

# ROSA Annual Report | 2021



## **Chairperson's Report**

As my first of my two years as chairperson comes to a close, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the past year.

As the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve, many hoped 2021 would be a better year. Sadly, that proved not to be the case as the pandemic continued rage on and negatively impact lives in many ways. At ROSA we've felt the impact of some of that, but I am truly proud of the way we've stood together and weathered the storm.

Having already shifted gears in 2020, continuing to do things online has helped keep us in touch with each other and the WhatsApp groups are lively. Our members have continued to publish books prolifically and we've seen a rise in new authors publishing their debut novels.

Some projects remain on the back burner until such time that we can, once again, go out and do in-person meetings and presentations but, in the meantime, we continue to build on what we can.

The 2021 conference will be held online again this year and we're excited to share the fabulous line up of speakers with you - a wonderful blend of both local and international talent. By popular demand, publishers will be taking pitches again this year, so keep an eye out for the newsletter going out later in October to sign up to pitch.

Despite the setbacks the pandemic has thrown our way, the future continues to look bright.

I'd like to thank my fellow Exco members for all their support this past year. It is deeply appreciated. And, from the Exco and I, we'd like to thank all the volunteers - each subcommittee member, chapter leader, mentor, judge, event organiser, webinar presenter and contributor - who've contributed to ROSA's ongoing success this past year. We could not have done it without you.

Here's to another great year together.

*Dorothy Ewels*

**ROSA Chairperson**

## **Treasurer's Report**

The increase of 20 percent in the membership fees as well as the increase in membership has resulted in an increase of 15.6 percent in the item Membership dues.

For the first time the revenue and expenditure for a conference has been contained in the financial year in which it has taken place. The full surplus generated by the 2020 conference of R 20,972 is reflected in the financial statements.

There was a marginal deficit in Webinars, and expenditure exceeded revenue collected for Awards. Other items of expenditure were in line with prior years. The revenue for the 2019 Conference which is reflected in the comparative figures, was collected over two financial years.

The reserves of the organisation total R 131,997 this is made up of the bank account balance of R 128,145k a significant increase over the R 88,631 of last year, and the investment consisting of shares and loan in the wholly owned Rosa Publishers Pty Ltd.

We do not anticipate any major shifts in the financial position of the organisation over the ensuing year.

*Peter Barker*

**ROSA Treasurer**

## Membership

ROSA currently (at the start of October 2021) has 82 members, consisting of 80 renewals and 2 new members. Welcome to our new members!

Our members are spread across 8 provinces, plus 7 members who now live abroad. The breakdown per province is listed below.

- Gauteng – 39 members (28 Jo’burg, 10 Pretoria and 1 other)
- Western Cape – 21 members (18 greater Cape Town and 3 George)
- International members – 7 members
- Kwazulu-Natal – 3 members
- Free State – 3 members
- Mpumalanga – 3 members
- North West – 3 members
- Eastern Cape – 2 members
- Limpopo – 1 member

In the 2019-20 year we used an online Google form for membership renewals and applications, which was a big success over the previous manual email/EFT system. The benefits were that the online form was easier to access, and it enabled the committee to keep up-to-date, easy-to-access records.

For the 2020-21 year we again tried something new, this time hiring Trajectory Systems to build us a dedicated website with PayFast links to make the process even easier. There were a number of teething problems, however, with many people struggling to submit their online applications via the site, so we had to use a Google form in conjunction with the new website, and also some of the information submitted via the website (such as whether members are trad or self-published, or both) was not retrievable.

Thank you to everyone for their patience as we’ve experimented with these new systems. Each year we improve and grow, and we look forward to ironing out the glitches so that next year we’ll hopefully have a renewal system that is even more efficient and user-friendly!

In 2021, due to the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic, ROSA offered an unlimited number of sponsored memberships to those in financial need. While some members took up this offer, the numbers were not as high as we expected. ROSA is delighted to be able to give back to our membership in this way, and to make membership accessible to all.

*Romy Sommer*

ROSA Membership Co-ordinator

## **Vision Statement**

ROSA's stated mission, as per our constitution and our website, is:

- To provide support, encouragement and professional development to romance writers, especially to writers resident in Southern Africa and of South African descent.
- To enhance and promote the various types of romantic fiction and to encourage good writing.
- To support writers of romantic fiction through networking, information, resources and an online community.
- Represent the genre of romantic fiction within Southern Africa.

During our 2020-21 year we furthered these aims through the following initiatives:

## **Local Chapters**

This past year ROSA expanded the number of local chapters. We now have the following chapters represented via WhatsApp groups:

- Johannesburg
- Pretoria
- Cape Town
- Garden Route
- Durban
- Afrikaans
- International

Bloemfontein looks like it might get a chapter soon but as such this has not yet materialised.

Chapter reports are attached as Addendum to this Annual Report.

A huge thanks goes out to all our volunteer chapter leaders who do so much to keep our members up to date and who organise networking events to keep us all sane!

*Mandy Verbaan*

**Chapter Leaders Coordinator**

## **Website, Blog, Newsletters & Social Media**

The quarterly newsletter had a few ups and downs this past year, and was not as consistent as we'd hoped, however, after a hiatus, Romy Sommer has returned to coordinate a new committee of volunteers. We are very excited for the future of the newsletter, with some fresh new ideas like the Ask Auntie Rosa column. (Please send your writing or publishing questions to Auntie Rosa on [newsletter@romancewriters.co.za](mailto:newsletter@romancewriters.co.za)). The committee welcomes contributions of articles, links, latest news, book reviews, etc, so please do keep sending us your content.

The website is still hosted via a Wix premium package, and we have also added separate sites for the conferences and membership renewals via Trajectory Systems. The various domains are registered via The Framework in Cape Town. While Wix can be a tad clunky to use, it remains easy to access and update by the various members who manage the different areas of the site (eg. Strelitzia, Imbali, conference and resource pages) and with the site having grown so big over the years it would now be very complicated to move to a new host, so we recommend continuing with the website as is for at least the coming year.

With blogging no longer as popular as it once was, the ROSA blog (<https://saromancewriters.blogspot.com>) has been mostly inactive in past years, however the quarterly newsletter committee has some interesting ideas to breathe life into the blog over the coming year and to improve our SEO. All members are invited to - we are particularly looking for short articles on the writing journey, writing craft and marketing. Please feel free to send your proposals or blog posts to [newsletter@romancewriters.co.za](mailto:newsletter@romancewriters.co.za).

*Romy Sommer*

ROSA PR Co-ordinator

## **Professional Development**

ROSA successfully achieved its aim of providing professional development for its members during the past year through ROSACon 2020, the Strelitzia mentorship

program, workshops offered by the local chapters, and a series of webinars.

In 2020 the mentorship phase of the Strelitzia Contest was re-vamped. A private Facebook group was created, in which entrants received weekly lessons. A Q&A with mentors was held and a series of webinars was provided free of charge to Strelitzia entrants.

## **Quality Control & the Pursuit of Excellence**

### **Imbali Contest**

Part of ROSA's vision in promoting romantic fiction is to encourage and reward good writing within the genre. This is why the Imbali Award was introduced as an annual award for excellence in romance writing. 2021 marks the sixth year of the Imbali's for English and the fifth year for Afrikaans.

This year we received eleven entries in our English category and five in our Afrikaans category. We will be presenting the entries and announcing the winners during this evening's Awards Ceremony.

*Mandy Verbaan*

**Imbali Contest Administrator**

### **Strelitzia Contest**

The Strelitzia contest for our unpublished members had 13 participants in 2021. The participants received mentorship, lessons, and access to webinars as part of their mentorship phase. As agreed in the 2020 AGM, a few changes were made to this year's contest, with only one round of entries rather than two, and the mentorship phase extended from 3 months to 6 months. Participants were then encouraged to submit full manuscripts rather than partial submissions, in the hope that more participants would be encouraged to complete full manuscripts. In order to avoid an onerous burden on mentors, editorial feedback was curtailed this year.

Six participants submitted full manuscripts for judging (five in English and one on Afrikaans). Despite our concerns that this would place a bigger burden on our judges, we were especially blessed with judges this year. We gave the judges the opportunity to opt out of reading the full manuscript after 25% if they were sure that the manuscript was not yet ready for publication or an award contender, however very few used this option and all the entries received multiple full reads. Every entry received a minimum of five separate reads, and some received up to eight reads, enabling us to ensure that the scoring was as fair as possible.

The one downside of this year's contest was that the drawn-out mentorship phase did not have the same momentum as in past years and it felt as if motivation was lacking in 2021. This could, however, also be due to the ongoing pandemic affecting motivation! We look forward to receiving feedback from the participants, mentors and judges, so that we can improve the contest experience in 2022.

Well done to all the entrants who took part, and especially to those who now have completed manuscripts to show for it! We hope that you learned a great deal through the process this year.

Thank you to all the mentors and judges who contributed time and effort this year to making this contest a success, especially to those judges who read every entry, enabling us to establish a baseline for scoring. We hugely appreciate your involvement!

*Romy Semmer*

**Strelitzia Contest Administrator**

**\*\* Winners of both the Imbali and Strelitzia awards will be announced during an awards ceremony following the close of the AGM on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021. \*\***

## **Outreach**

As the pandemic continued to affect in-person meetings and events, the outreach program spent a second year lying dormant. However, we were approached this year by Sunel Combrinck of Hoërskool Eldoraigne to participate in a mentorship

program for budding young writers. This initiative is primarily aimed at the 16 – 18-year age range as they learn the craft of writing and explore the potential of it as a career. The Eldo-skryfskool initiative is due to launch in early 2022 and we look forward to being a part of this exciting project.

*Dorothy Ewels*

**Outreach Administrator**

## **Anthologies**

The anthologies that released during 2021 seemed to be well received by those who left reviews. It was rather difficult to wrangle in all the loose ends left by the previous manager of this project, but with Dorothy's help, it all came together. I believe the authors enjoyed taking part and learning a bit more about the marketing process which can be quite intricate.

If ROSA does decide to run anthologies again, I would recommend only doing two. We should then run them six months apart. Perhaps we can do a sweet, Christmas themed anthology, and one nearer Valentine's Day which could be steamier.

There were quite a lot of authors who had signed up and got the manuscripts in on time. Sadly, due to the rush of trying to get them out, I didn't get a chance to read all the stories. I would also say in future, we should look at doing a print copy for authors taking part to be able to hold a copy in their hands. It's one of the perks of being an author, being able to actually hold your book.

We also have to remember, 90% of the authors who did take part don't have a large following yet. I find anthologies are there to grow readerships, as well as to teach authors more about marketing a project. Should I be part of ExCo next year, I'd love to do another two anthologies with better planning as I would run them from the get-go, rather than picking up from the middle when everything seemed to be up in the air.

Also, I think if we have longer deadlines, giving authors more time on the project, it will help them garner experience, as well as be able to get the manuscripts in without rushing which I noticed a few did.

All in all, I think they went down well and I believe if we do dive into these again, we may have a lot more sign ups.

*Dani René*

**Anthologies Project Manager**

## **Constitution**

From 2019 to 2021, the Policy Committee and ExCos worked together to update the original 2014 Constitution to bring it in more in line with ROSA's needs as well as South African legal requirements for non-profit organisations. The updated constitution, including notes on what changes were made, why and by whom, were distributed to members for comment via the Spring 2021 quarterly newsletter, and will soon be voted on by the membership. The updated constitution include the reworded vision statement agreed at the 2020 AGM. If approved by 66% of the members present at the AGM in October 2021, the updated constitution will be lodged with the Department of Social Development.

## **Looking Forward**

It is with an optimistic heart that I look forward to the next year for ROSA. I cling to the hope that we will see the return of in-person meetings and get together sooner rather than later.

I'd like to encourage all members to get involved with ROSA, regardless of how small the contribution. As a volunteer-run organisation, our success lies in the hands of its members and is only made possible through your continued involvement. With your active participation, ROSA can only continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you for your support this year, and I look forward to sharing the next year with you.

*Dorothy Ewels*

**ROSA Chairperson**

## Chapter Reports

### Chapter Report – Johannesburg

The Johannesburg chapter has been less busy this past year. A sense of online fatigue is settling in and chatting has been happening more in the WhatsApp group over the past 12 months. There have been a couple of face to face meetings for the brave amongst us. As we continue to see infection rates drop and state of emergency levels slacken we hope to be able to hold more face to face events in the coming year.

A big thanks goes out to Peter Barker who joined as Chapter Leader and organised a great presentation regarding the legal profession with Felicia Snyman-Du Toit. This was well attended and very useful to all those considering using a character or storyline that ventures into South African legalese.

We're looking ahead to less stressful, virus-free times!

*Mandy Verbaan*

**Johannesburg Chapter Coordinator**

### Chapter Report – Western Cape

With the various levels of lockdown prohibiting larger gatherings, the Cape Town chapter shifted gears and took meetings online. Between Zoom get togethers and the WhatsApp group, we've remained fairly active and involved in supporting each other on our respective writing journeys. A number of our members have been meeting regularly for sprinting sessions to remain productive and connected through these difficult times. With the announcement of Level 1, there is hope that we will be able to return to our monthly in-person meetings early in the new year.

*Dorothy Ewels*

**Western Cape Chapter Coordinator**

### **Chapter Report – Pretoria**

Sunel Combrinck took over Chapter leadership during May/June 2021. During this time South Africa did go through stricter lockdown regulations, but following events still happened in the Chapter:

- Chapter get together
- Writing marathon

*Sunel Combrinck*

**Pretoria Chapter Coordinator**

### **Chapter Report – Durban**

This year the KZN chapter has been quiet with not much happening chapter wise. Several members had new publications and some ventured into digital publishing. It seems like the year had gotten away from us and we didn't have any meetings or write ins. I'm afraid we weren't very active.

*Yolande Pienaar*

**Durban Chapter Coordinator**

### **Chapter Report – Garden Route**

The Garden Route chapter consists of a small group of ten members ranging from the Garden Route, Karoo, and Eastern Cape.

Since COVID, the chapter "get-togethers" consists of the Zooms calls that ROSA puts together.

*Tanya Hoeksema*

**Garden Route Chapter Coordinator**

**New Chapters introduced during 2020/21**

## **International Chapter**

During the past year, we created a WhatsApp group for our international members to enable them to stay connected with the organisation. While it's a small group and not always active, it has been a joy to chat to our members who are spread around the globe, in Canada, England, Scotland, Belgium, Mauritius and New Zealand. Thank you to all our members who have stayed connected to ROSA despite the geographic distances!

*Romy Semmer*

**International Chapter Coordinator**

## **Afrikaans Chapter**

The Afrikaans chapter is mostly active in the WhatsApp group. I shared all activities and news in the group, and sometimes there will be long conversation threads, but it comes and goes. They are supportive there and on Facebook, but other than that, I have little to report, unfortunately.

We had one online meeting to discuss marketing strategies, but since only two other members, apart from the Pretoria members attended it, I had arranged nothing else.

*Francine Beaton*

**Afrikaans Chapter Coordinator**

**\*\* Francine is stepping down as chapter co-ordinator and Marilize Roos will taking over from her. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Francine for her service as chapter co-ordinator and welcome Marilize as the new co-ordinator going forward. \*\***

## **Young Adult Romance Chapter**

This is the first year the young adult group started. The following webinars were held throughout the year:

- **The difference between romance for adults and YA/teens by Jan Vermeulen**
- **Writing 21st century YA by An-mari Do Carmo**

**The member also took turns to provide catchy teenage slang on the group. Upcoming events include one webinar by Annerle Barnard on writing style.**

*Sunel Combrinck*

**Young Adult Romance Chapter Coordinator**

**Romance Writers Organisation of South Africa (ROSA)**

Income and Expenditure statement for the year ending June 30, 2021.

	June ZAR 2021	June ZAR 2020
<b>REVENUE</b>	116 158,69	90 445,00
Membership dues	33 108,93	26 500,00
2020 Conference Fees	66 313,04	-
2019 Conference Fees	-	48 295,00
Awards Entrance Fee	8 400,00	7 700,00
Webinar revenue	7 950,00	7 950,00
Revaluation of Foreign account	386,72	-
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	73 542,28	95 019,10
Administration & Marketing	730,21	830,00
Annual General Meeting	-	1 618,18
Bank Charges	1 690,75	1 441,82
2019 Conference Costs	-	67 935,40
2020 Conference Costs	50 260,55	-
Scholarship	-	2 225,00
Webinars	8 144,85	9 192,75
Website and other admin costs	2 605,92	2 799,20
Trophies and Prizes	10 110,00	8 976,75
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - for the year	42 616,41	(4 574,10)
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - opening year	89 380,36	93 954,46
ACCUMULATED RESERVES - end of year	<u>131 996,77</u>	<u>89 380,36</u>

**Romance Writers Organisation of South Africa (ROSA)**

Assets and Liabilities Statement at June 30, 2021

Accumulated Reserves	131,996.77	89,380.36
Represented by		
Cash FNB Account	128,145.45	88,631.19
Paypal Account	0.00	3,255.26
Share Investment 100 shares Rosa Publications Pty Ltd	1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL ASSETS	129,145.45	92,886.45
Membership Dues in Advance	-	1,750.00
Loan Rosa Publishing Pty Ltd	(2,851.32)	1,756.09
	(2,851.32)	3,506.09
NET ASSETS	131,996.77	89,380.36

## Notes

The accounts are set up on the cash based system, whereby revenue and expenditure relevant to the organisation is not reflected in the accounts until it has been entered in the bank account