

**Australian Science Fiction Foundation  
President's Report  
Rose Mitchell, 20 January 2019**

**WEBSITE**

Report from Webmaster Ion Newcombe

This year has seen some changes at the ASFF website, with a major move to my own webserver space at a datacentre in Sydney. That move and update allowed the installation of some new features, including a new flexible site template and various plugins for new features, including the addition of online membership sign up – which is currently under review to make the collection of new member details an easier process.

Here's an incomplete list of various other features and functions added during the year, along with the posting of monthly news items and event updates:

- Integrated Google Calendar for posting and flexible display of coming conventions and ASFF events.
- Slideshow feature displays SF oriented artwork on the front page.
- Old ASFF logo replaced with new.
- ASFF colour scheme applied site-wide.
- Online forms for mail forwarding and notifications from the website.
- Mail forwarders and webmail facilities for those on the committee needing them.
- Online membership sign up (as above) – including the capability for designated “members only” areas, for future storage of “Instrumentality” or other documents such as meeting reports, and the collection of membership fees via Paypal.
- Aussie spe-fic podcast directory information.

The Committee commends Ion for all his hard work on revamping the website and also his dedication to ensure it is up to 21st Century standards.

**A BERTRAM CHANDLER AWARD**

Edwina Harvey was the recipient of the A Bertram Chandler Award for 2018. Edwina is a worthy recipient: she has been an active member of Australian science-fiction fandom: writing, publishing and with her amazing artwork for 40 years. And, she is still active in Australian fandom. The award was very well received by the Australian SF community.

I have acted as the Award Administrator in past years but will look for another person to take on this responsibility in 2019.

**NORMA K HEMMING AWARD**

Tehani Croft - Norma K Hemming Award Administrator:

The 2018 Norma K Hemming Award saw significant changes implemented, with great success. With a team of four new jurors, drawn from a public application process, the Award expanded to two categories, Long Form (covering graphic novels, scripts, collections, anthologies, novels and novellas over 17,500 words) and Short Fiction (work under 17,500 words). More than 130 entries were received from both creators and publishers across the field, with two well-considered, diverse shortlists returned by the jurors. In 2018, the entry period was the preceding **two** years of eligibility, due to no award being presented in 2017. We also moved forward with the creation of a dedicated website for the Award, and the implementation of Twitter and Facebook pages to increase social media visibility.

For the 2019 award, it was decided to expand the judging panel to eight judges, with four jurors reading for each category. As award convenor, I am very pleased with the diversity of our jurors, and will continue to work hard to maintain and expand on this element, which I believe is crucial for the integrity of this award, given the focus on the exploration of themes of race, gender, sexuality, class or disability.

Entries for the 2019 award, covering works published/performed in 2018, close on January 31, with shortlists expected toward the end of April in advance of the award presentation at Continuum in June. Unfortunately, second-time juror Stephanie Lai has presented her resignation from the panel for personal reasons. Lyss Wickramasinghe, from NSW, has willingly stepped into the vacated Long Form panel position.

I am currently looking into a dedicated mailing list for creators and publishers to keep up to date with the awards, as the vagaries of social media mean that not all interested parties see crucial information about open entry periods and so on. At this stage, I think a free MailChimp account will be suitable for the purpose and number of potential subscribers.

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Thank you to the ASFF committee for the continued support of the Norma K Hemming Award, and particularly to Rose for championing the new structure.

The Committee thanks Tehani for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the Award and without whose contribution the Award would not be of the standard and regard in which it is held. I personally would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Tehani who has shown extraordinary professionalism during the past year, and commend her willingness to work collaboratively with myself, the Committee and the panel of judges to achieve such positive outcomes with the new structure.

**PROMOTION**

During 2018 promotion focused on showcasing the work of the ASFF so as to raise awareness of the Foundation within the Australian science fiction community. It was hoped that these positive messages would engage the Aussie community and increase take up of membership. Membership subscriptions fund our activities and without an adequate revenue stream we are limited in what we can do to fulfil our Purpose.

I have been unsuccessful in recruiting a person to edit the Instrumentality, which is a very sad publication indeed needing a lot more energy and creativity to be useful to the Members. And, same story with finding a new administrator/moderator for our Facebook page, let alone venturing onto other media platforms. I will continue to look for suitable person/s to take on these roles in 2019 with a view to making these platforms much more dynamic.

**AGENTS**

The ASFF has agents in place for the Gillian Polack for ACT, Gerald Smith for NSW, Van Ikin for WA (Academic) and Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay At Large. On behalf of the Committee, I congratulate especially Gillian Polack whose valuable contribution increased awareness of the ASFF in the ACT.

All current agents have agreed to continue their roles in 2019.

Ideally we would have liked to see agents for all states and work on recruiting suitable people continues in 2019.

**COMPLAINT**

In January 2018 the ASFF received a complaint of bully and harassment from a group of people, only one of whom was a member. Clause ## was enacted and the committee engaged an independent person to investigate the complaint. This came at a considerable cost as we were unable to find a person from the fannish community to undertake the investigation. The independent investigator found there was no instance of bullying and harassment but did find that the 4 complainants had a grievance. He also found that the ASFF lacked necessary procedures to properly deal with a complaint of this nature and recommended a set of procedures to comply. These have been endorsed by the Committee. The investigation was undertaken according to the Fair Work Act.

Murray McLachlan has agreed to be the Independent Investigator in 2019 should a future complaint be received.

**THANK YOU COMMITTEE**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee who have all made a valuable contribution to the ASFF and Australian fandom in general. Without your commitment and dedication the ASFF would not be able to function. Most of you have been involved with the ASFF and fandom for many decades and your work is commended.

I'd like to personally thank two Committee Members: Carey Handfield for his wise and insightful counsel and Cath Ortlieb who is stepping down as Secretary after 40 years due to ill health. However, all is not lost; Cath will continue on Committee as an Ordinary Committee Member until her health returns.

Recruitment for committee positions has not been as successful as I would have liked and work will continue in 2019 to approach suitable and dedicated people to join the committee and continue the important work of the ASFF.