



FRIENDS OF THE ACADEMY INC.

## CHAIR REPORT 2021

I, like many others, felt that Covid was a passing danger and that our doctors and scientists would resolve and overcome the virus with some magic vaccine. How wrong I was! Who would have thought that the live performance landscape would have been so negatively affected by Covid? The presence of Covid with all its restrictions, masks, social distancing, performance cancellations, general uncertainty and disruption is now the new “normal”.

The presence of Covid in our community has tested the Friends like many other groups but supporting WAAPA students was and still is our focus. We've managed to continue without any disruption to our support. Of course, that's meant adjustments in the way we operate. Committee meetings are no longer face-to-face but electronically via Zoom. The Committee has adjusted to the medium and is working as well as in the past. Our main concern was that many students could not complete interstate and overseas secondments.

As a direct result of Covid, ECU has experienced a reduced income. In turn, the diminishing income for the university led to the permanent withdrawal of \$30,000 in annual funding to the Friends. That decision was a significant blow to our finances, planning and provision of financial support to WAAPA students. The Committee feels that our viability rests solely with keeping our existing members while adding new and younger members.

We realise that our membership is concentrated mainly in the western suburbs and aged sixty years or more.

Consequently, our focus needs to include a much wider audience and younger demographic. That's where we need to concentrate and build. Although we rarely ask for much assistance, we certainly need our existing members to proactively promote Friends membership to their family and friends.

This is the time for all members to give something in return for the discounted tickets, exclusive access to performances and artists unavailable to the general public. In essence, we need your help!

Despite that withdrawal of funding, the Committee decided to donate a grant of \$20,000 to WAAPA to sponsor the Hansel & Gretel opera in early September 2022. As a result of that grant, we've negotiated a one-off 'dress rehearsal performance' for members. This is the first time such an event has happened at WAAPA, and we're hoping for a sell-out audience and tangible proof that the Friends can make a difference.

To replace our complimentary suppers, and with the support of WAAPA, the Friends took the initiative to provide after performance Q & A's six times a year. An item that's proved to be extremely popular with audiences. The format is for students, staff and Directors to spend time talking about the show to give insights into the performance just experienced and to take questions from the audience. So, don't rush off after the show! Stay around for the Q & A's after the Friends Events that are advertised in the WAAPA Program.

In addition, the increasing competitiveness of other not-for-profit organisations makes our aim even more difficult. We're all chasing the same dollars. However, we have built some excellent springboards for future growth, and whilst there is still work to do, particularly in and around the metropolitan area of Perth, I am delighted with our performance so far. We have a distinct advantage. The Friends have the solid backing of ECU, a history of nearly 40 years of student support, a partnership with a world-renowned institution and loyal members that will soon move to an iconic location.

The WAAPA move to the CBD in 2025 will inevitably bring new challenges for the Friends but simultaneously offer opportunities to increase membership to the whole of Perth and surrounds. New audiences will discover the fresh and exuberant performances provided by a centre of excellence and young, vibrant Arts performers. I believe the value of students at WAAPA will not be diminished but increased.

While the present outlook may look gloomy, I feel that the future will be a time of unparalleled growth. It's up to all of us to make the most of that opportunity.

**Kevin Button**

Chair

Friends of the Academy Inc.





# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 MINUTES

## 1. WELCOME:

The meeting commenced at 4.35 pm, via Zoom.

## 2. ATTENDANCE LIST:

Twenty (20) financial Members attended the Zoom meeting.

## 3. APOLOGIES:

Twelve (12) apologies were received.

## 4. PROXY VOTES:

Nil.

## 5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE FoA AGM OF 3 OCTOBER 2021:

Ms Jacqui Macliver moved that the Minutes be accepted. Seconded Ms Carol Schembri. Carried by a show of hands.

## 6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

Nil.

## 7. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Available on request.

## 8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2021/22:

The Chair thanked the Committee for the past year's contribution and those who have given their time to assist, including Ms Susie Lim, Mr Saxon Neate, Ms Jessica Hodges and Ms Judy Lukowiak.

There were two Committee members who retired during the year. Mr Warren Mitchell (Treasurer) and Ms Virginia Withers (General Committee). Thanks were extended to both. Mr Mitchell introduced a new accounting system which resulted in a substantially discounted auditing fee. Ms Withers, employed by ECU was the conduit for the Friends between the University and WAAPA. She has since resigned from ECU and the committee and taken up a new position with Black Swan Theatre as Development Manager.

The Chair handed over to Ms Susie Lim to conduct the election of the Committee. The three new nominees are Ms Jacqui Macliver, (General Committee), nominated by K Button, formerly from the WA Teachers Union, Ms Cassey Smith (Treasurer), nominated by K Button, a lawyer with trust accounting experience and Ms Sue Scrutton, (General Committee), nominated by K Button, a former Marketing Manager at WAAPA.

The following Committee members are reapplying:

Mr Kevin Button, Chair,  
nominated by A Bromfield

Ms Angela Bromfield, Secretary,  
nominated by K Button

Ms Donna McFetridge, Grants Administrator nominated by K Button

Ms Lyn Cuthbert, Tours Co-ordinator  
nominated by K Button

Ms Tanya Tsirigotis, General Committee  
nominated by K Button

All of the above eight (8) nominees were elected by a unanimous show of hands.

## **9. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR FOR 2022:**

Shreeve & Carslake were nominated by Ms Donna McFetridge. Seconded by Ms Irene Froyland.

## **10. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

During the meeting various videos, supplied by WAAPA, were played for the attendees. The Chair gave a general overview regarding the topics listed below.

### ***Finance:***

- ECU withdrew \$28K annual funding to the Friends;
- Student numbers are similar to 2021;
- Currently forecasting student Grant expenditure of approximately \$60K;
- The Friends have gifted to WAAPA \$20K for mounting the opera (Hansel and Gretel) in 2022;
- Investments with Beyond Bank and Bellwether.

### ***Membership:***

- Membership numbers remain static. Ideally a 10% increase would enable funding to advantage more students;
- Use of advertorials in local newspapers;
- We have an aging membership and need to attract younger members. This has proven to be a perennial dilemma;
- All current members need to actively promote the Friends and assist in increasing the membership;
- Friends' supper functions are currently on hold due to Covid;
- Post-performance Q&A's at each of the six Friends' Functions have proven to be extremely well received. Performances advertised in the WAAPA Program.

### ***Academy Tours:***

- Four tours are available per year each with twenty guests. A sum of \$3,800 is raised annually. Thanks to Ms Lyn Cuthbert and all her helpers for arranging the tours and providing morning tea. Currently maintaining a waiting list for 2023.

### ***Committee performance:***

- The Committee meets each month via Zoom;
- Distributes around 120 Grants to the approximate value of \$60K;
- Provide Aboriginal Performance with an annual grant of \$3,200 per year; to assist with a production and including Coles cards of \$2K for incidental needs;
- Organises four Tours of the Academy and raises \$3,800;
- Conducted an online Survey of lapsed members.

### ***Website:***

- The Friends Web Page carries news and videos advertising WAAPA productions;
- Memberships and renewals are available on line;
- Applications for Student Grants;
- Bookings for WAAPA productions;
- Bookings for WAAPA Tours;
- Contact Us
- Last minute changes to the WAAPA Program

**Questions:**

- **Q: Ms A Bromfield extended a vote of thanks to both Ms Carol Schembri and Ms Sylvia Horner for their assistance with the morning teas for the Tours.**

A: The Chair extended a general vote of thanks to all those ex-committee members and friends who have provided invaluable assistance when requested.

- **Q: Ms Carol Schembri inquired if a Treasurer's Report and Auditors Report were available.**

A: The Chair advised if any member requires a copy please ask and it will be forwarded. Not included due to electronic issues.

- **Q: Mr Adrian de Graaf asked why hard copy of Programs were not mailed to members in 2022.**

A: WAAPA discontinued a general mail-out of hard copies in order to reduce costs. The Program is available online to anyone and can be updated throughout the year. Hard copies are available upon request to WAAPA.

- **Q: With any major changes could the Friends be involved in the discussion?**

A: No, the Friends are not part of WAAPA and as such are not generally included in day-to-day financial discussions or program changes unless they directly impact on the Friends.

- **Q and Comments to the Meeting from Ms Donna McFetridge, FoA Committee Member: It might be helpful to give feedback of the involvement of the Friends in the move to the city. The committee is aware of the excitement and concerns and as soon as we know about changes will that information be passed on to all members?**

A: Not much information up to now as it is still in the planning stage; construction has not begun; site chosen at Yagan Square. Email from WAAPA about progress will be sent to K Button and that will be forwarded to the membership. It's worth noting that about 50% of the ticket sales are purchased by the Friends. That figure will probably remain the same when WAAPA transfers to the city. Perhaps the number of matinees will be increased as there are concerns by some members about night travel to the city.

**11. NEXT AGM DATE TO BE FIXED:**

A date in March 2023 will be advised at a future time. As there was no further business the meeting closed at 5.08 pm



# LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR COMMITTEE POSITIONS, 2022

## **KEVIN BUTTON: CHAIR**

Although I've been the Chair of the Friends Committee for several years, the youthful enthusiasm and talent of WAAPA's students make any effort worthwhile.

My commitment is as strong as ever to our membership and to supporting WAAPA students and I enjoy the role.

We're about to enter an exciting time with changes at ECU and WAAPA's intended move to the Perth CBD. As a result, the next few years will bring new challenges for our organisation moving forward into our next development phase.

I believe that I have the experience for our immediate future and offer myself for re-election as Chair of the Friends, knowing full well that our committee is more than capable and up for the challenge.

## **CASSEY SMITH: TREASURER**

I enjoy my role on the committee and the work we do for WAAPA and its students.

## **ANGELA BROMFIELD: SECRETARY**

Having been on the Committee for a number of years and having held the position of Secretary, I am impressed by the passion and good will that the committee demonstrates towards the well-being of the students, particularly with financial assistance that we may give them on behalf of the Friends. With the pending relocation of WAAPA to the city the committee will oversee and establish a footprint for the Friends in the new environment and being a part of that move and vision is a challenge and one that I would appreciate being a part of.

## **DONNA MCFETRIDGE: GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR**

I am nominating for election to the Committee as I believe the Committee has a strong commitment to supporting students at WAAPA. I am very interested in the Arts and wish to offer what support I can to people who pursue this career path for the benefit of all. The FOA has a proud tradition of encouraging membership to support emerging artists and those entering this demanding industry. I would like to help in this small way.

## **LYN CUTHBERT: TOURS COORDINATOR**

I have been a passionate supporter of the students at WAAPA and would like to continue to

help for as long as I am able.

Jacqui Macliver: General Committee

I am already on the Committee and would like to serve another term.

## **SUE SCRUTTON: GENERAL COMMITTEE**

I hope to build on the knowledge I have gained since joining the Friends of the Academy committee and add to my usefulness to the Chair, the committee and WAAPA students.

## **TANYA TSIRIGOTIS: GENERAL COMMITTEE**

For 15 years I have been a FOA committee member and still enjoy helping the students, as much as we can, to achieve their goals. I would appreciate being on the Committee as long as I am needed.