



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION (QUEENSLAND BRANCH)

Newsletter, October 2021

WELCOME

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

2021 has been a year for the survivors, the imaginative, and the innovators. And for those who are good at persisting under duress. Although Queensland, by a mixture of leadership, orderly community response, workable policy, and luck, has come extraordinarily well through the pandemic so far, there are signs of stress all around, especially in the business world, which will take a long time to recover. Being double vaccinated may well become a minimal and standard requirement for access to much that we have taken for granted in the past: parks, beaches, theatres, libraries, sporting fixtures. Not to mention weddings, funerals, and social gatherings. If anything, Covid 19 should have made us value these more than we did before.

EVENTS

The annual Churchill Oration, in its now traditional black-tie format, was given on 30 July to 41 ESU members and guests at the United Service Club by Brian Lorigan, President of the French Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Queensland. His topic was “Cool Britannia”. He explored a number of arguments in favour of Brexit being a reinvigoration and a rebirth of Britain as a self-standing country outside, but with continuing commercial links, to the European Union. Britain, as we are aware, is a country that punches above its weight in many ways, not the least in innovation and industry. Given the renewing connexions between Australia and Britain, we will watch with special attention how Brian Lorigan’s analysis plays out over the coming years.

A new initiative, a high tea event, was held at Miegunyah on 23 October. Three of the winners in the Public Speaking Competition attended and presented their winning speeches. This format offers a stylish, relaxed and slightly nostalgic context for the ESU to extend the range of its social activities, and to showcase work which is done under its aegis. We shall be investigating other avenues of this nature in 2022.

Details of various ESU events are documented and illustrated on the website:

<https://www.esu.org.au/>

FACEBOOK

Jan Heffernan has promoted the ESU Facebook page, and we know that her active advocacy for the Short Story Competition through Facebook was instrumental in the increased number of entries. Members are warmly encouraged to access the ESU Facebook [page](#).

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

The standout success of the year has certainly been the Public Speaking Competition, where Emeritus Professor Caroline Hatcher has achieved miracles of planning, balance and execution in making sure that as much of the program as possible was able to take place under conditions as close as possible to those which we have enjoyed in the past. We have also seen the expansion of the competition to far North Queensland, with excellent prospects of not only of a continuation, but also an enlarged competition there, in 2022.



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The heats and finals this year were held in the Newmarket Hall on Ashgrove Avenue. Covid requirements for the management of guest numbers, spacing and movement required additional attention from the organizers. Members of the ESU were willing and invaluable helpers: Richard Macedo, Gary Gardiner, Robert Goes, Majella Stevens and Roly Sussex.

The finals of each of the three divisions (Senior, Intermediate, Junior) were exciting and tight, and the oratorical skills on display from the contestants bode well for the future of public speaking, and speaking more generally, in Queensland. The North Queensland heats in Townsville were organized by Joanne Keune, a well known local leading figure in public speaking there. The winners of each division were flown to Brisbane by the ESU to compete in the grand finals, and in the Senior division the winner was Barnabas Juhasz of Townsville Grammar School. Photos and details are available on the ESU website:

<https://www.esu.org.au/2021-secondary-schools-public-speaking-grand-finals/>

We are looking at further broadening the competition in North Queensland in 2022.

The Board extends its specially warm thanks to the judges: Caroline Hatcher, Lesley Irvine and Annette Stoddart.

A working party of the Board will shortly convene to evaluate the 2021 competition and to plan for 2022.

COMPETITION - ROLY SUSSEX SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The 2021 ESU Roly Sussex Short Story Competition closed on September 30. There were over 150 entries, nearly 4 times the number that we had last year. Entries in the Open section outnumbered those in the Student section by approximately 6:5, and both sections attracted stories from right across the country. The three judges have a much more onerous job to do than last year, and we are deeply grateful to them: Peter Little (Chief Judge), supported by David Fagan and John Thompson-Gray.

An announcement of the winners will be made on the website, and by email to the members, as soon as the judges have completed their work and reported their results. The winning stories will again be put on the website, in order to give appropriate visibility to excellent writing.

A working party is about to get to work to review the competition and how it runs, with a view to evaluating the competition in its present form, and rationalising and simplifying procedures from 2022. The greatly enlarged body of stories this year has meant a considerable amount of extra work, particularly when some of the entrants seemed unable to follow instructions on how to submit their stories.

Looking back, the Short Story Competition would appear to have benefited from the fact that people fulfilling their home quarantine obligations have turned to writing. Long may that writing continue, even when people are able to get out and about more than they have over the last 20 months.

The Covid circumstances, and the fact that the two top winners in the 2020 Open competition were from interstate, forced the Board regretfully to cancel the award ceremony at Government House. Sixty-five people had accepted an invitation to witness the awards being presented. Trophies and certificates have been posted to the winners. Their short stories can be found at <https://www.esu.org.au/2020-esu-roly-sussex-short-story-competition/>

INVESTMENT REPORT

Under the leadership of Gary Gardiner and Richard Macedo, the Board has continued to pursue properties for purchase. In spite of rapid response to properties coming on the



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market, we have been outbid and/or gazumped on a number of properties. The market is over-heated, with a lot of investors from the southern states looking to place money in investment properties. The necessity to exercise due care and diligence as befits a Not-For-Profit has meant that we have not been able to react with competitive speed in the face of some very aggressive buyers.

The Board is actively pursuing this initiative, which it believes offers the best prospects for the future prospering of the ESU (Queensland). Once a suitable property is secured the Board plans to invest the residue, once a working capital fund is deducted, in suitable investments.

FUTURE EVENTS: AGM and CHRISTMAS PARTY

For your diary! Our next event is the AGM and the Christmas Party:

Date and time: 19 November 2021; 4.30 for the AGM and 6pm for the Christmas Party

Place: 66 on Ernest, TAFE, Ernest St, South Brisbane

Parking: Parking is available off Ernest St.

Members are warmly invited to attend both events. The Secretary has sent invitations, so do send in your acceptances. We look forward to seeing you there.

AGM

The annual AGM will be held on 19 November at 6.00pm at the restaurant, 66 on Ernest, TAFE, South Brisbane. The Secretary has sent the meeting papers and nomination forms.

RETROSPECT

While it is certainly too early to declare victory over Covid 19, it does appear that Australia is moving, in the last months of 2021, towards a more "normal" mode of operation – though we don't know precisely what "normal" means, and it is likely that in some respects we will have to invent it. This has been a truly disruptive period. The Board is warmly grateful to members for their loyalty and persistence as we have gradually reintroduced something like our regular schedule of events. We hope to 2022 will prove to be less stressful, and with fewer unpleasant surprises.

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