



FRIENDS OF THE ACADEMY INC.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

Although I've been chairman of the Friends for some years, there hasn't been a tedious or straightforward year yet. Every year has its own set of unique circumstances and areas that present new difficulties, and solving them is what makes it worthwhile!

Our Committee has functioned well during the past year and has coped with the resignation of four members at various times. I want to take this opportunity to thank Linley Harris, Cassey Smith, Sue Scrutton, and Ron Magerl for their participation as committee members during the year. In particular, Ron stepped in at a crucial point and put our accounts in order at the expense of his own study time!

The loss of all their contribution created a significant challenge in providing student grants to 85 graduating WAAPA students at the end of the year.

Consequently, we have elected two new members to our Committee at the recent AGM to compensate for their loss. The two new members are Ms. Di Collins, who has considerable experience with fundraising, and Mr. Richard Hyde, a scriptwriter/reviewer. Each new appointee will bring a different set of skills and expertise to our group, and we hope to utilise their knowledge in the most beneficial ways.

When WAAPA moves to the CBD in 2025/26, there will be an even more significant and additional challenge. Our presence at Mt Lawley is fast drawing to a close.

The Friend's method of operation will inevitably change. Our

goals will still be to support WAAPA students but with an even greater demand for our resources because there'll be a dramatic increase in the number of students but much less opportunity to fundraise on campus.

The Association must find different ways to raise funds at different locations off-campus to meet the increasing need for funds. The Committee is currently planning for such events, and more details will be released within a few months.

I'm sad to say that, in contrast to an increase in student numbers, there will be an anticipated decrease in membership. The decrease will occur because older members living around Mt Lawley have made it clear that they won't travel to Perth City to attend performances. This is a disappointing outcome when a superior facility will dramatically enhance the WAAPA experience.

Therefore, capturing people's attention and increasing membership will be at the forefront of our efforts for the next two years. We intend to advertise and find new methods of gaining members, and the Committee is currently addressing the issue.

As the time draws closer for WAAPA's move to the CBD, we must have another update on progress and a possible completion date for members.

The structural elements of the building are close to their final height, and the site bounded by Roe, Wellington, and William

streets is quite imposing. Once completed, it will become a landmark within the city, something of which WAAPA and the City of Perth can be rightly proud.

I am arranging a free seminar for Friends members and friends sometime in June 2024 to keep them informed of the new building's progress in the CBD. My idea is to hold these events at regular intervals as the new building's opening draws closer — a Friends exclusive, if you like.

As most members would know, finance has been our most significant challenge for the past several years. Still, to address this, we've embarked upon registering the Friends of the Academy as a recognised Charity. This status recognition is almost complete and is currently in the first approval phase with the Western Australian Government. All is going well, and if successful, we should be able to offer donors tax-deductible benefits for their donations to the Friends of the Academy by June 2024.

However, given the above, I'm confident that the Committee can rise to the challenge and continue supporting WAAPA students just as we have for the past forty years. I hope that you will join us in this life-enhancing endeavour!

Kevin Button

Chair

Friends of the Academy Inc.

