

Presentation of Regional Arts NSW Life Memberships to Margaret and Malcolm Kiehne

by IAN GZELL, QC

Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Ian Gzell and I am the President of Regional Arts New South Wales.

The Constitution of The Arts Council of New South Wales Limited which trades under the name Regional Arts New South Wales provides for the admission to life membership of a person who the Board of Directors is satisfied has given outstanding and meritorious service to the Arts by the practice of the same or in the advancement and administration of the same for a period exceeding ten years.

At the last Annual General Meeting of our company, two persons were added to the select group of life members. The Annual General Meeting resolved that public recognition of the new life members be made at this State Conference jointly sponsored by Museums and Galleries Foundation of New South Wales, Community Cultural Development New South Wales and our organisation in conjunction with the Local Government and Shires Associations of New South Wales. It is my pleasant duty to carry out that resolution with the leave of our joint convenors.

Malcolm and Margaret Kiehne have collectively given seventy-nine years of service to Glen Innes Arts Council, the oldest continuously operating Arts Council in Australia.

Mal joined Glen Innes Arts Council in the cast of the local production of *Reedy River* in 1959 and since then has undertaken almost every task associated with a busy Arts Council and a thriving amateur theatrical group. He has been musical director, producer, set designer, actor and singer.

Margaret joined Glen Innes Arts Council and made her stage debut as a juror in *Trial by Jury* in 1964. In the early 1990s she ventured in musical direction. Included in her successes was *Fiddler on the Roof* which I was fortunate enough to see when I first joined Regional Arts New South Wales.

When she was not treading the boards or directing musicals, Margaret has contributed to productions in many different ways from stage hand to prompt to organising props and stage crews. Margaret is known as a perfectionist and expects and gets the best from any production with which she is involved.

Malcolm was President of Glen Innes Arts Council from 1969 until he took self-imposed retirement in 1984. During that time there was a steady increase in membership of the Council, three local productions a year were staged and some fifty visiting theatrical and musical performances were brought to town.

Mal was responsible for the acquisition of the former Methodist Church and its conversion to the Chapel Theatre which, I am told, is now free of debt, refurbished with new seating, has heating and air conditioning and has become the hub of Glen Innes.

Margaret has held a variety of executive positions with Glen Innes Arts Council and is currently Publicity Officer and writes a column in the local newspaper promoting the Arts in Glen Innes.

Both Mal and Margaret demonstrate a culture of commitment to their community. They are guided by a philosophy of having fun, being welcoming to all and providing high quality arts and culture to Glen Innes.

In 1985 Mal was rightly honoured as Glen Innes Citizen of the Year and winner of the Buddee Award for his contribution to the arts. In 2000 Mal received the Rotary Award for his efforts to make the community a better place.

This year Margaret became Glen Innes Citizen of the Year.

Margaret and Malcolm are exemplary proponents of the Arts. Their unstinting service to Glen Innes Arts Council as well as to other community organisations and the humour and warmth they display in serving their town make them extraordinary ambassadors of the Arts. We are proud that they have accepted life membership of Regional Arts New South Wales which is but a token of the recognition they so richly deserve.

It gives me very much pleasure to present to them their certificates as Life Members of Regional Arts New South Wales. ■