuss literature by other writers, especially American or Australian. Reflecting later on Hartley Grattan’s 1938 visit to Perth, Peter Cowan commented that the books he talked about were not available in Perth, and that ‘the notable essayist’ [Walter Murdoch] had not only not read American authors, but had no intention of doing so.\(^{169}\)

The literary friendships described in these pages demonstrate how much Perth’s writers, in the late 1930s, needed a structure that would support their creative endeavours. These relationships were the first steps, albeit unconscious ones, towards the foundation of the Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in 1938. They also provided the framework

\(^{165}\) Some of these are collected in J. K. Ewers’ scrapbooks. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/32–34.

\(^{166}\) C. Sanders, Acting Clerk of Senate, University of Western Australia, to J. K. Ewers, 1 July 1940. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/413. Norman Bartlett papers NLA 6884.


for what Durack later identified as ‘the long-lasting and possibly unique solidarity’ that existed among its members.\textsuperscript{170} This was a group of writers committed, not only to their own writing, but also to the support and promotion of fellow writers and Australian literature.

Access to publishers was crucial for the successful development of a local literary culture. However, Western Australia lacked any established publication outlets for its writers. Hence they turned to England for publication. Skinner’s \textit{Letters of a V.A.D.} was published by Andrew Melrose in London and Ewers’ \textit{Money Street} by Hodder and Stoughton, London. Besides the local printing company of Porter and Salmon, Patersons Printing Press was the only other small publisher in Perth in the early 1930s. Answering a question from Ewers, in 1949, as to why he had set up the publishing house, J.G. Paterson wrote:

So far as publishing is concerned, it was begun as a desire to do something for what at that time, in 1931 or so, was something akin to stagnation, so far as Western Australian authors were concerned, and, of course we have enabled some to achieve a measure of success at any rate. The material results to us have been negligible, of course, but you will agree that pleasure in life can come from sources other than merely economic gains.\textsuperscript{171}

In 1939, after their marriage, Paul and Alexandra Hasluck began the Freshwater Bay Press, the first of a number of boutique publishing enterprises set up by Perth writers to compensate for the dearth of commercial publishing houses in the State. The first book produced was a collection of Hasluck’s poetry, \textit{Into the Desert}. Local printer Len Porter printed it ‘on commercial terms and contributing his own knowledge and talents’.\textsuperscript{172} In 1923, Porter illustrated and printed Ewers’ first book of poetry \textit{Boy and Silver}.\textsuperscript{173}

One publication outlet for Western Australian writers, however, was the wide variety of local and national newspapers and magazines produced in Australia at the time. Before the use of syndicated material following the end of World War II, most commercial newspapers and magazines readily accepted articles by local writers in addition to that of their own journalists. John Hay described

\textsuperscript{170} M. Durack. ‘Foreword: As I remember them’, 1988, p. xviii.
\textsuperscript{171} J. G. Paterson to J. K. Ewers, 3 June 1949. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/401.
\textsuperscript{172} P. Hasluck. \textit{Mucking About}, 1977, p. 288.
the earlier Goldfields newspapers, in particular, as appearing to be ‘the literary arbiters of their times’.\textsuperscript{174} In the 1920s and early 1930s, names such as Drake-Brockman, Murdoch, Pollard and Ewers appeared frequently in newspaper pages. In 1934, a new weekly paper, \textit{The Broadcaster}, was issued from Newspaper House, and became a significant outlet for local creative writers. Until its demise, in 1955, \textit{The Broadcaster} featured works such as Prichard's \textit{Black Opal} (in serial form), as well as a regular column dedicated to information on local arts activities.\textsuperscript{175} Drake-Brockman regularly contributed a column called ‘Perth Pieces’ to a national magazine, \textit{The Playbill}. This provided information on plays by Perth playwrights Alan Aldous, Alexander Turner, Herbert Flinn and Drake-Brockman herself. Its publication was short-lived.\textsuperscript{176}

According to Hay, there was an ‘ostensible lack of interest in local literature’ at the offices of the \textit{West Australian}, although its off-shoot the \textit{Western Mail} had printed original writings since its inception in 1885.\textsuperscript{177} The \textit{West Australian} published little local fiction, although, in the 1920s and 1930s, it ran two regular features which purported to promote a literary awareness. The Saturday editorial during these years was usually written by Laurence Jupp around a 'literary or philosophical theme'. Also appearing on Saturdays, was the 'Life and Letters' column which, in the 1930s, grew into a two page section with Murdoch's Questions and Answers as a central feature.\textsuperscript{178} These outlets offered a temporary avenue of publication for many of the foundation members of the FAWWA as well as promoting their names within the State. Ewers reported being encouraged by two newspaper editors, Ivor C. Birtwhistle at the \textit{Western Mail} and D. D. Braham at the \textit{West Australian}.\textsuperscript{179}

Although few local magazines existed apart from the University journal the \textit{Black Swan}, one publishing venture began with much flourish and encouragement for Western Australian authors. \textit{Jarrah Leaves}, produced by the Imperial Printing Company, was intended by poet John Glascock to be ‘a

\textsuperscript{175} D. Grant. ‘Literary Journalism’ in \textit{The Literature of Western Australia}, 1979, pp. 290–291.  
\textsuperscript{176} B. Dunstone. ‘Drama’, 1979, p. 196.  
\textsuperscript{178} D. Grant. ‘Literary Journalism’, 1979, p. 299.  
literary and artistic annual consisting entirely of matter supplied by Western Australians.\textsuperscript{180} Glascock’s own collection of poems, \textit{A Pageant of Pain and Other Verses} had appeared in 1927.\textsuperscript{181} The first edition of \textit{Jarrah Leaves}, produced in 1933, featured work by most of the important names in Western Australian art and literature at that time. Glascock left the Press in 1934 but that year’s edition was produced in spite of financial strain.\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Jarrah Leaves} appeared in only the two editions of 1933 and 1934.\textsuperscript{183}

That the intellectual and cultural life in Perth matured during the 1930s is clear from letters written by both Paul and Alexandra Hasluck, in 1941. Having moved to Canberra when the former worked for the Commonwealth government, the couple were able to reflect with the objectivity of distance on life in their home State. Alexandra wrote:

I’ve come to the conclusion that our intelligentsia in the west aren’t so bad at all. They don’t seem to pant along tiring themselves out to make an impression as some of those in the East.\textsuperscript{184}

Similarly, Paul was also critical of his new neighbours, writing:

The people are clever enough at their job, I suppose, but as a people they are denatured... One misses the intellectual movement that there was in Perth.\textsuperscript{185}

Conclusion

The broad divergence between Kate O’Connor’s exasperation with Perth’s parochial narrowness and this positive regard for the city’s intellectual life indicates that Perth had matured both intellectually and culturally during the 1930s. This growth was manifested in the emergence of the first group of Western Australian writers. Many of these writers had been shaped by the educational openings available through the foundation of Perth Modern School and the simultaneous establishment of the University of Western Australia.

\textsuperscript{180} J. L. Glascock, of Imperial Printing to J. K. Ewers, 9 May 1933. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/391.

\textsuperscript{181} N. Hasluck and F. Zwicky. ‘Poetry’ in \textit{The Literature of Western Australia}, 1979, p. 156.

\textsuperscript{182} M. S. Watt to J. K. Ewers, 26 February 1934. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/330.

\textsuperscript{183} T. Kotai-Ewers. ‘\textit{Jarrah Leaves}, literary forerunner to \textit{Marginata}’ in \textit{Marginata} Issue 7, August 2004, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{184} A. Hasluck to H. Drake-Brockman, 11 June 1941. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/9.

\textsuperscript{185} P. Hasluck to H. Drake-Brockman, 30 June 1941. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/9.
Without the free education offered in these establishments some of this group of essentially Western Australian writers may have received little education. This common background, together with the openings possible in a small population situated on the extreme edge of the continent, provided a cohesion not readily available in larger cities. New technology contributed to the growth of state-based broadcasting, thus offering new outlets for local writers. Some of them benefitted from the increased opportunity for travel in the late 1930s, while growing dissatisfaction with the capitalist system aroused interest in more radical political systems among Perth’s intelligentsia.

This interest was fostered by the vitality of the Workers’ Art Guild, which brought new life to Perth’s theatre and arts world through its promotion of some of the most recent radical plays and avant garde visual arts. Fanned by the enthusiastic and skilful leadership of Keith George, together with Prichard’s passionate support for radical politics, the Guild was a catalyst for creative energy at a time when established theatres and the Art Gallery remained strictly conservative.

Although isolation from the major centres in the east could heighten the tendency to parochial introversion that so frustrated artists like Kathleen O’Connor and Prichard, it also encouraged a strongly independent approach. Combined with a small population, such remoteness enabled Perth’s creative writers to interact with different areas of the artistic world. They therefore sought to establish a writers’ organisation which would continue these connections by working closely with the cultural and educational community in Perth and, later, the rest of the State. However, they did not seek to confine the new organisation within the boundaries of Western Australia.

In its beginnings both international and national influences shaped the early Fellowship. Two international writers visited Perth in the second half of 1938. In June, American author, Hartley Grattan, provided the catalyst for the formation of a writers’ body in Perth. In December, H. G. Wells was the first guest of the FAWWA. Even while the newly-established organisation focused on developing a literary community with a sound internal structure, members were conscious of being part of a national literary organisation, with a strong sense of
connection to other cultural bodies in the State. The following chapter seeks to identify how the FAWWA aimed to support the individual writer, and relationships it developed with organisations such as the Adult Education Board and the national FAW. In considering the effects of World War II on individual writers and organisations, the chapter considers the effectiveness of the FAWWA’s lobbying on behalf of Australia’s writers in order to minimise the war’s impact on their professional interests.
the formation of some sort of literary fellowship – not a mutual admiration society but a sincere mutual-help entente. We in the West are outside all such associations in the East, and are isolated and neglected. The necessity for organisation is obvious.

If we had a Western organisation we could speak with authority – I mean instead of being isolated geographically & individually we should be collective and vocal. In Melbourne they have half a dozen literary societies which are continually appraising their own writers, and keeping them before the public. I don’t blame them for being provincial, and I think we should do likewise. Had we an authoritative organisation we could have met Dr Blair and pointed out that WA has quite a number of authors with books to their credit. I shall be glad to learn your views on this subject.....

Poet, Arthur Chandler to Ewers, 14 April 1936¹

¹ A. Chandler to J. K. Ewers, 14 April 1936. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/373.
Chapter Three

Beginnings: — responding to outside influences

… all professionals who put the practice of our profession first & foremost²

Whereas theatre and the visual arts in Perth during the 1930s had created for themselves points of reference within the community, the group of Western Australian writers coming to the fore had no ‘authoritative organisation’, in Chandler’s words.³ Only Drake-Brockman and Prichard belonged to the FAW in Sydney. Individual writers were left to find their own publication outlets, and rely on literary friends for advice and encouragement. Nor was there any agency to speak on behalf of the writing profession in order to protect writers’ interests. The early years of the Fellowship in Western Australia, with World War II declared just twelve months after the inaugural meeting, saw developments such as censorship and paper shortages which required the lobbying of government on behalf of Australia’s writers.

This chapter will show that, in its first decade, the FAWWA aimed to meet these needs by focusing on creating a literary community which would support and inform the individual writer. To this end, founding members worked to attract local writers by establishing a well-structured organisation and an interesting program of activities. The chapter argues that the Fellowship utilised the links that individual members had already established with Perth’s cultural bodies, developing its own working relationships with them and so created a visible place within the existing cultural world for the State’s writers. The FAWWA’s unsuccessful attempt to unite twenty-five cultural organisations in Perth to form a Western Australian Council for Culture can be seen as the natural expression

of a desire for further solidarity and visibility within that world. Connecting with writers in other Australian states further extended this sense of connection between writers. As the FAWWA worked with the FAW in both Sydney and Melbourne, local writers were encouraged to no longer feel isolated or neglected. The outbreak of World War II, within a year of the first meeting of the Fellowship in Western Australian, will be seen to have inculcated a strong awareness of being involved with international affairs, as members left to play their part in the war. The war also gave rise to situations which led the Fellowship to lobby on behalf of individual Australian writers during these years. The chapter begins with a discussion of the visits of overseas writers, C. Hartley Grattan from the United States, in June 1938, and H. G. Wells from the United Kingdom in December of that year, which respectively inspired and strengthened the beginnings of the Western Australian Fellowship, and provided an immediate link with the international literary world.

C. Hartley Grattan in Perth
… a peregrinating yank

This was a second visit to Australia for the American social historian, journalist and ‘Australianist’, C. Hartley Grattan. His first visit in 1927, accompanying his singer wife, had coincided with Authors’ Week in Melbourne, held to promote Australian books, many of which, however, were unobtainable even in Australia. During that time he met only a few Australian authors, although he already counted Nettie and Vance Palmer among his correspondents. His booklet Australian Literature, with a foreword by Nettie Palmer, was published in 1929, following that visit. Response to this publication led to Grattan becoming acquainted with a broader segment of the Australian literary world, including Miles Franklin, Kate Baker, Prichard, and Ewers. In retrospect, Ewers described his subsequent meeting with Grattan in New York, in 1936, as having greatly

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5 C. Roderick, in his biography of Miles Franklin, called Grattan ‘an American bower bird who was busy appropriating Australia as his intellectual province’. Western Australian writers were some of the number who benefited from his ‘bower bird’ tendencies of ‘collecting’ Australian authors. C. Roderick. Miles Franklin: her brilliant career. Sydney: Lansdowne Publishing Pty. Ltd, 1982, p.168.
influenced the rest of his life through the contacts it sparked ‘with many literary
people in Australia, in particular the literary life of Perth’.  

Grattan’s friendships with Australian writers proved invaluable in planning his
next trip to Australia, in 1938. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation, this was to
be a much vaster trip than the first—‘from Sydney Domain to Broome’, in his
own words. He hoped to partly fund this longer stay by giving lectures and
writing articles. On his return to the United States, he intended producing a
weightier publication, based on what he found in Australia on this second visit.

Gathering Perth writers for a dinner with Hartley Grattan
*‘… a memorable banquet in so many ways’* 

After corresponding with Grattan, Prichard and Ewers made arrangements to
welcome him to Perth. According to a brief exchange of letters, this
collaboration was not without difficulties, presaging later clashes between the
two writers within FAWWA meetings. A dinner in Grattan’s honour was held
on 6 June 1938, in Billett’s Café in Gledden Buildings, central Perth, at a cost of
3/6 a head; the sum including 3/- for the five course dinner and 6d to cover
clerical costs. This evening proved to be a seminal gathering for the writers
present, with far-reaching consequences for each of them as they found
themselves drawn into helping establish a section of the Fellowship of
Australian Writers in Perth. 

In many respects that dinner resembled the one in London that Anthony
Trollope described in his autobiography, when he met a group of the luminaries
connected to the *Cornhill* magazine, including Thackeray and Millais, who would
become his closest friends. He reflected that only ‘rarely’ would such a wealth of
friendships be formed at the one time. ‘Rarely’ perhaps, but the Western

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12 J. K. Ewers to K. S. Prichard, 4 May 1938. K. S. Prichard to J. K. Ewers, 5 May 1938. Ewers
papers BL 1870/5459A/402.
Australian writers who first met at that dinner, in 1938, had a similar experience, as they met writers who were to become close friends and colleagues for the rest of their lives. Durack wrote of the occasion as having more ‘long-lasting consequences’ than any other in her life.\(^{16}\) The organisers hoped that the gathering would fully represent Western Australian writers, and provide plenty of opportunity to share ideas.\(^{17}\) They could have had little concept of the sense of community that would flow from that evening, or that steps taken as a result of it would still be working with Western Australian writers over seventy years into the future.\(^{18}\) At the time, both Prichard and Ewers must have felt disappointed at only being able to find eleven writers who could attend.\(^{19}\) James Pollard would have been the twelfth writer, however he was making final preparations for the following day, when he would drive Grattan on a tour through the South-West, as arranged by Ewers because of Pollard’s in-depth knowledge of the State’s flora and fauna.\(^{20}\)

Those present that night were Gavin Casey, Ethel Davies, Drake-Brockman, Durack, Ewers, Jesse Hammond, Bill Irwin, Annie Mark, Murdoch, Prichard and W.C. Thomas.\(^{21}\) At 82, Hammond was the oldest of the writers, with Durack, then 25, the youngest. Irwin was editor of the *Daily News*, having worked in London for some years. Both he and his wife, Dorothy, joined the Communist Party in the late 1930s, and were part of the circle of literary friends who constellated around Prichard. Thomas, Mark and Davies were minor poets. Thomas had published a collection of poems in 1931, with another to follow in 1940.\(^{22}\) Mark’s elaborate letterhead announced her as a ‘Lyric Author’ and included various comments on her work.\(^{23}\) She had three books of poetry published. The first was published in London in 1896, the others in Perth in

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\(^{17}\) J. K. Ewers to J. Hammond, 24 May 1938. Hammond papers BL COMAP214.

\(^{18}\) Author’s note: The Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) celebrated its seventieth anniversary in 2008.


\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 191.

\(^{21}\) For biographies of major writers mentioned in this chapter, see Appendix 2.


\(^{23}\) A. Mark to C. Lindsay, Secretary FAW(NSW), 31 October 1938. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
1929 and, possibly, 1939, although the book gives no date. Ethel Davies' only book appeared in 1932. Despite the relatively sparse population of Perth, and the friendships between some of the writers, those present were amazed that not one of the eleven gathered in the Billett’s Café knew all of the other ten. Concerned by this lack of communication within the writing fraternity, Jesse Hammond later approached Ewers and suggested that he organise a more structured means for writers to meet with each other.

Writing of the Fellowship after its first year, Casey confirmed categorically Hammond’s central role in establishing the organisation.

Its founder was Jesse E. Hammond, an 83-years-old historian and Aborigine [sic] student of these parts. Mr. Hammond met a number of fellow-writers at a dinner given to Hartley Grattan, the American critic, and was impressed by a suggestion made by the visitor that local inky wayfarers should get together. He wrote to John K. Ewers, Mr Ewers to the writer, and after the trio had discussed the matter, the first meeting was held.

In Hammond's mind, there was no doubt as to his part in the establishment. Just before his death, in February 1940, he wrote in his journal that he had 'organised an authors' association in Western Australia...' He went on to note that, although only three writers were present at the first few meetings, by the time of the first Annual General Meeting membership had grown to around sixty writers. Casey's article and the existing correspondence between Casey, Ewers and Pollard, make it clear that the idea originated with Hammond, was acted upon by Ewers, and eagerly embraced by Casey, Drake-Brockman and others present at the initial meetings. Drake-Brockman herself clearly named Hammond as the originator, in a short history of the Fellowship she wrote for the Fellowship News in 1963. These early statements become important in the light of the prolonged disagreement in the FAW in Sydney as to whether that
organisation was founded by Mary Gilmore or Roderic Quinn. Dame Mary Gilmore affirmed that she paid the costs of the first meetings.30

The aim of a writers’ organisation
... not a mutual admiration society but a sincere mutual-help entente31

The alacrity with which he acted upon Hammond’s suggestion indicates Ewers’ enthusiasm for it. This was not the first time he had been urged to help form ‘some sort of literary fellowship’ to serve Western Australian authors. Two years previously, poet Arthur Chandler had written seeking Ewers’ views on the need for a writers’ organisation in Perth after reading, in the West Australian, an interview with Dr Blair, from Herbert Jenkins (Publishers) in London. Blair announced that his company was prepared to publish 50 Australian books per year. Chandler reacted with regret that there had been no one in Perth able to speak to the publisher on behalf of local writers.32 Ewers’ failure to act in that instance no doubt had more to do with his imminent marriage two months later, followed by his departure for England for a year-long honeymoon, rather than a lack of interest in the proposal.33

In the weeks following Hammond’s request, discussions took place ‘in various tea-rooms’ before a gathering at the Shaftsbury Hotel, in August, decided to form a Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers.34 As a member of the FAW(NSW), Drake-Brockman suggested the Western Australian body be affiliated with that organisation as a means of providing both contact with eastern states writers, and the right to attend meetings in Sydney and Melbourne. Besides the main organisers, Casey, Drake-Brockman, Ewers and Pollard, those present at that decisive meeting were Norman Bartlett, Mary and Elizabeth Durack, John McLeod, Murdoch, Prichard, Skinner and Jack Sorenson.35

32 Ibid. A long extract from the text of the letter is on the title page to Section Two.
The inclusion of artists Elizabeth Durack and John McLeod in that seminal meeting may well have prompted the inclusion of art in the first object of the new group’s constitution, which undertook to ‘encourage the study and practice of Literature, Art and Music, in Australia’.\footnote{Draft constitution. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72. The inclusion of artists and musicians in this early constitution is discussed more fully later in this chapter.} It seems likely that the FAWWA sought to provide an umbrella organisation to embrace creative people already interested in becoming members, such as these visual artists and, later, musician Edward Black.

Elizabeth Durack, sister of the writer, was becoming well-known for her outback paintings. In the late 1920s, John McLeod had been one of the foundation members of the University Art Club. This would have brought him into contact with Leslie Rees, and other emerging writers, who later became members of the FAWWA.\footnote{J. Gooding. ‘Western Australian Art 1911–1939: The Perpetuation of a Conservative Style’. Thesis submitted in support of BA Honours in the School of Social Inquiry, Murdoch University, 1978, p. 132.} McLeod became the FAWWA’s fifth president, from October 1942 to 1943.\footnote{J. Lang. At the Toss of a Coin, 1987, p. 72.} Other Perth visual artists joined the Fellowship in its early days. These included John Oldham, the architect and visual artist whose work had featured at the Workers’ Art Guild with that of Harald Vike, and his wife, historian Rae Oldham. Ivor Hunt, also a member and teacher of Fine Art at Perth Technical School, was commissioned, in 1949, to paint the portrait of Joseph Furphy which now hangs in Tom Collins House.\footnote{Ibid., p. 46.} In 1951, with the help of the Technical School, he designed and printed early letterheads for the organisation.\footnote{FAWWA to I. Hunt and Principal and staff of Perth Technical School, 19 December 1951, thanking them for designing and printing the letterheads. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.}

Writing to Drake-Brockman, Mollie Skinner's idiosyncratic style brought to life an early planning meeting.\footnote{The letters are now among the Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/3/24. Quotations from some of them appear in this and other chapters.}

May I send you a continuation of my impressions of our club.....
What a big hit, the little bit done, was, the other evening. One at least of the Duracks lighted — the other responded (a little), Ewers living up to your hope of him, Pollard glowing a bit. Was it the beer? ....... I wish Norbar had been there. We need the complete whole. He is very
essential, for he 'feels' and 'sees', he has a very fine sense of critical values....

I appreciate your comradeship so enormously.42

Prichard, a long-time member and Patron of the FAW in Sydney, also encouraged the formation of the new body as a section of the FAW.43 It was a significant decision for the future of the Western Australian group. Initially, it provided the infant organisation with models for organisational structure, and the opportunity to seek advice from the older body. Letters between the secretary of FAW(NSW) and Drake-Brockman, Casey and Ewers, during 1938 and 1939, reveal the extent of these ongoing discussions.44 On 25 July 1938, just one month after the original Grattan dinner, the secretary of the FAW(NSW) wrote to Ewers, welcoming the idea of a Western Australian Section, and promising to send a copy of the Sydney FAW’s constitution as a guide for the proposed new body.45 As Drake-Brockman predicted, the affiliation brought Western Australian writers into closer contact with their eastern states counterparts, thus helping to overcome the marginalising effect of distance and strengthen the sense of belonging to the national literature. It also helped the new body to avoid a narrowly parochial focus. Frequently the FAWWA joined with the FAW in other states to lobby on matters that concerned all writers, thus reinforcing their argument. The establishment of the Federal FAW Council, in 1955, provided a truly national voice on literary matters.46 Within its second month, the FAWWA felt the benefits of its link with the FAW(NSW), when the latter informed it of the intended visit of English author H. G. Wells, in December 1938.

Entertaining the great man, H. G. Wells and the FAWWA

... I’m thrilled to say he accepted our invite47

Coming only months after the first FAWWA meeting, the visit by English novelist H. G. Wells, to attend a Science Congress in Canberra in December 1938,

42 M. Skinner to H. Drake-Brockman, 3 September 1938. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/3/24. ‘Norbar’ was the pen-name of journalist, and later historian, Norman Bartlett.
44 FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
46 L. Fox, ed. Dream at a Graveside, 1988, pp. 68–70.
47 H. Drake-Brockman to C. Lindsay, FAW(NSW) secretary, 14 December [1938]. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
provided the occasion for the new group to test its strength and make a public statement about its place in Perth’s cultural life. In correspondence with the Sydney FAW, Wells had indicated his interest in meeting ‘fellow-workers’ during his visit. Consequently, the FAWWA planned to entertain the writer at a dinner, on 27 December, at the Palace Hotel, at the cost of 7/6 per head. Immediately people jostled to participate in this opportunity to meet such a celebrity.

As part of its aim to support individual writers, the committee decided that only full members, or Fellows, of the FAWWA would be eligible to attend the Wells dinner. When this decision became public, there was an influx of applications for membership. As Casey commented dryly: ‘On learning that he [Wells] was to be entertained in the West by the F. A. W., some 75 per cent of Perth’s Paltriest People suddenly went literary’. The writers therefore had to carefully scrutinise the requirements for membership, at that time a two-tier system of Associate members and Fellows, the latter being writers with a body of published work. Casey, Drake-Brockman and Ewers vetted the list of membership applications, and unhesitatingly removed even well-known names. Reflecting on the event years later, Ewers suspected that their action could have made them unpopular, as they refused membership to ‘high-ranking clerics and even some editors and managing editors’. Their criteria was to accept only people who were likely to remain members, and thus contribute to the original purpose of the organisation. Ewers saw the visit as a ‘triumph’ for the FAWWA, as their prompt action ensured that they arranged the event before other interested groups could propose competing gatherings for Wells. FAWWA members met the visitor as soon as his boat berthed, took him on a sight-seeing tour, then delivered him to the University in Crawley, where he was to have afternoon tea. They collected him again from Crawley at five o’clock, so that he would have time to rest before speaking at the FAWWA dinner.

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48 Secretary FAW (NSW) to H. Drake-Brockman, 16 October 1938. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
Skinner left her own word picture of the evening in a letter to Drake-Brockman:

She [Prichard] was an electric globe at the dinner. (You were like a Chinese lantern) in a pale green sky. I thought she carried the H.G [H. G. Wells] along: our President [Ewers] contented himself with aboriginal sparks, our Secretary [Casey] with a box of matches.
Mary Miller is always rosette.\textsuperscript{52}

On the whole she was hopeful for the organisation’s future, and for Drake-Brockman’s part in that future, as she encapsulated the leading role Drake-Brockman played from the beginning:

you have the professor [Murdoch] in a nice mood, living up to his expressions of benevolence (on the wireless) for once; you have a dozen men eager and anxious to unfold (but ready to fly back into their shells) — You are younger than almost any of them, are you going to carry them through?\textsuperscript{53}

That December dinner validated the new organisation in three ways. It provided excellent publicity for the new organisation, demonstrating clearly the benefits of belonging to the FAWWA. Secondly, for the members, being part of a gathering of ‘fellow-workers’ with such a well-known writer as H. G. Wells, must have strengthened their determination to be accepted as professional writers. And thirdly, in taking such an uncompromising stance when faced with an influx of membership applications, the committee showed unambiguously that it intended the organisation to benefit individual writers, rather than become another social group. As the successful occasion would not have taken place without the active liaison between the Perth and Sydney sections of the FAW, it confirmed the value of the earlier decision to become affiliated with the Sydney-based FAW. Shortly afterwards, however, the connection with the Sydney FAW sparked an internal fracas over politics which continued to intensify as the outside world fluctuated through the war and later Cold War. This situation will be discussed in the following chapter.

Creating the structure to support the passion
... difficulty in drawing up the rules and regulations$^{54}$

The Wells’ visit focused the organisation’s attention on how the membership rules should be expressed in the constitution that was being finalised. Months earlier, before any formal announcement of the new body, a sub-committee of Drake-Brockman, Casey and Ewers began deliberating the constitution and the degree to which the local Fellowship should mirror the structure of the FAW in other states. They finally adopted a slightly altered version of the NSW Fellowship.$^{55}$ One amendment made was the clause, inserted by Casey in his role as secretary, which stated that:

All property of the Fellowship, whether land and animals, buildings, slaves, jewels, bullion, stores of foodstuff, drink, explosives, valuable manuscripts written by members, fishing rights, mining leases, works of art or articles or agreements and concessions of value, of any kind, shall be under the control of the Executive.$^{56}$

Casey expressed his attitude to constitutions in general when he wrote of the early FAWWA referring to it only rarely, thus ensuring that it did not ‘interfere seriously with the sensible handling of the body’s affairs’.$^{57}$ In the late 1940s, this property clause was amended to a less colourful and more standard statement.

The first object in early constitutions was ‘to encourage the study and practise [sic] of Literature, Art and Music in Australia’.$^{58}$ Both elements in this sentence warrant further exploration. The inclusion of art and music, although deleted from later constitutions, highlighted the early members’ desire to support the creative community as a whole. Other organisations demonstrated a similarly inclusive trend. A ‘Writers and Artists’ Union existed in Melbourne in 1910, and

$^{54}$ J. K. Ewers to C. Lindsay, secretary of FAW (NSW), 8 November 1938. FAW (NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106. Without the minutes for meetings in those years it is impossible to know what these difficulties were, although the type of membership was a topic of discussion with FAW (NSW).
$^{55}$ G. Casey. ‘A Year-old Infant Still Bellows Lustily’, 1940, p.5.
$^{57}$ G. Casey. ‘A Year-old Infant Still Bellows Lustily’, 1940, p.5.
$^{58}$ From the draft constitution for the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA), und, but from surrounding material, and from the wording of the Property clause, the author dates this copy to the original 1939 version. All subsequent citations in these paragraphs are drawn from the early constitution, und. Copies of the original constitution and later version, Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
the Australian Journalists Association also included a ‘Writers and Artists’ Section, while the Queensland Authors and Artists Association preceded the FAW in that state. Although apparently the model for the constitution of the Western Australian Section, the Sydney FAW’s constitution of 1928 focused on fostering and promoting ‘the growth and development of letters and the drama’ as its first purpose, with a second aim of encouraging ‘the study of Australian literature’. Only then, in third place, did it aspire to provide necessary assistance to ‘Australian authors, artists and dramatists’. In early discussions, Ewers assured the FAW(NSW) that the inclusion of music did not reflect an existing lack of support for local musicians. Rather, the FAWWA hoped to encourage future collaboration, especially between writers and composers. The inclusion may reflect an early awareness of the need for some overarching arts body in the State, similar to the Council for Culture, which, in 1944, the FAWWA proposed without success.

The aim of fostering Australian literature ensured a broader focus beyond State boundaries, rather than remaining limited and therefore parochial. In the 1930s, Australian writers were conscious of the need to promote the country’s literature and looked to the growth of ‘a new national culture and literature’ to bring cultural change. In spite of their distance from the Sydney/Melbourne cultural nexus, the creative intellectuals who founded the FAWWA felt they belonged within such a national culture. By dividing its focus between encouraging the study of Australian literature and the practice of writing, the FAWWA committed itself to work in the public arena, while fulfilling its narrower role of nurturing Western Australian writers.

The Western Australian Fellowship’s aims, however, encompassed more than promoting the study and practice of literature and related arts. The remaining
three objects listed in early constitutions emphasise the advocacy role to which early members of the FAWWA aspired. The first two are specific aims to improve conditions for ‘Australian Writers, Artists and Music Composers’ and to help individual practitioners. These are commitments that could be expected of any professional body. The third object, however, commits the FAWWA to defend the democratic nature of Australian culture, with particular reference to fighting censorship and any other change that might be seen to limit the ‘free interchange of ideas.’ As will be seen throughout this study, all these areas of advocacy demanded extra time and energy from a small percentage of members, as they lobbied all levels of government and other agencies such as the Australian Broadcasting Commission to both protect writers’ working conditions and to fight any attempt to limit free speech.

The importance early members placed on working with all other like-minded cultural bodies is underlined in the list of methods suggested in the constitution as means by which the FAWWA might achieve these objects. As well as encouraging ‘social contact’ between writers, artists, composers and ‘kindred workers’, the committee was encouraged to enlist support and cooperation from such groups and from any ‘leaders of thought, and cultured people generally’. It could also associate with any bodies having similar aims and ‘encourage friendly contact’ with cultural bodies both in Australia and overseas. The emphasis on building and working with a cultural community was unmistakeable.65

To provide effective support for local writers and Australian literature as a whole, however, the principal task of the nascent group was to attract members. Membership grew quickly at first. From a beginning of only ten writers in October 1938, by June 1939 the membership numbered between 60 and 70.66 Lang recorded that, in December 1938, there were 31 full members (Fellows) and 25 associates.67 The response to the clamour for membership before the Wells’ dinner defined clearly the FAWWA’s intention to retain the organisation as the province of professional writers, rather than becoming ‘a club for amateur

65 Quotations from the 1949 version of the FAWWA constitution.
66 J. K. Ewer to Professor Morris Miller, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania, 20 June 1939. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/397.
booklovers’, as David Carter suggested was true of the FAW in the 1950s. After this initial growth spurt, membership grew only gradually. New members in 1944 totalled eleven, with only 48 of the total 77 members actually financial. By 1948, after ten years of activity, membership totalled 94, made up of 52 full members and 42 associates.

This two strata membership system followed the example of the Sydney FAW, and was the structure adopted by all state sections of the FAW, except those in Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Writers with a publication record which the committee deemed ‘considerable’ became full members or Fellows. Others became associates, but could and did apply for Fellow status as their writing career advanced. Associate members enjoyed the same opportunities as Fellows, without voting rights. The adoption of this two-fold membership aimed to retain control in the hands of professional writers, thus confirming the FAWWA as a professional organisation. Membership was open to ‘Writers, Artists and Composers’ but not to journalists. As Ewers explained to Catherine Lindsay, secretary of FAW(NSW), they intended to exclude those who were ‘merely journalists and nothing more’ whereas journalists with literary ambitions, such as Rees, Malcolm Uren and Hasluck, would automatically qualify for membership as they were also writers. Professional journalists were unlikely to seek membership unless actively interested in more literary writing. The Australian Journalists Association, founded in 1910, already provided them with an industrial union to foster their interests.

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69 Secretary and Treasurer’s report to the Annual General Meeting, 25 October 1944. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
70 FAWWA Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 26 October 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
71 Copies of the constitutions of the state sections of the FAW are held in the Tom Collins House Archives.
74 J. K. Ewers to C. Lindsay, FAW(NSW), 8 November 1938. FAW (NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
Planning activities to inform and inspire creative minds
... to sharpen wits and exchange information\textsuperscript{76}

This was how Casey's first wife described the activities held regularly for FAWWA members in the early years. Dorothy Congdon remembered the writers as being 'young and vital and bent on making names for themselves in the literary world'.\textsuperscript{77} An early newspaper report described the new body as being founded to provide ‘the social unity of writers’, and as a means of protecting ‘their business interests’.\textsuperscript{78} To fulfil this first aim the emphasis was on planning occasions to bring writers together. Held fortnightly at first, general meetings formed the backbone of such a programme intended to both inform and entertain existing members and attract new ones through interesting speakers. Most frequently, these talks featured different aspects of Australian literature, including topics such as 'The Australian Bush and its Bandicoots' by James Pollard, or 'The Importance of an Australian Outlook in Literature' by William Hatfield, then resident in Western Australia.\textsuperscript{79} The fact that these meetings could attract a sufficiently large audience indicates the need there was for opportunities for intellectual discussion, in the Perth of the late 1930s.

Although no record exists of a guiding policy for the choice of speakers, topics for these evenings included current affairs and items of cultural interest, and appear to have been planned to stimulate a broader intellectual discussion than simply one designed to help writers by focusing on literary matters. Only two of the seven speakers listed by McLeod in his Report for 1943 were actively involved in writing and literature. One, Malcolm Uren, was a journalist and editor of two local publications, the other, Professor Allan Edwards, was Professor of English at the University of Western Australia. The influence of the war is evident, with speakers such as Commander Sadd from the United States Navy. The Chinese Consul, Dr. Tsao, addressed members on two occasions, with other speakers including Professor Currie, Vice-Chancellor of the University of

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 135.
\textsuperscript{78} West Australian, 8 November 1945.
\textsuperscript{79} J. K. Ewers to H. W. Malloch, editor of Bohemia, 18 May 1939. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/398.
Western Australia. The inclusion of journalists like Irwin, Bartlett and George Mulgrue as members ensured that all FAWWA functions received press coverage. Such publicity comprised a significant element in the Fellowship’s promotion of the State’s writers in its early years.

Without a regular monthly newsletter in these early years, there is very little indication of how successful such gatherings were, although Skinner left one of her penetrating comments on an evening when Dr. Tsao was the guest speaker.

The choice of the Consul as speaker possibly arose from the FAWWA’s correspondence at that time with the Australia-China Association, of which FAWWA committee member, poet John Thompson, was the secretary. This pattern appeared often during the early years, as members drew on their existing networks to enrich the activities of the FAWWA.

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Writers were occasionally called upon to talk about their current writing project. In 1942, Skinner assured Drake-Brockman that the July meeting was ‘a treat…’. Skinner described the evening when Elizabeth Durack showed members her original sketches for the Way of the Whirlwind and ‘gave us meat’. Published in 1941, this children’s book featured Elizabeth's illustrations and her sister Mary's text. On another occasion, Alec King discussed one of Peter Cowan’s short stories included in the 1943 Coast to Coast anthology. In those early years, workshops in various aspects of the writing craft were not part of the

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Australian literary scene and so did not feature in the FAWWA programme. Members who spent time in the USA during the 1950s and early 1960s brought the concept to Western Australia, and the FAWWA. Hew Roberts, Director of Adult Education, spoke in 1957 on the topic ‘The Creative Artist in America’, a talk which prompted then president F. B. Vickers to arrange a ‘Writers’ Wongi’ to discuss the idea of writers’ workshops. Three years later, Eleanor White spoke of workshops she attended at the University of California and proposed that the FAWWA either sponsor her or allow her to rent Tom Collins House for a similar series. The committee chose the latter, although president Gerald Glaskin suggested the FAWWA set aside one night a month for workshops. The first creative writing workshops were not introduced in Western Australia until Elizabeth Jolley began teaching at the Fremantle Arts Centre in 1974.

The nearest the FAWWA came to offering tuition in the craft of writing during these years were regular sessions, begun in 1947 and known as the Round Table. Responding to the members’ need for constructive criticism of their work, these innovative sessions concentrated on ‘the trade of writing’, thus in fact, serving a similar purpose as later workshops. The Round Table gatherings changed over time. From March 1948, alternate sessions dealt with prose and poetry. The format changed continually depending on the requirements of the group and on the leader, with different published writers leading sessions. Lack of support caused the suspension of Round Table gatherings in May 1949, however they were soon revived, because their unstructured format could provide advice about specific writing problems as well as assessment of manuscripts by individual members. Olive Pell wrote that members ‘derived not only help but great stimulation’ from these sessions. In her 1960 President’s Report, Durack suggested that she would welcome ‘anyone with enthusiasm

86 26 March 1957, secretary’s notes on Robert’s talk, in FAWWA scrapbook ‘Newsletters and Reports on Functions’. FAWWA papers TCHA.
89 Fellowship, the official organ of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, September 1947. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
90 FAWWA Minutes, 30 March 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
91 O. Pell to FAWWA committee, 27 July 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
enough to re-establish the Round Table where aspiring writers could read — and tear to pieces — constructively of course — each other's work".\(^{92}\)

Whenever possible the committee and members of the Fellowship entertained visiting writers. In October 1940, they once again welcomed Hartley Grattan, who had played such an important role in inspiring local writers to join together.\(^{93}\) In 1944, members of eastern states Fellowships were welcomed; firstly Dr Evatt, followed by Mr Haylen, MHR and Vance Palmer, then president of FAW(Vic).\(^{94}\)

Not all gatherings went as planned. Ernestine Hill wrote to Drake-Brockman, in 1946, apologising for her part in an evening she described as 'a “difficult” chair with speakers gone dumb and gone bush….’ She went on to explain:

> I realise that the complication was to some extent due to me ... but speaking is a physical and mental ordeal that in a big gathering I cannot face. I am sorry, but after all it was a meeting of much happiness and, looking back, of humour. We shall ever remember your helpless, but graceful, flap when nobody would play. Never mind. Everyone enjoyed it.\(^{95}\)

Hill wrote of it as 'a most happy evening', with one member able to give an interesting talk without any preparation. Her description of Drake-Brockman's 'bright natural personality', together with the way Durack held the fort, painted an image of the warm sense of fellowship that developed in those early years.

A social gathering, initiated in 1939, became a regular annual event on the FAWWA calendar, continuing until the late 1990s. The first 'Corroboree' in 1939, was planned as a formal dinner, possibly in recognition of the important role the two dinners for Hartley Grattan and H. G. Wells had played in the formation of the organisation. Unfortunately there is no explanation in either official or personal papers of why this annual event was called a 'Corroboree'. Perhaps it reflected a fellow feeling with the Jindyworobak movement, in seeking to incorporate Aboriginal Australia into the activities of the Fellowship. Or perhaps it was an unspoken tribute to Joseph Furphy, who in a letter to Miles Franklin just after his arrival in Western Australia wrote of 'the intellectual

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92 M. Durack, President's Report, 25 October 1960. FAWWA papers TCHA.
93 FAWWA to FAW (Vic), 20 October 1940. FAW (NSW) papers ML 2008/K22105.
It was possibly a combination of the two explanations, both of which fit easily with the foundation president’s known support for the Jindyworobaks and his enthusiasm for the writing of Joseph Furphy. The invitation for the 1946 ‘Corroboree’ leaves no doubt of the link in the organisers’ mind between the traditional corroboree of indigenous Australians and the event held at the Dutch Mill. Drawn and signed by a local cartoonist, the front page featured a group of obviously Caucasian men and women brandishing spears while they cavort around a camp-fire over which one of them, wearing a chef’s hat, cooks a string of sausages. The men wear lap-laps and pseudo tribal markings. While the name and illustration may be an attempt to show camaraderie with indigenous Australians, from the viewpoint of the twenty-first century it is all too clear how they would be insulted by such representations. It was recognition of this fact that, in the 1990s, led the committee to cease these functions.

From the changes in location it appears certain that during this first decade the ‘Corroboree’ grew in size and scope. Guests at the ninth annual ‘Corroboree’, in 1947, included Sir John Kirwan, former Member of Parliament and part of the University of Western Australia Senate, as well as author of three books on Western Australian history. Also present were several of the guest speakers from that year. This practice enabled the FAWWA to use its principal social occasion, not only as a way of developing fellowship between its members, but also as an opportunity to cement the group’s links with other organisations and members of Perth’s cultural community. It also provided the opportunity to honour local writers and Australian literature in general, in much the same way

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98 Invitation to FAWWA ‘Corroboree’, 30 November 1946. FAWWA papers TCHA.
99 The author’s personal recollection.
as annual lectures do today, and emphasised the social role which the Fellowship aimed to fill.

Working within a creative community
… an association of some standing

Building links between itself and already existing cultural bodies in Western Australia was essential if the FAWWA were to be accepted as a significant professional organisation for the State’s writers. Comparison of the networks writers had already developed within the intellectual and artistic population of Perth in the 1930s, and the circle of influence fostered by the FAWWA by the end of the 1940s, indicates the degree to which the organisation built upon the series of interlocking circles brought to the group by individual members. Writers like Bartlett, Hasluck, Ewers and Drake-Brockman, through their links with the University of WA, introduced the FAWWA to a working relationship with the English Faculty, as well as the Adult Education Board. Artist members, including Elizabeth Durack, Hunt and McLeod, brought connections with Perth Technical School, galleries and the artists’ societies. Journalists Hasluck, Irwin, Uren and Bartlett brought a connection with the daily newspapers. The circle of writers, attracted to Prichard as much by her political beliefs as her writing prowess, included Irwin, whose wife, Dorothy, like Mollie Skinner and Irene Greenwood, was actively involved with both the peace and the women’s movements of the 1940s. Consequently, the FAWWA dialogued with organisations involved in both activities. Playwrights such as Drake-Brockman, F.B. (Bert) Vickers and H. E. M. Flinn all had personal connections with the theatrical world in Perth, including the Workers’ Art Guild. Early members Irene Greenwood, Catherine King, John Bottomley and George Mulgrue were all regular broadcasters on Perth’s fledgling radio stations. Superimposed on

103 FAWWA secretaries varied in their spelling between Flinn and Flynn. The latter spelling is used in Western Australian Writing, B. Bennett with P. Cowan, J. Hay and S. Ashford, eds., 1990, p. 48. FAWWA documents show Flinn signing his name as Flinn. See FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/1. This spelling is used throughout this study.
these connecting circles were the individual friendships between members, friendships which were based on a mutual dedication to writing and the cause of Australian literature. It was this dedication which provided the glue that held the interlocking circles as they extended outwards to form links with both artistic and civic groups within Perth society, with the FAW in the other states and with all levels of government. The working relationships the FAWWA forged with other cultural entities in its early years served several purposes. They enriched the internal life of the organisation, provided new avenues in which to promote Australian literature, and gave added weight to the voice of writers within the community.¹⁰⁵

Absorbing the Western Australian Women Writers’ Club
… *The first writers’ (apart from journalists) organisation in W.A.*¹⁰⁶

Jean Lang was a member of both the FAWWA and Perth’s only other literary group, the WA Women Writers’ Club, founded in the 1920s. As writers’ organisations, both groups shared aims and members. In mid-1943, the WA Women Writers Club appealed to the FAWWA for action in a case of plagiarism of Mary Durack’s work, assuring them of its support in ‘any action the Fellowship of Writers takes in the matter’.¹⁰⁷ Shortly afterwards, members of the WA Women Writers' Club accepted an invitation to an FAWWA meeting to discuss the problems affecting all writers.¹⁰⁸ In November 1951, the FAWWA wrote to the Club suggesting that it amalgamate with the Fellowship.¹⁰⁹ It was an obvious development as the two organisations had many members in common, and had co-operated in creating recent Children’s Book Week displays.¹¹⁰ The date at which this amalgamation took place is not easily discovered. Lang, in the only existing written account of the early group, wrote that it was ‘absorbed’ by the FAWWA, in September 1950. As the FAWWA

¹⁰⁵ Later chapters will discuss FAWWA meetings and poetry evenings held at the Skinner Gallery in Mount Street, Perth and the presentations of Western Australia's writers' works at the Art Gallery during Festivals of Perth.


¹⁰⁷ WA Women Writers Club to FAWWA, 8 June 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.

¹⁰⁸ WA Women Writers’ Club to FAWWA, 2 July 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.

¹⁰⁹ FAWWA to WA Women Writers Club, November 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25. The matter had been discussed at the July committee meeting. FAWWA Minutes, 10 July 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.

Minutes for 14 November 1951 record the correspondence between both bodies concerning such an amalgamation, it seems likely that it occurred late in 1951 or early 1952. Some years later, the Club was resurrected as the Society of Women Writers, which is still active today. In line with past relationships between the two groups, they still have members in common and support each other's activities.

Collaborating with the Adult Education Board

... a powerful force\textsuperscript{111}

Given the connections existing between the University of W.A. and FAWWA members, it followed that it would also work with the University's agent in the community, the Adult Education Board. During the 1940s and 1950s, Hew Roberts and John Birman held pivotal positions with the Adult Education Board and were also members of the Fellowship. Roberts, having initially been Academic Secretary and Student Adviser, became Director of the Board, in 1939.\textsuperscript{112} Birman arrived in Sydney from Poland, in 1937. He immediately contacted the FAW in Sydney, which he found to be 'an extremely active body' although at the time its accent was 'not so much on literary things, as on social and current affairs'.\textsuperscript{113} Both Roberts and Birman spoke frequently at Fellowship meetings. In 1948, John Birman became full-time assistant director of the Adult Education Board. His encouragement of drama productions and community arts led to the birth of the Festival of Perth, in 1953.\textsuperscript{114}

During the 1940s, the FAWWA worked with the Adult Education Board and the University to present lectures on Australian literature. Some of these lectures formed part of the Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF) series, supported by an annual grant to the University of £100, some of which went towards purchasing a 'library of Australian books for students'. Ewers told Ingamells that '... they have a very fine collection, some of it quite rare, much of it very contemporary and likely to be rare in the future'.\textsuperscript{115} Individual writers also gave courses on

\textsuperscript{111} K. Tennant. 'Culture Blooms in the West', \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 21 February 1959.
\textsuperscript{115} J. K. Ewers to R. Ingamells 15 April 1942. Ingamells papers AMC SLV 6244/1466/143/1/205.
Australian literature at the Board’s rooms in Howard Street, Perth in most years.\textsuperscript{116}

Relating to the Fellowship of Australian Writers in other states
... rather than forming some purely local and parochial body\textsuperscript{117}

Although the FAWWA existed essentially to foster writers in Western Australia, its stated purpose was to promote Australian literature as a national entity. An important element in the fulfilment of this aim was its affiliation with the Fellowship of Australian Writers in other states. From its inception, the FAWWA maintained a lively relationship with the original body in Sydney. The 1940s were an important time for the FAW, with new Sections recently created in Victoria and South Australia as well as Western Australia. The Eleventh Annual Report of the original FAW in Sydney included the announcement:

"Interstate sections". A system of communications has been established between the Fellowship in NSW and the sections in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, and it is the practice of the various sections to consult each other in matters of vital policy involving Federal action. Several important questions were under consideration by the Fellowship throughout Australia at the end of last month and unified action on various matters affecting writers will be shortly implemented.\textsuperscript{118}

The 'matters affecting writers', in 1938, became increasingly important through the war years, as the FAWWA joined members of the FAW in other states to speak out, not always successfully, against matters including censorship and the increasing use of syndicated material.

Working with Fellowships based in Melbourne and Sydney helped overcome the isolation of distance for the FAWWA, and provided immediate contact with leading cultural bodies including the Commonwealth Literature Fund. As in all relationships, interactions between these bodies, and more especially with the original Sydney-based FAW, had both positives and negatives. Whereas the Sydney FAW acted as a sounding board and source of guidance in developing the structure of the Western Australian Section, and specifically offered the opportunity to entertain H. G. Wells, it also caused friction over the years, as

\textsuperscript{116} FAWWA Minutes, und, report that J.K. Ewers would present a series of ten lectures for the Adult Education Board and that boxes of Australian books were being added to the Box Scheme. FAWWA papers BL Pollard papers 742/2846A/72.
\textsuperscript{117} J. K. Ewers to R. Throssell, 6 March 1972. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/412.
\textsuperscript{118} FAW(NSW) papers, ML MSS2008/K22105.
occurred in the case of the Anti-Fascism book which sparked bitter disagreement within the FAWWA.\textsuperscript{119} In its minutes of meetings and correspondence, the FAWWA frequently expressed frustration when the Sydney body acted in the name of the FAW without consulting the other state sections. Correspondence over the years show that members of the FAW in other states responded in the same way.

As early as 1939, there is reference to a move by the Sydney body to change its name to the Fellowship of Australian Writers (New South Wales Section).\textsuperscript{120} This would have placed all the different sections of the FAW on an equal footing, while still maintaining their autonomy. It would also have clarified whether an action was undertaken on behalf of all Australian writers or the members of one particular state section. Had this change of name taken place, some of the disagreements between the FAWWA and the FAW(NSW) during the 1940s may have been avoided.\textsuperscript{121} As it was, a rather uneasy liaison existed between the committees in each state during those early years, with FAWWA Minutes recording members’ concern that public actions were often undertaken by the New South Wales body, under the name of the Fellowship of Australian Writers but without consultation with the other state sections. The opinion of the Western Australian Section of the FAW was encapsulated in the decision moved in 1944 that:

\begin{quote}
this branch of the FAW affirms its belief that the various branches should have complete freedom in publishing papers, pamphlets or books, with the stipulation that such publications should clearly state that it is published by a particular branch of the FAW. Further that, when a publication is to be issued, this shall not be done without first communicating with the state branches.\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

This statement was prompted by a confidential report sent by the Sydney-based body, in 1943, to the state sections, informing them of the incorporation of a new publishing body. The FAW Co-operative Publishing Society Ltd was an attempt to solve problems experienced by Australian writers seeking publication in their own country ‘not only under the special difficulties created by war, but

\textsuperscript{119} The response within the FAWWA to this book proposal is discussed in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{120} J. K. Ewers to H. W. Malloch, editor of \textit{Bohemia}, 10 March 1940. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/398.
\textsuperscript{121} Although this nomenclature was not adopted by the FAW in Sydney until much later, it will be used henceforth to ensure clarity.
\textsuperscript{122} FAWWA Minutes, 12 July 1944. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/1.
also in peace time’. The organisers explained the lack of prior consultation with the other FAW Sections as necessary to obtain capital from Federal Treasury, as well as a means of avoiding any premature opposition from ‘the proprietary publishing houses’. Such explanations did nothing to pacify the members of the Western Australian and Victorian sections. In a letter dated six weeks later, the FAWWA remonstrated against the FAW's connection to a body, over which it did not exercise complete control, and suggested that FAW involvement in such a publishing enterprise would place authors in conflict with publishers with whom they already had working agreements. Nor did they support requests for finance for yet another literary periodical when those in existence were 'not paid the attention they merit'. Finally the committee expressed concern that the proposed capital of £500 did not appear sufficient for such an endeavour.

Underlying these points of opposition was a desire not to support any move taken by the New South Wales body in the name of the FAW as a whole, but without prior consultation with the other states.

In 1947, there was further dispute concerning the FAW(NSW)’s protest on behalf of American author Howard Fast. Both the Victorian and Western Australian groups made it clear that their objection was not against the protest itself, but against the fact that, once again, the New South Wales body had taken upon itself to speak on behalf of the Fellowship as a whole. Remonstrating over these actions, the FAW(Vic) expressed succinctly the expectation that

before any Sections (including N.S.W.) could speak for the writers of all Australia, it would have to have the concurrence of the other Sections. Otherwise it has power to speak only for itself and its own members.

Many of these arguments arose from what the New South Wales committee saw as the need for immediate action, with no opportunity to consult the other states, in days of only slow communication avenues. Underlying them all, however, was the fact that the FAW in other states had come into being in a

\[123\] FAW(NSW) to FAWWA, 25 October 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.
\[124\] FAWWA to FAW (NSW), 6 December 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.
\[125\] FAWWA Minutes, 28 October 1947. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2. Also correspondence between the Victorian and New South Wales Sections, November and December 1947. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/23.
\[126\] FAW (Vic) to FAW (NSW), 27 December 1947. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/23.
\[127\] FAW (NSW) to FAW (Vic), 27 November 1947. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/23.
rather ad hoc manner without first developing either a common constitution, similar membership requirements, or an understanding of processes by which future decisions would be made. This was exacerbated by the failure of the original FAW to change its name to reflect its state focus. In a fiery exchange of letters in 1947 and 1948, the Sydney Fellowship pointed out that the Fellowship of Australian Writers was only 'loosely associated in various States with bodies having somewhat kindred aims and making qualified use of its name'.\(^{128}\) In the following year, they wrote that they would adhere to their constitution, referring to themselves as FAW while calling the other bodies the Victorian and Western Australian Sections. They also called on the Victorian section to send 'some senior member' to discuss matters and so arrive at 'a better understanding'.\(^{129}\) It appeared that some elements within the original FAW resented the presence of state sections as much as the newer sections resented what appeared to be an overbearing attitude on the part of the original body. Such exchanges highlighted the need for a joint conference that would enable discussions and allow a fuller interchange of ideas and activities in order to fashion the state sections into a truly national body. Throughout the 1940s, the minutes of the FAWWA suggest that they believed such a conference was imminent. The successful establishment of this council is discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

Besides official interactions between the state sections of the FAW, individual Western Australian writers kept the FAWWA in contact with literary activities throughout Australia. Clem Christesen, founding editor of the *Meanjin Papers* in 1940, asked Ewers in 1944 to act as State representative.\(^{130}\) Copies of the magazine were sold at FAWWA meetings, with regular reports sent to Christesen on the number of sales and subscriptions collected.\(^{131}\) Drake-Brockman also corresponded with Christesen spasmodically from the early 1940s, while Greenwood became a regular correspondent in the 1950s.\(^{132}\) Miles Franklin kept Drake-Brockman informed of literary developments in the eastern states, while Prichard had a wide circle of correspondents among

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\(^{129}\) FAW (NSW) to FAW (Vic), 29 February 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/23.

\(^{130}\) J. K. Ewers to R. Ingamells, 16 April 1944. Ingamells papers AMC SLV 6244/1466/1431/244.

\(^{131}\) For example see letter from J. K. Ewers to C. Christesen, 2 October 1942, in which Ewers reported one subscription and four sales. The *Meanjin* Archive UMA Ewers file.

\(^{132}\) Correspondence between C. Christesen and H. Drake-Brockman and I. Greenwood. The *Meanjin* Archive UMA. Drake-Brockman and Greenwood files.
Australia’s women writers in particular. As travel opportunities improved, individual writers were able to strengthen relationships with their fellow writers in the other states.

Calling for a Western Australian Cultural Council

... to co-ordinate the activities of all the cultural societies in WA

A result of the FAWWA’s active involvement with a broad range of local cultural organisations, and of its urge to see greater collaboration between these bodies, was an ambitious plan set in motion in September 1942. An FAWWA sub-committee consisting of McLeod, Ewers and Stan Wilbur planned the formation of a Cultural Council, to which all organisations of a cultural nature would be invited to send representatives. The idea appeared to have been acted upon only in 1944, when the Fellowship contacted twenty-five organisations and individuals in the community. There was apparently some uncertainty within the Fellowship itself of the true nature of such a council. In his President’s Report in 1944, Flinn called it ‘whatever name it may eventually adopt’. In her analysis, Gregg concentrated on the earliest reference to the concept in FAWWA papers, as a Western Australian Cultural Centre.

Establishing a physical cultural centre in Perth was a major objective of the proposal, however the letter described the aims as being ‘to promote friendly co-operation between all bodies interested in the dissemination of culture, to co-ordinate their activities, and to maintain links with similar organisations in the

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136 Letters went to contacts at the University of Western Australia, notably Murdoch and Allan Edwards, to the Guild of Undergraduates and to the, then, Major F. Alexander, at the Adult Education Board. Others went to the secretaries of a number of cultural organisations, including the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Journalists’ Association, the Women Writers’ Club, the Historical Society, the Elocution Society, the Perth Society of Artists, the Women Painters and Applied Arts Society, the W. A. Drama Festivals Inc., the Repertory Club, the Shakespeare Club, the Patch Theatre Guild, the Musicians’ Union, the Eureka Youth League, the Teachers’ Union, the Australian Natives’ Association, the Women’s Service Guild and the Jugo-Slav and Greek Cultural Societies.


138 A. Gregg, Catalysts for Change: The Influence of Individuals in Establishing Children’s Library Services in Western Australia. LISWA Research Series, No. 8. LISWA, 1996, p. 44.
other states’. later documents refer to a council which would organise activities at the centre and ‘co-ordinate the activities of all the cultural societies in WA’.\textsuperscript{139}

The fact that this project was launched near the end of the war suggests that its formulation was prompted by the desire to establish a better world order through a more lively cultural and artistic life, once the war officially ended. The impetus for the attempt may well have been the Arts Councils established in Great Britain in the later years of the war. These Councils sought to build upon the civilising activities enabled by the arts, as a way of returning the world to civility after the extremes of war. The same desire underpinned the campaign for free children’s libraries and the annual Children’s Book Weeks in which the FAWWA played such a leading part from 1945 onwards.\textsuperscript{140} In his President's Report, playwright H. E. M. Flinn, expressed the hope that the cultural centre would:

\begin{quote}
bring the people of the State generally into closer contact with Australian literature, drama, music, painting and arts and crafts, the main immediate objects being the institution of a national theatre, free libraries supported from rates and government subsidies, and an annual cultural festival.\textsuperscript{141}
\end{quote}

The groups approached, however, did not display any lasting enthusiasm for the formation of such a body. At the Annual General Meeting in October 1945, the outgoing president, H. E. M. Flinn, reported briefly that, as there had been disappointing attendance at meetings of the Cultural Council, it had been decided to drop the matter.\textsuperscript{142} The previous FAWWA committee had already anticipated this possibility and proposed that the Fellowship take the initiative itself to work for public libraries in the city and country and a National Theatre.\textsuperscript{143} Perhaps the Fellowship had not given enough energy to the concept or, perhaps, as seems likely from Hough's account of the theatre world in Perth during those years, the cultural world in Perth consisted of too many small groups, each with its own particular focus and very little inclination at the time to

\textsuperscript{139} H. E. M. Flinn, President's Report, 25 October 1944. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
\textsuperscript{140} This movement and the accompanying Book Weeks are discussed in the following chapter.
\textsuperscript{141} H. E. M. Flinn, President's Report, 25 October 1944. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
\textsuperscript{142} FAWWA Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 31 October 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
\textsuperscript{143} 'Recommendations by outgoing committee’, November 1944. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
pull together. It is certainly unlikely that a body like the FAWWA, only four years after its foundation, could bear the responsibility for such a development. Not until the late 1960s, when the social ethos encouraged the concept of groups and individuals working together, did a number of individuals combine to form the Cultural Development Council of which the FAWWA became a group member.

Several of the proposed Council’s goals were achieved in the following decade. The first Festival of Perth took place in 1953, making it the earliest Arts Festival in Australia. The basis of a free public lending scheme came into being in 1951, through the Library Board Act that set up the Board with Fred Alexander as its Chairman. When, in 1953, F. A. Sharr was appointed Executive Officer, the future of the library system was ensured, with children’s libraries included in those for adults. This followed lobbying by many agencies including the FAWWA, which was especially active in organising Children’s Book Weeks and the Children’s Book Council in WA.

The goal of developing a National Theatre in Perth brought Western Australia into what was, in fact, a nationwide campaign. As early as 1939, the Central Cultural Council in Sydney had formed a sub-committee of three, Bartlett Adamson, then president of the FAW(NSW), with two others from Sydney theatre companies, to begin a campaign for this purpose. Within the Fellowship major support came from Frank Dalby Davison, Marjorie Barnard and Western Australian Leslie Rees, with Rees suggesting that writers were the best people to power the movement. Jean Devanny outlined the project to Miles Franklin with a request that she, too, become one of the sub-committee. By January 1940, Devanny was able to report confidently to Prichard that the Sydney body

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144 D. Hough. ‘the playmakers’ in farewell cinderella, 2003, p. 38.
145 A. Gregg suggested several reasons for the failure of this proposal, including personality conflicts, lack of finance, or lack of vision. A. Gregg. Catalysts for Change, 1996, p. 45.
146 The formation and work of this Council is discussed in Chapter Eight.
147 F. Alexander. Campus at Crawley: a narrative and critical appreciation of the first fifty years of the University of Western Australia. Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire for University of Western Australia Press, p. 691.
149 A detailed discussion of the FAWWA’s role in early Children’s Book Week celebrations follows in Chapter Four.
had the National Theatre Movement 'well in hand'.\textsuperscript{151} In the same letter, she asked Prichard to send her a list of 'good' names of Western Australians, who were 'likely to interest themselves in culture' in order to spread the movement to the West. In 1956, a semi-professional National Theatre Company in Western Australia grew from the merger of the Company of Four and the Perth Repertory Company.\textsuperscript{152}

Supporting writers in war time

... the monstrous evil of war\textsuperscript{153}

Coming so soon after the foundation of the Fellowship in Western Australia, the outbreak of World War II impacted on the membership in a variety of ways. Besides increased tensions between members who held differing political allegiances, there was the immediate effect, shared by the rest of the community, of loss of manpower as a number of foundation members were called up 'on service of one kind or another'.\textsuperscript{154} Drake-Brockman moved to Melbourne in 1941 when her husband, Geoffrey, was appointed Director-General of Engineer Services in the Army.\textsuperscript{155} Writing to Miles Franklin in 1942 she complained of being 'so depressed with the stupid war'.\textsuperscript{156} Prichard also shifted to the eastern states for a short while, taking up the post of co-editor of \textit{Australian New Writing}.\textsuperscript{157}

Some members were stationed at army bases throughout Australia.\textsuperscript{158} Jack Sorenson, James Pollard and Stan Wilbur were in the Northern Territory with the Australian Army and the RAAF respectively.\textsuperscript{159} By early 1945, all three had

\begin{thebibliography}{159}
\item J. Devanney to K. S. Prichard, 9 January 1940. Cited in C. Ferrier, ed., \textit{As good as a yarn with you}, 1992, p. 49.
\item D. Hough. 'the playmakers', 2003, pp. 39–40.
\item C. Christesen to K. S. Prichard, 24 February 1967. Prichard papers NLA 6201/10//11.
\item Early in 1939 Geoffrey Drake-Brockman had been made C.R.E. of Western Command. When war was declared he was responsible for establishing an A.I.F. camp for the State at Northam. During the early war years he travelled extensively throughout the State and then Australia inspecting army installations, roads, etc. G. Drake-Brockman. \textit{The Turning Wheel}. Perth: Paterson Brokensha Pty Ltd., 1960, pp. 238 ff.
\item H. Drake-Brockman to M. Franklin, 22 February 1942. Franklin papers ML 364/33.
\item FAWWA \textit{Quarterly Review}, und. but probably June 1943, p.3. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
\item Information about members absent on war duties was always printed in monthly reports and recorded in the minutes of meetings. For example FAWWA Minutes, und. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
\item This information and that which follows is from the FAWWA \textit{Quarterly Review}, und. but probably June 1943, p.3. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72. A later Review, similarly undated,
returned to Perth. Mervyn Cooke and Ted Mayman both attended an officers’ school in the RAAF in Melbourne. Others saw active service. Peter Mantle spent ten months with a commando unit in Timor before returning to the Army Education Service. Paul Buddee was in the siege of Tobruk, moving to take charge of an amenities camp in Palestine before returning to Queensland and later Hobart with Army Education. As a Rat of Tobruk, Buddee was one of the few Western Australian writers to produce a body of war poems, Stand To and Other Poems, printed in 1943, of which J. T. Laird considered ‘the humorous and satirical pieces’ to be the most successful.160 George Mulgrue, having been taken prisoner of war in the Middle East, escaped and almost reached the Swiss border after the fall of Italy. He was recaptured, however, and sent to prison camp in Germany. From Oflag VIII/F he wrote to Drake-Brockman: ‘Since my recapture I’ve written a play, dealing with things in Italy after that phoney armistice’. By early 1945, he was safely back in England.161 Mulgrue and Wilbur were particularly missed, having been secretary and treasurer respectively in the early years of the organisation.162

Remembered ‘well and affectionately’, the only FAWWA member to lose his life fighting during World War II was Dr Andrew Robert Fausset Clarke (1892–1942), a committee member in 1939. Clarke was killed in the fall of Singapore, where he commanded a Field Ambulance Unit.163

For Gavin Casey, Norman Bartlett and Bill Irwin, the war opened new avenues for their own writing. Both Casey and Irwin went to New York, the former with the Department of Information, the latter with Australian Associated Press.164 Writing once again to Drake-Brockman, Mollie Skinner provided a word picture of Casey as a soldier:


162 J. McLeod. President's Report, 27 October 1943, p. 2. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22105; and FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
164 Details from FAWWA Quarterly Reviews, und. but apparently mid-1943 and early 1945, pp. 2–3 and 1–2 respectively. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
The great delight of my life at the moment is Gavin being given the Prior Memorial Prize. He came in with Dorothy (looking really rather like a pearl of great price) to the FS last evening. He was in uniform and had cut his moustache at the top like Charlie Chaplin and looked absolutely a forlorn soldier.  

Perhaps Bartlett was the one whose future direction as a writer was most influenced by his wartime experience. Moving to Townsville as an Intelligence Officer with the RAAF in 1941, he subsequently became Public Relations Officer for the RAAF in New Guinea, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. This led to his becoming Publications Editor for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In later life, he held diplomatic posts and was commissioned to write the history of the two hundred year relationship between Australia and America, to commemorate the bicentenary of American independence.  

In 1942, the FAW(NSW) suggested Australian writers should record, in words, their impressions of the war activity, much as artists were already creating a pictorial record. The FAWWA nominated Katharine Susannah Prichard and Gavin Casey to the Prime Minister as suitable writers to spend time at the front line. On purely literary grounds, the choice of Prichard was a logical one, as she was then the best known and most widely acclaimed Western Australian writer. Given the political sensitivities of the time, however, it is unlikely that Prichard would have appeared a suitable candidate as far as the Australian government was concerned. The suggestion was not acted upon. The war provided the stimulus for fictional works by a large number of Australian writers. In Western Australia writers like F. B. (Bert) Vickers and Gerald Glaskin wrote their first stories while in hospital recuperating from war injuries. Vickers’ first novel, First Place to the Stranger, won a Sydney Morning Herald award in 1946, although it was not published until 1956. Glaskin’s first novel, A World of Our Own, based on the experiences of service men returning

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166 Information for this paragraph drawn from Bartlett papers NLA 6884.  
167 FAWWA to FAW(NSW), 16 January 1943 and 27 April 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.  
to civilian life, won the 1957 Commonwealth Literary Award.\textsuperscript{169} Both writers served as presidents of the FAWWA, Vickers in 1953–1955 and Glaskin in 1968–1969. William Jamieson Brown’s novel, \textit{Destroyers will Rendez-vous}, also drew on the writer’s wartime experiences, while some, like Jack Harvey, stopped writing after telling their own stories in novels such as \textit{Salt in Our Wounds} (1957). Other Western Australians who drew upon their wartime experiences for later fictional works included Peter Cowan (never a member of the FAWWA), Alec Choate, T.A.G. Hungerford, Donald Stuart and Richard Beilby. Stuart was president of the FAWWA from 1973 to 1975, serving as national president at the same time.\textsuperscript{170}

The Fellowship supported its writers on active service in ways typical of any professional organisation for its members. The committee maintained contact with them as much as possible, reporting on their whereabouts in the monthly bulletins. For those serving overseas, parcels were arranged containing books written by members, including Casey’s \textit{It’s Harder for Girls}, and cakes.\textsuperscript{171} FAWWA bulletins referred to letters of thanks from Buddee and Mulgrue. Flinn reported having received a letter from Buddee to the Fellowship, in April 1945:

May I say how much I appreciated the fact that not one Season has passed in the five that I have been in the Army without the Fellowship sending me some little token of remembrance. Thanks!\textsuperscript{172}

At home, the FAWWA felt the constraints of war-time rationing upon its own activities. In 1943, the annual dinner became a buffet supper, with members asked to donate two ounces of butter each, ‘owing to the impossibility of getting extra coupons’.\textsuperscript{173}

One member appealed for a different kind of support. In 1944, Eric Muspratt sought help in gaining, from the Prime Minister, release from army duties to

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p. 315–316.
\textsuperscript{170} S. Clarke. \textit{In The Space Behind His Eyes: Donald R. Stuart, 1913—1983}. Lesmurdie, Western Australia: Claverton House, 2006, pp. 239-240.
\textsuperscript{171} G. Mulgrue wrote to H. Drake-Brockman mentioning that he had ‘got the cake and book from FS’ and was ‘writing to thank them’, 25 January 1942. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634 Series 3/20.
\textsuperscript{172} H.E.M. Flinn. President’s Report, 30 October 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
\textsuperscript{173} FAWWA Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 13 October 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/1.
write a book on the war experience.\textsuperscript{174} Subsequently, Ewers visited the Manpower Office, only to discover that Muspratt had already been given leave.\textsuperscript{175} Although too late to help gain this release, the FAWWA’s advocacy may have helped him, in October 1945, to gain a literary pension and a ‘roving commission’ to prepare a history.\textsuperscript{176}

The topics suggested by the FAWWA for a proposed Federal Conference of the FAW, in January 1939, included other innovative ways the government could support Australia’s writers. These included a requirement that shipping companies trading with Australia maintain a number of Australian books in their libraries; that annual prizes be established for writing in a range of genres and that duties be imposed on imported material published in Australian journals. The conference did not take place so these suggestions were never discussed.\textsuperscript{177}

Effect of paper shortages
\textit{all former draft contracts are now out of the question}.\textsuperscript{178}

Immediately after war broke out in Europe, publishing in Australia actually increased. English publishers, hit by the restriction of paper in their own country, discovered that they could publish books in Australia instead of exporting them to that country. Large numbers of comics and much advertising material were also published here. However, the boom did not include Australian material, nor did it last. By July 1940, the Australian government had introduced its first restrictions on newsprint.\textsuperscript{179}

The problem of paper shortages and their impact on the Australian publishing industry, and therefore on the country’s writers, was tackled by all state FAWs, together with a wide range of literary bodies. The Sydney FAW requested 50 organisations throughout New South Wales to support the approach to the

\textsuperscript{174} G. Mulgrue to FAWWA, 8 March 1944. FAWWA papers, BL, 2134/1438A/19.  
\textsuperscript{175} FAWWA Minutes, 10 May 1944. FAWWA papers, BL, 214/1438/1.  
\textsuperscript{176} FAWWA Minutes, 3 October 1945. FAWWA papers, BL, 214/1438/2.  
\textsuperscript{177} G. Casey to FAW(NSW), 18 December 1938. FAW(NSW) papers, ML, 2008/K22106.  
\textsuperscript{178} The Currawong Publishing Co. to J. K. Ewers, 1 March 1943. FAWWA papers, BL, 214/5459A/375.  
Federal Government by the Federal Council of the Association of Journalists of Australia.\(^\text{180}\) On the 2 January 1940, the FAWWA appealed to Prime Minister Menzies to control the massive importation of syndicated material. Cited in the letter was the *Smith’s Weekly* calculation that 20,400lbs of newsprint per week were required to print comic supplements for the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*. Such material wasted supplies of paper, limited due to the war, as well as preventing the publication of original Australian writing. This effectively handicapped ‘the development of an indigenous Australian literature’ thus ‘hindering Australia’s social and cultural development’.\(^\text{181}\)

A letter to the FAWWA from the Combined Literary Societies of Melbourne dated 1943 shows that the paper supply deteriorated further as the war progressed. Problems with manpower among loggers and general workers affected mill production, especially in Tasmania, while the government was suspected of holding paper in reserve. The letter warned that the publishing industry, and therefore the livelihood of Australia’s writers, was under severe threat, just when there was increased demand for Australian books, especially from the American soldiers serving in this country.\(^\text{182}\) In January 1944, a Book Sponsorship Committee was established to consult with the federal government on releases of paper for book production, with a special emphasis on the publication of text books.\(^\text{183}\) Eight months earlier, the Prime Minister John Curtin had responded to the FAWWA’s letter of concern about restricted book sales in Western Australia due to the shortages.\(^\text{184}\) He later intervened in the Book Sponsorship Committee to broaden its scope.\(^\text{185}\) By April 1944, it was reported that four out of the eight literary books published since January were by Australian authors.\(^\text{186}\)

\(^{180}\) FAW(NSW) to FAWWA, 29 December 1939. FAW(NSW) papers, ML, 2008/K22105.


\(^{182}\) Combined Literary Societies of Melbourne to FAWWA, 30 April 1943. FAWWA papers, BL, 214/1438A/1.

\(^{183}\) The Age, 25 January 1944.

\(^{184}\) Prime Minister J. Curtin to FAWWA, 26 May 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/1.

\(^{185}\) Momento, National Archives of Australia, Issue 37, 2009, p. 10.


\(^{186}\) Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April 1944.
Conclusion

The visits of American critic Hartley C. Grattan and English novelist H. G. Wells, in June and December 1938, encouraged the small group of writers in Perth to see themselves as part of the world-wide literary community. Following Grattan’s advice, Jesse Hammond approached Ewers and in October 1938 a nucleus of writers formed the Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. The new organisation’s early focus was twofold, to build a strong literary community that would support the professional careers of the State’s writers, and to position that community in a working relationship with other cultural bodies, especially the University of Western Australia, through its Adult Education Board, and the other state sections of the FAW. Membership grew steadily, fostered by a regular program of talks on a wide variety of subjects, designed to stimulate local writers intellectually; a monthly session offering critical appraisal of members’ writings, and an annual major social event.

In the early 1940s, the FAWWA made special efforts to support its members involved in the war, while making adjustments to counter reduced manpower. Lobbying against war-time trends such as the increasing use of syndicated overseas material in Australian publications, and paper shortages inhibiting publication of local books, was, on the whole, unsuccessful in reducing these developments. Nor was the FAWWA successful in gaining positions as literary war observers for either Casey or Prichard, although it may have helped Mulgrue eventually gain support for a study of sailors in the war. In spite of the failure of its proposal to set up a Western Australian Cultural Council, during the years ahead, the FAWWA continued to work for the achievement of elements incorporated in the aims of that projected body.

The political tensions aroused by World War II disrupted relationships within the FAWWA during the war years and into the ensuing Cold War period. Many writers, both in Australia and overseas, supported radical politics as an
alternative to capitalism. Within the Fellowship some members belonged to the Communist Party of Australia while many others supported its ideals. Conflict erupted between them and more conservative writers, as well as those who sought to maintain the FAWWA free from any political affiliation. With feelings running high there were fiery outbursts at meetings. The following chapter discusses the internal dissension during the 1940s and 1950s. The chapter will show that, in spite of these disagreements, Perth’s writers remained united on matters that were purely literary, and worked together to lobby against politically-inspired decisions that affected Australia’s writers. In particular, even while members were divided on political opinions, they combined with librarians and teachers to organise the annual Children’s Book Week celebrations, which played an important role in the struggle to establish children’s libraries.
** Chapter Four

Surviving political turmoil

… a very perilous whirling centre

Mollie Skinner’s description of the Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in its early stages as a centre that was both ‘perilous’ and ‘whirling’ was insightful. She wrote to Drake-Brockman:

We must stand steady on our centre of gravity; our consciousness of what we aim at. We have no growth yet — only a centre of gravity. A very perilous whirling centre we must keep our toes on…

At the time, Skinner can have had little idea how accurate her words would prove. Although early committees worked to build a literary community that would survive and be effective because of a strong inner structure and the collaboration between writers, World War II brought more damaging influences than the influx of syndicated material and paper shortages. Political dissonances, sparked by a wide-spread struggle between the extremes in politics, destabilised the FAWWA throughout the war years and the following Cold War period. This chapter explores the major internal conflagrations that buffeted the FAWWA during the first fifteen years of its life. At the root of each was the conflict of strong creative minds, with equally strong political ideals. It will be shown, however, that members remained united on literary issues. They worked together to lobby against censorship, and the centralisation of Australian Broadcasting Commission programs in particular, while their involvement in the continuing fight for free children’s libraries expressed itself in

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the annual presentation of Children’s Book Week from 1945 to 1953. These
weeks marked the first public promotion of Australian books and their authors in
the State, and were a significant achievement in light of the internal tensions of
that time. In order to provide the background against which these contrasting
activities occurred, the chapter begins with a brief overview of the growth of
Perth’s cultural life in post-war years.

In his 1945 report, FAWWA president playwright H. E. M. Flinn, predicted ‘full
peace-time activity’ in the year ahead. He suggested that the Fellowship’s
activities would be strengthened in the post-war years by the experience of
members as they returned from war service. This was certainly true in other
cultural areas. In the visual arts, Guy Grey-Smith and Howard Taylor were ex-
service artists, while Kathleen O’Connor returned from Paris in 1948 for three
years. The influx of post-war migrants from Europe after the war brought a new
dimension to Western Australia’s cultural life with newcomers, including Drs
Salec Minc, Rudolph Werther, Hans Briner and his wife Catherine, all involved
in promoting art and music in Perth. In 1947, Briner established the Western
Australian Opera Society, while Werther organised musical events at the
Cottesloe Civic Centre. Enthusiasms were fuelled by discussions at the
Banana Club, an unstructured group formed in 1945 by artist Elise Blumann,
who met to discuss cultural matters in the European coffee house tradition.
Local art also emerged with the first exhibition of Elizabeth Durack’s work held
in Perth, in 1946. Although these activities did not immediately involve or affect
the writing community, they helped provide the beginnings of a creative milieu in
which all art forms might flourish.

The theatrical world in Perth, by contrast, did involve local writers, many of
whom wrote for theatre and radio. The strong local theatre tradition existing in

3 Ibid.
4 N. Weston. ‘visual sites’ in farewell cinderella: creating arts and identity in western Australia.
G. Bolton, R. Rossiter, and J. Ryan, eds. Crawley, W.A.: University of Western Australia Press,
2003, p. 194.
8 Prichard’s Brumby Innes won the 1927 Triad award for the best Australian three act play. R.
Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1975, pp. 50–51. Drake-Brockman’s Men without Wives won the
the 1940s and 1950s provided opportunities for local writers’ scripts to be workshopped and performed. The University Dramatic Society and other smaller theatre companies which had flourished in pre-war Perth, suffered from a manpower shortage and war-time austerities during the early 1940s. However, the theatre world received a major boost when the University of Western Australia, encouraged by Jeana Tweedie (later Jeana Bradley), established a Theatre Council in Perth in 1948. This was the first step in establishing a state branch of the national theatre, a vision shared by the Cultural Council which the FAWWA attempted to launch in 1944. The Theatre Council revived the popular State Drama Festival, encouraging local writers through prizes for the best scripts. In the following year, British producer Tyrone Guthrie visited Perth and urged Western Australian theatrical companies to become more professional. As a direct result of this visit, the Company of Four was established, leading to the successful National Theatre Movement, in 1956. Led by Lily Kavanagh, a drama teacher, the Company included Nita Pannell, already an established actress, Sol Sainken, a director connected with the Repertory Club, and Harold Krantz, businessman and husband of one of Perth's well-known actresses, Dorothy Krantz. The backing of a successful businessman like Krantz was a major factor in the Movement's success.

While local playwrights gained public recognition if their works were performed by local theatrical groups, there was still little opportunity for books by Western Australian writers to receive public promotion. A lucky author might have a book featured in the window of a city bookshop and be interviewed on radio programmes such as Catherine King’s Women’s Session on the Australian Broadcasting Commission, however there were few other opportunities to present new books and their authors to the general community.

9 Tweedie/Bradley was appointed to the English Department in 1947. Ibid., p. 37.
10 Ibid., pp. 38–39.
Dissension among members
...literature has always been and always should be tangled with great ideas\textsuperscript{12}

Like their European counterparts, most Australian writers at that time belonged
to a new element in Australian society, one that Serle described as ‘an
intellectual-cultural class’ that was ‘predominantly dissident’.\textsuperscript{13} This support for
left-wing and progressive policies resulted in part from a growing criticism of the
tenets of capitalism following its inability to stop the country from sliding into the
depression of the 1930s. Such criticisms were compounded by concern at the
dominance of extreme right-wing policies in Franco’s Spain where totalitarian
government was imposed on the people in opposition to the elected socialist
government, followed by the rise of the Nazis in Germany. In Western Australia
Prichard, as a well-known communist, provided a focal point around whom
these writers constellated. Norman Bartlett wrote that her presence in
Greenmount provided ‘a much more compelling focus for diffuse revolutionary
idealism than the University’.\textsuperscript{14} By signing a Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler in
December 1939, Soviet Russia unleashed a wave of anti-communist sentiment
in allied countries, which disheartened many of its overseas supporters. In June
1940, as a result of these strong anti-communist sentiments, the Communist
Party of Australia was banned and its activities, including the newspapers
produced within each state, forced to go underground. Almost exactly twelve
months later, on 22 June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union and, by
December 1942, the Communist Party was once more declared a legal entity in
Australia.\textsuperscript{15}

Whenever fear and suspicion of communism escalated, the authorities and
general public were quick to accuse anyone expressing slightly left-wing
sentiments of being a member of the Communist Party. Throughout most
western countries, writers were particularly targeted. The Spanish Civil War led
many writers to use political as well as artistic means to fight the inequalities in

\textsuperscript{12} H. Roberts to K. Tennant, 19 May 1958. Adult Education Board papers UWAA 364; CLF
\textsuperscript{13} G. Serle. \textit{From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788–1972.}
\textsuperscript{15} J. Williams. \textit{Anger & Love: a life of struggle and commitment}. Fremantle, W.A.: Fremantle
Arts Centre Press, 1993, pp. 85, 91–96.
the world.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, even when public sentiment in Australia was most strongly anti-communist, there remained a left-wing influence in the literary world.\textsuperscript{17} The correspondence between six women writers between 1930 and 1957, as collected by Carole Ferrier, paints a vivid picture of their free-ranging attitudes from disapproval of government policy to open support for, and membership of, the Communist Party of Australia.\textsuperscript{18}

Communist Party records for Western Australia give the number of members in 1939 as 348. Of the 26 officials of the Party named in a security report, in 1943, three were foundation members of the Fellowship – Prichard, journalist Bill Irwin and Greenwood.\textsuperscript{19} Files held by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) reveal that the last of the three, a committed feminist and broadcaster, joined the Communist Party of Australia in 1942, a fact which she nevertheless denied throughout her life.\textsuperscript{20} Also active within Western Australia, in the early 1940s, was the Anti-Fascist League, presided over by Edward (“Bill”) Beeby, who, with his partner Ida, ran Patch Theatre in King Street, Perth. Beeby gathered like-minded people around him, especially through his radio session on Radio 6PR.\textsuperscript{21} Throughout her adult life, Prichard maintained her loyalty to the Party, not even wavering from her support following the invasion of Hungary, in 1956, with its brutal repression of those seeking freedom from the Soviet system. At that time many others, including Irwin, responded by renouncing their allegiance to the USSR. Some, like journalist Kenneth Gott, were expelled by the Party because of their criticism of those events.\textsuperscript{22}

Joan Williams’ account of the political events in Western Australia, during the 1940s and 1950s, was based on her own active involvement with the Communist Party and her experiences as a cadet with the \textit{West Australian

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{18} C. Ferrier, ed. \textit{As good as a yarn with you: Letters between Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Jean Devanny, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark}. Oakleigh, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
\bibitem{21} J. Williams. \textit{Anger & Love}, 1993, p. 94.
\bibitem{22} K. Gott and B. Irwin correspondence. Gott papers Australian Manuscripts Collection SLV 13047 Box 3765/7.
\end{thebibliography}
newspaper. There she quickly became friends with more established journalists such as Irwin. Williams, with Irwin and her first husband, journalist Pete Thomas, worked on the production of the communist paper the *Workers’ Star*, as well as organising and attending classes in Marxist theory. The federal government of 1940–1941 initiated extensive police raids on the homes of anyone suspected of communist sympathies. Williams and her husband concealed their Marxist literature in his sister’s home.\(^{23}\) Having already been raided several times, Prichard used her creative imagination to find hiding places for forbidden printed matter. During the raids early in 1940, she hid them in a tin trunk, buried in the thick growth of a plumbago hedge in the grounds of her Greenmount home.\(^{24}\)

For the FAWWA, both periods of strongest anti-communist sentiment, 1939–1940 and 1950–1951, proved disruptive, with fiery interactions between members resulting in several resignations. During these years the FAWWA membership included writers like Durack and Drake-Brockman, who through their families, were strongly connected to the conservative side of politics. Ewers played a central role in all the episodes of political argument, and many members found his attitude difficult to comprehend. Consequently, over the years, he was deemed to be a radical dissident by more conservative writers and a reactionary right-wing supporter by others, some of whom went so far as to name him as an agent of the Australian security organisation.\(^{25}\)

Ewers, however, walked a line on which he was quite clear, describing himself as not ‘sectarian’.\(^{26}\) His second President’s Report, *Writers and the Peace*, given in 1946, clearly expressed his dislike of capitalism.\(^{27}\) Later, writing of Prichard after her death, he noted that, while sharing many of communism’s ideals, he considered it to be state capitalism, and disliked its followers’ practice


\(^{26}\) J. K. Ewers to C. Christesen, 18 June 1942. The Meanjin Archive UMA, Ewers File One.

of placing their allegiance to the party before allegiance to any other group to which they belonged. In recent years the fact that Ewers opposed communism has sufficed for some commentators to assume, wrongly, that he belonged in the conservative camp.

Other writers shared Ewers’ opinion of communism. In a letter to Skinner, Ewers quoted from Bartlett’s recent letter to him.

Obviously a party line which frankly subordinates literature, art, religion, morals, personal relationships and everything else to politics, is more dangerous than eccentrics with odd ideas …

My whole point was to watch for white-anters who want to use the society and you have my sympathy in anything you do to keep them out.

Years later, Hew Roberts expressed similar thoughts. While planning the 1958 Commonwealth Literature Fund lectures in Perth, he asked Sydney writer Kylie Tennant whether Dymphna Cusack would be an appropriate lecturer:

…I have also heard that she is perhaps more interested in politics than in literature. I have no interest in any quarrel with the political views of anyone but it is true that some people use a platform intended for a cultural purpose to present political rather than cultural ideas. Even my old and beloved personal friend, Katharine Susannah, sometimes did this.

Again, I have no personal quarrel for literature has always been and always should be tangled with great ideas. But when a public platform is used for purposes other than the advertised purpose it sometimes becomes ineffective. The aim of this lecture, after all, is to encourage the reading of Australian literature and the seeing of Australian plays.

In his long letter to Skinner, Ewers outlined in some detail the danger he felt that such adherence to a political party posed for the FAWWA at the time. In his opinion, the FAW in Sydney and Melbourne were ‘not representative of the writers in NSW and Vic [sic]’, being controlled by ‘a political minority’. Consequently, they ‘put the “cause” first and literature a bad second’. Andrew Milner confirmed this assessment, in 1988, when he named the Fellowship of

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Australian Writers as ‘a Communist Party front organization [sic.]’. Ewers saw the FAWWA as ‘representative of the writers of WA’, as it included members with a wide range of political affiliations.

On the occasion of the Wells’ visit, the Sydney body exerted a positive influence on the development of the FAWWA. In early 1939, however, its decision to publish a book, *Writers in Defence of Freedom*, sparked the first political arguments in the new group, splitting the committee into two opposing camps. One group, led by Prichard and Irwin, argued that the Western Australian Section should support the book as it stood. The second, led by Ewers, argued, not against the sentiments of the book, but that before the FAWWA could accept the book, the Preface should be changed to include communism among the totalitarian governments that it condemned.

A ‘wordy row’ broke out at the first meeting to discuss the matter, with no decision reached and a second meeting was called to find some solution. Before that meeting, Ewers asked the vice-president Pollard to take the chair, leaving him free to propose that the Preface of the book be changed ‘to include a protest against all interference with freedom whether from (a) influences within a democracy (b) Fascist influences (c) communist influences’. Ewers’ letter to Pollard left no doubt that he had been very ‘upset’ by the opposition during that first meeting.

Skinner apparently felt sufficiently separate from the emotional undercurrents of the initial meeting to give her sense of humour full play, as she described the confrontation to Drake-Brockman, who had not attended. It is worth quoting in full.

Feb, 39. "Dear Ettie" It's only fair to give you a resume of your club meeting - the first at which our Chinese Lantern was not. ................ about 16 men and 13 women. The important cinder in the eye of it, was K.S.P. I became aware of her mood when she kissed me in front of them all — distant, begging, and don't-care-a-damn-if-you-give-me-no-moral-support — potent. See?

Pollard ironic and you-can't-get-round-me, no how! Casey, shot! Norbar & Wilbur real real nice and — nothing on top. George dressed, boots & suit, impish though ....

The matter was the undercurrent of politics. The question arising about that FAW's book. K. S. said "As a member of the Sydney Centre — etc. She had been asked by them ......" And J. K. Ewers got angry and Wilbur wanted a motion passed for discussion and J. K. Ewers tried to pass it off, and you know which way his thoughts raced. He talked high of "our little Club", so amiable and pleasant and always happy till — you know him....

So it's to be next time. I don't think you'd better go!

She added as a postscript: — ‘PS Burn this letter please. Shot? Who was shot?’ Fortunately, Henrietta disobeyed her injunction. It is clear from this correspondence that Drake-Brockman was unable to attend these discussions, or perhaps unwilling. She was one of those Ewers felt had stayed away as a protest against the discussion of politics within FAWWA meetings.

Bartlett's own reflections on these episodes, written nearly 40 years later, described the meetings as 'acrimonious'. He saw the Fellowship as having its 'dedicated leftists' who were 'mothered by Katharine Susannah Prichard' and among whom Bartlett initially included himself. No doubt this argument was the ongoing internal battle referred to by Casey in his Bohemia article, when he wrote:

Political squabbles are frequent and furious, but roars of rage are invariably responded to with howls of indignation; never with the hurt stare which might indicate a member about to be lost.

The 'squabbles' that broke out over the proposed book served little purpose other than to trigger stormy meetings within the local organisation. Only after the defeat of Ewers' motion did the Perth Fellowship learn that the FAW in Victoria had already requested that the Preface be altered along the same lines.

36 Writers referred to here are: Gavin Casey, well-known for his tendency to drink heavily, Norman Bartlett, a journalist with the West Australian using the nom de plume of ‘Norbar’, Stan Wilbur, a journalist and member of the Communist Party of Australia, and George Mulgrue, radio announcer with local radio station 6PR.


38 H. Drake-Brockman certainly disapproved of Ewers' criticism of capitalism in his second President's Report. In 1949, she assured him that his words had 'Lost us some members who would have been valuable'. H. Drake-Brockman to J. K. Ewers, 22 February 1949. Drake-Brockman papers, NLA 1634/9/17.


40 G. Casey. 'A Year-old Infant Still Bellows Lustily (Light-Hearted History of the W.A. Literary Movement)' in Bohemia, January 1940, p.5.
and that the change had already been made. The Prefatory Statement to the book was altered to include a protest against all totalitarian governments, fascist and communist. The fact that such bitter debate had been raging within the Western Australian Section, even while the FAWs in Melbourne and Sydney were arranging the required changes, highlights the disadvantages faced by the Perth group because of its geographic distance from Melbourne and Sydney.

In March 1939, Ewers wrote to the FAW(NSW) expressing his total support for the new preface and his willingness for his name to appear in the list of supporting writers. The book was not published, however, being overtaken by the declaration of war in the following September. It was to have included articles by both Prichard and Drake-Brockman. Prichard's thoughts on the arguments and attitudes within the Fellowship are clear from her comment to Miles Franklin that meetings in Perth were 'dull shows' with 'everybody scared stiff to discuss anything political'. She went on to describe the 'bourgeois liberals(?)' [Prichard's punctuation] as being afraid to be seen with her in public, an attitude which left her 'so grieved'. None of this deterred her from her political attachment to serving humanity 'in the only way' that she saw possible.

Following the bitterness of these exchanges, events in the first half of 1940 offered the Fellowship members the opportunity to demonstrate that, when it came to literary matters, they stood firmly by their fellows. The University of W.A., having engaged Prichard to deliver lectures on Australian literature, suddenly decided to align itself with those who were afraid to be associated with her, and cancelled her appointment. Writing to her son, Ric Throssell, in 1972, Professor Allan Edwards described his astonishment at 'the fervour of the Chairman's objections to having a notorious Red on the staff if only in a temporary capacity'.

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41 FAW(Vic) to FAW(NSW), 31 January 1939. The altered Prefatory Statement made it clear that writers were speaking out against all forms of 'totalitarian' as opposed to 'democratic' government. See Statement, p. 2. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
42 J. K. Ewers to C. Lindsay (Sec. FAW in NSW), 6 March 1949. FAW (NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
44 K. S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 14 October 1940, cited in C. Ferrier, ed. As good as a yarn with you, 1992, p. 62.
Hearing of this affront to one of its members, the Fellowship forgot the political wrangling of the previous year, and united in an appeal to the University to reverse the decision. In particular, they deplored the implied questioning of Prichard's qualifications to deliver lectures on the topic, and the fact that Prichard's services had been rejected four days before the date set for the first lecture. Although her lectures were not reinstated, as a result of these protests Prichard was reimbursed £10 for the time spent in preparation. This was a minor success in the FAWWA’s first step towards emphasising the need for writers to be treated as professionals in their field. Indicative of the change in attitudes towards Russia and communism over the next few years is the fact that Prichard was subsequently employed by the University and the Australian Broadcasting Commission to present similar lectures. That all trace of division among the members had disappeared by 1945 was suggested in the words of president H.E.M. Flinn in his report: ‘We are more united amongst ourselves and we have cemented more firmly the bonds with the other Branches in the other States’.

Besides providing the FAWWA with an opportunity to express the essential cohesion and solidarity among its members on matters pertaining to their profession, the incident between Prichard and the University prompted the suggestion that the Fellowship should sponsor its own series of public lectures on Australian literature. The vehemently negative response of some members to the idea of holding these lectures at the Workers’ Art Guild, however, highlighted how strongly they felt about not aligning the group with a body connected in any way to the Communist Party. Both Drake-Brockman and Bartlett left little doubt as to their feelings on the matter. Drake-Brockman was brief and to the point, writing that 'I did not think we would do anything but a dis-service to our cause if we held such lectures... in WAG'.

Once again Bartlett, in his response to this suggestion, offered a full assessment of the political nuances underlying the suggestion. A large extract

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46 FAWWA to the Professorial Board of the University of Western Australia, 1 July 1940. FAW(NSW) papers ML2008/K22105.
47 H. Drake-Brockman to J. Pollard, then president of the FAWWA, 14 July 1940. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
50 H. Drake-Brockman to J. Pollard, 14 July 1940. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
of his letter is quoted here because it indicates the strength of the residue of those earlier arguments on the political stance of the Fellowship.

All but the innocent know what the Guild is and, quite apart from my personal dislike of it and its political purpose, it would be sheer stupidity to associate the F, already 1/2 ruined by people who try to use it for their own political ends, with an annex of the now illegal Communist Party. ... To unnecessarily limit our audience, if we decide to give these lectures, is silly.  

After outlining his detailed reasons for not wanting this association between the Fellowship and the Workers' Art Guild, Bartlett concluded with the offer to resign, if necessary, over the matter. Pollard, in his customarily calm manner, replied that they should not 'talk too readily of resigning', but rather seek 'a balanced outlook'. Bartlett could have been echoing Dame Mary Gilmore's dismay at developments within the Sydney FAW which, in her opinion, left it in danger of being thought to be narrowly political in nature. Others shared his concern and in the early 1950s, following another outbreak of bitter disagreement within the committee and the abrupt resignation of the president, Peter Gorman, changes were made to the constitution to ensure that no political credo should direct the FAWWA's decisions in the future.

FAWWA accused of being subversive

...Fellowship in no way red  

There were unexpected parallels between events at the beginning of the FAWWA's first decade and the opening years of its second. Both began with a celebration. The larger scale of the official opening of Tom Collins House in 1949, and the publicity it engendered among writers with press coverage in the other states, compared to the modest dinner organised for Grattan, in 1938, mirrored the growth of the FAWWA in its first ten years. At both times, too, political differences caused discord between members. Whereas the early disagreements erupted over what was essentially an internal matter between

51 N. Bartlett to J. Pollard, und. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72. While Bartlett's letter is undated, the reply from Pollard (see below) was written on 24 July 1940.
52 J. Pollard to N. Bartlett, 24 July 1940. Pollard papers BL 742/2846A/72.
55 The FAWWA's acquisition of Joseph Furphy's home is discussed in full in the following chapter.
the different state sections of the FAW, the divisions of the early 1950s became more public, as they followed a press report which inferred that the FAWWA, having a communist among its members, was itself politically suspect. The writer referred to was undoubtedly Prichard, although she was not named.56 The degree to which she, as a well-known communist, was under surveillance during these years is evident in the extensive security files dedicated to her, dating from 1919 to the 1970s.57

Strong anti-communist sentiments had spread once again through the western world, during the late 1940s and 1950s. In Australia, both major political parties combined to effect laws such as those banning communists from employment in areas including government and universities.58 In May 1949, the Western Australian police again raided the homes of well-known communists, including writers Joan and Vic Williams.59 When, later in that year, the newly formed Liberal Party, led by R. G. Menzies, defeated the Labor government of J. B. Chifley, its success was based firmly on a campaign in favour of private enterprise and against communism.60 In the ensuing years, the Australian government, through the instrument of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, established in March 1949, increasingly attacked any citizens suspected of supporting communist doctrines. The Intelligence Organisation had a broad mandate to protect Australia and the Commonwealth from any potential subversion by either individuals or organisations. Most writers were passionate promoters of the social movements which were becoming identified with the Soviet Union, especially the call for peace and the promotion of culture. Included on the Security Organisation’s list of suspect writers and organisations were Prichard and Murdoch in Western Australia and the FAW in general.61 Often artists became suspect simply because they refused to remain within the conventional mould and could thus be seen as threats to established, capitalist, society.62 Already, in 1947, an unsigned article in the monthly publication The

56 West Australian, 29 July 1950.
Australasian Book News and Library Journal lamented the ‘vituperative’ attacks made against the literary advisory board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, claiming a suspected tendency to favour communist writers.63 As the writer pointed out, since the Fund was governed by then Prime Minister Chifley and Members of Parliament, Menzies and Scullin, none of whom could be suspected of supporting communism, there was little likelihood of such favouritism.

The attack continued in Federal Parliament, in 1952, with a campaign launched against leading Australian writers on the Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, with its chairman, Vance Palmer, as a main target. Once again, they were accused of using the Fund to support writers who were either communists or communist sympathisers.64 During months of questions and accusations in both Parliament and the Sydney press, Prichard was named, not only as a member of the Communist Party but as ‘one of its leading operatives’. Prichard had received a fellowship from the Fund, in 1941.65

That this political tension impacted particularly on Australia’s writers is demonstrated by the political basis for the newer literary journals which began in the eastern states during this period. In Brisbane, Clem Christesen had launched Meanjin, in 1940, in order to clarify the connection between literature and politics and to inform readers of developments in the community which should be opposed.66 Although not a communist, Christesen supported left-wing ideals and was constantly criticised by the conservative right. Nevertheless, he maintained an open-minded approach, continuing to publish articles which suited his intention ‘to establish a place in the world for Australian literature and art’.67 Like many other writers, he was called before the Petrov Commission,
partly because of the material included in *Meanjin*, and partly because, with his Russian wife, Nina, who taught Russian at the university, he had dined with the Soviet Consul. Unlike *Meanjin*, the journal *Overland*, established by Stephen Murray-Smith in 1954, was overtly communist in ethos, having grown out of the Melbourne-based journal *The Realist Writer*. Over the years, the Soviet Union had expounded its theory of social realist writing, requiring that all writing should express the ‘social order established by Marxism and defined by the Party’.\(^6^8\) Even Prichard’s books were criticised at times for not being sufficiently militant, while the Australasian Book Society, a communist-oriented publishing house, refused to print Vickers’ first novel *The Mirage* for several years, because it did not sufficiently adhere to the guidelines for realist writing or depict military conclusions.\(^6^9\)

In this oppressive climate, members of the Fellowship committee were frequently cautious, being aware that any accusation that the FAWWA harboured communist ‘fellow-travellers’, could diminish its ability to promote Australian literature to the general public. In a milieu where communists were banned from working in universities and government departments, it was certainly likely that being named as a subversive organisation would have barred the FAWWA from taking an active part in developments within Perth’s cultural world in the 1950s, such as the Festival of Perth. Such labelling would have hindered its status as the principal body representing the State’s writers.

**A divided committee**

*split down the middle*\(^7^0\)

Once more, matters came to a head for the FAWWA when, in July 1950, the *West Australian* reported that the Cottesloe Council had rejected the FAWWA’s application for affiliation with the Cottesloe Civic Centre, on the grounds that it included a communist among its members, thus inferring that the organisation itself was communist.\(^7^1\) The Fellowship had approached the Cottesloe Council

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\(^{6^9}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 35–38. The Australasian Book Society was established in 1952 under the inspiration of communist writer Frank Hardy. Its express purpose was to provide a publication avenue for new writers ‘with something to say’. Although the Communist Party was not specifically involved in its establishment it was well known at the time, as is supported by McLaren, that it existed to promote social realist writing approved by the Communist Party officials.

\(^{7^0}\) J. K. Ewers, President’s Report, 31 October 1950. FAWWA papers TCHA.

\(^{7^1}\) *West Australian*, 29 July 1950.
with the request to become affiliated with Overton Lodge, the home built by Claude de Bernales, which the Council had recently bought for a Civic Centre, renaming it the War Memorial and Town Hall. As Tom Collins House was located within the boundaries of Cottesloe, the FAWWA was responding to the Cottesloe Council’s invitation to local organisations to become affiliated with the new Civic Centre. Affiliation would have enabled them to use Overton Lodge for the annual dinner in November. The committee may also have hoped that such an affiliation would help the FAWWA gain assistance from the Council with the maintenance of Tom Collins House and the waiving of annual rates.

When the news item appeared both the president, Ewers, and immediate past president, Trevor Tuckfield, were away from Perth, so there was no leadership to organise a strong response. Ewers learnt of it only when he arrived in Alice Springs to find the following telegram waiting for him from Buddee, who, though actually honorary secretary, was also acting president:

Press report Cottesloe Council unanimously refused Fellowship application for use of Civic Centre on grounds Fellowship includes a repeat a communist in its listed membership quote which would impart an element opposed to the maintenance of Aust. Freedom which many of those honoured by the memorial died to preserve. Please advise action and any comment – calling meeting Monday. Regards Paul.

Always quick to fly to the defence of the Fellowship, Ewers’ reply was immediate:

72 In 1950 the Cottesloe Town Council had purchased Overton Lodge in Cottesloe, the former home of entrepreneur Claude de Bernales, for its council chambers. The building included a number of areas where large functions could be held. [http://www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au/data/page/72/Heritage_TrailNo2.pdf](http://www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au/data/page/72/Heritage_TrailNo2.pdf) Accessed 30 September 2008.

73 A year after its purchase by the Cottesloe Council, there were 32 organisations affiliated with Overton Lodge. Dr Werther, an FAWWA member, was organising musical and literary events at the Centre, and a literary society and free children’s library had been established. *West Australian*, 25 August 1951.

74 FAWWA to Cottesloe Town Council, 17 May 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25. That the Fellowship pursued the matter of financial assistance from the Council is revealed in a letter from the Cottesloe Council, in April 1951, notifying the Fellowship that they would not waive annual rates, as the house was ‘let to various organisations on a hire basis’. The FAWWA’s response that Tom Collins House was open to the public brought no change in the Council’s decision. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.

75 Ewers, in his third term as president, was absent on a writing trip in the North for *Australasian Post* and *Walkabout*. J. K. Ewers. *Long Enough for a Joke*, 1983, pp. 248–250. The immediate past president and junior vice-president, Trevor Tuckfield, was sailing around Australia with his wife in a home-built 30 foot ketch, following the route of Matthew Flinders. J. K. Ewers journal 1950. Ewers papers BL 1870/5340A/6.
Most earnestly point out Fellowship in no way red stop My attitude firm stand should be made that membership demands literary qualifications only stop Resist any move withdraw membership Katharine stop affiliate Cottesloe relatively unimportant Letter following. Ewers.  

There is no evidence, in records of the time, of any move by members of either the committee or individual FAWWA members to expel Prichard, although Vickers told Williams of an attempt some years later to exclude communists from FAWWA membership. Ewers’ comment to Buddee may have been prompted by his own hypothesis that right-wing members could assume such an action to be the next logical step.

In a following letter to Buddee, Ewers enlarged on his brief telegram, attributing the Council’s action to the anti-communist Bill, which encouraged the labelling of an organisation and its members by the presence of just one communist member. He urged the committee to respond firmly to the accusation with a restrained statement to the press. His letter left no doubt as to his personal feelings.

…I feel mad enough to spit…I am sorry this should have occurred in my absence and do hope that the Executive uses it to bring the Fellowship out of it with a growth of popular esteem — not necessarily by encouraging a present popular attitude — but by taking an attitude of its own which shows with dignity that literary achievements & political opinion are two different things & that the CMC [Cottesloe Municipal Council] has shown unwisdom in confusing them.

After some discussion, the committee decided to ignore Ewers’ request and took no action. Franklin told Prichard a recent visitor had told her that they wanted to forget the situation. In his President’s Report in October 1950, Ewers reported his concern at hearing of the press release, compounded by the committee’s failure to refute the accusation publicly. Ewers spoke clearly of his displeasure with the committee’s lack of public response. Departing from the customary expression of thanks to his committee, he expressed regret that the division within the committee had led to its failure to take a public stand against the Council’s action and the prevailing atmosphere of political persecution, and

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76 The original telegram from Buddee, with Ewers’ handwritten reply on the reverse, is in the Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/372.
79 K. S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 30 November 1950, C. Ferrier, ed. As good as a yarn with you, p. 258.
stating his fear that the organisation might one day be called upon to defend its silence. For Ewers there seemed little hope of reconciliation between the members of such a divided committee who, in his opinion, had ‘excelled themselves in inactivity’. He outlined his non-conformist attitude to world political opinion as he concluded his report, claiming, ‘the right, freed of all political restraint, to sit back and report on the world – and if necessary to laugh at the world’. That Ewers was still unsure of the membership’s response to his opinions, or did not want to open the floor for further argument, is suggested by his failure to move that his report be accepted at the meeting, thus allowing no opportunity for discussion. Instead he passed immediately to the election of the 1951 office-bearers.

The election of a new committee did not end the dissension. On being elected, the incoming president, businessman, Peter Gorman, nominated for the position by Ewers, predicted that all would not go smoothly within the committee in the year ahead. The problem, as he saw it, stemmed from his own relationship with Ewers. Accepting the position of president, he remarked that ‘he had disagreed with Mr Ewers in the past and would probably also in the future’. Nevertheless he undertook to make ‘Fellowship’ the theme of his term as president. This intention, however, was not sufficient to avoid major conflict erupting between the two men. Twelve months later, after giving his President’s Report to the annual general meeting for 1951, Gorman announced his resignation from the position of president. Events leading up to this decision clearly convey the tensions active within the Fellowship in this era, and so will be outlined in some detail.

At its February meeting, the new committee resolved to take the unusual step of having the FAWWA membership screened by the police for the presence of subversive elements. Surviving documents fail to enunciate whether this decision was intended to quell any future accusations of a link between the FAWWA and the Communist Party, or whether enough committee members

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80 J. K. Ewers. President’s Report, 31 October 1950. FAWWA papers TCHA.
81 J. K. Ewers, President’s Report, 31 October 1950. FAWWA papers TCHA.
82 FAWWA Minutes, 31 October 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.
83 It is ironic that it should have been Ewers himself who nominated Gorman for the position of president considering the altercations that erupted between the two men. J.K. Ewers to C. Christesen, 30 September 1950. The Meanjin Archive UMA Ewers File One.
may have wished to remove communist sympathisers from the organisation. Whatever the reason, the list was forwarded to Detective-Sergeant Alford of the CIB in Perth.\textsuperscript{84} Alford’s response to this action was a model of diplomacy as he assured the secretary that he neither wished, nor had the jurisdiction, to involve himself in the political beliefs of FAWWA members. He also rejected any suggestion that the police were implicated in the dispute between the Fellowship and the Cottesloe Council.\textsuperscript{85}

Government attempts to ban the Communist Party …\textit{heresy-hunting}\textsuperscript{86}

Gorman and Ewers held diametrically opposed political views, with Gorman supporting the Menzies-led Liberal party. The catalyst for their final falling-out was the referendum, organised by the Liberal Party, to amend the constitution in order to facilitate the banning of the Communist Party in Australia. Both Gorman and Ewers had letters to the editor on the topic published in the \textit{West Australian} immediately before the referendum. A comparison of these letters reveals immediately the deep philosophical differences between the two men. The first, signed by Ewers and six other intellectuals, began by stating that all signatories supported the political freedom enshrined in the British system’s liberal democracy and denying any sympathy with either the objectives or the methods of the Communist Party. The signatories opposed the Bill as being contrary to that freedom, fearing it would lead to the punishment of individuals for their political beliefs alone, measures which they described as typical of both communist and fascist totalitarian governments.\textsuperscript{87}

Gorman’s reply, published the following day, read as a personal attack on the six signatories of the first letter, whom he described as ‘well-meaning but narrow-visioned professors and writers’ seeking to impress through an ‘implied profundity of learning’ in what he described as ‘high-sounding platitudes’. Instead, he urged readers to accept the assurances of the Prime Minister and the Honourable Paul Hasluck, MHR, whom he described as ‘two honourable

\textsuperscript{84} FAWWA to Detective-Sergeant Alford, CIB, Perth, 15 February 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
\textsuperscript{85} Detective-Sergeant Alford to FAWWA, 27 February 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
\textsuperscript{86} From the letter against the proposed Bill to ban the Communist Party, \textit{West Australian}, 14 September 1951.
\textsuperscript{87} The other six signatories were J. Bell, A. C. Fox, W. Murdoch, W. Somerville, E. Underwood and E. White.
men’. Gorman’s final statement even more clearly demonstrated the gulf between his convictions and those of the signatories of the first letter, when he assured the readers that temporary dictatorship would be acceptable if imposed by the Australian government.88

Gorman’s final break with the FAWWA came when the committee agreed to a request for a special general meeting to discuss the September referendum. As required by the constitution, the request was made in a letter written by eight committee members, including Ewers. The letter claimed that such a referendum and subsequent action implied serious consequences for writers and the right to free speech.89 Similar meetings were held in other state sections of the FAW.90 The minutes of the meeting, at which the letter was discussed, recorded that it should be ‘an open forum for expression of views on both sides’, and that the Fellowship would issue no statement of opinion on its own account nor take any action.91 Ewers’ correspondence with Clem Christesen from this period confirms his intention at the meeting to oppose the referendum. When Western Australia returned a ‘Yes’ vote, Ewers apologised to Christesen for the State’s inability to support democratic freedom. He described the Fellowship meeting, held in spite of ‘Presidential disinclination’ and the letter in the West Australian, as his personal efforts to produce a ‘No’ vote.92

Fellowship members expressed mixed opinions about the proposed meeting. Though apologising for her inability to attend, one member indicated her pleasure that the Fellowship should provide the opportunity for frank and uninhibited discussion of the Referendum.93 One couple, on the other hand, both committee members, condemned the meeting vehemently, referring to the

88 Letters to the editor, West Australian, 15 September 1951.
89 The members of the committee who requested a special meeting to discuss the possible effects on writers of the coming referendum to ban the Communist Party in Australia were J. K. and J.G. Ewers, D. Hutchison, D. Dyson, F. Larter, I. Greenwood, B. McKie, J. Harvey, and H. H. Wilson. Notice of the meeting, dated 6 September 1951, was issued by the FAWWA to all its members. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
90 A letter from V. Palmer to the FAWWA outlining actions taken by the Victorian Section, was presented at the July meeting of the FAWWA committee. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.
92 J. K. Ewers to C. Christesen, 30 September 1951. The Meanjin Archive UMA. Ewers File One. 55.09% of West Australians voted in favour of the constitutional amendments, although the vote was lost by 50.56% to 49.44% Australia-wide. http://wikipedia.org/wiki/1951_Australian_referendum Accessed 15 October 2008.
93 Miss M J McRae to FAWWA, 14 September 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
FAWWA’s earlier attitude that members should decide for themselves how they would vote on such matters, and suggesting that a general discussion of the Referendum was an attempt to influence members’ decisions.\textsuperscript{94} The letter closed with a statement which both sides of the political divide would support, that: ‘the Fellowship of Writers is an organisation for the encouragement and help of artists, and to improve literary standards’.\textsuperscript{95} At the meeting on 10 October 1951, the committee accepted the couple’s resignation from the FAWWA. There seemed to have been little resentment about their action, however, as at the following committee meeting it was resolved to ask one of them to audit the financial books for the current year.\textsuperscript{96}

The meeting proceeded with members expressing their personal views on the proposal to ban the Communist Party. As intended, no vote was taken or official opinion expressed by the Fellowship itself.\textsuperscript{97} That this unrest during the year had a destabilising effect on the organisation was apparent at the Annual General Meeting in October 1951, with neither the minutes of the previous year’s meeting nor the general audit available for members.\textsuperscript{98} Ewers gave his version of the year’s events in a letter to Christesen:

We’ve had a major upheaval in the F.A.W. here. Have got rid of a most undesirable President who wrote two exceedingly foolish letters to the press on the referendum. He did it in a private capacity, but nevertheless expressed views which made a number of members feel he should no longer be President and I was induced (against my wishes) to nominate against him.\textsuperscript{99}

As a result of these two years of political argument, a general meeting in 1952 passed an amendment to the constitution which stated that the Fellowship should never be used to serve ‘political nor sectarian interests’ and to ensure that it would be ‘free to pursue its objects in the furtherance of Australian

\textsuperscript{94} Mr and Mrs Metcalfe-Agg were both central to the organising core of the FAWWA in 1959, being members of the Tom Collins House committee. FAWWA Minutes, 31 October 1950 and election of members of both the FAWWA and Tom Collins House committee. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.
\textsuperscript{95} Mr and Mrs Metcalfe-Agg to FAWWA, 8 and 15 September 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
\textsuperscript{96} FAWWA Minutes, 25 September 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
\textsuperscript{97} FAWWA Minutes, 18 September 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
\textsuperscript{98} FAWWA Minutes, 30 October 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
Literature under the traditional Australian freedom of speech and expression.\textsuperscript{100} This move ensured that the organisation could not be used to serve anything but literary principles.

Prichard nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature

*it is pleasing to think that my work has been responsible for this nomination.\textsuperscript{101}

In this atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, the FAWWA in early 1950 took the unexpected step of endorsing Ewers’ nomination of Prichard for the Nobel Prize in Literature.\textsuperscript{102} Prichard herself was surprised by this action, as she described to Franklin:

JK sprang another surprise on the Fellowship too. Told them about his article in the *Australasian Post*, ‘Why Not a Nobel Prize for Australia?’ & how the Swedish Academy had sent out nomination papers to him. He nominated, & the Fellowship here endorsed your KS as a candidate! I was overwhelmed. Can’t believe the honour wd come my way — though I’d rejoice if it came to anyone, for the sake of Australian literature.\textsuperscript{103}

Ewers had forewarned Prichard of his plans, assuring her that he wished that she could receive the award with all his heart, because:

I certainly think you deserve one if any Australian does, and when I think what such an award would mean to the prestige of Australian literature both here and abroad I tremble with a sort of inward pleasure.\textsuperscript{104}

That both writers emphasised the benefit this award would bring to Australian literature encapsulates what remained the potent driving force behind Fellowship activities, namely the promotion of Australian literature by means of the promotion of individual writers. In her reply, Franklin rejoiced over the possibility of Prichard receiving such an award, suggesting that the Party enthusiasm for Prichard would ensure its success. She continued: ‘I am assured there are lots of Party members in Swedish circles to whom you wd

\textsuperscript{100} J. K. Ewers, President’s Report, 27 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA. This addition to the Constitution was discussed in the meeting of 8 April 1952, with the motion moved by Olive Pell, seconded by Vickers. And yet a copy of the constitution dated 29 September 1949 and signed by then president Paul Buddee, contains the same clause. FAWWA papers TCHA. There seems little explanation for the oversight that saw this clause added twice. The 1949 Constitution was discussed at the September meeting, 1949 and presented to a general meeting on 27 September 1949.

\textsuperscript{101} K. S. Prichard to Jonathon Cape, March 2 1950. Prichard papers NLA 6201/10/9.

\textsuperscript{102} FAWWA Minutes, 11 April 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.

\textsuperscript{103} K. S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 5 March 1950, cited in *As good as a yarn with you*, 1992, p. 239.

\textsuperscript{104} J. K. Ewers to K.S. Prichard, 15 February 1950. Prichard papers NLA 6201/10/2.
[sic] be a welcome choice.\textsuperscript{105} From the letters sent by the FAW in Sydney and the University of New South Wales just a month later, it seemed apparent that other parts of the Australian literary world supported the nomination.\textsuperscript{106} The only notes of disapproval, came from the Queensland and Tasmanian Sections of the FAW, who, while supporting the choice of writer nominated, criticised the failure to gain support from the Fellowship sections in the other states before proceeding with the nomination. Ewers pointed out that the invitation to nominate an Australian author had been sent to him personally and that time had conspired against obtaining approvals.\textsuperscript{107}

Although Prichard, in her exchanges with Franklin in 1950, tried to make light of the effect upon her of the anti-communist attitudes prevailing in the western world, her words reveal the ongoing pressure she felt as a well-known communist who never abandoned her support for the Soviet Union. That Prichard was sensitive to public sentiment is clear from her suggestions to Franklin that they should not meet during the latter’s imminent visit to Perth as part of the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures. Prichard expressed fear that ‘the Menzies’ “blunderbuss”..’ could prove detrimental for Franklin, should she spend time with a fellow writer whose political convictions made her an opponent of government in the post war Australia.\textsuperscript{108} Franklin replied that she herself had been named as ‘a Communist [sic] stooge’ in one security dossier, a suggestion she had taken ‘lightly at first’, later realising that ‘it was a justifiable classification’.\textsuperscript{109}

The Authors’ World Peace Appeal

...I would be only too happy to sign the Appeal ... if I thought such documents did the slightest good...\textsuperscript{110}

The decision of the Fellowship to refrain from any political statement determined its response to a request, in March 1952, that it support the Authors’ World Peace Appeal.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{105} M. Franklin to K. S. Prichard, 21 March 1950. Cited in C. Ferrier, ed., \textit{As good as a yarn with you}, 1992, p. 239.
\textsuperscript{106} Letters from both organisations were tabled at the May committee meeting of the FAWWA. FAWWA Minutes, 29 May 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438/27.
\textsuperscript{107} FAWWA Minutes, committee meeting, 11 April 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/14338A/25.
\textsuperscript{108} K. S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 31 May 1950 and 3 September 1950, cited in C. Ferrier, ed., \textit{As good as a yarn with you}, 1992, pp. 245 and 252.
\textsuperscript{109} M. Franklin to K. S. Prichard, 8 February 1950, cited in C. Ferrier, ed., \textit{As good as a yarn with you}, 1992, p. 236.
\textsuperscript{110} H. Drake-Brockman to C. Christesen, 31 October 1952. The Meanjin Archive UMA Drake-Brockman File.
Peace Appeal. Emanating from a group of well-known English writers, the appeal had been backed by the Communist Party. The Fellowship committee repeated the earlier decision that no commitment should be made on behalf of the organisation, but that the individual writer be left to make his or her own decision to sign the pledge. According to Christesen, three Western Australian writers did not sign, namely Drake-Brockman, Hungerford and Ewers. Replying to FAWWA member Lyndall Hadow’s request for advice on the matter, Ewers explained his own reasons for not signing the Peace Appeal:

we all want peace. We say we do anyway. But we do nothing to ourselves to make it possible. ……Between World Wars I and II I spoke for Peace… I did not realise that what I was not doing was to make myself a first vehicle for peace……The will to peace will not be achieved by any number of organisations or discussions, but by a great deal of hard work by the individual on himself.

Not everyone was happy with some of the committee’s decisions between 1953 and 1956. An incident in 1954 revealed the extent to which concern for the effect of public anti-communist opinion could determine Fellowship decisions at the time. Artist, lecturer in art, editor and writer Elisabeth Vassilieff, described by author John McLaren as a Party intellectual, was refused an invitation to speak at Tom Collins House during her visit, in 1954. Australian born, Vassilieff had married Russian artist, Danila Vassilieff, in Melbourne, in 1947. Prichard suggested that the Fellowship invite her to speak to members during her visit to Perth. In a furious interchange with Ewers, Christesen accused him of refusing to allow this invitation to be made. Greenwood also attacked Ewers, accusing him of wrongdoing Vassilieff by this refusal. He replied that to invite her would have wronged the Fellowship, since her visit to Perth was connected to the Authors’ Peace Appeal rather than literature. In fact, records show that it was

117 As reported by I. Greenwood in correspondence to C. Christesen, 2 July 1954. The Meanjin Archive UMA Greenwood File.
the president, who at the time was Vickers, who cast the Chairman’s deciding vote not to invite her as a speaker.\textsuperscript{118}

In the midst of heightened emotions aroused by this incident, Greenwood could nevertheless assure Christesen that the FAWWA was ‘so strong, so vital in membership, so well balanced as to political outlook and types of writers’ and that the members valued this harmony.\textsuperscript{119} It is hard to agree with her, although there can be no doubt about the varied political opinions contained within the membership. Reflecting on this period, Williams suggested that Vickers’ level-headed actions, as president from October 1953 to October 1955, helped left-wing writers to forget their sectarianism while ‘our former opponents had a mental blackout about having succumbed to McCarthyism’.\textsuperscript{120} The upheavals of these years, and how opinions became moderated as time went by, is most effectively summed up through extracts of letters between Ewers and Clem Christesen, in 1973, after a long silence which dated from a disagreement in the McCarthy era of the mid-1950s. When Christesen commented on the fact that they had lost touch because of political differences, Ewers agreed, adding that he failed to see that politics provided ‘an effective answer to the condition of man’. Christesen agreed, although he suggested that politics offered ways for reform.\textsuperscript{121}

The tensions within the FAWWA during these years reflected the polarisation experienced at all levels of Australian society. Other state sections of the Fellowship suffered similar disruptions, especially in New South Wales, in spite of the FAW(NSW)’s earlier amalgamation with the left-wing Writers’ Association. There, too, members resigned in response to the organisation’s political inclination. Reports in the local press ensured the resignations became public knowledge, thus tarnishing the body’s reputation.\textsuperscript{122} Writing of the effects of such disagreements upon the New South Wales body, Len Fox could well have been speaking for the Fellowship in Western Australia:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] FAWWA Minutes, 8 June 1954. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/29.
\item[119] I. Greenwood to C. Christesen, 2 July 1954. The Meanjin Archive UMA Greenwood File
\item[120] J. Williams, \textit{Anger & Love}, 1993, p. 135.
\item[121] C. Christesen to J. K. Ewers, 19 March 1973. Writing about their separation over politics, Christesen offered Ewers free subscriptions to \textit{Meanjin} in appreciation of the ‘invaluable work’ he did for the journal ‘when the going was very rough indeed’. Ewers replied late that year, 24 November 1973, giving his thoughts on politics. The Meanjin Archive UMA Ewers file Two.
\end{footnotes}
The political atmosphere of this era also gave rise to many cases of censorship in Australia, against which the FAWWA lobbied in the 1940s and 1950s. The FAWWA joined Australia’s other writers’ organisations to protest against prosecutions of individual authors both within Australia and overseas. Until the banning of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, in 1929, there had been very little active censorship in Australia. Times of fear and uncertainty, however, gave rise to an increase in censorship on both political and moral grounds. In Australia during the depression, the list of proscribed books and pamphlets grew to around 5,000.124

In 1934, J. M. Harcourt’s second novel *Upsurge* became the first Australian book to be officially banned for its indecency and in particular, its explicit treatment of sex. The real cause for the banning was its encouragement of revolution, and its criticism of the capitalist system. It was the first Australian novel written in the social realist style, as promoted by the Soviet Union in the early 1930s. Prichard welcomed it as the ‘first truly proletarian novel’.125 Nile described the book as ‘one of the most radical Australian books’ to appear between the two world wars.126 Copies of *Upsurge* had first been seized by police in Western Australia and New South Wales.127 Ten years later, the ‘Ern Malley affair’ erupted in South Australia, with Max Harris prosecuted for publishing, in *Angry Penguins*, poems supposedly written by an unknown poet, Ern Malley. The prosecution was once more based on accusations of indecency, with the prosecuting policeman describing them as filled with ‘sexual innuendoes’. In fact, they were written by poets James McAuley and Harold Stewart as an attack on what they considered the literary pretensions of Harris and his promotion of modernism.128 In 1946, Lawson Glassop’s novel *We Were*...
the Rats was banned as obscene and the author fined, which Buddee later attributed to complaints by a ‘small country women’s association’.\textsuperscript{129}

The role of the police, in most cases of censorship, gave writers the opportunity to contest the lack, in prosecuting these authors, of people with a literary background and appreciation. In June 1946, three members of the FAWWA committee, Buddee, Drake-Brockman and Ewers, began a series of discussions with Emil Nulsen, Minister for Justice in Western Australia.\textsuperscript{130} After hearing them ‘sympathetically’, the Minister suggested that they discuss the existing Indecent and Obscene Publications Act, which dated from 1902, with the FAWWA’s honorary solicitor, Margaret Battye, in order to develop a clause to be added to the Act that no prosecution could take place without the books in question being submitted to a committee with literary knowledge.\textsuperscript{131} Two years later, writing in support of the actions by the FAW in other states, Buddee reported that the Western Australian Parliament would soon be considering the Fellowship’s proposed redraft of Western Australia’s Act of Obscenity, requiring a recommendation from a literary organisation before any prosecution was made.\textsuperscript{132}

Some forty years later, Buddee, in a letter to Brian Dibble, reflected on the FAWWA’s involvement in these discussions. He was convinced that their success was proven by the fact that, in Western Australia at least, there were no prosecutions of authors or publishers for any work on the grounds of indecency.\textsuperscript{133} As Buddee remembered it, ‘the Government authorities acted in a sensible manner’.\textsuperscript{134}

In the other states these prosecutions continued. In 1948, even stricter penalties were imposed on Robert Close for his book Love Me Sailor. With the book banned, both author and publisher were fined and Close received a jail

\textsuperscript{129} P. Buddee to B. Dibble, 14 March 1984. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\textsuperscript{130} See Transcript of discussion between E. Needham, MLA; Paul Buddee, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, J.K. Ewers, Miss E. Turner (FAWWA secretary) and the Minister for Justice (Hon. E. Nulsen MLA), 6 June 1946. FAWWA papers, TCHA.
\textsuperscript{131} FAWWA Minutes, 27 June 1946. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
\textsuperscript{132} P. Buddee to FAW(NSW), April 1948. FAW papers Correspondence, 1938 – 1949 ML 2008/K22106.
\textsuperscript{134} P. Buddee to B. Dibble, 14 March 1984. FAWWA papers TCHA
sentence. Following an appeal and a flood of protests from the FAW in all states, as well as other literary and cultural organisations, this sentence was later lifted. The FAWWA joined the protests, with the current president, Buddee, sending a lettergram to the FAW(NSW) supporting the appeal and recommending that other states adopt the new draft of the Obscenity Bill, which the FAWWA was preparing for the Western Australian government. The banning of Sumner Locke Elliott’s play *Rusty Bugles* in that year, on the grounds of bad language, highlighted many of the writers’ objections to Australia’s system of state-based censorship prosecuted by the police, and galvanised protests from a wide section of the community. A great success on its first night, it was nevertheless withdrawn by the police, because this play about soldiers in a war-time camp in northern Australia used words such as ‘bloody’ and ‘bastard’. Launching an immediate campaign against the ban, drama critic and playwright Rees called it ‘a tragedy for culture’. After a gathering of representatives from theatre groups and the FAW(NSW), the latter sent a deputation to the New South Wales Premier, seeking a more informed judgement on such cases. Although no official change was made to the law, the authorities appeared to listen to more liberal advice, and the play was allowed to continue its season, but with the offending words replaced. Rees noted that, by the end of weeks of performance in both Sydney and Melbourne, ‘the original swear-words for the most part sneaked back…’ The response in Western Australia, as Buddee remembered it, was ‘a flurry in the bookstalls’ as booksellers hastened to determine how the actions in the eastern states might affect their trade in the State. The advice from Buddee and presumably the FAWWA, was to keep the books under the counter. FAWWA member, librarian Rex Price, offered a lighter side to the censorship question by sending the committee a list of banned books, which included an English publication *The Rape of the Coast*, written by a conservationist in protest against the desecration of the British coastline.

140 P. Buddee to B. Dibble, 14 March 1984. FAWWA papers, TCHA.
Strict censorship laws not only affected individual writers but had a negative impact on a wider range of literary publications. In a letter to Ewers in 1942, Christesen outlined some of the problems he dealt with to produce issues of *Meanjin*. After 'delay upon delay' caused by shortages of staff at the printers, the government required that all content should be submitted to the State Publicity Censor, threatening that Christesen might need a permit for future publications.\(^\text{141}\) In the late 1940s, government financial support was withdrawn from literary magazines such as *Meanjin* and *Southerly*. Writing to H. S. Temby, secretary of the Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1948, Buddee expressed the FAWWA's dismay at the likelihood of 'any curtailment of their activities' given their 'high literary standard' and their non-profit standing. Buddee urged the Fund to make a subsidiary payment to both *Meanjin* and *Southerly* to meet current debts.\(^\text{142}\) The combined voices raised in this case achieved a review of the funding decision, and ensured the continuation of both journals.

Local writers learnt, however, that censorship could take a variety of forms. In 1949, Vickers complained to the Fellowship that the *West Australian* had failed to print a review of his play, *Stained Pieces*. The committee suspended standing orders in its November meeting to hear the details of the case.\(^\text{143}\) Although the newspaper had sent a reporter to review the play, nothing had been printed, presumably because the play was presented by the left-wing New Theatre, a group formed to replace the Workers’ Art Guild, and present radical Australian drama unlikely to be performed in established, conservative theatres.\(^\text{144}\) The committee protested this decision with a restrained letter to the editor, who responded only that future letters should be shorter.\(^\text{145}\) When Vickers redrafted the play into his first novel, *The Mirage*, he experienced another form of censorship practised against radical writers, when one potential publisher refused the manuscript, for fear of offending the Menzies Government.\(^\text{146}\)

\(^{141}\) C. Christesen to J. K. Ewers, 20 April, 1942. The Meanjin Archive UMA, Ewers file.
\(^{142}\) FAWWA to Commonwealth Literary Fund, 19 June 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
\(^{143}\) FAWWA Minutes, 9 November 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/3.
\(^{145}\) FAWWA Minutes, 29 November 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/3.
\(^{146}\) Autobiographical notes, und. Vickers papers BL 1479A/4682A/5.
In 1951, E. C. de Burgh, then editor of the *West Australian*, informed Walter Murdoch that the shortage of newsprint necessitated a severe reduction of his popular ‘Answers’ currently appearing each Saturday. Neither Murdoch nor the FAWWA could understand why a Western Australian newspaper should be so affected, when those in the eastern states and New Zealand still ran the feature. Gorman and Ewers discussed the matter with the editor, Murdoch proposed a compromise and the feature was resumed, although slightly reduced in length.\textsuperscript{147} There was no overt suggestion that the newspaper’s action was politically motivated, nor did it inhibit Murdoch’s choice of topic. A week before the referendum he used his reply to the possibly hypothetical question ‘How will you vote in the referendum?’ to air his reasons for supporting a No vote; the same reasons outlined in the letter to the editor discussed above, of which he was a signatory.\textsuperscript{148} The *West Australian* also acted on the FAWWA’s suggestion that they conduct literary competitions to acknowledge Western Australia’s writers during the Jubilee year.\textsuperscript{149}

Politics were not the only cause for lobbying by the FAWWA in the 1940s. Its support for the State’s writers led it to lobby against the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s policy of increasing centralization in Sydney and Melbourne, with a resulting decrease in creative Western Australian material broadcast. Being aware of radio’s usefulness as a means of promoting Australian literature, members of the FAWWA had many suggestions to make concerning changes in broadcasting, especially as they affected Western Australian writers. In October 1940, Drake-Brockman protested to T. W. Bearup, Acting-General Manager of the Commission, against the decision to purchase short stories and drama through Head Office instead of the individual state offices.\textsuperscript{150} Bearup argued that the new policy would give Western Australian writers the opportunity of being heard throughout Australia as well as receiving higher rates of pay. He emphasised the benefits to Australian literature of ‘specialist officers at Head Office’ to provide guidance in how to write for radio.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} Correspondence between FAWWA and E. C. de Burgh, Editor, *West Australian* between 11 April and 24 May 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
\textsuperscript{149} P. Gorman, President’s Report, 23 November 1951. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\textsuperscript{150} Information in this section is drawn from documents held in FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.
\textsuperscript{151} T. W. Bearup to H. Drake-Brockman, 30 October 1940. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.
then FAWWA secretary, reported to the Sydney FAW that the ABC’s ‘two and a half foolscap pages of justification’ of its policies, ‘did not please us mightily’! Nevertheless, the new policy was implemented.

In 1945, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting approached the FAWWA seeking its opinions on three matters: the expenditure on current cultural programmes which attracted comparatively few listeners; the desirability of instituting an “Amateur Hour” designed to discover and encourage Australian talent; and the degree of control over the importation and use of overseas material. While discouraging the inauguration of an Amateur Hour on the ABC, the FAWWA recommended an annual feature for professional as well as amateur performers, called ‘The Eisteddfod of the Air’, whose outline strongly resembled today’s Performer of the Year. The FAWWA further discouraged any limit to the importation of good material, while supporting restriction of poor quality material whether imported or local. It also encouraged the establishment of State-based listening panels to advise both commercial and national broadcasting companies, and a wider exchange of recordings and scripts to promote Australian artists overseas.

Again the FAWWA reiterated that programme planning concentrated in Melbourne or Sydney drove ‘both listeners and performers to commercial radio’. It quoted the experience of FAWWA members Bottomley and Mulgrue. After 500 consecutive broadcasts, the ABC cancelled the former’s morning session. Bottomley forthwith transferred his listeners to a commercial radio station. Mulgrue had a similar experience, and the FAWWA pointed out that: ‘Hundreds of listeners were thus lost to the National Stations’.

The FAWWA’s recommendations reflected its attitude to the place of regional literature in the national culture. While requesting that Western Australia’s geographic isolation be taken into account when planning programmes, it described this distance as giving the State’s inhabitants ‘a peculiarly wide sense of perspective regarding the continent as a whole’. It was clear that, in spite of the lack of fast interstate travel and communications, the early Western

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152 FAWWA to FAW(NSW), 20 October 1940. FAW(NSW) papers ML 008/K22105.
153 The information in this and the following paragraphs is drawn from Recommendations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting by the FAWWA, pp.1-3. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.
Australian writers did not feel totally disadvantaged by their distance from Melbourne and Sydney. In all, it supported the importance of regional culture in the development of nationhood. Whereas the FAWWA’s attempts to limit the process of centralisation had little effect, some factors it suggested, such as the listeners’ panels and an Eisteddfod of the Air, appeared to bear fruit. It is instructive that the Broadcasting Commission sought the opinion of a small group of writers working within an organisation just over eight years old. During these years, the FAWs Australia-wide lobbied the Commission for increased fees with some success.154

Children’s Book Week: Working as catalysts for change … it is hoped it will grow in significance with each passing year.155

During the later war years in both Australia and overseas, librarians, educators and literary organisations called for the establishment of free public libraries. Such a move was seen as a positive means towards the social reconstruction so necessary following the war’s conclusion, a way of establishing a new order and rectifying the curtailed education of so many young men and women due to war service.156 In Western Australia, this campaign was spearheaded by the Free Library Movement, which included Phyllis Wild, Eric Kent of Alberts Bookshop, C. A. Glew, Catherine and Alec King, Ewers and Pollard, all FAWWA members.157 The Fellowship had already demonstrated its support for the establishment of free libraries in both metropolitan and country regions by including it in the aims of the Cultural Council proposed in 1944. Creating a broader reading population ensured that the writers would have a continually-renewed audience.

Throughout 1943 and 1944, the Free Library Movement, the Adult Education Board and the government discussed the future of libraries in this state.158 A government decision, in 1943, offered minimal financial support, for regional

154 Statement on behalf of the FAW(Vic) to the Chairman & Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Jan. 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.
157 C. A. Glew was headmaster of Perth Boys School, where Ewers taught in the early 1940s. Catherine King, the broadcaster, was the daughter of Professor Walter Murdoch, and her husband Alec was Lecturer in English at the University of Western Australia.
158 See A. Gregg, Catalysts for Change, 1996, Ch. 4 – Suggested Solutions, for a detailed discussion of developments during these years.
libraries only. For the lobbyists this decision did not go far enough, as it still left the metropolitan area without a comprehensive library system, which, together with the provision of libraries specifically for children, became the focus for ongoing lobbying that continued, even after the demise of the Free Library Movement, in 1945.\(^{159}\)

Several Fellowship members, including Durack, Pollard and Buddee, were already writing for children. A typewritten list of books about Western Australia, including ten books under the heading 'Juveniles', exists in the FAWWA papers dating from the mid 1940s although, as is often the case in the early archives of the Fellowship, there is no indication of the purpose of this list.\(^{160}\) Its existence, however, suggests an acceptance of children’s books as having equal importance to those written for adults.

In order to promote reading among children, Children's Book Weeks had already been held in the UK and the USA in preceding years and it was a natural step for local writers to follow these examples.\(^{161}\) The FAWWA was not new to the concept of setting days aside for special recognition of Australian literature. One of its first public acts, in October 1938, was to ask the Western Australian Department of Education to name 17 June as a day of 'appreciation' of Australian literature in schools throughout the State, in line with developments in the eastern states. After some correspondence the Education Circular printed a grudging announcement that the Fellowship of Australian Writers had decided to appoint that date as a special day in schools. Assuring readers that Australian literature was a 'continuous feature of school work', the notice continued that the Department saw no need for a 'special observance'.\(^{162}\)

Children's Book Weeks received a more enthusiastic welcome. The first, in 1945, was a 'comparatively low-key celebration' organised by the Australian Institute of Librarians in Western Australia, and members of the Free Library

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\(^{159}\) Ibid., pp. 48–53.

\(^{160}\) Probable date, 1945–1946, as list is among papers from these dates. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/21.

\(^{161}\) The FAW in Sydney also organised a Children's Book Week in 1945, however the local group acted independently as the promotional material promised by the Sydney Fellowship did not arrive until after the event. FAWWA Minutes, 12 December 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.

\(^{162}\) The notice appeared in the September – October Issue of the Education Circular WA, which Ewers enclosed in a letter to the FAW (NSW) on 8 November 1938. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/252.
Movement, who drew on the FAWWA’s connections in the writing world.\textsuperscript{163} It consisted largely of displays of children’s books in the windows of Perth bookshops, and some radio talks by the State’s writers. With each year, however, Children’s Book Week grew into ever more elaborate book fairs, moving from the display hall at Boans Department Store (1946), to Burt Hall, attached to St. George’s Cathedral in St George's Terrace (1947), and then into the Perth Town Hall (1948). By 1951, there were two exhibitions, held in successive weeks, at the Perth and Fremantle Town Halls.\textsuperscript{164} Activities evolved from simple book displays to include live and radio talks by local authors. Children became involved for the first time in 1947, through competitions ranging from book cover designs and puppet plays, to dolls representing favourite characters. In the same year Children's Book Week moved into the schools, with writers appearing as guest speakers. The Education Department collaborated further in the following year, when two FAWWA teacher/members, Paul Buddee and Dorothy Lucie Sanders, were seconded from the Department to tour schools promoting books and reading.\textsuperscript{165}

The promotional leaflet printed by Paterson's Press for the 1947 Children's Book Week attributed the success of these events to the 'co-operation between literary organisations, broadcasting stations, the Press, booksellers, youth leagues, the printing and publishing trades, Australian Institute of Librarians (WA Branch), the public Library and a panel of enthusiastic citizens'.\textsuperscript{166} This was the kind of collaboration possible in a city with a relatively small population and a group of intellectuals linked through their shared history and common passion for education and the arts. Had the FAWWA's proposal of a Cultural Council been made after it had established itself more publicly through these successful Book Weeks, it may have received more support. Following the 1945 Book Week, programming for future weeks was increasingly taken over by the Fellowship and its members. This was a natural development for the FAWWA as an already established body, whose aim was to promote Australian literature, and whose members included a number of teachers as well as authors of books.

\textsuperscript{164} A. Gregg. 'Children’s Book Week in WA: Back at the Beginning', 2001, p.2. Typed copy in the author’s possession.
\textsuperscript{166} Children's Book Fair, 6 to 11 October 1947. Cited in A. Gregg, \textit{Catalysts for Change}, 1996, p.64.
for children. When, in June 1947, the Western Australian Children's Book Council was established, with Ewers as president, the Fellowship underwrote it with an advance of £5/5/-.

While the new Council then took over the organisation of subsequent Children's Book Week activities, its inclusion of FAWWA members ensured that the Fellowship was also involved.

These celebrations of children’s books and their authors provided the first major public platform for the promotion of Australian writers in Western Australia. Growing from book displays to include authors’ talks in person and on radio, and school visits, they were the forerunner of the Writers’ Weeks so popular in the twenty-first century. From 1949 onwards, lobbying by the Children’s Book Council for a free library system, including ones for children, became more political, the whole movement climaxing in 1951, when Parliament passed the Library Board Act, establishing a Library Board in Western Australia.

Becoming increasingly disenchanted with the Board’s lack of focus on libraries specifically for children, the Children’s Book Council ceased to exist in Western Australia in 1953. Children’s Book Weeks began again in 1968 with their organisation passing to the Sections of the WA Branch of the Library Association of Australia dedicated to children and schools.

In June 1975, the FAWWA called a meeting to recreate the Children’s Book Council. For the FAWWA, in the 1940s and 1950s, bearing the major responsibility for presenting Children’s Book Week was an important annual project which brought the organisation into the public eye, while providing a popular avenue for the promotion of local writers.

Conclusion

During its first fifteen years, the Fellowship in Western Australia reflected the political polarisation in the world around it, as the writers expressed their individual political allegiances in a series of disputes. The first, over the decision...

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169 Ibid., p. 75.
170 Ibid., p. 83.
171 D. Stuart, President’s Report, 27 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58. Also report on the first meeting. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(2).
to support the Sydney FAW’s proposed book *Writers in Defence of Freedom*, erupted just months after the FAWWA’s first meeting. The bitter debates that dominated this discussion foreshadowed the difficulties successive FAWWA committees would face in reaching balanced decisions in the ‘undercurrent of politics’.

This argument revealed the political tensions within the FAWWA, with communist members and fellow-travellers, led by Prichard supporting Communist Party attitudes. Some more conservative writers preferred to ignore any political debate, while Ewers and supporters enunciated their non-sectarian stance. That the FAW(NSW) had accepted the same alteration to the book’s Preface, when it was suggested by FAW(Vic), served to underline the disadvantage of the FAWWA’s physical distance from Sydney and Melbourne.

The second major political argument was sparked by the failure of conservative members to speak out against the public inference that the presence of one communist in the membership indicated the nature of the Fellowship itself. The resignation of a president demonstrated the serious divisions within the organisation at the time of the federal government’s moves to facilitate the banning of the Communist Party. Given the political tensions throughout the western world during these years, there would have been few bodies able to contain, without dissension, the breadth of political opinion represented in the FAWWA.

Throughout this period, the writers demonstrated that their differences were not personal, firstly with the successful appeal to the University of W.A. on behalf of Prichard and secondly, by her subsequent nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature. The FAWWA’s success in reversing the *West Australian*’s decision to cut Murdoch’s weekly letters epitomised the response to its lobbying when it concerned a personal appeal on behalf of one of its members.

Playing a major role in the formation of the Children’s Book Council and the presentation of the annual Children’s Book Week represented the interface of the FAWWA three major intentions. While the displays promoted Australian authors to the general public, they also provided an opportunity to collaborate with the Free Library association, teachers and booksellers, in order to lobby government for the establishment of a public library system. This development

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would in turn benefit writers by making their books more readily available. In assessing the lasting effect of the political tensions compared to the achievements of Children’s Book Week, it is instructive to consider two publications from the last twenty years. Geoffrey Bolton, in his recent history of Western Australia, sums up the FAWWA after 70 years as ‘a quarrelsome coterie’ which nevertheless did encourage younger writers.¹⁷³ On the other hand, Alison Gregg devoted a doctoral study, and the resulting publication, to the involvement of the FAWWA, together with individual writers and librarians as ‘catalysts of change’. Gregg points out that their efforts led to a public library system, and a continuing tradition of promoting Australia’s children’s writers through the annual Children’s Book Weeks. There seems little doubt that these initiatives, from the late 1940s onwards, have had a more lasting and positive effect than the series of internal upheavals which arose specifically out of the political concerns of World War II and the years immediately following it.

It was inevitable that, in an atmosphere of intense political involvement, writers should choose to discuss these questions. The proposed banning of the Communist Party was likely to increase government censorship, a move which impinges on the writer’s ability to express his or her thoughts freely. As Roberts had so aptly written, literature and the writers who create it will always be ‘tangled with great ideas’.¹⁷⁴ That these discussions became so heated indicates the strength of writers’ convictions about their beliefs and the wide range of those beliefs within the one organisation. In most cases, the writers modified these beliefs over time, as is evident from their later writings.

Even as the FAWWA worked its way through these disruptions over political differences, in the early 1950s, it was also in the midst of making a decision that would initiate the most dramatic change in its history, as it became the owner of what would become one of Australia’s most important literary museums. The following chapter will unravel all the many connections that led to the home of Joseph Furphy becoming the headquarters of the FAWWA, before assessing the effect that had on the organisation. This gift of a house was one in a series of events which brought writers in Western Australia into a closer working

relationship with their fellow writers in other states, thus helping to ameliorate the abiding sense of isolation. At the same time, the Fellowship extended the public persona it developed through the annual Children’s Book Weeks, by pursuing new opportunities to promote local writers, through the publication of an anthology of Western Australian writing, and public appearances as part of the newly-established Festival of Perth. The ongoing role of the FAWWA as lobbyist for better rates of pay for writers will be discussed in the next chapter, as will the increased awareness on the Western Australian section’s connection with the national literary world which followed the foundation of the Federal FAW Council in 1955 thus providing the FAW with a national presence.
Chapter Five

Establishing a physical home
…the delightful, if difficult, task of taking over Tom Collins House...¹

During its first decade, the Western Australian Fellowship concentrated on strengthening the organisation and its position in Perth’s cultural life, developing a strong base with its first constitution, regular activities for members, and liaisons with other cultural bodies. Ongoing political disagreements threatened this internal strength, however, and committee members worked to minimise any major damage to the organisation. As the FAWWA moved into its second decade, several external events impacted upon it, which expanded its field of activity and offering more public arenas in which to promote Australian literature.

In 1949, the Fellowship took possession of the house built and lived in by one of Australia’s early novelists, Joseph Furphy, an event which brought congratulatory messages from writers such as Eleanor Dark, Bernard O’Dowd, Nettie Palmer, and from the Shepparton Council, Victoria.² It also placed considerable responsibility on a body of around 60 members, with assets of only £23.³ As the constitution included no reference to owning a building that required constant maintenance, this development could be seen as a move away from the Fellowship’s original purpose; a move which might well interfere

¹ P. Buddee to FAW(NSW), 20 August 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
² Congratulatory messages from Australia’s major writers were read at the opening of Tom Collins House, in September 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/11438A/25.
³ FAWWA Minutes, 26 October 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
with the organisation’s purpose of encouraging the study and practice of literature.

This chapter presents for the first time new information about the series of coincidences involving then president Paul Buddee and former presidents Drake-Brockman and Ewers, which led to Joseph Furphy’s home in Swanbourne being given to the FAWWA. It then considers the changes that owning and maintaining such a house necessitated for this small band of writers. This chapter argues that, while becoming owners of the Furphy house introduced another focus for the FAWWA, it did not distract it from its purpose of promoting the study and practice of literature in Australia. It will show that, in fact, owning the home lived in by one of Australia’s classic writers provided increased opportunities to celebrate the story of Australia’s writers and their works. At the same time, the FAWWA moved increasingly into the public domain during its second decade. While continuing to organise the annual Children’s Book Week, it presented a variety of events in conjunction with the Festival of Perth, established in 1953. Additionally, in 1956, Drake-Brockman played a major role in establishing the federal council of the FAW. The Fellowship also lobbied successfully for better payment of writers by both the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

Becoming owners of a wooden cottage in Swanbourne … it is a stout jarrah house, with many years yet ahead of it…

In his President’s Report in 1944, Flinn told members that the committee had agreed to obtain ‘furniture and a permanent room’ for the exclusive and full-time use of FAWWA members. They hoped that such a room would house a collection of Australian books, and become a refuge for writers where they could write or read. In the same year, the FAWWA included among the aims of the cultural council it proposed, the development of an arts centre to provide performance, display and meeting areas.

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4 Joseph Furphy (1843–1912) wrote his major work Such Is Life, under the nom de plume of Tom Collins. It was first published in 1903.
Owning property was a bold step for a group of between 60 and 70 writers with minimal financial resources.\(^7\) In planning a headquarters of its own, the FAWWA was responding to three main stimuli: a positive vision of the future, the intention to provide greater support for its individual members, and dissatisfaction with constantly renting rooms. In the first place, post-war prospects offered a promise of expanded activities and increased membership, and a growing role for literature and the arts in shaping a new, peaceful world.\(^8\) Secondly, a place where members could either drop in casually or meet fellow writers would help create a physical centre for the literary community the Fellowship aspired to build, and offer tangible support for individual writers. Members may have been influenced by the Adult Education Board’s headquarters in Howard Street, Perth. In use between 1938 and 1954, these rooms were well known to individual writers as the location of the Board’s series of lectures on Australian literature, many delivered by Drake-Brockman, Ewers and other FAWWA members, as well as visiting writers sponsored by the Commonwealth Literature Fund.\(^9\) The Board also maintained a library of which FAWWA members would have been aware, at a time when agencies and individuals were calling for the establishment of public libraries. The third stimulus was a growing dissatisfaction with sharing rooms with other organisations.

Since its beginning in 1938, the FAWWA had met in cafés, hotels, and club rooms such as the Women’s Service Guild and the Modern Women’s Club. After Flinn’s announcement, discussions regarding a permanent home continued at committee level.\(^10\) In 1946, a conversation with architect, Harold

\(^7\) The annual financial report for 1948 showed total receipts of only £62/12/11 and expenditure of £39/10/. Cash in the bank was £15/10/11, with Savings Certificates worth £7/12/-. FAWWA Minutes October 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.

\(^8\) This belief in the role of literature combined with education provided a strong stimulus for the Free Library Movement, which eventually resulted in a viable public lending library service in the State. See A. Gregg. *Catalysts for Change. The Influence of Individuals in Establishing Children’s Library Services in Western Australia*. LISWA Research Series, No. 8. LISWA, 1996, pp. 33 and 40. Throughout Chapters 3 and 4 Gregg explores the connection between literature a sound democratic system and post-war reconstruction. The FAWWA’s belief in the need for the arts to be more accessible for the general public is contained in the objects of the Cultural Council of Western Australia proposed by the FAWWA. A. Gregg cites this in *Catalysts for Change*, 1996, p. 44.


\(^10\) FAWWA Minutes, 31 October 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
Krantz suggested the possibility of space in the city that might be available in the New Zealand Insurance Company’s building.\textsuperscript{11} Nothing came of this proposal, although a space in central Perth would have offered easy access for members. Accessibility by public transport was a necessity, the motor car not becoming a part of most households until the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{12} Lack of funds posed a problem. By the end of 1948, FAWWA savings to provide these rooms amounted to only £7/12/- in War Savings Certificates.\textsuperscript{13} It seems possible that rooms provided in a commercial building might provide the advantage of being underwritten by the business owner. Two years later, however, the provision of a room of their own had been set in motion through a quite unforeseen avenue.

Until the discovery, in late 2011, of letters between Drake-Brockman, Samuel Furphy, Professor Allan Edwards at the University of W.A. and Ewers, different versions existed of the bequest of Joseph Furphy’s house to the FAWWA.\textsuperscript{14} The interests and connections of three significant members of the FAWWA, Drake-Brockman, Ewers and the president for 1947–1949, Paul Buddee, all played a part in the final gift of the house. Although Drake-Brockman had studied art at the Perth Technical School with Henri van Raalte, she did not meet Mattie Furphy through that connection.\textsuperscript{15} Drake-Brockman left a description of meeting Mattie shortly before the latter’s death.\textsuperscript{16} It seems likely that she knew of the family through her friendship with Miles Franklin, with whom she corresponded from 1940 to 1954.\textsuperscript{17} In 1943, she wrote to Franklin of visiting ‘dear Sam & Mattie’.\textsuperscript{18} Ewers met the Furphy family through his aunt Lisbeth Gray.\textsuperscript{19} Unlike

\textsuperscript{11} FAWWA Minutes, 27 March 1946. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
\textsuperscript{13} FAWWA Newsletter, October 1948. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
\textsuperscript{14} These letters are in Henrietta Drake-Brockman’s papers in the NLA. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634 5/14 and 15.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Guide to the papers and books of Miles Franklin in the Mitchell Library, State Library of N. S. W.} (1983) Sydney: Library Council of New South Wales, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{18} H. Drake-Brockman to M. Franklin, 1 June 1943. Then in 1948 H. Drake-Brockman reported that ‘Little Mrs Sam Furphy died suddenly on July 25th….She just went like a flash — heart — as she one morning rose to make a cup of tea…’. H. Drake-Brockman to M. Franklin, 6 October 1948. Franklin Papers ML 364/33 (Microfiche).
Drake-Brockman and Ewers, Paul Buddee had no personal acquaintance with the Furphy family. Elected FAWWA president in October 1947, Buddee learned of the Furphy home through students at Swanbourne Primary School, where he was deputy headmaster. The boys picked mulberries from a tree in the garden of the Furphy house in Servetus Street.20

Following his wife Mattie’s sudden death in July 1948, Samuel Furphy decided to leave Western Australia after establishing some memorial for his father Joseph. In late 1948, he visited Ewers to discuss the best way to proceed with such an undertaking. Ewers, however, was away on a writing trip, so his wife suggested Furphy talk to Drake-Brockman.21 Writing later to Guy Howarth, Drake-Brockman described how horrified she was to learn that Furphy’s lawyer had suggested he endow a bed at the Home of Peace, a home for the aged and infirm in Subiaco.

I am afraid I literally yelled, “Oh, you can’t do that! Not in honour of Furphy — it must be something to do with Australian literature or with helping a young writer, or at least with books … why not something for the University?” He said he had not thought of that — it was but a modest bequest.22

Furphy intended to give around £2,000 from royalties for his father’s writings to provide this memorial.23 In phone conversations between Edwards and Drake-Brockman it was suggested that the University of Western Australia would set up a Furphy room or area in honour of Joseph Furphy. In December 1948, while negotiations were still underway, Furphy told Drake-Brockman of his intention to let the house before travelling east. He did not want to leave his wife’s artwork there, and wondered if the University could place it somewhere. Drake-Brockman knew of the development of St. Catherine’s residential College for female students, so spoke with people in charge as well as the University librarian, Miss E. Wood, who assured her that the University could house most

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Drake-Brockman was describing events some months after they took place. The papers held in this folder include letters to and from Drake-Brockman, Ewers, and Professor Allan Edwards, dating from January to April 1949.
23 FAWWA to Angus & Robertson Ltd, 10 July 1962. FAWWA papers TCHA.
of the furniture and Mattie Furphy’s copper work.\textsuperscript{24} Drake-Brockman proposed that the house should also be preserved, pointing out that:

The increasing importance of Joseph Furphy’s place in the history of our national literature makes me feel that, in fifty years’ time, say, all those concerned would be considered thoughtless if this matter of the house preservation itself, is not thoroughly well considered at this moment.\textsuperscript{25}

Drake-Brockman thought perhaps the University, Royal W.A. Historical Society or State Gardens Board might take over the house. Although appreciative of her help with the bequest to the University, Edwards expressed doubts about how the Investment Committee might view the acquisition of a forty year old wooden cottage.\textsuperscript{26} A month later, Ewers returned from his trip in the north of the State, and told Drake-Brockman that he had suggested to Furphy that the house be given to the Fellowship. Furphy ‘immediately liked the idea’.\textsuperscript{27} Ewers explained that a comment by Buddee at a committee meeting inspired him to suggest this to Furphy. He regretted that so much furniture had already been given to the Women’s College. A later letter from the secretary of the University Women’s College Council informed Drake-Brockman that the furniture and china they received was either in use, in storage or auctioned.\textsuperscript{28}

Drake-Brockman was vehement in her doubts about the wisdom of such a move, telling Ewers that he was ‘somewhat blinded’ by his ‘own enthusiasms’.\textsuperscript{29} Still convinced that the house should be preserved, Drake-Brockman nevertheless agonised over the responsibility the FAWWA was accepting. At FAWWA meetings Drake-Brockman led the opposition in ‘a number of stormy sessions’.\textsuperscript{30} Finally, however, the FAWWA agreed to accept the house ‘in the spirit of a memorial’ with the proviso that, should the Fellowship ever cease to

\textsuperscript{25} ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} E.M. Watson, Hon Sec., Council of University Women’s College to H. Drake-Brockman, 24 May 1949. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/5/14. Some furniture and all of the copper work was returned to the FAWWA. There is no record of paintings being returned, although FAWWA minutes record the return of some china.
be able to maintain it, the house should become the property of the University. Buddee and Ewers were appointed as official negotiators with Sam Furphy. Prichard reported to Franklin that ‘Henrietta, no doubt, will tell you all about the Furphy House — & the arrangements as to what should be done with it. She’s mostly aggrieved & disapproving, I think’. Although Drake-Brockman continued to regret the task assumed by the FAWWA, once the members accepted the motion she worked hard to ensure that funds were available for its maintenance. Both Buddee and Ewers later emphasised the passion with which she worked to ensure that the house was maintained and furnished. The fact that she was capable of seeing the positives in the gift, in spite of her own reservations, is clear from her reflection to Franklin, in May 1949:

It was a fantastic streak of destiny, it seemed to me, that I should find myself associated with all this......Mr. Sam has given the dear little house to the FAW. That suggestion did not come from me, but it is a good idea, so long as we can keep it properly maintained.

Who was Joseph Furphy?
... a founding father of the Australian novel

Although his writing life was spent in and around his native Shepparton in Victoria, for the last seven years of his life Joseph Furphy lived in Western Australia, arriving with his wife Leonie, in January 1905. They came to support their two sons, Felix and Samuel, who, in 1903, had started a foundry in Fremantle. Furphy left an account of his years in Western Australia in his letters to his mother, Judith Furphy, and to literary friends including Franklin, Kate Baker, and William Cathels. He divided his time between foundry work and building houses for the three families, at first three ‘hovels’ on the corner of

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31 FAWWA Minutes, 23 February 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
Clement and Marmion Streets in Swanbourne.\textsuperscript{39} In 1908, with the help of German builder, Godfrey Reinfeld, he built a 'half-finished villa-fronted cottage' in Servetus Street, Swanbourne for his wife and himself.\textsuperscript{40} Furphy died suddenly, in September 1912, just before his sixty-ninth birthday.\textsuperscript{41} In 1938, Furphy's youngest son Samuel, and his artist wife Sarah Martha (Mattie), sold their larger home in Clement Street, and moved into the wooden cottage. They made numerous alterations to the house, installing most of the finer pieces of Mattie's beaten copper work.\textsuperscript{42} Mattie's teachers at the Perth Technical School included James W. R. Linton. Her work was exhibited in London and won international prizes.\textsuperscript{43}

Furphy had already been the focus for Fellowship activities when, in September 1943, it organised a Perth event as part of the Australia-wide celebrations marking the centenary of his birth. In the eastern states these events were largely fuelled by the enthusiasm of Kate Baker and Miles Franklin, whose biography of Furphy was published in Sydney, in 1944.\textsuperscript{44} Taking place at the Modern Women's Club before an 'overflowing public audience', FAWWA's Furphy celebration was one of the organisation's first major public events devoted to its aim of promoting Australian writers and their writing, thus strengthening the members' sense of belonging to the national literary scene. Reflecting on the day in his President's Report, John McLeod called it an 'outstanding event'.\textsuperscript{45} Attendance was partly increased by the 'large crowd of supporters' brought to the gathering by William Beeby, from Patch Theatre, in his role as president of the Anti-Fascist League.\textsuperscript{46} Indeed Ewers reported to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} J. Lang. \textit{At the Toss of a Coin}, 1987, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{40} The building of this house is well documented. J. Lang. \textit{At the Toss of a Coin}, 1987, pp. 9–11.
\item \textsuperscript{41} J. Furphy to his mother Judith Furphy, [February/March 1908?] in J. Barnes and L. Hoffmann, eds. \textit{Bushman and Bookworm. Editors' note}, 1995, p. 241. Also J. K. Ewers. 'The Tom Collins House' in \textit{Walkabout}, 1 July 1952, pp. 41–42.
\item \textsuperscript{42} J. K. Ewers. 'The Tom Collins House' in \textit{Walkabout}, 1 July 1952, pp. 41–42. Also the FAWWA holds a statement by his granddaughter Emily Main of seeing the actual building process. Emily Main. Legal statement, 25 February 1977. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item \textsuperscript{44} M. Franklin (in association with K. Baker). \textit{Joseph Furphy: The Legend of a Man and his Book}. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1944.
\item \textsuperscript{45} J. McLeod. President's Report, 27 October 1943, p. 2. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/15.
\item \textsuperscript{46} FAWWA to William Beeby, 1 November 1943. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/19.
\end{itemize}
Kate Baker that, rather than Fellowship members, the audience came from 'all walks of life' including members of the Furphy family in Western Australia, as well as people who had known Furphy during the eight years, when he lived and worked in Fremantle and Swanbourne.\(^{47}\) The programme consisted of addresses and readings from the works of "Tom Collins" arranged by Ewers, whose admiration for Furphy was apparent in his 1942 book *Tell the People* which examined Furphy's writings on social theories.\(^{48}\) A highlight of the event was a talk by Reg Landells, who, as a young man of eighteen, had known Furphy. Although they frequently walked together along Swanbourne beach, Furphy had never told Landells that he was a writer.\(^{49}\) During the weeks preceding the celebration Ewers also gave radio talks on Furphy, and supervised the Western Australian production of the play *Stolen Grass*, based on *Such Is Life* and presented on radio around Australia as part of the celebrations.

Naming the house

*Tom Collins is the name I gave myself*\(^{60}\)

In the first announcement of Samuel Furphy's bequest to the FAWWA, in April 1949, the media declared that ‘Tom Collins’ Cottage will go to writers.\(^{51}\) Discussion continued within the organisation about the name to be given the house until, at a general meeting later in the year, Ewers adopted the persona of Joseph Furphy stating that:

> Joseph is the name I was given. Tom Collins is the name I gave myself. Joseph Furphy is dead, but Tom Collins lives on and dwells among you as you may observe. It is as Tom Collins that I will be present at all your meetings under this roof, whether you gather to talk shop, to talk turkey, or

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\(^{48}\) J. K. Ewers. *Tell the People: An examination of the little-known writings of Joseph Furphy (Tom Collins)—in the light of their value for Australia today*. Sydney: The Currawong Publishing Company, 1943. A note handwritten by Ewers in his copy of the book states: 'Published either very late in 1943 or very early in 1944. My author's copies were awaiting me on return from holiday at the end of January, 1944. It was written in 1942'.


\(^{50}\) Cited in J. Lang, *At the Toss of a Coin*, 1987, p. 33.

\(^{51}\) *Daily News*, 8 April 1949.
under the convivial influence of Bacchus, to talk (adj.) nonsense.....I name this place TOM COLLINS HOUSE.\footnote{52}

Ewers’ suggestion was accepted and, from that time, the cottage officially became Tom Collins House.

The choice of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia to open the house, on 29 September 1949, highlighted the new relationship between the University and the FAWWA, created by the terms of Samuel Furphy’s deed of gift.\footnote{53} The opening also confirmed the Fellowship’s conviction that this State’s writers belonged within the national literary world. Writers around Australia such as Nettie and Vance Palmer, Bernard O’Dowd, Eleanor Dark, Ion Idriess, Miles Franklin, H. M. Green, Kate Baker, Louis Lavater, Kylie Tennant, Ernestine Hill, Eleanor Dark, and Ruth Park sent congratulatory messages, which were read to the gathering on the front lawn in Servetus Street.\footnote{54} Several of them commented on the fact that, while Sydney writers had managed to save only the chimney of Henry Lawson’s house as his memorial, the Western Australians had preserved a whole house.\footnote{55}

Two months later, Prichard described to Miles Franklin the events of that ‘miserably cold afternoon’.

How the ceremony wd have amused him! [Joseph Furphy] I felt all the time that a wan, lanky ghost was hanging round — the crowd collected on the lawn in front of the cottage, professors of the University & odds & sods eg the cultivated (?) clique — most of whom I’ll swear had never heard of “S.I.L.” or “Rigby’s”.\footnote{56} It saddened me to think how little appreciation JF had in his lifetime. And now the wd-be intelligentzia [sic] gathers round to do honour to his memory!

Prichard made her point to those present that afternoon, as she thanked the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia for his opening speech. While saying it was ‘pleasing to find the University associated with appreciation

\footnote{52} Cited in J. Lang, \textit{At the Toss of a Coin}, 1987, p. 33. 
\footnote{53} See later in this chapter for a more detailed discussion of the terms of the Furphy Bequest to the University of W.A. 
\footnote{54} All messages are held in FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/6. 
\footnote{55} This memorial to Lawson was unveiled in September 1949. M. Franklin to FAWWA, 27 August 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
\footnote{56} The question mark was Prichard’s punctuation and reflects the scorn she felt for the University’s lack of interest in and knowledge of Australian literature at the time.
of JF & his work’, she could not resist a regretful reminder that both were ‘ignored by the universities & so many “cultured” people during his life’.57

So the FAWWA began its second decade, with a permanent headquarters in which to hold gatherings and develop a library. More than that, it was a headquarters of some substance, being the home of one of Australia’s classic authors, situated on a quarter acre in a comfortable coastal suburb. It was also the first of such literary memorials in Australia, which could, in Buddee’s words, ‘provide an inspiring focal point for all those with literary aspirations or interested in literature’ by perpetuating the presence of noted writers.58 Ownership of a small wooden worker’s cottage, however, held contradictory possibilities for the small organisation. At the time of becoming property owners, most members hopefully shared the retiring president’s feelings when he stated categorically that

The presentation to this Fellowship of his father’s late home by Samuel Furphy set in train a series of events that has had a very stimulating effect on this Fellowship in particular and on Australian writing in general.59

Drake-Brockman, however, remained concerned at the FAWWA’s ‘undertaking such a financial incubus’.60

How would a small group of writers with minimal finances maintain a wooden house, which Durack remembered as ‘being in a rather dilapidated state’ when it came into their possession?61 Reflecting on her 1956 visit to Western Australia, Sydney author Nancy Keesing wrote convincingly of the ‘financial and curatorial burden’ which property ownership imposed on the FAWWA. Such was her reaction that she determined that ‘gifts, bequests, endowments and like initiatives’ to organisations should be accompanied by ‘provision for managerial and administrative’ expenses.62 News circulars and Presidents' Reports from the 1950s reflect the degree to which the need for funds to support the house

57 K.S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 28 November 1849. Franklin papers ML 364/21 General Correspondence.
58 Daily News, 8 April 1949.
61 Discussion between M. Durack, B. and D. Irwin and T. Mayman with D. Grant and B. Dibble, on the early days of the FAWWA, 1985. Tape in the Durack papers BL 0071/7273A/MDM.
dominated FAWWA policy and directed activities, which ranged from 'an endless round of blooming busy bees' to appeals to government on federal, state and local levels, with little or no results.\(^{63}\)

Immediately after the bequest was made, Murdoch appealed to the Prime Minister for a federal contribution to the upkeep of this memorial to Furphy as a writer of national importance. The reply came back promptly. As with the Lawson memorial, the government considered it a state matter and no federal funds or support would be forthcoming.\(^{64}\) Requests to the government of the day continued throughout the 1950s. Local member Ross Hutchison MLA was approached, in 1953, with a number of suggestions, including support by the Public Works Department for maintenance, the State Gardens Board to care for the grounds and the Government Printers to print a booklet for sale to visitors. Alternatively, the FAWWA suggested that a sum of £100 be allocated annually to the trustees for major maintenance work, rates and so on. These requests were unsuccessful.\(^{65}\) It became clear that the burden of upkeep remained totally with the writers’ organisation.

In the 1940s, no government grants or other forms of public funding were available for the restoration and upkeep of heritage buildings, and Western Australia had an undeveloped culture of public benefaction. The most direct means of raising funds for specific purposes was to levy members. In 1952, a general levy of 10/- per member provided fees for the incorporation necessitated by the new acquisition.\(^{66}\) Within a year the levy had raised £24/17/6.\(^{67}\) A proportion of the trust monies came from direct donation by individual members; such donations totalling £140, in 1957.\(^{68}\) Writers in other states, local businesses and literary magazines also donated funds. Each month’s Fellowship circular recorded the amounts received during that month, thus keeping before members the need for further donations.


\(^{64}\) Correspondence between W. Murdoch and the Prime Minister, September 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.

\(^{65}\) See, for example, FAWWA Minutes, 14 April and 9 June 1953. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/58..

\(^{66}\) FAWWA Circular, August 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.

\(^{67}\) J. K. Ewers. President’s Report, 28 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.

\(^{68}\) H. Drake-Brockman. President’s Report, 29 October 1957. FAWWA papers TCHA.
Fund-raising activities offered the FAWWA another way to meet property expenses. The first reference to these appears, in 1951, when money was needed to pay for a professional painter to complete the painting of external walls begun by members. One popular and ongoing form of fund-raising was the holding of film evenings at the Shell Theatrette in Hay Street, Perth, which showed short feature films. The first of these evenings took place, in 1950. Also, on several occasions during the 1950s, the FAWWA purchased block bookings for performances at the Perth Repertory Club. These events did not raise large sums of money (one, in 1952, brought in £19/12/-), nor did they always run smoothly. The 1952 performance had in fact been postponed from the previous year. Nevertheless, by the end of 1959, then president Vincent Serventy was able to report that £1000 had been lodged with Perpetual Trustees in a trust fund for the preservation of the house. This indicates the dedication of successive committees to ensuring that successful fund-raising activities should be a regular event on the FAWWA calendar. Besides funding house maintenance, such events helped strengthen the FAWWA’s relationship with other cultural bodies.

A new FAWWA anthology: *West Coast Stories*  
a very good book in itself

Possibly the most ambitious project to augment the Fund was the publication of an anthology of Western Australian writing, proposed in 1957. Drake-Brockman was the active force behind this anthology. During a visit to Sydney in 1957, she proposed the venture to George Ferguson at Angus and Robertson on the understanding that all royalties would go towards the TCH Fund. She gained a further concession from Ferguson, that no copies of the book would be remainedered, but that the Fellowship would be given the opportunity of purchasing unsold copies at a reduced price. Angus and Robertson agreed to publish the book as an expression of the publisher’s appreciation of the

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70 FAWWA Minutes, 10 June 1952. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.  
71 J. K. Ewers. President’s Report, 28 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
72 V. Serventy. President’s Report, 27 October 1959. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
73 V. Palmer, 8 March 1959. Typescript in FAWWA papers TCHA.  
74 G. Ferguson to H. Drake-Brockman, 26 June 1957. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
75 FAWWA Minutes, 9 August 1960. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
Fellowship’s role in maintaining the home of Joseph Furphy, for whose book, *Such Is Life*, they held the copyright. In 1963, Drake-Brockman articulated her frustration with still being involved in selling the anthology:

> Things are only so-so in the Fellowship .... I only stay on the Committee to get rid of that wretched *West Coast Stories* — I work like a slave for that wretched FAW, and I never wanted the house, or the book, and certainly not the responsibility of getting rid of all the copies — it is fantastic, really, how I always get involved in the end.

At the time, she was diving at the Abrolhos Islands to research her Batavia books, as she described to Glaskin in the same letter. This would have been a much more exciting activity than propping up a committee and promoting the sale of books.

The collection featured works by twenty-two Western Australian writers, all members of the FAWWA. Reviewing the book on the ABC’s *Today’s Books*, Vance Palmer described it as having ‘a very praiseworthy purpose’ while also being ‘a very good book in itself’. For the next few years, the committee, and especially Drake-Brockman, promoted the book on every possible occasion. Alberts bookshop was urged to mount displays of *West Coast Stories* to coincide with conferences such as the Science Congress, in August 1959, and natural selling times like Christmas. As the first major publication by the Fellowship, *West Coast Stories* became an important public statement of its promotion of Western Australian writers as a regional force within the framework of Australian literature. It also encouraged the organisation to proceed with future publishing endeavours, especially as Angus and Robertson, then Australia’s foremost publisher, was so supportive. Copies were sold at every Fellowship gathering, both in-house and public. Despite this, the Tom Collins Fund was boosted by only £205.17.0 after two years. In mid-May 1961, Beatrice Davis, then editor at Angus and Robertson, told Drake-Brockman that 1457 copies of the book remained. Having undertaken not to

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77 H. Drake-Brockman to G. Glaskin, 12 October 1963. Glaskin papers, MUA, Literary Correspondence 1296A 14/5.
78 V. Palmer, 8 March 1959. Typescript in FAWWA files. FAWWA papers TCHA.
79 FAWWA to Manager, Alberts Bookshop, 4 August 1959. FAWWA papers TCHA.
80 See Royalty statements from Angus & Robertson and letters of thanks from FAWWA, 30 June 1959 – 9 May 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.
remainder the anthology, Angus and Robertson suggested that remaining copies be handed to the Fellowship for storage and sales. While copies could still be sold to the public for 20/-, the publishers would expect only a six month statement of sales and payment of 5/- per copy. The committee agreed, grateful for member Elizabeth Backhouse’s offer to store excess copies in the offices of the Insurance company where she worked. Hungerford offered to take charge of selling the books. Drake-Brockman had already contacted Ross Hutchinson, MLA, urging him to put to Premier Brand the possibility of the government buying all remaining copies, in order to use them for promotion of the State prior to and during the Commonwealth Games, in 1962. Unfortunately the Premier was not convinced. In thanking Hutchinson for his efforts, Drake-Brockman acknowledged that, even if the government plan was not feasible, ‘similar avenues’ had come to mind and the Fellowship would still attempt to ‘dispose of the books en masse’. These avenues included the Commonwealth Games Publicity unit within the News and Information Service, as well as the State Education Department.

Hungerford utilised his position as press officer in the News and Information Bureau to urge the Australian Bureau to purchase the books. As he pointed out, the sale of the remaining 1400 books would ‘completely free the W.A. Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers from the responsibility of maintaining Tom Collins House’. He did not hesitate to underline the difficulties faced by the Fellowship, having been bequeathed the house ‘entirely without endowment’. He described it as ‘something of an embarrassment to a small band of normally impecunious writers’. However, governments and their agencies, in the 1950s and 1960s, were not yet inclined to take upon their exchequers the financial care of heritage buildings. The News and Information Service agreed to buy three hundred copies at 5/- each for promotion purposes.

81 B. Davis to H. Drake-Brockman, 19 May 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
82 FAWWA Minutes, 10 October 1961. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/81. 1050 copies of the book were reported as being stored in a locked room at the Chamber of Manufacturers Insurance Ltd at the committee meeting, 14 November 1961. FAWWA Minutes, 10 October 1961. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/81.  
83 Correspondence between H. Drake-Brockman, R. Hutchinson, MLA and the Premier’s Department, July to August, 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
84 H. Drake-Brockman to Hon R. Hutchinson, MLA, 3 August 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.  
85 T. A. G. Hungerford to K. Murphy, Director of the Australian News and Information Bureau, 23 August 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.
In 1962, Hungerford swung into a sales campaign, including a paragraph on the front page of *Jetstream*, the publication of MacRobertson Miller Airlines, in April 1962. A year later, the Fellowship forwarded a cheque for £70.10.0 to Angus and Robertson, representing the sale of 282 copies. By December 1963, they had sold a further 251 copies. In May 1964, Drake-Brockman wrote delightedly to Beatrice Davis: ‘This is one of the letters it gives me pleasure to write…’ With congratulations on the sales, Davis advised the Fellowship that Angus and Robertson was prepared to write off the remaining copies to enable all outstanding proceeds to go directly to the Tom Collins House Fund. The *Fellowship News*, June 1964, announced that the Fund had reached £1500, only £500 short of the desired £2000.

In order to relieve the committee of the ongoing task of caring for the house, a separate Tom Collins House committee of twelve people, with Ewers as chairman, was formed at the first meeting for 1950. This sub-committee had full responsibility for care of the house, on the understanding that the committee must approve all ‘major changes’ to either house or grounds. Later in the year it was given a separate bank account, but had to ask committee approval of any expenditure over £25. Although this sub-committee relieved the main body of some pressure, the activities of the organisation as a whole were increasingly influenced by the requirements of caring for the newly acquired property.

An immediate problem was the lack of suitable furniture, as the house was virtually empty except for Mattie’s copper work. For early functions, chairs were carried from the Swanbourne Primary School. Students helped in other ways as well, cleaning the grounds, painting the front fence and providing ushers for the opening ceremony. Permanent arrangements were needed for

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86 B. Davis to H. Drake-Brockman acknowledging receipt of cheque, 16 May 1963. FAWWA papers TCHA.
87 H. Drake-Brockman to B. Davis, 11 December 1963. FAWWA papers TCHA.
88 B. Davis to H. Drake-Brockman, 21 May 1964. FAWWA papers TCHA.
89 *Fellowship News*, June 1964, p.3.
90 FAWWA minutes, 10 January 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/3.
91 FAWWA minutes, 26 June 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
93 P. Buddee to J. K. Ewers, 8 March 1972, p. 2. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/371. P. Buddee, Speech to FAWWA members at the Fellows Dinner, 29 September 1989, p.4. FAWWA papers, TCHA.
chairs in the two rooms that would be used for meetings. Donations were called for and, by January 1950, an order was placed with a Bassendean carpenter for sixteen chairs. The cost of £2/2/- per chair was met by donations from individual writers, whose names were inscribed on the backs of their chairs.\textsuperscript{94} Prichard informed Franklin that she had ‘donated one, wh [sic] is to bear your name’.\textsuperscript{95}

When planning the acquisition of a permanent base, one stated purpose had always been to create a library of Western Australian and Australian books. In 1952 member Eric Kent, then part-owner of Alberts Book shop in Forrest Place in Perth, donated eight books to provide the nucleus.\textsuperscript{96} Four years later, the committee sought the advice of the State Librarian, Ali Sharr. On his recommendations, it was agreed to create a specialised collection of Western Australian books.\textsuperscript{97} Initially members were encouraged to give a copy of each of their books, on publication, for inclusion in the library. Not only did members respond to this appeal; some, like J. Sayers, bequeathed their whole library to the FAWWA.\textsuperscript{98} When the books were finally delivered in 1961, Durack in her diary described ‘cartons of books littering floor, chairs and table of TCH’.\textsuperscript{99}

The library needed bookcases or shelves and, by the end of 1950, the president was able to report that two had been donated.\textsuperscript{100} Ewers gave a showcase to hold his collection of Furphy’s books on loan to the Fellowship, while Eric Kent suggested and organised the purchase of 250 copies of \textit{The Buln-Buln and the Broglia} by Furphy for resale.\textsuperscript{101} As plans for the University Women’s College developed it became increasingly clear that the items given by Samuel Furphy were not suitable, and they were returned to the Fellowship.\textsuperscript{102} These included smaller pieces of Mattie Furphy’s copper work as well as two large jarrah and leather chairs, made by Joseph Furphy with carving by Mattie, a smaller leather

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\item[\textsuperscript{94}] FAWWA Minutes, 17 January 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/3.
\item[\textsuperscript{95}] K. S. Prichard to M. Franklin, 8 November 1949. Franklin Papers ML MSS 364/21.
\item[\textsuperscript{96}] J.K. Ewers. President’s Report, 28 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item[\textsuperscript{97}] H. Drake-Brockman. President’s Report, 30 October 1956, p. 3. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item[\textsuperscript{98}] FAWWA Minutes, 11 November 1952. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
\item[\textsuperscript{99}] M. Durack diary, 1961, August 28. Original in Durack papers BL 0071/7273A/MDMDRY.
\item[\textsuperscript{100}] The bookcases were donated by J. K. Moir, of the Bread and Cheese Club in Melbourne and Cecil Saunders, a Perth business man. J.K. Ewers. President’s Report, 31 October 1950. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item[\textsuperscript{101}] J.K. Ewers. President’s Report, 27 October 1953, p. 2. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item[\textsuperscript{102}] J. Lang. \textit{At the Toss of a Coin}, 1987, p. 30.
\end{thebibliography}
chair of unknown provenance and the jarrah dining table and chairs made for the Furphy couple by Ewers' uncle, Harry Gray.¹⁰³

Now that they had room for storage, the committee began to develop more extensive records of their activities and of writing within the State. In 1952, Blanche McKie is noted as planning a scrap-book of ‘Fellowship activities in general and the T.C.H. in particular’.¹⁰⁴ That this development of records was ongoing is shown by the commencement, in 1957, of a biographical record of all local authors. Members were asked to contribute biographies and updates as new publications appeared.¹⁰⁵ Lang and Eleanor White spearheaded this first attempt to create a database of Western Australian writers. Unfortunately, the record was not maintained in subsequent years.

Owning a house, with or without furniture, immediately raised the question of security. A house left empty in a suburban street was not a safe option even in the late 1940s. The FAWWA found a solution for this problem almost immediately when Mollie Skinner, then aged seventy-three and 'looking pretty frail', offered to move into the house as its first caretaker.¹⁰⁶ The trustees agreed with some misgivings. Both Ewers and Buddee checked 'almost daily and often at night to find this remarkable woman wondering what the fuss was all about. She had offered to look after the house and look after it she would'.¹⁰⁷ Skinner stayed seven or eight months until Blanche McKie, then secretary, took her place to become the 'first resident Secretary'.¹⁰⁸ Her combined duties led Ewers to praise her for a dedication to the house which went far beyond her secretarial duties. He described her wheeling 'barrow-loads of manure from the dairy and spreading it on the rosebeds'.¹⁰⁹ The question of a caretaker was formally solved, in May 1950, when a pensioner couple, Mr and Mrs W. Cook, became the first of many caretakers, appointed for twelve months, with free rent

¹⁰⁴ J.K. Ewers. President’s Report, 28 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.
¹⁰⁵ H. Drake-Brockman. President’s Report, 29 October 1957. FAWWA papers TCHA.
¹⁰⁶ P. Buddee. Speech to FAWWA members at the Fellows Dinner, 29 September 1989. FAWWA papers TCHA.
¹⁰⁷ P. Buddee to B. Dibble, 12 March 1984, p. 1. FAWWA papers TCHA.
¹⁰⁹ The Ascot dairy was then situated in Servetus Street directly opposite the house. See photo taken at the Opening of Tom Collins House in September 1949. FAWWA papers TCHA.
in exchange for their services.\textsuperscript{110} Later tenants paid minimal rent which helped offset maintenance costs. At times the tenants were more closely linked with the activities of the Fellowship as was the case, in 1969, when poet Andrew Burke lived there with his first wife and child. Burke was quoted in the \textit{Daily News} as saying that it was easy to ‘reel off poems in this house’.\textsuperscript{111}

The location of the house posed problems for the general membership of the FAWWA. A coastal suburb was not as easily accessible for members as rooms in the centre of Perth, which meant that, in 1952, when meetings were held alternately in Swanbourne and in Perth, the former meetings were reported as being ‘less well attended’ but having ‘an intimacy about them’ which Ewers, rather hopefully, suggested would make up for the small number of members present.\textsuperscript{112} Having been built as a worker’s cottage, Tom Collins House did not provide the open spaces needed for a growing organisation and, as one member pointed out in 1965, the main room was ‘far too stuffy’. He proposed that alterations be made to extend the meeting space by opening up the front rooms to include the hallway between them.\textsuperscript{113} This work was finally carried out in 1967, under the supervision of architect Marshall Clifton.\textsuperscript{114}

In retrospect, it can be seen that there were benefits for the organisation of which members at the time may have been unaware. Ownership of the Furphy house provided a new focus for members and encouraged the organisation to instigate new professional endeavours. The first ‘busy bee’ to prepare the house for use became something of a legend in the minds of the members involved. The State’s leading writers had wielded paint-brushes rather than pens, with Jack Harvey tied to the chimney so that he could safely paint the steep tin roof. \textit{West Coast Stories} marked the FAWWA’s intention to continue publishing Western Australian writing, being the second in a series of such anthologies.\textsuperscript{115} These ongoing publications helped to promote the State’s

\begin{thebibliography}{115}
\bibitem{Footnote110} FAWWA Minutes, May 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.
\bibitem{Footnote112} President’s Report, 27 October 1952, p.1. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\bibitem{Footnote113} FAWWA Minutes, 13 April 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\bibitem{Footnote114} M. Durack. President’s Report, 30 October 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A /52.
\bibitem{Footnote115} The first anthology published on behalf of the FAWWA was J. Pollard, ed. \textit{Out of the West}. Perth: Paterson Brokensha, und. [1940?].
\end{thebibliography}
writers throughout the rest of the country, making other states aware of the wealth of regional literature emanating from Western Australia.\textsuperscript{116}

Property ownership also stimulated the committee, in the 1950s, to pursue incorporation in order to transfer trusteeship for the house from the original trustees, Buddee and Ewers, to the president, secretary and treasurer of the organisation. In her President’s Report in October 1957, Drake-Brockman confirmed the successful conclusion to this process, with Marshall Clifton continuing as Honorary Architect, having accepted this role in the previous year.\textsuperscript{117}

Possibly the most significant outcome of the FAWWA’s ownership of Tom Collins House was a new awareness of the Western Australian section of the FAW among writers in other states of Australia and overseas, as well as within the cultural community in Perth. This awareness in turn helped to bring Western Australian writers to the attention of the literary world throughout Australia. Although he wrote nothing of importance while living in Western Australia, Joseph Furphy has long been acknowledged as ‘one of the most significant writers of Australian fiction before the First World War’.\textsuperscript{118} The congratulatory messages from writers in other states, when the Fellowship assumed responsibility to maintain the house as a memorial to Furphy, reflected the esteem Australian writers felt for him. The house provided a natural gathering point for visiting writers.

The first official visitors to be welcomed to the house were playwright and children’s author, Rees, and his wife. Both originally from Perth, they happily ‘connived’ with Ewers and Buddee to provide an occasion intended to arouse

\textsuperscript{116} In her thesis submitted to the University of Western Australia in fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy, P. H. Henningsgaard discussed four anthologies produced by the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) between 1959 and 1988, and their role in promoting the regional literature of Western Australia. P. H. Henningsgaard. ‘Outside Traditional Publishing Centres: Towards the Production of a Regional Literature in Western Australia’, 2008, pp. 94–106.
\textsuperscript{117} H. Drake-Brockman. President’s Report, 30 October 1956 and 29 October 1957. FAWWA papers TCHA.
the enthusiasm of members for their new role as property owners. Rees rose to the occasion, announcing that Sydney writers would be ‘green with envy’. In 1960, some of the first Russian writers to visit Australia after the initial thawing of the Cold War were welcomed at Tom Collins House. In the 1970s, Australian poets Les Murray and William Hart-Smith were among the visitors, while international authors William Golding, Doris Lessing and Iris Murdoch visited the house during visits to Perth for the Perth Festival of Arts. Some occasions left striking memories. In 1968, long-time member Dorothy Brooks wrote of watching Drake-Brockman just a week before her unexpected death, as she showed Judith Wright around the house.


In March 1952, the house served another purpose, becoming an art gallery for one of the first exhibitions in the metropolitan area of the paintings by Aboriginal boys at Carrolup mission.

An unlooked-for benefit of home ownership was that it necessitated the establishment of new working relationships for the FAWWA. On the local government level, Cottesloe Council, within whose boundaries the house stood until its relocation in 1996, initially granted the organisation exemption from all rates and charges together with the advisory services of a council gardener. This offer was reversed in 1951, after a paying tenant was installed and the house was deemed to be earning income as a rental property. The then

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119 P. Buddee, Speech to members of FAWWA at the Fellows Dinner, 29 September 1989, p. 4. FAWWA papers TCHA.
120 Newspaper cutting und. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/252.
121 The writers were Alexei Surkov, well-known Russian poet then secretary of the Russian Writers' Union and Oksana Krugeskaya, an English translator with the Writers' Union, who specialised in Australian literature. Their visit is described in more detail in Chapter 7. FAWWA Minutes, August 1960. FAWWA papers TCHA.
122 Fellowship News, April 1968, p. 16.
secretary replied to the council pointing out that in 1950 income from hire was only £6/8/5. The council did not change its position.

Because Buddee was both FAWWA president, and deputy headmaster of the local Swanbourne Primary School, at the time of the bequest, a special connection existed between school and the writers’ organisation. As well as providing chairs for the opening, school students were called in to provide manpower for house maintenance in the early months. The legendary first working party included fourteen students whose signatures appear on the first page in a visitors’ book that spans the years from 1948 to 2004. Among the names is that of Walter Vivian, who was to become FAWWA president in 1992. One of the stories emanating from that day is of the neighbourhood dog that the students painted along with the front picket fence.

As already mentioned, the process of acquiring the house also brought about a more formalised working relationship between the Fellowship and the University of Western Australia. This arose partly from the combination of early discussions between Samuel Furphy, Drake-Brockman, Edwards and Ewers, the donation of furniture to the proposed University Women’s College and the provision, in the deed of gift, that the house would become the property of the University should the Fellowship prove unable to maintain it. Partly, however, it was further cemented by the terms of the separate bequest which Furphy made to the University. Initially, he gave £1,000 to the University for the purchase of art works, and to finance an annual essay prize in honour of his father. This sum was to be augmented by royalties from the sale of Such Is Life while they were still paid. Under the terms of the gift, the University was to negotiate with the president of the FAWWA before naming the judge of the essay prize each year, a practice which persisted into the twenty-first century. As trustees of the bequest, successive FAWWA presidents also met the Professor of English at intervals to discuss the Trust fund. The bulk of the monies went to buy art

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125 FAWWA Minutes, 2 May 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/3.
126 FAWWA Attendance book. FAWWA papers TCHA.
127 This is part of the oral tradition of the FAWWA.
129 Minutes for some of these meetings exist in the FAWWA papers, TCHA.
works by Australian artists, including an early purchase of a major collection of eleven paintings by Sydney Nolan. At that time, local artist Durack had completed her Alcheringa series, and the discussion on the advisability of purchasing these works, gave rise to a satirical poem published anonymously in an unnamed newspaper. Referring to the Durack paintings, the poem began:

They're changing the mains on Varsity sewers
While Professor Edwards contends with Ewers.
"Buy them," says Ewers; Edwards says: "That stuff!"
"A middleman's life is terribly tough!" thinks Prescott.130

This relationship between the Fellowship and the University was fine-tuned in 1990, during negotiations to relocate Tom Collins House from Servetus Street to the Allen Park Heritage Precinct, to make way for the development of Servetus Street into part of West Coast Highway. The Deed of Agreement, produced in February 1990, confirmed that the FAWWA holds the house in trust for the Samuel Furphy Bequest.131

As the Furphy family originally came from Shepparton in Victoria, ownership of his house brought the Fellowship into the wider circle of family connections. While Joseph Furphy and his wife Leonie, and later Samuel and Mattie, lived in the Servetus Street house, it was the centre for the Furphy family in Western Australia, and well-known to members of the family in other states. In the years immediately after the bequest, strong ties developed between the Fellowship in Western Australia and descendants of the Furphy family. Several descendants donated to the FAWWA items of significance either to Joseph Furphy himself or the Furphy family. These were described in detail in Jean Lang's 1987 publication At the Toss of a Coin.132 In following years, family members from other states, as well as Joseph Furphy's descendants in regional Western Australia, visited the house.133 From 1975 to 2008, J. Furphy and Sons in Shepparton sponsored the annual Tom Collins Poetry Prize, administered by

130 Complete poem in Ewers papers, BL 1870/5459A/251. As Head of the English Department Professor Allan Edwards was responsible for the management of the Furphy Bequest in the late 1940s and early 1950s.
131 Copy of the Deed, dated February 1990. FAWWA papers TCHA.
132 J. Lang. At the Toss of a Coin, 1987, pp. 34 – 51. The Significance Assessment produced by the FAWWA in 2012 by historian Dr Robyn Taylor and the author also contains a full description of many items.
133 The author's personal recollection.
This connection remained after the house was transferred to the Allen Park Heritage Precinct, when Andrew Furphy, then manager of J. Furphy and Sons, spoke at the opening. By emphasising, for the Fellowship, its sense of belonging to the wider national literary scene, this interaction with the Furphy family Australia-wide helped to prevent the organisation from adopting a narrower, strictly parochial perspective. Owning the home of a writer such as Joseph Furphy who, through his major work *Such Is Life*, contributed significantly to the story of Australian literature, offered members of the Fellowship a new way of promoting that literature. Celebrating important writers of the past is a viable means of promoting the writers of today.

Yet Furphy’s distance, in time and geography, from the young organisation in Western Australia posed another hurdle for the FAWWA. It is instructive to ask whether a small wooden cottage in the suburbs, built and lived in by an eastern states writer, was the structure Fellowship members would have chosen as being most appropriate for what was effectively the first writers’ centre in the country, set up before writers’ centres became an established part of each state’s cultural infra-structure. Besides the difficulties already discussed, of ongoing maintenance, distance from central Perth and the inadequacy of its internal design, the fact that it honoured a writer whose major literary output dated from his years in Victoria, can be seen as a drawback in a State with an almost defensive sense of its own identity. Furphy himself referred to his lack of significant writing in Western Australia, during the seven years before his death, describing his life as that of a ‘grafter pure and simple’. In spite of the Fellowship gaining a sense of national identity from possessing the home of a national literary figure, it might have had more success in garnering local support to underwrite the expenses incurred in maintaining a writers’ centre had it been the home of a Western Australian author, with a closer connection to the State’s writers.

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135 The author’s personal recollection. At the time she was project manager for the relocation and restoration of the house.

Buddee’s claim, that the gift of the house had ‘a very stimulating effect’ on both the FAWWA and Australian literature, is almost impossible to either confirm or refute.\textsuperscript{137} It is certain that owning the home of one of Australia’s most revered early writers created a persona for the organisation, albeit one which, in the twenty-first century with its demand for constant innovation, can appear a clinging to the past. Modern writers, however, have testified to the positive effect on their career of a working space redolent with the literary efforts of writers past and present.\textsuperscript{138}

In subsequent years, the extent of the events set in train by this gift became increasingly apparent. Not only had the Fellowship become the owner of a wooden cottage whose fabric and grounds needed ongoing maintenance, but it also possessed the beginnings of a library of Western Australian and Australian books, as well as a small collection of historical literary artefacts, which in the future qualified the house as a small museum. All these belongings would require listing, conservation and security measures not at first envisaged. A group that had evolved initially to bring together local writers, promote their writings and represent their professional interests, had been redirected almost by chance to become responsible for a part of the built and movable heritage of Western Australia. The acquisition of Tom Collins House extended the purpose of this volunteer-based writers’ organisation beyond the professional development of Western Australian writers, to encompass the preservation of an item of Australia’s built heritage. The successful involvement of the FAWWA in the early Children’s Book Weeks during the same period when it became a property owner, indicates that responsibility for a heritage building did not prevent the organisation from working to fulfil its initial purpose. There is no doubt, however, that over the years care of the house demanded an increasing concentration of time and energy from a small group of dedicated members.

In the late 1970s, the FAWWA experienced further negative consequences of owning property when the house was threatened by the State Government’s plans to redevelop Servetus Street as a major highway. Members began a

\textsuperscript{137} P. Buddee. President’s Report, 25 October 1949. FAWWA papers BL1438A/15. The full quote was cited earlier in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{138} Reports by successive writers in residence at Tom Collins House. FAWWA papers TCHA.
campaign to redirect those plans towards the use of Marmion Street, parallel to Servetus, for the proposed highway. This move evoked an erroneous but highly publicised claim that Furphy had neither built nor lived in Tom Collins House. This was ‘a superb Furphy’ which echoed over subsequent years. From 1978 until the house was relocated in 1996, news of the FAWWA’s challenges to find a satisfactory home for its headquarters provided the media with ongoing articles, keeping the organisation in the public domain. Past president and long-time treasurer, Don Grant, wrote, in 1993, that he would have preferred to inherit a dog rather than a house, as the animal would have died by then. The effort he made towards the search for a new location for the house belied his complaint. Eight years earlier, Grant had assured Durack that for 36 of the Fellowship’s 47 years Tom Collins House had been ‘a most important ingredient in the success of our fellowship.’ It is also highly probable that, given the lack of any culture of valuing and preserving heritage buildings in that era, the house built by Joseph Furphy, including Mattie Furphy’s copper repoussé work that it contains, would have disappeared even more completely than Henry Lawson’s home in New South Wales.

The efforts taken by the FAWWA committee to ensure the future upkeep of Tom Collins House, in the first decade after becoming property owners, could have limited the energy available for promoting Australian literature and the State’s writers. The following survey of the Fellowship’s literary activities during these years shows that this did not happen.

Although FAWWA minutes from 1949 report in detail the process of adjusting to the status of property owners, they also reveal that the Fellowship maintained its usual programme of monthly meetings, with guest speakers and special occasions to welcome visiting writers. By 1957, two regular events had been

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140 Ibid.  
141 D. Grant to M. Durack, 30 January 1985. Durack papers BL 71/7273A.  
142 A typical year of speakers and events began in March 1957 with Hew Roberts speaking on ‘The Creative Artist in America’, followed by an evening of ‘recorded Australian poetry, songs, etc’. (April), Professor M.N. Austin from the Department of Classics at the University of W.A. discussing ‘The Perfect Detective Story’ (May), Drake-Brockman. Ewers and Vickers speaking of their latest publications (June), Helen Helga Wilson’s paper on ‘Post-war Japan through Japanese Eyes’ (July), while in August Greenwood and Drake-Brockman presented an evening
added to the programme: the September celebration of Furphy’s birthday, an event at Tom Collins House featuring a guest speaker; and the November reading of members’ work which replaced the usual monthly speaker. Visiting writers entertained at Tom Collins House in the decade following its acquisition included Bartlett Adamson from the FAW(NSW) in 1949, American novelist and short story writer James Farrell, in May 1956, Mr and Mrs Ray Lawler, Robin Lovejoy and Elsie Beyer, in November 1956.\(^{143}\) The Round Table group, described in Chapter Three, continued to meet fortnightly, until 1951.\(^{144}\) Successfully established in 1947, the Children’s Book Council had nominally taken over organisation of the annual Children’s Book Week programme from that date. In effect, however, the council consisted mainly of Fellowship members and was described in one 1949 FAWWA circular, as ‘an off-shoot of FAW’.\(^{145}\) Minutes of committee meetings detailed planning progress for the annual event, with the council, in 1951, inviting the Fellowship to take responsibility for organising the display of children’s books, as it had in previous years.\(^{146}\)

The FAWWA’s active role in organising annual celebrations of Children’s Book Weeks over these years initiated an important public phase in the Fellowship’s activities. Whereas members of the public were always welcome at the monthly general meetings, these were essentially designed for writers and members, aimed at fulfilling the FAWWA’s initial purpose of encouraging the practice of literature, art and music. Perth’s growing cultural milieu soon offered a major new avenue for the Fellowship to further develop its public programmes in the 1950s. With the birth of the Perth Festival of Arts in 1953, the Fellowship sought to utilise the opportunity to promote local writers and their works. Three years later the university replaced Winthrop Review with a new literary journal, Westerly, an opportunity for publication which FAWWA members were quick to

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\(^{144}\) Minutes of committee meetings.


\(^{146}\) P. Gorman. President’s Report, 30 October 1951.

\(^{146}\) C Mutzig, Hon Organiser, West Australian Children's Book Council, Inc. to the FAWWA, 29 July 1951. FAWWA papers BN 214/1438A/25.
seize. On the national scene, the Fellowship of Australian Writers in each state combined to form a federal council, the first national organisation for writers which offered a united voice and support for writing across the country.

The Furphy bequest to the University of W. A., in 1949, helped sustain the University's intention to play a pivotal role in the cultural life of the State. Through its Adult Education programmes, especially the annual Summer School, it stimulated a lively community involvement in the arts. The new reader in music, Frank Callaway, addressing the University Convocation in September, 1953, advocated a leadership function for the University, especially with regard to music.\textsuperscript{147} He founded the University Orchestral Society in the same year.\textsuperscript{148} By organising the first Festival of Perth the University formally committed to present artistic activities to the State. The Art Gallery and the National Theatre were both represented on the first Festival of Perth committee, along with the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Perth City Council.\textsuperscript{149}

Initially, festival activities were held in the grounds of the University of W.A., particularly in the Somerville Auditorium, then a live theatre as well as film venue.\textsuperscript{150} Over successive years the festival gradually spread outwards in concentric circles of venues while still retaining its University focus.\textsuperscript{151} In 1954, performances took place at the University Colleges and the Sunken Garden with art exhibitions at the Skinner Galleries. By 1956, Festival locations included the Capitol Theatre in William Street, the King's Park Royal Tennis Club, as well as the gala opening of the Jubilee Orchestral Shell in Supreme Court Gardens. The following year, Drake-Brockman, a member of the Festival sub-committee that year in her position as FAWWA president, organised evenings of readings at the Art Gallery, backed by Australian art and displays of Australian books arranged by booksellers.\textsuperscript{152} This became a regular event for the next few years, with Serventy, FAWWA president from 1959 to 1960, describing it as a Festival

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{West Australian}, 19 September 1953.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 690–691.
\textsuperscript{150} F. Alexander, ‘Open-air Arts Festival To Open In Perth’ in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 30 December 1952, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{151} Information for this section is based on Festival programmes housed in the BL PR 10960.
\textsuperscript{152} H. Drake-Brockman to C. Christesen, 5 February 1957. The \textit{Meanjin} Archive UMA Drake-Brockman file.
highlight.\textsuperscript{153} This represented a major development after the failure to include Australian writers in early Festivals.

As the Director of the University’s Adult Education, Professor Fred Alexander played a leading role in planning the Festival from its small beginnings in 1953. The first Festival, however, included neither original Australian plays nor music, a fact which brought a swift response in the press from local writers. In the \textit{Life and Letters} page of the \textit{West Australian} Drake-Brockman argued forcibly for a distinctively Australian flavour for the Festival, lamenting that, without the inclusion of works created by Australians, visitors might well believe they were in Perth, Scotland.\textsuperscript{154} Replying with his own article in the \textit{Life and Letters Page} the following Saturday, Alexander claimed that Drake-Brockman’s article relied on ‘half-truths and omissions’. He outlined the unsuccessful search for an Australian drama to present.\textsuperscript{155} Ewers entered the battle in support of Drake-Brockman,\textsuperscript{156} West Australian writers were not the only ones to question this lack of distinctively Australian culture in the Festival. Miles Franklin, writing to Drake-Brockman a month later, commented scathingly on the Festival programme outlined in Alexander’s promotional article in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}.\textsuperscript{157} Hers was an outspoken reaction. She asked Drake-Brockman whether Alexander was: ‘an Australian, a mere lick-spittler to England’, or whether he was actually English and so had ‘no vision of the part Australia must play in her own culture?’\textsuperscript{158}

Certainly, the following year, when Alexander announced a considerable expansion in performances of music, drama, ballet and films in future festivals, he was not referring to works by Australian artists.\textsuperscript{159} Over the following week, newspaper debate erupted again as he sought to answer criticisms about the lack of Australian works, with assurances that Western Australian painters

\begin{footnotes}
\item[153] V. Serventy, President’s Report, 27 October 1959. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item[155] F. Alexander, ‘Defending the First Festival of Perth’ in the \textit{West Australian}, 6 December 1952, p. 15.
\item[157] F. Alexander, ‘Open-air Arts Festival To Open In Perth’ in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 30 December 1953, p. 2.
\item[158] M. Franklin to H. Drake-Brockman, 3 January 1953. Drake-Brockman papers NLA.
\item[159] \textit{West Australian}, 21 September 1953, p.14.
\end{footnotes}
would be featured, and an Australian composer commissioned for a specially composed Overture.\textsuperscript{160} In this era, Alexander was not the only one to disregard local artists. When Children's Book Week opened in September 1953, a newspaper report on the event failed to name any Australian, much less any Western Australian, book on display, mentioning instead only overseas authors such as Mark Twain.\textsuperscript{161}

For the Festival the balance of Western Australian to international content was improved, in 1959, with the first performance of the opera \textit{Dalgerie}, based on Durack's novel, \textit{Keep Him my Country}. In a collaboration, which possibly stemmed from their mutual membership of the FAWWA, Durack wrote the libretto, while James Penberthy composed the music. Sydney writer, Tom Inglis Moore, in Perth for the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures, congratulated Durack on the opera, which he described as 'a really fine piece of work all round', predicting that it would become 'a valuable, permanent contribution to Australian art and literature'.\textsuperscript{162} The FAWWA's continued involvement in successive Festivals is discussed in the following chapters.

Another important development for Western Australian writers in this decade was the replacement in 1956 of the \textit{Winthrop Review}, published by the Arts Department of the University of Western Australia, with the more significant literary journal \textit{Westerly}. That \textit{Westerly}'s first editor, R.W. Smith, was a member of the Fellowship ensured a working relationship between the journal and the FAWWA.\textsuperscript{163} When, in 1959, the journal planned a short story competition, it appealed to FAWWA members for submissions of work, and the FAWWA committee for suggestions of a suitable judge.\textsuperscript{164} Issues of \textit{Westerly} were sent to the Fellowship's country members, just as the \textit{Winthrop Review} had been, in order to keep them in touch with literary developments in recognition of their distance from Perth. The birth of this university-based literary journal was an important development for FAWWA members, not only because it provided a significant publication outlet, but also as it gave literature a new prominence,

\textsuperscript{160} For example see \textit{West Australian}, 23 September 1953, p.2.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{West Australian}, 30 September 1953, p.8.
\textsuperscript{162} T. Inglis Moore to M. Durack, 20 March 1959: FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/33.
\textsuperscript{163} H. Drake-Brockman, President's Report, 30 October 1956. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\textsuperscript{164} FAWWA Minutes, 9 June 1959. FAWWA papers Battye Library 214/1438A/29.
showing that local writing deserved academic review. It helped establish writing as a creative activity worth pursuing and worth studying at a tertiary level. The production of a serious, literary journal brought Perth writers into the company of their fellows in Melbourne and Sydney where *Meanjin* (1940), *Quadrant* (1956) and *Overland* (1954) were produced.

A national body, writers speaking with one voice … *a long-desired Council*…

A major means of *rapprochement* for Fellowship members in all states came with the establishment of a Federal FAW Council, in 1956. Discussed since 1938, this council was finally established with its constitution approved, when Drake-Brockman, during a visit to Sydney, seized the opportunity to convene a gathering of state delegates Representatives attended from Canberra, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. This move built on the work, in 1955, of previous FAWWA president, F.B. Vickers. Tom Inglis Moore, already a member of the Commonwealth Literary Fund Advisory Board, was elected as the first chairman, with governance in the hands of the Canberra section. The task of providing the governing body was to be rotated among the states, and once Writers’ Week began, as part of the Adelaide Arts Festival, council meetings were timed to coincide with it. There was no South Australian section of the Fellowship until Drake-Brockman, on the same visit, called together a group of writers in Adelaide, from which meeting an Adelaide Section was formed with Flexmore Hudson as chairperson. Drake-Brockman spoke of the ‘outstanding contribution’ the FAWWA made towards the establishment of a federal council of the FAW.

Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, much of the impetus for a federal council had indeed come from the Western Australian section. The FAWWA’s support for this council evolved, in part, as a reflection of the original vision of its founding writers of an Australia-wide Fellowship. Additionally, it was a response to the negative effects of distance which isolated Western Australian writers from the cultural centres in Melbourne and Sydney. As early as 1938, the vision

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165 H. Drake-Brockman, President’s Report, 30 October 1956. FAWWA papers TCHA.
166 Information in this paragraph is drawn from H. Drake-Brockman’s President’s Report, 30 October 1956. FAWWA papers TCHA.
of those writers responsible for founding the FAWWA had included eventually creating ‘a circle of Fellowships, one in each State, and all part of the one continent-wide Fellowship, with a Federal writers’ council drawn from the lot’.  

Frequent references, in early correspondence, indicate that the various state bodies believed that its birth was imminent. As early as October 1938, Catherine Lindsay, secretary of FAW(NSW), wrote to Drake-Brockman of an intended interstate conference the following January, to be attended by whichever members of the FAW were able to travel, with the intention of forming some more structured entity. In November, Ewers assured Lindsay that FAWWA hoped to either be represented at that conference or send discussion points by letter, including uniformity of membership regulations among the state sections. Having adopted a constitution which reflected that of the Sydney Fellowship, membership regulations in Western Australia were similar, including full members, who were established writers, and associate members, who were emerging writers and others interested in supporting Australian literature. This need for uniformity between the states was reiterated in a 1945 letter from the FAWWA to the Queensland Authors and Artists Association, not yet the FAW(Q) but working with the Fellowship in other States. Providing a point of collaboration between the state sections of the FAW, the federal council would serve to unite them in membership, objects, and attitudes, without in any way limiting the individual sections. There was also a suggestion that the federal council should employ a permanent secretary, which the Victorian Section felt was beyond the FAW at the time, adding that the cost of travel made interstate conferences out of reach of most members. Still pursuing the possibility of a Federal council, in the following year, the FAWWA circulated a potential constitution. Three years later, at the time of yet another attempt to call a meeting, FAWWA president Buddee reflected on the lack of response to that proposed constitution.

168 C. Lindsay, secretary FAW(NSW) to H. Drake-Brockman, 16 October 1938. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
169 J. K. Ewers to C. Lindsay, secretary FAW(NSW), 8 November 1938. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.
170 FAWWA to Queensland Authors and Artists Association, 12 March 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/20.
171 FAW(Vic) to FAWWA, 20 January 1945. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/20.
172 FAWWA to FAW(NSW), 11 August 1946. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22105.
Some years ago, this Branch endeavoured to make a move in that direction by sending to all branches in Australia a copy of a proposed draft constitution but unfortunately the letters must have been melted by the heat of the Nullarbor and on reaching their destination to have been unintelligible — anyhow, whatever happened we never received acknowledgement form [sic] any Branch or part of the Fellowship.\textsuperscript{173}

A federal council could have avoided the frustrations that arose when one section acted without the support of the others. The newer sections still had difficulty convincing the Sydney body that they, too, were part of the FAW and that, consequently, it was no longer appropriate for Sydney to act independently on national matters. With writers Australia-wide speaking with one voice through the council, the FAW could more effectively promote Australian literature and guarantee sound working conditions for writers.\textsuperscript{174}

Other lobbying, during the 1950s, sought to preserve or improve the financial situation of writers, by gaining increased payment from agencies including the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The FAWWA also opposed the loss of employment possibilities for writers, especially those resulting from increasing centralisation in radio programming, and the introduction of television. The Commonwealth Literary Fund had already undergone changes in 1939, with additional funds available for writers’ pensions and lectures on Australian literature in each state capital. These increases came in response to lobbying by the FAW in most states. In 1944, pensions paid to writers increased to £2 per week with a further increase to £3 in 1947. In June 1951, the Western Australian Section, with the support of the FAW in the other states, appealed to the Fund to match writers’ payments with the old age pension.\textsuperscript{175} They were successful and, in 1952, the pension increased to £4 for a writer deemed worthy and £3 for the dependent of a deceased writer.\textsuperscript{176}

As in the previous decade, the FAWWA appealed to the Australian Broadcasting Commission for an increase in fees paid to writers. Gorman reported, in 1951, that this appeal was accepted well, without giving any

\textsuperscript{173} P. Buddee to secretary of FAW(NSW), 20 August 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/26.
\textsuperscript{174} I. Greenwood to C. Christesen, 1 June 1955. The Meanjin Archive UMA Greenwood file.
\textsuperscript{175} FAWWA Minutes, 12 June 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
\textsuperscript{176} Commonwealth Literary Fund Newssheet, 18 May 1955. FAWWA papers TCHA.
The following year, Ewers reported slight increases in payment, which he saw as the result of the FAWWA’s lobbying. The Commission provided an important outlet for writers, whether writing scripts, novels for serialization, giving talks, or as broadcasters. In 1956, Bessie Rischbieth, acting president of the Women’s Service Guild, enlisted the FAWWA’s support for a campaign to restore the state-based Argonauts session, replaced by the Sydney-based version, in the mid 1950s. FAWWA president, Serventy, supported Rischbieth’s complaints with a lengthy letter to the General Manager of the Commission, in 1958. Underlying the request was the fear that Catherine King’s Women’s Session would also be replaced. The reply was reassuring on the matter of the Women’s Session but unbending concerning the Argonauts.

The FAWWA lobbied on a wide front of topics during these years. Periodically it appealed to the University of Western Australia to include more Australian books in the syllabi for both secondary and tertiary students. Buddee applauded Ewers’ criticism, in 1952, of the neglect of Australian literature by the University, which then determined exams and school syllabi. In 1955, the Public Examinations Board assured the FAWWA that Australian books were sought where possible, but undertook to investigate the possibility of having cheaper editions printed. Another campaign, initiated by the FAW(ACT) and supported by the FAWWA, aimed to have income tax lifted from the prizes offered in the Jubilee literary competition. Although the treasurer ruled that there was no room within the act to make such a change, it led to future consideration of how taxation was applied to writers, who might have worked for between five and ten years before receiving any financial return from the book.

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177 P. Gorman. President’s Report, 30 October 1951. FAWWA papers TCHA.
178 J. K. Ewers, President’s Report, 27 October 1952. FAWWA papers TCHA.
179 For almost ten years J. K. Ewers was the literary adviser on the Argonauts, first as Diogenes, then as Inky Wells. See J. K. Ewers. *Long Enough for a Joke*, 1983, p. 252.
180 V. Serventy to General Manager, 4 June 1958. FAWWA papers TCHA. Catherine King, daughter of Professor Walter Murdoch and presenter of the Women’s Session from 1944 to 1965, was also a member of the FAWWA.
181 C. Moses to V. Serventy, 30 June 1958. FAWWA papers TCHA.
183 Correspondence between FAW(ACT), FAWWA, the Hon. Paul Hasluck and Mr Arthur Fadden, August, 1950 and February, 1951. FAWWA papers TCHA.
The Fellowship’s constitution required it to work to improve the conditions for Australian writers, however this was becoming an increasingly complex task, placing extra demands on writers whose writing time was already diminished by the exigencies of running an organisation to benefit their fellows. They would all have supported Ewers’ rather regretful statement to his friend Leslie Rees in Sydney, that he would have to ‘do a morning’s work at the office tomorrow to make up for time lost last week in giving evidence before the TV Commission and taking a deputation to the Premier, both on behalf of the FAW’. 184 This problem was a major reason for FAW support in the move to establish an Australian Society of Authors in the 1960s. 185

Returning to the presidency in 1956, Drake-Brockman, in an oblique criticism, no doubt, of the time and energy devoted previously to politics, lobbying and becoming property owners, expressed the hope that, within the Fellowship, writing and the technique of writing would be the first interests. 186 An article entitled ‘W. A. can be proud of her authors’ in the Sunday Times, at the end of the previous year, made it clear that nine Western Australian authors had never lost their focus on writing. The article’s author, Helen Helga Wilson, also a member of the Fellowship, lauded the publication achievements of Durack, Drake-Brockman, Ewers, Glaskin, Harvey, Sanders and her alter ego Lucy Walker, Stow and Vickers, each with a book published, in 1955. All eight authors were FAWWA members. 187

Conclusion

The challenges of becoming property owners, in 1949, brought a new focus for the FAWWA. Ownership of Joseph Furphy’s house confirmed the FAWWA’s position as a major literary organisation, linking it more closely with the literary world in the eastern states. Celebrating one of Australia’s classic writers helped to promote the story of Australian literature. The demands of owning an old

186 H. Drake-Brockman. President’s Report, 30 October 1956. FAWWA papers TCHA.
187 H. H. Wilson. ‘W. A. can be proud of her authors’, Sunday Times, 13 November 1955. Sanders wrote novels set in the western suburbs of Perth under her own name and romance novels, usually set in the outback, under the pen name of Lucy Walker.
wooden cottage with a remarkable literary legacy inspired the FAWWA to take two important steps in its development. It became an incorporated body, in order to facilitate home ownership, and it ventured into publication of a major anthology of Western Australian writings in order to finance that ownership.

While the FAWWA committee was preoccupied with fund-raising to support the maintenance of Tom Collins House, it was also making new connections with the University of W.A. and the Cottesloe Council, as well as forging a link with members of the Furphy family in Western Australia and Victoria. Such associations served to expand the FAWWA’s sphere of activity and further extend awareness of Australia’s writers and their works. At the same time, the FAWWA continued to inform and encourage its members and their guests by presenting guest speakers each month. In 1959, these ranged from Frank Norton, Director of the Perth Art Gallery, to visiting Canadian professor R. E. Watters, and included a celebration of Prichard’s 50 years of publication.188 During its second decade, the FAWWA became increasingly visible through public forums such as the annual Children’s Book Weeks and the Perth Festival of Arts, both offering new opportunities to present local writers and their works in a variety of settings. The increase in payments for writers by both the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Australian Broadcasting Commission confirmed the body’s role as a lobbyist for the professional concerns of local writers.

Another avenue for promoting Australian literature came with the establishment of the Federal FAW Council, providing a united voice for writers around the country. As the Western Australian Fellowship had promoted the concept of a federal council from its inception, in 1938, it was fitting that Drake-Brockman’s visit to the eastern states, in 1956, should have provided the catalyst for finally forming this body, with its constitution accepted by all states.

Such a varied array of literary activities shows that, although the acquisition of the house, built and lived in by Joseph Furphy, required added time and energy for its upkeep, this did not distract the Fellowship from pursuing its aims of

188 V. Serventy. President’s Report, 27 October 1959. FAWWA papers TCHA
promoting and supporting the State’s writers. These undertakings, however, had their disadvantages. The demands made on individual members became increasingly burdensome, which provided the impetus, in the early 1960s, for the move to work with the FAW in other states to establish the Australian Society of Authors, a professional body with financial support which would enable it to pursue some of these actions hitherto undertaken by writers in their own time and at the expense of their own writing. Meanwhile, the 1960s and 1970s were a time of expansion in the arts, with the Adelaide Festival and its Writers’ Weeks providing a platform that, as well as promoting Australia’s writers, fostered interstate connections between them, and offered a meeting point for the Federal FAW Council. The following chapter discusses the expansion in Perth’s artistic world and considers the new opportunities this offered the FAWWA, with the beginnings of regional branches, and visits by Soviet writers, which further enriched the story of Australian literature in the State.
The tyranny of distance separating the majority of the state’s population from other Australians and a certain uniqueness in the observable physiographical and biological characteristics of this state has, however, produced, if not a crop of unique writers, a collection of prose and verse with an identifiable regional patina.

Glen Phillips

1 ‘Preface’ in Summerland: A Western Australian Sesquicentenary Anthology of Poetry and Prose, A. Choate and B. York Main, eds. Nedlands, W.A.: University of Western Australia Press, 1979, p. v. The Summerland anthology was prepared by the FAWWA.
Chapter Six

The 1960s & 1970s: A Time of Expansion…
…plenty of cultural activity at all levels

Even as the FAWWA managed the demands of property ownership, and extended its activities further into the public sphere, changes were brewing which, over the next two decades, would completely alter the cultural milieu in which the FAWWA operated. Like other Western countries, Western Australia experienced social and cultural transformation in the 1960s and 1970s. This was partly fuelled by an increasing affluence. People had more time and money to enjoy and be involved in the arts. Moreover, easier and more frequent travel, together with changes wrought by the presence of post-war migrants who arrived in the late 1940s and 1950s, facilitated the exchange of new ideas. These decades saw powerful social movements, including feminism, equal rights and gay rights, as well as anti-war sentiment, causes which most of the world’s writers traditionally supported. The Federal FAW Council met regularly, and state sections joined with individual writers to achieve the establishment of an Australian Society of Authors. This became the first component in the developing literary infrastructure, which heralded major change for volunteer-based organisations such as the FAW.

The following three chapters analyse the effect of this expanding cultural milieu on the FAWWA through three different lenses. Chapter Six explores the growth within Perth’s cultural world, during the 1960s, which, though external to the FAWWA, nevertheless influenced its activities. This expansion brought opportunities for the Fellowship to move further into the public sphere,

especially through presenting literary events at the annual Perth Arts Festival. Chapter Seven considers the internal changes experienced by the Fellowship in these years. It assesses the nature of these changes, many of which coincided with times of internal contraction for the organisation. The eighth and final chapter discusses the growth of a more coordinated, government-initiated cultural infrastructure, that developed in the 1970s, at both federal and State levels. It explores the effects, both positive and negative, of the development of this infrastructure on the FAWWA.

Fox described the 1960s as a time of consolidation for the Fellowship in all states.\(^4\) This chapter will show that, for the Fellowship in Western Australia, these years were also times of expansion. As the only major writers’ organisation in the State, the FAWWA benefitted from this period of increasing interest in and funding for the arts, which offered the organisation many opportunities to achieve its threefold purpose of encouraging individual writers, promoting Australian literature together with Western Australian writers, and lobbying to protect writers’ professional interests.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the rate of population growth in Western Australia, and the increasing affluence of that population. It continues with a discussion of the expansion occurring in the 1960s within the State’s theatrical world, the role the University of W.A. continued to play in presenting drama, and how this involved local writers. There follows a survey of developments in broadcasting, including the growth of television, before a general discussion of advances in the visual arts and publishing during these years. After an outline of the arts-specific journal the *Critic*, published from 1961 to 1970, the chapter continues with a discussion of the FAWWA’s activities under three separate themes. Firstly, it explores those activities which aimed to support and encourage individual writers, such as the expansion of the monthly news sheet into a journal containing news about competitions and publication opportunities; the occasions which enabled local writers to meet both Australian

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and international writers visiting Perth; and the foundation of new branches for both country writers and young writers in suburban Perth. Secondly, it discusses the Fellowship events designed to promote Western Australian writers, and their works, and Australian literature as a whole. These included presentations at the annual Perth Arts Festival, and readings in a local theatre. Thirdly, the chapter considers the FAWWA’s advocacy on behalf of Australian writers, in particular its successful appeal for the expansion of Commonwealth Literature Fund Lectures, and its attempts to ensure a place for local writers in the newly-developed television industry. The lobbying which led to the establishment of an Australian Society of Authors is discussed in Chapter Eight.

Societal and artistic growth in Western Australia

... modest but significant cultural advances...⁵

Both the economy and population of Western Australia grew in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1961, the population of Western Australia was 736,629, an increase of 235,149 in the fourteen years since 1947. By 1971, it had passed one million (1,030,469), growing by 293,840 in just ten years.⁶ From 1950 onwards, Australia’s post-war immigration policies contributed to this upsurge in population. As early as 1943, the federal government realised that Australia would need to help accommodate some of the large numbers of people displaced as World War II swept across Europe. To meet the challenge, it formed a Department of Immigration, with Arthur Calwell as Minister for Immigration.⁷ As seen in Chapter Four, migrants enriched Australia’s cultural world, bringing new artistic skills to the country, together with strongly-held beliefs about the importance of the arts in the daily life of a country.⁸

Income per head of population also increased markedly during these years. In the financial year 1948–1949, Western Australians had an average income of

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⁵ G. Bolton. Land of Vision and Mirage: Western Australia since 1826. Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2008, p. 151.
$480 at current prices. It grew to $1181 in 1960–1961 while in 1975–1976 it had almost quadrupled to $4404.\(^9\) Whereas the Australian economy showed a 13.2% growth between 1965 and 1975, the Western Australian economy in that time grew by 16.2%. This increase resulted partly from the strong prices for wool and wheat, and partly from the mining boom.\(^10\) Such growth encouraged a materialistic outlook in some. However, as Serle pointed out, commentators tend to write of ‘a cultural breakthrough’ occurring in the 1950s and 1960s, with substantial growth in all art forms.\(^11\)

**Expansion of artistic activity**

*The scene in Australia is changing*\(^12\)

In his survey of theatre in Western Australia, Hough gave the title ‘Proliferation’ to the period from 1960 to 2000. This epithet could aptly be applied to all aspects of the arts in the State, between 1960 and 1980. The growth of a vibrant cultural milieu in Perth during these years provided a rich backdrop to the activities of the Fellowship. This following section will discuss developments in theatre, the visual arts and crafts, and increasing university involvement in fostering these art forms, before giving an overview of new advances in broadcasting, television and publishing in Australia. As this discussion will show, the FAWWA, either as an organisation or through its individual members, had connections with all these areas of the arts.

It was in theatre, however, that some of the major changes took place. Theatre was also most closely linked with the Fellowship’s members, many of whom were also playwrights. The semi-professional National Theatre Company, created from a merger of the Company of Four and the Perth Repertory Club in the late 1950s, became a fully professional company in 1960, with its headquarters at the Playhouse Theatre, built in 1956.\(^13\) During its first decade, directors included Aarne Neeme, Edgar Metcalf and Raymond Westwell, names

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\(^12\) Dorothy Hewett cited in M. Durack’s diary, 17 April 1968.

which would resonate through the history of theatre in Perth for the next 50 years. The company was not as long-lived, becoming the Western Australian Theatre Company in 1985, with a directive to produce Australian plays and foster new playwrights. Initially, however, the Company made little attempt to produce works by local writers. One of the few, Dorothy Hewett’s first play, *This Old Man Comes Rolling Home*, was performed at the New Fortune Theatre, which opened on the University campus in 1966.\(^\text{14}\)

The University of Western Australia had already added to its theatrical outlets in 1960, with the construction of the small Dolphin Theatre.\(^\text{15}\) Because of its size, the Dolphin offered a useful space for readings and short runs or workshopping of new plays or ballets. In 1961, Fellowship members organised a reading of Vicker’s play *The Grass Grows Green* there, and later an evening of poetry readings by Dorothy Hewett, Griff Watkins, and Merv Lilley.\(^\text{16}\)

Not until 1970 was there a concentrated move by local theatrical companies to foster and promote Western Australian playwrights.\(^\text{17}\) Plays by Fellowship members, Elizabeth Backhouse (*Mirage*) and Mary Gage (*The New Life*) were performed in 1972 and 1974 respectively, while Dorothy Hewett’s play *The Man from Muckinupin* was commissioned and staged at the Playhouse for the sesquicentenary, in 1979. The smaller, independent theatre, the Hole in the Wall, established by Frank Baden-Powell and John Gill in 1965, offered Perth for the first time an experimental theatre in the round. It produced Gerald Glaskin’s portrayal of Marilyn Monroe just before her death, in *Turn on the Heat*, in 1967, the year before Glaskin became FAWWA president. Moving to a new location in 1968, the company produced Mary Durack’s solo piece, *Swan River Saga*, starring Nita Pannell, which, after a long local season, in 1972, toured nationally in 1973. The early 1980s saw the beginnings of a flourish of new theatrical companies including the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre (1981), Deckchair Theatre Company (1983) and ‘Swy’ Theatre Company (1983). A vital

\(^\text{14}\) Ibid., p. 49.
\(^\text{16}\) M. Durack. President’s Report, 7 November 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\(^\text{17}\) Information in this paragraph is drawn from D. Hough. ‘the playmakers’, 2003, pp. 44–55.
boost to the performing arts in Western Australia followed the Zink Report of 1978, that recommended a ‘vocational training centre’ for the performing arts. The next year, the Mt. Lawley College of Advanced Education (now Edith Cowan University) was invited to establish the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Finally opened in 1981, the Academy trains not only performers, but directors, arts administrators and a broad raft of related professionals.\(^{18}\)

The growth of theatre, in the 1960s, stimulated a growing interest in the craft of script development, which led to the formation of a new body, known as Kuljak, to support the State’s emerging playwrights. FAWWA member, Eleanor Page-Smith, conceived of the idea of establishing Kuljak, and drew together a group of writers to support this independent body. In April 1960, Page-Smith told an FAWWA committee meeting of her desire to establish ‘an outdoor theatre in a natural bushland setting’ at what is now known as the Quarry Amphitheatre, in City Beach.\(^{19}\) Durack wrote in her diary that members at the later general meeting gave ‘non-committal’ support for the plan.\(^{20}\) Nevertheless, although it never became an official FAWWA project, Durack continued to work with Page-Smith, and Kuljak activities were always promoted in the Fellowship News. Progress was slow and the Kuljak Australian Playwrights Company was only formed in Perth, in May 1968.\(^{21}\) The Company received small amounts of financial support from the State-based funding bodies, in the early 1970s, to run competitions for playwrights and host readings of plays by local writers, however the open-air amphitheatre was not developed until the 1980s.\(^{22}\) Kuljak proved to be an important interim body supporting local playwrights.\(^{23}\) Its function was gradually subsumed by the local chapter of the Australian Writers

\(^{18}\) D. Hough. ‘the playmakers’, 2003, pp. 54—55.
\(^{19}\) FAWWA Minutes, 12 April 1960. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
\(^{22}\) Dancer Diana Waldron saw its possibilities in 1980 and with the help of her architect husband Ken Waldron finally received permission to construct the Bold Park Quarry Amphitheatre, supported by funding bodies including the Commonwealth Employment programme and Lotterywest. It was opened in 1986. Davis, Ashleigh, ‘Study may delay Quarry Amphitheatre development’ in the Western Suburbs Weekly, 24 November 2011.
\(^{23}\) Kuljak events are included in the Happenings pages of Artlook, 1975 to 1976, such as Vol. 1 No. 9, September 1975, p. 20.
Guild, a national professionally-run body, that fostered writers working for performance, whether in theatre, radio or television. Established in Western Australia in the late 1960s, and with strong connections both interstate and with theatre companies within the State, the Guild became a much stronger body than the purely local, volunteer-based, Kuljak. In the 1970s, the annual Australian Playwrights’ Conference, held in Canberra, took over the role of fostering Australia’s emerging playwrights.

Max Harris observed, in 1961, that Perth was still not on the Musica Viva circuit and therefore ‘small musical societies flourish more extensively than anywhere else in Australia’. Musical theatre received a major impetus when the Western Australian Opera Company was established in 1967, with funding from the State and federal governments. As the ABC’s symphony orchestras grew and improved, they also encouraged Australia’s composers, and helped develop an audience for classical music Australia-wide.

The visual arts also expanded during the 1970s, encouraged by the establishment of the cooperative Praxis, led by a group of experimental artists, seeking to provide a place for more progressive artists for the first time in Perth. In the late 1980s, with government funding, Praxis became the Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts (PICA), housed in the old Perth Boys School in the Northbridge arts complex. Praxis and its successor, PICA, legitimised the work of younger artists who felt out of place in the more constrained atmosphere of the Western Australian Art Gallery.

In 1972, the Craft Association of Western Australia began operations, promoting craft activities in metropolitan and regional areas, and from the mid-1970s

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liaising with the Craft Board of the Australian Council for the Arts.\textsuperscript{30} As early as 1935, a Western Australian Women’s Society of Fine Arts and Crafts had come into being, but only in 1973 did the Society have a physical space at Arts and Crafts House in Subiaco. The late 1970s, into the 1980s, are remembered as a time of expansion, when the Society’s membership rose significantly.\textsuperscript{31} While there was no overt interaction between writers and the arts and crafts movement, activities such as the annual Hyde Park Holiday featuring craft practitioners and organisations, fostered a milieu which encouraged all other creative activities during this decade.

A series of changes in the tertiary education system, during the 1960s, improved training in the visual arts and crafts in Western Australia. When Tony Russell replaced Ivor Hunt as Head of the Art Department of the Perth Technical School, the existing programme was revitalised by the introduction of new courses, including printmaking, fashion and textiles (1965), industrial design (1968) and media design (1969). The visual arts in the State received a further impetus when tertiary programmes offered at the Perth Technical School were incorporated into a large Art Department in the newly established Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT), opened in 1966.\textsuperscript{32} In a State where tertiary education had previously been the province of the University of Western Australia, the advent of a new tertiary institution brought many changes. These developments touched the FAWWA, particularly when Brian Dibble and Don Grant, academics with literary backgrounds, arrived in Western Australia to join the new faculties at the Institute. In the 1980s, both Dibble and Grant occupied executive roles in the Fellowship, each as president for several terms. They played important roles in the FAWWA for almost twenty years, however, it falls outside the time frame of this study.\textsuperscript{33}

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\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Craft News}, the newsletter of the Craft Association of WA, ran from January 1972 to February 1973, when it became \textit{Craft West}. SLWA.

\textsuperscript{31} http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0794b.htm Accessed 16 October 2010.


New developments in broadcasting

*a new opportunity to make themselves heard.*

Another area that flourished, during the 1970s, was broadcasting, in both radio and television. As FM radio became established in 1974, existing trends of radio listening underwent major changes, which in turn led to new approaches to broadcasting, with specific programmes planned to appeal to different age groups. The FAWWA and its members had always used radio as a means of promotion. The increase in regional broadcasting stations coincided with an increase in FAWWA’s outreach to country areas, which was supported by the new radio networks.

The proliferation of television, through the 1970s, is reflected in the establishment of eleven new stations, stretching especially through regional areas such as Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Karratha. Production, however, remained firmly entrenched in the eastern states, leaving little scope for Western Australian writers, or other creative artists, to become involved in the unfolding television industry. The FAWWA’s lobbying on behalf of the State’s writers and their involvement in producing scripts for television, is discussed later in this chapter.

Changes to publishing in Australia offered Australian writers new opportunities, during the 1960s. Angus & Robertson (A&R) still held its position as the dominant Australian bookseller and publisher. By combining a publishing house, printer (through its printing arm, Halstead Press) and retail outlet in one operation, A&R ensured its financial success. It also received publication subsidies through the renewed Commonwealth Literary Fund which, between 1940 and 1966, helped a variety of publishers produce 234 books by Australian

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34 *Fellowship News*, June 1976, p. 5. Announcing the new Radio 6NR, interested members were urged to investigate the opportunities the new radio would offer writers.

35 B. Shoesmith and L. Edmonds. ‘making culture out of the air’ in *farewell cinderella*, 2003, p. 233. Table 6.2.


Many Western Australian writers, including Drake-Brockman, Ewers, Murdoch, Prichard and Upfield, had some of their books published by A&R. Although they lie beyond the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that two unsuccessful take-over bids for control of the publishing firm in the early 1960s foreshadowed major changes to Australian publishing in the years ahead. Independent local publishers were established Australia-wide during these decades, while the older publishing houses like Cheshire, Ure Smith and Penguin added Australian titles to their lists. University presses had come into being after 1922, when Melbourne University Press published its first book. The University of Western Australia Press, which now provides an important outlet for Western Australian writers, began publishing in 1954. The most important publishing house for the State’s writers in the future was the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, which, in 1976, was established with government funding as an autonomous entity within the Fremantle Arts Centre, both of them under the directorship of Ian Templeman. Both of these presses are still vital elements in Western Australia’s creative infrastructure and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

The 1960s saw another major change in publishing, the advent of the paperback. Books in the Western Australian collection in Tom Collins House clearly demonstrate the change of publishing styles in the early 1970s. Those published up until the early to mid-1970s appear in hard cover, while the newer volumes are mainly paperbacks. There was also an increase in non-fiction books published on the topics of Australian culture and public affairs, suggesting a growing readiness on the part of Australians to reflect seriously

45 In April 2012, this collection contained over 1600 books. New examples are added constantly through donations by authors and the Fremantle Arts Centre Press.
upon what distinguished them from the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{46} From the late 1950s into the early 1960s, the number of independent magazines and journals increased, including \textit{Nation} (1958–1972) and the \textit{Observer} (1958 until its merger with the \textit{Bulletin} in 1961).\textsuperscript{47} Such journals provided new publishing outlets for writers in which to make their writings public and to share ideas. The expansion of Australia’s universities gradually increased the opportunities to study Australian literature.\textsuperscript{48} Its growing acceptance as being worthy of critical discussion found expression in the birth of two journals, \textit{Australian Letters} (1957–1968) and \textit{Australian Book Review} (founded in 1961 and still in production).\textsuperscript{49}

This increased artistic activity is reflected in the publication in Perth of two journals devoted solely to the arts. One, the \textit{Critic}, (February 1961 to June 1970) was produced within the University of W.A., while the second, \textit{Artlook} (December 1974 to November/December 1983) was produced by The Nine Club, ‘a group of nine journalists and academics’.\textsuperscript{50} The growing number of artistic performances, exhibitions and events in Perth and in country regions is clearly signalled in the regular pages in \textit{Artlook} titled \textit{Happenings}, which announced cultural events in both metropolitan and regional areas. The number of events expanded from 29 entries in early issues, to 59 by 1975.

As Western Australia’s first journal devoted to the arts, the \textit{Critic} also promoted the role of the University of W.A. in fostering artistic endeavours. It was printed by the Literary Society of Perth, a group within the University, founded originally in 1939, with the aim of organising talks and discussions about Australian literature, as well as offering practical assistance to those students interested in writing.\textsuperscript{51} Quite probably, the Society arose from the involvement of students like Paul Hasluck, Norman Bartlett, Leslie Rees and Alexandra Darker, all future writers who, as discussed in Chapter Two, were university students in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 370.
\item \textsuperscript{48} J. Rickard. \textit{Australia}, 1988, p. 255.
\item \textsuperscript{50} The \textit{Critic}, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Note, July 1939. Bartlett papers NLA 6884/1/9–13/3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
1930s. By the 1960s, it existed in name only, but afforded a useful structure from which the journal could evolve.\textsuperscript{52} In his history of the University of Western Australia Fred Alexander described the \textit{Critic} as follows:

The \textit{Critic}, a combined staff and student journal of comment on contemporary literature, drama, music and pictorial art, which first appeared in 1961, attracted considerable attention not only on the campus but also in Perth and in other Australian cities.\textsuperscript{53}

The magazine featured contributions from lecturers within the Arts Faculty, with established artists providing specialist articles and reviews in their respective fields.\textsuperscript{54} Initially, the \textit{Critic} appeared fortnightly, then more irregularly in the later volumes.\textsuperscript{55} By providing a survey of the artistic and cultural life of Perth, it aimed to fill an obvious void in eastern states publications at the time.\textsuperscript{56} It also offered a forum for some of the arguments which currently engaged the local cultural community. Although it involved local artists and writers in the critical process, the magazine and its editors made little attempt to interact with local organisations such as the FAWWA. Fellowship activities did not usually feature in its pages, but individual members used it as another outlet for their writing, contributing reviews and articles. Prominent among these were Drake-Brockman, Durack, Ewers and the younger Dorothy Hewett.\textsuperscript{57} The underlying premise of the journal seems to have focused on establishing the University in the role of critical authority, standing slightly apart from the performers or writers, in order to better view and measure their creative efforts. Its strength lay in the determination of the editorial team to bring attention to bear on local cultural events, at a time when there was a burgeoning of such activities. Like the Western Australian anthologies of writings that appeared from the 1960s

\textsuperscript{52} Collin O’Brien, interviewed by the author, 18 March 2003. The brother of one of the editors, John O’Brien, Collin O’Brien was a major contributor both in his own name and under several \textit{noms-de-plume}. Occasionally the \textit{Critic} advertised poetry readings organised by the Society.

\textsuperscript{53} F. Alexander. \textit{Campus at Crawley: A Narrative and Critical Appreciation of the First Fifty Years of the University of Western Australia}. Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire for The University of Western Australia Press, 1963, p. 698.

\textsuperscript{54} The editors were named as John O’Brien, Eugene Schlusser, Frank Arndt, H. Nicholson, Vol. 1 No. 1, p.1. Recurring names of contributors include Jeanna Bradley, John Barnes, Sally Trethowan, Salec Minc, Malcolm Levene, P. AE. Hutchings.

\textsuperscript{55} Volume 7 spanned the sixteen months from March 1966 to July 1967, while Volume 10 appeared over ten months from April 1969 to June 1970. See the \textit{Critic}, Vols. 1–11, BL.

\textsuperscript{56} Editorial in the \textit{Critic}, Vol. 1, No. 1, p.1.

\textsuperscript{57} Hewett had joined the English Department of UWA as writer-in-residence in the late 1960s, the final years of the publication. She continued there into the early 1970s. See D. Hough: ‘the playmakers’, 2003, pp. 49ff.
onwards, the *Critic* stated clearly the importance of the arts in Western Australia, writing about events which were seldom mentioned in publications produced in the other states. As such, the magazine provides a valuable record of the developing cultural life in Perth, during the 1960s.

This decade witnessed a great deal of public discussion on the cultural development of Perth, as the State government and Perth City Council considered various proposals, including building an arts centre on Heirisson Island, which did not eventuate, and a new Concert Hall for Perth, which did.\(^{58}\) The State Government had already announced its intention of spending $23m on a new Cultural Centre over the railway line from the city. Successive issues of the *Critic* featured plans and a broad-ranging discussion. The Concert Hall was finally built in 1971. As the first such centre in Australia since the war, it was claimed by John Birman, Director of the Perth Festival, to have ‘more than local significance’.\(^{59}\) The journal *Artlook* was closely connected with Perth’s growing cultural infrastructure and so is discussed in more detail as part of the overview of that development in Chapter Eight. The publication of the *Critic* and its successor *Artlook*, illustrated the increased artistic activity in Western Australia during these twenty years, and helped to create a more supportive milieu for Perth’s artists. In the same way, the launch by the FAWWA, in May 1960, of a more substantial monthly periodical, *Fellowship News*, helped the State’s writers to feel more connected to the growing literary community in Western Australia and in other states.

The *Fellowship News*  
... *a slightly larger version of the monthly circular*\(^{60}\)

This publication reflected the growth in Fellowship activities as well as an increase in literary events around the country. Sharing these developments with its members was one important way for the FAWWA to support the individual writer. Prior to this, from 1944 to early 1960, the FAWWA had informed its members of forthcoming events by the monthly issue of a single cyclostyled

\(^{58}\) For example, see G. Bolton, the *Critic*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 1, 11 August 1967.  
\(^{60}\) *Fellowship News*, May 1960, p. 4.
page circular, in foolscap size. In April 1960, the committee expressed the need for a more substantial newsletter. At a special general meeting on 26 April 1960, members agreed to adopt the new format, with a clause to that effect added to the constitution. Changes to the constitution also stipulated the financial support to be made for this new endeavour.

The price of 3d. per issue shall be included in the annual subscriptions or contributions. Three shillings per annum from each member’s annual subscription or contribution shall be set apart for the journal and shall be separately accounted for in the annual Balance Sheet and shall be duly audited.

Originally envisaged as appearing ‘at least quarterly’, the new periodical in fact continued the monthly pattern of its predecessor. The four A5 pages gave greater scope for information to be circulated, especially literary competitions, which increased significantly during this decade, and were organised by a wide range of agencies. At first compiled by the secretary, the Fellowship News had increased sufficiently in size by May 1963 to need an editor. That year, with only £20 allocated per month for printing costs, the secretary appealed for, and received, an increase to £30. By November 1968, the role of editor appeared as a separate committee position in annual elections, with Dorothy Brooks named as publicity officer and editor. The publication, each month, of a newsletter which reported on Fellowship events, as well as other cultural activities in the State, and informed members of publication opportunities and literary competitions Australia-wide, offered the FAWWA a new means of encouraging all writers and keeping them in touch with the wider literary world.

Besides the Fellowship News, the committee continued the practice of sending to country members, free of charge, copies of the literary journal Westerly, which the University of W. A still produced. This helped to compensate those

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61 H.E.M. Flinn announced the introduction of these circulars in his President’s Report, 25 October 1944. FAWWA papers, BL, 214/1/1438A/15. These circulars concentrated on meetings, the progress of the Tom Collins House Fund, welcomes to new members and brief information on members’ activities. See examples in FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/30, which contains copies of circulars from 1948–1959.
63 FAWWA Circular, April 1960. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/30.
64 FAWWA Minutes, 10 September 1963. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
65 Fellowship News, November 1968, p. 3.
66 All issues of the Fellowship News are held in bound journals in the State Library of Western Australia.
members for their inability to attend most Fellowship functions. Such a move became increasingly appropriate as the FAWWA’s membership outside the metropolitan area grew, during the 1960s, as a result of an increase in visits of writers to country centres under various lecture and teaching programmes, and the foundation of the FAWWA’s country branches which occurred as a result of these visits.

The dramatic increase in air travel during these years, a result of technical and mechanical advances, was another factor in the expansion of Perth’s cultural world. For Western Australia’s writers, the growing ease of air travel brought increasing opportunities for an exchange of ideas, as eastern states and international writers visited Perth and local writers travelled more. In the early 1960s, the direct flying time from Perth to Adelaide was five and a half hours, give or take a little depending on the type of plane. From Perth to Sydney was an eight hours’ flight. This helped to mitigate the earlier effects of Perth’s isolation from the other Australian capitals.

Ewers’ description of his first flight, in 1930, highlights the difference these developments made. Having travelled by rail to Sydney and Melbourne to meet writers, including Vance and Nettie Palmer and A.B. Paterson, Ewers flew home from Adelaide in an unpressurised Hercules plane, on the route developed by West Australian Airways Ltd, established by Norman Brearley (later Sir Norman Brearley) in 1929. Cold and noisy, with only fourteen passengers, the plane stopped over-night in Forrest on the Nullarbor Plain, before continuing to Perth. For Ewers at least, this flight, lasting two days, left him deaf and suffering intense pain for some time after each landing, and did not encourage further flights. There is every reason to believe that other air travellers shared similar

67 FAWWA Minutes, 12 July 1956. FAWWA papers TCHA. In April 1961 the FAWWA had only 11 members for whom it ordered copies of Westerly. FAWWA Minutes, 11 April 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.
69 These details supplied from old flight brochures produced by Australian National Airways and Trans Australia Airways by Patsy Millet, daughter of Mary Durack.
experiences before the development of pressurised planes. The contrast between that earlier flight and the ease of travelling, in the 1960s, in pressurised, time-saving jet planes, explains the increased travel during this decade. It is also little wonder that the FAW was unable to organise interstate conferences while flying was so difficult.

The greater mobility of writers and other artists, in these years, ensured that Western Australian authors travelled more frequently, while writers visited Perth from other Australian states, as well as Europe and the United Kingdom. The regular lecture tours by writers, in the late 1950s, initiated by a request the FAWWA made to the Commonwealth Literary Fund, played a significant role in this increase of visiting writers. In 1957, the Fund supported a successful lecture tour of Tasmania by Tom Inglis Moore. The FAWWA immediately appealed to the Fund to support a similar tour annually in Western Australia.72 The Fund agreed and, as in Tasmania, organisation was placed in the hands of then Director of the Adult Education Board, Hew Roberts, a Fellowship member. He approached Inglis Moore, warning him that: ‘This State is not yet as conscious of the development of Australian literature nor as interested in it as are Victoria and New South Wales’.73

By organising numbers of eastern states and Western Australian writers to give lectures in metropolitan and regional centres, Roberts hoped to encourage Western Australians to read Australian literature, which would then warrant the inclusion of more Australian books in the Adult Education Board’s box scheme.74 In a later letter, he assured Inglis Moore that the FAWWA was ‘one of the best’ sections of the FAW.75 Eventually, Alan Marshall replaced Moore on the first tour, and was accompanied by local writers Casey and Ewers.76 The FAWWA regularly invited the touring writers to speak to members at Tom Collins House. In this way, the Fellowship ensured that the State’s writers would benefit from the writers’ visits. In 1962, children’s author Colin Thiele, then

72 Adult Education Board papers, 1 November 1957. UWA Archives AEB 364 CLF.
73 H. Roberts to T. Inglis Moore, 12 May 1958. UWA Archives AEB 364 CLF.
74 H. Roberts to FAWWA, 9 June 1958. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/33.
75 H. Roberts to T. Inglis Moore, 27 May 1958. UWA Archives AEB 364 CLF.
president of the FAW in South Australia, was the touring lecturer. His visit to Tom Collins House was described in the *Fellowship News*:

Mr Thiele delighted a large group of members sitting in the sun on the lawn of Tom Collins House on Saturday, August 18. Afterwards he met everybody individually and took a large number of photographs so that his South Australians can see what W.A. Fellowship members and their Tom Collins House look like.\(^77\)

The new ease of travel for Australians, in the 1960s, was not without its drawbacks for the Fellowship. The committee was frequently reduced, with numbers of its members absent at any one time. Presidents, too, travelled during their term of office, with two of them, Glaskin and Serventy, leaving the State before completing the two years for which they were elected, both to pursue new career openings, as will be discussed in the following chapter. A party held by Durack in her Dalkeith home, in November 1961, illustrates this increasing mobility of Australia’s writers. Organised initially to welcome Ian Mudie to Perth for the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures, the evening was also to farewell Ewers, Serventy, and Drake-Brockman, all leaving with their families on extended holidays, and to welcome Hungerford returning to Perth after an absence of some years.\(^78\) Durack was celebrating her own ‘retirement’ from the presidency of the FAWWA.\(^79\) At one meeting in 1965, three writers requested leave of absence from the committee. Alix Hasluck and Greenwood were both travelling, while Durack was working on a television assignment.\(^80\)

The effects of increased travel, however, were generally far from disruptive. As writers returned from their travels, they joined the growing numbers of suburban Australians hosting evenings of travel slides, photos and accounts of life in other countries. During the early years of this decade, members’ travels were featured at several general meetings. These talks covered areas such as Asia, Canada and the USA.\(^81\)

\(^{77}\) *Fellowship News*, August 1962, p.2.  
\(^{78}\) *Fellowship News*, October 1961, p. 1; and August 1961, p. 4.  
\(^{79}\) FAWWA Minutes, 10 October 1961 and 14 November 1961. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.  
\(^{80}\) FAWWA Minutes, 13 April 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.  
\(^{81}\) For example, writers speaking on their travels included Helen Helga Wilson in 1961, Ewers in 1962, Dr Ida Mann in 1964, and R.C. Hyslop in 1966. These talks were announced in the
From the late 1950s onwards, other visiting writers were welcomed to Tom Collins House. These included Professor R. E. Watters from the University of British Columbia (May 1959) and, in August 1959, husband and wife Leslie and Coralie Rees, on a return visit to their native Perth.\textsuperscript{82} Indian writer Dr Raj Anand visited in November 1959, on his way to a Conference of Writers and Artists in connection with the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{83} A more unusual speaker, but nonetheless appropriate given the inclusion of musicians and visual artists in the Fellowship’s membership, was Perth born soprano Lorna Sydney. Her talk, in October 1962, was described by the secretary as ‘one of the best of many fine talks’ in which she described her life with the Vienna State Opera, where she spent five months of the year, travelling to the USA and other centres for the remaining seven.\textsuperscript{84} In March of the next year, committee members Durack and Eleanor Page-Smith scored something of a coup when they took flowers to the ship on which Dame Edith Sitwell was travelling from the UK to Sydney. Sitwell was refusing all visitors but, on hearing that the two women were writers and represented Australian Writers through the Federal FAW Council, which was currently headquartered with the FAWWA, she had them ushered into her cabin. They were her only ‘social visitors’ throughout her trip to Australia.\textsuperscript{85}

Xavier Herbert’s visit in April 1964

… rather impertinently rude to a few others\textsuperscript{86}

Some visitors, like Xavier Herbert, made a different impression.\textsuperscript{87} Herbert was in Perth in April 1964, following the publication of \textit{Disturbing Element} (1963), the autobiography of his first twenty-five years. The \textit{Fellowship News} wrote about the evening when he spoke Tom Collins House as follows:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Fellowship News}, July 1961, p.1; July 1964, p.1; August, 1964, p.1; and March 1962, p.1, respectively, with Hyslop’s talk discussed in FAWWA Minutes, 3 October 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\item FAWWA Circulars, May and August 1959. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
\item FAWWA Circular, October 1959. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/30.
\item \textit{Fellowship News}, October 1962, p.1.
\item \textit{Fellowship News}, April 1963, p.3. The Newsletter included a poem written by M. Durack to mark the occasion.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The April meeting at Tom Collins House allayed our curiosity about Xavier Herbert. We saw him, heard him, and met him personally. Xavier gave us an informative and delightfully lively talk on himself and his writings, and all who heard him were sorry that others in this State would not have the chance to hear him talk about his work. Xavier made the end of the evening even more electric, but only those who had dallied after supper had a chance to witness the fireworks.88

The ‘fireworks’ referred to Herbert’s belligerence towards Adult Education Board Director, Roberts, following the talk. The evening and a subsequent party at Durack’s home, became part of the Fellowship’s collection of unforgettable moments, and were remembered both by then president Vincent Serventy in his autobiography and by Durack on several occasions, including an oral history recorded 26 years after the event.89 A scrapbook, compiled by the FAWWA, which covers the period from 1937 to 1968, includes several cuttings about Herbert’s time in Western Australia.90 In one item, Roberts suggests that Herbert had urged that he be brought to Perth by the Board for the CLF lectures as he could not afford the fare himself. Having written about his early years in the State in his latest book, the visit appeared to have been his own idea, planned as a publicity stunt in which he proceeded to pour insults on the State of his birth.91 According to Serventy, Herbert was angered by Roberts’ insistence that, to cut costs during his country tour, Herbert should share a hotel room with the other touring writer. Serventy described Herbert as having ‘visions of roaring through the countryside on a motor bike and dropping in on pubs to talk to the locals’.92 The Melbourne Sun quoted Herbert as saying that Roberts might stop him from criticising his home State. Both Durack and Serventy agreed that Herbert had returned to Western Australia ‘spoiling for a fight’.93

Roberts attended the evening talk at Tom Collins House but remained concealed in the kitchen. When he emerged to congratulate the speaker,

90 FAWWA Scrapbook, FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/85.
Herbert became incensed, demanding that Roberts ‘come outside’ for a fight. Durack later recorded that Herbert ‘wasn’t very nice to Hew’. Only the diplomacy of the writers present averted a larger scene. Roberts summed up the episode with the comment: ‘Annoyed with him? How could I be? to Xavier, all this fuss has been mostly a joke’. He continued that, for Herbert, there was no such thing as adverse publicity. Later, at a party at Durack’s home, a young reporter upset Herbert, who ‘flattened him’ before refusing to shake hands with Drake-Brockman, insulting her and reducing the party to ruins. For some time after the episode, correspondence flowed copiously from members who objected to the Fellowship inviting such a speaker. The only possible reply to those who complained was that, as guest speakers were not members of the Fellowship, the committee could exercise no control over them.

Exchange visits with the Soviet Union
... a great joy for me to meet and talk to them here in the West

An unforeseen consequence of the greater ease of travel, combined with the general easing of anti-communist sentiments, was the ground-breaking series of writers’ exchanges that took place between Australian and Soviet writers. Beginning in the early 1960s, these visits were proposed by the strong Soviet Writers’ Union to the federal FAW. The size and power of this Union, with a membership totalling 5,024, surprised Australian writers on their first official visit to the Soviet Union, in 1962. These exchanges of writers between Australia and the Soviet Union took place when the Cold War of the 1950s was beginning to wane as a major influence in Australian political life. With the impetus coming from the Soviet Union, the exchanges formed part of that country’s propaganda, designed to temper western opinion of the Communist State and the superiority of Marxism over capitalism. For writers, however, the timing of the first Soviet

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97 Herbert became well known for his aggressive outbursts. One such episode became a legend in the history of the Australian Society of Authors just as the episode above did for the FAWWA. D. Hill. A Writer’s Right’s: The Story of the Australian Society of Authors 1963–1983. French’s Forest, Australia: Australian & New Zealand Book Company, pp.219–221.
99 The FAW selected authors John Morrison (Victoria) and Robert S. Byrnes (Queensland and president of the Federal Council of the Fellowship) to visit the Soviet Union in 1962. See an extract from their official report printed in the Fellowship News April 1962, pp. 3–4.
visit in 1960, by poet Alexei Surkov and English translator, Miss Oksana Krugerskaya, was unfortunate. In late 1958, Soviet poet and novelist, Boris Pasternak, had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for his contributions to lyric poetry and the Russian epic. His novel Dr Zhivago, first published in Italy, contained criticism of the Soviet system and so the chief of the Soviet Cultural Committee demanded that Pasternak reject the prize. Refusing at first, Pasternak finally acquiesced, having been expelled from the Writers’ Union and subjected to public criticism. Some Australian writers were incensed by this attack on a fellow writer. Arriving in Perth, Surkov publicly defended the Soviet veto on Pasternak. Ewers declined to meet the visiting writers, in protest against the Soviet action. In her diary, then president Durack wrote of her dilemma: ‘Don’t much like the sound of them either, but have to do the best I can now’.

As the first visit of Soviet writers to Australia, it appeared to be fraught with difficulties and the date of their arrival in Perth was changed twice. The pair spent four days in Perth, with Surkov staying with Vickers and Krugerskaya with Prichard. A sub-committee, led by Durack, organised visits to the museum, the Wild Life Show and Kwinana High School, as well as gatherings at Tom Collins House, the University of Western Australia and the Russian-Australian Association. The FAWWA called on its member James Penberthy and his Russian wife dancer Kira Bousloff, to help with translations.

Australian writers, chosen from each state FAW, also visited the Soviet Bloc in this decade. In 1965, Western Australia writers Vickers and David Hutchison attended a Writers’ Conference in East Germany before visiting Moscow. Immediately after the visit of Surkov and Krugerskaya, Ewers and Durack were named by the FAWWA for inclusion in the first writers’ tour to the Soviet Union. While assuring Krugerskaya that Australian writers were ‘thrilled’ to be invited to the Soviet Union, Prichard expressed pleasure that Ewers had not been chosen, suspecting him of wishing to merely offer ‘hostile criticism’ of what he

104 FAWWA Minutes, 29 June 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
saw. Selected as a communist delegate to China in 1961, Joan Williams travelled around that country in a regulated well-supervised group. Without warning, the trip was extended and the group found itself in Russia, a development Williams interpreted as more about Sino-Soviet relations, which were shaky at the time, than about opening up the Russian nation to the Western world. The increased exchanges with the Soviet Union did not indicate an end to political tension within the FAWWA, as will be seen in the following chapter.

Such visits of writers to Perth enriched the cultural and specifically literary community in general. That FAWWA members and their friends could meet these writers at Tom Collins House, and discuss with them the specifics of the writing life, was one aspect of the support the FAWWA offered its members during these decades. From 1962, the Fellowship formed new branches in both country and metropolitan centres. This expansion enabled the FAWWA to support more emerging writers in regions far from the capital city.

Extending the FAWWA’s influence
... moving up and down the coast line

The lectures on Australian literature organised in Western Australia by the Adult Education Board on behalf of the Commonwealth Literary Fund were not only presented in Perth. Writers from the eastern states, together with local writers, travelled to the larger regional areas to give these lectures. On a cold, bleak night in 1962, Durack spoke to an interested audience in Albany about Australian books. Writing later to her friend Florence James, she described the listeners as being ‘really interested’. She was horrified to discover, however, that local bookshops had no Australian books in stock and that ‘the library was quite defunct’. This experience initiated the genesis of the first country branch of the Fellowship in Western Australia. As early as 1960, the Fellowship had

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105 K. S. Prichard to O. Krugerskaya, 26 June 1961. Prichard papers NLA 6201/16/10/10.  
107 Ibid., pp. 208 and 211.  
109 See Adult Education Board archives from 1957 onwards. UWA Archives AEB 364 Commonwealth Literary Fund.  
110 M. Durack to F. James, 17 January 1963. F. James papers ML 5877/16.
discussed the possibility of establishing branches in country towns when Donald Stuart was due to travel to Geraldton. He had to cancel the visit due to illness, and the outreach was abandoned for another two years.\textsuperscript{111}

The creation of a country branch required a new set of guidelines. These were drawn up in November 1962, and reflect the central structure of the FAWWA, with power held by the published authors or Fellows. To form a new branch required two or more Fellows living beyond a radius of fifty miles from Perth, one of whom would become chairman of the new group. Membership fees would be paid to the central organisation, with 90% being reimbursed to the self-governing branch, which could send a delegate to speak to any FAWWA meetings, suggest motions for the parent body to consider, and matters for discussion at council meetings of the Federal FAW Council.\textsuperscript{112} The requirement, that two Fellows should live in the region before a new branch could begin, frequently resulted in the appointment of writers with insignificant publication records as Fellows, or the failure of some centres to be able to form a branch. The latter reason prevented there being a branch in Bruce Rock. In September 1966, after local residents had requested an FAWWA branch in the town, the committee suggested that the situation in the town be reconsidered after Alan Marshall’s projected visit there in the following month as part of the Adult Education Board’s Commonwealth Literary Fund tour.\textsuperscript{113} The district never met the requirement of two Fellow members and so no branch was established there.

An FAWWA Branch in Albany
... a healthy start for the new group\textsuperscript{114}

Following her earlier talk in Albany, Durack visited again, in January 1963, to run a week for writers. Since her previous time there, a literary group had been formed and she described herself to Florence James as feeling rather like its godmother.\textsuperscript{115} In May 1963, this group formally became the Albany branch of the Fellowship. In that year, James was touring for the Adult Education

\textsuperscript{111} FAWWA Minutes, 12 September 1960. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
\textsuperscript{112} FAWWA Minutes, 13 November 1962. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
\textsuperscript{113} FAWWA Minutes 5 September 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{114} Fellowship News, June 1963, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{115} M. Durack to F. James, 17 January 1963. James papers ML 5877/16.
Board.116 James, together with Durack, her friend and FAWWA member, Dr Ida Mann and then FAWWA president, Vincent Serventy, spoke at the inaugural meeting.117 From its beginnings, the branch received ongoing support from *The Albany Advertiser*, through reports on the group and its meetings.118 The newspaper sponsored the branch’s creative writing competition, while the Perth Fellowship provided short story judges Durack, Irene Greenwood and Eleanor White, with David Hutchison, Os Watson and Olive Pell judging poetry.119 Durack and James donated book prizes.120 In 1964, the new branch opened its club house in the old Post Office in Albany.121 During September 1963, Drake-Brockman led classes at the first Adult Education Board Summer School for arts and crafts in Geraldton. This aroused a great deal of interest, with several applications for membership of the FAWWA. In 1964, the second country branch was formed there. By July, the *Fellowship News* reported that the Geraldton Branch was ‘meeting regularly’ and publications by three of its members appeared as Members’ Credits in that month’s *Fellowship News*.122

In 1966, the Albany group produced the first edition of *Albany Writes*, a collection of poetry and prose from writers in the area.123 With 300 copies produced and printed in Albany, the booklet was described in the *Albany Advertiser* as ‘the only publication in Aus. produced by group of non-professional writers.’124 During that year, six of its members wrote talks and scripts for the Australian Broadcasting Commission.125 From their beginnings,

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116 F. James (1904–1993). Born in New Zealand, James studied at the University of Sydney. Meeting Dymphna Cusack there, she shared a house with her in the Blue Mountains. Together they wrote the children’s book *Four Winds and a Family*, followed by the novel *Come In Spinner*, which won the 1948 Daily Telegraph competition. James returned to London where she had previously worked in journalism. She acted as an agent for Australian authors, including Durack. Returning to Sydney she worked on the original manuscript of *Come In Spinner*, and travelled widely lecturing on Australian Literature.


119 FAWWA Minutes, 10 September 1963. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.

120 *Fellowship News*, April 1964, p. 3.


123 *Fellowship News*, October 1966, p. 3; February 1967, p.2. FAWWA Minutes, 6 December 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81. These booklets continued to be produced regularly until the demise of the Branch in the 1990s.

124 *Albany Advertiser*, 16 October 1968. In the FAWWA Scrapbook. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/85.

125 *Fellowship News*, March 1966, p.3; July 1966, p.4; September 1966, p.3.
both branches conducted regular creative writing competitions in the genres of short story and poetry, often with judges provided by the parent body. They organised gatherings to welcome visiting authors, and encouraged writers in their district. By the 1980s, new branches existed in Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Bunbury, Busselton, the Hills (Kalamunda) and at Curtin University.

Western Australia was the first FAW to establish country branches. Sydney’s first branch was established in 1972. However, by the early 1980s New South Wales had over twenty Regionals, as they were called, there and in Victoria. These branches were not confined to country areas. In New South Wales, the FAW had active Regionals in suburbs such as Manly, North Shore and West Sydney. The Fellowship in Western Australia possibly began country branches earlier because of the greater distances in the State. The success of Regionals in the other states stemmed from the attention they received from leading writers within the central organisations. The country groups in this State flourished in the years when writers visited them regularly. Many of them ceased to function as their leading members grew older, in the late 1980s and 1990s.

While the branches contributed to the cultural lives of their own districts, they also affected the activities of the central body, which extended its focus to include country writers. In 1965, Fellowship members presented two evenings of readings, to coincide with the Royal Show, as country members were likely to be visiting the metropolitan area for the Show. Held at the Skinner Galleries in Mount Street, the evenings featured readings, interspersed with music provided by folk singers. Senior writers visited these groups to encourage them. In May 1965, the Albany branch organised an evening of readings to celebrate a visit by Ewers. Vickers, then president, travelled to Albany for the branch’s birthday celebrations, in 1966. Such informal visits of writers to country areas were the forerunners of the annual writers’ tours to country schools, initiated by

126 L. Fox, ed. Dream at a Graveside, 1988, pp. 156-158.
127 Planning for these evenings began in June, see FAWWA Minutes, 8 June 1965, and continued until the results were presented to the committee on 12 October 1965. FAWWA Minutes, 12 October 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81. They were judged to be a great success, bringing in a profit of £25.11.0 for the Tom Collins House Fund.
129 FAWWA Minutes, 7 June 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
the FAWWA in 1970, and continuing until 1995. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter Eight, these tours were planned to conclude with several days in a country town where the FAWWA had a branch, so that touring writers could spend time with the FAWWA’s distant members, conducting workshops and giving readings of their work.

Young Writers Branch of the Fellowship

… our work with children interested in writing

A different kind of branch was established by the FAWWA, in the late 1970s. Moves to begin a Young Writers Fellowship, in 1979, brought an unforeseen response. The first meeting, for children between 6 and 19 years of age took place in the Koondoola Community Centre, and attracted a total of 122 children, most of whom had already enjoyed some creative writing. Two groups were formed: the under-12 group of 72, and the over-12 group of 50. Writers Glen Phillips (FAWWA president in 1979), Amanda Nolan, and children’s writer Paul Buddee led the discussions, with Lee Knowles leading a poetry workshop. Two weeks later, a second gathering drew a similarly enthusiastic response. The young writers’ branch of the FAWWA was launched at the end of Writers’ Week, 1979. The branch planned to continue with twenty fortnightly seminars. Glen Phillips, Paul Buddee and Lee Knowles continued to work with the groups during 1979, followed by Oliver Deacon and Trevor Todd. A major aim of the group was to organise competitions to encourage young writers, as there had been nothing offered locally for young writers since the Perth-based Australian Broadcasting Commission’s Argonauts session was replaced, in the early 1960s, by one produced in Sydney.

The FAWWA also reached out to other parts of the community, during these years. In 1950, the FAWWA had responded positively to an invitation to become affiliated with the Good Neighbour Council, formed to facilitate the assimilation of migrants arriving in Australia in the post-war years. The federal

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132 At the committee meeting on 12 December newly-elected president Peter Gorman agreed to respond to the invitation written by Ralph Featherstone of the Good Neighbour Council just four days previously. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/28.
government had envisaged that organisations working with the Council would be those which had proved themselves to be ‘eager to shoulder community responsibility’. Ralph Featherstone, the Council’s representative, suggested that the Fellowship could welcome:

New Australian writers and artists, thus helping them to become a part of Australian community life, and, at the same time, to make their own contribution to Australian culture.

When asked to report, a year later, on their contacts with migrant writers the Fellowship had to reply that none had come forward. Given the policy by which the federal government selected migrants in the 1950s, it is doubtful whether many writers would have been among them. The government focused on migrants who would help the State’s shortage of labour by boosting the manual workforce in the aftermath of the war. The artists who arrived in this post-war immigration programme tended to be visual or plastic artists and musicians, whose creative expression was not determined by language. In spite of several efforts to involve migrants in its activities, in these early years, the Fellowship attracted only Greek-born Vasso Kalamaras as a long-term member. Like migrant writers in the other states, Kalamaras depicts the immigrant experience in her writings. She writes in Greek, using Australian translators to create her often bilingual books.

The Fellowship’s relationship with the Good Neighbour Council continued, however, and, in 1966, a handwritten note in the minutes book recorded that Vickers, Durack and the FAWWA secretary Marjorie Rees had arranged a successful evening of combined readings of work by migrants and Fellowship members during the year. This evening had been suggested by the FAWWA in March. The note continued that the ‘readings by migrants were most

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134 R. Featherstone to FAWWA, 8 December 1950. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
135 FAWWA to Good Neighbour Council, 14 November 1951. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/25.
139 FAWWA Minutes, 7 March 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
interesting and in some cases of a very high standard and the audience appeared to enjoy the Australian readings’.  

While the ever-increasing ease of travel enabled the FAWWA to support writers in different parts of the State, it also benefitted the annual Perth Festival and the biennial Adelaide Arts Festival, with more writers travelling to these events. Besides the stimulation they offered to practising writers, such Festivals, especially the one in Perth, offered greater opportunities for the FAWWA to promote Australian literature and local writers.

Perth and Adelaide Festivals

… We achieved recognition by the Festival of Perth

The Perth Festival had grown steadily since it began in 1953, however it was still firmly linked with the University of Western Australia and the Adult Education Board. During the intervening years, the FAWWA enjoyed a deepening relationship with these bodies, with the Fellowship’s members touring on the Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures, and the continuing functions of the Joseph Furphy Bequest linking the University and the FAWWA. Writing about the Festival in the _Sydney Morning Herald_, in 1959, Kylie Tennant encapsulated the close relationship between these two organisations, when she referred to the FAWWA and the Adult Education Board as ‘two of the most powerful pressure groups in the city’. In 1961, South Australian writer, Max Harris, described Perth’s Festival as having developed from the State’s isolation and ‘its own creative resources’. The FAWWA’s active involvement with the Festival, from 1960 onwards, began with a successful evening of readings in that year, modelled on the earlier ones of the 1950s. Ongoing dialogues about the organisation’s contribution are recorded in the minutes of meetings and indicate the amount of time and effort expended annually by committee members to present Western Australian writers at the Festival. Beginning in June 1959, the FAWWA planned an evening of readings by contemporary

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140 FAWWA Minutes, 1 August 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
141 J. Williams. President’s Report, 29 October 1973. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58. Williams was referring to the Writers’ Week organised by the FAWWA for the 1973 Festival of Perth.
writers, later extending it to include more traditional writers. Although Festival
organisers suggested Winthrop Hall or Skinner Galleries as venues, the
evening was finally presented in the University’s Sunken Garden.144 In January
1960, the West Australian reported that the Fellowship would ‘take over the
Sunken Garden’, with a programme that included songs by John Joseph Jones,
and writings from Bill Jamieson Brown, Alexandra Hasluck, Ewers, Pell, Dr Ida
Mann, Donald Stuart, Larry Hunter, and Murdoch.145 The day after the reading,
Durack wrote in her diary: ‘Full house & all went well – even the weather…Very
appreciative audience so feel it was worth-while’. Two months later, Hew
Roberts informed the organisers that there had been an audience of 354 at the
evening, and, in April, the FAWWA received a cheque for £32.19.6 as its share
of the takings. Roberts’ assessment was that it had been ‘a most successful
evening’, which could well become a regular feature of future Festivals.146 The
Fellowship had further increased its income from the evening by selling copies
of its anthology West Coast Stories, and Joseph Furphy’s The Buln-Buln and
the Brolga.147

By the mid-1960s, Festival organisers had appointed a literary sub-committee,
including an FAWWA representative. Once again, it was decided to present an
evening of readings in succeeding Festival.148 This was not a permanent
arrangement, as the Fellowship discovered, in November 1965, when the
committee learnt that it was too late for the FAWWA to be involved in planning
for the 1966 Festival.149 Festival Director John Birman assured the FAWWA
that, although there was no literature component in the coming Festival, the
Fellowship would be involved in planning for the subsequent one.150 In the
following year, 1967, literature gained a higher profile, when the literature sub-
committee organised visits from English author Iris Murdoch and her husband

144 These discussions are recorded in FAWWA Minutes, 9 June, 11 August, 8 December 1959
145 A copy of the newspaper cutting is in M. Durack’s diary, January 1960. Mary Durack papers
BL 0071/7273A/MDMDRY/ Box 1.
146 H. Roberts to the FAWWA, 8 March 1960 and 12 April 1960. FAWWA papers BL
214/1428A/33.
148 Festival planning was discussed in subsequent meetings during 1966. FAWWA papers BL
214/3021A/81.
149 FAWWA Minutes, 9 November 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
150 FAWWA Minutes, 6 December 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
John Bayley. They featured in a seminar on Writers in the Modern World at the University, with input from Tom Inglis Moore and Robert Brissenden, chaired by Clem Christesen. Letters from Christesen to Prichard make it clear that this seminar was not a success, for reasons he was unable to determine, although he was unhappy with his performance as chairman. He criticised Murdoch and Bayley, feeling that they ‘hindered the discussions’ rather than helping them.\textsuperscript{151}

Drake-Brockman wrote in her notebook: ‘Clem is a bad chair. We are all exhausted’. She also provided a rough sketch of Christesen. Although undated, it is clear from the contents that these notes refer to the 1967 Seminar.\textsuperscript{152}

The visitors were guests of honour at that year’s Corroboree and in his President’s Report Vickers named it as ‘one of the most successful summer parties we have yet held’.\textsuperscript{153} For several years after this, the FAWWA’s annual social gathering, or Corroboree, was timed to coincide with the end of the Festival, and visiting writers were guests at the event at Tom Collins House. In 1968, Judith Wright was shown around Tom Collins House by Drake-Brockman, who talked ‘animatedly of future plans’, as FAWWA member Dorothy Brooks remembered when Drake-Brockman died suddenly, just a week later.\textsuperscript{154} Few writers refused the invitation to attend the Corroboree. Hal Porter was an exception, assuring then president Olive Pell that he held ‘no brief at all for writers, either individually or in the repulsive mass. Indeed I am particularly anti groups of writers’.\textsuperscript{155}

\textbf{Writers’ Week, 1973}

\textit{the new Fremantle Arts Centre — a lovely venue & attendance of about 100.}\textsuperscript{156}

The Adelaide Festival included the first Writers’ Weeks in Australia. These enabled regular discussions among writers from all Australian states. Such opportunities to meet large numbers of interstate and international authors were vitally important for the previously isolated Western Australian writers, and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{151} C. Christesen to K.S. Prichard, 24 February and 13 March 1967. Prichard papers NLA/10/18.
  \item \textsuperscript{152} H. Drake-Brockman, notebook. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/7/75.
  \item \textsuperscript{153} B. Vickers. President’s Report, 30 October 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
  \item \textsuperscript{154} D. Brooks. \textit{Fellowship News}, April 1968, p. 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{155} H. Porter to O. Pell, 25 November 1970. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/11.
\end{itemize}
FAWWA members such as Hungerford, in 1962, shared their experiences with the membership through talks and film presentations.157 State Fellowship representatives used these Writers’ Weeks to hold formal and informal meetings of the FAW’s Federal Council. The growth of the Federal Council will be discussed more fully in Chapter Eight. Such occasions encouraged the growth of an active creative community among Australia’s writers.

In March 1972, then FAWWA president Joan Williams attended the Adelaide Writers’ Week with Durack and actor Nita Pannell. This experience confirmed her belief that the Festival of Perth should include a Writers’ Week. On her return, she talked with Birman and reported achieving ‘a valuable breakthrough and a tentative programme worked out in consultation with him’.158 Consequently, in conjunction with the Perth Arts Festival, the FAWWA presented the first Western Australian Writers’ Week from 19 to 25 February 1973, featuring Sydney writers Olaf Ruhen and Mena Calthorpe, ‘a balanced and successful team’.159 As an adjunct to the main programme, poetry readings were inaugurated in the city for the week, and were later repeated at the Playhouse, produced professionally by Dorothy Hewett. The Commonwealth Literary Fund supported arrangements with a grant of $1,200. This was the first Writers’ Week to be presented in an Australian capital outside of the Adelaide Week.

The Australian Society of Author’s Chairman’s Letter for January 1973 advised writers Australia-wide of the Western Australian Writers’ Week, describing it as a week of ‘Readings, lectures by visiting writers, wine and poetry tasting safari to Upper Swan, historical tour, study session on creative writing, Olaf Ruhen to be one of principal guests’. The week included the launches of books by FAWWA members Dorothy Hewett, Randolph Stow, Elizabeth Durack, Richard

157 Fellowship News, May 1962, p.1, and August 1964, p.1. These meetings revolved around commentaries by members who had attended Writers’ Week, with, in August, a film of the Adelaide Festival made by the Visual Education Centre.
158 J. Williams. President’s Report, 30 October 1972. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/13, p. 3.
Beilby and William Hart-Smith. The Chairman added: ‘All fit enough to cross the Nullarbor will be welcome!’

Ongoing programmes
... a programme designed to win more recognition and status for W.A. writers.

As well as arranging literary events during the Perth Arts Festival in the 1960s and 1970s, the Fellowship continued to present other smaller-scale events aiming to promote Australian writers and their books. As early as 1960, Greenwood, then publicity officer, wrote to Christesen that ‘less than 300’ was considered a small audience at such readings. This claim is not substantiated in other papers. For many years, the final members’ meeting of the year had traditionally consisted of a programme of readings of members' works. In earlier years these took place at the Skinner’s Gallery, in Mount Street, Perth. In 1970, the committee agreed to look for an outside venue for these readings, hoping to attract a larger audience. The Hole in the Wall theatre provided a space for two nights in November. At the same time, the in-house readings at Tom Collins House continued, together with talks by visiting and local speakers, including Ian McGill of Serendipity Antiquarian Bookshop, Hugh Edwards, showing slides and speaking about Western Australian wrecks, English satirist, Michael Frayn, president of the Australian Society of Authors, Barbara Jefferis, and authors Ivan Southall and Thomas Kenneally, whom Stuart described as becoming ‘enthusiastic about the unique qualities of Tom Collins House’.

Not all such events were so successful. In 1966, the Anglican Dean of Perth invited the FAWWA to organise a display of Western Australian books for the Patronal Festival of St George’s Cathedral. The committee agreed and Greenwood took charge of the organisation. The final display included 300 books, magazines, scrapbooks, photographs and manuscripts, however...

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161 J. Williams. President’s Report, 30 October 1972. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/13, p. 3.
162 ‘Local Writers Perform Well’ in West Australian, 26 November 1958. Copy in
163 FAWWA Minutes, 10 August 1970. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
attendance was poor due to insufficient publicity and the committee expressed disappointment with the results.\textsuperscript{165}

Lobbying

\textit{in Perth they [writers] are all in one big union}\textsuperscript{166}

Since its beginnings, one important aspect of the FAWWA's work had been to act as a writers' union, and to lobby in support of the professional interests of Australia's writers. In the early 1960s, the main purpose for such lobbying was to establish an Australian Society for Authors, a cause for which the Fellowship fought, together with the FAW in other states. With the birth of this Society in 1963, it, for the most part, assumed the task of lobbying on behalf of the country's writers. Hence, the FAWWA papers from the later 1960s and the 1970s, reveal fewer times when the Western Australian Fellowship acted as an advocate for writers as a whole. In specific cases that affected the State's writers, however, its lobbying was usually successful.

In the 1960s and 1970s, television appeared unlikely to fulfil the promise it had initially offered Australian authors. As regulations requiring a given amount of Australian content were watered down to allow more imported programmes, there were few openings for work by local writers. By the mid-1960s, most television drama was imported very cheaply from the USA and Britain. Only seven per cent of all drama programmes shown were Australian-produced.\textsuperscript{167} In 1962, seventeen Sydney scriptwriters formed the Australian Writers' Guild, a union that aimed to obtain basic professional rights for script writers. The Guild would eventually become an important lobby group in matters such as payment for scripts, and proportions of Australian content. In the 1960s, however, these topics drew comment from the FAWWA. In 1963, John Joseph Jones prepared a report for the Television Commission with Durack adding her comment on the ‘backlog of Aust. Lit. to draw from to be arranged by their scripting experts’.\textsuperscript{168}

Scriptwriter, Eleanor White, tabled the Vincent Report on Encouragement of Australian Productions for Television, in October 1964, and all members were

\textsuperscript{165} FAWWA Minutes from 7 March 1966 to 2 May 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{166} K. Tennant. 'Culture Blooms in the West', \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 19 February 1959, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{168} M. Durack. Diary entry, 6 May 1963. Durack papers BL 71/7273A/MDM/Dry.
urged to attend the forthcoming conference and citizen consultation.\textsuperscript{169} In his President’s Report that year, Serventy reported attending the UNESCO Committee for Letters, where he had stressed the importance of creating a pool of writers for television, and of developing the opportunity for such writers to exercise their talent. The committee had agreed to the FAWWA’s proposal for seminars and workshops in television writing, with the warning, however, that it might take some years before this was acted upon.\textsuperscript{170} For the many FAWWA members who wrote play scripts, as well as fiction or poetry, it was vital that some training was provided for local writers to learn the very different techniques that television scripts required of the writer.

Three years earlier, in 1961, the FAWWA had some success when it appealed to the local television station, Channel 7, for a greater emphasis on Australian literature in its programming. In the 23\textsuperscript{rd} President’s Report, Durack described a series of interviews on Channel 7 which resulted from this request. During the year, Drake-Brockman interviewed William Jamieson Brown, Ewers and Durack were interviewed by Coralie Congdon on the subject of the anthology *West Coast Stories*, and the Tom Collins Trust Fund, while Serventy and Stuart appeared ‘talking about their books, other people’s books, or simply airing their opinions’.\textsuperscript{171}

The Fellowship was most successful with its appeal to the Commonwealth Literary Fund, in 1957, for Western Australia to host extensive lectures on Australian literature.\textsuperscript{172} The results of this request have already been described, but there can be no doubt that this move was one of the most effective developments in the promotion of Australian literature through the State’s far-flung areas. As already seen, this move resulted in the formation of the FAWWA’s country branches, which supported regional writers, connecting them with their metropolitan fellows. These lectures also stimulated the FAWWA’s tours of writers to country areas in the 1970s, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

\textsuperscript{169} FAWWA Minutes, 13 October 1964. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{170} V. Serventy. President’s Report, 27 October 1964. BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{171} M. Durack. President’s Report, 7 November 1961. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\textsuperscript{172} Adult Education Board papers, 1 November 1957. UWA Archives AEB 364 CLF.
Conclusion

From 1961 to 1970, the journal the *Critic*, produced by the University of W.A., reflected the growth in Western Australia’s cultural world. This expansion resulted from several factors, including a larger and more affluent population, the stimulation of increased travel, both to and from Perth, and a growing availability of funds to support the arts. From 1960, the Fellowship produced its expanded monthly newsletter, the *Fellowship News*. This publication encouraged individual writers by informing them of literary events throughout Australia, and was particularly important for regional writers, who joined the FAWWA’s newly-founded country branches. It also notified members of the many writers visiting Tom Collins House in these years. Such opportunities to meet and talk with writers, from other Australian states and overseas, enabled local writers to expand their own horizons and stimulated their enthusiasm for writing, thus overcoming some of the disadvantages of geographic isolation.

The expansion of Perth’s cultural life, in the 1960s, offered new ways for the Fellowship to promote Australian literature. It organised readings and talks in the annual Perth Arts Festival, although such involvement was not always guaranteed. A study of the programmes for these Festivals shows that the relationship between the Adult Education Board, responsible for organising the Festival in those years, and the Fellowship consolidated with time. FAWWA’s representation on the literary sub-committee enabled it to contribute to planning and ensured that, once the Festival began to invite overseas and interstate writers as participants, they were all guests at Tom Collins House. This cooperation culminated in the first full Writers’ Week, organised by the FAWWA in 1973. Public readings of their works by Western Australian writers attracted healthy audiences, especially when the Fellowship utilised locations such as the Hole in the Wall Theatre for these annual events.

In this period, membership grew to include country writers, and occasions for public promotion of Australian literature increased. FAWWA members were also encouraged by the successful appeal to establish an Australian Society of Authors. After 1963, the Fellowship lobbied less on matters of general concern to writers, while it remained outspoken on questions of specific interest, such as
the extension of Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture tours to Western Australia and, for one year at least, a series of television appearances by local writers.

During these decades, which saw such a burgeoning of public activities mounted by the FAWWA, the organisation underwent internal changes. The advent of younger writers provided a necessary balance to the deaths of five founding members, all of whom had influenced the progress of the Fellowship during its early years. During the 1960s and 1970s the organisation was led by eleven very different presidents; Mary Durack and Joan Williams providing a sense of stability with repeated terms. Chapter Seven will discuss these changes, and their effect on the organisation. The final proof of the Fellowship’s power of endurance came with its response in the 1970s to government plans to redevelop Servetus Street into a north-west highway. With Tom Collins House facing demolition to achieve this, the FAWWA moved into a phase of active opposition to government plans, and to false accusations that the house had been neither built, nor lived in, by Joseph Furphy. It also signalled new demands on the Fellowship committee, as the responsibility of owning a house, that was such an important part of Australia’s literary heritage, became increasingly complex.
This was the complaint of many presidents of the FAWWA during the 1960s and 1970s. The opportunities to expand its programmes, resulting from changes in Australia’s arts world during these years, meant more work for the committee, and especially the president. Feeling duty bound to support newer members, Durack had many days such as the one referred to in her diary, when she reflected, with a mixture of enjoyment and regret, that the current president had: ‘called & pleasantly sabotaged the morning’. For one new president, Gerald Glaskin, the demands were such that he curtailed his time as president, leaving the State to pursue his writing career in Holland. His vice-president delivered Glaskin’s President’s Report, justifying his early departure. Such challenges were to be expected for a volunteer-based organisation like the FAWWA.

This chapter argues that, even while the FAWWA’s public activities expanded, a number of circumstances combined to weaken the organisation from within. Four of these are explored in the following pages. Firstly, the chapter discusses the effect on the FAWWA of the deaths, between 1964 and 1978, of its founding members, Casey, Lyndall Hadow and Murdoch, and, more significantly, Drake-Brockman and Ewers. Most of these writers were still active within the organisation until just before their deaths. Secondly, it considers the extent to which the membership was renewed by an influx of younger writers, and how the FAWWA changed under the very individual leadership styles of writers such

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1 F. James to D. Irwin, 2 May 1963. James papers ML 5877/4. Florence James was reporting Mary Durack’s feelings to a mutual friend.
as Dorothy Hewett, Gerald Glaskin, Donald Stuart and John Joseph Jones as presidents. Thirdly, the chapter analyses the political tensions that erupted once more during the early 1960s, in the final stages of the Cold War, and how they affected the membership. Finally, the chapter discusses the threat to Tom Collins House posed by the State government’s plan to widen Servetus Street in order to create a north-south highway; a plan which necessitated the demolition of all houses, including Tom Collins House, on the west side of the street. The claim by a local academic that Joseph Furphy had neither built nor lived in the house marred the organisation’s reputation in spite of energetic repudiations by both FAWWA members and the Furphy family. At the same time, the growth of a government-funded, cultural infrastructure, during these twenty years, increased the demand for professionalism in the arts, and tended to marginalise volunteer-based arts organisations. These developments will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

The deaths of founding members

... I have an inexpressible sense of loss

Several of the writers present at the dinner for C. Hartley Grattan, in June 1938, were no longer alive. Jesse Hammond, who had suggested to form a writers’ organisation, died in 1940, only two years after that gathering. The death of the poet, Annie Marks, was recorded in FAWWA Minutes of 1947. James Pollard, the FAWWA’s second president, died in 1971. All these writers, however, had withdrawn from FAWWA activities some years before their death. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by the deaths of writers who had made important contributions to the FAWWA over the years, and who were therefore more sorely missed. In particular, with the deaths of Drake-Brockman, in 1968, and Ewers, ten years later, the organisation lost two of its most ardent advocates, each of whom had devoted so much time to the promotion of Australian literature through Fellowship activities. With their deaths, members also lost two of the writers who had always been available for advice and encouragement, and sometimes for stern admonishments.

6 FAWWA Minutes, 28 August 1964. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/2.
First came the death of Gavin Casey, one of a small group of writers involved in early discussions leading to the foundation of the Fellowship. The humour he brought to bureaucratic functions was enshrined in the first version of the constitution, which Vickers remembered as ‘a very humorous and human document’, that would allow members to meet and argue ‘in good fellowship over a flagon or a jar in a … civilised community of interest. Not always in peace, but in the harmony that comes with respect for another man and his views’.  

Absent from the State during the war years, Casey worked in London and New York for the Australian News & Information Bureau, from 1946 until the late 1950s. On his return to Western Australia, Casey re-established his early involvement with the Fellowship, thus enhancing the sense of continuity with the organisation’s beginnings. He took part in country tours, gave lectures in the Commonwealth Literary Fund series, spoke at FAWWA meetings and participated in public readings. Remembering the lecture tour, when he and Casey travelled together, in 1958, Alan Marshall wrote that he ‘was really dying as we travelled along the road. He used to have a hard job to climb the stairs in the pub’. As one of the judges for the 1961 Short Story Competition, organised in conjunction with the *West Australian*, Casey wrote an ongoing ‘Hints to Competitors’ column in the *Weekend News*. After his death, the *Weekend News* asked Drake-Brockman and Ted Mayman to provide appreciations of Casey for its 27 June issue. During his years working in Sydney, Casey had created a name for himself. Consequently, the Journalists Club of Sydney added the reflections of Drake-Brockman and Mayman to its own memorial notice, and distributed the result to all its members. During his illness, local and interstate artists organised auctions of their works to raise funds for his young family.

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10 FAWWA Minutes, 3 January 1961. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30. The other judges were Gerald Glaskin and Molly Lukis.
Members of the Fellowship farewelled him with regret as a ‘much loved writer and mate to many’.\textsuperscript{13} In October 1976, the FAWWA joined with the Kalgoorlie Historical Society to organise a weekend seminar in Kalgoorlie, featuring a ‘Gavin Casey Night’, to pay tribute to him. The audience, which included Casey’s first wife, Dorothy Congdon and members of his family, heard reminiscences and extracts from his writings. Joan Williams spoke of working with Casey as a journalist on local newspapers, while Julian Grill described of the times through which he had lived, and one of his friends talked of their school days together.\textsuperscript{14}

A greater shock to the literary world in Western Australia, and to Fellowship members, was the sudden death of Drake-Brockman, from a cerebral haemorrhage in early 1968. As Durack wrote: ‘She left us in her vitality and her beauty and that is as we shall remember her’.\textsuperscript{15} Writing about the cultural life of Perth in \textit{Nation} in 1961, Max Harris had described her as ‘the matriarch of Western Australian literary life, a powerful and eloquent woman’.\textsuperscript{16} For the Fellowship, it was a particularly emotional loss. Aged only 67, Drake-Brockman was active in Fellowship activities right up until her unforeseen death. Just a year earlier, she was made an Honorary Life Member, in acknowledgement of her contributions as foundation member, vice-president in the first committee and president, in 1940–41 and again in 1955–57.\textsuperscript{17} The news of her death reverberated through Writers’ Week, which had just begun at the Adelaide Festival. Christesen wrote to her husband on behalf of the writers gathered there: ‘Henrietta’s death deeply mourned by all writers attending Adelaide Festival. Please accept our profound sympathy’.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Artlook: The West Australian Arts Newspaper}, Vol. 2 No. 10, November 1976, p.21.
\textsuperscript{18} C. Christesen to G. Drake-Brockman, 14 March 1968. The \textit{Meanjin} Archive UMA Drake-Brockman file.
Two issues of the Fellowship News were devoted to tributes from Drake-Brockman’s fellow writers.¹⁹ Most moving was that written by Prichard. Despite their diametrically opposed political beliefs, the friendship between the two women, which had begun in the early 1930s, had survived the strains of political tensions accompanying World War II, and the subsequent Cold War period.²⁰ Drake-Brockman appeared to Prichard to have little understanding of, or sympathy for, socialist causes, much less communism, although Drake-Brockman had privately declared to Lindsay, secretary of the FAW(NSW) that she was ‘fairly Left in most of my views…’ Where she did differ from Prichard was in her belief in ‘more individual freedom than meted out in Russia (as far as we can tell from hearsay)’.²¹

The depth of Prichard’s feelings, in her response to Drake-Brockman’s death, indicated the degree to which this earlier disagreement had been resolved in the intervening years. Writing to her son, Ric Throssell, Prichard described how shattered she had been to receive the news, describing Drake-Brockman’s visit to her just two weeks earlier, ‘looking so well, and still beautiful with a scarlet straw hat which was most becoming’.²²

Not only did Prichard’s tribute to Drake-Brockman, in the Fellowship News of April 1968, express the shock felt by all members of the Fellowship, but it also gave a vivid picture of the writer who had played such a central part in shaping the organisation, and in ensuring its contributions to the cultural life of the State.

The Fellowship without Henrietta! It seems incredible. We who are grieving can’t think of her without tears welling. Never to see her come into a room, with her radiant vitality and beautiful eyes smiling! I have an inexpressible sense of loss. She was such a lovely girl when we first met before she was married.²³ We were close friends over the years. Our friendship survived political differences of opinion: the indefinable bonds of love and admiration were stronger.

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¹⁹ Fellowship News, April and May 1968. Both newsletters were devoted to memorial messages, with just a double page supplement for news items.  
²¹ H. Drake-Brockman to C. Lindsay, 12 February, no year but from the context it was 1939. FAW(NSW) papers ML 2008/K22106.  
²³ This seems to be a mistake on Prichard’s part. As described in Chapter Two, they met when Prichard wrote to ‘Henry Drake’ commenting on ‘his’ early stories. Drake-Brockman only used the nom-de plume ‘Henry Drake’ after she had married Geoffrey Drake-Brockman in 1921.
Henrietta’s strength of character, uncompromising appreciation of noblesse oblige, her generosity and the charm of her personality made her a fascinating companion... She will never be old in our memory. We will remember her as she was, always alive and sensitive in her perception of literary or art values.

Dear Henrietta, I have loved you, and pay tribute to your warm sympathies with the comedy and tragedy of human existence.\textsuperscript{24}

Discussion about how best to create a memorial for Drake-Brockman continued in the FAWWA committee for some months. In June 1969, the FAWWA committee decided that the wrought iron garden seats, favoured by then president Glaskin, were ‘too ornate and unenduring’. They therefore ordered a granite seat or bench, to be placed in the grounds of Tom Collins House as a more lasting memorial to Drake-Brockman. Some members were still unhappy about this decision. Marjorie Rees had suggested a light for the garden as being more appropriate a memory for Drake-Brockman than a seat. One comment overheard was that 'no-one had ever sat upon Henrietta during her life time!'\textsuperscript{25}

In her speech for the dedication of the seat, in January 1970, Lady Alexandra Hasluck summed up Drake-Brockman’s contribution by describing her as ‘a vital part of the life of her times, but ….she could also translate it to us, to others, to other times…’\textsuperscript{26}

In October of the following year, Prichard, too, was gone. Her passing was not entirely unexpected, although its suddenness caught friends and family unawares, as her friend Bill Irwin wrote to Ken Gott, in Victoria:

Katharine Susannah died last week, October 2. We had lunch with her ten days before, and she was in excellent health, and mentally as bright as ever. Her son Ric was coming over for a conference on October 2 arriving late at night by air and going straight up to Greenmount. He got home to learn that Katharine had died 15 minutes earlier after a sudden heart attack.\textsuperscript{27}

The FAWWA had celebrated Prichard’s eightieth birthday, in December 1963. In the following year, Prichard suffered a severe stroke from which she

\textsuperscript{24} Fellowship News, April 1968, pp. 4–5.

\textsuperscript{25} FAWWA minutes, 11 August 1969. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/52. Remembered by Patsy Millett as having been said by Eleanor Page-Smith. Discussion with the author, September 2012.

\textsuperscript{26} Transcript of Lady Hasluck’s dedication. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/10.

\textsuperscript{27} B. Irwin to K. Gott, 6 October 1969. Gott papers AMC SLV. MS 13047 Box 3765/7.
recovered only slowly. Living in Greenmount, twenty-five kilometres from the city centre, made it difficult for her to attend Fellowship gatherings in her later years. She relied on visiting friends, and touring writers and artists, to remain connected to the cultural world. During the 1960s, Soviet writers and dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet Company were among her visitors. Recording her death, the November issue of the Fellowship News named Prichard as ‘one of the few Australian writers to become an Internationally known literary name’. It continued: ‘She also had the courage to stand by her, at one time, most unpopular political beliefs’. Williams wrote: ‘Life without Katharine was inconceivable’.

The losses in the 1960s were not confined to older writers. In 1969, the FAWWA paid tribute to thirty-nine year-old poet Griffith (“Griff”) Watkins, who had taken his own life. In his President’s Report at the end of 1969, Glaskin reflected on the loss of such a promising young writer, winner of the Weekend News short story competition, the UWA Simpson Prize and the 1966 Henry Lawson Prize for poetry. The Fellowship had welcomed Watkins as ‘one of the most talented and accomplished younger writers the WA literary scene had produced’. As he had encouraged Watkins’ writing, Glaskin felt his death keenly.

Less than a year later, the Fellowship mourned the loss of a fourth foundation member, paying tribute to Sir Walter Murdoch in the Fellowship News, after his death, in July, at the age of ninety-six. Murdoch had influenced many of the foundation members of the Fellowship, either as their University lecturer in English or as a wise guide and mentor in matters literary. Although, in more
recent years, he had played an infrequent role in Fellowship activities, Durack summed up what he had meant to the FAWWA in earlier times.

In former years he attended most of our major functions and contributed always to such occasions with friendly interest and quizzical wit... He disclaimed ever ‘advising’ anyone but somehow he managed to convey to me in my youth some meaningful directives.\(^{36}\)

Noting his death in her diary, Durack commented: ‘My own memories of him go back to childhood days’.\(^{37}\)

One of the most unusual ceremonies ever held by the FAWWA to bestow life membership on a member, was that held for Lyndall Hadow, on 31 May 1976. Since April 1967, when Drake-Brockman and Ewers received crucibles used in the gold refining process to mark their status as honorary life members, this gift of a crucible had become a tradition, indicating that the new life member had refined his or her words and in so doing been refined themselves.\(^{38}\) Hadow, the older sister of Donald Stuart, worked as a radio copy-writer but, as well as promoting her brother’s writing, was a skilled short-story writer. Williams wrote of ‘her talent and craftsmanship, used so often to help others’.\(^{39}\) While the FAWWA celebrated its new life member, Hadow was ill in hospital with pneumonia, having just completed her second collection of short stories, with the assistance of a Literature Board grant. As Williams recorded: ‘She was lying in a coma when John K. Ewers put the Fellowship crucible in her hand’. In Hadow’s memory, the FAWWA established a fund to support a national short story competition. The Lyndall Hadow Short Story Prize was first held in 1977.\(^{40}\)

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Brockman co-edited with Murdoch the Oxford University Press collection *Australian Short Stories.*

38 FAWWA Minutes, 3 April 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
39 J. Williams. ‘A Crucible for Lyndall’ in *she too is ‘part of the glory’*, Fellowship of Australian Writers, Western Australian section, 1976, p. 1. The title of the tribute booklet derives from her father Julian Stuart’s reminiscences of the shearers’ strike in Queensland in 1891. Hadow wrote a foreword on the man and his times.
40 *Ibid.*, p. 2. The competition later became the Hadow/Stuart Short Story Prize in honour of both Hadow and her brother Donald Stuart.
John K. Ewers, March 1978

... the first writer actually born, reared and educated in this State to gain Australia-wide recognition\footnote{M. Durack. ‘An Abiding Influence’ in \textit{The Ultimate Honesty: Recollections of John K. Ewers 1904–1978 with some glimpses culled from his works}, P. Bibby, ed. Perth: Fellowship of Australian Writers (W.A. Branch), 1982, p. 21.}

Summing up the achievements of Fellowship members during 1975, then president Donald Stuart reported that:

for some of our newest and youngest, right through to our now somewhat middle-aged Foundation President Keith Ewers, it has been a busy and productive year.\footnote{D. Stuart. President’s Report, 27 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/52.}

At 71, Ewers was more than ‘somewhat middle-aged’. However, he was still very active, especially in the campaign to save Tom Collins House and to assure the public and authorities of the genuine connection between Joseph Furphy and the house. In 1973, he had been granted a Literary Pension by the newly-established Literature Board, with the statement that:

The members of the Board were unanimous in praising your own versatility and creativity as a writer and several members spoke from personal experience of the contribution you had made over many years to the cultural life of Western Australia.\footnote{G. Blainey to J. K. Ewers, 12 June 1973. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/395.}

Diagnosed with lung cancer towards the end of 1977, Ewers died in Charles Gairdner Hospital, in March 1978. His writer friends visited him regularly in his last years. As Vickers wrote:

I was privileged to have John share his depth of thought and vision with me during the last year of his life when we spent a quiet hour together at the weekly date we had with each other.

Barbara York Main expressed how the newer members felt about him, when she wrote to his widow: ‘His influence and example and encouragement to us younger writers — often indirectly, has been far more profound than probably you are aware of’.\footnote{B. York Main to J. Ewers, 16 March 1978. In the possession of the author.}

Four years after his death, the Fellowship produced a book of tributes to Ewers, compiled by one of his protégé writers, Peter Bibby. Memorials from fourteen
Western Australian writers spoke of Ewers as the ‘elder statesman of writing’, who was ready to advise both individual writers and the organisation as a whole.\(^{45}\) Irene Greenwood’s description of Ewers as ‘Author, Philosopher, Educator, Humanitarian, Prophet’ reflected how her opinions had changed, and how political tensions had relaxed since 1955, when she wrote to Clem Christesen:

> I shall continue to believe that J.K.E. has been acting for Security, until such time as he denies it, and until he does I shall not be able to associate with him again.\(^{46}\)

In 1982, her tone was much milder. She referred to Ewers’ first presidential report *The Australian Paradox*, given in November 1939, in which he stated his belief that ‘it is the destiny of Australian writers, through their writings to assist Australians to an awareness of themselves and of their country’.\(^{47}\)

These deaths of significant founding members affected the organisation and its members in three specific ways. As the writers’ tributes show, they felt strongly the loss of advisers to whom they had been able to turn in any situation. Durack, the one remaining active member present at the first meetings, carried the FAWWA memory and so became chief adviser, on whom successive presidents relied until her death in 1994. A second result of these losses was the impetus they provided for new presidents to become respected older statesmen in their turn. As will be seen in the discussion that follows, during the late 1960s and 1970s, Vickers and Stuart took on this role. The third effect was to reinforce the urgent need to attract younger writers to join the organisation. In the expansive years under consideration, this proved to be a relatively easy process. The difficulty was to retain them. And, as the organisation attracted new members, so it needed to make internal changes to adjust to these members.

New influences within the membership

*an influx of younger members*\(^48\)

The passing of the old guard, and its more rigid ideas concerning the nature of the Fellowship, was balanced by a rising number of new members, many of whom were to become prominent in the Western Australian literary world. That two presidents, Dorothy Hewett in 1968 and Donald Stuart in 1974, commented on the ‘influx of new members’ indicates how aware the committee was of this need to attract younger writers.\(^49\) A new generation of writers had the potential to reinvigorate the FAWWA during the 1960s and 1970s. Presidents during these years, on the whole, were also younger writers. For some, like Vincent Serventy, writing was only one aspect of their career, while others, like songwriter and playwright John Joseph Jones, were devoted to a genre of writing differing from the traditional. For the first time, the FAWWA had as president members like Eleanor White who had only a slight writing background. No longer was it true that the best known Western Australian writers were leading the organisation, a fact which alarmed some of the older writers, who feared that its standing in the arts world could be diminished.\(^50\) In fact, most of these writers led the FAWWA to great effect, as Lang’s letter of congratulations to White makes obvious, when she thanked White for her ‘valuable work’ putting together a series of lectures on Australian literature.\(^51\)

In 1961, the Fellowship had 124 members, including 63 full members or Fellows and 61 associate members. This balance must have pleased the founding members, who had feared that the number of Associates would outweigh the number of Fellows, thus diluting the professionalism of the organisation. Membership grew gradually during the decade, with numbers falling to 122, then rising to 132, by 1968. Of these, 34 belonged through the two Country

\(^{48}\) In her President’s Report, 28 October 1968, retiring president Dorothy Lilley (née Hewett) referred to ‘an influx of younger members earlier in the year’. *Fellowship News*, November, 1968, p. 1.

\(^{49}\) D. Stuart wrote of: ‘an influx of younger people into the ranks of the Fellowship’. D. Stuart President’s Report, 28 October 1974. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/52.

\(^{50}\) In 1979, Vickers wrote to M. Durack, concerned that Eleanor White was to receive the crucible for honorary membership without having a body of published work. F. B. Vickers to M. Durack, 28 April 1979. Durack literary papers, 10, 1-14.

\(^{51}\) J. Lang to E. White, 20 June 1978. Letter in the hands of White’s daughter Lorelei Moreling.
Branches at Albany and Geraldton. By 1967, five of the founding members, Murdoch, Prichard, Ewers, Drake-Brockman and Skinner, had been made Honorary Life Members.

Between 1940 and 1959, many members were already established writers, or well advanced in developing their careers. Now, in the 1970s, the Fellowship increasingly attracted people who were emerging as writers. Many of this new wave of aspiring writers, during the early 1960s, were students at the University of Western Australia, which helped to revive the link between the organisation and the University. Following the established pattern, membership applications were approved at committee meetings, with new members welcomed in the following Fellowship News. As before, many younger writers joined as Associate members, becoming Fellows once their writing careers developed sufficiently. Although overall membership numbers did not vary markedly during the 1960s, there were some notable additions such as Merv Lilley (1961), Hugh Edwards and Nene Gare (1964), Lloyd Davies (1965), William Grono (1966) and Elizabeth Jolley (1967) all of whom joined with Fellow status. Younger writers, including Nicholas Hasluck, Hal Colebatch, Andrew Burke and Bill Grono, soon became involved with FAWWA activities, as members of the committee. They provided a solid base on which the successful future of the group could be built, broadening the FAWWA’s networks with their individual interests. The FAWWA made special efforts to integrate these younger writers. The end of year readings, in 1967, organised by vice-president, John Barnes, then lecturer in the English Department of the University, included a segment called ‘Unfamiliar Voices’, which featured poets Nicholas Hasluck, Viv Kitson, Andrew Burke and Ian Templeman. At times, their creative approaches to

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52 FAWW correspondence and membership lists. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/7.
53 The Fellowship News, April 1967 mentioned four of the Honorary life members, and in the June issue there was an apology for the omission of Prichard.
55 Poet Bill Grono was accepted as a Fellow, 29 November 1966, see FAWWA Minutes, 29 November 1966, and 6 December 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81. He was co-opted to the committee at the same meeting. In 1968 he was elected vice-president. FAWWA Minutes, 3 June 1968. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
56 West Australian, 2 December 1967. Also entry in Nicholas Hasluck’s journal for Monday 27 November 1967. Copy provided to the author by N. Hasluck, 3 July 2011.
writing and its presentation may have startled some older members. The first poem Andrew Burke read in Tom Collins House was written on a toilet roll.57

FAWWA Presidents in the 1960s
....I cannot forget the friendships I’ve been privileged to make within the Fellowship.58

The changes taking place, in both the FAWWA and Perth’s cultural world, during the 1960s and 1970s, are reflected in the eleven different writers elected as presidents in these years. Two were long-term members of the organisation, although only Durack, president from 1959 to 1961 and again from 1966 to 1967, dated her involvement from the 1938 dinner for Grattan. Vickers, a member since the mid-1940s, returned to the presidency from 1965 to 1966, having already been president from 1953 to 1955.59 His second term, however, began six months earlier, when he took over, in April, as acting president after then president Serventy left Perth to film Australia’s first natural history television series *Nature Walkabout* for Channel Nine.60 While a government school teacher in Perth, Serventy still managed to pursue what he declared to be his ‘twin loves of writing and conservation’.61 He remembered being groomed by Drake-Brockman for the role of president.62 His passion for wildlife and the natural world brought a new vitality to the FAWWA, and the committee expressed ‘a mixture of regret and pleasure’ at his leaving the State. ‘Regret that we are losing our President and pleasure for him in his new venture’. Nevertheless the hope was that, living in Sydney, Serventy would be able to ‘remain a vital force in the Fellowship and revitalise the Fellowship on the other side’.63

57 Anecdotal information confirmed by the poet.
59 J. Lang. *At the Toss of a Coin*, 1987, p. 72. Lang’s chart of the presidents from 1938 to 1987 has provided all date details in this discussion. They are confirmed by the Honour Board in Tom Collins House.
61 Ibid., p. 32.
62 Ibid., p. 91.
63 FAWWA Minutes, 13 April 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
Joan Williams also had two terms as president, in 1971–1973 and 1979–1981. These repeated terms provided a steadying influence, with Vickers and Durack able to build upon their familiarity with past traditions, and Williams helping to create traditions that would form the foundation of the FAWWA’s next 30 years. Williams began her writing life as a journalist with the *West Australian, Daily News* and the *Workers’ Star*. As she was a staunch communist, her election as president in 1971 and again in 1979, clearly demonstrates the easing of political attitudes in Australia in the 1970s. With her poet husband, Vic Williams, she joined the FAWWA in the early 1950s. In 1961, Williams had travelled to China and the Soviet Union, as the Western Australian representative in an Australian Communist Party delegation. Again, in June 1977, the couple left Perth for one to two years in Moscow, sending news back to the FAWWA regularly. It was thanks to Williams’ intervention that Perth had its first Writers’ Week, as part of the 1973 Festival of Perth. When, in 1975, the Literature Board first funded the FAWWA to organise country tours by writers, Williams travelled 2000 kilometres with Barbara York Main, speaking to 1200 students in secondary and primary schools from Bunbury to Esperance. This was the first in what became an ongoing project, with up to two major country tours funded each year by Healthways and the State government, through various funding bodies. In the early 1980s, she joined forces with Glen Phillips and Dr Brian Dibble to work on behalf of the FAWWA committee to persuade the Labor government of the day to buy Prichard’s house and set up the now flourishing Writers Centre and the Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation. When, in 1996, Williams received the Order of Australia in recognition of her services to literature, she joined Drake-Brockman, awarded an OBE in 1966, and Durack, made a Dame of the British Empire in 1977. Durack also received a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1989.

The seven writers who were new to this role brought very different backgrounds to the position. When poet, song-writer and dramatist, John Joseph Jones (1961 to 1963), became president in 1961, more established writers privately

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64 E. White, President’s Report, October 1977. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58, p. 1.
expressed their doubts as to his suitability. After his election, Durack felt strained by his constant need for support and guidance. Nevertheless, he expanded the FAWWA’s activities, bringing a new interest in script-writing, and providing the opportunity for readings and performances to take place at what Bill Dunstone described as ‘One of the most imaginative but relatively short-lived attempts to establish an indigenous theatre in recent years’. Jones built the Parkerville Amphitheatre, later known as the Seddon Vincent Memorial, in the hills suburb of Hovea, with the help of prisoners from Bartons Mill. In 1963, Jones was also the first Western Australian to hold the position of Federal president when the control of the Federal Council moved to this State. His inexperience, however, sparked an outburst within the committee, which is discussed in the section below, on political disagreements.

The election of a singer/song-writer as FAWWA president was in many ways the culmination of developments, begun in 1958, with the addition of three new composer members to the ranks: Dr Werther, James Penberthy and Dr Edgar Ford. At that time, apart from the Western Australian Music Teachers’ Association, founded in 1910, there existed no organisation for professional composers. Nor was there any financial support for expensive performances such as opera, beyond that provided by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the Adult Education Board with the Festival of Perth. Since his arrival in Perth in 1954, Penberthy had been in the forefront of musical endeavours in the State, through his work firstly with the Western Australian Ballet Company, between 1954 and 1974, and then the Western Australian Opera Company, from 1967. The constitution of the Fellowship of Australian Writers provided Penberthy with the pattern for the constitution of a Fellowship

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of Composers (WA), founded in late 1965.\textsuperscript{71} The composers called for librettists and poets to join, as well as writers. Already, in 1959, the musicians within the FAWWA membership had organised evenings of songs, ballads and poetry at the Skinner Galleries. These featured a song cycle composed by Dr Werther to poems by various members, interspersed with bush ballads sung by Ian Conochie, and selections of members’ poetry.\textsuperscript{72} In the mid-1960s, the FAWWA held a joint workshop, with nineteen writers and six composers meeting to combine words and music.\textsuperscript{73} The membership of these musicians and other artists such as Elizabeth Durack, Ivor Hunt and Elizabeth Blair Barber (Elizabeth Bunning), brought the Fellowship close to its early vision of drawing together creative people active in all the arts, as well as writers.\textsuperscript{74} It was a creative blend which had already produced results, especially involving composer James Penberthy. Writers such as Stuart and Serventy became close friends with Penberthy and his wife, Kira Bousloff. From the late 1950s onwards, the ballets \textit{Brolga}, \textit{Kooree and the Mists} and \textit{Woodara}, choreographed by Bousloff to Penberthy’s music, came into being as a result of these connections.\textsuperscript{75}

Dorothy Hewett (1967 to 1968), was one of the few presidents active within a literary milieu, having returned to Perth and university studies in 1960. She had married Merv Lilley, a communist and poet, but in 1968 Hewett left the Party following the Soviet Union’s crack-down in Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{76} During her presidency, in September 1968, the FAWWA protested to the Soviet Union after its suppression of Dubcek’s attempts to free Czechoslovakia from Soviet oppression.\textsuperscript{77} While president of the FAWWA, she was lecturer in the English department at the University of Western Australia.\textsuperscript{78} Her plays were being

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\textsuperscript{71} FAWWA Minutes, 7 March 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81. The Fellowship of Composers began in the eastern states in 1959, while the first meeting in Western Australia took place on 17 October 1965. Papers of Fellowship of Australian Composers, Western Australian Branch, SLWA 2462/2141A.

\textsuperscript{72} FAWWA Circular, May 1959, p.1. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/30.

\textsuperscript{73} FAWWA Minutes, 1 August and 5 September 1966. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.

\textsuperscript{74} Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) constitution. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/7.


\textsuperscript{76} \url{http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/hewett-dorothy} Accessed 13 December 2012.

\textsuperscript{77} FAWWA Minutes, 2 September 1968. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.

\textsuperscript{78} T. Kotai-Ewers. ‘Dorothy Hewett’ in the Celebrating Western Australia’s Creative Women Project, Dr R. Taylor, ed, unpublished.
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produced in eastern states theatres. In her tribute following Drake-Brockman’s
death, Hewett described being taken by her father to an FAWWA meeting when
she was only fifteen, and seeing Drake-Brockman, Casey, Prichard and Ewers.
She wrote of being ‘enthralled and hooked for ever’. Hewett remembered her
last conversation with Drake-Brockman, who talked about Hewett’s play ‘with
sensitivity and genuine involvement, this was an extremely vital woman’. 79

Gerald Glaskin was the author of sixteen books, mainly novels, by the time he
became president in 1968. Throughout the 1960s, however, he had been
travelling between Perth, Europe and Singapore, in his profession as stock-
broker. Copies of the Fellowship News for these years are spattered with
reports of his travels, the latest developments in his publishing career, and
advice to members about how to become more professional as writers. 80
Glaskin summed up his unique situation in his President’s Report for 1969, read
by acting president, Bert Vickers:

I have been away from Australia more years than I have lived here; and
although I have been a member of the Fellowship since, I think, 1946, I
have had no more than five years amongst you in almost... a quarter of a
century. 81

At the beginning of Glaskin's presidency, Durack, one of the writers who had
supported the younger man, noted in her diary: ‘Gerry doing a very elegant &
efficient job in the chair’. 82 Unfortunately, it ended on a sour note with his
sixteen-page President’s Report outlining his disappointment with the
experience of being president. He had not received the support he expected,
while ‘several of the members’ expected ‘to be able to invade the President’s or
any other Committee Members’, privacy and time of day’. 83 Glaskin had begun
his term with a list of projects he hoped to set in motion ‘to improve the
conditions of local writers where it was humanly possible’. He expressed
frustration with the ‘trivial matters’ that consumed the time at committee
meetings, preventing the discussion of more important items. It was a fair

79 Fellowship News, April 1968, p. 4.
80 For example, see Fellowship News, April 1962, p.1; June 1963, p.4; July 1964, p.2.
83 Comments from M. Durack’s diary quoted in this chapter show that she accepted such
interruptions as an integral part of occupying a senior position in the FAWWA.
criticism, but his presidency was punctuated by disagreements over a variety of committee matters.\textsuperscript{84} To the Geraldton Branch of the FAWWA, he explained his resignation as follows:

\begin{quote}
It is ironic that, now, all three Western Australian branches of the Fellowship have, in my opinion, behaved disgracefully over different matters so that I have found it necessary to resign from the Presidency, the Executive Committee and from the Fellowship itself...\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

There are no details as to what Glaskin considered disgraceful behaviour. In his paper on Glaskin, Jeremy Fisher explored his reputation among publishers as ‘a difficult author’ and his arguments with the Australian Society of Authors, from which body he also resigned.\textsuperscript{86} In spite of his frequent criticisms, no one could doubt Glaskin’s desire to obtain improved conditions for his fellow writers. His early resignation did not signal a lasting break with the FAWWA. Whenever he returned to Perth, Glaskin visited Tom Collins House, as in 1977, when he was listed among visitors including Rosemary Dobson, Colin Thiele and Professor Manning Clark.\textsuperscript{87}

In direct opposition to the requirement that Fellows must have published at least one volume, two presidents in the years that followed, Olive Pell (1969–1971) and Eleanor White (1975–1977) had little in the way of publications. A minor poet, Pell had published only a slim volume of poetry in 1964. However, she was a long-term Fellowship member who, the year before her presidency, had revived the previously popular Round Table, organising published writers to attend and advise members on their manuscripts.\textsuperscript{88} As president, Pell oversaw the publication of the FAWWA’s third anthology \textit{Sandgropers}, edited by Dorothy Hewett, supported by a State Government grant and published by the University of Western Australia Press.

\textsuperscript{84} G. Glaskin. President’s Report, 27 October 1969. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
\textsuperscript{85} G. Glaskin to E. Ford, president of the FAWWA Geraldton Branch, 17 October 1969. Glaskin papers MGLA MU.
\textsuperscript{87} E. White, President’s Report, October 1977. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{West Australian}, West Suburban Section, 10 April 1969.
White joined the FAWWA in 1954, having written several radio scripts. Over the years, she filled a variety of committee positions, including publicity officer, newsletter editor, committee member and president, proving to be an innovative organiser. In 1960, she returned from the USA inspired by the writing workshops she had attended at the University of California, and suggested running these, on her own initiative, using Tom Collins House as the base. By the mid-1970s, creative writing workshops had become an integral part of FAWWA activities, with members being asked to indicate in which genre they would like the Fellowship to offer workshops during the next year’s programme.\(^8^9\) Greenwood congratulated White on the good job she had made of the presidency, adding: ‘a thankless task at best of times and almost impossible under present repression of the Arts in Australia’.\(^9^0\) In the late 1970s, White turned to organising the annual Writers’ Week in the Perth Festival. Letters on file indicate that in 1978 she invited, unsuccessfully, Morris West, Thomas Kenneally and Patrick White to be part of Writers’ Week 1979. In refusing the invitation Patrick White explained: ‘I never go to Writers’ Weeks, Conferences, Seminars... I want to get on with my work, & all these functions are the great excuse not to do so’.\(^9^1\) In 1979, Eleanor White followed his example, and left the committee to concentrate on her own writing.\(^9^2\)

Donald Stuart (1973–1975) preceded White as president, and came well-qualified to the position, with four novels already published and three more launched during his presidency. Having travelled widely through the north of the State, he was ready to become part of the settled literary community. His presidency coincided with the Western Australian Fellowship taking the organising role for the Federal Council and so, in 1974 at the Adelaide Festival, Stuart was named Federal President of the FAW.\(^9^3\) Stuart found this interaction

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\(^9^0\) I. Greenwood to E. White, und. But from the context, Christmas 1977. Copy provided to the author by E. White’s daughter Lorelei Moreling.

\(^9^1\) P. White to E. White, 5 November 1978. Copy provided to the author by E. White’s daughter Lorelei Moreling.


\(^9^3\) S. Clarke. *In The Space Behind His Eyes*, 2006, p. 239.
with the other FAWs ‘both pleasant and necessary’ and in early 1975 he arranged for the Federal Council to meet in Perth. They were heady days with the Federal Council discussing ‘matters such as censorship, copying, PLR, copyright, and negotiations with the Literature Board’.94

One of the youngest FAWWA presidents, poet Glen Phillips (1977–1979) heralded a new era for the Fellowship. With the exception of Williams, who returned for another term as president from 1979 to 1981, the decade from 1977 to 1987 would see the FAWWA led by three academic writers in a pattern which reflected the acceptance of Australian literature by the universities. Phillips lectured at Graylands Teachers College, moving later to Mt Lawley College of Advanced Education, which in 1991 became Edith Cowan University. As described in Chapter Six Phillips began the Young Writers Fellowship in 1979, and worked with Williams to establish the Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation and Writers Centre in 1985.95

As younger writers joined the FAWWA during these decades, they were led by younger presidents with adventurous ideas of ways in which the organisation could take advantage of the increased funding for writers, and of new ways in which to promote their writings. The 1970s, in particular, were an exciting time for writers and other artists. Not all the decisions made by these presidents, however, were well-advised. In particular during the 1960s three incidents within the FAWWA threaten to destabilise the group once more.

Political differences

*everyone now nervous about involving Fellowship in political disputes*96

The Cold War had dominated Australian politics in the 1950s, however its impact was still felt in the early 1960s. Literature had been used as a political tool, with the Communist Party sponsoring Realist Writers Groups throughout

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95 The other academics were Dr Brian Dibble and Professor Don Grant, both from the newly-established Western Australian Institute of Technology, now Curtin University. Grant was president from 1981 to 1982 and 1984 to 1986, Dibble from 1982 to 1984 with Phillips president again from 1986 to 1988.
the country.\textsuperscript{97} With the Perth Realist Writers Group only founded in 1960, the relationship between literature and radical politics was still very alive in these years when internal conflict broke out again in the FAWWA. This intertwining of politics and literature was clearly illustrated Australia-wide by the ideological focus underlying the three major literary journals of the era, in spite of changes in format and frequency of publication since their beginnings. Clem Christesen continued as editor of \textit{Meanjin}, a position he held from its beginnings in 1940, handing over to Jim Davidson at the end of 1974.\textsuperscript{98} In later years, Christesen described one of his objectives in establishing the journal as being to ‘make clear the connection between literature and politics’.\textsuperscript{99} His support for left-wing ideals saw him often wrongly accused of being a communist. \textit{Overland}, too, continued, with its founding editor Stephen Murray-Smith, from 1954 until his death in 1988. Although it severed connections with \textit{Realist Writer} after the Hungarian revolution in 1956, when, like many other artists, Murray-Smith left the Communist Party, \textit{Overland} maintained its purpose of developing ‘a radical tradition, including within that the Marxist tradition’ and participating in ‘polemics against the Right’, as elucidated by co-founder Ian Turner.\textsuperscript{100} Initially launched to counteract the influence of \textit{Meanjin}, on the other extreme of the political spectrum, \textit{Quadrant} first appeared in 1950, edited by James McAuley. \textit{Quadrant} was sponsored by the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, an organisation backed by the international Congress for Cultural Freedom, established to combat the perceived threat of communism. Only in 1967 was it revealed that the Congress of Cultural Freedom had been underwritten by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in a cultural programme intended to counteract the influence communism was perceived to have in cultural activities.\textsuperscript{101} Twenty years after this, McAuley wrote of the link with the

\textsuperscript{97} J. McLaren. \textit{Writing in Hope and Fear: Literature as Politics in Post-War Australia}. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 33. \\
\textsuperscript{98} D. Campisi. 'Little Magazines, Great Divides' in \textit{Meanjin} Vol. 63, No. 1, 2004, pp. 159 & 164. \\
\textsuperscript{100} W. Wilde, J. Hooton, B. Andrews, eds. \textit{The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature}, 1994, p. 596. \\
Association for Cultural Freedom but denied any ‘external manipulation’ by organisations such as the Intelligence Agency.\textsuperscript{102}

Before the birth in Australia of literary journals such as \textit{Meanjin} and \textit{Overland}, the Communist Party had initiated another movement, the Australian Peace Council, described by its organising secretary, Ian Turner, as having originated at ‘a top secret meeting of party members and close sympathisers in Melbourne in 1949’.\textsuperscript{103} In the early 1960s, Australia was still fraught with Cold War tensions. Connections with the Australian Peace Council were enough to attract the accusation of being a communist, an accusation frequently levelled at universities and intellectuals in those years which, in McLaren’s words, were typified by ‘intellectual hatreds and delusive fantasy’.\textsuperscript{104} Three times, during the 1960s, the Western Australian Division of the Australian Peace Council was the catalyst for disputes within the FAWWA. Comments about these events, by FAWWA members, illustrate the full gamut of political opinions contained within the microcosm of the Fellowship, in a reflection of those expressed within the macrocosm of Australian society.

In May 1960, the \textit{Fellowship News} included an invitation to all members to attend a dinner organized by the Western Australian Division of the Australian Peace Council, at which Professor Murdoch would present Prichard with the Joliot-Curie Medal for ‘outstanding work for peace’. Ewers immediately wrote to then president Durack asking if the Fellowship’s opinion had been sought on this event, and objecting to the inference that the FAWWA was involved with the Australian Peace Council in organising the dinner, going on to express his indignation at the claim that Prichard had in fact worked for peace.\textsuperscript{105} Ewers concluded with a sentence which clarifies his reactions to the political tensions within the FAWWA since its beginnings.

\textsuperscript{103} I. Turner, cited in J. McLaren, \textit{Writing in Hope and Fear}, 1996, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{104} J. McLaren. \textit{Writing in Hope and Fear}, 1996, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{105} J. K. Ewers to M. Durack, 24 May 1960. Ewers quoted Prichard’s statement that the Hungarian revolution of 1956 had been ‘a capitalist plot to overthrow communism in Hungary’. Having personal connections with Hungarians in Perth Ewers drew on his knowledge of the event to describe it as ‘an uprising of Hungarian communists to throw off the Russian domination of their country’. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/33.
From time to time, during my 21 years on the Executive, I have seen how attempts have been made to use the Fellowship for other purposes. I had hoped this had ended but apparently it has not.

In her diary, Durack wrote of the dilemma she faced in making a choice between such an inference and the failure to honour a revered writer, especially considering Murdoch’s involvement, which Ewers saw as being ‘a personal matter’.

J. K. Ewers upset about invitation to Fellowship circulated through monthly circular re KSP’s dinner & Currie Prize... See his point but don’t see how we cld [sic] ignore it as honour to foundation & life members. He says it’s political not literary.\(^{106}\)

Subsequent issues of the *Fellowship News* made no reference to the dinner, nor was it discussed in committee meetings. Some months later, the FAWWA welcomed the first Soviet writers to visit the State, Alexei Surkov, well-known in Russia as a poet and the Secretary of the Soviet Writers’ Union and the English translator of the Writers’ Union, Oksana Krugerskaya.\(^{107}\)

Three years later, discord erupted again within the committee when John Joseph Jones as current FAWWA president accepted the Western Australian Division of the Australian Peace Council’s invitation to present Prichard with an 80th birthday gift at a function they were organising in her honour. Once again there is little mention of this in FAWWA minutes, but writers including Prichard herself have left their own thoughts on the matter.

Quite a storm in a tea-cup arose here, when John Clements issued an invitation for John Joseph-Jones, President of the Fellowship of WA (and of the Federal Council, as it’s meeting here this year) to present me with the record of 2 stories read for the benefit of Peace Council funds at a barbecue to be held on March 16. J.J. [sic] it seems, agreed to make the presentation, before consulting executive of the local Fellowship – a reactionary bunch. He, naturally, expected that there wd [sic] be no opposition. But, there was.\(^{108}\)

Alix Hasluck reported the discussions to Drake-Brockman in a very different tone.

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\(^{107}\) FAWWA Minutes, 9 August 1960. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.

\(^{108}\) K. S. Prichard to J. Lindsay, 23 March 1963. Prichard papers NLA 18/17/10.
We had an Extraordinary Council meeting of FAW last Tuesday. You
would have been ropable. Silly John Jones had gone & accepted a
proposal of the Peace Council to present Katharine Susannah with a
present for her birthday, as President of the FS [sic]. Most of us didn’t
want to be connected in any way with the project & demanded to know
why they couldn’t make their own presentation. John kept saying they
were trying to do him honour. He didn’t see he was being made a sucker
of. Finally we moved that all states vote on whether he should do it (at
this stage we didn’t know he’d accepted) & a telegram was sent off.\footnote{A. Hasluck to H. Drake-Brockman, 10 March 1963. Drake-Brockman papers NLA 1634/3/10.}

As Jones had already accepted the invitation, it seemed to be a \textit{fait accompli}. Nevertheless, a vote was requested from the committees of the other state branches, as was appropriate, considering that Jones was also Federal president at the time. The vote was three for and three against. Although Prichard was upset by the FAWWA committee’s action, railing against how ‘mean-spirited’ they were, she realised that, as on occasions when the Fellowship had opposed her in the past, it was not a personal attack on her.

At the same time it was suggested that the Fellowship would like to
give a party in recognition of my 80th birthday, later in the year. So, it
seems, that the opposition was not to me personally, but to support of a
function in aid of the Peace Council.\footnote{K. S. Prichard to Jack Lindsay, 23 March 1963. Prichard papers NLA 18/1710.}

There is no sign of Prichard achieving her suggestion to Lindsay that the
Sydney FAW might intervene to ensure that support for the peace movement
should be introduced to all FAWs ‘as a non-political matter of vital importance to
writers’. The FAWWA did, however hold its own celebration of Prichard’s
birthday and received a charming letter of thanks with no hint of the earlier
\textit{contrettemps}.

It was so kind of everybody to make this gesture. I have simply been
overwhelmed by all the good-will and kindness shown to me. If my
literary work has been of value to fellow writers, I am grateful, for this
opportunity to tell them how thrilled I have been by the splendid
contributions to Australian literature made by many of our members. May
they all live to be eighty, and let us celebrate for them, as charmingly as
they have done for me.\footnote{K. S. Prichard to FAWWA, 2 January 1964. FAWWA Scrapbook. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/85.}

In 1965, disagreement again broke out when Vickers was elected president of
the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) and president of the Peace Council at
the same time. As vice-president, Vickers had taken over as acting president when Serventy resigned in May 1965. Vickers must have expected the political tensions to have eased by the time he moved into the full position of president, because he accepted the same position with the Western Australian Division of the Australian Peace Council. Since the 1940s, Vickers had contributed to the *Australian Peace Review* and written leaflets for the Peace Council.\textsuperscript{112}

Vickers relayed his own version of the event to Williams, saying that ‘an attempted witch-hunt’ broke out, with ‘the dissidents’ assuming that he was a communist when the appointment to the Peace Council was announced. They subsequently made the ‘committee meetings of the FAWWA almost unworkable’.\textsuperscript{113} Although he was one of Prichard’s long-time friends, Vickers was never a member of the Communist Party, as Prichard herself confirmed in a letter to Igor Volkov, First Secretary of Cultural Affairs Soviet Embassy in Canberra. She wrote: ‘Mr Vickers is not a comrade and I do not discuss intimate affairs with him’.\textsuperscript{114} When Vickers challenged his opponents on the committee they turned the attack onto Greenwood, on the grounds of her work for the Lord Mayor’s ‘Sheepskins for Russia’ campaign. This was an ironic change of tactic considering that, as already discussed, Greenwood was actually a member of the Communist Party but denied it all her life.\textsuperscript{115} Some members of the committee then proposed the banning of communists from membership of the FAWWA, an attempt that was soundly defeated.\textsuperscript{116}

This impasse was solved only when Vickers withdrew from the position with the Peace Council. Vickers had often spoken of all that the Fellowship of Writers meant to him, feelings confirmed by his second wife when she spoke with FAWWA publicity officer, Pattie Watts:

\textsuperscript{112} Copies in Vickers papers BL 1479/4682A/11, 30 and 41.
\textsuperscript{114} K. Prichard to I. Volkov, First Secretary of Cultural Affairs Soviet Embassy, Canberra, 2 February 1968. Prichard papers NLA Box 18 Folder 22.
\textsuperscript{116} J. Williams. ‘The Fellowship in Western Australia’, 1989, p. 178.
'The Fellowship meant so much to Bert coming as he did from class-rigid England where one was born into one class and expected to stay there for life'.

This sense of gratitude no doubt lay behind his resignation from the position of president of the Peace Council rather than the FAWWA.

In early 1968, the FAWWA had an opportunity to express clearly its position on politics, in its reaction to the Soviet crack-down in Czechoslovakia when Alexander Dubcek attempted to liberalise that country’s communist government. In a letter of protest to the Soviet government, the FAWWA joined P.E.N. International and the other state branches of the Fellowship in deploiring the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, while at the same time rejecting any involvement with politics. The letter attributed this response on behalf of writers to literary concerns, namely the interaction developed in recent years between Western Australian and Soviet writers. The FAWWA called for the protection of the 'cultural freedom of Czechoslovakian writers and artists' while nevertheless promising to maintain the friendly connection developed since 1960 with the Soviet Writers Union.

Tom Collins House in a time of change
... is a writers' centre and should be used as such

The 1960s were years of change for Tom Collins House much as they were for other parts of the FAWWA. Although Tom Collins House was not officially called a writers’ centre, that is the way the writers active there during this decade felt about it. In March 1964, the committee discussed an invitation to the FAWWA president to attend a poetry reading at a gathering of a new writing group, West Coast Writers. FAWWA members expressed the hope that they might arrange a joint discussion for members of both organisations, meeting at Tom Collins House, which Buddee had foreseen would eventually become ‘a centre of

118 FAWWA Minutes, 2 September 1968. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
literary life in Western Australia.\textsuperscript{120} FAWWA papers contain no record of the outcome of this suggestion.

The enlargement of the lawn area, due to pressure of numbers at functions, prepared the house for the extra use to be made of it in the 1960s. Nicholas Hasluck’s diary entry, after the evening of members’ readings in November 1967, highlighted one of the shortcomings of the house. He wrote of ‘reading at the centre rounded table aided by the light of a bulb shaded by a bizarre straw hat’.\textsuperscript{121} While the house abounded with ambiance, conditions were far from adequate for public performance, or being able to read one’s own work.\textsuperscript{122}

Changes were made, however, in how much the Fellowship used the space, and how that space could be better adapted to accommodate larger numbers. At the same time, the committee debated whether it should be occupied by a caretaker in return for ongoing maintenance or by rent-paying tenants. Underlying these questions was the perpetual concern of how a relatively small body of people could generate the funds necessary to maintain a wooden house given the repeated refusal by governing bodies to assist with the care of what was essentially a national monument.

The constraints of Tom Collins House

\textit{Members overflowed into the passage}\textsuperscript{123}

A higher public profile for the arts no doubt provided the stimulus for the Fellowship’s need, in the latter part of the 1960s, for a more regular meeting space, with larger areas than those originally provided by Tom Collins House when it was deeded to the Fellowship in 1949. As in previous years, only alternative meetings took place at the house. Its main use was for festive occasions such as Prichard’s 80\textsuperscript{th} birthday in December 1963.\textsuperscript{124} Visiting writers were entertained there by the Fellowship. In August 1962, Colin Thiele, then president of the FAW(SA), not only ‘delighted’ members but photographed the House in order to report back to his fellow writers in South Australia. Although

\textsuperscript{120} P. Buddee addressing guests at the opening of Tom Collins House, 29 September 1949. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/30.
\textsuperscript{121} N. Hasluck. Diary entry, 27 November 1967. Copy provided to the author by N. Hasluck, 3 July 2011.
\textsuperscript{122} The inadequate lighting was only improved after the house was relocated in 1996.
\textsuperscript{123} Fellowship News, July 1962, p.3.
\textsuperscript{124} Fellowship News, November 1963, p.1.
Thiele's visit was in August, the *Fellowship News* noted that the gathering took place ‘in the sun on the lawn’.\(^{125}\) Tom Collins House had already become the setting for the Fellowship’s annual social event, or Corroboree. Taking place in February or March, it could utilise the attractive garden setting. In February 1958, the secretary noted: ‘Approximately 100 people attended — a warm night helped make this a most successful outdoor function’.\(^{126}\)

A move at the Annual General Meeting in 1966 to hold all future meetings at the house is a clear indication of the degree to which FAWWA members had accepted Tom Collins House as the home of the Fellowship. Vickers pointed out that, during the year, meetings at the house had been better attended than those held elsewhere. He attributed this, in part, to the ease of parking, and in part to atmosphere, which no doubt again reflected the growing sense of ownership. Tom Collins House may not have been called a writers’ centre, but to all intents and purposes, during this decade, it began to fulfil this function in the Western Australian community.

Increased use of the house strained the space offered by a worker’s cottage consisting of two main rooms on either side of a central passage. The committee discussed several possibilities, before agreeing to a suggestion by Glaskin, based on a meeting room he had seen in Holland, where folding doors created a flexible use of space. The individual jarrah doors, featuring Mattie Furphy’s copper work, could be hinged to form such a feature. By early 1967, ideas had formalised sufficiently to request the Honorary Architect Marshall Clifton to draw up plans for the alterations. Ewers, who still maintained an active interest in the care of the house, outlined the plans to then president Durack. The internal walls of both front rooms would be removed, thus forming one large room that included the passage space. The caretaker’s section of the house would be closed off, with a door at the end of what had been the passage. To pay for this work, Ewers suggested raising debentures, to be paid off in three or five years.\(^{127}\) Instead, it was agreed to call for a donation of £4 from members.

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\(^{125}\) *Fellowship News*, August 1962, p.2.


By the August 1967 meeting, the Fellowship had received £434, and only the woodwork remained to be completed.\textsuperscript{128} At the Annual General Meeting, Durack reported that the alterations were completed, ‘with a minimum expense and a minimum upsettment \textit{[sic]} of the plan of the house.’\textsuperscript{129}

Perhaps buoyed by the success of these major alterations, the Fellowship undertook more building alterations in the following year. The catalyst for these further changes was the decision to advertise for tenants, who would pay rent. The prospect of a regular income no doubt increased the committee’s willingness to make changes, which would improve the comfort of, and facilities for, those tenants. Extending the rear wall westward by six feet to enlarge the back vestibule would provide a larger living area for the caretaker/tenants, and provide an internal toilet. A new gas stove and hot water system were installed in the kitchen. The estimated cost was $2300.\textsuperscript{130} That the Fellowship undertook these alterations, and incurred a bank loan, reflects a number of factors. Firstly, a sense of satisfaction with the effects of the previous alterations. With most meetings now held at Tom Collins House, the organisation saved on rental expenses, while members could enjoy the more appealing atmosphere of a writer’s house. Possibly there was a sense of relief at the apparent ease with which funds had been raised for the 1967 changes. Younger committee members and a general sense of great affluence may well have further encouraged the committee to carry out the extensions.

Since the bequest of Tom Collins House in 1949, the Fellowship had relied on a live-in caretaker to oversee its daily upkeep, beginning with the elderly Mollie Skinner. From 1955 until 1968, a retired couple, Mr and Mrs Walker, cared for the house and grounds impeccably, and welcomed visitors to the House out of meeting hours, both requirements of their position as caretakers. When the couple ended their tenancy in June 1968, the Fellowship decided to change to a tenancy agreement requiring payment of a small weekly rent.\textsuperscript{131} In the previous

\textsuperscript{128} FAWWA Minutes, 3 August 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{129} M. Durack. President’s Report, 30 October 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
\textsuperscript{130} FAWWA Minutes, 5 August 1968. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\textsuperscript{131} FAWWA Minutes, 1 April 1968. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
year the FAWWA had again approached the Town Clerk of Cottesloe Town Council seeking, not just exemption from future rates but also:

possibly the remittance of those rates paid since the foundation of the house as a memorial in 1949.... As you will readily understand the house has been a continual financial drain on Fellowship funds which might otherwise have been used for the promotion of literary projects.\textsuperscript{132}

New tenants were not chosen until early 1969, and provided yet another variation on previous arrangements, when FAWWA member, emerging poet Andrew Burke and his young wife Pixie, became the new tenants in March 1969. They soon provided Tom Collins House with yet another ‘first’ when their son, Miles, was born.\textsuperscript{133} Some months after they moved in, Burke told reporters that it was ‘easy to reel off poems in this house’.\textsuperscript{134}

Ironically, just as the FAWWA had come to consider Tom Collins House as its active headquarters and to hold all meetings there, the house came under threat from the State government’s road plans. Whereas the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority favoured using Marmion Street in Cottesloe as a future highway to relieve heavy traffic along Servetus Street, the government was listening favourably to the suggestion of the Cottesloe Council that Servetus Street should be the route, although it necessitated major levelling works and the resumption of 41 houses on the west side of the street. These included Tom Collins House, so the FAWWA immediately went into battle. A Save Tom Collins House sub-committee, consisting of Pattie Watts, Joyce Walker and Vic Williams, applied to the National Trust for classification of the house as a literary memorial, and wrote to a wide range of Australians including writers, FAW branches, the Literature Board, the Australian Society of Authors, politicians, university lecturers and literary magazines.\textsuperscript{135} Supportive replies came from, among others, the Federal Minister for Environment and Conservation, Dr Cass, and the Chairman of the Literature Board of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[132] M. Durack to D. Hill, Town Clerk of Cottesloe, 6 May 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/52.
\item[133] The wheel came full circle in the mid-1990s when Miles and Andrew Burke became joint editors of the Fellowship’s monthly magazine \textit{Western Word}. Andrew became FAWWA president in 1999.
\item[134] \textit{Daily News}, 16 June 1969.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The house is perhaps the most unusual and most important memorial in our literary history; and anything your government could do to save it would be gratefully acknowledged by thousands of Australians. 

Connections were made with the Swanbourne Residents’ Group, which was also fighting against the proposed Servetus Street route. Williams undertook to edit a booklet titled *Joseph Furphy and his House*, to be compiled with the help of other members to mark the 130th anniversary of Furphy’s birth.

Further opposition to the house, and therefore to the FAWWA itself, came in 1976, when historian and academic Leslie Marchant penned an article that appeared in the *Sunday Times* headed ‘It’s All a Furphy’, in which he claimed Furphy had actually lived on the corner of Marmion and Clement Streets in Cottesloe. This would have made the Marmion Street proposal for the highway route undesirable, and Servetus Street the obvious choice. Marchant had researched Furphy’s letters, title deeds and the postal directories; however he was misled by several idiosyncrasies appearing in these sources. As is clear from the collection of Furphy’s letters, published in 1995, and edited by John Barnes and Lois Hoffman, Furphy often failed to date letters or omitted the year of writing. He also kept his name listed at both Marmion and Servetus Streets, and all Furphy houses were registered in the names of the wives rather than the husbands. Added to this were the prevarications of the three families, that first saw them renting in Fremantle, then building three ‘skillions’ in Marmion Street. Subsequently, two families planned to move back to Fremantle before finally deciding to build in Servetus Street, while the third family, Samuel and his wife Mattie, built a larger home on the three original Marmion Street blocks. This adds up to a confusing picture. Marchant made one major error of interpretation, however. Quoting Furphy’s letter: ‘with the revolving light of

138 FAWWA Minutes, 10 September 1973. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
Rottnest Island clearly visible every night from the back door of the house’ he assumes this would have been impossible from Servetus Street. In fact, the house in Marmion Street faced west, so at the back door Furphy would have been looking east. The Servetus Street house had the opposite alignment with the back door facing west. When Furphy lived there, few other houses existed, and hence few lights would have competed with the lighthouse no matter the distance. In May 1977, the National Heritage Commission informed the FAWWA that the house was being nominated for registration on the National Estate. This confirmation of the heritage value of Tom Collins House strengthened the Fellowship’s hopes that they would find support for their fight to ensure its safety.

Writers in the eastern states, however, spread the Marchant assumption, Robert Drewe mistakenly writing that the local historians who belonged to the FAWWA had ‘been reduced to embarrassed silence’. In fact the Fellowship leapt to the defence of its claim, that Furphy had built and lived in what became Tom Collins House. The Jean Lang archives at Tom Collins House contain copies of Marchant’s article, including Lang’s hand-written comments. On 25 February 1977, Furphy’s grand-daughter, Emily Main, provided a signed declaration that the writer had ‘designed the wooden building himself, constructing sections of the wooden framework on the ground’ and ‘Joseph and Leonie lived in this house until his death on September the 13th 1912’. Lang, who later became the FAWWA’s archivist and herself was briefly married to one of Furphy’s grandsons, wrote At the Toss of a Coin: Joseph Furphy: the Western Link, a definitive account of Furphy’s years in Western Australia. In 1996, Tom Collins House was relocated, approximately one kilometre away, in the bushland that Furphy had known so well. As the central house in the Allen Park Heritage Precinct, it is now situated away from traffic in an area filled with birdsong, more conducive to writing.

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140 J. Lang to J. Barnes, 4 October 1984. JLA TCH.
143 J. Lang to L. Adler, editor Australian Book Review, 5 April 1988, replying to an article in that magazine. JLA TCH. Also J. Lang. At the Toss of a Coin, 1987, pp. 9–10. The original signed declaration is held in the TCH Archives.
Conclusion

During these two decades, the FAWWA underwent both internal changes and external challenges which affected its potency and its ability to represent all Western Australian writers. The losses of writers such as Casey, Drake-Brockman and Ewers, while they were all still active within the organisation and a source of stability and advice for younger writers, diminished the potency of the Fellowship. At the same time, the loss of these older writers opened the way for younger members to prove themselves, although placing extra weight on Durack’s shoulders, as she sought to fill the gap they had left. The frequent political disagreements of earlier years still erupted, but with less vehemence, as society’s views became less intensely polarised, and the organisation reinforced its statement that the FAWWA was first and foremost concerned with writers and writing. The election of communist writers, such as Hewett (1967) and Williams (1971), as presidents demonstrated effectively the change in attitudes to politics, as the FAWWA moved into the more relaxed 1970s. If tensions over political adherence were minimised during these last ten years of the period under consideration, apprehension regarding the future of Tom Collins House and anger over the questioning of its legitimacy as a memorial to Joseph Furphy, inflamed members and led them to expend a great deal of energy to defend their headquarters.

These internal changes prepared the Fellowship for the changes that lay ahead in the 1970s. The presence of younger members, and especially presidents, encouraged the rethinking of some of the traditional ways for the FAWWA members to work to achieve the body’s aims. This led to a willingness to adopt new ideas for ways to support the individual writer. FAWWA included creative writing workshops in the program, and utilised increased arts funding to reach out into country areas through tours, which placed writers in schools and libraries, in centres that were both large and small. Exchanges with writers in other states increased through the more frequent Commonwealth Literary Fund’s lecture tours, attendance at federal FAW council meetings, and improved opportunities to travel to events such as the Adelaide Writers Week. At the same time, the FAWWA, through its regional vice-presidents, was
working with the newly-established Australian Society of Authors. In this way, the FAWWA retained a voice in lobbying on behalf of writers’ professional interests, even though this was officially the province of the Society of Authors. With the extra arts funding available, new bodies came into existence, such as the Fremantle Arts Centre, which threatened to rival the Fellowship for its position as the major supporter of the State’s writers. The acceptance of Australian literature for study in the tertiary institutions created another challenger. Both the Fremantle Centre and universities, unlike the FAWWA, had core funding to provide administrative support and a marketing infrastructure.

Chapter Eight explores the growth of the arts in Western Australia, as expressed through the journal *Artlook*, before continuing to a closer study of the growing cultural infrastructure. This developed when all levels of government demonstrated a willingness to assume some responsibility for promoting the arts. The chapter outlines the development of organisations that came into being, supported by local and State government, such as the Fremantle Arts Centre; those that arose under the aegis of the State government, including the Arts Advisory Council and its different incarnations; and the Western Australian Arts Council, as well as federally fostered organisations such as the Arts Council of Australia, the Australian Society of Authors, and the National Book Council. A study of these bodies leads to a discussion of the increasing professionalism in the arts, and how that affected the purely volunteer-based Fellowship. The chapter also discusses the FAWWA’s changing relationship with the University of W.A, just when Australian literature became an accepted part of university studies. These investigations will show that, whereas the developments in Australia’s arts world in these years represented the realisation of many of the FAWWA’s most important goals, their existence would, paradoxically, lead to an overshadowing of the organisation’s importance in Australia’s literary world.
Chapter Eight

Negotiating the Arts Labyrinth

The intellectual climate now is very different, obviously, and the infrastructure …is vast by comparison…¹

The 1970s were years of dramatic change in Australia’s artistic world. A combination of increased government patronage and the birth of new cultural structures, with their growing emphasis on professionalism in the arts, transformed the environment within which the FAWWA operated.² Formerly, new bodies arose out of the artistic community, whether dedicated to a specific art form or drawing together diverse areas of the arts. Increasingly, however, new organisations were developed as a result of government initiative at both state and federal levels. At the same time, universities accepted Australian literature as a component of tertiary level study. Such developments opened new avenues for the FAWWA, however the advances in the arts also brought challenges. For the first time in its thirty years, the FAWWA was no longer the sole repository of expertise on Australian literature in the State. The University of Western Australia, the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, together with organisations such as the Fremantle Arts Centre, increasingly promoted creative writing and the study of Australian literature, each working to establish its own ‘fiefdom’.³ Such institutions could access more substantial funds than those available to

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³ N. Hasluck, interviewed by the author. Claremont, W.A. 10 July 2012.
the Fellowship, were supported by full-time administrative staff and offered the promise of professional training. The task for the FAWWA, in the 1970s, was to develop working relationships with these bodies, especially the tertiary institutions, some of whose lecturers were writers and Fellowship members. This chapter explores the growth of cultural organisations in the 1970s and the FAWWA’s interaction with them. It will show that subsequent committees succeeding in working closely with such bodies as the Australian Society of Authors, the State-based Cultural Development Council and the Literature Board of the Australia Council. It will be found, however, that as more centralised bodies were established, like the National Book Council, the relationship was less successful. The chapter will also explore factors that affected the Fellowship’s working connection with the University of Western Australia.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, a movement grew which favoured increasing rapprochement between creative individuals. The other art forms developed umbrella bodies similar to the Australian Society for Authors. They formalised networks between groups of artists previously working in isolation. The establishment of the Craft Association, combining the different crafts, typified such a development. The first Craft Association in Sydney and the World Crafts Council were both established in 1964. The Western Australian Craft Association was founded in 1968, and by 1971 each state had its own Craft Association. With one body to speak for all the different expressions of craft activity, the individual artist’s work could achieve a much higher profile. The existence of such bodies further emphasised the need for professionalism in the arts, which had been an aim of groups such as the FAW since the 1930s. To be truly professional, sections of the writing community needed their own representative organisation and the FAWWA was involved in the early stages of two such bodies, the Children’s Book Council and the Oral History Association.

Despite the fact that the Children’s Book Council continued to operate in other states, no group had existed to promote writing for children in this State since the original Western Australian Council collapsed in 1953. In 1975, while visiting

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Canberra and Adelaide, Donald Stuart met officers from the Children’s Book Council in each state. On his return, the FAWWA committee instigated an inaugural meeting to establish a revitalised Council. The following month, the new body presented its first Children’s Book Week, featuring Sydney editor Anne Barr Ingram, whose visit was supported by the Literature Board. The Fellowship, as an organisation, did not continue an active involvement in Children’s Book Week. Instead it encouraged the participation of individual members, and promoted events in its newsletter. In 1978, the Fellowship News announced that the week, based on the theme ‘Blast off with Books!’, featuring FAWWA members Trevor Todd, Jean Lang, Paul Buddee, Dafne Bidwell-Jones and Donald Stuart, had attracted ‘large crowds’.

In 1978, FAWWA member, Jean Teasdale, convened the Oral History Association. Already active in other states, the Association aimed to serve both historians and writers by preserving the memories of notable Western Australians for the future. The FAWWA supported the Association by sending historian Charles Staples to the first meetings as its representative. The encouragement to record interviews resulted in a research resource that proved important for Western Australian historians, and creative writers seeking a factual basis for their fiction.

The development which most clearly exemplified the move to create coordinating bodies that represented a broad sweep of Perth’s arts world was the establishment, in 1968, of the Cultural Development Council. The founders included critic and publicist Helen Weller, broadcaster John Harper-Nelson, potter Meg Sheen, and founder of Children’s Activities Time Society (CATS) Joan Pope, together with business men Paul Canet and John Tinley. The Council aimed to ‘foster and develop public interest in the arts’ with a specific goal of bringing multi-art activities to the community. By 1973, it had a

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6 The meeting was held on the 20 June 1975. D. Stuart. President’s Report, 27 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58. Also report on the first meeting. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(2).
7 *Fellowship News*, July 1975, pp. 4–5. Volume and number details were not recorded on the newsletter until 1978.
membership of 92 cultural groups and 197 individuals. The aims of this Council closely resembled those of the Cultural Council proposed by the FAWWA in 1944. This more recent body, however, succeeded where the earlier one did not, for two main reasons. Firstly, the initiative had come from a wider base of Perth’s artistic community, thus ensuring a greater degree of support and involvement. Secondly, it was a time which encouraged such over-arching organisations, and understood the need for an entrepreneurial approach to presenting the arts. The Cultural Development Council, with an emphasis on crafts and the performing arts, supported activities such as the Hyde Park Holiday, WA Week activities and the State Drama Festival. The FAWWA was a member organisation of the Council, occasionally advertising an event in the Digest. In December 1974, the Digest became Artlook, a weightier publication edited by Helen Weller. Its contents included all the arts, with FAWWA members contributing articles on Fellowship events, providing a welcome new avenue for publicity. Since the Cultural Development Council sought to advise government on the needs of individual artists and cultural organisations, however, its birth created another level of appeal between government and individual bodies such as the FAWWA, effectively distancing them from the decision-making centre. The Council received modest government support and shared conveniently central headquarters, with the Children’s Activities Time Society in Museum Street.

Concurrent with the Cultural Development Council, a Western Australian Arts Advisory Council acted to advise the State Government on the arts. By 1973, planning was underway to create a statutory body, the Arts Council of Western Australia, which would replace the Arts Advisory Board. Such a formalised body would then be able to receive state funding as occurred in other states, where

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10 CDC digest, Vol. 1 No. 4. November 1973, corrected in pencil to December, p. 1
11 ‘Are you taking advantage of us?’, CDC Digest, Vol. 2 No. 4, June 1974, p. 3. Also general survey of the magazine from September 1973 to November 1974. Originally called the Hyde Par Holyday as it took place on the then under-utilised Long Weekend of Australia Day, it was renamed the Hyde Park Festival and held at a later date in summer, after the CDC ceased to operate. In 1976 CDC shared space in Museum Street, Perth, rented by Children’s Activities Time Society.
Arts Councils existed and received funding from both state and federal governments.\textsuperscript{14}

WA Arts Council funding for the FAWWA

... this grant is as timely as it is welcome\textsuperscript{15}

A volunteer-based organisation such as the Fellowship, without full-time staff, was at a disadvantage when dealing with the demands of funding bodies. In 1970, the first year of Western Australian Arts Council funding, questions were asked as to why the FAWWA received nothing. In her President’s Report that year, Olive Pell revealed that no-one had realised that grant applications were due, or perhaps even, that one was needed. She expressed the hope that, in future, the FAWWA would always know the application date and would apply.\textsuperscript{16}

The fact that the Fellowship received repeated funding after that date shows that her hopes were realised, and that the Fellowship never made the same mistake again.

These requests were always relatively modest. The Arts Advisory Board granted $100 in 1972 and $200 in 1973, mainly for costs associated with the monthly newsletter.\textsuperscript{17} In 1973, the FAWWA’s Albany and Geraldton Branches each received $100. In September 1975, the Arts Council gave the Fellowship ‘grant-in-aid’ of $500, to help with production and distribution costs for the newsletter, and organising public readings.\textsuperscript{18} While the Fellowship had been quick to overcome the hurdle it faced in 1970, these grants presented only a small proportion of the total funding. When, in December 1976, the FAWWA received its requested $500 the total grants allocation was $1,114,000, of which $489,000 was set aside for the major performing companies.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} CDC digest, unnumbered, October 1973 (date handwritten on copy), p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Fellowship News, October 1975, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{16} O. Pell. President’s Report, 26 October 1970. FAWWA papers TCHA.
\item \textsuperscript{17} J. Williams. President’s Report, 29 October 1973. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Murray Edmond, WA Arts Council to FAWWA, 17 September 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/20(3).
\item \textsuperscript{19} Artlook, Vol. 2 No. 11, December 1976, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
A new era in federal support for the arts

*The climate has never been so good for the development of Australian writers*\(^{20}\)

The expansion of a federal infrastructure to support the arts signalled major change for Australia’s literary scene in general, and the Fellowship in particular. It began in 1967, when the Prime Minister Harold Holt established the Australian Council for the Arts, a body to be linked with the Prime Minister’s Department, in order to advise the government and distribute funding to the arts nationwide.\(^{21}\) In 1973, this evolved into the Australia Council for the Arts, when Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, removed the government control of arts funding by creating a new Council, with seven Boards overseeing different areas of arts activities. Its formal establishment, by an act of Parliament in 1975, marked a turning point for the arts in Australia. The Council’s individual Boards directed increased government funds into areas such as visual arts, music, theatre, literature, indigenous and youth arts. The Literature Board replaced the Commonwealth Literary Fund, and was responsible for distributing funds of approximately $1,300,000, nearly four times the amount previously available for literature.\(^{22}\)

The impact of these changes on the FAWWA was twofold. Increased funding opened new avenues of activity, enabling it to extend its reach throughout the State. The FAW Australia-wide developed a stronger sense of itself as a national body, thanks to funding received for state delegates to attend the annual conference of the FAW’s Federal Council. Greater government support for the arts, however, encouraged the development of bodies with similar aims to those of the FAWWA, with the advantage of being new and therefore seen as ‘innovative’, one of the attributes emphasised increasingly by funding bodies established in 1973. Richard Nile pointed out that, with moneys available for individual writers through fellowships and publication opportunities, the increase in funding encouraged writers to pursue their individual interests rather than supporting a ‘common cause’ such as the establishment of a national literature,

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\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 176–177.
which had fired bodies such as the FAW since its inception.\textsuperscript{23} The development of well-funded organisations, including the Fremantle Arts Centre and the Australian Society of Authors, also meant that the Fellowship, reliant as it was on writers to volunteer their time, was in competition with organisations with the benefit of full-time paid administrative staff.

Both the Australian Society of Authors and the FAW benefitted from the new funding, each receiving $5,210 immediately.\textsuperscript{24} The Society was able to employ a secretary, meet administrative and publication costs, fund workshops, prizes and travel for visiting writers.\textsuperscript{25} The $5,210 received by the FAW had to be divided among all state sections, on a pro rata basis, for administrative costs, travel expenses and competitions. It therefore did not make a major contribution to the administrative work of the Fellowship across the country. Retaining its strong state-identity could possibly have been a disadvantage for the FAW as a national body, in this instance, although its major work was, and is, within the individual states.

The Australian Society of Authors

... to play a big part in the protection of professional interests of writers\textsuperscript{26}

From the early 1960s, Australia’s writers felt increasingly that they needed a body modelled on the British Society of Authors, which could advise authors on legal matters, such as publishers’ contracts, as well as lobbying government and other bodies for more equitable fees for writers and surety of copyright. Until that point, the only nation-wide body concerned with such matters was the FAW. In June 1962, Alexandra Hasluck suggested to the FAWWA committee that FAW Australia-wide jointly employ a competent literary agent, in order to advise writers on contracts and other legal agreements.\textsuperscript{27} She may, In fact, have been responding to ideas already in circulation among writers in Canberra and other capitals. At that time, they were discussing the possibility of government funding to establish an Australian Society of Authors (ASA). With at

\begin{flushendnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[24] \textit{Fellowship News}, August 1973, p. 3.
\item[26] V. Serventy, President’s Report, 27 October 1964. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
\item[27] FAWWA Minutes, 12 June 1962. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/30.
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushendnotes}
least one paid coordinator, this Society would lobby government and other bodies on behalf of Australia’s writers, thus relieving members of writing organisations, including the FAW, from having to sacrifice writing time to fulfil this responsibility. Effectively, the Society would become the official link between writers and the government, a move some authors feared would weaken the position of the FAW throughout the country. In fact, Alexandra Hasluck’s suggestion may have been an alternative proposal designed to avoid such a loss of power to the FAW. The FAWWA committee, however, supported the move for the new organisation, having, in the past, successfully sought advice from the English Society of Authors and found it most helpful. Writing to the absent Glaskin, a year after the Society was founded, Durack asserted that it was ‘a local equivalent of the Author’s [sic] Soc. in England’ and that ‘[a]lmost all active or serious writers … are members of the newly formed Society of Aust. Authors’. After its first year the Society had 266 members. This does not appear to have alarmed Fellowship members, although a competition for membership numbers was to become one of the severest tests for the FAW over time. At the beginning, however, strong links held the two organisations together.

Unlike the British Society of Authors, situated in a small country where distances are slight, the Australian organisation had to manage the vast expanses separating its central governing body, in Sydney, from writers in other capital cities. Nevertheless, the Australian Society continued to operate on a federal level, without establishing state-based offices. It sought to overcome the problem of distance by including writers from each state on the Council or Management Committee, and naming one as liaison officer (later known as regional vice-president). Initially, Durack and Ewers represented Western Australian writers, with Ewers as the State’s first liaison officer, followed by Richard Beilby, and later Brian Dibble. Having an FAWWA member as the Western Australian spokesperson for the Society of Authors, from its inception.

28 FAWWA to British Society of Authors, 21 February 1952. In 1952 the FAWWA approached the British Society of Authors for information on special taxation arrangements for writers in the UK where they were allowed to spread income over 5 years. FAWWA papers BL 214/1438A/27.
29 M. Durack to G. Glaskin, 1 February 1964. Glaskin papers GLA MUL 1296A/14/5.
to the mid-1980s, ensured that the two organisations continued to work closely together.\textsuperscript{32}

In his 1964 President's Report, Serventy revealed how he saw the relationship between the two bodies:

Ours is the social and State side while the Society of Authors will act as our professional organisation to fight for better conditions and by means of its size and financial resources do what we as individuals have neither the time, inclination nor money to tackle.\textsuperscript{33}

This clearly stated a perceived change in the Fellowship's role, resulting from the birth of the new organisation. Fighting for better conditions for writers had initially been one of the major concerns of the FAWWA. By the 1970s, however, the artistic world had become more complex. Universities were just beginning to recognise Australian literature as a separate form of literary expression, thus removing the need to struggle for acceptance of a national literature. Above all, writers wanted to concentrate on writing, and were only too pleased to hand over the role of lobbyist to people paid for that task.\textsuperscript{34}

There were still tussles to establish the distinct roles of the two organisations. In February 1964, the FAWWA admonished the Australian Broadcasting Commission for approaching the Society of Authors, instead of the FAWWA, regarding a writers' workshop for television writing.\textsuperscript{35} Although FAWWA stressed that the Society was 'not represented in the States' it was to prove impossible, given the growing preference for bureaucratic professional structures, to prevent government and other agencies from choosing to work with the professional organisation, rather than the volunteer-based Fellowship. This was inevitable given that, in 1973, no clear lines of demarcation were established between the functions of the Australian Society of Authors and the

\textsuperscript{32} In her history of the ASA, \textit{A Writer's Rights}, D. Hill listed Ewers as liaison officer for 1963, then did not include any WA writer until 1969. FAWWA records, however, indicate that Ewers represented the State’s writers each year from 1963 until 1972. Richard Beilby was WA representative from 1973 to 1981, when Brian Dibble became WA’s regional vice-president.

\textsuperscript{33} V. Serventy. President's Report, 27 October 1964. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.

\textsuperscript{34} Writing to the W.A. Arts Council in 1974, D. Stuart pointed out that ‘our task is writing and in order to do this we cannot spend time on the conventional fund-raising activities... ’ 29 July 1974, FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/17(1). Lobbying had always occupied a great deal of time for individual FAWWA members from the 1940s to the mid-1960s.

\textsuperscript{35} FAWWA Minutes, 10 February 1964. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
local FAWs. Consequently, the FAWWA at times opposed the Society’s proposed activities.

In 1972, the Sydney-based Society provoked an immediate rejection from the FAWWA when it suggested that committees be established to arrange play readings and poetry sessions in each state. As regional vice-president, Ewers assured Nancy Keesing, a Society Councillor, that the thought made his ‘blood run cold’. He explained that there were ‘ways in which the A.S.A. should be content not to act’.36 Five years earlier a Sub-committee of the Society had been established in Victoria, originally in response to a suggestion by Clem Christesen, editor of *Meanjin*, as a way of involving Victorian writers in the Society. After organising a writers’ seminar in 1966, members began to ask questions about the relationship between the two Society committees in Melbourne and Sydney. When discussions continued about further Society programmes in Victoria, the FAW(Vic) protested that it was beginning to intrude into the Fellowship’s domain.37 From that time, until the sub-committee’s demise in 1976, the Society of Authors and the FAW(Vic) combined to present annual seminars and other literary activities. The concern aroused by this Victorian sub-committee demonstrated the potential threat that the better funded Society might pose to the FAW. In the years under consideration, in Western Australia at least, the FAWWA derived major benefits from the cohesion between the two bodies, with Fellowship members filling the role of ASA regional vice-president over these years.38

The FAWWA archives record many occasions when it combined with the Society of Authors to promote Australian literature. In 1973, Williams reported on the enthusiasm of the ASA representative, Richard Beilby, in presenting Western Australia Week exhibits in a city bank, the Fremantle Evan Davies Library, and readings at local libraries.39 In 1975, the meeting called to reinstate the Children’s Book Council in Western Australia was presented as a joint meeting between the FAWWA, the Australian Society of Authors and the

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The presence of Western Australian writers at celebratory events in Sydney reinforced this connection. After attending the dinner to celebrate the Society's 1,000th member Ewers and Beilby remarked that, 'although it cost them $10 a mouthful, it was well worth it for the contact with other writers and general relaxation'.

Not all the projects proposed by the Society in Western Australia proved successful. In 1968, the State government rejected its request that the State follow New South Wales' example to grant a $4,000 fellowship enabling a local writer to complete a specific work, although a Treasury Official visited Ewers to discuss the matter. In a letter to the *West Australian*, Ewers began by congratulating the Premier on presenting $2,000 to initiate a fund to send local athletes to the Mexico Olympic Games. He continued:

> Far be it for me to criticise a decision to assist athletics but not literature in WA. I am as keen on sport as anyone else... However the encouragement of literature in W.A. is no less worthy and, in view of the circumstances prevailing here, it is a matter of some urgency...

He concluded with the hope that in future the government would respond positively to such a request in the realisation that 'a good manuscript may be as important to this State as an Olympic gold medal'.

Despite the possibility of competition with the Society of Authors, the FAWWA enthusiastically joined its campaign to lobby the Federal Government for the establishment of a Public Lending Right scheme. Such a proposal sought to recompense writers for the loss of royalties on books held in libraries and thus read by many readers. Different methods of organising such a scheme were already in place in Sweden and Denmark, with the ASA supporting the Danish process, where the government paid a sum of money for each book held in any library into a fund established for the purpose, the authors then receiving their share as an annual payment. In a letter circulated to FAWWA members with the *Fellowship News*, Ewers urged them to contact their Federal members of

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41 *Fellowship News*, November 1972, p. 5.
parliament, or any other organisation likely to support the Society’s move, lobbying for Australia’s writers to earn a just return for their books, which the public read through library membership. In Western Australia, in July 1971, the FAWWA organised a combined meeting of the FAWWA, the Library Association and the Society of Authors, in order to inform members of all bodies of the proposed policy.44 The campaign continued into 1972, when the Society threatened to withdraw all Australian books from libraries if the Prime Minister failed to support the move. Before the 1972 election, Gough Whitlam committed the Labour Party to establishing a Public Lending Right scheme if elected. Although the Society was ready to implement the scheme by early 1974, it still took until after the next election before it became law, with the first payments covering the quarter, April to June 1974.45

FAWWA member Dorothy Lucy Sanders, a prolific writer under the nom de plume Lucy Walker, was so jubilant at the establishment of the scheme in Australia that she sent the FAWWA a special donation of $200 to celebrate the occasion.46 Publishers were anxious to notify all their authors of the process, to ensure that they received the new payment. Consequently, the FAWWA received two letters concerning the new Public Lending Right scheme, one addressed to Mr Joseph Furphy, the other to Mr Tom Collins, Furphy’s nom de plume. As Furphy died in September 1912, the FAWWA secretary replied on his behalf, writing: ‘As Joseph Furphy himself is unavailable, I am answering your letter on his behalf’. She did not reply on behalf of Collins, instead enclosing a copy of Tom Collins & his House.47 In September 1975, then FAWWA president, Stuart, and ASA regional vice-president, Richard Beilby, joined Prime Minister Whitlam, representatives from the FAW, the Society of Authors, the Literature Board of the Australia Council and the Press, at the Melbourne dinner to celebrate the successful establishment of the scheme.48 Stuart described the celebratory evening of witty speeches, and a brief conversation with Prime

46 D. Sanders to FAWWA, 17 November 1974. FAWWA papers BL 3021A/17(1).
47 FAWWA to Jonathon Cape Publishers, 1 August 1974. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(1).
Minister Gough Whitlam, as ‘coruscating’, but no doubt supported Whitlam’s vow of continued support for the Arts.\textsuperscript{49}

Vickers’ comment, in his 1967 President’s Report, on the amount of time that Fellowship business required, makes it clear that the new organisation did not take over the FAWWA’s activities.\textsuperscript{50} He reflected that ‘some of the things which we have undertaken in the past year have used up a lot of the time of those who have been willing to do the work entailed’. In particular, he had in mind a night of readings presented on behalf of the Good Neighbour Council, an exhibition of books for St George’s Cathedral, the gathering of titles and publishers for an exhibition of Western Australian authors in London, as well as organising and presenting readings in the Sunken Garden at UWA and at Skinner Galleries.

Working with the Australia Council for the Arts and its Literature Board …to foster a strong artistic life in the community\textsuperscript{51}

The period of the changeover from the Commonwealth Literary Fund to the Literature Board caused confusion for the FAWWA. In 1972, seeking support for public readings, and a programme of writers’ visits to metropolitan schools and teachers’ colleges, from either the Fund or the new Western Australian Arts Council, the FAWWA received neither funds nor ‘any reasonable reply on the issue’. Instead, the president reported ruefully that the application had been ‘shunted back and forth between the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Council for the Arts’. No record exists of the school visits taking place, an unfortunate result for Williams, who reported having received ‘the blessing’ of the Director of Education after ‘exhaustive discussions’.\textsuperscript{52}

Although the location of both the Australian Society of Authors and the Australian Council for the Arts in Sydney resulted in an increasing focus on the federal, and therefore centralised, avenue for support for the arts, the increased

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\textsuperscript{49} S. Clarke. \textit{In The Space Behind His Eyes: Donald R. Stuart 1913 to 1983}. Lesmurdie, Western Australia: Claverton House, 2006, p. 241.

\textsuperscript{50} F. B. Vickers. President’s Report, 30 October 1967. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A58.


\textsuperscript{52} J. Williams. President’s Report, 30 October 1972. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/13.
funds available fostered closer links between writers in different states. The Literature Board’s underwriting of state representatives’ fares to meetings of the federal FAW council, ensured that those meetings continued into the 1990s.\footnote{Fellowship News, August 1973, p. 3.} This encouraged a strong sense of national unity among the state sections. Madeleine Brunato, then FAW(SA) president and delegate to the Federal Council held in Perth in 1975, when thanking Stuart for FAWWA’s hospitality, wrote of ‘that wonderful feeling of friendship and informality, which have helped to strengthen the existing bonds between State branches’.\footnote{M. Brunato to D. Stuart, und. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18 (2).}

Importantly for Western Australian writers, during the 1970s, those writers responsible for making the funding decisions also travelled interstate. The members of the Commonwealth Literary Fund visited Tom Collins House for an afternoon reception in September 1972, the next day meeting a deputation of local writers, J. Williams, O. Pell, R. Beilby and J. K. Ewers, for a ‘more intimate talk with them on how writers might be helped’. Ewers reflected that

\begin{quote}
it was a good idea their coming over here \textit{en masse}... The disadvantage of WA writers is that Perth is so far from the hub.\footnote{J. K. Ewers to L. Brown, 29 September 1972. Ewers papers BL 1870/5459A/371.}
\end{quote}

The \textit{Fellowship News} reported that the visitors listened sympathetically to an outline of FAWWA plans, adding that, in an unofficial conversation, they suggested that there was ‘an awakening in the Eastern States [sic] of interest in W. A.’.\footnote{Fellowship News, September 1972, p. 2.} After the establishment of the Literature Board, its members also visited Perth, thus helping to minimise the isolation of the State’s writers. The visit of members of the first Literature Board in 1974 coincided with the Writers’ Week presented jointly by the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) and the newly-established Fremantle Arts Centre in February of that year.

In Western Australia, an immediate outcome of the increased cooperation between state and federal governments to fund the arts, was the development of the Fremantle Arts Centre. An pivotal event in the expansion of Perth’s cultural milieu, the Centre was funded jointly by the State government, Fremantle City Council and the Australia Council. The concept grew from a
Fremantle City Council decision, in the early 1970s, to restore the original lunatic asylum building, part of which, from 1944 to 1957, served as a Technical School focusing on the arts. The initial plan was to use it as headquarters for various community arts groups, including the Craft Association of W.A. and Children’s Activities Time Society. After Ian Templeman was made director, it was decided to establish an Arts and Crafts Centre rather than have individual tenants. Templeman, himself a poet and FAWWA member, soon began to utilise the centre to foster local writers.

Following the successful Writers’ Week, organised by the FAWWA in 1973 and described in Chapter Six, Templeman approached the Fellowship, proposing that the two organisations present a joint event at the Fremantle Arts Centre for Writers’ Week in 1974. The FAWWA received a grant of $750 from the Literature Board to bring over two visiting writers. Templeman suggested that the Centre would apply for a separate grant to cover administration, and payment of local writers. He also offered FAWWA members the use of an office at the Arts Centre during the week. In his 1974 President’s Report, Stuart was critical of aspects of the resulting Writers’ Week, especially the fact that the organisers had not been told of the imminent presence of all the members of the Literature Board. As Stuart commented, had they expected these writers they could have made ‘a fuller use of their services’. In his diary, Nicholas Hasluck described Tom Collins House as ‘seething with literati’ when all the writers involved in the week, plus the Literature Board members, attended the FAWWA Corroboree on the Monday. Hasluck’s diary also provides a vivid description of the dinner held at his home that week, when local writers joined invited writers, including the full Literature Board consisting of chairman Geoffrey Blainey, with Geoffrey Dutton, Manning Clark, Judah Waten, David Malouf, Tom Shapcott, Elizabeth Riddell, Nancy Keesing, Richard Walsh

61 Fellowship News, November 1973, p. 3.
62 D. Stuart, President’s Report, 27 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
63 N. Hasluck. Diary entry, 4 February 1974. Supplied to the author by N. Hasluck.
and Richard Hall. As Hasluck later reflected, this fairly impromptu evening included ‘the whole pantheon of Australian literature’.  

In August of that year, Templeman again contacted the FAWWA, this time informing the president that he had decided to ‘take the initiative and be responsible for planning’ a Writers’ Weekend in 1975, entitled ‘The Writer and the Critic’. He sought support from the Fellowship, mainly in providing members, including Fay Zwicky and Stuart, to chair sessions over the weekend. At least one member approved of this development. Pell assured Stuart that it was a good idea, as the Centre had ‘all the administrative machinery for running such an event’. Some members could well have felt that their central role as the organiser of literary events had been usurped by the new Centre. The FAWWA committee, however, was no doubt relieved, as the annual FAW Federal Council meeting took place in Perth for the first time that February. State presidents, secretaries and some observers all met on the 20 and 21 February, then went to dinner to meet ‘prominent W.A. personalities’ who were attending the Corroboree on the 22 February. Stuart described it as ‘a wonderful success in bringing together delegates from all States, in a situation where more work could be done in two days than by telephone and letter in six months’.

In 1974 and 1975, Templeman took steps to increase the centre’s links between the Fremantle Arts Centre and the State’s writers. The classes in Creative Writing and Appreciating Literature, held there in these years, were some of the first creative writing workshops in the State, that were not run by the Fellowship. The establishment of the government-funded Fremantle Arts Centre Press, in 1975, was a boon for Western Australian writers, and endorsed the Centre’s role in promoting the State’s writers and their work. Teaching Creative Writing at the Centre, together with her early publications by the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, confirmed the reputation of Elizabeth Jolley, an FAWWA member since

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64. N. Hasluck, interviewed by the author. Claremont, W.A. 20 July 2012.
66. O. Pell to D. Stuart, 29 August 1974. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/17(2).
the 1960s.\textsuperscript{70} The conference on regional writing in Australia, held at the Fremantle Arts Centre in October 1978, was a milestone in declaring confidence in Western Australian literature and the place it occupied in the world of Australian literature.\textsuperscript{71}

**Arts Access: A trend towards government-directed arts bodies**

to respond to the needs and requests of community groups in sponsoring arts activities\textsuperscript{72}

Something of a furore broke out in Perth’s arts world when, in March 1976, the Western Australian Arts Council announced the formation of Arts Access, to be based at the Fremantle Arts Centre, with Templeman as director and $200,000 in funding from the local Arts Council and the federal Australia Council.\textsuperscript{73} This action represented the trend towards the implementation of government-initiated and funded bureaucracies, to carry out tasks previously undertaken by volunteer arts organisations. Arts Access would employ eleven people, with officers to organise art exhibitions, performances and manage country tours. The response of many in the arts was expressed vehemently in the March issue of *Artlook*. John Harper-Nelson asked what purpose the Arts Council would now serve, as one of its central roles had been to take the arts to country areas. Negative responses to the new body came from the Craft Association, the State-based Art Gallery, Ballet and Opera Companies and the Western Australian Theatre Company. Most of them criticised the lack of consultation, and the expense of establishing a separate body which could have been run through the Western Australian Arts Council. Like the Fellowship, these organisations had already conducted their own country tours and expected to continue doing so. Although the FAWWA made no public comment, and carried on organising its own country tours, it would eventually be affected by the push for professionalism in arts bodies, which Joan Pope saw as underlying this new development. She asked whether the ‘setting up of Arts Access constitutes a


\textsuperscript{71} There is a full report on the Seminar in *Westerly* Vol. 23 No 4, December 1978.

\textsuperscript{72} *Artlook*, Vol. 2 No. 3, March 1976, p. 4.

rebuke by officialdom to all those voluntary organisations’. As early as 1956, Fred Alexander had expressed similar thoughts on the tendency of governments to work ‘from the centre outwards rather than from the ground upwards’. On that occasion, he was referring to the establishment of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and its funding, interpreting the decision as a refusal to give financial support to those within the State who ‘had for years been working in an honorary capacity to create a national theatre, both in spirit and with bricks and mortar’.  

National Book Council and Australian Book Week  
_to bring together a variety of organisations and individuals who had an interest in .... books_  

The concept of an Australian Book Week had reoccurred periodically over the years. In the 1960s, the Australian Book Publishers’ Association arranged observances of the week in each state, with the Fellowship running the event in Western Australia. Each year in that decade, the FAWWA arranged an afternoon of readings in the Orchestral Shell in Supreme Court Gardens, Perth, although comments in both the minutes of committee meeting and the Fellowship News leave little doubt about ongoing tension between the Publishers’ Association and the FAWWA. Announcing the 1964 celebration, the newsletter advised that ‘no other details are available at the moment’, as it had been arranged ‘at short notice’. The next year, the minutes reported a request from the Book Week Committee for the programme of that year’s readings, whereas the FAWWA had received no prior information on presenting them. A year later, Ewers complained to Frank Davidson, Editorial Director of the Sunday Times, that, whereas the newspaper included a complete supplement on Hamersley Iron, there was nothing on Australian Book Week, both having opened on the same day. Davidson’s reply pointed out that neither any writers nor writers’ organisations had either ‘asked or encouraged or pressured’ the

74 Artlook, Vol. 2 No. 3, March 1976, pp. 4–8. In conversation with Joan Pope she mentioned the feeling of ‘being usurped’ at this decision, 2 September 2012.  
75 F. Alexander. ‘The Elizabethan Theatre Trust and You’ in Westerly No. 2 June 1956, p. 10.  
78 FAWWA Minutes, 9 November 1965. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
paper into promoting Australian Book Week. He assured Ewers that the *Sunday Times* intended ‘to continue publishing news of books’.\textsuperscript{79}

An early action of the Literature Board of the Australia Council, in 1973, was to establish a National Book Council whose task was to promote Australian books in a regular and professional manner. To achieve this, the Council undertook several programmes that included establishing a series of national awards, later called the Banjo Awards, reviving the monthly *Australian Book Review* in 1978, and beginning a Manuscript Assessment scheme.\textsuperscript{80} The FAW was a foundation member, together with the Australian Society of Authors, the Australian Book Publishers’ Association and the Booksellers’ Association, the Children’s Book Council and the National Library.\textsuperscript{81} One responsibility of the new body was to organise the annual Australian Book Week. In its first year, the Council did not appear to have helped the FAWWA attract a satisfactory audience to the Supreme Court Gardens readings. Stuart reported that the open air readings, held to celebrate the week, were a failure, expressing embarrassment that readers like Vickers should have been left ‘reading so well to such vacant air’.\textsuperscript{82}

The following year, the National Book Council held a dinner, at the Cottesloe Civic Centre, to celebrate the beginning of Australian Book Week. Its failure to invite those writers who had actively promoted Australian books in the past displayed a dismaying lack of familiarity with the Western Australian writing world. Not only did the professional government-funded body fail to invite either the FAWWA, the Standing Committee of the federal FAW council, or the Western Australian regional vice-president of the Australian Society of Authors, but it also omitted the Western Australian member of the Literature Board, Vic Williams from the guest list.\textsuperscript{83} Discussions Stuart held with office bearers of the Council, during a trip to Melbourne early in 1975, suggested that these

\textsuperscript{82} D. Stuart. President’s Report 1974. BL 214/3021A/52.
\textsuperscript{83} D. Stuart. President’s Report, 28 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
omissions may not have been merely an error, as there were plans for the Council to take over such activities as the visits of overseas writers, seminars and literary competitions, ‘and indeed all the matters that have for so long been the main concern of F.A.W.’. Such threats remained a lively possibility with the growth of new, well-funded literary bodies. In the years ahead, while the take-over did not take place, the relationship between the FAWWA and the Council did not improve. In August 1977, the FAWWA committee was once more beginning preparations to ensure that Australian books were displayed for the annual Australian Book Week. The committee asked Don Grant to remind the National Book Council that the FAWWA wished to receive all information concerning the week and not be ignored as in previous years. White summed up the situation in her report at the end of the year.

There has been no word of any kind from the National Book Council, for the past two years. The F.A.W. Federal Council donates $200 per year to the National Book Council, but apparently they are unaware of writing and writers in West Australia.

Much of the National Book Council’s energies and funds were, in fact, directed towards promotions on a national, rather than local, scale. It continued its activities until 1997, when the Council was no longer able to maintain the commitment for its programmes, due to the loss, in 1993, of the ‘substantial funding’ provided by the Literature Board.

Of the activities initiated by the Council, only the Australian Book Review continues in 2013, funded by the Australia Council, the Arts Councils in Victoria and South Australia, the Copyright Agency, and a variety of private foundations including the Sydney Myer Fund and the Ian Potter Foundation. The need for an Australian Book Week vanished with the growth of Writers’ Festivals during the 1980s and 1990s, together with television and radio programmes devoted to Australian literature. The Banjo Awards continued until 1997, however, and

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84 Fellowship News, April-May 1975, p. 9.
85 FAWWA Minutes, committee meeting 13 April 1977. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/82.
86 E. White, President’s Report, 31 October 1977. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
88 Australian Book Review, November 2011.
were replaced with a wide raft of literary awards funded by arts bodies, including Premiers’ Awards in different states. 89

Grants for the FAWWA in the 1970s
*You dig a lot of wells before you strike oil* 90

Within the State, funding from the Australia Council and the W.A Council for the Arts helped the Fellowship to extend its focus further into country areas, as it organised tours of writers to country schools and literary seminars in Kalgoorlie and Bunbury. Not only did these tours encourage members of the new branches, formed in both Bunbury and later Kalgoorlie, but they extended the Fellowship’s aim to foster the ‘study and practice of writing’ among school students. As one school principal expressed in a letter of thanks for the visit of Dafne Bidwell Jones, Buddee and Hungerford to his school:

> The staff and pupils were delighted with their lectures and gained many ideas and a wider knowledge and understanding of writers and writing... This kind of tour is invaluable to isolated areas such as Esperance, mitigating some of our cultural drawbacks and enabling children with potential writing ability to get better motivated. 91

The FAWWA first requested funding from the Literature Board to support tours to country areas, in early 1975. Stuart outlined the Fellowship’s intention to conduct four tours that year, as well as publishing a collection of short stories, depicting ‘life on the West Australian Coast’. 92 In May the same year, the Literature Board confirmed funding of $1,000, to cover costs for one tour, including fares for the writers, mileage, accommodation and venue hire. 93 Two months later, Stuart reported to the Board on the successful visit of Joan Williams and Barbara York Main to Esperance, Albany and Denmark, among other towns in the South West. Stuart stated that the FAWWA wished to conduct another in October, with writers Bob Chambers, Connie Miller and Ted

90 Tony Morphett, a member of the Literature Board of the Australia Council in 1978, having described the process of giving government grants to writers as ‘wild cat drilling’. Fellowship News, January/February 1978, p. 4.
91 The Principal, Castletown Primary School, 22 August 1978. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/24(1).
92 D. Stuart to Literature Board, 17 January 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/3021A/18(1).
93 Literature Board to D. Stuart, 9 May 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(2).
Mayman visiting the Collie area, at an estimated cost of $1,500.94 Stuart told FAWWA members that ‘completed questionnaires after the tour leave no doubt that tours of this kind, well planned and undertaken by competent speakers, are a great part of what our Fellowship should be doing’.95 The informality of Stuart’s request for further funds in the same year indicates that the development of application procedures was not an immediate priority of the newly-established Board, a position that would change within several years. In this instance, the Literature Board replied that it was deferring the FAWWA application, until it had clarified the situation of its funds.96 Reporting on grants remained fairly informal at first. In 1975, the Australia Council announced that audited accounts would be required to acquit any future grants.97

In 1977, with tours to the south-west and Goldfields, the FAWWA developed a slightly different format. The tours began with three writers visiting between twenty and thirty schools in an area, and concluded with an extensive weekend seminar in a central location, when the touring writers joined with Perth and local writers in a central town, to conduct workshops, panel discussions and readings. At the end of July, Bryn Griffiths, Thea Cheney (a Busselton writer), and historian Margaret Wilson visited schools in ten towns in the Dardanup, Bridgetown, Margaret River, and Busselton areas. For the final weekend, FAWWA president, Eleanor White, led a team, including anthropologist and author Jacob de Hoog, Richard Beilby, David Rapsey and Mary Durack, with local writers joining them, to present a weekend seminar on different approaches to writing, with a special interest in writing history. From 21 June to 5 July, another group consisting of Donald Stuart, Eleanor Page-Smith and Nita Pannell, were greeted enthusiastically at around 30 schools between Northam and Kambalda.98 In Kalgoorlie they joined Don Grant, Glen Phillips, Brian Dibble, Bill Grono and Oliver Deacon, presenting a seminar at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines.99 This format included organisational and funding support from

94 FAWWA to Literature Board, 21 July 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(1). The successful tour was described in the Fellowship News, July 1975, pp.7–8.
96 Literature Board to FAWWA, 12 September 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(1).
97 J. Williams to FAWWA committee, 27 August 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/20(2).
98 P. Watts. ‘Country Tour’ in West Australian, 7 June 1977.
the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and proved so successful that it was used for another tour to the goldfields area in 1979. Both tours were funded by the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

In his President’s Report for 1975, Stuart reported that ‘relations with the Literature Board continue to be based on mutual respect and understanding’. He made special mention of FAWWA member, Vic Williams, who, as the only Western Australian writer on the Board, had done ‘a tremendous job of representing the writers of W.A.’. A year later, the Literature Board indicated that relationships would no longer be so informal, making it clear that more bureaucratic structures were in place. The Chairman, Michael Costigan, informed the new president, Eleanor White, that he was expecting a ‘more formal submission’ from the FAWWA for the sum of $2000 it needed to fund the Writers’ Week planned to celebrate Western Australia’s sesquicentenary year in 1979.

Australian literature in tertiary education

such a course is the first – & only – in WA

Another development, during the 1960s and 1970s, which added to the growing professional status of Australian literature, was its acceptance as a topic for tertiary study. In 1974, Stuart, as FAWWA president, was sent the outline of a Bachelor of Arts course which included creative writing, by Brian Dibble, professor at the Western Australian Institute of Technology. Stuart gave his approval, assuring Dibble that such a course was ‘long overdue’, continuing that the Fellowship looked forward ‘to contributing to and benefitting from the existing and proposed programmes’. At both of Perth’s two new tertiary institutions, the Western Australian Institute of Technology, later Curtin University, and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, later Edith Cowan University, writers who were FAWWA members were part of the teaching staff. Consequently, the Fellowship collaborated successfully with

100 D. Stuart. President’s Report, 27 October 1975. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
101 Dr Michael Costigan, Literature Board to E. White, FAWWA, 10 November 1978. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/24(1).
102 D. Stuart to B. Dibble, 17 December 1974. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/18(1).
103 Ibid.
these new tertiary bodies, academics from each one holding key positions on the FAWWA’s committee in the late 1970s into the 1990s.  

Stuart outlined this growing collaboration in his 1975 report. When William Golding was writer in residence at the Mount Lawley Advanced College, he was a guest of the FAWWA’s at an evening so successful that Stuart was prompt to report it to Costigan, Chairman of the Literature Board. Stuart commented on the ‘Fellowship’s vitality’, on entertaining an international visitor so successfully. For the Extension Service of the Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education, Phillips organised a parade of Western Australian writers in the series, ‘The West Awakes’, which included FAWWA members Zwicky, Durack, Stuart, Bruce Bennett, author and academic Peter Cowan, Lesley Rees, Writer in Residence at Mt Lawley College. Rees also spoke on ‘Writing for Children’ at Tom Collins House, in November of the same year.

The Fellowship utilised the Institute of Technology’s radio station 6NR as an innovative way to extend its promotion of Australian literature. In December 1976, it broadcast ‘Writers Inc.’, which became the first in a series of readings that it organised. Future programmes were planned to include readings, panel discussions, news of competitions and special sessions ‘for and by young writers’. By 1978, this collaboration had developed into a monthly broadcast on the first Friday of the month, featuring interviews with writers such as Jolley and Hungerford. Thanks to the influence of the writers in their academic staff, both the Institute and the College included writers in residence in their literature programmes, and ensured that each writer was entertained at Tom Collins House.

104 Poet Glen Phillips, from the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, first became president in 1977, then served on the committee continually for thirty years, returning to the presidency in 1986 to 1987. With Joan Williams he was instrumental in securing the purchase of Prichard’s house by the government and its establishment as the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers’ Centre in 1985. Professors Don Grant formerly from Melbourne, and Brian Dibble formerly from Canada, filled the presidency alternately from 1981 to 1986.

105 Fellowship News, June 1975, p. 3.
During these decades, the Fellowship’s collaboration with the University of Western Australia and its Adult Education Board, later known as the Extension Service, continued, with some variations. Instead of individual writers who happened to be FAWWA members, giving talks on Australian literature, at Adult Education Board rooms, in Howard Street Perth, the Fellowship now arranged several series on aspects of literature, with writers as presenters. In 1977, Beilby, Jamieson Brown, Bidwell-Jones, Stuart and Grant each spoke on specific aspects of Western Australian writing, under the title of ‘Discover Your Western Australia Writers’.\(^\text{109}\) This series was so successful that it was replicated in 1978, when the FAWWA sponsored a similar series, organised by former president White. This time, the course focused around the theme of writing for theatre, radio, television and film, and featured writers such as Alexander Turner, Joan Ambrose and Guy Baskin. For the final lecture in the series, Sir Paul Hasluck gave an overview of the history of writing in the State.\(^\text{110}\)

During the 1970s, the University of Western Australia Press published two anthologies of the State’s writing, prepared by the FAWWA. In 1973, poet Dorothy Hewett edited the collection *Sandgropers*, described as having ‘a short and stormy gestation’ in Williams’ President’s Report.\(^\text{111}\) A grant of $5,000 from the State government supported payments to local writers, and those to the editor and the press, at appropriate rates.\(^\text{112}\) In 1979, the University’s press produced the FAWWA’s sesquicentenary anthology *Summerland*, edited by Alec Choate and Barbara York Main.

Since 1969, the FAWWA had been actively urging the University of Western Australia to include Australian literature in its official course of study. The first chair in Australian literature had been established at Sydney University in 1962, with the first critical journal, *Australian Literary Studies*, founded two years later, in 1964. In 1965, critic and author Colin Roderick was appointed to the

\(^{109}\) P. Watts. ‘Variety is the Keynote’ in *West Australian*, 23 June 1977.
\(^{111}\) J. Williams. President’s Report, 29 October 1973. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
\(^{112}\) J. Williams. President’s Report, 29 October 1973. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/58.
inaugural chair of English at James Cook University.\footnote{113} In August 1969, Vickers explained to the FAWWA committee that University English lecturer, John Barnes, had approached the professorial body at the University, asking for a course in Australian Literature to be established there. His suggestion was initially rejected, but since the professorial board was reconsidering it Vickers proposed that an appeal from the FAWWA might help convince the academics.\footnote{114} Glaskin had already suggested the FAWWA might approach the Vice-Chancellor of the University to host a writer in residence.\footnote{115} By the early 1970s, the University of Western Australian acknowledged the significance of Australian literature, and its value as a separate area of study. The establishment of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature, in 1977 in Queensland, provided an external concrete sign that the universities were accepting the role of responsibility for promoting Australian writers and their works.\footnote{116} These developments represented the achievement of one goal for which the FAW throughout Australia had been working from its beginnings.

The FAWWA welcomed writers in residence from both the Adult Education Board Summer Schools and the University. Poet Judith Rodriquez spoke on Australian poets at the 1978 Summer School, and was entertained at Tom Collins House for a buffet meal.\footnote{117} Another poet, A.D. Hope, was in residence at the University, in 1975, and spoke to FAWWA members on 5 May.\footnote{118} Such interchanges arose from the close working relationship which had existed between these two establishments since the foundation of the FAWWA. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, these strong traditional links with the University of Western Australia were tested by factors quite external to the everyday activities of both the University and the Fellowship.

\footnote{114} FAWWA Minutes, 11 August 1969. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\footnote{115} FAWWA Minutes, 3 March 1969. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/81.
\footnote{117} P. Watts. ‘Poets Galore’ in \textit{West Australian}, 29 August 1977.
\footnote{118} \textit{Fellowship News}, April–May 1975, p. 4. Also \textit{Fellowship News}, June 1975, p. 4.
The Hewett-Davies dispute

*a sad story, but with ironical overtones*\(^{119}\)

One possible cause for a coolness between the University’s English department and the FAWWA was the bitter, personal but very public, altercation which erupted between Dorothy Hewett, former FAWWA president and University of W.A. lecturer, and her first husband, barrister, writer and Fellowship member, Lloyd Davies. Foundation member Bill Irwin described it as ‘a personal vendetta, of a type that serves no social or artistic purpose that I can see’.\(^{120}\) A friend of both Hewett and Davies since their university days, Irwin refused to take sides but was in a position to provide an overall picture of the case. Over some months, between late 1976 and mid-1977, in response to a question from his friend, Ken Gott, in Melbourne, Irwin outlined to Gott the ‘issue’ which he wrote was ‘still rumbling’. Hewett had on several occasions portrayed Davies harshly, in both plays and poems. Acknowledging that Hewett’s writing tended to be ‘very autobiographical’, Irwin described the specific poem, ‘Uninvited guest’, which attacked Davies’ second wife and their children, something Irwin found inexcusable. After the poem’s appearance in a minor journal, Davies asked that it not be published again. When Hewett’s collection *Rapunzel in Suburbia* included it, and when the review of the book in *Westerly* reprinted almost the complete poem in the review, Davies felt compelled to publicly support his family, and sued both Hewett and her publisher. The battle caused a stir in Australian literary circles, with Sydney writers who knew Hewett from her years there, and her fellow tutors at the University, supporting her loyally. In Perth, many writers like Irwin, who were mutual friends of the couple, were torn between the two, often deciding not to speak out on the matter. The fact that Davies remained an active member of the FAWWA, serving on the committee into the late 1980s, may well have contributed to a distancing between FAWWA and the University of Western Australia. With lecturers from the two newer tertiary institutions active on the Fellowship committee, it was also natural that the FAWWA should develop a closer working relationship with those bodies.

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\(^{119}\) B. Irwin to K. Gott, 11 November 1976. Gott papers LTL 13047 Box 3765/7.

\(^{120}\) B. Irwin to K. Gott, 24 May 1977. LTL 13047 Box 3765/7. The information used in this paragraph is contained in two long letters from Bill Irwin to Ken Gott on 11 November 1976 and 24 May 1977. LTL 13047 Box 3765/7.
Writers’ Way Week, February 1979

A week with so much happening in it, with so many people, can’t just happen by itself\(^{121}\)

The benefits possible with the co-operation of the cultural community, and well-sourced funding, were apparent in Writers’ Way Week, initiated by the FAWWA as part of the sesquicentenary celebrations, in 1979. In her early planning, past president White invited some of Australia’s leading writers to take part. Morris West and Thomas Kenneally had other engagements. Patrick White thanked White for her invitation, but refused it with the explanation:

…not that I have anything against Perth, but because I never go to Writers’ Weeks, Conferences, Seminars….I want to get on with my work, & all these functions are the great excuse not to do so’\(^{122}\).

With these writers unable to attend, the week was planned around the growing interest in scriptwriting with additional workshops in other writing genres.

Working with the Australian Society of Authors, the Australian Writers’ Guild, the Society of Women Writers and Kuljak playwrights, the FAWWA presented a week which included visiting writers Welsh poet Bryan Walters, playwright David Williamson and his wife Kristin Green, a children’s author, together with scriptwriters John Dingwall and Margaret Kelly. It also involved a large number of local authors including Hungerford, Rica Erickson, Veronica Brady, Bill Dunstone, Robert Drewe, Beilby and Durack. Early viewings were arranged, for the emerging playwrights, of plays by Tom Stoppard and Alex Buzo which were about to open at the Playhouse and the Hole in the Wall Theatre. By arrangement with the Perth Institute of Film and Television, some students took part in a children’s scriptwriting workshop, with tutor Roger Simpson. The weekend before ‘Writers’ Way ’79’, the Federal FAW Conference took place in Perth again, and most of the presidents and delegates from other states stayed on for the week. The Australian Society of Authors sent Barbara Jefferis to Perth to hold a meeting of the Society immediately before the week of activities, and she stayed on and led a workshop during Writers’ Week.

\(^{121}\) E. Jolley to FAWWA secretary, 10 February 1979. FAWWA papers BL 214/3021A/79(1).

\(^{122}\) P. White to E. White, 5 November 1978. T. Kenneally to E. White, 28 October 1978, M. West to E. White, E. White papers. Held by her daughter Lorelei Moreling. Copies held by the author.
The cooperation of other literary bodies included financial support. The Australian Writers Guild underwrote fees and fares for Dingwall and Margaret Kelly through a grant from the Western Australian Arts Council’s Film and TV Committee, with the input of $950 from the Fellowship. The costs of attendance by Williamson and Green were donated by Channel Seven, while the University’s Kingswood Residential College donated the venue. The organisers received $1,000 from both the Literature Board of the Australia Council and the Western Australian Sesquicentenary Committee, and $250 from the Western Australian Arts Council Literature Committee. In a comprehensive report for the Literature Board of the Australia Council, the FAWWA president Glen Phillips assured Costigan that the treasurer estimated a balanced budget for the seminar. There were 94 enrolled participants, with others paying at the door for individual events.\(^\text{123}\)

After the tensions with the National Book Council, this seminar offered an example of the richness that can be achieved when all levels of the literary world work together. The visits by the federal FAW council and the Australian Society of Authors provided highlights to a collaboration that ranged from the in-kind support of a University college and commercial sponsorship of specific costs like travel, to grants from four established funding bodies and to the assistance of three local writers’ groups.

Conclusion

The birth of organisations such as the Australian Society of Authors, the Australia Council and its Literature Board brought powerful new forces to work for the promotion of Australian literature in the 1970s. For existing organisations like the FAWWA, the results were twofold. On the one hand, the Fellowship could access increasing amounts of funding and so undertake a wider range of activities, designed to achieve its aims of supporting individual writers and promoting Australia literature. The success of ‘Writers Way ‘79’ showed that when the FAWWA was motivated by a group of committed volunteers, it could

draw on the networks within Perth’s arts world, utilising the links so easily created within a small population. Such connections were a strong feature of the Fellowship’s activities from its very beginnings.

The FAWWA’s public program for one year, 1977, clearly shows the increase in activities that stemmed from the additional funding available from both State and federal sources. In that year, the Fellowship organised two three-week long country tours, each followed by a weekend seminar in a major town in the area. For the University of Western Australia’s Extension Service, it organised a series of lectures on the State’s writers, and worked with librarians from the Library Association of Australia to present readings from the works of eight FAWWA members. The Fellowship held gatherings to welcome to Perth actor Leonard Teale, Professor Bernard Hickey from Venice University, Gus O’Donnell of the Australian Copyright Council, and Belfast writer Mairead Corrigan. It also arranged its annual evening of readings, at the Hole in the Wall Theatre, and ran both the Tom Collins Poetry Prize and the new Lyndall Hadow Short Story Award, as well as holding regular monthly members’ meetings. Williams’ assessment of 1973 as ‘the busiest year’ in the Fellowship’s history could actually have been applied to most years in the 1970s.

On the other hand, there was the danger that bodies with access to greater and more regular funding, and hence a more efficient and professional structure, could replace the community-based organisations reliant on volunteers. The responses of local groups to the government-initiated Arts Access in 1976, published in Artlook, were an early indicator of future problems for existing groups. The failure of the National Book Council to include the FAWWA in its deliberations reduced the effectiveness of Australian Book Week in this State to truly promote Australian writers and their works.

The foundation of the Australian Society of Authors, in 1963, could have threatened to replace the FAWWA. It did become the main advocate for writers’ professional interests, a move welcomed by some members because of the amount of time such lobbying had previously required. Losing the role of lobbyist for writers helped weaken that organisation’s connection with government. However, in Western Australia Fellowship members also acted as
liaison officers, or Regional Vice-presidents of the Society of Authors, thus ensuring a close cooperation between the two bodies. Furthermore, the Fellowship showed its ability to effectively promote Australian writers and their works during these years, by its publication of two anthologies, while the increased funding enabled the FAWWA to introduce extensive and successful writers’ tours. These extended the influence of the FAWWA into country Western Australia, increasing its ability to effectively support the country writers already members through the Fellowship’s country branches. Although at one stage it seemed that the Fremantle Arts Centre might become the principal organiser of literary events in conjunction with the Perth Festival, the successful ‘Writers’ Way ‘79’ demonstrated the Fellowship’s ability to utilise the networks built by its foundation members. That the FAWWA continued to present lecture series on Australian literature under the auspices of the Adult Education Board showed that it retained its early working relationship with the University of Western Australia. At the same time, it developed strong connections with newly-established tertiary institutions, welcoming to successive committees those writers holding academic positions.

By the end of the 1970s, the Fellowship in Western Australia was playing a central role in the expanding literary community in the State. Besides the new support for regional writers through country branches and writers’ tours to schools, that community had grown to include interstate writers, by means of the visits by Literature Board members, the federal FAW Council and officers from the Australian Society of Authors. The FAWWA’s active connection with these bodies enhanced its support for local writers while providing further opportunities to promote Australian literature within the State.
Conclusion

What immediately emerges from this study is the dedication of a small group of Western Australian writers, not only to their own writing careers but to furthering the careers of writers throughout Australia, and to establishing Australian literature as the voice of a nation. The same writers reappear throughout this study in a variety of roles, while the organisation they founded sought to build a literary community which would support individual writers, promote Australian literature and lobby on behalf of writers’ professional interests.

The underlying purpose of these early writers in founding the Western Australian Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers was to enable social contact between writers, artists and musicians. Creating an autonomous section of the Sydney-based FAW ensured that such contact extended nation-wide and helped to overcome the sense of isolation common to Western Australian artists. This connection was confirmed by the establishment, in 1955, of the federal FAW council, brought about largely by Drake-Brockman’s perseverance during her second term as FAWWA president. In the 1960s and 1970s, interaction between writers from all states expanded, thanks to the increased Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture tours, the foundation of the Australian Society of Authors in 1963, greater ease of travel and increased funding. FAWWA members took part in the tours, and acted as regional vice-presidents of the Society of Authors, thus ensuring that all visiting writers were entertained at Tom Collins House, with the opportunity to meet local writers.

There was surprisingly little in the way of training in the craft of writing available to members in the early years of the FAWWA. Regular talks by a wide variety of speakers provided intellectual stimulation and insight into the working practice of some members, however specific guidance was only offered during regular Round Table sessions. These included both assessment of individual manuscripts and general discussions of writing techniques. The sessions had an uneven history, being dependent on the presence of a writer willing to
arrange and lead them. Even after Roberts, and later White, reported on creative writing workshops observed in the United States, the Fellowship was slow to include them in its programme. This appears to have been a combination of the belief that creative writing could not be taught, and the lack of funding to pay a workshop leader. Once financial support became available, from both State and federal agencies, writing workshops became a regular part of the FAWWA tours to country schools, and of metropolitan Writers' Weeks.

The growth of country branches extended the reach of the Perth-based Fellowship. Once again, this extension to create communities of country writers flourished with the new funds available to arts organisations. From 1975 onwards, the FAWWA pioneered tours to all parts of the State, with writers running workshops in schools, and public readings in local libraries for the adult population. Without paid administrative staff, these tours were major undertakings for the writers, who both volunteered to take part and helped organise them. Liaison with members of the country FAWWA branches provided an important element in this organisation. Continuing for nearly twenty years, such tours helped to both support writers and promote Australian literature throughout Western Australia.

Promoting the nation's literature was a major goal for the FAWWA, clearly demonstrated by the inclusion of a Toast to Australian literature in the formalities of the annual 'corroboree'. This was the major social function for the Fellowship, and the appointment of a writer to propose that toast was an integral part of preparations each year. Whatever the form or wherever the venue of the 'corroboree', the toast remained. From the 1938 request to the Education Department that a day each year be named Australian Literature Day, to the suggestion, to an early federal FAW conference, that ships sailing to Australia should include Australian books in their libraries, the FAWWA was keen to find opportunities for presenting Australian writers and their works to the public. The first major occasion to promote Australian literature grew from a collaboration between the Fellowship, the Free Libraries Association and individual librarians. From 1945 to 1953, Children's Book Week became an increasingly significant event in Perth's cultural life. The FAWWA played a major role in planning this celebration of children's authors, liaising with
booksellers to create displays of books, and including authors to promote children’s literature with talks and readings.

The ability to work with other local organisations was one of the Fellowship’s strengths. It evolved from individual writers’ connections within Perth’s small cultural world. In particular, the working relations that foundation members had forged with the University of W.A., and its Adult Education Board, created openings over the years for the FAWWA to promote Australian writers at succeeding Perth Arts Festivals, and to provide writers for the Commonwealth Literary Funds’ annual lecture tours. Becoming owners of the house built and lived in by Joseph Furphy in 1949, further linked the Fellowship to the University through the Furphy Bequest.

Discovering Drake-Brockman’s correspondence with Samuel Furphy, Professor Edwards and Ewers was particularly exciting, as it enabled the reconstruction of the actual process by which the FAWWA came to own this valuable, if somewhat inconvenient, literary landmark. Drake-Brockman’s recognition that the house should be saved, combined with her obvious exasperation with Ewers’ idealistic ability to minimise the struggle Fellowship members would face to maintain a wooden worker’s cottage, expressed the complex issues in becoming owners of a heritage house. Over the years, however, Tom Collins House came to fulfil a central role in the Fellowship’s life, serving as its headquarters and a living memorial, not only to Furphy but to all early Western Australian writers.

During its first 40 years, the FAWWA promoted the State’s writers in a tangible way through the publication of five anthologies of poetry and prose works by Western Australian writers. The second of these, West Coast Stories, edited by Drake-Brockman, was her practical response to the need to finance the maintenance of Tom Collins House. Ongoing negotiations with the publishers, Angus & Robertson, reflected the editor’s sound relationship with the firm, publishers of ten of Drake-Brockman’s 23 publications during her lifetime. The last two anthologies of this period were prepared by the FAWWA, edited by some of its leading members, and published by the University of W.A. Press. Such anthologies served a dual function. On the one hand, they promoted the
writings of individual local writers, while on the other hand, they made a national statement that demonstrated the strength of Western Australian writing, which, in the late 1970s, came to be recognised as a strong expression of regional Australian literature.

As well as supporting individual writers and promoting Australian literature, the FAWWA initially worked to protect writers’ professional interests. When this work involved writers Australia-wide, much of it was done in conjunction with the other state sections of the FAW. The Western Australian Fellowship, however, initiated, in 1944, the successful appeal to the Commonwealth Literary Fund, which resulted in an increase in writers’ pension payments. Although it is frequently difficult to trace a link between the Fellowship's actions and subsequent policy changes, writers considered that their lobbying brought about changes in two other areas. Firstly, following its appeals to the Australian Broadcasting Commission for higher fees for talks and articles, there were increases in sums received by individual writers. Secondly, in the early years of the Fellowship, members had frequent discussions with the State government on obscenity laws in place in Western Australia. They made a strong case for the importance of literary value, rather than a concentration on persecution based on the narrow mores of the 1950s and 1960s. FAWWA members saw the absence of persecution in this State on the grounds of obscenity, as proof of the success of their arguments. Such attributions may be simply wishful thinking, as the reasons for decisions were seldom revealed. The FAWWA was certainly unsuccessful in fighting the centralisation of programming by the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the subsequent closure of the State-based Argonauts programme.

The Fellowship had little impact in general matters such as the wide use of syndicated material, although its appeal to Prime Minister Curtin did apparently encourage him to take steps to lessen the negative effect of the war-time paper shortages on the publication of Australian books. Where it lobbied most effectively was in matters concerning individual writers, such as the request to the University of W. A. to disregard anti-communist sentiment, and reinstate Prichard’s lectures on Australian literature. Although this did not occur, Prichard received some payment for preparation already undertaken. More successful
was the appeal to the *West Australian* newspaper, which saw Murdoch’s weekly letters and answers reinstated in spite of the newspaper’s decision to end the feature. One of the most successful campaigns undertaken by the FAW, Australia-wide, was the move to establish an Australian Society of Authors. Once this succeeded in 1963, there was little need for the FAWWA to lobby on behalf of writers’ professional needs, as this became the province of the Society. The local Fellowship did however, take part in the successful national campaign to initiate a Public Lending Right payment scheme for Australian authors.

For over twenty of the 40 years under consideration, the FAWWA’s endeavours were carried out against an internal atmosphere of intense dissension, as writers responded to the political tensions played out in Australian society during the years of World War II and the cold war. As an organisation whose members expressed the full gamut of political views, from Prichard’s unwavering communism to Gorman’s outspoken right-wing sentiments, it was unlikely that all would be peace and harmony, given the tendency of writers to use words to great effect. Consequently, the Fellowship lost members from both sides of the political divide during these years. This study has taken the approach that writers could be expected to be outspoken in such weighty matters; that members showed their support for each other in literary matters regardless of political tendencies; and that much other work was undertaken during this period regardless of the intermittent outbreaks of hostilities.

In fact, taking into account these differences of political opinion, the study of papers relating to the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia reveals the considerable influence that this small group of writers has had upon the story of the development of Australian literature in the State. Although some writers felt themselves distanced, the majority benefited from the support of the FAWWA. Australian writers, and their works, were promoted within schools and universities as well as in public events and publications. Additionally, through lobbying all levels of government and other bodies, the FAWWA brought the needs of Australian writers to the country’s decision-makers. While the Fellowship may not have been involved at a management level, in the dramatic changes occurring in Australia’s literary world during the 1970s, those changes
nevertheless reflected the deepest wishes of the founding members of the FAWWA. Australian literature was accepted and studied within universities, writers had access to funds to support their writing careers, while more avenues existed for the publication of their works, which were promoted publicly through festivals and other performance opportunities.

Further research

This survey opens the way for further research into other aspects of Western Australia’s literary world. Most apparent is the need to extend the present study of the FAWWA’s activities from 1980 to the present day. The last 33 years have brought many changes, both within the organisation and in the cultural milieu within which it operates. The beginnings of new literary groups, Australia-wide, which began in the 1960s, has continued in recent years. Most significant for the FAWWA was the decision of its committee members, in the early 1980s, to request that the Labor government buy the former home of Katharine Susannah Prichard in Greenmount and establish it as a writers’ centre.\(^1\) The formation of the autonomous Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation and Writers’ Centre in 1985 was followed, in 1995, by the development of the Peter Cowan Writers’ Centre on the Joondalup campus of Edith Cowan University, which has a vibrant creative writing faculty. The existence of three separate writers’ centres suits the combination of Perth’s extended metropolitan area and the widespread interest in writing among its population. It poses problems, however, for government funding bodies, which would prefer to deal with only one body. More recently, the centres combined to form the W.A. Writers’ Centre. Unfortunately, this was short-lived and now all three work independently, while still collaborating and offering reciprocal benefits to members of the other organisations. Indeed, the working relationships between other bodies within Perth’s writing world, such as writers’ centres, genre-specific groups, publishers and university faculty members, would prove a rewarding topic for further study.

As discussed, government plans to develop Servetus Street into a six-lane highway necessitated the eventual relocation and restoration of Tom Collins

House, in 1996. Subsequently, ownership of this Furphy house led the Fellowship into a further involvement with the State’s built heritage when, at the request of the Heritage Council of W.A., it took responsibility, in 2005, for the home built for Samuel and Mattie Furphy, relocating it to the Allen Park Heritage Precinct alongside Tom Collins House, and restoring it with funds from the University of W.A., State government and Lotterywest, to become the Mattie Furphy Centre for Creative Imagining. Ownership of heritage wooden buildings has proved to be more destabilising and time-consuming for the FAWWA in these recent years than in earlier times. Largely, this reflects the bureaucracy now required in the care of heritage buildings, as well as the severity of the upheaval of relocation, with the FAWWA unable to use Tom Collins House for over two years while restoration works continued.

This thesis also reveals several lacunae in the studies of individual Western Australian authors. Very few of the writers who played such important roles in the FAWWA have received serious attention. Writers like Henrietta Drake-Brockman deserve a study which will consider their literary output, together with their dedication to Australian literature, as manifested through their involvement with the FAWWA and other organisations. Research for this thesis uncovered hitherto unknown material, including Skinner's delightfully idiosyncratic letters to Drake-Brockman. When working with writers, there is usually an abundance of written material. This instance was no different, and the possibilities for further study that appeared during the research reinforce Mead’s suggestion for more investigation into regional promotion of Australian literature.

Working through the Fellowship, the first group of dedicated writers to emerge from Western Australia translated their own passion for writing into building a lively literary community. Despite their many differences, these early writers succeeded in shaping a group of separate individuals into a body that spoke on

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2 The relocation of both houses has been widely documented, especially in the local press. The fullest documentation, however, exists within the Conservation Plans for both Tom Collins House and Mattie Furphy House. The former was prepared by Drs Robyn Taylor and Dorothy Erickson with architect Murray Slavin, in 1996, while the latter was prepared by Dr Robyn Taylor and the thesis author in 2005. Both are held in the Bert Vickers Library in Tom Collins House. The author acted as Project Manager for both relocations and the subsequent restoration.

behalf of Western Australian writers, and worked within Perth’s cultural world to strengthen the literary life of the State. While fostering a positive approach to the creative opportunities offered by life in an isolated city, with a small population, they liaised with like-minded individuals and organisations, Australia-wide. The Fellowship they founded faced many challenges, during its first 40 years, from the anxieties and political disruptions of World War II, to the strain on its resources of money and time, when it became the owner of a small wooden cottage. In its final decade, it adapted to Australia’s expanding cultural infrastructure. The Western Australian section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers encouraged an awareness of Australian literature in the State supporting and promoting both established and aspiring writers.
Appendix One: Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA)

Committees 1938-1980

From its beginning in 1938 the FAWWA elected an Executive Committee consisting of President, Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, and up to eight Committee Members plus the Immediate past president as an *ex officio* member. In some years, no distinction was made between the positions of Senior and Junior Vice-President. Information in this Appendix derived from FAWWA Minutes, Circulars, newsletters. BL and TCHA.

1938–1939
Pres. John K. Ewers
SVP. James Pollard; JVP. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
Sec. Gavin Casey; Assistant Sec. George Mulgrue
Pub. Officer Norman Bartlett
Committee: Mary and Elizabeth Durack, Ted Mayman, Walter Murdoch, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Mollie Skinner, Jack Sorenson

1939–1940
Pres. James Pollard
SVP. Henrietta Drake-Brockman; JVP. Gavin Casey
Sec. George Mulgrue; Assistant Sec. Mervyn Cooke
Pub. Officer Norman Bartlett
Committee: Dr Andrew Clarke, Ethel Davies, Mr H.E.M. Flinn, Ted Mayman, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Mollie Skinner, John K. Ewers (*ex officio*)

1940–1941
Pres. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
SVP. Gavin Casey; JVP. John McLeod
Sec. Mervyn A. Cooke
Committee: Norman Bartlett, Dr Andrew Clarke, Ethel Davies, John K. Ewers, Mr H.E.M. Flinn, Mr T.R. Lewis, Ted Mayman, Mollie Skinner, Jack Sorenson, James Pollard (*ex officio*)

1941–1942
Pres. Gavin Casey
SVP. John McLeod; JVP. Mr H.E.M. Flinn
Committee: Ethel Davies, John K. Ewers, Ted Mayman, Mollie Skinner, Henrietta Drake-Brockman (*ex officio*)
1942–1943
Pres. John McLeod
SVP. Mr H.E.M. Flinn; JVP. William (Bill) Irwin
Sec./Treas. Stan Wilbur
Pub. Officer Bill Irwin
Committee: Mrs A. Evans, John K. Ewers, Alec King, Annie Mark, Mollie Skinner, John Thompson, Erle Wilson, Gavin Casey (ex officio)

1943–1944
Pres. Mr H.E.M. Flinn
SVP. John K. Ewers; JVP. Erle Wilson
Sec./Treas. Mrs A. Creed
Pub. Officer Ted Mayman
Committee: Ethel Davies, Annie Mark, Ted Mayman, Mollie Skinner, Mrs Weaver, John McLeod (ex officio)

1944–1945
Pres. Mr H.E.M. Flinn
SVP. John K. Ewers; JVP. Alec King
Sec. Mrs E. Cole
Pub. Officer John K. Ewers
Committee: Mrs A. Creed, Ethel Davies, Miss E. Hooton, Annie Mark, Peter Mantle, Mollie Skinner, John McLeod (ex officio)

1945–1946
Pres. John K. Ewers
SVP. John McLeod; JVP. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
Sec. Miss Turner
Treas. Dalton Fox
Pub. Officer Jack Sorenson
Committee: Paul Buddee, Ethel Davies, Miss E. Hooton, Annie Mark, James Pollard, Mollie Skinner, Mr H.E.M. Flinn (ex officio)
Hon. Aud. Mr Henshilwood

1946–1947
Pres. John K. Ewers
SVP. Paul Buddee; JVP. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
Pub. Officer Ted Mayman
Sec. Eileen Turner
Treas. Dalton Fox, c/- Bank of NSW.
Committee: Mr W.C. Edwards, Miss E. Hooton, Annie Mark, Daphne Mayman, James Pollard, Mollie Skinner, May Thomas, Trevor Tuckfield, Mr H.E.M. Flinn (ex officio)
Hon. Sol. Margaret Battye
Hon. Aud. Mr P. Henshilwood
1947‒1948
Pres.  Paul Buddee
SVP.  John K. Ewers;  JVP.  Trevor Tuckfield
Sec.  Eileen Turner
Treas.  Dalton Fox, c/- Bank of NSW.
Pub. Officer  Gerald (Gerry) Glaskin
Committee:  John Bottomley, John Goldsmith, Miss E. Hooton, Melva Lister,
Ted Mayman, Mollie Skinner, May Thomas, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Hon. Aud.  Mr P. Henshilwood

1948‒1949
Pres.  Paul Buddee
VP.  John K. Ewe
Sec.  Mrs Boyes
Treas.  Dalton Fox, c/- Bank of NSW.
Pub. Officer  Dorothy Casey
Committee:  Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Mr W. C. Edwards, Peter Gorman,
Irene Greenwood, James Pollard, Mr Salmon, Mollie Skinner, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Aud.  Mr P. Henshilwood
Legal Advisor. Margaret Battye

1949‒1950
Pres.  John K. Ewers
SVP.  Trevor Tuckfield,  JVP.  Mr F.B.(Bert) Vickers
Sec.  Blanche McKie
Treas.  Peter Gorman
Pub. Officer  Dorothy Casey
Committee:  Gavin Casey, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Doris Dyson, Irene
Greenwood, Mrs M. Lister, Daphne Mayman, James Pollard, Helen Helga
Wilson, Paul Buddee (ex officio)
Hon. Aud.  Mr P. Henshilwood
Hon. Sol.  Margaret Battye
Hon. Arch.  Harold Krantz

1950‒1951
Pres.  Peter Gorman
SVP.  Paul Buddee;  JVP.  Jack Harvey
Sec.  Blanche McKie; Daphne Mayman
Treas.  Peter Gorman
Pub. Officer  Dorothy Casey
Committee:  John Bottomley, Doris Dyson, Jean Ewers, Irene Greenwood,
David Hutchison, Mrs Lister, Daphne Mayman, Olive Pell, Mollie Skinner, Stan
Wilbur, Helen Helga Wilson, John K. Ewers (ex officio)

1951‒1952
Pres.  John K. Ewers
VPs.  Paul Buddee, Jack Harvey
1951‒1952 (cont.)
Sec. No Nominations
Treas. Fred Ashton
Committee: Doris Dyson, Jean Ewers, Irene Greenwood, David Hutchison,
Olive Pell, Mollie Skinner, Helen Helga Wilson
Hon. Aud. Lester Metcalfe-Agg
Hon. Sol. Mr. H.A Reid
Hon. Arch. Harold Krantz
[Note: There was no past president acting ex officio because of P. Gorman’s resignation from the FAWWA]

1952‒1953
Pres. John K. Ewers
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers; JVP. Jack Harvey
Sec. Marjorie Rees
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Lyndall Hadow
Committee: Marjorie Clarke, Jean Crowe, Irene Greenwood, Joan Jacoby,
Frank Larter, Ted Mayman, Olive Pell, John Rose, Mollie Skinner, Helen Helga Wilson

1953‒1954
Pres. Mr F. B. (Bert) Vickers
VPs. Irene Greenwood, Jack Harvey
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Lyndall Hadow
Sec. Marjorie Rees
Committee: Molly Asphar, Jean Crowe, Wilfred Dowsett, David Hutchison,
Joan Jacoby, Frank Larter, Olive Pell, Helen Helga Wilson, John K. Ewers (ex officio)

1954‒1955
Pres. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers,
SVP. W. Dowsett, JVP. David Hutchison
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Lyndall Hadow
Sec. Marjorie Rees
Committee: Paul Buddee, Jean Crowe, Jack Harvey, Joan Jacoby, Daphne Mayman, Olive Pell, Dorothy Lucie Sanders, John K. Ewers (ex officio)

1955‒1956
Pres. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
VPs. John K. Ewers, Mary Durack
Pub. Officer Jean Crowe
Treas. Fred Ashton
Committee: Molly Asphar, Jean Crowe, Irene Greenwood, Lyndall Hadow,
David Hutchison, Joan Jacoby, Olive Pell, Helen Helga Wilson, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers (ex officio)
1956–1957
Pres. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
VPs. John K. Ewers, Mary Durack
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Jean Crowe
Committee: G. Casey, Lyndall Hadow, David Hutchison, Olive Pell, Donald Stuart, Vincent Serventy, Helen Helga Wilson, F.B. (Bert) Vickers (ex officio)

1957–1958
Pres. Vincent Serventy
VPs. John K. Ewers, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Enid Hewett
Pub. Officer Jean Crowe
Committee: Irene Greenwood, Lyndall Hadow, Eleanor Page-Smith, Donald Stuart, Helen Helga Wilson, Henrietta Drake-Brockman (ex officio)

1958–1959
Pres. Vincent Serventy
VPs. Mary Durack; F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Enid Harrison (née Hewett)
Pub. Irene Greenwood
Committee: Lyndall Hadow, Eleanor Page-Smith, Donald Stuart, Henrietta Drake-Brockman (ex officio)

1959–1960
Pres. Mary Durack
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers; JVP. John Joseph Jones
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Enid Harrison
Pub. Officer Irene Greenwood
Committee: Elizabeth Backhouse, Freda Carmody, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Gerald Glaskin, Mr D.W. Howard, Eleanor Page-Smith, Donald Stuart, Helen Helga Wilson, Vincent Serventy (ex officio)

1960–1961
Pres. Mary Durack
VPs. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers, John Joseph Jones
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Enid Harrison
Pub. Officer Irene Greenwood
Committee: Elizabeth Backhouse, Freda Carmody, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Gerald Glaskin, Mr D.W Howard, Eleanor Page-Smith, Donald Stuart, Helen Helga Wilson, Vincent Serventy (ex officio)
1961‒1962
Pres. John Joseph Jones
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers; JVP. Elizabeth Backhouse
Sec. Enid Harrison
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Eleanor Page-Smith
Committee: William Jamieson Brown, Freda Carmody, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Irene Greenwood, Alexandra Hasluck, Mr D. W. Howard, Mr T.A.G. Hungerford, Helen Helga Wilson, Mary Durack (ex officio)

1962‒1963
Pres. John Joseph Jones
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers; JVP. Elizabeth Backhouse
Sec. Enid Harrison
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Eleanor Page-Smith
Committee: William Jamieson Brown, Freda Carmody, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Irene Greenwood, Donald Stuart, Helen Helga Wilson, Mary Durack (ex officio).

1963‒1964
Pres. Vincent Serventy
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Sec. Miss M Haynes
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Eleanor White
Committee: Elizabeth Backhouse, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Mary Durack, Ken Eades, Irene Greenwood, Alexandra Hasluck, Eleanor Page-Smith, Olive Pell, John Joseph Jones (ex officio)

1964‒1965
Pres. Vincent Serventy
SVP. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers; JVP. Henrietta Drake-Brockman
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Miss Haynes
Pub. Officer/Ed. Eleanor White
Committee: Mary Durack, Ken Eades, Nene Gare, Irene Greenwood, Alexandra Hasluck, Frank Larter, Eleanor Page-Smith, Olive Pell, Os Watson; Mr J. Honniball, Eleanor White, John Joseph Jones (ex officio); E Backhouse resigned from Committee during year.
Hon. Arch. Marshall Clifton
Hon. Sol. Peter Atkins
Hon. Aud. John Serventy

1965‒1966
Pres. Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
SVP. Mary Durack; JVP. Olive Pell
Treas. Mrs C. Marriott
1965‒1966 (cont.)
Committee: Ken Eades, Dorothy Hewett, Nene Gare, Olive Pell, Frank Larter, Marjorie Rees, Os Watson, Eleanor White

No nominations for Secretary.

1966‒1967
Pres. Mary Durack
VPs. Olive Pell, Dorothy Hewett
Ed. Eleanor White
Pub. Officer T.A.G. Hungerford
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Rosalind Jennings
Committee: Elizabeth Backhouse, John Barnes, Gerald Glaskin, Bill Grono, John Joseph Jones (granted leave), Mervyn Lilley, Eleanor Page-Smith, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers (ex officio)

1967‒1968
Pres. Dorothy Hewett
VPs. John Barnes, Bill Grono
Sec. Anne Holbrook
Treas. Fred Ashton
Committee: Howard Gaskin, Irene Greenwood, David Hutchison, Julie Lewis, Mervyn Lilley, Eleanor Page-Smith, Olive Pell, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers, Mary Durack (ex officio)
Hon. Arch. Marshall Clifton
Hon. Aud. John Serventy
Hon. Sol. Peter Atkins

1968‒1969
Pres. Gerald Glaskin
VPs. Eleanor Page-Smith, Mr F.B. (Bert) Vickers
Pub. Officer, Ed. Dorothy Brooks
Treas. Fred Ashton
Sec. Ann Gaskin
Committee: Irene Greenwood, David Hutchison, Julie Lewis, Mervyn Lilley, Olive Pell, Vera Whittington, Mary Durack (co-opted), Dorothy Lilley (née Hewett) (ex officio)
Hon. Arch. Marshall Clifton
Hon. Aud. J. Serventy
Hon. Sol. P. Atkins

1969‒1970
Pres. Olive Pell
VPs. Dorothy Lilley (née Hewett), Robert Chambers
Sec. Betty McLerie, Assist. Sec. Daphne Plant
Treas. Fred Ashton, Assist. Treas. Cyril Phillips
Pub. Officer Hal Colebatch
1969‒1970 (cont.)
Pub. Relations, Ed. Andrew Burke
Committee: Mardy Amos, Hal Colebatch, Mary Durack, Mervyn Lilley, Joan Williams, Vera Whittington
Hon. Arch. Marshall Clifton
Hon. Aud. J. Serventy
Hon. Sol. P. Atkins

1970‒1971
Pres. Olive Pell
VPs. Nicholas Hasluck, Andrew Burke
Sec. Kaye Over
Pub. Officer Robert Chambers
Ed. Natalie Harvey
Committee: Richard Beilby, Hal Colebatch, Mary Durack, Mrs P. Ewan, Elizabeth Jolley, Daphne Plant, Vera Whittington, Joan Williams,

1971‒1972
Pres. Joan Williams
VPs. Richard Beilby, Andrew Burke
Sec. Kaye Over
Pub. Officer Olive Pell (ex officio)
Ed. Natalie Harvey
Committee: Richard Beilby, Robert Chambers, Alec Choate, Hal Colebatch, Nicholas Hasluck, Peter Jefferies, Daphne Plant, Eleanor White

1972‒1973
Pres. Joan Williams
VPs. Donald Stuart, Barbara York Main
Sec. Mrs Kit Hayles
Treas. Fred Ashton
Pub. Officer Olive Pell (ex officio)
Ed. Megan O’Brien
Committee: Robert Chambers, Hal Colebatch, Nicholas Hasluck, Peter Jefferies, Elizabeth Jolley, C.B. (Mack) McKenzie, Eleanor White

1973‒1974
Pres. Donald Stuart
VP. Barbara York Main
Sec. Megan O’Brien
Treas. CB (Mack) McKenzie
Pub. Officer Olive Pell
Ed. Megan O’Brien
Committee: Alan Alexander, Robert Chambers, Hal Colebatch, Elizabeth Jolley, Glen Phillips, Eleanor White, Joan Williams (ex officio)
1974–1975
Pres.  Donald Stuart
VP.  Barbara York Main, Robert Chambers
Sec.  Beryl Boardman
Treas.  CB (Mack) McKenzie
Pub. Officer  Olive Pell
Ed.  Megan O’Brien
Committee:  Alan Alexander, Hal Colebatch, Elizabeth Jolley, Glen Phillips, Eleanor White, Fay Zwicky, Joan Williams (ex officio)

1975–1976
Pres.  Eleanor White
VPs.  Robert Chambers, Glen Phillips
Sec.  Beryl Boardman
Treas.  CB (Mack) McKenzie, Assist. Treas. Pattie Watts
Pub. Officer  Olive Pell
Ed.  Honor Pusenjak
Committee:  Alan Alexander, Hal Colebatch, Connie Miller, Daphne Plant, Joan Williams, Donald Stuart (ex officio)

1976–1977
Pres.  Eleanor White
VPs.  Glen Phillips, Don Grant
Sec.  Stella Brearley
Treas.  CB (Mack) McKenzie
Pub. Officer  Pattie Watts
Ed.  Megan O’Brien
Committee:  Alan Alexander, Caroline Caddy, Robert Chambers, Jean Crowe, Daphne Plant, Charlie Staples, Joan Williams, Vic Williams, Donald Stuart (ex officio)

1977–1978
Pres.  Glen Phillips
VPs.  Richard Beilby, Daphne Plant
Sec.  Jean Crowe, Assist. Sec.  Beryl Boardman
Treas.  Kevin Harris
Pub. Officer  Pattie Watts
Ed.  Jean Crowe
Committee:  William Jamieson Brown, Larry Hunter, CB (Mack) McKenzie, Shane McCauley, Amanda Nolan, Eleanor White (ex officio)
Poetry Workshop Sec.  Caroline Caddy

1978–1979
Pres.  Glen Phillips
VPs.  Joan Williams, Shane McCauley
Sec.  Ethel Webb, Assist. Sec.  Beryl Boardman
Treas.  Kevin Harris,
Grants Officer (Assist. Treas.)  Larry Hunter
Pub. Officer  Pattie Watts
1978–1979 (cont.)
Ed. Jean Crowe
Committee: William Jamieson Brown, Daphne Plant, Vic Williams, Eleanor White (ex officio)

1979–1980
Pres. Joan Williams
VPs. Daphne Plant, Brian Dibble
Sec. Ethel Webb
Treas. Kevin Harris, Assist. Treas. Mahl Winter
Grants Officer Larry Hunter
Pub. Officer Pattie Watts
Ed. Enid Forrestal
Committee: Jean Crowe, Lloyd Davies, Phyll Ewan, Don Grant, Shane McCauley, Glen Phillips (ex officio)
Coordinator for Young Writers’ Group Trevor Todd
Appendix Two  Biographies of major writers and FAWWA members

This Appendix contains brief biographies of writers who played significant roles in the first 40 years of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia, either as presidents or active members. References for each writer follow the biography.


All biographies were also cross-referenced with the Australian literature resource website http://www.austlit.edu.au  Accessed between January and May 2013.

Norman Bartlett (1908–1992)

Born in the United Kingdom in 1908, Bartlett came to Western Australia with his parents and older sister in 1911. At the end of World War I, following his father’s death in the battle of the Somme, the remaining family returned to the UK, in 1919, only to migrate to Western Australia once more in 1924.

Studying journalism at the University of Western Australia, Bartlett won the Lovekin Prize for Journalism in 1936, together with a History prize for an essay on the American War of Independence. After being awarded a Diploma in Journalism by the University in 1937, he completed a Bachelor of Arts with second class Honours two years later. In 1940, he won the Katherine Moss Prize in English Literature, and was asked by the University to give several lectures in Australian literature.
Bartlett wrote newspaper articles under the pen-name of ‘Norbar’. He worked as a journalist with the South-West Times, then the West Australian and the Daily News, as an editorial writer, until he began his war service with the RAAF in 1941. An Intelligence Officer with the RAAF, Bartlett went on to become Public Relations Officer for the RAAF in New Guinea, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. After the war, he held a number of posts including literary editor and leader writer with Sydney Daily Telegraph, Press Attaché in Bangkok then New Delhi, and Information Counselor in the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. In the early 1970s, he was Liaison Officer for Economics in the News and Information Bureau in Australia House, London. Bartlett wrote dramatized versions of the pearl industry and gold mining in Australia. The Australian government commissioned him to write the official history of the two hundred years’ relationship between Australia and the United States, in the mid-1970s. In 1977, Bartlett gained a Doctor of Philosophy in history at the Australian National University. Norman Bartlett died in Perth in 1992, aged 84 years.

Bartlett’s publications: 1 novel, 1 collection of his writings, 2 dramatised historical studies, 1 travel book, 1 commissioned history. Bartlett edited two collections of war memories.


References:


http://www.auslit.edu.au

Paul Buddee (1913–2002)

Born in Mount Lawley in 1913, Paul Buddee was educated at Perth Boys School and Claremont Teachers’ College, teaching in country and city primary schools until his retirement from the Education Department in 1976. He was
made a member of the College of Education in 1963. Buddee joined the Fellowship in its early years, but soon enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces, serving in Northern Australia and Tobruk. He published a book of war poems as a result of these experiences.

Returning to Perth after the war, Buddee became involved again in the FAWWA until country teaching and ill-health intervened. He was FAWWA president in 1949, playing an important role in the acquisition of Joseph Furphy’s wooden cottage, of which he was a joint trustee with John K. Ewers. As a teacher, writer and promoter of Australian books, he enthusiastically supported the establishment of children’s libraries and was part of the committee planning Children’s Book Week from 1945 to 1948, and of the early Children’s Book Council. During his time in government schools, Buddee ensured that his students had access to a library of books. In the 1960s and 1970s, Buddee turned to historical fiction, writing about the boys sent to Australia from Parkhurst Prison in the 1840s. He also wrote about the Fenians who escaped from Fremantle Prison. His historical research was used by other authors and film-makers, and is now lodged in the State Library of Western Australia.

Buddee wrote three series of novels for children and young adults. The Air Patrol young adult series included four novels, as did the Peter Devlin series of children’s novels, while the Ann Rankin children’s series consisted of eight novels. In all, Buddee wrote over 20 books for children and young adults.

Buddee was also a flautist, composer and conductor of school orchestras. He first performed on radio in 1927, and won the woodwind section of the 1939 Western Australian musical festival competitions.

Buddee died in Perth in 2002.

Buddee’s publications: 17 children’s novels, 1 collection children’s stories, 1 FAWWA Presidential Address, 1 historical novel, 2 historical studies, 1 book of poetry.

Gavin Casey (1907–1964)

Born in Kalgoorlie in 1907, Gavin Casey was the older of two boys. As Town surveyor for Kalgoorlie from 1900, Casey’s father was a part-time writer who loved books. Both parents died when Casey was only eighteen. Educated at local schools, Casey became an apprentice to the Kalgoorlie municipal electric light company, before beginning studies at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, which he failed to complete. Coming to Perth in the late 1920s, Casey worked as a motorbike salesman. During the depression, he returned to Kalgoorlie working wherever he could including in the mines. These early experiences provided him with much of the material for his later stories. In the early 1930s, he became the Kalgoorlie representative of the Perth-based Sunday newspaper, the Mirror, and the Sunday Times. Casey’s short stories, were rejected at first. However, they soon appeared in the Bulletin and the Australian Journal.. His best known story, Rich Stew, won the Bulletin prize for a humorous short story, while Mail Run East won a general prize. In 1940, Casey worked as a journalist and features writer with the Daily News.

In World War II, Casey was enlisted for only one year, returning to Perth to work as the State publicity censor before being sent to the Pacific in 1944 as a writer with the Department of Information. When the war ended he was head of the Australian News and Information Bureau in New York, then in London. In 1947, Casey returned to Canberra as the head publicity officer with the Bureau. Leaving this position in 1950, he worked as a freelance journalist for six years in Sydney. Casey returned to Perth in 1956, resuming his involvement with the FAWWA. FAWWA president, H.E.M. Flinn, described Casey as ‘one of the best means of enlivening a meeting which promised to be dull.’ However, his last

References:

M. Allen. ‘The Funeral Service for Paul Buddee’. Typescript. TCHA.
B. Bennett, with P. Cowan, J. Hay and S. Ashford. Western Australian Writing, 1990, pp. 18-20.
http://www.auslit.edu.au
years were marred by ill-health. Casey had divorced his first wife in 1947, marrying his secretary from New York. They had two sons and it was a struggle for Casey to support them by his writing. The writing community in several states worked to raise funds to help support his sons


Casey's publications: 9 novels, 2 collections short stories, 1 non-fiction prose.


References:
http://www.auslit.edu.au

 Henrietta Drake-Brockman (1901–1968)

Born in Perth in 1901, Henrietta Drake-Brockman was the only child of Western Australia’s first Public Service Commissioner, while her mother, Roberta Jull, was Perth’s second woman doctor. Drake-Brockman was educated at a boarding school in Scotland, returning to Perth at the age of twelve. World War I interfered with plans to send her back to Scotland, and she finished her education at a boarding school in New South Wales.

Determined to be an artist, Drake-Brockman studied art with Henri Van Raalte in his Perth studio, also studying French and English literature at the University.
In 1921, aged only twenty, she married Geoffrey Drake-Brockman and joined him on his travels through the north of the State, in his role as Commissioner for the North-West. Under the *nom de plume* of Henry Drake, Drake-Brockman wrote short stories and articles based on what she saw in her travels. From 1934, Drake-Brockman wrote under her own name, receiving immediate recognition, with her first three novels commended or winning places in *Bulletin* competitions. Admitting to being ‘fascinated’ by the theatre, Drake-Brockman also wrote plays, one, *Men Without Wives*, winning the drama section of the Commonwealth Sesquicentenary competitions in 1938. Perhaps her most lasting work was her research into the Batavia wreck in the Abrolhos. This became the basis for her novel *The Wicked and the Fair* and the historical work *Voyage to Disaster: the Life of Franciscus Pelsaert*.

Described by author Max Harris as ‘a powerful and eloquent woman’, Drake-Brockman played a dynamic role in Perth’s cultural life. She was part of the group of writers who, in 1938, planned the establishment of the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Perth. As a member of the original FAW in Sydney, Drake-Brockman suggested that Western Australians would benefit from being a part of that body while remaining autonomous. At her urging, in the 1950s, the first meeting of state presidents was held to officially form a federal Fellowship Council. Although she did not totally support the FAWWA’s ownership of Joseph Furphy’s cottage, she played a major role in maintaining that building as a part of Australia’s literary heritage. As well as her contribution to the literary community, she was involved in theatre and university life.

Drake-Brockman died suddenly in Perth in 1968.

Drake-Brockman’s publications: 3 anthologies (editor), 1 collection short stories, 5 novels, 10 plays, 1 presidential address, 1 historical work, 1 non-fiction prose, 1 writer’s profile.

(Dame) Mary Durack (1913–1994)

Born in Adelaide in February 1913, Durack came to Western Australia with her family as a child.

Inheriting her family’s proud pioneering spirit, Durack found inspiration for her writing in the family’s connection with life in the Kimberleys. Educated at Loreto Convent in Perth, she and her sister spent two years (1934 – 1936) living on the family’s stations, Argyle and Ivanhoe in the East Kimberleys. During this time, Mary wrote articles on station life for the West Australian, the Western Mail and the Bulletin. From her interactions with Aborigines on the stations Mary developed a lifelong dedication to Aboriginal causes, including years as an executive member of the Aboriginal Cultural Foundation.

After a year overseas with Elizabeth, Mary worked on the staff of the Western Mail, writing for country women and children as the columnist ‘Virgilia’. In December 1938, she married aviator Captain Horace Miller who, in 1928, had co-founded MacRobertson Miller Airlines. They had six children. In 1955, Mary first ventured into adult fiction with the novel Keep Him My Country, later transforming the love story from the novel into the libretto for the opera Dalgerie, to music by Western Australian composer James Penberthy.
Best known for the family sagas *Kings in Grass Castles* (1959) and *Sons in the Saddles* (1983), based on numerous family sources, including surviving stock and station books and her father’s diaries, Durack also wrote historical biographies including the stage monologue *Swan River Saga* (1975) written in collaboration with actor Nita Pannell. This became the historical novel, *To be Heirs Forever* (1979). At the time of her death, Durack was working with Barron films on the screen play for *Kings in Grass Castles*, the television series of which appeared in 1998. *The Rock and the Sand* (1969), Durack’s record of the hitherto unwritten history of the WA missionary endeavour, was received with high critical acclaim.

In 1965, Durack’s book *The Courteous Savage: Yagan of Swan River* (1964) was commended by the Children’s Book Council. She received an Order of the British Empire for her services to literature in 1966, being made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1977 and a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1989. The breadth of Durack’s interests and writings is reflected in the honours she received during her lifetime from a range of institutions, such as Curtin University, International PEN Australia, the Australian Irish Heritage Association of WA, and the Stockman’s Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, of which she was a director and patron.


Durack’s publications: 1 book of early poetry, 8 children’s books with her sister Elizabeth Durack, 8 non-fiction prose/history, 2 family history, 1 novel, 4 scripts (incl. an opera libretto).


References:
(1 family history appeared after the publication of this reference.)
T. Kotai-Ewers. ‘Mary Durack’ in the Celebrating Western Australia’s Creative Women Project, Dr Robyn Taylor, ed. publication pending.
John K. Ewers (1904–1978)

Born in Subiaco in 1904, John Keith Ewers was educated at Perth Modern School, and Claremont Teachers’ College, with some studies at the University of Western Australia. Close friends and family knew Ewers as ‘Keith’, although some writing friends, such as Drake-Brockman, always called him ‘John’, a distinction which, at times, proved confusing. Ewers always made it clear that he wrote under the name of John K. While still at school, Ewers knew that he wanted to be a writer. Becoming a primary school teacher, he taught at one-teacher country schools during the 1920s. The experiences of these years provided much of the material for short stories and his later wheat belt novels. Returning to metropolitan schools after 1929, Ewers became increasingly involved with Australia’s writing world, corresponding with writers around Australia. His first novel, Money Street, was published in 1933.

In 1947, Ewers gave up teaching and became a full-time writer, frequently travelling on assignments for Walkabout magazine. With the Sun on My Back (1953) was an account of his travels in the north of the State, especially one with American dancer Ted Shawn and Queensland-born raconteur, Bill Harney, a fervent champion of the indigenous cause. This book shared first place in the Commonwealth Jubilee literary competition with Tom Inglis Moore’s study of Australian literature, published by Angus & Robertson in 1971, as Social Patterns in Australian Literature. In the 1950s, Ewers began working part-time as editor of correspondence courses presented by the Western Australian Technical School.

Although not a journalist, Ewers had short stories, articles and poems published in various Australian newspapers and magazines, including regular columns on Australian literature in local newspapers, under several pseudonyms. He also
became known as a broadcaster for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and a lecturer on Australian literature with the Adult Education Board. His writing output spread over several genres and included *Creative Writing in Australia* (1945), an early, easily-accessible survey of Australian literature, which was subsequently revised in 1962 and 1963. Like his primary and secondary grammar books, *Creative Writing* was frequently set as a textbook for Australian students. Throughout his life, Ewers demonstrated his belief in the value of Australian literature through his involvement with the Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia. Although he left the committee in 1958, he continued to play an active part in the FAWWA’s activities, being especially committed to the maintenance of Tom Collins House.


Ewers’ publications: 5 novels, 1 collection of short stories, 2 books of poetry, 4 local histories, one of which (*The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle*), was reprinted in a revised form in 1971, 1 autobiography, 2 children’s books, 1 critical study; 1 literary study, 2 Presidential Addresses. Plus 2 primary school English texts, 2 series of Secondary school English texts.


References:
[http://www.auslit.edu.au](http://www.auslit.edu.au)
Gerald Glaskin (1923–2000)

Born in Perth in 1923, Gerald (Gerry) Glaskin was the oldest of seven children. Educated at Perth Modern School, Glaskin left school early, finding work in order to help family finances. He enrolled in the Royal Australian Navy in 1941. Invalided out in 1943, following a ship-board accident which damaged his arms, Glaskin was hospitalised in Western Australia’s Hollywood Military Hospital. Here he returned to his early passion, writing. In his autobiographical novel *Lion in the Sun* (1960), Glaskin attributed his situation to the protagonist, Geoffrey Graham. Still unable to use his arms, Glaskin dictated his first stories to the man in the neighbouring bed, a soldier whose legs were paralysed. All the twelve stories written during this time were sold by the time Glaskin left hospital.

A return to civilian life where he worked as a sales statistician left Glaskin unfulfilled. He succeeded in enlisting with the Royal Australian Air Force, in spite of his previous injuries, and trained as a navigator in Canada. He returned to Perth and a series of clerical positions. In 1946, one of his stories won third place in the Australian School of Journalism short story competition. Before taking up work in Singapore, in 1948, Glaskin spent six months writing his first novel, *A World of Our Own*. Published in London in 1955, following a great deal of editing, this book was a best-seller in Europe. Glaskin moved into stockbroking in Singapore, returning to Perth in 1954 to recover from serious illness. While convalescing, he wrote his second novel *A Minor Portrait*, published in England in 1957. This book sold six thousand hard cover copies and 75 thousand in paperback, in England and Europe. This was to become the pattern for Glaskin’s books, many of which were published in translation in Holland, France, Germany and Scandinavian countries.

Glaskin continued to work in Singapore until, in the late 1950s, he became a full-time writer. From this point he divided his time between living in Holland and returning to Perth. His lack of acknowledgement in Australia may be due to the confronting themes of his books, which first appeared in the fifties when Australian attitudes, especially to homosexuality, were still very narrow. Jeremy Fisher described Glaskin’s 1965 novel *No End to the Way* as Australia’s first homosexual novel. Written in the second person, under the pseudonym of Neville Jackson, the book was banned in Australia, while it was published most
successfully in Europe and America. Glaskin’s reputation as a ‘difficult’ author also proved a stumbling block in later years. Dogged by ill-health caused by his war injuries and aggravated by later accidents, Glaskin died in Perth in 2000.

Glaskin’s publications: 9 novels (including one under the name of Neville Jackson), 3 novella, 1 children’s novel, 3 scripts, 2 non-fiction prose, 1 collection of short stories, 2 autobiographies.


References:
B. Bennett, with P. Cowan, J. Hay and S. Ashford. Western Australian Writing, 1990, pp. 54–55.

Dorothy Hewett (1923–2002)

Born in the Western Australian wheat-belt town of Wickepin in 1923, Dorothy Hewett was educated at Perth College and the University of Western Australia. Hewett began writing when still at school and, when she was nineteen, one of her poems was published in Meanjin. She had a prodigious talent, writing poetry, plays, novels and a memoir. She joined the Communist Party of Australia in 1945, leaving it, in 1968, as a protest against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. For some years Hewett wrote political articles for communist newspapers. Her fiction writing reflected her political beliefs, with her first novel Bobbin’ Up being considered as a classic example of social realism.

In 1944, while still a student at the University, Hewett married fellow communist and lawyer, Lloyd Davies. She left him four years later, travelling to Sydney with
Les Flood. When that relationship broke up, she returned to Perth to continue her studies, marrying merchant seaman and poet, Merv Lilley, in 1960. Hewett joined the FAWWA committee in 1965, when she was lecturing in the English department at the University, and edited the 1973 anthology *Sandgropers*, prepared by the Fellowship, and published by the University of Western Australia Press. Hewett lived in Sydney for the last two decades of her life.

From the age of twenty-two, Hewett received many prizes and awards. Her poetry collections *Peninsula* (1994), *Collected Poems* (1996) and *Halfway up the Mountain* (2001) won the W.A. Premier’s Poetry Prize, while the memoir *Wild Card* shared the Western Australian Historical and Critical Studies Award in 1991. The Literature Board of the Australia Council granted her a total of eight fellowships and, in 1988, a lifetime Emeritus Fellowship. Paul Keating gave her a "Keating" fellowship. These made it possible for Hewett to devote herself full-time to her writing. In 1986, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to literature, ten years later receiving an honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Western Australia. The extent of her contribution to Australian literature is demonstrated by the publication, in recent years, of collections of Hewett’s poems, prose, plays and selected critical essays.

Hewett died at her home in the Blue Mountains in 2002

Hewett’s publications: 7 volumes of poetry, another with Western Australian poet, John Kinsella, 3 novels, 2 collections of short stories, 21 plays, 1 critical work.


References:


T. Kotai-Ewers. ‘Dorothy Hewett’ in the Celebrating Western Australia’s Creative Women Project, Dr Robyn Taylor, ed. publication pending.
Katharine Susannah Prichard (1883–1969)

Born in Fiji in 1883, Katharine Susannah Prichard spent her early years there, in Tasmania and in Melbourne. Educated at home before gaining a half-scholarship to the South Melbourne College, Prichard was unable to attend university because of the family's finances. She became a governess first in Gippsland and later in country New South Wales. These experiences provided material for Prichard’s writing, with a serial appearing in New Idea in 1906. The following year her father committed suicide.

From 1908 to 1916, Prichard worked as a journalist, in England for the Melbourne Herald, in Australia as editor of that newspaper's women’s pages, followed by five years in England, Paris and America. In 1915, her novel The Pioneers won the Hodder & Staunton All-Empire prize, and she returned to Australia as a celebrated author. Prichard worked on Black Opal between 1916 and 1919, while learning more of socialism and communism, and becoming part of a circle of writers that included Nettie and Vance Palmer, Hilda and Louis Esson. In 1919, Prichard married Captain Hugo Throssell and they moved to Western Australia, building a house in Greenmount.

For Prichard, the 1920s were productive years. Two years after helping found the Western Australian branch of the Communist Party, in 1922, her only child, Ric was born. Four novels appeared during the 1920s, with one, Coonardoo, sharing first prize in the 1928 Bulletin competition. The previous year, her play, Brumby Innes had won the Triad competition. Working Bullocks appeared in 1926. In 1933, Prichard sailed to Europe with her sister. While she was in Moscow collecting material for her book The Real Russia, her husband
committed suicide, having gone deeply into debt. Arriving back after the long sea voyage, Prichard was frail and distraught. However, she had to keep writing to support her son. She helped establish the Australian Writers’ League (1934) and was president in 1937. In 1938, she founded the Modern Women’s Club and was a foundation member of the FAWWA. Intimate Strangers, the tragic story of the depression years, an early version of which she feared had contributed to Hugo’s suicide, appeared in 1937.

During the 1940s, Prichard produced her goldfields trilogy, the books which most clearly belong to the social realist tradition. For Prichard, writing and politics were always intertwined. The years of World War II and the following Cold War involved her in more political writing, including ‘agit-prop’ plays, lectures and working for the peace movement and nuclear disarmament. Throughout these years, the anti-communist sentiment in Australia resulted in police raids and accusations that her books were merely propaganda.

Living in Greenmount, some distance from Perth, left Prichard increasingly isolated in her later years. In 1963, her autobiography, Child of the Hurricane was published. The writing of her final novel, Subtle Flame, was interrupted by a stroke, and only appeared in 1967, after she learned to write again.

Prichard died at her home in 1969.

Prichard’s publications: 13 plays, 16 novels, 2 collections of verse, 1 autobiography, 4 collections of short stories, 5 political pamphlets or lectures, posthumous selected collections of her stories, journalism, essays, and addresses. Prichard also had significant pieces published in a number of journals and particularly Australian New Writing which she co-edited. Her works were translated into several languages.

FAWWA committee: 1938–1940.

References:
Vincent Serventy (1916–2007)

Born in Bickley in 1916, Vincent Serventy was the youngest of the eight children of Croatian migrants. Serventy was educated at local State schools, Perth Modern School, the University of Western Australia and Claremont Teachers’ College. His early years were spent wandering in the bush around Bickley and Cannington. When the family moved to Subiaco, Serventy made Kings Park his playground. Family life encouraged Serventy’s interest in the scientific study of nature. His oldest brother, Dominic (‘Dom’) started a family newspaper to which they all contributed. In 1924, Dominic was the driving force behind the formation of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club. After studying at Cambridge University, he went on to became a leading ornithologist.

Serventy graduated from the University in geology and mathematics. In his final years, he studied part-time, attending Claremont Teachers’ College at the same time. He taught the Education Department classes at the Western Australian Museum, continuing a connection with the museum that he had developed during his school years. As a teacher he encouraged active participation by the students, rather than teacher-directed learning. Serventy taught science and mathematics at Northam High School, Perth Modern School and Claremont Teacher’s College before resigning in 1951 to travel overseas for five years, living on his writing. Returning, he married Caroline Darbyshire, then advisory teacher with Music, Drama and Speech staff in the Education Department. He
returned to Claremont Teachers’ College in charge of teaching science and mathematics.

Throughout his teaching career, Serventy remained actively involved in wildlife and conservation. As president of the Western Australian Naturalists’ Club in 1946, he initiated the popular annual Wild Life Shows. In 1959, he was the science member of the newly-founded National Trust. Over the years, he fought against development in Kings Park, resumption of parts of the Swan River for roads, and logging in native forests.

Serventy’s two passions were conservation and writing. In the late 1950s, he joined the FAWWA, becoming president in 1957 and again in 1963. During this second term, he left Perth for Sydney when, in 1964, Frank Packer invited him to travel around Australia with his family, in a caravan, filming for the series Nature’s Walkabout, to be shown on Channel Nine. Staying in Sydney, Serventy became increasingly involved in the Wild Life Preservation Society, while his wife helped establish a friends group for the Australian Museum.

The next 42 years were a kaleidoscope of public appearances, fighting in a wide range of conservation battles and writing most of the 62 publications listed in his autobiography. Seven of these were written with his wife, Carol. In 1974, he was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion, and the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1976.


Serventy’s Publications: (As listed on the AusLit website) 10 literary works consisting of 3 books of poetry, 4 autobiography, 2 children’s fiction, 1 non-fiction prose. As stated above, Serventy’s autobiography lists 62 publications plus two German translations.


References:


Mollie Skinner (1876–1955)

Born in Perth in 1876, Mollie Skinner was taken to London at the age of two when her father, Captain James Skinner, returned to a position there. She did not return to Perth until 1900. Educated at the Edinburgh Ladies College, Skinner had to leave school at the age of eleven, when trachoma forced her to remain in a darkened room until she was fifteen. Skinner’s eyesight continued to deteriorate, leaving her virtually blind in her final years. In spite of this handicap, before returning to Western Australia, she began the two strands of her future career. In order to support herself, Skinner began nursing training. At the same time, following her love of story-telling, she sent her writings to various journals, with her first article printed in London in The Hospital, and the Daily News.

Back in Perth in 1901, Skinner won second prize for a short story competition. When her father died in 1902, she became the family’s breadwinner, working as social columnist for the Morning Herald. Still nursing, she opened the first hospital in Wagin in 1906. Then, in 1909, Skinner made a second voyage to London, completing midwifery training and teaching at the Maternity Nursing Association run by Matron Sybil Dauney. Back in Perth, she opened the St. Helen’s Maternity Hospital. Her midwifery dictionary, Midwifery Made Easy, appeared in 1912. Dauney died that year, and Skinner went to London for a third time, to continue Dauney’s work in London’s slums. The strain of this work drove her to take refuge with family members in India. Spending most of the war years there, she served in a military nursing unit and wrote the novel Letters from a V.A.D. (1918). Returning to Perth in 1917, Skinner and fellow nurse Nellie Beakbane, after one unsuccessful attempt, opened a rest home in Darlington. It was here that English novelist D. H. Lawrence and his wife
holidayed in 1922. Lawrence praised Skinner’s writing, suggesting she send him an Australian novel and promising to help find a publisher. Receiving *The House of Ellis* in 1923, Lawrence reworked it into *The Boy in the Bush*, which was published under their joint names in 1924. Much to Skinner’s chagrin this novel remained the one for which she was best known. Her novel *Black Swans* appeared in 1925. Foundation membership of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) provided friendships with fellow writers and the opportunities to ‘talk to someone who knows something about writing.’ Her radio play *Fear* won second prize in the Western Australian Drama Festival in 1938. In 1947, her novel *Behold Thy Son* appeared. Based on her experiences as relief nurse on Aboriginal missions during World War II, the work was highly commended in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Competition.


Skinner’s publications: 1 autobiography, 3 novels, 1 novel under the pseudonym of R.E. Leake, 1 novel in collaboration with D.H. Lawrence, 1 selected prose, 1 Midwifery text-book, editor of 1 biography.


References:

T. Kotai-Ewers. ‘Mollie Skinner’ in the Celebrating Western Australia’s Creative Women Project, Dr Robyn Taylor, ed. publication pending.

Donald Stuart (1913–1983)

Born at Cottesloe in 1913, Donald R. Stuart was the seventh of eight children born to Julian and Florence Stuart. Julian, a bush poet and raconteur, was one-time editor of the goldfields newspaper *The Westralian Worker*. His writings appeared in the *Bulletin*. A radical and unionist, he was imprisoned for his part in the shearer’s strike of 1891. As one of the State’s earliest women journalists, Florence Stuart supported her husband, both politically and by writing for the newspaper. Donald Stuart was educated at local State schools and Perth Modern School, leaving after only two years there. From 1928 to 1938, Stuart worked in the outback on stations and in the goldfields. He described many of these experiences in his early books.

In 1940, Stuart joined the 10th Light Horse. While in South Australia for training, he married Joan Bertelmeir. Following some months fighting in Egypt, Stuart was among a group of soldiers left in Batavia weeks before the Japanese invasion. As one of Dunlop Force, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel ‘Weary’ Dunlop, he was sent to work on the Burma-Thailand Railway. Besides the physical deprivations of that experience, Stuart’s extremely independent nature often brought him into conflict with the Japanese guards. He wrote about his war experiences in his last three books, *Wedgetail View* (1978), *Crank Back on Roller* (1979) and *I Think I’ll Live* (1981). Stuart’s marriage to Joan ended when he returned to Australia after the war, and in 1948 he married Dulcie (Dessie) Eunice Singh.

In 1953, the couple went to live at Yandeyarra Station run by Don McLeod in the Pilbara. Like many Australians at the time, concerned to see social justice, they were both deeply interested in the plight of the Aborigines. Although life was hard, Stuart gained the deeper insight into Aboriginal life that is evident in his first novel *Yandy* (1959) and subsequent publications *Ilberana* (1971) and *Malloonkai* (1976). Conflict arose, however, between Stuart and McLeod, and in 1954 Stuart left Yandeyarra station, while Dessie stayed there, thus ending their marriage.
For the next fourteen years, Stuart lived a precarious life, mainly in the city, writing and revising early versions of his first novel. His older sister, widower and short story writer, Lyndall Haddow, encouraged him by reading manuscripts, applying for Commonwealth Literary Fund support and introducing him to Perth writers and the FAWWA.

By 1970, Stuart was an accepted part of Perth’s literary community, serving as FAWWA president from 1973 to 1975. During that time he also became president of the Federal FAW Council and organised its first meeting in Perth. Stuart received three grants from the Commonwealth Literary Fund between 1960 and 1972. His writing output was prodigious, with eight novels and one collection of short stories appearing within ten years. Following the formation of the Literature Board of the Australia Council in 1973, Stuart received seven further grants between 1974 and 1981. His sister continued to advise him until her death in 1976. Stuart died in Broome in 1983, following the launch there of *Broome, Landscapes and People*, a book of photographs by Roger Garwood for which Stuart wrote the text.

Stuart’s Publications: 11 novels, 1 collection of short stories, text to 1 photographic study.


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http://www.auslit.edu.au
Frederick Bert Vickers (1903–1985)

Born in Worcestershire in the United Kingdom in 1903, Frederick B. (Bert) Vickers was educated at the Council School, leaving at the age of 12, to work as a fitter and turner in an engineering factory.

Unemployed when the factory closed, Vickers gained an assisted passage (£13) to Australia, landing in Fremantle in February 1925. He worked on a poultry farm before gaining a diploma in wool-classing in 1938. When war broke out Vickers joined the Australian Imperial Force, as an engineer, sailing on the first troop ship from Fremantle. After some three and a half years in the Middle East, he returned to Australia to teach farmers’ sons about wool.

While in hospital recovering from an accident, encouraged by the Army Education officer to study, Vickers enrolled for Freelance Journalism, expecting to be dismissed for his poor knowledge of English spelling and grammar. The tutor, Victorian writer Alan Marshall, praised his writing. Vickers’ first short story was published in the Western Mail in 1944. He later wrote that Marshall ‘had sown a seed in my mind that refused to die.’

While running his poultry farm, Vickers continued writing articles, short stories, novels, and giving talks, based on his own life. In 1946, his first novel, First Place to the Stranger, won a Sydney Morning Herald award, although it was not published until 1956. This novel described his parents’ experiences as migrants to Australia. His first play Stained Pieces played for three nights in Perth in 1949. Becoming the novel The Mirage, published in 1955, it was translated into Rumanian and German. In both this and his novel No Man Is Himself (1970) Vickers explored the aboriginal problem, reflecting on what he saw during his earlier travels in the north of the State.

Although never a member of any political party, Vickers was a friend of Katharine Susannah Prichard. He experienced the vilification of writers and artists during the 1940s and 1950s, having been threatened with expulsion from the Poultry Farmers’ Association because of suspected links with communism.
The novel *Though Poppies Grow* (1958) protested against such attacks. His last novels *Without Map or Compass* (1974), which shared the 1975 National Book Council Award, and *A Stranger No Longer* (1977) drew on his own life. Part of the writers’ exchanges between Australia and the Soviet Union in the 1960s, Vickers attended a Writers’ Conference in East Germany in 1965, followed by a visit to Moscow. In the 1970s, he and Marshall travelled in Western Australia for the Commonwealth Literature Fund.

A member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA) until his death, Vickers was made an Honorary Life Member in 1971. Vickers died in Subiaco in July 1985.

Vickers’ publications: 6 novels, 1 play, short stories.


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[http://www.auslit.edu.au](http://www.auslit.edu.au)

**Joan Williams (writing as Justina Williams) (1916–2008)**

Born in Coolgardie in 1916, Joan Williams (née Allen) spent her formative years on a selection at Kendenup in the South-West of Western Australia. She was educated at Albany Senior High School, Perth Technical College and the University of Western Australia. Beginning work as a junior clerk at the *West Australian* while still a teenager, Williams continued there as a journalist,
marrying fellow journalist Pete Thomas. In these years, Williams began a lifetime involvement with Perth's left-wing intelligentsia. She joined the Communist Party in 1939, and was a foundation member of the Modern Women's Club, the Western Australian Council for Equal Pay and Opportunity and the International Women's Day Committee.

During the war, Williams moved into general reporting with the Daily News, becoming Gavin Casey's assistant. Increasingly involved in Communist Party activities, in 1943 she left the newspaper to write for The Workers' Star. Like Prichard, Williams was targeted in the police raids of 1949 and 1950. By this time, she had met communist and poet, Victor Williams, who became her second husband. Joining the FAWWA in the mid-1950s, both writers were members of the committee, with Williams being president from 1971 to 1973, and from 1979 to 1981. She edited the booklet Tom Collins and His House.

In 1961, in the middle of the cold war, Williams was invited to be the Western Australian delegate in a ten-member Australian Communist Party delegation to the People's Republic of China. Unexpectedly, the trip was extended to the Soviet Union. After attending Writers' Week at the 1972 Adelaide Arts Festival, Williams suggested to the Perth Festival organisers that it, too, should include a Writers' Week, which was subsequently organised by the FAWWA in 1973.

In 1975, Williams and Barbara York Main travelled 2000 kilometres speaking to 1200 students from Bunbury to Esperance on the FAWWA's first writers' country tour, funded by the Literature Board. In 1979 she returned to the Presidency amidst the initial battle to save Tom Collins House from demolition in order to develop West Coast Highway. In the late 1970s, on behalf of the FAWWA Committee, Williams together with Glen Phillips, persuaded the government to buy Prichard's house in Greenmount and establish the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre.

In 1996, Williams received the Order of Australia in recognition of her services to literature. She died in Perth in 2008.

Williams' publications: (As Justina Williams) 1 autobiography, 1 children's novel, 1 novel, 1 non-fiction prose, 5 collections of poetry, 1 collection of short
stories, edited 2 collections of poetry and prose, plus 1 historical study. (As Joan Thomas) 1 travel.


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Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria AMC SLV
Battye Library BL
Mitchell Library ML
National Library of Australia NLA
University of Melbourne Archives UMA
Tom Collins House Archives TCHA
Murdoch University Gay and Lesbian Archives MUGLA
State Library of Western Australia LISWA

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