



# Organ Society of Queensland Inc.

## President's Report to the

## Annual General Meeting

9:30am Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

Christ Church, St. Lucia.

The committee since that last AGM, comprised of:

Peter Robinson – President

Ross Windsor – Vice President

Denis Wayper – Secretary

Jenny Summerson – Treasurer

Steven Nisbet – Member

Amanda Hume – Member

It has been a busy year for the committee. Our activity has been concentrated on the areas of running the society in accordance with our constitution, scholarship activities and events involving the members. Notably, we have had a request to advise on the procurement of a church organ, run a series of 'Piano to Organ' courses, raised considerable sums for charity and visited the QPAC concert hall organ giving members of the OSQ, and our friends at TOSA, an opportunity to play that instrument. Special thanks are due to founding member, Dr. Robert Boughen, for facilitating this visit.

Sadly we also lost one of our longest-standing members in Elsie Anders who passed away just before her 86<sup>th</sup> birthday last June. Elsie will be missed and I acknowledge her long and consistent support of the OSQ. Our immediate past president, Dr. Steven Nisbet, volunteered his services to preside at the console at Elsie's funeral, and it was a fitting farewell to her from Steven and other OSQ members who formed part of the large congregation who gathered to bid her farewell. Rest in peace Elsie.

Steven Nisbet has also met with some bad luck when, only last Monday, he suffered a seriously fractured right arm as a result of a bicycle accident. Steven has spent most of the last week in hospital but he is now back at home recuperating. I'm sure you will all join with me in wishing him a speedy and full recovery and that we look forward to hearing him back at the console as soon as is possible.

As touched on above, we were approached to give advice on the procurement of a new instrument for a church in Gatton. Steven Nisbet met with the church's organ procurement committee and had a warm and enthusiastic reception when they discussed their various options. We have had good feedback from them about the service we provided. I hope we hear of a decent and appropriate new instrument being brought into service in the future.

I mentioned last year about a scholarship that had started at The Anglican Church Grammar School ('Churchie') in the latter half of 2017. I am pleased to report that the scholar is making good progress and has been further awarded another year's scholarship to continue his studies for 2018. In addition to this, a further scholarship of equal value (ie half of the tuition fees for the period of the scholarship) has been awarded to another 'Churchie' boy who has keen and promising musical talent, but otherwise would not have been in a position to take up organ lessons. I hope to be invited to Churchie soon to formally present this second scholarship at a morning assembly.

Last year, it was also mentioned that we were in discussion with St. Stephen's Cathedral about becoming involved in their scholarship program. We have heard nothing more from them about this so the committee has allowed this matter to lapse. We continue to look further afield for opportunities, but have had one offer declined from a canvassed school and another declined from a suburban church. Unfortunately our coffers are not "bulging at the seams" so there is no need for us to find scholarship

recipients in haste, however, we will continue looking and I am confident our cautious and conservative approach will eventually yield a worthy and keen recipient where the funds will give great value.

During the year we received a donation to the scholarship fund from Lynda McKelvie, to be put to use in memory of her late husband and OSQ member, Bill. We are still looking to use this money but I wish to acknowledge this special donation. We are always looking for donations to our scholarship fund and if any of you feel the need to make one today, please see any of the committee and we will be happy to accept it.

The OSQ also conducted a survey and published a report on its results about church organists pay rates. This report has received wide response from throughout the country and hopefully will make a contribution in helping church musicians receive appropriate recompense for their services. The final report is available on the OSQ website.

The OSQ website is getting tired and is in need of update. There is work in progress on this matter and changes are not too far away. Negotiations about this are still at an early stage, but I hope results not too far away. I hope we can bring you a vibrant and useful website about society matters as well as a first stop “see what’s going on in the organ world” service.

Once again Ross Windsor and Steven Nisbet combined to perform a charity fund-raising concert for the Queensland Brain Institute. Just under \$1,000.00 was raised and contributed to Alzheimer’s research in memory of our late member Alastair Rushworth as a result. I congratulate and applaud Steven and Ross for their special efforts to this contribution and also all of the many others who helped bring this concert to fruition and made it a success.

Steven Nisbet also combined with Greg Hartay-Szabo to provide what we believe to be an Australian first. A two-organ concert utilizing pipes on the one hand and digitally reproduced pipes on the other. This concert took place in the Albert Street Uniting church last November using the in situ pipe organ and a digital reproduction of the famous Melbourne Town Hall Organ. The concert was very well received by the audience and also very successful in that around \$3,700.00 was raised for Hummingbird House, Queensland’s only children’s hospice. Congratulations and well done all around once again.

Throughout the year, we have welcomed eight new members to the OSQ. It is heartening to see that although a small and specialized interest group, we can still attract new members. Welcome again to you and I hope we have a long, interesting and mutually beneficial relationship together. On the downside of membership, we still have around 10 members significantly behind in their dues. The committee does what it can to chase these arrears and encourage all to remain members, but it is likely that not all will remain on the books next year. At last count we were 88 members, including 5 honorary life members and our patron with 17 members behind on their membership fees (10 mentioned above and 7 only one payment behind.)

One area of concern is that of the “Organ Australia” magazine. The Society of Organists, Victoria, has informed us that in future it is only to be a digital magazine. We were given no notice or say in this and are not happy with it. We also do not know how much we are expected to pay for the purely digital product into the future. We are not of the opinion that a digital magazine is worth the same price as the printed version. Investigation and planning future options is underway, but the way ahead is not clear at this stage. We hope to bring you Organ Australia in some form or another in the immediate future, but it is possible that this might not happen and there will be a disruption to what you receive. I hope this is not the case, but as we resolve the various issues, you will be kept informed.

Moving to the future, we have some exciting plans for 2019. We hope to mount a ‘Young’ Organists concert around March/April next year. This will probably be in St. Andrew’s Uniting Church, include our scholarship winners as well as other organ students of varying experience from around Brisbane. Happily it looks like we will have much to choose from when constructing the program.

Also, later in 2019, maybe September, we are looking to mount a ‘Spectacular’ in City Hall that will feature the organ, choral works and probably brass. This will be part of the Brisbane Festival, and co-produced by the OSQ, 4MBS and Brisbane City Council. There is much planning to be done and confirmation of participants is yet to be finalised, but all approached parties to date are very excited by the concept and want it to go ahead. So watch this space.

Information about the last two concerts will be communicated to you as soon we can.

In conclusion, I will thank all who serve and assist the committee.

The regional representatives show continued interest and attend as much as they can in Brisbane. Their efforts are very much appreciated and I still hope we can arrange some regional activities sooner rather than later.

David Vann is a stalwart in providing a link with Organ Australia. Although the future here is unclear, it doesn't make David's work any less important. Thank you one again David.

I also thank the outgoing committee members for their efforts since the last AGM. None of the above would happen with out them and their willingness to donate their time on behalf of the OSQ. It has been my privilege to be your President for the last year. I hope you feel we have served you well in looking after the interests of the OSQ.

Finally, I thank Christ Church for having us here today. I thank the eminent Christopher Wrench for being the liaison with Christ Church for us, and providing his talents to demonstrate what I'm sure you will agree is a remarkable instrument.

Peter Robinson

President

Organ Society of Queensland