

The National Carillon at Canberra

Statement from Meryl Bollard and Sister Lorraine Gatehouse
The Gathering Place
Centre for Australian Spirituality
4 Bancroft Street
DICKSON ACT 2602

17th April 2008

Dear Members of the Carillon Committee,

For the past few years we have been associated with the National Carillon. We feel that the Carillon has a significant place in the life of the National Capital. The music played by the group of dedicated carillonists is a delight to hear when one is in the vicinity of the Lake and the beauty of this experience adds a unique touch to the atmosphere of the National Capital. Families enjoy picnics by the lake, many visitors place it on their itinerary, and it is a popular outing for many of Canberra's elderly who are taken by their families for a Sunday afternoon drive and by buses from the day-care centres to enjoy the views and listen to, and enjoy, the carillon recitals. For those who have had the opportunity to have a tour of the carillon, it provides a very special educational and musical experience. We have actually been present on tours with overseas visitors and they commented just what a wonderful experience it was and what an amazing musical instrument it is.

During the last two years we have had the privilege of working with carillonist Lyn Fuller on the occasions of the twilight series "**Stillness and the Night**". These recitals took place during the month of February 2007 & 2008. We combined with Lyn to offer an evening of carillon music and poetry in two twilight recitals. It was an opportunity to share the richness of our Australian literary and social heritage in a unique and creative way. The first recital was entitled **Poetry and Music: Language of the Soul**, in which we told the story of one of our best know Australians, **Judith Wright**, in prose and poetry. We have since repeated this program at the University of Sydney.

The second recital was similar, with a focus on the **Life and Poetry of John Shaw Neilson**. The carillon played a major part in these recitals providing appropriate music at intervals in the narrative and also accompanying the recital of some of the poems. Many people availed themselves of this opportunity and came to these recitals. The overall effect of this combination of music and readings was highly commended and greatly appreciated. For both of these recitals, we did not expect any funding. It gave us great pleasure to offer our services to the community.

We are disappointed that the National Capital Authority deems it necessary to cut the funding to this National icon and we hope that some Federal legislation can be put in place to ensure regular funding for both the care of this world class instrument and for the many programs that offer such delight and beauty to both the residents of and visitors to the National Capital.

Yours sincerely,

Meryl Bollard and Sr. Lorraine Gatehouse, csb.

