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***Where is Writing Now?: Australian University Creative Writing Programs at the End of the Millennium***

**Abstract:**

*In the early 1990s, creative writing programs in Australia were 'thrust' into the university domain by the Dawkins amalgamations. Prior to that, there was no established national focus: no national peak body, no discipline-based research agenda, no political or academic networking, and no statistical analysis to portray the nature of the activity advancing apace on isolated campuses. Compared with the visual and performing arts disciplines, creative writing programs were unorganised and separatist, but they were aware of their potential for the future. This article reviews advances made by Australian university creative writing programs to date and considers some aspects of the situation after 2000 related to teaching and research.*

There has been a quiet revolution going on and we, the teachers of creative writing at university-level in Australia, are part of it, whether we are fully aware of the fact or not.

According to figures provided by the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, the number of students enrolled in creative arts studies (visual and performing arts, writing, etc) has increased by 45% since 1989. That is roughly the period since the Dawkins amalgamations were mooted and put in place. While it may be thought generally that tertiary enrolments were driven by graduate career outcomes in the nineties - that the desire for university education was seen to be entirely career-oriented and that 'safe' career options were the engines for study - there is this statistic which suggests that in a period of low growth overall in universities, increasing numbers of students turned to a 'creative' education, in spite of the fact that 'creative' industries do not traditionally promise secure employment outcomes.

One might speculate on the influence of entertainment industries in the media here. The glamour of film, TV, popular music and other aspects of popular culture may have led students away from traditional thinking about the arts, and especially the creative arts. The many and powerful forms of the media suggest not only the generic skills associated with the traditional arts degree, but also the creative and production-oriented skills associated with newer 'applied' arts study components such as creative writing. Films like *Romeo + Juliet* or *Shakespeare in Love*, it seems, have not turned students on to the Elizabethan bard and his enduring literary value, but rather have turned them on to Hollywood, and perhaps its promise of riches. In a context of high unemployment, the gamble on fame and fortune (which you *can* achieve in the creative arts) seems just as good as the promise of a more-or-less secure job.

Popular culture, and its aggressive nineties immersion techniques, although marginally tapped into by

the sciences and humanities, seems to have had an unusually strong influence on arts education. Compelling documentaries on environmental problems, new discoveries in the solar system, or alarming social issues, are causing prospective university students to say less often: 'I want to learn so that I can contribute further to solving these problems'; and more often: 'I want to learn to make films'. The medium is more interesting than the message. And as students have taken on the notion of the communications-driven future more significantly, they have sought to apply some of that focus to the communicatory aspects of the creative arts. I'll come back later to the current promises being made by universities regarding the employment outcomes for creative writing study.

It has been noted that university creative writing schools in Australia weren't included in the argument, the statistics or the recommendations contained in Dennis Strand's report on *Research in the Creative Arts* published in 1998. Nor were they included in the DEETYA Evaluation and Investigations Program, funded in 1996, which involved the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) and the National Council of Heads of Tertiary Music Schools (NACHTHMUS). Those areas which were represented were Drama/Theatre Studies, Dance, Music, Design and Curatorship. Mainly, and appropriately, they represented the interests of the peak bodies involved.

Creative Writing wasn't included in the Strand report and wasn't invited to participate in the project study, or the follow-up meetings which occurred in 1996 and 1997, for one simple reason. Until late 1996, creative writing in tertiary institutions had no peak body. There was no national association to represent the creative writing activity which had been developing rapidly in universities since the Dawkins amalgamations, and prior to that had been developing over two decades in Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Higher Education and Technology around the country.

Creative Writing was not invited to participate in the Strand Report because it had not drawn itself into any sort of national focus. It had no statistics relating to its own existence at a national level, no constituted association or membership, no executive body, and no focused research activity by which it could identify itself.

The *Research in the Creative Arts Project* was undoubtedly one of the catalysts which brought together the creative writing programs in Australian universities. At a first forum, the conference held at the University of Technology, Sydney, in October 1996, an Association of Australian Writing Programs (AAWP) was formed. A national committee was elected, and several agendas were set, including one that might be described as an alarmed reaction to the fact that creative writing was not part of the already busy activities of the visual and performing arts disciplines in terms of the national Research Quantum debate (the parameters of which, of course, are now changing significantly, due to the recent Australian government re-think on university research).

In all of the mid-nineties activity, I believe, we as tertiary-level teachers of creative writing saw three main points:

- there was no national database or publication listing all creative writing programs in Australia. In other words, there was nowhere for a student or a researcher to go directly to find detailed information about programs available at undergraduate and postgraduate levels around Australia. (By comparison, the Associated Writing Programs body in America - the AWP - had their *Official Guide to Writing Programs*, currently in its ninth edition, a 370 page information document. Notably, this year's AWP Guide gives 'descriptions of Creative Writing Programs in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom'. But Australia is absent.);
- also, there was no analysis of this activity in Australia in terms of varying teaching practices, various entry and completion requirements for degrees, especially various requirements for assessment of research higher degrees (RHDs), or understanding of course satisfaction levels, etc;
- also, there was no drawing together of information about how 'research' was being interpreted in

the various creative writing schools, and there was no accumulated index of creative writing research in Australia.

In the last three years, of course, the AAWP has begun addressing all of these issues, especially through *TEXT*. Worthy of note, however, is the fact that in the third issue of *TEXT* a survey was run to attempt to find out where creative writing teaching and research was taking place. While academics generally are notoriously fond of running surveys, they are equally unfond of responding to them. The survey was a spectacular failure. At the third conference of the Association (at the University of Adelaide, 1998) Tess Brady and I reported to an eagerly listening lecture theatre full of delegates, that where creative writing teaching and research activities were taking place was still shrouded in mystery. I then committed the School of Arts at Griffith University to some part-time employment for a research assistant to gather together this information for the Association.

We did that survey [current at October 1999] and its results are the basis for this paper. (See Appendix) The survey, carried out electronically by interrogating university web-sites, indicates that there were 37 Australian universities offering a total of 142 named awards where writing could be studied. 13 of these awards were at non-degree levels; 50 were at bachelor levels; 18 at honours; and 61 were postgraduate.

At the bachelor's level, according to the information published on websites, 7 of the 37 Australian universities offered just one solitary undergraduate subject or only a couple of subjects. Others offered minor and major sequences while still others offered numbers of full awards from pre-degree level to PhD. 8 universities offered more than five awards, and up to 10. 2 universities offered pre-degree awards only, and 3 offered postgraduate awards only. It seems, from on-line advertising, that only a small handful of universities (Bond, Notre Dame and the University of Southern Queensland amongst them) offered no creative writing study whatsoever. You can get creative writing with a religious flavour at the Australian Catholic University, and creative writing with a military flavour at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

In other words, universities across Australia have now significantly embraced the study of creative writing, but there are interesting facets to these statistics. They show that there are more postgraduate courses than undergraduate courses (61 versus 50, excluding Honours). There are few honours courses in comparison with undergraduate 3-year and postgraduate offerings (18 versus 111), and most of the postgraduate offerings (36 of them) fall into the category of the non-research or coursework award. If a student wants to do a doctorate in creative writing, there are just 9 universities to choose from. The current national profile suggests that:

- creative writing is viewed as somewhat a later development of educational interest and capability;
- the relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate study is problematic, since only 48% of the universities offering any sort of creative writing study provide an honours bridge between undergraduate and postgraduate programs; and
- the ultimate worth of creative writing study in cultural and academic contexts continues to be under question since only 27% of those universities involved in creative writing at 'lesser' levels provide doctoral study in the area, and only one 'sandstone' offers a PhD;
- and also, only 7% of the total number of programs is available in distance mode - perhaps a very surprising feature.

To some extent, these statistics reflect the history of development of creative writing programs around Australia, where more was done by those 'go-getter' institutions who had less to lose in terms of traditional academic perceptions.

The survey throws up some particular oddities - and some of these suggest almost contradictory thinking about the development of writing courses in the past.

For example, the University of Queensland and the University of Ballarat (two very different institutions, one surmises) have in common that they both offer a PhD with creative writing study... but one of the oldest writing schools - Curtin - does not.

Three sandstones - Adelaide, Queensland and Sydney - according to their web-advertising, offer only postgraduate studies, and don't offer an honours year. Is creative writing seen here as not suitable for undergraduate endeavour, but acceptable with higher award status? Or are these universities being simply cool and smart - biding their time, waiting for the best candidates to emerge from the melee of qualified undergraduate, honours and industry-profiled applicants? Perhaps significantly, each of these sandstones offers its creative writing programs from an English Department. The history of creative writing course development in Australia, as also in the US, is (of course) one of writership breaking free from readership.

Also of note here is the fact that the Universities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, along with the University of Western Australia, do not yet offer doctoral study in creative writing. It seems that the sandstone concept is to confine the study of creative writing to the limited spheres of the graduate diploma and the coursework masters levels.

This is not a criticism, but an observation. The 'gumtree' universities (in Simon Marginson's term, i.e. the more recently up-springing and fast-growing) have been quicker to react to the notion of doctoral status for creative writing.

One might surmise that the role of a university is to provide a pathway of accumulating learning in any discipline it espouses. If a discipline is worth studying, it is worth studying at all levels. But in Australian universities now, there is a broad range of interpretations of on-going, accumulative learning in creative writing. For example, RMIT and Swinburne offer only sub-degree studies, focussing their efforts on certificate and diploma courses. Presumably these institutions see themselves as feeder institutions to the greater world of degree-level creative writing study. At the same time, universities like Curtin, James Cook, Murdoch, VUT, and UWS offer undergraduate as well as postgraduate courses, but not the honours study year to link between the two.

According to the web, there was only one university [at October 1999] offering courses at all levels from non-degree certificate through to doctorate, and modesty prevents me from naming it. It seems to me easy to interpret in all of this that while all major Australian universities have now embraced creative writing as a discipline study, they have done so for quite different, but always possibly cynical, reasons. The 'go-getter' universities have been aware of creative writing as a student number-attractor, while the sandstones have seen these increasing undergraduate populations as exploitable at higher levels.

Competition now prevails. Universities now pitch student numbers and entry levels against quality of teaching and research training outcomes. The big universities continue to attract by reputation and folklore; the smaller universities assume to attract by regional significance and creative advertising. In this context, creative writing has seriously dented the attractability of English literature courses. English and Humanities Departments, that once held sway in terms of offering studies for generic and analytical interpretative language skills, are now facing notions of 'productivity-value' not previously encountered. Reading and criticising texts, as opposed to producing them, doesn't cut so much ice with the clientele anymore. In the 1990s, the 'real world' focus of university training has added a practical 'can do' aspect to the receptive 'will do' orientation of English departments and traditional arts degrees.

Thus, there has been a power-shift. English Departments, prior to the nineties, were all about readership, reception and reaction. By enrolling, students defined themselves in 'Other' terms, in disempowered terms. 'Here is the canon,' English Departments said, 'cop it!' 'The hierarchy states this,' they said, 'respond to it!' Unsurprisingly, in the developing cultural context, albeit prompted by

English Departments themselves in several cases, students have oriented towards pro-active, innovative behaviours - discarding re-active, history-bound activity. Writing looks like 'doing it'; reading looks like 'suffering it'. Students react to all sorts of cultural and social imperatives, but the 'practical' has gained an advance against the 'academic' in attracting students to university courses.

Creative Writing Departments, in this context, have offered not only readership, but also *writership*. They have replaced re-action with pro-action. They have empowered students to tell, and not just to read and reply (to re-tell the telling); they have encouraged production and not just reception. They have put expression, not just impression, into the hands of students.

The Nike footwear advertisements say: 'Just do it'. They don't say 'Just wear it'. Current prospective students are probably more influenced by Nike advertising than they are by university advertising. 'Just do it' is the ad for Creative Writing departments; 'Just wear it' might be seen as the ad for old-style English departments.

As teachers of creative writing we have the media-inspired popular culture on our side. But we need also to exercise the academic rigours associated with the excellence in endeavour expected by university education. In this context it is useful to look further at what we do and how we do it. Clearly, according to my survey, there is a bewildering array of possibilities available to prospective students of creative writing, and making an enrolment choice can be based on many factors.

For a start: Where are creative writing courses offered in Australian universities? Well, they're offered in:

- several English Departments;
- a School of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Humanities;
- a School of Creative Communication and Culture Studies;
- a School of Literary and Communication Studies;
- a Faculty of Arts and Business;
- a School of Media and Journalism;
- a Department of Creative Media;
- a School of Social and Behavioural Sciences;
- a Faculty of Social Enquiry;
- a Faculty of Creative Arts; and so on.

Might this be confusing for prospective students? Where does this mongrel - Creative Writing - really sit? Does he more authentically settle herself in an English Department, or somewhere else? Is Creative Writing Literature? Is it Communication, Media or Journalism? Is it Business? Social Science? Cultural Studies?

I remember a poster on the butcher's shop wall. It shows the cuts the slaughtered beast is subject to. In which part is Creative Writing to be placed? The head? The loin? The tail?

And how are we to advertise our increasingly prime cut? The web shows a broad variety of pitches and slants. Some universities have gone for the employability and generic skills slants, others for the new technologies future slant, yet others for the hobby slant, the self-employed practitioner slant, the purposeful citizen slant, the multi-skilled all-rounder slant, the glittering prizes slant, the 'exciting ideas' slant and, of course, the 'this is not really the old English Department studies dressed up anew' slant.

Here are just a few of the on-line come-ons:

'Journalists, script writers, poets, short story writers, novelists, non-fiction writers, dramatists and children's authors are all catered for in this course.'

'[This university] offers a comprehensive English program incorporating the traditional study of the literature of Britain, Australia and America and newer areas such as creative writing, Australian Aboriginal writing and literary theory.'

'[The course is] designed to provide graduates who better meet the needs of industry, and to provide graduates with opportunities to explore an increased range of career options.'

'...many graduates have gone on to establish an outstanding reputation in the field and several have won prestigious literary awards and prizes.'

'Perhaps writing is just something you always wanted to do and now you have time to devote to it.'

'...the capacities to generate, compose and persuasively present your own work is important vocationally, personally, and in your development and contribution as a citizen.'

'Graduates...find positions in commercial and community arts industries, teaching, publishing, advertising, public relations, the public service, local government, the media, publicity and sales, and also pursue careers as self-employed practitioners.'

And so on.

These are just a few of the pitches on the list of 37. Not only do they challenge the generally-held view that creative writing study is pretty-well useless in career terms, they also challenge the whole question of a creative arts degree's vocational applicability. They say: 'Do Creative Writing and achieve something! Do Creative Writing and get somewhere!'

Several, but not an overwhelming number, of Australian universities offering creative writing courses claim specific learning outcomes for new technology industries - clearly the sites for future writing. One might say that surprisingly few schools do this future-viewing in a field where all schools should be engaged. The battle between: fitting creative writing study into existing canonical contexts and taking into account the clear demands of the technological future, has not in any way been resolved. The study of creative writing stands significantly at the cross-roads between looking backwards at canonical valorisation and looking forwards towards practical, productive contexts.

For example, some universities are touting their creative writing wares in the following manner:

'As Australia moves into the post-industrial age, with new opportunities and challenges, the nation needs more graduates who are flexible and adaptive, equipped with transferable and generic skills...'

'Literature at [this university] emphasises new writing technologies and new ways of thinking about writing as technology. Literature subjects at [this university] have synergised with Media and have a common basis in different approaches to textuality, to reading texts, and theorising the place of texts in society. The 1993 Australian Pro-Vice-Chancellors' investigation into English and Literature programs looked favourably on [this university's] revisions.'

And here: a suitably dispassionate sandstone on-line comment on the Australian teaching of creative writing future:

'This course will provide students with an understanding of creative writing

concepts and techniques which seem especially pertinent in the 1990s and beyond.'

These examples of information/advertising have all been taken from websites, so some consciousness of the cyber-medium should be expected. The audience, to get in touch with this information has, after all, probably switched on a computer and navigated their way successfully. Often, it seems, however, in the 37 come-ons, that the old print publication material has simply been tipped in. I particularly like this one:

'All of these [creative writing] programs offer a high quality degree with special strengths: Innovation, Employability, Transdisciplinarity, Practical Relevance, Exciting Ideas... Graduates find jobs in an enormous diversity of areas...'

I like the use of the word 'enormous' here. It is honest. This notion of *enormity* now confronts the prospective student of creative writing at tertiary level. The idea of 142 programs available in 37 universities is enormous in itself, and the bewildering array of levels and durations of these programs adds to the enormity. For example, for how many semesters should a prospective student think to study? 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 or 14 semesters? Each of these separate durations leads to a completed award, or a progressive combination of awards.

The intricacies of the spider's web of creative writing course availabilities across Australia - or the disorganisation of it, if you like - indicates the nature of the history of creative writing course development in our country: much of it has happened via developments on campuses isolated one from the other. Three historical contexts have particularly impinged on this process.

Initially, in the 1970s and 80s, the development of a creative writing course was not necessarily something to speak about to another campus, because of the stigma associated with doing what American universities did and British universities definitely didn't do. No-one in the institutes of technology and the CAEs was too pleased to advertise broadly that they were indulging in commonly-perceived 'Mickey Mouse' activities. The English Department police were always around the corner. They had had, in the 60s at least, a habit of saying that the only good author was a dead one. I remember that at Mitchell College in the early 70s two New Zealand writers were brought in to develop and teach the creative writing course. Perhaps that was seen as a safe tactic: New Zealanders are doing it; we don't accept full responsibility.

The second aspect of historical context is the fact that the CAEs and institute campuses did not have the budgets, or the need, for national profiling, as they do now. Development of second-tier tertiary courses in the 70s and 80s was more a localised matter, even though courses may have needed approval from Canberra. Someone in a Canberra office knew what was going on around the country, but publicity levels stayed local.

The third historical context was the Dawkins amalgamation, almost a decade ago. As several established universities were forced to welcome 'the great unwashed' from the second tier of tertiary education, and as some of that second tier gained independent first tier status, a new reason for not talking with other campuses about creative writing courses was introduced. The Dawkins initiative created a serious new competitiveness not based principally on supposed academic and research standards, but on new criteria related to economic viability and student enrolment numbers, especially to be achieved through marketing and campus image-creation. One smallish economic weapon the second tier campuses discovered they already possessed, was the marketability and attractiveness of creative writing courses. A generation of prospective students brought up on popular culture, much of it American-generated, and no longer oriented towards British canonical institutions, were opting for these 'can-do' creative writing studies as opposed to 'must-do' English literature studies at local campuses. In the given competitive context, the new reason for the developers of a creative writing course to not talk with another campus was the possible loss of a competitive edge. Any new slant on

the offering of creative writing was seen as potentially an industrial secret, something with which to press home an economic advantage.

Ironically now, web-advertising of creative writing courses has universalised access to information and challenged the notion that a course can simply 'work its local patch'. Admittedly, the present reduced availability of undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships and the high cost of moving to and living in another city or state are working against the notion of enrolment in courses supposedly broadly accessible to students nationally. But at the informational level, prospective students can now easily know much more about what's going on at various campuses, and those various campuses can know much more about what each other is doing. This is happening at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Thus outdated contexts, where creative writing courses around the nation were developed in local circumstances significantly isolated one from the other, are now confronted with a new, though highly correlated context, where informational interplay, especially via the web, has come into being and overlaid individualistic requirements. The way creative writing courses were developed is not in line with the way they can now be accessed. And the ways in which they might interact institutionally have not yet been fully investigated.

The main contingent of teachers in tertiary institutions at present are fiction writers and poets. In fiction and poetry, the writer has traditionally seen himself/herself as resistant to the notion of team activity. 'I write alone,' this kind of writer tends to say. Consequently, at the tertiary teaching level, one particularly influential principle has been forged: 'This is how I do my writing; this is how I do my writing course.' Perhaps that stance has to change.

Outside the university context these days, professional fiction writers and poets clearly must admit: 'I write in conjunction with my administration colleagues - my editors, publishers, agents and publicists - as indeed, I write in conjunction with my clients' needs, the requirements of my audience.' Organisational structure particularly hits the creative writer when she/he comes into contact with academia. I suspect that if there had been script writers (stage, film, TV, radio, electronic writers) mainly involved in developing creative writing courses in Australia, the outcomes would have been different. They would have more easily acknowledged organisational needs - especially the advantageous identification of teams and clients and their respective requirements - and they would have sought more links and more correlation in requirements across campuses.

The project for the teaching of creative writing in Australian universities has established itself not because it was enthusiastically subscribed to by academic hierarchies, but because the project was separately undertaken by individually-committed academics who read a broader picture, argued persuasively at local levels, and put their necks on the line. The process of creative writing entering academia has been a successful subversive process, an acknowledgement of an Other by several dominant centralities which were themselves subject to telling and changing pressures. Creative writing came through because British imperialism got rejected, and because university funding got rationalist. The AAWP is a product of republican and financial forces. Pity it's not a product of appreciation of the contribution of creative writing to cultural progress! (I jest.)

But what this process came up with, taken as a whole, is a highly individualised system of creative writing courses on offer across Australia. These courses are consistently based on the pursuit of individual excellence and on the expanding development of cultural product, but they also acknowledge a variety of industry and contextual imperatives (both professional and academic). Creative writing courses in Australia offer huge variety, and some of that variety is entirely justified.

I suggest the key matter underlying all of the above is that the discipline of Creative Writing in Australia began with, and has needed to follow for three decades, the American university model where Creative Writing schools long ago formed a critical mass which could not easily be argued

with:

- creative writing programs in the US have been offered since 1926; there are now more than 300 programs;
- creative writing courses in the US have produced a huge industry - there were 1500 delegates at the 1999 Associated Writing Programs conference held in Albany, NY; 130 publishers set up stands at the conference; mainly it is the university presses that churn out the products from the university writing programs;
- in the States, the creative writing product is in itself the recognised research - one will get a job teaching in a university on the basis of the creative publications one has.

But, these apparent strengths have their down-sides:

- US Creative Writing schools strive for separation from English, Humanities and Cultural Studies departments - thus minimising the opportunities for interdisciplinarity (and indeed, perhaps, the development of a serious Creative Writing Theory);
- the big publishing industry feeding off the programs is a paper-based industry - it is not yet dealing with the opportunities, or the problems, associated with new technologies (e.g. the Brown University 1999 conference on narrative futures attracted 30 delegates. It was held in the week prior to, and nearby to, the 1500 strong, far more conventionally-based AWP conference);
- the highest award in creative writing study in the US is overwhelmingly the MFA (Master of Fine Arts) - it will secure a job teaching creative writing in a US university and is still considered the most advanced qualification necessary; the PhD is only just coming into the picture.

In some significant ways, therefore, the Australian creative writing teaching industry has advanced beyond its American model in its concern for interdisciplinarity, its new technologies orientation, and its offering of PhD programs.

I think all of this suggests the following:

*a) that creative writing studies at undergraduate level in Australia legitimately claim to serve a variety of academic and professional career-oriented purposes and that these purposes are able to be legitimised in terms of yr2000 and beyond national needs; in other words, that what we do now at undergraduate level, in its diverse focuses, is 'quite a good job';*

*but, b) I suggest that greater consistency needs to be established between creative writing courses at the honours and postgraduate levels. If creative writing is to lay claim to national research significance, it must utilise, promote and rationalise its national research network. The claims for the value of postgraduate research in creative writing are currently subject to understandings that are different from one school to another. At present RHD submissions pass between schools with alarmingly little idea of home school requirements and assessor school orientations. Simply, the increasing emergence of the RHD product from our schools, especially the doctorate, is endangered by our isolationist histories, and can only benefit from more seriously analysed and realised bench-marking;*

*and c) the need for national benchmarking at postgraduate level is even more urgent now considering the recent Australian government re-think on research and research training. Perhaps 60% of future research funding to universities is going to come in on the basis of RHD completions along with publication activities (including 'exhibited', i.e. creative works). Creative writing schools can get into the funding action here in a way they were previously unable to. But a*

*real effort needs to be made to ensure that the creative writing research degree is a solid item, authenticated through networked means across Australia. I suggest that the AAWP, as peak body, should get together a team to examine creative writing research higher degrees and to do some solid research-level benchmarking, so that we do not disadvantage our students, and each other, through ill-preparation.*

Recent government re-thinking of research has levelled the playing field somewhat for creative writing. But more schools need to get PhDs established. And we need to have clearer ideas about assessment, to allow for more dependable completions. It will still be difficult for creative writing to attract external research funding (the other 40% of the new RQ index) and that's a challenge yet to be strategised. But we have the means now to address the problems associated with achieving national definition for RHD theses in creative writing. Creative writing is certainly back in the research game for the future, providing the powers-that-be don't think up some reason for taking our RHD students off us.

In this paper I have attempted to describe the cross-roads I see us standing at following the pioneering decades of the seventies and eighties, and the coming-together forged during the nineties. Creative writing courses have now achieved a critical mass, a clear recognition and respect, perhaps even some envy, from academia in terms of our economic viability in teaching and learning, and our significant relationship with employment applicability and cultural and technological change, at the turn of the millennium.

What I'm not sure we have yet achieved is our solid status in that elite echelon of academia which focuses on research excellence and which, to a significant extent, gives universities their 'real' reason to exist.

*Associate Professor Nigel Krauth is Head of the Writing Program at Griffith University, Gold Coast, Queensland. The author acknowledges the assistance of Ms Sally Breen and Mr Ben Isakhan in the preparation of the research material for this paper.*

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## Appendix

### **CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMS - AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES 1999**

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Program Sub-type (F/t or EqP/t)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Non-degree studies</b>			<b>13</b>

	Certificate (1 sem)	8	
	Diploma (1 yr)	3	
	Diploma/Advanced Diploma (2 yr)	2	
	Distance mode	[6only]	
<b>Undergraduate degrees</b>			<b>50</b>
	Undergraduate degree with major or subjects in creative writing (3 yr)	48 but 7 just 1 or 2 subjects	
	Combined Bachelor/Diploma (3.5 yr or 4 yr) with major	2	
	Distance mode	[3 only]	
<b>Honours degrees (1 yr)</b>			<b>18</b>
<b>Postgraduate studies</b>			<b>61</b>
	Graduate Certificate(1 sem or 1-2 sem)	9	
	Graduate Diploma/MA/MA Prelim/P/g Dip (1 yr or 1.5 yr or 1-2 yr)	27	
	Masters (2 yr)	14	
	Masters with Honours	1	
	PhD (3 yr)	8	
	DCA (3 yr)	2	
	Distance Mode	[1 only]	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>142</b>

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