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BACKROOM SEEN AT SPN

In November, Backroom Press Chairperson, Gillian Kennedy, attended the three-day Independent Publishing Conference at the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne, hosted by the **Small Press Network (SPN)**.

It was terrific to meet fellow small-press colleagues, to hear about the latest trends in the book industry and to get some great publishing tips to bring back to Broome. Session highlights included 'Reaching your audience', 'Business basics', 'Book cover design' and 'Getting your books into libraries'.

Gillian recommends this conference as a 'must-do' for the Backroom Press calendar next year.

Fun facts from SPN:

1. Backroom Press is not just a small publisher; it is a micro publisher
2. No matter how big or how small, most publishers seem to grapple with similar challenges



when it comes to choosing which manuscripts to take on:

- a. Is it the right 'fit' for the organisation?
 - b. Will it make money?
 - c. If it won't make money, should we publish it anyway, because we love it?
3. Big publishers are often risk averse; they are looking for 'the last big thing'. Small (and micro) publishers can be liberated from the 'bestsellers' market, to find the writers and stories that might be the 'next big thing'.
 4. 87% of panellists agree that metadata is really, really important. (The other 13% have no idea what metadata is.)

'TERMITES' FINDS AN AUDIENCE IN ALICE SPRINGS

Our very own insect enthusiast, Pat Lowe, attended the Australian Entomology Society conference at Alice Springs on our behalf. She presented a paper titled *Insects for Everyone*, and enjoyed meeting others of like mind and spruiking *Our Friends the Termites*.

DERBY WRITERS FESTIVAL



As avid readers will remember, in our June edition we said that Gillian and Pat had been to Derby to help plan the town's inaugural writers' festival. In July the same two and Eirlys, one of our very active members, drove back to Derby for the short festival, ably organized by Maggie McGuinness. We earned our keep by stepping in to help with workshops at short notice.



VALE: RANI



Tragically, former Backroom Press Committee member, Rani Middleton, died early in November. Rani was a much-valued member of Backroom Press, who brought energy, humour and artistic skills to our collective. Broome has lost a lovely and talented community member, and Backroom Press extends heartfelt sympathy to Rani's family, especially Nathan and Teo.

CORRUGATED LINES 10 – 12 AUGUST

Broome's readers' and writers' festival was once again hailed a success with full houses for most workshops, presentations and panel discussions. This year CL joined in Theatre Kimberley's hilarious Bust Out Cabaret, with three members of the team dressing up (or down) and performing some racy limericks. Trish forgot to put her dacks on under her pinny, and the crowd roared as she made her exit.

The limerick competition on the theme *the colour red* was won by Broome local, Hannah Thevissen with her limerick:

*Remember that old man Billy?
Who was drunkenly chopping up chilli?
It started to burn
And he quickly did learn
To wash his hands before touching his Willy!*

Backroom Press held a stall at the Courthouse Market on Saturday, distributing programmes and selling our wares. Alongside us, Sam Bayley led the always popular Giant Speed Scrabble.



Backroom Press presented a number of events over the weekend:

1. In conversation with Allan Clarke at The Lock-Up Café, facilitated by Anna Moulton from Magabala Books. Special thanks to Marie Gamble for her assistance in bringing Allan to Broome.



Allan Clarke and Anna Moulton

2. In conversation with Estelle Blackburn at the Kimberley Bookshop
3. The Reading Brain by Dr Lorraine Hammond at the University of Notre Dame
4. A true-crime panel discussion at the Mangrove Hotel, facilitated by Vanessa Mills.



Acting Superintendent Tony Jeavons, Estelle Blackburn, Trish Pepper, Allan Clarke, Vanessa Mills

The festival concluded with an epilogue, which featured special 'improv' acts by members of the Bust Out Cabaret and interactive performances by the Broometime Singers.

POETRY SLAM

For the fourth year running, Pat represented Backroom Press as one of the six judges for the annual Interschool Poetry Slam, held in the chilly performance space at Broome Senior High School. Broome and Derby Schools took part. The atmosphere was electric, with doof music to put us all in the mood, and an introductory performance by Broome rapper Jacob Gregory.

Some excellent original poems were presented by both primary and high school students. Most of the presenters and prizewinners were girls, but a number of boys put on a good show, one of whom received an inaugural Rani Middleton award for his poem 'Books'. The second of these went to a girl for her poem 'Equality'. The judges received a hand-made thank-you card and small bar of Toblerone. Pat's melted later in her bag.

AGM 2018

At this year's AGM the management committee members were all re-elected with a slight shuffle of portfolio responsibilities. Maria Mann and Christine Elsasser swapped the roles of treasurer and secretary. For the first time we produced a colourful, informative Annual Report which can be found on the website.