



BAY of Plenty Blues Club Incorporated

2017 AGM – PRESIDENTS REPORT

Another 12 months have flown by and we find ourselves again at the AGM here today.

To try and sum up this year in a few words is certainly no mean feat but without turning this into a full blown lecture I will now try and give an overview of what has been an interesting, challenging yet fun and in many aspects a fulfilling year.

First and foremost I would like to thank the committee from the bottom of my heart. Everyone has put their heart and soul into the club this year and it goes without saying that nothing would have been possible without all the time freely given by all to get the club back on track after a period of uncertainty in regards to changing venues for the club nights and the big question around “what do we do with the festival” given it was not held in the 2016 year.

Thanks to Mike and his dedication in taking over the photography and particularly in producing the handmade custom cigar box guitar for auction at the festival. Thanks Noel for his continued unerring support of the club in which without him holding the club nights would be a whole lot more difficult given he is the one who stores and transports all the gear and at the end of the day “makes things happen” from a technical and logistical point of view – and let’s not forget from a financial angle to when providing professional services to the club. Another unerring supporter – Rob Gilles – who I’m sure everyone wishes all the best and pray that his current treatment for his health issues will see him able to be a part of our little community for many years to come yet. Peri, thanks to you for your brilliant marshalling, willingness to play and support anyone who takes the stage and it goes without saying, always being there for the set up and breakdown of the equipment on all the club nights – a massive contribution. And finally, our three “club mothers” without whose support none of this would have been possible.

Cheryl, Sue and Di, I can’t thank you enough for what you have contributed this year. The time and effort you three have given to the club is nothing short of outstanding. I unfortunately don’t have the luxury of being able to do a lot of club business during business hours thanks to the demands placed on me by my position. So this is where these three have really been what I consider to be the ones essentially carrying out many of the tasks required to keep the club afloat especially in regards to the organising of the Blues Festival. In my opinion I could write an essay on the value these members have added to the committee and club and I still would not be anything close to capturing it all. Cheryl, your input will be sorely missed and while I am disappointed that you have given your resignation I also fully understand why this has come about and wish you well in whatever pursuits

you take on in the future. There will always be a seat here for you should you decide to come back in the future— I think that goes without saying.

Without going too much into the details the first few months were very challenging in respects to what could only amount to a level of in-fighting within the committee that only served to set us all back in achieving goals and certainly in regards to facilitating a harmonious atmosphere that promoted a peaceful working environment. I will not dwell on this as although it did eventually sort itself out it was not without outcomes that anyone would necessarily deem to be constructive or indeed in some respects fair. None the less since that time the working relationship within the committee has been much more productive and cooperative.

I think it's fair to say the biggest project we took on this year was the Blues Festival at Queen's Birthday Weekend. As we are all aware this did not take place in 2016 and it was based on what I brought up at a meeting in 2015 about how there was no benefit financially to the club given all the time and effort required to produce the festival and the returns the club wasn't receiving. As a committee we took on the task of trying to turn the festival around to work more in our favour – the biggest risk of course was having ticketed events in the attempt to bring more financial reward to the club. I think in the final analysis the club may not actually be much further ahead than on previous years and for that I am willing to take full responsibility. But as it always seems as in previous years, once again the festival was almost in an experimental setting in an attempt to provide higher financial rewards for the club. We do have difficult barriers to overcome in many facets. We do not receive any support to speak of from our local council and it does not look this will change any time soon as we unfortunately cannot fit a set of pedals or provide it in a powdered form for 5 tons of "just add water" blues music. While we know and acknowledge that we do have our supporters on Eat Streat the same cannot be said for all vendors down there yet I can't go past the fact that in terms of holding a public event it remains the ideal council provided place yet it feels as though we have been given a hammer but asked not to hit any nails with it. None the less it may be that there are developments happening in this space given a recent meeting of Eat Streat vendors and a call that was placed to Cheryl during that meeting from a council representative. It sounds like they may be changing their tune but we will see what develops in that space.

Funding as usual also presents on going difficulties as it was a close call even up to 2 weeks prior to the festival – not a situation the club hasn't been in before but one that has the potential to cause more stress than is necessary or needed on those trying to put this event on. As this has been my area of responsibility in previous years, and one I am still willing to take on, my goal next time around is to see how this cannot be modified to ensure we don't find ourselves in this position again. But just to try and put a positive spin on this bone of contention and an example of on-going developments, Creative NZ who actually turned us down for funding this time around have been in contact with me and want to meet up in regards to how they could fund us. I will be meeting with them at the end of this month but more about that in I guess a normal committee meeting. I guess what I am saying in the final breakdown is that while this year seemed to be another restart for the festival it seems that how it is delivered can be worked on some more and I remain optimistic that with a process of continual development and tweaking the Rotorua Blues Festival an still be the pre-eminent Queen's Birthday destination for blues music in the country.

The jam nights have also become much more successful since moving to our new base at the Lakeside Café. Norma and Colin really have been fantastic in their support and effort in facilitating us and their venue has proven to be a great place that people can enjoy and relax in. Let's not forget the sound quality that is possible in that venue is also a great asset. Since being homed there we have numbers consistently grow and this is proven by our door takings, raffle ticket sales, and the variety of faces we are seeing come through the door. At least for now this is one aspect that does not need revisiting – I hope we can all agree on that. As a result too the club is starting to take on a few more memberships so that is only good for us. The impact and effectiveness of concentration on our social media channels has also been much more evident this year and is proof positive that the club is being marketed far beyond what was previously achieved.

I must also make mention of thanks to those people that have helped this year in matters pertaining to the club who are not part of the committee as such. Crystal McMillan, thanks to you for your advice and help at the door on jam nights, Rina Joy for your expertise in re-programming our website which is now ready for the go button to be hit, and all the friends and supports of the club like Marion Forbes and all the parents of our former youth band "Running Mint" who are now a band in their own right, Jimmy Murray, Stew Martin, Macca and all those who we see on jam nights on a regular basis.

I believe the future is bright with on-going development and unrealised potentials and with your on-going support for the club I'm sure that many more things are achievable. Once again, I thank you all.