

WILLIAMSTOWN FILM SOCIETY

www.williamstown-film-society.org

Last Wednesday of the month, 7:30pm at the Council Chamber,
Williamstown Town Hall, Ferguson Street, Williamstown, 3016



AGM

29th November 2023

President's Report

We've had a great year sharing the watching of a diverse program of films!

I will begin with a brief explanation of the rescheduling of this AGM from its usual month of October to November, for this year only. We had an offer we couldn't refuse. Producer/Director Gus Berger the creative force behind our October film *The Lost City of Melbourne* was able to attend our screening and participate in a Q&A. This was a rare opportunity and we wanted to allow Gus plenty of time with us and something had to give – we moved the AGM. It was worth it. We had a terrific turnout of 50 in attendance; Gus was a hit and had a wonderful time; we had our first ever 5 out of 5 Starbox score.

All screenings have taken place in the Council Chamber of the Williamstown Town Hall. Nearly everyone finds the venue comfortable, easy to access, warm in the colder months and the air con makes it cooler in the warmer months (even if it is a little loud). A big thankyou to the Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC) staff and the team of the Venues Department for all their help and assistance with screenings, in particular those on duty at the town hall on our regular Wednesday nights. They have been courteous and only too keen to help in any way that they can. It was appreciated by our membership.

After our January 2023 screening I was contacted by the Venues Department of HBCC. The main thrust of the short phone call was that the WFS was to pay a venue hire fee each month from the beginning of the new financial year in July. With such a long association between the Council and WFS, our disappointment with the suddenness and bluntness of this news was made clear in a further phone call. Since then, the matter has not been raised. We will simply wait and see. We are prepared.

Our members and their guests (and there have been many) have loved our films this year, with five films scoring 4 or better on the FVFS Starbox rating system – *The Drover's Wife*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Book Thief*, *Golden Voices* and *The Lost city of Melbourne*. And the rest were not far behind. That is a very good strike rate. The committee need to be congratulated on their programming. Selecting the films and creating a program for the year takes a great deal of juggling and fine adjustment to get the flow and balance right and we never let our audience off completely scot-free by giving them exactly what they want. And it is quite apparent that our members like a challenging film, if it is made well.

We still encourage the use of masks and pre-booking has continued. In fact, it has been enormously helpful to know ahead of time the numbers attending as it makes life a little easier for our new catering roster. Long time member Annie Link offered to produce and manage a roster of volunteers to spread the load when it comes to treats to have with cuppas. It turned out to be a lot of fun and was well supported. Tea and coffee facilities were once again supplied by council and greatly appreciated.

Attendances have increased with totals hovering in the high 30s and low 40s. Our peak audience of 44 occurred in May, *Carmen Jones*, and again in August, *The Girl Can't Help It*, two American films

from the 1950s which featured music – opera and rock & roll. This peak was overtaken by our October screening of *The Lost City of Melbourne*, with an audience of 50.

We continued our lucky door prizes. A bit of simple fun to spice up our break for a cuppa or a nice way to round out the evening.

We have gained many new members via the monthly posters displayed in the City of Hobsons Bay libraries. A simple strategy which could not have happened without the support of local state member, Melissa Horne M.P., and the staff in her office, who very generously do all of our printing.

Once again, the WFS website has proved to be a valuable resource. We have been 'found' online resulting in new memberships. In addition, my weekly email, the Wednesday Update, is responsible for jogging the memories of many as the final Wednesday of the month draws near. Truth be known I really enjoy sending them and take great delight in the brief electronic exchanges which we share. Therese and I have heard about some excellent movies and TV from our members, in response to our recommendations.

A very special event was held on the 19th April at Pirates Tavern on the Williamstown foreshore. In conjunction with Seaworks, Pirates Tavern and Hobsons Bay City Council, the WFS presented a program entitled Hobsons Bay Heritage on Screen: A Taste. A black and white episode of the classic Melbourne crime series *Homicide*, featuring the Gellibrand Pile Light and a VCA short film entitled *The Don of Trugo*. Guest speakers, a fog horn blast and the chance to play trugo, albeit on fake grass, attracted more than 100 people to the Tavern and a fabulous night was had by all.

In concluding this report, I would like to thank a few people and the organisations they represent.

It never hurts to repeat thanks but I will. Thank you to Mr Marcus Cassidy-Anderson, Garth Sheridan from Venues Department of the Hobson's Bay City Council for their assistance in setting up for our Wednesday screenings and also with the loan of equipment for our Heritage event at Pirate's Tavern.

Thank you to the FVFS for their advice and support in the day-to-day running of a film society. Their information days are invaluable and fun with the added bonus of networking.

Thank you to the WFS Committee – Barbara Sloan, Marilyn McIntyre, Ross Dufty, Pat Duncan, Andrew Radwadowski, Maria Kouppas (secretary), Dimi Simeonidis (treasurer) and Jack Neill (projectionist). We are a good committee, work well together and step in when a need is there. Our programming get-togethers are always great fun. A big thank you to Allan Park who responded to our call for help. He is keen to work with Dimi and has nominated to join the committee.

Finally, thank you to our wonderful members. Recently, when reminding members to do their Starbox rating after a screening I made the mistake of using the phrase 'show how much you liked it'. It was quickly pointed out that the words 'like' and 'enjoy' are not appropriate for some films because they may make us uncomfortable, forcing us to put ourselves in the shoes of others for a short time. However, this type of film can still be appreciated for the skills involved in the telling of the story. This response shows just how great our members are and I'll show my appreciation by giving them 5 stars.

Keep turning up; we'll still be here.

Michael Slee

President

Williamstown Film society

5th November 2022