



## Writers' Group Guidelines

Do you ever wish you had an interested audience with whom to share your writing? Someone who will listen, make comments beyond 'That's great!' when you know it's not?

Participants of Writers' Groups share their work, read what others are writing, make comments and learn from the informed opinions of fellow members of the Society of Women Writers. Writers' Groups are supportive and encouraging and members understand that participants are all at different stages of their writing journey and respect each other's sensitivity and creativity.

Members of Writers' Groups agree to give constructive feedback, following the 'sandwich' anthology: the top slice of bread gives a positive comment about the work, the sandwich filling is more detailed feedback about a specific issue or part of the text and what can be improved, and the bottom slice of bread is a broad comment about the whole piece. There are further suggestions for critiquing and providing feedback on work below.

Members respect each other's voices, share information and support each other and, most importantly, feel inspired and have fun.

## **Perennial Poets and Spring Groups**

### **How the groups operate**

These writers' groups consists of approximately eight writers, including the facilitator or leader of the group, whose monthly submissions are combined into a journal, a word document, and circulated amongst members by email. Each member in turn receives the journal, reads the contributions, makes her comments and, within four days, emails the journal to the next person on the list. The journal finally comes back to the facilitator who returns the original contributions, together with comments.

### **Do I have to be an accomplished writer?**

Definitely not, members of the groups are usually at different levels of accomplishment. Beginning writers benefit from the knowledge of those more experienced. The enthusiasm of the new writer encourages those who are inclined to procrastinate. At first, it may seem daunting to produce a short critique for each piece of writing within four days, but most members find it advantageous working to a deadline. Comments are helpful and encouraging.

### **What genres are included?**

There are presently two active writers' groups – Perennial Poets, a poetry only group and Spring to which submissions can be prose of any genre – fiction, nonfiction, memoir and articles – or poetry. Prose to a maximum of 2000 words. Should you wish to submit writing that is longer than 2000 words please serialise over a few months. For poetry, two pages only: one poem per page or one two-page poem.

### **What format should I use?**

All contributions should be submitted to that group's facilitator as a Word document with wide margins. Always use one of the basic fonts such as Times New Roman 12 point. For prose: double or one and a half spacing to allow easy reading.

The group's facilitator will advise the date your submission is due, usually the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### **What does it cost?**

Society members who participate in a Writers' Group pay an additional \$10 per year to cover costs.

Members of Writers' Groups meet on the 3rd Saturday each January and June for lunch in Melbourne CBD. Details will be advised a month prior to each date.

## What do members say?

“I love to write and I belong to two other local writing groups. The Carpe Diem workshop ladies didn’t know me and therefore were more impartial when providing feedback on my memoir. They had a wealth of experience in writing, grammar and punctuation and helped me to identify a number of (annoying) lapses in my writing I hadn’t previously noticed. As a result my writing became stronger and more succinct.” *Sue G. Carpe Diem & Spring*

“To send in a submission each month requires discipline, to heed the critiques given requires humility; to learn from them requires enlightenment, to grow as a writer requires perseverance. Surely there can be no greater influences than discipline, humility, enlightenment and perseverance.” *Patricia A. Carpe Diem & Spring*

“Having a number of people critique my writing, both offering encouragement and also constructive criticism allows for growth and development. Also, suggestions of various avenues that might be interested in my work (or even potential publication!) are also very inspirational to keep moving forward.” *Nenia T. Perennial Poets & Spring*

“Reading to critique the work of others has nurtured a greater awareness of the art of writing. Being critiqued on the other hand has nurtured an awareness not only of my own writing strengths but the possibilities of what and how I can improve the not-so-strong aspects of my work.” *Judith G. Carpe Diem & Spring*

“I am so happy to belong to SWWV. The genuine support that comes from a group where we all share a common passion is priceless. The members help you in ways that give you perspective on your craft and encourage you to develop and expand ideas. I enjoy sharing my writing and critiquing my peers writing. I feel as though in a sense I can follow them on their own personal journeys and also have a giggle or cry along the way. Thank you all the team, for the opportunity you have given me and the encouragement to express myself in this wonderful way.” *Mary L. Perennial Poets*

“I discovered the Society of Women Writers Victoria around 1995 and joined a Postal Workshop not long after becoming a member. I can’t consider not being part of a workshop, the input from fellow writers has been important in my growth as a writer. To me though one of the biggest joys is being allowed to ride along on different authors’ journey as they write and publish their books.” *Paula W. Spring*

“For me the importance of the group workshop program has been the continuity of the connection over more than 15 years. Writing has not always been easy and the support that comes from friends in the group is so

positive, you don't ever quite let go. Along with that is the development of the writer's sense of the need for balanced criticism and the happy acceptance of that criticism. This alone, would be reason enough to join a group of writers, but in fact the fellowship experienced in the group is even more valuable. After time you realise you've developed your 'voice', gained in skill and expanded your literary interests. Such connections are hard to come by and quite special." *Del N. Spring*

"These groups had a significant impact on my writing, however it was always only for my own pleasure. I've not won any awards on this journey, but that's not important to me. I like feed back, good or bad. That's part of it all. I have enjoyed my years with Carpe Diem and now Perennial Poets. I enjoy what I do and have been grateful for all the encouragement at SWWV. I've learnt a lot about writing, me as a writer and other writers of all levels and of all genres." *Sandra T. Carpe Diem & Perennial Poets*

\*Note: The Carpe Diem writing group referred to above was the last of the Postal Workshops offered by SWWV. It closed at the end of 2019.