

AGM REPORTS

President

AUSTA National AGM Report – James de Rozario AUSTA National President

AUSTA National AGM Meeting – 24-11-2022

As I type my third and final National President AGM Report, I have been busy thinking over the last three years.

I began my Presidency in 2020 fresh and excited – I was about to face new challenges with AUSTA, and I was also taking on a new job. Everything started well – getting to know systems and people along with formulating plans and strategies. In March 2020, the National Executive met in Adelaide, and I remember leaving the meeting invigorated and excited for what was to come.

None of us were to know that just a few days later, we would be entering lockdowns.

The onset of COVID changed everything – and it was the blind leading the blind! I remember writing contingency plans so that we could keep my schools' music program going – individual lessons, ensembles as well as curriculum instrumental programs. At the same time, AUSTA required direction and purpose as we entered a new time. We were soon cancelling the visit of Barry Green, postponing the National Conference and cancelling live events. But our amazing State Presidents and Committees were thinking on their feet and were quickly pivoting events online. As we adjusted to this new format, one thing at least became clear – our regular events were at last TRULY national – it was lovely to receive feedback from members in country Tasmania who were enjoying events up in Brisbane. It has been terrific to see how many of our events have remained online or have become mixed events.

As 2021 approached, the pandemic seemed to ease and there was hope that the Conference could still run – but with fresh outbreaks and with all travel becoming ever increasingly difficult, the difficult decision was made to postpone the conference to 2022. One good outcome of this was that the Presidency had a better flow – Year 1 would be the AUSTA international trip; Year 2 would be a visiting artist or pedagogue; and Year 3 would be the National Conference.

In 2021, some states were fortunate to be able to run in person events, whilst other states had continued restrictions.

And so we come to 2022!

This year we have enjoyed a mix of live and online events. Many of our traditional events have been able to restart around the country and these have been well received. Some events have had lower attendance rates than usual – often due to COVID modifications (such as audience limits), along with some members nervous about attending large scale events. This aside, the events have demonstrated the power of AUSTA and the importance of bringing people together to learn from each other.

I would like to thank each state Chapter and President for the work that they put into running all of these events. I know that it hasn't been easy as you have adjusted to different COVID conditions, but you have always been cheerful and determined in everything you do. I don't think our members appreciate how much work you do!

The National Conference ran successfully in July. Every state and territory was represented at the conference where we enjoyed presentations from great Australian presenters, along with guests from the USA and Finland. Thanks to laryngitis and illness, my personal experience of the conference was not what I had hoped for, but I had great pleasure watching everyone gather together for “Strings of Australia”. I would like to give personal thanks to Karen Kyriakou and Helen Holt who did an amazing amount of work on the organising committee and also the amazing Victorian Committee lead by Hamish Patterson who did such an amazing job!

And so I sum up the last three years as having some incredible highs, along with some incredible lows!

Over the year, the National Executive has been working on the following:

- Appointing new patrons
 - Robyn Wilson
 - Howard Penny
 - Patricia Pollett
- AUSTA was a sponsor of the national Strike a Chord Chamber Music Competition for the third year in a row.
- An agreement with EBM Insurance was signed to provide discounts to members.
- Continued to invest money for the long-term benefit of AUSTA members.
- Launched the AUSTA book – Molto AUSTA – a historical overview of the Australian Strings Association
- Assisted Stephen Chin in organising the 2023 overseas AUSTA tour

Our Administration Team has continued to work tirelessly on ensuring our members are supported. Continued maintenance and improvements to the website & database were made, whilst regular email communication with members continued. I would like to thank Emily Dittman for all of her hard work in this area. Her work in the lead up to the Conference was incredible!

I would like to thank Gina de Francesco for all of her work on our finance side. Her diligence is much appreciated! As well, I would like to thank Lubino Fernandes for all of his hard work as Treasurer.

Our Social Media presence has continued to evolve and is now more sophisticated than ever. I would like to thank Catherine Hughes for her work in this area, especially with her help with the conference and the overseas tour.

The Stringendo Team has put together some marvellous issues throughout 2022 and I would like to thank Susan Pierotti (National Journal Editor), Adele Gibson (National Advertising Manager), Mary Nemet (National Reviews Editor) and Louise Booth (Graphic Designer).

There are still many challenges ahead for AUSTA:

- Rebuilding those events that are yet to resume their normal format.
- Increasing our membership – in particular attracting younger members.
- Ensuring that we are building longevity into everything we are doing.

Lastly, I would like to say a very big thank you to all the National Executive and volunteers who give up so much of their time for AUSTA.

	Molto AUSTA!
Treasurer	<p>2022 was a significant year in AUSTA's calendar, this being the year in which the AUSTA National Conference was held. We had to postpone the conference by a year due to Covid, but it was well worth the wait. The Melbourne conference was a very successful and inspiring event and full kudos to the Conference Organising Committee led by our president, James. I am glad to inform you that the conference made a profit of \$26,327.</p> <p>That's the good news.</p> <p>The income and expenditure summary in the AUSTA Ltd financial statements ending 30 June 2022 was a different story. It showed a deficit of \$56,575 for the year.</p> <p>Income: Membership income in 2022 was down by about \$8,000 from 2021. Advertising income was up by about \$4,000 from last year. Income from Workshops was also slightly higher than we had estimated. It was \$26,342 - up from our budget forecast of \$25,000.</p> <p>Expenses: Employee costs were lower by about \$20,000 from last year because of Covid payment requirements last year. There was an increase in costs related to our flagship publication, Stringendo, and to 'Sponsorships and Awards', Donations and 'Other' expenses.</p> <p>Draft Budget The committee prepared and approved a draft budget for 2022-2023 at the last meeting in October '22. It shows that we can expect to end the financial year with a loss of about \$7,500.</p> <p>Stockspot investment</p> <p>The executive committee made the decision last year to invest \$120,000, which was sitting as surplus in the online saver account. After some research, we chose Stockspot, an investment platform that offers portfolios that track a broad range of sustainable and ethical global assets. We started by investing \$50,000 at the beginning of November and then added another \$40,000 to our portfolio at the end of November hoping to take advantage of the dividends that were due soon. Little did we anticipate the global turmoil that was to follow the invasion of Ukraine last February and the subsequent downturn that followed.</p> <p>The account, as a result, is currently showing a loss in value of about \$6,300 (6.85%). I have attached an Investment Summary of the AUSTA portfolio from Stockspot. It shows details of the various asset classes that we are invested in and also the dividends that we received and the fees that we paid. We are yet to invest the final tranche of \$30,000.</p> <p>In summary, we ended the financial year with a deficit of \$56,575, \$10,000 of which was the capital loss on the Stockspot investment at the time (June '22). That still leaves us with the fact that we suffered a loss of around \$46,500. We cannot maintain this continuous depletion of our reserves for long and AUSTA will need to find a way to balance the outflows with income from memberships, workshop income and advertising income. The committee will be working on applications for grants so that we can function as a quality organisation for the strings community in Australia.</p>

	<p>I move that the report be adopted.</p>
<p>Queensland</p>	<p>In 2022 AUSTA Q has continued to work towards returning to its pre-covid activities. This has not been without its challenges. The school year in Queensland navigated a particularly shaky start. The first two weeks of Term 1 commenced online for all schools as the state dealt with its first wave of the Omicron Covid variant. Shortly after schools returned to face-to-face learning, Brisbane and its surrounding areas were hit by significant flooding that again paused all usual activities. As a result, AUSTA Q's annual Reading Day was postponed from early February and ended up becoming the opening session of the Mini-Conference in early April.</p> <p>Fortunately, from this point forward AUSTA Q's annual activities have run more smoothly, and it is finally starting to feel like we are returning to our pre-covid existence. Following on from the Mini-Conference, almost 40 Queenslanders headed to Melbourne for the very successful AUSTA National Conference. The AUSTA Q Concerto Championship and Strings Festival went ahead in late July. The annual Professional Weekend in September featured Dr Rob McWilliams who led two full days of very informative and practical conducting workshops and the International Reading Day ran online in November with very positive attendance and feedback from all over Australia.</p> <p>AUSTA Q has also focussed on developing activities in regional areas this year. I am thrilled to report that very successful events have been held in Cairns, Townsville, Mt Isa, Bundaberg and Maryborough. Congratulations to our Regional Reps in each of those areas who have worked with the AUSTA Q Executive Committee to see these events go ahead.</p> <p>Rather excitingly, the inclusion of these regional events has meant that a total of approx. 1000 students have attended an AUSTA event, either in Brisbane or regionally, across Queensland in 2022! We are very hopeful that the current committee format that includes these Regional Reps on the AUSTA Q committee will continue to enable and encourage events in regional areas to thrive.</p> <p>AUSTA Q now looks forward to events in 2023. My three-year tenure as AUSTA Q President will end at the AGM in early February and we look forward to welcoming Amy Phillips (current President-Elect) into her new role as AUSTA Q President at that time. I will remain on the committee and look forward to continuing to assist in whatever way I can, but I would like to thank all members of both the AUSTA Q Committee and all members of the National Executive Committee for their support and guidance over what has been quite an unexpectedly challenging three years in this role. I wish both AUSTA Q and AUSTA National all the best as we continue to support string players, teachers, makers and students in the future.</p>
<p>NSW</p>	

<p>ACT</p>	<p>2022 has certainly been a much easier year than the two preceding years, but we got off to a tentative start by changing our Pedagogy Forum from a live event to a National Zoom event. Whilst the change of format at the last minute certainly presented us with all sorts of challenges, it ended up being a very successful forum with contributions from AUSTA members all around the country.</p> <p>In April Sydney violinist Evgeny Sorkin did a National Zoom event for us on the intricacies of shifting on the violin. His presentation was so very carefully thought out and clearly presented, that everyone enjoyed it. Thank you Evgeny!</p> <p>Early June saw the long awaited resumption of our String Festival. In view of the current covid situation we decided to confine the Festival to non-competitive sections only, and allow participants to play a second piece if they wished, as preparation for their AMEB exams later in June. We also designed a new Certificate of Participation for all students, to be presented with their report, written by pairs of local teachers. The non-competitive nature of this Festival produced such a happy and relaxed vibe that we will continue with this format in future Festivals.</p> <p>Our Reading Day ended up being cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control.</p> <p>In August we finally managed to run our much delayed Klezmer Workshop with local violinist Pip Thompson. This live workshop was fascinating! Pip discussed many of the regional differences in this exciting folk music, and then we formed a Klezmer Band to play some examples of the styles and ornamentations she had described.</p> <p>In October we held 2 events, firstly an insightful look into Cello Shifting by local cellist and Alexander Teacher, Megan Taylor. Zoom provided us with the opportunity to share this interesting discussion with many interstate colleagues.</p> <p>A week later we held a live event with recently returned Early Music specialist and violinist, John Ma. John took us through the early beginnings of European 'Classical' music from about 1600, highlighting the gradual development of notation and styles of playing, which eventually lead to the works of Bach, Handel, Haydn and the later Romantic composers. Once again we all played examples he provided which illustrated the points he'd made, thankyou John for a fascinating afternoon!</p> <p>We will end the year with a party and AGM on 4th December. I will be passing on the reins of AUSTA ACT for next year, and would like to most sincerely thank all the wonderful local committee members who've helped me over the last, almost 10 years. It has been a most rewarding experience! A big thankyou also goes to Gina, Emily and her predecessors, John, Stephen, Helen and James who've steered AUSTA so well, and have helped me (with the IT) over all this time. Thank you all!</p> <p>Molto AUSTA!</p>
<p>VIC</p>	<p>The Victorian committee ran our new music Reading Day on Sunday February 6. Numbers were lower with only 25-30 people there but this was understandable with COVID-caution being around the Melbourne community at the time.</p> <p>We have had to cancel our String Orchestra Festival for May due to difficulty in finding a venue and lack of numbers.</p>

	<p>Victoria held the Paul McDermott scholarship in the weeks leading up to the National Conference and we thank the adjudicator, Michael Loftus-Hills for his time and reports for the entrants.</p> <p>The National Conference in early July was a success with around 200 participants kept warm and fed whilst soaking up knowledge and enjoying catching up with people they haven't seen over the past troubled years of the pandemic.</p> <p>Our events following the conference were a masterclass for VCE students in late August. Roy Theaker was the guest violinist and 8 students benefitted from his time and comments on the afternoon. A couple of weeks later in early September we held our String Performers Festival. The numbers were a little lower than the last one held in 2019 but still enough to bode well for future growth for the event.</p> <p>We will end our year in late November with an evening for Emerging String Teachers, enjoying drinks, pizza and discussion with some of the more experienced teachers from the Victorian committee. I would like to thank everybody on the state committee for all their work throughout 2022.</p>
<p>TASMANIA</p>	<p>AUSTA TAS has been a little bit unsuccessful with some of our planned events in 2022 due to conflicts with schedules, covid restrictions, or lack of registrations for our events. That being said, we have generated a lot of interest in our events and are working with other music organisations to help plan 2023 so that AUSTA events can be accessible to more string players and teachers.</p> <p>AUSTA TAS continues to sponsor awards and financially support the Hobart and City of Clarence Eisteddfods. We congratulate the recipients of these awards and extend our appreciation to the staff who made the Eisteddfods valuable experiences for all who participated. A warm congratulations to our valuable committee member Audrey Akerman for being the worthy recipient of the Tasmania State Award for the AUSTA National Conference 2022. Audrey has worked tirelessly as an educator in Tasmania since 1977, teaching hundreds of string players and making a valuable, international contribution to string education with her 'Tricks to Tunes' method for classroom string teaching. Bravo Audrey!</p> <p>Our recent master class with Emma McGrath (TSO Concertmaster) was well attended by teachers, students and the general public. Emma delivered energetic and fun sessions with all the participants, and we are delighted that she is willing to offer more workshops and classes for AUSTA TAS in 2023.</p> <p>Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 'Statewide Chamber Music Weekend in Oatlands' had to be postponed again (at the last minute!) to Sunday, 5 March 2023. We already have five ensembles registered, and our guest tutors from the TSO booked in, so fingers crossed we are lucky the third time around! Between now and then, most of us are looking forward to the annual Residential Summer String Camp, held in Ulverstone in Tasmania's north.</p> <p>Thank you to our committee members, and happy holidays to all.</p>
<p>SA</p>	<p>This year, AUSTA SA has been working towards securing collaborations with the Elder Conservatorium of Music to find a central venue and support for events. This has resulted in some success, with two events being presented through the Elder Conservatorium so far this year. We have also had support from the string community in SA in providing smaller venues for our Adult beginner ensemble workshops, which have also been very successful this year. In term</p>

	<p>3, AUSTA SA also hosted a string workshop for primary school students, which was well attended. We also hosted a PD event online, and provided an encore version of this event, exploring amateur projects.</p> <p>AUSTA SA has also sponsored a few events this year. Recently, we sponsored a category in the Young Composers Awards, and we would love to work towards providing performance opportunities for the string compositions that were created within our category. We also supported the Balaklava Eisteddfods and the AMEB awards this year.</p> <p>We have had a couple of new committee members this year, and it has been great to have their support for events.</p> <p>For future events, we are looking at hosting a PD in the near future, we have a string workshop occurring this term (in December) and hosting our AGM early next year.</p>
<p>WA</p>	<p>AUSTA WA: In October our regional rep in Albany, Helen Grandage, held a successful Albany AUSTA Festival. Andrew Patrick organised a String Reading afternoon with the AUSTA reading folders - attendance still relatively small compared with other states, but a viable orchestra was formed, and hopefully the word will get out and this event will grow in future years. Our AGM is coming up soon and we have several social events right before Christmas, two outer suburban coffee mornings north and south of Perth open to members and non-members with a door prize of an AUSTA membership for all non-members who register, and other door prizes for members, and also a members lunch, same place as last year.</p>
<p>Stringendo</p>	<p>AUSTA Stringendo 2021 Annual Report <i>Susan Pierotti, National Editor</i></p> <p>April 2022 issue, Vol. 44, no. 1 The April issue had two themes: Baroque and, to advertise the forthcoming National Conference, Strings of Australia. The feature article was on the upcoming National Conference. Baroque contributions included, a review of two books on Baroque playing and articles on arranging Baroque music for students and case studies of how Baroque musician can be used as therapy. Strings of Australia contributions highlighted the Australian Romantic and Classical Orchestra's 2022 season, a new competition for violists, the Big Bass Day in Brisbane, organising concerts in Tasmania and celebrated Simply for String's 25th anniversary. A chapter on previous National Conferences from the to-be-released AUSTA book was also included.</p> <p>Amateur cellist and professional musculoskeletal therapist, Daniel Carner's article in this issue focused on shoulder stability. His articles in Stringendo contributed to his being a presenter at the National Conference.</p> <p>Living Treasures featured Part 1 of Mary Nemet's interview with Stanley Ritchie, Baroque violinist and pedagogue.</p> <p>This issue was 68 pages. There were 21 advertisers.</p> <p>October 2022 issue, Vol. 44, no. 2 The theme for October was the National Conference. The feature article was collected from nominated AUSTA members from different states and gave a wide overview of nearly every</p>

event and session. Other conference-related articles were on what the conference committee were looking forward to at the conference, why we attend conferences, the Founder's and President's conference reflections, an article from a presenter unable to attend the conference due to Covid (about the importance of games in teaching), an interview with the AUSTA National Award recipient Stephen Chin and bios of the State Award winners and AUSTA's new Patrons.

Other contributions were a personal memory of violinist Sascha Lasserson, an interview with young Indigenous violinist Eric Avery, the Big Bass Day in Brisbane Ukraine's contribution to the world of music, and of string ensemble exercises (Part 1).

Living Treasures featured Part 2 of Mary Nemet's interview with Stanley Ritchie, Baroque violinist and pedagogue.

The Makers and Suppliers page was introduced after the AUSTA 2018 conference as an initiative by our advertising sponsors to give them a voice. The National Editor spoke to many of them at the recent National Conference, with the result that there were a greater number of contributions than on the past few years.

This issue was 68 pages with 20 advertisers.

Regular Zoom sessions between the National Editor, President James de Rozario and AUSTA's Advertising Manager, Adele Gibson, have been able to plan forthcoming *Stringendo* issues, which has saved time and effort for all of us. These meetings were first established in the late 1990s when the Editorial Board was established and I would urge that future AUSTA Presidents, National Editors and Advertising Managers continue to meet every few months as it will lead to even better editions of *Stringendo*.

I would like to thank Mary Nemet (Reviews Editor) and Louise Booth (graphic designer), my colleagues in producing another two fine issues. As always, it has been a great joy and privilege being the National Editor of such a fine and respected publication.