

**CITY OF TOOWOOMBA EISTEDDFOD  
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009**

Ladies & Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to present the President's Report to the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the City of Toowoomba Eisteddfod. This report covers the period from the last AGM held on November 11 2008 and is an opportunity to reflect on some of the key issues and events of the past year.

The Management Committee of the City of Toowoomba Eisteddfod Inc with the assistance and guidance of the various sub committees has worked hard to continue to develop and expand the Eisteddfod in 2009. After many months of planning, the 2009 Eisteddfod (May & July) was a success with 27 days of competition and a 25% increase in entries from 2008.

There have been a number of new initiatives this year. These include the TS Burstow Opera Gala held on 9 May with prize money of \$2500 generously sponsored by TS Burstow Pty Ltd. A cocktail party before the event gave us the opportunity to make contact with many of our sponsors and supporters. The Owen Ray's International Music Rock Band sections received many entries competing for prizes of over \$1700 from Owen Ray's International Music and Kustom Amplification. Both of these initiatives have raised the bar on the level of prize money previously sought for this competition.

Dance Group sections for Years 8 – 9 and Years 10 – 12 were introduced in 2009. A separate 3-day Dance Eisteddfod is planned for September 2010 with additional sections for Primary & Secondary ages.

The Closing Concert was held on 2 August and was heralded as a true celebration of the arts showcasing the wealth of talent in our community. We were delighted to have our Patron His Worship the Mayor Cr Peter Taylor and Mrs Taylor attend both this event and the TS Burstow Opera Gala and I acknowledge and thank him for his interest and support in the Toowoomba Eisteddfod.

Other important achievements include the Scholarship program which aims to establish a number of \$500 Scholarships by application for performers competing in the Toowoomba Eisteddfod. The inaugural James Melville-Clark Memorial Scholarship was introduced this year and, together with the James Cronin Memorial Scholarship established in 2008, the piano area now has two Scholarships. A \$500 Clive Berghofer Scholarship for Secondary Brass has also been introduced this year and it is hoped that Primary and Secondary Scholarships can be established in each discipline area over the coming year. Perhaps the most significant scholarship to be established in 2009 through the Eisteddfod Association is the Toowoomba Community Vocal Scholarship Fund. It was originally hoped that \$2000 could be raised by inviting 10 members of the community to donate \$200 each. However the response surpassed our expectations and we were able to award \$3400 to young vocalists as a result of this scholarship.

Many amendments and additions have been made to individual areas of the competition this year. These have included the introduction of graded solos into the instrumental sections and vocal solos with backing track for Primary & Secondary students. The aggregates were also reviewed to ensure consistency across the board. A new Open Contemporary Chorus was introduced and paired with the Open Sacred Choral section to form the newly created Mansel Jones Memorial Trophy & Aggregate with a prize of \$200 donated by the Choral Society. The John Penny Memorial Trophy & Aggregate with a prize of \$200 was also donated by the Choral Society in John's memory.

The Literary sections were significantly reviewed and a number of new initiatives introduced including publishing opportunities and cash prizes and this resulted in a small increase in entries. However, the viability of the literary sections in 2010 will need to be considered by the incoming committee.

Much of our success this year can be attributed to the generosity of our sponsors and we are indebted to them all. Our major sponsors, the Toowoomba Regional Council, TS Burstows and Owen Ray's International Music and Kustom Amplification have donated significantly to the event. Businesses and individuals have generously donated the funds needed to provide prize money and awards and, in addition to these, we have also received assistance from local businesses in setting up the new permanent office in the Empire Theatre complex with carpet, office furniture and a new computer. The complete list of sponsors was printed in our programs and may be viewed on our website.

On the administrative front, a few changes were also made. The addition at last year's AGM of a professional membership category offering early bird Programs and the Schedule to email users plus free entry to the Church Theatre and Studio has proven successful with about a quarter of our members choosing this option. It should be noted that membership of the Association has doubled over the past 12 months. The entry forms were redesigned and the facility to submit entries electronically and pay by direct debit was introduced. To reduce the cost of printing programs, a decision was made to limit

the number of full programs printed and to include free daily programs in the cost of the entry ticket. OfficeWorks kindly supported the Eisteddfod Association by offering free or 'at cost' printing. Advertisers were invited to place ¼ page adverts on newly designed advert pages to be attached to all daily programs. This gave advertisers excellent exposure to the thousands of patrons who attend the event and significantly increased the amount previously raised by the Association through advertising.

It gives me pleasure to report to you the successes of the Eisteddfod Association during the past year and without doubt, the members of the 2009 Management Committee deserve our thanks and praise for these achievements. Unfortunately it is also my duty to make known to the members of the Association that there has been some serious division within the current Management Committee over the past few months both in terms of the policies and direction of the event and in what is considered to be acceptable workplace behaviour. While these problems in no way diminish the diligent and generous contribution of each and every member of the Management Committee, I do believe the Association should take steps to avoid such a situation occurring in the future and, with respect, make two recommendations. First, that a formal complaint process be included in the Association's rules with an independent person appointed to be in charge of receiving and dealing with complaints. The Office of Fair Trading recommends that all incorporated associations include a dispute resolution process as part of their rules to ensure that any dispute can be dealt with in a consistent and effective manner. Second, that a code of conduct for management, staff and volunteers is developed defining the expectations that the Association has about the behaviour of people involved in its activities. A code of conduct would uphold behaviour that is respectful of diversity, is non-discriminatory and upholds the association's values together with behaviour that does not abuse, physically, sexually or verbally, any member of the association, staff, volunteers or members of the public. The updated Constitution as approved by members at the 2008 AGM was registered in February but this may now need to be reviewed further necessitating a general meeting in the future.

With regard to the Constitution, members may recall that one of the amendments to this document approved at last year's AGM related to the number of Management Committee members permitted to serve. In order to accommodate a growing and expanding Eisteddfod, this was changed from 'being not more than six' to 'not less than six or more than eight' members not including the Executive. In order to best serve the Association in 2010 and, as stated in the current Constitution, to represent the skill areas required to effectively organize the Eisteddfod I call on the members to permit eight Management Committee members to be elected to office in 2010. This will enable Dance to be represented, the administrative and marketing areas to be covered and the largest area of the competition, the instrumental sections, to be divided amongst three members. This distribution will also facilitate greater participation and input from the teachers in these areas.

Over the past few months, conveners in each area have held discussions with the sub committees and teachers and comprehensive reports with recommendations have been submitted for the attention of the new Management Committee as it commences work on the 2010 Eisteddfod. The relevant issues from these reports will be compiled into a final document and sent to members shortly.

As we look to the future, it is always with great sadness that the Association learns of the deaths of former members particularly those who have contributed to and supported the Eisteddfod movement in our community. The Management Committee and members of the City of Toowoomba Eisteddfod Inc pay tribute to Madge Chamberlin who passed away on 4 April 2009 and to John Cay who passed away on 19 May 2009.

The organization of the event involves thousands of hours of preparation throughout the year and would not be possible without the hard work of the Executive, Management Committee and sub committee members. On behalf of the Association I extend my sincerest thanks to you all for your valued contribution. It is with regret that we farewell some of our respected colleagues who served in 2009 but I know you will all join me in welcoming the new members forming the 2010 Management Committee. I also acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated volunteers from the community who assisted with the daily organization and running of the Eisteddfod in May and July and to the many other voluntary contributions made by members and the general public in various capacities this year. Forgive me if I do not mention individuals but you are a great team of people and you share a common bond – a willingness to serve our community.

It has been an honour to serve as President this year and respectfully move the acceptance of my report as read.

Paula Melville-Clark  
27 October 2009