



North Queensland Ensembles Inc

(ABN: 73-365-249-138)

BARRIER REEF ORCHESTRA

www.nqorchestra.com.au



Presidents Report 2020 – 2021

Barrier Reef Orchestra's 2020 AGM was held on the 14th June. At the time many of us were feeling bewildered and uncertain about the relatively new COVID global pandemic. We were generally isolated, fearful of travelling away from Townsville and missing live concerts and human interaction in general. As the new committee met for the first time (via Zoom meeting) planning for future concerts was not possible and discussion centred around what we could do in these unusual circumstances.

I wish to personally thank each and every member of the BRO committee who have worked hard throughout the past twelve months to plan, discuss and progress management committee processes. Committee members prepared and collated surveys; updated administration and web-based communication systems; met for discussion regarding the future pathway for BRO; submitted a RADF Grant, a Community Benefit Gambling Fund Grant and a Qld Govt Arts Organisation Grant. The committee have an agreed Strategic Plan for 2021- 2025 (a copy is available today for perusal); a management committee Code of Conduct; insight into the role of committee members; and agreements and checklists for the lead up to performances. In addition, Angela and Julian Summers have provided their skill and expertise to produce shared web-based storage and an updated member list which allows circulation of newsletters and emails to all members. Julian is continuing to develop and update the BRO website.

Jean Dartnall was commissioned in 2019 to write the BRO Twenty Year History Book, with its release to coincide with the BRO Twenty Year Anniversary in 2020. This anniversary became another COVID casualty. I wish to personally thank Judy Hunter, Lorraine Gray and Marg Naylor who have committed significant time and effort to this project. They researched information to provide Jean along with collecting and sorting an extensive array of photos. They continue to liaise with Trisha Fielding whom the BRO management committee appointed to prepare this book to publication standard.

By September 2020, COVID restrictions were easing slightly allowing the committee to consider holding a live, but restricted, performance. Thank you to Sally Frewen-Lord (Manager) and Stephen Frewen-Lord (Concert Master) who developed a suitable musical program, reached out to eager musicians and coordinated rehearsals, following a COVID safe plan, which resulted in three restricted performances to family and friends in St James Cathedral. Major Matt O'Keefe, 1RAR, conducted the Brass Ensemble and Stephen Frewen-Lord lead the Chamber Orchestra. Donations received at these performances were given to St James Cathedral, with everyone thoroughly enjoying the exposure to live music again.

***Helen Land
President 2020 - 2021***

One of the goals discussed for inclusion in our Strategic Plan was to nurture our musicians and ensure the orchestra is sustainable into the future. The committee felt we could trial this with a “Christmas Fun Day”. Thank you to Sally Frewen-Lord (Manager) who organised and managed this one-day workshop, held at Annandale Christian School in December 2020. Townsville music teachers were asked to recommend and invite their talented students to join the BRO, exposing these developing students to ‘the next level of performance’. The workshop culminated in a ‘performance’ at the end of the day, with OmniTitan Video Productions appointed to record this performance. The committee hoped the recording could be used for promotion and was an opportunity to explore the possibility of streaming BRO performances in the future, with the outcome of the pandemic still unknown.

BRO was successful in obtaining a RADF grant to provide a percussion skills and development workshop in February 2021. The committee saw this as an opportunity to source and upskill percussionists in the Townsville region with BRO consistently having great difficulty in sourcing percussionists for performances. Professional percussionist, Wyana O’Keefe has been residing in Townsville during 2020-2021, so this opportunity was too good to pass by. Thank you to Wyana for developing two excellent programs, “Beginner” and “Advanced” specifically focused on orchestral percussion performance. Wyana continues to mentor percussionists at BRO rehearsals, preparing these students for our 2021 performances, along with playing in the performances herself.

BRO has also been successful in obtaining a Community Benefit Gambling Fund Grant allowing us to purchase a custom-built trailer to transport all our equipment (music stands and percussion) to varying rehearsal and performance sites. This will provide significant cost saving into the future. A special thank you to Andrew Ryder for researching the trailer parameters and sourcing the quote. It is hoped this trailer will be completed by August 2021.

I am sure you all enjoyed BRO’s first performance in over twelve months, held at the Civic Theatre, on the 24th April 2021. We were all ‘blown away’ by Cherin Lee’s performance of Bruch’s Violin Concerto No.1 and enjoyed the friendly banter of conductor Patrick Pickett who chose a perfect ‘welcome back’ Townsville program of live orchestral music. It was truly a relief to have no limitations on audience seating or rehearsal planning to allow this to happen (albeit on Cowboys Games Night).

We move forward to now and our thoughts reach out to those family and friends in Melbourne who find themselves in lockdown again as the fight against the virulent, highly transmissible strain of the virus swirls around. We watch from afar, remaining vigilant with our social distancing and sanitising, hoping we can keep this virus at bay. 2020 has provided the management committee to focus on more than just preparing for the next performance. The committee has had time to reflect, discuss and plan and it is hoped this will be of benefit to all in the future.

Helen Land
President 2020 - 2021