

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I will keep my remarks brief, because a lot of the ground will be covered by our musical director, Andrew Del Riccio, treasurer Rufina Ismail and publicity manager Linda Entwistle.

I think it is fair to say – and I hope Andrew will bear me out – that the orchestra is reaching new benchmarks at almost every concert. We have about forty regular members at any one time (most of whom are paid up, are they not, Rufina?) and are developing a vibrant new community of players from many sources: teachers, students, amateur players of varying experience, but all with expertise and enthusiasm.

Many of the programs have been challenging, but I think it's important that they should continue to be so. One of the joys of playing in a community orchestra, I think, is the opportunity to understand some of the great works of western classical music from the inside, as it were, being part of a huge musical machine. And we have surprised ourselves more than once with our precision and expertise.

So, what have been the highlights of the past year?

From my point of view, it's been very pleasing to see how the orchestra has come together as a unit. It no longer feels as if we are a bunch of separate entities – strings here, woodwinds there, brass, timpani and so on. We're a team. We know each other better, we work better with each other, and I don't see much of the petty rivalry that bedevils many orchestras, whether amateur or professional. I used to feel that the less there was at stake, the more bitter the backbiting was apt to be – you just have to look at societies of poets, who make nothing from literature, to see how that works – but the Mosman Symphony Orchestra is not like that, and I believe we are the better, and play better, for it.

Our next step is clear, and we've already embarked on it. As you know, at the extraordinary general meeting a few weeks ago, we voted to change our constitution in order to enable us to give tax deductions. Tax deductibility is a vital tool in attracting potential sponsors and community supporters. It will also enable us to plan ahead, knowing that our income stream is not entirely dependent on the Mosman Council's subsidy and takings from our concerts – which, as you know, vary according to season and program. We will be able to recompense our key musicians more fully, and

generally to increase our profile within the Mosman area, and perhaps beyond. Application has been a bit tortuous, with a few hoops to clear, but we look forward to achieving tax deductibility status later in the year.

That's all I want to say for now. I would like to give special thanks to the members of the committee – Andrew, Megan, Linda, Brett, Rufina, Bob, Greg, Vicki, Cate – whose contribution has been enormous, and who have helped make my job so much easier. Thank you.