



BALLARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE



2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

For the financial year ending 30 April 2020



To be presented for adoption at the 162nd Annual General Meeting

To be held via Zoom Videoconferencing (due to COVID restrictions)
on Monday 27th September 2021 at 4.00 pm

President: Dr Mike Stephens

Vice Presidents: Paula Nicholson and Jane Valpied

Secretary: Ross Furness

Treasurer: Peter Dowling

Other Members of the Board of Directors July 2020 - June 2021:

Terry Lloyd, David Berry, Andrew Miller, Prue Bentley, Paulene Barton, Phil Roberts

Executive Manager:

Colin Jackson OAM

Patrons:

Mayor of Ballarat, Councillor Daniel Moloney

Dr Phil Roberts OAM

Auditors:

CountPro Audit Pty Ltd

President's Report

Overview

The last 12 months have been traumatic and testing for the BMI and our members as we and the Ballarat community continue to be impacted by the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Whilst daily operations have been impacted with the building closed for lengthy periods of time we have been able to achieve many positive outcomes for our members.

Some of the major achievements include:

- Continued focus on strategic planning and development of key projects,
- Finalisation of the BMI Constitution and Bylaws review,
- Repair and restoration of the basement area,
- Upgrade of Minerva Space sound, lighting, and AV equipment,
- Introduction of Library Click and Collect service for members.

Detailed financial statements are included with this annual report, and I thank Peter Dowling and his finance committee members for their attention to the wise stewardship of our finances

Our members and volunteers are the beating heart of the BMI, and it is this strong and committed base that provides the essential foundation to all that we do. I'd like to acknowledge the commitment of members and volunteers and thank them for their support and commitment during the past 12 months.

In addition to continuing to renew and pay their membership fees, they supported our end-of-financial-year appeal which raised over \$35,000 for our organisation.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable financial support we have received from the State and Commonwealth Governments via JobKeeper, Business support packages, and the significant grants from DELWP and Creative Victoria. Without this support the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic would have had a much more severe impact on the viability of the BMI.

I would lastly like to acknowledge the valuable relationship we have continued to develop with the City of Ballarat via the Strategic Partnership program.

Board - Strategic Planning

The Board meets monthly and has continued to review BMI operations and important strategic items such as the business plan and the updating of the Articles of Association and bylaws. It is pleasing that after many years the Board was able to complete the Review and I would like to thank Terry Lloyd in particular for his dedication to completing this important task. The changes were presented and passed by members at a Special General meeting in June of this year.

Of course there is always more to follow, with forward planning still required for other identified key projects, including Essential Services, Risk Management, Asset Management and more.

BMI Staff

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff. Our staff are to be commended for their dedication to the needs of the BMI, our Board, members and volunteers. In particular I note the contributions of Colin Jackson (Executive Manager), Sam McColl (Venue Manager), Rosemary McInerney (Librarian) and Kevin Murnane (Finance Manager). We have also had a number of new staff join us including Mark Potter (Cultural Development), Katrina Hill (Events and Programs), and Sam and Nick (Venue Techs).

In mentioning our management team, I do want to include Marilyn Furness as our Volunteer Coordinator, and Ross Furness as our retiring Bar Coordinator - both of these being voluntary positions. Both Marilyn and Ross attend to these very important tasks with enormous generosity, goodwill and efficiency.

Volunteers

We are indebted to the many volunteers who contribute so much to the BMI. The danger is in mentioning individuals, so collectively I want to acknowledge the wonderful support and assistance provided through the Friends of Minerva, the Pop Up Shop, the Library and Collections volunteers, archives, those who help with the bar, hospitality and venue readiness, and building maintenance.

This year required an increase volunteer activity as we relocated our heritage newspaper collections from the basement to the Hooper Room. Thanks to Ross Furness, Neil Leckie, Peter Dowling, and Andrew Miller in particular for their hard work over an extended period of time.

BMI continues to be built on the hard work of our dedicated volunteers. Thank you indeed to all our volunteers.

Building Improvements

This year has been very productive at the BMI. While the building is not being used as much we have had opportunities to complete a number of major projects, including:

- Waterproofing and tank of the Humffray Room balcony,
- Installation of cleaners sink in the ground floor stores area,
- Paint repairs throughout the building,
- Upgrading of hydronic heating system, and air-conditioning for our building tenants,
- Repairs and stabilisation of the foyer hatch door to basement,
- Renovations to the basement including upgrading of ventilation systems.

Special thanks to Wendy Jacobs, our Architect and Heritage Consultant. We also thank the Department of Environment, Land, Water and planning for their financial support to enable us to undertake much-needed repair and restoration work in the basement.

Member Communications

This year we completely redeveloped our website. This was a major undertaking that was done thanks to funds from Creative Victoria, and completed by Small Dog Design who worked with our venue manager, Sam, to create an easy to navigate website that would help people hire the venue, find the latest news, and look at the upcoming events calendar. The website is continually improved and updated, so make sure you check it out regularly (<https://ballaratmi.org.au>).

This year we also updated the style and content of our members' newsletter to focus on events and activities being held in the Building, whilst continuing to provide links to our lending library and historic resources and collections. We now produce the newsletter in house and I would like to thank Mark Potter for his work in producing the newsletter each month.

BMI Events and Functions

As mentioned, this year has been very challenging for the BMI, and none more so than for Sam and the venue and events team. We have had many events and hires postponed or cancelled due to restrictions and lockdowns, which still continue to affect the organisation and live music and events industry.

Whilst we have been heavily impacted by the pandemic we were able to deliver a number of well attended and well produced events. These include:

- Live streams for the Ballarat Heritage Weekend (May 2020),
- Our first live concert since the pandemic - Fanny Lumsden - Fallow tour (January 2021),
- Big Women theatre production - LadderFrame Theatre (March 2021),
- Makers Market (March 2021)
- Keep the Circle Unbroken live music (March 2021)
- Twilight Talks (April 2021)
- Music at the BMI - final event in series (April 2021)

Throughout the past 12 months we hosted a number of weddings, birthday parties, meetings, and film recordings. We also donated the use of our space to community organisations including the Words Out workshops for the Creative Ballarat Continuous Voices Project.

This year we also conducted a live stream series prior to the Ballarat Local Government elections. This four-part series was free for the community to attend and involved the BMI creating a forum for council candidates to talk about their policies, and the reasons that voters should consider them on the ballot. This series was attended by all council candidates (but one) and was very well attended by the community.

During the year we continued to be supported by our more 'permanent' hirers including Kadampa Meditation, Ballarat Chess Club, Ballarat Film Society, and Sing Australia.

We have maintained our partnership with The Wheeler Centre and look forward to working with them to present more thought-provoking events.

We have also developed a number of new cultural based activities (thanks to Mark and volunteers) including the Makers and Community Markets, as well as workshops on painting and other creative arts.

Board of Management

In conclusion I would like to thank the BMI Board for their hard work, diligence, professional expertise and the generosity of their time. As we know it is not just the Board Members themselves who get involved but also partners, and at times families, and this broad based support and hard work is very much appreciated. From this perspective I would like to thank Board Secretary Ross Furness for his fantastic work in all the meeting preparation, board projects, following up actions and keeping us organised so efficiently.

As at 30th April 2021, the Committee structure was:

Note - President is Ex-Officio on each committee.

Building and Assets

Andrew Miller (Chair), Paula Nicholson

Staff: Venue & Events Manager (Ex-Officio), Executive Manager (Ex-Officio)

Finance

Peter Dowling (Chair), Paulene Barton, Grantley Hastings

Staff: Finance Officer (Ex-Officio), Executive Manager (Ex-Officio)

Dr Mike Stephens | President
Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute
September 2021

Treasurer's Report

It is my pleasure to present the annual Audited Financial Statements for the Ballarat Mechanics Institute for the financial year ended 30 April 2021.

INCOME

Total income in 2021 was \$408,770 compared to \$254,050 in 2020 but that must be looked at in line with the assistance BMI received to compensate for the COVID-19 lockdowns:

Our rental role income remained strong during 2021 but the rent that BMI would normally receive from functions was much less than the 2020 year as a result of our inability to conduct functions.

In total the rental income for 2021 was \$85,135 compared to \$124,456 in 2020

The Library Income in 2021 was \$30,936 compared to \$30,766 in 2020 and we thank our loyal library scribes for their continued patronage.

Our librarian Rosemary and her volunteers worked tirelessly to provide click and collect during COVID-19 which was important for our readers.

The library has continued to purchase new releases for our readers.

Fundraising. As stated in the 2020 financial report BMI commenced an ongoing appeal to assist with operational costs and in 2021 \$35,784 was received.

Other Income in 2021 was \$256,815 compared with \$81,028 in 2020 and this result was a result of BMI applying for and receiving:

\$118,350 compared to \$12,000 in 2020

Live Music Venues Program Income \$75,250

Cash Flow boost \$13,721

Victorian Government Business Support Grant \$20,000

EXPENDITURE

Insurance is one of the biggest expenses of BMI amounting to \$25,708 in 2021

Business as usual expenses such as gas and electricity, cleaning, telephone, fire protection, catering and bar purchases and artists for functions are lower as a result of Covid-19 lockdown where bookings and events plummeted.

Live music program expenses are funds spent from the grant received with other items in capital expenditure and other expense lines. This grant has been fully acquitted to the funding body.

Repairs and maintenance is \$26,742 in 2021 compared with \$18,287 last year as BMI took the opportunity to repair and clean the premises when there were no patrons.

Staff remuneration amounted to \$210,569 in 2021 compared to \$193,486 in 2020. There is the equal of 3 full time.

The 2021 report shows an operating surplus of \$30,643 this year compared to a deficit of \$72,659 last year and as explained previously this is a result of the Annual Appeal and the COVID-19 funding received.

A 2021 net deficit after depreciation and capital items for the year ended 30 April 2021 was \$63,941.

The challenges for the 2021/22 year include:

- Covid-19 lockdowns continue to prevent BMI from holding events 2021 and on the Road Map to the future out of Covid-19 appears not to improve as BMI is primarily an indoor event centre and there are severe restrictions on patron numbers;

- BMI is receiving less rent from shops as we have followed the Commonwealth's guidelines and offered rent relief where requested
- The Royal South Street Eisteddford remains under some threat.
- Whether or not the venue is open for events the insurance bill of some \$30,000 is incurred each year in September and this impacts the cash flow

The positives for the 2021/22 year include:

- The 2021/22 Annual Appeal to assist with operational costs was again successful
- The City of Ballarat has renewed it's partnership with BMI to assist with staffing costs and this is \$45,000 each year for 3 years.
- BMI continue to apply for and receive Covid-19 funding and this financially supports the business
- BMI has received \$85,000 ex GST to restore the Von Muller collection and repair paintings in the premises

Peter Dowling | Treasurer
Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute
September 2021

I recommend that the 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements be adopted by the meeting.

ballaratmi.org.au