The TSA CONCERT & AWARDS 2015
by Duncan Hill...

On January 20, a capacity audience at the Longyard Hotel witnessed the TSA’s presentation of awards for entries in the National Songwriting Contest (for unreleased material) and the Songwriter Salute Awards for released songs from the past year. Also presented were the APRA/AMCOS/TSA New Songwriter Award and the CRS Encouragement Award.

The audience were entertained by a range of fabulous artists including Brothers3, Jeff Brown, Aly Cook, Kristy Cox, Bec Hance, Adam Harvey, Kathryn Jones, Steve Passfield & Handpicked, Taylor Pfeiffer, Jared Porter and Amber Joy Poulton.

The 2015 award contests received a very high number of entries and feedback from the judges indicated that the standard was also very high.

This year, the TSA had a number of artists and special guests assist with the presentation of Awards. Adam Harvey, Aly Cook, Jared Porter, Kristy Cox and Joan Douglas presented and added great colour and comment on the night.

The TSA received this from a performer on the night:

I’d like to thank you so much for asking me to perform at the TSA Salute Awards Concert. A few years back I used to dream about being on this stage!! The band played my songs really well and it was awesome to see some familiar faces in the audience and back stage. It was definitely a highlight for the festival.

Thank you so much Lorraine,
Love,
Taylor Pfeiffer
2015 Awards Results

National Country Songwriting Contest

Novice
Brian Garde – “Black Saturday”

Open Traditional
Sharon Benjamin – “Just One of Our Mistakes”

Open Contemporary
Becci Nethery – “I Wrote This One For You”

Alt-Blues and Bluegrass
Adam James & Graham “Buzz” Bidstrup – ‘Bringing Me To Tears”

Junior
Abbey Gardner – “Fall For You”

Lyrics (only)
Allan Thompson – “Lets Not Forget”

International
Beau Renfro (USA) – “I Want To Dance”

Gospel Song of the Year
Dean Perrett – “The Lighthouse”

Children’s Song of the Year
Stan Lenz – “The Wombat Wobble”

Comedy/Novelty Song of the Year
John Battle & Tony Roberts – “The Walk Up Artist”

The Bev Daniel Commemorative Award for Traditional Bush Ballad of the Year
Dean Perrett – “Coopers Creek”

Contemporary Ballad of the Year
Megan Cooper – “Texas”

Contemporary Song of the Year
Megan Cooper & Dana Hassal – “27 Degrees”

Country Song of the Year
Megan Cooper – “Texas”

Alt Blues & Bluegrass Song of the Year
Dean Perrett – “Fear God”

APRA/AMCOS / TSA New Songwriter
Justin Standley – “Hard Easy”

Tex Morton Award
Joan Douglas

TSA Songmaker Award
Colin Buchannan

CRS Encouragement Award
Liam Kennedy-Clark

The TSA committee is very grateful for the generous donation of time from all our busy judges for the songwriting contests. The list of judges is very long (and not all wish to have their names listed below) however we wish to thank each and every judge for their valuable contribution judging the contests:

Alan Gilmore (94.1 Central Coast), Jim Paterson, Ian Pav (Pav Studios), Lou Bradley, Lee J Collier, Christie Lamb, Michael Abrey, Roxanne Kiely (Scoop FX) Donna Boyd (Director Golden Saddle Awards), Vanessa Gordon (The Leaning Lounge), Allan Caswell, Chris Martin Murphy, (CJ Murphy Blues Collection & Blindwoman’s Beefcake), Dominique Maurice (Singer, Songwriter & Design), Roger Corbett, Graham Reid (Songwriter, Burnley Bros Sydney) Kevin Adams (Frozen Music) Britton Morrison, Steve Kiely (ScoopFX), Aly Cook (Artist), Phil Cole (2BS Bathurst), Mick Malouf (Music Teacher & Artist), Ken Dyster (Aussie Broadband), George Young, Alan Bruce (Songwriter, Wildseed).
Sister cities, Tamworth and Nashville — an update from *Carolyn Morris*...

Tamworth Country Music Festival 2015 marked an exciting crossing of paths between the TSA and the *Tamworth Sister City Committee*; which then effectively extended to indirectly include Tamworth’s latest Sister City addition; *Nashville, USA*.

At the beginning of 2010, I began campaigning for the establishment of a Tamworth-Nashville Sister City alliance; and hence then attended monthly Tamworth Sister City committee meetings; as a community member. After some time, Tamworth Regional Council officially supported the idea and three years later the formal alliance took place with a 2013 treaty signing in Nashville.

In 2014, the TSA committee added a new *International* category to our annual song competition. The Tamworth Regional Council’s Sister City Committee agreed to sponsorship of this category for its inaugural year.

Tamworth Regional Council hosted visitors from Nashville during the 2015 Festival; including Nashville Mayor Karl Dean; and Sister City officials Heather Cochran Cunningham and Garry Jackson. Mr Jackson, a songwriter himself, kindly agreed to present the International Category trophy during our TSA Awards Concert. It seemed particularly appropriate; given the new category and the Tamworth-Nashville music affiliation.

The 2015 Cavalcade … saw the TSA participate with a fabulous looking (and sounding) float down Peel Street.

On board were members of the Tamworth Musical Society, Becci Nethery, Keith Jamieson (CMAA), Bowen & Clare (*live bush band*) and other members and friends of the TSA...

![Nashville Sister City officials Heather Cochran Cunningham & songwriter Garry Jackson.](image)

The TSA Float themed “*Tamworth Country Music and a whole lot more*”

BIG thanks to Wendy Wood for making it all happen along with TSA float helpers … Chris Davies, Maurie Marion, Kevin, Peter Weller, Kat Weller, Kellie Weller, Carolyne Morris, Judy Smith, Maria Gruer and Greg Jones.

We also had help from the Tamworth Musical Society who helped provide costumes and characters for the float. Also, thanks to Scotty the truck driver, Wayne Zell and staff at Port Tamworth Containers where we decorate the truck every year.
“Pickin Pen” news from Lawrie Minson....

Lawrie Minson

There were two Songwriters nights held during the Festival upstairs at the Pickin Pen.

Billy Hardy from Emmaville won the first January Song of the Night with Hmmm, a comedy song about word substitution when you need to swear! Billy came out to Macca's Breakfast Show on 2TM the following week and performed live to air.

Bruce O'Hara won the Mini Maton guitar, a wireless amplifier pack and full membership of TSA and CCMA. Mark Malmborg and Scott Smoothy from Maton were in town but we missed the photo opportunity because Bruce was holidaying in Scotland!

The Pickin Pen was jam packed on Jan 21 and the winning song on the second night went to local girl Donella Waters with her song ‘I Believe’ with a long line-up of 30 songwriters.

Well done Donella!!

The next Songwriters @ the Pickin' Pen will be next Wednesday.
Cheers LM

Lance Toohey & the Cairns to Nashville Song Contest ...

Lance Toohey

Shirley Lynn won the Cairns to Nashville Song Contest with her song ‘My Kinda Paradise’

The song contest was a hit with just about everyone. Both seminars attracted about 35 people and many were disappointed to miss out.

Brealy Sheehan won BEST PERFORMER . . . Max was blown away by her unique style....his quote to me was "This lady came to win".... great performance

Max will definitely be returning to do the Cairns To Nashville theme again, but we’re also working on much bigger plans at the moment... all in early stages yet.

Editor’s Note ... Max T Barnes is a hit songwriter with numerous No #1s to his credit and cuts for John Anderson Collin Raye George Jones Gene Watson Randy Travis Diamond Rio Joe Diffie Jodee Messina Trace Atkins Mark Wills Alabama Ray Stevens Billie Joe Royal The Marie Sisters Jeff Carson Hank Cochran Rhett Akins Daryl Singletary John and Audry Wiggins John Shnieder Cletus T. Judd Ralph Stanley Linda Davis Joe Sun Montgomery Gentry Vern Gosdin Skip Ewing James Bonamy Billy Dean

His father Max D Barnes also wrote hits for Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Alan Jackson and many more ... http://www.maxtbarnes.com/

Editor’s Note ... Winners of song of these nights receive TSA Memberships as part of the prizes too which is great.!
What an awesome 2015 Tamworth Festival for all our members!

Thanks to support from Mike Vee, Dallas Entertainment & The Hogs Breath Cafe we were able to showcase our member’s songs at various venues around town.

If you add to that the invitation spots from our sponsors Doozi Do’z Entertainment & Events at the Post Office Hotel and the council stage that meant we had over 50 artists performing over 8 days, across 6 venues!!

Our opportunities just keep getting better!

The following members showcased songs during the TSA showcases at the Festival:

Susan Lily, Melissa Robertson, Greta Ziller, Charlie Adams, Cathy Dobson, Kerrie Garside, Taylor Pfeiffer, Geoff Williams, Kathryn Luxford, Sarah Head, Bowen & Clare, Dianne Lindsay, Dunc’n Sons, Kylie Castle, Daniel Higgins, Allan Lavender, Long & Short, Becci Nethery, Natalie Baker, Grazy & Ames, Sontya Trahah, Sami Cook, Wendy Wood, Kalesti Butler, Peter Salata, Rachel Summerall, Mark Shay, Maurie Marion, Angus Gill, Justin Standley, Emma Jene, Amber Joy Poulton, Brenda Lee Kelly, Stephen & Roxanne Kiely

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The TSA thanks the following venues for their wonderful support for our showcases during the TCMF:

The Post Office Hotel
The Albert Hotel
The Hogs Breach Café
The Locomotive Hotel
The Southgate Inn

TSA Showcases at the 2nd annual Bonnie Doon Music Festival in Victoria....

Our members were the backbone of the program in 2014 and this year that continued with members Bros 3 returning to perform this time as the festivals headliners!

The program also included the return of our own Toyota Starmaker finalist Greta Ziller, the award winning Long & Short of It, Grazy’s Country, Andrew Swift, Jan Bentley and Mark Hellrich.

‘Grazy’s Country’ performing at Bonnie Doon

Once again Darryl & I ran the ‘Bowen & Clare’ session stage so we were unable to perform in the TSA showcase but were very proud to see our members sharing their songs on stage.

Of course there were a few other performers at the festival who have joining the TSA on their list of things to do!

It was great to be able to offer our Victorian members a chance to perform as part of the TSA at a festival in their region (as Tamworth is a long way from home for many of our members!).

Although based in Tamworth most of our members are spread across the states, so please let us know if there is a festival near you where we can pitch a TSA showcase to the organisers.

I’m still working on the chance for something to unfold for the TSA at the Gympie Muster, will keep you informed on the progress!

We’re really proud to be a part of this great network of songwriters.

Till next time
Lydia & Darryl
artist@tsaonline.com.au
Natalie Jane Baker

Hi! I’m a 31 year old mother of three little boys who keep me very busy! I first started writing my own songs at about the age of 15. On a farm near Bingara where I grew up, my dad taught me a few chords on the guitar and from there I started teaching myself. When I was a little older and moved to Tamworth, I started going to music jams.

I regularly go to the Lawrie Minson’s Songwriters night at Hogs Breath where I have even been lucky enough to win song of the night for my songs "Get a life" and "Beautiful Bones". As a result of that I was also really lucky to get a write up in the Country Music Capital News Magazine and go on the radio show 2TM and chat to Macca about my winning song!

I have also recently released my very first studio album called ‘Beautiful Bones’, which can be described as contemporary and easy listening. It was recorded with Steve Newton at Enrec studios in Tamworth with a live studio band consisting of local talented musicians. It has 12 original songs, including a bonus track, a 16 page booklet with all the words to every song included! My album is available for purchase from Cheapa Music in Tamworth or email direct - nattie_baker@hotmail.com

Editor’s note: Good on you Natalie for recording your debut album firstly in a local studio with local musicians. We need to support our independent artists by buying CDs!!

Paul Bonner Jones

The Tweed Heads based singer/songwriter is the official entertainer at the 225th anniversary of the wrecking of HMS Sirius on Norfolk Island in mid March 2015.

Paul is a sixth generation descendent to First Fleeter Owen Cavanough who was on board the ship when it entered into Sydney Cove on January 26 1788.

The abel seaman is officially recognised as the first person from the First Fleet to step ashore as he pulled in the long boat carrying Captain Arthur Phillip to shore. Owen was also on board when HMS Sirius when it was shipwrecked on Norfolk on March 19 1790.

Paul is departing for Norfolk on March 14-21, performing in three shows including one with island school children singing an original song co-written by Paul and partner Patricia Cruzado titled Norfolk. .

Paul conducted a Songwriter’s workshop on Norfolk in 2012 when the song was written and recorded live with the school children and later completed at Enrec Studios

If you’d like to join the 2015 celebrations email paulbonner59@gmail.com

Editor’s note: Congratulations to Paul for mixing his proud Australian heritage with his love of songwriting, performance and music!
Wendy Wood

Wendy has had some very successful years of late. Below is a snapshot of her songwriting highlights. Read her story in this edition of the newsletter on page 8. It starts with a guitar she picked up by the side of the road and continued as she did the ‘hard yards’ writing, performing, entering contests and networking both in person and online.

Wendy’s story is a wonderful example of talent, persistence, pro-active networking and staying true to who she is as a songwriter that has earned her the success she has to date.

- Started songwriting in 1991
- Finalist TSA Amateur section 1996
- Won TSA Amateur section 1997
- Won TSA/Capital New New Songwriter 2004
- Won Nashville Universe Songwriter of Year 2014
- Won The Song Comp - Songsalive!Australia
  - Songwriter of the Year 2014
  - Country Song of The Year
  - Childrens/Comedy/Novelty Song of the Year
- Finalist – TSA Salute Awards
  - Contemporary Song of the Year 2014

Peter Christie

“Please vote for me in the Gospel Music Fan Fair Awards in Kentucky in May …!”

I am a Country Gospel artist/songwriter & have been writing & recording over last few years. Last year one of my songs was picked up by American Country Gospel Promoter, Perry Edge from Double E Promotions. ‘My Father’s House’ was released to the US Gospel Market in December & is continuing to climb through the US charts.

But more exciting is that I have been named as a finalist in 6 categories of the Gospel Music Fan Fair Awards to be held in Kentucky in May. Not only am I the first Australian to make the finals, this year (along with one other band) I received the highest number of finals births so, I am off to Kentucky for the Fan Fair to perform.

My Band and I are nominated in the following categories:

- Horizon Male - Peter Christie
- Horizon Band- Peter Christie band
- Fav. Band - Peter Christie Band
- Fav. Song - My father’s House
- Fav. Filmclip - My father’s House
- Fav. Album - Revival - Peter Christie Band

The winners are decided by a count of industry as well as public votes. I am up against people like the Gaither Vocal Band, the Isaacs, Carrie Underwood etc, so the more votes the better!

http://www.gospelmusicfanfair.com/AWARDS.htm

Editor’s Note: Congratulations Wendy! You deserve your success and more.
How would you describe your early days entering the songwriter and performing arenas?

My parents were very musical and very supportive of us all musically. Once I married and had kids I lost the ‘music mojo’ in my life for a while and it wasn’t until we moved to Murwillumbah where I found myself at home with my son and daughter (diagnosed with CF) that I returned to the thing that always made me feel good – and that was music. After I found the guitar I started to etch out some songs and was encouraged to contact Ron and Bev Daniel who was running the Tamworth Songwriters Association (TSA) in Tamworth. Not long afterwards we lost our house in Murwillumbah (I have yet to write my song about this heartbreaking event) and I moved to Tamworth to be closer to family and from then I also got involved with the TSA joining as a volunteer.

In 1996 I entered the Amateur section of the TSA’s song writing contest and was a finalist. It completely blew me away! The following year in 1997 my song “Country Music Radio” won the Amateur section. I was then asked to perform at the concert the following year and I was terrified! So, with some time to prepare, I embraced Karaoke. I found this an excellent platform to gain some experience and confidence as a singer. Needless to say I survived my performance at the Awards the following year - but I couldn’t have done so without the support provided by the Karaoke platform and community.

How has the TSA helped you in your career both as a songwriter and performer?

The TSA made me aware of what song writing really is and how to do it. Being part of the TSA I was able to enter song writing contests (and get feedback) network with other songwriters and see what they do, learn more about the industry as well as attend songwriter workshops.

Networking with other songwriters enabled me to learn from others who had done it before and who were so supportive.

I believe workshops really do provide wonderful opportunities for writers because apart from learning potential tips, tricks, techniques, approaches etc. from a tutor there are other budding writers keen to share ideas and possibly collaborate. Whilst I have not done a lot of collaboration myself I am very aware of other songwriters who have found huge benefits by doing so.

Not everyone is a lyricist and/or a musician and not everyone is able or wants to perform - so it makes good sense to find others to share the creative process where possible.

As a performer, I can’t speak highly enough for the opportunities presented by the TSA to get involved in the Tamworth Country Music Festival (TCMF). The opportunities to showcase and perform my songs were only possible due to the TSA and the TCMF (being the key music industry event for Australia) was, and is, the best place to do this.
“singer/songwriter” was a label that was not well known. It was all about performers.

Through the TSA and its “First The Song” campaign the festival evolved to focus more on the writers of the songs that performers play. Consequently there is more recognition for writers as well as more songwriter focused events at the festival such as ‘songwriter in the round’ sessions etc.

How are your songs triggered ... melody first then lyrics or visa versa?

Generally, both lyrics and melody come to me together. It depends on how the mood strikes – could be someone says something or a movie or another piece of music evokes something. There is no set pattern. Sometimes it takes a long time to write a song and other times they just fall out quickly.

When I wrote “A Bell Is Ringing Out in Beaconsfield” I was driving from Tamworth to Brisbane and I heard the miners had got out and that there was a bell was ringing in Beaconsfield. By the time I had got to other side of Armidale I had written the song in my head. I stopped by the side of the road and sang it into my phone then phoned my home answering service to record it there too!

As you know, it is tough for songwriters trying to get their songs out. How have you approached this and what do you believe has worked best for you?

I am a big believer in networks and communities such as Facebook etc. The communities that I have been involved in both physically and online have worked the best for me. I think now, more than ever, the opportunities for writers are far greater than previous years. It is important to believe in yourself and put your songs out there whichever way you can. Songs are your babies and they are precious but if you can make them connect with people then those people will remember them (and you!) It is also important not to be discouraged by criticism. Not everyone will like your song, not everyone will respond to it - but unless it is heard, you will never know.

Another great opportunity for getting songs heard is entering song writing contests. Apart from the possibility of winning, there are usually a number of judges listening to your song and you never know who they are and/or if they might be looking for a song for someone.

Some contests provide feedback and sometimes this might not be what you want to hear. It is important not to be discouraged by a negative comment – just remember a judge is just one person who (despite having an ability to view your song objectively) will respond to it subjectively.

Success takes many forms – how do you define success?

If a song connects with a large number of people then I consider it to be successful. To me a good song tells a story and evokes emotions. One of my favourite songs is “A Bell Is Ringing Out In Beaconsfield” but probably one of my most successful songs would be “Fairytale” (off my Enchanted Wood album) as it has (through VRadio Nashville and others) connected with the most number of people who have responded by requesting it. It was No. 1 on VRadio Nashville last Feb and it won the Nashville Universe last year.

“If a song connects with a large number of people then I consider it to be successful”

Winning awards, contests etc. is not just about prizes or money but more about the exposure you get that helps build your profile as a songwriter.

Above all, I believe it is important to stay true to yourself as a writer. I am not prepared to sacrifice my song writing and how it connects with people by having someone tell me how I should change who I am etc. As you wrote above “music is my sanity I actually think it is my insanity”.

Wendy’s sites:

www.reverbnation.com/wendywood
https://www.facebook.com/WendyWoodMusic/
http://wooby62.wix.com/wendywood

View highlights of Wendy’s songwriting career on page 7 of this newsletter.
Some useful links and things

**Song TownUSA?**

Join an international network of songwriters providing opportunities for doing courses online, find collaborators, learn from hit songwriters, improve skills and discover new music!!

[www.songtownusa.com](http://www.songtownusa.com)

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**SONG TOWNUSA ...**

by Marty Dodson  2/2/15

**Things That Make Me Want To Write**

I was thinking this morning about things that make me want to write. I thought I'd share and I'd love to get your thoughts on things that make YOU want to write. Here’s my list in no particular order.

1) Hearing a wonderfully crafted song that makes me think "Why didn't I think of that?"

2) Seeing a beautiful sunset.

3) Being out in nature.

4) Having a conversation with a friend about something that moves them deeply.

5) Experiencing something new.

6) Thinking about joys and failures in my life.

7) Going to an awesome concert.

8) Hearing someone tell an inspiring story.

9) Sitting with my wife by our fireplace with a glass of wine.

10) Being with an old friend.

If you have any further suggestions pls email [patcruzado28@gmail.com](mailto:patcruzado28@gmail.com) and we’ll print them in the next newsletter!!

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**FESTIVALS:**

**Dubbo Country Music Festival 2015**

April 2-6

Dubbo Country Music Association

**Urban Country Music Festival 2015**

May 1 – 3


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**TSA Members getting airplay on 88.9fm Tamworth**

Athol Latham presents “Athol’s Aussie Country” on 88.9fm from Tamworth on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7-11pm. During the 2015 festival (or any other time you happen to be in Tamworth) if you would like Athol to promote your records he is happy to do so To get an interview or promo please contact Athol on 02 6761 3428 or email [1953awl@gmail.com](mailto:1953awl@gmail.com).
TSA Workshop … January 2016?

Due to lack of numbers the TSA did NOT run a Songwriter’s workshop during Tamworth 2015. HOWEVER, it was interesting that Nashville songwriter Jerry Salley held two workshops at West Leagues during the Festival with about 18 in each group. It wasn’t widely advertised and a friend mentioned it to me the day before so I attended.

I also went to Mr Salley’s show a few years ago at the Southgate Inn and he is a very talented singer songwriter. He charged a reasonable $35 for the two hour workshop and it didn’t seem long enough. If you are interested in attending a Songwriter’s workshop at the 2016 Tamworth festival pls email patcruzado28@gmail.com or text 0448832670.

The facilitator is TBD but we may have some exciting news to reveal in the next few months…. Thanks … Patricia

TSA Annual General Meeting

The TSA Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 21st January 2015 in the St Andrew Room of the Uniting Church Hall – Marius Street, Tamworth at 9.00am.

The committee elected is as follows : president Duncan Hill; vice president Darryl Bowen; secretary Lorraine Pfitzner; treasurer Athol Latham; committee Lydia Clare Bowen, Patricia Cruzado, Carolyne Morris, Wendy Wood, Melissa Robertson, John P Toomey and Chris Davies. Judy Smith is the Song comp co-ordinator.

TSA Website under re-development!

Due to some difficulties with the old www.tsaonline.com.au website, the committee elected to develop a new site. Our new site is under development and we expect to announce its arrival online in the next month or so! In the meantime, there is a temporary site in place. We will keep you posted…

TSA & Songsalive!Australia Workshop in the Blue Mountains 2015 ...

The annual songwriters workshop weekend held in the Blue Mountains and featuring tutors Roger Corbett and Allan Caswell will be running again later this year. Date/Venue details to be confirmed.

Your TSA committee wish all those who attended TSA events during the Festival enjoyed the experiences and opportunities. We value any feedback so please get in touch with us. We are always looking for song writing related stories for the next newsletter so any contributors are greatly appreciated. We all hope the New Year brings out your best song writing and a wonderful and musical year!