



Annual General Meeting 2017

President's Report

It is with delight that I present to you my first annual report as the President of the Highlands Theatre Group.

I am pleased to summarise the year by saying that by this AGM, we are headed in the right direction. In business it is expected that goals beget goals and I look forward to seeing where the goals we have achieved this year will take us.

Shows

The year started out with some difficulty and it was clear that the road ahead would be challenging. The Sneeze whilst containing many gifted people was an unfortunate failure. I misstep on behalf of the committee and not only as President, but as a cast member of the show, I take full responsibility for that. We worked hard to make a show that was different from the usual fare and something that we could be proud to look back on in the future, however our audiences went away disappointed and a bond of trust was broken between us and the theatre going community. It was clear that we didn't know our audience as well as we should.

We decided to return to what we knew best and Jim Cheesley presented *The Vicar of Dibley* which was one of the most successful shows that HTG has ever produced. The cast was solid and experienced. The production team came together well. Credit certainly goes to Jim Cheesley who directed, performed in and designed the show from the ground up. Credit is also due to the creative talents of Sue MacDonald our Marketing Chief who has certainly been an underrated asset to the Highlands Theatre Group.

We have now turned to our November production which is *The Odd Couple*. Last year as some may know, I was chosen to direct the play for HTG, but that fell through as it could not be cast. This time around I chose to use Neil Simon's script written with a female casting and I'm pleased to say that all is looking well. Don't forget to buy your tickets through our website.

HTG Business

This year we have seen a few changes to the way that HTG does things. We took the time to update our website and make it more clean, dynamic and easier to navigate. Many of you have seen the new htg.org.au site. There is more engagement with our social media sites as our website posts automatically post to Facebook and Twitter. With this has come a much easier way to check the effectiveness of our site and in the two months leading up to the

Vicar of Dibley, we had 4000 people visiting our site. Coupled with this, we have added dedicated htg.org.au emails for our key committee members which allow people direct communication with the people who are managing the various areas. This in turn allowed us to cancel our Gmail account and e-mail address which had been opened up to various security concerns. Our mailing list moved across from Gmail to Mail chimp which allows us to send more dynamic newsletters to our subscribers and gives our subscribers more control over their subscription to our site. There are a further hundred people subscribing to our news since March.

This year we also conducted our first ever patron survey through survey service Survey Monkey. We had a good response from our first survey and the responses highlighted certain things for us. A detailed analysis was given to the committee and this provided discussion at our committee meetings. Out of the study, it was noted that 55% of people will only see shows that they are interested in. This indicates that group loyalty is not a high priority for the average Highlands theatre-goer. 70% of the respondents stated that they like musicals, comedies and dramas with a small spattering of more independent or avant garde genres. 76% of people who took the survey said that they would attend another HTG show which was very gratifying; however we need to temper that with the fact that they will only see what interests them. There is some interesting information for us to go forward with. I am happy to make the analysis available to full financial members of the company upon request.

The shed project which has been an ongoing headache for a number of years has hit something of a major road block in the last two months. We had been under the impression that we were on the cusp of getting the green light to begin construction on the site at Welby Oval which had been earmarked as a loan site from the council for us to construct the shed. When council met us on the site, there was a request for a full development proposal for the site which included a driveway and a set amount of parking and numerous other things which were out of our resource capacity. It was decided in a recent general committee meeting that we would have to abandon the project on the Welby Oval site and inform the council of this decision. Our sheds and Leopold Lane and Moss Vale are for the present going to be cleaned and repurposed until a suitable solution can be found. This has been a very frustrating period for HTG; however we are content to have a firm answer on the Welby Oval project.

Lastly it was my declaration at my first general committee meeting to finally ratify the specific constitution for the Highlands Theatre Group. Since our Incorporation of Association back in 1994, the Group has been governed by the model constitution provided by the Department of Fair Trading. Some years ago, the committee of the time under the leadership of Brian Muir determined that we should have a specific constitution to govern the activities of the Highlands Theatre Group, a constitution which sat for many years waiting for some action. This year, we have worked hard to ensure that the proposed

constitution would be ready for ratification. As of writing this report, we have called a special general meeting of the full membership to come together and formally ratify the constitution. This meeting is scheduled for the 3rd of October at 7pm, just an hour before the AGM.

Thanks

There are many people to thank for this year. Firstly I would like to thank the committee who have worked tirelessly for this last year being guided by my plans and playing devil's advocate to me when I needed it. To Jonathon Purvis who unfortunately had to resign as Vice President earlier this year due to relocation to Toowoomba for work, I say a big thank you. He helped me to kick off the year with strategic vigour. Toowoomba's gain is our loss. To Jim Cheesley who was elected Secretary and co-opted to be Treasurer as well, who picked up that number two position well and has given me much wisdom and guidance. To Ron Russell, our stalwart costumier and passionate theatre man, who gave me much respect and would be willing to call nonsense in a dignified way. To Darrell and Jill Hope, the team who have kept faithful to the ship even in what seemed her darkest days, your willingness to go with me even if it hurt behind the scenes should be commended. To Barb Handley, who has leant her wisdom for all things theatrical and her advice on years in the theatre world to this committee. To Ebony Hope and Rebecca Dann who although not living locally always ready and on hand to help make decisions and provide thoughts at committee meetings and Ebony always ready to lend a hand come show time.

Secondly to those others who have been invaluable to the running of the company but not serving in a committee capacity. To Barbara Collins who agreed to do our bookkeeping for us and has ensured that bills are paid on time and that figures were kept exact throughout the year. To Sue MacDonald who committed lots of time and energy to our public relations and marketing areas which allowed for us to do so well on the Vicar of Dibley. To those countless people who have served in front of house, back stage and technical capacities.

Thirdly, I thank my family for putting up with me this year and to those who have been caring for me behind the scenes.

To all of you, HTG would not run without you, so thank you.

Steven Clancy
President 2017
Highlands Theatre Group