



For more than 25 years, the Friends of the Academy have been assisting students at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

The small but hard working Committee ensures students continue to directly receive the benefits of the Friends' fundraising efforts and pastoral care.

The help provided by the Friends Committee on behalf of the membership takes many forms, including individual assistance grants for students, a 'meet and greet' service for new interstate or country students arriving in Perth without local contacts, opportunities to interact with their audiences, the annual new students' barbecue and entertainment evening, ongoing recognition of high achievers after they leave the Academy, and equipment for WAAPA that is beyond its budget.

Financial grants are provided mainly to supplement travel and accommodation for final year students undertaking work experience secondments around Australia and overseas.

In addition to individual grants of up to \$500 each, and group grants of \$15,000, the Friends provide \$10,000 each year to help fund the annual Showcase tour that sees final year Musical Theatre and Theatre students demonstrating their talent for promoters and agents in Sydney and Melbourne.

While annual membership fees from the more than 1,000 members of the Friends help provide student assistance, most of the money to pay for these benefits is generated from fundraising each year.

Fundraising activities include Friends performances, hosting behind-the-scenes tours of the Academy, and providing food and drink at the Academy's annual Open Day.

The Friends of the Academy benefit financially from selected student performances each semester. The performances are billed as special 'Friends Events' and we rely heavily on members of the Friends and the general public to support these shows because we receive the net takings from ticket sales. This is one of the Friends' major sources of income.

Many new members don't realise that by supporting these events they will not only still receive discounted tickets but also be able to share the complimentary light refreshments after the show, and to meet and chat with the cast and staff.

The resultant income from these events has meant that, in addition to student grants, the Friends have been able to provide the furniture and kitchen equipment for the student Green Room, a new industrial dishwasher for the foyer bar, the lighting hoist for the theatres, a high-tech portable sound and lighting desk, a new electronic keyboard, a drum kit, and assistance in purchasing major musical instruments.

All these things have only been possible with the support and expansion of the Friends' membership base.



What are Friends for? 1



What are Friends for?

Continued...

Friends of the Academy activities extend well beyond fundraising.

Support is provided, particularly for students new to Western Australia, including having a Committee member meet them at the train station or airport on arrival, providing transport, and helping them settle into their new accommodation. In some emergency circumstances, further assistance is offered.

During the past few years, we've hosted the now hugely popular student barbecue and entertainment evening held each first semester to welcome new students and renew friendships with those from the previous year.

This annual occasion was conceived as a means for the student body to integrate and interact across departmental boundaries.

In 2008, the Committee embarked on two new special support projects, with the Friends giving annual cash grants to Aboriginal Theatre students and Link Dance Company.

The first recognises the fact that many of the young students in the Aboriginal Theatre course, many living away from home for the first time, need support in areas other than their scholastic endeavours.

The Friends therefore provide grants each year for incidental expenses, available quickly to help in time of need.

The second support project helps fund Link Dance Company, a WAAPA graduate pre-professional dance company that helps dancers transit from student to professional.

The Friends grant is used as seed capital to assist in mounting performances.

However, no matter how much we do, there's always more that could be done to help WAAPA students.

In all our endeavours, we are really blessed to have such staunch, supportive Friends of the Academy members.

So, why do people become Friends of the Academy?

Our last membership survey provided the answers to this question. A very high proportion of respondents indicated a strong affinity with the objects of the Friends and the work of the Academy, with most regarding membership as a privilege and a pleasure not taken for granted.

The three main reasons given for membership were (in order) they enjoyed supporting young people developing a career in the arts; they had a keen personal interest in the arts; and they appreciated tickets at special Friends prices.

Members also enjoyed mingling and talking with students and staff at the special functions which follow Friends' performances, where complimentary wine and refreshments are usually provided.

However, none of this work would be possible without the support of WAAPA faculty and administrative staff. In particular, we are grateful to Director Julie Warn (and her predecessors, of course), the Heads of Department and senior administration staff who provide the Committee with considerable logistical help and encouragement.



Want to know more?

Kevin Button - Chairman

0411 072 210 or kevin@bellamy.com.au

Kevin Payne - Secretary

0407 121 123 or kevin.payne@antsoft.com.au