

From: Paul Kooperman [<mailto:Paul@australianpoetry.org>]

Sent: Friday, 23 March 2012 1:34 PM

Subject: Bold and Beautiful

Dear friends, colleagues, partners and key stakeholders of Australian Poetry Limited,

Yes it's **Bold and the Beautiful Day** around the world, marking the TV debut of the daytime soap opera on March 23, 1987.

Also...

It is with regret that I inform you that I am resigning as the National Director of Australian Poetry Limited. All programs we're working on with you are still planned to go ahead at this stage, but I wanted to let you know my decision, as from now on you'll be corresponding with others here at AP.

The decision

This is not a decision I have taken lightly and feel it is primarily due to a difference in vision between the Board and myself as well as communication issues between myself and the Board since APL was launched in January 2011. I think it's taken me a while to come to grips with the fact that the situation is beyond repair. I have always been optimistic that things were going to improve, but at my staff review last week, and a meeting with the Chair and Treasurer more recently, it was clear nothing has changed and the Board seems less interested in negotiating a positive outcome and more interested in having things their own way. I have loved working with the broad range of stakeholders, the resident orgs at the Wheeler Centre, poets and artists around the country (and overseas) and the various poetry/literary organisations and festivals. I have thoroughly enjoyed building new audiences for poetry and engaging Australians with the art form. I have loved working with the staff and also the Board at various times.

The rationale

As you're aware, the biggest challenge with the merger between the Poets Union and APC was less a logistical one and more a philosophical one - about the difference in attitude, background, expectations and vision for the organisation by different staff and Board members from these two previous organisations. This challenge remains and the difference in vision between Board members and CEO has now created an unworkable situation. However, I do not wish to sound overly dramatic or alarm anyone about how APL is currently operating at staff/office level.

The legacy

Just so you're aware, things will keep ticking over at AP. There is a committed staff delivering a terrific program nationally. The current staff is:

- **Eliza Hull** – 4 days a week - (Office Manager and Project Manager for the Omnibus Mobile Library, Cafe Poet Program and Schools Program)
- **Noe Harsel** – 3 days a week – (Development Manager, subsidised by the Australia Council and mentored by Arts Support representative, Judy Buchan)
- **Ainslee Meredith** – 2 days a week – (Memberships Officer and New Voices Project Manager)
- **Benjamin Laird** – 2 days a week (until June 30) (subsidised by the Australia Council as our 'Geek in Residence', working on the Online National Poetry Festival, Cafe Poet Sound Map and New Voices and AP Journal e-publications)
- **Mary Mahoney** – 1 day a fortnight - (updating our accounts, invoices/payments, ensuring we're compliant and providing board reporting documents)

- **Cecilia Condon** – 2 days a week – Publications Manager for the AP Journal, recently recruited to replace Victoria Amy's duties in regard to working with Editor Bronwyn Lea and managing the AP Journal).
- **Jacqui Hagen** – 2 days a week – (website management and digital publications project manager replacing the other duties Victoria Amy used to handle in her role as Publications Manager)
- **Hal Judge** - contractor - (working as our paid ACT State Coordinator to deliver an APL program in the ACT, supported by Arts ACT)

We also have other State Coordinators currently working voluntarily for APL: **Karen Murphy** (WA), **David Stavanger** (QLD), **Esther Ottaway** (TAS)

We've been successful in engaging a Geek in Residence and Development Manager through the Australia Council's Arts Support scheme. The international tour planned is going exceptionally well - flights and schedule confirmed. Our Journal is on track to be released in May, Bronwyn Lea still editing and doing a terrific job. The Omnibus Mobile Library is travelling to Darwin in May and nationally during the year. We're developing fantastic new relationships with Bendigo Bank and a number of foundations. We're running a National Poetry Festival in Darwin in May. Out Loud is on again this year at the Melbourne Writers Festival. The Cafe Poet Program is in the Sydney Morning Herald this week and is going from strength to strength. Our membership is increasing. Other staff members are generally happy. We've cut expenses and increased revenue streams to deliver a surplus this year and most of our KPI's are on track. I have written to funding bodies, ASIC and key stakeholders to ask their advice on how to proceed. I am waiting on their response and hope they are forthcoming in being willing to talk with the organisation in order to sail through these stormy seas.

The plan from here

My last day at AP will be **Friday April 13th** and I will work closely with Eliza Hull, our Office Manager, to ensure she feels comfortable keeping things operating and undertaking a recruitment process for a new CEO. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Eliza

It's been terrific working with you and I hope we will cross paths again in some other context.

Kind regards,

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