

## Chairman's Report 2023

Another year has passed with, dare I say, decreasing interruptions from Covid. Through your subscriptions and generous donations we have been able to support the theatre a little more than usual this year. We have agreed to sponsor a children's show in the new season, "Kuia and the Spider", we have given a contribution towards a new theatre van and we have made a general operation financial grant to the theatre.

We are sad to see Dame Adrienne Stewart relinquish her role as the patron of the friends. Dame Adrienne has been our patron for 23 years and we are so grateful for her loyal support her ambassadorship and her annual donations. We could not ask more dedication from any one person.

Derek Hargreaves, the longest serving member of the Court Theatre passed away before Christmas after a prolonged illness with cancer. We have so much to thank Derek for in his extraordinary forty one year role with our Theatre. His exceptional knowledge, his records of the Court's history, his sage advice and his mentorship. He was the Board secretary for most of these years and the co- writer of our *The History of The Court Theatre Celebrating 50 Years*. I have been privileged to have work with Derek on the Trust Board for many years and also to have regarded him as a good friend, a friend I will dearly miss.

I would like to thank the committee so much for their tireless work and dedication to The Friends Organisation. The Court Cues newsletter, the profitable coffee bar, the Friends events, the membership administration, and the financial records all require constant management by our committed team.

We continue to provide events for our members and this year we accepted the generosity of Penny Zino and hosted a garden festival in her garden at Flaxmere, Hawarden. The day included a plant auction to which thirty very generous nurseries around the district contributed plants ( with special thanks to Terra Viva for their organisation ) art sales, a panel of celebrity gardeners and a well subscribed raffle. We are proud to say the considerable sum of \$20,000 was raised.

Our annual dinner with celebrity guest Kathleen Burns was again a great success and our quiz night bought out those who love to compete whilst having a lot of banter and laughter. Tessitura, the theatre software that has replaced Patron Base has taken some patience frustration and management in its incorporation and we are most grateful to those who have spent many many hours putting this in place.

You may have observed our new look newsletter. After discussion and evaluation it was decided the Court Cues needed revamping. It was decided that a newsletter, if it was going to be read in times of communication bombardment needed to be concise, easily read and of interest. We hope you approve of the change and fervently read these bi monthly letters. Our wonderful team of ushers continue to be the face of the theatre. Their professional friendly interaction with the patrons each night is the greatest advocacy the Theatre can have.

A committee 'Strategy Session' was held in July where we had a good hard look at "*what we are*" and "*where we are going*". This was followed up three months later and the committee feels confident in their pathway forward. We have a new theatre on the horizon, and a

growing partnership with theatre management. Traditionally we were independent of the theatre but now they assist us in many of our roles. We are evolving to meet the needs of the changing times.

In May Andrea Bankier and Jenny May our two new committee members were elected onto the Trust Board as the Friends' representatives

Our commitment in raising funds for the new theatre continues and our pledge of \$250,000.00 towards a room whether it be The Green Room or a VIP Room is still on track. We will be engaging with The Friends personally later in the year with opportunities to support the *New Build Project*.

Your subscriptions, with the donations that you so often add, continue to support our theatre and its ongoing success and I can't thank you enough.

Thank you  
Annie Bonifant