



# Newport Fiddle and Folk Club

Annual Report 2007

[nffc.org.au](http://nffc.org.au)

## NEWPORT FIDDLE AND FOLK CLUB

### ANNUAL REPORT 2007

2007 has been a very successful year for the Newport Fiddle and Folk Club. While we are still a fairly informal organisation, and it is only 3 years since we formed, we have been able to achieve a number of things which enabled us to fulfil our aims which are to::

- *Provide a venue for those interested in locally produced music*
- *Provide opportunities for amateur musicians to get together, play and learn from each other with an emphasis on, but not restricted to, folk music,*
- *Provide opportunities for non musicians to come enjoy and participate in music through listening, singing, and dancing.*

*Beyond the monthly gatherings of the NFFC, the Club has a role to play in the development of young and older musicians through workshops and other planned musical gatherings. The NFFC aims to develop links with sponsors of the Arts to source funding for professional musicians who will be able to provide musical both leadership and inspiration for developing musicians.*

This report seeks to review the activities of the NFFC for 2007 and present initiatives that will be undertaken by the Folk Club in 2008.

#### **Monthly Sessions**

The NFFC has been able to provide a 'venue for those interested in locally produced music' through the monthly music sessions at the Newport Community Hall. The monthly sessions continue to delight and entertain with a wide variety of musical and poetic styles, and with their emphasis on participation for much of the night. 2007 has seen many new faces become regulars at the sessions, and while the nights are advertised from 7.30 – 9.30 pm, the fact that the nights have yet to end before 11pm illustrates the success of the format. There have been a number of players who have taken great leaps of confidence in their performances and this a marvellous outcome of the nights. I suspect that besides the music, the strong sense of community that develops at each session is one of the keys that keeps drawing people back to the NFFC. If we can continue to nurture this emerging culture of musical performance, participation and community the folk club will be able to look forward to a very bright future.

#### **The Newport Bush Orchestra**

In addition to these monthly sessions, those people who have been interested in playing more regularly, and learning Australian Folk Tunes, have joined the Newport Bush Orchestra. The NBO meets weekly for each of the 4 school terms and has attracted an average of 14 members for each term. The 14 people have become a quite a tight musical community and importantly, for the folk club, their term fees enable the NBO to be self-funding. This is a great achievement.

The members of the Bush Orchestra have developed their playing skills and have had a number of opportunities to play for the public, including at the Newport Lakes Bush Dance in March, and at the Colbinabbin Bush Dance in November. The success of the NBO is attributed to the clear need for such a group but also to the hard work and generous teaching of the group's leader Greg O'Leary. We are very fortunate to have Greg as a keen member and supporter of the folk club and it was great pleasure for so many of our members to be able to celebrate Greg's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in October. Many thanks Greg and we look forward to your continued support of the Bush Orchestra and the Folk Club in 2008.

### **Self-Organised Musical Groups**

In addition to the Bush Orchestra, a number of informal groups have sprung up as a direct result of the Folk Club. The Newport Strings (ukes and guitar) is a women's group that has started up a fortnightly session to develop their skills and repertoire and they have also drawn on Greg O'Leary's experience to provide them with tuition and feedback. Another group, the newport gypsy djangos, has also developed from a shared interest in the musical style of Django Reinhart. This group meets weekly and has now developed a repertoire that have enabled them to hit the streets and the fete circuit. A third group has begun a weekly practice schedule at Breizoz in Williamstown and is developing a folk based repertoire. This group uses a PA for each session and so is able to refine their skills with electrical equipment as well as developing their own unique repertoire. Importantly all groups have been a catalyst for a significant number of people to develop their music and performance skills in their area of interest to such an extent that they are able to contribute to the musical life of the community through their performances.

### **Hobsons Bay City Council**

In 2007 the NFFC continued to enjoy the support of the Hobsons Bay City Council. The Council provided a \$2000 grant to enable the NFFC and the Friends of Newport Lakes put on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Newport Lakes Bush Dance in March. This event was again a great success with 200 people attending the event, and some of these people then became regular members of the Folk Club. We are very grateful that the Council is again supporting the Bush Dance in 2008 and we look forward to another great community event.

The Folk Club has also provided music for a number of Council Functions during the year. The Newport Fiddlers played at the Summer Sounds program in Pavey Park, a group of 8 performers played a key role in the entertainment for the Senior Citizens Dinner at the Town Hall in December and the folk club provided music for a number of other events. One result of the collaboration between the Council and the Folk Club was the tour up to the Buloke Shire in December. On December 18 and 19 the Folk Club played at the country towns of Donald and Culgoa. Both of these drought affected towns were very grateful for the support they got from their city cousins and the tour was a great success. The tour to the Buloke Shire was the catalyst for the beginning of a relationship between the NFFC and the Newport Traders Association. The NTA generously paid for the accommodation of the touring musicians. We look forward to continuing to develop a close relationship with the NTA as we expand our activities.

The Council has been very supportive of the NFFC and we also look forward to increased collaboration with the Council on the initiatives that we have proposed for 2008.

### **Outlets Cooperative Community Centre (Outlets)**

The NFFC enjoys great support from Outlets and specifically Therese McKenny-Campbell. Outlets is our Auspicing Body and this has enabled us to explore a number of initiatives which would have been beyond our reach if we did not have this support. Therese was very supportive of the idea of the Folk Club from the beginning and has continued to play a key mentoring role to me and Alison Dew. For this we are very grateful – thank you Therese. As we develop the organisation and seek to be a strong contributor to the Newport area, and to Hobsons Bay we will continue to rely on Therese's assistance. On a very practical level, Outlets have made the NFFC feel very welcome in our use of the Outlets facilities and we look forward to maintaining a very positive relationship with Outlets in 2008.

### **The NFFC Website**

The NFFC is very fortunate to have Alan Davies as our webmaster. Alan has worked throughout the year to make sure that the site is up-to-date. As a result of this the site is an important reference place for members, and has become a source of new members who are able to find us easily. The new domain name [nffc.org.au](http://nffc.org.au) is easy for people to remember and to pass on to anyone who is interested in finding out about the group. Alan has begun using *youtube* links to provide video of events that the group has played at and this has been a great initiative where players get to see themselves perform on the web. Apart from being good fun, it also helps to strengthen the identity of the NFFC, and enables people who are not able to get to our sessions to still keep up with the group. We look forward to seeing the site continue to be a central element of the Folk Club. Many thanks Alan.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR 2007**

One simple measure of the effectiveness of the NFFC in achieving our aims is to list the activities of the club throughout 2007. The list below provides a comprehensive record of most of the events that the group has been involved in throughout the year, including both Regular Activities and One Off Activities

### **REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

#### **Monthly Music Sessions at the Newport Community Hall**

4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the Month - February to November  
7.30 – 11 pm  
Average Attendance – 25 – 30 people  
Special Night in October to Celebrate Greg O’Leary’s 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
These sessions will continue in 2008.

#### **The Newport Bush Orchestra**

The NBO has 4 terms with an average of 12 players  
The group is self-funding through the member fees  
Greg O’Leary, the Conductor, continues to expand the repertoire of the group and refine the tunes that the NBO knows so that they now have 12 dance sets that they can play  
The Group performed at the Newport Lakes Bush Dance, Music on Mason, the Monthly Sessions, and at the Colbinabbin Bush Dance (their first Tour!)  
The group will continue in 2008.

#### **The Newport Strings**

A group of 4 NFFC members have taken up the uke and now have fortnightly sessions where they receive instruction from Greg O’Leary in developing their repertoire and strengthening their performance skills. The value of these sessions has been clear in their increased confidence in their performance at the monthly sessions, and in their ability to take on gigs organised through the folk club. This group will continue in 2008.

**The newport gypsy djangos**

The ngd's formed mid 2007 when a group of members saw they had a shared interest in the music style of Django Reinhart. The group of 7 players has met weekly in Terms 3 and 4 and has developed a repertoire and played at the Spotwood Fete, The Sacred Heart Fete, the Hobsons Bay Film Night, and played on Hall St outside NOSH Café. This group will continue in 2008.

**The Breizoz Group**

2 Members of the folk club (Simon Leverton and Greg Hammond) created a folk venue in the chapel at the back of the Breizoz French Creperie in Williamstown. This monthly venue has seen professional musicians such as Nick Charles and Martin Pearson appear alongside amateur musicians who are able to experience a more formal music venue than the folk club's monthly session. This 'gig' has been the catalyst for Greg Hammond to bring together a number of the folk club members to practice once a week in the venue. This group has been going for the last 4 months of 2007.

**Music at the RSL**

Local Musician Don Gula and his partner Amelia took the initiative to help save the Newport RSL by having monthly musical afternoons at the RSL. The Newport Fiddle and Folk Club has been a strong supporter of this initiative and has provided musicians for most of the sessions at the RSL since this began in June 2007. The NFFC will continue to provide support for this initiative in 2008.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The Newport Fiddle and Folk Club has continued to receive requests to perform music at community events locally and in some cases quite a distance from Newport. The events that the NFFC provided music for are listed below and illustrate the club's value to the community

- January:** Australia Day at Colbinabbin – Newport Convention
- February:** Hobsons Bay City Council Summer Sounds: Pavey Park, Newport Lakes  
Williamstown North Primary School Fete / Stella Maris P.S. Fete  
Newport Bush Orchestra Term 1 (15 people)
- March** MUSIC ON MASON: Anglican Church Garage Sale & Sammy's Bakery – Music and Face Painting in Mason St  
Yarraville Festival
- April** MUSIC ON MASON: Pears Café  
Newport Bush Orchestra Term 2
- May** St Dunstan's Church Fete Camberwell
- June** Music at Breizoz French Creperie begins – every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month
- July** The Substation Open Day – Music from 10 – 2 pm  
Newport Bush Orchestra Term 3
- August:** CARERS Victoria\* 1 – Docklands at the NAB Building  
CARERS Victoria\* 2 – Geelong Wool Museum \*Carers Mingle Forum
- September** Concert for BREACAM – Holy Trinity Church  
'Run For Life' at Newport Athletics Track
- October** Sacred Heart Fete  
Spotswood Fete  
Music and Poetry for the Senior Citizens Discussion Group (first session)  
Newport Bush Orchestra Term 4
- November** Old Laverton Primary School Community Centre Open Day  
Colbinabbin Drought Relief Bush Dance
- December** Music and Poetry for the Senior Citizens Discussion Group (final session)  
Williamstown Town Hall – Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch  
MUSIC ON HALL – NOSH CAFÉ  
MUSIC ON MASON – SAMMY'S BAKERY  
Outlets Neighbourhood House Christmas Party at Paine Reserve  
Hobsons Bay P.S. Outdoor Film Night  
Buloke Shire / Hobsons Bay Collaboration –  
- Music for the Donald Christmas Party and the Culgoa Shire Bush Dance  
Church of Christ Christmas Festival in Douglas Parade  
Yarraville Produce Market – Christmas Market

## **INITIATIVES FOR 2008**

After such a successful 2007 it is necessary to reset our goals for 2008 so that the group will continue to be vibrant and play a strong role in the cultural life of Newport and the City of Hobsons Bay. The following

### **1. CONTINUE WHAT IS WORKING**

2008 will see the Folk Club maintain its regular **Monthly Sessions** on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month from February to November. The dates for these have already been included on the online Calandar on our website.

The **Newport Bush Orchestra** will resume in 2008. The first term will be spent preparing for the Newport Lakes Bush Dance and then the group will continue to develop both their repertoire and their performance skills under the guidance of Greg O'Leary.

#### **Term Dates for the NBO**

- 1) Term 1: Monday Feb 4 to Monday March 17  
6 Weeks (no session after the Bush Dance – March 10)  
Cost: \$50
- 2) Term 2: Monday April 14 to Monday June 9  
9 Weeks  
Terms Fees: \$80
- 3) Term 3: Monday July 21 to Monday September 15  
9 Weeks  
Term Fees: \$80
- 4) Term 4: Monday October 13 to Monday December 9  
9 Weeks  
Term Fees: \$80

### **2. NEWPORT LAKES BUSH DANCE**

The NFFC received a Grant from the Hobsons Bay City Council (Arts and Culture) for \$2000 to put on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Newport Lakes Bush Dance. Friends of Newport Lakes are pleased to join with us for this event which is included as part of both the Bayside Festival and the Hobsons Bay Summer Sounds Series. Planning will begin with a meeting with the Friends of Newport Lakes on January 30.

The Bush Dance will take place on Sunday, March 9 in the Amphitheatre of the Newport Lakes Reserve from 4.30 – 7.30 pm. All are welcome and admission to the event is free.

### **3. MUSIC WORKSHOPS**

The NFFC received a Community Development Grant from the Hobsons Bay City Council for \$2000 to run 5 workshops in 2008. It is proposed to run the following sessions

- a. Gypsy Guitar – Dave Krycer has been approached to run this session  
(tentative date Saturday April 12, 1 – 5 pm)
- b. Violin to Fiddle Workshop – Helen O'Shea has been approached to run this session
- c. Getting the Best out of Your PA – Don Gula has been approached to run this session

- d. Doing the Uke – Shirley Billing or / Tony Leonard would be suitable to run this workshop. We will explore the best option in the near future.
- e. Getting the Best out of Your Voice – We are currently looking for possible facilitators to run this workshop

#### 4. The Aims of the Session would be to

Develop People's Skills

Strengthen sense of community

Reinforce the Role of Newport (and the NFFC) as a centre for Music in Melbourne

Draw more members to the Folk Club

Provide Members with Value for their Membership

#### Proposed Format of the Workshops

- 4 hour session

- Instructor to provide support materials and help in the promotion of the session – this can be posted on our website

- Leave the session with a limited number of tunes for practice which will then become part of the NFFC repertoire

#### Cost Structure for the Session

Session Fees: Members \$20, Non-members \$25

Instructor: \$300

Hall Hire (community Centre) \$10 + \$30 for tea / coffee

This will mean the break even point is 15 people – if we break even then we are able to fund further workshops (and so it becomes self funding)

#### Marketing – the Big Challenge

The big challenge for the committee will be to market the workshops to the widest possible audience of people and groups who might be interested in participating in these workshops.

This is an area for consideration of the committee

#### Managing the Workshops

Ideally a member of the committee would be able to take an active role in running one of the workshops to spread the load of organisation. To be successful the sessions, and the facilitators will need to have the support of the committee so that things run smoothly and that any problems that arise (as they inevitably will) can be easily resolved. This is something to be discussed by the committee. \_

## 5. **MEMBERSHIP**

It is proposed that we invite people to formally join the NFFC through a membership. The model for membership is taken from the Black Rose Acoustic Society in Colorado (blackroseacoustic.com) as this is a group that seems to have a similar ethos to the NFFC but is further down the track from us (they started about 1994) .

Individual Membership - \$20, Family Membership, \$25.

Member benefits would include reduced admission to club nights (\$3), reduced admission to workshops (\$20 instead of \$25) and invitations to special club nights (eg 3 private functions per year). Members could also be able to have their picture and brief bio included on nffc.org.au

### Aim of the Membership

Strengthen the sense of identity of the NFFC  
Provide definition of the strength of the club in submissions  
Provide a source of income for the club

## **6. NEWPORT FIDDLE AND FOLK FESTIVAL**

It is proposed that the NFFC have a one day festival in July this year. The council (Janet Dawes – Arts and Leisure, and Daryl Warren – Tourism and Business Development) are supportive of the Festival and the mid-year timing.

A festival this year could draw together the various elements of the club (sessions, instructional sessions, Music on Mason / Hall) and have a major event (Bush Dance) as the centre piece. In the spirit of the NFFC, it would be valuable to invite people from other folk clubs around Victoria to come and join us so that the emphasis would be on participation rather than passive entertainment. While we have ambitions of a big Folk Festival in the future our key to success would be to start small and evolve slowly. The committee will need to begin to work on the Folk Festival in February so that it can be well organised and well attended.

## **7. MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN LINKS WITH COUNTRY VICTORIA**

The folk club has been successful in establishing links with Central Victoria (Colbinabbin) and the Buloke Shire (Donald and Culgoa). Apart from providing these areas with music at their community events, they also provide another set of performance opportunities for the musicians of the NFFC. It would be useful to maintain these links and continue to develop them in 2008. It is worth noting that our first event for 2008 is celebrating Australia Day in Colbinabbin.

## **8. INCORPORATION**

It is proposed that the NFFC work towards incorporation in the first half of the year. This will require us to develop a more formal meeting and reporting structure, and the election of office bearers in the early part of the year. It is a natural part of the evolution of the NFFC and will ensure that we are able to be viable and transparent as an organisation.

## **9. MARKETING**

One of the areas that will need to be developed is our marketing of the NFFC and its various activities. Last year we were quite successful in getting into the local newspapers (and the TV) and this helped to raise the profile of the club. If we are going to develop the folk club, and have a successful folk festival each year, we will need to continue to find ways to market the folk club to the local area and also to the broader community of folk music inclined people. This is something the committee could discuss and ideally identify someone on the committee to be responsible for marketing.

The Newport Fiddle and Folk Club has the opportunity to grow into a really strong organisation that supports the development of a music culture in this Newport. The initiatives all require considerable hard work on the part of the committee and the members of the Folk Club. I would like to thank the Committee for their support of the Folk Club over the last 12 months and I would be very pleased if they are able to continue in the support of the Folk Club. I would particularly like to thank Alison Dew who, as Secretary and Treasurer of the Folk Club works particularly hard to make sure that things run smoothly, ensures that we have enough cash to survive, and that we are able to enjoy the music and the sense of community that the folk club brings. Thanks Alison.

I look forward to a very successful year for the NFFC in 2008. I hope you come along for some of the sessions and take the opportunity to be involved in the events that we are organising and contributing to this year. I would also invite you to become a member of the Newport Fiddle and Folk Club and help the Club become a significant contributor to the cultural life of this particular part of the universe.

Michael Stewart  
President

## The Newport Fiddle and Folk Club Committee

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