



Friends of the Auburn Tower Newsletter

Grant Funding Success



We are delighted to announce that we have been successful in obtaining grant funding of \$10,000 towards the costs of two new projects:

- An acoustic study of the church auditorium
- Engagement of a concert facilitator.

Ever since its opening in 1889, it has been perceived wisdom that the Auburn auditorium has excellent acoustics, but this has never been independently tested or quantified. With

funding from the Peggy and Leslie Cranbourne Foundation, we are able to engage the services of local acoustic consultant Mark Hanson to carry out a test of the auditorium's response to different frequencies of sound, and to produce a report identifying any ways in which the acoustics might be made even better.

Following the encouragement of guest speaker Peter Tregear at our 2024 AGM, the Committee resolved to explore ways to increase the usage of the auditorium for concerts, rehearsals and recording. Musician Tom Grayden has been engaged, initially to co-ordinate the next Concert Under the Tower (see page 2); and then, subject to funding, to promote the auditorium to a wider audience. With funding from the Cranbourne Foundation, we are now able to pay Tom to carry out this work on a part-time contract basis. Armed with the acoustic report, Tom will work to promote both our own concerts and usage by outside groups.

The Friends' membership is again coming up for Annual Renewal. Check your inboxes in the next week or so. All details to renew electronically will be on the invoice from our Treasurer, Jane. We do prefer renewal via Direct Debit but, of course, if you prefer to pay by cheque our Exec Officer will brave the Winter chill to check the Post Office box occasionally.

Also coming up is the Friends AGM. Each year, we find an interesting and informative speaker to present on a topic related to the cultural history or environment of Melbourne and Victoria. This year's speaker is architect, **Virginia Ross**. Please come along and bring your friends to what promises to be a very interesting evening. An introduction to Virginia can be found on Page 3 of this newsletter.

Winter 2025

**Friends of the Auburn
Tower Inc**

PO Box 583

HAWTHORN BC 3122

 www.auburntowerfriends.org.au

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**The Committee of the
Friends of the Auburn
Tower Inc.**

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Secretary: Alan Chuck

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Daphne Arthur

Avril McHugh

Executive Officer:

Cheryl Pisterman

execofficer@

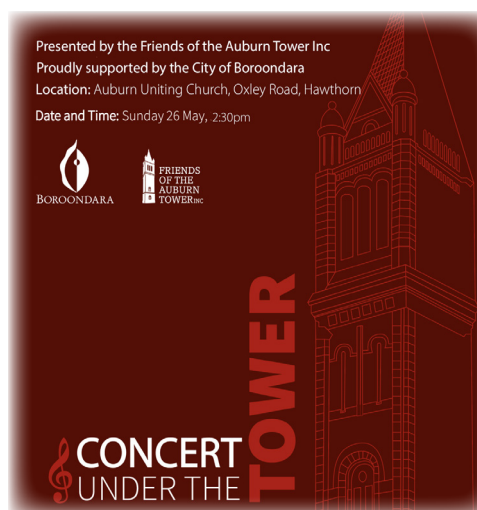
auburntowerfriends.org.au

Contact: 0419 757866

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Concert Under the Tower 2025



Members will recall that the Friends received a grant under the City of Boroondara's Triennial Grants Program to run a series of concerts in the church and provide performance opportunities for local artists who had been finalists in the Boroondara Eisteddfod. The first such concert was held in May 2024. The experience of mounting that concert led us to approach the Council to amend the terms of the grant so as to combine the 2025 and 2026 concerts into a single event. This the Council has agreed to do, and the combined concert will be held on **Sunday afternoon, 23 November 2025.**

With the grant funding, we have engaged Tom Grayden to plan and co-ordinate the concert. Full details will be released as they come to hand, but, in the meantime, please keep the date free.

Who is Thomas Grayden?



Tom Grayden

Tom Grayden is an arts administrator, chaplain and trombonist, who is passionate about fostering the kind of environments where everyone can feel safe and empowered to express their art in their own way. Tom has experience across a wide variety of areas, from orchestral playing to swimming coaching, and loves finding new ways to bring his eclectic skillset together in every project he works on. He is currently working as the first ever chaplain at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, alongside his work as a private trombone teacher. Tom is excited about the opportunity the 2025 *Concert Under the Tower* presents to work alongside local emerging artists, giving them not only a paid performance opportunity, but also offering them a chance to collaborate

with other early-career artists in curating a concert experience. Outside of the world of music, Tom spends his time honing his food growing skills, and spends as much time as possible in the bush or the ocean.

Peskanov and Friends



Auburn Uniting Church presents international pianist **Alexander Peskanov** in a return visit to Auburn: **Sunday 17 August at 5.00pm.** He will be joined by associate artists **Coady Green**, piano, and his wife **Lu Ann Peskanov**, flute, in a programme for solo piano, piano duet and flute & piano. Bookings are now open at <https://www.trybooking.com/DCNFS>. Ticket price includes refreshments in the Hall after the concert.

Left: Lu Ann & Alexander Peskanov

SPRING OPEN DAY

The final Tower Open Day for 2025 will be on the afternoon of **Sunday 9 November.** Watch out for a call for volunteers to assist with the opening.

AGM and Guest Speaker – Save the Date!

The Friends 2025 AGM will be held on **Thursday 23 October**. After the meeting, which will be brief, there will be a presentation by architect **Virginia Ross**. Virginia is a founding director and Senior Consultant at Williams Ross Architects (WRA) Her professional career spans over three decades, characterized by her deep commitment to architectural excellence and service to the profession. Her dedication is evident as an RAI Victoria Chapter Councillor, lecturer, and mentor to younger architects, fostering the next generation of professionals through her leadership and guidance. She has a Bachelor of Architecture from Auckland University and also holds a Diploma of Writing & Editing from RMIT University.



Virginia Ross

Virginia's expertise covers a diverse range of projects, including education, healthcare, and community buildings, where she has consistently delivered designs that respond thoughtfully to both context and client needs. She is a recognised expert in cultural facilities and oversees all WRA cultural and community work. Virginia's work is marked by an enduring focus on the social and environmental impact of architecture, advocating for designs that prioritize sustainability and community well-being. As part of her focus on sustainability, Virginia worked with the WMA team asked to investigate the Theatres Building at the Victorian College of the Arts building to increase its occupancy enabling more programs, staff and students to be housed. Despite the many difficulties, Virginia and her team succeeded in repurposing this 2004 building without compromising its heritage integrity.

With such a wide range of professional experience including finding new uses for existing buildings, Virginia's presentation will greatly interest our members: Please put the date in your diary: invite any friends and family who may be interested.

Vale Mick

Friends who attended the Concert marking the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War 2 may remember the recorded interview with naval veteran Paul M ("Mick") Dexter, who recounted his adventures in de-mining Bass Strait after the War, and who was present on the day of the concert. Mick died on 12 May, aged 100, and was remembered by family and friends at a memorial gathering at Karralyka Centre, Ringwood, on 29 June. Alan and Wendy Chuck represented the Friends.



Mick with ExecOfficer, Cheryl

New Carpet for Church

The red carpet on the dais and in the aisles of Auburn Uniting Church is over 50 years old, and has reached the end of its useful life. The Church Council resolved to replace the carpet. The new carpet was made in England by Brintons, and will be installed in early August, in time for the church's concert, ***Peskanov and Friends*** on Sunday, 17 August.

The Friends Committee was pleased to make a donation of \$3,000 towards the cost of the new carpet.