

BURNIE ARTS COUNCIL President's Report 2017

“ A year of shifting sands and modern technology”

Series of Farewells :

At the beginning of March we lost our highly respected **Patron Helen Jones**: a long debilitating lung condition having finally claimed her. Burnie Arts Council (BAC) is pleased to confirm that her name will live on in our community through the *Helen Jones Memorial Bursary* set up on her 80th Birthday. This Bursary Trust is managed highly efficiently by Treasurer Lyn Smith and the community interest and support as demonstrated by the attendance and generosity at the Annual Fundraising Concert in November ensures its' continued existence. The 2017 winner was Julia Parker (violinist from Stanley) who received \$1000 and is heading to Melbourne for further study.

June 30th saw the final demise and disbandment of **Tasmanian Regional Arts (TRA)**. For several years it had been in a precarious position as a result of changes to both Federal and State funding landscapes and even the the total commitment of President Annette Downs and the Board of Directors could not save the 70 year old organisation. BAC as the inaugural Branch followed the conclusion process closely and ultimately, reluctantly, lobbied to support the Board's recommendation that TRA had served its time as a very valuable and committed community arts organisation but closure was the only responsible action to be taken. BAC as an Incorporated Body continues to operate.

As a result of this **Material Girl**, the only Tasmanian competition for female artists held its final exhibition at Burnie Regional Art Gallery (BRAG) in May. It had been an inspiration for women artists since 2002 and will be sorely missed.

At the beginning of June BAC organised a *“Farewell to the Farrells”* to enable the community to acknowledge and thank **Andy and Rose Farrell** for their significant contributions to the arts life of the region through their teaching in many schools, private students, involvement in Wynyard Concert Band, Burnie Musical Society, Cradle Coast Orchestra and performances for Jazz programmes and general musical gatherings. Leaving the Coast after 46 years to move to Hobart: many tributes were given to them on this lovely occasion.

It had to happen sometime but the departure of **Geoff Dobson** from the position of Director, Burnie Arts and Function Centre (BAFC) and BRAG came unexpectedly. Enticed to Devonport members of both BAC and Friends of the Gallery farewelled this talented , capable and personable young man with a combined presentation following a Friends meeting. We all wished Geoffrey, Libby and their young family every joy and happiness as Dad moved to another stage of his career.

Subsequent to his departure we also farewelled **Birgitta Magnusson -Reid** who had been the Education and Projects Officer at BRAG. We have all admired Birgitta's tireless work over the years, thank her for her commitment and wish her well as she too heads for Devonport.

Into the world of the internet:

For some considerable time members had looked at the question of modern technology and what it could contribute to the development of BAC. The appointment of Lyndal Thorne as Vice President for 2017 meant we were able, with her guidance and knowledge, step into the world of internet and social media. Spurred by the desire to promote the *Paper on Skin* Competition and Event nationally and internationally Lyndal thoroughly explored the possibilities and requirements for BAC to have an online presence. With the support of Burnie City Council (BCC) through a Community Assistance Grant and many volunteer hours on her behalf working with the web designer provided

by that money, BAC now has a website www.burnieartscouncil.com and a growing social media base with BAC and *Paper on Skin (POS)* Facebook pages. All our activities and parallel events are listed and available to the whole world! Thank you Lyndal for your vision, persistence and industry.

Paper on Skin 2018

Developments regarding *POS* include a successful Regional Arts Fund (RAF) grant for \$5000 to bring International Paper Artist Aimee Lee to Burnie from New York to run a 2 day workshop around that event. Significant interest in that programme which can only accommodate 15 participants is already half subscribed and promises to be very inspiring, stimulating and successful. We look forward to Friday June 15th for the Fourth *Paper on Skin* and wish Pam, Lyndal and their committee every success. We will all be there to support them!

Our changing arts landscape

On Tuesday August 1st a hugely significant announcement was made at Makers' Workshop Gallery by Saul Eslake, Chair, *Ten Days Days on The Island* (TDOTI) in which we were informed that TDOTI from then onwards would have its major base in Burnie. Jane Haley (CEO) would spend half her time here and the rest in a small office in South Hobart. Since then we have had close contact with her and are absolutely thrilled to think that Burnie was chosen as its new Regional Office. More recently other significant Festival appointments have been made all based around Burnie. What a great development: further consolidating Burnie as the coast's *Centre of Culture*.

We continue to lobby

We regard representation at the monthly BCC meetings to be of great importance. Often it is to ask questions but it can be just the opportunity to check on what's going on. Whenever arts matters require statements or clarification from the community we are there! A case in point centred on the advertising and appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced person to replace Geoff; a process which took much longer than we had expected but ultimately had an acceptable outcome.

Additional activities

Support for community events continues. The fine music ensemble *Sequenza* performed in the gallery; several members were involved in *Facing North* (the TDOTI highly successful community music project in March reprised in October for *Burnie Shines*) and our visual artists frequently assist with projects when requested.

The school *Stringalong Programme* continues to thrive and celebrated 10 years in 2017. It is now firmly established in the participating schools and partnerships with the TSO and UTAS Con. Continue to strengthen. It celebrated the acceptance of Rex Guest and Victoria Hall into the Conservatorium but sadly farewelled Stephanie Perry (inspiring PHS string teacher for 7 years) as she moved to Hobart. Thanks to the Minister for Education the *Burnie Stringalong Orchestra* (BSO) also runs an exciting programme.

Viktor's monthly Jazz events, Burnie Concert Band, Hellyer Choir and the Cradle Coast Orchestra all add to the energetic fabric that represents the arts in Burnie.

Sincere thanks to our committed executive: Vice Pres. Lyndal, Treasurer Lyn, Secretary Pam and everyone who attends our monthly meetings - Viktor, John, Noelene, Eleanor, Janine, Sandra and Leonie. Thank you for all your support and enthusiasm.

Hugh and Joan Hiscutt as always ready to offer counsel when required.

Here's to 2018 and the new arts landscape in Burnie.!