



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



ROYAL
SOUTH
STREET
SOCIETY



Overview

The Royal South Street Society conducts Australia's oldest and longest running Eisteddfod, first established in 1891. Since then, over one million aspiring performing artists have had the opportunity to shine on the Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod stage. Untold thousands of performing artists have left a little piece of their heart in Ballarat.



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY



The Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod currently runs throughout June to October each year. The annual Eisteddfod includes 11 theatrical disciplines providing some 40,000+ on-stage performance opportunities for artists from all over Australia, conducted at quality venues throughout the Ballarat region.

The Royal South Street Society is a not-for-profit organisation overseen by a volunteer Board, and a small office team, assisted by up to 200 volunteers as Discipline Chairs, committee members and event roles. We are grateful for the additional funding from generous sponsors, businesses, local and state government, individuals and families, committees, and volunteers.

www.royalsouthstreet.com

Our Vision

To conduct Australia's premier Eisteddfod, promoting and encouraging participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts.



Our Values

1

We are welcoming, professional and respectful.

2

We provide opportunities for performers to develop and flourish.

3

We are inclusive and embrace diversity.

4

We act with honesty and integrity.

5

We are committed to excellence.

2023 Board Directors



Lindsay Eaton

Board Chair



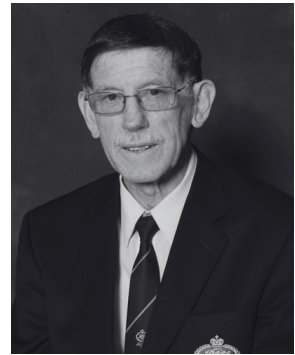
Andrea Brown

Deputy Chair
Secretary



Danielle Coltman

Treasurer



Ron Harrington

OAM



Adam Miller



Virginia Wise

Resignations or retirement/non-standing from the Board of Directors before, on or after the 2022 AGM

- Maree Nolan
- Peter Zala (non-standing)
- Kallista Kaval (non-standing)
- Jessica Godfrey
- Sally Stevens
- Michelle Kerr

Life Members

Dr. A.M Cole
Mrs. B. Dunlop
Mr. R. Harrington O.A.M
Mrs. D. Harrington
Mr. L. Harvey
Mrs. L. Harvey
Mr. R. Matthews
Mr. B. McInnis
Mr P. Zala



Patrons

Patron in Chief

Her Excellency Professor the
Honourable Margaret Gardner, AC
Governor of Victoria

Honorary Patrons

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, A.C., D.B.E.,
O.N.Z.

Lady Primrose Potter, A.C.

Board Chair Report

Lindsay Eaton

As my first year both on the Board of Management for Royal South Street Society (RSSS) and Chair of the Board, 2023 has certainly had its challenges.

Firstly, the financial aspect inheriting a significant deficit from 2022 following the terrible impact from COVID years. We worked hard to balance the operational needs of our wonderful eisteddfod against limiting our general expenditure until we were confident with the entries to our program that underpinned our likely financial stability.

Our second and probably more important hurdle was the limited staffing situation with only Louise Brooks on deck at the start of the year, effectively doing everything.... From entries, volunteer support and assistance, sponsorship, programming and many other things. She definitely single-handedly enabled our program to progress to a solid outcome. I was able to provide some assistance as temporary volunteer business / support manager, as and when, I had availability.

While we acknowledge not everything was able to be completed exactly how we would have liked, a really good eisteddfod program was created and run.

It was during the year that we firstly welcomed Carolyn Bennett to support the Events Co-Ordination to our team and later in the year Judy-Ann Quilliam as Business and Marketing Manager.

At a Board level, we identified very early that there was a significant amount of work required to be done to start the rebuild of the Eisteddfod program and business.

We implemented fortnightly Board meetings to enable Board members to focus on a number of items at each meeting to enable better and more timely decision making to take place. This proved positive and enabled us to have a focused approach at meetings.

I would like to thank all members of our team including all staff, Board colleagues, and very importantly our Discipline Chairs and their respective committees. The work put in by you all, your experience and expertise that you all regularly show is quite amazing and it is this level of commitment that ensures RSSS not only survives but thrives now and into the future.

Our whole focus as an organisation is to create RSSS Ballarat Eisteddfod into the leading eisteddfod in Australia. It's about providing the opportunity for our children and other performers the chance to do their "thing" on a stage and where possible a great supporting audience.

As we progress into the 2024 season, we have some exciting activities happening including 100 years of Calisthenics Graceful Solo, 100 years of Herald Sun Aria and a great program put together by our dedicated team. Much work is being done to refocus parts of our program to meet the current needs of our performers and to talk and listen to schools and teachers generally, to uncover positive opportunities to move forward as an organisation.

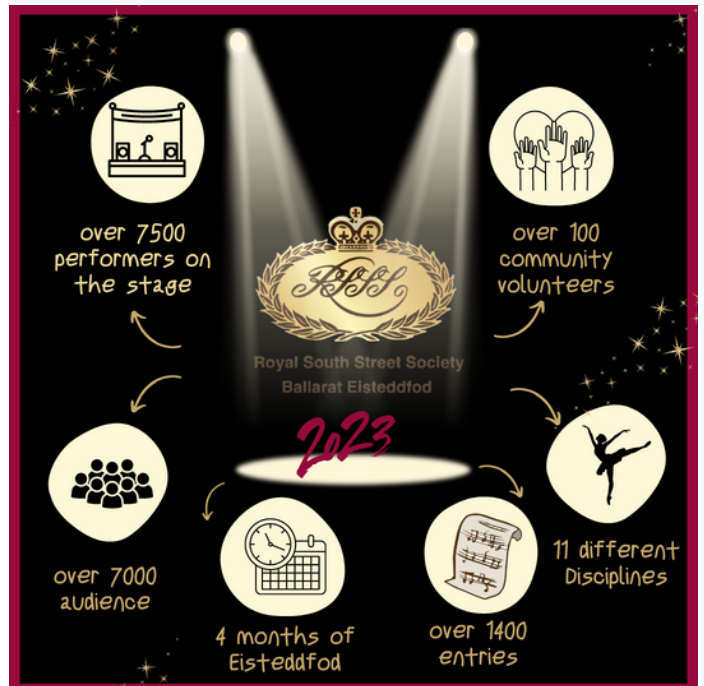
Our vibrant staffing team, and our new website, together with a more focused marketing and awareness program will be aiming to expand our reach further into the community to support our business and future growth.





2023 Performance Highlights

Shining a spotlight on the 2023 Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod...over 7500 individual performers on the stage, 11 different performing arts disciplines, 4 months of Eisteddfod events, over 100 community volunteers and our special thanks to our many sponsors, donors, adjudicators, schools, teachers, parents, supporters and suppliers who make the Eisteddfod all that it is.



Our Largest Discipline

Our spectacular Australian Calisthenics Competition continues to be our largest discipline. The Peace & Quiet Day Spa Graceful Solo Champion was Elyse Pavan (SA). The Opening Night Supplies Calisthenics Solo Champion was Louisa Humphrey (WA). The Ron & Dawn Harrington Overall Aggregate was awarded to the calisthenics team with the highest overall points for the competition, Larinda Calisthenics College.





ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY
BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD

PREMIER PIANO EISTEDDFOD

The Margaret Schofield Memorial Prize
For a performance of the music of Chopin
- Rachel Shindang

The Junior Chopin Solo
- Jiayi Angela Yin



Some of our favourite Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod performances were from one of our most recent discipline additions - The UFS All Abilities Performing Arts. And what an extravaganza it was this year! Every performance a celebration of joy and participation, with all performers receiving a special certificate and ribbon. We loved that the certificate presented to all performers was designed by the creative students themselves. Pure performance gold of the greatest kind!

New Vocal Crossover Championship

The new Crossover Championship is the ultimate challenge to prepare singers for a life in the performance industry, with the winner receiving a \$1000 first prize - we are grateful for sponsorship of this section by Hans Henkell. All competitors must sing a music theatre piece and an operatic aria, and adjudication is based on charisma, vocal proficiency and the ability to show vocal contrast between two very different styles.

The inaugural winner of the 16 years and over Crossover Championship was Olive Cullen.



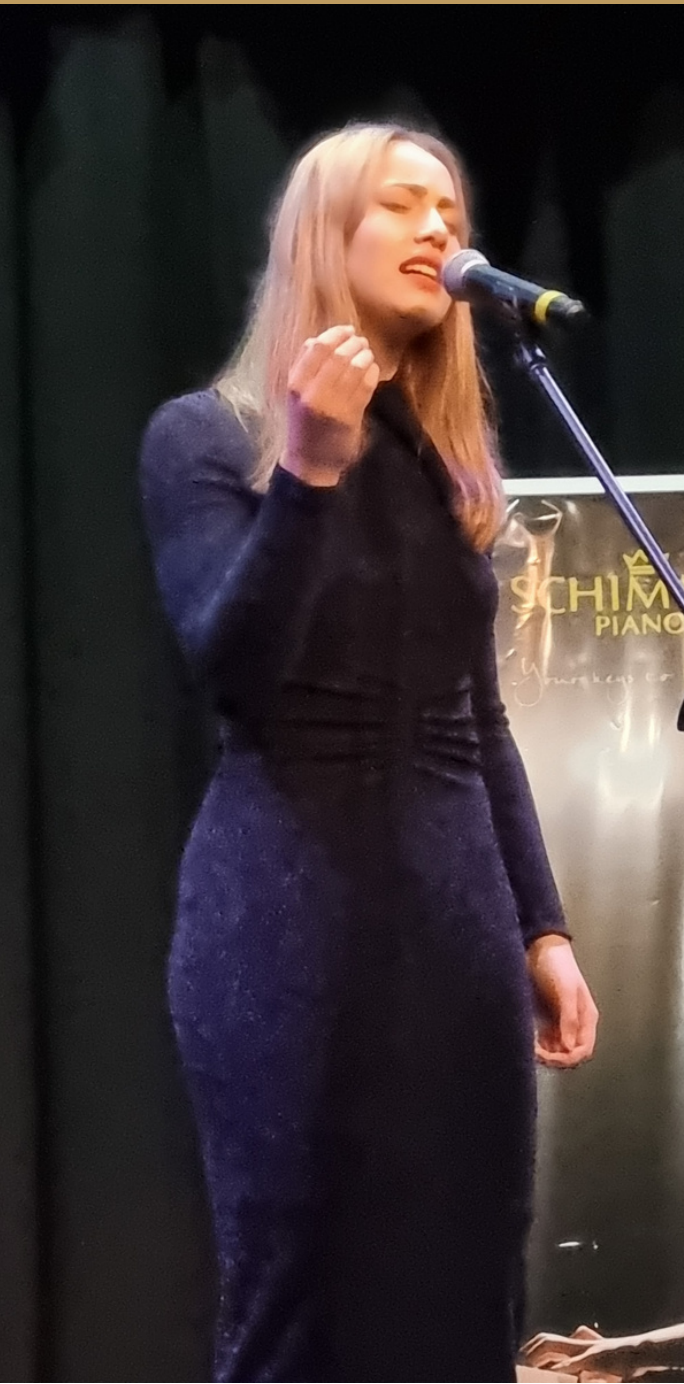
Staff

Staff as at 31/12/2023

- Louise Brooks - Eisteddfod Coordinator (appointed March 2023)
- Carolyn Bennett - Eisteddfod Development and Volunteer Coordinator (appointed June 2023)
- Judy-Ann Quilliam - Business and Marketing Manager (appointed October 2023)

Staff in 2023

- Tennille McLauchlan
- Brooke Stevenson



Discipline Committees

- Debating Committee - Loretta Kaval (Discipline Chair)
- All Abilities Performing Arts – Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair), Akasha Temple-Mathews, Amy Jeffreys, April Welfare, Jessica Bond
- Speech & Drama – Ailsa Du Bois (Discipline Chair), Mika Wallace, Penny Powell, Alexandra Meerbach, Rachael Shelton
- Calisthenics – Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair), Lexie Brown, Wendy Riding, Jo Hocking, Annette Lawson
- Celebrating Chopin – Peter Zala (Discipline Chair)
- Choral – Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair)
- Dance – Danielle Coltman & Jessica Godfrey (Discipline Co-Chairs), Nicki Ballinger, Sandra Fishwick, Cathy Scrivener
- Festival of Schools Instrumental Music – Mark Witham (Discipline Chair), Peter Zala, Cassandra Hiscock, Katrina Bird, Lyn Schuller, Andrew Power, Doug McGregor, Wade Cameron, Dennis Stevenson, Frank Dyer, Janice Lynn
- Aria – Peter Zala (Discipline Chair), Carolyn Bennett
- Pianoforte – Peter Zala, Lauren Knight (Discipline Co-Chairs)
- Vocal – Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair), Jason Wasley

Debating Report

Loretta Kaval (Discipline Chair)

2023 brought a change in personnel with both previous Co-Discipline Chairs of Debating resigning. I had only been involved in Royal South Street Society (RSSS) Debating previously as a teacher, so the learning curve was extremely steep. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the RSSS office staff and Louise in particular for guiding my way through. I am also grateful to Chris Rickard who helped set up this year's competition and made sure we were on the right path.

With all that to be considered I feel very proud of the successful competition we held this year, but I am also aware of areas for future improvement.

Overall, we had good participation. Consistently students were well prepared and enthusiastic. At Year 5 & 6 level there were twenty teams entered from seven schools. Prior to the competition I was approached by one school for some help in "how to debate". I held a workshop at that school and afterwards sent some basic "how to" notes to all of the participating primary schools.

Interestingly all primary participants were state schools. I would like to encourage more Catholic and Independent schools to enter in future. At secondary school level the participants were mixed from Government, Catholic and Independent schools.

Our three adjudicators were all very competent on the day, completed their adjudications within timeframe, and were friendly and approachable to the students. However, there were some delays in sending back crits and prompt crits are needed for students to prepare for the finals, so it was disappointing that this was not carried out effectively – something to improve in the future.

As a follow up for 2024, I would like to suggest that we change the way adjudicators do crits. Previously, straight after a debate, both teams were addressed vocally, given some hints and the winning team announced. I would like us to consider that teams/ individuals are given a written response at this time as well, much as is done in Speech & Drama, but without the point scores. This means that adjudicators still have the ability to choose the finalists at each level, if necessary, splitting scores, but that students already have the follow up they need to proceed. Adjudicators would then be asked to timely (to be decided upon) announce the 4 finalists at each section. The whole process would flow much more easily.

In an attempt to keep the competition tight we made our daily timeline a bit too tight. This is a matter we can easily adjust in the future. Like other disciplines, we are also considering using MyStage in 2024 to help prevent overuse of paper.

We were very happy with the venue. Connor's Hall itself is appropriate and the seating works well. ACU staff go out of their way to be helpful and there is ample space for students to have lunch or wait.

I look back on the competition with happy relief and also with a great deal of gratitude to all the Debating Committee members, to sponsors and to the volunteers who helped make it successful.



All Abilities Performing Arts Report

Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair)

The All Abilities performance this year was wonderful and very different to previous year's competition.

It was decided that we would not conduct a standard competition with 1st, 2nd or 3rd places, instead, we gave each act a certificate of participation and some performances also received a small gift voucher for their outstanding work. These were 4 x \$50 vouchers for group performance and 4 x \$25 vouchers for individual performances. While the performers loved receiving them, the Adjudicator, Geoff, said it was extremely hard to decide who to give them to, and would prefer that we do not do this again.

Because the disability community often struggle financially, we decided to allow free entry to the performance extravaganza and requested a gold coin to come and watch. The money earned from the entry (\$88.00) is to be given to a local disability charity.

We also gave two gift vouchers in appreciation of two volunteers who were present for the whole two days, Liam and Joel, and two awards to Geoff Hassle and Maria for their outstanding work in the disability community.

The adjudicator loved being at our Royal South Street Society All Abilities Performing Arts Extravaganza and would love to come again in 2024.

We would love to thank the Special School Café for the amazing coffee and food served.

The Committee would also like to thank SLC for doing an amazing job setting a stage and taking care of the technical requirements for the duration of the event. I would personally like to thank Akasha and Amy who organised most of the events over the two days as I was unfortunately unwell for much of this year. Their support has been greatly appreciated.

Our two amazing volunteers, Yvonne and Stella were there for both days and shared that they absolutely love being part of this event.

I am looking forward to being more involved in 2024 to make this a bigger event. Thank you to the Royal South Street Society office staff for all their hard work in getting this event going this year.



Speech & Drama Report

Ailsa Du Bois (Discipline Chair)

Our Speech and Drama discipline went well this year, without any major hitches. It was a great performance opportunity for the participants. We provided flexibility to allow competitors to perform around other commitments and there was plenty of good feedback from competitors and parents. The Committee and volunteers worked hard to make it a friendly and flexible competition with a 'can-do' attitude.

There are a few things we could do in the future to improve this Discipline including possibly tweaking some of the improvisation topics, and to give some consideration to packaged entrance fees to reduce costs to competitors.

We would like to look at a few different spaces around town and test acoustics for venue for 2024 and would like an extra space for competitors to talk and de-stress.

We would love to see/source more sponsorship for this discipline in the future, perhaps businesses, organisations and individuals more aligned or links to Speech and Drama.

We will need a new Discipline Chair for 2024 and hope to invite a RSSS alumna who has been associated with the Speech and Drama discipline for many years, knows the Committee quite well, and would be a good fit.

To improve the event and adjudicator communications, the Committee should ensure they send the RSSS office staff a list of bump in props and requirements and a list of what is required from the adjudicator. This request for requirements should be sent out to adjudicator a month prior to the comp with a return date of a week prior.



Calisthenics Report

Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair)

2023 was a definite improvement on the previous year, but we know we can do even better.

We began our year with our solo auditions at Founders Theatre in June. Peace & Quiet Day Spa again sponsored the Graceful Solo section, and we welcomed Opening Night Supplies as our new sponsor of the Calisthenics Solo section. Approximately 50 entrants auditioned for each section, with finalists returning in October for two magnificent evenings of performances to 658 patrons. Congratulations to the winners of these prestigious sections - Louisa Humphrey from WA (Calisthenics Solo) and Elyse Pavan from SA (Graceful Solo).

October saw us run off our feet with 42 team competitions over 23 days – 314 sections, 1783 items performed and 3563 competitors – a significant increase on 2022 numbers. Entries to our Masters sections increased, and for the first time we offered Division 8 Juniors and Seniors competitions which were very well supported. The Ron & Dawn Harrington Trophy, awarded to the club with the highest number of aggregate points across all sections was won by Larinda Calisthenics Club.

We used the MyStage software for entries and eisteddfod management and through the use of 'live' tablets communication was made easy. This year we uploaded individual competition programmes to our website for patrons to download themselves. This proved popular with our audiences and our post-comp survey revealed an overwhelming support for this to continue. The downside of this is that our guidebook sales were significantly reduced, and we will need to print these to order next year.

Our biggest challenge again was the lack of volunteers, and we will need to find a more sustainable solution for the future. We had a few people showing up for many shifts, whereas what we need is many people showing up for only a few shifts. We had a desperate need for backstage volunteers this year, and we may need to ask competing clubs to assist if we are unable to source them from our volunteer base or local clubs. To those who did help, we are truly grateful for the time you gave, and the effort you made to get to Founders Hall on so many occasions.

Her Majesty's Theatre is an enormous incentive and drawback for the calisthenics community; it's the reason they come to Ballarat, and its closure over the past few years has been detrimental. Despite our increasing entries and the positives of Founders Theatre, 87% of respondents to our survey indicated they would prefer to be at Her Majesty's Theatre in 2024, with reasons given as "history ... tradition ... nostalgia ... that's why we go to Ballarat ... Founders is just another theatre it's just not South Street without Her Maj" ...etc.

On the whole, our 2023 season ran smoothly, with great support from the office staff and our Board Chair. Many comments were made about our friendliness and the easy/smooth running of comps, how helpful the backstage team were, and how organised everything seemed to be, with no real hiccups. Special thanks to the team from Sound & Light Concepts for their unwavering support and assistance during the comps.

We are looking forward to our 2024 season, including celebrations for 100 years of Graceful Solos, and the return of some Championship teams, including several from interstate.

And finally, many, many thanks to my dedicated committee members Annette and Jo for all your support, to Tennille and Wendy for your brief involvement, and to Lexie for being my sounding board at home, for her encouragement when things got tough, and her assistance at the comps. Organising and running such a big discipline is a team effort, and what a team we are!

Bring on 2024.



Choral Report

Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair)

Our 2023 Choral competition at the Civic Hall attracted a good amount of entries overall.

With Her Majesty's Theatre still closed for renovations our venue for 2023 was the Civic Hall. We were somewhat concerned about acoustics and movement of groups in this venue and placed the choral risers on the ground to help with this. Also, in terms of stage height, it was decided better to keep the choral risers on the ground. We did have some feedback that the sound was getting somewhat swallowed up into the curtains.

The movement of choir groups between performances and sections at the venue ultimately worked well and we soon worked out it was best to wait on announcing until the choir had moved into the side room. We think we could re-look at the presentation of medals/prizes and streamline that system to save on time and movement.

A good piano is always very important for the accompanist for this section. Ideally if we continue to hire a quality piano, we could try to work dates in with the other sections that require a piano (Pianoforte, Vocal, Herald Sun Aria and Chopin) to minimize piano moving and tuning costs.

The participating schools like to receive lots of feedback, therefore it is best to ensure the selection and communication of this important information when choosing and advising adjudicators.

If Her Majesty's Theatre is unavailable in 2024, it might be better to consider Founders Hall as this venue will offer better warm up rooms and space than the Civic Hall. It is very important to provide a warmup space for our choirs and this was challenging at the Civic Hall. We do look forward to taking our Choral competition back to Her Majesty's Theatre when we can.

Some suggestions for future improvement would be to split larger sections and to ask choirs prior to the event whether they plan to come to watch other sessions so we can plan seating numbers better. We would encourage keeping the community choir section and re-encourage communities to enter, and perhaps offer some non-competitive, performance opportunities to encourage novice choirs and young performers to enter for feedback. Perhaps giving ribbons to all student participants.

We did have a clash with another RSSS discipline which impacts on volunteer numbers and staff, so ideally don't clash with other South Street disciplines.

We need to get Royal South Street Society Eisteddfod out into country/rural schools and promote this much more. This may require the Discipline Chair or staff to go to country schools and talk about it.



Dance Report

Danielle Coltman & Jessica Godfrey (Discipline Co-Chairs)

The 2023 Royal South Street Society Energetiks Dance Competition was a warm, welcoming and successful event overall with many happy competitors, parents and teachers.

Her Majesty's Theatre remained closed for renovations, so the Dance discipline was held at Founders Hall, Federation University. The competition commenced with the Troupes weekend on 16 September, followed by nine days of solo competitions.

The members of the Dance Committee changed significantly mid-way through the year which presented some challenges for the Dance discipline. However, the new Co-Chairs and Committee continued the existing planning, devoting significant hours prior to and during the competition to ensure its successful implementation. With the support of the RSSS office staff, everything was well organised by the commencement of the competition.

The Founders Hall venue worked surprisingly well. The parking was great, and the operations worked smoothly with SLC, however the change rooms were at times overcrowded and this would need to be considered in the future. The use of hire vehicles for adjudicators also worked well to ensure they were able to access the venue readily and not be reliant on volunteers for travel.

Our volunteer numbers assisting with the event increased post Covid, however some volunteers continue to be over extended, which is not ideal or sustainable in the future.

A formal feedback session was offered for teachers and feedback for future planning was shared directly to the Chairs and staff throughout the competition.

Season passes sold well and the increased offering of quality scholarships were well received by entrants, teachers and families. The Energetics Dance for Life section was moved to the end of the competition, which proved to be a positive culmination and promotion of all the competition offered. However, we were unable to offer prize money for troupes this year, which was not ideal, we would like to change this in the future through greater sponsorship.

In 2024, we would like to see the Dance competition run longer to prevent the late evening sections for younger ages. As part of our future planning and wider industry engagement, we would like to introduce more junior troupe sections, solos for juniors and an expansion of the Junior and Intermediate Championship sections. We will continue to offer scholarships to the Intermediate and Senior Championships; however, these will not always be awarded to the winner of the section as the scholarship providers wish to be involved in selecting the recipients.

We are excited for the reintroduction of the Nijinsky Prize, an all-male section for all ages and all genres to encourage the participation of males in the Eisteddfod, and the introduction of a Variation section to provide an opportunity to the many students who learn variations, and we have included a VCE/VET dance section, as we look to engage wider with secondary schools. It is expected that some of these will have minimal entrants in this first year but with an increase in communications, these sections will support an increase in entry numbers and school engagement.

Our 2024 Dance Prospectus was sent to all schools before the end of 2023 to ensure they have the relevant information as early as possible to assist with their planning. Entries will also be open for longer period to allow entrants and schools more time for financial planning and payment.

In 2024, to assist with preparation and planning, with thanks to Stardom and MyStage, all music will be required to be pre- uploaded by all troupes, and all DLP's to be used must also be provided by a date prior to the competition and are to be tested during plotting sessions.

We are looking forward to a fabulous 2024 and a potential return to Her Majesty's Theatre. Whilst there will be some changes to the day-to-day operation, we look forward to embracing the beauty that is Her Majesty's Theatre and capitalising on the central location with a push to seek sponsorship from the many local businesses who will benefit from increased patronage at this time.



Pianoforte & Chopin Report

Lauren Knight (Discipline Chair & Chopin Committee)

Our Pianoforte discipline was held at the Diocesan Centre in Lydiard Street and was conducted over three days (three mornings and afternoons and one evening session) from Monday 24 July to Wednesday 26 July 2023.

Our Adjudicator (Coady Green) gave constructive and useful feedback to competitors through individual reports. Overall his adjudication was efficient and he spoke briefly at each session about the performances and was impressed with the overall standard of the competitors and their high level of presentation. Bernie's Music Land again delivered and donated two pianos to be used by competitors. Bernie Capicchiano or his colleague Alan Cook spoke each day regarding these Schimmel pianos supplied for our competition. The front page of the Ballarat Courier featured a young pianist performing on the Schimmel grand piano on Tuesday 25th and another photo and article inside which was great to see.

Our 2023 entries increased by 15% from the previous year. Local competitors were well represented in most sections, largely students from two private schools. It would be great to actively encourage participation from students attending other schools, both primary and secondary. One Melton school boosted the numbers in the Junior and duet sections, which enabled these sections to run as scheduled after recent declining numbers. Day one saw the many younger students arriving to perform their short pieces attending with parents and grandparents, so the room was almost overflowing with more chairs needing to be set up quickly.

There was a particularly high standard from the 5 young participants in the Open piano sections (all from Melbourne) some of whom also played in the 14 and 16 and under sections. Building the numbers and range of participants in these sections is a priority, including encouraging University level students to participate in these Open sections. This year there was a new award in 14 years and under age group - the Jess Crowe Memorial Award Shield, which was awarded to a local student.

Overall, the discipline ran well with thanks to some amazing volunteers - and for me, it was interesting and enlightening to see the competition from a new perspective. Peter Zala and Louise Brooks were able to direct me through the operational aspects.

A priority for 2024 is to find a more suitable venue, the Ballarat Masonic Centre has been suggested. Thanks to the sponsorship of Bernie's Musicland for the provision of the pianos, accessibility and facilities are the most important aspects of this decision.

Looking towards 2024, in response to teacher feedback, we need to extend sections in each age group and add non-competitive sections for performance and critique only. Attention will be given to VCE/VET music sections next year - again with direct contact with schools and updated wording to reflect the current study design.

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Celebrating Chopin was held at Loreto College on the weekend of the 26 and 27 July 2023. I would like to acknowledge the generosity of Mr Andrew Cochrane AM and family for sponsoring the prizes for this prestigious event in memory of their mother, Margaret Schofield, for the 15th year. The incredibly high standard of the Chopin Junior and Senior competitors were on display for all to see, however audience numbers were down section for this special event. The weekend was particularly busy in the Ballarat music community with five other well attended concerts being held, making it difficult to have an audience for the Chopin performers. I suggest holding the Chopin section on the weekend prior to the Schimmel piano section next year.

Areas of Pianoforte and Chopin I would like to streamline - firstly by looking at what is already in place to follow in other disciplines - include a volunteer briefing prior to the start of the section to define roles; a competitor checklist particularly to help first time entrants have access to information about how the competition is run; a clear policy regarding photography including a consent form; a reworking of prize money/encouragement awards to address inequity and a committee to include people who are not as directly involved as the teachers already attending the piano section.

Thank you for the opportunity to be Section Chair for the Schimmel Piano section and support for Celebrating Chopin this year and I look forward to contributing to this role in 2024.



Vocal & Aria Report

Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair & Aria Committee)

We were thrilled to be back in the lovely Minerva Space in the historic Ballarat Mechanics Institute for our Vocal Competition which ran from August 14 – 19, 2023. This is our preferred venue for size, acoustics and central location.

The competition ran smoothly and was well attended with 474 entries over the 6 days. This is slightly down on the previous years, but we had very few withdrawals and many happy comments from competitors and parents regarding the running of the competition and the friendliness of the staff and volunteers. The timetable was tight, and mostly ran to time, except for our new 'Classical Crossover' section where the potential length of the classical arias was not taken into account.

In the lead up to the competition, all competitors were sent detailed information and FAQ's outlining what to expect. This helped them to feel well prepared and understand the rules and expectations. Our adjudicators for 2023 were Marianne Rigby and Carrie Barr, who were both exceptional in their comments and feedback over the duration of the competition. Special thanks must also go to our classical accompanist, Mary O'Driscoll.

We were able to offer cash prizes for all 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners, largely due to the generous support of our major sponsors, Hans Henkell, Opus 50 Charitable Trust, Caine Real Estate and Optiform Ballarat. We were also able to offer a song writing masterclass and a VCE/VET Music Masterclass in a bid to enhance the educational aspect of our competition through extended learning. Another example of this was shown in partnering with Ballarat Grammar School Sound Production Students who worked as trainee sound technicians for our event.

This formed part of their workplace training hours and enabled us to run the technical elements at a much cheaper rate. Our gratitude to Sam McColl (Duty Manager at the Minerva Space) for allowing us to use our own technicians and provide this training opportunity for the students.

The new 'Classical Crossover' section was a huge success and the enhanced prize money attracted extremely high quality performers. Hans Henkell travelled to Ballarat to present the awards and we hope this section continues to shine and thrive in coming years, helping also to re-invigorate some of our other senior classical sections.

As always, there are things to learn from the event. Some of those things include - more clear rules outlining microphone use, remove the marking rubric from Crossover Championship, offer the VCE/VET sections as a non-competitive, performance experience with masterclass (rather than adjudicated placings) and encourage more parents to volunteer.

Heartfelt thanks to Jason Wasley (Vocal Committee) who assisted during the year with advice and sponsorship, and to Louise in the RSSS office for her guidance and support.

Overall, it was a very positive 6 days and I felt we were able to deliver on the overall Royal South Street Society vision to promote and encourage participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts.

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The Herald Sun Aria Heat was held at Loreto College on Sunday 06 August. We had 45 entries and some truly wonderful singers all vying to get into the Semi-Final which was to be held the following day. The singers were accompanied by the extremely talented Dean-Sky Lucas who played very challenging arias with great aplomb.

The adjudicators for the Heats and Semi-Final were Greg Hocking and Helena Dix, a past Herald Sun Aria finalist herself.

At the end of the Heats, 12 singers were chosen to compete in the Semi-Final on the evening of the 07 August. They were all given rehearsal time with Dean during the day at the Diocesan Centre on Lydiard Street South.

The Semi-Final was a true display of emerging operatic talent and it was a shame that so few people were in the audience to watch. The six finalists that were chosen, all stayed for an interview with the adjudicators and some promotional pictures before heading home. It would be exactly two months before they would sing in the final at the Melbourne Recital Centre in front of a packed house.

The results for the 99th Herald Sun Aria were as follows;

- Winner of the First Prize – Rachael Joyce
- Winner of the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Prize – Imogen Faith Malfitano
- Winner of the Richard Divall Prize – Jane Magao
- Winner of the John Fulford Prize – Nuolin Ouyang
- Runners-Up Prizes went to Daniel Felton and Joshua Oxley

Going forward, planning for and promoting this event should play a much bigger role. This event is one that RSSS can be truly proud of, and it should be showcased to the wider community. Next year marks the 100th Year Anniversary of the Aria, so even greater importance should be placed on appropriate marketing and exposure for these incredibly talented young artists.



Bands & Instrumental Report

Mark Witham (Discipline Chair)

Peter Zala approached me to Chair the Band and Instrumental Competitions for RSSS and I accepted the challenge given the support I could see RSSS needed in this discipline as I feel it is important to assist my music community where and when I can.

We formed a committee of ten local musicians who all have considerable experience and knowledge of the RSSS and under the guidance of Lindsay Eaton, Louise Brooks and Carolyn Bennett we managed to remain on track to produce another successful competition.

For the past ten to twenty years the competitors in the band and solo sections have slowly reduced; this is consistent with trends across all country competitions and eisteddfods. The reasons are not clear but it is believed to be driven by the change in priorities in schools. Gone are the days where brass bands and concert bands were a feature of a music department. There are many private schools with traditional music education programs but many other schools have opted for a broader approach to education. They tend not to have traditional ensembles and trend towards groups which involve guitars, multi-percussion and other combinations of instruments.

This year's competition reflected my earlier comments. We had lower entries in many sections with the exception of Intermediate Concert Bands and Intermediate Stage Bands. There was a fair representation of string ensembles and a few pockets of small ensembles. The high-end concert bands trickled down to just one!

There was also a trend away from metropolitan entries this year. Covid has played a part in priorities to school excursions and travel and not all schools support and budget for the traditional competition for their music departments.

Fortunately, we have several local schools which always support our Band Festival. Sadly, we don't have all schools onboard. This is mainly driven by the traditional nature of the Eisteddfod where it is seen more as a competition where there's a winner and a perceived 'loser'. This model is seen by some as 'past its use by date' not conforming to current educational directions. Not all schools and teachers agree with this perspective, but we certainly have a divide which needs addressing.

To resolve the low entries for this year's Festival our Committee devised a plan to amalgamate sections of similar age and standard to make all entries viable. Our idea was to be as inclusive as possible. The adjudicators were briefed prior to the amalgamation to ensure we were on the same page and to provide equity to all participants.

Looking to 2024 and beyond I would recommend a complete overhaul of the competition for bands and solos. The first step would be to engage with all stakeholders in the Ballarat area and to take a look at other successful events such as the Victorian Schools Music Festival. The Heads of Music in schools are the key to the ongoing success of the RSSS band and solo festival.

In closing, this year's festival was a success without any major issues. However, the RSSS brand needs attention as what was the pinnacle of Australian music eisteddfods is now perceived as a country eisteddfod in some disciplines. There is a great opportunity to redefine our competition to provide a credible and quality experience for all music students in the immediate Ballarat area and perhaps retain some interest from the metropolitan schools.

Volunteers Report

Welcome to Season Volunteer Function

Wednesday 05 July at The Grand

Welcome drink and nibbles

Our volunteers and staff heard from our Volunteers sponsor - Karen Eaton from Ingenia Lifestyle and Lindsay Eaton as Chairman of the RSSS Board.



End of Season Volunteers Thank You

Thursday 23 November at The Ballarat Mechanics Institute

Morning tea catered by Home Ground Café

Our volunteers and staff were thanked and acknowledged by Lindsay Eaton and Judy-Ann Quilliam.

End of Season Discipline Chairs Thank You

Tuesday 14 November at Oscars Hotel

An informal evening to thank our incredible Discipline Chairs





Volunteer Milestone Awards



Neil Steinman
Marjorie Steinman
Emma Quayle
Rosemary Sheludko



Bev Squire
Joylene Weckert
Jennifer Searle
Lorinda Bolton
Karen Pengelly

Verna Martin
Helen Brown
Yvonne Smith
Wayne Mitchell
Wally Horsman



Kristen Rowlands



Julie Hunneybell
Heather Turner



Dawn Harrington
Ron Harrington OAM
Dr Anthony Cole
Peter Zala

2023 Active Volunteers

KELLI AGGETT
NICKI BALLINGER
SUE BEECHEY
CAROLYN BENNETT
KATRINA BIRD
MARION BLYTHMAN
JESSICA BOND
PETER BOND
ALLISON BOUCHER
CAROLYN BOURKE
MICHELLE BOURKE
LOUISE BROOKS
MEG BROOKS
ANDREA BROWN
BEN BROWN
CHERIE BROWN
LEXIE BROWN
NORA CAIN
WADE CARMAN
KRIS CARROLL
CARON CAVALIER
VALDI CHAM
NANETTE CLIFTON
DANIELLE COLTMAN
CAROL CONWAY
CLAIRE CUMMINGS
KAREN DANIELL
NOREEN DANIELL
NICOLE DAVIES
SUE DEANS
LAUREN DELL
LAUREN DOWNER
JACQUI DRINNAN
AILSA DU BOIS
FRANK DYER
LINDSAY EATON
ELIZABETH ELDRIDGE
FIONA EMERY
JILL FILMER
SANDRA FISHWICK
RON FLEMING
DONNA FLYNN

AUNDREA FORESTER
KAZ FOY
GILLIAN FREESTONE
JESSICA GODFREY
ROBYN GOULD
LYNDA GRANT
GLENYS GRIGG
JASON HARGREAVES
DAWN HARRINGTON
RON HARRINGTON
MERLE HATHAWAY
OLIVIA HENDERSON
CASSANDRA HISCOCK
EVA HOCKING
JO HOCKING
COLLEEN HOLLOWAY
PAULA HORGAN
WALLY HORSMAN
LAURA HUDSON
AMY JEFFREYS
BROOKE JOHNSON
SHEENA JOHNSON
MICHELLE JORGANSEN
LORETTA KAVAL
LAUREN KNIGHT
EDDIE KOENE
ANNETTE LAWSON
JANICE LYNN
JOHN MACLEOD
BECK MAJOR
DEBBIE MARSHALL
VERNA MARTIN
JESS MARTLAND
AMANDA MCCORMACK
DOUG MCGREGOR
NAOMI MCKEE
CHLOE MCMILLAN
ALEXANDRA MEERBACH
AMANDA MILTON
ADAM MILLER
KIM MONTGOMERY
KATELYN MULRAYEY

KEITH MURDOCH
REBECCA NORRIS
GRAHAM PAULIN
KAREN PENGALLY
MORGAN PENGALLY
PENNY POWELL
ANDREW POWER
EMILY PRESTON
LUCY PRESTON
EMMA QUALE
JUDY-ANN QUILLIAM
BRITTANY REID
SHEREE REID
BERNADETTE REUS
WENDY RIDING
TARA SCHMIDT
LYN SCHULLER
CATHY SCRIVENER
JENNY SEARL
RACHAEL SHELTON
YVONNE SMITH
MARJORIE STEINMAN
NEIL STEINMAN
DENNIS STEVENSON
MICHAEL STEWART
GRAEME SUTTON
AKASHA TEMPLE-MATTHEWS
CLAIRE THORPE
HEATHER TURNER
MELINDA UNMACK
TAMMY VANDENBERG
MEGAN VANDERVEER
MIKA WALLACE
HEIDI WALSH
IRENE WARFE
JASON WASLEY
JOYLENE WECKERT
APRIL WELFARE
KERRY WILSON
STACEY WIMSHURST
VIRGINA WISE
MARK WITHAM

PETER ZALA

ARCHIVE TEAM

DAVID CALLINAN
DAVID EVANS
LYNDA GRANT
SILVIA WETZEL

2023 Associate Members

CAROLYN BENNETT
LOUISE BROOKS
ANDREA BROWN
CHERIE BROWN
LEXIE BROWN
DAVID CALLINAN
CHARISSA CHETCUTI
DANIELLE COLTMAN
LINDSAY EATON
VIVIENNE EDLUND
SANDRA FISHWICK
JESSICA GODFREY
ROBYN GOULD
LYNDA GRANT
CHRISTINE HARRIS
DAWN HARRINGTON
RON HARRINGTON
JO HOCKING
TENNILLE KORS
ANNETTE LAWSON
WAYNE MITCHELL
REBECCA NORRIS
GRAHAM PAULIN
MARJORIE STEINMAN
NEIL STEINMAN
SALLY STEVENS
HEATHER TURNER
JANE WILSON

Associate Members must have completed at least 12 months active volunteering and completed the annual renewal form and payment of nominated annual membership fee. Please contact admin@royalsouthstreet.com.au for further information.

Supporters & Sponsors Report

The Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod is a not-for-profit organisation and we rely on the generous support of our sponsors, donors and supporters to continue to be a transformative force in the performing arts.

Philanthropy is key to our ongoing mission to promote and encourage participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts.

Through the incredible generosity of our supporters, we are able to keep providing transformative opportunities for the young performers today who will be our artists and leaders of tomorrow.

The following supporters help us to:

- PROMOTE performing arts as a valuable contributor to our artistic, economic and cultural landscape.
- Ensure we keep providing a platform that ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION - for all to try, to learn, to improve and to develop.
- Nurture pure ENJOYMENT through the range of disciplines, participation and opportunities provided.
- And ENRICH the lives of our people - our entrants, our volunteers, our community.





Supporters Thank You

Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Trust
ANATS Victoria
Robyn Antoine and the Enduring Classics
Singing Group
APATA - Australian Performing Arts Teachers
Association
ASCA - Australian Society of Calisthenics
Ballarat Solo Competitions Inc
Ballarat Ballet Guild
Ballarat Women's Clinic
Sally Bourne
Marilyn Bradford
Lorayne Branch
Andrea & Justin Brown
T.E Byrne Memorial Fund
Buninyong Mt Helen Lions Club
Campion Books
Carwen Calisthenics
Cashes Awards & Promotions
Norma Clark Memorial Fund
Clifton Old Collegians
Val Coad
Andrew Cochrane
Dr Tony Cole
The Coltman Family
CommDance
Coward-Lemke School of Music
Crossroads Music
Claudia Dean
Lindsay & Karen Eaton
Fishwick Family
Julie Fox & Helen Barclay
Chris Gardner
Tim Gay
Ron and Dawn Harrington
Hecho En Mexico
Henkell Brothers
W.S Hooper Trust
Margery James Trust
Jayde Calisthenic Club
Isabella Foundation
Buninyong / Mt Helen Lions Club
Loretta Kaval
Loreto College

Ivy Keats Memorial Fund
Linda Dean Dancing Academy
Elsie Morison Memorial Trust
Frank Robertson-Smith Scholarship Fund
Ryans IGA
Bob Matthews
Leanne McInnes Memorial Scholarship
Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre
Lilian Monk Trust
Monica Morgan Trust
Mr & Mrs R Morgan
Nerrina Progress Association
One Life Health Group
Opus 50 Charitable Trust
Petera Clamp Estate
The Provincial Hotel
Quest Ballarat
Quest Station
Ray White Real Estate
The Reed Family
RJMs Wine Bar
Rotary Clubs of Ballarat, Ballarat South &
Ballarat East
Anita Stapp
Smooov Active
Tunstall Square Calisthenics
Sally Vawdry Memorial Trust
William Morrell Memorial Trust
Julie Wiseman and Rebecca Garlick
K&A Young Trust

*as well as many others and anonymous
supporters.*

Business Manager's Report

Strategic Plan Progress

Business & Marketing Manager - Judy-Ann Quilliam

As a proud Royal South Street Society (RSSS) Ballarat Eisteddfod alumna and past parent of multiple discipline entrants, I was delighted to accept the opportunity to join RSSS in October 2023 as Business and Marketing Manager.

The vision of the RSSS is to conduct Australia's premier eisteddfod – promoting and encouraging participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts. Achieving that vision and the delivery of the supporting strategic plan is our core focus.

The strategic priorities from the 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan are:

- Deliver a performance experience that is enjoyed and valued by competitors, teachers and supporters.
- Communicate and promote RSSS to its stakeholders and the wider community
- Manage RSSS and its eisteddfod effectively and efficiently
- Build on the financial foundations to deliver an operating surplus each year

There has been much work commenced to deliver on the strategic priorities, however, this work has been hampered by the Covid pandemic, ongoing post Covid challenges for the entire performing arts industry, major venue challenges such as the ongoing closure of Her Majesty's Theatre and changes in staff, Board and Committee members.

However, as at 31 December 2023, there is a strong and united Board, new and enthusiastic Discipline Committees and a fabulous small team of office staff who are all 110% committed to achieving the RSSS vision.

RSSS is Australia's oldest and longest running eisteddfod and has been the driving force behind exceptional performance opportunities since its establishment in 1891. The Eisteddfod empowers young people to flourish and has had a significant transformative impact on the performing arts landscape in this country.

The enduring commitment to providing a platform to develop performing arts in this region and our country, is testament to all those people who have come before us and to the forward-thinking approach that will ensure that we will continue to offer outstanding performance opportunities well into the future.

We finish the 2023 year armed with new draft Marketing and Communications Plan, Quality Management Plan, Volunteer Plan, Alumni Plan and Fundraising & Philanthropy Plan, all aligned to the specific objectives and actions of the 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan. These plans amongst other strategic work are ready to finalise, engage and implement in 2024. A new Style Guide has been approved and a new website is in development over the Christmas break, ready to launch when 2024 entries open on 01 March, 2024.

It's a fabulous time to be part of one of Ballarat's most important and iconic cultural events and Australia's premier performing arts eisteddfod. I urge all RSSS alumni, businesses, and organisations to get behind us once again, and join us for the performance!

Financial Reports

Royal South Street Society
ACN: 004 058 020

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Note	\$	\$
Income from ordinary activities		
Admission income		
Admissions	175,844	138,516
Total admissions	175,844	138,516
Other income		
Advertising in prize and guide books	-	1,626
Certificates	274	-
Dividends received	18,818	19,860
Donations	130,311	21,301
Entry fees	189,759	179,578
Grants received	117,922	90,237
Guide books and programs	11,438	12,690
Interest earned on RSSS funds	39	1,315
Interest earned on Trust funds	12,133	5,618
Other merchandise	3,826	931
Other rent and hire	10,441	10,774
Recoveries	1,418	650
Sale of badges	12,623	10,691
Sponsorships	66,580	42,350
Sundry income	642	-
Total other income	576,224	397,621
Total income from ordinary activities	752,068	536,137
	4	
Expenses from ordinary activities		
Accommodation	16,550	12,151
Accompanists	1,858	570
Accounting	37,920	55,210
Adjudicators and writers	41,483	44,019
Advertising	3,673	3,776
Audit fees	7,190	6,650
Bad and doubtful debts	8,450	-
Bank fees	5,713	5,352
Board costs	2,198	5,121
Commission on seat sales	4,735	5,237
Computer software and supplies	7,015	8,207
Contractor fees	1,944	91,853
Depreciation	33,369	33,552
Donations, gifts and presentations	273	462
Equipment hire	57,346	48,414
Finance costs	2,834	3,022
Functions and meeting costs	1,126	382
Insurance	8,940	9,381
Insurances - workcover	120	1,328

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Note	\$	\$
Licences, permits, legal fees	5,236	2,674
Legal fees	900	2,876
Meals	4,846	4,696
Occupancy overheads	4,627	5,646
Photocopier	2,196	1,471
Postage	911	1,227
Printing guide and prize books	7,226	13,406
Prize money	63,040	66,154
Retail stock purchased	10,700	6,219
Salaries and labour	133,046	158,393
Staff training and other costs	381	1,816
Stardom entry fees	5,870	6,708
Stationery and office supplies	1,511	2,063
Subscriptions	1,781	1,725
Superannuation	13,924	14,946
Technician and excess	-	164
Telephone and internet	2,719	2,947
Travel allowance	6,095	4,240
Trophies and medals	14,804	11,281
Utilities, rates and waste disposal	3,702	2,921
Venue hire	80,019	62,310
Volunteers	598	942
Total expenses from ordinary activities	606,869	709,512
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	145,199	(173,375)
Other comprehensive income		
Net unrealised gain/(loss) on revaluation of financial assets	758	(26,941)
Total comprehensive income	145,957	(200,316)

Royal South Street Society
ACN: 004 058 020

Statement of Financial Position
As At 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	194,113	104,888
Trade and other receivables	6	35,858	90,654
Total current assets		229,971	195,542
Non-current assets			
Investments	7	313,284	303,999
Trust prize investments	8	267,127	267,127
Property, plant and equipment	9	157,399	182,784
Total non-current assets		737,810	753,910
Total assets		967,781	949,452
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	32,188	188,099
Other financial liabilities	12	74,372	25,612
Lease liabilities	13	25,908	21,869
Employee benefits	14	5,735	4,990
Total current liabilities		138,203	240,570
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	13	4,618	29,703
Employee benefits	14	459	635
Total non-current liabilities		5,077	30,338
Total liabilities		143,280	270,908
Net assets		824,501	678,544
Equity			
Retained earnings		367,677	224,886
Financial asset reserve		48,233	47,475
Piano revaluation reserve		111,766	111,766
Trust fund reserve		296,825	294,417
Total equity		824,501	678,544

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

2023

	Retained earnings	Financial asset reserve	Piano revaluation reserve	Trust fund reserve	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2023	224,886	47,475	111,766	294,417	678,544
Surplus for the year	145,199	-	-	-	145,199
Transfer to/(from) reserves	(2,408)	-	-	2,408	-
Revaluation increment	-	758	-	-	758
Balance at 31 December 2023	367,677	48,233	111,766	296,825	824,501

2022

	Retained earnings	Financial asset Reserve	Piano revaluation reserve	Trust fund reserve	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2022	400,848	74,416	111,766	291,830	878,860
Deficit for the year	(173,375)	-	-	-	(173,375)
Transfer to/(from) reserves	(2,587)	-	-	2,587	-
Revaluation decrement	-	(26,941)	-	-	(26,941)
Balance at 31 December 2022	224,886	47,475	111,766	294,417	678,544

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Note	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Guide book sales	11,438	12,690
Other sales	17,477	10,691
Donations	130,311	21,301
Entry fees	189,759	179,578
Admissions	175,844	138,516
Interest received	10,740	8,320
Interest paid	(2,833)	(3,022)
Grants received	159,622	13,663
Advertising	-	1,626
Hires and recoveries	11,791	11,424
Dividends received	5,777	8,530
Other income	137,677	49,341
Payments to suppliers and employees	(729,348)	(535,764)
Net cash used in operating activities	22 <u>118,255</u>	<u>(83,106)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(4,666)	(9,068)
Proceeds from redemption of term deposits	-	91,210
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>(4,666)</u>	<u>82,142</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payment of lease liabilities	(24,364)	(21,869)
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(24,364)</u>	<u>(21,869)</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents held	89,225	(22,833)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>104,888</u>	<u>127,721</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5 <u>194,113</u>	<u>104,888</u>



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD

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