



Victorian State Concert Orchestra

Background:

The October-December 2022 floods impacted communities across the Gannawarra Shire. As part of flood recovery activities, a range of events and programs supported by Flood Recovery Funding through the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee were delivered. Council, through its Creative Gannawarra team, partnered with the Kerang Music Society to plan and deliver an event by the Victorian State Concert Orchestra (VSCO) in Kerang.

The VSCO is renowned for iconic programming, entertaining Victorians of all ages, with various tastes, for nearly 100 years. The VSCO is the longest existing orchestra in Australia. The VSCO's ongoing purpose is to provide a free service to the people of Victoria, especially to those in rural and regional areas that suffer from natural disasters and need a bit of high quality, light entertainment that's accessible and affordable as well as enjoyable.

Part of the appeal to bring the VSCO to Kerang was there was no expensive fee associated with the performance. Being a small rural Council, we have limited budget available to support concerts with such a large performance crew.

The performance was directed by acclaimed ABC Orchestra conductor, Gerald Keuneman and featured lyric soprano Veronica Iredale and tenor Nicholas Matters. The 50-piece orchestra performed various pieces from orchestras and musicals. Keuneman and the soloists provided a generous and insightful background to each item and there were many highlights.

The event was held on Sunday 2 June 2024 at the Kerang Memorial Hall. It was well attended by the community and was a resounding success. The afternoon was a celebration of fine music for the Gannawarra community.



Event aims:

- For Council and Kerang Music Society to work collaboratively to deliver a performance by the Victorian State Concert Orchestra (VSCO) in Kerang.
- Facilitate a visit of the VSCO to broaden cultural experiences to Gannawarra residents.
- Provide an opportunity for the community to attend a high quality performance locally at a very low ticket price of \$10.
- Support a number of local hospitality businesses.

What did the event deliver?

- High quality, accessible and affordable entertainment, in a regional area.
- Over 220 people (including a number of children under 16) attended the event in the Kerang Memorial Hall.
- Entertainment for attendees from Kerang and district, Cohuna, Koondrook, Barham, Lake Boga, Swan Hill and a few visitors from Queensland and WA.
- Afternoon tea was provided for the attendees and performers during the intermission.
- A wonderful opportunity for members of the Kerang Music Society to work closely with the VSCO members both prior to the event and on the day.
- 38 attendees completed the post event survey.



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Feedback (quotes from survey):

- It's been a highlight of many people's discussions. It certainly was a highlight to be there last Sunday. Opportunities like that don't come our way too often, but this one was special to many people.
- I took residents from Northaven and they too will definitely attend if the Orchestra were to perform again - they had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and are still talking about it days later.
- A brilliant event that was well organised and delivered to a high standard. Well done.
- Loved the Soprano and Tenor singers. Brought tears to the eyes of many.
- It was so great to get an artistic event in town and even more gratifying to see it so well attended. The orchestra and performers seemed to enjoy the day as much as the audience. Well done to everyone involved, at whatever level!
- It was wonderful and very beneficial to have such an outstanding performance from the Victorian State Orchestra come and perform at our small Country town. The music and the soloists were amazing with the Conductor being very interactive. A very enjoyable afternoon of entertainment with the added bonus of a magnificent afternoon tea. Thank you to everyone who was involved with the preparations and performance, all is greatly appreciated.
- Compliments to everyone involved - the organisers - the volunteers - the performers - it was perfect.
- Thankyou - Many of the elderly loved the afternoon of beautiful talent. Many unable to travel were so appreciative of the opportunity locally. Great work Gannawarra!!
- It was wonderful. Thanks to all who made this event possible.



What did the event achieve?

- 97% of survey respondents advised that the entertainment choice was what attracted them to attend.
- 87% of those surveyed appreciated the value for money.
- 74% found the event to be extremely organised, with the remaining 26% stating it was very organised.
- A common response from survey respondents was to request more of this type of event.
- 100% of respondents said that they would attend a VSCO event again if it returned to Gannawarra.
- An economic benefit to multiple local hospitality businesses.

Key Learnings:

- Partnership between Council and Kerang Music Society worked well to plan, promote and deliver the event.
- Excellent planning and communication prior to the event was beneficial to ensure smooth running of the event on the day.
- Worthwhile having a professional photographer at the event.
- Feedback was sought via an emailed survey after the event. Unfortunately, this survey only reached about 25% of the attendees as an email address was not provided for all ticket sale transactions. For future events, a survey will be available via QR code for people to provide feedback immediately after the event.
- Timing of the event (early winter and during the day) was ideal.



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