



STEEL CITY STRINGS



ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending
31 December 2020

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGY



ABN 29 940 633 839

Experience The Energy



PATRON

Andrew Ford OAM



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The mission of Steel City Strings is to enrich the diverse communities of the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands with the transformative power of live music.

ARTISTIC VISION

Steel City Strings seeks to share our passion for music with, and foster love of music in, the broader community. Music resonates with the heart and profoundly influences the growth and expression of human experience.

We will be a source of inspiring music across our region – nourishing the spirit of the community with music that speaks to, and sometimes for, a broad range of audience.

This means we need to be versatile as we strive for artistic excellence and diversity in genre, programming, collaboration, audience, and musicianship.

The musical family that is Steel City Strings must be nurtured and supported to grow professionally through exposure to the expertise of conductors, soloists and composers. We will grow the musical family by supporting talented local young musicians and local composers to ensure sustainability and maintain relevance.

Each season embarks on a musical adventure, where orchestra and audiences together are challenged by traditional classics, intrigued by relevant Australian works, stretched by demanding chamber works and dazzled by new/original works.



OUR VISION AND GOALS

GOALS FOR 2020

GOAL: Provide a vibrant, professional chamber orchestra servicing Illawarra, South Coast and Southern Highlands communities and more broadly the Australian music community.

STRATEGIES:

1. Deliver three programs (nine performances) per annum, each performed in Wollongong and two other regional locations; participate in other local arts activities.
2. Professional development of orchestra members through solo performances, innovative repertoire, and exposure to guest conductors and soloists.
3. Feature contemporary Australian composers and local soloists.
4. Professional rates of pay for members who are professional musicians.
5. Maintain existing partnerships: Four Donkey Films; Wollongong Conservatorium; local government (Wollongong, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee); and venue providers.
6. Strengthen our financial base through increased ticket sales, sponsorships, partnerships, donations and grants.
7. Expand our music library, as a resource for the orchestra and other local musicians.

GOAL: 'Connect community through music' by expanding our audience base and broadening audience access to the diversity of musical genres.

STRATEGIES:

1. Program concerts offering a diverse range of music and incorporating local artists from different genres.
2. Increase community awareness of Steel City Strings across the region through marketing strategies, with a particular focus on younger people.
3. Develop audience musical appreciation through innovative programming, comprehensive program notes, and meet-the-orchestra opportunities.
4. Ensure tickets are affordable for the targeted audiences.

GOAL: Develop and promote local young musicians and composers.

STRATEGIES:

1. Provide mentoring projects, opportunities to perform with or be a member of the orchestra.
2. Commission and perform works by young composers.
3. Strengthen partnerships with Wollongong Conservatorium, Wollongong Eisteddfod and BlueScope Youth Orchestra, and develop new partnerships to support this goal.
4. Provide a biennial Concerto Competition for young musicians in partnership with Wollongong Conservatorium.
5. Provide a biennial combined Steel City Strings/ BlueScope Youth Orchestra concert.





It was a cruel irony that the business sectors most significantly impacted by the pandemic over the last year have been those least likely to afford it.

The scale of disruption to the arts has been devastating, and Steel City Strings has not been immune to the cancellation of carefully planned programs and the evaporation of vital revenue.

However, thanks to the laudable efforts of our players and leaders, we have been able to not only weather this tumultuous time, but innovate and bring our audience some brilliant performances to shine a light into what has been a dark period for many in the community.

The board and I commend our extraordinary orchestra – both the players and leaders – for their resilience and adaptability over the last year. In particular, our gratitude is due to Lyndall Fowler, Yve Repin, Kyle Little and Jeremy Boulton for their leadership, persistence, and dedication.

We also wish to thank Steel City Strings' loyal and growing audience for its support over the challenging year just gone, and encourage you to share your love of music with your friends, family and colleagues.

Finally, I pay tribute to our board members, who continued to dedicate their valuable time and expertise to the stewardship of this fine organisation throughout the year. They are: Ben Twyford, James Welch, Dr Melissa Thompson, Anthony Body, Tony Williams and Kyle Little. A special acknowledgement of Tony Williams is due given he has sadly resigned from the board but continues to contribute so greatly to the orchestra through his peerless videography, editing and recording.

Adam Zarth, President





The entire Arts community was impacted by the COVID pandemic. Concerts needed to be cancelled or postponed and musicians continued to have their living wages affected requiring them to access government subsidies like JobKeeper. Our organisation was equally affected, requiring the board and the management team to develop innovative ways to keep Steel City Strings up and running and our musicians and audience members engaged. Keeping SCS alive was due to the consistent hard work of our management team and the commitment and resilience of our orchestra members.

Our 2020 season was meant to have three programs: 'Composer in the Room', 'Earth Connections', and 'Seasons'. The orchestra started to rehearse the music for 'Composer in the Room', and having met with composer Elena Kats-Chernin to discuss and play through the commissioned work, however, it was decided by the board and management committee that there was too much uncertainty with the pandemic and the concert needed to be postponed. It was very important to note that even though the concert was cancelled, our organisation did pay our conductor and orchestra members for all rehearsals attended. While the rest of the year was 'touch and go', it was eventually decided that the remaining two concerts would be postponed until the following year, until such a time it was safe for our musicians and audience members to meet in public performance venues. Although this was a big hit to the musicians and to our budget, we developed some innovative ways to stay afloat.

A lot of research and discussion went into several of our online virtual concerts. Taking the lead was Lyndall Fowler who delved into articles and watched other professional ensembles continue their programs in an online format. Dubbed '#isolationstrings' the result was a series of virtual, multi-camera performances and virtual concerts. The first two performances were a movement of St Paul Suite (Holst) as well as the much loved 'October' by Eric Whitacre. There was a lot of preparation to go into these projects, requiring the musicians to record themselves at home alongside the pre-made backing track. Working together with friend of the ensemble and filmmaker Tony Williams, these parts were stitched together to create two lovely performance pieces. Other performances were taken from our archives to present to the public which all culminated into a virtual string quartet performance in July 2020.

The virtual recital of 'Isolation String Quartet' hailed some firsts for our ensemble. This was the first time members of our ensemble had been live-streamed. Secondly, we were very honoured to have the piece 'Dark Fire' composed by John Spence, which was written specifically for this virtual concert. Members of the quartet, Cecilia Bersee, Adrian Davis, Rita Woolhouse and myself worked tirelessly to practise and perform other works by Prokofiev and Borodin. We had a very big community response, having many donate to our organisation. I would like to personally say thank you to all of those who donated to Steel City Strings and for helping to keep our ensemble afloat during these difficult times.

Our 'Digital Season' was another way we tried to keep our ensemble engaged in the public eye. Through the leadership of our new manager Jeremy Boulton, a series of three performances featuring the Steel City Strings orchestra as a whole, small chamber and/or solo works. This was highly successful and has helped to add to our digital profile as an ensemble. Many thanks go to all members involved and to Jeremy for his consistent effort when editing these concerts together.

To end the year on a high note, 'The Return' was Steel City Strings' safe return to the stage with audience members able to come back into venues in a limited capacity. All audience members were seated following the social distance advice from NSW Health which resulted in all of our concerts being sold out. This is a testament to the need for live performances in our community. Our ensemble would like to thank all those members of the community who attended.

This has been an interesting year for Steel City Strings, but it could not be possible without the support of the NSW Government as well as those who donated to our ensemble. A big thank you to all of those who help to support the arts in their community and for helping to keep our ensemble going.

Steel City Strings has had continued support from local businesses and councils in 2020. I would like to thank all of our corporate sponsors for the continued support, it is because of you that our orchestra continues to grow. Thank you to Shoalhaven City Council for helping to support Steel City Strings and for allowing us to use your venues. I would also like to thank The Wollongong Conservatorium for the continued and unwavering support and friendship through the donation of rehearsal space and use of equipment.

The orchestra has had wonderful support from the volunteers including the members of the management committee, and those who assist with all that goes into the preparation and execution of a concert series. Steel City Strings is still here because of your generous support and the donation of your time.

This year brings an end to Yve Repin's management of our ensemble. The original founder of Steel City Strings back in 2002-2004, Yve has dedicated much of her time to see this ensemble had grown to be an important facet of the local music community. Also receiving an OAM for her dedication to the Arts, we are honoured to have had Yve leading the charge. We are still happy to see that she will be staying on in a limited capacity in an administrative role. On behalf of the ensemble and the board I would like to say thank you, Yve, for all that you have done for Steel City Strings.

I would also like to welcome Jeremy Boulton as the new manager for Steel City Strings. Jeremy is currently studying a Masters Degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, is an ambassador for classikON, and is a performer (baritone) in his own right.

Our orchestra has demonstrated great resilience during this difficult time and that is due to the continued support from donors, our musicians' commitment to music in our region and our audience members. 2021 is shaping up to be an exciting year for live music and we are hoping to pick up where we left off. It is our hope that this small bump in the road helps to bring a renewed sense of the need for music in our communities.

Kyle Little, Artistic Director

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TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2020 calendar year ended with a net loss of \$5,869. With only \$11,204 in ticket sale income due to cancellation of all scheduled programs, we have depended on our sponsors (\$21,500), donors (\$14,969) and grants (\$10,000) to boost our revenue. We are also grateful to our subscribers, most of whom opted to hold their subscriptions until 2021 rather than claim a refund.

Cost of sales without ticket revenue was inflated due to player and conductor fees being paid for our first program that was cancelled just before the final rehearsal, and digital ticket sales did not cover the costs of player and other fees in presenting those programs. However, an unscheduled concert presented in late November and early December 2020 generated ticket sales that helped to offset these losses.

With continuing loosening of COVID social restrictions, and NSW government grants for three of our 2021 programs, we are optimistic that 2021 will return us to profitability.

Ben Twyford, Treasurer



Thanks to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, all 2020 scheduled programs were cancelled. As revenue from ticket sales dried up, Steel City Strings was unable to meet its goals for 2020. All 2020 programs were rescheduled for 2021.

Artistic Director Kyle Little quickly turned his attention to digital options for making music, and the Management Committee looked to other means of revenue raising.

Steel City Strings players learned the art of playing and filming themselves in isolation, with Kyle Little putting it all together in a virtual performance of Holst's St Paul's Suite and Whitacre's October to the appreciation of our loyal audiences.

In the meantime, the Management Committee was planning an Isolation Strings fundraising project attracting "Boost" funding of \$5000 through the Australian Cultural Fund. This fundraiser, together with a Quick Response grant through Wollongong City Council, enabled a free Steel City Strings Quartet live-streamed recital at the beginning of July for disaster affected communities in our region, with works about the recent bushfires and the experience of isolation. Local composer John Spence from the Wollongong Conservatorium dedicated a new work "Dark Fire" to victims of the bushfires, with works by Borodin and Prokofiev.

Funds raised also enabled us to purchase microphones, a camera and tripod to continue to film performances by Steel City Strings orchestra and small groups, and guest artists for the remainder of the year.

This project was managed by digitally skilled local baritone Jeremy Boulton, who was then appointed to the contracted position of Steel City Strings Manager as it became clear that his digital expertise would be needed for the foreseeable future.

As restrictions slowly lifted towards the end of the year, the orchestra presented 3 concerts of "Steel City Strings – The Return" to safely limited audiences at Berry School of Arts, Wollongong Town Hall and Bowral Memorial Hall.

None of this would have been possible without the continuing support of our sponsors. Thank you to Rob Newman of South Coast Equipment Group, Geoff O'Donnell of Shin Investments, Ernest and Dana Dupere of Benedict Recycling, Bernie Dean of Dean Industrial and Krop Industrial, Renaud Chauvet of Select Civil, David Sharpe for submission writing support, and George Nastovski of Steel City Beverages, who provided free bottled water to our players and audiences.

We were delighted to hear that three of our submissions to Create NSW for performances in 2021 were successful, enabling us to fulfil our goal of paying our musicians at professional rates in some 2021 performances.

Yve Repin Manager, January-July 2020



Upon my appointment from August 1 we continued to provide our musicians with opportunities across the ensuing months with the Steel City Strings inaugural 'Digital Season'. The initiative brought the whole orchestra back together in a shared physical recording space (Berry School of Arts) to record whole ensemble works led by Luke Spicer. Each of the three Digital Season concerts that were released between October-December 2020 featured one or two of these large ensemble works and were programmed alongside smaller chamber ensemble works such as quartets, trios as well as featured soloists.

The digital recordings provided a unique opportunity for the principal players to work on their ensemble skills in a small scale level and enabled the entire ensemble to come together to record as an ensemble, ensuring that vital orchestral ensemble skills were maintained during this period of no live performances. The recordings would not be possible but for the tireless efforts of John Spence who offered his recording services for a nominal fee to ensure financial losses were minimal.

Fortunately, as the recordings were taking place and being recorded, performance restrictions were eased and we were able to perform 'The Return' - a rapidly curated program to celebrate the return of Steel City Strings to the stage. The program featured most notably a work by Ernest Bloch that according to records had only been performed once in Australia some decades ago in Adelaide featuring the late Clemens Leske at the piano. The pianist for our concert was David Vance. Our concert series (a short program with no interval) was eagerly attended by audiences at Berry School of Arts, Wollongong Town Hall and Bowral Memorial Hall.

Upon the completion of 'The Return' program, the Digital Season access product was converted into a general 'Digital Subscription' package was then extended on our website until the end of June 2021 featuring an array of Steel City Strings digital performances, recordings and more. This will be an ongoing initiative that we maintain into the future in setting up a passive income stream for the ensemble and giving value to philanthropists.

Finally, John Spence and local young contemporary singer Daisy Pring joined forces with Steel City Strings to produce a recording of 'O Holy Night' as part of our first Christmas message to fans to thank them for their outstanding support in donating to our Isolation Strings fundraiser, purchasing Digital Subscriptions and attending 'The Return'.

2021 is already shaping up to be a bumper year for Steel City String with four outstanding programs (twelve concerts total) to be performed across the region, the continuation of our Digital Subscription model and the launch of our new philanthropy program.

Jeremy Boulton, Manager, August-December



A1 CORPORATE INFORMATION



STEEL CITY STRINGS

ABN 29 940 633 839

REGISTERED OFFICE: 23 Railway Parade, Woonona, NSW 2517

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

New Steel City Strings was registered as an incorporated association in New South Wales under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 on 14 January 2015. It is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.

In January 2019 a Board of Directors was established comprising:

PRESIDENT: Adam Zarth, Business Illawarra
TREASURER: Dylan Barry (April-July), Ben Twyford (October-), Kelly Partners
SECRETARY: James Welch, Access Law Group
MEMBERS: Melissa Thompson, University of Wollongong
Anthony Body, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
Tony Williams, Four Donkey Films
Kyle Little, Steel City Strings Artistic Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Lyndall Fowler

Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the volunteer **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** comprising volunteers Yve Repin, Lyndall Fowler, Kyle Little and Karella Mitchell, led by contracted Manager Jeremy Boulton (from August 2020)..

PATRON: Andrew Ford, OAM, Australian composer and ABC broadcaster, resident in Southern Highlands.

ACCOUNTANT: Irene Latoa CPA, First Class Accounts
PO Box 1639 Wollongong DC NSW 5000

AUDITORS: Delyse Del Turco BCom CPA, Better Business Accounting
368 Princes Highway Woonona NSW 2517



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PLAYERS IN 2020

RESIDENT CONDUCTOR Luke Spicer

VIOLIN

Kyle Little (concertmaster)
Jacob Antonio (leader 2nd)
Cecilia Bersee
Liana Bonaccorso
Nataliia Fatkulina
Sophia Hans
Wen-Tjen Lim
Kate Malone
Siobhan Mewes
Renae Pinazza
Mitra Ahmadi Pirshahid
Hannah Roberts
Matthew Tsalidis
Monique Ziegelaar

VIOLA

Adrian Davis (leader)
Janine Jackson
Rachel Miller
Miffy Ryan
Anna Hewgill
Renee Richardson

CELLO

Karella Mitchell (leader)
Catherine Barnett
Louisa Lovasz
Rita Woolhouse

DOUBLE BASS

Ethan Ireland (leader)

PIANO/CONTINUO

David Vance

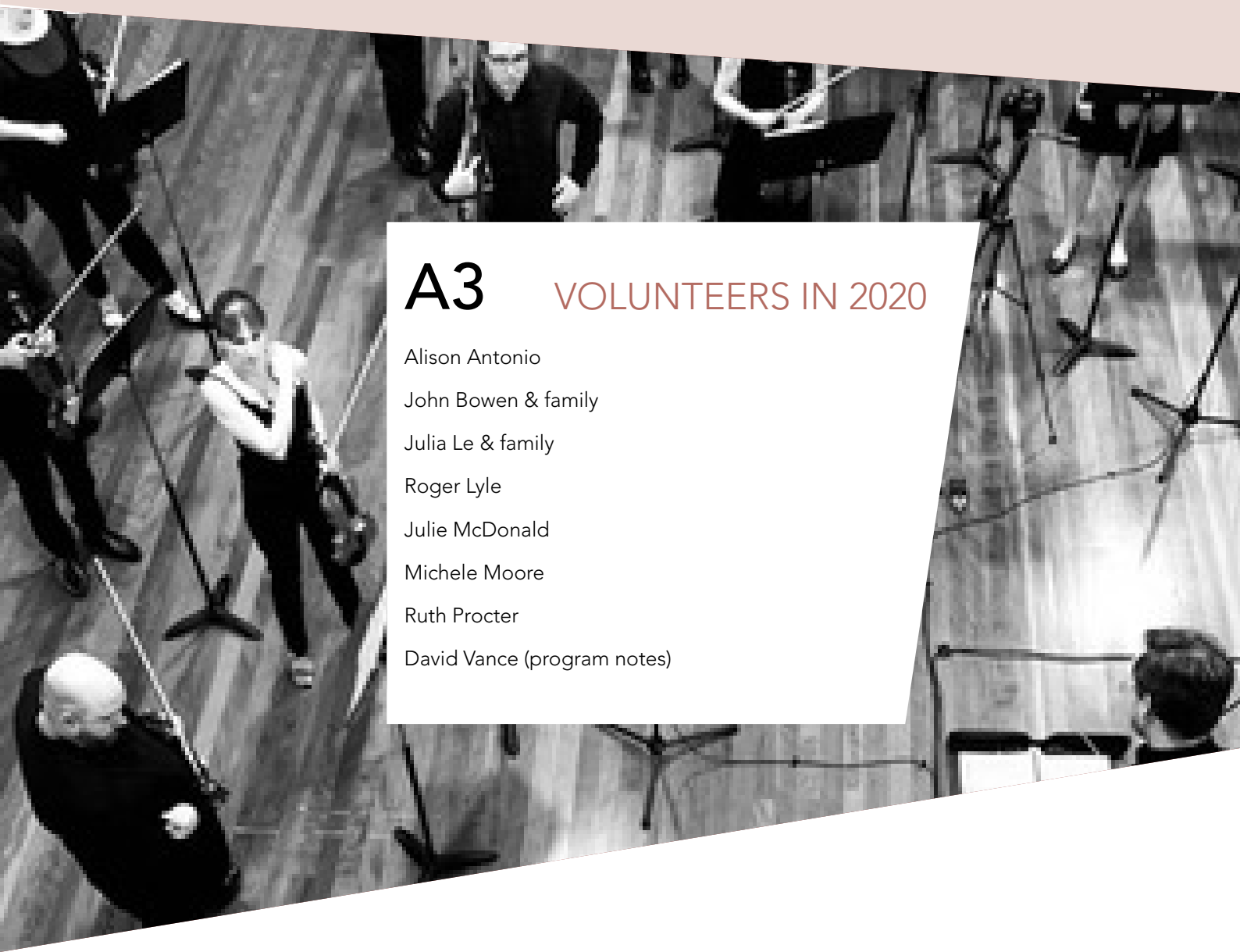
GUEST ARTISTS

Jeremy Boulton (baritone)
Bradley Baker (pianist)
Daisy Pring (soprano)

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VOLUNTEERS IN 2020

Alison Antonio
John Bowen & family
Julia Le & family
Roger Lyle
Julie McDonald
Michele Moore
Ruth Procter
David Vance (program notes)



(Auditor's report available on application)

New Steel City Strings Inc

Profit and Loss

January - December 2020

	TOTAL
Income	
Donations Income	14,968.55
Grants	10,000.00
Sponsorship Income	21,500.00
Ticket Sale Income	11,204.00
Total Income	A\$57,672.55
Cost of Sales	
Advertising & promotion	8,443.95
Booking/ Credit Card Fees	1,230.50
Composer Fee	1,500.00
Conductor fee	2,875.00
Contractor	2,200.00
Equipment cost	6,203.39
Film/image creation	5,023.60
Gift for Artists	40.00
Graphic design	1,160.00
Hire of Venues	654.35
Music	2,278.06
Permits, Fees & Licences	0.00
Player Fees	18,951.00
Printing	1,851.00
Show Catering	612.67
Travel expenses	347.58
Total Cost of Sales	A\$53,371.10
GROSS PROFIT	A\$4,301.45
Other Income	
Interest income	2.63
Total Other Income	A\$2.63
Expenses	
Accounting & Bookkeeping	2,420.00
Assn membership (AMC, U3A)	844.01
Bank charges	8.00
Donations	100.00
Insurance (P.L., volunteers)	1,495.89
Phone	70.00
Postage	112.50
Stationery	467.45
Web Design	4,222.90
Web hosting	432.30
Total Expenses	A\$10,173.05
NET EARNINGS	A\$ -5,868.97

New Steel City Strings Inc

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2020

	TOTAL
Assets	
Current Assets	
Accounts receivable	
Accounts Receivable	6,500.00
Total Accounts receivable	A\$6,500.00
Contra	0.00
Greater Bank Public Fund	7,431.61
Greater Bank Trading A/C	46,096.83
Paypal	77.32
Petty Cash	0.00
SCS Public Fund	5,401.68
SCS Transaction Account	0.00
Trybooking	1,730.62
Visa Debit Card	371.39
Deposit/Bonds Paid	250.00
Total Current Assets	A\$67,859.45
Total Assets	A\$67,859.45
Liabilities and shareholder's equity	
Current liabilities:	
Deferred Revenue	39,515.00
Total current liabilities	A\$39,515.00
Shareholders' equity:	
Net Income	-5,868.97
Retained Earnings	34,213.42
Total shareholders' equity	A\$28,344.45
Total liabilities and equity	A\$67,859.45







STEEL CITY STRINGS

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGY

OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS

