



## REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

9.45pm, Friday 28 October, 2022

**Carmel Shute, Secretary**

Thank you, Moraig – and thank you everyone for sticking around for our 2022 AGM.

The other convenors have threatened to take out a contract on me if I rave on as I am wont to do.

It's only been 5 months since my last report but there have been some really positive developments. A lot of records!

We now have a record 583 paid-up members. With supporters, our mailing list for our monthly newsletter, A Stab in the Dark, is now a record 4002.

A record 169 books battled it out for this year's 22<sup>nd</sup> Davitt Awards.

The prize money for this year's Scarlet Stiletto Awards – the 29<sup>th</sup> – is a record \$12,365.

A new chapter was launched in Tasmania a few weeks ago with LJM Owen, the director of Terror Australis, the convenor. As LJ reports: "On Thursday 6 October, we gathered a few bad apples from around the state and country – as well as some ring-ins from New Zealand – to celebrate the new Tasmanian Chapter of Sisters in Crime Australia at Frank's Ciderhouse in the Huon Valley. We were incredibly pleased to welcome Dr Angela Savage, CEO of Public Libraries Victoria, and Lindy Cameron, vice-President of Sisters in Crime Australia, to officially launch the new chapter." (More of the report will be on the Sisters in Crime website over the next few days.)

We've also been able to meet in person. In July, we met back here at the Rising Sun for the first time for two and a half years. In August, over 80 crime authors and fans turned up here for the Davitt Awards. It was a brilliant night – a wonderful 'in conversation' with ABC broadcaster and true crime author, **Louise Milligan**, conducted by **Jacqui Horwood** – and so much joyous networking between the authors and between the authors and their many fans. We were impressed that so many authors travelled from interstate even though they knew they hadn't won a prize. This place just buzzed!

The same weekend crime fans descended on a Sisters in Crime Festival in Cobargo, organised by the very energetic **Melissa Pouliot**, a Merimbula crime writer. Two of the featured authors are here tonight – **Vikki Petraitis**, and **Caroline de Costa**. Please give them a clap!

Over the past few months, we've also hosted four Sisters in Crime in the Library events – two in Bayside and two in the City of Port Phillip. We hope these partnerships will continue into the future.

Our monthly Murder Monday one-on-one author interviews are in abeyance following the withdrawal of **Karina Kilmore** who undertook an amazing 43 interviews since 2020, including a number with leading overseas writers, **Sara Paretsky**, **Kathy Reichs**, **Val McDermid**, **Ann Cleeves**, **Louise Candlish**, **Sara Vaughan**,

**Vanda Symon, and Tara Moss.** I did two myself though I am yet to get the courage to watch them. Any ideas of how we should proceed in the future would be appreciated, so long as it doesn't involve me.

There have been other changes:

In the Queensland Chapter, **Paula Duggan, Helen Goltz, and Janelle Colquhoun,** have retired as convenors – many thanks for their hard work in the past. Sisters in Crime would like to welcome on board a new convenor, journalist and true crime writer, **Megan Norris.** Megan should also be saluted for giving a voice to those who were so horribly injured in the blasts. Her book, *Out of the Ashes* (Big Sky Publishing), was launched earlier this month. She also appeared on Sixty Minutes and the Australian True Crime podcast. Megan has written an account that runs for 7pp in this month's *Australian Women's Weekly* (mind you, the Queen gets 60pp!) [Wave copy]. Usually, my excuse for buying it is the recipes . . .

In the New South Wales Chapter, due to ill health and the press of other commitments, there are currently only two members of the executive: **Siobhan Mullany** (also our TV crime reviewer) and **Alexandra Larach.** Previous members of the executive who worked like trojans were: **Ann Penhallurick, Catherine du Peloux Menagé, Natalie Conyer, Whitney Fitzsimmons, and Kellie Mc Court.**

The NSW chapter has hosted a live event at Gleebooks – *Mothers – how far will they go?* with **Pamela Hart** in conversation with **Jane Caro** and **Rae Cairns,** and also three Zoom events. It has repaid the \$500.00 seeding money.

The South Australian chapter has had a quiet year. On 9 November, it is holding an event where fans can hear from a group for SA readers and writers of crime books and short stories, both fiction and non-fiction.

Sisters in Crime Perth has celebrated its 30th birthday this year. To mark the occasion a photo book was put together by one of the members. Convenor **Val Marsden** reports: "We have continued to meet monthly as a reading group, although we have been joined by a new member who is a published author of children's books and the author of a crime novel due to be published this year."

Before, I do a lot of other thank yous, can I just say how thrilled we are that **Nicole Chamoun,** star of *Troppo,* will present the Scarlet Stiletto Awards here on Saturday 3 December. *Troppo,* as many of you will know, is based on *Crimson Lake* by long-time Sydney member **Candice Fox.** Time to frock or suit up in tropical attire – and there are prizes, copies of *Crimson Lake* and Troppo posters, donated by the production company, EQ Media Group. The good news is that there is a second series!

We trust you enjoy the monthly e-newsletter, *A Stab in the Dark,* produced by fellow convenor, **Sara Hood,** and me. Sara and our review editor, **Moraig Kisler,** now put out a mid-month review edition featuring book reviews and **Siobhan Mullany's** spot-on television reviews.

**Sara Hood** also had the bright idea of the Crime Stack where 20 members are chosen at random each month to receive a free book donated by publishers. In September Allen & Unwin went one further and donated 5 copies of 7 different crime novels. Not surprisingly, the Crime Stack has proved a winner with members.

Since the pandemic, Sisters in Crime has put much more effort into social media – Facebook (which I mostly do), and Twitter and Instagram (which Sara Hood does). If you haven't already liked us on Facebook, please

do. We post at least two items a day – partly because our members feature in the media a lot and partly because there are a lot of crime shows on television! 3,988 people currently follow us. Please also follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

I'll close with some thank yous, firstly to the convenors who have served over the past 12 months:

- President **Moraig Kisler** tries to keep our meetings in order – no mean feat – and does a splendid job organising our reviews. Moraig is also a Davitt judge and is desperate to find enough time to finish her police procedural novel, *The Salt Works*. She is also on the programming sub-committee with Carolyn Beasley, from Swinburne University of Technology, and me.
- **Vice-President Lindy Cameron** liaises with interstate chapters and always has bright ideas about programming. She works with Sara Hood on the communications and membership sub-committee. She now also videos our events. She has made an outstanding contribution to Sisters in Crime since 1992. Lindy is a great trouble-shooter and her enthusiasm remains contagious.
- Our treasured Treasurer **Lesley Gillis** does an outstanding job in keeping our finances in order and paying our bills. Lesley works closely with our esteemed accountant, **Robyn Young**.
- Committee member, **Sara Hood**, has helped modernise Sisters in Crime – updating our website, our association rules, and our membership system. This is tough stuff!

I would also like to pay tribute to:

- **Caz Brown**, a former convenor, who has done such a great job in designing our most of our graphics, and our trophy plaques, t-shirts, tote bags, convenors badges, and medallions to go on the shortlisted and winning Davitt books. She has played a key role in creating Sisters in Crime's 'look'. Caz has been made a life member as she served on the national committee for 10 years but, because of the pandemic, and her health concerns, we're still to make a formal presentation. Hopefully, it will happen within the next month.

I do admin, programming, event coordination, sponsorship, PR, and publisher liaison.

I am desperate to find someone who might take over this role. If you are interested, please let us know.

Finally, many thanks are also due to:

- Australian publishers who generously support both the Davitt and Scarlet Stiletto Awards, donate books for our raffles, and approach us re authors to speak at our events and, if possible, help get them here.
- **Deb Force** and the wonderful team at the **Sun Bookshop**, our official bookseller at events, which now offers an online service. Members get a 10% discount from anywhere in Australia. Deb has an encyclopaedic knowledge of crime writing and is a great source of top advice on what's worth reading, though we don't always agree.
- **Precilla Damain** who took over administering the Scarlet Stiletto Awards this year. A big job but she has done it so well!
- The indefatigable **Dr Carolyn Beasley** from **Swinburne University of Technology** which supports the Davitts and the first prize for the Scarlet Stiletto Awards.



- **Samantha** and the wonderful team at the Rising Sun.
- **Mark Barry** from BS Sound who does a sterling job setting up the PA system for dummies at our events.
- And most especially thanks to all of you, our members, for sticking with us over tough times. Thank you.