



AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY HEADS OF ENGLISH

Minutes from the 2023 Annual General Meeting

**Attended:**

Ann Vickery (President)  
Deborah Pike (Vice-President-Admin)  
Jessica Gildersleeve/Robert Clarke (Vice-President Treasurers)  
Chris Danta (Chair of Research Committee)

State Reps

Victoria: Jo Winning  
WA: Tanya Dalziell  
NT: Adelle Sefton-Rowston  
Queensland: Margaret Henderson

**Apologies:** Naomi Milthorpe (UTas); Paul Magee (ACT)

**President's Report (Ann Vickery)**

*Description of the organisation*

Umbrella formation/ Network.  
Resources, reports  
Events - symposia  
Advocacy and consultancy– eg. Lobby Committee created in 2022. Members and programs asking for support. ARC ERA journal list.  
Financial support – for keynotes and events  
Awards  
Social Media

*State of the discipline report overview*

Compiled Nov 2023. This was structured around the 2017 State of the Discipline report to gauge patterns over the past 7 years. This was a smaller report than previous one in 2017. Most states are covered. Report to be expanded to capture data from more universities before making public.  
Quantitative report to be supplemented by Teaching Committee's qualitative report that will be drawn from interviews.

Reduced enrolments across the discipline although some institutions have grown enrolments – eg. U Canberra / Growing Lit studies  
Whether this is a pattern specific to discipline or humanities or a pattern across the academy.

Most institutions have stronger enrolments in Lit studies than CW – is it an impact of Tehan reforms – English coded within the least expensive band. Further info needed. Note creative writing only programs where data is not captured in this report.

Foci of first year courses have remained largely the same since 2017.  
Difficult to identify number of graduating students due to various majors and difficulties in obtaining data.

Honours enrolments have decreased across the discipline, with the exception of Monash.  
Discussion point around the future of Honours in light of Master of Arts and M Research.  
PhD enrolments – no clear pattern. Discussion around the role of the PhD in the current climate.

Staff – didn't effectively capture casual staff. Casualisation as a focus in many enterprise agreements. Not a lot of change to numbers of permanent staff generally since 2017 – good result.  
2017 Report made no comment on teaching intensive positions. Emergence of these.

*Other elements impacting discipline:*

Emergence of AI programs  
Mental Health of staff and students  
Pandemic engagement impact  
Changes to modes of teaching: e.g. precarity of the lecture  
Changes to ARC discovery and DECRAs

JW – how about some comparative analysis with other humanities disciplines?

General responses: Compare surveys elsewhere. Australian Historical Association may have data  
DASHH may have BA enrolment info

AU – how senior management talk about disciplines. Who and what they advocate – support for humanities. Lack of support/ influences university responses and attitudes to the humanities.

RC – honours crash in numbers at UTas but then an uptick this year. In Humanities. Dips in numbers.  
People working hard to lift the profile in the school.

JW: Working hard to make Honours visible. Events etc. Uncertainty about what is the route into research M. Res at Monash – it competes with Honours. Seems complicated.

JM – in Adelaide forced into a merger with Uni SA – Management – dictates terms around honours – healthy hours program will be abolished in 2026. Incentive for Replace with with an M Res. Students don't know anything about an M Res. Strong attrition in program.

BE – M Res (Literary) and MA (CW). M Res potentially problematic.

AU Another point on M Res. Recognised internationally. Part of logic (not honours).

*PhD*

AV – Supervision now a workload issue – uptick in enrolments.

RC – UTas. Areas of strategic initiative. Doesn't always fit creative writing. Awkward. What is being used?

Deakin – PhDs fit into faculty structure.

Ashley – Swinburne – PhD has to align with technology. PhD proposals have to align

MH – UQ – carrot for PhD students to do industry placements – extra three months on scholarship

JM – Same at Adelaide. Pushing PhD students into industry.

WSU – The same.

BE 150 decasualised position – 1 Teaching intensive for three years, before movement to ordinary position

MH – UQ Enterprise bargaining agreement. No casuals can convene courses. Convert 50 positions to be teaching assistants – part time jobs. May be consequences – will increase teaching workloads?

AV – Deakin teaching scholars forever unless they get to the top level of Level B and then demonstrate capacity for research

ASR- CDU casualisation to fixed term with those - pressure to become teaching focused. Must have a teaching focus to be promoted.

JG – Is there a gendered dimension to the teaching intensive? / Compared to sciences? Look at SAGE for support in removing overload in teaching?

JM – Replacing retired staff – how does it go? Enormous reduction in staff, 2.7 staff. Little indication of replacement.

Replacement staff argument

Ashley – Swinburne. Lost many staff – PHIL and SOCI none replaced.

AV – Deakin, at least a year's lag in terms of replacement – a cost saving exercise.

RS – ANU replaced someone who retired.

EP – Flinders lose someone CW getting more investment.

JM – two members of staff on Long Covid. Both crash in our ability to staff courses.

AV – Long covid. At Deakin but have since returned

RS – Covid still impacting people – stress and anxiety stress in the past.

ASR – Does this affect enrolments – Down 9%

RC – Research students in particular affected.

AV – Same cohort PhDs

AU – Spike in fails at the end of last year in UG. Those missed schooling. Struggle to read and write.

BE – AI – pen and paper exams – Improved results.

Swinburne – culture of exams – no.

Swinburne – AI advisor – Not permitted to classify work as plagiarise. Deducting marks – not considered plagiarism

First Session on AI

AU – AI actually not helpful;/ Blindspot for close reading

EP – encouraged to design assessment to expose flaws. Ask them to write an AI generated essay.

RC – Using AI. Criteria – Use it as a teaching tool. USE AI. Go through it and examine it. Pick it apart. AI does become sophisticated.

AV – False scenes and characters and references.

#### **Vice-President Treasurer's Report (Robert Clarke)**

Balance at 27/11/2023: \$14,459.59

Call-out for any activities or initiatives that required funding. Those identified were the AUHE-funded keynote for the Literary Convention 2021 and a proposed Universities/Schools Nexus symposium.

Subscription runs for midyear. Fiona as treasurer and can sign the paperwork.

RC \$14500 in the account. Has come down

Having RAs have cost us; Webmaster Sara Pini etc

Moving forward, we will need to be careful about what we strategically fund.  
Go back to the secretary updating the website.

Running symposium

Lit Studies convention will give our profile back and an increase in funding.

AU – WSU venue for the convention.

CFP in December for July 2024

#### **Research Committee (Discussion led by Chris Danta)**

Modest goals

Start AUHE seminar series

Convened the research committee with a research project on the horizon for next year

Lorraine Sim has joined the committee. Isabelle Wentworth from Wollongong. Ben Eldridge – do a project around early career researching.

Convene committee and design a research project

Design project of ECRs

National Seminar Series.

Give ECRs a voice and forum to be heard. CFPs for young researchers. It has gone well so far.

Increasing numbers.

Has been going well. 10-30 People on the zoom.

Book launches.

Potential of doing podcast as format

AV – is the podcast an archive for those who have missed the event? More Branding needed.

AV – Do we need a calendar invite for this seminar series?

RC – Great idea.

AV – Round tables for book launches. Bring people across disciplines and regions. International audience as well. Reflecting on how you did something.

BE – Edited collections great motivation for the editors to do the work to spread the word.

Advertising a series on special issues.

ASR – Great idea – can order books for our libraries. *Borderlands* has just come out. Launches for lit magazines.

CD – Have a panel may be interesting. Publishing series perhaps?

AV -Something which is growing. Lots of possibilities for 2024.

TD – UWA is hosting the 2024 congress – organise AUHE stream, State Govt funding.. Speakers. UWA its consent about rooms. Themes – let TD know. Conversations about how that day will take shape. Run AGM in parallel with symposium next year.

Have AGM as well in WA

### **Teaching Committee**

AV Teaching committee was going to undertake research that was going to look at qualitative information in relation to the state of the discipline. In its preliminary stages.

This would supplement the current SOD survey. Have its independence. KD as chair has been leading this in its very early stages.

### **Research Committee and Teaching Committees are keeping the same chairs.**

JW – UK – UEA – want to join forces with the AUHE

Secondary school engagement – model from UK – secondary education can engage with universities.

AU- Great idea to converse with UEA – School curriculum

RC – Utas has a strong connection with English High school teachers – state branch of ETA maintains a great relationship with Dept Ed. AATE – ASAL has conference at the same time as theirs. Perhaps need to reconsider.

AU – Panels.

BE – Set up a call with those in UK

AU – MLA people interested but no follow through Also Canada

JW – July a good time to engage UK academics

AV – Great idea. Teachers' associations. State and Federal ones.

AV Secondary/ Tertiary nexus – we need to foster further in terms of pathways and in terms of those appropriate levels of skills. Narratives around why you might do a degree in English

### **Further Business**

AUHE should be liaising with and encouraging literary organisations in Australia to be working with each other. These include:

ASAL

AALS

AUMLA

Australasia Association for Pacific Studies

RSAA: Romantic Studies Association of Australasia

FNAWN

AVSA

Australasian Association of Writing Programs

Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association

IABA Asia-Pacific

Early Modern Women Research Network

ANZSA

Bibliographic Society of Australia and New Zealand

Shakespeare Association

Australasian Modernist Studies Network

### **Prizes**

The 2023 Voss Literary Prize was won by Robbie Arnott for *Limberlost*. Robbie was present at the AGM for the presentation.

The 2023 AUHE Prize in Literary Scholarship shortlist was announced. These included Melinda Cooper, Middlebrow Modernism; Tom Ford and Justin Clemens' Barron Field; and Roberta Kwan.

Winner: Melinda Cooper, *Middlebrow Modernism*

### **State reps**

NSW: to fill

NT – Adelle Sefton-Rowston (to continue)

WA – Tanya Dalziell (to continue)

SA – Eric Parisot (to continue)

QLD - Margaret Henderson (to continue)

NSW – unfilled: incoming Jumana Bayeh/Anthony Uhlmann

VIC – Jo Winning (to continue)

ACT – Paul Magee (to continue)

**Outgoing positions for AUHE**

President (2022-2023): Ann Vickery

Original office-bearer: Helen Groth

Vice President Admin: Deborah Pike

Treasurer (2019-2023)– Robert Clarke

Outreach – Naomi Milthorpe (2022-2023)

**Incoming office-bearers in 2024-2025**

President: Jess Gildersleeve;

Vice-President (Admin): Deborah Pike

Treasurer: Fiona Morrison

Outreach: Jumana Bayeh and Ben Etherington