President’s Report 2023

This time last year, I was called away on family business and missed the BRAG AGM. When I returned, I discovered that my continuing role as Vice President meant that, with nobody else willing to put their hand up as President, the role fell to me!

I’d therefore like to start by thanking my fellow committee members for all their hard work over the last twelve months. We’ve been able to divide the workload amongst ourselves, continue all our usual activities and start some new ones! Thanks also go to our helpers for assistance they’ve provided over the year, all of whom are members; and it’s membership that keeps our organisation strong and purposeful, and without our members the organisation wouldn’t exist. And lastly thanks to our regular hirers, as they help us to be able to continue our activities, and keep people coming into the centre regularly. We’ve had a number of new hirers this year, both one-off and weekly, and we hope they’ve felt very welcome. I’d like to remind everyone that their membership means (amongst other things) that they can hire space at the Arts Centre for any reason, at a reduced fee, and really encourage artists to consider hiring the space for a pop-up exhibition.

We’ve really enjoyed having Rose Marin and the team from Southern Tablelands Arts holding their Mobile Office here at the Arts Centre each month. It’s been wonderful to have STARTS here meeting local artists and providing support to the arts in the Southern Tablelands.

It’s tempting to assume that rural arts organisations focus solely on the visual arts, but we are always on the lookout for opportunities to support other arts. Therefore, my thanks go to William for getting the Open Mic nights (and associated pop-up restaurants!) up and running, with help from committee members and especially Nick and Steve who’ve really gone the extra step. We’re excited that as time goes on, we’re increasingly able to provide more support to the performing (and literary, not to mention culinary!) arts in Braidwood. Next year we really look forward to having more opportunities to include literary and performing arts in our schedule. It’s been exciting this year to have several book launches happen at the Arts Centre, and always welcome more!

In glad news about the Arts Centre building, we’re very pleased to announce that we’ve got the huge job of exterior painting of the building planned, and this will be happening very soon. And some time next year we can begin installation of our new gallery lighting system, which will not only be great for exhibitions of all kinds, but will also provide much more flexible and suitable lighting for other events.

For a number of years, the BRAG committee has seen a large part of its role as providing economic opportunity, not only to participating artists in exhibitions, but also to other local people. This includes commercial hirers of course, but also tradespeople and providers of other goods and services. We’re extremely pleased that the planned building improvements will be carried out by local people to keep money flowing in our community. We’ve also made a decision to begin using the industry standards of payment to our dear life models who work hard for us once a month during life drawing group, and to facilitators at workshops organised by BRAG. And we’ve recently been able to hire a very part-time but very valued admin assistant – welcome, Max! It can be difficult for non-profit organisations to keep their heads above water at times, but due to hard work on the part of

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present and previous committee members, we’ve been able to make offerings to the community that have benefited our bottom line and we are then able to pay that forward to others, and everyone benefits.

Some of our current committee members are leaving, so I’d like to thank Michelle, Helen and Maggie for their service to BRAG. Michelle’s not able to continue her role as Secretary, and will be greatly missed – it was wonderful to have a secretary again after going without for a few years, and the member survey with associated task development, conducted by Michelle, was a huge task that has been a big help in moving the organisation forward. Helen, during her time as treasurer has been able to streamline the job somewhat to make it easier for others that follow, to help the organisation run more smoothly and take some of the load off others, and has been a great source of ideas and renewal. We are a little envious of Braidwood Clean Energy who will now have her all to themselves.

Lastly, our very special thanks go to Maggie, who is leaving us after many years on the committee, having held multiple roles within the organisation and done them all with such aplomb. Maggie was kind enough to stay on the committee for one more year but the time has come for her to move on. We’ll miss her a lot and I’d like to personally thank her very much for the wise counsel, practical assistance, input and support she’s always provided to me and her fellow committee members.

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