

Quilters' Guild of South Australia Executive Committee 2019/20

President	Chris O'Brien
Secretary	Ann Ewer
Hon. Treasurer	Keith Holland
Banker	Jan Goulter
Vice President	Heather Ford
Vice President/Registrar	Cindy Massey
Appraisal Panel	Heather Ford
Editor I-Patch	Chris O'Brien
Editor Patches	Bronwyn Atkinson
Festival of Quilts Convenor	Ann Ewer
Frame Hire Bookings	Jan Goulter
Group Raffle Quilt Bookings	Jo Reardon
Groups Liaison	Cindy Massey & Jane Polden
Guest Speakers/Demonstrations	Jane Polden
Insurance Liaison/Public Officer	Bronwyn Atkinson
Judging Panel	Jill Christian
Librarian	Michael Barton
Meetings Greeter/Post	Emilie Knight
Meetings Team Leader/Shops	Peggy Argent
Membership	Margaret Sampson
Merchandise/Raffle Quilt bookings	Jo Reardon
Quilt Encounter	Kerryn Brand
Raffles	Dorothy Paterson
Scholarships & Grants	Heather Ford
Workshop Convenor	Heather Ford

<i>Executive Committee Support</i>

Archives	Candy Walker
Clayton's Committee	Lessa Siegele
Dare to Differ	Suzanne Gummow
Flinders Kids Project	Kay Lovell, Shirley Andrewartha
Portable Frames Hire	Rosie Player
Quilts of Love	After Dark Quilters
Southern Comforters	Mary Heard and Kay Wilson
Supper Roster	Carolyn Thurtell
Website/Social Media/I-Patch	Kathy Rossini

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present the President's Annual Report for 2020.

Quilters' Guild of South Australia Inc. comprises around 420 individual members and 100 affiliated city and country groups. Membership numbers were down from the previous year, most likely due to the impact of COVID19 on Guild activities.

Guild meetings were held twice in February and once in March. Attendance at the evening meetings was around 150, with the day-time meeting attendance around 60 members. The Guild hosts a local or country-based quilt shop at each Guild meeting, a particularly popular attraction for our members. We'd like to extend a huge thank you to the shops who supported those Guild meetings. Our Meetings Team **understands** only too well the effort involved in packing vehicles to the brim with quilting supplies, unpacking them at Guild and then reversing the process at the end of the meeting. We'd like the shops to know how much we appreciate their effort.

For the benefit of our members, the **key aims** of the Guild are

- To promote patchwork and quilting
- To provide a forum for South Australian quilters
- To encourage the formation and maintenance of quilters' groups
- To hold, organize and take part in exhibitions and workshops
- To provide information, knowledge and skills with regard to quilt making

Reflecting back on 2020, the year of coronavirus, meeting these aims presented some unique challenges for the Guild's Executive Committee and sub-committees. The management teams that were established in 2019 continued to work effectively and energetically until mid-March with the realization then that the pandemic was to significantly impact on our lives.

On the 15th March I wrote my first website communication to Guild members indicating that all Guild activities would be suspended due to concerns about the increasing risks associated with COVID19 given the general profile of our membership. Rather naively, I suspect, we hoped that this would be an interim measure with few of us envisaging the impact that the pandemic would have on our lives for the foreseeable future. Understanding that patchwork and quilting are important social events for many of us, digital contact became a lifeline during the long months of isolation and withdrawal from our normal routines.

A succession of Facebook based mystery quilt-alongs kept not only our own quilters engaged for many months but opened up the opportunity to interact with quilters from around the world. Membership of these online groups ranged from around 500 members to over 1000. We also focused on ensuring that our **website** and Guild **Facebook** page were kept both dynamic and informative. Facebook has been extremely effective in promoting Guild events, inspiring works of quiltmakers around the world and accessible online resources.

With little to report in the local quilting world our bi-monthly **Patches** newsletter was put on hold. The concept of an expanded digital **I-Patch** was explored and as an editorial team of 2, Kathy Rossini and myself developed regular content ideas, generating 20-30 pages each month to inform and entertain members. We are immensely grateful to our members and member shops for supporting us through their willingness to write articles, prepare tutorials and to be interviewed. *I-Patch* is emailed monthly to around 900 city and country members, member groups and national quilt guilds.

I-Patch was further enhanced when the editorial team expanded to include Cindy Massey and Jane Polden with their roaming sewing room video interviews. This, in turn, generated the creation of the Guild's own **YouTube** channel with new videos uploaded monthly.

Twice during those shelter at home months. I received a phone call from Mrs Le, wife of the South Australian Governor, who, as our **Patron**, wished to touch base as to how Guild members were managing these challenging times. She acknowledged that this was a perfect time for quilters to continue to produce the quilts that we love making, and that she was expecting quite a display at the next Festival of Quilts! She was also pleased to note our efforts to maintain contact with, and engage, our members through our various digital initiatives.

The Guild is managed by an **Executive Committee** of 16 elected members, including representatives from 6 Sub-Committees (Festival of Quilts, Quilt Encounter, Appraisal Panel, Judging Panel, Finance and Dare to Differ). Unable to hold our AGM during the year we were not able to officially farewell a much-valued member, Anne Marie Serrano, who has made a significant contribution to the Guild during the past 5 years. I would like to sincerely thank Anne Marie for her involvement and commitment, particularly as the Convenor of Festival of Quilts for many years.

The Guild's **Finance Sub-Committee** remained in contact throughout our shelter at home months, with discussion focused on membership fees, membership renewals and the Guild's annual budget. Our proposed rise in membership fees was put on hold, and our budget monitored closely in a year of reduced income. Reduced membership fees were offered for early bird renewals, which proved to be a popular strategy. Our greatest expense, around \$15,000, was for insurance and although neither the Guild nor our affiliated groups met for much of 2020 that expense was still incurred. This is an appropriate opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding commitment and contribution of **Keith Holland**, our Honorary Treasurer, in ensuring the Guild's financial well-being at all times, but particularly during the challenges of 2020

Scholarship and Country Grant applications were due for submission shortly after the declaration of the pandemic, but as the deciding committee was unable to meet to discuss the applications, we chose to postpone the allocation of funding to a later date. In truth that later date didn't eventuate due to ongoing COVID19 restrictions and our Scholarship and Country Grants program has subsequently been suspended until further notice. We are aware that some recipients of grants from 2019 have still not been able to participate in their nominated activity and we have reassured them that they can retain their grant until they are able to do so.

Most regular Guild activities were cancelled for much of 2020. Most disappointingly our **Festival of Quilts** was one significant casualty of COVID. The Festival of Quilts was scheduled for July, with 48 entries having been received at the time of cancellation. It was decided to roll over the theme and all preparations to 2021. Once households could host ten or more people, the Festival of Quilts Committee met every month at the Convenor's home and continued planning for the next Festival, which will be held from 30th April to 2nd May 2021. This date was set by Kym Jones Exhibitions to align with their Home Show.

The Festival of Quilts Committee team welcomed new members Kerry-Anne Burrowes, Wendy Hunt and Kay Calder. Unfortunately, Kerry-Anne was unable to stay on Committee due to work commitments, but we appreciated her input and continued support.

Festival of Quilts Committee Members

- Ann Ewer (Convenor)
- Renée Amyot
- Kay Calder
- Jan Goulter
- Wendy Hunt
- Emilie Knight
- Chris O'Brien
- Anne Marie Serrano,
- Pauline Thoman
- Prue Wheal
- Angela Yeates

DEBRA Australia was the nominated beneficiary of the Guild's **annual raffle**, run by the Festival of Quilts Committee. DEBRA is a charity that supports individuals, families and carers affected by Epidermolysis Bullosa. The raffle was due to be drawn on 6th August, but application was made to the Lotteries Commission for an extension. This was granted and the raffle will be drawn on February 4th, 2021. Sincere thanks go to all Guild members who supported this raffle and to Angela Yeates for her excellent management under trying circumstances.

Fortunately, the other lighthouse event on the Guild's annual calendar, **Quilt Encounter**, was able to be rescheduled for later in 2020. Unable to hire the facility previously used for 14 years and after considerable COVID19 related problem solving and meticulous planning, a new concept Quilt Encounter was held in October at the Stamford Grand Hotel on Jetty Rd, Glenelg.

125 participants along with 12 tutors and 9 Quilt Encounter Committee members attended. There were 33 "first timers" of which 31 came from SA. Total number of participants from SA was 111, along with 6 from Alice Springs, 7 from NSW and 1 from the ACT. Border restrictions with Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales impacted on participation by many regular quilters as well as tutors.

8 workshops were scheduled for each day with the following Tutors: Rachael Daisy, Chris Jurd and Wendy Williams (from NSW), and SA Tutors were Pam Holland, Roz McDonald, Rachelle Denny, Heather Ford, Kathy Horton, Jacky Eyre, Chris O'Brien, Linda Haig and Kerryn Brand (who stepped in for Michele Hill's class).

The Quilting Room and *Widebacks Australia* were the 2 on-site shops – both were able to more than cater for the retail therapy needs of participants. Once again Otto from Otto and Penny's Bernina supplied sewing machines in classrooms and was, as always, on hand and very supportive as needed. **Bernina Australia** is the major **sponsor** of Quilt Encounter and we are very grateful for this support. Once again, we were well supplied with generous donations from so many local and interstate shops and businesses – we really do appreciate their support.

The raffle quilt, made by the QE Committee and custom quilted by Sally Mackenzie of Valley Quilts, raised \$1508.00 with proceeds going to Back Packs 4 SA Kids – a very worthy local organisation.

The change of venue was significant in so many ways – but proved to be for the better with all classrooms, accommodation and shops in the one location and held during spring rather than winter. The Quilt Encounter Committee has subsequently decided to continue to hold QE at the Stamford Grand – with every classroom enjoying a view of the ocean and with various options for accommodation it is a perfect setting for a quilting retreat. The staff at the Hotel were very supportive of the QE Committee, whose workload has been dramatically reduced in this new venue.

The Executive Committee would like to extend our appreciation to the Quilt Encounter Committee for their outstanding effort, in extremely challenging circumstances.

Quilt Encounter Committee Members

- Kerry Brand (Convenor)
- Heather Bolt
- Joyce Chapman
- Roslyn Holmes
- Gena Martin
- Anna Rackham
- Margaret Sampson
- Julie Sutton
- Leanne Wagner

Following the cancellation of **workshops** in the early part of 2020 due to COVID19 restrictions, four successful workshops were eventually held. Pam Holland in August, two with Jill Christian in October and one with Sue Knuckey in November. All workshops were well attended with three being full, which was particularly pleasing during our COVID year. Further workshops have been planned for 2021

Our workshop accommodation at the Vermont Uniting Church has been very successful. The generous size of the hall has meant that COVID19 protocols have been upheld with ease. The Church has generously provided us with storage space, including allowing us to install an additional cupboard. I'd like to acknowledge the work of **Heather Ford**, as convenor, as well as **Monique Reed** and **Peggy Argent** for their work in managing the workshop program.

Also sharing the Vermont Uniting Church accommodation is our now twice monthly **Sit and Sew group**, having grown in both numbers and enthusiasm. Initially planned for meeting one day a month, once COVID restrictions were eased the group made the decision to meet fortnightly, with around 30 regular attendees. Fortunately the hall, as with workshops, can comfortably facilitate adherence to COVID19 protocols. The sit and sew program is a success thanks to the commitment of its management team comprising **Cindy Massey, Jane Polden, Jo Reardon** and **Heather Ford** as well as the many willing helpers each meeting.

During the past two years, members of our Guild have exchanged round robin style quilts with the **Belle Point Quilters** in Fort Smith, **Arkansas**. 28 quilters from each guild signed up for a 2020 exchange, but with the arrival of COVID19 the end point of the exchange travelled a quite different path. Under normal circumstances we would have had a show and tell of our returned tops at a Guild meeting before quilting them ready for display at Festival of Quilts. Instead our tops had to be returned to their owners "behind the scenes", our show and tell was via Facebook and our completed quilts will be on display at Festival of Quilts in 2021. A third exchange planned for 2020/2021 has been put on hold until more normal times.

Due to COVID restrictions just 6 quilts were appraised by the **Appraisal Panel** during the year, with their only meeting being held in February. The Panel currently consists of 13 qualified appraisers and 1 coordinator. We were sorry to say goodbye to Annette McRae who joined the panel in October 2018 and contributed much to our understanding of the production of art quilts. She will be missed.

The Appraisal Panel meets every second month on the Friday after the Guild Meeting. It supports both members and non-members as a service for both quilters and quilt owners to understand the replacement value of a quilt should it be lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed. The panel's quilt appraisal offers an insurance company a quilting industry estimate of the value of individual quilts

The panel also offers to appraise, free of charge, any raffle quilt made by a Guild affiliated group. I thank them for offering this service and encourage groups who make raffle quilts in order to raise money to take the Panel up on their offer. Thank you, Heather and team members, for the valuable service that you provide.

Appraisal Panel Members

- Heather Ford (Convenor)
- Vicki Hart (Secretary)
- Michelle Bouchier
- Kerry Anne Burrowes
- Elizabeth Camping
- Raelene Draheim
- Robyn Ferguson
- Patricia Grocock
- Nola Pearce
- Bronwyn Savage
- Judy Simcock
- Maxine Smith
- Carolyn-Anne Thurtell
- Sue Wege

2020 was a quiet year for the **Judging Panel** with limited opportunities to meet and to participate in judged quilt shows. On behalf of our Guild members I'd like to acknowledge the work of Convenor, **Jill Christian**, and her team in continuing to focus on developing strategies for best practice in judging.

Approved Judges

- Jill Christian (Convenor)
- Maxine Smith
- Sue Wege
- Kerry-Anne Burrows
- Raelene Draheim
- Julie Haddrick
- Sally MacKenzie
- Judy Simcock
- **Judges in Training**
- Tracey Browning
- Emilie Knight
- Jan Strachan
- Carolyn Thurtell

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the significant contribution to the Guild of several other Guild members outside of formal committees/sub-committees. First and foremost, as in 2019, is **Kathy Rossini**. As I've previously stated, I wish that I could accurately describe the diverse responsibilities and commitments that Kathy so willingly accepts. Throughout this year of coronavirus, maintaining an on-line presence has been critical. Kathy ensured that information on our website was kept up to date, a task that was on-going on an almost weekly basis. She is a co-administrator of all of the Guild's Facebook pages, ensuring that they are dynamic, interesting and informative. Kathy was also instrumental in creating, managing and populating the Guild's YouTube channel. She also became a roving videographer – videoing interviews with several South Australian quilters.

Of great importance though, was her ready willingness early in the year to take on board the layout and emailing out of our I-Patch newsletter. Over time Kathy took on the major editorial role and has, most appropriately, been acknowledged as producing a bright and informative newsletter that has kept our members in touch throughout this challenging year. On behalf of our members I'd like to thank Kathy for all that she has done, and no doubt will continue to do, for our Guild.

The **After Dark Quilters**, a city-based Guild affiliated group, became the new managers of the **Quilts of Love** program, led by coordinators **Jill Clausen**, **Monique Reed** and **Therese May**. **Kay Lovell** and **Shirley Andrewartha** represent the **Flinders' Kids** project while **Mary Heard** and **Kay Williams** have continued the work of the **Southern Comforters** group in supporting community needs for quilts, as have the **Clayton's Committee**.

Sadly, the provision of community quilts was significantly reduced during the year due to COVID19, with hospitals cancelling their volunteer programs. Quilts continued to be made, and stockpiles have mounted in homes around the state.

Through the efforts of these committed groups, hundreds of quilts would normally be distributed to hospices and hospitals across Adelaide. The community-based work of many of our various affiliated quilting groups must also be acknowledged– they provide quilts to local hospitals, aged-care facilities, domestic violence shelters and homeless support agencies. These gifted quilts make a difference in the lives of those who are experiencing significant challenges in life and on behalf of individuals and families who have been the recipients of such quilts, I thank all those quilters who contributed to the various community quilt programs within our Guild and hope that 2021 will allow us to more effectively distribute our stockpiled quilts than we were able to do in 2020.

These days, the business of quilt guilds is inextricably linked to businesses associated with meeting the needs of quilters. One business in particular has continued to be incredibly supportive of our Guild – **Bernina Australia**. Our local Bernina dealer and Guild life member, **Otto Windler** contacted me early in the pandemic to offer a Bernina sewing machine for us to raffle in order to raise funds for the Guild during a time of reduced income. We greatly appreciated Otto's offer, but ultimately (with his approval) we used this gift to raise money for a charity close to the heart of Guild members – Backpacks for SA Kids. Otto thank you for your generosity of heart and sewing machine.

As previously stated, Otto also supported the Guild through his sponsorship of Quilt Encounter, and his tireless efforts towards providing and maintaining machines during this event was very much appreciated.

The Quilt Encounter Committee rely on the **sponsorship** of local and interstate quilt shops, sewing machine retailers, quilting supplies wholesalers, Guild affiliated groups and individual Guild members. Without this generous sponsorship we would not be able to provide the raffle prizes and the bountiful goodie bags for attendees of Quilt Encounter. We thank you all for your much-appreciated generosity.

My final words are to the most important people in the Guild. **Our members**. I want to thank them for their understanding of the sometimes difficult decisions that we've made during 2020, for their financial support in a year of few income opportunities but significant insurance costs, for their participation in both real and virtual Guild events and for their invaluable support of our community quilt programs. Thank you all for making this somewhat challenging year a memorable one.

Our committee and sub-committee members work hard but they do so because our members give back. They attend our meetings, our workshops, our sit and sew days. They take up the challenge of supporting our communities. They accept our invitation to be a guest speaker. They take the time to tell us how much they enjoy the meetings. They write articles for I-Patch and agree to have our roving reporters visit their sewing rooms. They offer us feedback, suggestions and ideas for new initiatives. They came to Quilt Encounter.

Thank you to everyone who is a part of this wonderful Guild. And a very special thank you to the most amazing Executive Committee a President could wish for. They all now work in autonomous teams and in so doing share the workload, support each other, learn of roles beyond their own and form strong bonds of friendship. More than that – they have each played a significant role in making our Guild what it is today. I'd like to extend an enormous thank you to them from all of us.

Chris O'Brien
President