

BURNIE ARTS COUNCIL
President's Report 2020
“Changed Forever”

A year ago we set off planning and decision making assuming that life would continue as usual for 2020. How wrong we were ...some three weeks later our world was hit by COVID 19 and it changed forever.

When the Pandemic hit Burnie our city became the focus of national attention with ramifications that went straight to the heart of our Burnie Arts Council community. We had just joyously appointed long serving nonagenarian John Duncan as our new Patron only sadly to lose him from pneumonia on Friday April 24th. Trixie has been in our thoughts constantly over the year. A few days previously, Tuesday April 14th we had lost another stalwart from our community arts scene. Former President Tom Langston died suddenly in Launceston when attending LGH Emergency. His departure left a huge hole in the local choral music scene.

It was the start of major upheaval in our lives in general but more specifically for this context; repercussions for local arts activities. The closing down of public venues, government regulations regarding “lock downs” and social gatherings soon impacted on planned activities. Abandonment of BAFC Subscription Series including International Jazz Day, BMS season of “Beautiful”, Burnie Eisteddfod, all band/orchestra and choral rehearsals and planned school productions. School closures also impeded normal musical development for the year. Hence this report documents what we were able to rescue/retrieve/rework of the plans foreshadowed twelve months ago.

Specific Challenge for BAC.

2020 was the designated year for the 5th *Paper on Skin*” Wearable Paper Art Competition and Gala Parade event. Preparations were well in hand appropriate to the normal timeline – ie. sponsors locked in/ judges appointed,/entries accepted/payments made/organisation of Paper Workshop with Mary Hark from America: all accomplished with appropriate funding sources.

This was now not the traditional option for 2020.

A difficult decision had to be made...”to be or not to be!”

Being of the next generation Vice President and Project Manager Lyndal envisioned the possibility of making the whole Competition and Parade a Virtual Event through various online platforms. If I blandly report that this was a unique outstanding success it ignores the huge amount of thought, time and effort on the part of Lyndal, but also the whole talented production team and Treasurer Lyn whom it could be said outwitted COVID 19 and launched BAC into a new “stratosphere”.

“Take Off” - the paper plane project sponsored by *Bank of Us*.

Whilst not officially abandoned (we still have the \$5,000 sponsorship money patiently waiting), the *Take Off* community project designed to lock into the Tenth Anniversary of the Closure of the Paper Mill in Burnie on May 9th had to be stalled. An energetic committee (Fran Owen, Jaqueline de Jong, Lynne Ferenz, Lyndal and Pam) hope that eventually their great ideas can come to fruition.

Burnie City Council

As always we maintained a careful watch on happenings at Council Meetings and the community arts scene. Sadly BCC lost the services of Jenny Cox, three Museum staff, Karina Rose and Ben Turnbull and ultimately Dawn Oelrich. Concerned about this state of affairs Eleanor (Austin) and I met with the new General Manager Simon Overland recently and were delighted to hear him say that both he and his wife (who travel widely when they can) regularly visit Galleries and Museums - *“you don't have to convince me of the value of the Arts!”*

Excellent news! We hope the resultant vacant positions will be filled as soon as possible.

Burnie Regional Art Gallery

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the resignation of our Gallery Director of three years. Since her arrival Dawn has very successfully managed the Gallery space, introduced many new ideas and worked co-cooperatively with her staff (Randolf, Mary and Brad) and the *Friends of the Gallery*.

We thank her for her outstanding work and wish her well for the future.

Meanwhile we await activity regarding a new appointment.

Unfortunately too Janine Morris (Project Officer) is currently on leave and our thoughts are with her for a successful recovery.

Into the Future

From about September onwards we started having serious concerns regarding the sustainability of our organisation in its traditional form – we needed to recruit younger members! Initially Lyndal and I conducted several interviews with significant arts people to gain ideas as to the direction in which we should go and ultimately came up with the concept of developing a “Next Gen” tangent to our traditional activities. The first action was to call a “Breakfast Meeting” (8 – 9 am) in the BNW Headquarters -Plaza Arcade with invitations extended to specific people. The 11 people in attendance identified the challenges concerning linking with young people, and the need to focus on a specific short term project. A “throwaway” line about wheelie bins from Heather Wild has magically turned into our first project filling that need. Entitled *Genius Junk* a RAF application is being prepared for music and sculpture at Havenview on Sunday October 10th. Our current meeting time (3.45 pm) is not a very accessible one for working people (OK for retirees) so maybe the occasional Breakfast time slot needs to be a feature of the future.

Paper on Skin (POS)

It became very obvious post virtual event that POS needs its own identity and new direction.

Michael Cannon, Nick Higgins, Scott Campbell and Lyndal with adviser Warren Moore are well into the process of separation through the formation of its own company. BAC will continue to receive reports of its activity but all other administration is removed from us. In particular our new treasurer will be exempt from managing its finances.

Helen Jones Bursary Award

Whilst the annual presentation was devoid of a concert, new judges Michael Cannon and Jacqueline de Jong joined Robert Bentley and interviewed 5 applicants with the winner Lexie Jaensch being presented with her \$1000 at a small gathering in Hudson's Coffee Shop where she was working.

Lexie has now commenced a *Theatre Management* course at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Ten Days on the Island having moved its office to new highly visible headquarters at Spring Street, often cross references with us ideas in the making. Festival 2021 celebrates the 20th year since Jim Bacon and Robyn Archer first gave us these momentous arts events and we now have a very local connection with the programme.

Organisational Reports are presented at our meetings. Viktor continues to “make Jazz happen” and provides us with his unique and valuable overview of life. Hellyer Choir was able to perform *Messiah* under the direction of Thomas Lamb and Lyn tells us he has accepted that position on a permanent basis. Stringalong continues to thrive as does the Cradle Coast Orchestra. Burnie Concert Band has battled through COVID regulations to continue its valuable programme, DoMaur Productions consistently perform outstanding dramas with young people in our community and we continue to have a unique relationship with the new management of the TSO.

To our retiring members Noelene Hurkett (former secretary) and treasurer of over twenty years Lyn Smith, we express our very sincere thanks for their significant contributions and expertise over these times. For Lyn the additional workload required to manage the POS Virtual Version has been a huge demand as indeed it has expanded the work of our volunteer auditor Tony Moore. Special “thank you” there.

Whilst all this frantic activity happened secretary Pam (with Neil in the background) stoically managed the regular administration in her capable way and both she and vice-president Lyndal deserve our special thanks for the manner in which they kept going whilst significant events were challenging their family.

**So ..Onward into the Future with new shapes and destinations
Thank you Everyone.**