

Board Matters

IAF Chair's Report July 2023 - June 2024



The year 2023-2024 was a successful year of fundraising events. In addition to the regular film nights and literary dinners, we held several special events with the use of the Osmond Terrace Function Centre enabling us to accommodate large audiences. The room is carpeted and provides good acoustics, and a stage and sound system enable us present musical events with professional lighting and sound.

Highlights included the Keith Conlon Trio performing to a full house of over 140 guests in July 2023. This musical event was so popular that we hope to invite the Trio back to entertain members on another occasion.

In September 2023, we hosted, *Life is a Cabaret*, organised with the assistance of Laurence Nobes who is himself a cabaret artist. His alter ego, Helga Handful, was Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening and performed several songs. Other performers included singers David Gauci, Alison Kimber, comedian Jax Grayson and lip-synching drag queen Crimsin.

We also held two special literary events over 2023-2024. The first was organised by Helen Onopko and Jill Argent, with Pip Williams, author of *One Summer in Italy*. The other was, *The Bookbinder of Jericho* and *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, in conversation with Sandy Vershoor. The format was extremely successful and will be considered for future special literary events.

Taking advantage of the potential for wide promotion, we held another literary event in May 2024 as part of History Month, featuring Dr Kiera Lindsey, author of *The Convict's Daughter* and *Wild Love: The Ambition of Adelaide Ironside, the first Australian Artist to Astonish the World*. This was designed to be Dr Lindsey in conversation with Professor Penny Edmonds but sadly Professor Edmonds contracted COVID-19 just a few days before. With little notice, Dr Lindsey was able to pivot and prepared a fascinating presentation.

In the lead up to Christmas 2023, Carol Maelzer and Mary Odlum organised a special movie event with a showing of *Napoleon* at the Regal Cinema and a meal afterwards at the Marrayatville Hotel.

Thank you to all of the Board members and the other volunteers who have organised events and assisted in various ways throughout the year especially Cheryl Appelkamp, Marg Jude and Jill Argent.

I would also like to say a special thanks to Cheryl Appelkamp who, after many years as a Board member, had to step down after the AGM in November 2023 due to the six-year maximum term as a Board member, as determined by the IAF Constitution. Cheryl has in fact served many more years than this in two separate stints on the Board. She continues to organise and host the

literary dinners as a member volunteer, playing a key role in the delivery of our program of regular events.

Mary Odum and Helen Onopko had also served more than six years and so initially were also to step down at the AGM in Nov 2023. However, the terms of the Constitution allowed for the six-year limit to be waived in 'exceptional circumstances'. The Board members unanimously agreed that this should be applied to both, as they were key position holders (Mary as Treasurer, and Helen as Secretary and Archivist). It should be noted, however, that after several years in these roles both Mary and Helen would welcome the opportunity to step down, if a new Treasurer and Secretary can be found.

In October 2023, the Board welcomed another new member, Merinda Edwards PhD. As Marketing and Development Manager and currently Interim CEO of Guildhouse, we looked forward to her applying her expertise to assist the Board with promoting and raising the profile of the IAF and its grants program. Merinda, Tracy Crisp and Josh White began that process and later submitted draft proposals for marketing and rebranding for the Board's consideration.

One of the key areas of work of the Board during the first half of 2024 was to draft out the IAF Strategic Plan in order to provide direction and basis for developing other policies and procedures including marketing, sponsorship and event planning and to assist the Board in reviewing the grants program. The Board held a planning meeting and then a team of three - Margaret Lynch, Josh White and Merinda Edwards - worked on initial drafts.

During the first few months of 2024, we had seven members out of a possible nine, but struggled to have a quorum for Board meetings for which five are required to attend in person or online. This meant that we could discuss matters but not pass any resolutions. In June 2024, Josh White, a Melbourne-based marketing specialist who joined the Board in mid-2023, resigned due to work and family pressures.

We ended the 2023-24 year, recognising that the Board must recruit more individuals so that we had a quorum for most meetings, to spread the workload, and to ensure that the IAF is a sustainable organisation that will grow in membership, audiences, funds raised, and grants disbursed. This was to be a priority for the start of the new financial year and the lead up to the 2024 AGM and gave us a clear plan to new Board members who could fill specific gaps in the skill set of the existing Board, particularly in areas such as marketing and communications, philanthropy, fundraising, and graphic design. For this reason, it was agreed that completion of the strategic plan should be paused until after the AGM to enable new Board members to be involved in that process and work together to set the future direction for the IAF.

Moira G. Simpson, PhD.
IAF Chair (2023-2024)