



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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.



The Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod currently runs throughout June to October each year. The annual Eisteddfod includes 10 theatrical disciplines and provides outstanding 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 150 volunteers as Discipline Chairs, committee members and in event roles. We are grateful for the additional funding from generous sponsors, businesses, local and state government, individuals and families, committees, and volunteers.

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.

Life Members in Memoriam

T. Saunders	W.F Kittson
S.W.H Pearson	R.G Campbell
T Dammery	E.S Steele
J.A Wilkie	P. Nicholson
J.C Rowe	W.K Allen
A.W Steane	E.T (Ted)Lewis
S.C Henderson	C.J May
Alf Reid	Doug McMillan
A.C Thomas	Daphne McMillan
G.K Sutton	Ron Morgan
H Clogan	
K.J Flecknoe	
R.C Barrett	
W.S Hooper	

Life Members

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Cole

Barbara Dunlop

Ron Harrington O.A.M

Dawn Harrington

Lorraine Harvey

Lloyd Harvey

Robert Matthews

Brian McInnis

Peter 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.

2024 Board Directors

Resignations or retirement/non-standing from the Board of Directors before, on or after the 2023 AGM

- Ron Harrington OAM



Lindsay Eaton
Board Chair



Danielle Coltman
Deputy Chair



Karen Daniell
Treasurer



Barbara Stead
Secretary



Adam Miller



Virginia Wise



Andrea Brown



Narelle Carr



Nichola Sleight

Board Chair Report

Lindsay Eaton

The focus of our 2024 year has very much been about building on the base we established in 2023 and to begin the renewal process of many aspects of returning the Eisteddfod back to the leading eisteddfod in Australia.

This has included an up-date on our marketing material to highlight our main business being The Ballarat Eisteddfod.

To up-date our aging and poorly functioning website so that it was easier to use and provide the platform required for all.

It is fantastic to see that we have seen the continued growth in our competitors entering many disciplines and starting to get back to the pre Covid numbers. In some areas there is still much to do, however we are continuing to work through our marketing and communication with schools and other key partners.

Alas we were not able to return to Her Majesty's theatre for this year, something we gave our best shot working as closely with the City of Ballarat as we could to try and get in, however was not to be. We were still able to see a successful program held throughout our other venues during the year.

We have developed much stronger ties with the Ballarat Mechanics Institute (BMI) during this year with excellent response from competitors, adjudicators and our visitors. Much of this can be attributed to the work by our staff working closely with BMI Chair, Paula Nicholson.

It is also exciting to see the excellent response from our reintroduction of an opening night and the launch of the Piano fund raising for the purchase of the Schimmel K195. This was a major decision by the Board taking a huge step towards resolving one issue that was about to become significant due to the likely unavailability of a hire piano, plus removes the hire cost for the foreseeable future for the Aria, Chopin and Pianoforte sections for 2025 and beyond.

The challenges we face regarding the financial results continue to be high on our agenda with many actions now considered appropriate to reduce overall spending and review all income lines. This is very much a work in progress with some excellent work carried out by our Executive Officer, Judy-Ann Quilliam and our Board.

I would like to thank all the members of our RSSS team - our staff (Judy-Ann, Louise and Carolyn), our discipline committees and our cohesive, positive and creative RSSS Board.

Our achievements in 2024 include:

- 100th year of the Aria
- 100th year of the Graceful Solo
- Highly successful 100 years celebration program for both the Aria and Calisthenics Graceful Solo.
- The purchase of the Schimmel Grand piano to secure future performances
- Review & refinement of our governance and operations management with a focus on our future.

We are very much looking forward to the 2025 program and what it will bring to Ballarat and our community.

Office Management Team

RSSS Office Management Team as at 31/12/2024

- Judy-Ann Quilliam - Executive Officer (appointed October 2023)
- Louise Brooks - Eisteddfod Coordinator (appointed April 2021)
- Carolyn Bennett - Eisteddfod Development and Volunteer Coordinator (appointed June 2023)



Discipline Committees

- **All Abilities Performing Arts** – Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair), Akasha Temple-Mathews, Amy Jeffreys, April Welfare, Jessica Bond
- **Calisthenics** – Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair), Lexie Brown, Fiona Emery, Jo Hocking, Annette Lawson, Cherie Brown
- **Choral** – Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair), Sheena Johnson
- **Dance** – Danielle Coltman & Jessica Godfrey (Discipline Co-Chairs), Nicki Ballinger, Sandra Fishwick, Cathy Scrivener
- **Debating Committee** - Loretta Kaval (Discipline Chair) Deb Marshall, Rebecca Grime, Laura Benney, Mary-Rose McLaren, Kellie Healy, Tamara Vandenburg
- **Instrumental Music** – Karen Pengelly (Discipline Chair), Janice Lynn
- **Pianoforte & Chopin** – Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair), Lauren Knight (Discipline Advisor)
- **Speech & Drama** – Kris Carroll (Discipline Chair), Mika Wallace, Penny Powell, Alexandra Meerbach, Rachael Shelton, Tamara Vandenburg
- **Vocal & Aria** – Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair), Jason Wasley, Jacqueline Kalogerakis



2024 Performance Highlights

Shining a spotlight on the 2024 Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod... where almost 20,000 people attended to perform, watch or volunteer at our season of events!

Over 9050 individual performers on the stage, 10 different performing arts disciplines, 674 individual sections, 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.



Freemasons Thank You Freemasons
Foundation Victoria

ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD

The Royal South Street Society thanks you for your support of our Eisteddfod. Thank you for helping us promote and encourage participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts!

Here are some of the young people you supported at the Freemasons Vocal Competition!

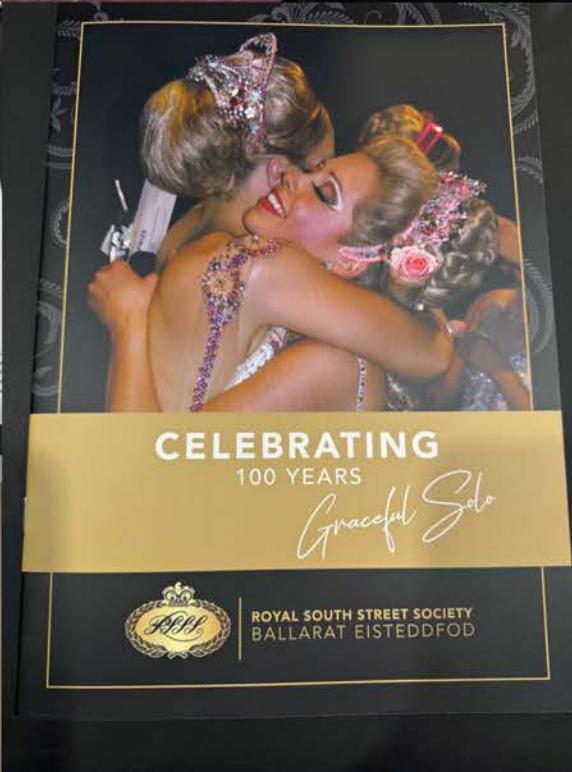
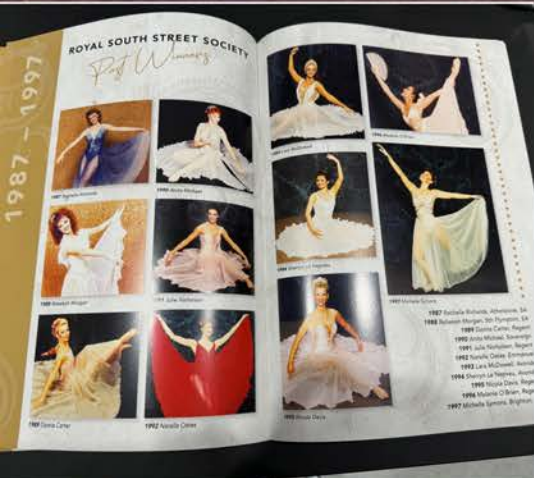
2024 PRIZE WINNER SERIES
Atticus Benjsson

Photo credit: Anna Every

WWW.ROYALSOUTHSTREET.COM.AU



Celebrated 100 Years of Herald Sun Aria



Celebrated 100 Years of Graceful Solo

Our Ballarat Community

Begonia Festival Parade

The Royal South Street Society participated in the 2024 Begonia Festival Parade. A fabulous showcase of the wider Ballarat community. We thank the volunteers and local dance school students who joined us, and we did recruit a few new volunteers!



Committee for Ballarat Membership

The Royal South Street Society secured partial funding for a new not-for-profit membership with the Committee for Ballarat.

Representation in this leading advocacy group ensures that the RSSS and the performing arts have a voice in shaping Ballarat's future. As a key part of the city's history and culture, a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable Ballarat must continue to embrace, support and promote the performing arts.

Stepping up for Community & RSSS Awareness

Royal South Street Society (RSSS) Executive Officer, Judy-Ann Quilliam, showcased RSSS while fundraising and taking on the challenge to learn to tango, in the Ballarat Foundation's 2024 Dancing With Our Stars.

Over three months, Judy-Ann raised more than \$11,000 (over \$212,000 was raised in the collective group effort) for the Ballarat Foundation, reinforcing RSSS's vital role in the community after its absence from the city centre during the pandemic and the closure of Her Majesty's Theatre.

The extensive fundraising efforts and connections from this event continue to support planning for the 2025 RSSS season.



\$212,017

Raised in sponsorship and donations.
Thank you for being a part of Dancing with our Stars 2024 in support of the Ballarat Foundation

All Abilities Performing Arts Report

Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair)

The 2024 All Abilities Performing Arts Showcase from 04 – 06 September was an amazing event filled with overwhelming talent from the disability community.

This year we ran the extravaganza over three days, from 10am till 2:30pm each day. Entry was free for the performers, and a gold coin entry for the audience. It was great to see representatives from our two major sponsors, UFS Healthcare and Astec Equipment Services, there to enjoy the performances.

All of the gold coin donations raised will go towards the purchase of music equipment that can be both used for our Showcase event, and to benefit the Ballarat Special School music program.

There was standing room only in the building, every day - such is the growing popularity of this special Showcase event.

The community rallied around and helped throughout the day, the staff at Ballarat Special School were most accommodating and supportive (as they always are) and the Café food was fantastic!

Our adjudicator, Sophie O'Donnell, was caring, supportive and encouraging of the performers; they all loved her. The special awards were a definite hit with the performers and the overall Community Award presented was also well received.

Our objective with this Showcase is to open the minds of others to the disability communities and how talented they truly are, and to bring children and adults with disabilities together to show their wonderful abilities to the wider community.

There can be no doubt that the All Abilities Performing Arts Showcase exemplifies the RSSS vision to promote and encourage participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts.

Some of our challenges to consider in future planning include re-imagining and planning the stage area to increase the performance space – we will address this next year.





It's not a bad challenge – but there was not enough seating for everyone! Our Showcase is so popular within our community that there were a lot of students who came along just to watch, so we may need to control seating a little more in the future, especially to ensure there are seats available for everyone.

In 2025 we are growing and will run the event for four days, including a Saturday, so those travelling further can also attend. We have a few operational changes planned, new banners and signage so the event on-site at the Ballarat Specialist School is easier to find, as well as flyers and banners of sponsors. We are seeking some new sponsors for our growing event also, and hope to make the performance area look more like a theatre. Overall, I love being a part of this special event every year. It brings great joy to the disability community and we are so proud that it keeps growing every year.

Calisthenics Report

Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair)

Calisthenics is unlike any other discipline ... each team performs six 'items', and a single competition could have as many as 70 items, and last anywhere from 3 – 6.5 hours. Stamina from performers, coaches and volunteers is necessary. There could also be 100-150 people backstage, so wrangling everyone can sometimes be challenging. Yet we love it.

While calisthenics is mostly centred around teams, the Royal South Street Graceful Solo and Calisthenics Solo are the most prestigious calisthenics titles in the country. We welcomed Couture Costume Dancewear as our new Graceful Solo section sponsor, and were pleased to have Opening Night Supplies continue their sponsorship of the Calisthenics Solo. We began the year with strong entries to our solo auditions – 57 for the Calisthenics section, and 60 for the Graceful – and five adjudicators for the weekend. We introduced this audition process in 2022, with 25 finalists selected to compete for each title in October.

This year marked 100 years of our Graceful Solo, a milestone we are proud to have reached. We spent many hours researching the whereabouts of past winners, and many memories and laughter were shared at a celebratory lunch at Oscar's with coaches and adjudicators. A magnificent souvenir programme was compiled, including a brief history of the competition, newspaper clippings and photos of each winner (thank you to our staff and archives team for your work on this) and each attendee received a copy as well as a souvenir badge.

Despite having confirmation early in the year that Her Majesty's Theatre would be available for us, unfortunately this was not the case, and we were once again at Founders Theatre. Whilst Founders has fantastic backstage space, the auditorium lacks the thrilling atmosphere of Her Maj.

The change in venue was disappointing for us, and with the special events planned for the Graceful Solo centenary, it was a great shame we weren't in our revered theatre.

Even so, the evening of the Graceful Solo final was certainly a very special night, with speeches, guests, and the past winners presented to the audience. Then, for the first time in 100 years, we found ourselves with a tie for first place, and a three-way tie for second! Congratulations to Louisa Humphrey from WA, and Charlotte Lord from Vic on their shared win, as well as Ava Arnold from SA who won the Calisthenics Solo the previous evening.

October brought the teams to Ballarat. Entries were slightly down on 2023 figures, possibly due to several Masters teams travelling to the Pan Pacific Masters Games on the Gold Coast, as well as a few mixed division competitions. We expect our 2025 return to Her Majesty's Theatre will remedy this. We were pleased to see 67 clubs enter (one from NSW, two from ACT and three from SA), though we would like to see more interstate teams attend in future – certainly an area for marketing.

In the end, we ran 38 competitions in 20 days, and managed 3332 competitors, 297 sections, 1689 item performances, 11 adjudicators, over approximately 220 hours of competition run time. For comparison ... 2023 numbers were 42 comps over 23 days, 3563 competitors, 314 sections, 1783 items, and 13 adjudicators.

The Ron & Dawn Harrington Trophy, awarded to the club with the highest number of aggregate points across all sections, was won by Narre Warren Calisthenics Club. It was fortuitous that their Juniors competed on the final day, so coaches were on stage to accept this special award.

The calisthenics community has, for a long time, viewed Royal South Street as the pinnacle of their year; for many people it is more significant than the State Titles. It was wonderful to see so many families attending to support their competitors, and the excitement in the dressing rooms and backstage was palpable. Several people commented on the friendliness of the volunteers, committee and staff, and we had many positive comments about how well organised we were and how smoothly the competitions ran. Not surprisingly, the most repeated comment in the feedback we received was that we should return the competitions to Her Majesty's Theatre.

Once again, unfortunately the struggle for volunteers was an issue. Calisthenics is an enormous section, and it takes a competent team to run a smooth competition. A successful competition needs a knowledgeable and competent stage manager, confident MC and 1-2 runners. We combined the role of MC and music operator which worked well, though sometimes the stage manager also had to pull curtains. Whilst this is not ideal, it can be done, though won't be necessary in 2025 as the curtains at HMT will be operated by a theatre tech. We will pursue this further with the local clubs as there are undoubtedly new volunteers to recruit.



We are excited to be returning to Her Majesty's Theatre in 2025, though at this stage we are still unsure of exactly what challenges this move will bring. We hope some of the Champ teams will eventually return to our Australian Calisthenics Competition, and we have had some interest from interstate clubs already. Timetabling will be looked at carefully, taking the feedback into consideration, and we will strongly encourage patrons to download and print their own programs.

Organising and running such a big discipline is a team effort, and what a team we are. Thank you to my committee members for their enthusiasm and hard work ... Annette, Cherie, Fiona, Jo and Lexie ... you were all amazing. Heartfelt thanks to Judy-Ann, Louise and Carolyn in the office, and the techs from SLC for their hard work and patience. To every volunteer who came to assist, thank you so much, you are greatly appreciated. We had some long days, but I know we all enjoyed it (especially the end of night 'coffee!').



Choral Report

Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair)

The CountPro Choral Competition was held at Founders Theatre, Federation University from 31 August – 01 September, 2024.

Overall, we had a wonderful 2024 Choral competition with an increase in entries on the previous two years. The venue worked very well for the large school groups in attendance, the adjudicator, Marianne Rigby, was fabulous and we had an increase in a diverse array of entries from across Victoria. It was also great to have a major sponsor for the event in 2024, with CountPro.

We introduced some new non-competitive sections for performance, workshop and critique only and these were very successful. The adjudicator provided great feedback and the workshop experience proved to be an excellent learning experience for the choirs.

Entries came from across Victoria, with city, regional and rural, as well as public and private schools performing. The format and rotation cycle from backstage, to stage, to audience facilitated greater camaraderie between schools involved, students were not on their phones, and were eagerly watching other singers. It was also great to see more males involved in the choirs.

The introduction the new non-competitive sections was in response to our primary market research that not all schools continue to enjoy competitive performance. Many more schools are seeking pure performance, expert feedback and learning opportunities, but not always competition placing. Whilst we are a competitive eisteddfod and must remain true to our established roots, these new sections are in alignment with our vision to encourage participation, enjoyment, and enrichment





through the performing arts, and we had several schools take up this opportunity.

There are always challenges in sourcing and training the required numbers of volunteers, and RSSS is working hard to overcome these challenges, particularly for key roles like MC.

Founders Theatre was a great venue for access, parking, school buses and large numbers of students, but some issues to work on included the Green Room side stage being too loud at times, and housing very large choir numbers.

There were some technical issues with the new online critiques on My Stage, although this was a new system, so work to do to improve, and scheduling for breaks, timing and school hours, bus timetables proved challenging. Also some lighting issues with shadow over the conductors stand which meant half of music was in shadow.

Music must also be emailed prior and uploaded and song names entered into My Stage prior to the comp, as it was far too time consuming on the day.

For future planning, we aim to run a choral conductor workshop to help schools prepare for competition and reach out to more rural schools to potentially participate. Communications with schools needs to be increased to encourage notification prior to the day if there any withdrawals, as this significantly impacts the timing of the competition. Scheduling can also improve on the changes introduced this year, to further refine and improve the program for 2025.

The venue worked very well this year for the large school choirs and a follow up survey of participating schools indicated that there is an even split in favour of keeping the competition at Founders Theatre, as opposed to returning to Her Majesty's Theatre in 2025. There is much to be considered, however, keeping the competition at Founders Theatre may provide a better learning experience for the students as the rotation from side-stage, to stage, then out to audience will always be much smoother at Founders Theatre.

In relation to our important volunteers, there were lots of new changes and training introduced in 2024, and further refinement of the Volunteer Management Program will help, as well as a need to share more live information about volunteering at the actual events. It was also evident across the entire eisteddfod that we need confident and experienced MCs as this is a prominent PR role where professionalism needs to be displayed at all times.

Sponsorship of the Choral competition is critical to future success as it runs through school hours and audience attendance is low. The prestigious A & K YOUNG sections also need reviewed prize money as these choirs have to perform more pieces and more challenging pieces. It would also be great to see more merchandise opportunities in 2025 and beyond to celebrate and promote performing at Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod.

Dance Report

Danielle Coltman & Jessica Godfrey (Discipline Co-Chairs)

The Energetiks Dance competition in 2024 was overall a positive, encouraging event with an increase in entrants across solos, championships and troupes. It was unfortunate that we could not be back at Her Majesty's Theatre as planned, therefore the Dance discipline was held once again at Founders Theatre, which we know impacts our entry numbers.

In 2024, we had 85 troupe entries (with late troupe entry requests that we hope to be able to support in the future), 1341 solo and 206 championship entrants, all spread across our two-week competition period, and we worked hard on establishing stronger relationships between schools, competitors, committee and staff.

We introduced several new sections including the Senior Contemporary Championship, Intermediate Theatrical and Modern Championship, and Junior Modern Championship. All were well received with good numbers entering and great support from scholarship providers.

Additional sections included the male identifying only section (formerly the Nijinsky) which allowed for a repeat performance to encourage male performers of all ages and across all genres to take part; and the new Classical Variations section, which opened to an amazing response. Split into two age group sections, the entry numbers and audience support for these sections was overwhelmingly encouraging and both were also well supported with prize money and scholarships.

We also included a new VCE and VCE VET genre which opens up our competition to non-dance based schools and we provided these participants with a critique reflecting the matrix of evaluation that is used for their subject exams.



The final highlight was the popular Dance for Life section which was increased to 25 prize winning performances, including new adjudicator selected wild card entries. This created a “buzz” throughout the theatre and increased the interest in the section.

Our strategic focus as a discipline has been to provide opportunities for all performers to pursue their dreams with the inclusion of sponsored scholarships for additional development. This is proving to be a competitive advantage for the Energetiks Dance Competition, and we note a growth in participation in the theatrical sections.

We worked hard in 2024 to secure some amazing Arts Partnerships and sponsored scholarship opportunities from:

- Scimm Dance Company
- Jason Coleman’s Ministry of Dance
- Transit Dance
- West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA)
- Australian Classical Grand Prix
- The Australian Ballet School
- Western Ballet Project
- Ballarat Dance Awards

Our greatest challenge in 2024 was the recruitment of the number of volunteers that we still need to run our competition. This has been an ongoing challenge that we need to simplify and somehow make more appealing. We had loyal volunteers and staff working excessive hours and some challenges with roles and new online technology platforms.

The only other ongoing challenge that faces all disciplines is securing enough sponsorship and funding support for prize money and awards, within the highly competitive not-for-profit sector. The office team have been working hard to assist us with this, as we know that prizes and scholarships are critical for encouraging entrants and providing the performance opportunities and outstanding competition that we seek to deliver.

With our long awaited return to our home theatre, Her Majesty’s Theatre in 2025, we hope to see an increase in entry numbers, in particular our troupe entries, as we know all schools near and afar love to perform on the magical “Her Maj” stage. There are many additional sponsors and scholarship providers that we will engage to further support the development of the incredible talent that graces the stage as we continue our mission to rebuild the prestigious RSSS reputation.

There is an infinite amount of work that goes into the running the Energetiks Dance Competition by staff and volunteers, including countless hours by the volunteer Dance Committee who oversee this event. We all continue to do this because we have a shared commitment to encouraging and promoting the performing arts and supporting young performers to create their most incredible memories here at Royal South Street.



Debating Report

Loretta Kaval (Discipline Chair)

My second year as Debating Discipline Chair was smoother than my first year. It also brought a chance to try a couple of new things with varying success. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the office staff for guiding my way through another year.

As Discipline Chair, I am aiming to boost participation by schools, over the next few years, one level at a time.

Last year I realised all our competitors at the primary level were government schools so in the lead up the 2024 comp, I rang every non-government school in the area. This resulted in four schools competing for the first time. During this time, a Google search discovered there are 49 primary schools in our immediate area, so I will be approaching all of them in 2025.

Disappointingly we had one school completely pull out the week before the comp started, which significantly impacted our scheduled competition. Fortunately, the opposing schools were gracious and understanding of our contingency planning to ensure the competition still went ahead as scheduled, with thanks to the wonderful junior students from Loreto College who stepped in to provide an opposition to the affected teams. We presented each of these students with a 2024 badge as a special thank you.

To assist and guide schools once again, I offered to run workshops with their students and two schools took up this offer. Other schools informed us they had referred to our document located on the website that we created - "How to Debate" - so this resource has proven valuable.



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Overall we had:

- Year 5 & 6: 24 teams from 16 schools
- Year 7 & 8: 10 teams from 4 schools
- Year 9 & 10: 12 teams from 6 schools
- And year 11 & 12: 4 teams from 3 schools

At secondary school level the participants were mixed from government, Catholic and independent schools. Two of the schools competing at secondary level informed me they were building their debating profile and hoped to have more teams enter across Year 7 to 12 next year.

Our three adjudicators (two had adjudicated previously and one was new this year) were all highly competent on the day, generally completed their adjudications within timeframe, and were friendly and approachable to the students. This year it was jointly decided to give students written and spoken feedback immediately after each debate, however, this took some time to do. As a result, a rubric style change was made to the adjudicator sheet, and this worked well for the rest of the competition.

ACU continued to offer wonderful support in the provision of our venue, which we are very grateful. The venue suits us well and generally the timing worked appropriately. One adjustment we need to consider is allowing extra time at the start of sessions for all the introductory information the Chair needs to announce.

It would be great to encourage more volunteers. We have a dedicated small group of Debating volunteers, however, if someone is sick or unable to attend, it becomes quite onerous for those who pick up a number of sessions.

Once again, I look back on the competition with happy relief, I have had several parents and teachers tell me how much they enjoy and value the competition. I also want to express a great deal of gratitude to all our committee members, the Royal South Street Society staff, sponsors, and volunteers who helped make it a successful event.



Herald Sun Aria Report

Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair)

2024 marked an incredible 100 Years of the Royal South Street Society Herald Sun Aria! For the first time, the Aria heats and semi-final were held in the historic Minerva Space (part of the Ballarat Mechanics Institute).

We received 61 entrants from all over Australia and New Zealand for the special centenary competition. The heats began at 10.00am on Sunday 18 August and ran through until Monday morning at 11.30am. Unfortunately, there were a number of last minute withdrawals which did affect our scheduling, however, our accompanist, Dean Sky-Lucas **, and our adjudicators Greg Hocking and Stephen Smith, seemed to enjoy the unexpected program breaks.

Once the 12 semi-finalists were chosen, they had the opportunity to rehearse their two semi-final arias in the afternoon, before returning that evening with the hope of singing their way into the final six.

A highlight was the Pre-Show Drinks and Canapes on the night of the Semi-Final. We invited many of our sponsors, supporters and local councillors who were treated to a showcase of the high calibre national talent synonymous with the Herald Sun Aria.

Of the 12 semi-finalists, the following six were selected to perform at the final which was held at the Melbourne Recital Centre on Saturday 19 October:

- Asher Reichman (Tenor)
- Darcy Carroll (Bass)
- Felicity Tomkins (Soprano)
- Henry Shaw (Bass)
- Bronwyn Douglass (Soprano)
- Bailey Montgomerie (Baritone)

Felicity Tomkins from New Zealand was to become the ultimate winner of the 2024 Herald Sun Aria, followed closely by Asher Reichman.

The Herald Sun Aria is an event that Ballarat should be extremely proud of, and it was quite evident that many people did not realise how wonderful the standard, and how entertaining the semi-final evening, would be. The advantage of running a pre-show drinks and canapes package, was that we had a ready-made audience for the singers. Going forward, we need to continue to find ways to promote this event and use it to showcase the wonderful work of the Royal South Street Society.



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The Melbourne Opera team were wonderful to work with and the communication between both organisations was open and transparent throughout the planning process. Melbourne Opera continue to pay for the adjudicators and the costs of staging the final, while Royal South Street Society pays for accommodation and meals for the adjudicators.

One of the most challenging aspects of the event, was scheduling the heats with many last minute withdrawals, this led to some disgruntled audience members who were not pleased with performance gaps and increased our accompanist costs.

The other challenge is the collection of music. This is something that can lead to reams of wasted paper, but in 2024 we trialed a digital collection of music which did seem to work better, saving time and printing costs. We will continue to develop better systems in the coming years.

One final challenge is increasing the recognition of the Royal South Street Society during the final. In many cases, we feel that the contribution and history of our organisation is overlooked by the organisers and presenters at the final. It would be advantageous to impress upon Melbourne Opera the importance of RSSS so we are better aligned and recognised by the sponsors and supporters of this event.

Overall, it was a wonderful event to celebrate an incredible 100 years. While there are small things to improve and tweak, the format largely remains unchanged after all these years. We are confident that the connection with Melbourne Opera remains strong and look forward to what the future years bring.

*** Vale Dean Sky-Lucas - sadly our much-loved and extraordinarily talented accompanist, Dean Sky-Lucas, passed away suddenly in December 2024. We were deeply saddened by this news.*



Instrumental Report

Karen Pengelly (Discipline Chair)

Our 2024 year began with a new small Instrumental Committee. We set straight to work taking on board invaluable feedback sourced directly from participating, and non-participating schools.

In response to the feedback, we introduced new VCE and non-competitive sections and opened up sections to include all instruments in the sections, this included brass bands, guitar and percussion. There was also the addition of a new jazz / rock / contemporary group allowing for different styles of music to be played.

As a result, our entry numbers for our 2024 Freemasons Instrumental Competition were encouraging. We had 60 solo entries and 62 bands including ensembles, stage, orchestra and concert/brass, over five full days, starting on Saturday for solos and ending on Thursday.

The timetable of bands was coordinated specifically to allow bands to also compete in the Victorian State Schools Spectacular. This was done by ensuring the advanced bands were timetabled early in the week in order to allow for students to attend rehearsals for this major event at the end of the week.

Our highlights included the introduction of the new non-competitive sections to allow performers to play on stage for pleasure rather than under the pressure of competition. The adjudicator spent time with these bands on stage and provided a workshop which was beneficial to the band members to work under an experienced interstate musician and composer.



Our adjudicator, Matt Klohs from Perth, WA was exceptional, always sharing his outstanding wealth of knowledge and industry experience with our performers and our committee.

We are proud that the values and vision of RSSS were met through our concerted effort to encourage competitors to always be professional and respectful, including during warm up and entering and exiting the stage in a safe and respectful manner. Our entries remain open to all solo musicians, ensembles and bands regardless of their ability and are grouped according to their ability to allow for fair and reasonable competition.

Our committee always acted in a professional and welcoming manner to ensure the competition was enjoyable for all and the competition encouraged participation by providing new sections for bands to enter, providing a wider range of music and enjoyment to those who play and to those who listen.

The competition did have its challenges, including the organisation of quality percussion instruments which were provided for schools to use. In the past, this has been a major expense. Fortunately, with the assistance and generosity of Blackburn High School & Backline Ballarat, we were able to borrow and hire suitable quality instruments.

The numbers of people coming to view the competition remains a challenge - this may be due to venue being in Mt Helen, however, this cannot be the only reason as entries from schools outside Ballarat exceeded local entries. It means that families and friends of the local bands did not come to the competition to see the performers and family and friends of those from outside Ballarat did not travel.

Volunteer numbers to assist with running of competition also remains a challenge. Our volunteer numbers were just sufficient, and those who did volunteer, worked extremely hard to maintain a good quality competition.

Our future planning includes encouragement of more local bands to enter and entice family and friends to come and watch and to enjoy the magnificent sounds produced. We will continue to reflect and seek feedback to ensure the competition continues to evolve.

We will continue to initiate and promote new sections and encourage more local bands to participate, including the smaller schools who have not competed with RSSS in the past. We are seeking to implement Australian composers within the competition to encourage and support Australian talent and will review the provision of guidelines regarding grading for the sections, namely beginner, intermediate and advanced bands which has been sought from feedback.

We will continue to provide high quality adjudicators with extensive knowledge to provide constructive professional feedback.

I would like to thank our major sponsor - Freemasons Foundation Victoria, sponsors and all involved with the Freemasons Instrumental Music Competition. This includes the staff at RSSS who assist with admin and entries and provide a great deal of moral support to our small committee. 2024 was a success, through lots of hard work and dedication by our committee, volunteers, and staff. I am encouraged by the feedback received and look forward to 2025.



Pianoforte & Chopin Report

Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair) & Lauren Knight (Advisor)

The Schimmel Pianoforte Competition was held at the Freemasons Masonic Lodge from 06 to 09 August 2024. The new venue suited us well with easy parking, good warm up space and spacious performance room.

We offered 52 sections, however, due to lack of entries in some sections, we cancelled eight sections and combined with other age groups. Our adjudicator Zen Zeng encapsulated the spirit of our Eisteddfod perfectly, offering friendly and encouraging comments throughout the week and providing some wonderful tips to competitors along the way.

With 298 performances over 4 days, it was a busy week, and although each day did finish mid to late afternoon, there were no evening sessions.

The scheduling on day one was problematic due to time allocations and technical issues with new online crits. Although we had run trial versions of the new system, the live running of the crits kept bringing up errors, delaying our competition on day one. It was an incredible testament to the competitors and families on the first day, to see that everyone accepted the delays without complaint and stayed to complete their sections, even though all were given the option of a refund.

The format of the Pianoforte competition remained largely the same as it had for the previous few years and in witnessing the week firsthand, I was impressed with the high quality of pianists this event attracts.

An exciting new collaboration began this year between RSSS and Chisholm St (a lovely new private performance space in Ballarat). Chisholm St offered a paid performance prize to the winners of two chosen sections. This had the potential to be the first professional 'gig' for our young competitors. The winners of this experience, Stefania Robu and Jayden Wayne were given their performance opportunity on Sunday 03 November and we were fortunate to attend to witness their professional recital debut.

The other addition to the program this year, was the collaboration with SBN national radio. This collaboration offered pianists the chance to perform and be interviewed on national radio as part of the RSSS Hour and People's Choice Awards - opportunities such as these that provide competitors with industry development experience are incredibly worthwhile.

The prize money for Pianoforte comes mostly from established trust funds, and only the first prize in the older age groups receive a small monetary reward. We were fortunate this year to have the support from Freemasons Foundation Victoria who provided our venue. In the lead up to the event, all competitors were given clear communication about what to expect, where to go, what to bring and to actively encourage a friendly competition. Prizes have been set up to support the highest scoring pianists, but also those who are worthy of encouragement. Our marking rubric is transparent and provides tangible, fair and detailed feedback to all entrants



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In general, the whole week ran very smoothly, however there are always events that challenge us to improve our systems for future years. There was limited opportunity for beginning or emerging students to enter this competition. In future, our goal would be to find ways to open this competition up to all students, whether beginning, intermediate or advanced.

We received some negative feedback on the way we ran our composition section, and that it was deemed unfair that an arrangement was given a higher mark than a new composition. We will take these comments on board, and also the recommendation to submit the composition prior to the competition to allow the adjudicator to judge the quality and form prior to hearing the performance of the piece.

The timetabling also needs to be tweaked for next year to allow enough time for each competitor, and to ensure the adjudicator has appropriate break times.

Moving forward, we need to find additional sponsors for this discipline, to enable us to increase the prize money and offer monetary prizes in all age groups. It will also be a goal to gain the support of more piano teachers to encourage their beginner students to enter our re-imagined novice sections; and encourage more people to join the committee and/or to assist in an advisory role.

Special thanks to Lauren Knight who provided crucial advice in planning this competition, and the piano teachers in the region who also offer advice and support. We are looking forward to 2025!



Celebrating Chopin

Celebrating Chopin was held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat on Saturday 31 August and Sunday 01 September. We sincerely thank our major sponsor of this prestigious competition, Dr Andrew Cochran, who continues to support the competition in memory of his mother, Margaret Schofield OAM.

We had 13 entrants in the Junior Chopin section and 14 entrants in the Margaret Schofield Senior Chopin section. These entry figures are on par with previous years. Our adjudicators were Kenji Fujimura and Julie Haskell who both presented with professionalism and integrity.

Each competitor is given warm up time on the Schimmel grand piano prior to the beginning of the competition, and each competitor presents a lengthy program. Therefore, we set aside a full day for each age group. In the end, this proved to be excessive, as only seven competitors presented for the junior competition and eight presented for the Margaret Schofield OAM senior award.

Regardless of the quantity, the quality was outstanding! The audience were treated to an immersive and impressive experience, listening to high calibre performances of Chopin while surrounded by glorious art works in the Oddie Gallery.

The significant prize money offered by Dr Andrew Cochran, and the opportunity to play on a first class Schimmel Pianoforte, is what makes this competition prestige. There is a great opportunity for this competition to be highly sought after Australia wide, and even on an international level for pianists looking to break into the professional circuit.

In general, the event ran smoothly but the potential must be pursued. A follow up meeting with the piano teachers of the 2024 entrants resulted in some fabulous planning.

In future years we will work on:

- Bringing a premium concert level grand piano to Ballarat to a RSSS home. We would then no longer need to transport these musical works of art, and we can strengthen Ballarat as the home of the fine piano competitions.
- Offering 'performance' money to all competitors who compete on the day. This would have the added benefit of covering costs for travel, and provide greater incentive for them to get their program ready for the day.
- Streamline the scheduling.
- Market this opportunity to the wider music conservatoires across Australia to increase awareness of the opportunities this competition provides talent pianists.

We are looking forward to an exciting 2025!





Speech & Drama Report

Kris Carroll (Discipline Chair)

2024 saw lots of 'firsts' within the discipline of Speech and Drama.

- New first time Discipline Chair – long term RSSS volunteer, Kris Carroll.
- First time in our new venue, Connors Hall, with sponsorship from ACU.
- First time adjudication from a former RSSS alumnus – Jack Richardson.
- First time producing online adjudication crits for participants through the MyStage program.
- Several new first time volunteers.

With the hard work and dedication of the staff, committee, volunteers, teachers and supportive families; all of these firsts, with the solid foundations built over many previous years, culminated in a spectacular week of friendly, fun and fabulous performances.

In 2024, Speech and Drama ran from Mon 19 – Friday 24 August and entries saw a steady increase of more than 30 up from 2023.

The Discipline Chair of many years, Dr Mary-Rose McLaren, retired from the role in 2022. She is the font of knowledge when it comes to the history of RSSS Speech and Drama and has been very generous in sharing her wealth of experience, understanding and anecdotes, of former teachers, sponsors, family members, volunteers etc. With this information, we were able to produce interesting, heartfelt and meaningful snapshots and profiles of these important contributors to the Speech and Drama competition. It was lovely to share these tidbits with the competitors and audience members to add value and understanding to the many, many important individuals who have shaped this discipline and so generously continue to offer up the sponsorship and prizes in many of the sections. Hopefully, with this, the history and the legacy of many will be carried on, with appreciation into the future.



Another highlight was the return of several award winning Speech & Drama alumni, who were invited and happily returned to present many of the aggregate and special awards. These were delightful reunions and presentations. They displayed and reinforced to the new competitors of the friendships that have been forged from being involved. It demonstrated the support, respect and love that has been at the heart of this discipline no matter the school, teacher or age group of the competitors. It showed a willingness to encourage and support each other and was a direct testimony to the value of the lifelong skills learned from the study and application of speech and drama.

The new space threw out a few challenges due to space, either too much, or not enough. We lacked an appropriate 'break-out' space for competitors to change and practice. Acoustics in the large hall space was of some concern at first but turned out to be quite good. However, the noise from the hallway of competitors and audience members proved to be a great distraction, especially to the adjudicator. We are very keen to rectify this problem in 2025.

In 2025, we look forward to incorporating comedy sections into the program and we are thrilled to be working alongside the City of Ballarat to introduce a new, sponsored section that will be open to all local high schools to participate in, for Years 9 & 10 and 11 & 12.

As with many RSSS sections, the pandemic cut the entries of Speech and Drama significantly and damaged the confidence of many of our young participants. Our discipline is recovering and looking to forge a new and exciting path, with the goal of strengthening and developing into a relevant and appealing discipline for our future speakers and dramatists.



Vocal Report

Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair)

The 2024 RSSS Freemasons Vocal Competition was held from Sunday 11 August to Saturday 17 August at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute, Minerva Space. The growing Vocal competition continues to provide amazing opportunities for singers, including the opportunity to receive detailed feedback on a marking rubric, to win cash prizes, coaching sessions and to partake in a series of masterclass opportunities.

Due to increased entry numbers, and a goal to finish each night by 9.30pm, our timetable of events increased from six days in 2023, to seven days in 2024. There were a staggering 608 entries across the entire vocal competition (compared with 474 entries in 2023), with the most notable increase being in the upper age groups. We had an average of 11 hours of competition each day, and a total of 61 sections.

Our adjudicators were Queenie van de Zandt, Justine Anderson and Gerald Marko, all of whom contributed a different set of skills, background experience and vocal preferences, giving our competitors the opportunity to hear a variety of feedback. The adjudicators rotated through the week, and were joined on the final day by Dr Richard Chew who came to co-adjudicate the senior vocal sections and run a well-attended and inspiring Art Song and Lieder Masterclass.

One of the most encouraging aspects this year was the increase of entries in 18 Years and Over. This age group had almost disappeared from the competition over the past 5 – 10 years, with an average of 38 entries each year. In 2024, this was more than double with 94 entries and we were able to fill an entire day with this age group for the first time in 16 years. We believe an increase in prize money (with thanks to Hans Henkell for his support of classical vocal) and a wide variety of sections are both big factors in the increase.

It must also be noted that there was significant support from some of the local teachers who are pro-actively encouraging their adult students to enter.

The Vocal Competition sources all prize money and awards from sponsorship, including industry opportunities, so it continues to perform well in the overall profit and loss report for the Society.

The Crossover Championship was again a highlight this year, as was the involvement of Victorian Opera. This new sponsor provided some incredible opportunities for our vocalists, including tickets to upcoming Victorian Opera events, a 2025 season pass, and the opportunity to be selected to perform in the Ballarat Opera Festival. Approximately 15 competitors were offered the amazing opportunity to rehearse under the baton of Phoebe Briggs and perform in the choir accompanied by the Ballarat Symphony Orchestra.

Our ongoing industry partnerships with SBN national radio, and the Sally Bourne Music Theatre Prize continue to inspire and provide extended development opportunities for our performers.

We strive to connect with all competitors in the lead up to the event with open and clear communication and actively encourage a friendly competition. Prizes have been set up to support the highest scoring singers, but also those who are worthy of encouragement. Our marking rubric is transparent and provides tangible, fair and detailed feedback to all entrants.

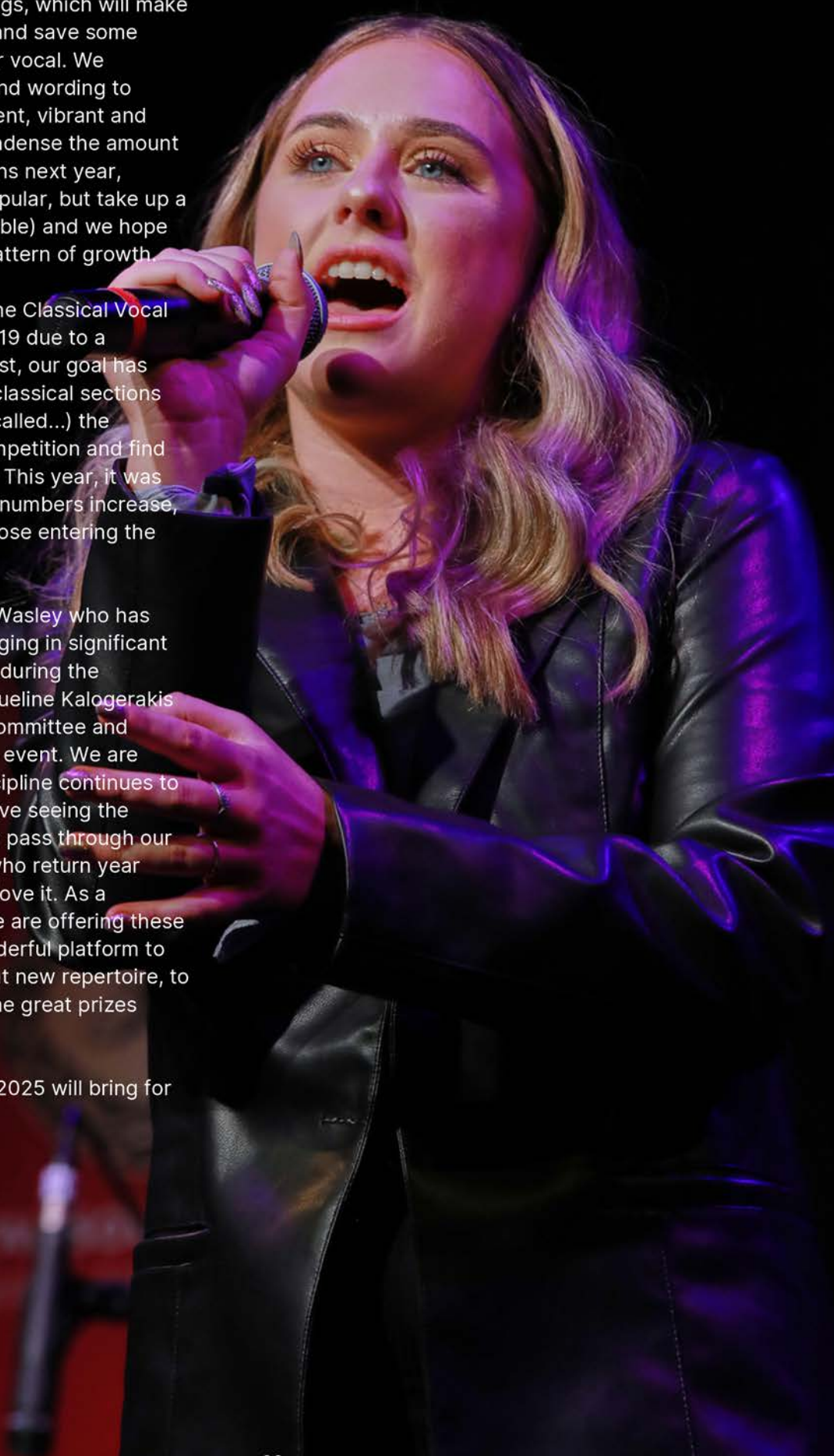
In general, the whole week ran very smoothly, however there are always events that challenge us to improve our systems for future years. We always welcome constructive feedback and as a result there are some planned changes for 2025.

Going forward, we will make some changes to our adjudicator bookings, which will make better use of their time, and save some accommodation costs for vocal. We continually tweak rules and wording to ensure that we stay current, vibrant and engaging. We plan to condense the amount of musical theatre sections next year, (which are immensely popular, but take up a large chunk of the timetable) and we hope to continue our overall pattern of growth.

Ever since the stand-alone Classical Vocal Competition closed in 2019 due to a diminishing lack of interest, our goal has been to incorporate the classical sections within (what used to be called...) the Contemporary Vocal Competition and find ways to build it up again. This year, it was so heartening to see the numbers increase, not only overall, but in those entering the classical sections.

Special thanks to Jason Wasley who has been instrumental in bringing in significant sponsorship and helping during the competition, and to Jacqueline Kalogerakis who has helped on the committee and during the running of the event. We are proud that our Vocal discipline continues to grow and improve. We love seeing the calibre of singers as they pass through our competition, and those who return year after year because they love it. As a renowned eisteddfod, we are offering these young performers a wonderful platform to hone their skills, to try out new repertoire, to entertain, and to win some great prizes along the way.

We are excited for what 2025 will bring for the Vocal Competition!



Volunteers Report

Compiled by Carolyn Bennett (Eisteddfod Development & Volunteer Coordinator)

It was a busy year for the Royal South Street Society volunteers!

Along with our regular season of events, we hosted five volunteer functions throughout the year and also saw the introduction and implementation of some key new components.

- New volunteer shirts – sponsored by Ingenia Lifestyle
- The release and implementation of our new Volunteer Management Plan
- The launch of our Volunteer Handbook on our new website
- The launch of our Child Safety Volunteer Training Course

We also attended the Ballarat Foundation Volunteer Expo in May with the aim of spreading the word around town and offering the Royal South Street Society as a great place to volunteer, learn new skills and feel part of a vibrant and exciting community.

In March, we invited our volunteers to participate in the 2024 Begonia Festival Parade as a celebration of our longstanding contribution to Ballarat. This event highlighted our role as a thriving not-for-profit organisation in the community. On Monday, March 11, despite the intense heat, thousands of spectators lined the streets to enjoy the parade. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated volunteers and performers who made the day a success.



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On Thursday, April 18, we hosted two volunteer training sessions at the Ballarat Masonic Lodge, which also served as our official season launch. The day featured two identical sessions covering:

- Season Welcome – Lindsay Eaton (Board Chair)
- Discipline Overview – Discipline Chairs
- Volunteer Management Plan – Carolyn Bennett
- Volunteer Sponsor Talk – Karen Eaton (Ingenia Lifestyle)
- Business Overview – Judy-Ann Quilliam (Business and Marketing Manager)
- MyStage Training – Albert and Wilson (MyStage Creators)

The sessions were well attended, providing a valuable opportunity to refresh our knowledge—especially with MyStage!



On Sunday, May 19, we partnered with the Ballarat Tramway Museum to host a volunteer social event. It was a fantastic morning spent exploring the rich history of the Ballarat tramways and touring their impressive new facility. The day included a scenic tram ride, followed by a delightful morning tea. A big thank you to Sam Boon and the BTM volunteers for their warm hospitality and for making the experience so enjoyable!

Our next event was the Morning Tea and Musical Melodies at Ingenia Parkside Lucas - an opportunity to collaborate with one of our major volunteer sponsors, explore their brand-new facility, and hopefully welcome new volunteers to our team.

The event featured a delightful musical performance by the Buninyong Players, a recorder quartet that captivated us with a beautiful program of Renaissance music played on a variety of unique instruments.

Additionally, we launched our Child Safe Training Course that morning. Attendees participated in the online training modules, successfully earning their Child Safe Compliance certificates.

This event seamlessly transitioned into the heart of our performance season, with our dedicated volunteers providing essential support throughout the four busy months of the Eisteddfod.

As part of our Volunteer Management Plan, we introduced monthly Volunteer Awards, generously sponsored by Country Kitchen and Michael Unwin Wines. In addition to these, we also presented Special Awards and recognised our Volunteer of the Year for outstanding contributions.

2024 Award Recipients

- **August** – Doug McGregor & Rebecca Norris
- **September** – Jessica Godfrey & Danielle Coltman
- **October** – Andrea Brown & Jo Hocking
- **Special Awards (Above & Beyond)** – Keith Murdoch & Roland Kaval



Our End of Year Thank You function was held at the Ballarat Mechanics’ Institute on Monday, December 9, celebrating not only the conclusion of another busy year but also the exciting new partnership between the Royal South Street Society and the BMI.

This joint event brought together volunteers from both organizations, with wonderful musical performances by the Ballarat Choral Society and the Ballarat Brass Band.

Volunteer Recognition Awards

We were thrilled to acknowledge the dedication of our volunteers with certificates and gifts:

Volunteer of the Year

🏆 Keith Murdoch

Above & Beyond Awards

- Andrea Brown
- Danielle Coltman
- Jessica Godfrey
- David Callinan

Volunteer Achievement Awards

- Nanette Clifton
- Annette Lawson
- Doug McGregor
- Heidi Walsh
- Jo Hocking
- Graeme Brown

Most Outstanding New Volunteer

★ Rachael Lynch

Young Shining Star Award

★ Naomi McKee

As we reflect on the year, we are once again overwhelmed by the unwavering dedication of our volunteers. Thanks to the generous support of our Volunteer Sponsors - Michael Unwin Wines, Ingenia Lifestyle, Country Kitchen, Mars Wrigley, and Hecho en Mexico - we were able to express our gratitude in a small but meaningful way.



Sadly, following our Christmas event in December, we received the heartbreaking news that one of our much loved long term volunteers, Doug McGregor, had passed away.

Many of the RSSS community attended his funeral to honor this wonderful man and his extraordinary contribution to the Royal South Street Society and Ballarat performing arts community for more than 40 years.

Rest in peace, Doug.



Archives Report

Compiled by David Callinan - Volunteer Archivist

The small RSSS Archives team are continuing the massive undertaking of digitizing all of the RSSS competitor data. We are currently working on the year 1953 and will continue to work back to the start. Thank you to Janice Wilckens and Lynda Grant for that work. The Program Guide archive is being upgraded by David Evans and Alex Ball is bringing together reference material required for research on our sponsors history, and the history of the people involved in running the competitions. David Callinan is continuing to manage the Archives and do research.

New material is being accessioned, indexed and photographed constantly.

Preparations are underway for our 2025 display at BPAC (Ballarat Performing Arts Community) for the Ballarat Heritage Festival in May – focussing on the history of performing arts in Ballarat. Royal South Street Society is proud to have a prominent role in this important cultural history and the BPAC exhibition. There will be another major reworking of the archives as we consider our changing office, storage and archives needs into the future.

Images below from the 2023 RSSS AGM held at BPAC



Volunteer Milestone Awards



Loretta Kaval



Melanie Dunbar

Ron Stead

David Santamaria

Barbara Stead

Irene Warfe



David Callinan

Heidi Walsh



Kris Carroll

Simon Carroll



Colleen Holloway



Claire Thorpe

2024 Active Volunteers

KELLI AGGETT	JAS FORBES	JANICE LYNN	ROSEMARY SHELUDKO
BRONWYN AKERS	AUNDREA FORESTER	JORDAN MACE	KELLY SILBEREISEN
NICKI BALLINGER	RHIANNON FRANKAS	JOHN MACLEOD	NICHOLA SLEIGHT
CAROLYN BENNETT	NAOMI FRAWLEY	BECK MAJOR	YVONNE SMITH
VICKI BENNETT	LAYNE FRAWLEY	DEBBIE MARSHALL	BRONISLAW SOZANSKI
LAURA BENNEY	PAM GILBERT	VERNA MARTIN	BARBARA STEAD
CAROLYN BOURKE	DEBORAH GILCHRIST	MELINDA MARTIN	RON STEAD
STACEY BOURKE	JOEL GILL	BOB MATTHEWS	NEIL STEINMAN
LOUISE BROOKS	JESSICA GODFREY	ELSPETH MATTHEWS	MARJORIE STEINMAN
ANDREA BROWN	JOY GOH	WENDY MCCANN	PAUL STEPHENS
CHERIE BROWN	ROBYN GOULD	DOUG MCGREGOR	WEE STRICKLAND
HELEN BROWN	LYNDA GRANT	NAOMI MCKEE	PAULINE SUNDERLAND
LEXIE BROWN	GLENYS GRIGG	PAM MCKEE	AKASHA TEMPLE-
NORA CAIN	REBECCA GRIME	MARY-ROSE MCLAREN	MATTHEWS
DAVID CALLINAN	ARCHER HALL	TAMARA MCLEOD	CLAIRE THORPE
KRIS CARROLL	DAWN HARRINGTON	CHLOE MCMILLIN	HEATHER TURNER
CARON CAVALIER	RON HARRINGTON	ALEXANDRA MEERBACH	MELINDA UNMACK
NANETTE CLIFTON	LLOYD HARVEY	ADAM MILLER	LUCY VAN
TONY COLE	LORRAINE HARVEY	AMANDA MILTON	HEERWAARDEN
DANIELLE COLTMAN	RILEY HAYMES	WAYNE MITCHELL	TAMMY VANDENBERG
CAROL CONWAY	KAY HEADLAND	HILARY MORGAN	MARION WALDRON
COURTNEY CUMMINGS	JO HOCKING	KEITH MURDOCH	MIKA WALLACE
KAREN DANIELL	EVA HOCKING	PETER NETHERCOTE	HEIDI WALSH
NOREEN DANIELL	MICHELLE HODGSON	REBECCA NORRIS	SOPHIE WALTERS
DIANNE DAVIDSON	COLLEEN HOLLOWAY	BELLA OTTINI	IRENE WARFE
MATTHEW DILEO	WALLY HORSMAN	SUMMER OTTINI	JASON WASLEY
ELIZA DODD	LAURA HUDSON	ZAIDA PAUL	JOYLENE WECKERT
LAUREN DOWNER	TANI JAKINS	GRAHAM PAULIN	SILVIA WETZEL
BARB DUNLOP	AMY JEFFREYS	KAREN PENGELLY	JANICE WILCKENS
RIC DUNLOP	BARRY JOHNSON	MORGAN PENGELLY	CAROLYN WILLIAMS
LINDSAY EATON	BROOKE JOHNSON	ELISHA POLKINGHORNE	STACEY WIMSHURST
KAREN EATON	SHEENA JOHNSON	EMMA QUAYLE	VIRGINA WISE
LAURA EDMONDSON	JACQUELINE KALOGERAKIS	JUDY-ANN QUILLIAM	ASHLEIGH WOODBRIDGE
GAYLE ELLEN	LORETTA KAVAL	WENDY RIDING	PETER ZALA
FIONA EMERY	ROLAND KAVAL	COURTNEY RODDA	
DAVID EVANS	SHARYN KENNEDY	AMANDA RUSHTON	
REBECCA FARNELL	LAUREN KNIGHT	TIM RYAN	ARCHIVE TEAM
TANYA FERGUSON	EDDY KOENE	TARA SCHMIDT	DAVID CALLINAN
AMANDA FEWELL	ANNETTE LAWSON	CATHY SCRIVENER	DAVID EVANS
JILL FILMER	NATASHA LIM	MICHELLE SCRIVENER	LYNDA GRANT
SANDRA FISHWICK	STELLA LOVESCO	JENNIFER SEARL	SILVIA WETZEL
RON FLEMING	RACHAEL LYNCH	RACHAEL SHELTON	

2024 Associate Members

CAROLYN BENNETT
LOUISE BROOKS
ANDREA BROWN
CHERIE BROWN
LEXIE BROWN
DAVID CALLINAN
DANIELLE COLTMAN
LINDSAY EATON
KAREN EATON
VIVIENNE EDLUND
DAVID EVANS
SANDRA FISHWICK
JESSICA GODFREY
ROBYN GOULD
LYNDA GRANT
DAWN HARRINGTON
RON HARRINGTON
ANNETTE LAWSON
WAYNE MITCHELL
REBECCA NORRIS
GRAHAM PAULIN
MARJORIE STEINMAN
NEIL STEINMAN
HEATHER TURNER

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.

2024 Supporters Thank You

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

Gold Crown

ACU - Australian Catholic University
City of Ballarat
Cochrane, Andrew
Creative Victoria
Energetiks
Freemasons Foundation Victoria
Ingenia Lifestyle

Silver Crown

ACF Australian Calisthenics Federation
Ballarat Mechanics Institute
Bernie's Music Land
Isabella Foundation
SBN - School Broadcasting Network
UFS Healthcare

Bronze Crown

Astec Equipment Services
Central Highlands Water
Clark, Norma Memorial Fund
CountPro
Couture Costume Dancewear
D'Addario Australia
Federation University
Henkell Brothers
Mulcahy & Co
Opening Night Supplies
Petera Clamp Estate

Champion

APATA - Australian Performing Arts Teachers
Association
Ascet Digital
Coltman Family

Champion cont..

Flying Horse Entertainment Venue
Matthews, Robert
Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre
Optiform
Robertson Smith, Frank Scholarship Fund
Victorian Opera
Victorian Flair
Young, K&A Trust

Scholarship

Australian Ballet School
Australian Classical Grand Prix
Ballarat Dance Awards
Bourne, Sally & Jacobs, Vicky & Langton, Melissa
& Walker, Susan-Ann
Hoffa Studios
MOPAC - Ministry of Performing Arts College
SCIMM. Dance
Transit Dance
WAAPA - Western Australian Academy of
Performing Arts
Western Ballet Project

Encore

Ballarat Jazz Club
BLOC Music Theatre
Bradford, Marilyn
Branch, Lorayne
Brown, Andrea & Justin
Buninyong/Mt Helen Lions Club
Caine Real Estate
Cash's Awards and Promotion Solutions
Clifton Old Collegians
Field Air

2024 Supporters Thank You

Encore cont..

Fishwick Family
Fox, Julie & Barclay, Helen
Hecho En Mexico
M&L McLean Cleaning Services
Mortgage Choice
Newington Physiotherapy
The Piano Bar
Reus Flower Co
Rotary Club of Ballarat East
Sovereign Press
Victorian Dance Festival
Williams Family

Spotlight

Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Trust
ANATS Victoria
Antoine, Robyn and the Enduring Classics
Singing Group
ASCA - Australian Society of Calisthenics
Ballarat Allied Health
Ballarat Arts Foundation
Ballarat Ballet Guild
Ballarat National Theatre
Ballarat Solo Competitions Inc
Ballarat Vocal Studio
BCMA - Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts
Birmingham Farm
Bowman, Dr Calvin
Byrne, TE Memorial Fund
Carpenter Family
Carwen Calisthenics
Cole, Dr Tony
CommDance
Coward-Lemke School of Music
Dance Around the World
Eaton, Lindsay & Karen
Gay, Tim & Liz
Harrington, Ron and Dawn
Gardner, Chris
Homeground Cafe & Bakery
Hooper, W.S Trust
Keats, Ivy Memorial Fund
James, Margery Trust

Spotlight cont...

Jayde Calisthenic Club
Isabella Foundation
Buninyong / Mt Helen Lions Club
Kaval, Loretta
McInnes, Brian
McMahon, Nicholas
Monk, Lillian Trust
Morgan, Monica Trust
Morgan, Mr & Mrs R
Morrison, Elsie Trust
Nerrina Progress Association
Oaktree Dental
One Life Health Group
O'Hehir, Veronica
The Reed Family
Rotary Clubs of Ballarat South & Ballarat East
Ryan, Tim
Soroptimist International
Stapp, Anita
The Shine Centre
Tunstall Square Calisthenics
Vawdrey, Sally Memorial Fund
Morrell, William Memorial Trust
Wiseman, Julie and Garlick, Rebecca
Zonta Club of Ballarat

as well as many others and anonymous supporters.

Executive Officer's Report

Executive Officer - Judy-Ann Quilliam

Royal South Street Society aims to be Australia's premier eisteddfod, fostering participation, enjoyment and enrichment through the performing arts. Achieving this vision through the Board's strategic plan is central to this role.

Key priorities (2022–2025) include:

- Deliver a valued performance experience for competitors, teachers, and supporters.
- Promote RSSS to stakeholders and the wider community.
- Manage operations effectively and efficiently.
- Strengthen financial foundations to ensure an annual surplus.

In 2024, we launched new plans for marketing, communications, quality management, volunteers, alumni, and fundraising - aligned with our strategic objectives. This guided the redesign of our website, launched successfully on time ahead of March 01 for the 2024 season's entries. The engaging site now integrates our past, present, and future.

There have been many policies and procedures written, updated, approved and published on our website, via our ongoing Quality Management cycle.

Marketing and communications will remain a priority as we reconnect with the community and reinforce RSSS's cultural, educational, social and economic impact.

Many new residents, businesses, and organisations in our region are unaware of RSSS. To expand our reach, we've invested in updated marketing resources, including website, social media, direct email, photography, videography, signage, and advertising—our first major update since pre-COVID.

Following extensive research, we've also adopted Artfuel, a new CRM tailored for performing arts eisteddfods. Developed by I-Nex Corporation, this Australian platform is used by leading arts organisations, including Sydney Eisteddfod. Implementation is currently underway, including historical data migration.

Ensuring our long-term sustainability requires significant investment in people, technology, finances, and volunteers, along with operational changes for 2025. Our 2025 Board will set a strategic plan that balances artist development, sustainability, and broader economic and social impact. What will Royal South Street Society and our annual Ballarat Eisteddfod look like in 100 years?

After 133 years, we continue the legacy of the forward-thinking leadership that has come before us, securing performance opportunities for future generations.

It is an exciting time to be part of the Royal South Street Society as a staff member, Board or committee member, volunteer, sponsor or supporter. We welcome everyone to join us or continue to experience the performing arts as an audience member to support our stars of the future!

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 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Income from ordinary activities			
Admission income			
Admissions		180,220	175,844
Total admission income		180,220	175,844
Other income			
Certificates		309	274
Dividends received		19,235	18,818
Donations		51,289	130,311
Entry fees		235,242	189,759
Grants received		118,518	117,922
Guide books and programs		13,566	11,438
Interest earned on RSSS funds		1,248	39
Interest earned on Trust funds		14,802	12,133
Other merchandise		6,868	3,826
Other rent and hire		8,823	10,441
Recoveries		1,834	1,418
Sale of badges		17,890	12,623
Sponsorships		81,311	66,580
Sundry income		5,292	642
Total other income		576,227	576,224
Total income from ordinary activities	4	756,447	752,068
Expenses from ordinary activities			
Accommodation		23,081	16,550
Accompanists		-	1,858
Accounting		46,300	37,920
Adjudicators and writers		52,328	41,483
Advertising		37,828	3,673
Audit fees		7,600	7,190
Bad and doubtful debts		(8,450)	8,450
Bank fees		4,424	5,713
Board costs		-	2,198
Commission on seat sales		5,008	4,735
Computer software and supplies		17,734	7,015
Contractor fees		-	1,944
Depreciation		36,057	33,369
Donations, gifts and presentations		1,116	273
Equipment hire		67,053	57,346
Finance costs		833	2,834
Functions and meeting costs		5,497	1,126
Insurance		10,119	8,940
Insurances - workcover		3,661	120
Licences, permits, legal fees		4,499	5,236

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
Note	\$	\$
Legal fees	-	900
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	1,504	-
Meals	4,057	4,846
Occupancy overheads	4,800	4,627
Photocopier	1,788	2,196
Postage	1,483	911
Printing guide and prize books	10,445	7,226
Prize money	72,857	63,040
Retail stock purchased	7,099	10,700
Salaries and labour	221,526	133,046
Staff training and other costs	984	381
Stardom entry fees	5,049	5,870
Stationery and office supplies	2,545	1,511
Subscriptions	1,188	1,781
Superannuation	23,387	13,924
Telephone and internet	2,872	2,719
Travel allowance	8,104	6,095
Trophies and medals	13,981	14,804
Uniforms	408	-
Utilities, rates and waste disposal	4,279	3,702
Venue hire	86,565	80,019
Volunteers	7,556	598
Total expenses from ordinary activities	797,165	606,869
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(40,718)	145,199
Other comprehensive income		
Net unrealised gain on revaluation of financial assets	170	758
Total comprehensive income	(40,548)	145,957

Statement of Financial Position
As At 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	135,436	194,113
Trade and other receivables	6	24,257	35,858
Total current assets		<u>159,693</u>	<u>229,971</u>
Non-current assets			
Investments	7	322,146	313,284
Trust prize investments	8	267,127	267,127
Property, plant and equipment	9	149,532	157,399
Total non-current assets		<u>738,805</u>	<u>737,810</u>
Total assets		<u>898,498</u>	<u>967,781</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	13,811	32,188
Other financial liabilities	12	75,672	74,372
Lease liabilities	13	4,037	25,908
Employee benefits	14	18,983	5,735
Total current liabilities		<u>112,503</u>	<u>138,203</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	13	640	4,618
Employee benefits	14	1,402	459
Total non-current liabilities		<u>2,042</u>	<u>5,077</u>
Total liabilities		<u>114,545</u>	<u>143,280</u>
Net assets		<u>783,953</u>	<u>824,501</u>
Equity			
Retained earnings		321,119	367,677
Financial asset reserve		48,403	48,233
Piano revaluation reserve		111,766	111,766
Trust fund reserve		302,665	296,825
Total equity		<u>783,953</u>	<u>824,501</u>

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 31 December 2024

2024

	Retained earnings	Financial asset reserve	Piano revaluation reserve	Trust fund reserve	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2024	367,677	48,233	111,766	296,825	824,501
Deficit for the year	(40,718)	-	-	-	(40,718)
Transfer to/(from) reserves	(5,840)	-	-	5,840	-
Revaluation increment	-	170	-	-	170
Balance at 31 December 2024	321,119	48,403	111,766	302,665	783,953

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

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
Note	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Guide book sales	13,566	11,438
Other sales	24,758	17,477
Donations	51,289	130,311
Entry fees	235,242	189,759
Admissions	180,220	175,844
Interest received	15,799	10,740
Interest paid	(832)	(2,833)
Grants received	119,818	159,622
Hires and recoveries	10,657	11,791
Dividends received	22,749	5,777
Other income	90,731	137,677
Payments to suppliers and employees	<u>(767,131)</u>	<u>(729,348)</u>
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	22 <u>(3,134)</u>	118,255
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	<u>(29,050)</u>	(4,666)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(29,050)</u>	(4,666)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payment of lease liabilities	<u>(26,493)</u>	(24,364)
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(26,493)</u>	(24,364)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(58,677)	89,225
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>194,113</u>	104,888
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5 <u><u>135,436</u></u>	<u>194,113</u>



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD

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