

N5 Convention 2014 Recap

Youth Participation

Youth was involved in a big way at the Lions 201N5 Convention 2014. Through this, our District helped realise one of the four main goals of International President Joe Preston - the "youth development" goal.



At the convention, young people were heavily involved both from within and without the Lions organisation.

The Convention commenced in the evening of 14 November. During the lead up to the Opening Ceremony, some 200 Lions congregated in the Luxe Room of the Castle Hill RSL, enjoying each others' company over canapé food, wine and soft drinks. At 7:10 pm, the doors of the adjoining Lyceum Auditorium opened. As the Lions entered, to their delight, they found 68 young musicians assembled there, playing soft music to entertain them.

These youths, aged 12 to 18 years, belonged to the Castle Hill Youth Wind Orchestra (YWO). This orchestra was formed over a decade ago and are now multiple national award winners. It is comprised of high school students who will have to "graduate" or leave the orchestra as they finish high school. Their Musical Director is the very talented James Brice, a long



The Castle Hill RSL Youth Wind Orchestra



The Castle Hill RSL Youth Wind Orchestra

time friend of mine. The Orchestra Manager is Fiona Day.

The YWO performed for us until the formal proceedings began at 7:30 pm. The young musicians held their positions until the finale of the Flag Ceremony when they sprang into action again. When the Chinese flag was paraded, they played the Chinese National Anthem. As they were playing, three young men from Sydney Chinese Lions, the Hosting club of the Convention, joined them. These three young men led the singing of the Chinese National anthem with fervour. Next, when the Australian flag was being honoured, the same three young singers joined with me on stage to sing the third verse of the anthem which was



Young Lions from Sydney Chinese Lead Singing



Young Lions from Sydney Chinese Lead Singing

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Youth Participation (contd)



Leo Joel Parading the Leo Flag

actually a repetition of the first verse. I first heard this special arrangement of our National Anthem at the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 and was greatly inspired.

Many flags were paraded at the Flag Ceremony. The first three were the Lions, the Lioness and the Leo flags. Leo Joel Pattinson-



Jess Scott - Lead Singer (Youth Wind Orchestra)

Cashman, Leo of the Year who flew in all the way from Mackay, Queensland was the bearer of the Leo flag.

When the Flag Ceremony was over, nine dancing lions waltzed into the Lyceum, in sync with the rhythm of Chinese drums and cymbals. These dancing lions were colourful and acrobatic. There probably wasn't a single soul in the audience who had a camera who did not use it to take multiple pictures of this unique and spectacular performance. Two operators were required to "man" each of the dancing lions. 18 youths from the Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe were there for the show. We are grateful to them for putting up such a wonderful act for us.

Towards the end of the formal speeches, Lion



The Nine Spectacular Dancing Lions on Stage - all Operated by Youths

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Youth Participation (contd)



The Three Dancing Lions on Stage

David Elliott MP declared the Convention open. Following that, the YWO featured a mini concert. When the young singer Jess Scott led the singing of popular numbers like *We Call Australia Home*, *Waltzing Matilda* and *the Road to Gundagai*, many Lions simply joined in, joyously following her lead.

Yes, we had a great Opening Ceremony but without the contributions of the youth from the YWO, the Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe and Sydney Chinese Lions, the whole evening would have been quite flat indeed.

The Leos had their own static display stand at the convention. Hornsby Leos manning the Leo stand at morning tea on Day Two conducted a quick raffle wheel gold coin donation... everyone's a winner... and raised \$111 for their Timor project... Thank you, generous Lions.

On Day Two of the convention, at my request, a lunch time forum was organised by Lion Gail Hart, District Leo Liaison Chairperson. Some 16 Leos from Oatley, Hornsby and the Hills Leo Clubs attended, as well as our guest Leo Joel Pattinson-Cashman, Leo of the Year from Mackay, Queensland.

To encourage the Leos from Norfolk Island to attend the convention, a sum of \$1,500 was set aside to help subsidize their travel expenses. Lions Bob and Helen Rose had also kindly offered their home to accommodate them during their stay. We were told, however, that they



Leos Watching their Peers Presenting

were unable to come due to study and work commitments. This came as a disappointment to us!

At Lion Gail's request, the Leos were provided a tasty sandwich lunch with fruit and drinks. Under her experienced guidance and facilitation, the forum developed into a free flow session with all participants willingly coming forward and sharing their views spontaneously on matters close to their hearts. I paid them a visit during the forum and was warmly received. Jack Fountain from the Hills Leos was an official photographer and he did a wonderful job.



Leo Maddie

During the afternoon session, the Leos provided a 15 minute feedback on the Leo Forum to the conventioners. Again, with the assistance of Lion Gail, three Leos took to the microphone.



Leo Georgia



Leo Carla

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Youth Participation (contd)



Lion Gail & Leos Carla, Maddie & Georgia

They were Leo Maddie from The Hills, Leo Carla from Oatley and Leo Georgia from Hornsby Leo Clubs. These young Leos did a fantastic job. They gave very lively presentations within their time frame and when they finished, received an appreciative round of applause from an enlightened audience.

230 Lions and guests attended the Convention Dinner. Seasoned event organisers would know that we would have to make a final commitment on numbers for catering purposes several days before the event. So when the crunch time came, I made the decision to order 20 more meals than the actual confirmed number. Nevertheless, these extra places were soon snatched up. I later found out that, on the night, there were scores of disappointed indi-



Leo Joel Pattinson-Cashman, Leo of the Year

viduals who simply said YES far too late. Anyway, that was a great evening with amazing entertainment. I am grateful to Lion Josh Roney, Advisor of the Hills Leos, for acting as Master of Ceremonies at the dinner. He was instrumental in pulling all the threads together and delivering the coherent signature function for the convention. I am also appreciative of the contributions of the Hills Leos in helping out with various chores throughout the whole convention.

In the morning session of Day Three of the Convention, a ten minute slot was made available for a second Leo Presentation. As specified in the Convention Program Booklet, the session was intended for Leo of the Year Joel Pattinson-Cashman to share his experiences,



Lion Josh Roney as Convention Dinner MC



Leo Joel, Lion Martin and DG Anthony

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with Leo Multiple District Chairman Martin Peebles introducing him. However, despite my making the time frame very clear to Martin, Joel was given a long introduction which effectively left him with a shortened time and regrettably the conventioners did not get to hear a full account of Joel's story.

I also learnt later that Joel felt humiliated as his presentation was cut short. I wish to stress that I never intended to humiliate anybody by the time keeping. Convention organisers have a job to do and when the allocated time was up for sessions, time WAS up!

Due to this incident, some fear was expressed that the District was not being supportive of the Leo and youth movement. I would point out that it is quite the contrary. Amongst other arrangements for youth at this convention, we have had two Leo presentation sessions totalling 25 minutes and a 90 minute Leo Forum. These arrangements for youth far exceeded those in other recent District conventions.

This year, the District provided full complimentary hospitality package for Joel and Lion Martin. District covered all Joel's out of pocket expenses during his stay in Sydney. In addition, Lions Chez and Josh Roney, on their own accord, kindly provided accommodation for Joel and Martin during the convention for which I am most thankful. I just hope that by and large, Joel enjoyed our Convention and his stay in Sydney. His bearing of the Leo flag at our Opening Ceremony, his attendance at the District Governor's Reception, the Leo Forum, the Convention Dinner, the various other hospitality events, his presentation on Day Three of the convention, his interaction with Leos and Lions throughout the convention plus the two extra days' stay in Sydney, etc should have all added up to a positive experience.



**The Male
Lead Singer**



The Friday Night LIVE Big Band

N5 Convention 2014 Recap

Youth Participation (contd)



The Female Lead Singer

The Convention's Opening Ceremony started with a mini concert performed by a group of 68 young musicians. It was fitting then that the Closing Ceremony concluded with another group of young musicians performing for us as well. Indeed it did! The Youth Wind Orchestra at the Opening Ceremony comprised musicians aged 12 to 18. The Friday Night LIVE Big Band that performed for us at the Closing

comprised musicians in their late teens and early twenties. They were the "graduates" of the YWO and were the pick of the crop. The band comprised some 20 very talented mu-



The Drummer



Musical Director James Brice

sicians. The music they played was rich and entertaining, drawn as it was from a wide-ranging repertoire.

Summing up, it is evident that our Convention 2014 benefitted big time as a result of invaluable contributions by the youth. I sincerely hope that all the Leos and young Lions who attended the convention were enthused and reinvigorated. I also hope that each of them learnt something from the Convention and from each other. Those youths who took part in the convention but were neither Leos nor Lions, had the opportunity of finding out firsthand something nice about Lions and the good work that we do. I hope that at some point of time in the future, they will decide to become Lions to help SERVE the less fortunate.

By Lion Anthony Cheung and Lion Gail Hart



The Friday Night LIVE Big Band