

Taiko report 2020/21

Toowoomba Taiko has experienced many changes throughout the past year.

While we stepped back from playing face to face with the restrictions COVID placed on us, we were incredibly thankful to be able to practice at CBRC once these eased. Mid-year, we returned to Hear & Say, however, COVID had taken its toll on several of our members.

We said farewell to Jun, Natsuko, JP and Jodie, who all left to focus on their families. Katy has had to take a step back too and, most recently, Diana left to take up a new job on the Gold Coast. Our co-founder, Tomoko, moved on to bigger and better things and while her loss is keenly felt, we are incredibly thankful for her commitment and dedication to building and teaching our taiko tribe over three years.

Performances were at a minimum during 2020 too, although we had an amazing experience at a major boxing tournament in November, drumming in the top-billed local fighter, The Viking - Stevie Smith, who hails from Smithy's Gym. It was an incredible opportunity to play not only locally, but on pay tv that was streamed world-wide. Katy joined in to do our make-up for the night - thank you for helping us get our Viking groove on! The feedback from the organisers was very positive, and we look forward to more performances for Stevie and the potential for corporate workshops in the future.

Our new calendar year brought an improved social media presence thanks to tribe member Gary Watson, gigs at the Australia Day celebrations in the Toowoomba CBD and several multicultural festivals in May ... and new members! We have welcomed four new drummers so far (Jan, Kelly, Stacey and Karen) and look forward to welcoming them to the stage very soon.

Congratulations are extended to JP and Jodie on the safe arrival of their little one in February, and we hope to see mum/dad back at Hear & Say once they have enjoyed some decent sleep!

Thank you to Sian, Gary and Mika, in particular, for your continued dedication to ensuring the group has stayed vibrant while I was on extended leave. Sian, your teaching is sincerely appreciated and it's because of you, Gary, Mika and Katy that we have grown and improved and can look forward to an exciting 2021!

Last, but by no means least, thank you to our wider tribe at BBRD for continuing to provide the back-of-house support in a way that means we can do the thing we most love to do ... play the powerful rhythms of taiko!

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