

Annual General Meeting 2018

President's Report

It has been a year of the unexpected for HTG, however I am pleased to say that we have strengthened our position to continue building a strong business of providing and encouraging live entertainment, performance and training opportunities for the Southern Highlands and adjoining communities.

Shows

Two shows for the year had me in the director's hot seat on both occasions. The Odd Couple whilst not producing the sound financial results was enjoyed by many and reminded us that we have a strong pool of female actors and crew at our disposal.

The second show we undertook was something of a risk for the company. It was a show which had never been produced in Australia before. Belfast Girls was a historical drama which told the story of a group of young women making the journey from Belfast to Sydney in the wake of the Potato famine. It was rough and gritty and the cast did a wonderful job of bringing this play to life. The author Jaki McCarrick was very helpful and showed great support throughout the production process. It ticked all the markers of a successful show, financially, critically and showed the Highlands Theatre going audience a truly new experience. The sets were picked up by Campbelltown Theatre for their current production *Of Mice and Men* and the show was requested by Canberra and Sydney Irish groups to go on the road. Belfast Girls will make its professional debut in 2019.

Due to ill health we had to cancel our mid-year show Open for Inspection which was a wise move all-round as we would have been rehearsing two productions at once with The Sound of Music going into production in June. Open for Inspection is tentatively set for May 2019.

We began production for The Sound of Music in June with a strong quality of Auditionees. Barb Handley has taken the helm of this show assisted by Kerith Fowles as Musical Director, Ann Clipsham as Repetiteur and Mark Davidson as Assistant to the Director. A long and exhaustive rehearsal schedule is reaching its final days and this looks to be a good show. With a month to go, our matinees have sold out and we have less than 550 tickets left to sell. I congratulate the team for their efforts so far. They have pulled together during what have been some challenging circumstances.

HTG Business

This year we have sought to stabilise the changes which were made during 2017. We began working on the implications for the constitution and how we could leverage our assets to create revenue streams to support our show income.

Due to being in the director's chair for most of the business year, we have put much of the business development on hold for the moment. However the plans are still in the works and upon election, the new committee will have much to work on. The business still has strong resources which will see it well into the future.

This year, our faithful van which had long seen off its last legs finally gave up the ghost. In order to continue the transport of sets and HTG assets, a new van was sourced and purchased. We now have as part of our asset register an IVECO Daily which has given a much needed boost to our ability to transport gear.

Personal note

I wish to thank the committee for once again following me through this period of change. Some things have been uncertain, but we are still in a strong position. To Jim Cheesley who has been a constant support throughout the year, give my sincere thanks.

Towards the end of production of Belfast Girls I began a new job which took me all over NSW and as such the last few months leading up to the AGM have been quite difficult for me to support the company. As such it is with much regret that I had to make the decision to step back from HTG. This move has hindered that production of The Sound of Music; however the team have handled this well. It also means that I have to hand over the development of the business goals much earlier than planned. So for personal and professional reasons I will not be standing as President of HTG for 2019. I will however be available to give the new team guidance and support in where they go from here.

I have enjoyed my time with this company very much and wish it all the best in the future. It is a company with much strength. One of the keys is its rich history which I know will help the new team going forward.

With this report I step down and hand over to those who I know will be able to drive the vision of this company towards a strong future.

Steven Clancy
President 2018
Highlands Theatre Group