



**BAND
ASSOCIATION
OF NSW INC**

2023

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Presented June 2024

www.bandnsw.com

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jeff Markham

I believe the BANSW to be in a very strong position as we and our bands come to the close of Year 2 of our Covid recovery.

2023 was a hugely successful year and yet one which was full of stark contrasts. We went from the high of the successful first in-venue Nationals in 4 years to the lows of the complete breakdown of the relationship between BANSW and the NBCA.

After 4 years without an in-venue Nationals, and after what felt like 5 years of planning, we were pleased to host the 2023 National Band Championships in Newcastle. With such memorable moments, from working with the legendary Bob Childs all weekend, sharing the stage with our incredible Australian composers, hearing some of the most incredible performances, and working with our amazing volunteers, it was certainly a great weekend.

Thank you to all who worked on this great event, both in the years leading up to it, and over the actual weekend and to all who participated.

The full report for the Nationals is contained in the Appendices (D).

As you will read, the rest of the year was hugely successful. Participation in our events continues to grow, as does our membership and reach within the larger banding community and our relationships with our key stakeholders, CreateNSW, Penrith City Council, Besson, JSPAC and Barker College remains strong.

Thank you to all of our sponsors throughout 2023, your support of the BANSW supports all of our members and movement by assisting us to continue to provide the events and services which we do.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who have worked with us over this past year. Without you our events just can't happen. It is a privilege to be working with such efficient, professional and friendly people.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In particular I would like to thank James Brice and the members of the BANSW Music Selection Sub-Committee, Ian Madden and Chris Downes for their work this year on the technology front and our Management Committee members, especially Kristen Moodie our BANSW Secretary and Contest Administrator and who has also been managing our Social Media as well as having me to manage, and Fiona Day who has managed all of our Volunteers, produced our programs and TMS and more.

All of our Management Committee members play an invaluable role in the running of our Band Association and your support throughout this year, making our great events happen, and then working through the tough decisions and difficult times is greatly appreciated.

It has once again been an honour and a privilege to occupy the position of President of the BANSW and to be working with the people that I have the privilege to be working with.

I thank you all for your continued support.

BAND ACTIVITY STATEMENT

Jeff Markham

The 2023 Band Activity Statement saw a total of 48 responses with 46 from community bands and 2 school bands. This represents a 47% response rate from our Community Bands, the largest response we have ever had.

Observations from the survey show that the total number of performances by our Association member bands across the State is up by 16% on 2022 data, but still down by 12% on the pre-covid 2019 data.

The number of parades in which our member bands have reported to have performed in has also risen by 16% on the 2022 numbers but when compared to the baseline of 2019, this figure is down by a whopping 48%.

The reported data shows that audience numbers are still well down on 2019 numbers by 30.5%, but they are steadily increasing with a rise of 7% on the 2022 reported data.

The reporting shows that our movement is diverse, growing, and in a strong position as we continue to recover from the 2020 – 21 Covid period.

The summary of results from the survey appear as Appendix A

Committee Reports

SECRETARY & ADMINISTRATION

Kristen Moodie

2023 turned out to be an exceptionally challenging year with the National Band Championships included. It was difficult not to feel burnt out after the past few years and it has taken a long time to get on top of the role again, and even then there is room for improvement. It's been extremely important to be able to rely on the committee members to assist with the preparation work for all of the events that were scheduled in 2023.

Email correspondence continues to make up the largest portion of my time. I have been, when time permits, updating processes and making changes to complete as much online as possible. I had issues where the emails stopped coming in but I have been mostly able to resolve that issue.

I have continued to complete short monthly newsletters as a complement to The Music Stand for most of the months of 2023.

The combined roles that I have taken on continue to require at least 25 hours per week to maintain satisfactory coverage.

Estimated Volunteer Hours by BANSW Secretary, President, and Committee Members – 3100
Estimated value of Management Committee volunteer hours - \$186,000.00

Management Committee Attendance Total Meetings Held – 8

Jeff Markham – 8
Kristen Moodie – 8
Fiona Day – 7
James Moule - 8
Katrina King (resigned Feb 2024) – 5
Bev Newitt – 7
Joan Thorp - 5
David Raciti (joined Sept 2023) - 4

Fees and Charges Schedule listed as Appendix K

TREASURER

Kristen Moodie

Operating Result

The net financial result for the Association for 2023 recorded a surplus of \$17,550.

Overall, the year ended 31 December 2023 saw top line revenues increase to \$299,151 from \$121,140 in 2022. This was driven from hosting the National Band Championships. Fixed costs remained relatively stable in comparison with previous years. The Association also continued to administer Create NSW's community band development grants under its devolved funding scheme.

The Association ended the financial year with total assets of \$234,708 a slight decrease from 2022 of \$250,510. This decrease is mainly due to having to use additional funds to cover the loss generated from the National Band Championships. Total Liabilities was at \$67,947, giving a net assets position of \$166,761, a marginal increase from 2022.

Outlook for 2024

With continued funding from Create NSW, operating costs largely static, and strong financial reserves, no factors present circumstances that could materially prejudice the ability of the Association to continue as a going concern or significantly affect the state of affairs of the Association in future financial years beyond 2023. With its strong current asset holdings and continued funding, the Association fully expects to be able to cover all operating costs while continuing to deliver support for its member bands.

Concluding remarks

Challenges were experienced with maintaining the accounts during the latter of 2023 with the Treasurer, Katrina King involved in personal matters. This resulted in her resignation in February 2024 where I stepped in as Acting Treasurer until the AGM. During this time, I assisted with the year end accounts and completing data entry in Xero. There is a bit of cleaning up work to be completed but we should remain in a good position to maintain a profit in 2024.

[Link to Financial Statements](#)

REGISTRAR & RECORDER

Ian Madden

I continued to be very pleased with the first full year of using the Online Membership Voucher, i.e. for the period 16-07-23 to 15-02-24 there have been 323 Vouchers processed.

Multiple registration with more than one Brass and / or more than one Concert band registration has not shown to be major issues so far.

To reduce the issue of overwriting an existing registration I have taken to emailing back some players and confirming if they intend to remain a member of a previous band, before I overwrite their previous band record.

In the interest of security for members we have activated the security SSL Certificate on the nswbands.com webspace as some browsers pop up nasty warnings when Bands / Players are retrieving their Adjudications Recordings from the cloud. This webspace is hosted by GoDaddy in the US.

Might be time to start retiring some of our older recording computers. I think this should be done on a rolling basis (i.e. One a Year). Some of the older computers are getting very slow.

The Full list of registered bands and services / products appears as Appendix B

We are currently sending out reminder notices to those bands that registered in 2022 and 2023 but not yet in 2024.

VOLUNTEERS

Fiona Day

2023 State Solos were held again at the magnificent Barker College.

20 volunteers assisted with over 280 hours of volunteering over the weekend. While this covered most of the roles, we were still short in some areas with room supervisors needing to double up as door people at times. Additionally many hours were put into the preparation for the event. Programmes this year were available by QR code with just 70 being printed. None were left over.

Food was provided as a BBQ from The Castle Hill RSL Bands - who organised an amazing array of lunches for our volunteers.

Over the weekend of the State Championships we had 48 volunteers who gave 749 hours over the 2 days and Friday night set up. We welcomed our usual regulars and a couple of new faces, including 10 students from Western Sydney Schools who were undertaking placement hours for their Entertainment Industry Year 12 subject.

Volunteer costs of accommodation were high this year, although we managed to save a considerable amount in catering through the generous volunteers from Castle Hill.

The full list of volunteers who generously donated their time and energy for the benefit of our members appears as Appendix C

The relationship between NBCA and BANSW continued to be hostile.

BANSW ran a highly successful Nationals in Newcastle with no support from NBCA until the last month and from the CLO, NBCA President and Secretary who worked in volunteer roles over the Nationals weekend

The Council subsequently invoiced BANSW the amount of \$5000 as the hosting fee. We requested this to be waived due to:

- the sizeable loss made on the event,
 - that the NBCA did not provide any support in the lead up to the nationals until only a month before,
 - and that the reason NSW was hosting the Nationals in 2023 was that we were asked to host it at the last minute due to South Australia cancelling.
- This request was denied.

I attended NBCA AGM and annual conference via zoom where I was harassed and bullied (as I have been previously) about a number of items, including the contents of the 2023 Nationals report and needing to consult with our BANSW members over issues that were brought to the table without notice. I was placed in the position where I was aggressively challenged and had to defend the 2023 Nationals report (Appendix F in this report), including the contents of the report, how it was written and who by. The answer to which was simple as it was written by all on the Organising Committee.

This behaviour of the Councillors was the same behaviours which I experienced in 2021 at the first conference I attended when our membership fee was increased to double what four other States pay and where the 2021 ANOFB report was rejected and the statement made that “this was just full of lies”. The bullying and harassment has continued unchanged at every meeting I have attended since the first. At the last meeting I attended, one councillor expressing sorrow and concern that I had to continually consult with my committee.

At the 2022 conference I witnessed the Western Australian Councillor being subjected to the same behaviours that I have been subject to.

After the June 2023 NBCA meeting, and considerable discussion with our committee, our Vice President sent a letter to the NBCA asking that the harassment and bullying be addressed and advising that our volunteers would not be attending any further meetings as we considered the NBCA to be an unsafe workplace. Our committee decided to disengage until the NBCA could demonstrate that appropriate steps had been taken to ensure the safety of our volunteers.

We subsequently received a notice that the Council have investigated their own actions and deemed that they have behaved entirely responsibly and that there was no case to answer to.

At the June 2023 conference, the membership fees were confirmed with BANSW and Victoria being charged double what the other States pay. BANSW asked the NBCA to provide the details of what services/product the membership gives us and why we are paying double. There was no correspondence on this matter received for our members.

At the October 2023 General Meeting, our members instructed our committee to only pay the same amount as the other states (except Victoria who are happy to pay double) and, in view of the lack of support for the NBCA, not to pay the full \$5000 but to pay the travel and accommodation costs for the NBCA President and CLO to attend the Nationals. When we only paid the amounts instructed, we were informed we were no longer members.

We then asked for our payment to be refunded. This refund has not been made.

After the Council confirmed the cancellation of our membership, we were greatly appreciative of the offer made from our colleagues in Western Australia which, with almost no inconvenience, meant that our members were able to participate at the National Band Championships without any issues.

All matters to do with the issues and disputes with the National Band Council have been fully and openly communicated to our members.

MUSIC SELECTION ADVISORY BOARD

James Brice OAM

I am proud to present this report on behalf of, and in representing the contribution of our 2023 Music Advisory Board Committee. I express my thanks to Michael Forsyth, Brian McGuinness, Garry Clark, Andrew McWade, David Kimpton and Joan Thorp in joining our committee in 2023. I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous support and assistance from Brenden Millard for his invaluable insight in confirming the status, availability and costings of proposed works throughout our nomination and selection process.

Without reservation, 2023 was a tremendous year for music making and our BANSW community!

Commencing with the 2023 Australian National Band Championships in Newcastle it was magnificent to see and hear so many bands and soloists clearly embracing and enjoying the test selections for which our BANSW Music Advisory Board had nominated and selected for this premiere event.

With the selection process and works announced in the latter half of 2022, the true measure of success was highlighted by the exceptionally strong representation of bands (both brass and concert) and soloists in Newcastle. For this I would like to acknowledge and sincerely congratulate our 2022 Music Advisory Board Committee members.

Whilst balancing an appropriate balanced of fresh selections to the list, once again it was our objective to provide a prescribed list inclusive of:

- Musical representation inclusive of female & male composers
- Our intention to increasing the profile of Australian works on our 2023 NSW State Championship Test Piece List.
- 2023 NSW State Championship Test Piece List – To include familiar and new works.
- Economic responsibilities – Specially in the post-covid world, acknowledging that for many bands purchasing new and expensive pieces would be prohibitive.
- Select works that could be performed again in concerts etc...

MUSIC SELECTION ADVISORY BOARD

Additional aspects pertinent in preparing and finalising the 2023 List of Prescribed works included the following reflections and enhancements:

BRASS BANDS:

- OPEN A Brass – Return to ONE singular Test piece
- OPEN B, C & D Grade Brass expanded to a CHOICE of 4 TEST PIECES (extending from 3 to 4) noting that 2 works were retained from 2022.
- JUNIOR Brass Grades (COMPLETE) also expanded the opportunity to a CHOICE of 4 TEST PIECES (extending from 3 to 4) in which there are currently 4 works proposed for both JUNIOR A & B Brass already.
- JUNIOR C Grade Brass – 4 WORKS (Aus) nominated for this grade.

WIND BANDS – Having received exceptionally positive confirmation & feedback received throughout and at the close of 2022 it was decided to retain and expand the lists to 15 Test Pieces in ALL Wind Bands sections.

- OPEN A Grade CONCERT – 2 additional works to be retired, providing opportunity to include the Aus Work, 'This Gift of Never & Always' by Matt Klohs, together with re-evaluating the placement of 'Give Us the Day' by David Maslanka into the OPEN A Concert Division.
- OPEN B Grade CONCERT – No changes required for 2023 – Re-assess for 2024, another 12 months with this current list
- OPEN C Grade CONCERT – Similarly No changes required for 2023 – Re-assess for 2024, another 12 months with this current list
- OPEN D Grade CONCERT – Only one singular change, retired 'Eiger – Journey to the Summit!' by Swearingen, providing opportunity to include another fresh Australian work.
- JUNIOR A Grade Concert – One new inclusion, showcasing the music of Julie Giroux (prominent US Female composer).
- JUNIOR B Grade Concert - No changes required for 2023 – Re-assess for 2024, another 12 months with this current list
- JUNIOR C Grade Concert – Only ONE Change required, retired 'Choreography' – Robert Sheldon from the list, replaced by 'Safely Rest' by Nicole Piunno.
- JUNIOR D Grade Concert – Two works retired, replaced by TWO new Fresh Aus works for 2023.

MUSIC SELECTION ADVISORY BOARD

In Conclusion:

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to thank our 2023 Music Advisory Board Committee, and BANSW President, Mr Jeff Markham and BANSW Committee for their support of 2023 BANSW Set Prescribed Works set for 2023.

As highlighted through past years of Test Music selections, the BANSW Music Advisory Board Committee has been leading the way in the Australian Banding Community with our very clear focus on supporting Australian composers and encouraging and premiering new music for the past 15 years, and we have achieved great things. The challenge now is to stay at that leading edge and respond to the needs of our members and their communities.

The full Test Music Lists are provided as Appendix E

ADVERTISING AND TRADE STANDS

Fiona Day

2023 State Bands we welcomed 5 trade stands in total including Sax and Woodwind/Besson, Reeds and More, Notus Winds, Upscale Music and the Australian Navy Band. We also accepted advertising from The NZ National Band as well as Ozwinds.

The trade stand area was probably at capacity, unless we can be creative about the space we use. The end of the foyer area that the majority were located were not as busy as the main entry, and given the weather was good, many band members were outside.

SPONSORSHIPS

Jeff Markham

The support of Besson Buffet Group has continued into 2023. This support is greatly appreciated by the Banding Community and we are proud of our long standing relationship with Besson.

The Penrith City Council also provided financial support by way of a \$8000 sponsorship for the 2023 NSW State Band Championships and we hope that this support for this event will continue into the future.

2023 also saw a new sponsor for BANSW events, including the Nationals. Lloyd Edge and his company Australian Property Professionals generously came on board as a sponsor for the State Nationals and State Band Championships.

The total sponsorship for the 2023 BANSW activities was \$18,000.

Sponsorship for the National Band Championships is included as a part of the attached 2023 National Band Championships report.

The support of our corporate sponsors is greatly appreciated and enables the BANSW to run the programs and events that we do for the benefit and development of our community and school bands.

We are always on the look out for new corporate supporters with advertising and promotional benefits being offered. If any of our membership are business owners looking for a way to contribute to our great Banding movement, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss our sponsorship and support packages with you.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Kristen Moodie

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/bandsnsw/>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/bandsnsw/>

X <https://twitter.com/bandsnsw>

Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/@BandAssociationofNSW>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/band-association-of-nsw>

The maintaining of the Social Media pages has fallen to myself as we have been unable to retain a full time volunteer to take it on during this time. I do thank a couple of people who have tried to step up but these unfortunately did not work out.

During this time, the post rate of content and engagement has dropped across all platforms and a new brief of what we would like to see from Social Media will need to be completed for 2024.

On a pleasing note, we had over 25K visits to our Facebook page during 2023 which is a 247% increase on the previous year.

I am fully aware that this is an area that we need to focus on improving over 2024/2025.

Events

CONTESTS

Kristen Moodie

I want to congratulate all soloists and bands for their time and effort in making these events the success that they were in 2023. This year was always going to be challenging as we were hosting the National Band Championships on top of our normal State events and this comes with a unique set of challenges.

Australian National Band Championships - April 7-10.

Held in Newcastle. We would not have been able to hold this event without the assistance of a very large committee and the Hunter Regional Band Association. So thank you to everyone who was a part of this.

We encountered many challenges not least with the venue themselves. We didn't have an event manager from the venue assigned to help us directly until about 6 weeks before the contest so this delayed us considerably in putting things in place early and resulted in a lot of unnecessary rushing around and took our focus off where we should have been in those final weeks.

I won't say that the weekend itself was without issue and you can read the details in the Nationals report linked in with the President's report so I won't duplicate it.

I would like to point out, and what is to be considered for future discussion is venue cost v audience numbers. This discussion will always revolve around the venue location (city or regional) and how much can we afford to pay. We all want to perform in a great venue but at what cost if we know we can't get decent audience numbers? Do we look at smaller venues that cater for stage size and work on increasing the live-stream side of things (and give consideration to pay for live-stream) or work to increase audience numbers?

NSW Solos & Party Championships - June 24-25.

This event was held at Barker College, Hornsby and we give thanks to Andrew McWade and his team at Barker College for making us feel welcome during our time there. Nothing has been too much trouble.

Our adjudicators for this contest were Adrian Hallam, Joan Thorp, John Buckley, Andrew McWade & Kaylie Dunstan.

We received 360 entries across 71 events. We recorded 44 withdrawals

Solos Championships Results - Appendix H

CONTESTS

NSW State Band Championships - Penrith August 26-27

This was a great turnout and a very busy weekend where we had 57 bands competing across all grades. A fantastic turnout considering when we host the Nationals, States are generally smaller. We sold approx. 1500 tickets over the weekend.

Our adjudicators for this year were Bryan Griffiths (SA) and Mark Ford (VIC) who were well-received.

We also held the Open Champion of Champions on the Saturday evening in the Malcolm Borland foyer. Congratulations to Nicky Abkiewicz of Sydney City Brass.

We continue to grow our audience on the live-streaming side.

Live streaming details - Appendix F

Band Championships Results - Appendix G

YOUNG BAND PERSON OF THE YEAR

Once again, the Young Band Person of the Year award program which was revised in full consultation with the HRBA and SMBB Presidents did not work as intended.

With 5 nominations received in total, The final assessments for the State winner were made by a sub-committee formed by Jeff Markham, Bev Newitt and James Moule. The State award for 2023 went to Bryn Wilson-Kellaway from Newcastle PCYC Brass Band.

In view of the continued lack of interest in nominations for this award, further discussion of the viability of this program continuing is needed.



WORKSHOPS

Unfortunately in 2023, the Skunkworks Zoom workshops which had been a feature of the past few years did not proceed. This was a decision of Shunkworks.

Our annual percussion workshop took place as a part of the State Solo and Ensemble Championships.

We are looking at our workshop program and how we can re-introduce the Conductors workshop series as well as adding other workshops to the program for 2024 and beyond.

2024 READING & RESOURCE DAY

Jean Thorp

The BANSW began planning for our first ever Music Reading Day to be held on 4 February 2024.

The day will be held by BANSW and supported by ABODA NSW, and will have 2 sessions for new Concert Band music and 1 session for new Brass Band music.

It is to be held at the Petersham Town Hall accompanied by trade displays from Brass Music Specialists (Qld), Engadine Music, Fine Music (Vic), Hosenbugler Music, Rod Herbert Big Sound Music, Thorp Music and Tim Ferrier Music.

We are expecting over 70 playing participants representing many community bands and educational institutions. Our guest conductors are Garry Clark, Eddie Claxton, Megan Lipworth and Andrew McWade, who will lead the bands through 66 new publications.

In selecting the music to be played, our music selection panel was overwhelmed with over 350 new and very worthy submissions by a great mix of both local Australian and international composers across all grade levels. We had a tough job narrowing the playing list down to 43 Concert Band works and 23 Brass Band works. We initially used the BANSW Composers and Publishers register as the basis for contacting composers for new works, expanding to the larger publishers as well.

The final music lists featured a great diversity of grades, styles, composers and publishers. The Concert Band list contains 53% Australian content and the Brass Band list is 87% Australian content.

Murray Bishop, who has been a part of the Organising sub-committee and who has had vast experience at running reading days will be our MC for the day.

The event will be a great positive way to launch into the New Year of teaching and community banding - sight reading new band charts plus catching up with old colleagues and making new musical connections.

Please save the date for our next one: Saturday 8th and/or Sunday 9th February 2025. Planning for this will begin in September 2024.

SERVICES

GRANTS

Jeff Markham

The 2023 Community Band Development Grants program received 26 applications seeking a total of \$53,450 in funding.

This year, all applications were assessed and approved by a panel of three people - Bev Newitt, James Moule and Jeff Markham. The approved funding came to the total of \$29,850 which included returned funds from previous years plus a clerical error which saw some of the \$3000 allocated from the BANSW administration fee for the program being paid to bands.

The full list of recipients, a brief project description and the amounts paid appears as Appendix I

There were a number of grants projects which had been held over for completion by bands from 2020, 2021 and 2022, which meant that in 2023, there were 3 years of acquittals due.

As at the date of writing this report:

- There are 2 bands acquittals remain outstanding from 2020 – Forbes Town Band and Gunnedah Shire Band.
- There are 2 bands with outstanding acquittals from 2021 - Campbelltown Camden District Band and Gunnedah Shire Band, and;
- No acquittals outstanding from 2022.
- There are 2 Acquittals outstanding for the 2023 program - Parramatta City Band and Willoughby City Band

Discussions have been had with each band with an outstanding acquittal. Campbelltown indicated that they were unable to expend their grant on the project that had been proposed and held over. They have requested for this to be held over to 2024 with a variation of purpose.

We are still working with Forbes, Gunnedah, Parramatta and Willoughby to have all outstanding acquittals completed as soon as possible as we understand that the funding has been spent and the proposed projects completed.

The BANSW received two grants under the Rescue and Restart Stage One and Stage Two grants. Both of these have been acquitted with the funds spent in support of BANSW activities and events.

GENERAL SERVICES

Band Public Liability Insurance Scheme

The Public Liability Insurance scheme continues to be popular with bands with 38 bands being a part of this scheme.

This has become an important product offering of the Association, being a key reason for a with a number of bands continuing to retain their membership.

One Music Australia Association Licence

The BANSW OneMusic Associations Licence continues to prove an essential product for our member bands with 47 licences being issue to bands in 2023.

We encourage all bands who have ticketed concerts, use photocopies in rehearsals and performances or who use, copy and circulate other bands recordings as a learning tool to take out this licence as it covers all the aspects of a community bands performing and rehearsing needs at a 10% discount to the OneMusic Community Music Licence.

Music Library and Archives

There has been steady borrowing this year, many requests coming from regional areas. A few scores have been donated, as well as some early Australasian Bandsman magazines.

There are still some 100 sets of brass band march cards which still have not been located. This is of great concern as many of these sets are rare. I would like to produce conductor scores and A4 sets for some of them, especially those by Australian composers.

We now have over well 5000 items available for loan.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Ian Madden who has frequently helped me overcome my lack of technical skills.

James Moule
Librarian

AWARDS AND LONG SERVICE

Jeff Markham

The Award of Merit is the second highest award that the BANSW can bestow and It was a great honour and privilege to present Awards of Merit for in recognition of the services to the BANSW and our member bands as long term volunteers to:

Fiona Day,
Katrina King,
Bev Newitt,
David Kimpton,
David Raciti,
Margaret Jones,
Petra Evans,
Sven Wright,
Linden Wright,
Careen Botha,
Gemma Rolph,
Stuart Bennett,
Eddie Claxton,

Throughout the year there were a number of Long Service Awards which were presented to BANSW members, including two 70 year service medals. **The list of awardees appears as Appendix J**

We encourage all BANSW member bands to recognise the years of service of their members as they achieve their major membership milestones.

Congratulations to our wonderful volunteers who were received the Award of Merit and to all members who received their long service medals. You are proof that banding really is a more than a hobby, it's a community and a lifelong passion.

THE MUSIC STAND JOURNAL

Fiona Day

The MS continues to be produced electronically with only 2 printed copies each edition. We receive an average of 6 articles from bands. It would be great to receive news from some more bands, even if it were snippets of interest. I would like to look at a way to re-engage readers in the coming year.

Branch Reports

HUNTER REGIONAL BAND ASSOCIATION

Dr Mark Pinner

As the 2023-24 financial year draws to a close, the Hunter Regional Band Association [HRBA] is in a healthy position. The following bands are affiliated with HRBA: Tuggerah Lakes District Band; Waratah Brass and Waratah Academy Bands; Western Lake Macquarie Concert Band, New Sounds Band and the Westlakes Seniors' Swing Band; CNL Brass; Lake Macquarie Winds; Toronto District Brass Band and Catalina Junior Band; PCYC Brass Band and Junior Band; Hunter School of Performing Arts Senior and Junior Concert Bands [HSPA]; Eleebana Primary School Concert Band; Heritage College; Wallarah Community Band; Gosford City Brass Band; Maitland City Brass Band; Singleton Town Band and the Port Stephens Community Band in the process of affiliating. There is also a proposed training band at Lake Macquarie Winds scheduled to start at the beginning of term 3. It is encouraging to see a number of junior bands now in operation and the committee is keen to encourage this and to also seek the affiliation of more of the area's school bands in the future.

The main aim of the HRBA is to provide performance opportunities not just our member bands but also the broader banding community. During the 2023 calendar year HRBA with the welcome assistance of the City of Lake Macquarie help three Bands in the Park [BITP] concerts at the Multi-Arts Pavilion in Speer's-Point Park. In addition to these three events we also held our annual East Coast Band Championships, at the Newcastle Conservatorium, and the HRBA Solo and Party Contest at the Hunter School of Performing Arts.

We also look forward to assisting the Band Association of NSW [BANSW] with the running of a youth brass band camp at the Crusaders Camp Lake Macquarie in 2024.

HUNTER REGIONAL BAND ASSOCIATION

East Coast Championship and Festival of the Bands 2023

The 2023 East Coast of Australia and Hunter Regional Band Championship and Festival of the Bands was held on 11 June 2023 at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music. Time constraints and the cost of venue hire kept the number of entries to 8 bands: CNL Brass; Maitland City Brass Band; Newcastle PCYC; Gosford City; Parramatta City; HSPA Senior and Junior; and Lake Macquarie Winds. Audience numbers, including band members was around 200 across the day, and there were in the vicinity of 250 performers. Again the event was stage managed by the Newcastle PCYC Brass Band who ensured that the contest ran smoothly. The adjudicator was David Thompson and the event was live streamed on Brassbanned.com. Of the 8 bands, 7 were HRBA member bands the 8th being our regular guests from Sydney, the Parramatta City Brass Band. It was great to see the Maitland City Brass Band return to contesting after a long hiatus. A large trade stand by Sax, Woodwind & Brass also proved popular, and we thank them for their ongoing support.

The 2024 East Coast Championships will be held on 23 June at the Newcastle Conservatorium. The University of Newcastle has kindly provided generous venue sponsorship for this year's event which has allowed us to expand to 10 bands. Another exciting innovation being trialled this year is the inclusion of a Youth Gala Concert held over the lunch break, an initiative from Vice President Teena Wallace and Committee Member Kelsey-Anne Scott. This is intended to introduce younger performers to the contest stage, to give them another opportunity to experience the atmosphere of a band contest, to encourage affiliation with HRBA and to bolster audience numbers. There are 4 Bands performing: Eleebana Public School; Cave's Beach Public School; Newcastle PCYC Junior, and Catalina Brass. It is hoped that we can continue this event in coming years perhaps with the aim to introducing a junior contest in the future. The 2024 contest also sees the re-appearance of the Western Lake Macquarie Concert Band to the contest stage.

HUNTER REGIONAL BAND ASSOCIATION

HRBA Solo and Party Competition

As in the previous year, the 2023 Solo and Party Contest attracted sufficient entries to require the use of 2 halls with 2 adjudicators and 2 accompanists. The 2023 event was held at Hunter School of Performing Arts, who kindly provided venue sponsorship for the event. Competition keen while comments from our adjudicators, Justin Williams and Tessie Overmeyer, were well received by the contestants. Events were held in divisions including Under 10s and Veterans [Over 55s] and included own-choice solos across brass & woodwind instrumental categories, duets, trios, quartets and the well subscribed Slow-Melody events.

It was pleasing to see a healthy number of entrants again coming from far and wide, including Gunnedah, Port Macquarie, Gosford and Willoughby compete over some 43 events. It was encouraging to see the Under 10 and Under 13 events well patronised as these competitors are the future of banding. Unfortunately the woodwind and percussion events were not as well supported, an issue the HRBA committee needs to look into for the future.

The Association's thanks go to the Toronto District Brass Band who assisted the HRBA in the organisation of the event, especially former HRBA Secretary and TDBB Treasurer Kylie-Ann Lysaght. Thanks also to our accompanists Philip Sketchley and Erin Sweetman for their contribution and encouragement of the performers.

The 2024 Solo and Party Contest is being held at Heritage College at Morisset. We are looking forward to another successful event this year.

HUNTER REGIONAL BAND ASSOCIATION

Bands in the Park

Three Bands in the Park [BITP] events were also held during 2023 at the City of Lake Macquarie's Multi-Arts Pavilion [MIMA] at Speer's Point Park. Audience numbers were healthy across the course of the day with a static audience of friends, relatives and supporters of band members; music lovers in general; as well as a lot of roving listeners enjoying some free entertainment. Although it is hard to accurately count audience numbers at events like these, on each occasion there were static audiences of around 100 across the day, as well as many hundreds of roving listeners as Speer's-Point Park is a popular venue for those getting exercise as well as picknickers.

These events are invaluable in keeping brass and concert bands and their music in the public consciousness. In addition to our contests these concerts also provide an opportunity for bands to keep their performance standards up. We acknowledge the City of Lake Macquarie for their ongoing support for these events.

In 2024 the HRBA Committee made the decision to return to the former stage at the other end of Speer's-Point Park. Unfortunately our first scheduled event in May this year had to be postponed because of the weather. We are looking at a possible alternative date for this, and still have one event scheduled for September. The committee is also keen to explore holding at least one Bands in the Club event with Cardiff RSL a possible venue. We are constantly looking for ways to increase performance opportunities and to put brass and concert band at the forefront of community music making.

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Financial Situation, and Membership

Currently the HRBA has 21 member bands with the probability of Lake Macquarie Winds forming a training band in term 3. Affiliated bands come from as far afield as Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, the Central Coast, Maitland, Singleton and Nelson Bay. We are hoping to expand our member base by encouraging school bands to affiliate, and we are also hoping that the recently formed Hastings River Brass Band will join the fold.

HRBA's financial viability has been boosted this year by generous venue sponsorship by the University of Newcastle-Newcastle Conservatorium. Many thanks to their staff and Director Sue Carson for their help. This has allowed us to invite 10 bands to compete and hold a Youth Gala Concert and saved HRBA close to \$5,000. The HRBA Committee are keen to cultivate a good working relationship with the Conservatorium as we share many similar values. Again the contest is being recorded by David Jarrett Productions and will hopefully be live streamed.

As with the band movement in general, especially post covid, many bands are struggling for numbers. While some are in a healthy position, Waratah Brass, including their academy band have 62 registered for 2024; Lake Macquarie Winds has 38; and Newcastle PCYC are able to field 2 complete bands as is HSPA others aren't in as healthy a state. Of concern is the paucity of lower brass in both concert and brass bands. I have broached the subject of possibly offering some kind of incentive to encourage people to take up lower brass with a number of people on band committees. Along the lines of offering free membership, tuition and a decent instrument in return for playing with a band. The next step is to find some funding.

Young Band Person of the Year

The HRBA Young Band Person of the Year was made a re-appearance in 2023 and we are looking at working with BANSW on increasing the profile of this award. Our Hunter Regional Award went to Bryn Wilson-Kellaway who also took out the state award. Bryn is now a member of the HRBA Committee.

HUNTER REGIONAL BAND ASSOCIATION

Band Activity

To gain better understanding of the contribution made by bands to the region's cultural life I asked bands to provide a brief activity statement. I haven't exactly been overwhelmed with responses, but those that have responded give a reasonable idea of what is going on.

A number of member bands regularly promote their own concerts which prove popular with audiences and are generally well subscribed. These are held on a regular basis at the Warner's-Bay Theatre-Baramayiba and the Rathmines Theatre. In the past Adamstown Uniting Church has also been used. Activity statements show just how popular these concerts are with Waratah Brass for example holding a three-concert series which attracted an audience of around 180 for each concert. Waratah also continued its partnership with the Australian Army Band Newcastle for the annual Voice of the Guns concert at Fort Scratchley, to an audience of any hundreds, they also gave 6 Christmas carol concerts in shopping centres around the area as well as the Stroud Brick and Rolling Pin Throwing Festival.

Both the Lake Macquarie Winds and Western Lake Macquarie Concert Bands as well as the Toronto District Brass Band also held concerts at the Rathmines Theatre. Lake Macquarie Winds for example have held a number of themed concerts including From Dreamtime to Modern, with the Gabinya Miyay Aboriginal dance group and featuring Australian compositions, and Music of the World in conjunction with the Elevate Irish Dancers and featuring new compositions by composers from Hong Kong and France. The Western Lake Macquarie Concert Band have also held a number of concerts at the same venue which also feature the Seniors' Swing Band and New Sounds training Band.

Bands have also been prominent at civic events especially ANZAC Day. Undoubtedly one of the busiest bands is the Newcastle PCYC Brass Band who performed at the dawn service in Gregson Park, Hamilton; providing buglers for Shortland RSL, Cardiff RSL, and Wallsend RSL dawn services; the ANZAC Day Street March and a concert at the Nelson Bay Wests Leagues Club.

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Other bands were also busy with Lake Macquarie Winds supported the Valentine Lions' Club at their 35th ANZAC Service at Valentine Park to an audience of over 300, and the Western Lake Macquarie Band supporting the Catalina Association. ANZAC services were also supported by other bands in the region, including Toronto Brass and Maitland City. Newcastle PCYC also supplies buglers for Remembrance Day while the Western Lake Macquarie Band support the Merchant Navy Memorial Service each June at the Mission to Seafarers, Wickham and other events sponsored by the City of Lake Macquarie. Most member bands are also active over the Christmas period supporting their local Carols by Candlelight and entertaining shoppers There are many more events, too many to mention here, where regional bands are out supporting their community.

In conclusion, the HRBA and its member bands are a much-needed part of the region's 'music space', and very much a part of the fabric of its cultural life. The aim of the association is to take band music to the public, providing performance opportunities and advocacy for our bands, as well as the supporting the broader band movement which I believe we are achieving. This would not be possible without the work of the HRBA Committee for 2024 is: Vice President, Teena Wallace; Treasurer, Paul Mather; Secretary, Jou McDougall; Bryn Wilson-Kellaway; Trish O'Hearn; Sven Wright; Kelsey-Anne Scott; Doug Treloar OAM & Rob Muir. To them I offer my sincere thanks for making HRBA a vibrant organisation with eyes on the future.

SYDNEY METROPOLITAN BAND BRANCH

Cathy Moran

The main event organised for 2023 was the SMBB Solo and Party Competition. We had over 180 entries from many widespread bands, which was very pleasing. This was again held at the new venue of De La Salle College Caringbah on the weekend of May 27th and 28th. We welcomed some experienced and some new adjudicators for the competition including Warwick Tyrell, Colin Grisdale and Daniel Blanch, all of whom did an exemplary job.

Our fabulous team of volunteers made the weekend run smoothly from start to finish. We have also received many compliments from our competitors praising our official accompanists, Hank Xiang and Ingrid Sakurovs.

The weekend went extremely well with competitors and supporters very happy with the location, the organisation and in particular the constructive and supportive feedback provided to our participants by our adjudicators. Below are listed the perpetual trophy winners for 2023-

Cath Hagerty Memorial Award - Under 11 Any Instrument - Nathan Zhao- River Concert Band
Mollie Neale Memorial Award - Under 13 Slow Melody - Alia Walker - Willoughby Brass no 2
Aub Owens Trophy - Under 15 - Any Brass Instrument - Savannah Heerey Mao- St George Brass
Jack Williams Memorial Award - Under 15 Woodwind Instruments - Sunae Park- Meriden Wind Symphony
Sue Caesar Memorial Award - U13 Novice - Kayla Chiu - Meriden Wind Symphony
Ken Luzzi Memorial Award - Under 15 Slow Melody - Charlotte Choy - Meriden Wind Symphony
The Moran Family Trophy - Under 19 Concerto - Holly Williams- The Shire Concert Band
H.J.Cartledge Trophy - Under 19 Brass Instruments - Alex Putra - St George Brass
SMBB Trophy - Under 19 - Woodwind Instruments - Holly Williams - The Shire Concert Band
The Mead Trophy - Open Concerto - Oliver Kurukchi - Willoughby City Band
Clifford Family Trophy - Australian Composition Open Solo - Ross Griffiths - City of Wollongong Brass Band
Sydney Metropolitan Aggregate Shield - Most successful Band - St George Brass

The aggregate trophy came down to the final section, with St George narrowly edging out Meriden.

The Branch thanks all the band members who entered and participated in the competition and, as with all band contests, is indebted to the strong group of volunteers who support the organisation each year and ensure the success of this event.

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