

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

2nd BPAC CHAIR'S REPORT

November 24 2025

SUMMARY

This is the first year for artistic activities enabled by the BPAC team. There has been increasing demand for our site and services (see operations report) not only justifying our presence but making it an imperative to continue. As predicted, the shortfall in space and facilities for grass-roots, up to established community Performing Arts organisations, can be alleviated by what we are currently achieving.

COMMITTEE

The current committee consists of Michael Whitehead (Chair), Millie Koenders (Treasurer), Tess Kelly (Secretary), Matthew Heenan, Jeff Moran, Lyn Broadstock, Jane Jens and Luke Tonkin, with executives Beth Lamont (General Manager) and Jo Kruse (Operations Manager). Tim Ryan has resigned from the committee after a very fruitful contribution to the establishment of the Organisation. We are grateful for his energy and advice and appreciate his efforts in progressing our support for the performing arts. The Committee has worked under extreme pressure to achieve what we have to date and it has not been easy to get this new organisation to its current level of performance and success. Beth and Jo, in particular, have been tireless in their efforts to make this work. Thank you sincerely for going to extremes to make things happen.

NEILL ST SITE

We have faced enormous challenges in just getting into these buildings regarding OH&S standards including electrical and fire safety, plus drainage and repairs to damaged property. Drainage, electrical upgrades, vehicle access, site clearing and gardening, plus signage and markedly lighting have improved the facility. Repair and maintenance work by Bruce Dalkin and Oliver Minns-Reeves is much appreciated. There is so much more we need to do. The rental of toilet facilities, courtesy of generous donations by Buninyong Community Bank and Alison Trevenen, has been an important addition to the site. The manse beside the church in Macarthur St is being readied for sale by UCA and its previously associated toilets were removed.

FUNDRAISING

The pledge campaign has over \$60,000 to date and a boost campaign is planned. The UCA purchase price of \$2M is well out of our personal range at present however we have been lobbying all levels of Government and have had endorsements from State (MLA, MLC) and Federal Government politicians. At meetings with City of Ballarat officers and the mayor, they implied that they would more favourable to our position subject to these positive endorsements. We are to have discussion with Creative Australia and are excited about the concept of a Creative Land Trust model to get philanthropic interest. We have a mid-December deadline to sign a contract of sale with Uniting Church Australia... watch this space.

FUTURE

If the enthusiasm of our team and the appreciation of the hirers to date counts for anything then we are in for an exciting ride in providing a missing link, never previously available in this 'Creative City'. We have an affordable, accessible, fit-for-purpose Performing Arts hub with administration, meeting, rehearsal and performance spaces on site, backed up by a team of experienced arts administrators available to assist this community.

To have such a unique combination of CBD position, appropriate function and historical beauty is such a rare opportunity that needs to be respected and supported for the benefit of today's performers and as a legacy for the future performers of Ballarat.

Michael Whitehead