

Joel Pickett- 2017 Report for AGM

The guitar studio remains a strong component of Gunnedah Conservatorium. Most lessons are hosted at Gunnedah Conservatorium and St Xavier's Primary School.

The guitar and piano/violin studios host a performance opportunity at the end of each semester. All students are encouraged to perform, especially those who have yet to make a debut. We often see students from beginner levels performing their works-in-progress through to students performing more challenging repertoire along with students presenting as part of a small group. The new Conservatorium premises (in the ECM room) allows for these recitals to be held in a comfortable, contained and encouraging environment.

Several students entered the Gunnedah Eisteddfod in 2017. The guitar sections of the Eisteddfod are often solely comprised of Conservatorium students. Eisteddfod results and comments were largely positive and gave the students another opportunity to perform in a different venue - this year at the Gunnedah Shire Band Hall. The Eisteddfod may be seen as another checkpoint performance for students - performing in a different environment with adjudication, feedback and higher standard of performance expected overall.

In addition to Conservatorium events, students have participated in various school and community performance opportunities. These include seasonal festivities (Carols) and school functions (talent quests, end-of-year concerts).

At the end of 2016, a group of students of the Tutorial Centre at Gunnedah High School performed at an assembly. This performance marked the culmination of two terms' learning how to play the guitar in a popular-contemporary context. They enjoyed performing as a small group, using acoustic and electric guitars. This event encouraged more practise, drew attention to music fundamentals (rhythm + timing, balancing instruments and dynamics, understanding roles of lead and rhythm guitars) and awareness of performance presentation.

I'd like to express my appreciation for all of those who were instrumental in moving premises in the past year. The feedback from students and parents has been unanimously positive. Some features of the new premises include:

- Number of studios upgraded from three to six
- Studios are well-furnished and provide a comfortable learning environment
- Dedicated administration and waiting areas
- Closer integration with Gunnedah Shire facilities, incl. Town Hall, The Civic, Smithurst Theatre

I'm looking forward to a strong Term 4 with exams to be held at the Conservatorium in mid-November. In previous years, students were required to travel to Sydney and only the most dedicated students and parents were prepared to do so. Holding the exams at the Con is also preferable for the student as it provides a comfortable and familiar environment.