



Connect, support & network with
Teachers of Singing across Victoria

Workshops | Events | Scholarships | Training | Resources | Mentoring | Information

www.anats.org.au

President's Report for 2023

Curtis Bayliss

It has been an honour to serve as this Chapter's Committee President over the last twelve months. As a new incumbent my primary aims for this year of 2023 have been:

- quickly learning the ropes of ANATS administration;
- finding meaningful events that have depth and real pedagogic value for our members;
- increasing our Chapter membership;
- trying to be cost effective
- seeking to broaden our Chapter image to be an even more inclusive and welcoming organisation for diversity in genre and thought.

May I boldly hypothesize that many vocal teachers in the wider community- if they know of us at all- may view ANATS as a somewhat academic, somewhat 'Classical' genre focused body. We may even possibly appear like an elite graduate guild.

This year our image, branding and marketing have become a chief focus of attention in our outreach to prospective members. In the most simplistic terms – our existing members are often Facebook type people, but our prospective members are not. You may have noticed more direct emails and also a heightened presence on Instagram.

During this year I have frequently viewed ANATS matters with two filters - asking the questions:

- Are we doing our best for the long-term preparations for the singing teachers of 2050?
- Are the decisions / actions we are taking or the money being spent of real benefit & value to our ANATS chapter members and also possibly of benefit to our colleagues who are not members?

Personally, for ANATS events, I wish to slightly elevate the focus on the teaching and pedagogic process slightly ahead of singing as an action, genres, physiologic-psychologic theory or science or linguistics. Yes agreed.....there are so many valuable components in what we do! My reasoning for this promotion is that for many voice teachers ANATS can be their singular avenue to access seeing other teachers working -whereas so much other information about singing / acoustics/ anatomy/ repertoire readily exists at so many levels of complexity in on-line resources.

So many voice teachers come from strong singing and musical backgrounds rather than having had extensive education training. We are a teacher development and support organisation.

As shown above- our Chapter letter-banner states 7 components for ANATS Victoria in its scope for supporting singing teachers across Victoria:

Workshops Events Scholarships Training Resources Mentoring Information

An 8th aspect is implied by the terms 'connecting / networking' in that we are building a sense of community and peer culture for singing teachers who frequently may work as sole traders or even possibly with a sense of isolation within some school settings.

So, what is the most useful and forward-thinking professional development and networking we can provide to our teacher members who already have various degrees, rich experience and a speciality of genre or approach? *The answer must come from our Chapter members.*

On the surface we have a dilemma: the very apparent situation that our **on-line events** can present to audiences across Australia and worldwide. Presentations online are cost effective and very convenient for our members- especially for the 28% who reside more than 50 kms outside of Melbourne – and preferred as convenient for the majority of participants who would consider themselves to be time poor. We save a great deal of paper.

In contrast our **live events** are expensive and risk barely break even or loss.

Yet *live events* (like workshops and conferences) are necessary to build better teachers, to hear teaching and singing in real acoustics, and to create stronger networks and collegial spirit. Without this realisation of those gains it would be a no brainer for ANATS to only run lectures and webinars remotely -to exist entirely as an online entity. This dilemma is a different situation from even just one decade previous!

Again, the answers for which is the preferred presentation mode (**online** or **live**) and what genres, topics and events should be presented *must come from our Chapter members.*

Live events 2022-2023

We are now moving beyond the overly cautious mentality developed by Victorians during the era of COVID lockdowns. Most unfortunately, indeed shamefully, there have been almost no live events in our Chapter since August of 2022. The **Bettine McCaughan Scholarship** Recital of August 2022 drew a healthy audience size at St Peter's Anglican Church in Box Hill.

In order to run live-events appropriate venues are needed. An ongoing mission has been to locate centralised and affordable venues for live events -our cost ratios are now tricky given under 120 members and a paid attendance likely to be at a modest 10-20 members.

In 2022 we discovered a very cost-effective meeting hub in Carlton – the Kathleen Symes Hub is part of City of Melbourne library system has been one such find for meetings. It is without a piano or suitable acoustic and we have only utilised this venue once as yet.

Apart from the Anglican Church in Box Hill used as the venue for the B M Scholarship each August we are still searching for schools and civic centres that would also suit our purpose and budget.

Our new and happily seconded member **Drew Downing** has also taken this particular task onboard and priced a number of arts venues on our behalf.

We are still looking for practical and accessible school and education venues that might prove suitable for live events. Suggestions for venues from our members would be very welcome!

A new factor in our costings for live events is obtaining the appropriate One Music Australia licensing allowing for the royalties of publicly performed music at each event. This is no longer covered by a national Association annual blanket policy.

ANATS National Council has recently begun to financially contribute towards our Chapter expenses of this fee. For your information, ANATS National kindly oversee and supply our annual Public Liability coverage- both of which are much appreciated.

In late September 2022 many members of ANATS Victoria participated in the **National Conference** held in Adelaide (hosted by ANATS South Australia / Northern Territory chapter). This enjoyable conference entitled *Encompassing the Vocal Spectrum* felt like a step into sunshine after the rainstorms of the COVID lockdowns. ANATS National managed to also provide a streamed hybrid version of this Conference for those who did not journey to Adelaide. It was particularly good to meet teachers from Victoria in person and start to get to know rural and newer members who attended. Thank you to all Victorians who attended in person and on-line!

During September and October of 2022, I emailed many ANATS chapter members and enquired about topic areas they would like the Committee to focus upon for live or online events. The return rates were extremely modest. Topics concerning online marketing and dealing with vocal technology were the highest mentions.

I repeated a version of these questions to the wider community of voice teachers who are not members – who had readily accessible /publicly available email addresses. Again, the reply rates were low.

At our Committee's planning meeting in November 2022 as part of our discussion were possible topics of overlapping common interest for voice teachers and also for members of Victoria's choral community. In January 23 we proposed to our choral cousins (ANCA Victoria) a live workshop session to be held in May 2023 featuring Kate Sadler and Jenny Caire focussing on technical and physiological aspects of singing of choral singers and singing teachers who work with choristers - but unfortunately because we did not receive enough timely support for the event from ANCA Victoria we felt unable to proceed.

We initially planned a live event in June 2023 for welcoming new teachers and recent voice graduates to meet- to interact and find the ways ANATS might assist they're building a voice studio. This event needs careful management and thoughtful informing of the possible participants. This will now happen in early 2024.

So possibly our largest live attendance session may be a day-long event in early August 2023 with Dr Irene Bartlett and young practitioners at **Pop and Contemporary Voice Day** - which will also be spent time considering voice processors and newer voice technologies. We are delighted that Dr Bartlett is happy to venture this far south from Brisbane at this time of year.

Very shortly after this current AGM the **2023 Bettine McCaughan Scholarship** reoccurs for outstanding young classical singers. Even though this is not my speciality, as an audience member, I was impressed by the quality of the young performers in 2022. ANATS Victoria

hosts this event under the curatorship of Lucas de Jong and the BMS Trust. In 2023 the prizes have increased in keeping with CPI and a new scholarship has been added.

Online Events 2022-2023

We are looking forward to coordinating and continuing the **OWLS (Older Singers who Love Singing) Scholarship** celebrating and rewarding older singers who love to sing. I thank the two sensational anonymous donors of this unique prize. I wish to thank Dr Julisa Nafisi for her energy and curatorship of the OWLS Prize each year.

ANATS Victoria provided the first national webinar aimed at all members- held in January 2023 with Dr Margaret Osborne a session on **Performance Anxiety Strategies**. Linda Barcan hosted this well attended online event with aplomb.

In the last two years, ANATS Victoria, has explored aspects of gender in relation to voice teaching. International Women's Day in March 2023 proved an appropriate time to announce a future online Chapter event. One of our future webinars will be considering the changes that occur across lifecycle for women's voices. This is important since the majority of teachers and indeed the majority of singers in Australia are of this gender. This online session on Sunday, 8 October 2023 will be brought to us by internationally recognised voice scientist, **Dr Phillipa La** based in Madrid.

In early April 2023 we held an on-line **VCE Voice Teachers interactive chat /support session** for the teachers of VCE Voice subjects to share feedback and experiences of voice teachers in both Schools and private studios. This online chat aimed to supportively check-in with how teachers are progressing with the new and significant 2023 changes that have occurred for VCE music subject. Curtis co-hosted this event with VCE specialist Lidia Mancini of Mentone Grammar.

On April 16th ANATS Victoria send out a celebratory video clip by the Committee wishing everyone a Happy **World Voice Day** which was further distributed by ANATS National and some other chapters.

Our Victorian Chapter members have been very frequent participants in online sessions run by ANATS National and also by other Chapters. These online sessions have included:

- *Marketing the Independent Voice Studio* with Michelle Deveaux;
- *Fly On the Wall- comparative and contrastive CCM and Classical Voice teaching* with Hulicombe and Bartlett;
- *Acoustics based Pedagogy* with Kenneth Bozeman;
- *Trauma Informed Pedagogy* with UK based researcher Emily Foulkes.

These online events and a National Conference have only partially offset the somewhat distressing paucity of our own live events.

Voice of ANATS- this year Victorian members have heavily contributed to our national seasonally issued publication. In part this has become a beautifully laid-out replacement of a local chapter e-newsletter. We thank Rebecca Watson of WA Chapter for her editorship of this online publication.

Our own Dr Julia Naifisi since 2018 has continued to edit and produce the significant and academically focused annual journal **Australian Voice**. Congratulations and thanks are due to Julia and co-editor Dr Melissa Forbes for this substantial peer reviewed production.

COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations in 2022-23

In August 2022 I introduced myself to many other community music and education groups - our tribal cousins- including AMUSE and also The Music Teachers Association of our state. I was warmly welcomed by The VMTA – the body which regulates the standard pricing guides for the pricing of instrumental vocal tuition and the rates for accompanists and competition adjudicators. VMTA also have a subset of some forty members who are singing teachers. A considerable number of this subset group are also ANATS members.

VMTA proposed to the DEET for a state-wide live and online project for music teacher developments in regional and rural settings across Victoria, focussing on Government school teachers. Like ABODA and a number of organisations we became a specialist advisory and contributory organisation to assist VMTA in delivery of this program. It is good to see this sort of multi-association collaboration for the greater good- and we are thankful for Josie Thomas and Lynn Spiteri of VMTA for overseeing for the program.

ANCA – our choral cousins- here in Victoria has been given our marketing assistance when their events would be of direct relevance and interest to our membership- such as Ron Morris' Accent Breath workshops.

In January 2023 we proposed an event that we felt would be relevant to both choral and our voice teaching communities, but this did not yet come fruition.

JMC -Soundworks:

In reaching out to institutions that educate future contemporary vocalists and possibly future voice teachers there are universities but also a number of fine tertiary and private providers. This year we initiated a collaboration with Ben Samuel and Chris Pickering of JMC Music Academy (South Melbourne) and also of vocal stream of the Sound Works Studio (Brunswick).

This sort of collaboration benefits ANATS for venue and equipment in addition to student contact. They also have a large number of voice staff who are not normally part of our ANATS connections.

ACTIVATING THE FUTURE

Action: **ethical & Australian based ticketing Humanitix change**

Humanitix is a not-for-profit Sydney based ticketing platform which donates profits to indigenous charities, a literacy program, and international women's education groups. The fees per ticket matched and, in some instances, even bettered our previous American owned supplier Try-Booking. The staff at Humanitix have been incredibly patient and helpful while we learned the procedures for their particular system. Thank you **Lucas de Jong** and **Freya Meredith Hanson** for your focus on this transition.

Action: **Review of our Bursaries Scholarship and Prize giving expenditure.**

Over the years ANATS Victoria have agreed to a myriad of funding vocal / competition prizes. During my tenure I hope to review the effectiveness of our current spending in this area. Most Competitions suffered very badly during the 2019-2021 period- and ANATS Victoria has contributed to new competitions and even initiated new vocal prizes. It is important to review and clearly know that our members fees are spent responsibly and contributing in the most effective way to our outreach to voice teachers, to students / singers and in a very minor way to the cultural life of Victorians. We will complete our considerations and Review by December 2023. I thank **Catrina Seiffert** for especially steering this process.

Actions: **CONFERENCE 2025 in Melbourne:**

Preparations are already underway to stage and host the next ANATS National Conference here in Melbourne July 7th-9th of 2025. Yes, July **2025** rather than what might be expected of a bi-annual event. Due to the initiatives of **Linda Barcan** The University of Melbourne has agreed to be a conference partner and has contributed a venue - namely the impressive Ian Potter Conservatorium of Music in Southbank.

ANATS National has already established a 2025 Conference Committee- and we have (albeit two years out) already made inroads into the planning, the use of the venue and even run mock lectures onsite to mock online viewers. I hope all our Chapter members will be excited by the prospect of this presently un-themed conference being so close to home.

MISSION/ CHALLENGES

Our 3 particular challenges remain-

1. gaining enough feedback responses to have quality information about what our current membership are interested in and desire for professional developments. (Jokingly - so that the committee avoids creating events that only the committee wants)
2. Thinking beyond our existing members to create useful events and services and reaching out to the many voice teachers in Victoria who are not members.
3. To professionally and responsibly represent the best interests of all singing teachers to other music, cultural and education organisations and to the wider community.

THANKS

We are a society of volunteering teachers enacting our support of other teachers. Every ANATS project relies on the constant energy and the focus of a project event leader and supportive team who determine much of the critical and financial success as they insure the smooth running of the event. Each project team finds the best path, determines the mission statement and the process for marketing, budgeting and the logistics for the event. Then with the ongoing support of our treasurer **Lucas de Jong** in terms of contracts and ticketing together from the reach of images and marketing from the Victoria's new and ever alert digital officer **Freya Meredith Hanson**, we attempt to engage with members and also non-members in the wider profession.

We are in a visual era so very attractive and inviting website and social media imaging are vital components of our outreach. Again we thank **Nikol McKail** in 2022 and now **Freya** for the artistic skills and marketing ideas they donate to our Chapter.

Freya's work is constantly viewed as both Victoria's digital and marketing officer-and as the recently appointed national administrative assistant.

Great thanks are due to our Chapter Committee in their service to ANATS this year. We have warmly welcomed and appreciated the fresh ideas during these twelve months of three seconded members who participated in the Committee meetings- namely new members **Drew Downing**, and **Lisa Maxwell-Cripps** and also long-time member **Joanne Carroll**. Our diligent Chapter Committee consists of **Dr Julia Nafisi**, **Catrina Seiffert**, **John Lander**, **Freya Meredith Hansen**, with secretary **Blanka West**, and our treasurer of a treasurer **Lucas de Jong**.

For a newbie to this role I must thank ever wise vice-president **Wendy Todd** and the multiple hats wearing committee member and national President **Linda Barcan** who is an eternally patient and constant source of supportive counsel and experience.

Our Chapter also owes great thanks to **Linda Barcan**, **Wendy Todd** and **Dr Julia Nafisi** for also being our state chapter representatives / councillors on the Board of ANATS National. I Especially note our thanks to Julia as she soon will conclude her cyclic term as one of our representatives.

Given the volunteer state of this organisation it is with thanks to the dedication and focus of the National Council and the state Chapter Committees like ours that ANATS generally appears to be such a professional organisation.




CURTIS BAYLISS (he / him)

VIC President

Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing

 vic.president@anats.org.au

 anats.org.au

 +61 414 812 089

 PO Box 465, Red Hill QLD 4059 Australia



Connect, support & network with
Teachers of Singing across Victoria

Workshops | Events | Scholarships | Training | Resources | Mentoring | Information

www.anats.org.au

