

## Catherine Noske – UWA (Job 46735)

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### Interviewer

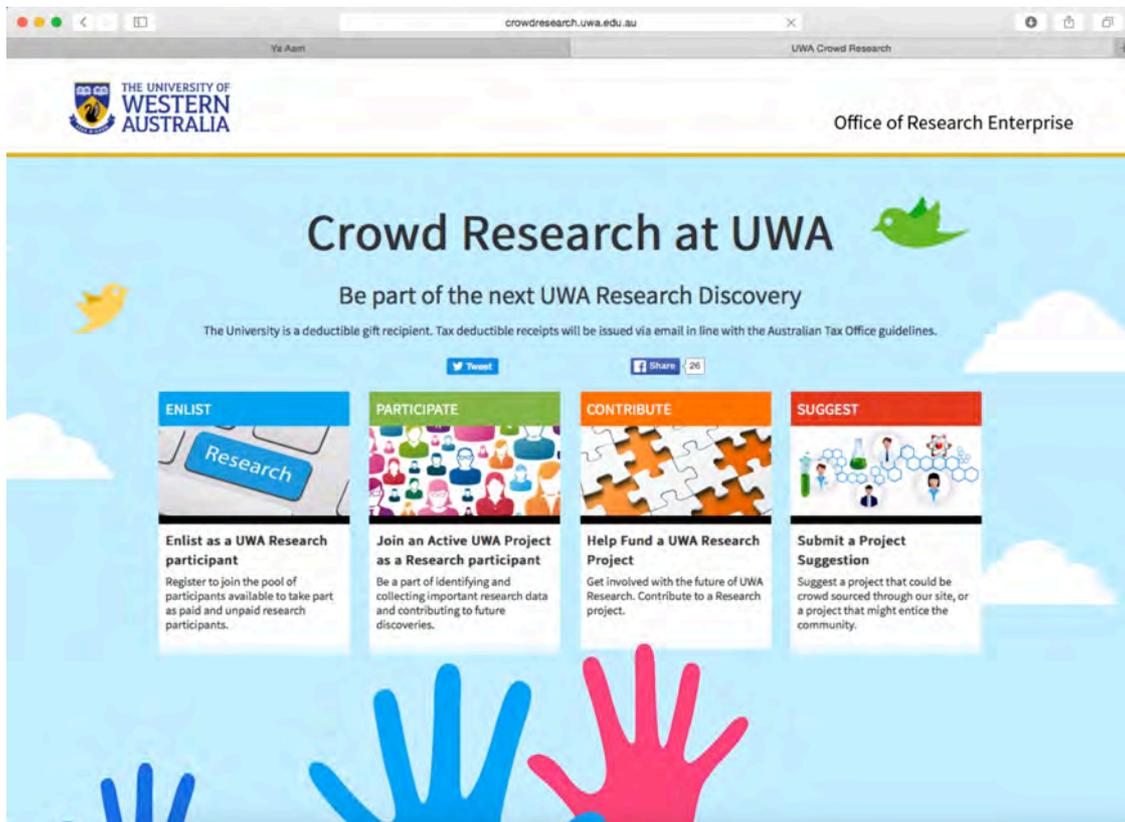
Tell me the story of your campaign for *Westerly*.

The screenshot shows a crowdfunding campaign on the Chuffed platform. The campaign title is "Help Support Western Australian Writing with Westerly Magazine" by The University of Western Australia. The campaign is marked as "Completed on 09-04-2016". It has raised \$15,485, with a goal of \$15,000. A video thumbnail shows three people sitting at a table. The page includes social sharing buttons for Facebook and Twitter, and a "Donations Closed" button. The campaign description states: "Westerly needs your help to continue producing Western Australian writing. With recent arts funding cuts, we are turning to the community to help us raise the funds to pay our wonderful writers." The page also features a "SELECT AN AMOUNT" section with buttons for \$5, \$25, \$50, and \$100, and an "Enter Other Amount" field. A "DONOR SAINT" section is partially visible at the bottom, showing a "\$1,000 PATRON SAINT" button.

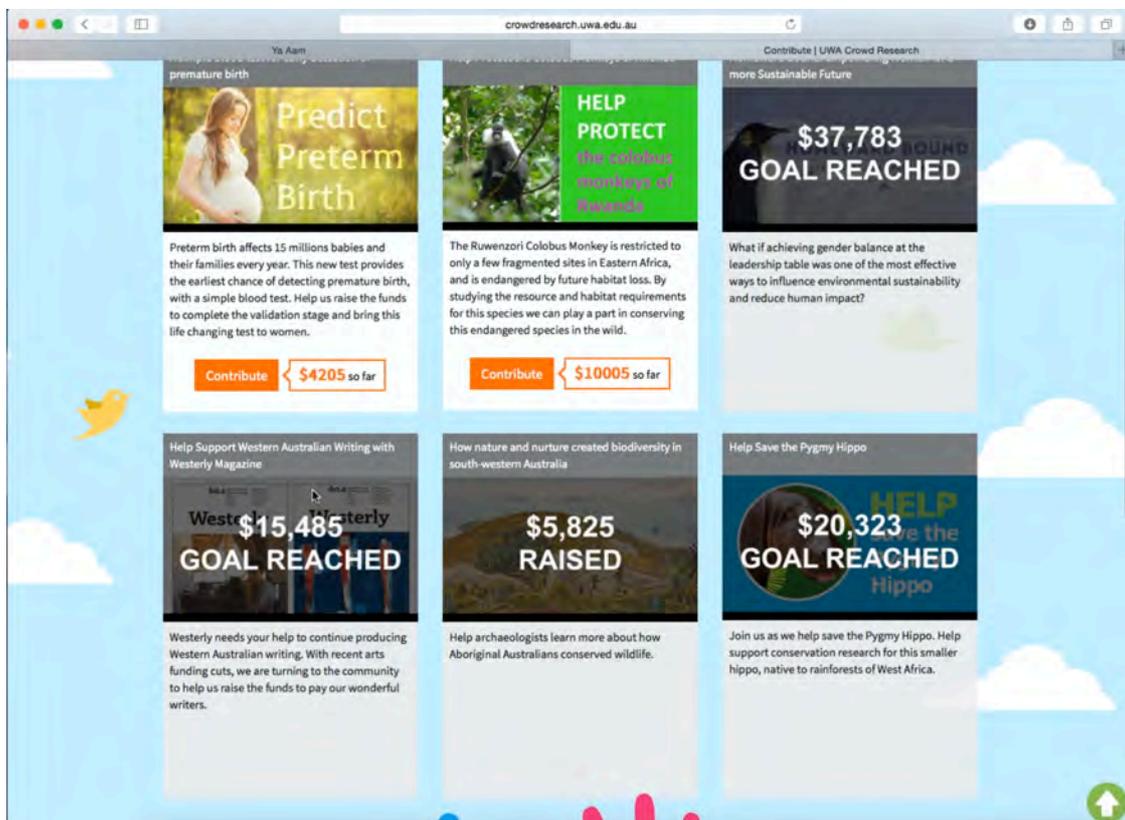
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### Participant

Basically, the campaign came out of a need to cover a gap in our funding. We lost project funding about the time that I arrived, started working for the journal, which is an unfortunate situation to emerge into, but fine, really. [Redacted] We basically saw crowdfunding as a way to both cover that gap, financially, and really start to build on the work we've been doing in audience development as well. So it was really both a media campaign and a crowdfunding campaign in one. When I arrived we changed the design of the magazine, we introduced different content, we recreated the website, we started really changing a lot of things up. So we needed a way to represent our new vision, and new ideas, to a much wider audience than we were currently in contact with, and the lack of funding gave us a really strong platform to make that message about the importance of the magazine as a cultural artefact, about its history and its heritage, and how we're taking that forwards, how our new design was going to build on that, rather than remove, it, change, it, whatever. So the campaign really was very much both those two outcomes in one and trying to be as efficient as possible, basically, in our approach to PR.



So the campaign itself [redacted] emerged through UWA’s crowd research. We had contemplated doing a sort of patronage, philanthropy drive, but found that would be ultimately in conflict with [redacted] the university’s Alumni Relations [Now the Department of Alumni Relations – added by applicant in review] in general. So crowdfunding was a way for us to work with them, rather than directly against them in seeking philanthropy.



Their crowd research program here enlisted us as participants, so it was quite simply a matter of setting up a platform with them. [Redacted]

The screenshot shows a crowdfunding campaign on the Chuffed platform. The campaign title is "Help Support Western Australian Writing with Westerly Magazine" by The University of Western Australia. A green box indicates the campaign is "Completed on 09-04-2016". The amount raised is \$15,485, with a note that \$15,000 was raised. A video player shows three people sitting at a table. Below the video, there are social media share buttons for Facebook (595 total shares) and Twitter. A "Donations Closed" button is visible, along with a "SELECT AN AMOUNT" section with options for \$5, \$25, \$50, and \$100, and an "Enter Other Amount" field. A "OR CHOOSE A FEE" section is partially visible at the bottom.

Basically, with their assistance we designed and set up the campaign. That actually took a process of about six months, all in all, and then it was approved and it took about another four months to launch and really kick-start the campaign itself. And we wanted to take that time simply because there was no point doing this, as I said, those two outcomes were never going to be achieved, unless we put the groundwork into place beforehand, and because we really needed the money by that stage so it needed to be successful. There was no point launching [redacted] [without being prepared – added by interviewee in review].

So, the actual design of the campaign was with the Office of Alumni's Relations' input, but the set up was something we'd been working on for a long time prior. At that stage, that was November 2015 when it was approved.

[Sorry, I wasn't very clear on the timeline here. We started talking about it as a concept, setting up possibilities and looking at all the options in philanthropy in 2014. From about May-November, we developed the campaign with the Department of Alumni Relations, and from Nov-Feb (the launch), we scaffolded it with a media plan, preparing social media material/information etc., as the funding which came in allowed us a little more space for that development. – added by the interviewee in review]

At that stage or shortly after I think it was, actually, we received a little bit of project funding which tided us over to February the following year when we launched the campaign. And we were actually successful in two other, much larger, project funding applications about three weeks after the campaign closed, so we had all of the good news at once, which was a really nice situation to be in. So the funding side became a lot less urgent at that point, but the goal of the campaign, to really extend our network, improve our reach, cultivate audience, and represent what we were about, was very much a boon. So that outcome, that second outcome, actually ended up being the more important, more successful aspect of the campaign.

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### Interviewer

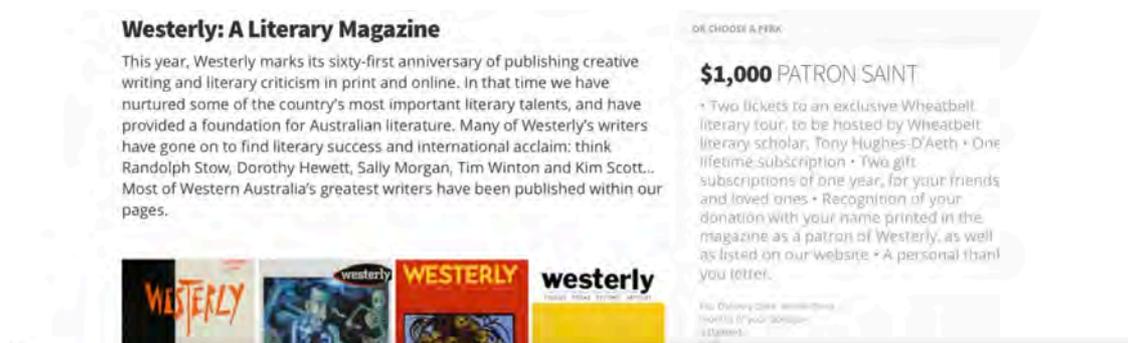
Ten months' development, roughly? Six months and four months. Can we talk about...

0:05:14.1-0:09:28.8

### Participant

The process there? Sure.

So, if we work from the start... [Redacted] Basically the idea for a crowdfunding campaign had been in place before I started with *Westerly*. Back in that form it was fairly low-key, as a simple idea, that was put together in 2014, I think, [redacted] as just a concept. The only real idea that was in place at that stage was to run a literary tour of the wheat belt, which our Web Editor [redacted] was quite keen on doing, and basically used the crowdfunding as a way to sell tickets at certain levels. When we started developing THIS program, we refined that, slowly but surely, into a much more, much broader appeal.



So we started with that base, and you can see from here that the patron saint is still about the literary wheat belt tour, the major reward, but we started with the wheat belt tour as the upper end, and worked our way down to simple \$5 donations with an online thank you as the basic lowest level. So that progress of development of working out what was going to appeal, of working out how those rewards could be structured, and at what level, was actually quite a long conversation, not only with the Office of Alumni Relations but also with our subscriber base, basically, testing with people that we were in contact with, with other organisations, what would appeal, what level they felt would be appropriate, without being too structured, but just beginning to talk about it locally in networks to start seeing how that could function. We spent probably about two months doing that, to create a basic outline. [Redacted]

LEVEL	AMOUNT	#	TOTAL	BENEFITS
1. CORPORATE	\$5 000	2	\$10 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full page ad in magazine</li><li>• Logo displayed in bottom banner on every web page</li><li>• 10 x gift subscriptions</li><li>• VIP list</li><li>• 2 x Wheatbelt tour</li></ul>
2. PATRON	\$1 000	10	\$10 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name printed in mag</li><li>• Listed on website</li><li>• 5 x gift subscriptions</li><li>• VIP list</li><li>• 2 x Wheatbelt tour</li></ul>
3. BENEFACTOR	\$500	10	\$5 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name printed in mag</li><li>• Listed on website</li><li>• 2 x gift subscriptions</li><li>• VIP list</li><li>• Wheatbelt tour</li></ul>
4. CHAMPION (FRIEND)	\$100	50	\$5 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listed on website</li><li>• VIP list</li></ul>
5. SUPER SUBSCRIBER	\$50	100	\$5 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One year subscription</li><li>• 3 x back issues</li></ul>

I think that's 2014. That will be [our Web Editor's] initial structure which quite simply set it up as the corporate and the patron, looking for the wheat belt tour as the major

reward. That's was the very first manifestation, the very first idea. And that was developed into a basic outline. [Redacted]



The program we developed after those first two months was looking at the plausible numbers, based on our target, as I said. So obviously we'd set our target as 15 [\$15,000 – added by the interviewee in review], given that was the gap that we had to meet, and we estimated our current reach as it stood to be about 5,000 people, that was based on our e-newsletter on our social media reach and on our organisational networks. [Redacted] so the 5,000 was a pretty confident estimate, but turned to be actually short of the reach that we did have. We ended up engaging with about 8,000 people all up. So that was okay. And we figured, based on that reach, that we needed 273 donations to be successful, as a minimum, and that wasn't unachievable. Hence the levels.

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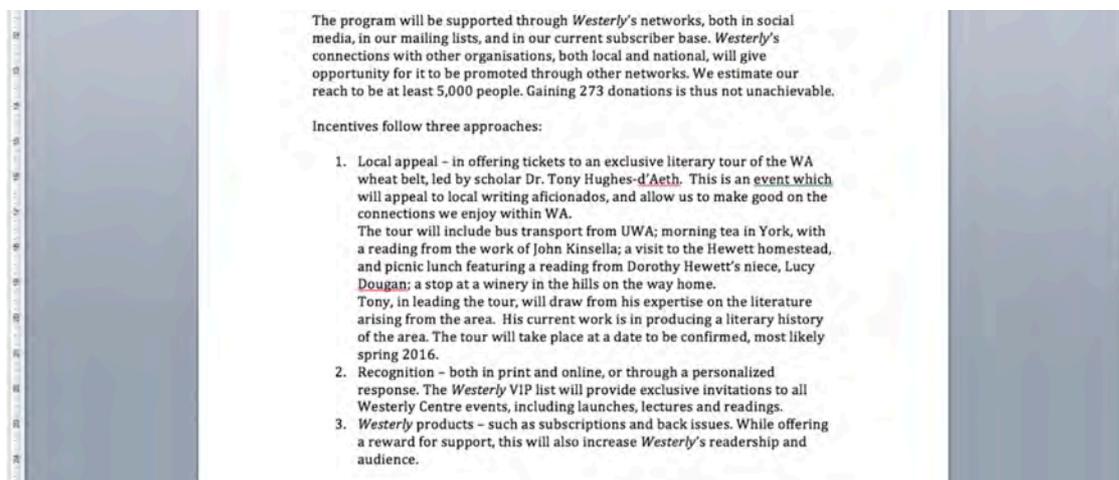
Interviewer

That's a very specific number!

0:09:31.4-0:26:32.6

Participant

Yes! [laughing] That was based on a couple of people who we had confirmed as being willing to donate, plus the maximum number of the smallest donation needed. So, assuming that, at least,  $x$  amount of people would donate \$5, and then the donations we were assured of on top.



We marked out (as you can see here, and I can provide you with these documents if you want) a basic set of incentives, across three approaches, and this was what was the result of those conversations that took over that two months with locals, basically. The appeal of the local tour was well received, recognition was also very well received, given the journal's heritage, so that became a major player in our outline, not only in the sense that being associated with the journal was something that people responded positively to, but also in the sense that the arts funding crisis, I suppose you could say, has been getting quite a lot of media coverage, a problem with the arts, really, and the idea of doing something positive about that, people were really keen to be seen as contributing actively. So that was partly the timing. And *Westerly* products were actually really well received as an incentive as well, so subscription became a pretty key outcome.

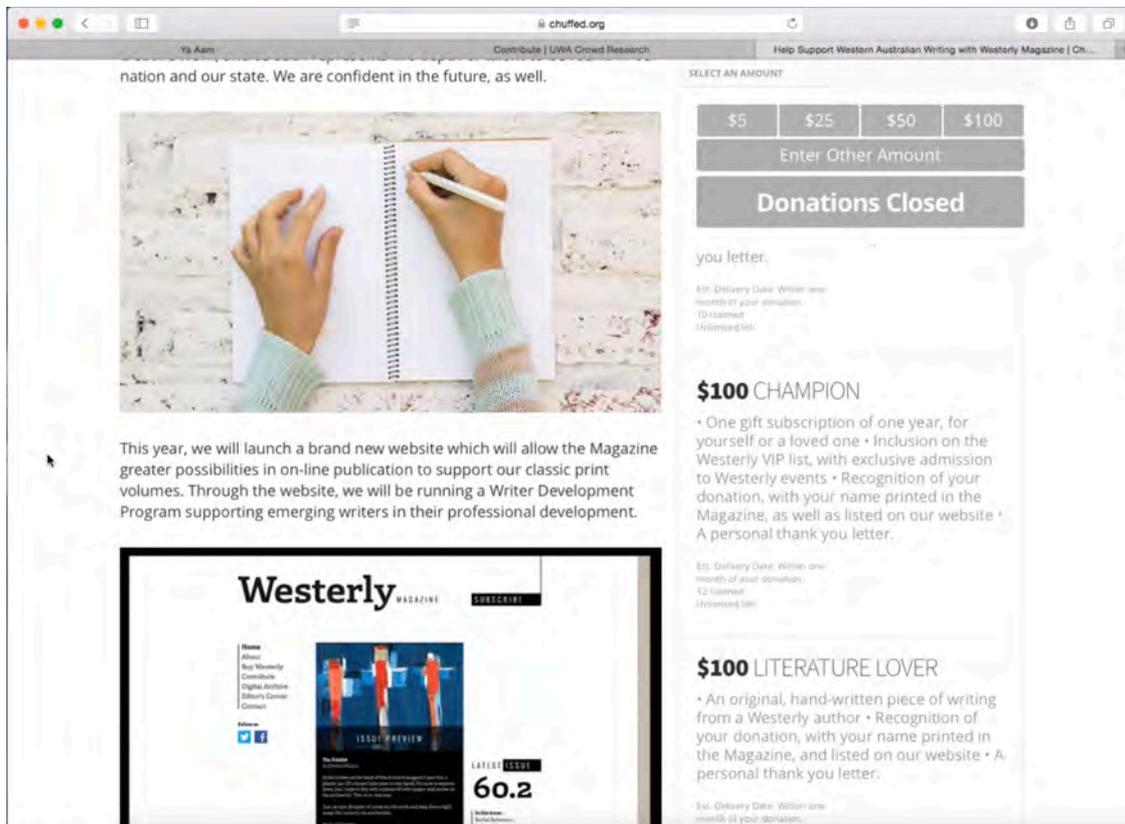
Incentive Levels Outline:

LEVEL	AMOUNT	#	TOTAL	BENEFITS
1. PATRON	\$1000	3	\$3000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name printed in mag</li> <li>▪ Name listed on website</li> <li>▪ 5 x gift subscriptions</li> <li>▪ <i>Westerly</i> VIP list</li> <li>▪ 2 x <i>Wheatbelt</i> tour</li> </ul>
2. BENEFACTOR	\$500	10	\$5000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name printed in mag</li> <li>▪ Name listed on website</li> <li>▪ 2 x gift subscription</li> <li>▪ <i>Westerly</i> VIP list</li> <li>▪ 2 x <i>Wheatbelt</i> tour</li> </ul>
3. CHAMPION	\$100	30	\$3000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 x gift subscription</li> <li>▪ Name printed in mag</li> <li>▪ Name listed on website</li> <li>▪ <i>Westerly</i> VIP list</li> </ul>
4. SUPER SUBSCRIBER	\$50	30	\$1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 x gift subscription</li> <li>▪ 1 x back issues</li> <li>▪ Personalized thank you</li> </ul>
5. WESTERLY FRIEND	\$20	100	\$2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 x back issues</li> <li>▪ Personalized thank you</li> </ul>
6. WRITING LOVER	\$5	100	\$500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personalized thank you</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>273</b>	<b>\$15000</b>	

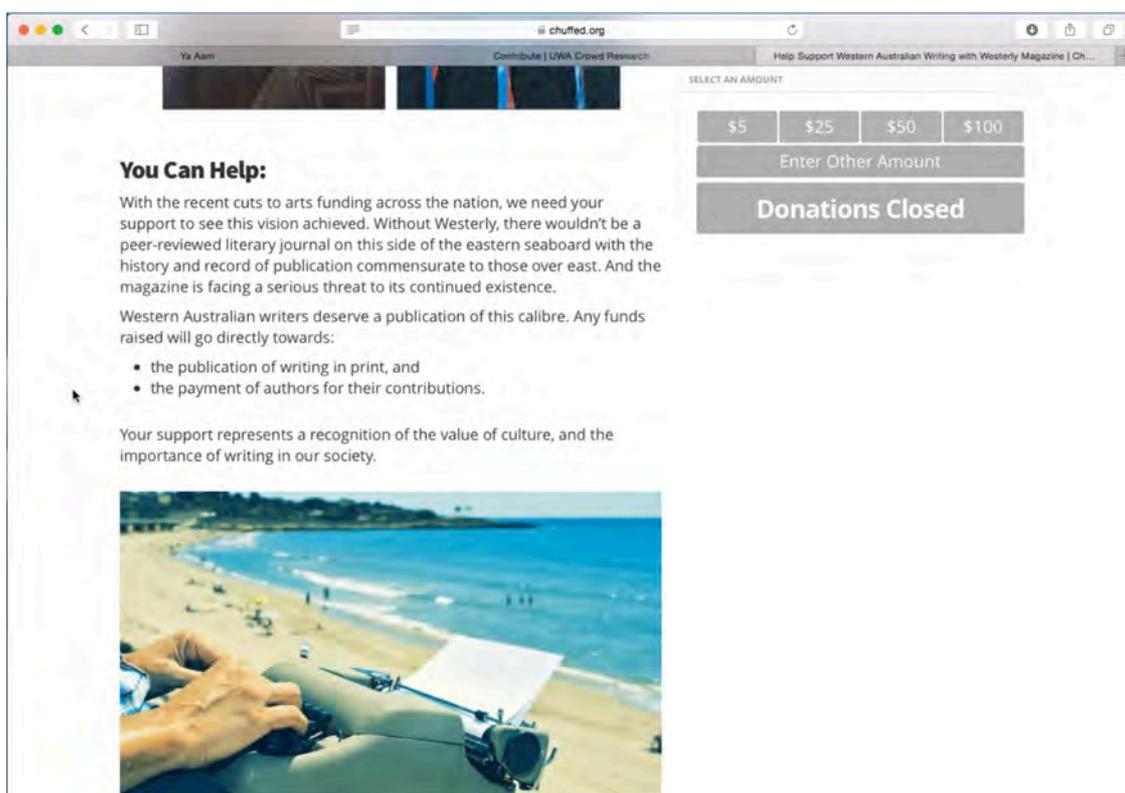
From that we developed [our Web Editor's] basic outline that we started with in 2014 into a much more user-friendly approach, with basic rewards. The original outline [he] had developed aimed at corporate sponsorship, which we ruled out as being against the basic outcomes of our program, so the incentives levels that we developed were actually skewed much closer to the small donation and in looking for the \$5 to \$50 range, and that's where we were banking on getting the larger part of our donations. At the end of that two months we quite simply looked at launch dates. At that stage we were hoping to launch it later in 2015, but with the awareness that the first half of 2016 would be a more likely outcome, simply because we knew from experience that working with the bureaucracy of the office was going to be a slow process.

The screenshot shows a crowdfunding campaign on Chuffed.org. At the top, it displays the amount raised: \$15,485, with a goal of \$15,000. A video player shows three people sitting at a table. Below the video, there are social media share buttons for Facebook and Twitter, and a total share count of 595. The campaign title is "Westerly: A Literary Magazine". The text below the title describes the magazine's 60th anniversary and lists several benefits for a \$1,000 "Patron Saint" donation, including tickets to a literary tour, a lifetime subscription, and recognition in the magazine. A "Donations Closed" button is visible on the right side of the page.

So that was the proposal we submitted to them, that was accepted. The process from there was very much one of set up, and working both to get the proposal accepted by Chuffed and then to develop the material which ended up featuring on the site. So a lot of that was simply sourcing images, they were very keen for us to use more stock images, for a more general appeal. The background there was that the office pushed us for quite a while to develop a program which they could put through their public networks and would have a more obvious point of contact for somebody who was not integrated within the culture and the arts sector. So it was about making the program more obvious as a, more approachable from a public point of view. That was something that we resisted a little bit, because the entirety of our messages were based on the audience having some appreciation of the arts, and not having to represent what value the arts offer. We felt like trying to make that argument would make the spiel we were giving much too complicated, so we were intending from the start to aim exclusively at an arts audience.

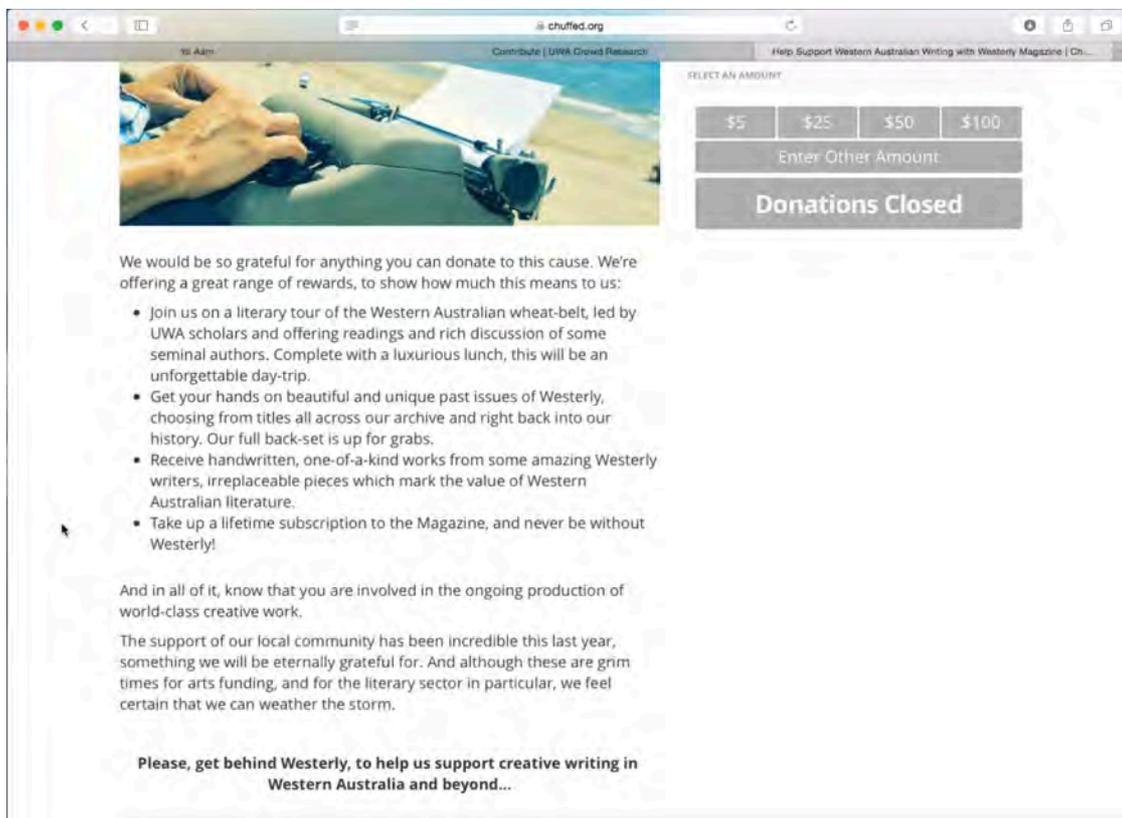


The compromise we reached then, after much discussion, was using stock images, breaking down the text, so it was less confronting for a general punter. Showing things like the new website which was, at that stage, still in development, as outcomes which were obvious to the public. And beginning to showcase our new design was our compromise within that, so we could have some of that second outcome coming through for us.



They also gave us a lot of support in terms of how to approach the spiel, so, breaking it down into really easily understandable outcomes was very much their message, and

their input, and we were really happy to be guided in that sense. So, the two outcomes which were developed with the office, and this was within that period of about, well, the second half of 2015, so July/August. Those two outcomes were basically publication of writing in print, and payment of authors for their contributions. So, easily understandable for all, and yet, for our purposes, allowing an arts audience to feel like they were engaging directly with the production of the book itself, rather than with paying our wages or supporting us administratively, which sort of tied into that perceived desire for recognition, too, because it was about our audience being able to associate themselves with the production of the book, with the actual book itself.



chuffed.org

Help Support Western Australian Writing with Westerly Magazine | Ch...

SELECT AN AMOUNT

\$5 \$25 \$50 \$100

Enter Other Amount

Donations Closed

We would be so grateful for anything you can donate to this cause. We're offering a great range of rewards, to show how much this means to us:

- Join us on a literary tour of the Western Australian wheat-belt, led by UWA scholars and offering readings and rich discussion of some seminal authors. Complete with a luxurious lunch, this will be an unforgettable day-trip.
- Get your hands on beautiful and unique past issues of Westerly, choosing from titles all across our archive and right back into our history. Our full back-set is up for grabs.
- Receive handwritten, one-of-a-kind works from some amazing Westerly writers, irreplaceable pieces which mark the value of Western Australian literature.
- Take up a lifetime subscription to the Magazine, and never be without Westerly!

And in all of it, know that you are involved in the ongoing production of world-class creative work.

The support of our local community has been incredible this last year, something we will be eternally grateful for. And although these are grim times for arts funding, and for the literary sector in particular, we feel certain that we can weather the storm.

**Please, get behind Westerly, to help us support creative writing in Western Australia and beyond...**

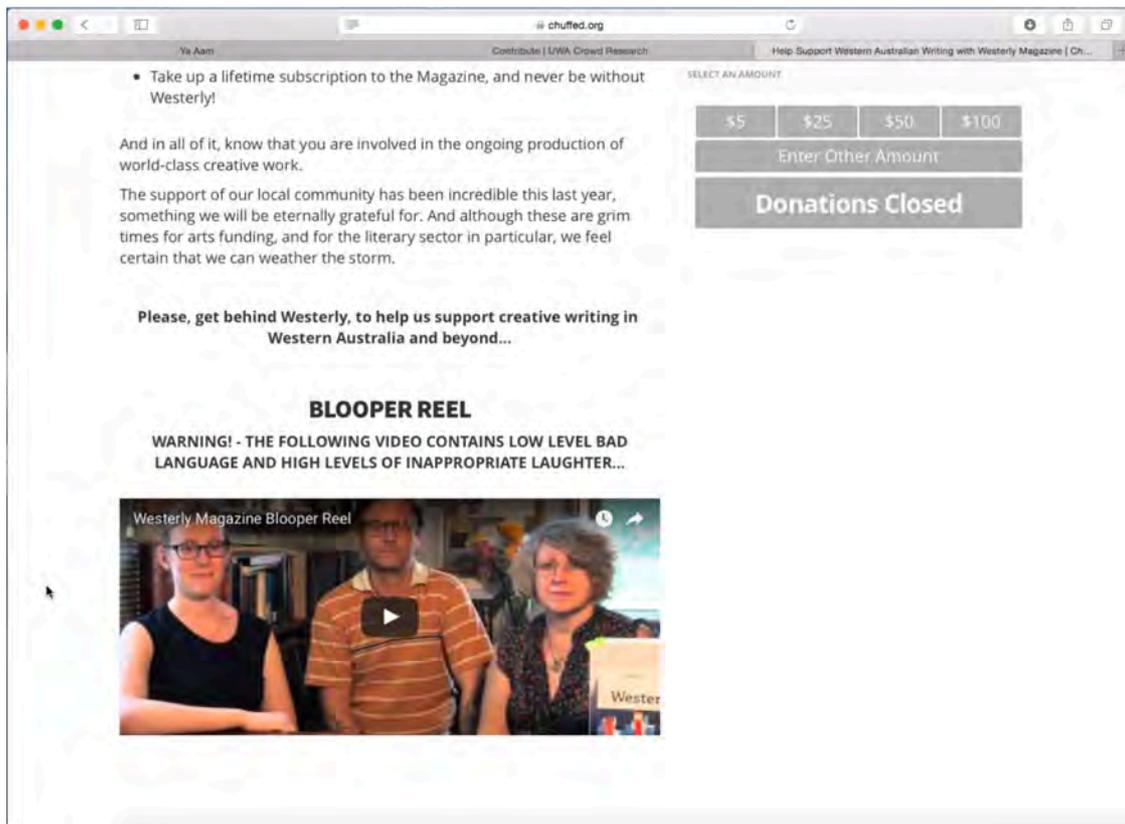
The rewards we were encouraged to spin out a little bit; the lifetime subscription was suggested, which we were quite happy to do, we had a couple of lifetime subscriptions in place for honorary associates and that sort of thing anyway. Really it was about making sure this was, again, all easily approachable. So that development took a little while.

The screenshot shows a crowdfunding campaign on the Chuffed website. The campaign title is "Help Support Western Australian Writing with Westerly Magazine" by The University of Western Australia. The campaign is completed on 09-04-2016. It has raised \$15,485 from \$15,000. A video thumbnail shows three people sitting at a table. The page includes social sharing buttons for Facebook (595 shares) and Twitter, and a "Donations Closed" button. The text below the video reads: "Westerly: A Literary Magazine. This year, Westerly marks its sixty-first anniversary of publishing creative..."

By the time we got to August, that was all ready to go, but the call was made to leave it till the start of next year, the following year, because coming into Christmas, that was seen as a conflict in the messaging, and that it would be unlikely to get as much attention as it would otherwise. In August we also traditionally run a subscription drive, and we didn't want to be asking people to subscribe and then immediately asking people to donate. And we got that first bit of project funding as well, so it became less urgent. So we were encouraged to push it off until February, which gave Christmas time to clear and people time to start to engage again and gave us a chance to bring our social media contact back up to full strength after the Christmas break, before we launched.

So, the October, November and January social media was all about building up to the campaign and that actually, I think, really contributed to its success in the end, in that we gave our audience a lot of warning that this was coming, there was the knowledge that we'd be pushing this later in the year, that we were cooking up this. We started teasing some of the rewards and getting people excited. So it was a long, slow build, but I think that actually was quite effective in the end.

And then the final step was producing some of the associated materials. Building video, which we all did ourselves, and botched together on iMovie, which was a learning curve for me, and producing other material like the blooper reel, funny, silly stuff to link in with it and make sure that that second outcome, of engagement with the magazine, an approachable face to the editorial team, a bit of energy and excitement behind what we were doing, came into play.

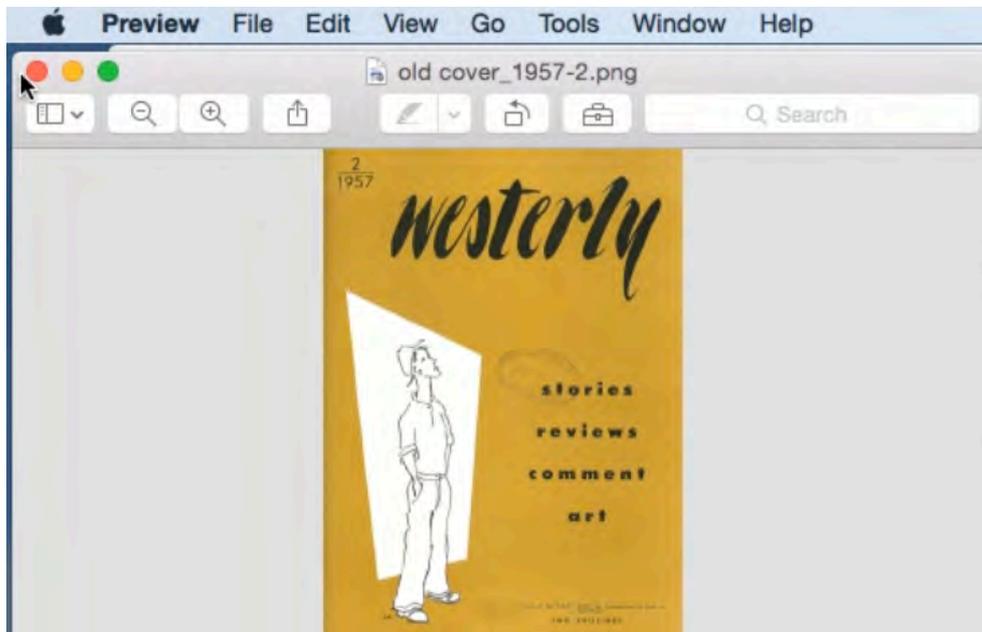


The blooper reel got, actually, really wonderful response. We had people emailing back just to say how much they'd enjoyed watching that. So that, I think, [redacted] kind of worked well, in the context of the campaign. And then by the time we launched this was all ready to go and it was simply press "live". The launch, in February, was accompanied by much of the associated material, so multiple press releases were developed to feed out, across the first few weeks in particular. We went with the strategy of pushing deliberately for two weeks, so that there was a solid total to kick start it. We had \$6,000 donated in the first two weeks, which was a really nice way to start, it meant that when we were pointing the campaign out it didn't just have 50 cents sitting in the account, and really gave it a little bit of momentum to carry. Once we got to that \$6,000 mark we stopped pushing and we gave it a couple of weeks just to sit, had a few reminders out here and there on our social media, but left it at that. We didn't want to fatigue people too quickly. And then for the second month of the campaign really brought it home. So it was a deliberate structure in that sense, in the freshness of the material coming out in the second half of the push was much less about the message and much more about the fun.



We developed a whole lot of material which was associated, things like that, which we just fed out with the blooper reel, in particular, to really keep that energy going and the positivity around the campaign.

We were a bit scared that, with all the doom and gloom of arts funding and the fact that we'd had cuts, the fact that we were desperate for the money, would make it feel a bit depressing. We didn't want that to be associated with the magazine, as a message, and we also wanted people to be confident that if they donate that it would be successful, that the magazine would keep going long enough to see their return on the money. So it was a very up-beat campaign.



We used lots of really old material from the issue, from the archive. *Westerly's* got a 61-year history, so there was a bit of cool retro stuff there to draw from, which gave us a bit of context for the redesign as well, in that it was less like we'd suddenly changed things and more like, okay, yeah, *Westerly* has been changing for 60 years, that's an okay thing to do.



The new web design hadn't been released at that stage but, yeah, was part of that, so it was about pointing to all the exciting things that were happening, and how fun that was. [Redacted]

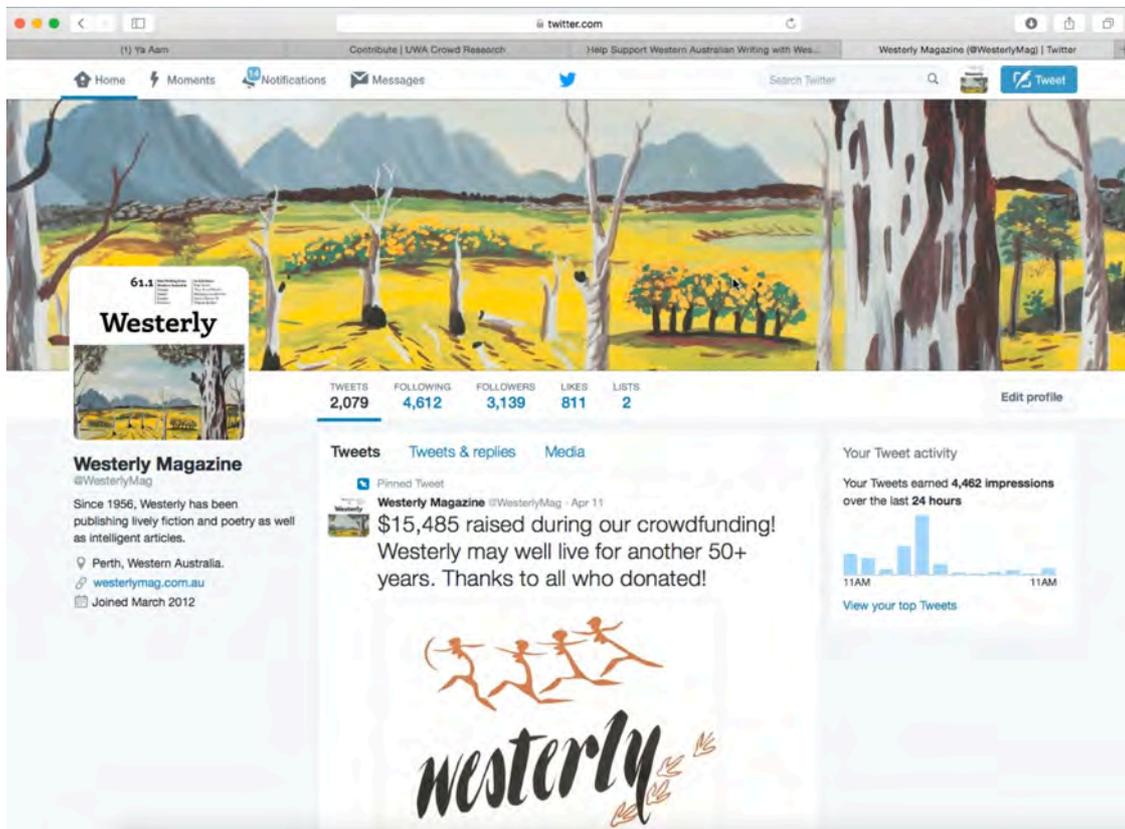


Oh, there's our "word matters" campaign, too, which was another arts campaign we put together to make a statement about what value writing has. It was writing that was all about currency, about numbers, about money, so that was writing we'd commissioned and published and then printed on business cards (which we have there, help yourself), so that campaign we linked to the crowdfunding. That campaign went out with the November issue the year before, so it was part of our teaser leading into the crowdfunding, and connected to it quite nicely.

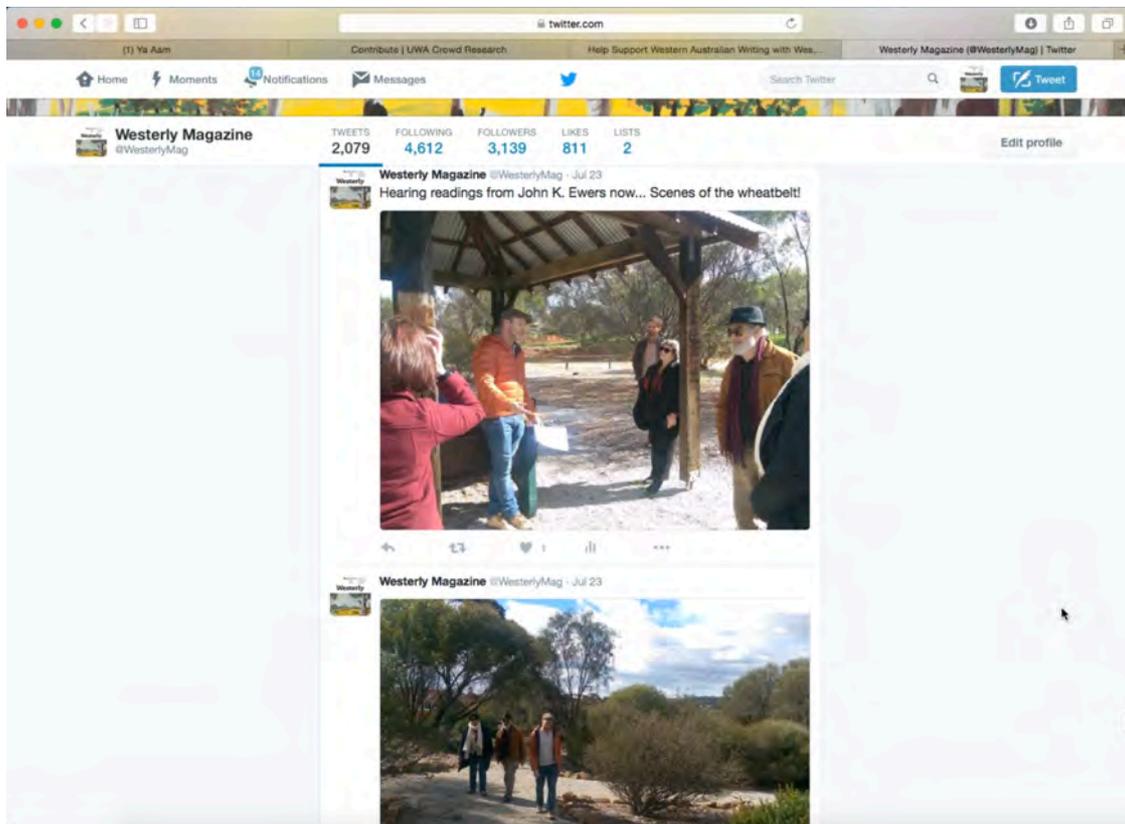
There was a lot of other material that [redacted] our Web Editor put together as well, which was basically just a number of pictures that we fed out, a lot of stick

figures, on their knees, begging, and that sort of thing. I'm not quite sure why I don't have that in that folder, but that was the sort of material that we pushed with towards the end of the campaign itself, to really keep that energy going.

And then, in the final weeks, it was about thanking people. So, starting the process of the rewards. We produced *Westerly* notepaper and had handwritten notes from our editorial team to thank people. The donors were tracked quite regularly (you can see there, fortnightly updates on the data coming through) so we would, from the second last week of the campaign on, we started the process of both beginning to send out these rewards, as needed, developed a very complex coding system for each part, which had its flaws, but eventually got there, and began to track who had actually taken a reward and who had donated without asking for a reward. That surprised us, the number of people that donated without asking for rewards, that was a really positive aspect to the campaign, in that people were willing to contribute without any return. And those were the people that we started to look for, in particular, in terms of recognising their contribution privately, rather than through the reward system openly, particularly at the upper end. So, that information (I probably can't share) is basically the map of how that campaign played out.



Once it finished, it was quite simply about celebrating online. So, you can see, we actually still have pinned on our social media the positive victory tweet, really. That will probably go now that we've released our next issue, because there's more important things at this stage to be celebrating. But it's been up there since April. So that success we wanted to carry through to the next issue, so that we could help people associate the issue coming with what they have donated to achieve. And then, obviously, just completing the rewards. The last reward we did was our wheat belt tour, which was on 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, we had a lovely afternoon out in the Avon valley, and had great fun live tweeting that event as well. So, again, turning it round so that it contributed back into our energy, our network, so that there was some sense of that continuing, that involvement, that engagement, and that pride in what *Westerly* was achieving, carried through to the audience which were involved.



That afternoon out in the wheat belt was quite a lovely day. We had a group of 14 people who all donated at those upper echelons, we had people come from Brisbane and Melbourne to join us, it was really lovely. And, I was saying on the day, it was actually a very enjoyable day in the sense that it was purely celebratory. We weren't trying to sell copies, we weren't trying to do anything but just enjoy being out there. Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, who's one of the scholars here, lecturer in literature, led the tour. He was incredibly knowledgeable about the history of the literature of the area, which was wonderful, he was perfect as a tour guide.



And we put together our wheat belt tour book, which I can give you a copy of, if you want, which basically showcased the literary heritage of the area. We used quotes from poets *Westerly* had had some relationship with in the past, to illustrate what careers come out of *Westerly*, basically. And, again, tying it back to our activities and our message but, at the same time, doing so in a way which was just about celebrating and having fun.

So that was it. That was about the breadth of the program as it unfolded. It was a long process, but it was actually quite straightforward in the activation. It was more about the legwork, more about the hours in admin, keeping track of every different piece in social media and then in responding.

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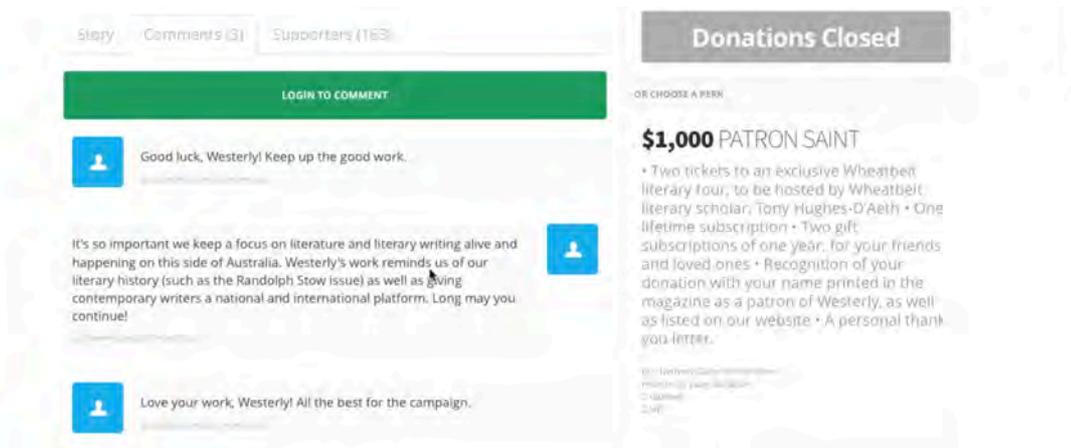
**Interviewer**

Okay. So. I'll come back to that. Were there things that were difficult?

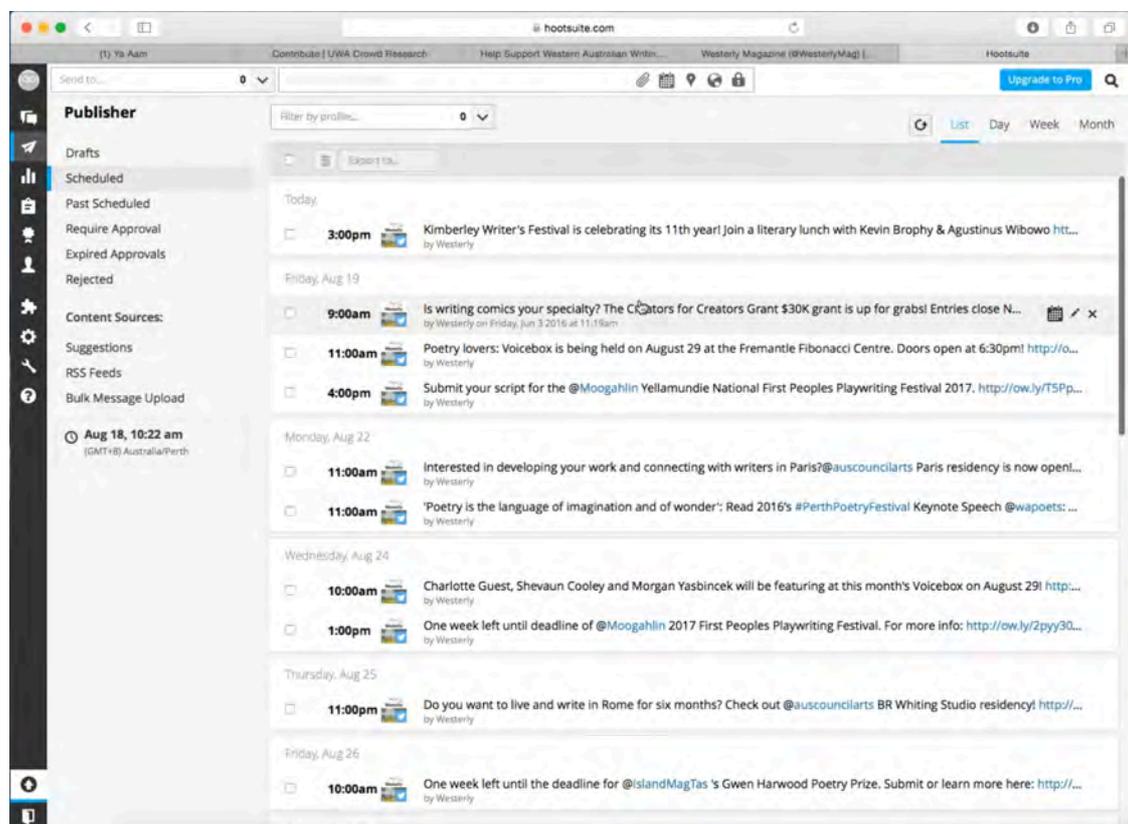
**0:26:42.4-0:30:51.7**

**Participant**

Yeah. The data management was much more difficult than I'd expected, both in the sense of managing the social media, leading into it, and managing the amount of engagement we had during the program. So, not only in the data of the donations, and keeping track of fulfilling rewards, but also in the comments from supporters.

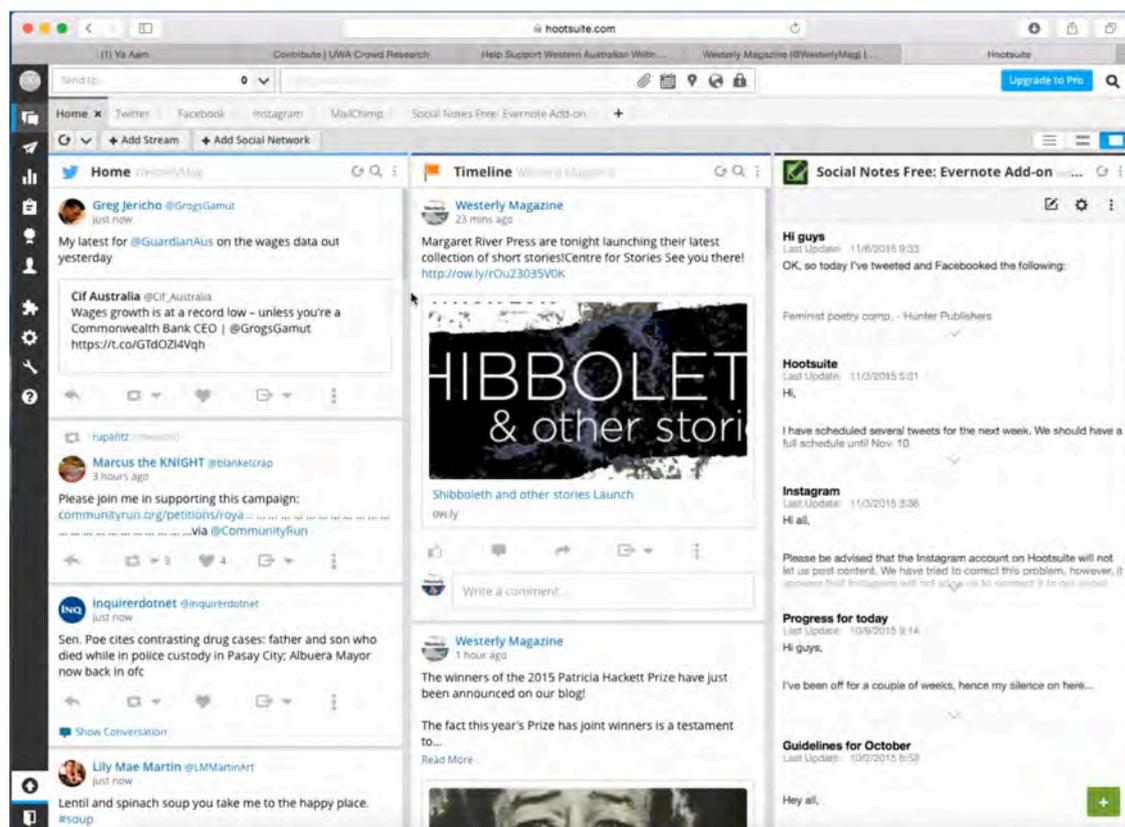


So, there's only three comments shown here, but we had the huge list of supporters who engaged with us, and most of those supporters engaged with the social media once they had donated. So it was keeping track of that process, of both reaching out to people, securing the donation, and then following up with whatever they carried on with, was much more time-consuming than I'd expected.



We were also in production of an issue while this was going on. So time management was a massive question, and you can see from our social media setup that we basically tend to schedule usually a week in advance. So we've scheduled right through to this Friday, it's a little bit light on, but generally like that, but the week following isn't terribly detailed. During the crowd funding campaign that had to be much more pre-planned, so there was a lot more work in data management in that sense than I had expected. Making sure that we weren't overlapping too much on what got sent out, monitoring the pictures which had had the best success, in terms of engagement, and making sure that we cycled through with either a similar approach or the same material. Working out the best avenues to send materials. So, if a tweet was particularly successful with particular image work in it, how we could build that image into a media release to send out to our contacts and that sort of thing. That was all

much more time-consuming than I had expected. So the biggest problem was keeping on top of those processes to the level that they would continue to be effective rather than just grinding to a halt as the campaign went on.



The media management was also integrated across HootSuite, across Twitter and Facebook through HootSuite, but we had underestimated the reach of our e-newsletter, and that went out in different places, into places that we hadn't expected, basically. So we had been expected to basically orchestrate the media of the campaign through HootSuite, and found that it was nowhere near capable of dealing with the number of outlets that we needed to reach, so a lot of online blogs picked up information about this, we had writers blogging about us, then there were digital publications like *Books and Publishing* that sort of thing. They were all great in supporting us, but it meant that we needed to be on top of all the details going out, making sure they were in the right place, and keeping track of who'd been contacted, who hadn't, our media list became a lot more developed during the period, because, as I said, we expected to be reaching the audience, we didn't stop to think that reaching the audience would be most successful through existing media strategies. So, the media list we had when we started was basically aimed at selling books, it was all about booksellers, and as the campaign kicked off it quickly became apparent that that wouldn't be sufficient, so there was a bit of work put in last minute to working out the best contacts, nationwide in particular. So trying to access the east coast through our different media points online, trying to get the conversation involved, all that sort of thing.

0:30:55.9-0:30:56.4

Interviewer

And was that successful?

**0:30:57.7-0:32:04.3**

**Participant**

I think so. I think it would have been more successful if we'd put a little bit more thought into that beforehand. We relied a lot on other organisations we had relationships with, to push for us, which didn't have the best hit rate at times, because, you know, they'll often be very willing to support but caught up with their own work as well.

We have joint subscriptions with quite a few magazines, and those guys were amazing in pushing for us. That was a really lovely boost for us, in the sense that it made clear that the joint subscriptions were functioning at an organisational level, as well as simply in sales. And we've done similar things for each of those magazines in return, which has been nice, being able to reciprocate. But it was successful enough, in that we reached our target; it could have been better done. So, I think, if we did it again, we're not planning to, but if, then we would spend a lot more time developing a media plan beforehand, as opposed to an audience-engagement plan.

**0:32:07.6-0:32:07.9**

**Interviewer**

Okay. Yeah. Cos they're two different things.

**0:32:08.4-0:32:26.5**

**Participant**

Yeah, and that was what we learnt, basically. We'd been expecting the audience engagement to sort of cover media, or be picked up by media, naturally, as part of the process, and it would have been a much better approach to have those two sets of drive going simultaneously.

**0:32:27.6-0:32:35.6**

**Interviewer**

So, you talk about this differently to pretty much everyone I've talked to.

**0:32:36.2-0:32:42.1**

**Participant**

That's interesting! I think this is partly my naivety; I went into this without knowing what I was doing, so I've just been making it up as I go along!

**0:32:44.2-0:32:52.8**

**Interviewer**

That doesn't come across. What comes across is a very sophisticated approach, and a really well-thought-out and well-executed plan.

**0:32:54.5-0:34:51.6**

**Participant**

I'm glad you think so. It didn't feel like that at the time. But we did have that long period of planning, and the fact that the idea had been floated in 2014 meant that we knew from the outset, basically, what we wanted to achieve. I spent quite a bit of time talking [redacted], because I was not aware of how crowd funding worked at all, before we even started talking to the office of alumni relations and setting it up. I spent a bit of time talking to people in PR, just over a coffee, asking them how this works, so I think that helped in the sense that I was much more acutely aware of the need for a deliberate structure to be in place, if we were going to succeed, than I would have been otherwise.

And, secondly, that long period beforehand really made us aware, because we had that time to stop and assess our networks, to start to count the numbers and work out all those details, that we would need to have to have a pretty solid structure in place to be successful. I think part of it is that we were aware that as a WA magazine and as the only WA lit mag, we both had a really definitive clear message to be able to say, in that we were quite overtly fighting to offer that service to the Western Australian sector; but also we were aware that that limited our audience a little bit. We were depending on a local audience to get behind us and see us survive. That happened, which was wonderful, but because we were aware of that factor of isolation the strategy to engage had to be spot on, or we wouldn't have made the target. It was a case of fear of failure driving the strategy as we went in.

**0:34:52.4-0:34:54.0**

**Interviewer**

So how DID it feel, when you were doing it?

**0:34:55.8-0:36:18.9**

**Participant**

Pretty wonderful! The amount of support coming in was really confirming, for what *Westerly* does. And the fact that that support was coming pretty evenly spread, from across the nation; it was mostly Western Australian donors, but it wasn't a massive majority. I think it was about 60-40 and we'd have been expecting much closer to an 80-20 split. It was really nice to have that opportunity to get that message across as to what we were attempting to do with the magazine. And, like I said, that had been part of the strategy to start with, that aspect of representation. So the fact that people were both listening to that message and responding to it was hugely confirming for the changes that we'd made in the journal. So it was a really elating experience, watching it. We'd come into the office every morning and check the tally, and go, "Ooh, look! We've got a couple more!" It was very exciting to see it happen. It was also a relief, given the amount of work we'd put in. But, yeah, the only uncomfortable part of the process was the grind afterwards, the stress of losing donations or something like that, making sure that we covered everybody and had the data management set in place, given that that was much more complex than we'd expected. But other than that, yeah, it was a pretty wonderful process, really.

**0:36:22.4-0:36:24.9**

**Interviewer**

You said you're not planning to do it again.

**0:36:26.1-0:38:58.8**

**Participant**

Probably not, no.

We don't have as great a need to represent our vision, at this stage; that was successful enough that we feel like we have that support coming through. Our subscription has gone up quite a bit, which I think is a really lovely feeling, and I think probably coming off that communication of vision. We have a pretty solid plan which, at the moment, I'm trying to develop into a five-year plan, in place, and I'm not intending to see crowdfunding as part of that five-year outlook. Two main reasons: firstly, I don't think it would be anywhere near as effective the second time round, we wouldn't want to fatigue our audience with over demanding, and it would be really sad after the success and energy of the first campaign to run a campaign that didn't have that strong response. Secondly, we've been quite successful in project funding since then, so

we're not in the dire straits that we were. Doesn't mean we're entirely comfortable, but we've got enough that we're okay to keep going. And the crowdfunding has meant that that's really contributed to this current issue, with the crowdfunding we'll be comfortable up to the middle of next year, and that gives us plenty of time to continue planning a funding approach through grant funding going ahead. So what it has bought us is time to really start to develop a more solid financial outlook and, given that, I don't think it would be appropriate to make those demands again, on our audience. If circumstances change, then that might. [Redacted]

There's not that need, and we wouldn't want to do that to our audience unless we absolutely had to. The support coming in came with a lot of goodwill and it would be really sad to see that diminished. So it's basically achieved its purpose.

**0:39:03.5-0:39:22.8**

**Interviewer**

You've talked a lot about the Office of Alumni Relations, is that as opposed to the Office of Research? Most of the staff I've talked to is the Office of Research.

**0:39:25.7-0:40:30.7**

**Participant**

Yeah, they are slightly different. They're associated. We were working with [a colleague] at the Office of Research. He was running the crowd research platform. I might have actually been using the word "Office of Alumni Relations" incorrectly, in that sense. They were the people we spoke to first. So it was through Alumni Relations that we made contact with [the Office of Research] for the first time. So I think basically our relationship with the Office of Alumni Relations will continue, because we're looking at other possibilities in that area for the next five years. But those are very much in a sense of working within the university structure, rather than running any philanthropy or crowdfunding ourselves. And working with [the people who helped us], they were great, they were really wonderful to work with, was sort of part of that ongoing conversation. So you're probably right, that's probably using an incorrect term.

**0:40:31.6-0:40:34.5**

**Interviewer**

You said they were wonderful to work with. What did they do?

**0:40:37.9-0:41:22.4**

They gave us a lot of input into the structure we were developing. They gave us a lot of support in that conversation as to how to frame it with both the public audience and arts audience. They were good in that they dealt with Chuffed for us, so it was those guys running the campaign through their crowd research website and they simply funnelled us the data so that we didn't have to deal with Chuffed in any way. And they were a very useful point of contact whenever we had anything come up in terms of problems commenting, a couple of people were struggling with use of the site and that sort of thing. They tended to manage all those sort of IT-related questions, which was really useful.

**0:41:26.9-0:41:31.0**

**Interviewer**

Did you get support from the uni in terms of funding?

**0:41:34.0-0:42:05.8**

**Participant**

The university support *Westerly* in both housing us, so this office is all in kind support, and in terms of my wage. That support continued and I think it will continue. But during the campaign itself, their support was in simply continuing that ongoing support of the magazine, and in providing us access to the crowd research platform. So, the set up was through those structures.

**0:42:10.2-0:42:15.4**

**Interviewer**

Is *Westerly* a separate organisation that sits within the university?

**0:42:17.4-0:43:24.9**

**Participant**

After a sense. Technically not. We are covered by the university's ABN, for instance. Our financial accounts are held by the university and we're published by the *Westerly* Centre, which is a university centre. But we're independent in the sense that editorially we sit apart as an organisation. The production of the magazine is independent from the university structure, if that makes sense, so the magazine itself has relationships with every other university in the state. Our fiction editor has just been announced as Rachel Robertson, who's a head at Curtin. We have Elfie Shiosaki coming on board as an editor for indigenous writing, and she's also a Curtin person. Our editorial committee, you can see I've done the sheet there, is full of leading lights from every other university. Our relationships extend beyond the bounds of the university and the *Westerly* Centre, and that's on a national scale as well as within Western Australia.

**0:43:27.8-0:43:48.4**

**Interviewer**

With other people, who are doing more traditional research-related projects, I'm asking them, "Does the crowdfunding income count towards their research income targets?" Do you have income targets, that the university ...

**0:43:50.1-0:44:36.8**

**Participant**

No. We don't sit under a structure like that, Because we do work as a publication, it is a little bit different for us, in that our only income target is to be sustainable in covering the costs of producing the book. Basically we, as long as we are coming out in the black, then they'll leave us alone. So there's no pressure to produce targets in that sense. They get the credits from the publication as a research outcome, and that relationship functions. In terms of the income counting as target, the crowdfunding simply contributed to our ability to produce, so I like I said it was all towards the production and payment of authors.

**0:44:45.2-0:44:50.7**

**Interviewer**

You talked about the balance of the funding, between east coast/west coast. And you talked about some major donors. Where did the funding come from?

**0:44:53.1-0:44:53.3**

**Participant**

In what sense?

**0:44:56.5-0:45:05.0**

**Interviewer**

Well, you've got your supporters, and there's a long list of them, do you have a sense of who most of those people were? You kind of talked about this in general, but ...

**0:45:06.7-0:48:26.7**

**Participant**

There were three fairly distinct areas in the data. The first was a demographic of local emerging writers, who saw *Westerly* as vital to their own ability to continue publishing locally. And they were very much in the domain of the lower end of the scale. That demographic was mostly Western Australians, but a fair smattering from the east coast as well. Largely because we do publish, or we aim to publish, about parity in terms of Western Australian writing and Australian writing in the issue. It's been sitting at around 60/40 as a print outcome. So a lot of those low-level donations from emerging writers were people we had published in the past who had seen the value of *Westerly's* publication for themselves. So that was a pretty clear demographic in the data.

The second, these guys were the mid-range donations, so from about \$500 to about \$100. That tended to be [arts enthusiasts and] local organisations, so we had donations from Fremantle Press, for example, from a couple of other people locally who we have an ongoing relationship with, who we've worked with in the past. People who I'm not actually sure whether or not they declared themselves, so I can't use names, but from people locally who were keen to support *Westerly* as an organisation. They were interesting as a group in that quite a lot of them were not seeking a reward, so it was very much just about that organisational support, and the number of people who were associated with an organisation, or who we were aware had connections with another organisation, was pretty impressive. It was really a big sense in that demographic of the arts all getting behind each other. Again, that was predominantly Western Australians, but there were quite a few who were from Tasmania, for instance, where we have a relationship with *Island Magazine*, and from New South Wales and Victoria as well, there were quite a few in that category.

And then finally we had a group of major donors, who tended again to be people who had a relationship with the journal, but not necessarily one that was as active. So they were regular academics, who'd seen the importance of *Westerly* as a scholarly journal, as well as a literary magazine. And generally the average demographic was that they were fairly close to retirement, if not retired, so willing to spend a little bit of their excess income on supporting the arts as a whole. And they were really the group who we felt were responding to the cuts to arts culture. There was a lot of that sort of message coming through with those large donations, so that was the \$500, \$1,000 donation group. And they were quite significant. There were a fairly large number of donors in that category, many more than we'd expected.

**0:48:32.8-0:48:33.7**

**Interviewer**

And you said you'd lined up some of those beforehand.

**0:48:34.7-0:49:45.9**

**Participant**

We'd lined up two! And at that stage they hadn't committed to a number. One of the people we had lined up donated slightly less, and one of the people we'd lined up donated slightly more, than expected. So that was really, simply, a lot of people say, when they're starting a crowdfunding campaign, they have people ready to go, to hit "send" on donations as soon as it goes live. We didn't approach it like that. We didn't

have people lined up to start, we simply had a lot of hype coming up to the release, we wanted those first donations to be genuine, low-level, grass roots, the \$5, \$10, and \$20 donations, because we thought that would give more of a sense of the energy behind the campaign than having one person stick \$500 in.

So that was, the donations we had committed were very much in terms of sure that this was viable, before we started, than a PR set up, if that makes sense, and those guys we'd been talking to from right back in July, when we started planning.

**0:49:50.6-0:49:55.8**

**Interviewer**

Okay, so the group that you haven't talked about, that most other people talk about, is friends and family.

**0:49:58.3-0:51:31.3**

**Participant**

Yep, we had a significant group of friends and family donate. My parents were one of the larger ends of donation, which was a bit of a surprise, they weren't people that I'd been expecting to donate at that level! I felt a bit like I was cheating, to be honest. But I think because, and obviously a lot of people who donate are friends, it's a pretty small arts community here, you do tend to know everybody, but I think because we set out this campaign with that idea of having it focus our message, send out what we were doing, start to put a bit of energy behind our vision for the magazine, that that idea of having friends and family donate wasn't what we were after. If it was going to succeed we needed to get that message out to people who we hadn't been in contact with, so it was very much about reaching new audience, with those ideas, beginning to reconfirm the audience we were in contact with, in a sense that, you know, introduce them to what we were heading towards. So it was, for us, the donations coming from people we didn't know were much more meaningful than the donations coming from people we did. In a sense. Of course, it was really lovely to see people we knew chipping in, but that donation sector, from people who we hadn't had direct contact with, was a much more powerful affirmation of what we were trying to achieve.

**0:51:31.4-0:51:33.0**

**Interviewer**

And it sounds like some of those became subscribers.



0:51:33.6-0:53:10.9

### Participant

Yeah, they have. So, because the subscription was part of the reward system at pretty much every level, so subscriptions as well as gift subscriptions at the top level, to give out to friends and family, given that it was shortly after Christmas that probably wasn't the best timing, but that's okay, and right down through to the *Westerly* friend, which was back issues, again which came with the hint to subscribe implied, so we had a large part of the rewards system, people engaging from about \$20 up, were brought into that pattern of subscribing. And we've found with subscription in general that it is very much a pattern. You introduce the magazine to people, you encourage them to engage, and then it's a matter of maintaining their interest so that that engagement naturally sustains itself. Introducing subscription

through this was very much a deliberate tactic as an easy way to make contact with people and start that engagement and hopefully we'll see some reward off that as people re-subscribe next year. The subscription has organically lifted coming out of the crowdfunding campaign too, and I think that is simply that people see subscribing as a form of crowdfunding. *Meanjin's* running a campaign like that at the moment, which is the idea that this is the original way to crowdfund, to support the journal, is simply to get involved in a subscription. And that, I think, as a message was pretty naturally received, so that has lifted a little bit coming out of it too.

0:53:23.2-0:53:46.6

### Interviewer

There's a couple of things I want to follow up on. Early on, you talked about timing, and you talked about the way you were thinking of doing it, and the university essentially saying, I can't remember how you expressed it, but conflict with philanthropic programs that they already had in place. Can you talk about that a bit?

0:53:49.8-0:54:50.6

### Participant

The conflict was just that the original concept was to simply introduce an ongoing philanthropy program, the "Donate Now" button, on *Westerly's* site, basically. That didn't go down quite as well as I'd expected, because a lot of the people we were going to approach to say, "Look, are you interested in becoming a patron of *Westerly*?" were people who were already donating substantial amounts to the university. And the office of alumni relations didn't want us to come into conflict with their ongoing relationship with those donors and channel off money, which might otherwise support the university as a whole. That was fine. That, again, was my naivety, I hadn't really stopped to consider that we weren't alone in asking people for cash, and that would come into conflict. So the shift to crowdfunding came out of that, as a conversation, and it wasn't ... Conflict's probably the wrong word to use, it's quite simply that we were both asking for the same thing. There wasn't any tension there, it was just trying to find a way to do it that would be beneficial for everybody involved.

0:54:53.7-0:54:57.7

**Interviewer**

Good that you talked to Alumni Relations before you put the “Donate Now” button on your site! [laughing]

0:54:58.2-0:55:04.0

**Participant**

Yeah! [laughing] It would have been a bit awkward if we hadn't! But anyway ...

0:55:05.3-0:55:10.7

**Interviewer**

And the other thing you talked about was just the idea of audience development. Can we just talk about that, please?

0:55:11.8-0:59:41.3

**Participant**

Yeah, of course, that's a really big topic for me. I think ... The reliance on arts funding in general really irritates me. I think a lot of organisations, and I think *Westerly* has been in a sense guilty of this as well, in the arts in Australia feel a little bit of entitlement to funding and that's because we can see the importance of our cultural product. But I'm not sure that that is a productive or healthy way for organisations to be thinking. Because, that sense of entitlement diminishes the focus and attention we put on developing audience for the arts, as a whole, nationwide. And I think, in Australia, the arts are severely undervalued as a practice. That's not just in the sense of artistic production, but in the sense of humanities degrees as well. There's, the essential joke is, you do an arts degree you'll end up at Macca's. And that's something that I think is a much larger problem [redacted]. And, to me, audience development is the only real way we're going to combat that. It's been a really big bugbear of mine that more effort and more energy haven't been put into that sort of activity in the literary sector as a whole. And it's something that I'm really pushing to see the magazine attempt. We've recently set up WAWU (Western Australian Writers United). It's a collaborative organisation, between nine local organisations, and basically it's a system of cross-promotion and network sharing so that there's reciprocal discounts across membership of all organisations in the network, and we all cross-promote each other's events, and we've got a central calendar, so that we're not arranging events in conflict with each other. That sort of low-level audience development, I think, is gonna be really important, because if we can begin to develop and sustain audience in much more meaningful ways across the sector locally, then we will hopefully see a rise in subscription, which will make us more self-sufficient and less reliant on the funding that we feel we need to go for. I am aware that it is a very big goal, to be aiming to become self-sufficient as a publication, entirely on subscriptions, but that's sort of the golden standard that we [want to] reach for. It would be nice not to be in crisis whenever a project funding application is denied, cos that's going to happen, with the amount of really wonderful arts production that's going on in the country, you're always going to be in really tight competition to receive any of the arts funding that's coming through, and cuts to funding haven't helped that. So audience cultivation is, for me, a really vital process. Not just locally, for *Westerly*, but as a movement for the arts sector as a whole. And it's something that I've been writing about in editorials and something that I've been talking about at sector meetings, but it's something that I think needs to continue as a much broader conversation across the sector. I've been talking with a lot of the magazines that we're in joint subscription with at the moment, about how we can represent literary

magazines as a practice, as a form of publication, so we're talking about putting together a centralised website, where we can represent Australian literary magazines to an international audience, for instance, and have one point of connection for each different lit mag in the country, and show the network, show how we function as a while to produce writing at that level. So that's ...

Look, it's part of our ongoing strategy, but it's also part of, I think, a much bigger conversation that some of us start to have. Audience development for the magazine, yeah, it's written into our plan, we've got KPIs based on our reach and on our subscription, but for me it's [also] about starting to have a more meaningful discussion about how funding needs to work in this country.

**0:59:47.1-1:00:09.3**

**Interviewer**

One last question. You mentioned research outputs, the university sees this as a publication outcome; thinking in those terms, do you think that crowdfunding is a sustainable model for research funding?

**1:00:13.9-1:01:35.6**

**Participant**

Not really. No. I think it is, I think it serves a purpose in kicking off a process, if that makes sense. I'm skewed very much by our experience here, wherein the crowdfunding was the start of something bigger. But, I think that it's gonna be a poor supplement for funding as a whole, because it's only going to contribute to audience fatigue, rather than audience cultivation, if we rely on it too heavily. And, like I said, my big message is that I want to see us talk more meaningfully about how the arts function in our society, what they offer, how we can bring more people to that appreciation. I don't think crowdfunding can achieve that. But, that said, it certainly does serve its purpose in being able to carry messages and beginning to start conversations and providing that income when it's desperately needed, and in giving research some sort of public face, too, I think is something particularly useful in crowdfunding, in that it is a very, it's a platform to stand on, to be very vocal about what you're attempting to achieve. And that's, I think, important for quite a lot of research outcomes.

**1:01:38.4-1:01:45.1**

**Interviewer**

I know you're not gonna do it again, but if I wanted someone to run a crowdfunding campaign for me, you would be the first person I'd come to!

**1:01:45.2-1:01:47.5**

**Participant**

Thanks! I'm glad you think we did an alright job!

**1:01:48.2-1:01:52.6**

**Interviewer**

Well, I think you approached it in a way that pretty much no-one else I've talked to has talked about.

**1:01:54.6-1:02:04.2**

**Participant**

That's really interesting. I was terrified coming into it. I was gonna be absolutely devastated if it didn't come off. So the approach was driven by fear of failure, very much.

[end of recording]