**Report of Public Performance Coordinator**

I am pleased to report that the Buskers have evolved into a community group that can not only involve our eager senior audiences in sing-alongs with a repertoire that is fondly familiar to them, but can rise to the challenge of entertaining a wide range of audiences with an expanded repertoire of songs. Some of the compliments we've received from our peer ukulele groups after each of our performances in 2017 (see list at end of this report) were- "You Buskers have improved out of sight!", "You've got so many good voices in your group", "You look like you're all enjoying yourselves so much". One of our members was told at the Husky Muster that he sounded much better in our group than in the other group that he performed with (Swingaleles). We now perform with more vocal and instrumental depth and with more light and shade.

The breakout performance for me was the Dapto Probus gig where we adopted Wendy Leatheam's entreaty to look up at the audience and smile. The returns smiles encouraged us to put more into our work so that the resulting performance was the best I'd ever heard from the Buskers. We received a deluge of appreciative comments from this first-time audience including my favourite "Your group have so much versatility". This for me made it worth all the growing pains our group has undergone. Buskers are now great believers in the worth of rehearsing performance song lists well ahead of time while working on ways we can continually improve those songs. I actually believe we now perform versions of "Rhythm of the Rain", "Oh Boy", "Dream Lover" and "Sloop John B" better than the originals.

My highlight of the year was when we welcomed busloads of refugees from Syria and Iraq to the Uniting Church, whereupon one teenaged girl sang "You Raise Me Up", heartfelt from a song sheet I just happened to have with me, accompanied on piano by a priest from the Benedictine Abbey.

We've now established a platform for the Buskers upon which we can accommodate beginners, as we've always done in our six years of existence, along with our more experienced and adventurous Buskers who can add more depth to our performances through vocal harmonies or more intricate musical accompaniment. Tom, our most accomplished musician, has been evolving from our "metronome" into our piano accompanist who gives us a point of difference from other ukulele groups. My goal is to use whatever talent we have at hand to our best advantage when performing in public. Although we will always be a ukulele group, I encourage the group to continue to welcome the inclusion of other instruments to accompany our music such as guitar, bass, harmonica and percussion.

I have to mention several things that have made a big impact to our progress:

Visits by Nick Rheinberger and Wendy Leatheam on separate Thursday nights planted new instrumental and vocal ideas that we've started to implement in our public performances. We've bought and loaded up an iPad for our pianist Tom to use to avoid carrying around 6 years of accumulated printed sheets music. We've bought some microphones that can pick up all of our group at once with Tom S has taking charge of their setup.

I'd like to thank everyone that contributed to the continuing growth and well-being of Blowhole Buskers - such as setting up our venues, suggesting ideas to improve our performances, and of course rehearsing and turning up for our many gigs.

***Our biggest year ever for public performances***

* 10 Sep '16 Dementia Awareness - Blowhole Point
* 18 Sep '16 Springstrum - Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadow
* 23 Oct '17 Cafe singalong - Speak 'n Easy
* 8 Nov '17 Uniting Church Refugee welcome
* 27-28 Jan '17 Kiama Show - Cafe de Rude
* 10 Mar '17 Kiama Jazz & Blues -Old Fire Station
* 12 Mar '17 Flash Mob - Centro
* 27 Apr '17 Dapto Probus - Dapto Leagues
* 29 Apr '17 Shoalhaven Uke Festival - Shoalhaven Heads Bowling Club
* 30 Apr '17 Kiss Arts - main stage + Cafe de Rude
* 24 Jun '17 Husky Muster - Huskisson Bowling Club
* 9 Sep '17 Alzheimers Australia Bondi2Berry welcome, Kiama Showground
* 9 Sep '17 Probus/Buskers combined concert, Blue Haven concert hall
* Sep 17 '17 Springstrum - Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadow
* Sep 24 '17 Folk By the Sea

Graeme Lock Lee

10 Sep, 2017