

The past 12 months has been very challenging for our industry. We have seen teachers, performers, venues and event organisers take a big hit as the result of the ongoing effects of COVID-19.

With everyone no doubt highly aware of the negatives, I choose to look at the positive takeaways for ANATS NSW from the past 12 months.

We have continued to work with the Roundtable of Instrumental, Vocal and Musical Education Organisations to support musicians during COVID times. In 2020, through conversations with the NSW Health Minister, RIVMEO was instrumental in loosening restrictions around singing within NSW and allowing teachers to get back to teaching face-to-face.

Our conference that was scheduled for October 2020 successfully moved online. The first-ever online conference for ANATS was a huge highlight and was met with overwhelmingly positive feedback. It was great to see so many NSW members attending and presenting. A big part of the discussions at this event was members wanting to see a move towards more inclusivity and diversity within ANATS in 2021.

We continued our sponsorship of the prize for the English Arts Song or Australian Arts Song (21-25 years old) category of the Sydney Eisteddfod in memory of Elizabeth Todd. While this event was unfortunately not able to go ahead, we felt that our ongoing financial contribution would help to support the Sydney Eisteddfod to continue in future years.

Our *Back to Basics* series saw another evolution as it transformed into *Advanced Tools and Techniques*. Our presenters for the day were:

- Associate Professor Diane Hughes – Resonance Strategies
- Dr. Debbie Phyland – Functional Vocal Anatomy
- Penny Pettigrew – Expressive Vocal Techniques

This was extremely well received with 93 in attendance virtually, including 84 members, 4 non-members and 5 students. It was at this event that we were able to trial closed captioning as a way to make our events more accessible to members.

And through the rain we saw a little sunshine in April 2021 as we celebrated World Voice Day by holding our first concert in many years. The theme this year was 'One World, Many Voices' which was very appropriate and in line with our renewed focus on inclusivity. A number of talented singers were chosen to perform from a pool of online auditions. It was a beautiful evening with audience members treated to a mesmerising opening song performed by the One Voice Choir led by committee member Elizabeth Lecoanet. There were 169 in attendance and entrance was by donation. The event meant that we were able to raise \$741.30 for our chosen charity, Musicians Making a Difference.

In August 2021, we engaged Jennifer Peers to run a workshop titled *Music Theatre: An Exploration of Style*. Our intention was to hold this in person however new lockdown rules within Sydney meant a quick pivot to online. In response to the additional pressure on our industry we dropped ticket prices on this event. Ultimately it was very encouraging to see 43 in attendance, including 31 members, 6 non-members and 6 students. This event was our first attempt at running a masterclass online and proved very successful.

In our efforts to continue to advocate for our industry, the committee has been working to put together a guide for singing teaching rates within NSW. A survey was sent around to members to seek further insight into the current rates that teachers are being paid. We will use this data to create suggested rates for singing teachers that takes into consideration their experience and qualifications. This will be made available to members in 2022.

The hard work of the volunteers on our committee makes all of these wonderful events possible. I would like to extend my gratitude to Meryl Jackson-Kew, Debbie Grace, Lisa Genovese, Jo Fabro, Dr. Naomi Cooper, Christina Wilson, Liz Lecoanet, Robyn Wells, Carol-Ann Bentley, Judith Lindeman, and Sue Carson for their efforts over the past 12 months. Thank you also to Christina Wilson, Debbie Grace and Naomi Cooper for representing our chapter on the ANATS National Council the past year.

This year it was my absolute pleasure to award long time-committee member Carol-ann Bentley a NSW Committee Legacy Award to commemorate over 20 years as a NSW committee member. 2021 marks Carol-ann's 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year on the committee. During this time she has held the positions of Vice President (12 years), President (2 years) and Membership Secretary (2 years). Her dedication to ANATS is evident through her continued volunteering and this is second only to her support. I would personally like to thank Carol-ann for her ongoing support, kind words and tireless enthusiasm for everything singing – here's to the next 21 years!

Past NSW President Stephen Baker sent his congratulations:

*I first met Carol-ann in 2008 I believe, when I first joined the committee of ANATS. Immediately, she showed me her warmth and friendliness and it was partially that friendship that helped me enjoy continuing to participate in the committee. Our association, at a committee level, continued for five years. When I was invited to become President of the NSW Chapter, I was advised to listen very closely to Carol-ann's counsel. More than my listening closely, her knowledge was invaluable. I relied upon her greatly and she was always so happy to advise and help at any time day or night. Never even so much as a sigh or a roll of the eyes when I would call her. She has such passion with regards to the core beliefs of ANATS and is most definitely responsible in a large way for its ability to endure through good times and bad.*

*To say you have a heart of gold Carol-ann is underselling you. You are truly a worthy recipient of this service award and although I know you would be embarrassed by all the fuss, as you would put it, enjoy this celebration from your colleagues because believe me, it is very well deserved.*

*Congratulations and much love,*

Stephen

I was also delighted to award a NSW Committee Award to Robyn Wells. Robyn first joined the NSW committee in 2002. She served not only as a committee member but also as our highly trusted Treasurer from 2002 all the way through to 2018! Robyn's passion for singing and ANATS has been a highlight of the committee for many years, with her often opening her home to us all for meetings and AGMs. It's been a pleasure serving alongside her.

Past NSW President Associate Professor Di Hughes sent her congratulations:

*A professional association, such as ANATS, relies on its members to be actively engaged. Member engagement can occur in several ways – event attendance, contributions to publications and posts, and through individual service. At any given time, there are always members who selflessly serve behind the scenes and form the backbone of our association. These members serve because they believe in what we do and truly want to assist our profession. They do not seek recognition or gain. Robyn Wells is one of those incredibly generous members. Generous of her time, energy and commitment, Robyn has served on the NSW Chapter Committee for many years both in the Treasurer role and as a committee member. It is in her capacity as NSW ANATS Treasurer that I worked closely with Robyn. During my time on the NSW Committee, we spent countless hours with Carol-ann Bentley (another longstanding and hardworking committee member) as we three car-pooled to different ANATS meetings and events. We shared many a philosophical discussion and our driving sessions form cherished memories. I personally witnessed Robyn's generosity time and time again as she opened her home to various visiting speakers for ANATS, as she generated and prepared myriad receipts and reports, as she welcomed attendees to events and helped organise events. Her positivity and care were always valued and did not go unnoticed. There were many events where Robyn would miss the event itself as she attended to the registration desk. Robyn, we thank you for all that you have given to ANATS, to the committee and to our profession. I am so happy that your contribution has been formally recognised.*

*I also wanted to add my congratulations to another worthy award recipient, Carol-ann Bentley. Carol-ann has contributed so much to the NSW committee over many years. In her role as NSW Chapter Vice-President, Carol-ann was always incredibly supportive of me and of the entire committee. She is wonderfully organised which is a prized committee asset. She has contributed much to our broader community, particularly through her coordination and encouragement of the many masterclass singers who participated in ANATS NSW events. In addition to her 2016 recognition award, it is wonderful to see Carol-ann's significant and sustained committee contributions acknowledged this year.*

*With much love and appreciation,*

*Di*

*ANATS NSW Chapter President (2009-2013)*

*ANATS National President (2013-2017)*

Whilst the immediate times ahead for our industry remain cloudy, the resilience and strength I've witnessed this past year from our members leads me to believe whole-heartedly that our future is bright, and I'm delighted to share that with you all.

Kind regards,

Nadine Manion