

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



ROYAL
SOUTH
STREET
SOCIETY

Overview

For more than 135 years, the Royal South Street Society has created stages where confidence grows, talent is nurtured and creative futures begin. Since 1891, generations of young Australians have stepped forward through the RSSS Ballarat Eisteddfod, discovering their voice, refining their craft and building lifelong connections to the performing arts.



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY



What began as a community initiative has grown into Australia's oldest and longest-running eisteddfod and the delivery platform for Victoria's largest youth performing arts pathway. More than one million performers — from first-time participants to future leaders in the arts and public life — have shared in this journey.

Today, the Royal South Street Society continues to honour its legacy while investing in the next generation, strengthening communities and sustaining essential cultural and educational infrastructure for regional Victoria and beyond. Over 29,000 pairs of feet graced the stages of the Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod in 2025

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	Doug McGregor
K.J Flecknoe	
R.C Barrett	
W.S Hooper	

Life Members

Cole, Dr. Anthony (Tony)
Dunlop, Barbara
Fishwick, Sandra
Harrington, Ron O.A.M
Harrington, Dawn
Harvey, Lorraine
Harvey, Lloyd
Matthews, Robert
McInnis, Brian
Zala, Peter



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.

2025 Board Directors

Resignations or retirement/non-standing from the Board of Directors before, on or after the 2024 AGM

- Karen Daniell - November 2025



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

2025 has seen many highlights, coordinated by our fabulous team led by Executive Officer, Judy-Ann Quilliam and supported by Eisteddfod Coordinators, Louise Brooks and Carolyn Bennett. We were also delighted to welcome Susie Schmidt late in the season.

The year commenced with our Season Opening at BMI, which incorporated the announcement of an exciting appeal to raise the funds to purchase a magnificent Schimmel piano. The result exceeded our initial expectations — though not our hopes. A huge thank you to everyone who purchased a piano key, enabling this beautiful instrument to remain at BMI and enjoyed by performers long into the future.

For some time our previous office premises had become increasingly difficult to manage without a reliable lift in the building. We now have sufficient space to accommodate our full team, including the archive and much of our historical storage. This move positions RSSS with a solid ongoing lease arrangement that is financially beneficial in the longer term.

It was wonderful to finally return to Her Maj for Dance and Calisthenics in 2025. The feedback from performers was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing how special it was to once again take the stage at Her Maj. While the transition back presented some challenges as everyone adjusted, the overall outcome was extremely encouraging.

Bringing back the end of season Showcase was another season highlight. There was an enormous amount of work invested in creating such a successful and celebratory conclusion to the season.

The full Board participated in developing our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, with the assistance of a consulting firm. From this work, we have progressed a shift in our overall focus — moving from positioning RSSS as a “competition” to emphasising our broader identity as an “Eisteddfod” that provides a developmental pathway for performers from a young age through to wherever their aspirations may lead.

This change reflects consistent feedback across almost all sectors of our community including schools, participants, sponsors, grant providers and the broader community. While our core purpose remains unchanged — providing a platform for performance, feedback and active participation — we recognise that many stakeholders are increasingly focused on nurturing development rather than solely on competitive outcomes; and we have an important role in this process.

Financial management continues to be an ongoing challenge for RSSS. We sincerely thank the sponsors and supporters who provide valuable financial assistance to our program. Ensuring we remain relevant to our partners while building long-term sustainability is one of our key priorities and challenges moving forward. As reflected in the enclosed financial statements, although we achieved a positive result through increased income, there are several areas of concern that will require focus in 2026 and beyond.

Finally, thank you to our cohesive and supportive Board, whose collaborative approach has delivered many positive outcomes throughout the year.

Office Management Team

RSSS Office Management Team as at 31/12/2025

- Judy-Ann Quilliam - Executive Officer
- Louise Brooks - Eisteddfod Coordinator
- Carolyn Bennett - Eisteddfod Development and Volunteer Coordinator
- Susie Schmidt - Finance Officer



Discipline Committees

- **All Abilities Performing Arts** – Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair), Akasha Temple-Mathews, Amy Jeffreys, Damien Pree, Rachael Lynch, Joel Gills
- **Calisthenics** – Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair), Lexie Brown, Fiona Emery, Annette Lawson, Cherie Brown, Rebecca Norris
- **Choral** – Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair), Sheena Johnson, Narelle Carr
- **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
- **Instrumental Music** – Karen Pengelly (Discipline Chair), Janice Lynn, Nichola Sleight
- **Pianoforte & Chopin** – Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair), Barbara Stead, (*Lauren Knight, Deborah Gilchrist, Katie Apps, Wendy Rechenberg, Bron Sozanski, Anna Whitehead - Discipline Advisors*)
- **Speech & Drama** – Kris Carroll (Discipline Chair), Mika Wallace, Rachael Shelton, Tamara Vandenburg
- **Vocal & Aria** – Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair), Jason Wasley, Jacqueline Kalogerakis, Danielle Larkins, Anna Whitehead

2025 Performance Highlights

Shining a spotlight on the 2025 Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod... where **over 29,000** pairs of feet hit the stage throughout our 2025 season of events!

Over 25,000 individual people attended to perform, watch, support or volunteer, 9 different performing arts disciplines, 703 individual sections, 4 months of Eisteddfod events, over 110 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.



A 2025 season launch was held in February, along with the launch of the Key to Music campaign to raise funds for the purchase of our beautiful new Margaret Schofield OAM Memorial piano - a Schimmel K195 Konzert Grand piano, housed at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute. We finally returned to Her Majesty's Theatre for dance and calisthenics and held the first RSSS Season Showcase in October.

And we moved our office and archives location to a new single site at 125 Albert St Ballarat.



2025 Season Launch



RSSS office and archive's relocation to one site at 125 Albert St, Ballarat



Key to Music campaign that resulted in welcoming our stunning new Schimmel K195 Grand Konzert Piano

The Margaret Schofield^{OAM} Memorial Piano

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY
BALLARAT EISTEDDFOD

A0	In memory of Jess Crowe	Karen & Lincoln Eaton	A0A
B0	Tao Ryan		
C1	Royal South Street Society	Patricia Clamp Trust	C1A
D1	Brendley Seal Piano Tuner Technician	Patricia Clamp Trust	D1A
E1	Andrew Cochrane		
F1	Mhonda Rumbler	Yvonne Rumbler	F1A
G1	Kingston Callithanos College	Andrew Cochrane	G1A
A1	Andrew Cochrane	Mark de Rosal	A1A
B1	Fiona Cochrane		
C2	Andrew Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	C2A
D2	Fiona Cochrane	Andrew Cochrane	D2A
E2	Margaret Cochran		
F2	Janette Clarke	Fiona Cochrane	F2A
G2	Anonymous Supporter	Andrew Cochrane	G2A
A2	Barb & Ric Durlop	Paula Nicholson	A2A
B2	Bronwyn Blacklock		
C3	Judy Ann Quilliam	Fiona Cochrane	C3A
D3	Andrew Cochrane	Andrew Cochrane	D3A
E3	Fiona Cochrane		
F3	Andrew Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	F3A
G3	Fiona Cochrane	Andrew Cochrane	G3A
A3	Andrew Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	A3A
B3	Fiona Cochrane		
C4	Charles & Marion Cullman (Wife)	Andrew Cochrane	C4A
D4	Andrew Cochrane		
E4	Fiona Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	E4A
F4	Loretta Colledge	Andrew Cochrane	F4A
G4	Fiona Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	G4A
A4	Andrew Cochrane	Andrew Cochrane	A4A
B4	Fiona Cochrane		
C5	Christopher Gardner	Fiona Cochrane	C5A
D5	Anonymous Supporter		
E5	Fiona Bar Ballant	Fiona Bar Ballant	E5A
F5	Brian & Anne Conny	Andrew Cochrane	F5A
G5	Andrew Cochrane	Fiona Cochrane	G5A
A5	Fiona Cochrane		
B5	Lara & Emma Greedy	Barbara Stead	B5A
C6	Carolyn Bennett	Andrew Cochrane	C6A
D6	Stewart Greedy	Fiona Cochrane	D6A
E6	Andrew Cochrane		
F6	Fiona Cochrane	In memory of Reginald Allen	F6A
G6	Susan Beechey	Susan Beechey	G6A
A6	Andrew Cochrane	Andrew & Sarah Brown	A6A
B6	Fiona Cochrane		
C7	Andrew Cochrane	Geroldine & Philip Roberts	C7A
D7	Fiona Cochrane		
E7	Constance Campbell-Lambie	Walter Bradbury	E7A
F7	In memory of Mary Miller	Harold Tom	F7A
G7	Arly Whiner 1948	Kate Young	G7A
A7	The Frank Robertson Smith Trust	James Van Dierkem	A7A
B7	Jayden Wayne	Susan Beechey	B7A
C8	Colleen Holloway		
D8	Capitlanos Family Trust & Bernies Music Land		





THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS EVOLUTIONS IN THE ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY. WHAT BEGAN, IN 1891, AS A DEBATING COMPETITION FOR YOUNG MEN HAS BECOME AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST-RUNNING PERFORMING ARTS EISTEDDFOD.

A launchpad for the country's talented performers and an iconic date on Her Maj's calendar for decades, Royal South Street returns to our stage this month. To mark this joyful moment, some of the local faces and industry names who grew up performing in the dance, singing, ballet and calisthenics disciplines look back on their time with Royal South Street.



Day 1 Troupes Weekend

So good to see dancers on Her Maj stage once again! 🍷

Celebrated our return to Her Majesty's Theatre

All Abilities Performing Arts Report

Rebecca Norris (Discipline Chair)

The 2025 UFS All Abilities Showcase was an amazing three days once again. All three days ran smoothly with thanks to our venue (Ballarat Specialist School), our Committee, RSSS and SLC providing lighting and tech support. We love seeing all the performers enjoy themselves and the talent and performances are always outstanding.

On reflection, I felt we had a few big breaks that could have been shorter in our programming, but I believe as we grow the need for the extra time will change.

This year in our program we included some song lyrics for the whole audience to participate, and this was a huge hit. We even had some spontaneous performers throughout the program.

The Ballarat Specialist School was wonderful in accommodating everything we needed including feeding the volunteers an amazing spread of food and treats.

Our adjudicator, Sophie O'Donnell continues to be caring, supportive and encouraging of the performers for the past two years and has agreed to come again for 2026. The participants have developed a strong rapport with her and look forward to her coming.

Our committee are extremely grateful for the major sponsorship we received last year from UFS Healthcare, ASTEC Equipment Services and the Community Bank Creswick – Bendigo Bank. It is also great to see these sponsors come along and enjoy the events, experience the pure joy of all abilities performing arts and present awards.

In 2026, we are scheduling three days of performances once again in September. We are very proud that this event keeps growing every year!





The All Abilities Committee is now working on:

- Community illustrations from our participants for the annual flyer and program
- Sending out communications with the flyer to past participants
- Updating the entry form and information to send out to all who enquire about our events
- Creating a database spreadsheet for the management of new and past entries.
- Discussing this year's awards and possible medal of participation instead of certificate.

Calisthenics Report

Andrea Brown (Discipline Chair)

Competitors, coaches, audience members and our 11 adjudicators were thrilled to be back in what the calisthenics community considers the home of Royal South Street Society - our beloved Her Majesty's Theatre (HMT) - after a five year absence, and the increase in entries and 8980 tickets sold were a solid reflection of that.

In addition to our two prestigious solo final evenings, we held 40 team competitions with entries from 67 clubs, 328 sections, and 3730 competitors who performed 1896 items (400 more competitors and 200 more items than in 2024). Our staff and volunteers averaged 11 hours/day for 21 days, and I cannot thank everyone enough for their enormous efforts. As the saying goes ... it takes a village ...

The staff and theatre techs at HMT were on a steep learning curve, with most of them never having seen calisthenics. We pushed through some initial teething problems during the first few days but had settled into a routine by the end of the first week, although each tech seemed to have their own way of doing things. Hopefully we can aim for a little more consistency in 2026.

Our solo sections were again well attended, with 56 and 59 entrants auditioning for Calisthenics and Graceful solos respectively. These sections are regarded as the most prestigious in the country, and entrants travelled from Qld, SA, WA and Victoria. We are grateful to our sponsors Opening Night Supplies and Couture Costume Dancewear for their continued support of these events. Congratulations to Chloe Chandler on her Calisthenics Solo win, and to Ava Arnold for winning the Graceful Solo. Their names will be added to the list of revered winners, dating back to 1924.

Our team competitions were well attended, and it was wonderful to see the younger age groups excited to be at Her Maj for the first time. It was also great to see many coaches several times, coaching different age groups and competing in a Seniors or Masters team themselves. Many in the calisthenics sphere have had a lengthy involvement, moving from Tinies through to Seniors and on to coaching. In fact, our six committee members have a total of over 140 years of active involvement in calisthenics, either as competitors, parents of competitors, committee members and/or volunteers. It really is a love of the sport that never leaves you.

The Ron & Dawn Harrington Trophy, awarded to the team who accrues the most aggregate points, was hotly contested and won by St Mark's Calisthenics Club (102.5 points), with both Boronia and Canadian Bay a close second on 101.5.

As with any discipline, sponsorship is an ongoing issue, and while the RSSS team successfully obtained trophy sponsorship, we are still in need of a major sponsor to cover the \$30,000 prize money for our team competitions.

Our volunteers were once again a mighty force, stepping up to fill some not-so-interesting positions (Lucky's foyer!) and we appreciate every one of them. We do, however, need more volunteers prepared to work backstage, particularly as MC and Stage Manager. This could be straightforward for someone familiar with calisthenics, but the inexperienced may require some guidance and shadowing before they go it alone. It may be very different from other disciplines, but it's nothing to be feared, and it is extremely rewarding to see things from side stage.



We were disappointed that our volunteers were not permitted to act as ushers as they always have, and hopefully we can work on this with the council as it would reduce the cost to RSSS immensely.

The future of calisthenics in Ballarat is exciting ... we are considering re-introducing some Championship sections in the younger age groups in 2026, and discussions are underway with the Australian Calisthenics Federation who are interested in collaborating with RSSS to strengthen our national footprint and widen our attraction to interstate teams. The only problem with having more interstate teams across all divisions, is where to house them. The recent theatre renovation has reduced the number of dressing rooms backstage,

and this year we had to hire external spaces in Unicorn Lane for our larger competitions, but these may not always be available.

Finally, as I said earlier, it takes a village, and my immediate village has been my supportive committee - Annette, Cherie, Fiona, Lexie and Rebecca. You've listened, made suggestions, discussed, agreed and disagreed, and raised the bar even further during the comps, and I cannot thank you enough. My wider village includes Louise, Judy-Ann, Carolyn and Susie, who joined us mid-competition. Thank you all for your efforts to get this enormous beast off the ground and back in Her Maj. And now that we've done it, we can look forward to 2026 with greater knowledge and renewed enthusiasm for an even better year.

Choral Report

Brooke Johnson (Discipline Chair)

In 2025, we had only one extra entry up on 2024, however, sadly quite a few choirs pulled out due to clashes with the dates which lowered the number of performances on the stage significantly. There were no entries for the new community choral section offered, even though we contacted over 80 community choirs across Victoria about the event, including all Ballarat community choirs. Clearly, the community choir format has changed from historical competitive experience to pure celebration of song and voice. We are keen to explore this change as a future option for community choirs to participate as part of our pathways focus.

The choral performances overall ran very smoothly. There were no issues at all that arose throughout the choral events. The adjudication all ran well and to time scheduled, as did the supporting technology and feedback crits this year.

The venue, Founders Theatre, and dressing rooms all worked well for the large student groups. Set up and pack down with volunteers and staff assistance also ran smoothly. All choirs reported they were happy with their experience and there were a lot of smiles and joy over the two days.

I noted that there was good interest in the purchase of Royal South Street Society memorabilia from the registration desk by the choral students over the past two years. This is possibly an area of opportunity for an increase in merchandise sales if we advertise what is available prior to the eisteddfod commencing. I think our participants would love to see something like a t-shirt that says, 'I performed at South Street 2026'.

Our adjudicator, Maryann Rigby, spoke positively and encouragingly to the choirs





and ran engaging short workshops from the stage where they all sang together as one instead of purely being separated by the hierarchy of prizes. This created a memorable learning experience for the performers and teachers.

Any problems that we had encountered during the choral events in 2024 were resolved in 2025, however, the goal of increasing participation numbers has not yet been met. This remains an ongoing post Covid challenge for RSSS, and for the wider performing arts.

Current challenges for our choral discipline are particularly around low entries. In discussion with RSSS team, there are some significant changes in future planning, including re-shaping the events to be more festival style, more inclusive and engaging whilst providing a unique learning and development experience and pathway for schools and community choirs alike.

We don't currently have a major sponsor for this discipline either, and our hope is that by moving back to our home at Her Majesty's Theatre in 2027, providing a prestigious theatre stage performance opportunity and reinvigorated event format, will increase entry and performance numbers, audience and sponsorship. The challenge at this venue though, will always be the large choir numbers and small dressing rooms backstage.

Changing the date in the future from August (in 2026) to September at Her Maj (in 2027) should help to increase performance numbers for primary, secondary and community choral sections

2025 will be a challenge once again at Founders Theatre, but our schools like the venue or easy access, so our focus will be in keeping the momentum to rebuild, and I believe there are great possibilities for the choral discipline in 2027 to be recognised for the celebration of voice and music in the heart of the city, once again.

Dance Report

Danielle Coltman & Jessica Godfrey (Discipline Co-Chairs)

The 2025 Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod - Energetiks Dance season was a resounding success, marked by the long-awaited and triumphant return to our home at Her Majesty's Theatre. Despite the inherent uncertainties of returning to a premier venue after a period away, our team hit the ground running, working tirelessly in the opening days to ensure a seamless experience for all participants.

Celebrating Growth and Performance

We were thrilled to see continued growth in our participation numbers, reflecting the vibrant health of the dance community. This year, we welcomed:

- 1,314 Solo entrants
- 218 Championship entrants
- 125 Troupe entries – this is an increase on the year prior showcasing the drawcard Her Majesty's theatre is to our Eisteddfod

A standout highlight was the Dance for Life section. By expanding to 25 prize-winning performances and adjudicator "wild card" entries, we created a palpable "buzz" throughout the theatre. Improved administrative processes—such as securing performer biographies well in advance—ensured the section ran smoothly and professionally.

Fostering Community and Connection

Our annual teacher's meeting remains a cornerstone of our success. This year's session was particularly vital as we navigated the operational nuances of Her Majesty's Theatre. By listening to our most valuable stakeholders, we ensure the competition stays aligned with modern trends and community expectations. We are also proud of the strengthened relationships built this year between schools, competitors, staff, and our dedicated committee.



Navigating Challenges with Resilience

While the season was a success, it was not without its hurdles. Our greatest challenge remains volunteer recruitment. Our loyal volunteers and staff worked extraordinary hours to navigate new technology platforms and theatre requirements. We acknowledge that relying on such excessive hours is not a sustainable model.

As we look toward 2026, our priority is to simplify volunteer roles, making them more accessible and rewarding, and ensuring our team feels supported and valued. Additionally, we continue to navigate a competitive funding landscape. We are working closely with our office team to secure the sponsorships and scholarships that are so vital to rewarding the excellence of our young performers.

The Path to 2026: Evolution and Inclusion

Moving forward, we are excited to evolve from a "competition" into a comprehensive performance pathway. In 2026, we will introduce:

- Non-Competitive Sections: Providing troupes and soloists the chance to perform and receive professional feedback without the pressure of scoring.
- Cultural Heritage Sections: New spiritual and storytelling categories to allow dancers to showcase their unique cultural identities.

These initiatives align with our strategic goal of providing professional development and celebrating all forms of performance. A Heartfelt Thank You - Energetiks Dance is fueled by an infinite amount of work from our staff and the volunteer Dance Committee. We are united by a shared commitment: to promote the performing arts and help young dancers create lifelong memories within the historic walls of Her Majesty's Theatre.



Debating Report

Loretta Kaval (Discipline Chair)

I enjoyed my third year of being Discipline Chair and once again, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the office staff and Louise in particular, for guiding my way through another year.

As Discipline Chair I see one of my major goals as boosting participation. Unfortunately, in 2025 overall our participation rate was down.

Early this year I rang every primary school in the district who was not already competing. I had a number of pleasant conversations (although 2 school receptionists told me their school did not do debating and was not interested!) and while there was no increase, it did help raise the profile of South Street Debating.

I also sent a letter to all schools at the end of the year, thanking those who participated and reminding all about the upcoming 2026 competition, encouraging them to contact me or the office for more detail.

All schools who participate express how much they enjoy the comp and are very grateful for the opportunities it gives their students.

Once again, I offered to workshop with students, and 2 schools took up that offer. Others told me they referred to the document I created called "How to debate" on the website.

Year 5 & 6: 18 teams from 10 schools
Year 7 & 8: 6 teams from 5 schools
Year 9 & 10: 10 teams from 6 schools
And year 11 & 12: 4 teams from 3 schools

At all levels the participants were mixed from government, Catholic and independent schools.

Our three adjudicators, all experienced and very competent on the day, were friendly and approachable to the students. We continued with giving students written and spoken feedback immediately after each debate, using an adjudication sheet created in a rubric style.



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

We decided against using the online system during the competitions this year but will consider the new to be introduced program for 2026.

ACU continued to offer wonderful support for which we are very grateful. The venue suits us well.

We altered our daily timing to allow more “in between debates” time and generally this worked appropriately.

As per last year, it would be great somehow to encourage more volunteers. We have a dedicated small group who volunteer for Debating but if someone is sick or unable to attend, it becomes quite onerous for those who pick up a number of sessions.

In summary, despite concern about how to encourage more schools to participate, I do look back on the competition with satisfaction. Students, teachers and parents continue to tell me how much they enjoy and value the competition.

I want to express a great deal of gratitude to all the committee members, to Royal South Street Society staff, to our sponsors and to the volunteers who help make it all successful.



Aria & Vocal Report

Carolyn Bennett (Discipline Chair Aria & Vocal)

The 2025 Vocal and Aria Competitions were held across split dates, running from Friday 18 July to Sunday 20 July and Monday 28 July to Monday 4 August. We were pleased to once again return to the Ballarat Mechanics Institute, which resonated with glorious singing across 11 days of competition.

A major highlight was the introduction of the new Schimmel K195 Konzert Grand Piano. Exceptionally talented accompanist Konrad Olszewski supported senior classical and aria competitors throughout the season, showcasing the instrument to great effect.

Adjudicators Sally Bourne, Richard Chew and Greg Hocking returned in 2025, joined by first-time RSSS adjudicators Phoebe Humphreys and Simon Meadows.

The Vocal and Aria sections have remained relatively stable in recent years, with only minor refinements required. Overall, the 2025 season ran smoothly.

Key changes introduced this year included:

- An expanded schedule with more competition days and shorter daily hours
- Introduction of a Musical Theatre Combo section
- Introduction of a Solo and Accompanist section (in collaboration with Pianoforte and Instrumental)
- A significant increase in high-quality senior competitors
- Free daily ticket giveaways to the Chopin and Aria Finals
- Introduction of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sponsorship awards

On paper, Vocal entry numbers dropped slightly in 2025. However, the new Musical Theatre Combo section consolidated two previous Musical Theatre sections into one, in which competitors performed two songs. Had both sections continued to run across the age groups, overall participation would have been slightly higher.



Breanna Stuart



Josh Morton-Galea



Molly Ryan



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Aria entries were lower than in 2024 but returned to the expected long-term trend. Entry numbers were inflated last year due to the Centenary Celebration of the Aria; in fact, the number of performers differed by only seven from the previous year.

Vocal Entries

2025: 533 entries across 60 sections
(average entry fee \$25.60)

2024: 608 entries across 62 sections
(average entry fee \$22.40)

Aria Entries

2025: 40 entries, 31 performers appeared
(entry fee \$99)

2024: 61 entries, 38 performers appeared
(entry fee \$95)

A notable trend was a significant drop in entries in the 14 to Under 16 years age group, while both younger and older age groups continued to strengthen.

A deliberate strategy to encourage senior and classical entries has resulted in strong growth in these areas. An increasing number of Aria entrants are now arriving a day early to participate in Senior Classical sections, raising performance standards and prestige while providing younger singers with clear pathways into advanced performance opportunities.

Another highlight was the Art Song and Lieder Masterclass by local expert Dr Richard Chew. In line with RSS's commitment to promoting a love of performance, non-competitive sections continued across all age groups. These were supported by detailed adjudicator critiques, providing constructive feedback, learning and encouragement for all participants.

Rules relating to appropriate song choice will be clarified in 2026, including adjustments to wording and point allocation. A small number of repertoire issues were identified in 2025.

Inconsistency in the quality and content of backing tracks remains an issue. While competitors are reminded to purchase tracks to comply with copyright regulations, a new rule will be introduced in 2026 disallowing all backing vocals and harmonies. This will create a more level playing field and align Vocal more closely with other eisteddfods.

The VCE section has unfortunately experienced low participation and will be incorporated into Strut Your Stuff in 2026.



Age group structures will be reviewed to ensure no age group spans more than a two-year range.

The Aria continues to be a valuable opportunity to showcase exceptional talent within the Ballarat community. Additional promotional opportunities will be explored, including the possibility of simulcasting the event on Classic FM.

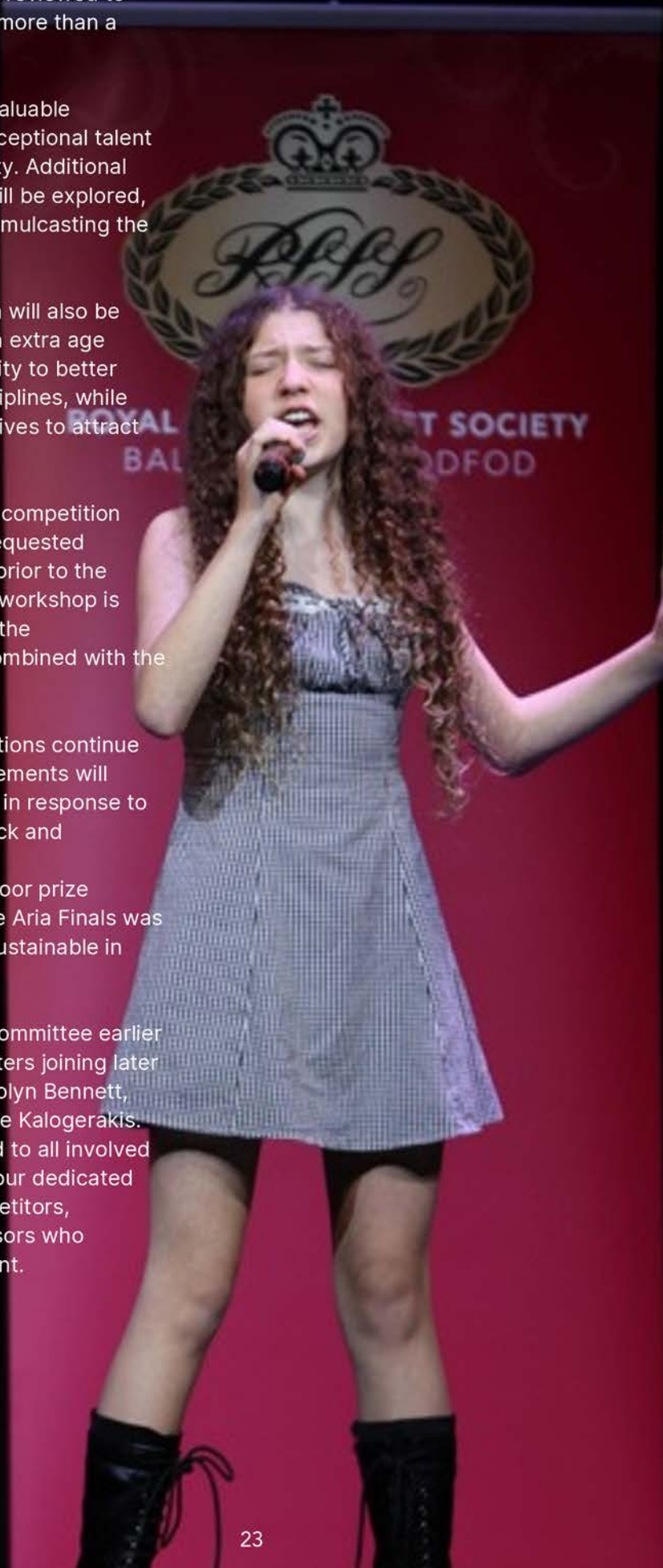
Prize money standardisation will also be reviewed. The addition of an extra age group presents an opportunity to better align awards with other disciplines, while maintaining sufficient incentives to attract high-calibre entries.

As Vocal occurs early in the competition calendar, volunteers have requested improved MyStage training prior to the event. In 2026, a volunteer workshop is planned for the day prior to the commencement of Vocal, combined with the season launch.

The Vocal and Aria Competitions continue to track well overall. Improvements will continue to be implemented in response to participation trends, feedback and operational learnings.

The introduction of a daily door prize offering a double pass to the Aria Finals was well received and is easily sustainable in future years.

Danielle Larkins joined the committee earlier in the year, with Sophie Walters joining later in the season. They join Carolyn Bennett, Jason Wasley and Jacqueline Kalogerakis. Sincere thanks are extended to all involved in planning and delivery, to our dedicated volunteers, and to the competitors, teachers, schools and sponsors who continue to support this event.



Instrumental Report

Karen Pengelly (Discipline Chair)

Freemasons Instrumental Music experienced another successful year, supported by a small, dedicated committee. The competition continues to operate within the Victorian Schools Music Festival framework and remains committed to encouraging participation, musical excellence and educational development among school ensembles and solo performers.

While entries for both bands and soloists were slightly lower than the previous year, 2025 events were a success. Additional sections for VCE students and non-competitive performers were again offered, and the competition provided valuable performance opportunities and constructive feedback for students and educators.

This year the competition welcomed 32 soloists and 61 bands, including ensembles, stage bands, orchestras, concert bands and brass bands.

The events were conducted over four slightly longer days. Band performances concluded on Friday morning, and solo performances continued into Friday afternoon. Solo entries were scheduled throughout weekday afternoons at the end of the daily program rather than being held on a single day, allowing more efficient use of the timetable.

Considerable coordination was required to manage stage operations and instrument logistics throughout the events. The committee is grateful for the continued support of Blackburn High School for the use of their instruments. The timetable ensured percussion instruments were utilised early in the competition, enabling stage management to progressively remove equipment prior to final pack-up on Friday. Across the four days of competition:

- 826 chairs were moved on/off the stage
- 990 music stands were used



- 303 percussion instruments were handled

The stage management team worked efficiently to maintain smooth transitions between ensembles and ensure the competition remained on schedule.

Our adjudicator, Sharelle Guest, provided valuable musical insight and constructive feedback to bands and soloists. Her comments were encouraging and informative, supporting both students and conductors in their musical development. Ms Guest also conducted on-stage workshops for the non-competitive sections, providing practical advice and musical guidance drawn from her experience as a musician and composer. These sessions contributed to the educational value of the competition.

Freemasons Instrumental Music reflects the values and vision of RSSS by promoting professionalism, respect and inclusivity. Competitors are encouraged to demonstrate professional behaviour at all times, including during warm-ups and when entering and exiting the stage safely and respectfully. Entries remain open to all solo musicians, ensembles and bands, regardless of ability. Sections are grouped according to performance level to ensure fair and equitable competition while supporting musical development.

Several challenges continue to impact the competition. Sourcing quality percussion instruments remains a significant logistical and financial issue, while relatively small audience numbers limit opportunities to increase revenue. This may be partly due to the competition location and the number of schools travelling from outside Ballarat, which can make it difficult for families and supporters to attend.

Volunteer capacity is also an ongoing consideration. While volunteer numbers were adequate this year, careful matching of volunteers to roles is important for occupational health and safety and for efficient stage transitions.

The committee continues to explore opportunities to strengthen and develop the competition. Future priorities include:

- Encouraging greater participation from local school bands
- Continuing to seek feedback and review competition processes
- Promoting new sections and encouraging participation from smaller schools
- Introducing Australian composers into the repertoire to support Australian music.
- Continuing to engage experienced adjudicators for meaningful feedback
- Exploring the inclusion of community bands to broaden participation

The committee extends sincere thanks to the many individuals who contribute to the success of Freemasons Instrumental Music. In particular, we acknowledge the RSSS staff for their ongoing administrative assistance and support, along with the dedication of committee members, volunteers and the stage management team whose collective efforts ensure the competition runs smoothly each year. The 2025 program was successfully delivered through this strong collaboration, with positive feedback from participants and educators highlighting the competition's continued value in supporting school instrumental music programs. The committee looks forward to building on this success in 2026 and beyond.



Pianoforte & Chopin Report

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

The Schimmel Pianoforte and Celebrating Chopin discipline was held at the historic Ballarat Mechanics Institute, opening on Monday 21 July and culminating in a thrilling finale with the Margaret Schofield Celebrating Chopin Concert on Sunday 27 July 2025.

After many years of hiring instruments for these sections—generously supported by Bernie’s Musicland—we were delighted to present the entire discipline this year on our own brand new Schimmel K195 Konzert Grand. This represented a significant milestone for the competition and was warmly received by both competitors and adjudicators.

The Pianoforte sections were expertly adjudicated by Ian Munro and Danaë Killian. Richard Chew presided over the Composition or Arrangement section and concluded the discipline with an inspiring and well-attended masterclass for entrants.

We were honoured to welcome Elizabeth Mitchell and David Soo as adjudicators for the Junior and Senior Chopin sections. Their insight, artistry, and engagement greatly enriched these highly skilled competitors.

In alignment with the RSSS Vision of promoting and encouraging participation, enjoyment, and enrichment, the key aim for 2025 was to introduce a range of new novice sections. These were designed to provide an accessible platform for beginners and less experienced students.

The inaugural year of these sections was highly encouraging, with 106 entries across the new novice categories. Overall entry numbers increased by just under 100 compared to the previous year.

Chopin entries remained stable at 27; however, increased promotion resulted in a noticeably stronger attendance rate. Information was distributed to all music conservatoires nationwide and promoted to leading piano teachers across Victoria.

A new multi-discipline section, Solo and Accompanist, was introduced to promote and develop accompanying skills. This initiative was followed by an excellent masterclass facilitated by Daniel Tusjak. The long-term objective was to create paid accompanist opportunities for emerging pianists within the vocal discipline. We are delighted to report that this goal was realised, with Poppy Robertson appointed as Junior Vocal Accompanist for 2026.



ROYAL SOUTH STREET SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Beyond the introduction of our new Schimmel Konzert Grand, the success of the novice sections was a major highlight. These sections provide a structured and supportive pathway for young pianists, allowing them to begin in a safe environment with the aim that they will progress confidently toward aggregate and senior sections when ready.

The masterclass led by Richard Chew was another standout, as was the collaborative masterclass with Daniel Tusjak, which encouraged meaningful interaction between pianists, instrumentalists, and vocalists.

We were pleased to welcome new sponsorship from the Sporting Motorists Association, Dr Richard Chew (local composer and performer), Eureka Music Studios, and Deborah Gilchrist. An important rule change was introduced requiring Junior Chopin entrants to compete in at least one additional Pianoforte section, supporting broader musical development.

The daily giveaway of Chopin Double Pass tickets proved to be a cost-effective and successful strategy in promoting our premier event.

Looking ahead, we plan to remove sections that have consistently attracted low entry numbers, refine age groups, and extend the time limits for senior sections.

Feedback indicated that the existing six-minute limit made it challenging for competitors to select repertoire of an appropriate standard.

We would also like to further position the Chopin performance as a premier event, with the aspiration of future simulcasting on Classic FM.

Registration procedures will be refined, particularly regarding the collection of music and sighting of original scores, to ensure full compliance with copyright requirements.

We plan to introduce a practice workshop prior to the 2026 event. This will include piano familiarisation and stage etiquette for competitors, as well as systems training and refresher sessions for volunteers.

We believe the discipline is on a strong and sustainable path, supported by a clear strategy for growth and enhancement. This discipline operates with great support from a team of advisors and experts in the field: Barb Stead (board representative), Lauren Knight, Anna Whitehead, Katie Apps, Deborah Gilchrist, Bron Sozanski, Wendy Rechenberg and Glenn Riddle.

We look forward to observing the continued development of the novice sections with the expectation that participation in novice will steadily increase entry numbers and more opportunities for performance through the intermediate and senior age groups.



Speech & Drama Report

Kris Carroll (Discipline Chair)

In my second year as Discipline Chair of Speech, Drama & Comedy, there were challenges and triumphs in equal measure. Overall, it was a successful and rewarding week, and I remain deeply grateful for the many supporters who stood beside me throughout the event. I hope that participants, volunteers, the office team and supporters of the discipline felt the same sense of achievement and enjoyment.

While total entries were slightly down compared with the previous year, several sections experienced strong growth. Most notably, the Senior Shakespearean Performance section saw a significant increase in entries. It was refreshing to witness the diverse interpretations presented, with both traditional and contemporary approaches to Shakespeare's works. The performances were entertaining and inventive, demonstrating how these timeless texts continue to evolve in the hands of young performers. I am confident this section will continue to grow and develop in ways even Shakespeare himself might never have imagined.

However, entry numbers for the improvisation sections across several age groups have declined since the pre-COVID years, something I have come to refer to as the "Covid Effect." Improvisation can be daunting for many performers, particularly after years where opportunities for spontaneous and collaborative performance were limited. In response, we trialled a new approach this year by inviting audience members to participate in the senior improvisation section purely for fun.

Those who had formally entered were still adjudicated and eligible for prizes, but this initiative allowed others to step forward without the pressure of competition or judgement. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Audience members, competitors and friends enthusiastically supported those brave enough to participate, cheering and applauding their efforts.



It created a warm and encouraging atmosphere and demonstrated that improvisation can be both accessible and enjoyable. Several participants who had previously been hesitant gave it a try and later reported that they had a great time. We hope this experience encourages them to return as official entrants in 2026.

In 2024 we were fortunate to welcome several alumni who shared their experiences and memories of participating in Speech and Drama. Among them was first-time adjudicator Jack Richardson, a multi-award-winning alumnus who demonstrated how enduring the friendships formed through this discipline can be, even among former competitors. Unfortunately, in 2025 we were unable to have teachers and alumni attend in person. However, in the spirit of drama and creativity, we found some inventive alternatives.

One much-loved teacher and dedicated committee member, who was unable to attend, was represented by a laminated photograph placed prominently to support and encourage her students. This became a source of amusement and many memorable photos throughout the week. We were also delighted to receive video messages from two previous Louie Dunn Award winners, Georgina McLaren and Ellie Carroll. Their heartfelt words of encouragement, advice and support were shared with eligible competitors before they performed for the award.

Thanks to Niall from the IT department at ACU, these messages were played on the large screen in the performance space. His generosity and technical expertise made this possible, and we were extremely grateful for his assistance. The videos were warmly received by competitors and audience members alike and proved to be a touching surprise, particularly for our adjudicator Mary-Rose, who had no idea that her daughter was one of the contributors.

Dr Mary-Rose McLaren returned to the discipline in 2025 as adjudicator for the first time. Her long connection with Speech and Drama—as a former competitor, teacher, parent of successful alumni, committee member and section chair—brought an invaluable depth of understanding to the role.

She provided insightful, constructive and encouraging adjudications throughout the week. Her familiarity with the discipline also proved helpful in addressing occasional questions or concerns that arose during the event.

There were many other highlights throughout the week. Our volunteers were extraordinary. We welcomed a wonderful mix of returning volunteers and first-time helpers, both young and older, who quickly became part of the vibrant Speech and Drama community. By the end of the week it felt as though we were one large, supportive family, with everyone willing to step in wherever needed. Their energy, flexibility and good humour were essential in managing the ever-changing pace of this unique discipline, and we look forward to welcoming them all back in 2026.

We were also pleased to welcome Mrs Jenny Odgers from the Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee, to present prizes for the sections supported by the Adam Lindsay Gordon Trust Fund. She shared fascinating insights into the life and work of this prolific Australian poet and expressed the committee's enthusiasm for continuing their support. There is also interest in expanding the presence of Australian poetry within the Speech and Drama program in future years.

A particularly joyful moment occurred on the final day of competition. While waiting for the final adjudication, some of the older students spontaneously began singing favourite Fleetwood Mac songs together. The atmosphere in the room was vibrant and uplifting, providing a fitting conclusion to a week filled with creativity, humour and outstanding performances from talented participants of all ages.

Looking ahead to 2026, we hope the Speech and Drama discipline will once again welcome our loyal returning performers while also attracting many new entrants.

May the tradition of "standing and delivering" continue through the prestigious platform of the Royal South Street Eisteddfod. In the words of Adam Lindsay Gordon:
"...Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone:
KINDNESS in another's trouble,
COURAGE in your own."

Volunteers Report

Carolyn Bennett (Eisteddfod Development & Volunteer Coordinator)

The 2025 RSSS Ballarat Eisteddfod was another successful year, providing further opportunities to strengthen and refine our Volunteer Program in line with the 2024 Volunteer Management Plan.

Alongside the regular season of events, a range of training, social and engagement activities were delivered throughout the year. These initiatives strengthened connections with volunteers, fostered peer relationships, and supported the continued development of skills, knowledge and confidence across the volunteer cohort.

At our 2024 AGM held in April, 2025, we formally welcomed two new Life Members to the Royal South Street Society.

This special recognition was awarded to Sandra Fishwick and a posthumous Life Member recognition for Doug McGregor, which was gratefully accepted by his family.

A well known face (and family) around the Eisteddfod for over 40 years, Sandra Fishwick has been involved with the Royal South Street Society since 1981 and has tirelessly volunteered in all aspects of Dance at RSSS. Sandra has also committed herself to all other disciplines to support the ongoing success of the organisation.

Doug McGregor was a much loved volunteer across all RSSS disciplines and the Ballarat performing arts community for over 40 years. Doug passed away in December, 2024 and will forever be remembered as a loved member of RSSS community.



Volunteer Engagement and Events

Season Launch and Fundraiser

The 2025 Season Launch was held on 19 February at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute, attracting over 100 volunteers, sponsors and supporters. The evening included a Welcome on Wadawurrung Country by Ash Skinner, performances by local artists, and the official opening of the season by Lindsay Eaton. Judy-Ann Quilliam and Bernie Capicchiano introduced the Key to Music fundraising campaign.

We thank Beechworth Bakery, Michael Unwin Wines and Reus Flower Co for their generous support.



Volunteer Social and Fundraising Activities

Volunteer social events were held throughout the year, including attendance at The Haunted Theatre in March and a Drag Bingo fundraiser at The Piano Bar in May. The Drag Bingo event raised \$1,620 towards the purchase of the Margaret Schofield OAM Memorial Piano.

Volunteer Training

Two training sessions were held in May at the Ballarat Masonic Lodge. Topics included recruitment strategies, updates to the Volunteer Handbook, MyStage registration, Square sales, and venue updates for Her Majesty's Theatre. Volunteers also received training in the volunteer component of ArtFuel, facilitated online by Mark DeRaad. We thank the Ballarat Freemasons for providing the venue free of charge.

Her Majesty's Theatre Induction

An induction session was held in September, providing volunteers with an overview of venue changes, safety procedures and operational planning ahead of upcoming events.

Grand Unveiling – Margaret Schofield OAM Memorial Piano

In July, volunteers and sponsors attended the unveiling of the new Schimmel K195 Concert Grand Piano. Approximately 80 guests attended the event, which featured performances by Charlie Wu and Stefania Robu and acknowledged the significant support of sponsors and donors.

CountPro Showcase Concert

The return of the RSSS Showcase Concert in October was a highlight of the year. Volunteers were invited to attend at a discounted rate in recognition of their outstanding contribution throughout the season.

End of Year Celebration

The volunteer year concluded with an end-of-year celebration in December, providing an opportunity to thank volunteers and formally recognise outstanding service.



Volunteer Recognition Awards

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

Volunteer of the Year

Graeme Brown & David Callinan

Above & Beyond Awards

Hilary Morgan, Alison Trevenen, Rachael Lynch, Rebecca Norris

Most Outstanding New Volunteer

Luke Harbour

Young Shining Star

Jordan Mace

Volunteer of the Month

August - Luke Harbour
 September - Chloe McMillan
 October - Claire Thorpe



In 2025, 124 active volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours across events, archival work, committees and board meetings. We were thrilled to have 30 new members join us and volunteer during the Eisteddfod season!

Volunteers were the public face of RSSS throughout the Eisteddfod, supporting thousands of competitors and families. The return to Her Majesty's Theatre for Dance and Calisthenics introduced new volunteer roles, all of which were embraced with professionalism and enthusiasm.

Next year, we plan to continue reaching out to the community to attract new volunteers, especially targeting senior performing art students, local theatre companies and past performers, and to continue to strengthen and maintain our experienced database of volunteers.

The ongoing success of the Eisteddfod is a direct reflection of the commitment and generosity of our volunteers. Sincere thanks are extended to all volunteers, discipline chairs and committee members for their invaluable contribution throughout the year.



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FREE WEEKLY
Friday 1 October 2025 \$16.80

Ballarat

TIMES NEWS GROUP

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE
Stage Door

Backstage stars

Thousands of Royal South Street Society eisteddfod performers take to Ballarat stages each year, and the RSSS' volunteers are key in helping them get their chance to shine. Luke Harbour and Marian Waldron are two of the society's 200-strong volunteer team.

READ MORE ABOUT THEIR ROLES ON PAGE 23

34

SPECIAL FEATURE
INSIDE
celebrating seniors
→ across the bay

A newspaper cover for Ballarat Times News Group. The main headline is 'Stage Door' with a sub-headline 'Backstage stars'. The cover features a photograph of two women in a doorway, one of whom is likely Marian Waldron. There is a blue circular badge on the right side that says 'SPECIAL FEATURE INSIDE celebrating seniors → across the bay'. The page number '34' is at the bottom right.

Archives Report

Compiled by David Callinan - Volunteer Archivist

With the move to our new offices in Albert Street, the RSSS Archives now have a serious shelving setup to house the archives. It took many carloads to shift almost everything and with the new storage system, it will be easier to access and manage the archives.

Four volunteers are now working on archives. Janice and Lynda are filling out the names of all competitors, not only the prize winners, on the Internet Web Results pages. This full listing now goes back to 1949. While the historic data still requires the old Chairman's Books and Guide Books, the data for the new years results requires MyStage, Facebook and ArtFuel. David continues to photograph a higher quality copy of the earlier Program Guides.

Board minutes and financial reports for the last thirty years are being accessioned, photographed and packaged.

Some recent photographs of the Board and items from the Graceful Solo 100 years have also been put into our system.

New accessions include donations of two formal conductors' batons from 1916 and earlier by the Victorian Welsh Choir. The Welsh Prize Choir had successfully competed at South Street in 1898. We now also have a silver tray presented to the Ballarat Choral Society for winning the 1968 Grand Champion Choral Contest.

We have two external researchers who are looking into Society history. One is investigating the connection between South Street and Civic Hall – the other, the history of the Herald-Sun Aria from Grand Opera. These are two more explorations into the Society's extensive history.



Volunteer Milestone Awards



Annette Lawson
Tony Rowlands



Louise Brooks
Yvonne Smith
Cherie Brown



Andrea Brown



Marion Waldron

2025 Active Volunteers

ABBOTT, RUBY
AGGETT, KELLI
ANTONIUS, ETHAN
BALLINGER, NICOLE
BEECHEY, SUE
BENNETT, CAROLYN
BENNETT, VICKI
BENNEY, LAURA
BOND, PETER
BOURKE, CAROLYN
BROOKS, LOUISE
BROWN, ANDREA
BROWN, BEN
BROWN, CHERIE
BROWN, LEXIE
BROWN, TANYA
BROWN, VICKI
CARR, NARELLE
CARROLL, KRISTEN
CARROLL, SIMON
CARROLL, ELLIE
CAVALIER, CARON
CLIFTON, NANETTE
COLE, TONY
COLTMAN, DANIELLE
CONWAY, CAROL
COOK, TANYA
DANIELL, KAREN
DANIELL, NOREEN
DAVIDSON, DIANE
DODD, ELIZA
DUNBAR, MELANIE
DUNLOP, BARBARA
DUNLOP, RIC
EATON, LINDSAY
EATON, KAREN
EMERY, FIONA
ERWIN, RENEE
FILMER, JILL
FISHWICK, SANDRA
FLEMING, RON
FORESTER, AUNDREA

FRAWLEY, LAYNE
FRAWLEY, NAOMI
GETSON, IAN
GILCHRIST, DEBORAH
GLEDHILL, KERRY
GILL, JOEL
GODFREY, JESSICA
GOULD, ROBYN
GRIGG, GLENYS
GRIME, REBECCA
HARBOUR, LUKE
HARRINGTON, DAWN
HARRINGTON, RON
HARVEY, LLOYD
HARVEY, LORRAINE
HAYES, LISA
HEIBERG WRIGHT, KATRINA
HENDERSON, CASEY
HENDERSON, OLIVIA
HIGGINS, LORRAINE
HOCKING, JO
HOLLOWAY, COLLEEN
HUNTER, SHANTEL
JAKINS, ISTANA
JEFFREYS, AMY
JOHNSON, BARRY
JOHNSON, BROOKE
JOHNSON, SHEENA
JOHNSON, MEGAN
KALOGERAKIS, JACQUELINE
KAVAL, KALLISTA
KAVAL, LORETTA
KAVAL, ROLAND
KAY, CHRIS
KERR, JENINE
KNIGHT, LAUREN
KOENE, EDDIE
LARKINS, DANIELLE
LAWSON, ANNETTE
LEE, ELLIE
LYNCH, RACHAEL
LYNN, JANICE

MABERLY, ELAINE
MACE, JORDAN
MARSHALL, DEB
MARTIN, VERNA
MCKEE, NAOMI
MCKEE PAM
MCLEOD, TAMARA
MCLAREN MARY-ROSE
MCMILLAN, CHLOE
MATTHEWS, BOB
MATTHEWS, ELSPETH
MILLER, ADAM
MORGAN, HILLARY
MOULD, PETER
MURDOCH, KEITH
NASH, ELLA
NETHERCOTE, PETER
NORRIS, REBECCA
OTTINI, BELLA
OTTINI, SUMMER
ORR, KARA
PAULIN, GRAHAM
PAYNE, MAUREEN
PENGELLY, KAREN
PENGELLY, MORGAN
PLAYSTED, GEORGINA
PREE, DAMIEN
QUAYLE, EMMA
QUILLIAM, JUDY-ANN
ROWLANDS, TONY
ROWLANDS, KRISTEN
ROMEO, MERVE
SANTAMARIA, DAVID
SCHMIDT, SUSIE
SCRIVENER, CATHY
SEARL, JENNIFER
SHELTON, RACHAEL
SLEIGHT, NICHOLA
SMITH, YVONNE
SOZANSKI, BRONISLAW
STEAD, RON
STEAD, BARBARA

STRICKLAND, WEE
SUNDERLAND, PAULINE
TEMPLE-MATTHEWS,
AKASHA
THORPE, CLAIRE
TREVENEN, ALISON
UNMACK, MELINDA
VANDENBERG, TAMMY
WALDRON, MARION
WALKER, BECK
WALLACE, MIKA
WALSH, HEIDI
WALTERS, SOPHIE
WASLEY, JASON
WHITEHEAD, ANNA
WILLIAMS, RUSSELL
WILSON, KERRY
WIMSHURST, STACEY
WISE, VIRGINIA
WOODBIDGE, ASHLEIGH
YIOLITIS, ALEXANDER
ZALA, PETER

ARCHIVE TEAM

BALL, ALEX
CALLINAN, DAVID
EVANS, DAVID
GRANT, LYNDA
WILKENS, JANICE

2025 Associate Members

BENNETT CAROLYN
BROOKS LOUISE
BROWN ANDREA
BROWN CHERIE
CALLINAN DAVID
CARROLL KRIS
COLTMAN DANIELLE
EATON LINDSAY
EATON KAREN
EDLUND VIVIENNE
EVANS DAVID
GLEDHILL KERRY
GODFREY JESSICA
GOULD ROBYN
GRANT LYNDA
LAWSON ANNETTE
NORRIS REBECCA
QUILLIAM JUDY-ANN
STEINMAN MARJORIE
STEINMAN NEIL
TURNER HEATHER
WARFE IRENE

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.

2025 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
3BA Power FM

Silver Crown

Ballarat Mechanics Institute
Bernie's Music Land
Isabella Foundation
SBN - School Broadcasting Network
The Sporting Globe Ballarat
UFS Healthcare

Bronze Crown

Astec Equipment Services
Beechworth Bakery
Central Highlands Water
Clamp, Petera Estate
Clark, Norma Memorial Fund
CountPro Pty Ltd
Country Kitchens / Good 4 U Meals
Couture Costume Dancewear
Henkell Family Fund
Opening Night Supplies

Champion

Aunty Jacks / Hop Temple / Grainery Lane / Roys
BJT Legal
Central Victorian Investments (CVI)
Clarke, Janette Trust Fund

Champion cont..

Coltman Family
Creswick Community Bank
Flying Horse Entertainment Venue
Lions Club of Ballarat
Lovell, Andrew
Newington Physiotherapy
Matthews, Robert
Optiform
Robertson Smith, Frank Scholarship Fund
Rotary Club of Wendouree Breakfast
Sporting Motorists Association, Ballarat
The Pancake Kitchen
Victorian Flair
Young, K&A Trust

Scholarship / Arts Partners

Australian Ballet School
Australian Classical Grand Prix
Ballarat Dance Awards
Bourne, Sally & Jacobs, Vicky & Langton, Melissa & Walker, Susan-Ann, Van deZandt, Queenie
Hoffa Studios
Kelly Akers Full Time Dance
Meadownick
Melbourne Opera
MOPAC - Ministry of Performing Arts College
SCIMM. Dance
Spectrum Global Arts
Sydney Dance Company
Tanya Pearson Academy
The Tap Project
Victorian Dance Festival
Victorian Opera
Western Ballet Project

2025 Supporters Thank You

Encore

Ascet Digital
Ballarat Solo Competitions
Ballarat Jazz Club
BLOC Music Theatre
Branch, Lorayne
Buninyong/Mt Helen Lions Club
Caine Real Estate
Cash's Awards and Promotion Solutions
Clifton Old Collegians
Craigs Hotel
Field Air
Fishwick Family
Fox, Julie & Barclay, Helen
Hecho En Mexico
Indian Motorcycle Ballarat
Kay, Chris
Kingston Calisthenics
Manton, Jesse & Buxton Real Estate
Minogue & Co Real Estate
M&L McLean Cleaning Services
Mortgage Choice
Mr V & Co Barbershop
The Piano Bar
Reus Flower Co
Rotary Club of Ballarat East
Sovereign Press
The Buninyong Hotel
Williams Family

Spotlight

ANATS Victorian Chapter
Antoine, Robyn and the Enduring Classics
Singing Group
Aria Calisthenics College
ASCA - Australian Society of Calisthenics
Ballarat Arts Foundation
Ballarat Ballet Guild
Ballarat Carols By Candlelight
Ballarat National Theatre
Ballarat Solo Competitions Inc
Ballarat Vocal Studio
BCIVIL Recruitment

Spotlight cont...

BCMA - Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts
Blaicklock, Bronwyn
Blue Financial
Brown, Erin
Byrne, TE Memorial Fund
Carpenter Family
Carwen Calisthenics
Cioti, Gayle & Just, Rhonda
Cole, Dr Tony
CommDance
Coward-Lemke School of Music
Dance School of Distinction
Darrell Lea Chocolate Experience Store
Eaton, Lindsay & Karen
Eureka Music Studios
Gay, Tim & Liz
Harrington, Ron and Dawn
Gardner, Chris
Gilchrist, Debra
Gordon, Adam Lindsay Memorial Trust
Homeground Cafe & Bakery
Hooper, W.S Trust
Jayde Calisthenic Club
James, Margery Trust
Johno & Jono
Keats, Ivy Memorial Fund
Kaval, Loretta
Leroy Mac Designs
Macedon Ranges Calisthenics College
McInnes, Brian
McMahon, Nicholas
Monk, Lillian Trust
Morgan, Monica Trust
Morgan, Mr & Mrs R
Morrison, Elsie Trust
Morrell, William Memorial Fund
Nerrina Progress Association
Oaktree Dental
One Life Health Group
O'Hehir, Veronica
The Reed Family
Rotary Clubs of Ballarat South
Ryan, Tim
Sorooptimist International
Stapp, Anita
The Shine Centre
Tunstall Square Calisthenics
Vawdrey, Sally Memorial Fund
Wiseman, Julie and Garlick, Rebecca
Zonta Club of Ballarat

Executive Officer's Report

Executive Officer - Judy-Ann Quilliam

The Royal South Street Society (RSSS) is Australia's longest-running eisteddfod and a vital piece of Victoria's living cultural infrastructure. Our mission—to enrich lives through the performing arts—supports early skills development, creative pathways and performance opportunities for thousands of young people each year.

Eisteddfods, and indeed the RSSS Ballarat Eisteddfod are now so much more than just "competitions". They form an essential creative ecosystem that delivers lasting cultural, social and economic impact. RSSS contributes to a clear creative workforce pipeline by providing structured, adjudicated performance experiences that build artistic capability, support teaching practice and lead many participants into tertiary study, arts education and professional creative careers. For children and young people, eisteddfods foster confidence, resilience, discipline and communication skills within safe, inclusive environments for creative expression. As a regional organisation, RSSS delivers high-quality cultural participation outside metropolitan centres, attracts statewide engagement to Ballarat, and generates significant flow-on benefits through tourism, volunteering and community involvement.

Communicating this broader impact remains an ongoing challenge, particularly as Victorian eisteddfods face mounting pressures, including the loss of recurrent state funding, rising operational and compliance costs, volunteer fatigue, and limited capacity for strategic development and data collection. Without sustained investment and support, the volunteer-led cultural infrastructure that is behind eisteddfods risks gradual erosion—once lost, it cannot be easily rebuilt.

In 2025, RSSS consolidated its post-COVID strategic priorities while continuing to plan for the future. We secured venues and resources, progressed our marketing, quality management and volunteer strategies, and renewed our fundraising focus. A significant milestone was the acquisition of the Margaret Schofield OAM Memorial Piano, a K195 Konzert Grand Piano, now housed at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute. We sincerely thank Andrew Cochrane OAM, Bernie Capicciano of Bernies Music Land, and all supporters who helped make this long-held aspiration a reality.

We also commenced implementation of a new custom events and eisteddfod CRM, Artfuel—an Australian-made system designed specifically for arts organisations and currently used by leading institutions including the Sydney Eisteddfod. This work will continue across 2025 and 2026 as historical data is progressively integrated.

A highlight of the year was our return to Her Majesty's Theatre Ballarat for dance and calisthenics, providing participants with a highly valued professional stage experience, and the highly anticipated return of the season Showcase – what a n evening of exceptional entertainment and demonstration of the breadth and depth of talent supported by RSSS that was!

Our greatest strategic focus remains strengthening how we articulate our impact to ensure long-term sustainability. Victorian eisteddfods are not legacy activities; they are future-facing cultural engines. The Royal South Street Society—and organisations like it—will continue to deliver enduring cultural, social and economic value for Ballarat and Victoria, and enriching lives through the performing arts.

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 2025

	2025	2024
Note	\$	\$
Income from ordinary activities		
Admission income		
Admissions	273,731	180,220
Total admission income	273,731	180,220
Other income		
Certificates		
Dividends received	5	309
Donations	21,135	19,235
Entry fees	114,172	51,289
Grants received	275,121	235,242
Guide books and programs	131,019	118,518
Interest earned on RSSS funds	12,013	13,566
Interest earned on Trust funds	224	1,248
Other merchandise	14,359	14,802
Other rent and hire	12,651	6,868
Recoveries	8,418	8,823
Sale of badges	323	1,834
Sponsorships	17,736	17,890
Sundry income	71,411	81,311
	3,263	5,292
Total other income	681,850	576,227
Total income from ordinary activities	955,581	756,447
	4	
Expenses from ordinary activities		
Accommodation	18,950	23,081
Accompanists	2,465	-
Accounting	34,260	46,300
Adjudicators and writers	52,206	52,328
Advertising	15,708	37,828
Audit fees	7,850	7,600
Bad and doubtful debts	-	(8,450)
Bank fees	235	4,424
Board costs	3,162	-
Commission on seat sales	1,043	5,008
Computer software and supplies	23,860	17,734
Contractor fees	2,800	-
Depreciation	40,390	36,057
Donations, gifts and presentations	192	1,116
Equipment hire	23,452	67,053
Finance costs	5,943	833
Functions and meeting costs	1,195	5,497
Insurance	8,375	10,119
Insurances - workcover	3,751	3,661
Licences, permits, legal fees	4,689	4,499

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
Note	\$	\$
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	1,504
Meals	2,231	4,057
Occupancy overheads	2,400	4,800
Photocopier	1,974	1,788
Piano tuning and repairs	270	-
Postage	1,424	1,483
Printing guide and prize books	3,978	10,445
Prize money	79,205	72,857
Retail stock purchased	11,607	7,099
Salaries and labour	231,639	221,526
Staff training and other costs	855	984
Stardom entry fees	-	5,049
Stationery and office supplies	1,523	2,545
Subscriptions	3,266	1,188
Superannuation	25,982	23,387
Telephone and internet	3,543	2,872
Travel allowance	6,052	8,104
Trophies and medals	16,425	13,981
Uniforms	45	408
Utilities, rates and waste disposal	2,317	4,279
Venue hire	237,280	86,565
Volunteers	1,814	7,556
Total expenses from ordinary activities	884,356	797,165
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	71,225	(40,718)
Other comprehensive income		
Net unrealised gain on revaluation of financial assets	33,468	170
Total comprehensive income	104,693	(40,548)

Statement of Financial Position
As At 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
Note	\$	\$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	5 93,986	135,436
Trade and other receivables	6 88,592	24,257
Total current assets	182,578	159,693
Non-current assets		
Investments	7 365,633	322,146
Trust prize investments	8 267,127	267,127
Property, plant and equipment	9 363,120	149,532
Total non-current assets	995,880	738,805
Total assets	1,178,458	898,498
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	11 29,909	13,811
Other financial liabilities	12 72,718	75,672
Lease liabilities	13 25,489	4,037
Employee benefits	14 28,924	18,983
Total current liabilities	157,040	112,503
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	13 130,396	640
Employee benefits	14 2,376	1,402
Total non-current liabilities	132,772	2,042
Total liabilities	289,812	114,545
Net assets	888,646	783,953
Equity		
Retained earnings	379,495	321,119
Financial asset reserve	81,871	48,403
Piano revaluation reserve	111,766	111,766
Trust fund reserve	315,514	302,665
Total equity	888,646	783,953

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

2025

	<i>Retained earnings</i>	<i>Financial asset reserve</i>	<i>Piano revaluation reserve</i>	<i>Trust fund reserve</i>	<i>Total</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at1 January 2025	321,119	48,403	111,766	302,665	783,953
Surplus for the year	71,225	-	-	-	71,225
Transfer to/(from) reserves	(12,849)	-	-	12,849	-
Revaluation increment	-	33,468	-	-	33,468
Balance at31 December 2025	379,495	81,871	111,766	315,514	888,646

2024

	<i>Retained earnings</i>	<i>Financial asset Reserve</i>	<i>Piano revaluation reserve</i>	<i>Trust fund reserve</i>	<i>Total</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Balance at1 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 at31 December 2024	321,119	48,403	111,766	302,665	783,953

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
Note	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities: Guide book sales		
	12,013	13,566
	30,387	24,758
	114,172	51,289
	275,121	235,242
	216,616	180,220
	15,438	15,799
	(1,216)	(832)
	126,719	119,818
	6,658	10,657
	4,973	22,749
	74,896	90,731
Payments to suppliers and employees Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	<u>(814,457)</u>	<u>(767,131)</u>
22	<u>61,320</u>	<u>(3,134)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	<u>(75,460)</u>	(29,050)
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(75,460)</u>	<u>(29,050)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payment of lease liabilities	<u>(27,310)</u>	(26,493)
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(27,310)</u>	<u>(26,493)</u>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	<u>(41,450)</u>	(58,677)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>135,436</u>	194,113
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5 <u>93,986</u>	<u>135,436</u>

The accompanying notes on the full Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2025 form part of these financial statements.



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