

## THE VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE INC.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2025

*Saturday March 1, 2025, 10.30am*

*Jenny Florence Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne & online.*

### MINUTES

#### WELCOME

The President Susan Rundle welcomed everybody to the meeting.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

#### PRESENT (INCLUDING ONLINE)

##### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:

*Susan Rundle, Deborah Fabbro, Alison Campbell Rate, Andrew McAliece, LB Bradley, Richard Burman, Jennifer Paragreen, Dexter Bourke, Zina Carman, Gail Brackley, Rod Nash, Robyn Kelly.*

##### COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES:

*Christine Nilsson (ETC), Dexter Bourke (The 1812), Suzie Martens (Brighton Theatre Co.), Jennifer Paragreen (FAMDA), Zina Carman (TTT)*

*OBSERVERS: (NON-FINANCIAL ATTENDEES – NO VOTING RIGHTS) – nil.*

**APOLOGIES** – Andrew Ferguson (Malvern Theatre Co.), Cheryl Threadgold, Monica Greenwood.

#### PROXIES RECEIVED –

received from -	in favour of -
Bob Bramble	Susan Rundle

**MINUTES** of the previous AGM - these were distributed after the previous AGM and made available at the time of the 2025 Notice of Meeting.

Moved Alison Campbell Rate, seconded Deborah Fabbro, Carried.

*Discussion arising - nil*

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – *attached*

The President gave her report.

Moved Susan Rundle, seconded LB Bradley, Carried.

*Discussion arising –*

The Secretary expressed thanks on behalf of The VDL for Susan's work and leadership.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT including STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS**

*The Secretary apologised for not sending the report in advance to meeting participants. It was however sent to the Committee to be ratified prior to the AGM.*

*The Treasurer presented her report, thanking Richard Burman, Chartered Accountant, for confirming the figures. Deborah noted that The VDL's finances are in a good position. Total equity \$49K; 7.7% up on 2023. Most activities staying at same level. Membership fluctuates as usual as individual members and companies come and go. The deposit to secure the next 2 years at new venue for the Awards dinner (Vogue Ballroom) has skewed outgoings for 2024. We are in a position to meet our liabilities as they arise.*

Report moved Deborah Fabbro, seconded Andrew McAliece; Carried.

*Discussion arising –*

*- Zina asked about audit requirements. Deborah explained that organisations with Income under 250K per annum don't require auditing. Members may request to view the books. Auditing is a decision for each theatre company to make if they fall under the threshold and according to their Rules of Association, or if a Limited Company. ACNC rules may change down the track.*

*- Richard Burman asked about status of library hirings. Deborah – down by \$1K. Hiring mostly depends on play reading groups. Individual member hiring has dropped off. A reminder to member companies that The VDL Library can supply production scripts so companies can fulfill production licensing obligations which requires them to have a “cast quantity of scripts not photocopies” and also support The VDL. Keeping an eye on the hiring; at present we are financially still able to afford the library space in Ross House. Need to encourage more hiring by companies.*

*- Zina asked about actors borrowing single scripts. Deborah – yes, providing they are members, scripts can be mailed out.*

## **ELECTIONS**

*(online members to vote via text to Secretary)*

*The President vacated the chair.*

- *Dexter Bourke was appointed as Scrutineer to assist The Secretary*
- *Announcement of Nominations received by The Secretary for the following positions –*
  - *President - Susan Rundle*
  - *Vice President – Andrew McAliece and LB Bradley*
  - *Secretary – Alison Campbell Rate*
  - *Treasurer – Deborah Fabbro*
  - *4 Ordinary Members – Keith Hutton, Steve Saul, Andrew McAliece*
- *Ballot Allocation – (confirm proxies, company reps.)*
- *Election for Vice President – LB Bradley was duly elected*
- *Call for nominations from the floor for 1 further Ordinary Member - 1 nomination received for Robyn Kelly, proposed by LB Bradley, seconded Gail Brackley, nomination accepted by Robyn Kelly.*
- *Robyn Kelly was duly elected as Ordinary Member*
- *Announcement of formation of committee*
- *Robyn Kelly spoke briefly about what she hoped to bring to the committee.*

The President thanked all who nominated for committee, particularly Andrew and LB for nominating for Vice President.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

**Special resolution/s - nil**

**CLOSE OF MEETING 11.18am**

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON 2024 VDL MEMBER SURVEY RE LOCAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY THEATRE AND ASSOCIATED LOBBYING STRATEGIES.**

The President reported on the findings of the survey. The report will be made available to members.

*Discussion -*

*- Dexter Bourke commented that a member of The 1812 board is also on the local arts council board, with the aim of keeping communication flowing*

- *The Secretary commented that the Grant Writing and Lobbying online workshop was held Feb 22, notes available for companies under Member Portal*
- *Richard Burman noted Councils have always been difficult to work with. Government financial support ceased with Jeff Kennet's government*
- *The Secretary commented that The VDL is hoping to develop some tools and skills to offer member companies to increase their capacity when dealing with local councils*
- *Robyn Kelly suggested companies should reach out to multicultural communities*
- *Deborah Fabbro supported this suggestion, noting there are other language theatre companies in existence and we should be reaching out to them*
- *Susan agreed, adding that disability is another area for inclusion – onstage and in the audience, such as a 'relaxed night' performance.*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2024**

2024 was a very positive year for The Victorian Drama League and its members. It was good to see companies back on track, audience numbers starting to lift again and One-Act Play Festivals returning. Significant dates in 2024 to acknowledge were MOARTZ celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and STAG their 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### **Online Workshops**

The VDL held 4 online workshops during 2024 which were all well received with excellent feedback from attendees. As I regularly say, it's a great initiative as it allows members from rural, regional and interstate to participate. On behalf of The VDL Committee, I sincerely thank those who provided their time and shared their expertise.

1. Companies Connect – provided an opportunity for member companies from Melbourne, wider Victoria and interstate to connect.
2. Intro to Costuming Workshop led by Tony Taranto, Juliet Hayday and Christine Tompkins
3. Intro to Sound Design – led by Blake Stringer, Tim Long and Andrea Cole
4. Intro to Stage Management – led by Gail Brackley, Constance Bram and Hayley Long (Kucom Theatre, Mackay)

We were also able to offer an online Directing Course to VDL members. This was through the generosity (and expertise) of Chris Baldock of Mockingbird Theatre. Having participated in the 2023 program, I know it is very good. Thank you, Chris.

### **Government Lobbying Working Group Commenced**

One of the things I'm most proud of was the commencement of our Government Lobbying Working Group, which is providing an opportunity for The VDL to not just support Australian Community Theatre, but to advocate for them.

A huge thank you to Michael Kakogiannis (Mordialloc Theatre), David Runnells (Mount Players) Andrew Ferguson and Monica Greenwood (Malvern Theatre), Shauna Stanley (Williamstown Little Theatre), for joining me, Alison Campbell Rate and Deborah Fabbro in this group from its inception, and to the others who have since joined.

The purpose of this group is to increase awareness at all levels of government about just how important community theatre is, not just to those of us who are directly involved in mounting productions, but to the local businesses who benefit, local residents and groups who have access to close to home opportunities to volunteer, make friends and attend theatre at a fraction of the cost of professional theatre.

Thank you to all who assisted and co-signed The VDL submission to the Victorian State Government's Creative State Survey, and to those who also completed the survey as individuals. The purpose of this survey is to assist the Victorian State Government in understanding just what the arts mean to us, as individuals and members of the community and just where and how they can support the creative arts sector – let's hope they listen to us.

As part of this working group, we undertook to survey our Member Companies, with the expert assistance of Monica Greenwood and JWS Research. This information is going to be used to assist you, our Member Companies, in highlighting to your Local Council what it is doing (or not doing) for community theatre, what Companies might be struggling with and what they need. We hope to use the results to raise awareness of the benefits community theatre brings, and equip companies to lobby for improved access to appropriate spaces and lower cost burdens.

A summary of the results of this survey will be presented after the business of the AGM is finished.

### **The VDL Awards 2024**

After enjoying Merrimu for many years, The VDL Awards Event was held there for the last time in 2024, superbly MC'd by Blake Stringer. We had 27 entries (representing 28 Companies), comprising 19 Dramas and 9 Comedies, making it a busy year for Drama Adjudicators in particular.

We also had the introduction of a new award, *The Alan Hopgood Hall of Fame Award*, sponsored by Helen Ellis in memory of Alan Hopgood. The awardee, nominated by Member Companies and selected by The VDL Committee, recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to their company or to the non-professional theatre community as a whole, across any aspect of theatre making.

### **Thank You**

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who volunteers in any way to support The Victorian Drama League (listed in full below). It is very much appreciated. I particularly thank my fellow Committee Members but I remind myself and you all, that we do this because it's important to us all to ensure that community theatre continues to thrive and is recognised for all it does for the whole community.

**Susan Rundle**  
**President**  
**The Victorian Drama League**

### **ADJUDICATORS 2024**

Comedy: Alan Burrows, Dexter Bourke, Glenda May

Drama: Neil Barnett, Lb Bradley, Zina Carman

RESERVE ADJUDICATORS - John Bishop, Keith Hutton

Minutes - The VDL AGM 2025 for the year 2024

LIBRARY - Fay Bock, David Dodd, Michael Mace, Genevieve Ryan

LIBRARY AND ROSS HOUSE COORDINATOR - Deborah Fabbro

REVIEWS COORDINATOR - Zina Carman

REVIEWERS - Richard Burman, Roderick Chappel, Bruce Cochrane, Cate Dowling-Trask, Deborah Fabbro, Andrew Gemmell, Damian Jones, Andrew Mcaliece, Rod Nash, Ryan O'connor, Genevieve Ryan

REVIEWS PROOFREADER - Carol Shelbourn

AWARDS ADJUDICATION CONVENOR - Tony Clayton And Susan Rundle

WEBSITE - Steve Saul, Alison Campbell Rate

SOCIAL MEDIA - Natasha Boyd

FOLLOW SPOT NEWSLETTER - Alison Campbell Rate

FOLLOW SPOT PROOFREADER - Deborah Fabbro

SCRIPT CRITIQUE SERVICE - Alison Campbell Rate, Geoff Hickey, Alison Knight, Andrew Mcaliece, Jeremy Just, Suzy Wilds

THE VDL COMMITTEE 2024

President: Susan Rundle, Vice-President: Andrew Mcaliece,

Secretary: Alison Campbell Rate, Treasurer: Deborah Fabbro,

General Members: Lb Bradley, Bob Bramble, Keith Hutton, Steve Saul

THE VDL AWARDS EVENT - Alison Campbell Rate, Deborah Fabbro, Monica Greenwood, Susan Rundle, Damian Vuleta, David Swan