**AGM Presidents Report 2024**

I have had to refer to the rules for our association recently when dealing with the State Revenue Office and as I was preparing my report, I thought it was worthwhile thinking about the purpose of our Acheron Hall Committee. The rules state that our purposes are to manage the Acheron Mechanics’ Institute Hall with a view to providing a meeting place for social, recreational and educational purposes for members of the Acheron community, including maintenance of the hall and surrounds in a sound and safe condition, and improvements to the facilities at the hall to ensure its suitability for community use.

I think we could also add that we also have responsibility for managing administrative issues, ensuring there are adequate finances to allow us to make payments as required and also planning and hosting events that will benefit the local community.

I think the committee has successfully achieved all of these purposes this year and I would like to thank all members of the committee for their hard work and commitment.

The hall has been well utilised this year by the community.

In August we had the 70s themed mid-winter dinner which was a great night. Again the hall committee deserve a huge thank you for organising the night including the amazing hall decorations and for the wonderful support of local businesses in providing auction items. This is really our main fundraiser from which we need to pay insurance, electricity bills, termite inspections etc

The hall was also the venue for the CFA trivia night which bought many members of the community together. Congratulations to the Acheron Brigade for a fun and well organised night which tested our combined intellectual capacities!

We also had the very special screening of the film ‘Weekend at Nans’ on Friday night followed by a delicious supper provided by hall committee members This provided another chance for the community to get together.

We are also very fortunate to have received funding for the mid-winter dinner and hopefully for the Christmas party from the Victorian and Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth State Disaster Funding Arrangements (DRFA), which was facilitated by the council.

In terms of hall improvements and maintenance, we completed the upgrade to the toilet block this year and have had two working bees. It was very exciting to have extra hands from the community help with the recent working bee and a lot what achieved.

On a less positive note, for the first time ever, we received two land tax bills which we have had to pay. One is for the parcel of land that the hall and CFA shed sit on and the other is for half of the tennis court. We are still waiting for an exemption and hope that this will be resolved in the near future and we will receive a refund. This has raised the issue of our two land titles and we need to investigate whether we need to consolidate the titles.

We are very sad to announce that three of our hall committee members are standing down this year. Our two Johns – John Turner and John Thorp have decided to step down, but we are fortunate that they will join Judy Turner as one of our valued ‘friends’ of the Acheron Hall. Sue Moran will step down from the treasurer role but we are thrilled that she will remain on the committee.

John Turner has been on the committee, since at least the early 1990s and took over as the chairman of the trust that was formed to ensure that the hall remained owned and managed by the local community. More recently, he and David Gamble have overseen the ‘maintenance’ of the hall and he has contributed to many of the upgrades to both the hall and the tennis court. John has always been very generous with his time and expertise and we thank him for his involvement over so many years. Fortunately we will still get to experience his wonderful sense of humour and positive attitude as he will continue to attend meetings in his new capacity as a ‘Friend of the Acheron Hall’.

John Thorp became president of the hall committee in 2011 and very ably led the committee through to 2022. We thank John for his wonderful leadership over those 11 years. Many significant projects were achieved including the fantastic centennial events in 2014 and the ongoing annual mid-winter dinners and repainting of the hall. In recent years John has been instrumental in obtaining and storing our popular fundraising wine from Sedona Estate and has in fact just obtained some of their latest shiraz which are now available to purchase. We thank him for his leadership and generous contribution of his time and look forward to his presence at committee meetings also as a Friend of the Hall.

Sue Moran has been our fantastic treasurer for 10 years – keeping track of and paying bills and we appreciate the brilliant job she has done in managing the ‘money’ at all of our events over the years and the donations of many of her ‘home produce ‘to our raffles. Over the years, Sue has efficiently and promptly attended to all ‘financial requests and payments’ including managing our change of banks for which we are very thankful. She has streamlined many of the processes and as mentioned we are very grateful that she is continuing on the committee. She is therefore available to support anyone that would like to take over the treasurer role. Its really the perfect way for a new treasurer to start.

One of the other purposes of our committee that is mentioned in the rules, is providing a meeting place for recreational purposes and ensuring the area around the hall is maintained or improved in a sound and safe condition. Unfortunately, the tennis court surface is badly degraded and would not be regarded to be in a sound or safe condition for its purpose. We were fortunate to receive funds from the Tiny Towns grant through the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to resurface the tennis court. The new tennis court surface will include markings for a pickle ball court which offers an extra recreational activity for the community. Unfortunately, the project is not as straight forward as hoped and a working party will need to be organised to assist with this project so if anyone is interested in helping should contact me.

I would like to thank everyone on the committee for all their hard work in contributing to such a successful year. It really is a pleasure to be part of such an enthusiastic and active committee.

We are looking forward to catching up with everyone at the Acheron Community Christmas Party which will be on 14th December this year.