

Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of Shepparton Theatre Arts Group for the Year 2023. It is with great pleasure that I stand before you for my second term as President. What a year we have had, and I am so proud of our remarkable and productive year.

As we come out of the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a collective sense of uncertainty. We wondered if the enthusiasm for live theatrical shows would still burn bright. The resounding answer we received was a heartfelt "YES." It is truly heartening to witness the renewed enthusiasm from our local theatrical community.

Our journey for the year began with the spectacular production of "Steel Magnolias" in October. The response to auditions was overwhelming, and a decision to double-cast the performance was made. This presented some challenges however; our dedicated production team and cast worked tirelessly and made this a resounding success. "Steel Magnolias" marked a significant milestone as the first play since the pandemic's onset, and we are thrilled to report that its success has paved the way for an exciting addition of more plays to the STAG repertoire.

The Georgy Awards recognized our 2022 production of "The Drowsy Chaperone" with ten nominations, and we proudly celebrated several wins.

Our successes extended to the Music Theatre Guild of Victoria, where we received nominations and commendations, further cementing our presence in the theatre community. Congratulation to all the well-deserved winners.

In December, we celebrated the year's end with a brilliant gathering at Mario's Pizza in Mooroopna, where we awarded Troy McKindley a Life Membership. Nicky Pummeroy and the rest of the STAG Committee surprised me with a Life Membership as well – very sneaky I had no idea although I did wonder why Paul was so passionate about coming to the Christmas party!!!!!!! We were both deeply surprised and graciously welcomed into the esteemed ranks of Life Members of STAG.

The new year started on a lively note with a Trivia Show hosted by Ian and Natalie, featuring entertainment from some of the "It Takes Two" presenters. This proved to be a great night out for In March, our innovative production of "It Takes Two" was relocated to the WestSide Performing Arts Centre due to flood damage. This endeavour was met with swift adjustments and an outpouring of support from our dedicated team. Special recognition goes out to Karen Groves and Nicky Pummeroy for their exceptional efforts in making this show a resounding success and for ushering a significant number of new members into the STAG family.

In July, in partnership with Riverlinks, we delivered "Christmas in July" at the Eastbank Centre, a venture led by Kat Bristol, Wade Gregory, and Nicky Pummeroy. The season consisted of a cabaret evening on Friday night followed by an Afternoon Delight on Sunday. Both performances were extremely well attended with great feedback from Riverlinks. Let me tell you my father in law loved it and has been telling everyone in Tintwistle, England about it. Maybe we need to take it overseas!

Stepping out from his usual roles backstage, Troy directed his first show, "12 Angry Jurors" in the Blackbox. This production, with its outstanding 13-member cast and two intermissions, was another triumph for STAG, further enriching the inclusion of plays in our repertoire.

Our major musical for the year, "Fiddler on the Roof," was a two-week extravaganza at the Westside Performing Arts Centre, and it too met with great success. We received heartfelt congratulations from the community, especially the Jewish community, for our respectful representation of their faith. Casey and her team dedicated immense effort to bring this show to life, and from all reports, it has been a major success. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting the financial results of the show.

STAG has yet again achieved success in the Bendigo Bank Community Grant program, securing \$4,500 towards a new Lighting Board. Our current 29-year-old system has served us faithfully in various venues and will be missed, but the new equipment will enable us to continue bringing more shows to life in the Blackbox Theatre.

Troy has been instrumental in overseeing various upgrades, including new lighting around the shed and a new air conditioning system for the Greenroom. He has also been diligently working on rewiring the Electrical Grid in the Blackbox. In addition, the Makeup room in the Blackbox Theatre has seen improvements, as evidenced in "Steel Magnolias" and "12 Angry Jurors."

Behind the scenes, we have been continuously updating our Policies and Procedures to align with current standards. We have also modified some of our forms to incorporate Working with Children Check requirements and updated our Code of Conduct. These changes are accessible on our website.

We bid farewell to our Life Members who sadly passed, Nancy Kinmond, and Paul Freeman, both of whom left an indelible mark on our organization.

We now have photos up of those loved ones that have passed and all Presidents in our Black box area.

Before concluding my report, I'd like to share some exciting news regarding the 2023 Georgy Awards. It brings me immense pleasure to announce that STAG has received a total of 25 nominations. These nominations encompass our outstanding productions, including "Fiddler on the Roof", "Steel Magnolias", "It Takes Two," and "Twelve Angry Jurors." Please join me in extending our heartfelt congratulations to all the deserving nominees. Bubbla Darlings!!!

As another year draws to a close, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have been a part of the STAG family, whether on stage or behind the scenes. Our dedicated audiences deserve our gratitude for their unwavering support. We have exciting plans for the upcoming year, and I encourage you all to get involved. Finally, to the amazing committee, I would personally like to say a huge thank you for all your support and guidance. We certainly are a team. Shows are not just on stage there is a lot of hard work that goes behind the scenes that no one sees and people aren't recognised for – but we do it because we love it.

Thank you.

Wendy Platt