



ORANGE
REGIONAL
CONSERVATORIUM
2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Inspire - Create - Enjoy

Dear Members

I am pleased to present this report to members of the Association on behalf of the Board, and in doing so, I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we live and work on, the Wiradjuri people.

Firstly, I wish to report on the dedication shown by Board members during the year. The Board met on 10 occasions and a healthy quorum was present at all of the meetings. Our thanks go to Ms Deborah Carden who, having been elected to the Board at the 2018 AGM, resigned her position in May when she relocated to Brisbane. Subsequently, the Board co-opted local solicitor Ms Paris Willis.

During the last 12 months the Board has awarded life memberships to Dr Robin Williams for his commitment to the Board and Virginia DeSantis in honor of Gordon Craig's contributions to the organisation for many years.

Looking forward to the future, and in preparation for the completion of the new facilities to be built in March Street, the Board decided that steps should be taken to ensure that the governance of the organisation was as robust as possible, especially given the considerable responsibility that we will hold to repay the trust that Orange City Council has shown in our organisation. We have undertaken an audit of the key governance functions of the Board and have identified a number of areas that we believe needed to be strengthened. Key priorities for 2020 have been:

- the development of a 5-year strategic plan;
- undertaking an audit of health and safety risks associated with our current operations;
- Improving our cyber-security.

Further efforts have been made to improve our financial management and accountability. With Tim Cummins joining the staff in late 2019, and our Treasurer, John O'Malley joining the Board at the last AGM, members should be reassured that the very best efforts are being taken to becoming ever more financially viable.

The Board has worked productively with staff to support their efforts to provide a high-quality service in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been impressed with the decisive and professional way that the Director and senior staff have responded to the challenges that they have faced. Amazingly, enrollments in individual tuition remained at 2019 levels. This is due to the flexible strategies put in place and to the positive attitudes of management and all the staff, some of whom needed to upskill rapidly in order to adapt their teaching to the on-line environment.

Members might wish to be aware that the Conservatorium provided nearly \$80,000 in fee discounts and fee relief to ensure as many students as possible were able to maintain their studies.

Unfortunately, it was not possible, with the coronavirus restrictions, to conduct rehearsals for choirs, bands, orchestras, and other ensembles. I wish to thank all members and students who showed the staff their understanding, and we are sorry for the disappointment this has caused.

Orange City Council have made great progress towards the realisation of their plans to build a new Conservatorium and Planetarium for Orange. It is truly amazing that our local government body shows such commitment to the importance of learning music, participating in music, and being present at inspiring musical performances. We know from our relationship with other regional conservatoriums that this initiative will provide Orange with the optimal conditions for our association to do its job well and to continue to be a treasured and well-supported part of the regional community.

May I once again acknowledge the ongoing advocacy of the Conservatorium by our former Chairperson, Councillor Russel Turner, whose support in Council and efforts to secure funding have been essential and for which the Conservatorium members and students, now and into the future, will be forever grateful.

Finally, may I express the Board's thanks and congratulations to the Director, Mrs Donna Riles, on her leadership during 2020. Donna has led a very good team in the face of great challenges during this pandemic year, maintaining a positive attitude and showing care and consideration for the health and wellbeing of our students, visitors, volunteers and staff.

Trevor Hazell
Chairperson

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you for the resilience and commitment you have shown through the year 2020.

We learn so much about ourselves as individuals and as a team when we are faced with hardship. I'm extremely proud of the team that I have worked with through 2020, the discoveries we have made together and the creative opportunities that have presented themselves.

"On the other side of a storm is the strength that comes from having navigated through it. Raise your sail and begin"
G.S. Williams

Please find a summary of the year that was, and I look forward to working with you to build and grow our wonderful community music hub with your support in 2021 and beyond.

Donna Riles

Director ORC

Our Vision

Inspire, Create, Enjoy

Our Purpose

The ORC will enhance the cultural life of our region by providing quality musical education, experiences and performance.

Our Values

In pursuit of our vision and purpose the Orange Regional Conservatorium values *Integrity, Inclusion, Excellence.*

Our Goals

To ensure that music and the ORC are a valued part of the culture of Orange.

To attract and retain quality teaching staff.

To engage the community.

To deliver excellence in every aspect of our business.

To sustain financial viability.





MUSIC EDUCATION

This was the year of COVID 19.

We set about establishing our 30 ensembles, new and long-term ones, developing collaborations with other music groups such as the City of Orange Brass Band and celebrating 30 years of the Orange Youth Orchestra (OYO).

However, not everything went to plan.

We gained support from the Orange Regional Arts Foundation (ORAF) for the OYO Concerto competition and 30-year celebration then everything moved online. Despite this, the orchestra under the baton of Ben Macpherson OAM, cleverly created a video of themselves, at distance, performing Ralph Hultgren's arrangement of Waltzing Matilda. Particular congratulations must go to James Buchanan for his time and effort filming, editing and uploading this to YouTube amongst the many other recordings he undertook.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCejlv6PIM>

I became in awe at the ability of our staff to adapt to online teaching individual lessons, ensemble and classroom situations.

We continued to the best of our ability and beyond, to run Professional Learning activities for classroom teachers, online masterclasses and a Virtual residency with Aura Go and Tomoe Kawabata supported by Musica Viva and the Godfrey Turner Memorial Music Trust. Social media snippets were filmed, ECM classrooms were Zoomed to as far away as New York, beginner violin classes took off, we took advantage of the AMEB's online examination process, we made recordings and Podcasts and maintained enrolments.

Once things began to slowly re-open, we carefully created workshops with Alice Chance (emerging Australian composer), holiday AMEB workshops, Opera Brass workshops, and we recorded HSC Compositions. We proudly celebrated the Encore nomination of ORC HSC Music percussion student Harry Cummins, tutored by Mitch Davis and awarded Isabelle Clarke-Randazzo the 2020 Directors Choice Award. By the end of the year we were blown away by the number of students applying for scholarships (65 in total), by student attendance at workshops and were thrilled by a visit from the Sydney Youth Orchestra.



PERFORMANCE

Our Program Launch featuring resident ensemble, Acacia Quartet was a wonderful success and we were grateful to Andrew Gee for his address, restating the Federal Government's commitment to funding \$10M for the new Conservatorium/Planetarium.

We managed to sneak in two concerts before live performances were shut down. The Australian Doctors Orchestra visit and concert was an enormous success that we were very proud to have been involved with. We are extremely grateful to them for their generous donation of \$2500.

The ORC Chamber Music Concert pivoted quickly to live-streaming with 100 live audience members and 1400 having watched it online.

All concerts thereafter were cancelled.

However, we delighted with our community who embraced driveway performances for ANZAC day and garage performances of Orange's Hand Bells by the Orange Pealers.

PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

We received visits from politicians and councillors as support for the funding of the final \$5M was sought and the Association of NSW Regional Conservatorium (ANSWRC) advocated for increased program funding.

We partnered with the Orange Eisteddfod Committee as they amended plans for the roll out of the 2020 competition. The Godfrey Turner Memorial Music Trust committed to setting up a new Chamber Music Fund in honour of Olive Dunk former ORC member.

Resident group Acacia Quartet recorded part of their latest CD here in the ORC auditorium.

Tim Cummins began working diligently with the Local Aboriginal Lands Council. We met regularly with ANSWRC in Roundtable discussions, had consultations with community and council to enact our new 5-year plan.



SCHOOLS

The new year began well with new schools coming on board and a dedicated K-6 classroom music specialist being appointed, Mrs Elyse Denham.

Demonstrations, concerts, Zoom, didgeridoos at Orange Public School, then...everything shut down very quickly, with a patchy return to programs later in the year. Time allowed us to prepare a glossy new document Music in Your School which has been sent to all district schools.

PROFILE

We established our Vision Purpose Values and Goals and have them displayed in all rooms and in all publications.

We continue to publish and distribute our annual Program Book, concert posters and flyers and have added the Music in Your School document. Interest in our journey by local media has been embraced regularly.

Live streaming and YouTube videos provided a creative new addition to profile opportunities. Social media interest increased.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In 2020 we embraced former student and Sydney Con undergrad, Lucy Clarke-Randazzo on the String team and farewellled two guitar teachers, Andrew French-Northam who became Director of the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music and Matt Arthur to join the wonderful world of local wine.

Professional Development and support for staff was offered with Zoom meetings through shut down, gift vouchers, digital resources and Jobkeeper.

The Board engaged Mary Jo Capps AM, Leadership Consultant to work with Donna as mentor. Donna was also invited to perform the role of secretary to the ANSWRC committee. In this role, Donna had the pleasure of meeting with Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales.



PHYSICAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

We redeemed the time given us through lock-down to attend to renovations of smaller studios, painted and revamped the Link area, Wangarang industries were engaged to undertake yard clean ups, new black chairs were purchased to replace old brown ones, the auditorium stage flooring was replaced, we archived files on the ORC server, replaced lighting with LED's under the State Government Energy Efficiency Initiative. Yamaha Australia supported us with discounts on two new studio pianos.

New instruments for school's programs were purchased including 57 student stringed instruments, 2 saxophones and old instruments were serviced. Camera, video and recording equipment was purchased to help us meet on-line demands and COVID guidelines were regularly reviewed and implemented.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Before COVID we reported to the Department of Education about increased participation in all areas of our operation. We received a Community Support grant from Orange Credit Union to purchase new didgeridoos, were awarded a cash boost of \$100 000

by the Federal government, we offered 20% discount to students in term 2 and a further 10% discount in term 3, received \$11 000 COVID assistance from the Godfrey Turner Memorial Music Trust, received an additional \$6690.20 from the NSW Department of Education to assist with on-line learning costs.

Tim had all our Insurances consolidated, he also undertook a WH&S audit and IT Systems audit. Jobkeeper rolled in to assist our staff unable to work through activity shutdown, we were supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and the Creative Kids program for the purchase of an interactive smartboard (COMMBOX) kept a close eye on cashflow and renewed the current lease with OCC.

The Board began the process of reflecting on the 30-year history of the organisation with the view to publishing something to present at the opening of the new building. The new 5-year plan began.

The year concluded with the best Christmas gift ever... to have heard from Orange City Council, the news the DA for the new building was approved by the Western Region Planning Panel.

We look forward to continuing to work with council to develop Australia's best regional conservatorium.

ORC PARTNERS

We thank the following organisations for their continued support



We also acknowledge all partner organisations, families and anonymous donors who have generously supported the Orange Regional Conservatorium in 2020.

Current Life Members:

Lee Britton

Virginia DeSantis

Mr Robert Sullivan

Mr & Mrs Russell Turner

Dr Robin & Nicola Williams

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