

IAF Chair's Report 2022-2023

The year July 2022-June 23 has been an eventful year for the IAF. It began with a decision by the then Board to wind up the IAF due to declining membership numbers, an uncertain economic situation, and having no replacement to take over as Chair after John Holmes concluded his six-year, two-term stint in that role. The announcement at last year's AGM in November came as a shock to many and a decision was made by the Board in December to postpone for three months in an effort to find a new Chair and to manage the wind down.

In February and March 2023, with the firm belief that the IAF had the potential to be reinvigorated and to continue its work in fundraising to support South Australian artists, my husband and I submitted proposals to the Board for ways to do this, and offered our assistance. These included adopting new fundraising strategies by planning occasional, larger-scale events with a wider range of events to attract broader audiences and boost income generation; developing and implementing a multi-stranded marketing plan that would raise the profile of the IAF amongst artists and the public and boost audiences and income; identifying one or more new venues with acoustics and a sound system, better suited to our needs and able to accommodate larger audiences; and undertaking an active and targeted search strategy for new Board members – including a Chair - with specific skill sets and professional expertise that would contribute to increasing the profile and marketing reach of the IAF.

In March 2023, with the Board still having no Chair and time running out, I volunteered to take on the role of Interim Chair, a proposal that was accepted by the Board. A few weeks later, the Board agreed to rescind the decision to wind up the IAF and we have been busy in many ways since then with work on new fundraising events and planning and policy documents.

The focus on larger events was adopted by the Board and we identified and have been using the Osmond Terrace Function Centre for the literary dinners as well as for other, larger, fundraising events. During May and June planning began for three major events: a musical event with the Kaith Conlon Trio in July, a cabaret in September and a literary luncheon with guest speaker Pip Williams in October. Helen Onopko approached Pip Williams, and she and Jill Argent began planning that event, whilst Laurence Nobes, a cabaret artist and event organiser, was approached to help with the organisation of the cabaret, a role that he adopted as a volunteer. The facilities of the Function Centre that the venue offers have enabled us to accommodate larger audiences for these events, with between 80 and 145 for each.

The Board will continue to explore opportunities for increasing future revenue generation with a program of events that reaches out to the public through more diverse – but targeted – range of events - with the prospect of increased revenue for grants, and better outcome in terms of time and energy of all the volunteers involved.

During the period 1 July 2022- 30 June 2023, the Board membership has had some changes. Carol Maelzer joined the Board at the last AGM, and since then has taken on several tasks including assisting Mary Odum with the organisation of film nights, acquiring and preparing raffles prizes and selling tickets; Carol organised the completion of the December IAF Newsletter and also introduced and compiled a booklet of reports received from past grant recipients. This report, distributed earlier this year, provides a useful record of the outcomes for grantees and is a powerful illustration of the value of our fundraising work.

Early in the year, Jen and Chloe Dunstan both stood down due to Jen's health and to focus on her post-operative recuperation. Both have given several years work to the Board and had been key figures at regular IAF events as well as initiating some memorable one-off events. We have been delighted to see Jen's progress in her health journey and her attendance at the AGM.

The strategic search for new Board members undertaken between February and April 2023, has reaped rewards. IAF member Tracy Crisp, herself a performing artist, expressed her interest in joining the Board. She was formally co-opted onto the Board in May and since then she has provided valuable insights into artists' experiences and perspectives, and made suggestions for policy changes which are under discussion.

Josh White was one of the individuals identified in our search for skilled professionals and we are delighted that he also joined the Board. Josh is CEO of Neon Treehouse, a digital marketing agency,

and has a wealth of experience in marketing and management. Josh was formally co-opted onto the Board in May and immediately reviewed and revised the draft Marketing Strategy, presenting a draft document with the addition of several proposals that are under consideration by the Board. He is helping us to utilise online strategies and advising on various ways of building networks across the arts sector that will improve the IAF's presence, profile and reach.

Since they joined the Board, Josh and Tracy have been working with Margaret Lynch to develop a Strategic Plan for the IAF. This is critical to the formation of various policies and plans that the IAF needs to adopt to ensure that we operate according to good governance principals in everything that we do, and that we increase efficiency and productivity, build audiences, diversify activities, boost income and extend our reach within the arts sector. The plan will be completed early next year.

We have gained another co-opted member of the Board, Merinda Edwards but, as her introduction falls outside the timescale of this report, I will leave discussion of her role and contributions until a later date.

So, the financial year ended in June with a much-improved outlook for the IAF, lots of activity being undertaken by Board members and the prospect of several exciting new fundraising events to look forward to.

I would like to thank all the members of the Board for their hard work, their energy and commitment to the arts and the work of the IAF, and also thank members and donors for their support as attendees of the events, for helping to spread the word amongst family and friends, and for the financial input through donations, ticket purchase, not to mention our regular raffles.

Due to the limitations on terms in office as members of the Board, as determined by the IAF Constitution, three of our Board members have reached – or gone beyond – that limit: Cheryl Appelkamp, who has organised the literary dinners for many years; Mary Odlum, Treasurer; and Helen Onopko, Secretary and archivist. I would like to acknowledge the tremendous input that they have had in many ways and the huge amount of knowledge that they have of the IAF and its activities over the years. We will welcome their continued active involvement in supporting the IAF and the events program as well as Helen's ongoing volunteering work as the IAF archivist.

The treasurer is a key role and the Constitution does make provision for Mary to continue in this role as a non-voting Board member, if there is no-one else appointed, and the role of secretary is also essential. Both Mary and Helen would welcome a rest and handing over the reins to others. So, we welcome nomination or volunteers for these two positions and will be dealing with the voting of Board members during the course of this evening's meeting.

As always, we would also welcome help from anyone who would like to volunteer to assist with planning and presenting future events as well as supporting the work of the Board in other ways. There are various roles that can be undertaken, so please approach any of the Board members over the course of the evening, or afterwards by email, if you would be able to assist in any way.

Moira Simpson,
Interim Chair
November 2023