



Title: Magical Musical Mondays with Mahalia

Category: Arts & Culture

Club Name: Bowral Bowling Club

Entrant: Tony Dunn

- 1. Provide an outline of the program, project or cause that addresses each of the following aspects:**
 - a. The program/project/cause objectives**
 - b. The support the club provided, i.e. was it financial, in-kind, staff volunteers or use of club facilities?**
 - c. A timeline of activities/events**
 - d. Any developments made since implementation (for example: if the support spans multiple years, how has the program grown? Will the club provide support again? Will the program be enhanced in the future?)**

Bowral Bowling Club is a small country club in the Southern Highlands, 100km from Sydney serving a population of 13,000 and is an ideal weekend getaway. We have a vision to be the best venue for music, sports and events and a meeting place for families and friends.

We have usually closed on Mondays as it was a low trading day. During 2020 and 2021 performers and promoters of live music suffered during the Covid lockdowns with limits on venue attendances and difficulties for people leaving their local government areas. We saw an opportunity to provide local artists a venue to perform to local crowds and, within social distancing restrictions, a dedicated evening for small groups to experience excellent music, good food and good company in an intimate seated space within the club.

We partnered with the music promotor, Eclectic Sounds, and were able to attract Mahalia Barnes to be an artist in residence performing monthly on Mondays from September 2020. Mahalia would bring local support acts to open her show and members of her famous family would make occasional guest appearances !

The club built a stage, purchased sound equipment and repurposed a storeroom into a green room for the performers and created an intimate space with individual tables for patrons whilst adhering to social distancing requirements. Patrons could choose meals on-line as a dinner and show package, as well as purchasing on the night. Board members managed the door checking QR check-in, tickets, vaccination certificates and introducing new patrons to the facilities of the club.

Patrons and performers enjoyed the shows based on their social media posts and they became a monthly event selling out quickly, the intimacy of having the club to themselves and enjoying live music and interacting with the performers saw its popularity grow.



Many other artists have joined us at the club including Tim Freedman from The Whitlams, Felicity Urquhart, Steve Kilby from The Church, Ray Thistlethwaite from Thirsty Merc and The Black Sorrows. In addition in Nov 2021 we partnered with the local community radio station 2ST to have our first Home Grown music night with three local bands and performers highlight a Saturday night. At the same time we started the Sunday Sessions where local performers play on Sunday afternoons for members and guests. Unfortunately the August 2021 Covid lockdown precluded us from hosting the Southern Highlands Choir concert but we are hopeful for 2022.

We also support a local ukulele group practice in their own private space every Tuesday night for free to provide a social outlet for them to meet, enjoy their own company and make music.

As the club was built in the 1950's we have had to be innovative and adapt our space to create a music venue. We have repurposed our TAB area into general seating with high table and chairs at the back of the room to give everyone a great view as well as creating a communal table seating 12 with a pool table cover. We are planning to enhance the space with better lighting and more bathroom facilities for our female patrons. Other planned enhancements is to improve the outside music facilities to host music on the green events utilising our multipurpose synthetic surface.

2. Provide a brief insight into why this program, project or cause was supported by the club. In your answer, summarise:

- a. How the project, program or cause was first presented to the club. For example, did a member present it to the Board or Executive team, was it part of a ClubGRANTS submission, did it come from a local business or the community based on a need, was a survey conducted to identify areas of community need, etc.**
- b. Why it was important to the club to support this community need.**

This programme was supported because it aligned with our vision of striving to be the best local venue for music and with one of our five key strategies to open new markets and provide more events for our community.

Although our club had hosted music events before this programme was different as the Club took a more active role in the event. Previously we were passive providing the space, food and beverages. The Board and management reviewed these processes and found many areas of improvement. We worked with the promotor to provide preordered meals with on line ticket booking. This allowed our kitchen staff to provide a set menu with improved efficiency of food preparation and ordering. We allowed on site ordering with the same menu which provided timeliness of meals to be consumed before the performer started which minimised disruption to patrons and performers.

The Club took over table allocation and confirmation of food orders to minimise order omissions and errors and to allow all meals arrive together when all patrons had arrived at their table. We have



received positive feedback for our events organisation and our coordination with the kitchen. Having Board members doing this also allows a friendly and welcoming face explaining the club layout to new visitors and guests.

Music and live entertainment provide meeting places for communities, families and friends and is essential for uplifting spirits and ones mental health during periods of isolation. The Club is proud to support local talent whether that is arts or sports and to provide more services for our community, members and their guests. All successful artists start their careers locally and we are proud to support local artists as both support acts for Mahalia Barnes, on the Home Grown evening and the Sunday Sessions. Local talent now have a space to perform with a professional stage, sound and music system and social media advertising linked to the clubs website, Facebook and Instagram pages.

3. Provide an outline of the positive impact the club's contribution had on the community.

Our expanding music programme meets our vision to be the best local venue for live music and events and a meeting place for families and friends. This programme is not in isolation but aligns with our other new programmes we have commenced during 2020 and 2021 such as becoming the new home for the Bowral Farmers Markets and creating purpose built indoor and outdoor play areas for children to provide more services for families and actively promoting the club on social media outlets. It has added a vibrancy to our Club, and increased our marketability with new members, Instagram followers from 100 to 1000 and a doubling of friends on Facebook to over 1600. This has attracted local businesses keen to sponsor our lawn bowling sides. We were awarded Best Club / Pub in the Southern Highlands in 2020 and were a finalist in the Clubs NSW 2020 Club of the Year.

4. Add any credits here (optional).

Tony Dunn - General Manager

Kate Dunn - Events Coordinator

Stephen Della- Chairman

Isis Hunt - Food and Beverage Manager

Scott Gibson - Music promoter

5. Supporting material:

- *To request copies of the supporting documents, please email events@clubsnsw.com.au*