

AGM 29 September 2016

President's Report

The Friends of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery continued to enjoy solid growth, and we are seeing a surge in new members, which is very pleasing.

Our financial position is also solid. In the past year we were able to donate \$15,000 to TMAG for Pattern Play, and \$4000 for TMAG to purchase a large screen for audiovisual presentations in the Central Gallery. We also donate funds to TMAG to cover the cost of the staff rostered to assist when we hold events outside normal museum hours.

Events

We held twelve functions over the year, some onsite with TMAG speakers including Zoe Rimmer, Ian Terry, Andy Baird, Scott Carlin, Jane Stewart and Mary Knights. At other events built around TMAG exhibitions we brought in speakers: Alison Alexander spoke about the Panoramas exhibition, Nicola Goc about Snapshot Photography and Migrant Women, and Rod Seppelt about Where Science Meets Art. We also held functions further afield: Theatre Royal, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and Detached Cultural Organisation. In addition to our regular welcomes for new members, we also held an Old Members' function, celebrating those who joined in the first years of our existence (from 1982), and remain with us still. In the months since TMAG launched *Tempest*, we have held four Tempest Talks on extreme weather, shipwrecks, and the art of *Tempest*. In October we will hold the final Tempest Talk, with Robert Jarman to speak about the staging of Shakespeare's play here at TMAG, in Prospero's Library.

Communications

Through our member database/website we are now able to accept memberships, renewals, donations, event bookings and payments online via credit card or PayPal. The TMAG Shop is also able to accept payment for memberships, renewals and donations by card or cash. This is a big improvement on payment by cheque only just a few years ago, an inconvenience that put off many potential members.

We have recently conducted a second member survey. The first survey was done in 2012, in the leadup to the TMAG redevelopment. At that stage we were gauging members' interest in electronic communications, and we were surprised at that point to find that some 80% of members had access to the internet. This encouraged us to push forward with plans to set up our own website and regular communications by email. We continue to send invitations and renewals by mail to around 100 members, but the savings in postage and time as a result of using email are of great benefit to us as an organisation. From this most recent survey we find that around 50% of members are now visiting our website, and nearly 60% are making payment for renewals, donations and events electronically.

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New directions

Spurred on by Pattern Play and the aims of the TMAG Strategic Plan, we have conducted a number of child-friendly events this year. We see this as an opportunity for people to bring their children or grandchildren to TMAG to share their interests together. As it isn't an area that we have explored in the past, we expect this will take some time to develop, but we are encouraged by an increasing number of family memberships where children are included.

The new committee will soon start planning for the next twelve months, and we will be looking at providing a wider variety of event times and formats to cater for those who can't attend on weekday evenings.

Support for TMAG

We have enjoyed a close working relationship with TMAG through the director, Janet Carding, and a wide range of curators and staff, all of them very supportive towards us. One of Janet's initiatives has been to foster closer links between the Friends, the Foundation and the TMAGgots. We need to work together to determine how each organisation can be of most help to TMAG. The results of our survey showed very clearly that our members' main motivation in joining the Friends is to show support for TMAG as a cultural and scientific institution, followed closely by the opportunity to attend events and hear from expert speakers. We therefore feel that this is the main contribution that the Friends can make.

Changes to the rules for charities

This has been discussed in the previous agenda item. On behalf of the Friends, I would like to express my thanks to Deloitte, who have audited our books free of charge for many years, and have only withdrawn their offer because it is no longer a legal requirement.

Committee

We have two new faces who have nominated to join the Friends committee: Peter Black and Jane Wilcox. They will step into the shoes of the members who are stepping down: Digby Longhurst, Andrew Ross and Suzy Cooper. I would like to thank them for their service. Digby has contributed to every aspect of the committee's work over many years, including the thankless task of taking the minutes at our meetings, where everyone is talking at once. Andrew Ross has been the brains behind getting our website and electronic communications up and running: we couldn't have done it without him. Suzy Cooper has been a breath of fresh air and fresh ideas, and I hope she will continue to challenge us into the future.

To them, and to the continuing committee members, Jean Boughey, David Coleman, Noel Harper, John Sexton, Chris Thomas, Matt Spencer and Gabrielle Balon, I thank you for making my year as President a memorable one.

JULIE HAWKINS