

GUNNEDAH CONSERVATORIUM

Annual
Report
2022-2023



From the Chair

The 2022/23 period has been a year of time of reflection and development for Gunnedah Conservatorium.

The promotion of our Conservatorium from the Tier 5 to Tier 4 funding level has resulted in the Management Committee taking significant action in addition to our existing compliance obligations to consider the future of the Conservatorium and to plan for that future.

The Gunnedah Conservatorium has also taken on sincerely feedback from its major funder, the Department of Education, and its Regional Conservatorium grants Program assessment panel.

To this end, Gunnedah Conservatorium made the decision in November 2022 to engage the skills of David Fischel of Positive Solution to conduct a thorough review of the organisation and provide recommendations.

All key stakeholders of Gunnedah Conservatorium - administration staff, teachers, parents and other community stakeholders - met with David Fishel during his site visit in February 2023 and this informed the direction of a review and recommendations for the Conservatorium. In addition, the Management Committee was able to undertake governance training with David during this period.

Positive Solutions delivered Organisational Development Planning – Final Report in April 2023 which was accepted by the Management Committee and all recommendations accepted in full. This report is provided at Appendix 1.

Change is not always easy especially when there is a review element and I commend all staff for being open and engaged in this process and working with David to put in place a good plan for our organisation's future.

Benedict Hennessy
Chair

OUR VALUES

Professionalism | Opportunities | Collaboration |
Quality | Safe & Caring

Director's Report

Being the director of Gunnedah Conservatorium has been one of the most significant roles in my life. Our organisation has experienced great growth during my tenure as the Director but during the 2022/23 we were really given an opportunity to stop reflect and plan for the future.

The impetus for this planning was our movement from Tier 5 Conservatorium to a Tier 4 Conservatorium through the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program. This is a game changer for our organisation with the additional funding allowing us to put in place the steps that will guarantee and consolidate our future.

There have been many highlights this year and included at Appendix 1 is an extract from our management committee meetings from January to June 2023 (when our meeting report format was updated) which illustrates these achievements.

Our student achievement in AMEB examinations is also recognised on the following page.

Our progress towards Strategic Plan 2022-2025 is set out on pages 5-13.

Finally, the outcomes and recommendations of our review process are included at Appendix 2.

Rebecca Ryan
September 2023

Student Achievement

AMEB exam period July – August 2022

Student	Teacher	AMEB Exam	Result
Ingrid Allen-Thomas*	Sandy Clark	Musical Theatre Repertoire G7	B+
Georgia Baird	Sandy Clark	Musical Theatre Repertoire G7	C
Madelleine Birkett *	Sandy Clark	Piano Comprehensive G1	B
Anna Collison	Sandy Clark	Piano Leisure Video Repertoire G7	B+
Lucy Furner	Sandy Clark	Online Music Craft Preliminary	98/100 HD
Lucy Furner	Sandy Clark	Piano Comprehensive G4	A+
Lucy Furner	Sandy Clark	Singing Comprehensive G1	B+
Isabelle Gilbert	Jamie Brown	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G3	C+
Eugenie Goddard	Sandy Clark	Piano Repertoire Preliminary	C+
Dominic Goodwin-Hauck	Sandy Clark	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G7	A
Clare Grima	Kirrie Jaeger	Piano Leisure Old G1	B+
Addison Hathway	Jaie Brown	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G3	B
Clancy Heath	Sandy Clark	Online Music Craft Preliminary	96/100 HD
Julian Heath	Sandy Clark	Online Music Craft Preliminary	100/100 HD
Brae Hinchcliff	Jamie Brown	Piano Leisure OLD G1	A+
Annabelle Kelly	Jamie Brown	Piano Leisure OLD G1	A
Debora Manik	Sandy Clark	Piano Repertoire G3	A
Edward Martin	Sandy Clark	Online Music Craft Preliminary	93/100 H
Annabelle Mitchell	Sandy Clark	Piano Repertoire Preliminary	A
Hayley Munro	Jamie Brown	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G6	A
Rebecca Sams	Sandy Clark	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G4	B
Sara Sirajur Raheem	Kirrie Jaeger	Piano Comprehensive G1	B+
Jessica Swain	Emma Kersley	Piano Leisure OLD G1	A
Sienna Swain	Emma Kersley	Piano Leisure OLD Preliminary	B
Emma Walton	Jamie Brown	Musical Theatre Comprehensive G2	B+
Evie Watt	Sandy Clark	Piano Video Repertoire Preliminary	B

* Denotes adult learner

Progress towards Strategic Plan 2022-2025

CONnect – Inspire music and performance art in more people.

Objective 1: Expand our music education, training and performance programs across the North West

Goals		Activities/Actions	Progress
1.1	Increase our numbers by at least 5% per year	Confirm benchmark figures for individual, group. Ensemble and school programs. Set 5% targets	GOAL EXCEEDED Benchmarked figures were confirmed and this goal was achieved and exceeded with student numbers increasing by 17% though individual tuition, additional school programs, expanded teaching to Mullaley, Coonabarabran and Boggabri
		Tailor marketing and communication plan to target new students / enrolments	GOAL ACHIEVED New photography campaign has generated images for use in local media and social media attracting students. Targeted campaigns to local schools have driven interest in ongoing programs and school holiday programs. School holiday programs have generated interest in ongoing lessons
		Promote Gunnedah Conservatorium success stories through Media Release / Social Media Post	GOAL ACHIEVED
1.2	Develop funding stream to support bursary program	Develop a sponsorship proposal to distribute to local businesses and organisations, including sponsorship targets	GOAL MOVED INTO 2023/24 BASED on the outcome of the Gunnedah Conservatorium Review, this action has moved into the 2023/24 and will be linked to other activities identified by the Review
		Develop marketing materials to promote bursary success stories	AS ABOVE

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		Host sponsorship acknowledgement events	AS ABOVE As a precursor to sponsorship function and as a strategy to raise broad awareness of the Gunnedah Conservatorium with the local business community, Gunnedah Conservatorium hosted an extremely successful Business Breakfast as part of the Make Music Day with more than 30 local business owners in attendance.
1.3	Increase use of video conferencing to teach and reach	Discuss opportunities with three targeted public schools in Narrabri Shire	IN PROGRESS, initially growth of Gunnedah Conservatorium has focused in the Coonabarabran area in preference to Narrabri. Based at local schools in Coonabarabran and with expansion to Baradine planned during the latter half of 2024. Tuition expanded into Boggabri Public School (Narrabri Shire), with pilot classroom program to also commence in the latter half of 2024.

Objective 2: Strategic partnerships and clients, with reference to relationships with schools

<i>Goals</i>		<i>Activities/Actions</i>	<i>Progress</i>
2.1	Maintain current school teaching and expand numbers by 5%	Report achievements and outcome to schools each term	GOAL ACHIEVED
2.2	Expand into one new school each year	Discuss opportunities with three targeted public schools in Narrabri Shire	GOAL ACHIEVED Coonabarabran Public School, expanded program at Boggabri Public School, Gunnedah High School (previously ad hoc work, new program confirmed)
2.3	Work with Sydney Youth Orchestra to develop professional development program for regional school teachers and Gunnedah Conservatorium staff	Access to two workshops (remote delivery or face-to-face)	IN PROGRESS, initial conversations with SYO have been positive and Gunnedah Conservatorium hosted concert program in April 2023. Students from Gunnedah Shire participated in program at NECOM

Objective 3: Access and equity of service provision			
Goals		Activities/Actions	Progress
3.1	Develop outreach programs for the outlying villages and towns	Work with local progress association, village schools and preschools and Gunnedah Shire Council cultural development officer to identify opportunities	GOAL ACHIEVED Preschool Music delivered at Mullaley, Visting Artists performances at schools in Mullaley, Tambar Springs, Somerton and Curlews, School Holiday program delivered at Curlewis Hall, Music contribution to community events at Curlewis, Kelvin, Mullaley and Piallaway
3.2	Develop at least one targeted program incorporating local Aboriginal community involvement	Develop recorded Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country to be played at all Gunnedah Conservatorium events	GOAL ACHIEVED Community Leaders invited to perform welcome to country at opening concert event for 2023. Welcome to Country incorporated at all events hosted by Gunnedah Conservatorium
		Source musical performances for NAIDOC Week local community celebrations and Reconciliation Week	GOAL ACHIEVED Gunnedah Conservatorium funded performance for NAIDOC week

CONvey – Promote our programs, performances, and possibilities.

Objective 4: Increase our audience numbers by at least 5%			
Goals		Activities/Actions	Progress
4.1	Increase audience numbers by at least 5%	Confirm benchmark figures based on audience averages pre-covid.	GOAL ACHIEVED Returning to a full concert program post COVID has resulted in audience figures increasing by
		Survey audience and staff to inform program decision making	GOAL ACHIEVED Audience feedback informing future programming. Following great response to contemporary artists, more focus placed on this area.

Objective 5: The biggest concert ever with the whole conservatorium community		
Goals	Activities/Actions	Progress
5.1 Deliver an annual concert and performance program for all students	Five student concerts held each term	GOAL ACHIEVED Frequency of studio concerts increased and excellent feedback from students and families
	End of Year Showcase	GOAL ACHIEVED Showcase included in yearly planning
	Mid-Year Showcase	GOAL ACHIEVED Showcase included in yearly planning
	Participation in Make Music Day	GOAL ACHIEVED Extensive teacher and student involvement program from 7am through to 5pm
	Develop Conservatorium “performance team” students who are ready to perform at other community events and opportunities	IN PROGRESS Initial list developed, more rehearsal required for all members of the group.

Objective 6: Ongoing development of contact databases for regular engagement		
Goals	Activities/Actions	Progress
6.1 Build reach and engagement to ensure share of voice and community engagement	Media invited to events	GOAL ACHIEVED We have a great relationship with The Gunnedah Times and 2MO/2TripleG and have supported this through advertising spend. In turn, we have had positive coverage of events and activities at the Conservatorium through both media outlets.
	Add contacts to database after events	GOAL ACHIEVED Details of attendees at events are added to contact database after events.

CONtrol – Pursue excellence, ensuring the health and wellbeing of the organisation and all involved.

<i>Objective 7: Resource management – human and physical</i>			
	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Activities/Actions</i>	<i>Progress</i>
7.1	Retain and provide annual professional development opportunities for all staff	Six monthly surveys and evaluation with staff	<p>IN PROGRESS Gunnedah Conservatorium staff have embraced diverse Professional Learning and Development Opportunities over the last 12-months. Four staff members have completed African Drumming course to extend ability to develop school and community workshops. Gunnedah Conservatorium co-hosted and sponsored the delivery of the Orff Schulwerk Level 1 course in April 2023 and four staff members completed the course.</p> <p>Staff were actively engaged in the Gunnedah Conservatorium Review process with 100% staff participation in the survey and face-to-face consultations during the site visit.</p>

<i>Objective 8: Financial Management</i>			
	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Activities/Actions</i>	<i>Progress</i>
8.1	Maintain financial sustainability	Annual audit	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Following the Review of Gunnedah Conservatorium, additional resources have been directed towards the role of a contract Accountant.</p> <p>Gunnedah Conservatorium is in the process of implementing additional elements identified in the review including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A four-year financial forecast for board approval, linked to the Conservatorium’s Strategic Plan. • Future annual budgets confirmed at least four months prior to the start of each financial year.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration with the ACNC is being pursued as a matter of priority.
8.2	Seek sponsorships to support targeted growth	Refer to 1.2	<p>ACTION REFRAMED based on Review of Gunnedah Conservatorium.</p> <p>New action for 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Partnerships Policy be adopted to frame business partnerships and sponsorships. Following confirmation of charity registration, a Fundraising Plan be adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan and Marketing and Communications Plan

Objective 9: Governance and Compliance

	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Activities/Actions</i>	
9.1	Maintain board and management administration to expected levels	<p>Two board meetings held each term.</p> <p>Board member attendance rates</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Board engagement has been strengthened and supported by the review process and in particular board training which ran alongside the review.</p> <p>Board and Director (and Administration Team) are invested in the success of stronger working relationship where there is a greater understanding of roles within the organisation.</p>
9.2	Organisational strategic review completed by February 2023	Brief developed, support engaged, and recommendations implemented	REVIEW COMPLETE

Objective 10: Continuous Improvement			
	Goals	Activities/Actions	
10.1	Benchmark results and record outcomes of new initiatives	Surveys and evaluation processes implemented for all initiatives	COMPLETED on an ongoing basis
10.2	Seek feedback and conduct regular evaluations of music program	Surveys and evaluation processes implemented for all initiatives	ONGOING surveys distributed to families during each term and following major events.
10.3	Ensure assets are fit for purpose and can grow with us	Asset register demonstrating maintenance and new purchases	ONGOING Asset register up to date and monitored by Administration staff and Accountant.
10.4	Ongoing efforts to support the culture of teamwork and cooperation	Term Staff Meeting (dinner)	ONGOING Staff meetings well attended
		Joint studio performances / cooperation (see 4.2)	ONGOING, pleasing participation in studio and Conservatorium performance event
		Access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	EAP in place

Objective 11: Risk management			
	Goals	Activities/Actions	
11.1	Maintain a safe and quality environment	Maintain risk register and actions	ONGOING

CONtribute – Ensure the Conservatorium’s place in our regional culture into the future.

<i>Objective 12: Ensure the future of the Conservatorium as an integral part of the new Cultural Precinct in Gunnedah</i>			
<i>Goals</i>		<i>Activities/Actions</i>	
12.1	Provide input and support consultation with Gunnedah Shire Council and funding partners	Meet twice yearly (formal) with the GM and Mayor	ONGOING due to changing staff and responsibilities at Council currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Council for endorsement at Council.

<i>Objective 13: Recognition of the economic benefits of music and the performing arts</i>			
<i>Goals</i>		<i>Activities/Actions</i>	
13.1	Grow our footprint	Meet twice yearly (formal) with the GM and Mayor	ONGOING due to changing staff and responsibilities at Council currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Council for endorsement at Council.
13.2	Working with local govt, stakeholders and business for mutual benefit	Representation of Council Economic or Business Committees	ONGOING due to changing staff and responsibilities at Council currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Council for endorsement at Council.

Objective 14: Recognition of the social benefits of music and the performing arts		
Goals	Activities/Actions	Progress
14.1 Build awareness of the quality of teaching and performance outcomes	Representation at community events – Markets, Special Event invitations to perform, AgQuip night markets, Christmas Fair,	ONGOING, participation in several Christmas community event (end of 2022) and this has continued in 2023 with Australia Day, local hall events, Make Music Day, Gunnedah Show, Annual Art Exhibition, Mine Open Days, Dorothea Mackellar Open Day at Kurrumbede
	Student outcomes	ONGOING, pleasing results in July-August 2022 exam period.
	Village Hall events	ONGOING, events at Kelvin Hall, Curlewis Hall, Mullaley Hall and Piallaway Hall



▲ Scholarship student Haylee Turner has contributed to many school and conservatorium events during 2022/23

Appendix 1 HIGHLIGHTS

Extracts from Committee Reports January 2023-June 2023

January / February 2023

1 Significant developments/changes in the operating environment

We have started the year with an expansion of programs into Coonabarabran community with lessons at Coonabarabran Public School from 12noon to 6:30pm Friday. There is room for future expansion, but we will have to ensure we can service demand. This may involve Saturday morning teaching or may involve sending additional staff.

There has also been high interest and demand for lessons at St Xavier's. This will be carefully managed so that it does not become a burden on the administrative staff of the school.

As a result of teaching afternoons at the Conservatorium being full and additional teaching at St Xavier's, Boggabri (Public School), Coonabarabran student numbers have reached **200 individual students**.

With school programs, early childhood activities and adult ensembles we have **568 weekly participants** making music each week through Gunnedah Conservatorium.

Looking at the Gunnedah Shire Population, we **have 488 young people from babies to 18 years participating in music which is 14% of Gunnedah Shire Council's youth population** (2021 Census). Looking at 0-4 years, we teach 18% of the town's children in this age bracket.

Comparing Gunnedah Conservatorium engagement numbers to the Gunnedah biggest participation sport, soccer, we possibly deliver youth activities to the most children in Gunnedah (538 compared to soccer's report 510 at the of 2022).

Teaching and administrative staff welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the Review process and meetings with David Fishel were well attended by staff. An immediate action from that process was to instigate staff meetings and we now have in place an administrative meeting on Mondays and a teaching meeting is scheduled for 14 April.

2 Partnerships – new and existing

Gunnedah Shire Council We are developing a positive working relationship with key new staff in the cultural precinct. This on-the-ground relationship has always been important in ensuring that through the hierarchy the work of the conservatorium is valued and appreciated.

The implementation of the Create NSW (Department of Enterprise, Investment & Trade) **Creative Capital Minor Works and Equipment Round One — CCA00244 — Sound, Lighting and Staging Improvements** will be the basis of the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding with Gunnedah Shire Council for a favourable user agreement when hiring venues within the Cultural Precinct for Performances. It will also reduce reliance on third-party providers to provide sound and lighting support.

The House That Dan Built I was in Sydney on the 22 February and able to meet with Danielle O'Keefe from The House that Dan Built. The organisation has been able to secure additional funding to deliver a Toy Choir program (program aimed at girls from Year 5 + which combines ukulele and song writing) in Gunnedah. Will deliver through schools.

Sydney Youth Orchestra Also meet with SYO in Sydney and confirmed arrangement for visit to Gunnedah on 14 April – and off-shoot of regional camp at Armidale.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS – Extracts from Board Reports January 2023-June 2023

Prepared by Rebecca Ryan

3 Significant media coverage, marketing and communications program and issues

Gunnedah Times We have a fortnightly advertisement in the Gunnedah Times which we use for event promotion and general awareness of teaching program. We have tried to leverage this for event coverage and pre-promotion which has been inconsistent. We have had some frank conversations with the Gunnedah Times re. support and coverage of events. We realise there has been some issues around staffing and we are trying to make sure our material is provided in a way that is easy to cut and paste. Good coverage post of Taikoz concert with our supplied images and content and good pre promotion of Ave - Australian Vocal Ensemble.

Events promotion TAIKOZ was one of our most successful Visiting Artist events in recent memory with more than 90 people in attendance. Twenty young people attended the workshop the day prior which also converted to ticket sales. Multi-pronged approach worked – corflutes, Facebook, posters, flyers, radio, school information packs. Ticket sales are similarly tracking well for Ave - Australian Vocal Ensemble

4 Staff and board achievements

Student enrolment. Our student numbers reflect the high regard in which are teachers are held by students, parents and the community. Retention of students from year to year is high.

Board The board participated in development and planning sessions with David Fishel and is leading the important review of the organisation.

March / April 2023

1 Significant developments/changes in the operating environment

There have been some changes in student numbers, with active students growing from 200 in January to 232 at the end of April. With the start of Term 2 we may see some further changes as students who started in Term 1 discontinue lessons. There is always some movement between terms.

An immediate outcome of the review process has been an increase in staff engagement and meetings particularly with administrative staff and the reallocation of some roles and tasks between the Director and Administrative /Communication Staff.

2 Partnerships – new and existing

Gunnedah Shire Council Working on a Memorandum of Understanding which should reduce the costs for performances within the cultural precinct.

Two successful events were programmed as part of the Gunnedah Shire Council School Holiday program. **Sydney Youth Orchestra** presented a concert on Friday 14 April at the Gunnedah Town Hall following a residency in Quirindi. Gunnedah Conservatorium negotiated venue and provided lunch withing with the Rotary West. St Mary College student Mitchell Herden was a participant in the program spending the week in camp at Armidale and performing in the Gunnedah concert.

On **Tuesday 18 April** Arc Circus presented The Bee Story and a Circus Workshop at the Gunnedah Town Hall. Great attendance at the show – more than 100 families – and the workshop was full - 20 attendees. Phoebe Neil and Susan Wilson assisted with Front of House for show and Olivia Heath for workshop.

The House That Dan Built has funding for a week-long program in the July school holidays which will be delivered as part of the school holiday program. It will be a all-inclusive week long program with a half day program for primary school children and a full program for high school children. The

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House will visit Gunnedah ahead of the program and be based from the Gunnedah Conservatorium to promote the program and engage with the community.

Additionally, a composition project with five young women (violinists and vocalist) will work with Rose Riebl and Danielle OKeefe on the development of a new work for voice and strings.

Rose Riebl trained intensively as a classical pianist from the age of five, later studying at Australian National Academy of Music, Sydney Conservatorium and the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna. Her work as a professional concert pianist has seen her debut at the Melbourne Recital Centre Salon, and tour through some of Asia's leading concert halls. Read more at [ROSE RIEBL](#)

Land and Lyric with Maryanne Piper and Anna Falt This residency in May will develop new work and focus on developing material from the Dorothea Mackellar Centre and poetry anthologies. A vocal and meditation workshop will also be offered as part of the program.

Lil Achievers Meg Clowes has been delivering weekly program and in the school holidays we delivered an African Drumming session as part of their school holiday program.

3 Significant media coverage, marketing and communications program and issues

Gunnedah Times Fortnightly advertisement in the Gunnedah Times

Events promotion Continues to progress well – excellent audience numbers for Ave, and good results for school holiday activities.

4 Staff and board achievements

Professional Learning. Meg Clowes, Dominic Goodwin-Hauck, Joel Pickett and Rebecca Ryan all completed Level 1 Orff Schulwerk training in the April Holidays. This was a full on 34 hours of professional development and was excellent team building for our teacher and Director who participated in the training with 12 other music teachers from the region and beyond.

The same group of four also completed an online African Drumming session over a Saturday and Sunday.

The value in the Director participating particular in the Orff Schulwerk had a significant impact on team development and growth. It was a very intensive week for all and especially the Director in terms of the skills and the recruitment to be passed as proficient. The philosophy of the Director was that if she were to prioritise this training and this philosophy towards teaching she should experience that and have an understanding of the program and the expectations having been immersed in the process.

Performance.

- Fabulasses performed as part of the entertainment at the Whitehaven Community Day.
- Combined children's choir led by Meg Clowes (students from Mullaley, Poco a Poco, individual lessons) and some adult singers performed Anthem and We Are Australian (including in Gamilaroi led by Matilda Mitchell, 5yo) at opening of Gunnedah Show.
- Joel Pickett and Dominic Goodwin performed at the opening of the Art Show at the Gunnedah Show (Friday night)

May / June 2023

1 Significant developments/changes in the operating environment

Reconfiguration of the office space is complete, and the space is working well for the team. Reception role has been advertised with some good responses, we have developed shortlist of five candidates and suggest Director/Administration Officer proceed to interview stage.

2 Partnerships – new and existing

Gunnedah Shire Council with resignation of Team Leader Cultural Precinct, it is important that a Memorandum of Understanding be advanced with more senior staff. Director and Chair met with Susan Frater (Economic Development) to discuss Masterplan and getting this back on the agenda but Council will need additional fund streams to what is available through grant funding.

The House That Dan Built visited Gunnedah in the first week of June to work on a composition project with nine young women (violinists and vocalist) will work with Rose Riebl and Danielle OKeefe on the development of a new work for voice and strings.

The project was very well-received and highlighted a desire for a vocal ensemble program for young singers. Key learnings – the young women enjoyed and could sing challenging music together, and they loved being “invited” to be part of the project. Listen to the outcome performance here <https://drive.google.com/file/d/10vUZafe6sfRjm0gHLG1zbLi-yqKyt31a/view?usp=sharing>



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July School Holiday Program As reported last meeting, there will be a free workshop program in the school holidays – half day for primary, full day of activities for high school student. Share with your networks will be great [Gunnedah | thehouse \(thehousethatdanbuilt.com\)](http://Gunnedah | thehouse (thehousethatdanbuilt.com))

3 Significant media coverage, marketing and communications program and issues

Gunnedah Times Fortnightly advertisement in the Gunnedah Times

Events promotion Continues to progress well

4 Staff and board achievements

Professional Learning. Meg Clowes attended the Annual Conference with Director Rebecca Ryan which was the first phase in developing an Association approach to annual Professional Learning events for teachers and a support network.

Performance.

- Fabulasses performed as part of Dorothea Mackellar Open Day at Kurrumbede
- Various performances as part of Gunnedah Eisteddfod.
- Gunnedah Conservatorium coordinated music for Piallaway Centenary Celebrations
- Future events:
 - **Make Music Day 21 June** – performance all day at Con and various venues
 - **Showcase Wednesday 28 June 6:30pm**
 - **Studio Concerts Thursday 29 June**

Appendix 2: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING - FINAL REPORT



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING - FINAL REPORT

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28 April 2023



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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations apply:

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
DGR	Deductible Gift Recipient
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HR	Human resources
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PD	Position Description

RECOMMENDATIONS

STAFFING

- > The current complement of two FTE, management and administration staff be increased to 3.6, more closely in line with other Tier 4 conservatoriums which have been benchmarked.
- > The current Finance and Operations post-holder has indicated a preference not to increase beyond .6 – but this could be supplemented with a more experienced/qualified Accountant, bringing increased capability in financial planning and oversight
- > An entry-level or trainee Administration Officer would free up other administration staff. As a full-time role they would provide a consistent Monday-to-Friday presence and point of contact during office hours, facilitate a level of delegation from the Director and Finance and Operations Manager, and support marketing operations.
- > The introduction of a Program Development function could be achieved through having .4 Marketing and .4 Program Development. However, combining these roles strengthens the overall management team presence, and would be a stronger attractor for potential applicants.
- > Revision to the Director’s position description to declutter it from low-level administrative tasks and focus more clearly on strategic, value-adding activities – business development and longer-term strategy, staff leadership and communications, fundraising and resourcing, systems improvements, effective board servicing, maintaining positive stakeholder relationships
- > Encouraging further training and up-skilling for the Director, including through site visits and mentorships with other organisations
- > Setting and monitoring performance targets for the Director
- > Regular progress meetings between the Director and Chair, or another nominated Board member

BOARD DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNANCE PROCESSES, CONSTITUTION

- > A maximum of nine Board members be stated in the Constitution
- > Board terms be set at two years or three years, renewable up to a maximum of six years on the Board, following which Board members must step down for a year before being eligible for re-election (or co-option, see below). Board terms be on a rolling basis to avoid all Board members stepping down at the same point in time¹
- > The Chair be selected by the Board not by the AGM
- > A minority of Board positions be subject to co-option rather than election, but be subject to endorsement at the next AGM. That is, up to five Board members be elected at the AGM and up to four be selected by the current Board – noting that rolling terms will mean that not all positions will be vacant at the same time. The power of co-option will enable the Board to seek out skills needs and connections that will be of benefit to the Conservatorium where these are not provided through the election process
- > The Board mandate the form of the Director’s written reports to the Board, and the frequency and nature of financial reports
- > A rolling triennial review of policies be put in place
- > An annual Board calendar be adopted – including scheduled Board meetings, key topics to be addressed at each meeting (e.g. approval of the strategic plan, approval of annual budgets), and early alerts to important activities in the life of the Conservatorium

¹ It is usual when implementing this type of change for a transitional arrangement to be put in place e.g. board members initially be appointed for a mix of 1, 2 and 3 year terms

- > Succession planning for the Chair be addressed to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the current Chair's term

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- > A Marketing and Communications plan be developed and adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan.
If necessary temporary expert help could be engaged to assist with development of the Plan, which would clearly indicate key messages, target markets, marketing activities and responsibilities, and timing. Responsibilities would not sit with the Marketing and Communications role alone, but with be shared with the Board, Director, and other staff.
- > Clear marketing and communications performance measures be indicated in the Plan
- > A marketing budget be confirmed to support implementation of the Plan

PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

- > The Board and Director confirm future premises needs through the adoption of a specification which takes into account:
 - Future staffing levels
 - Space for music practice and ensemble rehearsals, including the possibility of further ensembles being formed in the future as the student cohort increases
 - Access, including for parents with young children, people with limited mobility, or with sight impairment
 - Other operational requirements
- > The Board seek short- to medium-term ways of meeting the requirements of the premises specification through leasing and adapting an existing building in Gunnedah
- > The Board consider the longer-term needs of the Conservatorium and the potential for new build or a more substantial adaptation of existing premises (including the Town Hall) to meet these needs
- > The Board adopt a Vision and Development Plan to articulate and build support for the Conservatorium's long-term vision

SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

- > The post of part-time Marketing and Program Development Officer be implemented, as proposed above
- > Schools engagement be clearly framed within the Marketing and Communications Plan
- > The roles of Board members and all staff in optimising stakeholder and events-related communications be clarified in the Marketing and Communications Plan (and in duty statements and teacher contracts), and supported by shorter-term marketing action plans
- > The Director scan the activities of other conservatoriums – not limited to those benchmarked in this consulting process – to identify potential future program developments and present these for Board consideration

REVENUE MODEL AND FUNDRAISING

- > A four-year financial forecast be prepared for board approval, linked to the Conservatorium's Strategic Plan
- > Annual budgets be presented to the Board for approval, at least four months prior to the start of each financial year. The budgets will be informed by:
 - The rolling four-year financial forecast, and progress to date
 - Annual operational plans in support of the Strategic Plan
- > Registration with the ACNC be pursued as a matter of priority – noting that each of the other conservatoriums benchmarked for this study are registered with the ACNC and have DGR status

- > A legal practice with prior experience of charity registration be engaged to assist with this process and to advise on any changes in the Conservatorium's Constitution which may be necessary to meet ACNC requirements
- > A Partnerships Policy be adopted to frame business partnerships and sponsorships
- > Following confirmation of charity registration, a Fundraising Plan be adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan and Marketing and Communications Plan, and to guide the Conservatorium's targets and activities in sourcing private sector support





1. BRIEF AND METHOD

Positive Solutions (the consultant) has been engaged to support Gunnedah Conservatorium with organisational and governance developments. The objective is to ensure that the structure, staffing and processes for the Conservatorium are fit-for-purpose, especially in light of the uplift in funding recently secured from NSW State Government, and the heightened expectations and increased work output that comes with this. There will be impacts for:

- > The role of the CEO, and the position descriptions for CEO and other staff
- > Role of the Board, and Board-CEO linkage
- > Reporting arrangements to the Board, and to external stakeholders.
- > Ensuring that medium and longer-term strategy is underpinned with suitable operational planning and allocation of responsibilities
- > The design of administrative, scheduling, budgeting, HR, fundraising and other systems

The Review is intended to align the activities and focus of the Board, Director and team to the Strategic Plan and support implementation of the Strategic Plan in day-to-day operations. The Review is also to ensure that the Conservatorium benefits from best practice governance and management.

In order to address these requirements, Positive Solutions undertook the following steps:

- > Briefing with Chair and Director of the Conservatorium
- > Review of governance and planning documentation requested (list appended)
- > Benchmarking of staffing and systems at comparable, 'Tier 4' conservatoriums in NSW (separate report provided)
- > Interviews with board members, NSW Education officers, local and regional stakeholders
- > Facilitation of group discussions with teachers and parents (site visit)
- > Organisational planning workshop with selected board members, and governance workshop with all available board members (site visit)
- > Preparation of this Draft Final Report

A list of consultees is appended.

2. CONTEXTS AND CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 PREMISES

The Conservatorium occupies the front of Gunnedah Town Hall. The leased space includes a reception area and waiting room, used for overflow teaching when required, and five studio/office spaces, and a large room for group classes and ensembles. In addition, Gunnedah hires space in the Town Hall / Cultural Precinct when needed. The lease from Gunnedah Shire Council has been in place since 2016.

2.2 SERVICES

The Conservatorium:

- > Provides individual lessons (193 students enrolled at the time of this review), k-2 group lessons and an Early Childhood Music Program
- > Hosts ensembles, including three vocal groups, a small ensemble and a musical theatre group
- > Presents a program of visiting artists, two major student showcases and studio concerts
- > Delivers schools programs, currently in Gunnedah, Mullaley, Boggabri, Coonabarabran
- > Provides scholarships and in-confidence bursaries

The principal beneficiaries of the Conservatorium's services are the students and their parents, supplemented by audiences at concerts and events, and schools accessing the Conservatorium's teaching resources. More broadly, the Conservatorium contributes to the liveability of Gunnedah.

Future service development plans include expansion of the schools program, and a stronger presence in the North West, including Coonabarabran and Narrabri. Partnership opportunities will also be explored, for example with Sydney Youth Orchestra, Opera Australia and the Sydney Symphony and Sydney Conservatorium. Some of these will be as a participant on the Association of Regional Conservatoriums.

Further details on services and operational arrangements are included in the Benchmarking report separately provided.

2.3 STAFFING

There are two FTE administration staff – a full-time Director and part-time Administration Officer and Communications Officer. There are currently 3.5 FTE teaching staff.

The Director's current Position Description (PD) is as amended in June 2019, when the Director was a .8 part-time role. A revised PD is proposed below.

The Conservatorium benefits from a core team of long-standing teaching staff members, with three having been in post more than nine years. However, in common with other conservatoriums, a continuing challenge is the attraction and retention of teaching staff in regional areas. In response, during the last three years the Conservatorium has mentored selected students into teaching positions successfully.

2.4 BOARD

There are seven Board members, with skills and experience ranging across Human Resource Management, Marketing and Communication, Events Management, Business Development, Legal, Strategic Planning, Education Systems, and Community Cultural Development.

The Board meets approximately eight times per year and is supported by Events, Governance and Financial committees.

2.5 FINANCES

In the last year expenditure totalled \$460,602 and income totalled \$520,265. Salaries and fees comprised 63% of expenditure, of which two-thirds was the costs of teaching staff.

43% of revenue came in the form of tuition fees, and 53% in the form of grant income. The latter will increase by c.50% from 2023.

2.6 GOVERNANCE AND POLICY CONTEXTS

The Conservatorium is an Incorporated Association with the following purposes:

- > To facilitate tuition in music and the performing arts in a nurturing and encouraging environment
- > To present regular performances
- > To encourage participation in all areas of the performing arts, including a wide variety of music

The Conservatorium does not appear to be registered with the ACNC, and does not have Deductible Gift Recipient status. This limits its capacity to raise funds from private sources.

The Mission of the Conservatorium is:

To provide access to quality experiences and learning opportunities in music and the performing arts, for local residents, distant and isolated communities, especially for young people.

The board is set at a minimum of five members, with no stated maximum. Board members are elected at the AGM for a one-year term and are eligible for re-election.

There is a board handbook, comprising primarily a range of factsheets and templates.

The NSW Government requires the boards of funded Conservatoriums to have 'members with a range of appropriate skills, knowledge, abilities, qualifications and experience to ensure the effective management and governance of the organisation.'

Board members and staff are required to have appropriate Working with Children Checks, and be trained in Child Protection requirements.

Regional Conservatoriums in NSW are also required to have at least the following policies and procedures in place:

- > Code of conduct
- > Complaints-handling mechanism*
- > Conflicts of interest
- > Records management*
- > Risk management*
- > People and Services - WH&S
- > Child Protection
- > Staffing / employment / salary

The Conservatorium has a Policy Manual dated November 2022, with 29 policies included. The asterisked policies above do not yet seem to be covered by the Manual.

A NSW-funded Conservatorium must:

- > Be financially viable and have sources of funding in addition to the Program grant so that its operation is sustainable into the future
- > Operate with a minimum Reserves Ratio of 30%
- > Operate with a minimum Working Current Ratio of 1.5:1
- > Operate with a Net Cash flow of 26 weeks



- > Be committed to maximising revenue through actively marketing ticketed events, music education programs and services, other grants and sponsorship opportunities to the local and regional community.

These are matters which the Board should review on a regular basis to ensure compliance.

3. CONSULTATION FINDINGS

3.1 INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

3.1.1 OVERVIEW

- > The location and expertise of the Gunnedah Conservatorium Director and teaching staff were viewed very positively
- > There has been stability amongst teaching staff. There is a need for regular staff meetings and smoother internal communications
- > Interviewees commented on the Director's dedication, but felt there was a need for more support staff, a clarification of duties, and greater administrative efficiency
- > There was frustration with a 'last-minute' culture, affecting event promotion, board papers, funding acquittals
- > There were concerns with the Conservatorium's premises - uncertainty over tenure, a lack of sound-proof rooms, having to book external spaces because of inadequate core space, and physical accessibility
- > Future partnerships could assist with meeting venue requirements, acquiring more/specialised teachers, and increasing the range of student scholarships
- > Business development opportunities include an expansion of schools programs, an extension of drama offerings and offering more ensembles.

3.1.2 PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Parents and students liked the central location and had a high regard for the Director. They appreciated the quality of the Conservatorium's music teachers, the nurturing teaching environment, and the events program.

Parents and students reported difficulty accessing tuition, with teachers being fully booked, and requested a greater range of disciplines/instruments and ensembles in the teaching program. They reported issues with the

premises - including the need for sound-proofing between rooms, better toilets, signage, and more practice rooms. The marketing of events could be improved to give the community longer notice.

Although scheduling had allowed for two group discussions with parents and students, the relatively low response resulted in a single group discussion.

3.1.3 CONSERVATORIUM STAFF

The staff and teachers have good rapport, and there has been stability of staff and the teaching cohort. However, there is no succession planning and an over-reliance on the Director. The division of responsibilities between The Director, Administration Officer and Communications Officer are not clear enough. A weekly staff meeting could address this issue. The role functions and deliverables should be more clearly outlined. This could be a formal process to recast Job Purpose statements with results areas and details. There is an opportunity to draft alternative staff structures, for example with a Marketing Assistant and junior/trainee administrator and/or a Deputy to enable The Director to evolve as CEO. The business needs a more structured approach to planning and operations – a three to four year budget, Annual Operational Plan, and Marketing and Communications Plan.

There are issues with the current - venue, tenure is uncertain, the building needs redevelopment and is not fit for purpose. Staff can't see people coming and going from the Reception space, there are not enough teaching rooms, many students/parents cannot access the upstairs rooms, the toilet is accessed through other functional spaces, and more computers are needed. An analysis of venue requirements will assist with venue programming and planning, such as room sound-proofing, accessibility, size and usage, compared with other conservatoriums. It may be possible to negotiate with the Shire Council and/or seek alternative premises to ensure a more secure future for the Conservatorium in premises that are fit-for-purpose.

There are opportunities for future partnerships to support student bursaries, teaching specialisms (e.g. brass), events, equipment, building development. The Board has more of a role to play in fundraising.

3.1.4 CONSERVATORIUM TEACHERS

Teachers felt the location was excellent - a central hub for the arts in Gunnedah. Other strengths of the Conservatorium were the knowledge and experience of teaching staff, the stability of staff compared to other Conservatoriums, smoothly-run financial administration and the outreach programs to outlying schools.

Teachers reported issues with the facilities, having to constantly negotiate space use with Council and felt that the building is not big enough or fit for purpose. Concerns included a shortage of teaching rooms, inadequate sound-proofing of rooms, and a lack of storage (e.g. the piano is kept on-stage at The Civic). The building needs redevelopment to facilitate music tuition. In addition, more music equipment and lighting equipment is needed for performances.

Teachers stated that a better building would attract new teachers and enable the expansion of the music program. More teaching staff are needed offering other specialisms. Ensembles were also a cost-effective use of teacher time, and could be increased. Teachers requested regular staff meetings, indicating that the most recent was over a year ago. Teachers reported issues with timetable changes and lack of communication. Clearer administrative role allocations would clarify who they should approach to address any such issues.

One suggestion was to create an annual calendar of Conservatorium events to address poor attendance at events by community, teachers, and students.

3.1.5 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Education NSW reported that the Conservatorium should focus on consolidating their elevation to Tier 4. It was felt that The Director should prioritise how the business can be improved, networking and business development, as well as securing administrative efficiencies. She has the skills to do so. The Conservatorium is in a strong location at Gunnedah. They could be generating more revenue from services to schools (private/public) with either school or parents paying. There might be an opportunity to partner with the Tamworth Music Festival for a fringe music festival event.

The Shire Council recognised that the Conservatorium has to fight for space and that there is no guarantee of future tenancy. The Shire Council prioritises commercial hires rather than community hires. Potentially, Council could assist with scholarships or bursaries for students who cannot afford to learn at the Conservatorium as well as resources and support from the IT team in Council.

Arts North West recognised The Director's ability at creating opportunities and the Conservatorium's positive engagement with community, from early learning to older life. It was felt that The Director's workload is excessive, with a need for a more formal documented/systematised approach to support delegation and improve efficiency. A significant vulnerability is the lack of certainty regarding the building, and accessibility/disability issues with the venue. It was felt that the Conservatorium should not have to routinely hire space. The Conservatorium needs either a new building or a MOU with Council, providing medium-term certainty, and confidence to invest in the current building. The Conservatorium are good at bringing in events, and can do more, but require an Events Officer to handle administration and delivery (perhaps one to two days per week). It was perceived that the Board is currently not involved in Strategic Planning.

3.1.6 BOARD MEMBERS

Board members recognised the strong commitment and capability of the Director, and acknowledged that there was an over-reliance on the Director for all aspects of the Conservatorium's operations. Further administrative support was needed to support improved delegation, and to enable the Director to focus time on strategic development of the Conservatorium rather than only the day to day delivery of services. There was an interest in learning from benchmarking amongst other Conservatoriums, to understand more about their staffing levels and procedures.

The Board expressed concerns at:

- > Last-minute delivery of board papers, including financials, and late delivery of funding stakeholder acquittal requirements
- > Poor internal communications from the Director to the Board (and possibly to staff)
- > Perceptions that the Director's management style is over-assertive
- > The need for clearer allocation of responsibilities within the staff team
- > The need for the Board to be more structured in providing performance reviews, and possibly provide closer guidance to the Director
- > The need to use the Strategic Plan more actively to drive operations, and monitor progress
- > The need to build the board's skills base

4. BENCHMARK LEARNINGS

For comparison of structures, assets and systems four NSW conservatoriums were selected, in consultation with the Director and with Education NSW – Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley (Grafton), Young and South West (Deniliquin). Documentation is included in a benchmark report separately provided. The following are brief extracts.

4.1 PREMISES

Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium is housed in a specially fitted-out building.² The property, a former night club, was purchased in 2009 through patron support. Refurbishment saw the construction of 12 acoustically-designed rehearsal and teaching studios, foyer, kitchen facilities, music library, administration offices, and a connection to secure parking. The new facility opened in 2010.³ A subsequent 2018 redevelopment saw the acquisition of an adjacent property to expand studio space, and the fit-out of a 158-seat performance space with state -of-the-art audio-visual equipment for multipurpose use.

South West Music Regional Conservatorium is currently housed in a heritage building in Deniliquin's CBD, with Edward River Council Offices and Library in proximity. The Conservatorium is currently undergoing feasibility and vision planning for a \$4.3m extension under a Creative Capital Infrastructure Project, paired with the Town Hall

² <https://www.coffscon.org.au/about-us/>

³ <https://www.coffscon.org.au/about-us/history/>

development, with a funding commitment from NSW Aboriginal Affairs, Creative NSW, and Regional Youth and Tourism Minister Ben Franklin.⁴

Clarence Valley Conservatorium occupies the music rooms at 4-8 Villiers Street, Grafton. The rooms were established in the 1930s by the Sisters of Mercy as part of the catholic school system, but also offered lessons to non-Catholic students. Fifty years later, in 1982, under the direction of Sr Cecilia Moran, purpose-built premises were constructed, and the centre named St Cecilia’s Music Academy.

Young Regional Conservatorium has been delivering music education and performance across the wider Hilltops region of southern NSW since 1984. The Conservatorium operates out of offices in Young and studio space in Temora. The lack of a performance space is regarded as a constraint, with use of a cinema and the Town Hall as a work-round.

4.2 STAFFING

Gunnedah’s core management and administration staffing is lower than that of the other conservatoriums benchmarked. Current staffing at the conservatoriums reviewed is as follows⁵:

Table 1 | Staffing at selected Conservatoriums

STAFFING (CURRENT)					TBC
	GUNNEDAH	CLARENCE VALLEY	COFFS HARBOUR	SOUTH WEST MUSIC	YOUNG REGIONAL
Director/CEO	1	1	1	1	1
Admin Officer	0.6	1	1 casual	1 Admin & Finance	1
Finance		1 PT	1		.4
Reception			1	(Admin Officer)	
Project Officer		1 PT			
Coordinator		1 PT Program Coordinator	1 casual Schools Coordinator	1 Head of Music ⁶	
Communications	0.4			.6 Comms/Events	
FTE Administration staff	2	3.03	3.7	3.6	2.4
Teaching Staff	8 casual	14 casual	1 FT 20 casual	1 FT 5 casual	10:7 Casual: PT
FTE Teaching staff	3.5 ⁷	4.08	11	2.5	9

Interviews with the Directors at each of the other conservatoriums secured a range of comments on current HR challenges, and some of their future aspirations for staffing.

Table 2 | Comparison of HR comments and plans

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – COMMENTS AND PLANS				
Gunnedah	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour	South West Music	Young Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors workload is intense – same for other Cons Increase administration hours and capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem not being able to provide PT or FT work - too much is casual Staff retention is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff retention is a challenge A lot of our staff have performance careers in Brisbane- they’re busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More highly qualified casual staff Need a string teacher Approached the community to identify music talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Got rid of an office staff position Teaching staff shortage – need to offer enough hours to make a move into the area viable

⁴ <https://www.pressreader.com/australia/the-riverine-herald/20220817/page/9>

⁵ Confirmation of data is pending from Young Conservatorium

⁶ Currently Acting Head of Agency, with CEO on extended leave

⁷ Gunnedah has .25 vacancy for drums, and demand for a further .25 piano

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – COMMENTS AND PLANS				
Gunnedah	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour	South West Music	Young Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing / Schools role Job security for long term casuals Good staff and teacher retention, a core team of long-standing teaching staff members Recruitment to fill music teaching gaps is a challenge Train the teachers we need - mentoring students into teaching positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggle to find percussion teacher, and gaps in piano and strings No current collaboration with other Conservatoriums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress the need for interest in regional areas Director’s workload is intense – same for other Cons Everything falls on the Director’s desk We need a 2IC or HR or artistic lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to attract staff without the offer of full-time employment - won’t relocate for PT/casual roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like collaborations formed with other Conservatoriums to address teacher shortage Distances are prohibitive Teaching online not as effective as face-to-face and teachers are very resistant

4.3 SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

Although the level of outputs varies at each conservatorium, all cover a range of individual tuition, schools-based classroom learning, ensemble and orchestral working. The instrumental teaching options and the ensembles available – for students and the community – appear to be broader at other conservatoriums.

Table 3 | Comparison of programs offered for schools

SCHOOLS PROGRAMS				
GUNNEDAH	CLARENCE VALLEY	COFFS HARBOUR	SOUTH WEST MUSIC	YOUNG REGIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual lessons - voice, guitar, ukulele, piano lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual lessons at 15 schools Early childhood music Jazz String Adults join in ensembles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff work in 12 local schools – ranging from 1:1 to group lessons, school bands, show and tell performances, ensembles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops and master classes with visiting artists Classroom music programs in primary schools across the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensemble programs at 10 Primary/High Schools: Choir, Band, Rock band, Drum corps, Recorder ensemble, Junior band, Senior band, Guitar ensembles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group lessons - choir, guitar, ukulele, Early Childhood Music, African Drumming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group lessons Ensembles Provide a lot of group lessons, partly because low socio-economic profile – they can’t afford lessons Lot of classes in their own purpose- built premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Youth Orchestras x 3 experience levels, Youth choir, 3 Contemporary/Jazz bands A range of scholarships are available to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street Percussion Vocal Ensemble Musical Theatre River Song Distance learning via video conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curricular (classroom) music programs at 9 schools

4.4 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Selected financial data from the conservatoriums reviewed follows.

The financial turnover of the other conservatoriums reviewed is higher than that currently generated at Gunnedah – typically around \$1m per year. However, the uplift in State funding and increased activity that will flow from this at Gunnedah may raise turnover to a level similar to that of other Tier 4 conservatoriums, over a period of two or three years.

The comparison below is between Gunnedah as a Tier 5 conservatorium and several Tier 4 conservatoriums.

Table 4 | Comparison of selected financial data

FINANCES					
Conservatorium 2022	GUNNEDAH	CLARENCE VALLEY	COFFS HARBOUR	SOUTH WEST MUSIC	YOUNG REGIONAL
INCOME					
Tuition/Fees	223,621	471,819	638,601	279,314	414,417
Gov/Grants	277,082	862,096	403,054	413,587	424,823
Performances	4,197	-		23,960	
Other	6,109		207,706	24,576	153,270
Total Income	\$520,104	\$1,317,777	\$1,252,804	\$741,748	\$1,024,544
EXPENDITURE					
Wages	292,311	714,029	896,395	469,675	874,020
Super	27,961			47,706	
Work Comp	1,268				
Total Expenditure	\$460,602	\$1,070,906	\$1,235,110	\$554,206	\$1,074,993

Note that the rows do not equal the 'total income' and 'total expenditure' as not all rows have been included in this snapshot.

4.5 PRICING

A comparison of current pricing has been undertaken, with Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour, to identify if Gunnedah's pricing is in line with other conservatoriums. Individual tuition is at a similar pricing level – but it is more difficult to correlate the way in which other services, such as ensemble work, are priced. Further analysis may be merited, if there is price resistance at Gunnedah – or if some services are felt to be under-priced by comparison with the other conservatoriums.

Table 5 | Pricing per program

CONSERVATORIUM TEACHING PRICES			
Teaching Program	GUNNEDAH	CLARENCE VALLEY	COFFS HARBOUR
Individual classes	\$24 (20min) \$35 (30min) \$53 (45min) \$70 (60min) \$20 (30min per student shared class)	\$31.50 (30min)	\$39.50 (30 mins) \$59 (45 mins) \$79 (60 mins)
Group classes	\$75 (45 min) \$100 (1 hr -subsidy for GC students\$75) \$60 Choirs	\$6.50 (per week)	\$20 (per student per class, 10 week term) min 2
Ensemble attendance	\$75 (45 min) \$100 (1 hr -subsidy for GC students\$75) \$60 Choirs	\$6.50 (per week)	\$130 (The Academy & Six Again per term) \$75 (per term Choirs, Junior Academy, Youth Orchestra, Stage Band, Adult)
School programs	\$80 per hour for a class-based group	\$43.50 (\$14.50 per lesson x 3 school students per week)	

CONSERVATORIUM TEACHING PRICES			
Teaching Program	GUNNEDAH	CLARENCE VALLEY	COFFS HARBOUR
Early Learning	\$96 (Baby 8wks) \$96 (Toddler 8wks) \$130 (Preschool10wks) \$100 (K-Yr210wks)	\$8.00 (per week)	\$125 (9 week term ~\$13.90 per class)
Annual registration	\$2 Annual Membership fee plus Admin fee per term \$10 (individual) or \$15 (family)	\$20 per family	\$50 (excludes school programs)

4.6 FUNDING

All the Conservatoriums receive NSW Education Department funding. Some have built up supplementary sources of support, from other grant programs, and from donations and sponsorships.

Table 6 | Comparison of Conservatorium Funding

FUNDING SOURCES				
Gunnedah	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour	South West Music	Young Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Department of Education Grant Government Subsidies (COVID 19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Department of Education Grant Department of Education Project Funding Service NSW Insurance Grant Forget Me Not Choir Grant Stronger Communities Fund Service NSW COVID 19 Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Dept Education – Regional Conservatoriums Grants Program NSW Dept Education – Regional Conservatoriums Grants Program NSW Government – Community Building Partnership grants Coffs Harbour City Council – Arts & Cultural grants; Capital Infrastructure grants Enterprise Training Company (ETC) provided mortgage repayments for the first 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Government Funding Grants – other Donations and Sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Department of Education Grant Government Subsidies (COVID 19) Donations and Sponsorship

4.7 BOARD COMPOSITION

The board size of other conservatoriums is in the range six-eight members. Most have some professional music or music-education experience present on the Board.

Table 7 | Comparison of Conservatorium Board Committees

BOARD COMMITTEES					
Board	Gunnedah	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour	South West Music	Young Regional
Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Governance • Financial (not active currently) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee • Professional Development Committee • Fundraising & Marketing Committee • Building Committee • COVID-19 Taskforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live Music Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Committee –not active currently

5. CONCLUSIONS

- > The recent elevation to Tier 4 represents an opportunity for the Conservatorium to invest significantly in its administrative and teaching staffing to expand its impact and consolidates its position
- > The Conservatorium is respected and valued by local and by industry peers
- > The Conservatorium benefits from a dedicated Director, experienced and loyal teaching staff, and a Board which has some strong business and professional skills
- > There are concerns with the last-minute nature of some of the administration and management functions – mentioned both by internal and external stakeholders
- > Tier 4 will bring a need for the Director to focus on strategic business development – and this in turn requires additional administrative staffing, effective delegation, more systematic ways of working and improved communications
- > The Conservatorium’s premises are unfit-for-purpose, inadequate for the level of teaching and other activity, and with poor physical access. Several of the other Conservatoriums reviewed have succeeded in upgrading their venues, or building new ones
- > The Board will need to play a more forward-leaning role during the next stage of the Conservatorium’s development – to support and monitor the Director, enhance Conservatorium systems, support fundraising from public and private sector sources, and bring a new focus to premises improvements or securing alternative premises



6. FUTURE OPERATIONS

6.1 STAFFING

In view of the increase in funding which facilitates additional investment in staff, the need to focus on business development – especially with schools – and the feedback on current ‘pressure points’ which lead to blockages in communications, strategic development and board servicing, it is recommended that the current complement of two FTE, management and administration staff be increased to 3.6, more closely in line with other Tier 4 conservatoriums which have been benchmarked.

The following table indicates the proposed future staffing roles, compared with the current position.

Table 8 | Current and future staffing

CURRENT AND FUTURE STAFFING				
Post	Current	Future	Key functions	
Director	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership, HR Planning, finances (planning, monitoring) Fundraising, resourcing, partnership development Events Board support Internal communications 	
Finance and Operations Manager	0.6	0.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premises and office resources and systems Payroll Application and acquittal support Scheduling Accounts Payable and Receivable 	
Accountant		0.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher level accounting support, compliance Financial Reporting and forecasting 	
Administration Officer/Reception		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception Enrolments Data entry – MYOB, Music Monitor Accept payments at counter (ticket sales) Schedule changes Administration support for teachers (p ‘copying, phone calls) Venue bookings Accounts data entry (receipting etc) 	
Marketing and Program Development	0.4	0.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools communications and business development Working with teaching staff to develop programs and new opportunities with schools and community Events administration and marketing External communications Conservatorium branding and promotion. Fundraising communications support 	
Total FTE Admin	2	3.6		

Notes:

- > The current Finance and Operations post-holder has indicated a preference not to increase beyond .6 – but this could be supplemented with a more experienced/qualified Accountant, bringing increased capability in financial planning and oversight
- > An entry-level or trainee Administration Officer would free up other administration staff. As a full-time role they would provide a consistent Monday-to-Friday presence and point of contact during office hours,

facilitate a level of delegation from the Director and Finance and Operations Manager, and support marketing operations. A draft PD is appended.

- > The introduction of a Program Development function could be achieved through having .4 Marketing and .4 Program Development. However, combining these roles strengthens the overall management team presence, and would be a stronger attractor for potential applicants.

An important staffing development will be the full realisation of the Director's role as a CEO for the organisation. This is partly an issue of increased staffing to support delegation, but also requires:

- > Revision to the Director's position description to declutter it from low-level administrative tasks and focus more clearly on strategic, value-adding activities – business development and longer-term strategy, staff leadership and communications, fundraising and resourcing, systems improvements, effective board servicing, maintaining positive stakeholder relationships
- > Encouraging further training and up-skilling for the Director, including through site visits and mentorships with other organisations
- > Setting and monitoring performance targets for the Director
- > Regular progress meetings between the Director and Chair, or another nominated Board member

It is recommended that these actions be implemented by the Board. A draft, revised PD for the Director is appended.

6.2 BOARD DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNANCE PROCESSES, CONSTITUTION

During the consultant's Gunnedah site visit two working sessions were held with the Board. The first was an update on the consultant's thinking regarding future staffing, the role of the Director, and other operational areas for Board attention. The second was a Board Development Workshop to enhance the Board's role clarity and processes. Topics covered during the Workshop included:

- > Role of the Board
- > Legal duties and compliance
- > Planning and running effective meetings
- > Board papers
- > Linkage between the Board and the Director

A suite of advisory factsheets was issued to Board members, along with a copy of the training presentation.

In light of the requirements of Education NSW, the Board will need to satisfy itself that it is compliant with regard to the issues identified in 2.6 above.

The Constitution states that Board members are elected at the AGM for a one-year term. The board size is set at a minimum of five board members, but there is no stated maximum. Several refinements to the Constitution are recommended:

- > A maximum of nine Board members be stated in the Constitution
- > Board terms be set at two years or three years, renewable up to a maximum of six years on the Board, following which Board members must step down for a year before being eligible for re-election (or co-option, see below). Board terms be on a rolling basis to avoid all Board members stepping down at the same point in time⁸
- > The Chair be selected by the Board not by the AGM
- > A minority of Board positions be subject to co-option rather than election, but be subject to endorsement at the next AGM. That is, up to five Board members be elected at the AGM and up to four be selected by the

⁸ It is usual when implementing this type of change for a transitional arrangement to be put in place e.g. board members initially be appointed for a mix of 1, 2 and 3 year terms

current Board – noting that rolling terms will mean that not all positions will be vacant at the same time. The power of co-optation will enable the Board to seek out skills needs and connections that will be of benefit to the Conservatorium where these are not provided through the election process

In light of the recommendation below to register with the ACNC, further amendments to the Constitution may be advised.

It is further recommended that:

- > The Board mandate the form of the Director’s written reports to the Board, and the frequency and nature of financial reports
- > A rolling triennial review of policies be put in place
- > An annual Board calendar be adopted – including scheduled Board meetings, key topics to be addressed at each meeting (e.g. approval of the strategic plan, approval of annual budgets), and early alerts to important activities in the life of the Conservatorium
- > Succession planning for the Chair be addressed to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the current Chair’s term

6.3 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

A strengthening of the Marketing function is proposed within the staffing arrangements described above. Additionally, it is recommended that:

- > A Marketing and Communications plan be developed and adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan.
If necessary temporary expert help could be engaged to assist with development of the Plan, which would clearly indicate key messages, target markets, marketing activities and responsibilities, and timing. Responsibilities would not sit with the Marketing and Communications role alone, but with be shared with the Board, Director, and other staff.
- > Clear marketing and communications performance measures be indicated in the Plan
- > A marketing budget be confirmed to support implementation of the Plan

6.4 PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

Some of the other Tier 4 conservatoriums have taken significant steps forward in modernising their premises or in other ways making them fit for purpose. Numerous negative comments were made by parents, staff and stakeholders regarding the limitations and insecurity of the current premises, regardless of the prime location within Gunnedah. With the increased activity that comes with Tier 4, and a continuing pressure to increase earned income, the limitations of the premises will become more evident. It is therefore recommended that:

- > The Board and Director confirm future premises needs through the adoption of a specification which takes into account:
 - Future staffing levels
 - Space for music practice and ensemble rehearsals, including the possibility of further ensembles being formed in the future as the student cohort increases
 - Access, including for parents with young children, people with limited mobility, or with sight impairment
 - Other operational requirements
- > The Board seek short- to medium-term ways of meeting the requirements of the premises specification through leasing and adapting an existing building in Gunnedah
- > The Board consider the longer-term needs of the Conservatorium and the potential for new build or a more substantial adaptation of existing premises (including the Town Hall) to meet these needs
- > The Board adopt a Vision and Development Plan to articulate and build support for the Conservatorium’s long-term vision

6.5 SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue generation, and cultural and educational impacts, will be optimised through expansion of the Conservatorium's schools programs, ensembles and periodic events schedule. Meeting the requirements of Education NSW will primarily be addressed through the level of engagement with schools. It is therefore recommended that:

- > The post of part-time Marketing and Program Development Officer be implemented, as proposed above
- > Schools engagement be clearly framed within the Marketing and Communications Plan
- > The roles of Board members and all staff in optimising stakeholder and events-related communications be clarified in the Marketing and Communications Plan (and in duty statements and teacher contracts), and supported by shorter-term marketing action plans
- > The Director scan the activities of other conservatoriums – not limited to those benchmarked in this consulting process – to identify potential future program developments and present these for Board consideration

6.6 REVENUE MODEL AND FUNDRAISING

The uplift in funding from NSW, and the expected increase in earned income, requires a reframing of the Conservatorium's medium-term financial planning. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- > A four-year financial forecast be prepared for board approval, linked to the Conservatorium's Strategic Plan
- > Annual budgets be presented to the Board for approval, at least four months prior to the start of each financial year. The budgets will be informed by:
 - The rolling four-year financial forecast, and progress to date
 - Annual operational plans in support of the Strategic Plan

Freeing up Director time from lower-level administration tasks, and the strengthening of the marketing function, create the opportunity for the Conservatorium to build support through business partnerships and philanthropy. However, philanthropic support will be seriously curtailed by the lack of DGR status. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- > Registration with the ACNC be pursued as a matter of priority – noting that each of the other conservatoriums benchmarked for this study are registered with the ACNC and have DGR status
- > A legal practice with prior experience of charity registration be engaged to assist with this process and to advice on any changes in the Conservatorium's Constitution which may be necessary to meet ACNC requirements
- > A Partnerships Policy be adopted to frame business partnerships and sponsorships.
- > Following confirmation of charity registration, a Fundraising Plan be adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan and Marketing and Communications Plan, and to guide the Conservatorium's targets and activities in sourcing private sector support

7. IMPLEMENTATION

A preliminary Action Plan has already been provided to the Director, and is appended, with progress notes added by the Director at 10th March 2023. The recommendations in this report extend beyond the preliminary Plan, and are presented here with indicative scheduling and lead responsibilities.

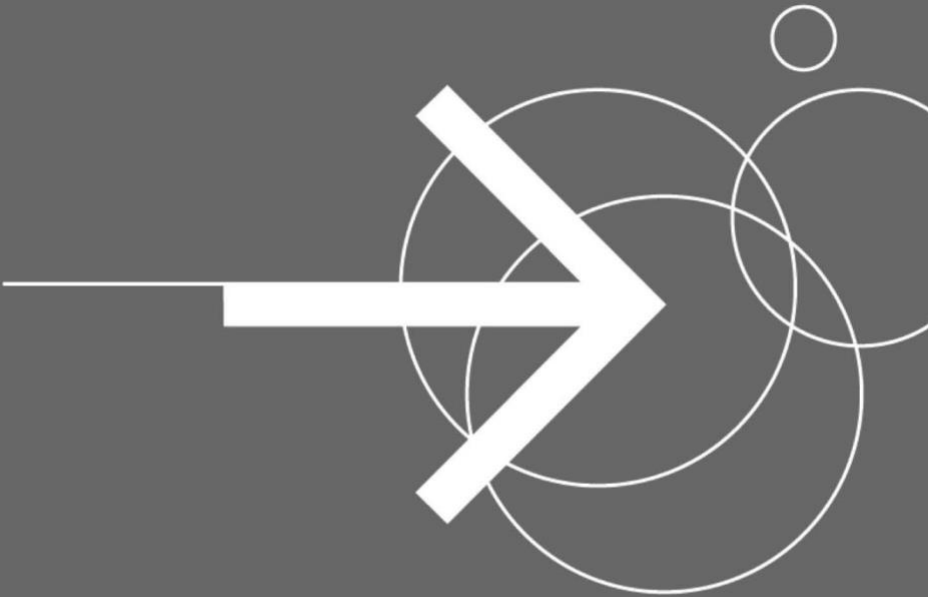
Table 9 | Recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN			
	Start	Complete	Lead or Owner
STAFFING			
Confirm new staffing structure and levels			
Communicate new structure to current personnel			
Finalise PDs for all existing and new staff			
Set and monitor performance targets for the Director			
Recruit new .2 Accountant			
Recruit FT trainee Administration Officer			
Recruit .8 Program Development and Marketing Officer			
Discontinue current .4 Marketing Officer role			
Clarify and support further training and up-skilling for the Director			
Initiate regular progress meetings between the Director and Chair			
Initiate regular staff meetings (admin and teaching staff)			
GOVERNANCE			
The Board endorse the Director's Action Plan (appended to this Report)			
Consider amendments to the Constitution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of nine Board members be stated in the Constitution • Board terms be set at two years or three years, renewable up to a maximum of six years on the Board, following which Board members must step down for a year before being eligible for re-election (or co-option) • The Chair be selected by the Board not by the AGM • A minority of Board positions be subject to co-option rather than election, but be subject to endorsement at the next AGM. That is, up to five Board members be elected at the AGM and up to four be selected by the current Board 			

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN			
	Start	Complete	Lead or Owner
The Board mandate the form of the Director's written reports to the Board, and the frequency and nature of financial reports			
A rolling triennial review of policies be initiated			
An annual Board calendar be adopted – including scheduled Board meetings, key topics to be addressed at each meeting, and early alerts to important activities			
Succession planning for the Chair be addressed to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the current Chair's term			
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS			
A Marketing and Communications plan be developed and adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan.			
If necessary engage temporary expert help to assist with development of the Plan			
Confirm a marketing budget to support implementation of the Plan			
Short-term marketing action plans be drafted to support implementation			
PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT			
The Board and Director confirm future premises needs through the adoption of a specification which takes into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future staffing levels • Space for music practice and ensemble rehearsals, including the possibility of further ensembles being formed in the future as the student cohort increases • Access, including for parents with young children, people with limited mobility, or with sight impairment • Other operational requirements 			
The Board identify short- to medium-term ways of meeting the requirements of the premises specification			
The Board consider the longer-term needs of the Conservatorium and the potential for new build or a more substantial adaptation of existing premises (including the Town Hall) to meet these needs			
The Board adopt a Vision and Development Plan to articulate and build support for the Conservatorium's long-term vision			

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN			
	Start	Complete	Lead or Owner
ACTIVITIES			
The Director scan the activities of other conservatoriums – not limited to those benchmarked in this consulting process – to identify potential future program developments and present these for Board consideration			
REVENUE MODEL AND FUNDRAISING			
A four-year financial forecast be prepared for board approval, linked to the Conservatorium’s Strategic Plan			
Deadlines for the preparation of future annual budgets be confirmed (at least four months prior to the start of each financial year)			
Registration with the ACNC be pursued as a matter of priority			
A legal practice with prior experience of charity registration be engaged to assist with this process			
A Partnerships Policy be adopted to frame business partnerships and sponsorships			
Following confirmation of charity registration, a Fundraising Plan be adopted, to sit alongside the Strategic Plan and Marketing and Communications Plan			

APPENDIX



APPENDIX 1: GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING DOCUMENTATION

GUNNEDAH CONSERVATORIUM ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING REPORT	
Publications	Publisher
Board Handbook, April 2019	GC/Board Connect
Policy Manual, 30 November 2022	GC
Constitution, February 2018	GC
Profit and Loss Statement July 2022 to October 2022	GC
Gunnedah Conservatorium Inc Financial statements 30 Sep 2022	GC
Regional Conservatorium Grants Program Funding Agreement 2022/23–2024/25	NSW Government
Annual Report 2021-2022	GC
Program Performance Report 2022 Semester 1: Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, 30 September 2022	GC
Regional Conservatorium Grants Program: Program Guidelines 2022/23–2024/25	NSW Government
Strategic Plan 2022-2025	GC
Information	Source
List of Board members	GC
Board Member Responsibilities	GC
Organisational Structure 9 December 2022	GC
Position Description, Administration Coordinator, October 2018	GC
Expectations and Responsibilities: Gunnedah Conservatorium Management and Teaching Staff, 24 April 2019	GC
Director's Position Description Schedule, 24 June 2019	GC
Administration Officer Letter of Appointment, 8 October 2018	GC
List of Organisational Policies	GC
Agenda: Board of Management General Meeting, Wednesday 30 November 2022	GC
Minutes of the General Meeting of the Board of Management of Gunnedah Conservatorium, Wednesday 30 October 2022	GC

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF CONSULTEES

GUNNEDAH CONSERVATORIUM CONSULTEES LIST			
First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
Rebecca	Ryan	Director	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Ben	Hennessy	Board Chair	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Renata		Administration Officer	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Natalie	Walters	Board Member	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Susan	Wilson	Board Member	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Nicole	McDonald	Board Member	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Jenny	MacAulay	Board Member	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Penny	Haire	Board Member	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Susan	Frater	Manager Economy & Growth	Gunnedah Shire Council
Lauren	Mackley	Executive Director	Arts North West

GUNNEDAH CONSERVATORIUM CONSULTEES LIST - GROUP DISCUSSIONS			
First Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
Dominic	Goodwin-Hauck	Music Teacher	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Meg	Clowes	Music Teacher/Administration	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Margaret	Amos	Singalong Group Teacher	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Larni	Christie	Drama Teacher	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Joel	Pickett	Guitar Teacher	Gunnedah Conservatorium
Keely	Murphy	Choir / Adult Learner / local Music teacher	Gunnedah Community Member
Erin	McAdam	Parent of a GC music student	Gunnedah Community Member
Alice	Mclean	Guitar student	Gunnedah Community Member
Joanne	Piper	Student of Blenders, piano and guitar	Gunnedah Community Member

APPENDIX 3: POSITION DESCRIPTION -RECEPTION

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT | RECEPTION

A pivotal member of the Gunnedah Conservatorium team, our receptionist is the first point of contact for people wanting to get involved with our organisation. The role is varied and interesting and is important to the smooth running of the day-to-day operations of the Gunnedah Conservatorium.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- > Respond to social media, telephone and face to face enquiries regarding Gunnedah Conservatorium operations
- > Direct incoming calls to appropriate team member
- > Screen calls to the Director
- > Commence the enrolment process for new student enquires
- > Demonstrate effective, friendly communication with students, parents, tutors, Management Committee and the community
- > Receive and receipt payments through the office

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

- > Notify teachers of any advised student absences
- > Notify students of teacher absence due to illness / required change of program
- > When needed, contact students to arrange make-up lessons or to fill casual vacancies
- > Mark rolls
- > Photocopy teaching support materials
- > Maintain record of preferred teaching materials, and order stock as required
- > Ensure teachers' schedules are up to date at the start of each week, communicate changes

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE TASK

- > Assist in maintaining the organisation's filing system
- > Assist in maintaining all student files/databases both electronically and in hardcopy
- > Collect and send mail and undertake any banking required
- > Process and distribute correspondence in an appropriate and timely manner
- > Monitor and ensure timely distribution of email correspondence as directed
- > Purchase staff kitchen and cleaning consumables and stationery supplies
- > Keep office and public spaces clean presentable

EVENTS

- > Ticketing for events held by the Conservatorium
- > Assist with setting up events
- > May be called on to assist with front of house at events

APPENDIX 4: POSITION DESCRIPTION - GUNNEDAH CONSERVATORIUM DIRECTOR

POSITION PURPOSE

The Conservatorium Director is the senior executive of the organisation. The role is responsible to the Board for articulating the educational and creative vision for the Conservatorium, for ensuring that the vision informs business decisions and operations, and for growing the Conservatorium's student-base, audiences, financial strength, and educational quality and reputation.

COMMUNICATIONS

Reports to: Conservatorium Board

Internal: Board Chair and Members, all management and teaching staff and Volunteers

External: Government stakeholders, community stakeholders, corporate partners and donors, artists and key arts organisations

ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Conservatorium Director is accountable for:

- > Conceptualising, designing, and recommending the Conservatorium's programs to the Board.
- > Leading the delivery of the programs to achieve the vision, and outcomes and targets articulated in strategic and operational plans.
- > Building the quality and reputation of the Conservatorium's work.
- > Creating a positive and effective organisational structure, operating environment and culture.
- > Maintaining a financially sustainable organisation through an appropriate balance of income sources, sound planning and business management, and effective use of resources.
- > Creating positive internal and external relationships, and maintaining excellent communications with Education NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council, students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders

RESPONSIBILITIES

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- > Act as the public face, primary spokesperson and representative of the Conservatorium, promoting and advocating for the Conservatorium, and building identity and profile locally and nationally.
- > Focus and inspire staff and Board toward achievement of the vision.
- > Lead, encourage and model a culture of respect, communication, mutual support, collaboration and high performance.

EDUCATIONAL AND CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

- > As Conservatorium Director, conceptualise and articulate the educational and creative framework and direction for the company.
- > Following Board acceptance of direction, develop and lead implementation of the program.
- > Maintain an active dialogue with the Board during the development of the program, including any new developments or significant changes.
- > Manage all aspects of program delivery to align with the vision, and to meet budget targets.
- > Curate and deliver the Conservatorium's annual program within budget parameters approved by the Board.

- > Stimulate new program thinking and innovative program delivery.
- > Recommend to the Board support structures (e.g. working parties, advisory groups, critical friends) which will assist in strengthening Conservatorium's programs
- > Build and leverage cultural, community and corporate partnerships which enhance the Conservatorium's programs.

GOVERNANCE, BOARD RELATIONS, STRATEGY AND PLANNING

- > In conjunction with the Chair and Board, play a central role in the Conservatorium's strategic planning processes; accept responsibility for delivering the actions and targets within the current strategic plan; and report as required against the plan.
- > Oversee development of Operational Plans which ensure appropriate timetabling of projects, and use of human and financial resources.
- > Support the Board in addressing the development or replacement of the Conservatorium's premises.
- > Report periodically to the Board on delivery and changes to approved plans.
- > Respect the Board's authority over and accountability for the affairs of the Conservatorium, and work within approved delegations.
- > Work in close liaison with the Chair to provide direction and leadership for the Conservatorium.
- > Keep the Board informed of program plans, opportunities, risks and challenges.
- > Ensure Board meetings are effectively serviced, with appropriate papers, reports and information.
- > Provide Board with all reports, information and advice necessary to ensure good governance.
- > Keep the Chair and Board informed of any changes in plans, directions, significant incidents which may have a bearing on the company's performance or reputation.

FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND FUNDRAISING

- > Ensure provision of timely, accurate, and thorough information to keep the Board informed of the company's financial position.
- > Develop strategies for fund-raising and sponsorship and ensure that they are implemented.
- > Take overall responsibility for financial control of the organisation; ensuring cashflow projections are aligned to goals and targets set in business plan.
- > Lead the budget planning, monitoring and control process, in order to achieve financial targets approved by the Board.
- > Submit annual and project budgets to the Board for discussion and approval.
- > Ensure the Board is kept fully informed of the Conservatorium's financial position.
- > Ensure timely submission and acquittal of grants.

MANAGEMENT

- > Oversee the management of the day-to-day operations of the organisation through appropriate staffing, delegations, collaboration, information sharing, supervision and performance review.
- > Manage the financial performance of the organisation, including the growth and diversification of the revenue base, the development of budgets for Board approval, and ensuring performance within budget.
- > Oversee the establishment of management and administrative systems, policies and practices for HR, finance, fund-raising, risk management, data gathering, and formal reporting on the performance of the business.
- > Develop, in consultation with the General Manager, review and evaluation processes to enable extensive reports to the Board and stakeholders on the outcomes of the Festival, and to support future directions and decision-making.

- > Ensure that all compliance and regulatory requirements are met.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- > Maintain a positive and safe working environment for all staff and volunteers.
- > Oversee the recruitment, induction and motivation of all management and teaching staff.
- > Ensure staff and volunteers benefit from regular, constructive appraisal, and are provided with professional and personal development opportunities.
- > Manage disciplinary and grievance issues, where necessary consulting with the Chair of the Board.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

- > Build the Festival brand and distinctive positioning locally and nationally.
- > Ensure the Marketing plan aligns with the vision and audience targets of the company.
- > Ensure a strong focus on awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of students, parents, audiences.
- > With support of the development staff, identify, convert and maintain relationships with key corporate and commercial partners.
- > Maximise attendance at and participation in the Conservatorium's programs.
- > Optimise earned income, and corporate and philanthropic support for NAFA and its programs.
- > Maintain constructive and regular communications with NAFA's government and corporate stakeholders and ensure that all reporting/ acquittal requirements are met.
- > Maintain a current marketing and communications plan.

APPENDIX 5: PRELIMINARY ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN	BY	WHO	PROGRESS
HR			UPDATED 13/3
Revision to Director, Admin Coordinator, Communications Officer job descriptions – Rebecca to recast with top-level Job Purpose statement, underpinned by main Results Areas, with dot point tasks under these	22/2	Rebecca	Discussed with DF 10/3
Discussion of need for a Deputy to enable Rebecca role to evolve as CEO. Deputy could be Business and Market Development (Schools liaison, events management, partnership development [or supporting Rebecca in the last of these]).	TBC	Board and Rebecca	Some discussions with David 10/3
DF/Rebecca to draft alternative staff structures, taking into account also the need for stronger marketing function, junior/trainee admin (could be supervised by Renata)	22/2	Rebecca, DF	Discussed with DF 10/3
Casual contracts may need review to clarify obligations. Some casuals may be better as P/T employees in the future. For further consideration	3/3	Rebecca, possible board/egal input	Revised contracts with Business NSW for feedback
Development of Rebecca role as CEO will be facilitated by the above tasks, plus some targeted mentoring/fact-finding from other Cons. Rebecca to progress this in consultation with selected Cons.	31/3	Rebecca	Travel to Orange April 1-2-3 Coffs Harbour April 26-27.28
BOARD/GOVERNANCE			
CEO report to Board to be enhanced to guide strategic discussion, and to harness board capabilities in achieving Con goals	31/3	Rebecca	Currently working on next board papers to reflect
Adopt starred agenda to prioritise discussion	31/3	Chair, Director	Currently working on next board papers to reflect
Chair and Director to have agenda and meeting planning session 7-14 days in advance of Board meetings	31/3	Chair, Director	Currently working on next board papers to reflect
Financial reports to include budget, actual, variances, cashflow and brief commentary	31/3	Penny, Director	Currently working on next board papers to reflect
Consider adoption of Board Code of Conduct, Board Duty Statement, Conflict of Interest Policy (models provided)	31/5	Board	

ACTION PLAN	BY	WHO	PROGRESS
Develop Board annual calendar, with meeting dates, key deadlines, Con events	30/6	Board, Director	
PLANNING AND FINANCES			
Annual operational/business plan to be produced to clarify how the strategic plan is being implemented year by year, and who is responsible for what. Add annual KPIs on staff, premises, as well as teaching/event outputs	March and May	Rebecca	
Annual budgeting process to include early presentation of draft budget to board, and final version 1-2 months before start of the financial year	March and May	Rebecca	
Budget figures to be inputted to MYOB so that variances can be generated in financial reports, as per model presented during Board development session	15/6	Rebecca	Commenced, to improve reporting
3 year forecast to be developed to sit alongside the strategic plan	Alongside the 2023/24 budget	Rebecca, Penny	
COMMUNICATIONS			
Internal comms would be improved by:			
> Clear allocation of responsibilities for communication	3/3	Rebecca	Started, to be refined with admin team feedback
> Cleary stated comms systems and rules – for teachers, parents/students, admin staff	3/3	Rebecca	Started, to be refined with admin team feedback
> Staff meetings	Start from March, but weekly 15 minute for admin	Rebecca	Started for Admin, scheduled for teaching staff 14 April
> Possibly enhanced IT systems e.g. full implementation of file-sharing system (OneDrive, Dropbox)	May	Rebecca	Working on some email improvements with consultant
External comms would be improved by:			
> A short Marketing and Communications Plan to sit alongside the strategic plan, and be approved by the Board	June	Rebecca, Board	
> A Marketing action sheet for each promoted event to guide promotion and audience development	June	Rebecca, Meg	

ACTION PLAN	BY	WHO	PROGRESS
PREMISES			
Rebecca to draft a high-level spec. What rooms needed, what size, what level of utilisation. Check against 1-2 specs from other conservatoriums (Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Upper Hunter)	10/3 (board meeting 15/3)	Rebecca, Board	Prepared for board meeting – now 22/3
Objective will be to negotiate with Shire Council and/or seek alternative premises for a more secure future for the Con, in premises that are fit-for-purpose (scale, access, noise-proofing)	31/3	Chair, Board	
FUND-RAISING			
Get DGR status	30/4	Natalie, Board, Rebecca	
Adopt sponsorship/partnerships policy	31./5	Rebecca, Board	
Identify opportunities for future partnerships e.g. to support student bursaries, teaching specialisms, events, equipment, building development	July	Rebecca, Board	
Clarify Board role in fundraising	May	Board, Rebecca	

DISCLAIMER

Positive Solutions and its employees, representatives and consultants make no representation or warranty as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness in respect of information provided by Gunnedah Conservatorium and its contractors. Financial and other information is based on information provided and informed by stakeholder consultation and prevailing market conditions.

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