

Referral for Patricia Johnson

28 September 2023

I have known Pat Johnson for the better part of a decade. During that time two aspects of her contributions to the arts and to writing have stood out for me.

The first was in her role of President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers WA from 2017 to 2018, during which time her wise decision-making and calm, even temperament helped to keep the association running smoothly and effectively. I believe her equanimity was a major part of her leadership. This post followed her role as Administration Officer from 2008 to 2016, and she was always a quietly influential committee member (2008–2019). I found her guidance, sensibility, understanding of the fellowship's needs and empathy with the writers who made up its membership to be of great benefit throughout that time.

These strengths relate to the second aspect of her contribution. While innate, they come partly from the fact that she is herself also a writer. I worked with Pat as editor of her unusual and magical novella, *Isla Rising* (Ferguson Press, 2021), and also did some editing for her current collection of poems, some of which have already been published individually in different anthologies.

Many of the best authors write as a way of finding themselves — core beliefs and values, inner life, inherent identity — and take the reader with them on this journey. This is something Pat does with enchantment and conviction, fully engaging her readers.

Pat is a beautiful person as well as a strong leader and an engaging writer with a thorough appreciation of the works she has read and the authors she has interviewed. (I was most impressed by an interview she conducted with me in 2022 for Kalamunda Community Radio.) I have every reason to believe she will be an ideal fit for the role of assessor on the Peer Assessment Panel in the Department of Culture and the Arts.

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