

THE BOUDDI SOCIETY INC.

Annual General Meeting

28 May 2021

President's Report

It is with some regret that I submit to members my last President's Report, since I will not be standing for re-election for the coming year. Having said that, I have been President now for 19 years and it is high time that the organisation had the benefit of fresh ideas and energy to continue pursuing its goals of bringing the arts to this wonderful community and documenting its history.

Given a little time, I intend to submit to the committee a retrospective view of those past nineteen years. In the meantime I provide this brief overview of some of the many highlights of that period.

The Bouddi Society came in to being on 13 July 2001 so we are coming up to our 20th Anniversary. It succeeded the former Hardys Bay-Killcare Progress Association which itself had existed since 1926, and perhaps longer.

For its first ten years the Society pursued its goals under the old constitution: "to foster interest in matters of a local, environmental, cultural and historical and community nature and to assist with and promote those matters which the Society may deem appropriate."

These goals were quite broad and some elements were shared with other community organisations with the result that the Society was sometimes recruited to participate in matters outside its principal interests and, occasionally, found itself at odds with fraternal organisations.

However, this was a particularly vibrant time for the Society, in the main inspired by the irrepressible energy of David Dufty a born impresario who launched spectacles to mark the new millennium and the Spike Milligan celebrations.

These major events were augmented by regular concerts organised by Narelle Jones and our popular "Sunday Afternoons by the Bay" lecture series.

We also embarked, tentatively, on a small grants program to provide assistance to needy young artists including scholarships for woodwind students at the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music.

A major initiative of this time was the effort put in by the Society to document the history of the Bouddi Peninsula. It was launched by a "History Day" at Wagstaffe Hall at which people

brought family photographs and documents. These were photographed and many people interviewed and their stories recorded.

The great wealth of material collected formed the basis of a series of important projects including the production of a CD of 'Voices and Images from a Colourful Past.' It was also the genesis of an ambitious publishing project: the production of a beautiful coffee-table type book "The Bouddi Peninsula – A Very Special Place." Edited and, in the main, written by Lee Casey, it has been a highly popular book with to date around 1500 copies sold.

The stimulus that this has provided in interest in local history has been remarkable. We have twice reprinted Jill Baxter's seminal collection of tales of the past "From the Beach and the Bays" and, of late, Robyn Warburton has added impressively researched works on aspects of local history. It is important that community memory is preserved and maintained. As the writer Faulkner said "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

After ten years an event occurred with far-reaching consequences for the Society. At the end of 2011 a fund-raising concert was held at Wagstaffe Hall to aid the young actor Imogen Sage. This was so successful that it prompted John Bell to suggest to the Bouddi Society that it establish a body that could raise funds to provide, on an ongoing basis, similar assistance to young artists on the Central Coast.

This concept provided the opportunity for the Society to re-examine what its true purpose was. The constitution was rewritten to focus on two major objectives; culture and history. And, in response to John Bell's suggestion, a philanthropic body within the structure of the Society was created, the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts. The Foundation's prospects were greatly strengthened by receiving authority from the Australian Taxation Office to issue tax-deductible receipts for donations.

It is safe to say that the Foundation has been a great success and something of which we can be justifiably proud. In its ten years of operation it has made 140 grants to young artists worth a total of over \$250,000. All those grants have been put to good use and there have been some outstanding success stories arising from that assistance.

This has been no means an exhaustive account of the Society's activities. There have been many other achievements such as support for Graeme Anderson's initiative in securing public access through private property to walking trails to Box Head, and the donation of equipment to Wagstaffe Hall, to name but two.

But it has been a great privilege to serve as your president. I thank all of our members for their support and I am particularly grateful to my fellow committee members past and present, both the Bouddi Society Committee and the Foundation management committee, for their hard work and dedication. Your assistance to me, and your friendship, has been inspirational. Thank you. I wish you all, and the Society, the greatest success in the future.

Phil Donnelly
26 May 2021