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President's Report 2021

I would like to begin this report with recognition for the initiative, resilience and passion of our Coordinator, Hilary Rigg. We saw many organisations close down over the long COVID periods last year, but Hilary used initiative, research and plain hard work to keep us functioning all year. She didn't just pull Crashendo!Bairnsdale through COVID but diversified the delivery of our programs into activities that still maintained our goals of social inclusion and excellent music-making, and upskilled herself and all participants. A massive thank you, Hilary!

2020 was the year for diversification in the Crashendo program and one of the most exciting events was forming a partnership with the i-tet John Noble Quartet Program. This program included 4 of our past students within the senior WyYung Quartet and Alpine Trio (beginner level). John Noble alternated between Remote Lessons with the students in lockdown in their own homes, to group rehearsals with John on ZOOM, and John coming down to Bairnsdale for face-to-face sessions with the groups. As online 'Remote Learning' became the norm in many schools, music lessons were delivered via ZOOM for our students. Hilary made contact with Ryyan Chin, our first ever strings teacher from 2014, who now teaches in WA, to teach our Alpine Trio violinists and a Melbourne cellist, Lachlan Dent to teach our cellist. A huge thank you to Andrea Fail for being our Responsible Person at rehearsals and for tackling new internet skills to run ZOOM meetings.

Definitely a highlight for East Gippsland was the May concert with i-tet WyYung, Alpine, Traralgon & Melbourne based professional Flinders Quartet delivering a highly professional and musical performance in the warm acoustics of St Mary's Church, Bairnsdale.

Due to COVID, the Orchestra Program moved to one session a week via ZOOM and again Hilary researched and implemented the best way to do this and continued to provide these rehearsals. Once restrictions eased a little, 2 of our very senior participants started 'meeting' outside CRASHENDO! times, to practise their parts together and enjoy each other's company. Mark Sheill, an experienced conductor and advocate of the benefits of rural community music came on board as our Orchestra Leader/Conductor in October, raising the level of playing and musicians' spirits remarkably in a short space of time. He

delivered via ZOOM to the Hub's excellent online facilities each week and attended rehearsals personally when possible. This Youth(ful) Orchestra really is a community event, with our trainee conductor gaining his practical experience in front of the orchestra and Mark on the huge screen via ZOOM educating all the above. Although COVID lockdowns impacted on our participation numbers in the Youth(ful) Orchestra, there was always a hive of activity, more musicians taking up new roles (eg library monitor) and a wonderful interaction of enthusiastic musicians from primary school age to more senior citizens.

Our Early Years Program – a development of the-pilot program, Little Squeaks & Whistles program, identified that most Early Years staff did not understand the importance of music as a tool to support school readiness, and were not comfortable/confident in delivering music activities so part of the Regional Development Victoria grant was allocated to providing PD opportunities and assistance with upskilling Early Years teachers within our shire. Delivery of Professional. We appointed Rachel Barling to the position and she launched into researching suitable PD deliverers and devising the timeline for the program. Due largely to her enthusiasm and passion, the program had over 40 Early Years teachers involved, with Zoom meets when COVID again interrupted our lives, and personal assistance from Rachel when allowed. This program informed educators of the pedagogy of including music in everyday early years activities and Rachel provided many user-friendly resources based on Early Years curriculum. These resources will be launched on our website in the near future as a valuable resource for any Early Years programs. With so much research now stating the importance of music from birth, our program will keep supporting the upskilling of Early Years teachers; that is if the funding continues!

The Holiday Program in July was reduced to 3 days with two 45 min sessions presented via ZOOM- a circus skills program from a local presenter and a percussion program from our great supporter-John Wise from Melbourne. Although there was only a small group of participants, it was excellent learning for all in presenting programs whilst in COVID lockdown. A particular congratulations to our Coordinator, Hilary, in her upskilling in ZOOM and managing the delivery of the sessions.

Tom Ponting, from the Business Recovery Advisory Services Program, joint funded through the Federal and Victorian Governments, continued to mentor and advise the management and development of our program, with ongoing meetings and check-ins with Hilary and myself. His advice for marketing, managing personnel and programs, goal-setting, structuring and interviewing prospective staff and volunteers was invaluable. He also designed our new logo and banners. A heartfelt thank you from Crashendo!Bairnsdale.

After the initial East Gippsland Shire sponsored 2020 Quasitrad partnership program was cancelled due to the Bushfires, planning to present a community special event was

reorganised. After a few more alternative dates, an outdoor concert with singing workshops with the new COVID style of outdoor venues and limited numbers for April this year also fell through due to musician availability. We are still planning a replacement event.

Our annual concert events collaborating with The Gippsland Symphony Orchestra and Latrobe Orchestra in August-September were cancelled due to the ongoing lockdowns with COVID. We collaborated with GSO and David Williams to create a video with participants ranging all over greater Gippsland. David ran online rehearsals and everyone recorded their parts to a click track. Hilary organised the video and audio mixing down through our contact with Quasitrad in Melbourne and great video of the 'William Tell Overture' resulted. Another creative Hilary initiative!

The Youthful Orchestra participated in the East Gippsland 'BraveArts' initiative to inspire locals impacted by COVID. Hilary organised a very entertaining and inspiring video from our very young to the more senior participants and it was released through the Shire.

Another expansion of our program included a Youth Conductor Traineeship for one of our participants, upskilling local people to then take on positions with the program. Mark Sheill took our student with a very structured and challenging program delivered by ZOOM lessons. Our trainee also conducts the Youthful Orchestra whilst Mark directs both him and the Orchestra as required.

Other major impacts on our program was the arrival of Jacqui Crawford as our volunteer media person. Jacqui arrived like a bombshell and hasn't slowed down, taking on all our Social Media with continuous updates and liaising with Paul Mlynarz in implementing the redesigning of our website.

Marianne Rothschild joined as a string tutor and orchestra volunteer, travelling from Melbourne each week for an overnight stay.

COVID impacted on other special events:

- The Bairnsdale Christmas Parade was replaced with a Christmas Hunt with our display in the Dwyers Toyota showroom.
- Lost in the Groove July 3 days- rescheduled 3 times
- Eastwood Village concert cancelled and still working on a new date.

Then just to give nature an opportunity to have its say, the Twin Rivers Lions Club and Crashendo organised Johnsonville Hall performance in May was cancelled due to forecast violent winds. This event included the E G Symphonia, E Gippsland Brass, Canzona Brass and I-tet WyYung quartet and we have a new date for later this year.

Our local community continued to support us with particular thanks to the Bairnsdale Community Hub for providing us with well-appointed rooms for meetings, rehearsals and events, and Grimace Computers for the donation of a laptop for our ZOOM meetings.

Last but certainly not least is the continued support of our committee, stepping up to assist in the greater load and constantly changing social rules that COVID created and upskilling themselves to work effectively in this environment. Also I would like to acknowledge Judy-Anne Alexander who is our Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Advisor and has been with us for many years now.

It has been a challenging year for us all, but we have survived. It is the embedded belief that our programs do change the lives of all those involved, from the Early Years program children and teachers, through the primary school students, secondary school mentors, trainee, adults who are part of our orchestra, local musicians and Melbournians who simplify music parts. It is worth the effort!