

2018 AGM PRESIDENT REPORT

It is with pleasure that I present to you after five years in the chair, my final report as President of the Boonah & District Cultural Foundation.

2018 has been a busy year and I am delighted to report that our membership now stands at its highest level since the Foundation's inception.

Fassifern Voices under the direction of Dr Bob Smith continues to grow in numbers and presented the very successful concert, "Game On" in March in a salute to the Commonwealth Games.

The 2018 Boonah Writers Festival was most successful as an event despite numbers attending being a bit less than for 2017. However, feedback from participants was particularly positive. This year we changed the format slightly and extended the event by an extra half day, but this proved to be just a little too much concentrated concentration.

Guest speaker at the Writers Dinner, Rick Morton proved a very popular and entertaining speaker and was a highlight of the event. He has gone on to greater things since then even being nominated for a Walkley Award for his book *One Hundred Years of Dirt*.

The Foundation donated a smart screen television and a scan and cut machine to create cutouts for the children's art classes in the library.

The Red Stall, as we so fondly called held in the Library Lane a part of a community awareness day, and manned by Julie Vellacott saw quite a number of new members sign up to the Foundation.

The classical concert that we presented in July with Opera Queensland performers Emily Burke, Jason Barry-Smith and Narelle French was a great success and very popular, fulfilling the Foundation's '*raison*' of bringing performers to Boonah to give residents an opportunity to enjoy global quality performance at very reasonable ticket prices.

The 2018 Ritchies Boonah Arts Festival raised, once again, a great deal of expectation and excitement with a number of excellent highlights. Fassifern Voices enjoyed its largest audience ever with Philosophers & Philanderers, the Great Comedy Debate also continues to grow, the Youth Showcase is as popular as ever and Lacey Sawtell does a great job with so many rampant children.

Sadly, our website crashed early in the year and this has had a powerful effect on entries for all of the competitions in the 2018 Festival in that entry forms could not be accessed or lodged through the site.

The Calico Fashion Awards did not fire up in 2018 due, I believe, to a number of causes, principally because of the website and that many of the past designers and participants were away, but more strongly, I believe that the event needs to be revamped and looked at critically to revitalize it. It does create opportunity for young people to design and create fashions, and that is important, but the event as a whole does, like second hand clothing, require renovation.

Red Rim Combined Community bands Concert, performed by the combined Redlands and Boonah Community Bands was a spectacular success.

The Arts Gala evening was a most enjoyable few hours, and Rob Davies' enlightening talk and demonstration of how to create music from junk was great fun and appreciated by everyone. The Art Show, I believe, was of a higher level of quality works than I have seen for some years.

I must express a sincere thank you to Ritchies IGA for its substantial and so very greatly appreciated support of the Boonah Arts Festival.

Bookfest was a successful event just a few weeks ago and remains the chief source of the Foundations financial operation.

This is to a great extent thanks to the large number of volunteers who come in over a number of days and labour to unpack, set up the

displays and finally pack the excess books up again for their journey to Lifeline in Ipswich. Thank you so much. Also thanks must go to Lifeline in Ipswich for actually taking those many books off our hands.

A problem that the Foundation experienced in 2018 was the crashing of the websites and this made it very difficult for everyone concerned – particularly those wishing to enter the many competitions associated with the Festival. That has been rectified and within the next week a whole new website will go live. Many thanks to Clive Beaton for getting this all sorted. It has been a massive task.

Bookings open in a couple of weeks for the exciting 2019 Boonah Writers Festival, the third such event in Boonah, to take place on 4th & 5th May. We have an exciting lineup of presenters that will cover the topics of Romance, Crime, Ghostwriting, Travel, Editing & Forensics with top practitioners in their respective fields, and our guest speaker at the writers dinner is Shane Webcke, former Rugby League great, journalist and there are actually three books accredited to his name.

We suspect that the dinner will be of great interest to a great number of local people.

The Foundation also contributed towards two of our young people, Sarah Greenwell and Lydia Gibson, in attending the Geelong Fibre Forum in Victoria.

Another project that has been under consideration by the outgoing committee, and one to be taken up by the new group is that of enabling local writers to submit chapters of a work that they are developing, and after selection, giving them the opportunity to work in a one-on-one session with established author and mentor Louise Cusack. This is envisaged to be quite separate from the Writers Festival.

Another area that has taken quite a deal of discussion is that of the name of the organisation. It has come to our attention that a great deal of the community believe that the Boonah and District Cultural

Foundation is an arm of Scenic Rim Council and in the past couple of months, I have had two people tell me that that is what they believed. They were quite astounded to learn otherwise. Apart from the hugely bulky title, the committee has felt that a name change is well overdue: one to escape from that misconception, and two, to come up with a snappier and more manageable name. To this time, two possible names have emerged – Arts Boonah and Creative Boonah. Shortly, we will put these suggestions to you, the membership, to decide.

I now take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you to all of the outgoing committee members for their hard work and dedication over the past twelve months, but also to all those with whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the past five years whilst I held this position – committee, volunteers. However, it is time for a change and I happily pass on the Presidency of the Foundation.

The enormous support of Ritchies IGA towards the Arts festival, as already mentioned is invaluable to the operation and words cannot express adequately the appreciation of their support.

Scenic Rim Regional Council, through its ‘Artist-in-Residence’ scheme gives huge support to the Foundation’s activities, and for that ongoing support, apart from the occasional grants that we receive, we give our heartfelt thanks.

To all of the many volunteers that assist us in so many ways throughout the year, I don’t know what we would do without you, so thank you, thank you, thank you.

And finally, to you, the Foundation membership – which, incidentally, is now the largest that it has ever been, thank you for your support throughout the year.