



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION  
Australia

## ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION (QUEENSLAND BRANCH) Newsletter, June 2021

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### WELCOME

Greetings to all the members of the ESU (Queensland Branch).

I had hoped that 2021 would see a rapid decline in the ravages of Covid-19. But Covid has tightened its grip on most parts of the world. Australia in general, and Queensland in particular, have been fortunate, as well as orderly, determined and generally positive. The ESU Queensland has been able to reignite its events (see below), and both our competitions have been going gangbusters, to coin a phrase. In addition, we have been expanding our footprint outside Brisbane, and have a variety of plans to exploit digital technology to enhance our outreach.

### EVENTS

We started the 2021 program of events on 5 March with a blockbuster evening of Shakespeare. Two Brisbane actors and specialists in speech communication and theatre, Patsy McCarthy and Dr Jillian Clare, entertained over 40 guests for a performance of 'Shakespeare's Queens'. Patsy and Jillian led us through a fascinating exploration of some of the many faces of love and passion in the works of Shakespeare. Working with a beautifully constructed script created by Jillian, they performed examples of many twists and turns in cameo scenes from Shakespeare's plays.

The second event showcased a memorable speech by journalist and author Madonna King on "The language of politics", which was held on the verandah at Miegunyah on 26 March. Madonna, as we know from her long and rich career, was elegant, articulate and provocative in the best possible sense, and provided insights on the language of politics which took us far beyond our former understanding of how people talk in politics. We were then able to enjoy a tour of Miegunyah and its exhibits, full of historical memories.

The third event was held at South Brisbane TAFE on 30 April, where Hugh O'Brien presented a talk on "How to Write a Funny Play". His long life in words was clearly detectable in the range, depth and exuberance of his most engaging presentation, features which are available in video on the ESU website. Several members in the audience were observed to be taking copious notes. We are looking forward to the theatrical outcomes.

### EVENTS - VIDEO AND WEBSITE

This year the Board decided to make enhanced use of the website. The goal is to make our events more accessible, especially to members who are not able to attend in person. In addition, the two competitions – the Public Speaking Competition and the Roly Sussex Short Story Competition – offer speech and writing respectively of extremely high quality which is a credit to the ESU, and which allows us to showcase the work which we support.

Accordingly, the website will offer some marvellous material to members and visitors:

A) selected video of presentations at our meetings, beginning with Hugh O'Brien:  
<https://www.esu.org.au/2021-events/>

B) selected video from the Grand Finals of the Public Speaking Competition's three divisions: Junior, Intermediate and Senior. These will be available at:  
<https://www.esu.org.au/2021-secondary-schools-public-speaking-grand-finals/>

C) the 10 winning short stories from the Roly Sussex Short Story Competition. These will shortly be available under the Competitions tab on the website:  
<https://www.esu.org.au/>

These video and written materials will form a growing archive of the work and activity supported and promoted by ESU Queensland.

We welcome comments from members about this initiative, especially ways in which we could improve the presentation and organisation of this material. Please email the Secretary, Ray Heffernan:

[secretary@esu.org.au](mailto:secretary@esu.org.au)

#### **FACEBOOK**

Under the guidance of Jan Heffernan the Facebook page has been reinvigorated. Members are warmly encouraged to access the page and contribute to ongoing discussion about the ESU and its activities:

<https://www.facebook.com/The-English-Speaking-Union-Queensland-151481784920387/>

#### **COMPETITION - PUBLIC SPEAKING IN SE QUEENSLAND AND NOW ALSO IN FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND**

Emeritus Professor Caroline Hatcher has again organised the Public Speaking Competition with her characteristic energy, insight and drive, for which the ESU Queensland is particularly grateful. The competition continues to gain in reputation and standard.

Since ESU Queensland no longer has a premises of its own, we have held the Junior (23 entries) and Intermediate (14 entries) grand finals at the Newmarket Hall on Ashgrove Avenue. Thanks to the good offices of board Member Majella Stevens, the grand final of the Senior competition will be held at Marist College.

For the first time we have taken a video record of the grand finals in each category, and samples of these outstanding performances will be available on our website.

An exciting development in 2021 has been the opening of a Far North Queensland division in Townsville, organized by Joanne Keune, a well known leading figure in speech and training in North Queensland. Heats were held for the Junior (12 entries) and Intermediate (8 entries) in Townsville, and the winners of each category were flown to Brisbane for the finals, financially supported by ESU Queensland.

The Senior competition is currently under way, with 16 competitors in Townsville and 15 in SE Queensland. Members are warmly invited to attend the Grand Final:

Date and time: 9 August, 6pm

Place: Marist College, Ashgrove

Details will be on our website.

The judges were Caroline Hatcher, Lesley Irvine and Annette Stoddart, to whom the ESU Queensland expresses its warm gratitude.

### **COMPETITION - ROLY SUSSEX SHORT STORY COMPETITION**

After a year's pause in 2019, during which time the ESU Board stabilised the financial position of the ESU, the Roly Sussex Short Story Competition resumed in 2020. There were 20 entries in the Open Category, and 17 in the Secondary Schools Competition. The judges reported that Covid had certainly had no deleterious effect on the quality of the submissions, which continues to increase.

The judges awarded a first and second prize, and three highly commended awards, in each of the Open and Secondary School categories. This year, by a strange bit of serendipity, all the awards in the Open Category went to people from outside Queensland, and all the awards in the Secondary Schools Category to people from Queensland.

The 10 winning stories will be available on the ESU website very shortly.

ESU Queensland is most grateful to His Excellency Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland, for again hosting the awards ceremony on 13 July.

The ESU is deeply grateful to the judging panel: Peter Little (Chief Judge), supported by David Fagan and John Thompson-Gray.

### **INVESTMENT REPORT**

Guided by Gary Gardiner, the Board has continued to pursue actively opportunities to purchase a suitable property for purchase, with the aim of using the rental income to support and expand the cultural work of the ESU. We were out-bid at auction on one potential property, but other possible purchases are currently under investigation. It will no longer be possible for the ESU (Queensland Branch) to own a property exclusively for its own cultural purposes, but we intend to buy an investment property, and to use the income to promote the cultural work of the ESU.

### **DESLEY MILLER, OAM**



On behalf of the Board, it gives me special pleasure to congratulate ESU member Desley Miller, who was awarded an OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for her service to education and to community mental health. It is splendid to see her long and distinguished contribution recognised by this award, and we are proud to count her among our long-serving members.

## **FUTURE EVENTS: CHURCHILL ORATION**

**For your diary!** Our next event is the annual flagship Churchill Oration:

Speaker: Brian Lorigan, President, Queensland chapter,  
French-Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Topic: "Cool Britannia!"  
Can the winds of change bring a welcome breath of fresh air, or a cool chill? Could the United Kingdom's first steps into standalone politics and trading relationships in decades provide a third way, strengthen multilateralism and rule of law, and reinvigorate its trading partners?

Date and time: 30th July 2021, 6pm

Place: United Service Club, 183 Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill, Brisbane

Parking: Behind the Club, accessible from Upper Edward Street between Wickham Terrace and Astor Terrace.

The Secretary is contacting members and guests about booking for this event. We look forward to seeing you there.

## **AFTERWORD OR POSTSCRIPT**

2020 was, and 2021 is continuing to be, a challenging time for organisations like the ESU. The Board is strongly appreciative of the loyalty and support of the members, and the way they are now returning to support our renewed activities. In an unexpected way, Covid has provided a catalyst for re-thinking a number of the things that we do in the ways that we do them. The Board anticipates a number of promising new initiatives during the rest of 2021 and 2022.

Emeritus Professor Roland (Roly) Sussex OAM, QFA, Chevalier des Palmes Académiques  
President, ESU (Queensland Branch)

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