



# FOLLOW SPOTS

## APRIL 2020

### A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

2020 was planned to be another big year for the Launceston Players with 2 major productions, a moved reading and 2 garage sales. How quickly things can change.

Rehearsals were well underway for our first production, *The Bridesmaid Must Die!*, props and costumes were coming together, preliminary work on the set done and the publicity material printed. The author Wayne Tunks was also coming to the pre-opening night show.

Then all of a sudden the situation surrounding COVID-19 started to evolve and quicker than anyone would have imagined. With many phone calls between Jeff Hockley and myself, we quickly came to the decision that although opening night was still some time away, we could not proceed with any certainty. As things turned out, with social isolation being enacted, it would not have been possible to run rehearsals. With act 1 completed the cast enjoyed pizza and some drinks and reflected on their journey so far.



After conversations with Mary Machen, President of the Tamar Valley Writers Festival, Stella Kent (writer) and Peter Hammond (director), the committee decided to proceed to stage *Marjorie Unravelled*, a musical about the life of Tasmania's Housewife Super Star, Marjorie Bligh. Our production was to be held in conjunction with the Tamar Valley Writers Festival who saw this as a big plus. Instead of attending a presentation by an author regarding their work, it was considered to be a unique opportunity so see the original work being performed live, with a special opening night for the Festival commencing with a Marjorie Bligh inspired cocktail party.

With auditions completed, the show cast and with the opening night the second week in September, we again had to give careful consideration if in fact it should proceed. However the decision was made for us when the Writers Festival committee decided not to proceed with their Festival for 2020.

*The Lark* was to be staged as a moved reading at St Patrick's College, Prospect in August. As this venue was withdrawn it was not possible to proceed as planned.

The committee met, ahead of the normal monthly meeting date, to assess the current situation and form a way forward. As events had then overtaken us and the committee could not meet around the one table due to the restrictions on people being in the one place at the one time, a series of virtual meetings were held.

Subsequently it was decided to not cancel, but postpone all 3 productions until 2021 with the opening night for ***The Bridesmaid Must Die!*** on 29 April. ***The Lark*** will move 12 months ahead, as will ***Marjorie Unravelled***. The Tamar Valley Writers are rescheduling the 2020 festival to 2021. As it turns out it fits in perfectly with our booking in the Earl Arts Centre in September.

The 2 planned Garage Sales, to help raise money for the writing of the Launceston Players History Book, are currently on hold. In his latest report to the committee, Dr. Thomas Gunn advised that with the staff from QVMAG now working from home, accessing information held there has become difficult, but he is progressing and now working from Linda Madill's minutes, so the work on the draft manuscript is moving into the more recent years. The committee were to meet with Thomas in May to commence a conversation regarding the style and size of the book and were also to commence developing the strategy for the ultimate publication of our book. This of course is now on hold.

Although disappointed that 2020 plans are now deferred 12 months, we are all looking forward to 2021 and hope you will join us on one or more occasions. I must add a caveat. Although we have deferred 2020 productions, we expect to be able to restage them in 2021 but, as events this year have shown, you never know what is around the corner. During this time of uncertainty, which has impacted on us all in such a dramatic way, I wish you well in the coming months and we on the committee send everyone best wishes for good health over the winter. We look forward to catching up with everyone during our rescheduled 2020 program.

Be Safe – Grahame Foster, President

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## **TASMANIAN THEATRE AWARDS 2020**

The Tasmanian Theatre Awards were announced at a dinner at Wrest Point, Hobart on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our heartfelt congratulations to **TRAVIS HENNESSY** who won the award of **Outstanding Male Leading Performance in Community Theatre** for his role as Winston Smith in **1984**.

Congratulations go to the director Megan Jolly and all the cast and production team who contributed to another quality show for the Launceston Players.

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## **LAUNCESTON PLAYERS COMMITTEE 2020**

At the Annual General Meeting on March 11, the following members were elected to serve on the committee for the coming year:

**PRESIDENT** – Grahame Foster      **VICE PRESIDENTS** – Jeff Hockley and Liz Santamaria

**SECRETARY/TREASURER** – Linda Madill \*

**GENERAL COMMITTEE** – Lorraine Andrews, Mark Horner, Dennis Mann, Alan Telford, David Towns

\*As there was no nomination for the role of Treasurer, the position was vacant until the committee agreed at the April meeting (conducted via emails) to combine the role of **Secretary/Treasurer** and Linda Madill was subsequently coopted to take on the position of Treasurer.

Alan Telford will take on the role of **Public Officer** for 2020.

The committee wishes to thank former committee member and Treasurer, **Vanessa Clifford**, for her valuable contribution to the Players from 2018 – 2020.

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