**The Bouddi Society Inc.**

Annual General Meeting – 4 May 2020

**Management Committee's Report for 2019**

On behalf of the Governing Committee of the Society I would like to report to members on what we believe has been another active and productive year in the pursuit of the Society’s goals: to encourage, promote and enrich the cultural life of this wonderful community that we are so lucky to be part of.

1. **The Bouddi Society**

Before I report on the Society’s activities over the past year, I would like to pay tribute to two prominent members of the Society who sadly passed away during the year.

In July we were shaken by the sudden death of Helen Ferguson, a tireless worker for the community and a stalwart supporter of the Society. Later in this report mention is made of our screening of the film “the Kid Stakes”, an event suggested by Helen who provided us with the rare film for us to show. It sadly marked the last example of her thoughtful and energetic contribution to the Society’s activities.

The following month saw the passing of Dr David Dufty AM. David was a Life Member of the Society and for many years its driving force. An indefatigable and dynamic organiser he was the inspiration behind many of the Society’s productions. Notably he was behind “Bouddi 2000”, a community celebrations that brought in the new century; “Where the World Turned Around”, a complex multi-media production themed around the sinking of the SS Maitland; “Spikefest” which celebrated the life of Spike Milligan and included a concert with Spike’s brother Desmond and two of Spike’s daughters along with a book of Spike-inspired nonsense verse provided by local children; written and visual contributions to the Society’s historical publications; and many concerts which he helped organise and in which he often performed.

Vale Helen and David.

Throughout 2019 the Society engaged in a number of events and activities that provided entertainment in a variety of modes, continued its important activities in documenting the area’s history, and, through the Society’s charitable wing, the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts’ extraordinarily successful grants program, furthered in a practical way the artistic development of many committed and gifted young people of the Central Coast. As a committee we believe that the health of our organisation and its continuing viability is dependent on it being well-rounded and balanced in its activities. This is attained, we believe, by addressing the past through our publications and historical photographs collection: the present by providing a variety of entertainments to our members and the public; and the future by investing in the development of the next generation of young people who will ensure that the cultural life of our community is safeguarded and improved.

As mentioned, in April we screened the vintage silent movie “The Kid Stakes”, the last silent movie made in Australia. Filmed mainly around Woolloomooloo it concerned the escapades of the popular cartoon character “Fatty Finn.” It was made in 1927, the same year that Pretty Beach Public School opened, and the Pretty Beach P&C participated in publicising the film and holding a cake stall on the afternoon. The proceeds of the cake stall went towards enhancing the school’s string section to which the Society had previously provided cellos, thus rounding out a satisfyingly symbiosis between the school and the Bouddi Society.

We were surprised and delighted that two of the daughters of the little boy who played Fatty Finn in the movie attended our screening and brought with them memorabilia of the movie, including his “contract” which included the payment of an extra shilling “if he brought his own dog.”

On 24 August a community party was held at Wagstaffe Hall to celebrate the enormous contribution made by Narelle Jones to the Peninsula community. The Bouddi Society took advantage of the occasion by conferring Life Membership on Narelle and she was presented with a scroll marking the Society’s gratitude to her. Narelle had served on the committees of both the Bouddi Society and the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts and the impact she has had on young people, particularly in relation to music, is immeasurable.

In September we were stunned to receive the gift of a beautiful baby grand piano from Chris Casey. A gifted pianist, Chris was a great supporter of the Society and its Foundation, as was her late husband, Lee Casey, who had served on the initial Foundation committee. The Bouddi Society negotiated with the managers of Wagstaffe Hall, the Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association, to have the piano permanently installed at the hall.

On 31 October Wagstaffe Hall was transformed into a Transylvanian castle as the Society hosted a Halloween disco in the late afternoon, providing a safe and fun-filled venue for young revellers. The costumes were spectacular, the decorations the spookiest, the disco music…loud, and it was a great success. Much kudos due to Veronica Crowe and her helpers.

The year ended with the reprinting of the booklet “Bouddi Bites”, a joint publication by the Society and the WTKCA. Compiled by Robyn Warburton it is a compendium of anecdotes of the past emphasising the vibrant experience of living in this magical place.

And while we are on publication matters, the printing of our periodic newsletter, “Bouddi News”, in colour, has been well received. Our creative editor, Peter Park, must be well pleased with the positive feedback.

1. **The Bouddi Foundation for the Arts.**

The Society’s charitable wing, the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts, chaired by John Bell, had its most productive year yet in encouraging and supporting talented young artists on the Central Coast. The Foundation’s grants program has now established itself as an important cultural institution on the Central Coast. The Foundation is very conscious of its responsibility in conducting a transparent process of high integrity in awarding its grants. It conducts a sophisticated examination of grant applications culminating in expert panels auditioning a short-list of candidates.

Such was the extraordinary quality of the applicants in 2019, and thanks to the wonderful generosity of donors, the Foundation made 24 grants for a record total of $49,900.

Successful grantees were presented with their awards at a function at Wagstaffe Hall in November after which several of them entertained the audience with performances before John Bell interviewed the special guest, the famed film director, Bruce Beresford.

The fruits of investing in young artists was demonstrated by a recital given by the flautist Alyse Faith. Alyse has been supported by the Society and the Foundation since she was ten and, assisted by a Foundation grant, is currently completing her Masters Degree in Performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Taking a short holiday from her studies in August, Alyse visited her parents in Ettalong and offered to demonstrate her gratitude to the Society and the Foundation by performing a recital for us. This was held in the beautiful home of Chris Casey in Killcare Heights where Alyse played exquisitely and was interviewed by the musicologist, Patrick Breslin. It was an unforgettable afternoon

Finally, the Management Committee would like to thank the Society's members for their ongoing support and I personally would like to thank all the committee members for their hard and cheerful efforts. Particular mention must be made of our Treasurer, Graeme Anderson, who has continued to expertly serve both the Society and the Foundation under the most trying of circumstances.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic2020 will contain unique challenges to the Society, our community, and all of us as individuals. Our experience as members of an organisation which reaches out to, and involves itself in, the life of our community, arms us well in meeting those challenges. There is a sweetness in the contradiction that the distance imposed by social isolation is, in fact, bringing us closer together. We and our community will be the stronger for it.

Go well.

Phil Donnelly

President

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May 2020